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# THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN DRIVING STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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*Abstract: This study explores the role of students in driving structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. Recognising students as pivotal actors in promoting sustainability, the research adopts a qualitative approach to delve into their experiences, motivations, and influence on social, economic, and environmental reform. Employing an exploratory research design, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a diverse sample of 20 students from various disciplines, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locations. Thematic analysis was utilised to identify core themes reflecting students' contributions to sustainability and inclusivity. Findings highlight key roles students play, including advocacy, innovative solutions and research, policy participation, leadership development, sustainable lifestyle practices, fostering inclusivity, and global collaboration. The study underscores students' significant contributions to raising awareness, advancing interdisciplinary solutions, and advocating for policies supporting structural transformation. Recommendations suggest that universities support student advocacy, promote interdisciplinary research, incorporate policy advocacy into curricula, and enhance inclusivity and global collaborations. By equipping students with leadership and project management skills and fostering a campus environment conducive to sustainable practices, institutions can amplify students' impact. This study concludes that students, with adequate institutional support, can be powerful agents of change, advancing the global commitment to sustainable and inclusive development and effectively addressing complex global challenges.*

*Keywords: Advocacy; Global Collaboration; Inclusivity; Innovation; Leadership Development; Structural Transformation, Student; Sustainable Development Goals*

## **Introduction**

The rapid societal changes of the 21st century demand active involvement from diverse sectors, including students, to drive structural transformations that foster inclusive and sustainable development. As future leaders, professionals, and informed citizens, students possess unique potential to influence policies, ideologies, and actions that advance social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic fairness. Their activism and engagement can significantly impact not only their academic environments but also local, national, and global communities. This research seeks to explore the role of students in driving structural transformation, focusing on their involvement in activism, education, policymaking, and community engagement. This study will investigate how students, through their positions within educational institutions, contribute to the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically those related to equality, environmental protection, and economic justice. By examining their participation in sustainability projects, advocacy campaigns, and social justice movements, this study will provide a comprehensive understanding of how students are shaping structural change.

Inclusive and sustainable development is a central theme in global policy, emphasised by the 2015 adoption of the SDGs. These goals highlight the importance of restructuring economic, social, and political systems to ensure equitable development while protecting future generations' resources. Structural transformation involves a comprehensive reconfiguration of systems to eliminate inequalities and support sustainable outcomes (Andreoni et al., 2021). While students' role in social change is often overlooked, their contributions within academic and societal settings have historically driven significant reform, from civil rights and environmental activism to global sustainability initiatives. Despite this impactful history, there is limited research on how modern student-led initiatives align with and contribute to these broader goals.

Students have traditionally influenced social and political change, but their specific contributions to structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development remain underexplored. In light of global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and social exclusion, understanding how students drive change is critical. However, there is limited empirical research on the strategies, mechanisms, and outcomes of student involvement in structural transformation, particularly regarding inclusivity and sustainability. This study addresses this gap, exploring the ways students engage with these issues, the challenges they face, and the implications of their actions. While discussions on sustainability and inclusivity are extensive, few studies have focused on students' roles in these areas, particularly concerning structural transformation. Existing research has mainly examined the roles of governments, international organisations, and corporations in driving sustainable development (UN, 2020; Sachs, 2015). However, students as active change agents are often overlooked, especially in their grassroots involvement, engagement with the SDGs, and integration of these goals into local and global advocacy.

This study is driven by the urgent need for a sustainable and inclusive future. As the world faces unprecedented challenges—climate change, economic inequality, and systemic injustice—students' involvement in driving structural transformation is essential. Positioned to challenge traditional perspectives, students can act as catalysts for change within their communities and institutions. By addressing issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice, they contribute to achieving the SDGs and shifting societal values. This research will provide insights into the practical and theoretical dimensions of student activism, examining both barriers and strategies in advocating for inclusive and sustainable development. Furthermore, by identifying successful student-led initiatives, this study will offer recommendations for educators, policymakers, and institutional leaders to better support student engagement with sustainability and inclusivity goals.

#### *Aim of the study*

This study seeks to explore the roles students can play in driving structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development.

#### **Methodology**

This study is grounded in the constructivist research paradigm, which posits that knowledge is formed through individuals' interactions with their environment and shaped by their lived experiences (Kamal, 2019). The constructivist approach aligns with the aim of exploring the role of students in driving structural transformation for inclusive and

sustainable development, as it prioritises the subjective interpretations of students' engagement and activism. By focusing on how students understand and make meaning of their actions, the study seeks to uncover how personal experiences, and social contexts shape their roles in promoting inclusivity and sustainability. A qualitative research approach was chosen for its capacity to provide rich, in-depth insights into students' beliefs, motivations, and perspectives on structural transformation. Qualitative research is particularly suited for examining complex social phenomena, where the goal is to understand participants' views and experiences in depth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This approach allows a nuanced examination of students' involvement in sustainability and inclusivity initiatives, yielding insights into how students contribute to these goals on multiple levels.

An exploratory research design was employed, as it is well-suited to investigating under-researched topics, like the role of students in driving structural transformation. This design supports the study's goal of discovering new insights into students' roles in sustainability, enabling flexibility in data collection and analysis, and facilitating the identification of emerging themes and patterns. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, a method that offers a flexible yet guided framework for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives. Semi-structured interviews are ideal for qualitative research, allowing the researcher to engage participants in a conversational manner while ensuring that key topics related to the research aim are addressed (Kvale, 2009). Open-ended questions encouraged participants to elaborate on their experiences and provided the researcher with opportunities to pursue unexpected insights that emerged during the interviews.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research aims. The sample included 20 students who demonstrated active involvement in initiatives related to inclusive and sustainable development, such as environmental sustainability campaigns, social justice movements, and student-led policy advocacy. This sampling approach allowed for the inclusion of participants from diverse backgrounds—encompassing various disciplines, socioeconomic statuses, and geographic regions—to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' engagement with sustainability and inclusivity issues (Palinkas et al., 2015). Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative method focused on identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is particularly appropriate for this study, as it offers a structured yet adaptable framework for analysing interview data in depth. Following Braun and Clarke's six-phase process, the analysis proceeded through familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This rigorous process allowed for the identification of key themes related to students' roles, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ in fostering structural transformation, inclusivity, and sustainability.

## **Findings**

Students play a crucial role in driving structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. Their influence and activism contribute to social, economic, and environmental changes at local, national, and global levels. Key roles students play in this transformative process include advocacy and awareness-raising, driving innovative solutions and research, engaging in policy advocacy and participation, building leadership

capacity, promoting sustainable lifestyles, creating inclusive educational environments, and fostering global collaboration and solidarity.

#### Innovative Solutions and Research

The participants indicate that students, as active contributors to structural transformation, play a pivotal role in generating innovative solutions and conducting research that aligns with the principles of inclusive and sustainable development. Their involvement in research allows them to explore new ideas, technologies, and models that address pressing global challenges such as climate change, poverty, inequality, and social justice. Many students engage in research and innovation focused on developing sustainable technologies. For example, students from engineering and technology fields are developing eco-friendly energy solutions, such as solar-powered devices, waste-to-energy systems, and sustainable agriculture technologies. For example, a student remarked: *“In my research project, I developed a solar-powered water purification system that helps address water scarcity in rural communities. The system is affordable, scalable, and environmentally friendly, offering a sustainable solution to water-related issues.”* These innovations directly contribute to sustainable development by reducing environmental degradation and promoting clean energy alternatives.

Students from various disciplines, including environmental science, architecture, and urban planning, are researching sustainable building materials, green technologies, and climate adaptation strategies. These students are examining how cities and rural areas can adapt to climate change by integrating sustainable infrastructure, such as green roofs, energy-efficient buildings, and water conservation systems. One of the participants mentioned: *“As a group of architecture students, we developed a sustainable housing model that incorporates recycled materials, natural ventilation systems, and renewable energy sources. This model was presented as a solution for low-income communities in urban areas prone to environmental risks.”* By proposing affordable, sustainable housing solutions, students contribute to addressing issues of housing inequality while promoting environmental sustainability. The data revealed that there is an increasing trend of interdisciplinary research. Students are collaborating across disciplines—combining fields such as economics, science, engineering, and sociology—to develop holistic solutions that address the multifaceted nature of sustainability and inclusivity. These collaborative efforts often lead to more comprehensive and innovative approaches to solving complex problems. Participant 15 reported that: *“A group of students from various disciplines (sociology, environmental science, and engineering) came together to create a model for sustainable waste management in urban slums. The model integrated waste reduction, recycling, and community-based management strategies.”* Such cross-disciplinary efforts not only enhance the quality of research but also provide more innovative and practical solutions that are likely to be more widely accepted and implemented in diverse communities.

The data underscores the transformative role of students in fostering structural change toward inclusive and sustainable development. Through active participation in research and innovation, students generate solutions that tackle global challenges, such as climate change, resource scarcity, and social inequality. Research suggests that students' engagement in developing sustainable technologies, like renewable energy solutions and eco-friendly materials, is essential in mitigating environmental degradation and promoting inclusive growth (Holmes et al., 2022). For instance, research in green engineering highlights students' contributions to affordable, scalable technologies like solar-powered



devices that improve living conditions in marginalised communities (Vijayan et al., 2023). Students in fields like architecture and urban planning are also at the forefront of designing sustainable housing and infrastructure solutions, addressing both environmental and social sustainability (Omole et al., 2023). Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration among students has become crucial, as it enables more comprehensive and context-sensitive solutions to complex sustainability issues (Liu et al., 2022). Through these cross-disciplinary initiatives, students combine perspectives from sociology, engineering, and environmental science, enhancing the relevance and practicality of their projects.

#### *Policy Advocacy and Participation*

The participants identified policy advocacy and participation as part of the essential role they play in fostering structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. The data revealed that students are actively engaged in policy advocacy, which is central to driving systemic and structural transformation. A recurring finding in the interviews was that students often engage in protests, demonstrations, and campaigns to raise awareness about key issues such as climate change, gender equality, and poverty alleviation. A participant shared: *"We organised a petition calling for our university to divest from fossil fuel investments. It was part of the larger global movement, and seeing the policy shift within the institution was a huge win for us."* Such actions highlight the role of students in influencing institutional and governmental policy changes that align with SDGs. Many students are involved in collaborative efforts with NGOs and grassroots organisations, amplifying their advocacy work. A student involved in policy advocacy commented: *"Working with local NGOs allowed us to voice our concerns more effectively at the national level. We were able to present a united front, pushing for policies on renewable energy that benefitted both the environment and vulnerable communities."*

Students also contribute to structural transformation by participating in decision-making processes, both within their academic institutions and broader political frameworks. This involvement ensures that policies reflect the needs and concerns of the younger generation, who will be directly impacted by these policies in the future. In many universities and public forums, students have seats on boards, committees, and policy advisory groups where they can directly influence institutional or governmental decisions. A student leader described: *"Being part of the student union, I had the opportunity to speak directly with policymakers about the need for more inclusive education programs that cater to disabled students. It felt empowering to be part of that decision-making process."* Through these channels, students engage in shaping policies that directly affect them, ensuring that youth perspectives are represented in discussions on climate action, social equity, and other key issues. Students also engage in advocacy that promotes environmental sustainability, especially in relation to indigenous communities and marginalised groups who are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. One student shared: *"I participated in a campaign focused on land rights for indigenous people. It was crucial to highlight how sustainable development needs to include these communities' voices to avoid further marginalisation."*

The role of students in policy advocacy and participation is pivotal in driving structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. Research highlights how youth activism and participation in policy advocacy can catalyse shifts towards equitable policies and sustainable practices (Shah & Khan, 2023). In line with the SDGs, students often engage in protests, petitions, and campaigns focused on critical issues such as climate

action, social equity, and poverty reduction. Studies reveal that student-led campaigns on fossil fuel divestment, for example, have compelled several institutions to reconsider their investment portfolios, aligning with broader sustainable development objectives (Grady-Benson & Sarathy, 2016; Khan et al., 2024). Collaborative efforts with NGOs and grassroots organisations allow students to amplify their impact on national and global platforms, enhancing policy efforts in renewable energy and social inclusion. Student participation in governance structures, such as university boards and public policy advisory groups, facilitates a youth-cantered approach in policymaking, ensuring future generations' concerns are addressed in institutional and governmental policies. Students' advocacy for marginalised communities, especially in environmental justice, underscores the importance of inclusive policy frameworks that recognise the needs of indigenous and vulnerable populations, aligning with research that stresses the necessity of participatory and equity-focused governance (Méndez-Barrientos et al., 2024). Through these activities, students not only influence immediate policy shifts but also help lay the groundwork for long-term sustainable and inclusive transformation.

#### *Capacity Building and Leadership Development*

Capacity building and leadership development emerged as part of the central roles played by students in driving structural transformation toward inclusive and sustainable development. Through various student-led initiatives, universities, and community programs, students develop critical leadership skills and the capacity to advocate for and implement change in their communities and beyond. A significant proportion of students reported that participation in leadership programs, student organisations, and volunteer activities helped develop essential leadership skills. One student from the Faculty of Engineering stated, *“Participating in the student leadership training programs helped me understand how to lead a team and manage a project, skills that I now apply in community development initiatives focusing on sustainability.”* Students' involvement in various campus and community-based sustainability projects, such as environmental conservation programs, awareness campaigns on climate change, and inclusive education initiatives, has contributed to their leadership development. A student from the Faculty of Arts shared, *“I led a project that aimed to reduce plastic waste on campus, and it not only made me more confident in my leadership abilities but also deepened my commitment to sustainable development.”*

Participants emphasised the role of mentorship and peer leadership in enhancing their leadership capacities. Through peer mentoring programs, students were able to guide and support their fellow peers, fostering a collaborative environment conducive to leadership development. This form of leadership also allowed students to practice inclusivity and sustainability in their approach to guiding others. A student from the School of Business remarked: *“As a mentor in the peer leadership program, I was able to support younger students in their academic and personal growth while also sharing my knowledge of sustainability practices. This experience strengthened my leadership skills in a practical, hands-on way.”* Students engaged in social entrepreneurship have reported the development of leadership skills through designing and implementing projects that promote sustainable development. These projects often focus on solving local challenges related to poverty, education, and environmental sustainability while building the students' ability to lead initiatives that benefit the wider community. A business student involved in

a social entrepreneurship initiative noted, *“I learnt how to manage a social enterprise that promotes renewable energy solutions in underserved communities, and this experience has significantly improved my leadership and problem-solving skills.”*

Capacity building and leadership development among students play a pivotal role in fostering structural transformation toward inclusive and sustainable development. Through active engagement in leadership programs, campus organisations, and community projects, students acquire essential skills for driving change in their communities and promoting sustainability goals. Research highlights the importance of student-led initiatives in building leadership competencies, as these programs offer students real-world experience in project management, team leadership, and strategic planning essential for sustainable development efforts (Uzorka et al., 2024). Furthermore, mentorship and peer leadership initiatives within universities strengthen leadership abilities, as they allow students to apply inclusivity principles and practice sustainability while guiding their peers, enhancing their preparedness to address societal challenges (Govender & Pillay, 2022). Social entrepreneurship projects led by students also contribute significantly to capacity building, particularly by empowering students to devise innovative solutions for local issues like poverty and environmental degradation, which further enhances their leadership skills and aligns with sustainable development targets (Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024). This emphasis on leadership development aligns with global education goals that advocate for the integration of sustainability competencies in higher education to support structural transformation on local and global scales.

#### *Engagement in Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyles*

The data highlight how students contribute to structural transformation by engaging in sustainable consumption and lifestyles, an essential component in promoting inclusivity and sustainability development. Students have shown a growing commitment to adopting sustainable consumption habits as a means of contributing to environmental sustainability. A significant number of students reported reducing waste through practices such as recycling, composting, and reusing materials. For instance, many students opt for reusable bags, water bottles, and containers instead of single-use plastic. One participant noted, *“I have started carrying my own bottle and coffee cup. It feels good knowing I’m not contributing to plastic waste, even if it’s a small change.”* The practice of second-hand shopping, sustainable clothing, and the rejection of fast fashion were common themes. Students reported making conscious decisions to buy from sustainable brands or to purchase second-hand clothing to reduce their environmental footprint. As one student shared, *“I have started buying from thrift shops and avoiding fast fashion, knowing that it helps reduce the demand for mass production.”* Many students also play an active role in promoting sustainable consumption practices within their peer groups and communities. Students are often at the forefront of organising sustainability-focused events, workshops, and awareness campaigns on campuses. These events range from sustainability fairs to educational workshops about reducing carbon footprints. One participant described their involvement: *“We organised a sustainability week on campus where we showed students how they could make more sustainable choices, like reducing energy consumption and switching to renewable energy sources.”*

Despite their commitment, students face several challenges in adopting sustainable consumption practices. Many students identified financial limitations as a barrier to fully

embracing sustainable consumption, particularly when sustainable options (e.g., eco-friendly products, organic food) are more expensive than conventional alternatives. One participant stated, *"It's hard to buy organic produce all the time because it's more expensive. Sometimes, the cheaper option isn't the most sustainable one."* In some areas, students reported limited access to sustainable options, such as local, organic food markets or sustainable brands. One student explained, *"Where I live, there aren't many sustainable stores or markets, so it's hard to find eco-friendly products. I wish I had more options locally."* Students also noted that their busy schedules make it difficult to adopt certain sustainable practices, such as growing their own food or actively participating in sustainability campaigns. One of the participants remarked: *"It's hard to balance everything – studies, work, and my sustainability efforts. Sometimes, it feels like I can't do as much as I want to."*

Despite these challenges, the majority of the participants expressed a strong commitment to continuing and expanding their sustainable consumption practices. Many students emphasised that sustainability is not just a personal choice but a collective responsibility. As one participant stated, *"Even small actions matter. I believe that if we all make an effort, we can really drive change. The future depends on it."* The data suggests that students' engagement in sustainable consumption and lifestyles contributes significantly to broader structural transformation in many ways. For example, as students embrace sustainable habits and educate their peers, they help shift cultural norms within their communities, workplaces, and future careers. Many students believe that sustainability will be a central aspect of their professional lives and future decisions. One participant remarked, *"I plan to work in a field that prioritises sustainability. It's part of how I see the world now."*

Engagement in sustainable consumption and lifestyles among students plays a crucial role in advancing structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. By embracing sustainable habits such as recycling, reducing plastic use, and choosing eco-friendly products, students actively contribute to environmental preservation and the formation of sustainable cultural norms. According to Filho et al. (2022), student-led initiatives, including campus sustainability campaigns, are pivotal in fostering environmental awareness and encouraging collective action toward sustainable lifestyles. This shift not only influences individual behaviour but also has broader implications for systemic change by reshaping peer and community norms around consumption practices (Lutkenhaus et al., 2023). However, financial constraints and limited access to eco-friendly options present significant barriers, as sustainable products are often costlier and less accessible than conventional alternatives (Durrani et al., 2024). Despite these challenges, students maintain a strong commitment to sustainable consumption, viewing it as a collective responsibility that extends beyond personal choices to societal transformation. This commitment aligns with findings by Leal Filho et al. (2018), who highlight that the active involvement of youth in sustainability enhances the capacity for structural transformation, as students today are future leaders and decision-makers. Through their ongoing advocacy and engagement, students are positioning themselves as central actors in the shift toward a more inclusive and sustainable society.

#### *Creating Inclusive Educational Environments*

The participants highlight the role of students in creating inclusive educational environments, one of the significant roles in driving structural transformation toward

inclusive and sustainable development. Participants emphasised the importance of advocating for curricula that include diverse perspectives. They highlighted how advocating for the inclusion of marginalised groups' histories, voices, and contributions in course materials can foster a more inclusive academic environment. One of the participants commented, *"We initiated a student-led campaign to have African history integrated into the core curriculum. It was not just about inclusivity but about ensuring that we understand all facets of our global heritage, especially those of marginalised communities."* Many students identified peer mentoring programs as an essential tool for fostering an inclusive educational environment. Through mentorship, students from diverse backgrounds could share knowledge and experiences and support each other. This approach not only facilitated academic success but also helped students from marginalised communities feel supported and valued. *"We developed a mentoring system where senior students helped first-year students navigate both academic and social challenges. This made a huge difference in terms of helping new students, especially from minority backgrounds, integrate and succeed."*

Students also noted their active involvement in student organisations aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within their universities. They worked toward ensuring that leadership structures in these organisations reflected the diversity of the student body, allowing all voices to be heard and represented in decision-making processes. One of the union members remarked that *"In the student union, we made it a point to ensure that all groups, including international students and students with disabilities, had a seat at the table. This not only empowered students but created an environment where everyone's opinions were valued."* Several students discussed how they actively confronted discriminatory practices and social biases within their educational environments. This included addressing issues such as racial discrimination, gender bias, and ableism in the classroom, ensuring that all students could learn in an environment free from prejudice and bias. Participant 19 remarked: *"We created a platform where students could anonymously report instances of discrimination or harassment, and it gave us the opportunity to address those issues openly and ensure everyone felt safe."*

In creating inclusive educational environments, students play a vital role in advancing structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development by advocating for diversity, equity, and representation within academic settings. Literature underscores the importance of student-led initiatives in promoting inclusion, noting that student activism and participation can significantly influence institutional policies and curricular changes (Strydom & Loots, 2020). By championing curricula that include marginalised perspectives, students address historical gaps in academic discourse, making learning more representative and enriching (Omodan & Marongwe, 2024). Peer mentoring programs, as noted by participants, also serve as critical mechanisms for fostering inclusivity, as they create networks of support and belonging for marginalised students, enhancing both academic success and social integration (Juvonen et al., 2019). Furthermore, inclusive student organisations promote diversity within leadership structures, enabling equitable decision-making and reflecting the diverse identities of the student population (Ainscow, 2020). Student-led efforts to confront biases—such as racial, gender, and disability discrimination—have been shown to create safer, more supportive learning environments (Isaac et al., 2023), aligning with broader goals of sustainable development that prioritise inclusivity and social justice.

### *Advocacy and Awareness Raising*

The data revealed that students are increasingly taking on active roles in advocacy and awareness-raising activities aimed at promoting inclusive and sustainable development. As future leaders, they are in a unique position to challenge existing systems, raise awareness about critical global issues, and advocate for policies that prioritise social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Many students reported utilising social media platforms as a tool for advocacy and awareness-raising. They engage in digital campaigns to highlight issues such as climate change, gender equality, racial justice, and poverty alleviation. These platforms provide students with an accessible and global audience to voice their concerns and mobilise support. For example, one of the participants remarked, *"I have been part of several online campaigns, especially focusing on climate action. Using social media to advocate for sustainability allows me to connect with other students and even organisations across the world. It feels empowering to raise awareness on such an important issue."* As Hajri & Daife (2024) suggest, students leverage their social networks and digital platforms to raise awareness about global challenges, such as climate change, social equity, and sustainable development, mobilising peer engagement and policy advocacy through online campaigns and activism. Social media, in particular, allows them to reach a wide audience, exemplifying how digital spaces can serve as both a learning and an advocacy tool (Scott & Maryman, 2023).

Students also organise movements on their campuses to raise awareness about sustainability, inclusivity, and social justice. These movements often include organising events such as workshops, panel discussions, protests, and petitions. Students are seen as the driving force behind these movements, aiming to engage their peers and campus communities in dialogues about inclusive development. Student 2 stated: *"We organised a climate change awareness week at our university. It included talks from experts, interactive sessions, and a protest demanding more sustainable practices from our university administration. It was inspiring to see so many students come together for a common cause."* This aligns with Mohammed et al. (2022), who stated that students organise on-campus events, such as panel discussions and protests, to foster dialogues around sustainability and inclusivity. Many students collaborate with non-governmental organisations and civil society groups to enhance their advocacy efforts. These collaborations often result in student-led initiatives that focus on real-world issues such as affordable education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. For example, participant 12 mentioned: *"I have worked with local NGOs to raise awareness about gender equality in rural communities. It was an eye-opening experience to see the power of grassroots advocacy in creating structural change."* Collaborating with non-governmental organisations enhances their impact, bringing students closer to community-driven efforts and real-world advocacy experiences (Singha & Singha, 2024).

Data also revealed that some students use art, theatre, and creative expression to raise awareness about social and environmental issues. These students engage in performances, exhibitions, and creative campaigns that convey the urgency of issues like environmental degradation, poverty, and inequality. Student 5 reported: *"I have been part of art exhibitions that address social justice issues, such as refugee rights and climate change. Art has a way of connecting with people on a deeper level, which is essential when raising awareness about structural issues."* Art becomes a powerful tool for social change, allowing students to communicate complex ideas and inspire action in a way that resonates

emotionally with diverse audiences. According to Farrington et al. (2019), many students turn to art and creative expressions—art exhibitions, theatre, and performances—to communicate social justice messages, a method that effectively engages audiences on an emotional level, inspiring deeper awareness and commitment to action. The role of students in advocacy and awareness-raising is central to driving structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. Their active participation in various forms of advocacy—ranging from digital campaigns and campus movements to collaborations with NGOs—serves as a catalyst for change. These multifaceted advocacy activities underscore the importance of student involvement in advancing social change, as they cultivate a generation committed to inclusive, sustainable development.

### *Global Collaboration and Solidarity*

Global collaboration and solidarity also emerged as essential roles of students in driving structural transformation toward inclusive and sustainable development. The data revealed that students play a key role in advocating for global solidarity, especially in response to challenges like climate change, social inequality, and the displacement of vulnerable populations. Participant 10 remarked: *"As part of a student-led initiative, I've collaborated with international peers on advocating for climate justice. It's about standing together as a global community, because the impact of climate change doesn't recognise borders."* Similarly, Participant 2 stated: *"We formed a coalition with students from other countries to promote education about climate change in underserved communities. This collective action creates a broader impact, beyond local issues."* Through international student networks and exchange programs, students facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity-building across countries. These programs serve as platforms for students to exchange ideas on sustainable practices, social inclusion policies, and inclusive economic models. They also help to build solidarity by connecting students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. According to Participant 7: *"Through an exchange program, I collaborated with students from Asia, Africa, and Europe to design a sustainable development project focusing on renewable energy. It was amazing to see how cultural and academic differences shaped the solutions we proposed."*

The data revealed that students also establish and lead international organisations and initiatives that promote sustainable development and inclusivity. These organisations often work in partnership with NGOs, governments, and international bodies to address development goals such as poverty reduction, quality education, and environmental protection. Participant 14 reported: *"I am part of a student-led global organisation that campaigns for youth inclusion in global policymaking. We push for youth participation in major UN forums and other international platforms focused on sustainable development."* The participants indicated that they have actively contributed to global health initiatives, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. By participating in awareness campaigns, fundraising, and sharing knowledge on public health practices, students promote solidarity and collective action to address health crises. Participant 20 stated: *"During the pandemic, I participated in a global health initiative that provided mental health resources to students in underdeveloped countries. It was vital to show that global challenges require a unified response."* Students contribute to the achievement of the United Nations SDGs by promoting global partnerships and supporting international efforts aimed at addressing

these goals. Participant 16 reported: "*In our student-led initiative, we worked with universities across different continents to build a collaborative platform for knowledge sharing about the SDGs. This helped ensure that the goal of sustainable development remained central to our academic work.*"

Global collaboration and solidarity among students are vital for driving structural transformation towards inclusive and sustainable development. Recent literature emphasises that student-led initiatives are uniquely positioned to influence global change, especially as students unite to tackle transnational issues such as climate change, social inequality, and poverty (Leal Filho et al., 2021). The data presented reflects that students actively collaborate across borders, contributing to advocacy, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building through international networks and exchanges, which foster cultural and academic diversity in problem-solving. Participant insights echo studies highlighting that students bring fresh perspectives to global issues and facilitate impactful social change through collective action (Chindasombatcharoen et al., 2022). For instance, initiatives that encourage cross-cultural partnerships—like the coalition to promote climate education in underserved communities—demonstrate how grassroots student action can extend the reach and inclusivity of sustainable development practices (Dajana & Shujat, 2021). Furthermore, students' participation in global health initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates their role in strengthening international solidarity to address crises (Taghizade et al., 2021). By championing the United Nations SDGs, student organisations contribute to broader efforts in poverty reduction, quality education, and environmental protection, underscoring the importance of youth engagement in global policymaking and structural transformation (Yadav, 2023).

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to enhance the roles students play in driving structural transformation toward inclusive and sustainable development:

**Institutional Support for Student Advocacy:** It is recommended that universities and academic institutions actively foster a supportive environment for student-led advocacy by allocating resources specifically for sustainability-related campaigns and discussions. This support might include funding, dedicated spaces for events, and partnerships with relevant NGOs and sustainability-focused organizations. Furthermore, institutions could organise social media and digital advocacy training to enable students to broaden their outreach and impact. Such support not only empowers students to raise awareness and mobilise others on sustainability issues but also strengthens the institution's commitment to fostering informed and proactive global citizens capable of advocating for structural change.

**Encouraging Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation:** To address the multifaceted nature of sustainability, universities could promote interdisciplinary research initiatives that bring students together from diverse fields—such as environmental science, engineering, social sciences, and business. Through collaborative projects and cross-departmental programs, students might develop innovative solutions to sustainability challenges like renewable energy, urban design, and resource management. Encouraging interdisciplinary research cultivates a holistic approach to problem solving, equipping students to understand and tackle complex global issues in ways that are both effective and sustainable.



**Integrating Policy Advocacy in Curricula:** Higher education institutions can enhance student engagement in structural transformation by incorporating modules on policy advocacy, civic engagement, and social justice into their curricula. Such courses could teach students how to navigate policy frameworks, effectively communicate with decision-makers, and advocate for sustainability-focused policy reforms. By instilling these skills, universities empower students to influence sustainable and inclusive policies both within the university and in wider societal settings, thereby fostering a generation of leaders equipped to drive meaningful change.

**Capacity-Building Programs for Leadership Development:** Universities and associated organisations should invest in capacity-building programs to strengthen students' leadership skills. Programs could include workshops on project management, community organisation, and strategic planning, along with mentorship opportunities where students learn directly from experienced leaders. Peer leadership programs can further promote collaborative skills essential for leading sustainability projects. By enhancing student leadership capacity, institutions help shape confident, capable individuals ready to initiate and lead inclusive, sustainability-driven initiatives within and beyond their communities.

**Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles on Campus:** Universities should lead by example by creating a campus environment that encourages sustainable practices. This could involve setting up recycling stations, composting facilities, and offering sustainable dining options. Organising events such as sustainability fairs, workshops, and challenges would engage students in adopting environmentally friendly practices and raise awareness of the importance of sustainable lifestyles. These initiatives make sustainable living accessible and habitual, positioning students as active participants in reducing their environmental footprint.

**Enhancing Inclusivity in Education:** Educational institutions can work with student organisations to build a truly inclusive learning environment, integrating diverse perspectives into course content and establishing peer mentorship programs to support under-represented students. Additionally, creating confidential reporting mechanisms for instances of discrimination or bias can ensure that all students feel safe and supported. By fostering inclusivity in this way, institutions create a supportive environment that values diverse voices, which is essential for cultivating student-driven change toward more inclusive and equitable societies.

**Facilitating Global Student Collaboration:** Universities should establish international exchange programs, online networking platforms, and global forums where students can collaborate across borders on issues of sustainability and inclusivity. Such initiatives enable students to share insights, resources, and innovations while learning about different approaches to sustainability. These connections foster a sense of global solidarity, equipping students to take informed action on global challenges and reinforcing the shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable development worldwide.

## **Conclusion**

This study highlights the critical role that students play in driving structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development. By engaging in advocacy, conducting research, participating in policy advocacy, and developing leadership capacities, students are instrumental in promoting awareness and action on pressing global challenges. Their commitment to sustainable consumption, inclusive educational environments, and global

solidarity underscores their potential to be powerful agents of change. With institutional support, access to resources, and global platforms for collaboration, students can further amplify their impact, helping to build a world that is more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Embracing these roles not only contributes to achieving the SDGs but also ensures that future leaders are equipped to address complex social, economic, and environmental challenges.

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# LEARNERS' INDISCIPLINE: CONSTRUCTING MODEL OF SOCIAL CONTROL AMONG PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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*Abstract: This study was conducted in Johannesburg secondary schools and focused on misconducts of students and management approach mitigating misconducts. This study is an extension of ongoing literature covering school discipline and enforcement moral conduct. The problem of learner's misconducts has assumed panic mode globally and there is now scholarly attention to mitigate the phenomenon. The study is hinged on Skinner's Operant Condition also known as Reinforcement Theory. Survey qualitative design was used and five schools in Johannesburg district of Central Gauteng were purposively selected using Principals as contact sample. Data were collected and analyzed qualitatively using in-depth interviews and thematic content analysis. Thematic Constructs were classified. On incidents of misconducts, it was evident that Johannesburg schools were deeply affected by learners' misconducts, occurrence was uniformed in the five schools and offenders were both male and females. Misconducts were perpetrated as collective sub group or gangs which strongly reinforced intention among offenders. Construct of management or principal's approach showed that the schools had structured discipline system which endured as preventive or punitive method. Despite the rigid structure, learner's misconducts were rampant and defiled management approach in Johannesburg schools. Principals attested to surging incidents of misconducts despite instrument of check and balance. Misconducts of learners in Johannesburg schools were mainly drug ingestions, violence, vandalism, absenteeism and bullying. School Offenders perpetrated misconducts when they operated as cluster group or gangs. Although cases of lone offenders were reported in the schools, sub group offenders were more severe and engaged brutal offending behaviors. There was consensus showing that learners' misconducts were rampant and brutal when it occurred as sub group offenders. Members of sub groups also gained status identity as hard guy, bad boy and scorpion. This is a dangerous trend in Johannesburg schools like similar case in global society. The study recommended that severe shaming and stigmatization method which extend label beyond school environment should be adopted to block opportunities for misconducts in Johannesburg schools as may be the case for others.*

*Keywords: Negative reinforcement, behavioral consequence, misconducts, adolescents' pupils, stigmatization*

## **Introduction**

Transition to school is a continuous socialization process which every adolescent pass in the stage of life. The post primary education is preparatory to higher tertiary education which not only engage formal curriculum in pedagogical learning, but also informal curriculum (Aslami, 2013). Formal curriculum dictates learning according to written rules, regulation and components of structured learning which lean towards test, examination and assessment. There is intense strictness and rigidity associated with formal learning. This describes intentional academic rigors and expectations which schools impose to nurture learners and achieve best outcome possible. Similarly, informal curriculum dictates moral discipline and expectations which form part of learning, although such morals are not rigid, or formally structured. Overall, there is learning discipline which exists as property of

schools and it is universal expectation which students are required to comply and internalize as a way of school life. Learning discipline frowns at disposition that undermines school rules which translate to success. The background knowledge is that rules are sacrosanct, well thought out and layout instructions unambiguous and clearly conceived by students. School offers every opportunity for learners to inculcate value of success and meritocracy which endure and translate to competitive success in the ever-expanding space of global competition. Significantly, secondary education provides direction and principled behavior which help smooth transition to tertiary education. This implies that abnormal behavioral disposition in secondary school poses major threat to meritocratic value and inculcation of moral behavior.

Indiscipline is undesirable and expression of gross moral deficit when it is emplaced among young adolescents in secondary schools. It is notable to state that South Africa is faced with many misdemeanors and crimes of different types ranging from violent crime to nonviolent subtle crimes which threaten social tranquility of the society (Atieno, 2014). Unfortunately, misdemeanors are common place in secondary schools and this is inseparable evidence in Johannesburg secondary schools (Bayaga & Jaysveree, 2011; Bechuke & Debeila, 2012). Students display non confirming behavior, disobey school rules, engage in hooliganism, sexual harassment, rape, violent attack against unsuspecting students and unruly behaviors in schools (Black, 2002). It is known evidence that secondary school students now engage cultism and secret society membership (Bray, 2005). The rate of indiscipline among students in secondary has reached new high and estimated at two to five ratio in every case, which mean for every five counts of students in Johannesburg secondary school, there are two cases of students involved in indiscipline (Du Plessis, 2015). Scholars are prominently concerned about rampant misdemeanors in secondary schools, cases of teenage pregnancy on the rise, school dropouts, amoral relationship between male teacher and female students reported cases and several unwholesome behaviors have triggered both national and global partnership in South Africa and international partners towards drawing sustainable agenda for change and enforcing discipline (Grobler, 2019). Interestingly, this study is built on ongoing agenda for change and global partnership which draw attention to enforcing discipline and building management approach to secondary education and pupils therein.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Studies have shown that there is continuous falling moral standard in secondary schools due to globalization consequences (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015). School environment is multi-dimensional in terms of actors and gladiators that prong outlook of secondary schools. Ideally, school pupils are ringed into normative expectations of learning which stand taller and impose restraining behavior for every pupil. The gladiators are rules makers and enforcers of the rule which consist of government, school management and teachers (Idu & Olugbade, 2011). These are actors laden with instrumental control and enforcers which are external to students and social control of behavior (Jinot, 2018). Teachers are next to God in rule obedience and conformity, due to fact that there is formal relationship which imposes enormous fear in the sight of students and unbridled tendency to obey school rules (Kourkoutas & Wolhuter, 2013). However, globalization of culture introduced hybrid school life which neutralize the once rigid structure especially the international submit that recognize rights and obligation of actors in school environment (Le Roux &

Kemp, 2015). There is now shift towards rights and obligations of teachers, students and school management and promotion of equality and equity to protect every actor in school environment (United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2019). Unfortunately, law of equity or right obligation is misinterpreted and the plural actors fall apart in conspicuous manifestation of behavioral disposition inimical to school rules and moral standards. Students exhibit sense of freedom and engagement in anti-school rules, gangs, cults, misdemeanors, violence attracts against school mate, teachers, absenteeism and dispositions strange to moral compass of schools.

Scholars are increasingly concerned about the rampage of school behavior and global consequences. Literature of school management recognized the significant role of school managers especially the place of teachers enforcing school rules (Magidi, Schenk & Erasmus, 2016). Studies in Chicago identified exacerbating moral standard in American schools, gun run and mass killing by American adolescent's gun handlers and dilapidating moral standards which attenuate public confidence in school handlers (Masitsa, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Mestry and Khumalo's (2012) Mutemeri & Gudyanga's, (2008) study, there is worsening moral standard in Zimbabwe schools due to amoral behaviors, cultism in secondary schools, teenage pregnancy and sexual relationship between teacher and female pupils in secondary school. Nigerian scholars have shown similar cases of moral decadents in violent behavior of secondary school pupils, cultism, gang rape, blackmail of teachers, internet frauds and ritual incidents (Oloyede & Adesina, 2013). Several other scholars have offered evidences which proved young adolescents secondary school students a moral burden in global society and serious consequences to quality education and youth population (Russo, Oosthuizen, & Wolhuter, 2014; Quick, 2013). This study is an extension of ongoing literature which relied on evidence from Johannesburg secondary schools. The study is triggered by increasing reported cases of misdemeanors in secondary schools and the researcher's intention to build useful model which contribute to knowledge in the ongoing literature.

### *Study Objective*

Against the backdrop of the preceding discourse, the study main goal is to examine outlook of misdemeanors in secondary schools especially providing evidence from Johannesburg secondary schools. However, the specific objectives are to:

Identify moral decadents exhibited among students in Johannesburg secondary schools.

Explore school management approach adopted to mitigate learner indiscipline in Johannesburg secondary schools.

### *Scope of the Study*

This study covers spectrum of school rules and pupils in secondary school. The study mainly focused on pupils' disposition in learning and character which deliberately violate school rules. This is treated as indiscipline and response by school management.

### **Literature Review**

Literature review in this study is classified into conceptual literature and theoretical literature. In the case of the former, the researcher reviewed concepts and conceptual framework which offer insights into pupils' indiscipline and forms in secondary schools

especially with reference Johannesburg schools. The latter covers theoretical framework which adopted Skinner's Behavioral Reinforcement Theory (BRT).

#### *Learner indiscipline*

Formal education is aimed at shaping desirable behavior among learners and phasing out unwanted ones. However, this function of "education has not been fully attained as students' behavior in school calls for great concern" (Yahaya, Ramli, Hashim, Ibrahim, Rahman & Yahaya, 2009). Student indiscipline around the world has become a threat that gives educational stakeholders great cause for concern. Any behavior contrary to the various definitions of discipline can be regarded as indiscipline. More specifically, behavior that makes learners and teachers feel unsafe, unsecure, disrespected and disrupts the teaching and learning process can be regarded as indiscipline (Mugaba & Maposa, 2013). Sekiwu and Botha (2013) argue that "indiscipline is an indication that there is a value vacuum in school and an indication of a fragile school process is bound to water down education". Zubaida (2009) defines indiscipline as the loss or lack of self-control and self-regulation. "Indiscipline is any act that deviates from the acceptable societal norms and values" (Ngwokabuenu, 2015). Edem (1982) defines indiscipline as the violation of school rules and regulations which can disrupt the smooth running of the school. Maphosa and Mammen (2011) also state that learners in the United Kingdom exhibit acts of indiscipline such as being noisy, rowdy, disrespectful to educators, bullying others, being involved in fights and drug usage. Okoson (2010) also points out that learners in Nigeria engage in acts of indiscipline such as "truancy, hooliganism, disrespect for school authority, cheating in examinations and drunkenness".

In South Africa, learner indiscipline includes various misdemeanors. Van Wyk (2001) states that learner indiscipline in South African schools range from late- coming, truancy, noisiness, physical abuse, violence, theft, threats, vandalism, gangsterism and sexual abuse. The learner discipline and school management framework categories learner indiscipline into four levels.

Level 1 misdemeanors include the following:

"Copying of homework, late arrival for class, talking (in class, lines, assemblies and during announcements), not following reasonable instructions, general untidiness, vandalism (including littering), misuse and unauthorized use of school equipment (fire extinguishers, taps, alarm system), leaving the school/classroom without permission, use of humiliating and suggestive language and signs, disrespectful actions towards educators, deliberate disruption of class, eating in class, playing with cell phones, absence without leave/truancy, inciting fighting, bullying behavior and misconduct on busses to and from school" (Goliath et al., 2007:4).

Level 2 misdemeanors include the following:

Repeated Level 1 misdemeanors, "disruption of class (repeated), racist, sexist and discriminatory comments and behavior, possession and distribution of pornographic, racist, sexist material; or viewing of and/or downloading of such on any computer or cell phone at school, fraud (falsification of documents, cheating in examinations), vandalism: (graffiti, writing on desks, breaking of windows), fighting and causing injuries, gambling, smoking cigarettes and possession of cigarettes, falsification of document with less serious consequences, serious disruption of class and refusal to submit to corrective measures" (Goliath et al., 2007:5).

Level 3 misdemeanors include the following:



Repeated level 2 misdemeanors, “repeated serious misconduct, under the influence of alcohol and drugs, theft of a serious nature/burglary, serious vandalism, sexual abuse (harassment of peer learners), sexual misconduct, physical assault of peer learners (fighting, throwing of objects, etc.), sexual misconduct in which learners are the perpetrators, threatening of peer learners or educators, involvement in gang-related activities, disruption of school programme through rebellion and demonstrating without permission, trespassing on school grounds while suspension is still in effect and making bomb threats” (Goliath et al., 2007:6).

Level 4 misdemeanors include the following:

Repeated Level 3 misdemeanors, “refusal to attend development-orientated programmes, dangerous weapons: bringing weapons onto school grounds, threatening people with weapon, deliberate assault of person with weapon, possession of drugs on school grounds, dealing in drugs on school grounds, serious assault, learner is found guilty in crime court (immediate expulsion), sexual assault (rape)” (Goliath et al., 2007:7).

### **Forms of learner indiscipline**

Different forms of indiscipline can be found in secondary schools which hamper the teaching and learning process. Forms of indiscipline include absenteeism, bullying, stealing, sexual misconduct, substance abuse and vandalism.

#### *Absenteeism*

Absenteeism, in the context of learners being missing from school without a valid reason (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010), may be regarded as a form of indiscipline. A report by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) defines absenteeism “as a situation where a learner is absent from school for an entire day without a valid reason” (CASE, 2007:8). Absenteeism affects the academic progress of the learner, affects the in-class planning of the teachers and demotivates both teachers and learners (Thornton, Darmody & McCoy, 2013). Ferrell, Nance, Torres and Torres (2014:205) argue that “absenteeism has a significant relationship with certain dangerous behaviors such as substance and alcohol abuse, violence, sexual misconduct and physical abuse”. Many reasons can be attributed to the causes of absenteeism in South African schools, which are, poverty, transportation, illness, lack of parental involvement, HIV/AIDS and food insecurity (CASE, 2007:8).

#### *Bullying*

Bullying in school is an international problem, with a rate ranging from 9% to 54% occurrence in schools in diverse countries (Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja & Ruan, 2004). Bullying is “described as behavior which firstly, is repetitive – it takes place more than once and secondly, there is a power imbalance such that it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves” (Smith, 2016). Similarly, Olweus (1994) defines bullying “as exposure to the negative actions of one or more persons repeatedly and over time”. The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2012) asserts that bullying involves one or more people singling out and deliberately and repeatedly hurting and harming one another physically and mentally.

Bullying has three major components. Firstly, “it involves targeting a particular person or group repeatedly over a period”. Secondly, “it involves the imbalance of power. Bullies are more powerful than the person or people being bullied. This power may come from differences in age, physical strength, status and popularity, amongst other sources”.

Finally, “the goal is to harm the target by hurting them physically or mentally” (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2012:4). Bullying is either direct or indirect. Direct bullying includes “hitting, kicking, threatening and extortion while indirect includes spreading rumors, social exclusion and cyber bullying” (Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2000:989). Bullying behavior is influenced by the actions and values of peer groups, schools, families, communities and societies.

#### *Stealing*

McPhail (2008) defines stealing as a covert activity that is not directly observed. Research has shown that stealing is a behavioral problem in schools (Ndambuki, Kikechi, Ngome & Munialo, 2016). Idu and Olugbade (2011:279) identify “various forms of antisocial behaviors among secondary school students in Nigeria inclusive of stealing problems, which contradict African cultural values and morality”. Bayaga and Jaysveree (2011:729) in their study, also established that “stealing is highly significant, and a common offence committed among learners” in secondary schools. A survey of behavior among delinquents established that stealing is a typical delinquent behavior among Kenyan secondary school students in the study (Nyabongi, 2012). Stealing in secondary schools appears to be a common and continuous problem in societies.

#### *Sexual misconduct*

The South African government (2018) states that many of its schools have become a violent and unsafe environment for teaching and learning, especially for a girl-child. A Human Rights Watch study on sexual violence within South African schools, similarly “indicated that female learners were often the victims of sexual violence, abuse, rape, harassment and assault by teachers and male learners” (George, 2001). Smit and Du Plessis (2011) argue that schools are no longer the ivory towers of the past and that they have become a breeding ground for sexual misconduct and discrimination of female learners. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) found in their study that sexual misconduct and harassment of female learners takes place in South African schools.

#### *Alcohol and drug abuse*

Drug abuse in South Africa is a serious issue, with drug usage reported as being twice that of the world norm (Takalani & Oni, 2016). Drug abuse in South African society is now reflected in its schools. Owo (2011:2) argues that the “use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs among South African youths and especially among high school learners have called for serious concern among educators and educational administrators”. Studies have also shown that drug abuse amongst high school learners in various parts of the country is on the increase (Onya & Flisher, 2008). Manu and Maluleke (2017) point out that illicit drugs and other substances are easily available and cheap in South Africa to the extent that learners can afford it, contributing to the increase in drug usage by learners. Substance abuse contributes to the high rate of school dropouts, crime and violence in secondary school. A national school-based violence report (Owo, 2011) stated that the high level of alcohol consumption and drug abuse in secondary school contributes to the increase in violence and indiscipline in schools and that 34.5% of learners come to school either high on alcohol or drugs. Owo (2011) highlights that media reports point to “learners drinking and selling drugs even during school hours, teachers sharing alcohol containing beverages and drugs with their students and several incidents of rapes and vandalism following binges of alcohol and drugs”.

#### *Vandalism*

School vandalism is not a new phenomenon, neither is it limited to South African schools (De Wet, 2004:6). Studies have shown that schools in Britain, the USA, Netherlands, France and Canada also experience school vandalism (Black, 2002). Keller (2011) states that In Australia, \$6.3 million was spent in 2010 alone in the state of South Australia, to repair vandalized property. “Vandalism causes a feeling of powerlessness, uncertainty and fear among educators and learners, and this necessarily leads to the destruction of the basis of a learning community” (De Wet, 2004:206). Vandalism can cause “teaching and learning to collapse as school programmes must often be interrupted to repair vandalized structures” (De Wet, 2004:206; Perry, 2001:1).

#### *Gangsterism*

Gangsterism can best be described as an organization of three or more individuals who form an alliance for a common purpose which they identify with and claim territory in the community and engage individually or collectively in violence and other criminal activities (Egley, Howell & Major, 2006). Magidi, Schenk and Erasmus (2016) argue that South African communities are experiencing an increase in gang-related crime and illegal activities.

#### *Violence*

Prinsloo and Nesor (2007:47) define school violence “as an intentional physical or non-physical (verbal) condition or act resulting in physical or non-physical pain being inflicted on the recipient of that act while the recipient is under the school’s supervision”. Crawage (2005:12) describes school violence as “the exercise of power over others in school related settings by some individual, agency, or social process”. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) state that there is increased violence in South African schools which have “become arenas for violence, not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils, interschool rivalries, and gang conflict”. Reports in the media in recent times show how serious violence in Gauteng secondary schools has become and this has made our schools unsafe for teaching and learning (Grobler, 2019).

#### *Effects of learners’ indiscipline in schools*

The effects of learner indiscipline in secondary schools can be categorized into two main areas, namely, effects on education and work and effects on social behavior (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015:1164). Learner indiscipline has contributed to the problem of insecurity in schools and poor performance faced in the education sector in the country and the world in general (Hill & Hill, 1994:6; Joubert et al, 2004:79). Balt (2008:8) argues that stress and low levels of morale among school staff can be attributed to learner indiscipline, especially in relation to school violence. Wolhuter and Van Staden (2008:390) found that 85% percent of educators in their study reported that learner discipline problems cost them time, promoted job dissatisfaction and contributed to health problems. Learner indiscipline reduces quality time meant for teaching (Mtsweni, 2008:4). Ncontsa and Shumba (2013:1) posit that educators spend quality time meant for teaching and learning, focusing on addressing issues associated with indiscipline and violence in schools. Poor discipline in schools is one of the primary reasons why new teachers leave the profession and one of the reasons for high teacher attrition (Aslami, 2013:73).

### **Reinforcement Factors of learners' indiscipline**

Scholars have carried out extensive research on the factors contributing or reinforcing learners' indiscipline in secondary schools. These factors can be classified into in-school factors and out-of-school factors.

#### *In-school factors*

Learner indiscipline results from deficiencies within the school and from how educators interact with learners. These factors might include learners' attitudes, educators' attitudes and peer pressure. Learners' attitudes affect their behavior. The advent of democracy, which places much emphasis on the rights and freedom of the individual, as well as the ban on corporal punishment, contributes to learners' poor behavior. Strauss (2006:20) argues that "learners often display an awareness of their rights and a readiness to challenge adults, but are contrastingly unaware of their responsibilities". Learners between the age of 11 and 17 years, in the pre-adolescent and adolescent phases, may experience an "identity crisis" resulting in poor behavior (Nealis, 2014). Jinot (2018) argues that secondary school learners are also more likely to engage in drug dealing and sexual activities out of curiosity and immaturity.

Educators' attitudes may contribute to learner indiscipline. Educators can sometimes be the cause of learner indiscipline due to their attitude or by being unprepared for class (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011). Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014) argue that teachers who are not confident and are ill-prepared for their classes, cannot deliver interesting lessons. Moreover, if they cannot stimulate the interest of the learners in the class, the chances of misbehavior occurring in the class are higher. Felix (2011) is of the view that the relationship between the educator and learners has a strong influence on the learners' behavior. Van Wyk (2006:46) states "that some teachers lack the competency to reflect on their emotions and control their impulses and consequently react to the provocation in manners that are inconsistent with their professional identity". Jinot (2018:41) found that educators do not model socially acceptable behavior to the learners they lead. Educators who are frequently absent from school also contribute to learner indiscipline (Donga, 1998:63). Mutemeri and Gudyana (2008) posit, that learners misbehave because educators lack the qualities needed to manage discipline in the classroom.

Peer relationships are crucial among learners in school and may have a positive or negative influence on learners' behavior. Mbatha (2008) argues that peer pressure influences learners' behavior and contributes to indiscipline in schools. Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar (2000) define peer pressure as a subjective feeling of being pushed, urged, ordered by others to do something, only because of the expectations of other people. Peer pressure contributes to the causes of indiscipline in South African schools.

#### *Out-of-school factors*

Out-of-school factors are those factors external to the school that contribute to learner indiscipline such as family matters, domestic violence and socio-economic contexts.

The family is the first institution that shapes the behavior of the learner, before school plays a significant role in shaping the behavior of the learner (Noun, 2015). Oloyede and Adesina (2013) argues that the root cause of learner indiscipline and misbehavior can be traced to the home. Atieno (2014) states that the home environment plays a huge role in influencing learner behavior. Singh and Steyn (2013:3) found that learners' family background, such as broken homes and poor parenting, contribute to the cause of learner indiscipline and violence in schools. The findings of their research indicate that most learners exhibiting

disruptive behavior are from a broken home or are living with a single parent (Singh & Steyn, 2013). Poor parenting contributes to disruptive anti-social behavior exhibited by learners in schools. Singh and Steyn (2013:3) found in their research, that parents who cannot “instill proper discipline in their children contribute to the disruptive behavior” exhibited by learners in schools. Felix (2011:77) argues that “single parents are likely to raise children with high emotional, psychological and behavioral problems”. Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014:85) also state that learners from homes where parents are always busy or spend less time at home, often turn to behaving in unacceptable ways.

Domestic violence affects children socially, emotionally, mentally and behaviorally (Szyndrowski, 2005:10). Spillane-Grieco (2000:427) asserts that any child who has experienced domestic violence at home as a victim or witness is more likely to have negative feelings in the home and end up being aggressive or behaving in an unacceptable manner. Donga (1998:20) argues that children from families where parents use violence as a means of discipline, tend to be violent at school. This factor makes it challenging to provide a safe milieu for teaching and learning to take place. Felix (2011:76) states that children from disorganized and chaotic family lives can be aggressive and exhibit destructive behavior.

Social economic factors affect learner behavior in school. Poverty has been acknowledged as another factor that contributes to the causes of anti-social behavior among learners in secondary schools (Singh & Steyn, 2013:3). Furthermore, “due to high rates of HIV and AIDS in South African society, many children are growing up and living without biological parents” and adult guidance, so they lack role models and tend to behave in an unacceptable manner (Le Roux-Kemp, 2015:5). Learners from child-headed homes, as alluded to before, tend toward being more rebellious and non-compliant at school.

### **Management of learner discipline in schools**

#### *The code of conduct*

“Section 8 of the South African Schools Act of 1996 bestows upon the SGBs the function to adopt a code of conduct for the enforcement and effective management of learner discipline in schools” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012:97). A code of conduct is a “form of subordinate legislation that reflects the democratic principles of human dignity, equality and freedom as required by the South African Constitution” (1996a). The code of conduct comprises rules and regulations regarding learner conduct and the expected behavior from learners in a school and it states the disciplinary procedures to follow concerning misbehaviors by learners. The code of conduct “contains the disciplinary rules for learners and is therefore crucial to school discipline” (Bray, 2005:133). Rossouw (2007:82) points out that a code of conduct is a “consensus document, and the drafting process should involve the parents, learners, educators and non-educators of the school”.

The school code of conduct is important in creating a safe school environment. The code of conduct aims at developing a self-disciplined learner, protecting the rights of all learners and maintaining a safe school environment. It further helps learners to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Leefon, Jacobs, Le Roux & De Wet, 2013:5). Nthebe (2006:20) states that the code of conduct is meant to promote the respect of human dignity as enshrined by the South African constitution. The “effectiveness of the code of conduct lies in its enforcement” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012:98). The SGB relinquishes the daily application of the code of conduct to the SMT and educators. The code of conduct

ought to contain the proper “disciplinary processes to be followed when learners violate the code of conduct” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012:99).

*Responsibility of the school principal*

Mestry (2017:257) states that a “school principal’s day is usually filled with diverse activities of administration and management – scheduling, reporting, handling relations with parents and the broader community, dealing with unexpected multiple learner and teacher crises, and extraordinary situations”. Chaplain (2003:104) similarly, states that the principal is “charged with planning, including determining the direction of the school, as well as organizing the day-to-day running of the school”. The primary responsibility of the school principal in managing learner discipline is to “ensure that the code of conduct is duly communicated to all educators, parents and learners and ensure that policy regarding disciplinary measures is implemented accordingly” (Goliath et al., 2007:4). The principal is responsible for the “application of discipline and the creation of a school culture of positive discipline”. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that learner behavior and learner discipline issues are discussed frequently and to “ensure that record is kept of learner misbehavior” (Goliath et al, 2007:4).

*Responsibility of the educator*

Educators are required to “prepare well for classes so that lessons can run smoothly. Educators are expected to create a learner-centered classroom where learners can express and discuss in a focused and orderly manner” (Goliath et al, 2007:4). Educators are expected to “punish only in accordance with the school’s code of conduct for learners and the classroom code of conduct”. Educators are expected to seek support from SMTs, rather than allow disciplinary problems to develop.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The literature review in the preceding section overviewed scholarly attention covering subject matter of learners’ indiscipline in school especially the young adolescents’ students. Literature texts recognize that young adolescents’ students deployed mischiefs and behavioral disposition to undermine school rules, impose sub culture value inimical to learning environment. It is suitable to admit that indiscipline is a reinforced behavior and collective disposition by individuals that engage the acts. Against the backdrop of foregoing, this study relies on Frederick Skinner Reinforcement Theory of Behavior (RTB). The central assumption of RTB is that every behavioral disposition has consequential reward similar to operant condition (Atkin at al. 2002; BBrusnaha & Gatti, 2008). In the conditioning behavior, there is consequence for every action which either reinforces continuous performance or discontinue the behavior. Skinner identified four level reinforcement at positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment and extinction. Using the positive reinforcement, it is held that every positive behavior, in this case obedience to school rules is reward positively, recognized and appreciate which reinforce intention to continue the behavior. Negative reinforcement occurs when stressors which constrained positive behavior are removed, terminated or redundant (Sugai & Horner, 2002). In this case, absenteeism is stressor which constrain reward for diligence and morality highly valued by school. Deliberate intention for punctuality makes redundant the stressor, absenteeism. The consequence of punctuality is reward for moral compass, good student and prize. But absenteeism must be terminated from behavior to reinforce the reward. Punishment occurs when behavior such as absenteeism is rewarded by suspension

from school, termination of studentship or expulsion for periods of time. Punishment reinforces intention to transform behavior from negative to positive outlook especially when doer of the behavior is remorseful. Extinction occurs when individual terminates behavior consequent upon lack of compensation, recognition and reward. In this case, a punctual student terminates punctuality when there is obvious reason or evidence which discriminates against them or favor absentees.

The fundamental expectation of Skinner's model is to establish value system which reinforces positive behavior through compensation, reward and public recognition. The assumption is that when individual receives commendation for doing well in society especially meritocracy, morally upright, contribution to knowledge in science and technology, academic merits, and endeavors which contribute to societal survival, it reinforces intention to retain such behavior and also improve on it. Similarly, moral compass in South African schools depends on the reinforcement for positive behavior which retain intention to continue the behavior. Unfortunately, indiscipline among learners in South African school is multidimensional and there are sizeable students in the vicious cycle of violent behavior, drug application, sexual misconduct, vandalism, gang-stars, stealing and absenteeism (). Although disposition of learners' indiscipline is inimical to school environment and school managers like the principals are caught in the web of push factor to mitigate the social problems, it is not certain whether such acts are intentional or reinforced by school environment. This study is saddled to explore main forms of indiscipline and factors which reinforced the act among Johannesburg secondary school students.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted survey qualitative design. The design was achieved in phases. In the first phase of the survey, the researcher identified secondary schools which had recurrent cases of learners' indiscipline especially drawing from national statistics. This phase was rigorously identified to ensure unbiased selection and valid verification of schools which fitted the study definition. Central Gauteng district in Johannesburg had the highest incident of learners' indiscipline and was selected purposive. The second phase identified schools which had principals who had minimum 10 years appointment as principal head of schools. Only five schools met the criterion definition and were selected. Besides, the school also had rampant cases learners' indiscipline. The third phase survey marked the schools as data collection area and identified study materials. Identification label defined inclusion criteria for study materials to include gender inclusiveness, principal status and physical fitness. Five principals from different secondary schools in Central Gauteng were selected for the study. A district official who worked as a cluster leader was approached to assist with the initial screening for suitable participants for this study.

**Table 1: Biographical details of the sample**

Participant	Gender	Years in position	Age range
One	Female	Six years	55 - 60
Two	Female	10 years	55 - 60
Three	Male	12 years	50 - 55
Four	Male	8 years	45 - 50
Five	Male	30 years	- 60

Method of data collection and analysis were qualitative. At the level of data collection, texts of conversation, school records and profiles of indiscipline learners formed components of data collection. Texts were generated through interview sessions which the research conducted with school principals. Each session of interview was flexible, broken into intermittent interaction and records of voice in electronic gadget. Interview was unstructured and components which related to forms of learner indiscipline and management approach formed main discussion. Instrument of data collection was mixed semi structured and unstructured in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed qualitatively. Texts from conversation were transcribed, labeled and coded to reflect themes. Structure of themes identified learner's indiscipline, gender differences, demographic variation, variance of indiscipline by school, school rules management approach to indiscipline and reinforcement attitude. Thematic content analysis was adopted as tool of data interpretation and discussion. Sampling method of the study was purposive having listed out criteria of study target. This study defined inclusion criteria for selection of sample which included schools with prime record of learners' indiscipline, school principals who had record of status position 10 years and above and schools which offer unhindered access. Ethical consideration of study was treated sacrosanct having reckoned with need for consent form and anonymity of participants. The researcher got consent approval form prior to collection of data treatment. Every participant was informed about the objective of the study and identity was kept confidential. Data collected for this study were only useful for the purpose for which the study intended and nothing more.

### **Results and discussion**

This section classifies discussion on learners' indiscipline and approach adopted by school management to mitigate the problem. There are thematic constructs developed to explain the study objectives. The constructs emerged from texts of interviews. Participant is labeled 'L' and each construct is thematically and contently analyzed.

#### **Section A**

##### **State of indiscipline in secondary schools**

The first theme that emerged from the data is the 'poor state of discipline in secondary schools. A list of sub-themes was identified.

##### *Poor discipline in schools*

Three of the five participants agreed that the current learner discipline in secondary schools was poor. Participant 2 stated: currently learners' behavior in the type of school that we have is quite hectic. To be honest we, and I, blame it on social situations from home and then learners are just misbehaving on a daily basis and I think that learners interest level at our school is quite low and that leads basically to learners misbehaving. You find learners that are not interested in school at all, you find learners that don't want to attend class. They to come to school but they don't want to attend class. You find learners that are on substance abuse and you find learners that are physically abusing other learners. Basically, in a nut shell, my experience (P2 149-156). In the case of participant 3, she stated: indiscipline is major problem to contend with. It's a challenge, discipline is a challenge. It cuts across all levels in the school. It is recurrent issue in the school when students no longer value school rules, form gangs, engage in anti-school norm and yet fill not remorseful for act of indiscipline. We have cases of serial offenders; students define which rule to obey in school (P3 287). Participant 4 concurred with participants 2 and 3 that



discipline was poor and elaborated that: you know what, from what we hear and what we see, it is very bad. Actually, it is getting out of hand, even now, I think the government must do something. Indiscipline is alarming among students. There is coordinated act among students to disobey school rules. Students do not act lonely to disobey school rules. Their motivation to disobey school when students act collectively (P4 495-496). Participant 4 further mentioned that: It is very, very bad. Especially where there are boys and girls, the discipline just went out of the window. That is what we feel as teachers when we talk to other teachers and what we see (P4 496-499). Although all participants recognized that indiscipline is universal in schools, participant 5 identified significant issue in the text. It is quite worrisome that female and male gender engage in misconducts. Females exhibited indiscipline when they act as homogeneous gender. Males also act as homogeneous gender in disposition to misconducts (P5 505-508)

It is evident from the principals that discipline in schools is out of control and this confirms existing studies in the literature (Owo, 2011; Quick, 2013). Maphosa (2011) found that the occurrence of disruptive behavior in South African schools is increasingly becoming a serious challenge for school stakeholders. Unfortunately, more than a decade of Mahosa's study, misconducts in schools have churned out multiple dimensions.

#### *Deterioration of discipline*

It emerged from the texts that learner discipline in secondary schools has deteriorated over the years especially the past decade. Participant 1 stated in the interview: it isn't as good as it used to be, but it's still not a hopeless situation. It is difficult to make generalizations because in some schools it is good, some schools it is excellent, some schools there are difficulties and then some schools it's just bad all around, so all in all, I think it has deteriorated over the last few years (L 4-7). Participant 2 concurred with participant 1, when he stated: well, I have been teaching for almost 30 years and then what I have realized is that it has changed in the past 30 years. School rules no longer deter offenders. May be since they act in group, offenders now have status to pride as hard guys (P2 138-149). Participant 5 also affirmed that learner discipline has worsened: over the years it has been deteriorating in general in the discipline because usually discipline starts at home and from my experience discipline at home is not what it used to be a few years ago (P5 663-665). Du Plessis (2015) argues that discipline problems in South African schools and the world is getting worse and even out of hand. The discipline process currently in use at schools does not seem to be effective in managing learner behavior. Using the assertive discipline framework of Canter and Canter (1979) cited in Canter (1989), the use of a discipline plan with five consequences for misbehaviors, as well as rewards for good behavior, was proposed. Brinkerhoff (2019) states that the assertive discipline model helps students to know the acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a school. But there is concern that students have exploited the weak disposition global culture and law which protect rights and obligations of citizens, collective movement against violation of human rights and disposition which whittle down moral law.

#### *Forms of misconducts in South African schools*

The thematic construct of misconducts emerged in the texts and there was exposition of the theme. Participant 3 was emphatic on the issue of misconducts when he said: honestly, our students engaged misconduct act which undermined school morals. We have cases of

stealing. School properties are stolen by students. Burglary cases are committed students, vandalism is common. It is worrisome that our students don't fear rules and consequence of their behavior (P3 312-315)

A similar scenario was presented by P2: indiscipline is on increase in our school despite punishment meter to offenders. We have cases of teenage pregnancy where male students impregnate female students. Student also engages in homosexual. This is worrisome in our school. We have strict punishment for offenders, but cases of misconducts are on the rise (P2 271-273)

Summarizing the problem, misconducts in South African schools are classified into sub cultural offender and lone offender. Sub cultural consists of group of students who act as gang or gang-stars and acquire status for act of misconducts. Lone offender only consists of an individual either male or female in misconduct act. But the incident of sub group offenders was repeatedly emphasized in the study. This was the case in the study area.

### **Strategies in-use to manage discipline**

Strategies which principals use to manage learner discipline in secondary schools emerged from the data and these formed the sub-themes. These strategies are 'positive discipline and prevention', 'discipline structures in the school, 'stakeholder involvement' and 'the code of conduct as a tool to manage discipline'. Each sub-theme is discussed below.

#### *Positive discipline and prevention*

The data revealed that principals use positive discipline to manage learner discipline in secondary school. Participant 3 stated that: I think reinforcing and highlighting a lot of what is good that they do. This is acceptable behavior, that is like what we value in you and me, emphasize our school values (L 384-386). Another example of positive discipline where principals show love and care and promote respect, is expressed by participant 1 as follows: Making sure that we show true interest in the welfare of our learners. If learners are happy, happy learners don't act up. So, if teachers are prepared to teach and plan interesting lessons, and the activities are centered around the learners enjoying what they are being taught, you generally don't have problems in the class. If you create an atmosphere in the school where learners are respected, they are not treated like rubbish or being abused, verbally abused etc. then your learners are generally happier. And, like I said, happy learners don't display negative behavior (L 73-79). Participant 3 further stressed the importance of speaking respectfully to learners with a view to understanding there are consequences for their actions in the following quote: "Speaking to them with respect, letting them understand this is the punishment, because of your action this will be the consequence" (L 377-379). Participant 3 concurred with participant 1 that learners must feel that they are respected and valued. The participant explained: I don't think they are different from any other child, but I think how you manage them, how you speak to children they must have a sense that you value them, I don't like what you're doing but I will still respect you. So that sort of almost like of a philosophy we like to try and inculcate in our school (L 424-427).

Principals use preventive measures such as being visible as a means to manage discipline. Participant 5 explained: I believe in visible management and that is how I manage my school, visible management you pick a problem very easily, prevent problem, you are proactive, and you know what is going on in you school (L 711-713).

Research has validated that punitive measures do not resolve issues of indiscipline and disruptive behavior exhibited by learners at school (National Association of School Psychologists, 2002). Therefore, Sonn (2002:25) argues that positive discipline is the best form of discipline that can address learner discipline as it focuses on positive aspects of behavior, reinforcing good behavior. The Canters' assertive discipline model (1979) posits that identifying and recognizing learners' good behavior and letting them know that you like it, reinforces the good behavior in them, Canter (1989:58) further stated that the consequences for misbehavior should not be punitive either psychologically or physically.

#### *Discipline structures in the school*

The data revealed that principals make use of different levels of management in managing learner discipline. Participant 1 stated: Well, in the first place we have a strong SMT team, who is prepared to step in there and take care of these problems. I have 2 deputies who are very good at managing problems, then we have a disciplinarian at our school, \*Mrs. Musa. If you observed behavior that justifies a parent being called in straight away, you take them to \*Mrs. Musa. She contacts the parent (L 62-66). Similarly, participant 4 explained that they make use of different levels of management to manage learner discipline. He commented: We have got levels of management like I told you, that actually, I am the last person. When everything else has failed, it will come to my desk. It starts in class – we got class teachers, we got grade heads, we got HODs and we've got a disciplinary committee. Then, if everything fails, unless it's something big where I must just go there immediately, that is how we manage. We escalate our disciplinary process depending on how big the issue is (L 558-563). Similarly, participant 5 asserted that they use different levels of management to manage learner discipline in secondary schools, when he stated that: "It is the responsibility of the school and the management of the school to enforce proper discipline, and also teach the discipline and respect as well" (L 667-668). Participant five further elaborated: We've got levels of management in the school. We've got the grade heads in the school where some problem learners are referred to the grade heads and they deal with the problems first. There are HODs. They also deal with the problems and it's only in the worst-case scenarios when these learners come to the Senior Management and the process of disciplinary hearings will continue (L 778-782). Participant 2 elaborated that schools use a disciplinary committee to manage learner discipline in school, when he explained: As a principal, we have a disciplinary committee which consists of parents who are on the governing body. And, what we do, is that when a learner misbehaves, we suspend the learner for five days. And then we call the parent in and we have a formal DC (disciplinary committee) hearing with the learner in front of the parent and punishment of punitive measures is determined by this DC (L 203-207). It emerged from the data that principals suspend learners in managing learners' discipline in secondary school. Participant 1 elaborated: If it comes to a point where a child is becoming a problem, or we observe behavior that is placing himself or the school at risk. We insist that a parent actually comes to school. It is non-negotiable. We go as far as suspending the learners until we've seen the parent, to force the issue of the parent coming to school (L 121-124). Serakwane (2007) found in her study that schools usually utilize a discipline hierarchy in managing learner discipline. Canter & Canter (1979) proposed a discipline hierarchy that lists all corrective actions and the order in which they should be followed (Charles, 2005:43).

## **Discussion**

There is abundant evidence to assert that indiscipline in Johannesburg schools is prominent and worrisome largely because offenders acted in group which reinforced the intention of the misconducts. Drawing from evidence of this study, it is asserted that sub cultural group strengthened predisposition to misconducts in schools. This is because there was preponderant for school offenders to perceive themselves as status group, hard boys or hard girls which must be seen as commanding attention. In the case of this study, offenders serially engaged in misconduct not because it was convenient to conceal the act, but there was motivation from peer group which propelled the intention. Skinner model of operant conditioning suitably assumes that the higher the consequence of behavior the better such behavior is likely to be repeated depending on the positive or negative consequence. Here, peer group misconduct offers some status disposition and label which offenders cherished among school mates. It was convenient to repeat misconducts when school mates hail criminal gangs and perceive the group as competitive to school rules. The consequence of misconducts behavior suited offenders that engaged it. Although the schools in the district where the study was conducted has structured discipline which enforced punishment and correction of learner misconducts, however the disposition of students to sub culture norms was emphatic and explicitly enforced. This was the case in which students hailed criminal gangs, were recruited into the gang, challenged the status quo of school rules and we're disgruntled through violent behavior, stealing of school property, bullying school mates and teachers and absenteeism. Unfortunately, consequence of misconducts was mixed of negative and positive outcome especially the latter was successful exploited to expand scope of misconducts in schools. Positive outcome was significant to offenders since this offers leverage of status identity.

## **Conclusion**

Misconducts in Johannesburg schools have remained consistent, exacerbated in frequency of occurrence and defiled school discipline structure established to deter the act. Principals in the five schools were disposed to strict structure which intentionally deterred misconducts. However, the overriding posture of criminal sub groups in schools whistled down effectiveness of management approach to mitigate misconducts. There was apparent emergence of gang-stars and cults among students which wielded enormous influence to expand scope of misconducts. Unfortunately, the consequence of misconducts behavior was neutralized by offenders when it was possible to recruit more mates in the gangs, expand the scope of misconducts and gain status. This scenario was explored and exploited by students in Johannesburg schools. This study however listed some action response which can be usefully adopted to mitigate the problem.

It is recommended that school rules in Johannesburg should be flexible to respond to sub group culture which exacerbated misconducts among students. The rules must be reconfigured to identify and quarantine criminal sub groups in schools.

The study recommended that response to criminal misconducts should provide mechanism which impose coercive consequence on behavior to block opportunity for repeated behavior. Coercion must measure consequences capable to deter misconducts.

The study also recommended shame action plan which stigmatize criminal misconducts beyond school environment. It was found that school rules in Johannesburg were no longer capable to deter severe misconduct and offenders neutralized the consequences of

misconducts. Blocking repeated behavior requires severe stigmatization and shaming which make it difficult to shake off the stigma.

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## GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND MONEY SUPPLY ROLES IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN AFRICA

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*Abstract: This study examines the roles of government spending and money supply on alleviating poverty in Africa. The study used 48 Sub-Saharan Africa countries from 2001 to 2017. The study employed one step and two-step system GMM and found that both the procedures have similar results. Different specifications were employed and the model selected was robust, with valid instruments and absence of autocorrelation at the second order. The study revealed that government spending and foreign direct investment have significant negative influence on reducing poverty while money supply has positive influence on the level of poverty in the region. The implication of the finding is that monetary policy tool of money supply has no strong influence in combating the menace of poverty. The study therefore recommends that emphasis should be placed on increasing more of government spending that would impact on the quality of life of the people in the region through multiplier effect, improving the financial system for effective monetary policy and attracting foreign direct inflows through enabling business environment in Africa.*

*Keywords: Fiscal Policy, Government spending, Money supply, monetary policy and Poverty.*

*JEL Classification: E62, H50, E51, E52, I32*

### Introduction

Poverty is seen as a multidimensional problem that include: social, political, and cultural issues, among others. Poverty has been a global problem and it affects different people in different continents, regions and countries in different ways and magnitude. Binuyo (2014) simply asserts that there is no country or region that is immune from poverty, however, the magnitude varies from region to region and country to country. Africa is a resource endowed region. However, most of the Africans are poor (Edrees, Azali, Hassan & Nor, 2015). Poverty in Africa is therefore a serious challenge facing the region or continent.



This include lack of human needs such as: food, access to health care, access to education, safe drinking water and electricity. Statistics have shown that about 76% of the poorest countries in the world (such as: Liberia, Somalia, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe) are located in Africa (Edrees, Azali, Hassan & Nor, 2015). Although global poverty has been on the decline except in some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Oriavwote & Ukawe, 2018). According to World Bank (2016), the number of people living in extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa has grown substantially since 1990. Poverty level in Africa rose even in the last 20 years (Adigan, Awoyemi & Omonona, 2011; Ravallion & Chen, 2004). It has become an endemic disease in developing countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

As a result of the negative consequences of poverty, governments from Sub-Saharan Africa countries have embarked on several fiscal and monetary policies to eradicate or combat poverty in the region. Government spending as one of the fiscal policy tools plays an important role in poverty reduction. According to Keynes theory, government spending may increase the aggregate demand which further stimulates the economic growth, employment and reduces poverty (Mehmood & Sadiq, 2010). Similarly, Farayibi and Owuru (2016) argues that fiscal policy administration through the mechanism of government spending plays an important role in poverty reduction, increase per capita income and finally culminates into economic growth and development. Therefore, government spending can affect economic growth positively and cause reduction in poverty level through the provision of social goods/services and infrastructural facilities needed for sustainable growth. Among the government strategies is the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategies Programme (PRSP) that emphasized investment in health, primary education and social sector in order to boast human capital formation for reducing poverty (Asghar, Hussain & Rehman, 2012). More so, there is growing concern about the distributive impacts of money supply as a monetary policy tool. However, poverty and social exclusion therefore serves as two key indicators of a government's commitment. In the light of the above, this study is set to measure the roles of government spending and money supply in alleviating poverty in Africa. This study considers 48 African countries from the Sub-Saharan region within the 21st century (2001 to 2017).

## **Literature Review**

### *Conceptual Clarification*

Money Supply: Jhingan (2004) defined money supply as the total amount of money in the economy at a point in time. This simply means that money supply is the total stock of monetary media of exchange available to a society for use in connection with the economic activity of the country. It includes: cash, coins, and money held in savings and checking accounts for short-term payments and investments. The money supply reflects the extent of liquidity that different money instruments have on an economy. Based on the size and type of account in which a liquid instrument belongs, money supply is broadly classified into:  $M_1$ ,  $M_2$ , and  $M_3$ . The narrow money supply ( $M_1$ ) is defined as currency outside bank plus demand deposits of commercial banks plus domestic deposits with the Central Banks less Federal Government deposits at commercial banks (Ifionu & Akinpelumi, 2015). In simple terms,  $M_1$  is defined as:

$$M_1 = C + D \quad (1)$$

Where:  $M_1$  = Narrow money supply,  $C$  = Currency outside banks,  $D$  = Demand deposits.  $M_2$  is generally defined as broad money. Ajayi (1979) noted that  $M_2$  includes not only notes and coins and bank current accounts, but also 7-days bank deposits and some building society deposits. Thus, broad money supply ( $M_2$ ) is defined as  $M_1$  plus quasi money. Quasi-money is seen as the sum of savings and time deposits with commercial banks.  $M_2$  is defined as:

$$M_2 = C + D + T + S \quad (2)$$

Where:  $M_2$  = Board money,  $T$  = Time deposit,  $S$  = Savings deposits,  $C$  = Currency outside bank and  $D$  = Demand deposits. In this study, we considered broad money growth which is define as the sum of currency outside banks; demand deposits other than those of the central government; the time, savings, and foreign currency deposits of resident sectors other than the central government; bank and traveler's checks; and other securities such as certificates of deposit and commercial paper (World Bank, 2017).

Poverty: Poverty can be regarded as the state of not being able to meet the basic needs (Gideon & Thaddeaus, 2016). These include: shelter, clothing, and food, among others. Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001) have broadly conceptualized poverty in four ways. These include: lack of access to basic needs/goods; a result of lack or impaired access to productive resources; outcome of inefficient use of common resources; and result of exclusion mechanism. Poverty is lack of basic needs/goods, essentially economic or consumption oriented. Basic goods are nutrition, shelter/housing, water, healthcare, and access to productive resources including education, working skills, tools, political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions (Adeyeye, 1999). The first three are the basic needs/goods necessary for survival. Impaired access to productive resources (agricultural land, physical capital and financial assets) leads to absolute low income, unemployment, undernourishment, among others.

Laderchi, Saith and Stewart (2003) defined poverty into four approaches: monetary, capabilities, social exclusion and participation. They considered monetary approach as the most common approach. It measures the shortfall in income or consumption below poverty line. The capabilities approach is the lack of some basic capabilities to function. The functioning can vary from such elementary physical ones as being well nourished, being adequately clothed and sheltered, avoiding preventable morbidity, among others, to more complex social achievements such as taking part in the life of the community, being able to appear in public without shame and so on. The opportunity of converting personal income into capabilities to function depends on a variety of personal circumstances (including age, gender, and disabilities, among others) and social surroundings (including epidemiological characteristics, physical and social environments, public services of health and education and so on). The definition extends poverty analysis to a wider scope than the monetary approach. It also focuses on the individuals and how they can realize their potentials. Social exclusion is the state of being wholly or partially excluded from full

participation in the society in which the subjects live. The fourth approach dwells on participation. It is the only approach that has attempted to include the poor in defining their own poverty. This study adopts the definition by World Bank (2017) that poverty is or National poverty headcount ratio is the percentage of the population living below the national poverty lines. National estimates are based on population-weighted subgroup estimates from household surveys.

**Government Spending:** The term government spending is used most times interchangeably with government expenditure. It plays key role in the operation of every economy (Keynes, 1936). It refers to expenses incurred by the government for the maintenance of itself and provision of public goods, services and works needed to foster or spur economic growth and improve the welfare of people in the society. Government spendings are generally categorized into: expenditures on administration, defense, internal securities, health, education, foreign affairs, among others and have both capital and recurrent components (Aigheyisi, 2013).

The capital expenditure refers to the amount spent in the acquisition of fixed (productive) assets (whose useful life extends beyond the accounting or fiscal year), as well as expenditure incurred in the upgrade/improvement of existing fixed assets such as lands, building, roads, machines and equipment, and so on, including intangible assets. It also includes: expenses on capital projects such as: roads, airports, health, education, electricity generation, and so on. Capital expenses are usually aimed at increasing the assets of a state and they give rise to recurrent expenditure. Expenditure in research also falls within this component of government spending. Capital expenditure is usually seen as expenditure creating future benefits, as there could be some lags between when it is incurred and when it takes effect on the economy. This includes: capital expenditures on administration, economic services and social community services.

Recurrent expenditure on the other hand refers to expenditure on purchase of goods and services, wages and salaries, operations as well as current grants and subsidies (usually classified as transfer payments). Recurrent expenditure, excluding transfer payments, is also referred to as government final consumption expenditure (Aigheyisi, 2013). Generally, recurrent expenditure refers to government expenses on administration, security, maintenance of public goods, interest payment on loans, etc. It includes expenditures on general administration, defense, internal security, national assembly, education, health, other social and community services, agriculture, construction, transport & communication, other economic services, public debt servicing, pensions and gratuities, contingencies/subventions and other/other CFR charges (CBN, 2017).

Okoro (2013) defines government expenditure as the value of goods and services provided through the public sector. It can also be described as the expenses incurred by the government in the provision of public goods and services. Thus, government expenditure is an important instrument for government in controlling the economy. It is the main instrument used by governments especially in developing countries to promote economic growth, income per capita income, reduce unemployment and poverty which are essential ingredients for sustainable development. Economic growth brings about a better standard of living of the people through provision of better infrastructure, health, housing, education services and improvement in agricultural productivity and food security as earlier noted. Almost all the sectors of developing economies demand more budgetary allocations every fiscal year. For instance, the agricultural sector under the Maputo Declaration of 2003

requires African governments to increase expenditure on agricultural sector to at least 10 percent of the national budgetary resources (New Partnership for Africa's Development-NEPAD, 2014). According to Keynes (1936), government spending is a major component of national income as seen in the expenditure approach to measuring national income as:  $Y = C+I+G +(X - M)$  where, Y is the national income, C is the consumption expenditure, G is the government spending, X is the export component and M is the import component. This implies that government spending is a key determinant of the size of the economy and generally economic growth. However, it could act as a two-edged sword: It could significantly boost aggregate output, especially in developing countries where there are massive market failures and poverty traps, and it could also have adverse consequences such as unintended inflation and boom-bust cycles. The effectiveness of government spending in expanding economy and fostering rapid economic growth depends on whether it is productive or unproductive. All things being equal, productive government expenditure would have positive effect on the economy, while unproductive expenditure would have the reverse effect.

### *Theoretical Review*

In the early part of the twentieth century, Fisher formulated the quantity equation which was a part of the classical theory (Nikitin, 1995). The classical theory states that when the quantity of money in circulation rises, real money supply reduces leading to a rise in general price level (Ireland, 2014). Fisher in 1911 provided a concise equation to capture the classical theory of money supply as follows:

$$MV = PT \quad 3$$

Where M=stock of money; V=velocity of money; P=price level; and T=transactions. Denoting the national output by Y and replacing transactions national output since the former is not measurable unlike the measurable. Hence, substituting it into equation 1.1, it becomes:

$$MV = PY \quad 4$$

The equation (1.2) explains the quantity theory of money. The theory posits that if velocity of money and national output are assumed constant, money supply is transmitted into a rise in the price level (Dornbusch, Fischer & Richard, 2008). As Nikitin (1995) observed the quantity theory of money was flawed on several grounds, which inter alia, includes the constancy assumptions of V and Y, as well as the strict proportionality condition between M and P. The neo-classical economists failed to provide any remedy to the great depression of 1930s. This led Keynes theory of money.

Keynes rejected the idea of an unfailing self-regulatory economic system enshrined in the neoclassical doctrine that became grossly disappointing during the great depression. Keynes suggested that an increase in government spending or effective demand paves way out of depression. Thus, the theory of demand-pull inflation draws from the fact that when there is a positive output gap at full employment, an inflationary gap will rise. Keynes ideas can be demonstrated in the IS-LM framework where demand for output determines supply up to the full employment level. Keynes emphasize the idea of government intervention. Monetarists further refuted the Keynesian prescription of government interventions in economic affairs including the idea and practice of deficit spending (Nikitin, 1995). They hinged on laissez faire belief that an economy is always near or close to full employment

(thus, negative output gap is negligible) and that changes in the quantity of money in circulation will only affect the price level and output in the long-run.

In the classical theory of poverty, the market is self-adjusting or regulating and resources are efficiently assigned to production units. Thus, poverty is seen not as result of market failure but poor economic decisions of individuals such as being lazy or being uneducated (Omari & Muturi, 2016; Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2014). It may also be attributed to inefficient allocation of productive resources. This is because, Omari and Muturi (2016) argues that living in deprivation is as a result of individual decisions and that better choices and hard work are sufficient to lift one out of poverty. In the words of Davis and Sanchez-Martinez (2014) as viewed by non-poor is that people who live in poverty deserves it and they tend to choose and nurture a culture of poverty which leads to intergenerational poverty (Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2014). According to Omari and Muturi (2016), government interventions to eradicate poverty of this nature through government spending are highly discouraged as it interferes with automatic market mechanism and may result to inefficiency ultimately. This spending can however be channeled to providing support activities and programmes that would facilitate individuals to engage in productive activities to earn a living wage/eking a living. The classical emphasized that government intervention to stem poverty is seen to rather reinforce poverty as it makes individuals to be dependent on the welfare thereby serving as disincentives to individuals' efforts to towards being more productive.

In the views of Keynes, he criticized the culture of poverty proposed in classical economics not to be consistent among the poor. Keynes argued that poverty is caused by economic underdevelopment and lack of human capital (Omari & Muturi, 2016; Jung & Smith, 2006). Issues of market failures such as uncertainties can cause critical economic situation given that the poor are more vulnerable to shocks that affect their income. The theory argues that the poor are impoverished due to external factors mostly beyond their control. Hence, government intervention is seen as a means to promoting economic development and welfare (Omari & Muturi, 2016; Davis & Sanchez-Martinez, 2014). For instance, during the great depression of 1930s, Keynes argued that government intervention through expansionary fiscal policies or increased government spending was necessary to stimulate aggregate demand and create jobs thereby reducing unemployment and poverty. Thus, government intervention stimulates the growth of an economy and via multiplies effect reduce poverty.

The study adopts the Keynesian theory who asserts that increases in government expenditure leads to high aggregate demand and rapid growth in national income (Keynes, 1936). This has capacity of reducing poverty among the populace. He favored government intervention to correct market failures and criticize the classical economists (Keynes, 1936). Keynes advocated a countercyclical fiscal policy in which, during the boom periods, the government ought to cut expenditure, and during periods of economic recession, government requires to undertake deficit spending. Keynes categorized government spending as an exogenous variable that can generate economic growth instead of an endogenous phenomenon. He believed the role of the government to be crucial as it can avoid depression by increasing aggregate demand and thus, switching on the economy again by the multiplier effect. It is a tool that bring stability in the short-run but this need to be done cautiously as too much of public spending lead to inflationary situations while too little of it leads to poverty and unemployment (Keynes, 1936).

According to Keynes (1936), the state of an economy is determined by four parameters: the money supply, the demand functions for consumption (or equivalently for savings) and for liquidity, and the schedule of the marginal efficiency of capital determined by the existing quantity of equipment and the state of long-term expectation (Keynes, 1936).

#### *Money Supply and Poverty Reduction*

This study examined the relationship between money supply or generally monetary policy and economic growth. Several authors have also attempted the examination of the influence of monetary policy on economic growth using either panel data or time series data. Goshit and Longduut (2016) examined the effectiveness of indirect monetary policy instruments in reducing poverty in Nigeria using multiple regression covering from 1986 to 2012. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique was employed and the findings showed that money supply significantly reduce poverty in Nigeria. In a similar vein, Ekobena (2014) also investigated the influence of monetary policy on inequality and poverty using panel system GMM estimation technique. The study covered United States and Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (EMCCA1) countries from 1986 to 2011. Findings from the study revealed that monetary policy and particularly interest rate and poverty are positively related in the United States, implying that increase in the rate of interest causes high level of poverty. However, for EMCCA countries, conventional monetary policy does not affect income distribution and poverty but rather through the quantitative easing channel. However, the study focused on the effectiveness of other monetary policy instruments such as interest rate and quantitative easing other than conventional monetary policy of money supply. In terms of the impact of macroeconomic policies, Amjad and Kemal (1997) assessed the impact of macroeconomic policies on poverty using multiple regression covering 1984-85 to 1990-91. The study found that policies pursued under the Structural Adjustment Programme have tended to increase the poverty levels due to decline in growth rates, withdrawal of subsidies on agricultural inputs and consumption, decline in employment, increase in indirect taxes, among others while a strategy for poverty eradication, the employment programmes as well as promotion of informal sector enterprises are imperative.

The ultimate objective of monetary policy is to control the volume of money in circulation in such a way as to promote sound economic performance and high living standards of the citizens. This gives the citizens confidence in the currency as a store of value, unit of account and medium of exchange, so that they can make sound economic and financial decisions. Money supply is one among the monetary policy tools. Monetary policy generally impacts on the wellbeing of individuals depending on the policy measures put in place (Gideon & Thaddeaus, 2016). For instance, money supply affects poverty by influencing the cost and availability of credit at commercial banks. An expansionary monetary policy therefore reduces the cost of credit and thus, boosts investments that generates employment and in turn reduces poverty and increases wellbeing (CBN, 2011). Romer and Romer (1989) have identified at least five channels through which monetary policy can affect long-run income distribution. First, the redistribution caused by swings in unanticipated inflation directly raise inequality. Second, the reduction in physical capital investment caused by uncertainty and financial markets disruptions raise the average return on capital and depress wages; thus widened the income distribution. Third, offsetting this, inflation may shift the burden of taxation away from labour towards capital. Fourth, the

markets cause by inflation and macroeconomic instability reduce not just physical investment, but human capital investment. This thwarts an important mechanism by which inequality can be mitigated. Finally, inflation and macroeconomic volatility may harm some sectors of the economy disproportionately. Goshit (2014) has opined that monetary policy can also influence poverty reduction through the attainment of high level of employment in the economy. When the objective of monetary policy is to achieve high level of employment in an economy, money supply assumes an expansionary dimension. First, an expansion in money supply leads directly to increased expenditure on goods and services and in turn increases employment to produce the extra goods and services being demanded. This increased employment invariably enhances income and thereby reduce income poverty in an economy. On the other hand, Ajayi (1979) opines that the alternative view in the transmission mechanism in which the increased money supply is seen to have led to a fall in interest rates, which in turn increases investment expenditure and thus, increased employment could be more potent in poverty reduction. Therefore, improving the quality and quantity of employment opportunities links economic growth to poverty reduction. Hence, a development strategy that fully employs a country's human resources and raises the returns to labour becomes an effective instrument for reducing poverty. It is on this premise that Romer and Romer (1989) submitted that an alternative monetary policy which focuses on real variables including employment and faster GDP growth is both feasible and necessary if any developing country is to make more rapid progress in reducing poverty and generating sustainable development. It is on this backdrop that Oni (2006) stressed that to generate employment opportunities, the monetary policy must encourage employment-generating investment, facilitate sustainable economic expansion and maintain macroeconomic stability. This study examines the influence of government spending and money supply on poverty in Africa.

#### *Government Spending and Poverty Reduction*

This study has examined the relationship between government spending and economic growth. Hence, previous empirical studies on the influence of government spending on economic growth were reviewed.

Chude, Chude, Anah and Chukwunulu (2019) examined the relationship between government expenditure, economic growth and poverty reduction in Nigeria covering 1980 to 2013. Using unit root tests, bound test co-integration approach and error correction techniques within an ARDL framework which yields more robust estimates, it was found that government spending affect economic growth positively and significantly. Findings emerged from this study also showed that government expenditure has significant short run impact on poverty reduction in Nigeria. Similarly, Oriavwote and Ukawe, (2018) investigated the impact of government expenditure on poverty reduction in Nigeria covering 1980 and 2016. The study used OLS and causality test and found that government expenditure on education has a significant positive impact on per capita income. The study also found bidirectional relationship between government expenditure on education and per capita income in Nigeria. Disaggregating government expenditure based on sectors, Omodero and Omodero (2019) examined the impact of government expenditure by sector on poverty from 2000 to 2017. The study employed ordinary least squares technique and the result indicates that government expenditure on building and construction, agriculture, education and health had no significant impact on poverty alleviation in Nigeria which was

attributed to the insufficiency of the government spending on these key sectors of the economy. Bright (2016) also assessed the effect of government expenditure on poverty incidence for Ghana covering 1960 to 2013 using the Johansen test (JH), Vector Error Correction (VECM) test and the Ordinary Least Square (OLS). The study found that poverty incidence positively correlated with government expenditure implying that poverty is not reducing with increase in government expenditure. The contrary view can be attributed to the non-stationary estimation of poverty variable using ordinary least squares technique.

Other studies such as: Rashid and Sara (2010) examined the relationship between fiscal deficits on poverty in Pakistan from 1976 to 2010. The study found a negative relationship between government expenditure and poverty and found that there exist short run and long run relationship between poverty and government expenditure. In a similar vein, Enyim (2013) examined the relationship between government spending and poverty reduction in Nigeria from 1980 to 2009 using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique. The study found that government spending has significant negative impact on poverty in Nigeria. Omari and Muturi (2016) also examined the impact of government expenditure by sectors on poverty level in Kenya covering 1964 to 2010. The study used Vector Autoregressive model, Co-integration analysis and error correction mechanism after ascertaining the presence of co-integration. The study found that agriculture sector and health sector expenditures have a positive and significant effect on poverty level while infrastructure sector expenditure has a negative and significant effect on poverty level. However, the effect of education sector expenditure on poverty level was not significant. Dahmardeh and Tabar (2013) assessed the relationship between government spending and poverty in Sistan and Baluchestan Province of Iran. The study examined the effects of government spending on poverty reduction from 1978 to 2008 using of Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) method. The study also found significant influence on reducing poverty in the country. As shown in the results, constructive expenditures have positive effect on poverty reduction Sistan and Baluchestan Province of Iran. Fan, Hazell and Thorat (1998) in another dimension examined the causes of the decline in rural poverty in India and quantify the effectiveness of government expenditures on poverty reduction covering 1970 to 1993. The study used simultaneous equation system. The study found that government spending has significant impact on poverty reduction.

Using panel data, Anderson, d'Orey, Duvendack and Esposito (2018) also examined the relationship between government spending and income poverty on low and middle income countries using 19 countries. Employing regression, the study found that the relationship between government spending and poverty is negative for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa though less negative than Eastern European countries and Central Asian countries. Shahrier and Lian (2018) also assessed the impact of monetary and fiscal policies on poverty line and income distribution of the bottom 20 percentile to the top 20 percentile using Financial Computable General Equilibrium (FCGE) model. The study found that expansionary fiscal policy or increase in government spending is more effective than the expansionary monetary policy in narrowing the income distribution and improving the income of the bottom 20% of the population in the short-run while monetary policy that aimed at low inflation and stable aggregate demand would permanently improve poverty incidence in the long-run.



Thus, increase in government spending is also likely to cause a rise in aggregate demand. This could also lead to higher growth and help to reduce levels of inequality and improve wellbeing. However, if an economy is close to full capacity, higher government expenditure could lead to crowding out effect (a situation when government spending rather causes reduction in private sector spending). Since, Africa is a developing region, there is dear need for increasing its expenditure. Hence, the impact of government spending or expenditure depends on the state of the economy. For instance, higher government expenditure may cause inflationary pressures and little increase in real GDP in an economy that is close to full capacity while government borrowings from the private sector acts as expansionary fiscal policy to boost economic growth when an economy is in recession. Increases in government expenditures may create a multiplier effect and further cause reduction in unemployment and poverty level and increase in aggregate demand.

The size of government spending and its effect on poverty reduction, and vice versa, has been an issue of sustained interest for decades. The relationship between government spending and poverty reduction has continued to generate series of debate among scholars as noted above. Government performs two functions- protection (and security) and provisions of some public goods. The creation of rule of law and enforcement of property rights are under protection functions. This helps to minimize risks of criminality, protect life and property, and the nation from external aggressions. Expenditure on goods such as: defense, roads, education, health, and power are under provisions of public goods. Some scholars argue that increase in government spending on socio-economic and physical infrastructures encourages economic growth and reduces poverty (Enyim, 2013; Osundina, Ebere & Osundina, 2014). These include: expenditure on infrastructure such as roads, communications and power. Sameti & Karami (2004) noted that government spending can have direct and indirect effects on poverty. The direct effects arise in the form of benefits the poor receive from expenditures on employment and welfare programs. The indirect effects arise when government investments in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, and the health and education of rural people, stimulate agricultural and nonagricultural growth, leading to greater employment and income earning opportunities for the poor, and to cheaper food. This study employs system of equation within the framework of panel system GMM to assess effects of government spending and money supply on poverty in Africa. Several studies examined the country specific impact of government spending on poverty and found that increased spending reduces poverty (Chude, Chude, Anah & Chukwunulu, 2019; d'Orey, Duvendack & Esposito, 2018; Oriavwote & Ukawe, 2018; Edrees, Azali, Hassan & Nor, 2015; Asghar, Hussain & Rehman, 2012; Rashid & Sara, 2010)

The introduction of SAP in Africa has made poverty to be arguably the most pressing economic problem of our time because rising inequality in levels of income has led to greater poverty (Goshit, 2014). Yet, the reduction of poverty is the most difficult challenge facing any developing economy just like Africa where the average of the population is considered poor and evidence shows that the number of those that are poor have continue to increase. Ogwumike (2001) estimated that more than 70 per cent of Africans live in poverty. Despite several government's policies and programmes towards poverty reduction in the economy, more than half of the population remain poor (Ogwumike, 2001). The consequences of extreme poverty in Africa are manifested in diverse ways including vices such as arm robbery, hunger, malnutrition, prostitution, illiteracy, kidnapping, oil pipes

vandalism, ethno-religious and political crises and others which are inimical to economic growth and development. At the same time, fiscal policy through government spending and monetary policy through money supply are among the traditional tools can help curb poverty in an economy.

## **Methodology**

### *Method of Data Analysis*

This study used GMM. The study used two approaches of deciding whether difference GMM or system GMM is most preferred. This include: Blundell-Bond (1998) and Bond, Hoeffler and Temple (2001). Blundell-Bond (1998) argues that difference GMM estimator may yield both a biased and inefficient estimate of the lagged dependent variable if the parameter estimate is persistent and close to being a random walk in finite samples and particularly acute when T is short. Blundell and Bond (1998) therefore attributed the poor performance of the difference GMM estimator in such cases to the use of poor instruments. Hence, the use of system GMM estimator overcome this problem. The study also estimated the autoregressive model using pooled OLS and fixed effects approach. The pooled OLS estimate for the lagged variable of poverty was considered as an upper-bound estimate, while the corresponding fixed effects estimate was considered a lower bound estimate. The decision rule is that if the difference GMM estimate obtained is close to or below the fixed effects estimate, the difference GMM is downward biased because of weak instrumentation and a system GMM is more preferred.

### *Data Needs and Sources*

All the data for the estimations were collected from World Development Indicators from 2001 to 2017. These include data on: poverty, government spending, broad money supply, foreign direct investment, domestic capital investment, gross national income per capita and overall economic freedom. These include: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

### *Theoretical Model*

Keynes (1936) argues that increasing government spending in times of economic downturn corrects the economy back to equilibrium. Following the Keynesian model that income or poverty level (POV) of an economy depends on the level of government intervention through increased government spending (G), it can be stated as:

$$POV = f(G) \quad 5$$

According to Keynes (1936), government intervenes in order to increase the level of aggregate demand or income. Thus, high levels of income in an economy may help in reducing poverty. This can be expressed as:

$$POV = f(G, Y) \quad 6$$

Where GNI is the annual income of an economy. Keynes (1936) further argued that an increase in money supply (M2) affects income and in turn reduces poverty.

$$POV = f(G, Y, M_2) \quad 7$$

Keynes (1936) also argued that income is affected by investment which can either be Foreign Investment (FI) or Domestic Investment (DI) and the degree of openness (OP). The equation 7 can be restated as:

$$POV = f(G, Y, M_2, FI, DI, OP) \quad 8$$

#### Model Specification

Using the theoretical model as stated in equation 8, with the theoretical expectation that increase in government spending, money supply, domestic capital investment, foreign direct investment inflows, gross national income and economic freedom are expected to have negative influence on poverty. Based on the above theoretical basis, the dynamic panel model for the study is stated as:

$$POV_{it} = \beta_0 + \delta POV_{i,t-1} + \beta_1 GSP_{it} + \beta_2 BMS_{it} + \beta_3 FDI_{it} + \beta_4 CIN_{it} + \beta_5 GNI_{it} + \beta_6 EFD_{it} + \varphi_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad 9$$

Where, POV = Poverty, GSP = Government Spending, BMS = Broad Money Supply, FDI = Foreign Direct Investment, CIN = Domestic Capital Investment, GNI = Gross National Income per capita and EFD = Overall Economic Freedom.  $\beta_0$  = Intercept,  $\beta_1 - \beta_6$  = Parameter coefficients to be estimated,  $\varphi_i$  = Individual Specific Effect or Fixed Effect and  $\varepsilon_{it}$  = An idiosyncratic error.

#### Variable Definitions

**Poverty:** The study used poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day and it is the percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 international prices (World Bank, 2019). Data for this variable is sourced from The World Bank

**Government spending as percent of GDP:** General government final consumption expenditure (formerly general government consumption) includes all government current expenditures for purchases of goods and services (including compensation of employees) (World Bank, 2019). Data for this variable is sourced from The World Bank

**Broad money supply** is the sum of currency outside banks; demand deposits other than those of the central government; the time, savings, and foreign currency deposits of resident sectors other than the central government; bank and traveler's checks; and other securities such as certificates of deposit and commercial paper (World Bank, 2019). This data is sourced from The World Bank

**Foreign Direct Investment, percent of GDP:** Foreign direct investment are the net inflows of investment to acquire a lasting management interest (10 percent or more of voting stock) in an enterprise operating in an economy other than that of the investor (World Bank, 2019). Data for this variable is sourced from The World Bank

**Capital investment as percent of GDP:** Gross capital formation (formerly gross domestic investment) consists of outlays on additions to the fixed assets of the economy plus net changes in the level of inventories (World Bank, 2019). Data for this variable is sourced from The World Bank.

GNI per capita: GNI per capita is gross national income divided by midyear population (World Bank, 2019). In this study, annual percentage growth rate of GNI per capita based on constant local currency was used. Data for this variable is sourced from The World Bank.

Economic freedom, overall index (0-100): The Overall index of economic freedom has ten components grouped into four broad categories: Rule of Law; Limited Government; Regulatory Efficiency and Open Markets. The overall economic freedom is scored on a scale of 0 to 100, where 100 represents the maximum freedom. Data for this variable is sourced from The Heritage Foundation

**Results and Discussions**

*Decision of using either difference or system GMM*

The study estimated the pooled OLS, Fixed Effect (FE), difference GMM and system GMM to obtain the estimate ( $\delta$ ) of the lagged dependent variable ( $POV_{t-1}$ ). The  $\delta$  estimate in pooled OLS is considered biased upwards while  $\delta$  estimate in Fixed Effect is considered biased downwards. As a decision rule, if the  $\delta$  estimate lies below or close to FE estimate, it is biased downwards, hence, system GMM estimator will be considered, otherwise, difference GMM will be considered. The estimated result of the pooled OLS, FE, difference GMM and system GMM for  $\delta$  (lagged dependent variable) are presented in Table 1

**Table 1: Decision of the use of difference and system GMM**

Estimators	Coefficients
Pooled OLS	1.500746
Fixed Effects	0.994518
One-Step Difference GMM	1.139221
Two-Step Difference GMM	1.102021
One-Step system GMM	1.328566
Two-Step system GMM	1.102021

Source: Author’s computation from STATA 15 output.

From the result in Table 1, the estimate of  $\delta$  in one-step and two-step difference GMM are closer to the estimate of  $\delta$  in fixed effects, thus, the little difference between the estimate of  $\delta$  in one-step/two-step difference GMM and fixed effects suggests that there may be much benefits to using the system GMM estimator as argued by Bond, Hoeffler and Temple (2001).

*Correlation Results*

The result of correlation analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Correlation Test Results**

	POV	GSP	BMS	FDI	CIN	GNI	efd
POV	1						
GSP	-0.1186	1					
BMS	-0.3642	0.3492	1				
FDI	0.0137	0.0728	0.0073	1			

CIN	-0.2572	0.2418	0.092	0.3463	1		
GNI	-0.5908	0.2174	0.3816	0.0109	0.2456	1	
EFD	-0.2849	0.0844	0.3765	-0.0953	0.1606	0.2789	1

Source: Authors' Computation from STATA 15 Output.

From the results of correlation test in Table 2, it implies that all the regressors are not linearly dependent on one another or exact. Hence, there is absence of multicollinearity in the model.

*The Roles of Government Spending and Money Supply on Poverty in Africa*

The estimated results of one-step and two- step system GMM for the 48 Sub-Saharan African countries in analyzing the effectiveness of government spending and money supply are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: The Result of One-step and Two-step System GMM**

Variables	One Step System GMM	Two Step System GMM
	POV	POV
L.POV	1.329***[0.000] (-0.059)	1.321*** [0.000] (-0.077)
GSP	-0.068 [0.022] (-0.024)	-0.044** [0.048] (-0.017)
BMS	0.057** [0.042] (-0.027)	0.062** [0.047] (-0.023)
FDI	-0.089** [0.012] (-0.034)	-0.085** [0.026] (-0.028)
CIN	0.089 [0.265] (-0.079)	0.081 [0.507] (-0.121)
GNI	0.001*** [0.000] (-0.000)	0.001*** [0.001] (-0.000)
EFD	0.059 [0.455] (-0.078)	0.010 [0.914] (-0.094)
Constant	-22.17*** [0.001] (-6.02)	-16.99** [0.033] (-7.691)
AR(2)	0.15 [0.883]	0.20 [0.841]
Hansen	26.33 [0.015]	26.33 [0.015]
Observations	567	567
Number of Country (Groups)	44	44
Number of Instruments	38	38
F-statistics	170.27 [0.000]	109.74 [0.000]

Source: Authors' Computation from STATA 15 Output.

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses ( ) and probability in brackets [ ]

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The result from Table 3 shows significant positive estimate of the lagged dependent variable ( $POV_{t-1}$ ) for the one-step and two-step system GMM estimates. The estimates of one-step system GMM are similar with two-step system GMM procedure. Hence, the study considers the estimates of two-step system GMM for statistical inferences in this study. The result shows 38 numbers of instruments and 44 number of groups. This means that the instruments in the model are not over-bloated. The result also reveals a statistically significant influence of lagged values of the dependent variable on current level of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. This implies that poverty has a cycle and people who live in the cycle of poverty have lagged effect of the incidence. The implication is that past levels of poverty strongly influence the current level of poverty in the region.

The result also shows that government spending has an estimated negative coefficient of -0.0442743 with the probability value of 0.048<0.05. The estimated coefficient is theoretically plausible and statistically significant at 5% significance level. The

relationship indicates that increasing government spending reduces the level of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. This implies that expansionary fiscal policy in terms of increased government spending has multiplier effect on the level of poverty in Africa.

The result also reveals that money supply has positive influence on the level of poverty. The estimated coefficient is positive (0.0621243) and statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The relationship, though not theoretically plausible, implies that increased money supply exerts positive influence on the levels of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. The implication is that increase in money supply fuels up poverty in the region.

The result also reveals negative relationship between foreign direct investment and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. The estimated coefficient of foreign direct investment (-0.0853582) with the probability value of  $0.026 < 0.05$  is also statistically significant at 5% significance level. This means that foreign direct investment inflows to Africa increases investment in the region that improves the income of the host communities. The result conforms to the theoretical position of eclectic theory by Dunning (1979). He argues that there must be some kind of location advantage in the place where the company is located.

The estimated coefficients of domestic capital investment, gross national income and overall economic freedom are 0.0811689, 0.0015375 and 0.103152. Apart from the estimated coefficient of gross national income that is statistically significant at 1% significance level, the estimated coefficients of domestic capital investment and overall economic freedom are not statistically significant even at 10% significance level. The strong positive relationship of gross national income with poverty implies that higher income for Sub-Saharan African countries is skewed or tilted towards very few rich persons, hence, poverty increase.

From the result, the numbers of instruments (38) were less than the number of groups (44) and there is joint significance of the variables incorporated in the model (that is, F-statistics of 109.74 and Prob. value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). The model also shows the Hansen statistic of 26.33 with its probability of  $0.015 < 0.05$ . This implies that there are valid instruments in the model. The AR (2) statistic is 0.20 with probability value of 0.841. This means that the model does not suffer from second order autocorrelation. The estimated lagged dependent variable was also statistically significant at 1% significance level.

#### *Year Dummies Control for Time Variations of the Dependent Variable*

The trend of the year dummies control for time variations of the dependent variable across panels is depicted in Figure 1. The interpretation of the year dummies is relative to the base year, 2001.

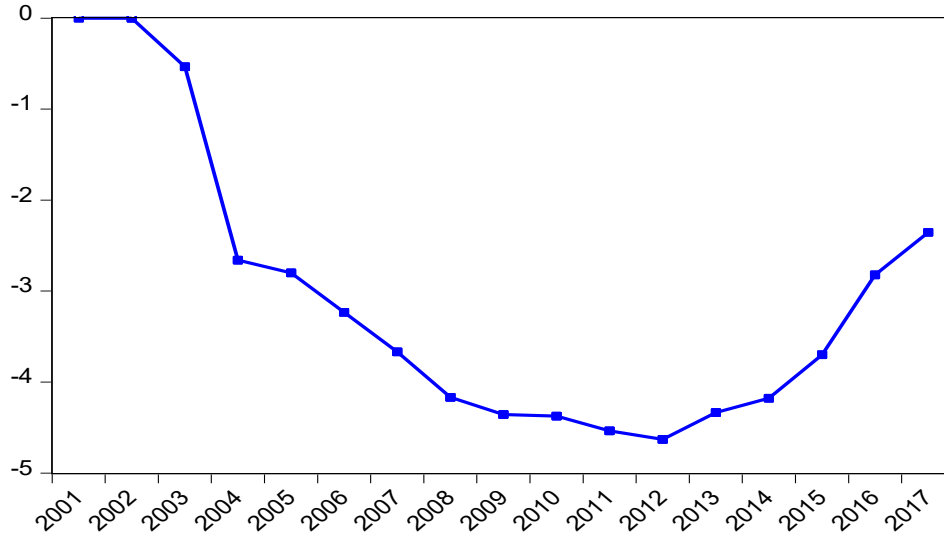


Figure 1: Poverty in Africa

The trend in Figure 1 shows that poverty in 2003 is on average and ceteris paribus, 53% lower than the base year 2001. The relative percentage of poverty to base year declined over time to 2012 and exhibited upward trending pattern from 2013 to 2017.

#### *Summary of Findings*

The study found that government spending and foreign direct investment had negative and significant influence on poverty among the African countries at 5% level of significance while money supply has positive influence on the level of poverty in the region implying that monetary policy tool of money supply has not been effective in combating the menace of poverty.

#### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The study concludes that government spending significantly reduces poverty levels in the region, whereas money supply, as a monetary policy tool, has a negligible impact on poverty alleviation. Additionally, foreign direct investment (FDI) has contributed to welfare improvements in the region, unlike money supply, which appears ineffective. This limited effect of monetary policy through money supply may stem from the region's low level of financial development, as a significant proportion of the population remains unbanked, limiting the reach and impact of traditional monetary tools on poverty. Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

African governments should prioritize and increase spending in sectors that directly contribute to improved quality of life, such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and agriculture. These sectors have the potential to generate long-term, sustainable improvements in welfare. National policymakers should aim to allocate a larger proportion of their annual budgets to capital investments that foster economic productivity. Ministries of Finance and Planning could work together to establish a phased, multi-year budgetary framework that gradually raises capital expenditures, targeting specific projects that directly impact poverty reduction. Such spending should be regularly evaluated to ensure that resources are effectively used to promote equitable economic growth and improved social services.

For monetary policy tools like money supply to become effective in combating poverty, African countries need to improve their financial systems to reach a broader population. This can be achieved by implementing policies that expand financial inclusion, including initiatives to increase the banked population. Central banks, in collaboration with commercial banks and financial technology firms, should develop programs that make banking more accessible and affordable, particularly in rural areas where banking infrastructure is limited. Governments can also promote digital banking platforms and mobile money services, which have proven effective in other regions for reaching the unbanked. Increasing financial inclusion will enable more people to benefit from monetary policies and credit facilities, enhancing overall economic stability and poverty reduction. To attract more foreign direct investment, African governments must focus on creating stable, secure, and business-friendly environments. This involves streamlining bureaucratic procedures to enhance the ease of doing business, as well as implementing robust policies to address security concerns and political instability, which can deter potential investors. National and regional policymakers should work to develop clear, transparent investment regulations that protect investors' rights while supporting local economic goals. Additionally, investments in infrastructure—such as reliable transportation networks, energy supplies, and telecommunications—are essential to create an environment conducive to foreign business operations. By working with international organizations, governments can also develop programs that incentivize sustainable investments aligned with national development objectives, ensuring that FDI inflows contribute to long-term poverty alleviation and economic resilience.

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## PROJECT EXECUTION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED AREA COUNCILS IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: Local government administration has been described as a vital vehicle to achieving sustainable development at the grassroots. This study seeks to examine project execution and rural development in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The core objectives of the study to examine the perception of the rural dwellers on developmental project execution in FCT-Abuja, impact of projects execution on rural development in FCT-Abuja and factors influencing project execution and rural development in FCT-Abuja. The study adopted survey research whereby questionnaire was administered to residents in selected area councils in FCT-Abuja. Taro Yamane formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 400 out of a total population of 3,067,500. Data gotten through questionnaire were arranged in tables, pie chart and analyzed using simple percentage and mean average. Secondary data elicited from journal articles, books and official documents were analyzed using desktop research method. The study found out that majority of the respondents in the selected area councils were dissatisfied about projects executed by area councils where they reside. Also, poor project conception, planning, misappropriation of funds, financial corruption and inadequate project management experts were significant factors affecting project execution and rural development in area councils in FCT-Abuja. The study recommended that social media and other media platforms can be used by area councils' authorities to disseminate the progress reports of area councils' developmental projects so that the local peoples' perception can be changed positively. Lastly, well-articulated projects conception, planning, involvement of professional project managers, adequate monitoring and evaluation of project expenditure can improve execution of projects and rural development in FCT-Abuja.*

*Keywords: Project, Project execution, local government, development, rural development*

### **Introduction**

One of the primary responsibilities of government is to guarantee that its residents have a means of obtaining high-quality products and services, and the local government, as a level of government, is certainly not an exemption. Local government has been and remains to be among the primary cause of growth in many regions of the world, and its value and effect on residents' daily lives is unquestionable. Many nations in developing nations are deeply concerned about the subject of rural development. Rural development is increasingly being recognized as an important tool in the overall development of the modern developing countries. This is due to the significant infrastructural disparity between rural and urban regions in terms of facilities, distribution of resources, growth of human resources, and job opportunities are all areas where rural development is critical (Odo, 2014).

Due to this disparity, rural communities are in a worse economic condition. It has resulted in rural-urban mobility, which has increased urban unemployment while denying rural regions of agricultural labor. This condition was a result of previously highlighted issues such as infrastructure, peasant and subsistence agriculture, a weak transportation system, limited commercial activity, a shortage of food preservation amenities, and an erosion threat (Odo, 2014).

In many developing countries, the state of affairs does not appear to be improving significantly. Rural development is a crucial indicator of societal advancement and change globally. Absolutely no country can claim to have accomplished improvement if a considerable proportion of its rural residents continue to live in desperate need, lack, and socioeconomic destitution (Akhakpe et al., 2012). Nevertheless, empirical data reveals that underdevelopment has persisted in Nigeria because people are apparently unaware of, or unconcerned about, the rationales for the formation of local governments.

In the nation of Nigeria, for example, a large percentage of the total population lives in rural regions. These rural inhabitants are primarily peasant farmers who struggle to sustain themselves and provide the most basic essentials of life for the members of their immediate families. The amount of poverty among Nigerian rural inhabitants is an expressive witness to the dire need for rural development (Egweme and Odo, 2012). Recognising the aforementioned issues prompted the federal military administration in 1976 to embark on a bold endeavor to overhaul Nigeria's local government system. As stated by Okafor (1994), the provisions of the unified system of local government, which operates across the nation, comprised of the formation of comparable-sized local councils with equivalent legislative powers and equal representation. The essence of the reform was to bring about stable increase in rural economy and general enhancement of the quality of life in the areas (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1980).

In the same vein, the Nigerian Constitution (1999) provides that every local government in the country shall participate in the economic planning and development of its own area of jurisdiction. To strengthen this great task bestowed on the local governments, General Ibrahim Babangida, reminded Nigerians that local governments were not created to pay salaries only, but to ensure collective participation in governance, motivate physical economic development, create the conditions for development opportunities and provide social services which can improve the well-being of the rural people.

Over the years, the local government areas in Nigeria have been allocated state resources and also received aids from local and international donors to carry our developmental projects and the area councils have not been left out. The area councils in Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria represents a good sample of rural administration in Nigeria reflects a number of grassroots development concerns. It is in this light of these issues that the study seeks to examine project execution and rural development in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

The local government was established for various reasons such as facilitating local participation in politics, rural development, bringing government closer to the grassroots etc. Despite, the lofty ideas behind the creation of local government, it has not function optimally to bring about the desired results. The area councils in FCT in partnership with other NGOs and foreign donors have carried out few developmental projects such as rural

electrification, construction of roads, bridges, schools, establishment of primary health care centers.

There are several factors which some scholars have identified as stumbling blocks on the way of rural development in Nigeria. These include: lack of adequate organization frame work and orientation, lack of dedication and commitment on the part of the local government councils to the cause of development, misplacement of organization priorities and consequently, misdirection of funds (Akhakpe et al., 2012).

In addition, lack of adequate executive capacity arising from lack of adequately trained, motivated and dedicated staff for effective and efficient implementation of council decision and unreliable external funding and inability to generate revenue for development purposes. For instance, some of the areas councils in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have not been able to successfully carried out a great number of developmental projects which would bring about massive grassroots employment across all the six area councils. Several studies have been carried out to examine the impact of local government on rural development but very few have paid attention to local residents' satisfaction on project execution in selected area councils of FCT. This study is being carried out to fill this gap.

#### *Objectives of the Study*

The broad objective of this study is to assess the impact of project execution on rural development in Federal Capital Territory. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. Find out the level of satisfaction of local residents of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja as regards to rural development projects.
- ii. Ascertain factors affecting project execution in the area councils in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Projects*

A project is a group of tasks, performed in a definable time period, in order to meet a specific set of objectives. As project has the following characteristic, it is likely to be a one-time programme, it has a life cycle with a specific start and end data, it has budget and likely to require the use of multiple resources, most of which may be scarce and have to be shared among others. It may require the establishment of a special organization or the crossing of traditional organizational boundaries (Harvey, 1999). Akarakiri (2007) defines project as any scheme, or part of a scheme for investing recourse which can reasonably be analyzed and evaluated as independent unit. Spinner (1997) also defines project as series of task or activities that have several distinguishing characteristics. Such as: Having specific starting and ending data, Achieving a specified result on product, well defined objectives, A unique, non-repetitive endeavor. This view point is collaborated by Verna (1995) when he defines project as the investment of capital in a time bound intervention to create assets. In the same way Kerzner (2003) further define project as an assignment that has to be undertaken and completed within a set time, budget, resources and performance specification designed to meet the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries. Although, there are numbers of general definition of the term project; it must be recognized at the outset that projects are distinct from other organizational processes. As a rule, a process refers to ongoing, day-to-day activities in which an organization engages, while producing goods

and services, processes use existing systems properties and capabilities in a continuous, fairly repetitive manner.

Projects, on the other hand, take place outside the normal, process-oriented world of the firm. Certainly, in some organizations, such as construction, day-to-day processes center on the creation and development of project. Nevertheless, for the majority of organizations project management activities remain unique and separate from the manner in which more routine, process driven work is performed (Kerzner, 2003). Project work is continuously evolving, established its own work rules, and is the antithesis of repetition in the work place. As a result, it represents an exciting alternative to business as usual for many companies. Probably the simplest definition is found in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) guide of the Project Management Institute (PMI). PMI is the world's largest professional project management association, with over 200,000 members' world wide as of 2005. In their PMBOK guide, a project is defined as "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service". PMI (2005) examined the various elements of projects as identified by the following set of definitions

Projects are complex, one-time processes - A project arises for a specific purpose or to meet a stated goal. They are complex because they typically require the co-ordinate inputs of numerous members of the organization, project members may be from different departments or other organizational unit or from one functional area. On the other hand, some projects such as new product introductions, work best with representatives from many functions, including marketing, engineering, production and design. Because a project is intended to fulfill a stated goal, it is temporary. It exists only until its goal has been met, and at that point, it is dissolved.

Projects are limited by budget, schedule and resources. Project work requires that members work with limited financial and human resources for a specified time period. They do not run indefinitely. Once the assignment is completed, the project team disbands. Until those points, all its activities are constrained by limitations on budget and personnel availability. Projects are "resource constrained" activities. Projects are developed to resolve a clear goal or set goals. There is no such thing as a project team with an on-going, non-specific purpose. Its goals, or deliverables, define the nature of the project and that is its team. Projects are designed to yield a tangible result, either as a new product or service. Whether the goal is to build a new bridge, implement a new account receivable system or win a presidential election, the goal must be specific and the project organized to achieve a stated aim.

Projects are customer focused: whether the project is responding to the needs of an internal organizational unit (e.g. accounting) or intended to exploit a market opportunity external to the organization the underlying purpose of any project is to satisfy customer needs. In the past, this goal was sometimes overlooked. Projects were considered successful if they attained technical, budgetary or scheduling goals. More and more, however, companies have realized that the primary goal of a project is customer satisfaction. If that goal is neglected, a firm runs the risk of "doing the wrong things well" pursuing projects that may be done efficiently but ignore customer needs or fail commercially.

Therefore, project is not determined by the amount of money involved or its size. For example, the construction of a house, relocation of an office, introducing a new business, installing new facilities for education or health are all projects because they are unique, have well-defined objectives and constrained by a time factor in a broad sense.

Asgari et al (2018) describe projects as a set of activities that should be conducted within clear limits of scope, specified deadlines, approved costs, and detailed service quality. The exclusion of one of these four factors can lead to a costly or failed project. Szalay et al. (2017), for their part, define project as a temporary effort to create a specific product or service, somehow different from all other products and services, having a well-defined start and finish, using resources, being conducted by people, and following parameters such as cost, time and quality. The concept of project is described in a similar way by the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017): a temporary effort undertaken to create a product, service or exclusive result. Projects are carried out to achieve aims by means of delivery production. Their temporary nature indicates they have a definitive start and end. The term temporary does not necessarily imply short duration, it refers to their engagement and endurance; furthermore, it does not apply to the product, service.

This study is focused on projects within the context of promoting rural development. In this context, the area councils are saddled with the responsibilities of ensuring local residents get the benefits of good governance by providing the basic social and economic amenities such as economic empowerment schemes, educational service and facilities, roads, culverts, rural electrification amongst others.

### **Local Government**

Prior to the attainment of independence in Nigeria, there was no uniformity in the local government administrations. According to Yahaya (1989), two different administrations emerged in Northern and Southern Nigeria; each of them conformed strongly to the ideological orientation of regional political class in power. There was relative democratic system of government in existence in the south where people were allowed to participate in governance, while the north was said to be highly centralized and undemocratic.

From the foregoing, there was no uniform style of Native Authority administration throughout Nigeria. This means that each locality had its own peculiarities applied on the people under its domain, which had its belief rooted on the existing traditional norms. Local governments in Nigeria have a long historic background. Prior to the advent of British colonial administration in Nigeria, there was already in existence in various parts of the country, some form of local administration with various formal political institutions. These political institutions were structurally diverse. But behind the adversity, a general basis for local government existed. It was on this basis that Indirect Rule was developed as a British administration policy. Thus, Indirect Rule was in reality a euphemism for the Native Authority system which was centered on traditional structures i.e. the Resident, the Native Authority, the Native Treasury and the Native Court (Bello-Imam, 1996). In the same vein, Shehu (2008), asserts that during the colonial period in Nigeria, local government administration was known as the Native Authority system. Also, between 1950 and 1960, Native Authority system in Nigeria underwent some reforms. This followed provisions of the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 that gave Nigerians a greater access to participate in policy formulation and implementation. During the indirect rule era, Emirs were Sole Native Authority executives. As a result of clarion call for reforms by the educated elites in 1952, the colonial government in Northern Nigeria abrogated the status of the Emirs as Sole Native Authority administrators conferred by the Native Authority Ordinance of 1933. In the Western Region, the reform took place in 1953 when the local government law came into effect. In the Eastern Region, control of local government political units became the

affairs of the elected representatives who made up three quarters of the council membership. At independence and with the military intervention in the politics of Nigeria, more reforms were made in the local government system in Nigeria. This happened in 1966 when local government council members were dissolved.

Akpan (1984) posits that “it is difficult, if not impossible for any state to administer successfully all functions of government through the central organs of the state”. Even communist nations that tried to control all localities of the state centrally met significant resistance and, in many cases, failed. This is perhaps why in 1936, the then USSR officially recognized the need for functions to be performed at local levels with a measure of control by the central organs of the state. This implies that for the central government anywhere to succeed in meeting the yearnings of her citizens there must be a kind of local body or organ familiar with the local needs and problems of the local people.

Local government constitutes the most critical level of government at which the momentum to sustain national development can be created (Bello-Imam, 1996). To some countries in the third world, it is the only semblance of authority known beyond the traditional institution. As a concept and one of the subordinate units in federal political system arrangement, it has attracted definitions of various scholars. Therefore, there is not unanimous agreement between these scholars on the definition of local government. In Nigeria federal system, we have the Federal, State and Local governments. The local government exists within a state. According to Bello et al (2004), Local government can be seen as a sub-organ of the State or central government at the local level. It is seen as the government at the grassroots. They are entities that can sue, be sued and can also enter into contracts. Oladisu (1981) describes local government as the formal governance mechanism with the statutory right to conduct its affairs in accordance with the relevant laws enabling it with little or no inter-position by the other levels of governance of the state. Yusuf and Saleh (1998) describes it as grassroots level with significant governance autonomy to provide and facilitate basic people-oriented services like primary education, primary and rural health care, community development and so on.

### *Grassroots Development*

Development in its simplest definition and perhaps in its common usage can be considered as the objective of moving to a state relatively better than what previously existed: “good change” as defined by Chambers (1997). As change is a process, this definition of development tends to denote a process towards a desirable state in society. Whether this state is achieved in the short or long term, change has several implications for society. Disruption may occur in the established patterns of living within the society as it moves towards *good change*, and thus reflect a contradiction to its intended meaning, and generate a discourse on what constitutes this “good change” (Thomas, 2000).

The most critical reason for the creation of local governments in Nigeria is grassroots development otherwise known as rural development, which embraces a host of economic, social and political activities aimed at improving the standard and living conditions of the rural dwellers. It is a process in which the people are key participants or ought to be key participants in their own development. Grassroots development is also viewed as a self-generating process of socio-economic and political development in which the rural inhabitants themselves are actively involved and share in the cost and benefits of such development. The essential elements of grassroots development include poverty reduction;



rising incomes; increase in health and nutrition status of the people; provision of quantitative and qualitative basic education; improved agricultural activities; provision of infrastructural facilities; amongst others.

Grassroots development is the responsibility of the local government with the active co-operation of the state and federal governments; aimed at improving the welfare of the masses within its areas of jurisdiction. Ibrahim (1980) defined grassroots development (rural development) as the process by which the standard of living at the grassroots level is enhanced politically, socially and economically. This definition views grassroots development as a multi-dimensional process involving important changes in social structures, conditions of life, as well as the involvement of the rural dwellers in decisions that affect their lives. Grassroots development, in this wise, is regarded as an effective strategy of addressing the basic needs of the rural population.

Adegboye (1973) cited in Egwemi and Odo (2013) sees rural or grassroots development as the development of rural people in such a continuous manner as to enable them to effectively and efficiently utilize their intellect, technology and other resources for further development of themselves and others. Grassroots development is a process of bringing improved level of living to the inhabitants with notable and reasonable changes in all ramifications. According to Gana (1990) cited in Egwemi and Odo (2013), grassroots development is the re-structuring of the rural economy in order to grow it from a dependent peasant and largely agricultural economy to one capable of sustaining an improved quality of life at the local level. Whatever, the conceptualization of grassroots development, the bottom-line is that it is about improving the standard and living conditions of the rural people. The thrust of the study is that local governments, having as they do, intimate knowledge of their areas of jurisdiction are most suited to mobilize both human and material resources of the local areas for grassroots development. There are several theoretical windows through the issue of local government and grassroot development can be anchored. While other theories may be right on their own, we underpin this paper on the integrated rural development theory.

Abutu (in Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2003) views the concept of integrated rural development as that of total transformation of the lives of the rural populace. According to him, integrated rural development is “that process of taking deliberate and concrete actions to ensure the positive transformation of the productive forces of the rural populace and the exploitation of rural resources for their common good. Hence it involves the mass mobilization of the rural populace in Policies that affect their lives, modernization of their productive Techniques and abilities and equitable distribution of whatever benefits that result from processes among different families, communities and classes.

Grassroots development as defined by Hall (2015) and some World Bank publications World Bank (2004; 2008; and 2014) is the restructuring of rural economy in order to grow it from dependent peasant and largely agricultural economy to one capable of sustaining an improved quality of life for the local people. Abdulgafar, Ibrahim and Alasinrin (2013) define grassroots development as the process by which the standard of living at the grassroots level is enhanced politically, socially and economically. Similarly, Olofin, Olaniyan and Folawewo (2013) define it as a deliberate effort which empowers people to get out of poverty, improve their living conditions and act as an instrument for social mobilization. Thus, showing that elements of grassroots development include: poverty reduction, rising incomes, increase in health and nutritional status of the people, qualitative

and quantitative basic education, improved agricultural activities and the provision of basic infrastructural facilities among others.

### **Local Government and Grassroots Development**

The local government is seen as government at the grassroots. The connection between local government and grassroots development can be really appreciated through the functions of the local government under the fourth schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. According to Ezeani (2006), local government is generally seen as a veritable agent of development and grassroots participation in the democratic process.

The roles and functions of local government in grass-root development are as follows:

1. Construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lightings, drains and other public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces or such public facilities like museum as may be prescribed from time to time by the house of assembly of the state.
2. Naming roads and streets and numbering of houses.
3. Provision and maintenance of public convenience, sewage and refuse disposal.
4. The provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education.
5. The development of agriculture and natural resources other than exploitation of minerals.
6. The provision and maintenance of health service like immunization.
7. Establishment of slaughter house, slaughter slabs, market, motor parks and public conveniences.
8. Mobilization of people for rapid rural development of the grass-roots with special reference to: Self help projects, farm productions Conflict resolution among warring communities.
9. Provision of housing and urban layouts.
10. Provision of electricity
11. Enlightenment service.

In the exercise of the functions conferred under the law, a local government may either by its employees or by dully appointed agents or otherwise for the discharge of such functions.

### **Empirical Review**

Nwobu (2008) did a study on local government administration and service delivery: a comparative analysis of elected and appointed councils in Awka South Local Government Area. The study adopted descriptive survey design and the result showed that the inability of the local government to provide social services to the grassroots was because council's chairmen were answerable to the governor and not the people. Similarly, in a study done by Ezeh and Muanya (2013), it was found that the state government has taken over the functions and revenue yielding sources of the local government through the appointment of caretaker committee in managing the affairs of the councils thereby eroding the autonomy of the local government as the third tier of government in Nigeria. In a related study, Fatile, Fajonyomi and Adejuwon (2017) did an empirical review of state-local government fiscal relations and grassroots development in selected LGAs in Lagos State. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The result showed that revenue allocation modules between and among the three levels of government have attendant problems on grassroots development in Nigeria and also that with proper fiscal responsibility exercised

by those entrusted with public fund, there would be a positive effect on service delivery in the localities. Akani (2017) did a theoretical appraisal of local government administration and grassroots development in Nigeria. The study which was designed as a content analysis found that the object of the 1976 local government reform has become a mirage. The ruling class now sees it as a patrimony to satisfy political allies and cronies through the award of contracts and political appointments. The study concludes that the local government should be development oriented through the application of democratic etiquette and good governance. Adebayo (2014) investigated the issues in local government and the challenges of rural development in Nigeria. The study which adopted content analysis found that non-involvement of the local dwellers in policy decisions and hijack of local government allocations by the state government are some of the reasons that the local governments are not providing the necessary services to their constituent localities. In another study, Okafor, Chukwuemeka and Udenta (2015) investigated a developmental local government as a model for grassroots socio-economic development in Nigeria. The study which adopted content analysis revealed that the abuse of the constitutional provisions and lack of commitment have negatively affected the development of the grassroots in the local government areas in Nigeria. In a related study, Odo (2014) examined the local government and the challenges of grassroots development in Nigeria. The study adopted content analysis and it found that local governments have performed far below expectations in rural/grassroot development. It concludes that despite the poor performance, local government is still best suited to engender development at the local level hence the urgent and compelling need to fix the local government system in order to enhance its service delivery capacity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts structural functionalism theory as its theoretical framework. In its simplest form, structural-functionalism “sets out to interpret society as a structure with interrelated parts” with each structure performing role function. The failure of one structure leads to dysfunctionality or disorderliness in the system. Structural-functionalists like Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell posited that for proper understanding of the structures (institutions) in the society, there is need to place them in a meaningful and dynamic historical context ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/structural\\_functionalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/structural_functionalism)).

Situated within the present study, the above postulations have relevant applicability in understanding and analyzing service delivery in Nigerian local governments. Local governments are structures created in Nigeria to perform specific functions that will help bring government closer to the people. As advised by Almond and Powell, historical study of local governments in Nigeria from its traditional forms like the traditional political system, Native Authority and modern local government systems has brought to fore some of the service delivery functions of local governments in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the idea of dysfunctionality or disorderliness advanced by structural functionalists could be used in explaining the incapacity of local governments to deliver services to the people in a timely, adequate and satisfactory manner. As a system consisting of interrelated parts or components, local governments cannot exist in isolations. Put differently, Local Government Councils in Nigeria consist of departments like works, land, survey and housing; agricultural and natural resources; health, education and social services; administration; budget and statistics and treasury. Each of these departments must

interact together to keep the local government moving and effective. Besides, the interactions within the local government milieu, interactions with bodies like the federal government, states, local service commissions, local government councils, rural communities and others must be sustained in an atmosphere of intergovernmental relations aimed at delivering quality service in a timely, satisfactory, honest, effective and transparent manner. To justify the reasons for creating local governments, local government spending, functions performed by local government workers, interactions between and among its component parts, projects executed by local governments should be aimed at “providing the basic services to which each citizen is entitled in a timely, fair, honest, effective and transparent manner” (‘Servicom and the citizen’, [www.servinigeria.com](http://www.servinigeria.com)).

Nigerians have the right to be served right whether at federal, state or local government levels. So, ‘dysfunctionalism’ in the operations of local governments in Nigeria can be corrected through identifying factors that have hampered service delivery and making appropriate prescriptions (recommendations) based on the findings of the study.

#### Study Location

The capital city of Nigeria, Abuja (/ə'bu:dʒə/), is situated in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) at coordinates 9.0765° N, 7.3986° E in the country's centre. While the majority of the FCT's landmass was taken from Niger State, the majority of it was also taken from the present-day states of Nasarawa (an Old Plateau state) and Kogi (an Old Plateau state). The area of Abuja is 1,769 km<sup>2</sup>. Although Abuja was established as Nigeria's capital on February 3, 1976, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida replaced Lagos, the nation's most populated city, as the capital on December 12, 1991 (President of Nigeria 1985- 1993).

Abuja has been linked to many sized territorial divisions. The town of Abuja is the first established by a man named Abu Ja, a descendant of Zaria's 54th Sarkin (Temple, 1965). 13 miles south of Izom, the town—named for its founder—was situated next to a River Ikutributary. The Abuja emirate's territory towards the end of the 19th century was substantially larger than what the local authorities had drawn when they met Lugard in 1904 (Hassan & Na'ibi, 1952). Examining the Federal Capital Territory's schedule, we see that Abuja is significantly bigger than the former Abuja town, which belongs within the Federal Capital Territory, and smaller than the Abuja Emirate during the height of the territory's growth on the outskirts of the new Federal capital territory (FCDA, 1979).

The Federal Capital Territory is administered by the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and the FCT Minister is the political administrator of the capital appointed by the President. There are six area councils in the FCT namely: Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abaji, Bwari, Gwagwada, Kwali and Kure area councils. The area councils are administered by an Executive chairman elected through popular suffrage. He is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the council. He disburses public funds and renders monthly statement of income, expenditure and annual reports to the council. The Vice-Chairman of the council is also elected through popular suffrage, he acts for the chairman in absence. The Legislative arm of the area council is composed of the leader of the council and other councilors. It debates and approves or amends annual budget of the area council, venting and monitoring the implementation of projects amongst other functions.

The Council Secretary is appointed by the Council Chairman and serves as the secretary of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the council and also keeps the records. The

councilors are elected into office and administer the wards of the area council. The Head of Personnel Management Department deals with staffs' performance, their welfare and it is focus on policies. The Works department oversees projects execution in the area council, the council treasurer acts as an information and reference point for the Chairman and other committee members: clarifying financial implications of proposals; confirming legal requirements; outlining the current financial status of the area council etc.

The Head of Internal Audit is responsible for developing internal audit policies, rules, standards, review and appraise budget planning and implementation with a view to promoting the council's goals and objectives. The Head of Environmental Sanitation oversees the compliance of council's decisions on clean and healthy environments. The Head of Primary Health is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining and overseeing of council's clinic – distribution of drugs and other health facilities in the council. The Head of Agricultural Department is in-charge of the distribution of fertilizers, seeds etc to the farmers either on loan or free as a way of the council's policy of eradicating food insecurity. The Head of Education and Special Duties is responsible oversees the distribution of learning materials to schools within the council, provision of scholarships to brilliant indigent students of the area council.

### **Some of the Key Rural Projects Executed in Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali Area Councils of FCT**

The following tables below constitute some of the key capital projects executed by successive area councils in partnership with donors from 2010 – 2024:

#### **Rural Electrification**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Benefiting Communities</b>
I	Installation of relieve 250KVA Transformer	Phase 1, Gwagwalada
ii	On-going Electrification Project	Giri Village, Gwagwalada
iii	Electrification project	Angwan-Dodo, Gwagwalada
v	Installation of 500/11 KVA Village Electrification Project	Paiko, Gwagwalada
v	Installation of 500/11 KVA Transformer	Stadium lay-out, Gwagwalada
vi	Extension of Electricity	Tungan-Maje Village, Gwagwalada
vii	Installation of relieve 500/11 KVA Transformer	Kuje
viii	Extension of Electricity	Paikan-Kore Village, Gwagwalada
ix	Extension of Rural electrification	Paiko/Ibwa
x	Biogas electricity	Rije and Kuyizhi, Kure
xi	Mini-grid power plants	Petti village, Kwali
xii	Street Light (Solar powered)	Several communities across selected area councils in FCT

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

**Housing/Roads/Bridges/Culverts**

S/N	Project Name	Benefiting Communities
i.	Road Rehabilitation	Anagada Community, Gwagwalada
ii	Road Rehabilitation	Dagiri, Gwagwalada
iii	Construction of Road	Ibwa, Gwagwalada
iv	Rehabilitation of Abattoir Brigde	Kutunku, Gwagwalada
v.	Construction of FRCN Road	Kutunku, Gwagwalada
vi.	Sport and Civic centre	Kaida, Gwagwalada
vii	Culvert construction	Godoji, Kuje
viii	Construction of roads	Anguwar and Damakusa, Kuje
ix	Construction of Borehole and drainage	Robochi, Kwali
x	60-Meter bridge construction	Jeida, Gbesan, Kure

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

**C. Health Facilities**

S/N	Project Name	Benefiting Communities
i.	Building of Primary Health Clinic	Angwan Dodo, Gwagwalada
ii.	Renovation and Fencing of Primary Health Clinic	Gwako Village, Gwagwalada
iii.	Building of Health Centre	Zuba, Gwagwalada
iv.	Fencing and Landscaping of Health Centre	Tunga-Maje, Gwagwalada
v.	Provision of health care centre	Paikon-Kore, Gwagwalada
vi.	Renovation of Primary Health Care Centre	Kuje

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

**Economic Empowerment**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Bursary Award</b>	<b>Benefiting Communities</b>
i.	Bursary Awards	Indigents undergraduates of Gwagwalada
ii.	Organizing Skills Acquisition Programmes	Dobi and Pagada
iii.	Micro credit empowerment scheme	Students and Market women in Kuje and Kwali

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

Education

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Benefiting Communities</b>
i.	Building of UBE Primary school	Kutunku
ii.	Construction of one block of two classroom UBE Primary school	Kutunku
iii.	Provision of new desks, chairs and newly constructed classrooms for LEA school	Pagada 2
iv.	Block of two classrooms and a head teacher office, Ventilated improved pit toilet	Dako

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

Motor Parks

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Benefiting Communities</b>
i.	Construction of Modern Motor Park	Dobi

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

Agriculture

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Benefiting Communities</b>
i.	Procurement of Tractors for Agriculture services	Kuje
ii.	Provision of fertilizers to rural farmers at subsidized rate	Gawagwala

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

Water Supply

S/N	Project Name	Benefiting Communities
i.	Provision of Water Overhead Tank	Zuba
ii.	Provision of Water Overhead Tank	Ikwa
iii.	Overhead Water Tank	Tsauni Village
iv.	Installation of Council Secretariat Overhead Water Tank	Council Secretariat
v.	Solar Energy-Power Water Supply Scheme	Tungan-Maje
vi.	Water Scheme	Dobi

Source: Research Compilation (2024)

Despite all these projects undertaken by successive administration, many rural communities lack basic social and economic infrastructures. Residents in area councils have been complaining of some the projects dilapidated state and the inability of the area councils to critically proffer solutions to salvaging these ailing projects or implementing new projects (Abubakar, 2014).

### Methodology

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of structured online survey questionnaire administered to selected residents of Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali area councils of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja-Nigeria. The questionnaire was drafted in a simple worded format for residents to understand the subject of research and also to enable them provide answers. The estimated population of FCT is placed at 3,067,500 and a sample size of 400 using Taro Yarmane formula for determining sample size.

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

where:

n= Calculated sample size,

N = The study population size which is the number of populations of FCT (3067500).

e = The acceptable sampling error shall be 5% assumed.

Thus:

$$\frac{n}{1 + 3067500 \times (0.05)^2} = \frac{3067500}{1 + 3067500 \times (0.05)^2}$$

n = 400.

The researcher adopted simple random sampling to distribute the questionnaire to residents of three area councils namely, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali. The reasons for selecting



these three area councils is because many rural areas are found in these places and the study sought to identify local capital projects and their impact on rural development. Data generated through the questionnaire were arranged in tables and analyzed using simple percentage and mean average.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were distributed local residents in selected area councils in FCT, Abuja. However, only 387 copies were properly filled and submitted to the researcher. Therefore, the analysis was based on the 387 retrieved by the researcher. The table 1 below shows the response rate of the distributed copies of questionnaire:

**Table 1: Response Rate of Administered Questionnaire**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Wrongly Filled	13	3.2	3.2	3.2
Accurately filled	387	96.8	96.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (October, 2024).

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Level of satisfaction of residents as regards rural development projects executed in FCT, Abuja**

Items	Sample Size	Mean	Decision
I am fully aware of key projects executed by area council administration where I reside	387	3.4	Not Sure
Local projects are always borne out of the need to enhance rural development	387	3.1	Not Sure
I am satisfied with the economic empowerment projects executed in my local area	387	1.8	Rejected
I am very satisfied with the roads, culvert or bridges constructed in my local area	387	1.9	Rejected
Local population have been able to access quality health care services	387	2.0	Rejected
Educational projects executed in my local area by the government and donors have been satisfactory	387	2.4	Rejected
I am always satisfied with the approach area council execute developmental projects	387	2.7	Rejected
<b>Grand Mean = 2.4 (Rejected)</b>			

Source: Computed Data (SPSS Version 23).

Table 2 displayed the responses of respondents on the level of satisfaction towards rural developmental projects executed in selected area councils in FCT, Abuja. From the result,

there was no consensus on whether local residents are fully aware of key projects executed by area councils' administration where they reside as revealed by the mean score of 3.4 (Not Sure). The mean score of 3.1 (Not Sure) indicated that there was no consensus on the issue on whether local projects are always borne out of the need enhance rural development. Majority of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the economic empowerment projects in their local areas as shown by the mean score of 1.8 (Rejected). Majority of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the kind of roads, culvert or bridges projects executed by the area council's administration as this is shown by the mean score of 1.9 (Rejected). The mean score of 2.0 (Rejected) clearly show that majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the health care service delivery in their local areas. Educational projects executed in my local area by the government and their partners have not been very satisfactory as revealed by the mean score of 2.4 (Rejected). Majority of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the approach area council execute developmental projects as shown by the mean score of 2.7 (Rejected). The overall mean result of 2.4 (Rejected) clearly showed that majority of the local residents are not satisfied with the local projects executed in the selected area councils within the Federal Capital Territory.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of factors affecting project execution in the area councils in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Poor project conception	387	4.6	Accepted
Poor planning	387	4.3	Accepted
Misappropriation of funds	387	4.5	Accepted
Inadequate monitoring and evaluation	387	4.1	Accepted
Inadequate project management experts	387	3.3	Not Sure
Delay in the release of project funds	387	4.0	Accepted
Use or purchase of substandard materials	387	3.4	Not Sure
Poor Funding and Revenue generation base	387	3.5	Not Sure
Poor collaboration with non-governmental organisations and other foreign donors project	387	4.0	Accepted
Awareness of the projects executed and their benefits to improving rural development	387	4.3	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean = 4.0 (Accepted)</b>			

Source: Computed Data (SPSS Version 23).

Table 3 displayed the descriptive statistics of factors affecting project execution in the area councils in FCT, Abuja. Factors such as poor project conception, poor planning, misappropriation of funds, inadequate monitoring and evaluation of projects and delay in the release of funds and poor collaboration with non-governmental organisations, other foreign donors project and awareness of the projects executed and their benefits to improving rural development significantly affect project execution as shown in their respective mean scores of 4.6, 4.3, 4.5, 4.1, 4.0, 4.0 and 4.3. There were no consensus on whether inadequate project experts, use or purchase of substandard materials and poor funding and revenue base affect project execution as revealed in their respective mean scores of 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. The overall mean score of 4.0 (Accepted) clearly indicated that these highlighted factors have significantly influence on project execution in the selected area councils of FCT, Abuja.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings revealed area councils were not effective in driving grassroots development due to the dissatisfaction expressed by the local residents. Local government is the closet tier of government to the people in Nigeria, yet the local population has been denied the benefits of its existence. Despite the efforts made by area councils administration in FCT, there are still many social infrastructures in dilapidated form. Local residents are dissatisfied with the roads, culvert and other physical infrastructures to enhance development. These findings corroborated with that of Olusola (2011) who posited that educational and health care facilities have been in shambles and inadequate in the local government area. Developmental projects are actually completed on time, but the study reveals that they are inadequate to cater for the needs of the rural dwellers. The study findings revealed that there are factors affecting project execution and improvement of rural development. From the findings of the study, poor project conception and poor planning significantly affect project execution and the enhancement of rural development. These findings collaborated with that of Akande (2018) and Nweze (2016) revealed that many developmental projects in Nigeria have failed because of inadequate plan conception. Besides, shortage of project management experts and delay in release of project execution funds to resulted to poor service delivery on the part of area councils. According to Onah (2002), the problems of efficient personnel has affected the performance of many local government areas. Onah (2002) pointed at political interference from the states and the influence of ethnicity, favoritisms and nepotism which is shown in the way projects are allocated and executed. The local government councils have a number of functions to perform within their area of jurisdiction. It ranges from economic to social functions. Performing these functions in themselves can be employment generating". But unfortunately, most local government are lagging behind in performing their functions. Because employees are not always getting the desired professional personnel management to effectively utilize them. One of the functions of the local government is to enhance the socio-economic life of its citizens. According to the findings from the study, it was revealed that many residents complained that area councils have not much in terms of creating economic empowerment schemes (job opportunities and in the area of vocational skills acquisition programme) to empower the youths economically. Every organization needs training to empower their employees to understand the objectives and goals of their organization and to function effectively. The study findings revealed that there is a

disconnect between the local residents of the area councils and projects being executed. This disconnect is caused by the irregular dissatisfaction of the rural dwellers. Local government has not really facilitated rapid development at the grassroots, which is the essence of their creation (Amaechi, 2012). This statement corroborated with the findings of the study that area councils has been underperforming because of inadequate funds. Funds needed to carry out huge development projects are not usually available. The capacity to harness the natural resource in the local government is inadequate and this has affected the amount of funds to the local government. The allocation of Federation Account is not enough to carry out developmental projects in all the political wards of the local government. The collaboration of partnership of area councils with other organisations providing social services is poor according to the findings from the analysis. There are several social service providers such as Non-Governmental Organisations who are ready to provide free health care services, skills acquisition trainings and other services.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The invaluable role of the local government is anchored on the attendant development it brings nearer to the people. The local people have the right to good governance by benefitting from developmental projects executed by their local leaders. The study concludes that residents in the selected area councils in FCT are not adequately satisfied with the execution of developmental projects. Some of the reasons for their dissatisfaction include poor execution of educational, health care services, poor road construction and the approach adopted by the area councils to executing developmental projects. Also, significant factors have contributed to the execution of projects in FCT and some of these include poor project conception, poor planning, inadequate project experts and poor collaboration with non-governmental organisations and other foreign donors to execute projects. In improving project execution and rural development in the Federal Capital Territory, adequate measures such as proper project conception, adequate and comprehensive project planning, involvement of project management experts, prompt release of project funds, efficient collaboration with non-governmental organisations and foreign donors, improved funding and revenue generation base as well as creating awareness using social media on the projects executed and their benefits to improving rural development.

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## OIL PRODUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE NIGER-DELTA REGION: SYNERGIC IMPLICATION AND ADAPTATION

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*Abstract: This study examines the interplay between oil production activities and climate change in the Niger Delta Region (NDR), highlighting the resulting environmental, socioeconomic, and infrastructural vulnerabilities. The NDR, rich in natural resources and central to Nigeria's petroleum and gas industry, paradoxically suffers from environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and stagnated socioeconomic growth. Employing the vulnerability-resilience framework, rooted in socio-environmental studies, the research explores the intersection of oil production and climate change, emphasizing the disruption of ecological balance and the need for resilience-building. Oil production has intensified environmental degradation, exacerbated climate change, and posed challenges such as health risks, socioeconomic disruption, and reduced livelihoods. This synergistic relationship has deepened the region's vulnerability, especially in coastal oil-host communities. Efforts to adapt and mitigate these impacts have yielded limited success due to persistent vulnerability driven by national revenue priorities and the unchecked expansion of oil production. The study underscores the urgent need for innovative, community-centered adaptation strategies and a climate-induced migration framework tailored to the coastal oil-host communities. These approaches require collaboration among governments, oil industries, local communities, and international organizations. By addressing the specific vulnerabilities of the region, these measures can improve the resilience and quality of life for local communities, support sustainable development, and restore ecological balance.*

*Keywords: Vulnerability, Resilience and Adaptation.*

### **Introduction**

The Niger Delta Region (NDR) of Nigeria is one of the world's largest wetlands, rich in oil resources and biodiversity. It is the most ecologically diverse area in Nigeria, supporting aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, mangrove forests, and serving as the economic hub of the country due to its vast oil reserves. These reserves have placed Nigeria among the top global crude oil producers. The region's biodiversity is essential for maintaining ecological balance and sustaining livelihoods, while oil production has been the backbone of Nigeria's economy, significantly contributing to GDP and foreign earnings.

Despite its economic importance, the NDR faces severe climate challenges due to its unique topography and its role as a focal point for the interaction between human activities

and climate change. This has created a vicious cycle of environmental degradation and socioeconomic instability, driven by oil industry operations and climate change effects. The region's vulnerability to these combined pressures undermines its ecological balance and hinders sustainable development.

The NDR's mangrove forests provide crucial ecological, economic, and social benefits, such as serving as habitats for diverse species, protecting shorelines, and acting as a carbon sink to mitigate climate change. However, oil spills and gas flaring from exploration and extraction activities pose significant threats, causing deforestation, habitat loss, and increased greenhouse gas emissions. These issues, combined with the region's low-lying topography, make it highly susceptible to climate impacts such as erratic rainfall, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events, which disrupt ecosystems, infrastructure, and livelihoods.

The consequences of oil production, including spills and gas flaring, exacerbate natural climate impacts such as coastal erosion, flooding, and biodiversity loss, leading to environmental migration and conflicts. For example, oil spills contaminate farmland, rivers, and lakes, depleting fish stocks and destroying crops, which increases food insecurity for rural communities reliant on fishing and farming. With growing populations in oil-host communities, the degradation and pollution associated with fossil fuel extraction have become a local and international concern, making the NDR one of the most vulnerable oil-producing regions globally.

While various climate adaptation strategies have been introduced, the region continues to struggle with escalating environmental vulnerabilities and a lack of socio-economic and infrastructural development, despite its economic contributions to the nation. Although much research has explored the impacts of oil production in the NDR, less attention has been paid to the interconnected effects of oil activities and climate change on the region's vulnerabilities. This paper investigates this intricate relationship, focusing on adaptation strategies to build resilience and promote sustainable development while addressing the unique challenges faced by the oil communities in the Niger Delta.

## **Literature / Conceptual Framework**

### *The NDR*

The Niger Delta Region (NDR) comprises nine states located along Nigeria's southern Atlantic coastline within the tributaries of the River Niger. These include Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers (the core NDR states), as well as Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Abia, Imo, and Ondo. Covering an estimated land area of 110,445.98 km<sup>2</sup> (Uyigue & Agho, 2007), the region is densely populated, with over 30 million residents speaking approximately 250 distinct dialects. Situated in Nigeria's low-lying wetlands, the NDR is highly susceptible to environmental challenges, including erratic and intense rainfall patterns and increased erosion, both of which are exacerbated by climate change. It is recognized as one of the most polluted regions globally (Mbachu, 2020).

Figure 1: The Oil Producing Niger-Delta region.



The map of Nigeria highlights the oil-producing states of the Niger Delta Region (NDR), excluding offshore production beyond the continental shelf's lower limit (Ite, Ibok, Ite, & Petters). Historically, the NDR was renowned for its rich agricultural production and was a major producer of palm oil. Known as "Oil Rivers," it served as a British Protectorate from 1898 until 1893, when it became the Niger Coast Protectorate (Otoabasi & Akpan, 2011). However, the advent of crude oil exploration marked a shift from agricultural dominance to oil extraction, transforming the region into the economic cornerstone of Nigeria. The discovery of high-quality crude oil in 1956 at Oloibiri, now in Bayelsa State, catalyzed oil commercialization, with the first export in 1958 and the establishment of an oil terminal at Bonny Island, Rivers State, in 1965 by Shell-BP (UNEP, 2011). The region became home to numerous international oil companies, with Shell Petroleum Development Company taking the lead since the 1950s. Oil production in the NDR has positioned Nigeria as one of the leading global oil producers and a significant player in the multinational oil industry. The sector contributes approximately 90% of Nigeria's foreign earnings, about 70% of government revenue, and, at its peak, produced over 2 million barrels of oil daily (Okonta & Douglas, 2009).

Despite these economic benefits, the Niger Delta communities bear the brunt of oil production's ecological and social impacts. The region suffers from severe environmental degradation, poverty, unemployment, and a lack of sustainable infrastructure, which have fueled tensions and conflicts. Aggrieved communities, disconnected from the wealth generated by oil, have formed militant groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) to demand resource control and justice (Ikelegbe, 2007). The oil industry's operations, including oil spills and unrelenting gas flaring, have made the Niger Delta one of the most polluted regions on earth, posing significant threats to ecosystem health and sustainable development.



The environmental challenges are compounded by climate change, which costs Nigeria an estimated \$100 billion annually a figure projected to rise to \$460 billion by 2050 (Angalapu, 2023). These dual pressures of oil production and climate change expose the Niger Delta's fragile ecosystem to the risk of collapse, necessitating a balance between Nigeria's economic interests and environmental protection.

Efforts to build resilience and adapt to recurring climate change impacts intertwined with oil production activities have been implemented, but challenges persist. The concepts of vulnerability and resilience are crucial for understanding how individuals, groups, or communities respond to stressors and adverse conditions. Vulnerability refers to the susceptibility to harm from hazards and limited capacity to manage associated risks (IPCC, 2014). It encompasses social, economic, and environmental dimensions influencing how communities experience and respond to crises (Wisner et al., 2004). Conversely, resilience is the adaptive capacity of communities to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from adverse events, supported by social networks, governance, and available resources (Adger, 2006). Resilience involves self-organization, adaptation, and learning processes in response to disruptions (IPCC, 2014; Manyena, 2006).

Understanding the complex and dynamic relationship between vulnerability and resilience is key to developing effective adaptation policies and measures to address the intertwined challenges of climate change and oil production in the Niger Delta.

Adaptation to climate change refers to the process of adjusting to the challenges and impacts resulting from global climate variations. It involves implementing strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change, whether caused by natural variability or human activities. The primary goal of adaptation is to address ecosystem challenges and help individuals and communities adjust to new realities brought about by climate change by either minimizing its negative impacts or maximizing potential benefits. The Niger Delta Region (NDR) is particularly vulnerable due to ongoing environmental degradation caused by oil production activities, including oil spills and gas flaring. These activities exacerbate the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, erosion, and rising sea levels, resulting in significant ecological and social challenges. Consequently, adaptation strategies are critical for addressing the unique and complex socio-environmental challenges faced by the region.

This study adopts the vulnerability-resilience theoretical framework to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interconnected challenges posed by oil production and climate change, as well as to inform policies and adaptation initiatives in the NDR. This framework, widely used today, integrates the concepts of vulnerability and resilience to evaluate the adaptability and risk exposure of socio-ecological systems. It emerged from disaster and socio-environmental studies, drawing on diverse disciplines, including sociology, ecology, economics, and social sciences. Foundational works by scholars such as C. S. Holling (1973), Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith (1982), and Norman Garnezy (1971) demonstrated that not all individuals exposed to vulnerabilities experience the same outcomes, leading to questions about factors that enable positive adaptation and laying the groundwork for resilience studies as a counterpoint to vulnerability.

By the 20th century, the framework evolved to emphasize the complexity and interconnectedness of vulnerability and resilience, recognizing that they are not opposing concepts but interdependent processes shaped by social and environmental factors (Manyena, 2006). For example, high vulnerability can reduce resilience by limiting access

to critical resources, information, and support systems. Conversely, enhancing resilience through improved infrastructure, education, and social networks can mitigate vulnerability (Nunes et al., 2021). The framework highlights the interrelatedness of social, economic, and environmental systems, showing how degradation and socioeconomic inequalities undermine resilience and how sustainable practices and community engagement can enhance it.

In this study, the framework is instrumental in examining how oil production and climate change exacerbate environmental degradation and socioeconomic inequalities in the NDR. It also explores strategies to build resilience and restore ecological balance. The region's persistent vulnerability stems from the dual impacts of oil production and climate change, including environmental degradation, health risks, and socio-economic instability. While oil production amplifies natural climate vulnerabilities, climate change intensifies vulnerabilities caused by oil activities, creating a cycle that threatens the region's socioeconomic systems. The framework underscores the importance of sustainable practices and responsible resource management to systematically address vulnerabilities and enhance resilience. It calls for adaptation strategies, such as improved governance structures, community engagement, and collective responses, to mitigate challenges and restore ecological balance in the Niger Delta. By highlighting the interconnected nature of social, economic, and environmental systems, the framework provides a deeper understanding of the region's adaptive capacity and informs solutions for tackling the dual challenges of oil production and climate change. This approach enhances the region's ability to cope with or recover from disruptions while promoting sustainable development and resilience-building efforts.

### **Oil Production and Climate Change In NDR**

Decades of oil exploration and industrial activities have severely impacted the Niger Delta region due to persistent gas flaring and oil spills associated with extraction, refining, transportation, and storage of petroleum. Gas flaring, a key component of oil extraction, significantly contributes to air pollution and climate change, creating a complex interplay that heightens the region's vulnerability. This vulnerability is further aggravated by the illegal bunkering of petroleum products and vandalism of oil pipelines, which result in frequent spills. These activities endanger the region's highly diverse ecosystems that support numerous species of terrestrial and aquatic fauna and flora, posing risks such as food insecurity, increased morbidity, and mortality (Agbozu & Oghama, 2021).

Nigeria ranks as the highest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in Africa, with the Niger Delta accounting for a substantial share of the country's carbon dioxide emissions (Anaglapu, 2023). Gas flaring remains a dominant source of GHG emissions in the region and is a common practice during natural gas release to enable oil extraction and enhance production. Despite regulatory efforts to curb gas flaring, the practice persists across many parts of the Niger Delta, contributing to localized air pollution and global climate change (Egbebum, Ekpe, & Adejumo, 2013).

Gas flaring significantly increases the region's susceptibility to climate change impacts, particularly due to its fragile ecosystems and unregulated human activities. This has led to widespread air and water pollution, ecosystem destruction, and adverse effects on human health. For example, the consistent rise in carbon monoxide emissions from 2016 to 2021, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, illustrates how persistent gas flaring has fueled global

warming, with profound environmental consequences for the Niger Delta, the hub of Nigeria’s oil industry.

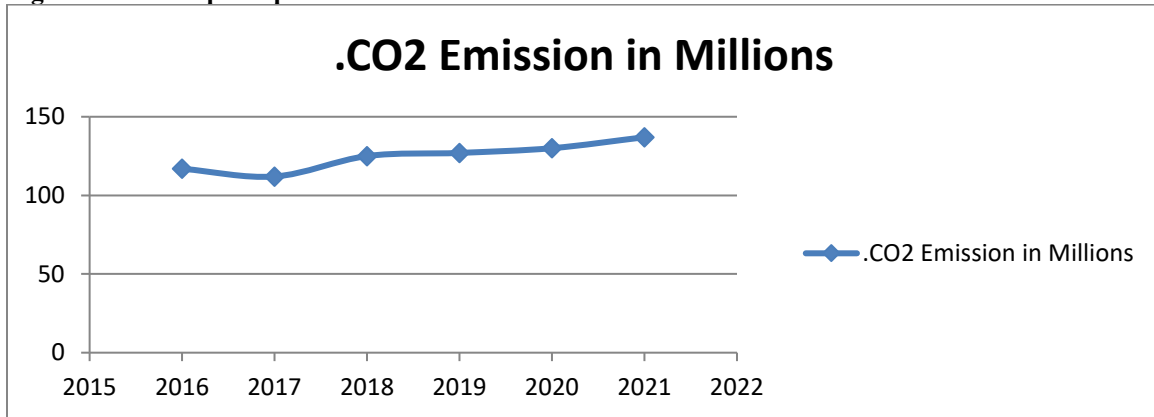
In essence, the drive to sustain government revenue through increased oil production exacerbates gas flaring, escalating air pollution and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta. This dynamic underscore the region's growing vulnerability to climate change and the urgent need for sustainable interventions to mitigate its adverse impacts.

**Table 1: Carbon dioxide (CO2) Emissions in Nigeria: 2016-2021**

Year	.CO <sub>2</sub> Emission in Millions
2016	116.95
2017	112.01
2018	125.01
2019	127.01
2020	130.01
2021	136.99

Source: Hannah &Max (2021).

**Figure 2 The Graph Representation**



Source: Author’s Design, 2024

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2011) highlighted the devastating impact of oil spills, noting that affected land becomes not only unproductive for activities like farming and fishing but also hazardous to all forms of life. Specifically referencing Ogoni land in the Niger Delta Region (NDR), the report emphasized how aging oil industry infrastructure frequently suffers damage, causing spillages that contaminate water sources and destroy agricultural land. Amnesty International (2009) reported that the region has endured over 7,000 oil spills between 1970 and 2000, coupled with gas flaring and deforestation, severely undermining local livelihoods. These oil industry activities threaten ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and harm the livelihoods of communities that depend on these natural resources for survival.

Petroleum exploration has caused extensive damage to forests and mangrove ecosystems in the Niger Delta. Oil pollution has also severely impaired the region's wetlands, which are crucial for natural flood control and mitigating climate change impacts (Olukaejire, Ifora, Osaro, Osuji, & Hart, 2024). Studies reveal that oil spills and gas flaring have dire socio-economic consequences, particularly in food security, health risks, and overall livelihoods (Onyema & Sam, 2020; Numbere, 2018; Nriagu, 2011; Agbonifo, 2016). The

Niger Delta's low-lying topography makes it particularly vulnerable to climate change phenomena such as erratic rainfall, erosion, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise. Decades of oil exploration have exacerbated these vulnerabilities, with climate change intensifying oil spills and gas flaring, leading to severe degradation of land and resources. Increased rainfall intensity and flooding, driven by climate change, damage vegetation critical for agriculture and disrupt oil production, further aggravating spillages. These disruptions have severe implications for species survival, with oil exploration releasing harmful chemicals into water bodies and threatening regional livelihoods.

Flooding, a persistent issue in the Niger Delta, can inundate oil facilities, cause spills, and hinder transportation (Uyigue & Agho, 2007). Climate-induced soil erosion and irregular rainfall patterns have devastating effects on crop yields, undermining food security. The contamination of farmland and soil by oil production compounds this issue, making farming increasingly unviable in the region (Efe, 2011). Rising sea levels and flooding also pose significant risks to human settlements and natural habitats. According to the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet, 2014), sea levels in the Niger Delta could rise by 0.2 to 1 meter by the century's end, potentially submerging vast portions of the region. This scenario threatens farming and fishing-based livelihoods and increases displacement and migration, creating public health crises.

The Niger Delta, as a coastal and riverine area, faces erosion challenges intensified by climate change. However, the combined effects of climate-induced events and oil extraction practices have worsened erosion, leading to the loss of agricultural land, destruction of homes, and the displacement of coastal communities. The degradation of mangrove forests further exposes the region's biodiversity to storm surges and environmental destruction (Awosika & Folorunsho, 2011). Changes in the climate also create significant health risks in the Niger Delta. Rising temperatures foster conditions conducive to mosquito breeding, increasing the prevalence of malaria. Oil spills that contaminate water sources lead to frequent outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid. The interaction between oil production activities and climate change has profound implications for environmental stability, socio-economic development, and human well-being in the region. This interconnectedness exacerbates poverty, intensifies competition for dwindling resources, and fuels social unrest. Addressing these intertwined challenges requires comprehensive adaptation measures that synchronize efforts to mitigate the dual impacts of oil production and climate change.

### **The Synergistic Relationship and Implications**

The interplay between oil production and climate change creates a cyclical feedback loop where the environmental damage caused by oil activities intensifies climate change, which in turn disrupts oil production and exacerbates vulnerability to its impacts. While oil production is a major driver of climate change, the resulting changes in climate conditions negatively affect oil production activities, posing serious challenges to environmental sustainability and climate mitigation efforts.

### **Contributions of Oil Production to Climate Change**

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions:** The oil industry is a significant source of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane, released during extraction, refining, and the burning of fossil fuels. Gas flaring, a common practice in oil production, emits toxic

gases like CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, and sulfur dioxide, contributing to climate change, respiratory diseases, and acid rain (Olukaejire, Ifora, Osaro, Osuji, & Hart, 2024). These emissions intensify the greenhouse effect, leading to global warming and subsequent climate disruptions, such as sea-level rise, which severely impacts coastal populations dependent on freshwater resources (IPCC, 2014).

**Habitat Destruction:** Oil exploration often involves the indiscriminate clearing of forests and wetlands, resulting in significant habitat loss. This exposes regions to climate change impacts such as erratic rainfall, frequent flooding, and accelerated coastal erosion. The destruction of vegetation and mangrove ecosystems has profound implications for species survival and environmental resilience (Olukaejire et al., 2024).

**Pollution:** Frequent oil spills and other pollution from oil production degrade ecosystems, reducing their capacity to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and exacerbating climate-related issues. Oil spills render affected land unfit for farming and fishing, while contaminated water and soil threaten local livelihoods and health (UNEP, 2011; Numbere, 2018). The destruction of carbon-sequestering ecosystems, such as mangroves and wetlands, further accelerates greenhouse gas accumulation.

#### Climate Change Impacts on Oil Production

**Disruption of Oil Activities:** Changing climate conditions, such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and intensified rainfall, cause significant damage to oil infrastructure, leading to production outages and increased costs. Coastal flooding and storm surges pose risks to offshore platforms and facilities, raising the likelihood of operational disruptions and environmental disasters (IPCC, 2014).

**Ecosystem Degradation:** Climate change exacerbates flooding, erosion, and other natural disasters, further damaging oil facilities and increasing oil spills. Flooding and saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources disrupt both oil production and community livelihoods, with severe consequences for agriculture and fishing (Arausi & Otite, 2022).

**Socioeconomic Impacts:** The combined effects of oil production and climate change deepen poverty and create significant challenges for local communities, particularly women, who are disproportionately affected by flooding and environmental degradation. Loss of agricultural land and declining fish populations threaten food security and economic stability in the region.

**Environmental Degradation** The Niger Delta Region (NDR) is among the most heavily impacted areas globally due to decades of oil exploration. Oil spills have polluted soils to depths exceeding five meters, contaminating groundwater aquifers (UNEP, 2011). The destruction of mangroves, which act as natural barriers against erosion and flooding, exposes the region to greater climate vulnerability. Gas flaring, deforestation, and infrastructure development for oil extraction contribute to biodiversity loss, ecosystem disruption, and water contamination, further aggravating the impacts of climate change.

As oil production and climate change exacerbate one another, the region faces severe environmental degradation, health risks, and socio-economic disruption. The degradation of mangroves and forests undermines ecosystem productivity, while pollution and habitat destruction impede agricultural and fishery activities, jeopardizing local livelihoods. The Niger Delta's dependence on oil revenue has come at the cost of its natural environment, with urgent adaptation and mitigation measures needed to address these interconnected challenges.

**Health Risks:** Climate change significantly exacerbates health challenges in the Niger Delta, especially through its interplay with oil production. Environmental degradation in the region exposes communities to waterborne diseases, respiratory issues, and malnutrition (Ebegbulem et al., 2013). Gas flaring, a widespread practice in oil production, releases harmful gases like carbon dioxide, methane, and sulfur dioxide. These pollutants contribute to respiratory illnesses, acid rain, and global warming (Olukaejire, Ifora, Osaro, Osuji, & Hart, 2024). Additionally, the degradation of ecosystems reduces the region's capacity for carbon sequestration, intensifying climate change impacts (Obasohan, 2008). The local population often suffers severe health consequences from exposure to oil pollution, contaminated water, and air pollution caused by unregulated crude oil activities. Moslen and Aigberua (2018) highlight the rise in heavy metal contamination of soil, plants, and groundwater, which directly affects human health. The Niger Delta's high daily discharge of heat estimated at 45.8 billion kilowatts renders some areas almost uninhabitable (Omale, 2021). Acid rain, resulting from gas flaring, is a regular occurrence in the region, further degrading air quality and increasing health risks. These activities undermine ecosystem health, depriving communities of traditional livelihoods like farming and fishing, which have been disrupted since the onset of oil exploration.

#### **Socio-Economic and Infrastructural Vulnerability**

The combined effects of climate change and oil production create a complex web of environmental, economic, and social disruptions, fostering ecological imbalance in the Niger Delta. These activities increase the region's vulnerability to environmental hazards and economic instability, disrupting livelihoods and hindering national development. Coastal communities face displacement due to sea-level rise and erosion, while oil spills and contamination damage infrastructure and disrupt economic activities. Ocean acidification further harms marine ecosystems, depleting fisheries and coral reefs vital to the local economy.

The region has suffered significant losses from recurrent flooding and erosion, which threaten infrastructure like roads, residential areas, and farmlands. For instance, the catastrophic floods of 2012 and 2022 destroyed farmlands and displaced communities, leading to hunger and economic hardship. Women in Isoko communities, for example, sought refuge in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, as flooded farmlands left them without harvests (Arausi & Otite, 2023). Gas flaring and unmitigated greenhouse gas emissions have also contributed to droughts, biodiversity loss, environmental conflicts, and forced migration (Uzuazo, 2021).

These dual pressures environmental degradation from oil production and climate change—have decimated agricultural productivity and livelihood opportunities, increasing displacement and deepening poverty. The local communities' inability to invest in adaptation measures has left them trapped in an increasingly degraded environment with few resources to combat the impacts of climate change.

#### **Marginalization and Socioeconomic Instability**

The ecological degradation caused by oil production has led to fierce competition for dwindling resources, fueling social tensions and conflicts that threaten the region's socioeconomic stability. Persistent poverty and marginalization of oil-producing communities exacerbate the problem. Despite bearing the brunt of environmental degradation, these communities receive little in terms of social benefits or development investments.

Both the Nigerian government and multinational oil corporations have failed to recognize Niger Delta communities as stakeholders in the oil industry. This lack of inclusion has resulted in widespread displacement, poverty, and insecurity. Akpan and Akpabio (2009) argue that unfavorable state policies, politicization of issues, and poor industry practices have perpetuated conflicts in the region. In response, the oil-rich communities have grown increasingly restive, resorting to protests and conflicts to voice their grievances. However, despite local and international adaptation efforts, the vulnerabilities of the Niger Delta remain unaddressed, leaving the region in a cycle of environmental and socio-economic crises.

### **Ascendable Vulnerability and Adaptation Efforts in the NDR.**

The Niger Delta region faces unique and interwoven environmental, economic, and social challenges due to extensive oil production and the escalating impacts of climate change. In response, specific adaptation efforts have been introduced to address environmental degradation, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and public health concerns while fostering resilience among local communities. These initiatives aim to promote socio-economic growth and sustainable development by tackling the root causes of social inequality in the region.

Despite these measures, the region's complex vulnerabilities persist, largely due to the interplay of oil production and unpredictable climate events. Contributing factors include uncontrolled environmental degradation, weak governance, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient social services. Extensive oil production continues to degrade the environment through frequent spills, air pollution, and uncontrolled gas flaring, all exacerbated by the drive to maximize national revenue. These activities lead to biodiversity loss, destruction of farmland, and persistent health risks for local populations. Ajuwo (2013) highlights the weakness of flaring reduction regulations, allowing decades of unchecked emissions that worsen the region's vulnerability. The increasing levels of carbon dioxide emissions in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta, underscore the urgency for stronger environmental health policies and actionable measures to combat global warming.

Additionally, the low-lying topography of the region makes it highly susceptible to the impacts of rising sea levels, flooding, saline intrusion, and erosion. Local communities, reliant on traditional adaptation methods, lack the economic resources, technology, and infrastructure necessary to address these evolving challenges. Industrial networks of aging pipelines exacerbate pollution and contamination, leading to displacement, loss of livelihoods, and heightened health risks.

Governance gaps and weak enforcement of environmental regulations further compound the region's challenges. Fragmentation among regulatory agencies creates inefficiencies and overlaps in addressing environmental hazards. For instance, laws such as the NOSDRA Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act, and the Gas Flaring Prohibition Act are hindered by inadequate funding, corruption, and overlapping responsibilities, resulting in weak enforcement. Illegal activities, such as unregulated backyard refineries, contribute to environmental degradation through oil spills and contamination. Efforts to reduce gas flaring, a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, have been limited by high infrastructure costs and regulatory weaknesses. While the government has introduced initiatives such as the Gas Flaring Prohibition Act, enforcement remains weak, and progress in harnessing flared gas for clean energy has been slow. Ojewale (2021) notes that

the commercialization of flared gas is capital-intensive, and government hesitation has stalled potential partnerships with investors.

The exclusion of host communities from adaptation planning and decision-making processes further undermines the effectiveness of these measures. Marginalization breeds misinformation and limits the adoption of tailored solutions to address the region's unique challenges. Community engagement and capacity-building initiatives supported by stakeholders and NGOs are crucial for increasing local resilience. However, many measures remain insufficient to address the socio-economic pressures and inequalities exacerbated by the dual impacts of oil production and climate change. For instance, restoration initiatives, such as the Ogoniland clean-up under United Nations environmental law, aim to remediate polluted land and water systems. However, these efforts have often been slow and inadequate, leaving the region to grapple with prolonged poverty, food insecurity, and disrupted social services. Despite these challenges, building stronger regulatory frameworks, enforcing environmental standards, and engaging local communities in adaptation strategies are essential to reducing vulnerability and fostering sustainable development in the Niger Delta.

The rising poverty and inequality, driven by limited economic opportunities, have pushed many local residents, particularly men, into illegal activities, often resulting in violence and conflicts that threaten regional security. In response, oil companies have implemented various programs aimed at improving community relations and addressing longstanding grievances and conflicts with host communities, such as the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) and the Host Community Development Trust (HCDDT) (Idowu, 2022). The GMOU is an informal agreement between the oil companies and the communities, often lacking a regulated framework for social responsibility initiatives, which are subject to negotiation and vary across companies. These partnerships aim to provide funding and technical expertise for adaptation projects, with companies like Shell and Chevron involved in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that address both environmental and social challenges. However, while these efforts face limitations, an Amnesty (2022) report states that "despite criticism of their scope and impact, these initiatives remain broader adaptation strategies." The enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021 has introduced a new dynamic in the relationship between operators and host communities, restructuring the management of community relations to foster sustainable participatory needs assessments and development plans that promote community sustainability and reduce environmental degradation (Idowu, 2022). Despite these efforts, Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta remains underdeveloped and one of the most vulnerable regions globally.

**Coastal and Flood Erosion Control:** This includes government projects like shoreline stabilization, including the construction of sea walls and barriers to combat rising sea levels and coastal erosion. These efforts are intended to protect coastal infrastructure and habitats from the destructive forces of climate change-induced erosion and flooding, which are exacerbated by oil production activities. The Nigerian coastal region, including the Niger Delta, is at risk of becoming uninhabitable by 2050 and may be fully submerged by 2100 due to rising sea levels driven by climate change (Jane Johnson, 2021), indicating that the combined impacts of climate change and oil production are overwhelming existing mitigation measures.



The region's continued vulnerability also arises from a lack of local economic diversification in oil-dependent communities. Their over-reliance on oil revenue has stifled the growth of alternative industries, making it difficult for them to recover from the risks posed by oil production and climate change when government measures are inadequate or fail. Livelihood diversification involves creating alternative sources of income for communities that rely on farming and fishing, which are being threatened by ongoing oil pollution and climate events. This approach aims to promote sustainable livelihoods and food security by encouraging non-agricultural ventures and sustainable agricultural practices. It also includes alternative skills training, such as agroforestry and renewable energy, which support climate adaptation and reduce dependence on oil-related industries, thereby mitigating security threats in the region. However, the local population faces significant challenges in acquiring new skills and technologies due to a lack of support for sustainable practices, which further hinders their ability to adapt.

Local oil communities are ill-equipped to adapt to changing climatic conditions due to poverty, limited access to technology, and inadequate infrastructure, all of which exacerbate the dual impacts of oil production and climate change. There is a critical need for investment in community-resilient infrastructure, such as elevated buildings in flood-prone areas, reinforced coastal barriers, and the adoption of innovative technologies in oil production to reduce environmental hazards.

**Promotion of Renewable Energy:** Moving toward renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and biomass power is crucial in reducing the environmental impact of oil production, such as carbon emissions that aggravate climate change in the region. This shift not only diversifies the region's energy mix but also creates opportunities for sustainable employment and economic growth in local communities.

The escalating poverty and socio-economic inequality driven by the combined impacts of oil production and climate change are major contributors to the region's ongoing vulnerability. The synergy of these factors has eroded natural livelihoods, reducing local income and impairing communities' ability to adapt. As a result, many communities remain highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The multinational oil companies, as the primary environmental polluters, disproportionately harm the local populations, who continue to earn their livelihoods amid the pollution.

### **Synergistic Intervention in the NDR**

The link between oil production and climate change remains a central cause of persistent vulnerability, contributing to a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that integrates environmental, social, and economic measures, with a strong focus on community-centered, sustainable adaptation strategies.

Enforcing stricter environmental laws is essential to effectively manage the impacts of oil spills, gas flaring, illegal deforestation, and other harmful practices by oil companies. This would ensure full compliance, holding companies accountable for their environmental damages in host communities. Adequate funding and staffing are crucial to empower agencies like NOSDRA to monitor and enforce environmental standards. Transparency and dialogue between the government, oil companies, and host communities are key to building trust and reducing regional tensions, which will also help improve the effectiveness of corporate responsibility initiatives.

Oil companies should adopt best practices and cleaner technologies to minimize environmental impacts. For example, a stronger commitment to gas reinjection technology could significantly reduce emissions and eliminate gas flaring, allowing for the recovery of valuable resources. This will require regular monitoring and assessments of their production processes.

Ongoing ecosystem restoration is vital for enhancing community resilience and sustainable resource management. This includes advancing mangrove reforestation, replanting local vegetation to reduce floods and coastal storm surges, and implementing integrated water management to improve water infrastructure and sanitation. These efforts help mitigate the health risks of oil spills and flooding, conserve biodiversity, and support sustainable resource management. Ecosystem restoration projects should follow strict environmental regulations to ensure long-term sustainability and contribute to the region's resilience against both climate change and oil-related damages.

Community-centered adaptation, focusing on inclusive and context-specific measures, is essential for sustainable development. Engaging all stakeholders in decision-making, planning, and implementing adaptation projects will build trust between companies and host communities, ensuring the effectiveness of the projects and fostering a sense of ownership among local populations. Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) empowers local residents by involving them in decision-making, which helps identify specific vulnerabilities and the causes of environmental degradation, restoring ecosystems and improving overall well-being. This approach, combined with greater stakeholder participation, promotes transparency, reduces tensions, and strengthens cooperation between the government, oil companies, and communities.

Environmental remediation efforts must be comprehensive and proactive, addressing oil production's disruptions and pollution. These efforts should focus on restoring contaminated ecosystems and improving public health and sanitation, particularly in communities affected by oil spills and climate change-induced health risks.

A focus on Community Green Skills Technology is critical in reducing the region's vulnerability to environmental degradation. Training programs in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture can help local communities shift toward eco-friendly practices, decreasing their reliance on oil and enhancing their resilience. Green skills development also promotes socio-economic growth and stability in the region by empowering vulnerable populations.

The ongoing impacts of oil production and climate change in the Niger Delta call for the development of a research framework to monitor and understand climate change impacts. This would provide the necessary data to inform effective policy decisions and adaptation strategies.

The Niger Delta's vulnerability is exacerbated by its reliance on oil revenues and its natural susceptibility to climate disasters. Climate-induced mitigation practices, such as migration-focused policies, are needed to address the escalating environmental and social pressures. While government policies prioritize adaptation strategies like flood control, coastal protection, and resilient agriculture, these measures alone may not be sufficient to address the continuous environmental degradation. Migration policies, which involve relocating people from highly vulnerable areas to safer regions, could serve as a preventive strategy to reduce exposure to climate hazards, improve quality of life, and support sustainable development. The UNEP report (2011) projects that significant sea-level rise could

submerge large parts of the Niger Delta by 2100, displacing millions of people. Migration-focused policies, by providing a proactive and resilient response, offer a promising solution for the region's highly vulnerable communities.

### **Conclusion**

The combined effects of oil production and climate change have consistently contributed to the environmental degradation of the Niger Delta, creating a complex web of environmental and socio-economic challenges. This has undermined the natural livelihoods of the people, lowered their income levels and weakened their ability to implement adaptive strategies, leaving many communities highly vulnerable to climate impacts. The presence of both oil production and unpredictable climate events is further complicated by uncontrolled environmental damage, socio-economic issues, and inadequate infrastructure and social services, all of which worsen the situation and hinder the effectiveness of current adaptation efforts. Several studies have identified the weaknesses of existing climate change policies and strategies, attributing them to factors such as lack of political will, corruption, public unawareness, weak institutional frameworks, insufficient funding, industrial influence, and the absence of climate science and environmental experts. The persistent vulnerability of the Niger Delta to the compounded effects of oil production and climate change is driven by a lack of alternative revenue sources and the unchanged landscape of oil-dependent communities, which are naturally susceptible to global climate disasters. While the study calls for a comprehensive, community-centered adaptation approach, it also highlights the need for a climate-induced migration framework, which could offer a sustainable solution, particularly for the coastal oil communities, to restore ecological balance in the region.

To address the environmental and socio-economic challenges in the Niger Delta, it is crucial to strengthen the existing climate change policies and governance frameworks. This involves increasing political will, tackling corruption, raising public awareness, and enhancing institutional capacity. Establishing robust environmental regulations and involving climate science and environmental experts in decision-making processes will help improve the effectiveness of adaptation strategies. Additionally, ensuring adequate funding and reducing the influence of the oil industry on policy-making can contribute to more sustainable environmental management. A key recommendation is to promote economic diversification in the Niger Delta, reducing the communities' dependence on oil revenue. This can be achieved by supporting the development of alternative industries, such as agriculture, renewable energy, and eco-tourism, which are more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Empowering local communities with skills training and access to green technologies will create sustainable livelihoods and improve their ability to cope with climate-induced challenges, ultimately reducing their vulnerability to both oil-related and climate change risks. Given the persistent vulnerability of oil-dependent coastal communities, it is essential to implement a climate-induced migration framework that can offer a long-term solution. This framework should focus on relocating communities from high-risk areas to safer, more sustainable locations. By strategically relocating vulnerable populations, the impacts of rising sea levels, flooding, and environmental degradation can be mitigated. Such a framework would contribute to the ecological balance of the region, reduce socio-economic pressures, and support the resilience of both the displaced communities and the region as a whole.

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# THE PATTERN OF AGITATIONS FOR RESTRUCTURING, RESOURCE CONTROL AND SECESSION IN NIGERIA FOURTH REPUBLIC

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*Abstract: Although, Nigeria has enjoyed successive transition from one administration to another since the return to civil rule in May 1999, unfortunately, none of these administrations reigned without the traditional agitations for political restructuring, constitutional review, and contestation for resource control. However, understanding the pattern of the agitations in Nigeria means understanding the motives behind them, and the impacts they have on national cohesion. It is on this background that this study examined the pattern of these agitations in Nigeria with a focus on the fourth republic. Descriptive analysis was adopted and qualitative method of data collection was utilized to gather data for the study. This study finds it appropriate to adopt 'Failed State theory' as its theoretical framework. Following the findings of this study, it was revealed that the flaws in the 1999 Constitution and failure of government to amend the contested sections of the constitution that led to the deepening agitations for restructuring and resource control and more secessionist movements in the Niger Delta and South-East Nigeria. Thus, the study suggests that the present administration should strengthen the weak institutions, ensures there is political inclusion, and restructure the economic system as measures to address the agitations in the country. The study also suggests that the present administration should amend the 1999 Constitution in order to accommodate the issues under contestation. Government should also call for a referendum to decide the faith of the pro-Biafran agitators, especially the issue of secession.*

*Keywords: Agitation, Fourth Republic, Restructuring, Resource Control, Failed State, Nigeria.*

## **Introduction**

From the time of restoration of democracy in Nigeria in May 29, 1999, agitation for political restructuring and contestation for secession, aside the insurgencies of Boko Haram and ISWAP, and criminal activities such as banditry, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, ritual killings, sea piracy, crude oil theft, and Fulani herdsmen militancy have dominated public discourse. Igwe and Amadi (2021:101) noted that, "democracy in its real sense embraces inclusion of all and exclusion of violence, and renders violence unnecessary". In Nigeria, it obviously does not apply because democracy in itself has created more problems than good among the people who are dispersed all over the country". The restoration of civilian rule is also associated with issues such as rioting and protest, militancy and terrorism, uprising and separatist agitations, armed insurgency, politically motivated assassinations, arson, and hooliganism, among others.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) like its predecessor movement, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) was predicated on the breakdown of law and order that followed the elections conducted in 1964 and 1965 for the federal and western region respectively. This development served as the impetus for the coup d'état of 15 January 1966 and the suspension of the federal constitution, and subsequently, burden of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) which was at its core during the period. Another issue of note was the counter-coup of July 1966 which was linked with the protracted conflict among the rank and file of the Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) and the January 15 coup d'état. Additionally, this development was the reason for the full-blown civil war which occurred between 1967 and 1970 (Akpotor & Oromareghake, 2010).

Currently, there are three self-determination movements in southern part of Nigeria, namely the South-East IPOB, the Biafra Customary Government (BCG), and lastly, the South-West Oduduwa Republic Separatist Agitation Movement (ORSAM). Some of the notable terms adopted by these movements are resource control, marginalization, secession and restructuring (Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, CISLAC, 2022). Amanamburu (2017:57), and Onuoha, Ochuba, Onuoha & Ani, (2021) affirmed these circumstances in Nigeria when they stated that the avoidable but self-inflicted civil war emerged to change the Nigerian narrative. Some ethnic groups across the country, including the Yoruba state of the South-West region have also risen to question the rationale behind Lord Lugard 1914 merger of the two protectorates of Nigeria as one country (Amanamburu, 2017:57). In recent times, the pro-Biafra movements in South-West has gathered momentum while contestation for resource control from the Niger Delta has receded after Presidential Amnesty was granted ex-militants by late President Umaru Musa. This did not end the emergence of other agitators, including private individuals and human rights groups, pressure groups, and ethnic and regional groups from campaigning for political structuring and resource control.

### **Statement of Problems**

Aside the contestations for restructuring and resource control, the call for independence by Nigerian Biafra has gathered momentum since the return to civilian rule in May 1999. While it is considered achievable in some sections of the public, many believe it is not achievable, and will remain part of national issues under the fourth republic. This situation is made complex by the best guess that the administration of President Bola Ahmad Tinubu has no will power to call for referendum to decide the faith of the nation. There is also the argument as to whether these agitations are legal or illegal despite the provisions made for engagement and actualization for self-determination in the Constitution of 1999 (as amended), the Charter of African Union on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, the Declaration of the Commonwealth of Nations on Democracy and Human Rights 1945, and other international human rights laws such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) ratified on 10 December 1948, as long as the principle of non-violence is strictly observed by the aggrieved and frustrated party (Amanambu, 2017:58). Nigeria remains in disarray despite the successful transitions from one civilian administration to another, which is the reason political analysts and the academia argue that the forceful union known as 'amalgamation' in 1914 is not the problem of post-independence Nigeria, but the flaws in the Constitution of 1999 (as amended), and failure of the fourth republic governments to adhere strictly to the physical administrative enactments, for example, the

federal character principle, etc. Also conceived as problems is the issue of fiscal federalism and decades' marginalization of the minority ethnic groups that are dispersed throughout the nation. These factors accompanied by ethnocentrism, tribalism, mediocracy and corruption emerged to change the Nigeria's narrative that now evolved the albatrosses that fuel the agitations for restructuring, resource control and secession in Nigeria (Adekoya, 2017). The desolation cause by oil spillages, high gas flaring rate, and other forms of under governed spaces produce avalanche of new generation of militant and restive youths in the Niger Delta that continuously call for resource control, while others are engaged in criminal activities such as piracy, oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism, hostage taking and kidnapping. However, the dissension between the oil multinationals and the federal government on one side, and the aggrieved Ijaw youth on the opposite side heightened criminal activities, including abduction and hostage taking of foreign oil workers which consequently created deepening tension. Despite the region being the host of rich oil deposits, it is highly marginalized and underdeveloped. Oronto, Von Kemedi, Okonta and Watts (2004:1) affirmed this development when they stated that the oil conflict in the Niger Delta marked the watershed and upward spiral violence in the region. Furthermore, frustrated armed Ijaw youth with new ambitions and capabilities to engage government forces in combatant war, a resemblance of the specter of Colombia emerged (Oronto et al., 2004). Like the Ijaw youth, same reasons applied in South-Eastern region, though with a very long history of marginalization. Prior to the Nigerian-Biafra war of 1967, the feeling of abandonment, and recession in the affairs and leadership of the nation dominated the thought of the Igbo people of Nigeria. The consequence of this development was the counter military coup staged by Igbo high ranking officers in the army, declaration of Biafra republic, and subsequently, the Biafran genocide cause by the war staged against the federal government of Nigeria by Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu led Biafra republic (Childs, 2021; Maiangwa, 2021; Fornie, 2023; Bassey, 2023).

Excessive tribal consciousness and unrestrained discords between the three main ethnic groups of the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo constitute a problem, though fueled by political inclination for federalism by the colonial masters and the military regimes. Accompanied by ethnocentrism, tribalism, nepotism and chronic corruption, the minority groups find expression in the call for resource control, and in the struggle for separation from Nigeria. Joseph (2021:79) argues that the dissatisfaction for obvious reasons among the different segments in Nigeria, perhaps, is a problem that promoted the persisting calls for constitutional and fiscal reforms, using different phrases, such as political restructuring, true-federalism, devolution, resource control, regionalism, among others. How much these debates are propelled by the desire for national integration and development across the different segments remain doubtful because many observers and analysts believe these calls are driven by grievances and competing interests among the different ethnic groups instead of the real sense of the calls which is national integration and unity diversity. It is on the premise that this study deemed it necessary to examine the actual reasons for these national issues of agitation for restructuring, resource control and secession in Nigeria with a focus on the fourth republic.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to identify the pattern of agitations in Nigeria since the return to civil rule in May 1999. While the specific objectives are to:



Identify the fundamental reasons for the agitations for restructuring, resource control and secession in the fourth republic,  
Examine the patterns of the agitations for restructuring, resource control and secession in the fourth republic,  
Examine the benefits of restructuring and resource control in Nigeria, and  
To suggest policy options to ameliorate this form of agitations in Nigeria.

#### Research Questions

The following questions are provided to guide this study:

What are the fundamental reasons for the agitations for restructuring, resource control and secession in the fourth republic?

What are the patterns of the agitations for restructuring, resource control and secession in the fourth republic?

What are the benefits of restructuring and resource control in Nigeria?

What are the policy options to ameliorate these forms of agitations in the country?

#### **Method of Study**

This study finds it necessary to adopt historical research design because of its unity and consistency. Data on past events can explain what happened and why it happened, and impacts on contemporary situations, particularly on a new research endeavor (Greenwood, 2012). Historical or analytical research design specifically can accommodate all-inclusive knowledge of past and current events. On a general note, research design is use to state the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. Its function is to provide for the collection of relevant data with utmost effort and time (Kothari, 2009; Kothari & Garg, 2019). Significantly, research design defines the validity and usefulness of data is source in any research endeavor.

#### **Conceptual and theoretical review**

##### *Agitation: Conceptual Explanation*

The meaning of the concept 'agitation' has evoked several meanings based with the situation that the word is related. The term can be best described as an extreme state of arousal and it means that an aggravated person can be stimulated to "stir up", be excited, tense, befuddled or irritated. This does not always mean a health issue, but if other signs manifest then it is indicative of disease (National Library of Medicine, 2022). When a person is unable to rest and be calm it can be referred to as agitation (The National Cancer Institute, 2024). Anyone who is anxious can end up tensed and feeling irritated all at once. He may be angry and ready to fight and do not want to change the situation to be better. Someone that is found to be very worried or upset situation, or frustration is said to be in a state of agitation. On general perspective, the term agitation means a state of excitement, disturbance, or worry about something. It is the act of moving something vigorously or the act of attempting to stir up public opinion for, or against something. It is a persistent urging of political or social cause or theory before the public (Collins English Dictionary, 2024). In the context of this study, the term is used to mean protest, or clamor or contestation against illegal, or something not proper, especially illegitimate government or policy not good enough for the citizens and that affect them as a nation.

##### *Theoretical Framework*

Amidst other theories such as frustration-aggression theory, plebiscitary theory of secession, system theory, structural-functionalism, social contract theory, and others, the failed state theory is adopted in this study. Zartman (1995) collapse states theory carried out to evaluate state failure conjures a graphic picture of state failure and its consequences. Rotberg (2002) also contributed to the development of the theory. He describes a failed state as one which the government for one reason or another cannot perform the terms of its social contract with the people. Failed state deteriorates to the extent that the expectations of the people are not met with by government. A strong and stable state provides for its citizens and possesses high sense of security, political liberation, civil liberty and forward economic opportunities for all. A strong and stable state thus possesses a higher per capita GDP, and internal security and respect for the rule of law (Rotberg, 2002; Rotberg, 2003).

State failure has two aspects, first, states are termed failed when they are consumed by internal violence and ceased to deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants, and secondly, the primary public good is to provide security within a territory, therefore, if a state is safe and secure for its citizens, every other thing like dispute settlement, rule of law, political participation, education and health care will spring forth, thus, security is the critical factor that determines all other developments and reasonable activities in a state (Rotberg, 2004). This is acknowledged in 1999 Constitution which arrogates responsibility of providing security and welfare services. On the contrary, Nigerian government is far behind in carrying out these responsibilities. Jacob (2015) used the terms “fragile state, collapsed state and shadow state” to describe a failed state. Watts (2000) describes a failed state as one that fails to protect the citizens from harm deliberately to incapacitate and prevent them from achieving their own goals, which they might use against the rulers.

Funke and Solomon (2002) aver that failed or shadow state operates only in the interest of the rulers, deliberately withholding basic rights to be enjoyed by citizens. Other names giving to a failed state are a rogue state, a weak state, a quasi-state and a lawless state, and one that is existing for nothing; incapable and good for nothing (Bilgin & Morton, 2002). The failure of a state takes gradual process, especially when government fails to discharge its responsibilities (Potter, 2004). Nigeria perfectly fits this description since Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu administration despite the massive natural and human resources fails to protect the people from hunger and starvation, insecurity and increase in crime rate, social injustices and violations of citizens ‘rights. Disregards for reverence for the rule of law, institutional corruption, mediocracy, tribalism, marginalization, and unaccepted policies of government are obviously in the increase in Nigeria, providing the impetus for analysts to refer to Nigeria as a ‘failing state’, while many refer to it as a ‘failed state’.

Irrepressible insecurity, institutional corruption and underdevelopment are obvious factors that categorize Nigeria one among the failing state in the world. This study thus argues that Nigeria is not a state, as the core responsibility of the incumbent administration is to destroy the nation. How does one expect the masses to cope in the current situation of harsh political and economic atmosphere? Nigerians are so frustrated and fed up with the socio-economic conditions of the nation that currently, the privileged few have been moving in large numbers to the developed nations of the world. They cannot be blamed for their action because nobody wants to identify with failure. The recent End Bad Government nationwide protest is a clear indication that Nigeria is moving toward total breakdown, and need to be rescued by government through restructuring of the current political structure, or

introduction of popular policies and programmes. There is the need for change of orientation among the people of Nigeria and of governance, which gives credence for the need for political restructuring and resource control.

## **Results and discussions**

### *Reasons for the Debates for Restructuring and Resource Control in Nigeria*

The self-adopted federal system in Nigeria that differs from the type practiced in the United States, Switzerland, Canada, among others remains the fundamental reason for the agitations in Nigeria. Though, characterized by distinct dates of emergence, the agitations in the country are not new, neither do they differ in ideology compare to the old forms of protestations since independence. Aside the 1967 civil war, the contestations for secession by prof-Biafran groups, political restructuring and resource control were peaceful, but with the emergence of militant groups that adopted hostage taking, kidnapping, piracy, vandalization oil installations and oil bunkering within the Niger Delta region the narratives changed for worse. Like the Igbos, Ijaw youths share the same feeling of marginalization in the affairs of the nation. Egocentrism and domineering and bossy attitude of the Hausa/Fulani oligarchy also created more problems in Nigeria that becomes more obvious after restoration of civilian government in 1999. Several attempts by some members of the Hausa/Fulani oligarchy to harm the reputation of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration increased the protests for political reform and control of resources. Though interpreted differently but a repeat of same behavior against Vice President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan after the unfortunate demise of his boss, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua on 5 May 2010, and subsequently, the gang-up to vote him out of power by some politician of northern origin and their cohorts from the southern region heightened the anxiety that was already budding among the people of the south (Abbas & Tijjani, 2024). This fear that was entertained by southerners increased the calls for political reform through constitutional amendment. Chiamogu, Onwughalu and Chiamogu (2012) identified intergovernmental social, political and economic conflict among the different levels of government, as well as revenue allocation sharing formula, control of resources, internal security and terrorism, state creation, wage fixing, and establishment of the sovereign wealth fund, structural composition of government and funding of local government councils as reasons for the agitations in recent year. These situations developed into different relationships that have also created different situations in each of the regions. Gurr (1993:123) outlined unequal treatment, competition for access to power, contagious effect of ethno-political activism, pattern of state building, lack of political power and economic development and emergence of new ethnic minority class who were unwilling to mobilize their constituents in the face of the changing political developments as reasons for ethnic minority grievances in Nigeria. Also, a contributing factor to the increase in protestation for restructuring, resource control and separation by IPOB members is absence of good governance often predicated on patriotism, transparency, accountability, fairness, and infrastructure development. Bad governance, insecurity and ethnocentrism evolved into the national issues that now fuel protests in the country. Ekpo and Agorye (2019), Oluwatobi (2018), Childs (2021), and Onichabor (2022) opine that the reason the pro-Biafra groups continued with their pursuit for secession, even after the end of the civil war that was experienced in 1967 and 1971 is perceived marginalization of the Igbos. Another

issue of note is that Igbos in diaspora provided the energy for the pro-Biafran movements to continue the agitation for secession in Nigeria. IPOB and its military wing, known as the ESN, like their predecessor group, MASSOB advanced the same grievances against the federal government of Nigeria. Little or no federal government investment in southeast region, as well as political alienation, ethnic marginalization, heavy military presence, inequitable distribution of federal resources, and extrajudicial killings are associated with the renewed hostility against the federal government by IPOB and other pro-Biafran movements in Nigeria. Prominent among the reasons advanced for the calls for restructuring, resource control and separation is the failure of the fourth republic administrations, from the time of Obasanjo to the incumbent administration restructure the self-imposed federal structure contained in the 1999 Constitution (as amended).

Okereka, Oluka and Igbini (2020) and Fornies (2023) express the view that egocentric and preservation of dominant power by the power by the military and brokers from the north, and illegally control and taking over of significant portion of the proceeds from the resource endowment in the south into private pockets aggravated the feeling of marginalization, and consequently leading to augmented protest for constitutional review, resource control and separation. Since the actions of government concerning the grievances remain for several years, the agitations for who should control the resource control and secession continue to grow more assertive (Isa, 2016). Political imbalances in social, economic and cooperate governance, management and sharing and allocation of commonwealth, as well as social neglect and political isolation of the Igbos are identified as reasons for the increasing calls for restructuring, resource control and secession in (Onuoha, Ochuba, Onuoha & Ani, 2021; Olomjobi, 2015; Sadiq-Bamgbopa, Ehinmilorin & Popoola (2022). The declaration of IPOB as a terrorist organization in September 2017, and detention of Nnamdi Kanu in custody of the Department of Security Service (DSS) since 2021 have obstinately driven IPOB quest to break away from Nigeria (Ukong, 2021; Maiangwa, 2021). The same government that failed to declare Fulani herdsmen of the Miyetti Allah Kaute Hore Association a terrorist organization despite obvious brandishing of dangerous weapons in different places, the government failed to declare them terrorist group. This development is described by many as double standard by government in in handling the security challenges in Nigeria. Perhaps, the obvious failure of government to address this issue exacerbates the security issues in the fourth republic, including agitations for resource control in the Niger Delta (Akpotor & Oromareghake, 2010; Akinola, 2013). The never-ending political differences and latent feelings of disunity among the ethnic groups are also affirmed as reasons for the uprising in Nigeria, including the pro-Biafran movements. These developments changed the country's narrative, now ravaging the public space with specific issues in each of the geopolitical zones.

#### *Patterns of Agitations in Nigeria*

Since the military reinstalled of democracy in May 1999, demand for good governance dominates public discourse. Also ravaging the public space is the persistent clamor for the review of the constitution and who should control state resource between the central and state governments. There is also the secession movement by pro-Biafran groups in South-East Nigeria. Many acknowledged that the pattern of agitations in Nigeria since the time of colonial rule through independence and post-independence eras remained the same. Suberu (2013) argues that the intimidating responses of governments to the grievances in

issues concerning the minority and marginalized group in Nigeria exacerbate the crisis of agitation for freedom by the pro-Biafran group in Eastern Nigeria. Rather than ending the challenges caused by its failure to adhere to the popular demand of the agitators through policy actions, the government resorted to its usual repressive strategy against the aggrieved groups in the country. This was the case in the Niger Delta before amnesty was granted to the militants by late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. After the death of President Yar'Adua, his successor Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan maintained Yar'Adua's policy towards the insurgent group which undeniably ameliorated the tension in the Niger Delta. From the inception, the pattern of agitation in the country has been centered on four waves, mainly agitation for political reforms, or political restructuring. The first wave was the aftermath of the merger of Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914, whose consequences lasted up to 1947 because there wasn't any room for national integration since the regions of the West, East and North were governed independently by the colonial masters. The reason for the agitations during the period was the apparent discrimination against the native population by the colonialists, especially in the civil service. The second wave was in 1947 and 1966. The apparent imbalance that was caused by the Richards Constitution was the basis for agitation during the period. The merger of the three regions into a single legislative council rather than having separate legislative councils for the three regions became the reason behind the agitation during the period (Nwokolo, 2020:173). Notably, the pattern of agitation in Nigeria during the fourth republic hasn't changed much from its traditional pattern, but the only notable difference is the modus operandi and sophistication and advancement in technology. The opportunities permitted by the restoration of democracy, such as freedom of association, freedom of press and freedom of speech, etc., provided the agitators the impetus to move farther their grievances against the government, and in different manners. In the South-South region, the various militant groups have agitated for control of resources and development of the sub-region in a related manner. The militant groups, notably the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF), Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Revolutionary Crusade (NDRC), and the Niger Delta Avenger (NDA) shared the same ideologies. In the South East, there are the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), and IPOB, all of which emerged due to the weaknesses and defects observed in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) (BBC News, 2017; Taiwo & Ariyo, 2020; Onichabor, 2022). Olufemi (2005) argues that the failure of government to do the needful imports ethnic militia groups in Nigeria, notably, the Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) which advocates for secession. In South West Nigeria, Afenifere, the pan-Yoruba socio-cultural group has also joined in the agitation as a better option that may promote growth and development across the regions. Like the other protagonists of the restructuring debate, Afenifere was bitter about the federation controlled by the Hausa/Fulani tribes and the discriminatory attitude towards the south (Ogefere, 2017). As Ogefere (2017) puts it, "while a larger number of the citizens advanced political restructuring as a better option to enhance good governance, national unity and development, the central government and some conservatives from the northern Nigeria see it as a threat, or rather, call to divide the country". No matter how these agitators for restructuring in Southern Nigeria seem to be, they are motivated by a sense of bitterness

against the central government, and its failure to adhere to the calls for political restructuring and resource control which Maina (2020) refers to as “minoritarian nationalism” that has consistently questioned national unity.

The agitation for withdrawal that continued after 12th June 1993 presidential election, judged by many as the freest and fairest election in the history of Nigeria was annulled by President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The continued agitation following 1994 and 1995 non-implementations of Constitutional Conference report and General Sani Abacha’s Conference report respectively, as well as President Olusegun Obasanjo’s 2005 Conference Report, and President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan’s Conference Report import the current debate for political restructuring and the push for referendum by IPOB members (Igboke, 2020:4). Apart from the calls for restructuring of the political structure in Nigeria by a number of socio-political groups and political configurations, including regional groups, all age groups are now engaged in the agitations in Nigeria (Nche, Otu, Ugwueze, Groupson-Paul, Ejem & Ononogbu, 2020).

#### *Benefits of Restructuring and Resource Control in Nigeria*

The multiple national issues associated with Nigeria’s fourth republic are undoubtedly inherited from the military regime that structured and handed over the 1999 Constitution when returning power to the civilians. The defects in 1999 Constitution have been consistently debated by public and academia, yet, government have done very little to resolve these contests through constitutional means. As Igboke (2020:3) puts it, “the persisting contestation for restructuring, resource control and separation by different interest groups in Nigeria, including the Niger Delta agitators and IPOB and its associate groups found their basis from the shaky federal structure enshrined in the sections of the 1999 Constitutionals amended”. The conceived defects in the post-independence 1966 Constitution led to the first military coup of 29 July 1966, and non-implementation of the agreement reached between General Yakubu Gowon and Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu in Ghana aimed at addressing the challenges cause the war of 6 July 1967 (Igboke, 2020). Nche, Otu, Ugwueze, Groupson-Paul, Ejem and Ononogbu (2020), and Suberu (2013) affirm that aside the calls for agitation for political restructuring by some political configurations, including regional groups, the old and young are now engage in agitations for political restructuring in Nigeria. These developments did not change the impression that fairness, transparency, accountability, patriotism, meritocracy and infrastructure development are panaceas of good governance which can only be done effectively through restructuring, autonomy and resource control. However, the needfulness of restructuring and resource control in actualizing national cohesion, integration and unity in diversity cannot be underestimated. Joseph (2021) and Sagay (2017) argue that restructuring Nigerian federal system will not only guarantee the autonomy of the federating units, but will also ameliorate the issues of marginalization and contestation for separation by IPOB as every state in Nigeria will have the opportunity to explore and manage their resource endowment and finances, and will be held responsible for their own success or failure, and development and underdevelopment. Furthermore, it will eliminate over-centralization of government powers at the central thereby empower the local dwellers to take charge of their own development. It will no doubt encourage the state governments to put mechanisms in place to promote transparency and accountability in their respective states

(Joseph, 2021; Sagay, 2017). There is however no doubt that amending the 1999 federal constitution will help the people of Nigeria to firmly resolve all the challenges of political and economic marginalization, and ethnic and religious differences, and to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation. Amending the constitution will also promote good governance at all levels, as well as welfare of all persons in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

The failure of government to resolve the numerous problems and tackle them appropriately is the reason for the confrontations between the government and various groups in Nigeria. Despite the threats from calls for restructuring that will empower the regions, the administrations under the fourth republic seemed not to have done enough to end this form of national issues through constitutional reform. The truth remains that the fourth republic administrations have no solution in hands to salvage these predicaments that are now confronting the nation in the face. Among the issues confronting the administrations, contestation for secession has been the most forceful and threatening issue, yet, government seems not to have solution to it soon. On daily basis, Nigerians are exposed to hardship which is heading beyond remedy. As the reasons for the contestations remain the same, the trend for these contestations and the IPOB agitation also remains same with no solution in sight soon.

### **Recommendations**

The following suggestions are considered relevant:

The current administration should strengthen the weak institutions and ensures there is political inclusion. It should also restructure the economic system to address all the grievances that propelled the agitations in Nigeria, including restructuring campaign, state creation, resource control and separation movements. This should be done through amendment of the current constitution. This no doubt will accommodate the issues under contestation that now desolate the public space.

Government should shelve its self-conceived antagonistic behavior against the Igbos and put machinery in motion to review the sections of the current constitution, especially those sections under contestation to mitigate the crises of secession from the pro-Biafran groups, and resource control from the Niger Delta youths.

Government should create opportunity for dialogue and negotiation with all aggrieved and self-acclaimed marginalized ethnic groups for national integration and unity, and peace and security to be sustained across the federation.

Government should also recall, study and enforce the recommendations of the various national conferences, particularly the 2014 Conference which will help to mitigate the agitations for constitutional review, resource control, and probably, the movement for secession by the pro-Biafran groups.

Government should also call for a referendum to decide the faith of the nation, especially the issue of secession by the southeast pro-Biafran group, the IPOB.

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## ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED AND FIRM VALUATION IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: This study examines the impact of economic value added on firm valuation in Nigeria. The study uses three proxies to capture firm valuation. They include income base of firm valuation that is measured as discounted cash flow (DCF), asset based of firm valuation using net book value (NBV) and market-based approach of firm valuation using publicly traded prices in the stock exchange (SP), while the explanatory variables (EVA) was measured as the company's profit after full cost of capital, while Firm size (FZE) and Leverage (LVG) are use as control variable. The study shows that EVA has a significant effect on firm valuation. The study recommended that successful value-based management firms should maintain that the technical accounting requirement of EVA is straightforward and makes only minimal adjustments to their accounting procedures. To give investors a normal return on their investment in the company's shares, managers should work to boost future EVA.*

*Keyword: Economic value added, firm valuation, share price, discounted cash flow, leverage*

*JEL Classification: C23, G32 G34*

### **Introduction**

For corporations and firms, market valuation and shareholder value generation, as opposed to profit maximization and wealth maximization, has become an increasingly essential problem. Most organizations' financial statements reporting book values do not reflect their underlying financial status, hence value estimation is essential in the business world. Any financial endeavor, such as soliciting new investors or making investment decisions, requires that the equity value created by the endeavor be considered. This is especially true for many entrepreneurial and small businesses, which frequently require funds from outside investors to support rapid expansion. The primary goal of financial statements, according to the International Accounting Standards Board (1989), is to offer information about an enterprise's financial situation and performance that is relevant to diverse investors in making investment decisions. For well-functioning capital markets and the economy as a whole, high-quality accounting data is essential. As a result, investors should place a high value on it. The value relevance of accounting information for equity valuation is a fundamental aspect of accounting quality. Value relevance appears to be more essential to investors than any other aspect, according to Francis and Schipper (1999). Four ways to

studying the value relevance of accounting information are identified by Francis et al., (1999). The fundamental analytical view, prediction view, information view, and measurement view of value relevance are the four views. The measuring view of value relevance is used for the purposes of this article. Accounting figures are value relevant if they capture or summarize information that affects stock prices, according to the measurement approach of value relevance (Francis and Schipper, 1999). Traditional financial performance indicators are frequently criticized for ignoring a firm's cost of capital, and are thus seen unsuitable for assessing value creation (Bognárová, 2017). Furthermore, because these indicators are almost entirely reliant on data from financial statements, they are susceptible to accounting distortions. It's worthless, and it's been suggested that conventional performance indicators do not often capture the actual surplus (Bantwa and Bhuva, 2020). Despite these limitations, traditional measurements are nevertheless commonly used by analysts and investors. Value-based financial performance metrics, on the other hand, were developed in response to the perceived inadequacies of traditional measures. The main distinction between traditional and value-based metrics is that value-based measures consider a company's cost of capital. They also seek to correct some accounting inconsistencies (Bognárová, 2017).

Stern Stewart & Company proposed the Economic Value Added (EVA) as a management technique (Stern, 1985; Stewart, 1991; Stern, Stewart and Chew, 1995). It provides a method for calculating the economic value a company has achieved or created over a given period of time. Economic Value Added (EVA) of an enterprise is the best indicator of financial performance for capturing the underlying economic profit (Awan, Siddique & Sarwar, 2014). EVA fills a critical role in today's financial and economic landscape that has received little attention from academics and practitioners. Because EVA is a performance metric, it is linked to shareholder wealth over time. Shareholders scrutinize the company for their specific interests and want management to operate in their best interests. Thus, EVA is significant in terms of determining how much economic value is added by management to shareholders' wealth, whereas other traditional techniques relied on accounted-for information. However, accounting only provides historical or distorted data that has no bearing on a company's actual performance, whereas EVA provides a viable performance measures for businesses (Shil, 2009). In recent years, the measurement of market value addition (MVA) has gotten a lot of attention (Athanasakos, 2007). Furthermore, previous research has concentrated on determining which metric best measures value creation. Traditional measures such as operating income (OI), profit after tax (PAT), return on investment (ROI), return on asset (ROA), and others have been argued to be misleading, inept, and often result in creative earnings over time (Siniak and Lozanoska 2019).

Since one view might not be adequate to provide a solution to the study, this study added to the body of existing knowledge by employing three proxies to capture firm valuation. The variables are the income-based approach of firm valuation, which is measured as discounted cash flow (DCF), the asset-based approach of firm valuation, which is measured as net book value (NBV), and the market-based approach of firm valuation, which is measured as publicly traded prices on the stock exchange (SP). The rationale for all of this is that the aim of investment is to earn future income (cash), which is calculated using predicted future income, which allows for a more accurate comparison with the substitution principle. Similarly, most Nigerian studies have not investigated whether EVA effects firm

valuation using MVA; nevertheless, earlier studies have looked at the relationship between EVA and stock returns and ROA. As a result, the goal of this research is to assess the impact of EVA on business valuation in Nigeria, as well as to see if there is a significant difference between EVA and traditional performance measures. The limitations of this study can be since from the fact that it only concentrates on the Nigeria, other studies can look into developed and other developing countries. The rest of this work is arranged in the following ways. The literature review is discussed in the second section, and the data and empirical methodological issues are presented in the third section. The empirical results are presented in part four, and the final section concludes.

## **Literature Review**

### *Conceptual Review*

Economic value added (EVA) has gotten a lot of credence as a new way to measure performance for some period now. Traditionally, EVA as theory as posit that businesses should endeavor to generate shareholder wealth. Traditional indicators in use overtime namely: return on investment (ROI), return on assets (ROA) and earning before tax (EBT) were employed by the corporations to match managerial interests with shareholder interests (Siniak and Lozanoska 2019). Economic value added (EVA) being a value-based measurement of financial performance, a decision tool for investment purpose that reflects the total amount of value created to shareholders (Geyser & Liebenberg, 2003). Calculated by multiplying the excess return from an investment by the total amount (capital) put into the investment. Economic value added (EVA) is the subtraction of charge for the opportunity cost of all capital spent in a company or on a project from the net operating profit. It's a calculation of true economic profit, or the amount by which earnings exceed or fall short of the needed minimum rate of return that investors may get by investing in similar risky securities (Stewart, 1990). EVA is not new generated residual income, being an accounting performance measurement; it is subtracting capital charge from operating profit. As a result, EVA is a variation of residual income, with changes to the way income and capital are calculated. EVA is generally seen as a single, straightforward metric that accurately depicts shareholder wealth creation. Value-based measurement systems can provide other practical benefits and also encourage managers to create value and serve as a basis for calculating management benefits (compensation). EVA system in an organization assists managers in making informed and important decisions, which result in better investment, identifying opportunities that bring about overall improvement, weighing both long- and short-term firm benefits (Roztoci & Needy, 1998). EVA is a dependable indicator of a company's future growth in value and an effective gauge of the prowess of managerial overall decisions. Positive EVA numbers that are constant over time will raise company values, whilst negative EVA values may lower company values.

Some other forward-looking indicators, typically those that are non-financial in nature, should be regularly seen in the time-to-time performance report generated by managers, providing timely warning indicator of potential problem (Wood, 2000). In some industrial sector, EVA only is an inadequate indicator of financial performance. Yearly fluctuations in EVA, negative sometimes are not capable of explaining variations in the value of the firm for new firm with high growth, which include firms in industries that are technologically inclined because the value of the firm is mostly based on the Cashflow expected in the long run (Wood, 2000). Distortion by inflation is another major issue with

EVA, this result in difficulty in using it to estimate actual profitability during inflationary periods. The adjusted EVA, a better measure, corrects for inflationary distortions. One of EVA's key flaws is that it is overly reliant on financial measures like capital invested, profit margins, and cost of capital, among others. According to empirical investigations, these measurements are frequently ineffective of predicting future performance (Fletcher & Smith, 2004). EVA is also thought to have a strong financial drive. Revenue realization and expense recognition play a big role in calculating EVA. Managers of firms can alter financial figures to get better financial performance (Horngren, Foster & Datar, 1997). Another important issue with EVA is that, in order to increase EVA, managers often use already depreciated assets; this practice lowers the asset base in the books of accounts while also ensuring that no depreciation is charged or recognized, resulting in higher EVA. Managers, on the other hand, see a significant reliance on EVA to gauge their performance as dysfunctional since it fails to reflect the actual level of performance at a given point in time. Thus, accounting number manipulation would be legitimate if management are aware that they have significantly improved performance but this is not instantly apparent in the accounting records (Brewer et al., 1999; Pustylnick, 2011).

EVA, like other performance measures, tries to resolve the fundamental tension between the need to create a performance measure that is substantially associated with shareholder wealth while also being less susceptible to random swings in stock prices. This is a challenging contradiction to reconcile, and it explains why all accounting-based performance indicators have a low year-to-year correlation with stock returns (Bognárová, 2017). Furthermore, successful value-based management firms are said to keep the technical accounting parts of EVA simple, making minimum changes to their accounting methods. They spend time and effort finding and evaluating the operational elements, or value drivers, that have the most impact on the development of economic profits (Fletcher & Smith, 2004). The valuation of a company is necessary for calculating stock prices, which is an important factor in many models (keys and Briggs, 1990). One of the most important companies aims is to maximize shareholder value. The market value of a company is a key measure of its shareholders' wealth. According to Biggs (1978), stock price occasionally, is the exclusive measure of performance in the model. It's more typically used as part of a weighted average that incorporates other measures. A firm's value can be determined using a variety of measures, each of which is likely to yield a value that differs from the others. The accounting net worth or book value of a company is the first and most accessible measure of its worth. However, because the accounting rule in a model may be at variance (in divergence) with generally accepted financial accounting principles, this measure might be problematic. This is because adhering to certain generally held principles, such as historical cost and conservatism, can result in values that are far from acceptable. The market value of all outstanding shares is the second metric. This is a widely used approach of valuing public firms in the real world. Its use, however, necessitates the existence of a functioning real-time stock market. This requirement is not met in models that do not allow participants to trade shares, and even when such trading is permitted, the trades are typically too few and infrequent to allow for reliable valuation. The capitalized value of its expected future performance is the third metric. Modigliani and Miller (1961) pointed out that, while four different methods of capitalization can be used for this goal, when the markets are ideal, they all result in the same valuation. People are perfectly rational, and the future is totally predictable.

However, if the Goosen's technique is used, the capitalized valued measure has a flaw because it requires at least one arbitrary parameter ( $m$ ). The deductive application of human judgment is the fourth measure. Firms are graded on a psychometric scale using this procedure. The results are then translated to monetary values using a formula. The issue with this metric is that it necessitates subjective evaluation. The accounting net value of a firm, adjusted for intangibles and the idiosyncrasies of accounting rules employed in the simulation, is the sixth metric. Although a general principle for adjustment could be established, the precise principle must be determined by the model's specifics. The adjusted net worth metric, on the other hand, eliminates both of these issues because it does not require an arbitrary parameter and can be totally objective. The challenge is that it necessitates a thorough understanding of the imitation techniques utilized in each model. The market value measure of establishing a firm's value, also known as market capitalization, is the most dependable and straightforward technique of determining a firm's value. It is also known as total value of all outstanding shares. It's worth noting that this strategy only works for publicly traded corporations with easily known share values. The number of outstanding shares multiplied by the current stock price yields a company's market capitalization (market value).

#### *Empirical Review*

Altaf (2016) investigated Stern Stewart & Company's argument that economic value added is a better measure for explaining market value in India than traditional earnings-based measurements. To achieve the study's objective, they used multivariate regression analysis. The study's findings show that operating income has a strong relationship with market value added in both the manufacturing and service industries. Nnado and Caroline (2016) used publicly traded firms to investigate the impact of board size on financial performance (as measured by both economic value added (EVA) and return on assets (ROA)) in Nigeria's manufacturing sector. The study uses a quantitative panel approach to analyze secondary (panel) data from the audited financial statements of 46 listed manufacturing firms taken from 95 NSE subsectors over a twelve-year period (2003-2014). Manufacturing companies with smaller boards are more viable than those with larger boards, according to the study. Firms in the sector with larger board size, on the other hand, reported lower profitability. Bognárová (2017) uses regression models to investigate the incremental information of a series of performance measures from 2010 to 2015, analyzing MVA performance and the link between EVA and MVA. According to the results of the models, the dominance of a modern performance measure EVA over two other traditional performance measures in explaining changes in MVA in the case of selected companies over the studied time period was affirmed. As well, Ceryova et al. (2018) used economic value added, economic value-added momentum, and economic value-added margin to evaluate the business performance of Microsoft Corporation, an American multinational technology corporation, from 2010 to 2015. They discovered that between 2010 and 2015, the value of economic value added increased significantly. As a result, Microsoft Corporation's executives have amassed a substantial amount of wealth. Thus, the company's excellent performance is highlighted by the economic value-added momentum, and the company's remarkable productivity performance is highlighted by the economic value-added margin. Pasha and Ramzan (2019) looked at the asymmetric impact of economic value-added dynamics on stock market value in Pakistan, using panel cointegration, FMOLS, and DOLS as new evidence. For the study period of 2006–2015,

the study sample consisted of 70 non-financial Pakistan Stock Exchange listed firms from 13 industries. Panel cointegration, panel FMOLS, and panel DOLS are used in the study. In the long run, it was discovered that EVA has a negative weak but significant relationship with stock return.

In terms of working capital management, Maenuddina et al. (2020) in their study evaluated and provided empirical fact about the economic value-added momentum in comparison to some conventional financial measurements. For a period of 11 years (2007-2017), the sample of the study was sixty-nine (69) quoted non-financial firms on the Pakistan Stock Exchange. The results showed positive significant relationship between working capital management and EVA momentum, demonstrating the addition of value by reduction in the company's cash conversion cycle. Shishany et al. (2020) in their study the impact of economic value added (EVA) adoption on stock performance; investigate whether adopting the EVA framework improves the firm's performance as well as the long-term impacts on the firm's value. It also evaluates how the market responds to the news that EVA will be used as a compensation mechanism. The paper also addresses this gap in the literature by demonstrating whether or not the adoption of EVA increases company value as measured by market prices over time. 89 US companies that have adopted EVA as a compensation method make up the study sample. The performance of adopting companies is compared to that of a few chosen matching companies as well as to market indices, especially the S&P500 portfolio. The CAR and BHAR aggregation methods are then used to evaluate the possibility of EVA adoption by various US firms. The findings, however, indicated a modest improvement in the performance of organization that adopted EVA within five years of the adoption date. Does the EVA valuation model explain the market value of equity better under changing required return than constant required return? is a study by Behera S. (2020), he examined if the EVA valuation model could be carried out under changing required return by effecting changes to the model, as well as whether the valuation model under the assumption of constant required return had a better explanatory capacity than the model under the assumption of changing required return. The intrinsic worth of stocks as determined by valuation models and the market value of stocks of 69 large-cap, 88 mid-cap, and 79 small-cap companies were sampled using the relative information content analyses. The outcomes demonstrated that the EVA-based valuation model with varying normal market return did better than the EVA-based valuation model with fixed required return.

The question of whether economic value added (EVA) as a performance assessment metric encourages public administrators to improve the performance of public organizations is investigated by Subedi and Farazmand (2020). Using 2274 firm-year observations for the years 2009 to 2010 in China, the research uses data from the Wind Info Database (WIND). It employs first-difference change analysis methodology to handle firm-level unobservable heterogeneities and address endogeneity issues. It has been discovered that using EVA as a performance evaluation metric encourages public officials to boost the total effectiveness of the public organizations under investigation. According to the research, after adopting EVA as their performance evaluation metric, public administrators make wise investment and operational decisions that improve the overall organizational performance. Omneya et al (2021) looked at Is EVA Momentum (Economic Value-Added Momentum) a Better Performance Measurement Tool? evidence from listed Egyptian firms. Return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE), two financial performance indicators for businesses,



were examined in the research. The financial industry was excluded from the data collection for companies listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange between 2010 and 2019. By using relative information content analysis and stepwise regression, the study also aims to contribute to the announcement of the economic value-added measure with the greatest explanatory power pertinent to firm financial performance. With the exception of EVA with ROE, the results indicated a significant effect for both economic values added on the financial performance of the firm. Additionally, it was discovered that EVA Momentum was the best economic indicator for enhancing and explaining financial performance. 3.

### Methodology

The sample for this study was made up of thirty (30) non-financial firms quoted on the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) covering the period of 2012-2020. The study employed the panel regression analysis.

### *Dependent Variable: Firm Valuation*

We use three proxies to capture firm valuation as one view might not be enough to provide solution to the study. The variables are income base of firm valuation that is measured as discounted cash flow (DCF), asset based of firm valuation using net book value (NBV) and market-based approach of firm valuation using publicly traded prices in the stock exchange (SP). The reason behind all these is purpose of investment is to earn future income (cash) which is considering expected future income which is better to make reasonably comparison with principle of substitution.

### *Independent Variables*

There are two categories of independent variables in this research. First, economic value added, the main independent variable, would be measured using the most popular proxies. (Biddle et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2011; Du et al. 2018). Second, firm size (FZE) and leverage (LVG), which are the control variable discussed based on prior research. We need accounting data from the financial statement to compute EVA. There must be a few adjustments made. The following formula is used to compute the EVA, which represents the company's profit after total cost of capital:

$$\text{EVA} = \text{Net Sales} - \text{Operating Expenses} - \text{taxes} - \text{Capital Charges}$$

	Net Sales – Operating expenses
=	Operating profit (EBIT, Earnings before Interest and Tax)
-	Taxes
=	Net operating profit after tax (NOPAT)
-	Capital charges (Invested capital cost of capital)
=	Economic Value Added (EVA)

Net operating profit after tax, or NOPAT. It gauges profits from ongoing business operations. It is comparable to EBIT (Earnings before interest and tax) less taxes, which is a common beginning point in analysts' valuation models. EVA can be thought of as NOPAT less capital charges for a business. Capital charges are calculated by multiplying the amount of capital invested by the company by the weighted average cost of capital (WACC). WACC is the additions of each component of capital minus short-term debt,

long-term debt and shareholders' equity minus weighted for its relative proportion, at market value, in the company's capital structure:

$$WACC = \frac{D}{D + E} .i.(1 - t) + \frac{E}{D + E} .r.....(3.1)$$

Where;

i = the average interest rate,

r = the required return on equity,

t = the tax rate,

D = the amount of debt capital, and

E = the amount of equity capital.

Based on the general form of panel data regression model, the econometric models of Moghaddam and Shoghi (2012); Onger (2014); Atlaf (2016) and Omneya et al (2021) are adapted in this study.

$$FV_{it} = f(EVA_{it}) \tag{3.2}$$

Where the above equation of (3.1) is decomposed into three econometric equations to meet up specific objectives of this study with control variables added.

Objective One:

$$DCF_{it} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 EVA_{it} + \beta_3 FZE_{it} + \beta_4 LVG_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{3.3}$$

Objective Two:

$$NBV_{it} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 EVA_{it} + \beta_3 FZE_{it} + \beta_4 LVG_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{3.4}$$

Objective Three:

$$SP_{it} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 EVA_{it} + \beta_3 FZE_{it} + \beta_4 LVG_{it} + ROA + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{3.5}$$

Where:

$DCF_{it}$  = Discounted Cash Flow (Dependent Variable)

$NBV_{it}$  = Net Book Value (Dependent Variable)

$SP_{it}$  = Company Stock Prices (Dependent Variable)

$ROA_{it}$  = Return on Asset

$EVA_{it}$  = Economic Value Added (Independent Variable)

$FZE_{it}$  = Firm Size (Control Variable)

$LVG_{it}$  = Leverage (Control Variable)

**Results and Discussion**

This section deals with the analysis and discussion of empirical findings. This covers the descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, Hausman Test and fixed & Random Effect Model.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

	SP	DCF	NBV	EVA	FSIZE	LEV	ROA
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Mean	61.096	15.924	15.392	20.630	18.078	17.171	17.862
Median	12.360	16.017	15.290	20.564	17.880	17.257	13.186
Max	1046.322	17.237	18.261	25.008	20.644	18.307	81.375
Min	0.044	9.040	11.962	14.571	16.856	15.548	0.017
Std. Dev.	168.284	0.975	0.867	1.831	0.755	0.528	15.088
Skew.	4.721	-2.912	0.129	-0.332	1.992	-0.702	1.342
Kurt.	25.165	19.950	5.552	3.515	6.313	3.496	4.744
Jarque-Bera	3628.113	2007.811	41.139	4.345	167.843	13.872	64.102
Prob.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.113	0.000	0.000	0.000
Obs.	270	270	270	270	270	270	270

Authors' Compilation, (2022)

From the above table, it is observed that the mean value of all the variables are positive suggesting that the variables on the average increased over the period studied. Share price (SP) has the highest mean value (#61.09), suggesting that for the firms sampled, the average share price is #61.09k. Similarly, the mean of EVA is 20.63 while firm size (FSIZE) has a mean value of 18.07 while return on asset (ROA) as a measure of financial performance recorded (17.86) mean value. Conversely, the mean values of all the variables are closer to the median, suggesting that the variables are symmetrical and normally distributed.

On the other hand, it was observed that all the variables range from positive-to-positive value as depicted by the result of the minimum and maximum. Also, among the variables studied, share price has the highest value for standard deviation while others were relatively low. Thus, implying that the share price of the firms sampled is unstable and unpredictable. Furthermore, it was discovered that all the variables are positive skewed except for DCF, EVA and LEV. Also, all the variables are leptokurtic since their value is greater than three (3) which implies that the variables produce higher extreme outliers than those of the normal distribution.

### Regression Analysis

**Table 2: EVA and Income Based Firm Valuation**

Dependent Variable: DCF			
Variable	Pooled	Fixed	Random
C	13.500 (3.536) 3.817*	22.488 (6.000) 3.747*	16.005 (4.273) 3.745
EVA	0.008 (0.047) 0.185	-0.079 (0.055) -1.423	-0.034 (0.048) -0.717
FZI	0.177 (0.115) 1.534	-0.304 (0.252) -1.205	0.087 (0.150) 0.585
LEV	-0.056 (0.156) -0.362	0.034 (0.246) 0.140	-0.055 (0.184) -0.302
R-squared	0.023	0.492	0.005
Adjusted R-squared	0.002	0.349	-0.015
F-statistic	1.131	3.452	0.263
Prob(F-statistic)	0.338	0.000	0.851
Test Summary	Chi-Sq. Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	25.522	3	0.000

Authors' Computation (2022)

The result for the pooled effect, fixed effect and random effect is reported in Table 2 above. As for the results obtained from the pooled regression models, the coefficient of EVA and FSIZE all shows a positive relationship with discounted cash flow (DCF) which measures the Income Based Firm Evaluation (DCF). This implies that Economic Value Added is poised to improve Income Based Firm Evaluation of the firms sampled. Similarly, the firm size (FSIZE) also improves Income Based Firm Evaluation suggesting that as firms acquire more assets which is a measure of firm size, Income Based Firm Evaluation will improve positively. However, leverage (LEV) depicted a negative relationship. Furthermore, given the value of the r-squared from the pooled regression analysis, only about 2.3% of changes in the explanatory variable are influenced by the variables considered in this study. The F-statistics on the other hand shows that the variables considered have insignificant impact on Income Based Firm Evaluation of the firm sampled.

On the other hand, the result of the fixed effect model shows the coefficient of EVA and FSIZE all shows a negative relationship with Income Based Firm Evaluation (DCF). This implies that Economic Value Added has the potential to negatively influence the income Based approach to Firm Evaluation of the firms sampled. Similarly, the firm size (FSIZE) also depicted a negative coefficient Income Based Firm Evaluation suggesting that as firms acquire more assets which is a measure of firm size, Income Based Firm Evaluation will be affected negatively. However, leverage (LEV) depicted a positive relationship, suggesting that an increase in leverage is expected to improved income-based approach to firm valuation The r-squared from the fixed effect model shows that 49% of changes in the explanatory variable is influenced by the variables considered in this study, suggesting that the model is fit and can be used for decision making. The F-statistics on the other hand shows that the variables considered have significant impact on income-based approach to firm valuation of the firm sampled.

While the result of the random effect model reveals that, EVA and LEV depicted a negative coefficient, suggesting that they both have a negative effect of income-based approach to firm valuation, while FSIZE depicted a positive relationship with income-based approach to firm valuation. The r-squared and F-statistics from the random effect model reveals that EVA has no significant relationship with income-based approach to firm valuation.

Furthermore, the above table also revealed that the constant of each of the model is positive and significance. It can also be seen from the result obtained above that the r-square for each of the models is relatively low, with only fixed effect model having value greater than 45%. It is also noteworthy to also mention that the F-statistics for the entire models were insignificant except for fixed effect model. The result of the Hausman Test favors the use of fixed effect which gave an appropriate result for the analysis. Thus, the conclusion of this hypothesis is based on the fixed effect model and the result obtained revealed that the EVA has a significant effect on income-based approach to firm valuation. This is consistent with the work of Geysler & Liebenberg (2003).

**Table 3: EVA on Book Value Based Approach of Firm Valuation**

Dependent Variable: NBV			
Variable	Pooled	Fixed	Random
C	15.928 (3.119) 5.106*	22.426 (4.818) 4.654*	19.163 (3.749) 5.110*
EVA	0.012 (0.042) 0.299	-0.007 (0.044) -0.166	3.500 (0.040) 0.000
FZI	0.018 (0.102) 0.179	-0.145 (0.203) -0.714	-0.045 (0.136) -0.332
LEV	-0.066 (0.137) -0.484	-0.249 (0.197) -1.260	-0.172 (0.160) -1.076

R-squared	0.003	0.570	0.008
Adjusted R-squared	-0.017	0.450	-0.012
F-statistic	0.159	4.735	0.419
Prob(F-statistic)	0.923	0.000	0.739
Test Summary	Chi-Sq. Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	7.053	3	0.070

Authors' Computation (2022)

The result of the effect of EVA on Book Value Based Approach of Firm Valuation for the pooled effect, fixed effect and random effect is reported in Table 4.3 above. As for the results obtained from the pooled regression models, the coefficient of EVA and FSIZE all shows a positive relationship with book value-based approach of firm valuation (NBV). This implies that Economic Value Added is poised to improve book value-based approach of firm valuation of the firms sampled. Similarly, the firm size (FSIZE) also improves book value-based approach of firm valuation suggesting that as firms acquire more assets which is a measure of firm size, book value-based approach of firm valuation will improve positively. However, leverage (LEV) depicted a negative relationship.

On the other hand, the result of the fixed effect model shows the coefficient of EVA and FSIZE and LEV all shows a negative relationship with book value-based approach of firm valuation (NBV). This implies that economic value added has the potential to negatively influence the book value-based approach of firm valuation of the firms sampled. Similarly, the firm size (FSIZE) also depicted a negative coefficient book value-based approach of firm valuation suggesting that as firms acquire more assets which is a measure of firm size, Income Based Firm Evaluation will be affected negatively. While, leverage (LEV) also depicted a negative relationship, suggesting that an increase in leverage is expected to negatively influence book value-based approach of firm valuation. The r-squared from the fixed effect model shows that 57% of changes in the explanatory variable is influenced by the variables considered in this study, suggesting that the model is fit and can be used for decision making. The F-statistics on the other hand shows that the variables considered have significant impact on book value-based approach of firm valuation of the firm sampled. While the result of the random effect model reveals that FSIZE and LEV depicted a negative coefficient, suggesting that they both have a negative effect of book value-based approach of firm valuation, while EVA depicted a positive relationship with book value-based approach of firm valuation. The r-squared and F-statistics from the random effect model reveals that EVA has no significant relationship with book value-based approach of firm valuation.

Furthermore, the above table also revealed that the constant of each of the model is positive and significance. It can also be seen from the result obtained above that the r-square for each of the models is relatively low, with only fixed effect model having value greater than 55%. It is also noteworthy to also mention that the F-statistics for the entire models were insignificant except for fixed effect model. However, the result of the Hausman Test favors the use of fixed effect which gave an appropriate result for the analysis. Thus, the conclusion of this hypothesis is based on the fixed effect model and the result obtained revealed that the EVA has a significant effect on book value-based approach of firm valuation.

**Table 4: Effect of EVA on Market Based Approach of Firm Valuation**

Dependent Variable: SP			
Variable	Pooled	Fixed	Random
C	777.835 (633.041) 1.230	227.547 (237.698) 0.957	239.425 (236.486) 1.012
EVA	3.970 (8.276) 0.479	0.477 (10.768) 0.234	0.489 (2.030) 0.241
FZI	-26.784 (22.266) -1.202	-2.327 (10.768) -0.216	-2.843 (10.515) -0.270
LEV	-15.998 (27.050) -0.591	-7.879 (8.969) -0.876	-8.043 (8.891) -0.904
ROA	-2.210 (1.050) -2.103	0.082 (0.267) 0.308	0.056 (0.265) 0.213
R-squared	0.034	0.977	0.007
Adjusted R-squared	0.007	0.971	-0.020
F-statistic	1.262	152.175	0.279
Prob(F-statistic)	0.287	0.000	0.890
Test Summary	Chi-Sq. Statistic	Chi-Sq. d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	8.164	3	0.042

Authors' Computation (2022)

The result of the effect of EVA on Market Based Approach of Firm Valuation for the pooled effect, fixed effect and random effect is reported in Table 4.3 above. As for the results obtained from the pooled regression models, the coefficient of EVA shows a positive relationship with share price which is a measure for Market Based Approach of Firm Valuation (SP). This implies that Economic Value Added is poised to improve share prices as a measure of market-based approach of firm valuation of the firms sampled. While, FSIZE, LEV and ROA all revealed a negative coefficient, suggesting that when share prices is used in measuring the Market Based Approach of Firm Valuation, it will result in a reduction in share price as it presently has a negative influence on market-based approach of firm valuation

On the other hand, the result of the fixed effect model shows that the coefficient of FSIZE and LEV all shows a negative relationship with market-based approach of firm valuation, measured using share price (SP). This implies that they have the potential to negatively influence the market-based approach of firm valuation of the firms sampled. While, EVA the depicted a negative coefficient book value-based approach of firm valuation suggesting that as firms acquire more assets which is a measure of firm size, Income Based Firm Evaluation will be affected negatively. While, EVA and ROA depicted a positive relationship, suggesting that and increase in EVA and ROA is expected to positively influence market-based approach of firm valuation. The r-squared from the fixed effect model shows that 97% of changes in the explanatory variable is influenced by the variables considered in this study, suggesting that the model is fit and can be used for decision making. The F-statistics on the other hand shows that the variables considered have significant impact on market-based approach of firm valuation of the firm sampled.

While the result of the random effect model reveals that the coefficient of EVA and ROA shows a positive relationship with share price which is a measure for Market Based Approach of Firm Valuation (SP). This implies that Economic Value Added is poised to improve share prices as a measure of market-based approach of firm valuation of the firms sampled. While, FSIZE, and LEV all revealed a negative coefficient, suggesting that when share prices is used in measuring the Market Based Approach of Firm Valuation, it will result in a reduction in share price as it presently has a negative influence on market-based approach of firm valuation. The r-squared and F-statistics from the random effect model

reveals that EVA has no significant relationship with book value-based approach of firm valuation.

Furthermore, the above table also revealed that the constant of each of the model is positive. It can also be seen from the result obtained above that the r-square for each of the models is relatively low, with only fixed effect model having value greater than 70%. It is also noteworthy to also mention that the F-statistics for the entire models were insignificant except for fixed effect model. However, the result of the Hausman Test favors the use of fixed effect which gave an appropriate result for the analysis. Thus, the conclusion of this hypothesis is based on the fixed effect model and the result obtained revealed that the EVA has a significant effect on share price as a measure for market-based approach of firm valuation.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study evaluates the impact of economic value added on firm valuation in Nigeria. The study uses three proxies to capture firm valuation. The variables are income base of firm valuation that is measured as discounted cash flow (DCF), asset based of firm valuation using net book value (NBV) and market-based approach of firm valuation using publicly traded prices in the stock exchange (SP), while the explanatory variables (EVA) were measured as the company's profit after full cost of capital, while Firm size (FZE) and Leverage (LVG) are use as control variable. Based on the findings of this study, EVA has a significant effect on firm valuation. Specifically, the result revealed that EVA has a significant effect on discounted cash flow-which measured income based approach of firm valuation. Also, EVA depicted a significant effect on book value approach to firm valuation, which is measured using net book value of asset. Similarly, a significant relationship exists between EVA and market based approach of firm valuation, measured using share prices. Thus, this study concludes that Economic Value Added has a significant effect on firm valuation. It therefore recommended that successful value-based management firms should maintain that the technical accounting requirement of EVA is straightforward and makes only minimal adjustments to their accounting procedures. To give investors a normal return on their investment in the company's shares, managers should work to boost future EVA. This is crucial for establishing success standards for management incentive compensation schemes by corporate compensation committees as well as securities analysts evaluating stocks. In order to increase the wealth of owners because they hold a particular position in the company and need the rate of return due to the risk, managers must work to satisfy both the needs of the company's customers and those of the owners. Firms should also strengthen internal financing to reduce financing from debt, as debt may affect the value of EVA.

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## THE CALM-DOWN EFFECT: GOOD GOVERNANCE'S ROLE IN STEMMING THE TIDE OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: Employing Toda-Yamamoto Granger causality technique, this study examined the relationship between public governance and corruption in Nigeria during the period, 1996-2022. In line with ex-post facto research design, secondary data (on yearly basis) on governance and corruption were obtained from Worldwide Governance Indicators and Transparency International respectively. The six governance indicators examined are control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability/absence of violence, voice and accountability, rule of law, and regulatory quality, while corruption was measured using corruption perception index. Empirically, this study found that the existence of a unidirectional causality running from control of corruption-to-corruption perception index in Nigeria. This implies that good governance through the instrumentality of control of corruption is germane to stemming the tide of corruption. Likewise, there is a unidirectional causality flow from political stability to corruption perception index in Nigeria which suggests that political stability/absence of violence is instrumental to stemming the tide of corruption. Further evidence from causality test reveals that political stability had a one-way causality to control of corruption in Nigeria, which implies that to reinforce control of corruption as a governance instrument for stemming the tide of corruption, political stability is key. Moreover, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and rule of law had a unidirectional causality with corruption perception index in Nigeria, thus suggesting the reinforcing role of regulatory quality, rule of law; and voice and accountability in promoting political stability. The study concludes that political stability/absence violence, and control of corruption are vital public governance measures for stemming the tide of corruption in Nigeria, thus indicating the 'calm-down' effect of good governance on corruption. It is therefore recommended that Nigerian government should intensify the tools of public governance in terms of control of corruption, and political stability, as well as voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and rule of law, in stemming the tide of corruption in Nigeria.*

*Keywords: calm-down effect, control of corruption, corruption perception index, good governance, institutional quality, political stability, worldwide governance indicators*

## **Introduction**

Corruption is universal as it exists in all countries, both developed and developing, in the public and private sectors, as well as in non-profit and charitable organizations (Mela et al., 2024). As reported by Nigerians, in 2016, corruption ranked 3rd on the list of most important problems, while in 2019 corruption ranked 5th and in 2023 corruption ranked 4th among the most important problems affecting the country, after the cost of living, insecurity and unemployment, suggesting relatively stable and high levels of concerns about corruption over time and compared to other concerns such as education or housing (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2024). Corruption has been mostly detrimental in its effects. It has been observed that there is a negative correlation between corruption and public financial management and corruption has been found to create unemployment among the youth, and also it affects governance and promote social vices in Nigeria (Mela et al., 2024). Other effects of corruption in Nigeria, according to the authors are its negative effect on economic growth thus causing reduction of economic efficiency and this is in addition to the creation of negative national image and loss of much needed revenue (Mela et al., 2024). Furthermore, corruption which affects the most vulnerable people of the society like the unemployed, old people, youths, has also been found to be detrimental to public administration, undermines democracy, and also degrades the moral fabric of the society and human rights (Nwogbo & Ighodalo, 2021). Corruption has impacted on Nigerian economy negatively such that there is increase in the incidence of poverty, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure etc. which has rendered able bodied men to perpetuate dastardly act such as robbery, premediated killing, prostitution, election thuggery to mention but a few (Atobatele & Okewale, 2018). In the same vein, studies have reported that corruption undermines the rule of law and affect the socio-economic development of any country (Atobatele & Okewale, 2018). In further corroboration, Nwogbo and Ighodalo (2021) asserted that there is no development problem in Nigeria that is as recurrent and problematic as corruption.

The strong link between institutions and corruption has been in prior study, whereby it was noted that corruption tends to be higher in countries with weak institutions and vice versa, and lower in countries with strong and effective institutions (Abdulhakeem, 2021). Therefore, in fighting corruption, the role of public governance cannot be neglected. Good governance is vital for achieving social and economic progress in a society and specifically, good governance ensures that corruption is reduced to drastically, the views and rights of the minority are respected and the voices of the most vulnerable in the society are listened to in the decision-making process (Mbara, 2019). There are different aspects of governance and each of them must be employed in the fight against corruption. For instance, according to the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), the six broad dimensions of governance are control of corruption, government effectiveness, voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, regulatory quality, and rule of law.

The nexus between good governance and corruption has been a subject of descriptive arguments in past studies (Atobatele & Okewale, 2018; Izuchukwu et al., 2024; Mbara, 2019; Nwogbo & Ighodalo, 202; Odeh, 2015) but its empirical investigation is relatively scarce. Therefore, in this study, an attempt was made to empirically examine the impact of good governance on corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, the study explored the impact of control of corruption, government effectiveness, voice and accountability, political

stability and absence of violence/terrorism, regulatory quality, and rule of law; on corruption in Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### *Conceptual Review. Concept of Good Governance*

Governance encompasses a broad spectrum of mechanisms and processes through which societies manage their affairs, ranging from the exercise of authority to decision-making and policy implementation and basically it reflects the manner in which power is wielded to allocate and manage a country's economic and social resources for the collective benefit of its citizens (Izuchukwu et al., 2024). Good governance as an ethical concept that seeks to achieve the greater and common good of the population; implies accountability and transparency, and also refers to government that fulfils its terms and responsibilities in the social contract (Mbara, 2019). According to the World Bank, governance is the exercise of power in the management of a country's economic and social resources towards achieving developmental objectives (Mbara, 2019). Good governance entails strict leadership that is sensitive and responsive to the yearning of the people there by instituting appropriate laws and measures to achieve socio-economic who is development (Atobatele & Okewale, 2018). According to Nwogbo and Ighodalo (2021), governance is not only about institutionalizing due process and transparency in the management of public resources, but must ensure that the goals of development are realized. In measuring good governance according to the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), there are six broad dimensions from which good governance could be viewed: control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability/absence of violence/terrorism, voice and accountability, rule of law, and regulatory quality. These indicators are based on over 30 underlying data sources reporting the perceptions of governance of a large number of survey respondents and expert assessments worldwide and the estimate of each of these six governance indicators ranges from approximately -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) governance performance (Kaufmann et al., 2010).

As a governance indicator, control of corruption reflects perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as capture of the state by elites and private interest (Kaufmann et al., 2010). Control of corruption is a critical factor for economic growth (Samarasinghe, 2018). Furthermore, Kaufmann et al. (2010), describe government effectiveness as a governance indicator which reflects perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. In the same vein, the authors explain political stability and absence of violence/terrorism as a measure of the perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically-motivated violence, including terrorism; and also serve as a measure of the possibility of changes in government due to unconstitutional reasons which may include terrorism or politically related violence. Further in their explanation, voice and accountability as a dimension of governance reflects perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. Also, regulatory quality reflects the perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies

and regulations that permit and promote private sector development; while rule of law was described to reflect the perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence (Kaufmann et al., 2010; Samarasinghe, 2018).

### *Concept of Corruption*

Corruption is a complex phenomenon that defies clear definition due to its multifarious nature, which involves the abuse of entrusted power for personal benefit at the expense of the common good (Ake, 2024). However, scholars have attempted its definition. For instance, corruption has been defined as the perpetration of a vice against the public well-being (Fagbadebo, 2007). Furthermore, corruption can be described as an act which diverges from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private motives such as wealth, power or position (Mela et al., 2024). According to Yusuf (2014), corruption which connotes any behavior that deviates from an established norm with regards to public trust; also means theft of public trust whether the person concerned is elected, selected, nominated or appointed. The typical manifestations of corruption in Nigeria which affect effective public financial management include bribery, extortion, embezzlement, abuse of power, conflict of interests, fraud, favoritism, insider trading/abuse of privileged information, construction of justice, collusion with business interests, influence peddling, procurement contract/bid rigging (Mela et al., 2024). It has been proven that corruption is not only endemic but also detrimental to the growth and development of any nation (Atobatele & Okewale, 2018).

### *Theoretical Framework*

In analyzing the link between governance and corruption, the principal-agent theory becomes relevant and appropriate theoretical framework. In the principal-agent model, some actors (agent) are entrusted with the resources of the state which is expected to be used in the good interest of another actors (principal) and the principal can sometimes make the decision that affects the incentives of the agent (Atobatele & Okewale, 2018). The agent usually occupies a position and take decision on behalf of the principal, which has direct effect on the interest of the principal (Abdulhakeem, 2021). It was further noted, however, that the problem arises when the principal cannot monitor the actions of the agent such that the agent takes decisions to his interest at the expense of the interest of the principal, such that if the ability of the principal to monitor and punish the agent for misbehavior is weak, the incentive for the agent to be corrupt is very high. It is the institutional setting that determines the incentive system (Abdulhakeem, 2021). Theoretically, there is an inverse relationship between good governance and corruption, which implies that corruption is expected to be proportionally low in countries where there is high level of good governance gauged for instance by its effective institutional quality viewed from the lens of control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability/absence of violence/terrorism, voice and accountability, rule of law, and regulatory quality.

### *Empirical Review*

Although there is dearth of lack extensive empirical study on the link between governance and corruption but few descriptive analyses of the linkage such as Nwogbo and Ighodalo

(2021), have reported that the political, social and economic dimensions of corruption are indications of the lack of effective governance and elite national consensus in fighting corruption. Also, Essien (2012) argued that good governance is a policy variable through which high human development in Nigeria could be achieved.

Furthermore, Abdulkakeem (2021) examined the relationship between corruption and measures of political institutions in Africa, also found the existence of a negative relationship between political institutions and corruption. It has been found that corruption-institutional quality interaction exerts a negative and significant impact on economic performance, thus suggesting that the trajectory of Nigeria's economic performance is impeded by high level of corruption and weak institutional quality (Ozegbe & Kelikume, 2022).

Atobatele and Okewale (2018) examined the impact of corruption on good governance. The study found that, though huge resources were committed to fighting corruption but little achievements have been recorded, and consequently, the spate of corruption has affected the growth of the economy which has led to structural imbalances such as deficit infrastructural facilities and social vices amongst the unemployed youths. Like Atobatele and Okewale (2018), Odeh (2015) examined the impact of corruption on good governance in Nigeria. The study revealed that despite the huge resources put into the implementation of policies geared towards good governance in Nigeria, there have not been visible changes in the living standard of the citizens, due to gross corruption. The study further posits that corruption is one of the major reasons for the poor economic performance, decaying infrastructures, the rising cost of living and poverty in Nigeria.

### **Material and Methods**

Employing Toda-Yamamoto Granger causality technique, this study examined the relationship between public governance and corruption in Nigeria during the period, 1996-2022. In line with ex-post facto research design, secondary data (on yearly basis) on governance and corruption were obtained from the Worldwide Governance Indicators and Transparency International respectively. The six governance indicators examined in this study are: control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability/absence of violence, voice and accountability, rule of law, and regulatory quality. The World Governance Indicators measures six dimensions of governance quality, namely, control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability/absence of violence/terrorism, voice and accountability, rule of law, and regulatory quality (Kaufmann et al., 2010). The estimates of these six dimensions were used in this study and the score within the index ranges between + 2.5 to – 2.5, with a score above zero indicating effective governance and a score below zero indicating ineffective governance.

In this study, corruption was measured using Corruption Perception Index (CPI). CPI as one of the most widely used global corruption ranking, measures how corrupt each country's public sector is perceived to be, according to experts and businesspeople. A country's score is the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0-100, where 0 means highly corrupt and 100 means very clean.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics**

	CPI	COC	GEF	POTAB	REQ	ROL	VOI
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Mean	14.694	-1.1783	-1.0438	-1.7331	-0.9232	-1.1318	-0.6991
Maximum	35.0000	-0.9009	-0.8972	-0.5863	-0.6817	-0.8426	-0.3193
Minimum	2.6600	-1.5020	-1.2133	-2.2111	-1.2928	-1.5125	-1.5537
Std. Dev.	14.0033	0.1364	0.0894	0.4157	0.1551	0.1862	0.2761
Jarque-Bera	4.3501	1.7907	1.3411	10.0564	1.9854	1.0809	14.0831
Probability	0.1136	0.4084	0.5114	0.0065	0.3705	0.5824	0.0008

Source: Authors

According to the summary statistics in Table 1, the average score for corruption perception index (CPI) for Nigeria in the study period, 1996-2022 was 14.69 while the index ranges between a minimum of 2.66 to a maximum of 35.00. The variable (CPI) is relatively stable around its mean and normally distributed.

The descriptive statistics reveals that all the six indicators of governance (government effectiveness (GEF), voice and accountability (VOI), control of corruption (COC), rule of law (ROL), regulatory quality (REQ) and political stability (POTAB)) have negative score, and even higher than the -2.5 benchmark (Kaufmann et al., 2010), thereby suggesting for the poor state of governance quality in the country-Nigeria. Corroborating this, the lack of good governance in Nigeria as evidenced in the WGI data, indicates negative scores for Nigeria in all the six governance indicators since 1996 (Adenuga, 2023). Among the six governance indicators, political stability has the least mean value while government effectiveness has the highest average value. However, except for political stability, and voice and accountability, the other four indicators of governance are normally distributed in the study period.

**Table 2. Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test statistics**

	ADF-Statistic in Level	ADF-Statistic at First Difference	I (d)
CPI	-0.9478 [0.7561]	0.0010* [0.0005]	I(1)
COC	-1.6179 [0.4595]	-4.9797* [0.0008]	I(1)
GEF	-3.4411** [0.0185]		I(0)
ROL	-1.1119 [0.6954]	-3.8747* [0.0083]	I(1)
VOI	-3.9706* [0.0054]		I(0)
REQ	-2.0399 [0.2690]	-5.7845* [0.0001]	I(1)
POTAB	-1.7819 [0.3806]	-4.7184* [0.0010]	I(1)

Source: Authors

Note: Values in [ ] are the probability values; \* Stationary at 0.01, \*\* Stationary at 0.05.

The ADF unit root test statistics in Table 2 reveals that except government effectiveness (GEF) and voice and accountability (VOI) which attained stationary in level, the other variables (corruption perception index (CPI), control of corruption (COC), rule of law (ROL), regulatory quality (REQ) and political stability (POTAB) could only attain stationarity after first difference. This implies that the maximum integration order for the specification purpose of VAR granger causality test (popularly called Toda-Yamamoto causality test) is one. Table 3 reports the Toda-Yamamoto causality test of good governance and corruption in Nigeria.

**Table 3. Toda-Yamamoto causality test of good governance and corruption in Nigeria**

	CPI	COC	GEF	ROL	VOI	REQ	POTAB
CPI		0.3047 [0.8587]	3.4542 [0.1778]	7.4038** [0.0247]	4.8649*** [0.0878]	0.5487 [0.7601]	0.2421 [0.8859]

COC	15.7510* [0.0004]		3.7609 [0.1525]	0.6375 [0.7271]	2.5266 [0.2827]	3.8213 [0.1480]	2.7065 [0.2584]
GEF	1.9352 [0.3800]	3.9175 [0.1410]		7.7310** [0.0210]	4.2708 [0.1182]	0.3156 [0.8540]	0.2209 [0.8954]
ROL	1.0802 [0.5827]	4.0563 [0.1316]	0.9602 [0.6187]		0.2561 [0.8798]	3.9328 [0.1400]	5.0495** [0.0801]
VOI	4.3440 [0.1139]	1.6951 [0.4284]	0.4662 [0.7921]	1.0410 [0.5942]		0.5060 [0.7765]	9.5367* [0.0085]
REQ	2.1678 [0.3383]	2.5284 [0.2825]	1.2833 [0.5264]	10.2232* [0.0060]	11.9255* [0.0026]	0.3514 [0.1275]	5.9836*** [0.0502]
POTAB	21.5331* [0.0000]	5.2691*** [0.0718]	0.3968 [0.8200]	1.2269 [0.5415]	4.0017 [0.1352]	0.1402 [0.9323]	

Source: Authors

Note: \* significant at 0.01, \*\* significant at 0.05, \*\*\* significant at 0.10; Values in [ ] are the probability values.

The results of the Toda-Yamamoto causality test as shown in Table 3 indicates the existence of a unidirectional causality running from control of corruption-to-corruption perception index in Nigeria. This implies that good governance through the instrumentality of control of corruption is germane to stemming the tide of corruption. Likewise, there is a unidirectional causality flow from political stability to corruption perception index in Nigeria which suggests that political stability/absence of violence is instrumental to stemming the tide of corruption. Further evidence from causality test reveals that political stability had a one-way causality to control of corruption in Nigeria, which implies that to reinforce control of corruption as a governance instrument for stemming the tide of corruption; political stability is key. Moreover, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and rule of law had a unidirectional causality with corruption perception index in Nigeria, thus suggesting the reinforcing role of regulatory quality, rule of law; and voice and accountability in promoting political stability.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Employing Toda-Yamamoto Granger causality technique, this study examined the relationship between public governance and corruption in Nigeria during the period, 1996-2022 using secondary data obtained from Worldwide Governance Indicators and Transparency International respectively. The six governance indicators examined are control of corruption, government effectiveness, political stability/absence of violence, voice and accountability, rule of law, and regulatory quality, while corruption was measured using corruption perception index.

Empirically, this study found that the existence of a unidirectional causality running from control of corruption-to-corruption perception index in Nigeria. This implies that good governance through the instrumentality of control of corruption is germane to stemming the tide of corruption. Likewise, there is a unidirectional causality flow from political stability to corruption perception index in Nigeria which suggests that political stability/absence of violence is instrumental to stemming the tide of corruption. Further evidence from causality test reveals that political stability had a one-way causality to control of corruption in Nigeria, which implies that to reinforce control of corruption as a governance instrument for stemming the tide of corruption; political stability is key. Moreover, voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and rule of law had a unidirectional



causality with corruption perception index in Nigeria, thus suggesting the reinforcing role of regulatory quality, rule of law; and voice and accountability in promoting political stability. The study concludes that political stability/absence violence, and control of corruption are vital public governance measures for stemming the tide of corruption in Nigeria, thus indicating the ‘calm-down’ effect of good governance on corruption. It is therefore recommended that Nigerian government should intensify the tools of public governance in terms of control of corruption, and political stability, as well as voice and accountability, regulatory quality, and rule of law, in stemming the tide of corruption in Nigeria.

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## REVISITING THE PERSPECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA'S QUEST FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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*Abstract: Although, the roles of the grassroot government in community development have been explored; but an up-to-date analysis on the specific objectives of this paper is unavailable. Consequently, the specific mandates of this paper are tripartite: to examine the concept of community development and associated perspectives/angles of community development; to highlight the roles of local governments in community development; and to relay the hindrances hindering local governments from performing its function of implementing and fostering community development. Rooted in participatory theory and qualitative research design; the paper made pertinent findings and observations regarding the objectives of the paper. On the perspectives, the following angles of community development were analyzed: Community development as provision of basic infrastructure, community development as community building, and community development as neighborhood regeneration. Re-examining the functions of local government in community development, this paper observed that local government is an agent of mass mobilization and participation. Revisiting the perspectives and functions of local government in Nigeria therefore highlights the need for further reforms aimed at strengthening local governments for effective community development as local governments have been unable to truly become vehicles of: mass mobilization, massive economic growth and development, and social and economic justice in Nigeria.*

*Keywords: Beggar thy Neighbor Foreign Policy Approach, Economic Growth and Development, Modernization Theory, National Development, Participatory Theory, Sustainable Development.*

### Introduction

Nigeria, a product of the colonialist as well as imperialist activities of the British government (Chioke, 2024) has its peculiar system of local government. Local governments since the start of 21st century have passed through fundamental shift from local government to local governance (Itai, 2023), seeking to ensure community

development amidst many public administration challenges. Imperatively, “while local authorities were traditionally responsible for providing basic services, they are now expected to act as proactive entrepreneurs by offering diverse services and addressing economic, environmental and community development issues (Itai, 2023).” From time immemorial, local governments in third world climes and beyond were crafted to facilitate economic and sociopolitical developments at community levels. In other words, the existence of local government structures preceded colonial rulership and imperialism in Nigeria for the achievement of community development.

Indeed, local government has been the governance structure put in place for administering the local people of various communities and ethnicities existing in their respective territorial domains. The already existing local government systems became the nucleus and fundamental structure that British government adopted in colonizing Nigeria and the rest of other African climes where such administrative structures were already in existence. In this dimension, there are varied indications that local government is meant to be a driver of rural and/or community development. Put differently, the point is that, “local government is a veritable grassroot vehicle for steady oversight and coordination of activities as regards socio-economic and political development (Udenta, 2007, p.302).” Nigeria’s local governments have been involved in community development process (Abugu, 2014, p.129), but public administration at the country’s local government level remains messy (Chioke, et al, 2022). To situate community development through the instrumentality of local government/institutions; participatory theory demonstrates the possible approach to understanding how public administration local government and community development. To this end, this paper examined community development from the perspectives of participatory theorists.

Community development was formally defined in 1945 as mass education which conceptualized community development as a movement designed to produce better living for the whole community with their active involvement and possibly on the initiative of the community members (Eze, 1999, p.8). Therefore, it is herein argued within the philosophical position of Udenta (2007, p.302) that local government when properly harnessed, provides a vehicle, an avenue, a framework for community involvement and invariably in development planning and implementation. Then concerning the dynamics of politics and administration in Nigeria; the need to empirically ascertain the functions of local government in community development is glaringly overwhelming. Apparently, this is the premise that premised the authors’ resolve to embark on this study through a qualitative approach.

To make precise conclusion on the journey so far; there is need to re-examine the roles of local government in community development and examine how Nigerian local governments have performed those functions. Based on this, the goals of this paper were to: examine the concept of community development and its associated perspectives/angles; and highlight the roles of local governments in community development. Following a qualitative method, the authors adopted content analysis method in analyzing data used for this investigation with multiple sources of data incorporated to minimize errors and ensure validity and reliability of the data used for the study’s analyses.

## **Literature Review**

On local government, there abound numberless conceptual explications on its nature and meaning/definition. Local government could be a: deconcentration or devolution. Deconcentration is the transfer of state responsibilities and resources from the center to the periphery (Nnamani, et al 2019), but devolution is the dispersal of power and authority on a territorial basis, thereby granting power and authority by the national government to subordinate body (Okolie & Eze, 2006). Ugwu (2017, p.14) observed that local government is at the base of a pyramid of governmental institutions, with the national government at the top and intermediate governments (states, regions, provinces) occupying the middle range. Olisa, Okoli and Nwabufo (1990, p.93) put it this way: local government is a unit of government below the central, regional or state government established by law to exercise political authority through a representative council within a defined area. Local government is a system of decentralization of government in which many of the functions of government are distributed among units separated both physically and organizationally from State government departments (Odenigwe, 1977). A local government is a corporate body that can sue and can be sued. It therefore has its own independent existence (Orewa, 1991, p.22). Furthermore, "Local government is any organized leadership championed via the use of local personnel for harnessing material resources and human capital development at the grassroots level. This suggests that the major focus of local government is the transformation of material resources of the local people and the development of human capital for participation in politics and contribution towards the organizational goals cum the overall sustainable national development. These are the hallmarks of an ideal local government (Chioke, 2022, p.47)." At the moment, there is no correlation between these hallmarks and the reality aground as per Nigeria's local governments and governance thereof. With this, the current local government system is merely a contrivance contrived in order to pretend to be developing communities while syphoning the treasury and commonwealth of the general public.

Etymologically, the word, 'local' shows that local government is any government that has other authorities higher than it. By this, one can argue that local government is a structure created by the state government for the performance of functions which are of local importance. Therefore, local government is not completely autonomous anywhere in the world. In the right sense, it is argued that although not completely autonomous, local government is a unique government structure put in place to perform certain duties targeted towards engendering community development or rural development within a geographical location and as such, it ought to be uniquely handled in a manner that will make it deliver the cardinal objectives for its establishment. Apart from this, local government is vital for other reasons. According to Odenigwe (1977, p.19), "it provides the communities with a formal organizational framework which enables them to conduct their affairs effectively and regulate the actions of their members for the good of the general public." Resultantly, the efficacy of local government could be seen from the lens of the level of finance it actually generates, the level of development therein, and the degree to which it ensures the needed security and material well-being of the rural people via the strategic planning and provision of social amenities. By this, local government unites the people and communities within a definite area.

Now, the focus is on demystifying community development via definitions put forward by eminent authors. First, development means different things to different people.

Accordingly, it has been misunderstood, misinterpreted and greatly misapplied in different directions. This notwithstanding, "Development is about the improvement in the quality of life. This improvement could be socio-economic and/or political. It is an intensive and an extensive reality (Udenta, 2007, p.279)." Community development is holistic approach grounded in the principles of human rights, empowerment, inclusion, self-determination, social justice and collective action (Kenny, 2007). Community development is centered on fostering better living for the community with the active participation of community dwellers and as such, local government is an agent of community development (Chioke, 2022, p.49). It suffices that the major target of community development is to cause the improvement of people's standard of living and productivity of the labor force/human resources of the community. Similar view was held by Abugu (2014) who opined that the goals of community development should be to improve people's productivity cum enable the people to partake in their future social, political and economic life. Hence, Eze (1999, p.7) rightly contended that, "Community development denotes various strategies and interpositions through coordinated actions of the community members in order to usher in for the people social and economic development. It is an effort geared towards achieving the solution of community problems, raising their standard of living as well as promoting social welfare, justice, community cohesion and the development of their material and human resources to the fullest extent." In respect of the foregoing position; it is obvious that community development demands synergy of the governors and the governed - government authorities and the community people.

Community development is the development of the community executed through the active participation of the indigene (Abugu, 2014). According to Smart (2017), community development chiefly focuses on the redistribution of power to address the causes of inequality and disadvantage. This position consequently suggests that any community development program must be championed by members of that particular community at all stages ranging from determination of community development issues, selecting and implementing actions regarding community development issues to evaluation of what has been done so far. For this reason, there must be community development initiatives. Significantly, Ife (2016) argued that with community development initiatives, community members can become more empowered in a way that they can increasingly recognize and challenge conditions and structures which are negatively impacting their wellbeing. Scholars have reasoned that at the community level; community development and empowerment initiatives can achieve long-term outcomes like stronger and more cohesive communities, evidenced by changes in social capital, civic engagement, social cohesion and improved health (Campbell, Pyett & McCarthy, 2007; Ife, 2016; Kenny, 2007; Wallerstein, 2006). It is thus clear that community development metamorphoses into national development. Therefore, while community development focuses on a unit or units; national development is larger and focuses on the general system. Importantly, we examine the perspectives on local government as regards community development in a separate section of this paper.

### **Theoretical Standpoint**

There is hardly any study without a theoretical base that relays adequate explanation of the various variables or issues under investigation. In light of this, this paper was anchored on participatory theory of development. Participatory theory is about community participation

in the development that is meant to solve their local needs. The authorship of the theory is hidden, but since it bothers on development, it could be traced to development theorists. Midgley, et al (1986) opined that the historical antecedents of community participation include: the legacy of western ideology, the influence of community development and the contribution of social work and community radicalism.

Participation theory of development explains the process of community development. According to Storey (1999), participation represents a move from the global, a spatial, top-down strategies that dominated early development initiatives to more locally sensitive methodologies. Buchy, Ross and Proctor (2000) added that literature on participation and participatory processes stems broadly from two major areas: political sciences and development theory. However, this paper sees the theory as being largely situated in the domain of development. In the view of Lane (1995), participation is greatly influenced by theories of development. The dominance of the top-down approaches to development was largely a result of modernization theory which was dominant in the 1960s (Lane 1995). Importantly, modernization theory is a theory of development. It (modernization theory) tried to explain development and reasons for underdevelopment in third world countries like Nigeria from the purview of liberal scholars. On modernization theory championed by liberal scholars, Chukwuemeka (2022, p.5) averred that they attribute underdevelopment especially in Nigeria to lack of skilled manpower, high incidence of corruption, politicization of ethnicity, absence of adequate institutional structures, non-availability of modern technology, inability of the third world countries to explore its natural resources, and absence of effective leadership. Participatory theorists and practitioners did contend that development demands sensitivity to cultural diversity cum other specific points that were ignored by modernization theorists (Dinbabo, 2003). However, the lack of such sensitivity as argued by Coetzee (2001) accounted for the problems and failures of many projects.

According to Dinbabo (2003, p.13), “the main tenet of participatory community development approaches is that all stakeholders collaborate in any development activities from the very beginning of project identification, prioritization, planning, implementing, evaluation and monitoring.” Participatory theory is in line with community development as it advocates development engineered by citizens at the grassroots through the principles of inclusivism, togetherness, cooperation, equal partnership, power sharing and transparency. This theory therefore answers the question: How can government at the grassroots achieve community development? Significantly, it is thus herein applied as the theoretical framework of this paper in answering the foregoing question. In applying the theory to local government and community development in Nigeria; the theory shows and buttresses the point that development especially at the community level requires bottom-top method involving people of different social rankings, political and religious affiliations.

### **Material and Methods**

This paper is a desk-based investigation aimed at revisiting the existing perspectives and functions of local government in Nigeria as instruments of community development. Thus, the paper adopted the technique of reviewing relevant extant literature in its bid to examine its specific goals. Qualitative research design, which included the use of secondary data collection strategy was adopted. Importantly, Chioke (2024, p.267) observed that this, “method is used when the researcher(s) is/are interested in examining issues or variables

that may not fit into the rigors of quantitative analysis.” To analyze the data, content analysis was employed. Identifying, presenting, and interpreting the data found in extant literature were part of the analytical procedures involved in writing this paper.

### **Perspectives of Local Government Vis-à-vis Community Development**

The perspectives/angles below aptly captured the descriptions of local government in Nigeria and beyond.

#### *Community Development as provision of Basic Infrastructures*

The goal for creating local government is centered on the provision of basic infrastructures at the grassroots or community levels. Regarding this, Adekoya (2020) perceived local governments as institutions created to ensure grassroots democracy, social and economic wellbeing of the citizens in the areas of security, infrastructural developments, and provision of goods and services. Therefore, local government is ultimately pivotal for the purpose of community development. The Basic Needs Approach (BNA) shows the essential needs of the community/rural dwellers. To ensure this, “Public administration defines the operational platform strategic as well as tactical for the pursuit and actualization of the aims of public policy (Udenta, 2017, p.6).” The recognition and importance of local government in the development process is prompted by the imperative to tackle local socio-economic problems and to manage grassroots development through provision of basic rural infrastructure (Lawal, 2014). Public administration at the local government level therefore includes the actualization of public policies centered on the development of the community. Emezi (2011) submitted that local government is conceived as a system of local administration instituted to maintain law and order, provide a limited range of social amenities and encourage co-operation and participation of inhabitants towards the improvement of their conditions of living. Udenta (2007) argued that Nigerian local governments have been involved in the process of providing basic infrastructure like rural roads, rural electrification, health centers, provision of open spaces, erection of parks, markets and stalls, shops, telecommunication, and so on. Concerning this, Amoke (2020, p.193) stated that it is the responsibility of local government to provide services like portable water, rural electricity, health centers, roads networks, schools and their maintenance. But the extent to which local government does these in Nigeria is to a low extent especially in Southeast geopolitical zone (Chioke, Umeokafor & Mbamalu, 2020). Studies have shown that local governments in Nigeria have not lived up to its expectations and have been consequently condemned for non-performance (Chioke, et al 2020; Udenta, 2005). Then the puzzle is: What should be done to attain sustainable development? Scientific understanding of leadership, public accountability, and related issues is necessary to promote sustainable development. (Chioke, 2023). In search of sustainable development for the underdeveloped countries, local councils should be rejigged by removing leaders with track record of public accountability questions and then install leaders with character and capacity to birth sustainable infrastructural development in their various localities.

#### *Community Development as Community Building*

Aside basic amenities, there are other imperative issues one need consider in community development. This suggests that community development as community building is not

about merely making sure that there is enough infrastructure at the rural or community level. In a collaborative dimension, Udentia (2007, p.282) added that:

This involves but surpasses the provision of basic infrastructure. It involves a higher tone of psychosocial existence and activity. This difference is essential because one could just be doing something at the ephemeral level without being really involved in it - no due commitment or attachment just going through the motions: like children in a catechism class involved in a hypnotic parrotization, without deep thought about what is being said. Therefore, when the activities have surpassed the provision of basic infrastructure and are focused on building or sustaining a sense of community, then we are involved in community development as community building or cultural re-orientation."

In order to concretize this, there are certain aids and principles that engender community building by local government as agent of community development. These principles are: rule of law, equity, subordination of personal will to the will of the community, and togetherness, which strengthens the sense communal living. Where these are lacking, community building will not be achieved through community development programs. Pertinently, "community building involves the creation or institutionalization of a sense of common or shared identity, common or shared purposes and common or shared destiny (Udentia 2007, p.283)." In lieu of this, community building is about the destruction of all forms of alienation, marginalization and servitude in a politically organized setting.

#### *Community Development as Neighborhood Regeneration*

This angle views community development as any systematic improvement of community that is faced with various turbulent social issues. It calls for rebirth, rejigging, reorganization, change and adjustment of the existing properties cum elements of the ailing community/system. For a proper understanding of the community development as neighborhood regeneration, the paper injects the view of Udentia (2007, pp.284-285) as stated below:

It is an arrangement in which the local government is best placed for the achievement of desired goals. In view of degeneration and decay resulting from so many sources including the loss of social dynamism and/or obsolescence, intellectual bankruptcy, poor executive capacity, poor maintenance culture, social atrophy/blight with the attendant alienation and anomie and other associated problems and challenges, there is a compelling need for a re-engineering, risorgimento, renewal, and rebirth. Both the ordinary regular cleansing actions in order to maintain homeostatic balance and the radical/remedial overhaul are all aspects of neighborhood regeneration when the end is the recovery and sustenance of the sense of community.

Importantly, neighborhood regeneration is about the renewal of the residential quarters with the sole interest of reviving, healing, resuscitating and improving its unpleasant present questions. Therefore, it is the present condition of the neighborhood that warrants regeneration.

#### **Functions of Local Governments in Community Development**

The following functions are the roles of local government in ensuring community development which are herein explored.

#### *Local Government as Agent of Mass Mobilization and Participation*



Notably, literature reviewed in the course of this paper noted that local government is an agent of mass mobilization (Abugu, 2014; Ezeani, 2006). However, this paper adds that local government is not just an agent of mass mobilization, rather it is an agent of mass mobilization and participation. Why? The reason is that local government do not just or merely mobilize people; it does that for those mobilized to actively participate in community development and by extension, sustainable national development. Therefore, mass mobilization is incomplete without participation of the community people. Mobilization is more of assembling together the rural/community people or other resources while participation is giving the mobilized people the opportunity to contribute meaningfully in the implementation of the community projects or development plans. From a similar parallax, while, mobilization connotes an assembling or putting into action or operation (Abugu, 2014, p.132), participation is the involvement of the community in the decision-making process of implementation of development projects (Maser, 1997). The need for mobilization and participation of the local people is thus thrown up as follows: We cannot realize the full benefit of democratic government unless we begin by the admission that all problems not central in their incidence require decision at the place and by the person, where and by whom incidence is most deeply felt (Laski, 1980, p.411). This suggests that the local governments are enhancers of community/grassroots participation in matters that concern them. Thus, the role of local government as an agent of mass mobilization and participation is to promote capacity building at the grassroots. Operationally, "capacity building refers to an approach to community development that raises people's knowledge, awareness and skills to use their own capacity and using available support systems, to resolve the more underlying causes of underdevelopment (Schuftan, 1996)." It should be noted that local government is not just an agent of mass mobilization and participation, it doubles as an agent of capacity building for community development.

It is on record that, "Local government administration facilitates political mobilization and sensitization of the people within its areas. The institutional framework of local government administration is pivotal to the success of any government program (Agbodike et al, 2014, p.100)." Local government allows for clientele participation in decision making and implementation of government programs that affect their lives (Akhakpe, 2013). Local government as a grassroot government transmits the pulse of other organs of government to the majority of the rural people and mobilizes them for effective national development (Abugu, 2014, p.132). Community development is better achieved through citizens' mobilization and participation. In short, it is through local/traditional institutions that the local government ensures or mobilizes the support of the people for steady, speedy and effective participation of the local populace in matters of importance to them. Imperatively, Nigerian local governments have achieved little in the area of mass mobilization and participation, emphasising the need for urgent people centred reforms.

#### *Local Government as an Accelerator of Economic Growth and Development*

Growth and development have been erroneously used interchangeably. The two are not the same. Growth precedes development. In short, growth is the foundation for development. Growth is change while development results from the consolidation of the change already in existence. Thus, where there is no growth, development becomes a wild goose chase. Gharajedaghi and Ackoff (1986) submitted that development is a mechanism through

which people increase their abilities and desires with the objective to satisfy their own needs.

In his address, General Babangida on October 1, 1988 stated that, “growth point must emerge from local government areas and provide the much-needed push to activate and energize productive activities in rural Nigeria and thus reverse the phenomenon of rural - urban drift.” Economic growth and development should be among the priorities of responsible local governments in Nigeria (Abugu, 2014, p.133). In the rural areas, effective local governments can assist the rural people in organizing themselves to mobilize and manage their resources effectively, reduce waste associated with rural development projects due to poor and inaccurate information, feedback as well as non-performing or corrupt bureaucracies (Olowu, 1988). In a lecture, Ozor (2002) emphasized that, “The grassroots should constitute the major basis of sustainable economic development program... No national economic development program can succeed without the active cooperation of the local populace who constitute the majority of the citizenry of this nation.” As such, local government through effective mobilization function as a facilitator for the acceleration of massive economic growth and development in Nigeria (Abugu, 2014, p.134).

Regrettably, the current travesty and happenings at the local governments show that the governance structures/local councils are far from ensuring economic growth and development through mobilization and participation of the people. Due to the omnibus administrative challenges, fiscal rascality and allied impediments; local governments in the country have not performed creditably as accelerators of massive economic growth and development. For one to experience economic growth, there must be increase in per capita income generated by individuals. To experience this at the local government level for the enhancement of community development and by extension national development; there must be adequate health care systems and healthy environment to ensure the health and well-being of rural/community people as health is wealth. In order to actively accelerate massive economic growth and development in the search for community development; local governments must provide employment opportunities, eliminate poverty through encouragement of SMEs and other related ways, fight corruption, and initiate and foster public private partnership in education sector and other vital areas of the local economy.

*Local Government as an Agent of Social and Economic Justice in Community Development*  
Local government is recognized as a driver of social and economic justice for community development below the state level but hardly perform this task satisfactorily. Abugu (2014, p.134) intoned that, “community development will be difficult if not impossible in an environment characterized by abject penury and blatant economic and social inequality. Local government must in this regard provide the equal enabling environment to enable the rural populace carry out their economic activities and thus generate the sufficient resources to perform their civil responsibilities to the government.” Where there is absence of economic justice; economic inequality would be the order of the day. Economic inequality is the prevalence of unequal distribution of the national cake - the commonwealth of the country. This situation as complained by ethnic minorities in Nigeria has contributed to the serious problems associated with the country's federalism and political instability thereby leading to massive underdevelopment at the grassroots and states in Nigeria. Invariably, economic injustice arising from the sharing of the commonwealth of the people has made social equilibrium not to be manifestly experienced

in third world countries. This notwithstanding, “successful economic projects sponsored, initiated or supported by local government could lead to a reduction in social inequality by raising the living standards of the poor and thereby enabling them to participate more effectively in decision making at the local and central levels (Olowu, 1988).”

### **Conclusion**

As Nigeria continues its quest for community development, the role of local government must be reevaluated and repositioned. On the perspectives of local government, it is clear that local governments in Nigeria are not appropriately tailored and managed to: ensure steady availability of basic infrastructure, engage the rural populace in community building, and execute neighborhood regeneration. In Nigeria, the potential of local governments to drive grassroots development is enormous, as they are now strategically positioned to identify and address the unique needs of their communities. However, to further strengthen grassroots governance in terms of performing community development functions, it is herein recommended that local government should be repositioned to carry out its globally recognized functions of engendering mass mobilization and participation, economic growth and development, as well as social cum economic justice. At the various states, the culture of undue meddlesomeness of the state government via the instrumentality of the ruling and non-ruling elites should be halted to ensure proper solutions are provided for the local needs with the limited resources of the local government. Through this, basic infrastructure, community building and neighborhood regeneration would be guaranteed when the community people have been given adequate platform to participate in community development as seen from the submissions of this paper’s theoretical framework. Revisiting the perspectives and functions of local government in Nigeria therefore highlights the need for further reforms aimed at strengthening local governments for effective community development as local governments have been unable to truly become vehicles of: mass mobilization, massive economic growth and development, and social and economic justice in Nigeria.

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## THE ECONOMICS OF UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

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*Abstract: This paper delves into the economic implications and feasibility of Universal Basic Income (UBI), concentrating on the considerable tax burden necessary to fund a UBI system on a national scale. With UBI increasingly seen as a potential solution to modern economic challenges, such as income inequality, poverty, and automation-driven job displacement, this analysis underscores the significant fiscal demands of implementing UBI. Through a comprehensive literature review of global UBI trials and an analysis of economic models and simulations, the paper explores UBI's impact on labor markets, poverty alleviation, and income redistribution. Notable UBI experiments in Finland, Kenya, and Stockton have demonstrated UBI's capacity to enhance well-being and provide financial security. However, these trials also reveal critical concerns about labor market participation and, more pressingly, the heavy fiscal burden a UBI system would impose. The fiscal models reviewed in this study indicate that UBI, while promising in enhancing social welfare, would require substantial tax increases to support it. The results emphasize that funding UBI would place a considerable strain on public resources, demanding either heightened income or consumption taxes or innovative but untested funding sources, such as taxes on carbon emissions or automation. Each of these potential funding mechanisms has profound implications for economic equity, efficiency, and social acceptance, and their viability is highly dependent on a nation's specific economic context and fiscal policy landscape. Furthermore, the study assesses UBI's potential long-term effects on labor markets, finding that while UBI might support labor market flexibility by reducing economic insecurity, the level of the payment and tax structure could significantly affect employment incentives. This complex interplay of UBI payments and tax policies, which often disproportionately impact certain socioeconomic groups, underlines the need for careful fiscal planning. If structured effectively, UBI could serve as a buffer against the economic disruptions caused by automation, providing displaced workers with the resources to retrain or pursue new career paths in a shifting job market. However, the increased tax burden raises questions about long-term viability, as higher taxes could reduce disposable incomes, deter workforce participation, and, paradoxically, counter the economic dynamism UBI aims to foster. In conclusion, while Universal Basic Income holds transformative potential for reducing poverty and supporting individuals in the face of technological change, its implementation would require an unprecedented commitment of public funds. This paper argues that UBI's long-term sustainability depends on the development of funding mechanisms that can balance equity with economic efficiency, without placing undue strain on public resources or individual taxpayers. The substantial tax burden associated with UBI implementation must be carefully managed to ensure that the societal benefits outweigh the financial costs, calling for further research into tax structures that align with economic and social goals.*

*Keywords: Universal Basic Income (UBI), economic modeling, labor market impacts, income inequality, poverty reduction, automation, UBI trials, fiscal sustainability, economic simulations, social welfare*

### Introduction

Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been gaining traction as a policy intervention to address income inequality, automation-driven job displacement, and economic insecurity. The idea behind UBI is simple: all citizens receive a regular, unconditional cash payment, regardless of their employment status or wealth. Advocates argue that UBI could reduce poverty, promote individual freedom, and prepare societies for technological disruptions in labor markets. Critics, however, raise concerns about the cost, labor disincentives, and

inefficiencies of such a policy. This paper explores the economics of UBI by examining literature on UBI trials, economic modeling and simulations, long-term labor market impacts, and effects on poverty and inequality.

### **1. Literature Review of UBI Trials**

Several trials of UBI, or UBI-like programs, have been conducted worldwide, providing valuable data on its economic and social impacts. These experiments vary in scale, design, and context, but all provide insights into UBI's potential effects.

#### **1.1. Finland (2017-2018)**

Finland conducted one of the most notable UBI experiments, providing 2,000 unemployed individuals with €560 per month for two years. The trial aimed to evaluate UBI's effects on employment, well-being, and administrative simplicity. Contrary to critics' expectations, the results showed no significant increase in employment rates, though participants reported improved mental health and life satisfaction (Kangas et al., 2019). These findings highlight that while UBI may not drastically alter work incentives in the short term, it does have positive psychological effects.

The Finland UBI experiment has several implications worth exploring:

1. **Psychological and Social Well-being:** Despite not significantly affecting employment, the improvement in mental health and life satisfaction among participants is a critical finding. This indicates that UBI can enhance well-being by reducing the financial stress associated with unemployment. Such psychological benefits may have indirect long-term economic effects, such as improved health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and possibly increased productivity when individuals do reenter the workforce.
2. **Employment Dynamics:** The unchanged employment rates challenge a common critique that UBI inherently reduces motivation to work. In Finland's case, UBI neither incentivized nor disincentivized work in the short term. This suggests that a moderate UBI amount may not impact the labor supply as strongly as critics claim, particularly if people still need additional income to meet lifestyle needs beyond basic expenses. It also implies that the effect of UBI on employment may vary based on local economic conditions and the level of benefits provided.
3. **Administrative Efficiency:** The Finnish experiment highlights the potential for UBI to simplify welfare systems by reducing bureaucratic costs and complexities associated with means-testing and conditional welfare programs. UBI's unconditional nature could streamline welfare administration, potentially lowering public administration expenses over time.
4. **Human Capital Development:** With financial support secure, participants might feel less immediate pressure to accept any available job, allowing them to consider opportunities that better align with their skills and long-term career interests. This freedom could foster a more resilient and adaptable workforce, as individuals might pursue further education, vocational training, or entrepreneurial ventures. In the long term, this flexibility could help individuals transition to roles less vulnerable to automation.
5. **Policy Scalability and Transferability:** Finland's findings also highlight the difficulty of generalizing UBI results across countries. Finland has a strong social safety net and labor market structure that may not mirror those of countries with

different welfare or employment landscapes. Policymakers need to consider the specific economic, social, and cultural contexts before implementing a UBI system, as outcomes may vary widely based on existing social supports and labor dynamics.

6. **Labor Market Flexibility and Innovation:** The Finnish UBI experiment shows potential for UBI to promote labor market flexibility. By providing a financial cushion, UBI could enable workers to transition to more fulfilling or innovative roles without immediate financial insecurity. This shift might not only support labor market dynamism but also foster creativity and entrepreneurship by reducing the financial risks associated with leaving steady but unfulfilling jobs.

Overall, Finland's UBI trial underscores that while direct economic impacts on employment may be limited in the short term, indirect benefits on well-being, human capital, and administrative efficiency present compelling arguments for further exploration. However, these results also highlight the need for careful design and context-sensitive applications to realize UBI's full potential.

### **1.2. Kenya (2016-present)**

GiveDirectly's ongoing UBI experiment in Kenya provides cash transfers to over 21,000 people in rural areas, with some receiving payments for 12 years. Early findings suggest UBI reduces food insecurity and improves mental health (Haushofer & Shapiro, 2018). This trial offers insights into UBI's impact in developing economies, where extreme poverty is prevalent. It shows that cash transfers can directly alleviate immediate economic hardships, with recipients investing in housing, education, and health, although longer-term effects on labor participation are still under study.

### **1.3. Stockton, California (2019-2021)**

The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) in California offered 125 residents \$500 per month for two years. The program aimed to alleviate poverty and assess its impact on employment and well-being. Results from SEED showed that recipients experienced greater financial stability, were more likely to find full-time employment, and reported better mental health (West et al., 2021). The Stockton trial highlights how UBI can serve as a cushion against economic shocks and create a safety net that encourages economic mobility.

### **1.4. Ontario, Canada (2017-2019)**

Ontario's Basic Income Pilot provided 4,000 low-income residents with a UBI of up to CAD \$17,000 annually. Although the program was discontinued prematurely, initial results indicated positive outcomes, including improvements in food security, housing stability, and health (Pasma, C. & Regehr, S., 2019). However, concerns were raised about long-term funding sustainability and the political will to implement such programs nationwide.

### **1.5. Namibia**

Smaller-scale UBI trials in Namibia (2008-2010) demonstrated the feasibility of UBI in reducing poverty and improving health and education outcomes. These trials found that UBI reduced malnutrition and increased school attendance, suggesting that even modest payments can significantly impact impoverished regions (Haarmann et al., 2008).



However, the scale and transferability of such results to larger or more developed economies remain uncertain.

### **1.6. Alaska Permanent Fund (1982-present, United States)**

Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) is a unique form of UBI that distributes a share of state oil revenues to all residents annually. While not a traditional UBI since payments vary yearly and are tied to state oil revenues, the PFD is a valuable long-term example of unconditional cash transfers. The PFD has shown that unconditional payments do not reduce labor participation significantly. Research suggests that the PFD has helped reduce poverty and income inequality while maintaining relatively stable employment rates. However, the amount (\$1,000–\$2,000 annually) is relatively small, limiting its impact on broader economic behavior or security. This program demonstrates that small, consistent cash transfers can have positive social effects without significantly discouraging work, although the benefits may be limited in scale and scope.

### **1.7. Brazil's Bolsa Família (2003-present)**

Although not a full UBI, Brazil's Bolsa Família program provides conditional cash transfers to low-income families. It is one of the world's largest cash transfer programs and shares certain UBI-like attributes, particularly in terms of poverty reduction and social inclusion. Bolsa Família has been linked to reduced poverty, improved child health and education outcomes, and increased labor market participation among beneficiaries, particularly women. The program's cash transfers have also boosted local economies through increased consumption. Bolsa Família illustrates that even partial cash transfer programs can support human capital development and boost economic stability at the household and community levels. A key takeaway is that conditional transfers can balance income support with incentives for positive behaviors in education and health, which could be an adaptation for UBI policies in specific contexts.

### **1.8. Madhya Pradesh, India (2011-2012)**

India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), along with UNICEF, conducted a UBI pilot in Madhya Pradesh. Around 6,000 villagers received unconditional cash transfers, with findings collected over an 18-month period (Davala et al., 2015). The experiment showed that recipients spent the funds on improving housing, nutrition, healthcare, and education. Moreover, labor participation among recipients slightly increased, suggesting that a UBI may empower people to improve their living conditions and invest in their future. Improvements in sanitation, education attendance, and small business investments were also reported. The Madhya Pradesh trial highlights UBI's potential to improve economic security and foster entrepreneurship in low-income settings. Additionally, it suggests that even relatively small, unconditional transfers can stimulate investment in essential needs and reduce poverty, particularly in developing economies.

### **1.9. Uganda's Youth Opportunities Program (2008)**

In Uganda, a large cash transfer experiment targeted at unemployed youth groups provided grants for vocational training and business startups, although it was not universally unconditional. Participants were given a one-time cash grant without restrictions on its use,

making it relevant for examining the effects of significant cash influxes without conditionality.

The program demonstrated significant improvements in earnings, business formation, and economic stability for participants, with recipients substantially increasing their income levels and business ownership rates. Long-term follow-up studies showed persistent positive effects on income and employment among recipients. This program underlines that cash grants can enable low-income individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency and entrepreneurial growth. UBI proponents could see this as evidence that UBI could potentially support sustainable job creation and economic self-reliance.

#### **1.10. Dauphin, Manitoba (1974-1979, Canada) – “Mincome”**

Canada’s “Mincome” experiment in Dauphin, Manitoba, provided a guaranteed income to residents, with the government ensuring that no family fell below a certain income threshold. Although it ended prematurely, the experiment was closely studied for its social and economic impacts. Mincome data revealed improvements in health outcomes, reduced hospitalization rates, and increased high school completion rates. Although some participants reduced their working hours slightly, the majority remained employed. Participants also reported less economic stress, allowing them to pursue education and caregiving activities. The Mincome experiment is often cited as a precedent for UBI’s potential to reduce healthcare costs and improve educational outcomes. Its findings indicate that with basic financial security, people are more likely to invest in their well-being and personal development, potentially reducing long-term social costs.

#### **1.11. South Korea’s Basic Income for Youths Program**

South Korea introduced a basic income program specifically targeting young adults in the Gyeonggi Province, where eligible individuals receive approximately \$250 per quarter. This program was designed partly in response to high youth unemployment and the need to prepare the younger workforce for future employment shifts. South Korea’s youth UBI program provides a small, regular income that recipients often use for education, certifications, and skills development. As the country faces rapid industrial and technological change, the program illustrates how UBI could provide young people with a buffer against unemployment and equip them for careers in sectors less prone to automation.

#### **1.12. Norway**

According to Stepan Hoenig (2024), the system that currently exists in Norway is the closest to a UBI system. In order to receive the benefits, those who qualify must look for employment, follow the law, participate in elections and pay taxes. Not everyone receives the benefit either. It’s given to those who are in need of an income and don’t have a current employment status. One of the main reasons that Norway has implemented this benefit is because they’re a welfare state. Even though the benefits aren’t available to everyone, they ensure all of their citizens are able to access healthcare, education and income, giving them the best opportunities for success.

#### **1.13. Implications from Trials**

UBI trials show consistent improvements in well-being, health, and economic security, though they present mixed results regarding employment incentives. The challenge lies in the variability of contexts -results from small, short-term trials in developing countries may not translate directly to larger, industrialized economies. Additionally, while UBI can mitigate short-term economic shocks and improve quality of life, its long-term sustainability and scalability are still areas of active research.

## **2. Fiscal Sustainability Models**

Fiscal sustainability is a significant concern when modeling UBI, especially in high-income countries. Studies by economists like Hoynes and Rothstein (2019) suggest that a full-fledged UBI replacing existing welfare programs could be prohibitively expensive without significant tax increases. They model various funding mechanisms, including value-added tax (VAT) and progressive income taxes, to cover UBI costs. Results indicate that while UBI is financially feasible at modest levels, higher UBI payments would require substantial cuts to other welfare programs or large increases in taxes.

To examine the tax burden associated with Universal Basic Income (UBI) and the concerns regarding its financial sustainability, it is essential to unpack the primary fiscal challenges. Implementing UBI on a national scale would require substantial public funds, making the choice of funding mechanisms and their economic implications a critical area for analysis. Here, I will explore the complexities and consequences of financing UBI through various tax mechanisms, focusing on the significant economic pressures that arise and how these pressures make fiscal sustainability a central consideration in the viability of UBI.

First, the magnitude of the funding required for UBI cannot be overstated. A universally applied UBI would demand immense resources due to the unconditional, widespread nature of payments. For instance, a UBI scheme providing each adult with \$1,000 per month in a country with 100 million adults would cost approximately \$1.2 trillion per year. This is a significant portion of most national GDPs and often exceeds current government welfare budgets, requiring an overhaul of existing fiscal policies to accommodate such a shift. When comparing UBI to traditional welfare programs, the scale of UBI funding requirements becomes evident. While targeted welfare programs assist specific populations, UBI's universal nature demands a broader tax base and larger revenue inflows, which places significant strain on fiscal resources.

Various tax mechanisms could be deployed to fund UBI, each with unique implications for economic equity, efficiency, and public acceptance. One approach is through progressive income tax increases, where higher income earners bear a larger share of the UBI cost. While such a tax increase could redistribute wealth effectively, there are diminishing returns as tax rates climb too high. Overly high tax rates can discourage high-income earners from working or investing domestically, shrinking the overall tax base and potentially leading to capital flight. While progressive income taxes are often viewed positively for funding social programs, excessively high rates could create substantial opposition and raise debates over income redistribution.

Another common proposal is to use Value-Added Tax (VAT) or other consumption taxes to fund UBI. VAT is applied broadly to goods and services, making it a reliable source of revenue. However, VAT is inherently regressive, impacting lower-income individuals more heavily since they spend a higher proportion of their income on taxed goods. This regressive nature poses a paradox for UBI's goals unless the UBI payments are high

enough to offset the increased consumer costs, especially for low-income earners. Countries with high VAT rates, such as those in Europe, show that VAT can be a consistent revenue generator. However, if rates rise too sharply, it may reduce consumer spending, negating some of the revenue gains from the tax.

Corporate taxes present another possible funding method, targeting large, profitable firms that may be capitalizing on automation and technological advancements. While corporate taxes can potentially fund UBI, higher corporate tax rates may deter business investment, especially in sectors driven by automation. Companies may relocate or seek cost reductions through automation, which could reduce job opportunities domestically and lower income tax revenues, offsetting the intended benefits. Politically, corporate taxes are appealing since they target wealthier entities, but they also risk impacting international competitiveness, posing challenges for countries in a globalized economy.

Wealth taxes are another option, applied to the net worth of individuals or on certain asset types. By taxing wealth more than income, policymakers could potentially generate large sums for UBI funding. However, wealth taxes are administratively complex and often met with resistance. They can deter savings and investments, and they face high rates of tax avoidance. The implementation and enforcement challenges make wealth taxes a difficult choice for sustained UBI funding, despite their appeal in redistributing wealth from the affluent to the broader public.

Fiscal sustainability is a major concern when discussing UBI funding mechanisms. Maintaining UBI long-term requires a steady, reliable revenue stream that does not overburden the economy. If UBI is primarily funded through increased labor or income taxes, this could discourage workforce participation, especially among higher earners, which would shrink the tax base over time. High levels of taxation may also lead to reduced incentives for working and consumption, especially if UBI payments themselves are not substantial enough to support all individuals.

The high tax burden necessary to sustain UBI raises serious questions about long-term viability, as any tax-dependent UBI program could become highly sensitive to economic cycles. For instance, a UBI funded by consumption taxes would be particularly vulnerable during economic downturns when consumer spending declines, leading to revenue shortfalls and potential instability in UBI financing. Without a sustainable fiscal model, a tax-dependent UBI system risks becoming unsustainable in times of economic strain.

Implementing UBI would have significant macroeconomic effects, as a high tax burden could impact growth by lowering disposable incomes, reducing consumption, and deterring investment. This is a particular risk for economies where growth is driven by consumer spending. Inflationary pressures are another concern, as increased government spending on UBI could elevate aggregate demand, especially if funded through debt, which might contribute to rising prices. Inflation could erode the real value of UBI payments, reducing their effectiveness in providing financial security.

An additional concern is that UBI funding may crowd out other social programs, redirecting funds that currently support targeted welfare initiatives. Replacing targeted welfare benefits with a UBI payment could leave some individuals and groups worse off, particularly those who rely on specialized assistance like healthcare or housing support. Reallocation of social budgets to fund UBI may thus compromise the social safety net, which raises ethical and economic questions about the trade-offs involved.

Alternative funding mechanisms have been proposed to alleviate the tax burden associated with UBI. Carbon taxes are one potential option, aligning environmental goals with social equity by taxing carbon-heavy activities. Additionally, taxes on automation and robotics could target industries that benefit from job displacement, generating revenue while addressing technological unemployment. However, these taxes are difficult to implement consistently and may inhibit technological growth. Debt financing is another potential short-term solution, particularly if UBI is used to stimulate the economy. However, debt-financed UBI would be unsustainable long-term due to potential inflation and fiscal instability.

The public and political feasibility of a tax-funded UBI is another significant concern. The public's willingness to accept higher taxes to fund UBI is uncertain, especially if the costs impact the middle class or adversely affect employment and economic growth. Higher taxes could create significant political resistance, both from high-income individuals and corporations, as well as ideological opposition to broad redistribution policies. Policymakers may face challenges in maintaining public support if UBI does not demonstrate clear benefits that outweigh the financial burden on taxpayers.

Ultimately, the balancing act between meaningful UBI payments and an acceptable tax burden will define UBI's feasibility. Smaller UBI payments may not achieve substantial poverty reduction, while larger payments could increase the tax burden to unsustainable levels. While UBI has the potential to reshape social welfare, the heavy tax burden required for its implementation presents significant obstacles. Excessive taxation may deter work, reduce investment, and ultimately hinder economic growth, challenging UBI's fiscal sustainability.

Thus, the debate over UBI is intrinsically linked to society's capacity to bear higher taxes. To be viable, UBI would require a carefully designed funding model that can handle the economic pressures of large-scale tax increases while ensuring that social and economic gains justify the costs. Addressing these fiscal challenges will be essential for realizing UBI as a sustainable policy in modern economies.

### **3. Long-Term Economic Impacts of UBI on Labor Markets**

The long-term effects of UBI on labor markets remain a topic of intense debate, with advocates and critics presenting contrasting views on its potential to transform or destabilize the workforce.

#### **3.1 Labor Force Participation**

One of the primary concerns regarding UBI is its potential to reduce labor force participation by providing individuals with enough financial security to opt out of work. Traditional economic theory suggests that providing a guaranteed income could reduce the incentive to seek employment, especially for lower-income individuals who may perceive UBI as sufficient to cover their basic needs. However, UBI trials in Finland, Stockton, and Kenya indicate that UBI does not significantly reduce labor participation. **In some cases**, recipients use the financial security UBI provides to pursue better job opportunities, education, or entrepreneurial endeavors (Kangas et al., 2019; West et al., 2021).

### **3.2. Labor Market Dynamism**

Proponents of UBI also argue that it could lead to a more dynamic labor market by allowing workers the freedom to transition between jobs without the fear of financial insecurity. Workers might pursue higher education or entrepreneurial ventures, reducing “job lock” and encouraging innovation. On the other hand, critics argue that such a transition could lead to a reduction in overall labor supply, raising wages but decreasing the competitiveness of low-skilled industries (Hoynes & Rothstein, 2019).

### **3.3. Automation and Job Displacement**

Exploring the impact of UBI on automation and job displacement brings to light some of the most pressing concerns facing modern labor markets. As automation accelerates, with machines and algorithms taking over tasks previously done by humans, the risk of significant job displacement is growing. The role of UBI in this context is often framed as a potential safety net that could provide financial stability to individuals affected by technological unemployment, giving them the resources and time to retrain or transition to new roles. Below, we delve into the implications of automation, UBI’s potential as a buffer against job displacement.

#### **The Scope of Automation-Driven Job Displacement**

Automation threatens a broad range of industries, from manufacturing to services, and even white-collar sectors like finance and law. A study by Frey and Osborne (2017) estimates that approximately 47% of jobs in the United States could be automated within the next two decades, with similarly high projections in other developed economies. Occupations involving repetitive tasks, such as assembly line work, data entry, and customer service, are especially vulnerable. As artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics evolve, even roles requiring cognitive skills, such as medical diagnostics or legal research, are at risk.

These trends highlight the need for policy interventions to manage the social and economic fallout of job displacement. Without intervention, widespread job losses could lead to increased economic inequality, social unrest, and a diminished consumer base, creating a feedback loop that stifles economic growth. UBI could theoretically mitigate these risks by providing a guaranteed income, offering displaced workers a level of security while they adapt to a changing job market.

#### **UBI as a Transitional Buffer for Displaced Workers**

A major argument in favor of UBI is its potential to act as a buffer during times of significant labor market shifts. **By providing individuals with an income floor**, UBI allows displaced workers to consider retraining, educational programs, or entrepreneurial ventures without the immediate pressure of securing a new job. This could help economies to transition more smoothly as technological advancements reshape the employment landscape.

UBI can thus promote a more dynamic labor market by enabling workers to pursue alternative career paths that align better with future labor demands. For example, as automation reduces the need for manual or low-skilled work, displaced workers could use UBI support to retrain for roles in growth areas such as healthcare, green energy, or technology. With an income cushion, individuals may also be more willing to relocate or take on short-term or project-based work, further enhancing labor market flexibility and resilience.

### **3.4. Potential Criticisms and Limitations of UBI in the Context of Automation**

While UBI has the potential to address some of the challenges posed by automation, it is not without limitations. One concern is that UBI might inadvertently lower the incentive for individuals to upskill, particularly if the UBI payment is generous enough to cover basic needs comfortably. This could lead to a scenario where individuals become reliant on UBI rather than actively pursuing personal development. Additionally, the costs of funding UBI could place a heavy burden on government resources, potentially detracting from other public investments in education, healthcare, or infrastructure that also play essential roles in supporting displaced workers.

Another criticism is that UBI, while providing financial stability, may not be enough to offset the social and psychological effects of losing one's job. Jobs often provide individuals with a sense of purpose, social interaction, and identity. Therefore, UBI alone might not fully address the broader impacts of automation-related unemployment, suggesting that UBI should be combined with other policies, such as workforce retraining programs, mental health support, and community initiatives that provide meaning and purpose beyond financial security.

In sum, the rapid progression of automation highlights the need for policies that can buffer individuals and communities from disruptive changes. UBI's potential as a transitional support mechanism, illustrated by these global examples, makes it a compelling policy option. By allowing workers to retrain, pursue new careers, and support themselves amidst economic shifts, UBI could serve as both a social safety net and a stimulus for a more resilient and adaptable workforce. However, its limitations mean that UBI should likely be part of a broader suite of policies aimed at addressing the multifaceted impacts of automation on the labor market.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Universal Basic Income stands as one of the boldest and most transformative social policy proposals of our time, seeking to address multifaceted economic challenges such as poverty, income inequality, and job displacement due to automation. The evidence from UBI trials and economic models reveals a nuanced picture: while UBI has consistently demonstrated its potential to enhance financial stability, improve well-being, and offer a safety net against economic shocks, its effects on labor market participation, productivity, and long-term economic growth remain mixed and highly context-dependent. The path toward implementing UBI on a national or global scale is fraught with financial and political challenges, particularly concerning the tax burden required for fiscal sustainability. Large-scale funding of UBI would demand careful, adaptive tax policies that balance fairness with economic efficiency, while also preserving incentives for productivity and investment. Policymakers would need to contend with potential trade-offs, as financing UBI might necessitate tax increases or reallocation of funds from other essential services. This raises complex questions about the balance between direct financial security provided by UBI and the continued need for targeted welfare programs and public goods that directly address issues such as healthcare, housing, and education.

Looking forward, UBI's role as a buffer against technological disruption could make it a critical element in future social policy frameworks. As automation and AI technologies continue to reshape industries and labor markets, UBI could provide displaced workers with the time and resources necessary to adapt, retrain, and re-enter the workforce with

skills suited to new, less automatable roles. This adaptability may become a defining trait of resilient economies in the 21st century, suggesting that UBI, though currently experimental, could evolve from a theoretical proposition to an essential social mechanism in the face of rapid technological advancement.

However, significant further research is required to fully understand UBI's potential impacts on different economic environments, particularly in developing countries and diverse socioeconomic settings where UBI trials are still limited. Long-term, cross-national studies are necessary to explore UBI's broader economic and social ramifications, such as its effects on productivity, innovation, and individual agency. Ultimately, UBI's feasibility and effectiveness will depend on its integration within comprehensive, carefully designed policy structures that account for economic context, fiscal capacity, and social needs. In envisioning the future of UBI, we are, in essence, imagining a shift in the social contract - a redefinition of how society provides security and opportunities for its members. Whether UBI becomes a foundational pillar of social policy or remains an experimental vision, its ongoing exploration reflects a profound commitment to innovating in the face of economic uncertainty, inequality, and transformation. In this light, UBI represents not just a policy proposal, but a vision of a society where financial security, flexibility, and resilience are accessible to all, empowering individuals to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

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## FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL AND THE ECONOMY OF SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: This study examined the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the economy of Nigeria with a special reference to IKA South Local Government Area. The study adopted survey research design and was anchored on Neo-liberalism theory as its theoretical framework. Data were sourced from 390 respondents through a self-administered questionnaire, and the sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane method. Data collected was analyzed using percentages and frequency and Pearson's correlation coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. Findings revealed that, fuel subsidy removal has a significant relationship with increase in the price of food stuffs, also, fuel subsidy removal has a significant relationship with the rate of poverty and fuel subsidy removal has a significant relationship with the rate of unemployment in IKA South Local Government Area. The study concluded that the President Bola Tinubu's administration removed fuel subsidy in Nigeria when refineries are non-functional thereby necessitating the continuous importation of refined petroleum. Fuel importation strains the local currency while the subsidy primarily favored the cabals and a leeway for arbitrage and the illicit transportation of petrol to neighboring countries and therefore recommended among others that the government should provide palliatives to Nigerians to mitigate the effects of the fuel subsidy removal. Also, the government should make sure that the new minimum wage is enforced in all sectors, including the private sector. If this is done, it will moderate the impacts of the fuel subsidy removal on the general populace.*

*Keywords: Fuel subsidy removal, price of food stuffs, poverty, unemployment*

### **Introduction**

Many debates have surrounded government retention to lapse fuel subsidy policy over the years. Because of the anticipated social and economic ramifications, attempts by the previous regimes to reverse retention of this policy have significantly sparked debate. Although the idea of subsidies is a noble one, there have been serious allegations of corruption and poor management regarding their implementation and management under the previous regimes (Ogwu, 2023). As soon as Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu, the newly elected president, announced the planned subsidy withdrawal on May 29, 2023, prices for goods and the costs of services, including transportation, rose sharply. Motorcyclists also changed their fare. Artisans including welders, aluminum window filters and tailors, and market men and women who cannot afford power generators raised their charges for services rendered to their customers. Nigerian youths engaged in riding of commercial motorcycles and tricycles, and into street hustling just to keep body and soul together are now finding it very difficult to cope following the recent development. According to Adeyeye (2023), the new administration's intention to eliminate the current fuel subsidy, which it views as a burden on governments, has a negative impact and, if not properly managed, its economic benefit could be meaningless. The fact remains that the new administration has to act in this way because a significant amount of money was spent on subsidizing imported fuel into the nation. Additionally, there is the issue of inflation and

rapidly rising prices for goods and services. What President Tinubu administration intends to achieve with the withdrawal of subsidy policy might contradict peace and security because previous administrations that tried it were confronted with serious resistance from the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). As Omoniji (2012) puts it, “while young Nigerians always react to the withdrawal of fuel subsidy through protest on the major highways, government workers, especially members of NLC engaged the government on negotiation, and whenever this fails, members always embark on strike action to express their dissatisfactions. Such developments in the past made the central government to lose millions of dollars translating into billions of naira”. One of the major problems associated with government withdrawal of its policy on fuel subsidy is mass poverty as prices of goods and services increased while public workers incomes remained constant. In some occasions, it resulted to violent demonstration that distorted peace and tranquility. In 2012, motorists who were returning to their homes after the New Year and Christmas celebrations were hit by sudden hikes on petrol prices. Prices rose dramatically ranging between N140 and N150 per liter and between N170 to N200 on black market (Omoniji, 2012).

Emeh (2012) averred that when former President Jonathan announced fuel subsidy withdrawal on January 1, 2012 Nigerians, especially members of the NLC reacted negatively. The strike action that followed this announcement made the government to lose a huge amount of money close to N100billion naira. It also generated inflation which brought about high cost of fuel and other items in market places. In addition, poverty rate increased because prices of goods and services increased while the incomes of people remained constant. Not minding the usual reactions that follow pronouncements of withdrawal of fuel subsidy, President Ahmed Bola Tinubu on the day of his inauguration announced his administration’s intension to push aside subsidy policy formulated and implemented by the previous administrations. As it has always been the case, the announcement was greeted with reactions from the masses. There was also a skyrocket price of goods and services that do not only traumatized Nigerians of all categories but threatened the existence of the poor masses. Despite the fact that the implementation of the policy has always been disgracefully marred by corruption, the reversion of the policy by the present government is greeted with opposition from the citizens. It is on this background that this study examined the effect of fuel subsidy removal on the economy of Nigeria with a special reference to Ika South Local Government Area.

## **Literature Review**

### *Subsidy and Fuel Subsidy Removal*

Subsidy can be seen as a grant of financial aid from the government used to maintain the prices of a particular item at a certain level. To subsidize is to sell a product below the cost of production, fuel subsidy, therefore, means to sell petrol below the cost of importation. Fuel subsidy can be properly defined as government effort in paying for the difference between the pump price of fuel at the petrol station and the actual cost of importation of the product. So, by paying the difference, the government enables fuel to be sold at a lower price so as to help ease the burden of its people especially lower income group, Fuel subsidy is a grant of financial aid from the government used to maintain the low price of petroleum products. Subsidy exists when government helps the consumers of a particular product to pay a price lower than the prevailing market price of that commodity (Kadiri & Lawal, 2016). Some authors like Shagali and Yusuf (2022) see it as a kind of market

manipulation whereby government fixes the price of the commodity below its actual market price and pay the difference to the retailers. In this case, the government fixes the pump price of fuel below the actual market price and the difference is paid to the importers and marketers by the government. Governmental policy on subsidies can take many different forms, including financial, labor, export, consumption, housing, and others. Scholars who have researched the term's relevance to policy have offered a number of definitions. According to Gordon and Suzanne (2023), a subsidy is "a benefit provided by a government to an individual, business, or institution and is typically offered to relieve burdens deemed to be in the general interest of the public." In accordance with economic theory, it is used to counteract market imperfections and increase economic efficiency (Gordon & Suzanne, 2023). It also promotes social good. World Trade Organization (2016) conceived it as a widely used economics term that is sometimes used as antonym to tax. Also, it described the term as, "a transfer of money by a government to an entity, including the private sector to subsidize the market price of a certain good or service". For Corporate Finance Institute (CFI, 2019), it is "an incentive set aside by the government to an individual or a business in the form of cash, grants, or tax breaks to improve the supply of goods and services". With it in place, consumers are able to access cheaper products and commodities. Its types include production subsidy, consumption subsidy, export subsidy and employment subsidy (CFI, 2019). The Economic Times (2023) defined it as "a transfer of money from the government of a state to an entity, usually a firm or company with the aim of subsidizing the market price of goods and services". In most cases, subsidy leads to a fall in price of the subsidized product and bolster the welfare of the citizens. Its types include petroleum subsidy, food subsidy, indirect rate subsidy, etc (The Economic Times, 2023). Civic Keypoint (2023) defined the term as, "any grant of financial aid from the government used to maintain the prices of some items at certain level". As it applies to fuel subsidy, it is government effort in paying a portion of the pump price of fuel in petrol stations. Paying the difference in price means the government makes it to be sold at a lower price to ease the burden of the citizens especially that of the lower income class (Civic Keypoint, 2023). Anyanruoh (2023) conceived it, "as the transfer of economic resources by government to consumers or producers of goods or suppliers of services". The resultant incentive that follows retention of subsidy policy cannot be overemphasized. It increases production and consumption of a commodity over what it would otherwise have been without subsidy. Ogunleye-Bello (2023) described subsidy removal as government withdrawal of its provision of financial support to reduce the cost of fuel for users of fuel in a country. He argued that, "when it is removed by government, it causes increase in fuel price which mean that people have to pay more to buy petrol. Subsidy therefore is a grant by the government to private persons or companies to subsidize their services or products to the final users or consumers. It is money given as part payment for the price of a commodity or service to be rendered to the public. It reduces the cost of producing food or a product to help to keep the price low for consumers. Fuel subsidy policy withdrawal by government in Nigeria has always been associated with protest. Despite this challenge, withdrawal of the policy helps government to save money and allocate resources realized to other sectors of the economy such as education and health. Therefore, Removal of fuel subsidy simply means the government not paying for the difference between pump price and the actual cost of importing fuel anymore. It technically means full deregulation of the downstream sector to pave way for vibrant competition by other interested investors. With

the removal of fuel subsidy, fuel will have to be sold in accordance with the prevailing market price based on the actual cost of importation.

*Fuel Subsidy Removal and the Economy of Nigeria*

As every action has propelling forces behind, so there are reasons behind every proactive government policy. Hence, the policy of fuel subsidy removal has an underneath reason as the government sees it as a stimulator of economic growth and development. For instance, the huge fund which is hitherto used to pay for subsidy will become available to the government for the development of the much-needed infrastructure in the country, especially in the healthcare, education and transport sectors among others. If this is done, every citizen of the country will benefit. Furthermore, deregulation of the downstream oil sector will attract private sector investments, more especially foreign direct investments, to the sector. Before now investors are not attracted to the sector as they fear they may not be able to recoup their investment at government-controlled prices. Foreign direct investment in the sector will create employment opportunities for the large number of unemployed Nigerians and also generate revenue to the government in the form of taxation and levies (Yunusa, Yakubu, Emeje, Ibrahim, Stephen & Egbunu, 2023). Availability of foreign exchange with the Central Bank of Nigeria will be another result of fuel subsidy removal. A steady flow of foreign exchange to the Central bank will lead to a single foreign exchange rate regime in the country thereby stabilizing the foreign exchange market and eliminating the black market. Foreign exchange will become easily accessible for importation of goods and machineries (Umeji & Eleanyi, 2021). Removal of fuel subsidy was also seen to help removing the distortions in the market. It will bring an end to smuggling of petroleum products to neighboring countries. Due to higher price of petroleum products in the neighboring countries, fuel that are meant for domestic use in Nigeria are smuggled across border to be sold at higher prices causing scarcity in the country. The erstwhile Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria and the former Emir of Kano. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi in listing the benefits of fuel subsidy removal (Onwuamaeze & Ekeghe, 2020) said that Nigeria is the only oil exporting country that does not ripe the benefits of crude oil price rise in the international market because it fixes the price of refined products that it does not produce. So, whatever it gains in high price of crude oil losses to high price of refined products that it imports. This is so because as price of crude oil goes up the price of refined products will go up also. Therefore, removal of fuel subsidy will eliminate such revenue losses to the Nigerian government. Moreover, Civic Keypoint, (2023) highlighted the following as benefits why fuel subsidy in Nigeria has to be removed: Firstly, fuel subsidy removal will ensure private sector participation in the importation of petroleum products which will free up the market, empower many Nigerians and also allow the government to focus on other key sectors of the economy. Secondly, it will ensure the ready availability of petrol at all times for all Nigerians as Nigeria will be saturated with petrol and there will be no diversion by marketers, and thereby curbing the greed for higher profits and sabotage by a few players in the oil industry which will positively affect the economy. Thirdly, fuel subsidy removal will also ensure competition in the industry and market forces will drive down the price of petrol in the long run as witnessed in the telecoms sector for the benefit of Nigerians and thereby permanently banish queues from petrol stations across the nation and free the country from the endless pains and sufferings that come with fuel scarcity, which makes Nigerians line up in petrol stations for a day.

However, this fuel subsidy policy however, has bred several unintended consequences and malpractices such as the smuggling of petroleum products out of the country, and claims by the federal government that fuel subsidy policy has made them unable to tackle problems of our collective infrastructure such as roads, power, agriculture, fixing the refineries etc. The cost of fuel subsidy has continued to grow exponentially. This is partly due to the rising cost of fuel-which meant that the government had to spend even more to keep its domestic price low- and also due to Nigeria's increasing population-which resulted in increased fuel consumption; together these pressures make the cost of the fuel subsidy unsustainable. By 2011, the subsidy accounted for 30 percent of the Nigerian government expenditure, which was about 4 percent of GDP and 118 percent of the capital budget. Further, in the era of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's reign, the subsidy re-investment programme (Sure-P) was initiated to channel the money realized from the partial removal of subsidy to ameliorate the plight of the generality of Nigerians. The committee set-up was to oversee and ensure the effective and timely implementation of projects to be funded with the savings accrued by the federal government from subsidy removal. SURE-P is basically designed to mitigate the effects of the removal of fuel subsidy and accelerate economic growth through investment in critically needed infrastructures. For them, savings from the subsidy removal under SURE-P are to be invested across major sectors of the economy such as Power, Health, Niger Delta, Youths etc. According to Sure-P, the federal government handles 41% of the intervention, 54% goes to the states and local governments while the remaining 5% goes to ecology (Omafume, 2014).

### **Empirical Review**

Atoyebi, Kadiri, Adekuyo, Ogundeji and Ademola (2012) carried out research on the impact of fuel subsidy removal on agricultural sector output. The study employed spearman's rank correlation and observed the existence of positive correlation between fuel subsidy removal and prices of agricultural output. This then implies that the removal of fuel subsidy would increase the budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector thereby increasing agricultural products. The researchers thereby recommended that a cushioned effect should be introduced by the government through the use of savings from the fuel subsidy removal on agricultural sector and to fast track the maintenance of the nation's refineries. Opeyemi, Kadiri, Adekuyo, Ogundeji and Ademola (2012) carried out research on the existence of a long run effect of fuel subsidy reform on environmental quality in Nigeria for the period of 1970 – 2012 using the Johansen and the Granger Two step co-integration procedure techniques. The study developed a three-case scenario including (i) a case of subsidy payment (ii) a case of effective subsidy and (iii) a case of no subsidy payment. The estimation result showed that the first and the last case scenario do not significantly influence environmental quality. Eyiuche (2012) conducted a study on the socio-economic implications of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria in relation to other oil producing countries in order to estimate the impact of fuel subsidy removal on the Nigerian citizens. From the research, he observed that at 65 naira per liter of fuel, Nigerians were buying fuel at the costliest price among oil producing nations in the world while in some other countries fuel is almost free. Balouga (2012) assessed the political economy of the subsidy removal and found out that the fuel subsidies have not being significantly felt by an average Nigerian whom the subsidy was actually initiated for. Adagunodo (2013) in his study examined the removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria as an economic necessity and a

political dilemma. In his research, he concluded that if implemented correctly, the subsidy funds could lead to major development gains for the country. It will also create the space for Nigeria to finally develop refinery capacity and consequently increase its potential revenue from the oil sector and create jobs. Uzonwanne, Ezenekwe and Iregbenu (2016) examined fuel subsidy removal and the Nigerian economy. The main objective of their study was to assess the contributions of the fuel subsidy in the Nigerian economy, that is, the study examined the problems, the prospects and a way forward for the sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. The study used Rosenstein-Rodan's Thesis or Theory of the "Big Push" to drive home the message. The major sources of data used in the study were primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through the use of questionnaire and the secondary data were also collected. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The study found that fuel subsidy has not resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of the life for the majority of Nigerians. The study therefore recommended that government should invest heavily on infrastructures and human capital instead of focusing on just removing fuel subsidy.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The theory adopted for this study is the Neo-liberalism theory. Neo-liberalism is a contemporary form of economic liberalism that emphasizes the efficiency of private enterprise, liberalized trade and relatively open markets to promote globalization. Neoliberals seek to maximize the role of the private sector in prioritizing the world the economy (Cohen, 2007). Neo-liberalism seeks to transfer control of the economy from public to the private sector under the belief that it will produce a more efficient government and improve the economic health of the nation (Prasad, 2006). Neo-liberalism became prominent following the establishment of the Mont Peleri Society in 1947 which its founding members include Friedrich Hark, Milton Friedman, Karl Popper, George Stigler, Ludwig Von Mises and James Buchanan (Andrew, 2009; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2021). The neo-liberal thought is a term used to signify the late 20th century political reappearance of the 19th century ideas associated with free-market capitalism after it fall into decline following the outbreak of World War II. It is also associated with the policies of economic liberalization, including privatization, deregulation, globalization, free trade, monetarism, austerity, and reductions in government spending in attempt to increase private sector involvement in economic drive of a nation (Bloom, 2017). Manning (2022) described the term as, "a policy that encompasses both politics and economics, and favors private enterprise and seeks to transfer the control of economic factors from the government to the private sector". "In essence, any liberal policy that targets efficient functioning or free market capitalism or that focused on limited government spending, regulation and ownership of major means of production and distribution is known as neo-liberal thought" (Manning, 2022; Okolie & Edo, 2023). However, the main points of neo-liberalism include: first, the rule of the market which liberate "free" enterprise or private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the government (the state) no matter how much social damage this causes. It reduced wages by de-unionizing workers and eliminating worker's right that had been won over many years of struggle. No more price control, all in all, total freedom of movement for capital, goods and services. An unregulated market is the best way to increase economic growth which will ultimately benefit everyone. Secondly, is the cutting off of public expenditure for social services such as education and

health care, reducing the safety-net for the poor and even maintenance of roads, bridges, water supply. In reducing government's role, neo-liberalists do not oppose to government's subsidies and tax benefits for business but are concerned about the operations. Third is privatization which is the sale of state-owned enterprise, goods and services to private investors. This includes banks, key industries, rail roads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water. Although, this is usually done in the name of efficiency which is often needed in the state to ensure citizens enjoy these services (Prasad, 2006). Privatization has the effect of concentration of wealth even more in a few hands and making the public pay even more for its needs as evident in the privatization policy of government in Nigeria. Nigerians pay more during privatization regime of government, especially in the electric power sector. The Neo-liberalism theory is one of the major views that justify the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and economic development. The Neo-liberalism theory is sacrosanct to this study because it focused on the issue at hand. This becomes one of the reasons subsidy regimes in the country is questioned by the present administration. Deregulation which reduces government's regulation of everything that could diminish profits, including protecting the environment and safety on the job raised serious concern to the public. This is what it means that having fuel subsidy regime in place will benefits both private sector and the populace. It however lowers prices of fuel and raise greater supply of the product. On the contrary, a relapse of the policy by the present government may have its challenges as well as its benefits which include the development of other sectors such education, health care and other infrastructure development with funds to be realized from withdrawal of subsidy.

### Research Methods

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. The goal was to ensure that data elicited from the field in the course of this study was primary and relevant as possible for analysis in order to understand and solve the problems at hand (McNabb, 2012). The total projected population of this study was 229000 persons living in Ika South Local Government Area (National Population Commission, 2022). The determination of the sample size of 390 was attained using the sample size determination of Yamane's formula:

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

Where N = Population size, n = Sample sized, e = Sampling error

Given the population size and with a sampling error of 5 percent, the required sample size is computed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{229000}{1 + 229000(0.05)^2} = 389.78 \text{ Approximately}$$

Consequently, a sample size of three hundred and ninety (390) was used. The purposive sampling method was employed to specifically select respondents from Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State. This involves the addition of respondents with specific characteristics relevant to the objectives of this study. This sampling method gives equal chance for each member of the population to be selected (Obasi, 2000). A pilot study was carried out to determine the reliability and test for internal consistency of the research instrument. The reliability test serves to determine the level of reliability of a questionnaire



on the consistency of the respondents' answers (Sentoso & Putra, 2021). The results yielded coefficients ranging from 0.745 to 0.823, which satisfied the general recommended level of 0.70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Hence, researcher satisfied both the reliability and validity of the scale. Face validity was employed for this study to ensure the validity of the instruments, by subjecting it to independent assessors for cross-examination. This was the main research supervisor of this work, who is a scholar in this field from the Department of Public Administration, for his thorough and in- depth scrutiny, before it will be applied. This is to ensure that this work attains a high level of accuracy and reliability in all of its content. Data collected from the questionnaire was collated, coded and imputed into the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS version 23.0, 2020) for data analysis. Percentages and frequency were used to analyze the demographic data content of respondents which include gender, job status, age, marital status, educational qualification and working experience, while Pearson’s coefficient of correlation was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. These are found suitable for the nature of the study of this work.

**Research Results**

The bivariate analysis involves the test for the bivariate relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The decision rule which applies for all bivariate test outcomes is stated as follows: where  $P < 0.05$ , reject hypothesis on the basis or evidence of insignificant relationship and where  $P > 0.05$ , accept hypothesis on the basis of significant relationship between the variables.

*Hypothesis One: H1: There is no significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and increase in the price of food stuffs in Ika South Local Government Area.*

**Table 1: Correlation of Fuel Subsidy Removal and Increase in the price of food stuffs**

	Variables		Fuel Subsidy Removal	Increase in the price of food stuffs
Spearman's rho	Fuel Subsidy Removal	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  328	.785** .000 328
	Increase in the price of food stuffs	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.785** .000 328	1  328

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

*Hypothesis Two: H2: There is not significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of poverty in Ika South Local Government Area.*

**Table 2: Correlation of Fuel Subsidy Removal and the Rate of Poverty**

	Variables		Fuel Subsidy Removal	the Rate of Poverty
Spearman's rho	Fuel Subsidy Removal	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.823** .000

		N	328	328
	the Rate of Poverty	Correlation Coefficient	.823**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	328	328

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

*Hypothesis Three: H3: There is not significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of unemployment in Ika South Local Government Area.*

**Table 3: Correlation of Fuel Subsidy Removal and the Rate of Unemployment**

	Variables		Fuel Subsidy Removal	the Rate of Unemployment
Spearman's rho	Fuel Subsidy Removal	Correlation Coefficient	1	.849**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	328	328
	the Rate of Unemployment	Correlation Coefficient	.849**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	328	328

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

### Discussion of Findings

Table 1, showed the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and increase in the price of food stuffs in Ika South Local Government Area using Spearman's correlation coefficients techniques. From the analysis, the result showed that fuel subsidy removal has a very strong positive and significant relationship with increase in the price of food stuffs at (rho = 0.785, N= 328 and P<0.05%). This result suggests that fuel subsidy removal can lead to increase in the price of food stuffs. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and increase in the price of food stuffs in Ika South Local Government Area.

Table 2, showed the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of poverty in Ika South Local Government Are using Spearman's correlation coefficients techniques. From the analysis, the result showed that fuel subsidy removal has a very strong positive and significant relationship with increase in the rate of poverty at (rho = 0. 823, N= 328 and P<0.05%). This result suggests that fuel subsidy removal can lead to increase in the rate of poverty. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of poverty in Ika South Local Government Area.

Table 3, showed the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of unemployment in Ika South Local Government Are using Spearman's correlation coefficients techniques. From the analysis, the result showed that fuel subsidy removal has a very strong positive and significant relationship with increase in the rate of unemployment at (rho = 0. 849, N= 328 and P<0.05%). This result suggests that fuel subsidy removal can lead to increase in the rate of unemployment. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and restated that there is a strong positive and significant relationship

between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of unemployment in Ika South Local Government Area.

The study examined the relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the economy of Nigeria with a special reference to Ika South Local Government Area and there were three hypotheses formulated for the study. With respect to the first hypothesis of this study, the study found that fuel subsidy removal had strong positive and significant relationship with increase in the price of food stuffs. This finding validates the work of Nkwagu (2012) on the influence of fuel subsidy removal on the Nigerian economy. The study revealed that fuel subsidy removal had a significant positive effect on the Nigerian economy. The finding corroborates with the views of Ogunleye-Bello (2023) who affirm that fuel subsidy removal increases the price of food stuffs in the market. Thus, the fuel subsidy removal results in relatively increase in the price of food stuffs. Therefore, the impact of fuel subsidy removal to the economy of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. With respect to the second hypothesis, study found that fuel subsidy removal had a very strong positive and significant relationship with increase in the rate of poverty. This result was supported by the findings of Nkwagu (2012) which showed that fuel subsidy removal increases the rate of poverty in the country. Ogunleye-Bello (2023) collaborating with this finding opined that fuel subsidy removal increases the rate of poverty in Nigeria. This finding also agreed with Akanbi (2023) study that revealed the impact of fuel subsidy removal on the rate of poverty in Nigeria. In support of this, Eyiuche (2012) in his study on “the socio-economic implication of the fuel subsidy removal” posits that fuel subsidy removal has a negative effect on the rate of poverty in Nigeria. Lastly, the result of hypothesis three showed that there is a significant relationship between fuel subsidy removal and the rate of unemployment in Ika South Local Government Area. This was supported by Eyiuche (2012) who posits that fuel subsidy removal has very strong negative impact on the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Akanbi (2023) argue that Nigerian government should wake up to its socio-economic responsibilities. Nigeria is ravaged by underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty, lack of basic social amenities, increased cost of living, and the incapacity of government to deal effectively with non-state actors/groups as a result of the effects of fuel subsidy removal. These have instigated grievances against the government and created breeding ground for terrorism, armed robbery and kidnapping, etc.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Attempts to remove petrol subsidy by past administrations triggered protests and stiff resistance. After swearing-in on May 29, the President Bola Tinubu’s administration removed fuel subsidy in Nigeria. Nigeria’s refineries are non-functional thereby necessitating the continuous importation of refined petroleum. Fuel importation strains the local currency while the subsidy primarily favored the cabals and a leeway for arbitrage and the illicit transportation of petrol to neighboring countries. The majority of Nigerians have embraced the government's most recent policy because they do not directly benefit from it. With this development, the government's plan to invest money obtained from the relapse subsidy policy in other economic sectors in order for the general public to benefit is supported by the majority of Nigerians. Not because people don't understand the withdrawal policy's significance or how it will help them in the long run, but rather because there is a great deal of mistrust in the government, is why there are protests against it. One obvious problem is the administration of President Tinubu's policies being implemented at

the wrong time. The people are now asking the government to provide palliatives or measures that would help cushion the effects in the short run, such as an increase in the cost of goods, school fees, transportation, spare parts, and house rents, as well as an increase in health risk, since the relapse fuel subsidy policy has become permanent. However, if the government manages the removal of the fuel subsidy properly, Nigerians will benefit. However, there is no doubt that the policy will play a significant role in sustaining and reviving other areas of the national economy. The challenges that the nation's fuel subsidy removal policy must address must be addressed with the following recommendations below. As a result of the findings and conclusion reached in this study, the following recommendations were made to ensure economic viability and improvement in living condition in Nigeria:

The government should provide palliatives to Nigerians to mitigate the effects of the fuel subsidy removal. The government should also make sure that the new minimum wage is enforced in all sectors, including the private sector. If this is done, it will moderate the impacts of the fuel subsidy removal on the general populace. The federal government of Nigeria should focus on and adequately develop other sectors, such as the educational, agricultural, communication, transportation, tourism, health, and provision of social amenities and infrastructure, which will significantly increase employment opportunities and the standard of living of the populace. This will significantly alleviate the suffering in Nigeria and put the issue of subsidy removal to rest. Government to embark on massive infrastructural investments in major sectors like health, education, power and works with funds saved from fuel subsidy removal. This will create employment for Nigerians and also, market for these sectors, which will eventually, serve as a big push for the ailing Nigerian economy and the government should allow free market operations.

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## FISCAL FEDERALISM AND THE DELTA QUESTION: PROSPECT FOR RESOURCE CONTROL IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: Resentment over resource control has frequently turned into militancy and violence in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Even if the demand is based on the transfer of ownership, management, and control of the processes of extracting crude oil, which is abundant in the area, the agitators are unaware of the exact parameters of the demand. Nigeria's many possibilities for resource control were examined in this study. In particular, it argued that constitutional modifications, the full repeal of the onshore/offshore dichotomy abrogation statute, and other actions may achieve resource control. The study adopted the historical research design and the qualitative method of data analysis. It is anchored on the frustration aggression theory and recommends that; lawmakers and the government should reorganize the economy so that the communities who produce oil have authority over their resources. In addition, restructuring should be done to return these oil-producing villages to the 1953– 1959 period, when they received 100% of the earnings instead of the current 13%. Two examples of legislation that should be abolished because they give the federal government authority over the entire nation are the Petroleum Act and the Territory Use Act*

*Keywords: Federalism, Resource Control, Fiscal Federalism, Agitation, Development*

### **Introduction**

Many militant/militia groups in the Niger Delta now base their operations on the fight for control of resources in the Nigerian body polity. Resource control has been seen by these parties as the core of their conflict. The problem of resource management in the Niger Delta has been used by gangs and other criminal forces to carry out illegal activities under the pretense of regional insecurity. The conflict in Nigeria's Delta region has taken on a new dimension in relation to state repression and violations of human rights and the region's youth ethnic associations have been at the front position of the violent conflicts, using violence as a way to express their demands and vent their rage (Faga and Ngwoke, 2021). According to Ikelegbe, (2006), the relationship between oil states and oil communities, oil companies and host communities, multinational oil corporations and host states, and finally between oil producing and oil importing/consuming states is what leads to the militarization of the Niger Delta region. In the fight for justice, equity, and control over resources, militants in the Niger Delta region target the military and multinational corporations. Locals' opposition to the Nigerian government's and the oil firms' ongoing

marginalization, land confiscation, and general disregard has, ironically, resulted in further government subjection and power politics. The militancy was made possible by the government's continual lip service to their demands. Following that, the militant attacks on the government and oil firms progressed into a stage of rebellion with the goal of stopping and disrupting oil exploration in order to eventually compel the government to address the issues facing the local population (Ikelegbe, 2005).

The Niger Delta's first oil or resource control war started in 1967 and flared up again in 2004 when the Ijaw ethnic minority launched an uprising fueled by oil-related grievances. An Ijaw youth organization called the Niger Delta's Volunteer Force (NDPF) fought with the Nigerian government. The federal administration then announced that it had identified 16 ethnic militias in the area, with proof connecting some of the organizations to both internal and external partners who were sustaining regional instability (Obi, 2011). First, dissatisfaction with the Nigerian government and multinational companies (MNCs) served as the foundation for the regional conflict.

Second, it involved agitation based solely on political demands and developmental issues. For instance, Bajzikova (2007) called for a restructuring of the federal system, a boost in the revenue allocation among the federation's component units from 13% to 100% in favor of the Niger Delta region, and other resource control issues. "We cease to recognize all undemocratic decrees that rob our peoples/communities of the rights to ownership control of our lives and resources, which were enacted without our participation and consent," (Raji, Grundlingh, and Abejide, 2013)). Obi (2010) claims of the Ijaw Youth Council, a civil society organization that took up the fight for resource control in 1997. The Niger Delta people's attitudes started to change as a result of the rise of these civil societies in the area and the ensuing challenges to the policies of the government and multinational oil companies. In 1990, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) was established as a means of interacting with the state and multinational corporations (MNCs) as their demands and grievances started to spread beyond the community to the ethnic group, state, and region (Ikelegbe, 2006). The "Kaiama Declaration" of the Ijaw people, which was formed on December 11, 1998, contains the most profound and dedicated struggle for resource sovereignty by the people of the Niger Delta. "All land and natural resources within the Niger Delta communities belong to the Niger Delta," the treaty states. This proclamation was founded on the Ijaws' allegations against the federal government, the violent and unrepentant efforts of multinational oil companies to plunder the Niger Delta's resources, and the murder of poet Ken SaroWiwa, the MOSOP leader (Tamuno, 2001).

When Nigeria went back to civilian rule in May 1999, there were great hopes that the democratic government would support the country, demilitarize the area, reduce poverty and tension, and provide the people with the "democracy dividend" (Obi, 2008). The fight and agitation for resource control has seen a dramatic change over the last ten years, from an elitist movement to one driven by militant youth, which has exacerbated the region's oil wars. In the Niger Delta, not every conflict can be directly traced back to agitation for control of resources. A group's classification as militant or not depends on the reason behind its acts of violence (Ako, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Lasswellan crisis of "who gets what, when, and how" is the result of Nigeria's natural resource endowment being unequally distributed among its constituent regions. Nigeria's



economy still relies heavily on the commercial production of crude oil, which is primarily located in the Niger Delta region. This suggests that Nigeria's golden egg is laid in the Niger Delta, which also experiences environmental damage as an effect of the oil extraction process. However, the protest for resource control is sparked by the lack of appropriate recompense. After military action was taken to quell the discontent, it escalated into violence through pipeline destruction, the kidnapping of government officials and largely foreign oil workers, and bold attacks on oil and gas setting up owned by oil firms. Even though the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) halted its offensive after the 2009 Amnesty Deal, the Niger Delta's agitation to control its resources has recently resumed with a ferocious intensity, forcing many oil companies to shut down operations in response to the Niger Delta Avengers' (NDA) demands that the oil companies leave the Niger Delta or face destruction and annihilation. The statement of this problem therefore is what are the issues responsible for the protest for resource control and what are the prospect for its effectiveness in the Niger Delta region?

### **Conceptual Review Federalism**

One idea that is difficult to define in a way that is universally accepted is federalism. This is due to the fact that different academics have diverse opinions about it. Wheare (1953) defined federalism as a constitutional framework that distributes responsibilities among the several tiers of government so that each is autonomous and coordinated within its own areas of authority and responsibility. Wheare claims that situations where people are willing to give up only a few powers and want to keep other, more restricted powers that can only be used by a coordinated group of authorities are what give rise to this constitutional system. He went on to say that a fundamental tenet of federalism is still the coordinated dominance of all governmental levels with respect to their individual functions. Accordingly, federalism has become a specific type of functional arrangement between states for coexisting and cooperating on a national level while maintaining a degree of individual individuality (Wheare,1953).

### **Resource Control**

Resource control, according to Ogag and Idris, (2023), refers to the independence of local governments and people to develop and use natural resources that are situated within their borders without interference from the federal government. According to Adeyeri, (2014), resource control is the idea that each federating unit should have the authority to govern itself. It is the responsibility of the whole nation to assist them in exercising their rights without interference. Accordingly, resource control is a manifestation of the units' self-determination, and it imposes a cooperative obligation on other regions of the nation to help the units achieve this goal (Ibeanu and Luckham,2006). The federal government receives the bulk of the nation's income, which counteracts the benefits of the present global federalism trend (Ekwuruke, 2005).

### **Nigeria's Fiscal Federalism**

According to Tarila and Idongesit (2022), the controversy surrounding Nigeria's fiscal federalism stems from the country's founding; therefore, one of the primary motivations for the colonial government's 1914 amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria was to enable it to reduce its subsidy on the colony of Northern Nigeria by using up the

surpluses from Southern Nigeria, even though the derivation principle was popular prior to the 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria. The primary sources of income for each region's internal resources include agriculture, cash or export crops, import and export taxes, and excise charges (Awa, 1996). However, Nigeria's history of fiscal federalism became evident in the 1940s, and from 1948 to the present, nine commissions, six military decrees, one legislative act, and two Supreme Court rulings have been used to define and alter the fiscal relationships between the federation's constituent parts (Egwaikhide & Isumonah, 2001). Statistically, the 1981 Act, which was signed into law and later used to allocate revenues in 1982 and the remainder of the second Republic, gave the federal government 55% of the vertical allocation, leaving the states (19) and (589) local governments with 35% and 10%, respectively. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that the federal government has always taken the "lion share" of the vertical allocation to itself and delegated more constitutional functions to the states. President Obasanjo changed the formulas in 1999 so that the federal government would receive 56% and the state and local governments would share 44%. According to political analysts, the federal government receives the majority of the nation's income, which goes against the current global federalism trend. (Suberu, 1998).

There is a general call for a return to "true federalism," which was foiled in 1967 with the creation of 12 states, but under current arrangements, state governments cannot be seen as cooperating with the federal government. Additionally, this high concentration of federal wealth on the federal government has led to the elimination of the only true principle of federal fiscal operation, the principle of derivation, because it takes a significant amount away from the people from whose land these resources are derived (Tanzi, 2003). This high percentage of the federal government's revenue is not only the primary source of injustice but also the primary cause of corruption, alleviation, marginalization, instability, and reckless agitation for restructuring in the nation (Peel, 2005).

The first stage of Nigeria's fiscal federalism development took place between 1948 and 1952. This stage was characterized by a centralized financial structure whereby surplus funds from the national government's budget were distributed to local governments using the derivation principle. Therefore, the federal government's spending requirements came first. Along with the implementation of the derivation principle for the distribution of federally collected revenue, the second phase (1952– 54) saw the introduction of autonomous revenue and tax jurisdiction for the regional administration. The third phase (1954–59) retained the fundamentals of the second phase. The emphasis on the derivation principle in the distribution of federally collected money was a key characteristic that set this phase apart (Ali, 2003).

Due to the increase in their export commodities— coconut in the West and cotton and groundnuts in the North— both the North and the West were happy about this. The application caused dissatisfaction in the Eastern Region, whose primary export crop, palm oil, was struggling in the international market. Generally speaking, state centered fiscal federalism prevailed throughout this time. Proponents of resource control or a greater emphasis on derivation, particularly those who are minorities in the oil-producing region, continue to use it as a benchmark. Resource control proponents even go so far as to compare it to 100% derivation. Independent politics produced the fourth phase (1960–1966), which continues to be the primary tenets of fiscal federalism today. Based on the

derivation concept, this phase aimed to lessen the prior emphasis on regional financial independence (Akinsanya, 1997).

It was maintained that regional stability depended on the federal government's financial stability. This was followed by provisions for 50% derivation of revenue from all minerals in the 1960 and 1963 constitutions. The Distributable Pool Account, which served as the model for the current federation account, was established during this time. The federal government paid certain tax revenues into this account before allocating them to the regions in accordance with the following standards: continuity of public services. Each government's minimum duties should be determined by the region's population and the federation's balanced development (Tanzi, 2003).

As the states have grown more reliant on the center, the fifth phase, which started in 1966, has been marked by growing centralization. The military's dominance over Nigerian politics has mostly corresponded with this time. Intergovernmental fiscal connections were impacted by the military's centrist command structure. The centrist inclination of military rulers was promoted by taking advantage of several historical occurrences and events. The creation of the state and the civil war were the most significant of these. The creation of states from the regions and the continued separation of states from the regions promoted a concentration of budgetary authority at the center. Additionally, the state lost its jurisdiction and tax authority as a result of several decrees that were made (Akinsanya, 2000).

### **Oil and Gas production in the Niger Delta Region**

Since Nigeria's formal independence from its colonial overlords in 1960, this area has continued to be the backbone of the nation's economy due to Nigeria's gradual shift toward a single crude oil commodity market. Although the Nigerian Bitumen corporation, a German corporation, made the first commercial discovery of oil in 1908 in the then Southern Protectorate of Nigeria, it wasn't until 1956 that the commodity was discovered in large quantities. Nigeria's economy was based on agriculture prior to this period. Nigeria, for example, had a thriving agro-economic that included cocoa, oil palm, coal, and fish in the south and groundnut pyramids, beans, and millet in the north. In 1960, Nigeria was the world's largest exporter of cocoa (UNDP, 2007).

However, some contend that the emergence of the petroleum industry actually hurt Nigeria's fortunes, despite the enormous opportunities the nation had to diversify its economy following the discovery of crude oil. This is a classic example of the curse that comes with a nation producing a lot of oil. In addition to ignoring other profitable areas of the economy in favor of focusing only on oil earnings, it is also argued that the oil industry actually signaled and has maintained the massive administrative and political decadence that has consistently slowed down the nation's progress and obstructed its development. At least three quarters of Nigeria's oil production comes from the 1,500 communities that make up the whole Niger Delta land mass, which is now covered in oil fields (Azaiki, 2003). The Nigerian state has benefited from this in billions of dollars since gaining independence in 1960. About 2 million barrels of crude oil are thought to be extracted from the Niger Delta every day, providing the US government with \$20–100 million every day. The delicate Delta ecology is home to roughly 159 oil fields and 275 flow stations that are owned by Shell Petroleum alone (Tamuno, 2004). It is estimated that more than 5,000 oil wells have been dug in the area, covering over 31,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land. Because to Nigeria's

excessive reliance on oil production, the product now dominates the country's economy, accounting for 40% of GDP, 90% of foreign exchange earnings, and over 80% of government revenues. Therefore, oil profits are essential to the operation, expansion, and advancement of every aspect of the Nigerian nation (ANEEJ, 2004).

Indeed, Nigeria's progress since the 1970s has been mostly dependent on oil money. Notwithstanding the advantages of producing crude oil, the area that does so continues to be the most underdeveloped in the nation, and its residents live in extreme poverty. The region is plagued by "administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor, and endemic conflict," according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Tamuno, 2004).

### **Origin of Resource Control Struggle in Nigeria**

Any element found in the natural environment that can be used for human advantage is referred to as a natural resource (Faniran & Ojo, 1981). Since its discovery at Oloibiri, Bayelsa state, in 1956, oil—the backbone of Nigeria's monoculture economy—has regrettably become a source of enduring animosity, inconsistencies, and crises. Nigeria's resource control problem has a complicated past. The people of the Niger Delta fought for active participation in regional trade, particularly palm oil, and self-government in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The opposition displayed by King William Koko of Nembe, King Jaja of Opobo, and King Nana Olomu of Itsekiri land most exemplifies this propensity for self-assertion and a wish to avoid being controlled by any "foreign" organization or authority. Due to a variety of factors, such as military conquests, British indirect rule, the cancellation of the Royal Niger Company's charter, and Christianity and western education, which resulted in the rise of a new traditional elite, the fight for involvement and control in the palm oil trade ultimately failed (Faga, & Uche 2019).

Concerns over resource control during the colonial era were typified by ethnic minorities' worries of dominance by the main ethnic groups, especially in the Niger Delta. These minority groups called for the creation of additional states, and as a result of their agitations, a number of political parties were formed, including the United Middle Belt Congress, the Borno Youth Movement, the Midwest State Movement, the Calabar – Ogoja River States Movement, the Benin and Delta Peoples Party, and others (Ali, 2003).

The need for direct control over revenue accruable from resources within their domain, which would be made possible within the context of their own states, was the ethnic minorities' real reason for demanding more states, despite their citing concern for an effective federal structure. Isaac Adaka Boro, a former police officer and chairman of a student union, attempted to create the Republic of Niger Delta in the immediate post-independence period. This came after the 1957 Constitutional Conference failed to find a solution to the minority issue (Ibaba, 2017).

Instead of resolving the issues, the conference sent them to Sir Henry Willinks' Minorities Commission. The panel opposed the concept of establishing additional nations at the time, even if it acknowledged the reasons behind minority fears. Rather, it suggested a plebiscite on the future of Ilorin and Kabba Provinces in the North and special councils for the Calabar and Midwest regions to oversee the operations of regional administrations (Ali, 2003). Despite being put down by federal forces in a matter of days, the Adaka Boro led uprising in 1966 was a precursor to the deadly role that minority agitations would play in

the decades that followed. The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), headed by Ken SaroWiwa, called for the Ogoni people to have self-determination and sovereignty over their resources through the Ogoni Bill of Rights in 1990 (Tarila, and Idongesit,2022).

Two years later, the Ogbia people of the central Niger Delta issued their charter of demands. The most incisive depiction and articulation of resource control, however, can be found in the Kaiama Declaration of December 11, 1998. The Ijaw people established, refined, and popularized the phrase "resource control" with that pronouncement, laying the foundation for the contemporary discussion of the topic (Douglas, 2001). Numerous proclamations, bills of rights, resolutions, and charters of demands from different Niger Delta ethnic nations, including the Itshekiri, Ibiobio, Egi, Oron, Ikwere, and Urhobo, have since followed the Kaima Declaration. In general, there are two main stages to Niger Delta agitations for self- determination and resource control: (i) the period of nonviolent protests and externalization of demands, and (ii) the rise of military conflict (Adeyeri, 2014)

### **The Niger-Delta Agitation for Resource Control**

Given the physical condition of the Niger Delta, it is important to highlight how the extreme poverty, backwardness, and particularly the policies and attitudes of the government toward the area have created the conditions for popular demands for economic autonomy, which occasionally result in intermittent armed conflicts and other types of violence. Several other significant factors for the instability and unrest in the Niger Delta are provided, in addition to the extreme poverty and harmful practices related to oil exploitation that were previously mentioned. For example, the region's unemployment rate is a serious issue that has significantly harmed peace and stability. Only 35,000 people are directly or indirectly employed by the oil business as a whole due to inadequate management, particularly in the downstream sector. 45 of these, less than 5% are Niger Delta residents (Faga and Ngwoke, 2021).

The gradual decline in the amount of money given to the Niger Delta from the extraction of crude oil after independence is another factor contributing to the people's annoyance and, consequently, discontent. It should be mentioned that between 1953 and 1959, nearly all of the oil earnings were returned to the producing regions. Before the Gowon administration lowered it to 30% in 1970, the 1960 Constitution set it at 50%. The amount refundable was then lowered by 5% by the Abovade Technical Committee during the Murtala/Obasanjo administration, 20% during the Shagari administration, and as low as 1.5% during the Buhari military regime. According to some authors, derivation actually fell to its lowest point ever—0%— before the Babangida administration raised it to 1% and then to 3%, where it stayed until the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution went into effect (Ikelegbe, 2006).

The government's confiscation of their lands, which not only characterized their lifestyle and culture but also served as a source of cash, further exacerbated the Niger Delta's declining oil resource earnings. In the eyes of the local populace, land ownership entails leaving behind everything related to it, including any natural resources that may be found there. In fact, despite the state's statutory ownership of natural resources, this explains their cooperation with the Nigerian government and Multinational Oil Corporations (MNOCs) before the Land Use Decree 1978 was passed (Faga and Ngwoke, 2021).

Their involvement in the land management and control process shown enough interest in crude oil development to satisfy environmental justice goals. In other words, communities owned the land beneath which the resources were located and thus reserved a number of beneficial rights, including the right to directly negotiate with oil companies regarding land use issues like rent, lease, tenure, and compensation, even though the federal government owned all of the oil. The "most dramatic of the barrage of pro-oil statutes" is how one characterizes the Act. A tripod trajectory can be seen when examining the agitation pattern in the Niger Delta critically. In what is commonly referred to as the "resource control struggle," independent federating units (states) in the area are agitating against the federal authority. Second, the local populace is agitated against the federal government and its oil interest in the area (Ologbenla, 2007).

This agitation manifests itself in militancy, which is frequently escalated into an insurgency, a small-scale conflict involving various acts of sabotage, guerrilla warfare, asymmetrical methods, and demands for self-determination. Third, the people of the region are agitating against MNOCs that operate there for environmental justice, human rights protection, and livelihood protection, and this agitation has gone beyond national remedial enforcement procedures. Isaac Adaka Boro's failed effort to break away from Nigeria and establish the Niger Delta Republic in 1966 marked the beginning of the Niger Delta region's fight for "resource control." Since the uprising was put down, the goal of each subsequent agitation movement in the area has changed from gaining political and sovereignty to pursuing internal economic autonomy and participatory self-determination (Ologbenla, 2007).

The creed or charter statement of each of the main ethnic groups in the area provides information on this. "All lands and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory belong to the Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival," for example, according to the 1998 Kaiama Declaration issued by the Ijaw nation. We no longer acknowledge any undemocratic laws that were passed without the involvement or approval of our peoples or communities and deprive them of the right to own and manage our lives and resources". The people of the Niger Delta are therefore at the forefront of the struggle for resource control, as evidenced by the widespread participation of regular Deltans in the various ethnic affiliates that adopted the declarations. These include the Land Use Decree, 1978 and the Petroleum Decree of 1969 and 1991, the Lands (Title Vesting, etc.) Decree no.52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree no.13 of 1997, etc.

Though with a significantly different objective, the elites/elders and local/state authorities in the area later appropriated the resource control agenda, turning the agitation into a more juridical and constitutional matter. The lack of clarity surrounding the definition and nature of the phrase is the issue with the resource control argument. Through a number of declarations, the Niger Delta's residents have articulated their interpretation of the phrase, which states that all natural resources, including land and minerals found on or beneath the land, must be fully controlled and managed by the people or communities whose land the resources occur. —Resource control means that if I as a Bini man go to Kebbi state and find gold, the resource should belong to me and not the state or the federal government, said a former governor of one of the Niger Delta states, for example. I only owed taxes and royalties to the federal government. If a Kano man finds oil in Edo, Delta, or Bayelsa, the same idea ought to be applicable. He solely gives the federal or state governments taxes

and royalties ‘‘. The statement that "the benefit of resource control should accrue to the individuals and not the state, following the principles enunciated by Adams Smith in the Wealth of Nations" was made by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, one of the country's founding fathers (Watts, 2005).

Therefore, the fight for resource control, which started as a populist movement for polity reconstruction, was taken over by the political elite after 1999, transforming the momentum into a constitutional periphery centered fight for autonomy, true federalism, and the devolution of political and economic power. "The practice of true federalism and natural law, in which the federating units express their right to primarily control the natural resources within their borders and make agreed contributions towards maintenance of common services of sovereign nation state in which they belong" is how the governors of the south zone (Niger Delta states) defined "resource control" during a heated conflict. The Federal Republic of Nigeria is the sovereign state, while the 36 states make up the federating units in this instance (Tarila, and Idongesit, 2022).

### **Era of Peaceful Demonstrations and Externalization of Niger Delta Agitations.**

Even though they were a minority under colonial rule, agitations for self-determination and resource management during this period were characterized by a strong sense of confidence and reliance on peaceful means of achieving justice. As was already indicated, testimony was given in 1957 to the Willink Commission of Enquiry into the problem of minority anxiety in the newly established Nigerian state. Numerous protests and demands for justice and equity that followed failed. Similarly, people in areas with abundant resources often resorted to litigation, which usually produced negative rulings (Jimoh 2008).

Letters about the Niger Delta problem were also written to Nigeria's colonial and post-independence governments. Following the failure of this tactic, the agitators went one step further and called on all governmental levels to improve the efficacy of their letters. However, aside from the warm greeting and vacuous promises, most cases did not show any significant progress (Saliu, 2008). In order to further raise awareness of the growing issue in the area, protests were held during this time in the Niger Delta and other locations, with banners and leaflets being exhibited. To pique the interest of the government, letters were handed in Abuja and Lagos, the capitals of the impacted states. The growing centralization of oil ownership and control, as well as the federal government's politicization of the income allocation system to the detriment of the minority oil producing states, were major factors in the externalization of Niger Delta agitations that quickly developed (Adeyeri, 2014).

According to Obi (2008), in an attempt to finance the war and find money for economic management, the federal government—still dominated by the now reformed Northern and Western factions of the ruling class— mandated through decrees that oil profits be collected and distributed to itself. Nigeria became totally reliant on oil revenue, and the hegemonic forces of the majority in the country now controlled the state budget to the exclusion of the oil minority. Nigeria's petroleum resources were fully owned by the federal government by Decree 51 of 1969, which goes directly against the principles of fiscal federalism. Furthermore, by granting the federal government total control over all revenue accruable from offshore oil wells in the coastal waters adjacent to them, Offshore Oil Revenue Decree No.9 significantly decreased the oil minorities' access to direct oil revenue and increased the dependence of the majority groups for a share of the oil wealth. The

conflict between the oil minorities and the Nigerian state, which attempted to exploit and control them along with their strategic resources through its excessive concentration of political and economic power, grew more intense as a result of the oil minorities' estrangement from their own goods. Additionally, the federal government abandoned the principle of Derivation as the basis for revenue allocation, which had profited the major ethnic groups within the days of cash crop exports, in favor of fairness and state population in reaction to the country's wealth changing from agriculture to petroleum and the desire of the majority nationalities to sustain their dominance over national revenue (Obi, 2000). Odia Ofeimum's comment relating to the derivation principles erratic and declining fortunes in Nigeria's revenue allocation system is enlightening. He asserted that between 1951 and 1960, it fell from 100% in 1946 to 50%. Within General Gowon's rule, it fell even lower to 45% by 1970, and within the Murtala/Obasanjo administration, it varied between 20% and 25%. The Buhari Idiagbon administration moved it down to its lowest point of 1.5%, while Shehu Shagari's government substantially reduced it to 5%. Only after significant agitation did the current 13% emerge (The Guardian, 17 July, 2005).

As a result of the federal seizure of oil control and the rejection of the Derivation principle, the minorities in the Niger Delta grew increasingly resolute against the dominance of the major nationalities and devised new strategies to externalize their complaints and demands against the Nigerian government. A powerful organization and an apparent national aspiration were formulated at the well-known level by protest movements like MOSOP, Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa (EMIROAF), and Chikoko. Above all, noteworthy environmental threats presented by oil mining companies and the underrepresentation of the Niger Delta peoples through a series of international bodies and conferences, Mosop, IYC, and Chikoko successfully advanced the Niger Delta case to the fore of global discourse (Obi, 2000). When the Abacha administration detained and killed Saro Wiwa and eight of his Ogoni compatriots in 1995, the public was outraged and the pathetic situation of the people received much international attention. Asuni, 2009) (Adeyeri, 2014).

### **Emergence of Armed Struggle in the Niger Delta**

The Adaka Boro uprising in 1966 was the first significant instance of armed force being used in Niger Delta unrest. Until the 1990s, when ethnic militias started to come into view and violent protests against the federal government's economic and political exclusion ensued, nothing like this occurred again (Asuni, 2009). The present surge in violence can be credited to two events: the Odi massacre, which was carried out during the civilian government of Obasanjo, and the longstanding intolerance for public debate by the regimes of Gen. Babangida and Abacha. The nature of the regimes, particularly Babangida and Abacha, led to the visibility of ethnic militias, which made the problems and discrepancy of the Nigerian state worse.

In reaction, the Niger Delta's populace strengthened their militancy and resorted to bloody violence adventure to hold the government and the oil companies accountable. Notably, ethnic militias are the most radical form of ethnic agitation for self-intent because they adopt a militant image before transforming into militia groups, each with its own ethnic character and goal to act as a channel for the satisfaction of the dreams of its people. Agbu (2002) asserts that these ethnic movements are typified by their use of violence,



associations with ethnic identities, youth preponderance, and popularity as movements seeking to drastically alter the existing quo. (Watts, 2009).

Among the most well-known ethnic militias in the area are the Niger Delta Liberation Army (NDLA), Greenlanders, Egbesu, Ijaw National Congress, Urhobo National Union, Martyrs Brigade, Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDDV), Chikoko Movement, Coalition for Militant Action in the Niger Delta (COMA), Joint Revolutionary Council, and, of course, the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). According to a current study, there are at least 48 ethnic militant organizations in Delta State alone, with over 25,000 members and a military stockpile of about 10,000 firearms, though it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of members in the Niger Delta. All of the organizations' efforts to stop the federal, state, and oil industries from exploiting their region are indirectly supported by the local populace. Additionally, some groups use political patronage to harass and threaten their opponents, while others count on military officers and politicians to help their illegitimate businesses, such as oil bunkering and weapons trafficking. Furthermore, the total number of armed rebels in the Niger Delta is thought to be around 60,000 (Asuni 2009).

Recall that the Niger Delta area erupted in protests in 1988 when AIG of Police Alhaji Bukar Ali a Northerner, succeeded Professor Eric Opia of Delta State as head of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). The fact that the Abubakar regime afterwards reversed the decision and relieved Bukar Ali with Delta State Rear Admiral Preston Omatsola is a poignant example of how the Nigerian government cannot treat oil minorities fairly without causing them great upheaval. Consequently, decades of peaceful protests have given way to violent militancy. The more extreme and violent agitations of the last few years have included calls for self-determination and outright secession.

On November 8, 1999, the Egbesu assassinated a police officer in Odi, Bayelsa State, after their youths kidnapped and murdered police officers in retaliation for the deaths of their members. The town was later demolished by government-sent soldiers. On April 25, 2003, Ijaw militiamen attacked the Army and Navy at Warri, Delta State, killing ten people. The terrorists also managed to intercept radio transmissions from the Army and Navy. Prior to the security forces intervention, an Ijaw militia raid on an Itshekiri hamlet claimed the lives of five women. On May 1, 2003, Ijaw militiamen assaulted government troops and oil facilities in Opumani, Tanke farm, Okerenkoko, Delta State. Effurun witnessed a similar incident the next day.

At the start of 2004, Mujahid Dokubo Asari's Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force swore to break up the Nigerian State and launch a complete conflict against the state governments, the federal government, and the oil companies. Following Dokubo Asari's incarceration on treason charges in September 2005, other militias came into view, particularly MEND, which is known for its intelligent strategies and well-considered ideas as well as its derision for the conservative local leaders it considered to be traitors to the Niger Delta cause. In February 2006, MEND embarked on a disruption of attacks against oil installations to highlight its demands for Dokubo Asari's release, compensation for environmental harm, and local control over oil earnings. This led to a 25% reduction in Nigeria's oil production. It also kidnapped nine foreign oil workers, who were let go in March, and threatened fresh violence against oil setups. On April 19, 2006, it detonated a

car bomb in a military barracks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, killing two people and seriously injured six more (Watts and Ibaba, 2001).

MEND has employed advanced media and technology to achieve its goals more than any other terrorist group. Its email-based threats of attacks caused crude oil prices to soar to \$70 per barrel. The group's first urban invasion, the Port Harcourt truck bomb, was set off by cell phones. Due to the high rate of youth unemployment in the Niger Delta, the accessibility of weaponry, and the persistent discontent with the federal and state administrations, MEND and other militias have found an easy source of freshmen to support their militant request and moves. For example, on January 15, 2006, the Martyrs Brigade attacked the Benisede Flow Station of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), murdering five army guards and nine others. (Omotola, 2006).

In June of that year, the Niger Delta Liberation Army threatened to assassinate Nuhu Ribadu, the former head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), for continuing to hold former Bayelsa State Governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, who was charged with corruption and money laundering. In a similar vein, the Coalition for Militant actions in the Niger Delta disbanded the Joint Revolution Council in July, claiming it was too lenient and supportive of Nigeria's leadership. The group then threatened to begin capturing captives once more, this time including notable Nigerians and local officials in addition to outsiders. Since potential victims now include foreigners, Nigerian state officials, children, and even the elderly, nobody is totally safe from the menace.

It is important to remember that hostage kidnappings have recently grown in scale and scope to an unimaginable degree. (Watts,2009). In 2008, the late President Umaru Yar'Adua made an additional effort to address the unique needs of the oil-producing states by establishing a Ministry. Legislative and judicial techniques have also been used to address resource control issues in addition to the institutional approach of creating commissions and the like. Among these is the National Assembly's sponsorship of bills that touch on resource control issues. For instance, in 2001, Hon. T. Harriman sponsored a bill to revise the harsh Petroleum Decree 51, which would have given towns, local governments, and oil producing states ownership and authority over the resources located inside their borders. Unfortunately, a Northern majority in the House of Representatives defeated the bill in a motion of 81 against 64, effectively killing it in its tracks. Stakeholders have also been outspoken in their calls for a change to the current revenue sharing model. For instance, Prof. Nimi Briggs has demanded that the current derivation formula be increased from 13% to 50%, that the government take possession of all assets and natural resources that include them, and that the land use decree be revoked (Ibeanu and Luckham, 2006).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Aggression is always the result of frustration, according to the main tenet of frustration aggression theory. If the necessary circumstances are met, a person whose basic desires are denied and who subsequently feels extremely angry and dissatisfied is likely to respond to his situation by acting aggressively toward the thing that is thought to be the cause of the desires being denied or a stand-in. The more thorough the checking and the more important the want is viewed as, the more forceful the reaction (Hann and Feagen, 1973).

The idea of relative deprivation, which is defined as a mental condition in which there is a gap between what men seek and what appears achievable, is a second variation of the

frustration aggression theory. Their rage and violent tendencies increase with the size of the disparity. Gurr concurs that we are prone to become angry when we are denied our desires, and that the most fulfilling natural reaction to anger is to attack the cause of the frustration (Gurr, 1970). "If the mobilization of discontent is correlated with the extensiveness of inequality, such that when inequality is pervasive, some mobilization is almost bound to occur, then the relationship between inequality and political violence should be positive and curvilinear, i.e., positively accelerated.

The insurgency and the region's demand for self-determination were supported by the theoretical considerations mentioned above, which shows how the people of the Niger Delta region are being denied their fundamental socioeconomic and political rights. As a result, the oil bonanza in the area has turned into a nightmare for the locals, and the Niger Delta has become the pinnacle of poverty, starvation, and injustice as a result of decades of neglect. Ten million people in the region are hence impoverished, with over 14 million of them residing in rural areas where they are living in extreme poverty (Udonwa, 2004). The remarkable rise in the country's GDP has not improved people's quality of life or contributed to a decrease in poverty in the area (Saliu, 2007). Although the area or communities did not gain much from exploitation, they did bear the externalities and risks of it. Unemployment, land degradation, deforestation, pollution of farm areas and fishing streams, and the loss of the people's source of income are only a few of the unimaginable suffering and destruction caused by this. The region is still incredibly underdeveloped in spite of its natural resources (Agbonifon, 2011).

The Niger Delta's environmental degradation, poverty, and alienation, however, are the root causes of the region's ongoing civil disturbance since the people there are unable to endure their depressing circumstances. Because their fundamental means of subsistence (human security) in the Niger Delta are gravely threatened, they turn to hostage taking and other militant acts against the government and international oil companies.

### **Prospects for Effective Resource Control in Nigeria**

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the degree of bias in Nigerian resource control, significant reforms are possible if they are carefully thought out and carried out without taking into account the arbitrary interests of those in positions of authority. These opportunities can be attained by doing the following:

Recourse to True Federalism: It should be mentioned that Nigeria adopted "neo-federalism" in 1954. The Lyttleton Constitution allowed the regions the freedom to enact laws on their own issues and contribute significantly to their own development. The ability to manage and control local resources while giving the federal government a fixed amount was one of the freedoms granted to the regions.

Over the course of time, the nation's infrastructure and economy both saw rapid improvements. For instance, there were accomplishments in the shape of significant infrastructure supply, regional collaboration, particularly in investments, etc., even if the Western area dominated the production and exportation of cocoa, cotton, and rubber. In addition, enterprises such as the Nigerian Water Resources Development Company (1959), Nidogas Lagos, Nigersol Construction Company (1959), and Nigerian Plastic Company (1954) were established in Western Nigeria (Oni, 2011). Based on the aforementioned, true federalism should permit states to exert authority and control over their resources, guaranteeing that development is carried out by and for the people. Development is closer

to the people when the government is closer to the people. While a portion is provided to the federal government as compensation, states should be granted the majority of sovereignty over their resources (Tarila and Idongesit, 2022).

### **Amendment of the Constitution**

To lessen federal interference in state matters, certain parts of the constitution ought to be changed. The constitution's provisions regarding the roles and duties of the several branches of government are of utmost importance. Specific functions for the Federal Government and State Governments were established in the exclusive and concurrent lists, respectively, by Section 6(2) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution. According to the arrangements, the federal government has more authority on 68 issues in terms of law and control. Although the states are intended to enact laws on 31 different topics, the federal government retains legislative and superseding authority over 19 of those topics, allowing the states to continue to have unrestricted autonomy over 12 of them.

Similar to the petroleum industry, the states have voiced their dissatisfaction with the federal government's intrusion into their affairs in an attempt to control their resources and influence their decisions in the agricultural and industrial sectors. The federal government's authority over state issues should be curtailed in order to preserve a balance in resource control and provide the states more flexibility to allocate their resources for their own growth. With this in place, resource management will adopt a new perspective.

### *Total Abolition of the On - shore/ Off - Shore Dichotomy Abrogation Bill*

The Abrogation Bill of 2004, an amendment to the Onshore/Offshore Dichotomy Abrogation Bill, was introduced by the federal government in 2004 in response to demand from state governments. This bill was more of an act of sympathy for the littoral governments, allowing them to receive a portion of the profits from offshore resources. According to the bill, the littoral states could profit from resources located inside their borders that are less than 200 meters deep (Oyesfusi,2007). The premise is that separating the ownership of coastal regions and waterways from the landed domains of the states is a geographical error. Given that the rivers are their physical surrounds, the littoral nations ought to be the owners of the riverine environment. Evidence from federal states like the United States of America supports the state's ownership and control over these regions, even though there is no international legislation to back up the aforementioned assertion. In accordance with the American Riparian Law, for example, "Land below the low water mark on navigable rivers belongs to the state governments," Therefore, the resources inside these navigable riverine borders should be under government control (Tarila and Idongesit, 2022).

### **Discussion of Key Findings**

The study was able to establish the following findings.

#### *Oil reliance*

The absence of alternative competitive industries in the nation has led the state and its administrators to rely mostly on oil as their source of foreign exchange profits. Income from oil, is virtually the only source of revenue for the Nigerian government. oil and gas from the region accounts for about 50 percent of Nigeria 's national GDP, 80 percent of

total government revenue and 97 percent of foreign exchange. Nigeria is abundantly rich in solid minerals that exist in virtually all the states of the federation or even wake up the agriculturally based economy of the fifties and sixties but rather stick to the production of only oil and gas which is the reason for the much pressure on the people and environment of the Niger Delta region.

#### *Marginalization*

In the framework of the Nigerian Federation, the Niger Delta is underrepresented in terms of political representation, resource distribution, and control. The Nigerian Federation's power dynamics and budgetary relationships are prone to injustices and imbalances due to the peculiarities of Nigeria's federalism. One of the most important aspects of the Niger Delta conflict is the region's seeming marginalization and estrangement from Nigeria's federalist ties.

#### **Conclusion**

This paper examines the agitation for resources control with the objective of proposing its prospect in Nigeria. The initial conflict in the Niger Delta was based on inadequate compensation as well as developmental and employment neglect. The initial response strategy was litigation and later peaceful demonstration. Currently, the response strategy has assumed the form of militancy. The current conflict for resource control is attributed to the failure of the state to effectively use the enormous oil resources generated from the oil producing states to ensure their socio-economic wellbeing. This was further aggravated by the states and oil companies' insensitivity to the people's environment which has been polluted and degraded in their reckless pursuit of capital accumulation. The people's survival is threatened by high level of pollution and deprivation hence the demand to reclaim their right to their own resources.

#### **Recommendations**

It is crucial that the government and policymakers reorganize the economy such that the communities that produce oil have authority over their resources. Additionally, restructuring should be carried out so that these oil producing villages return to the time between 1953 and 1959, when they received 100% of the money, or even better, 50% of the revenue instead of the current 13%. The government should start a large scale infrastructure development project. More intervention organizations should be established and funded by the government to handle the sociopolitical and economic growth of the oil-producing region or towns. Instead of becoming a security risk in the area, the government should hire and teach the young of these communities in occupations that would enable them to become self-sufficient and self-sufficient. Additionally, the government ought to prioritize the security issue. People's lives and property in relation to oil.

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**THE AUDIT BODY FOR EXPENDITURES SUPPORTED BY THE  
EU BUDGET: ESTABLISHMENT, FUNCTIONING, EVOLUTION,  
AND RESULTS — A REVIEW OF THE ROMANIAN CASE**

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*Abstract: The main purpose of our paper is to analyse the issues related to the activities of the Romanian audit body responsible for overseeing EU budget expenditures (the Audit Authority/AA) and to highlight its impact on the efficient use of European funds through a chronological and thematic approach. The authors believe that this article provides a solid foundation for further discussions on optimizing the activities of this body and aligning them with European requirements. Our approach focuses on the legislative steps involved in the creation of the AA, emphasizing that the first step toward institutionalizing the audit of EU budget expenditures was the extension of the Romanian Court of Accounts' (RCA) responsibilities to include European funds. Subsequently, the AA was established as a distinct body with operational independence within the RCA. This institutional model was chosen to meet the EU's specific requirements for audit transparency and autonomy. The current legislation outlines the responsibilities of the AA, including its reporting obligations to the European Commission (EC). Our references also cover the recent results of the institution's activities, as well as the deficiencies identified, which include procedural irregularities, the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms, and delays in project implementation. These issues have been categorized by program, highlighting the areas requiring urgent intervention. The paper's final conclusion is that the analysed body plays a important role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of European funds in Romania. Nevertheless, improvements are still necessary to address the identified deficiencies and strengthen the institution's administrative capacity.*

*Keywords: Audit Authority (AA); EU Budget; auditing expenditures; fraud prevention/combating; transparency; European/national regulatory framework; reporting.*

*JEL Classification: H54, H61, H72, H83,*

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**Introduction**

The Romanian institutional architecture focused on control and audit activities includes a structure created by law—the Audit Authority (AA) - arising from Romania's status as an EU member state. The AA, with appropriate technical expertise and operational



independence from the structures implementing funds and programs, is tasked with certifying that EU budget funds are used strictly in accordance with the European and national regulatory frameworks. In fact, even before Romania's accession to the EU, "following the European Commission's (EC) 2004 recommendation, which called for the designation of an independent control body responsible for sample-based verifications, system audits, and audits at the closure of ISPA measures, the decision was made to establish an independent body" within the RCA (RCA, 2020a). The role of this body, in the current European context, is significant, with several researchers referencing this aspect in their works and emphasizing the importance of preventing and combating fraud involving the EU budget (Blanco-Alcántara et al., 2022; Nicula and Firtescu, 2018; Bene and Bene, 2017; Bostan, Firtescu, and Nicula, 2017; Beldiman, D., 2016). Notably, a relatively large number of such works address this topic, primarily from the perspective of law and legal sciences (Neagu, N., 2018; Dragodan, A., 2017; Bostan and Pete, 2015; Costea and Ilucă, 2023). The following sections of our article will focus on the most significant aspects characterizing the AA for European funds allocated to Romania, specifically its establishment, organization, and functioning, highlighting key moments in its evolution and the results of its recent activities.

To ensure a thorough analysis of our topic, we have adopted the following structure for this paper: (1) Introduction; (2) Legislative steps in establishing the AA (2.1. A preliminary phase: extending RCA's control responsibilities over the use of EU Funds; 2.2. Establishing the AA as a entity without legal personality, operationally independent of the RCA; 2.3. Provisions regarding the AA in the current RCA Law); (3) Organizational and functional elements of the analysed institution; (4) Recent results of specific activities conducted by the AA (4.1. Audit missions conducted during 2023; 4.2. Specific audit activities conducted by the AA for the 2021–2022 financial period); (5) Significant deficiencies identified by the AA, grouped by program; and (6) Conclusions.

### **Legislative steps in establishing the AA**

#### *A preliminary phase: expanding the control responsibilities of the Romanian Court of Accounts (RCA) over the use of EU funds*

The need to meet conditions imposed by the EC regarding financial assistance granted to Romania during the pre-accession phase led to the expansion of the control responsibilities of the RCA. Starting in 2002, these responsibilities extended to the use of funds provided by the European Union (EU) and other international financing sources. This expansion was made possible through the adoption of Law No. 77/31.01.2002, amending and supplementing Law No. 94/1992 on the organization and functioning of the RCA (RP, 2002a). These amendments addressed not only the control and jurisdictional competencies at that time but also the institutional structure (RP, 2002b). Briefly, the RCA was reassigned control and jurisdictional competencies in the privatization of state-owned enterprises, an activity previously conducted by the State Property Fund and, later, the State Privatization Authority. This move was justified by "numerous negative phenomena, including fraud and corruption, which were under investigation by judicial authorities" (RP, 2002b). Control and jurisdictional competencies also extended to resolving issues related to non-compliance by buyers with contractual clauses in privatization agreements, as such cases typically caused significant financial damages. Consistent with this focus on

public asset management oversight, the RCA's competencies were further expanded to include financial investment companies and associations or foundations using public funds. These measures aimed to generate substantial revenues for the state budget and included proposals to monitor certain legal entities not previously covered by Law No. 94/1992 (Article 18) (RP, 1992). These entities were defined as "those with fiscal obligations, including the payment of taxes, fees, contributions, and other amounts representing public revenue" (RP, 2002b). Additionally, the RCA was tasked with overseeing the execution of the budgets of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, under the same conditions stipulated by law for the Presidency, the Romanian Government, and the Supreme Court of Justice. Concerning organizational structure, a single financial control division was established to ensure unity and coherence in control activities. The number of Court Counsellors was also reduced in both the Subsequent Control Division and the Jurisdictional Division, along with changes to the decision-making processes of the RCA Plenum and the Steering Committee, aiming to enhance decision-making efficiency. Specifically, regarding control competencies, the adopted law stipulated (complementing Article 17 of the RCA Law) that these would also cover "the use of funds made available to Romania by the European Union (EU) through the SAPARD Program and related co-financing" as well as "the use of funds provided by financial assistance from the EU and other international financing sources" (RP, 2002a).

*Establishment of the AA as a entity without legal personality, operationally independent from the RCA*

In 2004, the EC recommended that Romania designate "an independent control body responsible for sample checks, system audits, and closure audits of ISPA measures." Consequently, it was decided to establish an independent body within the RCA framework (RG, 2005), a measure agreed upon by the EC. The newly created body also met "the requirements of the applicable regulations for the 2007-2013 programming period, which stipulated that each operational program must have a designated management authority, certification authority, and audit authority" (RG, 2005). The relevant legislative act, approved by Law No. 200/2005, stipulated that: "In order to fulfil certain obligations assumed by Romania in the European integration process, an associated body is established within the Romanian Court of Accounts, with responsibilities and procedures distinct from those provided by the current law. This body will ensure external verification and auditing of the funds related to ISPA and SAPARD programs, in accordance with the provisions of the memoranda and financing agreements, as well as structural funds" (RG, 2005). Upon the approval of Emergency Ordinance No. 22/2005, the Romanian Parliament expanded the initial text to specify more explicitly that: "In order to fulfil certain obligations assumed by Romania in the European integration process, an Audit Authority is established within the Romanian Court of Accounts for funds granted to Romania by the EU through ISPA and SAPARD programs and for post-accession funds. Referred to hereinafter as the Audit Authority, it shall have distinct responsibilities and working procedures" (RP, 2005). It was stipulated that the AA "is operationally independent from the RCA and headquartered in Bucharest". Its responsibilities included: "a) System audits, sample-based checks, and final audits; b) External verification and auditing of structural funds allocated to Romania starting in 2007; c) Annual verification of the functioning of the management and control systems established for ISPA and SAPARD programs; d) Verification of eligible expenses

declared, based on a representative sample; e) Appropriate verifications for issuing final declarations regarding measures and programs; f) Certification of SAPARD annual accounts in terms of completeness, accuracy, and reliability; g) Verification of the existence and accuracy of the national co-financing element" (RP, 2005). Additionally, the legislative act regulated the governance of the AA, which was to be led by a president and a vice-president appointed by the RCA Plenum from among the acting counsellors of accounts for a three-year term, renewable only once. The authority was required to present annual or ad hoc activity reports to the RCA Plenum. Funding for its activities was to be provided from the state budget and included in the RCA's expenditure budget. The maximum number of positions within the institution was set at 110 posts.

*Provisions regarding the AA in the current RCA Law*

Law No. 217/2008, which amends and supplements the RCA Law (Art. 16) (RP, 2008), introduced several additions concerning the organization and functioning of the AA. A review of the current RCA Law reveals, among other things, that: "For non-reimbursable EU funds intended to support agriculture and rural development, the AA fulfils the role of a certifying body." Additionally, following system and operational audits, the AA "reports to the European Commission on the use of non-reimbursable EU funds stipulated in Art. 12, while the main findings and recommendations resulting from the audits are included in the annual public report of the RCA" (RCA, 2022). Currently led by a president and two vice-presidents appointed by Parliament from among the counsellors of accounts, for the duration of their (non-renewable) term as counsellors of accounts, the AA receives the necessary funds for fulfilling its responsibilities from the state budget. These funds are distinctly reflected in the RCA's budget. The diagram below illustrates the revised responsibilities of the institution (Figure 1).

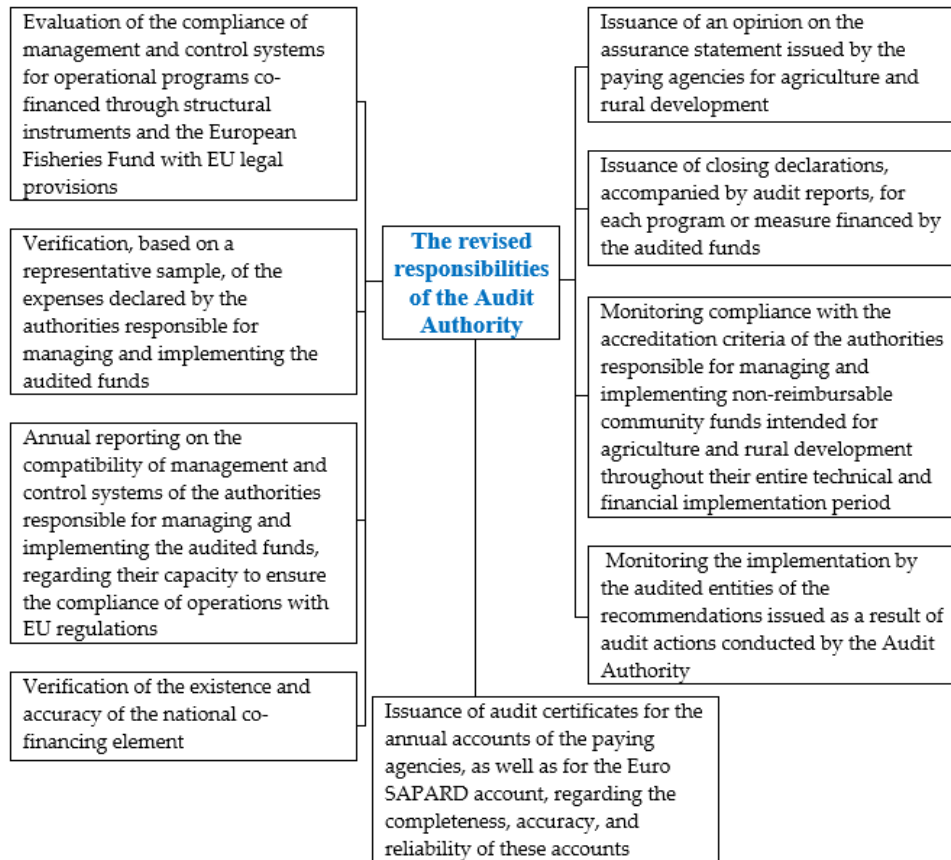


Figure 1. Revised responsibilities of the AA (Authors' elaboration based on RCA, 2022).

### Some organizational and functional aspects regarding the analyzed institution

As highlighted in our previous references, the AA is an operationally independent body, distinct from the RCA and from any other authorities responsible for managing and implementing non-reimbursable European funds. Its position within the RCA is illustrated in the organizational chart below (Figure 2).

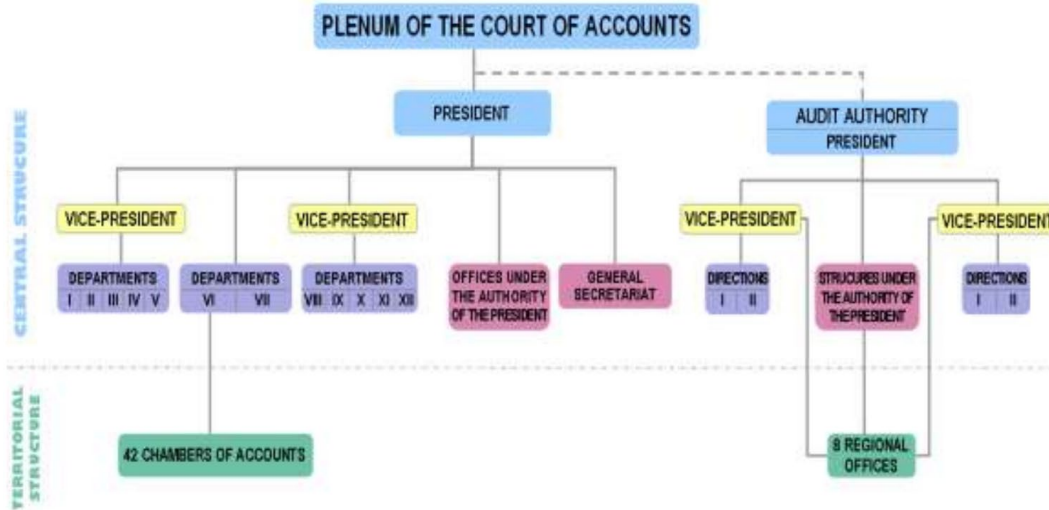


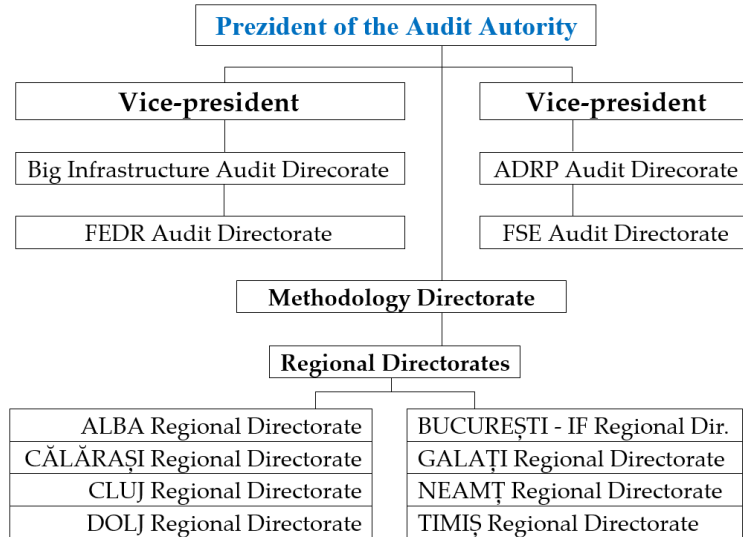
Figure 2. The Position of the AA within the RCA (RCA, 2020b).

This is the only national authority that can legally perform external public audit on the use of non-reimbursable European funds, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Funds subject to the activity of the AA (RCA, 2022).

<b>Funds subject to verification by the Audit Authority of Romania</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● European Regional Development Fund</li> <li>● European Social Fund</li> <li>● Cohesion Fund</li> <li>● European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument</li> <li>● Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance</li> <li>● European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development</li> <li>● European Agricultural Guarantee Fund</li> <li>● European Fisheries Fund</li> <li>● Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived</li> <li>● Internal Security Fund</li> <li>● Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● European Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Fund</li> <li>● European Neighbourhood Instrument</li> <li>● European Social Fund Plus</li> <li>● Just Transition Fund</li> <li>● European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund</li> <li>● Financial Support Instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy</li> <li>● Funds allocated to Romania through the Recovery and Resilience Facility</li> <li>● Other categories of funds (according to European/ national regulations)</li> </ul>

The institution can also perform external public audits on other European funds if specific regulations provide the necessary resources for covering such actions. The AA has its own structures at the central level, and in the territory, it has regional structures (Figure 3) organized in the counties where its agents, management authorities, and/or intermediary bodies managing European funds operate.



**Figure 3.** Organizational chart of the AA  
 Source: Adapted by the authors according to (RCA, 2021).

The organizational structure, staff number, and the list of positions of the AA are approved by the Plenary of RCA, upon the proposal of the President of AA. The available staff – working in the central structure, which includes five directorates, and in the regional directorates – generally has an economic background, but may also come from other fields of expertise. By the end of 2023, there were 273 positions funded for AA, out of a total of 1,966 approved positions at the RCA level (RCA, 2024).

### Recent results of the specific activity conducted by AA

#### *Audit missions carried out in 2023*

According to the RCA Activity Report for the year 2023 (Section 6: AA) (RCA, 2024), it is shown that 71 audit reports were prepared at the analyzed institution, along with 17 annual control reports (accompanied by the respective audit opinions), developed based on the provisions of Article 63, paragraph (7) of the EU Financial Regulation (EU, 2018), a summary of audits for payment request 3, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (EU, 2021), and five ex-ante evaluation reports of simplified cost options. Of these, one audit report concerned the 2007-2013 programming period, 70 audit reports and 17 annual control reports concerned the 2014-2020 programming period, and the five ex-ante evaluation reports of simplified cost options concerned the 2021-2027 programming period. During the reference period, AA audited a total of 50,261,677 thousand lei of the expenses declared to the EC, related to the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods. The total expenses audited amounted to 7,426,117 thousand lei, representing 15% of the total expenses declared to the EC. Irregularities were identified totaling 141,891 thousand lei, of which 73,319 thousand lei represented deviations from the eligibility criteria for expenditures, and 68,572 thousand lei represented financial corrections applied due to non-compliance with the Public Procurement Law.

*Specific audit activity conducted by AA in the 2021-2022 financial year*

According to the AA Activity Report for 2022 (RCA, 2023), in the 2021-2022 financial year, 60 audit reports were prepared for various types of missions, as well as 17 annual control reports, accompanied by audit opinions concerning declared expenses, primarily for the 2014-2020 programming period, but also for the 2007-2013 period. Analyzing the two periods separately, the situation regarding the number of reports is as follows: for the 2014-2020 programming period, 58 audit reports and 17 annual control reports, accompanied by audit opinions for the 2021-2022 financial year, were completed; regarding the 2007-2013 period, two audit reports were prepared concerning the closure of the Regional Operational Program. During the audit actions, 432 entities (public and private) were checked, and 697 reimbursement/payment requests from European funds submitted for settlement by their beneficiaries were audited. The total value of audited expenses amounted to 3,140,006 thousand lei, representing 8.24% of the total expenses declared to the EC for the 2021-2022 financial year, which totaled 38,097,964 thousand lei. Following the verification of reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year, financial irregularities were identified in the audited sample, totaling 61,409 thousand lei. Of these, financial corrections applied to contract values for deviations from procurement rules amounted to 33,330 thousand lei, while irregularities due to non-compliance with eligibility requirements totaled 28,079 thousand lei (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The situation of declared expenditures, audited expenditures, and the level of financial impact of identified irregularities (Thousands of Lei) (RCA, 2023)

Programming period	Certified and declared expenditures to the EC, from which the samples were extracted	Audited expenditures	Audited expenditures from declared expenditures	Errors detected with financial impact in audited expenditures	Out of which:	
					Financial corrections (illegal procurements)	Ineligible expenditures
2009-2013	112,167	112,167	100	50	43	8
2014-2020	37,985,797	3,027,839	7,97	61,358	33,287	28,071
Total	34,097,964	3,140,006	7,97	61,409	33,330	28,079

**Relevant deficiencies identified by AA, grouped by program**

The deficiencies identified by AA in the implementation of certain programs funded by the EU budget, as observed during the 2021-2022 financial year, were relatively numerous. Below is a brief summary of these findings - Selection/Synthesis based on (RCA, 2023):

*(i) Regional Operational Program*

In the course of the audit actions, reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year amounting to 6,729,434 thousand lei were examined. The sample analyzed included 35 reimbursement requests totaling 332,385 thousand lei, representing 4.94% of the total declared expenses. The audits revealed financial deficiencies amounting to 2,280 thousand lei, of which 1,806 thousand lei were financial corrections due to non-compliance with public procurement legislation, and 474 thousand lei represented expenses incurred without adhering to eligibility rules.

*(ii) Large Infrastructure Operational Program*

During the audit actions, reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year totaling 9,472,260 thousand lei were examined. The audited statistical sample included 35

reimbursement requests amounting to 1,743,381 thousand lei, representing 18.41% of the total declared expenses. The audits revealed financial deficiencies of 28,996 thousand lei, of which 28,664 thousand lei were financial corrections due to non-compliance with procurement regulations, and 332 thousand lei represented ineligible expenses.

*(iii) Competitiveness Operational Program*

In the audit missions, reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year totaling 2,078,422 thousand lei were examined based on a representative statistical sample. The audited sample included 30 reimbursement requests amounting to 337,485 thousand lei, representing 16.24% of the total reported expenses. The audits identified irregularities with a total financial impact of 1,040 thousand lei, corresponding to expenses incurred without adhering to eligibility rules.

*(iv) Human Capital Operational Program*

In the audit missions, reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year totaling 3,048,300 thousand lei were examined based on a representative statistical sample. The audited sample included 30 reimbursement requests totaling 31,501 thousand lei, representing 1.03% of the total reported expenses. Given the specific nature of this program and the significant number of transactions related to salary expenses, travel, and costs for the target group, the total audited expenses were determined using second-degree sampling. The audits identified irregularities with a total financial impact of 3,424 thousand lei, of which 240 thousand lei were financial corrections due to violations of procurement regulations, and 3,184 thousand lei represented ineligible expenses.

**Specific case:** *In the project - Equal opportunities in education for children from Dolj and Vâlcea counties with parents working abroad - implemented by a private beneficiary together with four partners, an erroneous reimbursement of ineligible expenditures amounting to 87 thousand RON was identified, representing salaries and related contributions. The identified deficiencies involved the following aspects: (i) Two project partners employed four experts under individual employment contracts on an hourly payment basis for positions within the organizational chart, in addition to their main 8-hour/day employment contracts within the same institution. This arrangement did not comply with the provisions of Article 1(b) of the Framework Regulation approved by Government Decision No. 325/2018. (ii) For one partner, two out of the three founding members of the Regional Consultancy Association Oltenia were employed within the project. These individuals were related by kinship or affinity up to the second degree, indicating a potential conflict of interest (RCA, 2023).*

*(v) Administrative Capacity Operational Program*

In the audit mission of operations, reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year totaling 493,688 thousand lei were examined. The audited sample included 30 reimbursement requests amounting to 84,061 thousand lei, representing 17.03% of the total reported expenses. The audits revealed deficiencies with a financial impact of 32 thousand lei, representing ineligible expenses due to non-compliance with eligibility rules. An additional objective was to identify aspects of the Management and Control System that might constitute redundant administrative tasks, lacking added value or efficiency, or that could generate excessive costs in relation to the benefits obtained.

*(vi) Technical Assistance Operational Program*

During the audit actions, reported expenses for the 2021-2022 financial year totaling 150,229 thousand lei were examined. The audited sample included 30 reimbursement requests totaling 9,646 thousand lei, representing 6.42% of the total reported expenses. The



audits revealed deficiencies with a financial impact of 7 thousand lei, of which 2 thousand lei were corrections applied due to irregularities found in public procurement, and 5 thousand lei were ineligible expenses due to non-compliance with eligibility rules.

### **Conclusions**

The AA has demonstrated a significant impact in monitoring the use of European funds in Romania, serving as a central pillar in ensuring transparency, compliance, and efficiency in the management of European resources. Through its activities, the AA contributes to identifying deficiencies, preventing fraud, and improving the use of funds, all critical aspects for Romania's efficient integration into the EU financial mechanisms. Its role is further strengthened by a well-defined legislative framework, which clearly sets out responsibilities and limits of competence, as well as adherence to international audit standards, ensuring the credibility and recognition of its results at the European level. However, the AA's activities do not have an immediate, massive impact on eliminating all identified deficiencies. These include significant delays in implementing projects financed with European funds, procedural irregularities that compromise the efficiency of administrative processes, and the lack of robust monitoring mechanisms that allow for early identification and correction of dysfunctions. Thus, there is a need to address these challenges through additional measures and specific reforms. In order for the AA to maximize its contribution to increasing the absorption rate of European funds and using them efficiently, several targeted initiatives are necessary. These include the continuous modernization of audit tools, the integration of advanced technologies into operational processes, and strengthening institutional capacity through the allocation of adequate human and financial resources. Additionally, increasing collaboration with other national and European institutions involved in managing funds is important to developing coordinated solutions to complex and recurring problems. In the long term, the efficiency and impact of the AA will depend on the implementation of proactive policies addressing the root causes of current deficiencies, as well as the creation of an integrated system for monitoring and evaluating the results of European funding.

### *Limitations of the Research*

This study has certain limitations due to the fact that our analysis was based on publicly available information, limiting access to more sensitive details regarding the specific nature of the identified deficiencies. Furthermore, the focus is clearly on Romania, and the study is exclusively concentrated on the activities of the AA in Romania. An extended comparison with other EU member states could have provided a more comprehensive perspective.

### *Future Research Directions*

To further deepen this subject, the authors understand the need to investigate how similar bodies operate in other EU member states to identify best practices that can be adapted to Romania. Additionally, there is a need to explore the extent to which AA's recommendations are implemented and influence the efficiency of European fund utilization, while exploring the use of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data, to optimize the audit process remains equally important.

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## THE SOUND OF PROGRESS: HOW DIGITALIZATION IS RESHAPING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

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*Abstract: In the 21st century, digitalization has revolutionized the music industry, reshaping every facet of how music is created, distributed, and consumed. "The Sound of Progress: How Digitalization is Reshaping the Music Industry" explores the impact that technological developments - such as streaming platforms, artificial intelligence, and digital production tools - are having on artists, producers, and audiences alike. Our work, created based on a comprehensive literature review method, synthesizes current research and case studies to analyse the shift from physical albums to digital streaming, the broadening access to music production technology through accessible software, and how Artificial Intelligence is transforming music composition and recommendation systems. The literature review highlights how digitalization is presenting both opportunities and challenges that are transforming the sound, reach, and economics of music. This article aims to provide an overview of these changes, offering insights into the future of the music industry in the digital age.*

*Keywords: Music digitalization; Artificial Intelligence in music; Technology impact.*

*JEL Classification: O14, O32, Z11*

### **Introduction**

Digitalization has revolutionized the cultural and artistic sectors, while the music industry is experiencing significant transformations. Existing studies explore how digital tools have reshaped the processes of music creation, circulation, and consumption, introducing both new opportunities and distinct challenges. This literature review aims to integrate key themes from academic and professional discussions, offering a holistic overview of current knowledge. It delves into historical advancements, obstacles in digital adoption, successful case studies as well as the role and impact of emerging technologies. By observing gaps and opportunities, this work emphasizes directions for future research and practical applications. This field presents numerous challenges for project management, including financial constraints, infrastructure-related obstacles, and planning difficulties. Efforts to manage the entire subset of industries collectively have consistently failed. It is essential to consequently identify the most effective segmented approach and develop a model that optimally balances centralization and decentralization (Walcott, 2004). Technological advancements have consistently influenced the evolution of the music industry, from the invention of the phonograph to the rise of digital streaming platforms that are well-known in our times. Each innovation has transformed the ways music is produced, distributed, and experienced, encouraging global connectivity and collaboration. In today's digital era, tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are not only elevating artistic expression but also revolutionizing project management within the industry. Since 2020, digital platforms have surged in popularity, with YouTube emerging as a dominant hub for streaming art-related content. Although debates persist over traditional versus digital methods of promoting and experiencing music, the online

environment has demonstrated its potential to transcend cultural boundaries. Numerous studies emphasize the often-overlooked role of algorithmic systems in classifying cultural goods (Arioldi, 2021). The integration of digital tools in music management encounters several notable challenges. Traditionalists express concerns that digitalization could compromise artistic authenticity, while infrastructural and economic inequalities limit the adoption of advanced technologies in developing regions. This study explores the transformative potential of digital tools in managing musical projects, emphasizing their ability to enhance management processes and providing practical solutions to bridge the gaps between the artistic and business aspects of the music industry.

### **Literature review**

The transition from analog to digital music represented a very important moment for the industry. Early innovations, such as compact discs and MP3 files, transformed music consumption, while streaming platforms like Napster and later Spotify democratized access to music. Early 2000s literature examines how these changes disrupted traditional business models, compelling artists and producers to adapt. Meanwhile, recent studies emphasize the dual impact of streaming services: empowering independent artists with global reach while introducing challenges such as algorithmic bias. This historical perspective lays the groundwork for understanding the current landscape of digital music. The cultural boundaries of art continue to face challenges related to legitimacy, copyright, and the actual issue of piracy, particularly within the audiovisual industry. In the realm of music, innovation is being explored through the application of digital tools on major live performance stages. Researchers are examining how live music venues of varying types and degrees of legitimacy align with or diverge from one another in their selection of choirs, orchestras, bands, and solo artists. This analysis deepens the understanding of this strong relationship between legitimacy and innovation in cultural production (Tai, 2023). Research also explores how Artificial Intelligence (AI) contributes to the music creation process through prototype applications that generate melodies by adjusting specific algorithmic parameters, such as Ant Colony Optimization (ACO), technique inspired by the natural behaviour of ant colonies, that was first introduced as an algorithm in 1991 by Marco Dorigo (Dorigo, et al., 1991). The principle behind ACO involves observing how ants navigate from their nests to locate food, optimizing for the shortest and quickest paths. The studies considered for this literature review experiment with various composition methods, incorporating the ACO algorithm. These studies detail the entire process, from theoretical analysis and system design to implementation, experimentation, and conclusion-drawing (Boryczka, et al., 2023). Several of the reviewed works examine different facets of musical performance and audience preferences, providing valuable insights into how music interplays with technology and its influence on consumption patterns. The technical and creative challenges of performing music online are discussed in detail, highlighting the effects of third-party digital mediation on synchronization and the aesthetics through which music is experienced (Wilson, 2020). Additionally, studies analyse how social and demographic factors shape listeners' musical preferences, with the help of advanced data analysis techniques to uncover recurring trends among online users (Shakhovska & Fedushko, 2021). Economic aspects of music streaming are also explored, focusing on how platforms encourage artists to share their work with audiences and examining the effects of "multi-homing" strategies on artists' income (Bender, et al., 2021).

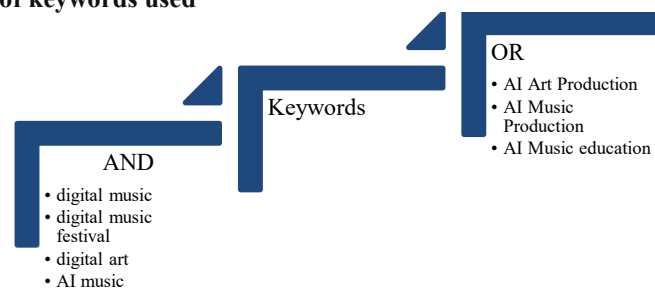
The economic and cultural influence of on-demand streaming services is profound. Wlömert and Papies' study investigates platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music, analysing how they have transformed revenue streams and distribution channels within the music industry. Their findings reveal that digital music is favoured by listeners over traditional formats (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). The research of Sinclair and Tinson explores the concept of psychological ownership within the context of music streaming. Their study examines how streaming services impact users' perceptions of ownership, loyalty, and emotional connection to music, offering a compelling comparison with traditional music formats in terms of ownership rights and consumption as it was in 2017 (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017). Another article introduces a method for identifying instrumental activity in orchestral music through hierarchical classification. This study showcases advancements in music analysis technology and its potential applications across various fields (Krause & Müller, 2023). The influence of technology in music extends to education, as evidenced by a study on integrating creativity, music, and digital skills into teaching practices. This research examines how technology enrich music educators' competencies and transforms their teaching methods (Tejada, et al., 2023). Music also acts as a bridge across various domains. For instance, Born and Devine's 2015 study explored the intersection of technology in music with gender and social class among music enthusiasts, as well as the broader effects of digitalization on educational and social shifts in the United Kingdom (Born & Devine, 2015). Nicholas Rougeux's work demonstrates a practical application of digitalization in music by reimagining musical scores through innovative visualizations. By converting complex musical data into simplified and visually engaging formats, his approach enhances the comprehension of music and provides enthusiasts with a fresh and interactive way to experience various compositions (Rougeux, 2020). The integration of advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), and Virtual Reality (VR) into the music domain has become a prominent topic of interest. In recent years, these advanced technologies have transformed traditional approaches to music education. Han's study explores the development of a VR-based music education system for vocal arts, demonstrating how VR is able to bring interactivity, boosting student engagement and learning outcomes (Han, 2022). Similarly, Yu and colleagues examine the applications of AI in music education, focusing on personalized learning experiences, intelligent music software and improved methods for assessing teaching effectiveness. These innovations facilitate tailored teaching for individual students and provide real-time feedback, effectively addressing the limitations of traditional teaching methods (Yu, et al., 2023). Another interesting study on intelligent music applications highlights innovative solutions for both musicians and listeners, illustrating how AI can be used for music composition and performance. These advancements broaden creative opportunities in music education. Together, these studies underscore the transformative role of VR and AI technologies in enhancing the efficiency, engagement, and accessibility of music education (Tabak, 2023). An intriguing perspective on digital music is shown by the exploration of the Internet of Musical Things (IoMusT) in two key studies. Luca Turchet et al. define IoMusT as networks of connected musical devices that enable multidirectional communication, with the potential to revolutionize areas such as concert experiences, public participation, remote rehearsals, music education, and production. However, challenges include ensuring network security, achieving real-time audio processing, and maintaining public engagement with music (Turchet, et al., 2018). Another study examines

how blockchain technology can enhance IoMusT by securely decentralizing music distribution and safeguarding copyrights. Potential applications include secure data exchange and smart contracts for copyright management, though challenges such as scalability, integration with IoMusT systems, and the demand for interdisciplinary collaboration remain significant (Turchet & Nam Ngo, 2022).

### Methodology

During the research for this article, the team accessed and analyzed an extensive collection of scholarly articles from reputable databases, including CABI Digital Library, IEEE Xplore, Sage, Science Direct, Scopus, Springer and Web of Science. Recognized for their comprehensive collections of peer-reviewed publications, Web of Science, Scopus, and Science Direct served as primary sources for gathering relevant data. To thoroughly address the study's objectives, both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods were employed, including bibliometric analysis. These approaches provided deeper insights and highlighted practical, effective strategies across various fields such as education, economics, and art. By analyzing keyword co-occurrence, researchers can uncover correlations that simplify hypothesis formulation and provide a deeper understanding of research themes. The use of keyword co-occurrence is crucial for advancing interdisciplinary studies and expanding intellectual boundaries in still-developing or underexplored fields. Following a carefully designed search strategy, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Fig. 1), the initial exploration identified a collection of 22,278 articles. Using the NVivo14 program, a keyword filtering method was applied. Upon discovering that many of these articles included professionals from the artistic field as co-authors, VOSviewer was employed with the co-authorship filtering method. The "Full Counting" approach was selected to ensure equal importance was given to all collaborations between authors. To maintain relevant connections between authors and their institutions, a maximum of six authors per article was set, along with a limit of three publications per author, aligning with the objective of focusing on the niche area of digital music.

Figure 1. The string of keywords used

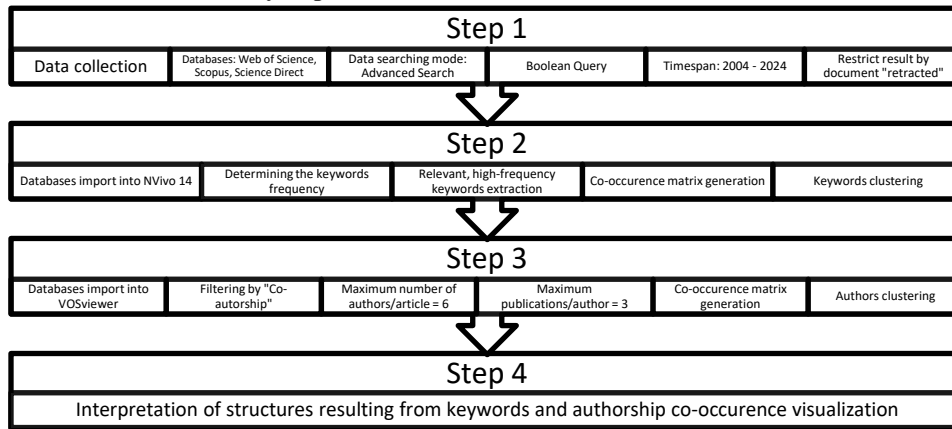


Source: Author's processing

The large number of generated papers highlights a significant interest in this field, particularly within the research community. Network graphs were created to visualize and reveal the complex relationships between keywords, authors, and institutions. In a total of 7426 authors, 400 met the specified criteria, although not all were directly connected (i.e., they had not work on the same articles). Out of these 400 authors, 168 were identified as having co-authored articles. In the final stage, following a thorough review of the articles

and analysis of the information to ensure alignment with the research topic, a total of 90 articles were selected for content analysis. Figure 2 (Fig. 2) provides a visual representation of the stages involved in the bibliometric analysis, outlining the methodology from data selection and filtering to the exclusion of open-access items and final dataset refinement. The diagram highlights the systematic approach taken to ensure accurate and reliable research results.

**Figure 2. The bibliometric analysis process**



Source: Author's processing

The selection of these keywords and authorship links was of high importance as they effectively represent the research domains, bringing together not only economic and technical aspects but also artistic ones. Basing the data analysis and insights on these keywords and co-authorship connections enables a thorough and comprehensive exploration of the subject.

### Results and discussions based on the bibliometric analysis

Bibliometric research is a systematic and quantitative approach to analyzing academic literature by examining networks of bibliographic references. Metrics such as citation frequency and volume are used as empirical indicators of a work's influence. This method is widely applied across disciplines to evaluate the scholarly impact of authors, publications and institutions, providing valuable insights into the evolving landscape of knowledge dissemination. Cluster analysis comes to complete the bibliometric research by identifying hidden patterns and thematic groupings within academic networks. These clusters reveal connections between researchers, institutions, and their contributions to scholarly discourse. Combining bibliometric and cluster analyses provides a deeper understanding of research impact, uncovering emerging trends, interdisciplinary connections and evolving paradigms. Figure 3 (Fig. 3) illustrates the codes and their associated sub-codes, providing clarity on the content analysis process conducted using the NVivo14 program.

**Figure 3. The hierarchical matrix of codes used for content analysis**





The majority of studies were conducted in countries such as the United States, Korea, China and India. Closer to Romania, research originates from France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Some of the analyzed works examine various aspects of musical performance and preferences, each one of them offering valuable insights into the interaction between music and technology and its impact on consumption. One study, conducted by a group of three researchers, applied the "text mining" method to analyze consumer reviews and online discussions about music streaming services. This technical paper identifies key factors driving consumer satisfaction and the popularity of these services, shedding light on common complaints and desired features for a better user experience (Chung, et al., 2022). To explore how listeners perceive the use of AI in music, Latikka et al. conducted a survey examining public attitudes toward AI integration in art. The results reveal mixed opinions on AI-generated art, though positive attitudes were noted regarding aspects such as perceived connection, autonomy, and technological competence. The study also offers valuable insights into the psychological factors that influence the acceptance of AI in creative industries (Latikka, et al., 2023).

**Table 1. Top 5 terms used to describe the theme**

No.	Term	Number of occurrences	Total link strength
1	Digitalizing music	18	134
2	Music industry	17	107
3	Innovation	14	84
4	Research	11	77
5	Culture	11	71

Source: Author's processing

The exploration of the Internet of Musical Things (IoMusT) provides intriguing insights, as highlighted in two significant studies. The first, led by Luca Turchet and collaborators, defines IoMusT as networks of computing devices embedded in musical objects, making possible the multidirectional communication. The study suggests that IoMusT has the potential to revolutionize various musical applications and services, such as enhancing concert experiences, promoting public participation, enabling remote rehearsals, advancing electronic music education, and optimizing studio production. However, it also identifies interdisciplinary challenges, including network security vulnerabilities, real-time audio processing, and the need for innovative strategies to sustain public engagement with music (Turchet, et al., 2018). The second study explores the integration of blockchain technology with IoMusT, highlighting its potential to transform the field by providing secure, decentralized music distribution and reliable copyright protection. The authors propose scenarios where blockchain-IoMusT applications can enable secure data exchange and implement smart contracts for managing copyrights. They also address challenges such as scalability, the technical integration of blockchain with IoMusT systems, and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to overcome these barriers (Turchet & Nam Ngo, 2022).

## **Conclusions**

Knowing that the arts benefit from collaboration with other sectors, there is a pressing need to explore, analyze, and organize the factors that enable effective partnerships between representatives of the economic sector and the cultural-artistic domain. The expected

impact is bidirectional: internally, it seeks to strengthen collaboration between these groups and externally, it aims to enhance the success of joint projects. Digitalization is known to streamline the organizational and managerial processes of cultural-artistic projects, making them more efficient, less burdensome, and more engaging. This transformation will provide creativity, quality that is essential to both the Fine Arts and business sectors. This literature review affirms the importance of this topic, as similar themes have been investigated by other researchers addressing related challenges. A transformative journey driven by innovation, collaboration, and challenges is marked by the digitalization of cultural and artistic sectors, particularly in the music industry. This literature review brings together diverse research to illustrate how digital tools have revolutionized music creation, distribution, and consumption. Starting with the shift from physical albums to digital platforms, going to the incorporation of technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR) and blockchain, the study highlights the music industry's evolution in the digital era. Digitalization has evened up the access to music and expanded creative opportunities, but it also continuously brings challenges, including preserving artistic authenticity, overcoming infrastructural disparities, and addressing algorithmic biases. Emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Musical Things (IoMusT) present transformative possibilities for education, production, and performance, establishing a new paradigm of interaction between technology and art. The findings highlight the critical need for interdisciplinary collaboration to bridge gaps and maximize the effective use of these technologies. By integrating creativity with technological advancements, the music industry can adopt more innovative practices, ensuring its ongoing relevance and influence in a digital-driven world. Rather than posing a threat to artistic integrity, the evolution of digital tools offers ways to redefine the boundaries of creativity. As this digital transformation stays in progress, it tells an inspiring story of adaptability, resilience, and the timeless ability of music to connect and transform lives worldwide. The story of digitalization in music is an ongoing journey of innovation, adaptation, and resilience. As digital tools evolve, they present a valuable opportunity to blend creativity with technology. By confronting challenges directly and working for an enduring interdisciplinary collaboration, the music industry can shape a harmonious, dynamic future. In this ever-changing landscape, something stays the same: music will continue to connect, inspire, and transform lives, regardless of the environment. The digital age does not mark the end of authenticity but instead, signals a new beginning.

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## **TESTING THE UNEMPLOYMENT HYSTERESIS HYPOTHESIS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A LINEAR AND NON-LINEAR APPROACH**

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*Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to analyze the unemployment hysteresis hypothesis in South Africa over the period 2000 to 2023. The study employed the wavelet unit root process, namely the Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) and the Maximum Overlap Wavelet Transform (MODWT) unit root processes. Furthermore, the linear tests comprised of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF), the Phillips-Perron (PP), and Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin (KPSS) tests were used, while the Fourier ADF tests were used as the non-linear end. Consequently, all the linear tests reveal some mean reversion while the Fourier ADF test confirms partial hysteresis: shocks to unemployment are indeed not permanent, but their effects do last over time.*

*Keywords: Unemployment, Hysteresis, Hypothesis, South Africa, Labor market*

### **Introduction**

The problem of unemployment has been central to the South African economy, compounded by structural shifts in the economy after the political liberalization of 1994. South Africa has recorded subpar growth performance since the political liberalization in 1994, averaging around 2.4% from the year 2000 to the year 2019, slightly above the population growth rate (Dadam & Viegi, 2024). Unemployment is expected to be high due to social exclusion and apartheid legacy effects. One of the theoretical perspectives that have been conceptualized to explain such dynamics is the unemployment hysteresis hypothesis (UHH) pioneered by Blanchard and Summers (1986). It implies that real economic disturbances may cause permanent changes in unemployment levels and cease to allow for a return to the natural rate as postulated by Friedman (1968). This is especially relevant given that unemployment in South Africa began rising sharply after the 2008-2009 international economic crisis and soared during the COVID-19 outbreak reaching 32.9% in the first quarter of 2024 (Stats SA, 2024). Researchers on UHH in South Africa provide evidence to support this theory. Elike, Anoruo, and Nwala (2018) stated that unemployment in South Africa fits neatly with the UHH.

In the same way, Raifu and Abodune (2020) conducted a statistical exercise and established that unemployment is a non-stationary process in Nigeria, thus the UHH was supported. Similarly, Nsenga et al. (2019) also found hysteresis in Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs) comprising South Africa, among others. In light of the above, this study investigates the UHH in South Africa. Specifically, this study seeks to empirically test the persistence of unemployment in the South African labour market during 2000-2023. This is to

determine if unemployment reverts to its average in the long run or if it has hysteresis where the shocks persist.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides the literature review. The methodology is presented in Section 3. The findings are discussed in Section 4, while the conclusion is presented in Section 5.

### **Literature review**

This literature review aims to assess the empirical literature on unemployment hysteresis in terms of methodologies employed, data, and results obtained from the analysis. It will also state the areas of literature which are lacking particularly in South Africa; it will also state the course this study is going to undertake. Section 2.1 of the literature reviews different theories that underpin the topic. Section 2.2 review empirical studies focusing on unemployment hysteresis in South Africa. Section 2.3 presents the gaps in the literature that the study intends to fill.

#### *Theoretical literature*

The analysis of unemployment hysteresis in South Africa can be viewed through key principles of concepts that are used to describe unemployment and its dynamics. Two dominant theories underpin this topic: The first explanation is the Hysteresis Hypothesis, and the subsequent one is the long-run Natural unemployment hypothesis. The Persistent Unemployment Theory/Hysteresis Hypothesis introduced by Blanchard and Summers (1986) postulates that non-employment is not only a cyclical phenomenon but can cause permanent changes to occur in unemployment, thus preventing the rate from returning to a natural long-run level. This theory is especially applicable to South Africa since the country has periodically failed to recover from such economic slump resulting in persistent high unemployment rates (Pikoko & Phiri, 2018). The hysteresis effect arises from rigidities in the market structure facilitated by features such as the dominance of labor unions and bargaining over wages that ensure that unemployment cannot decline even during recovery (Lindbeck & Snower, 1988). Also, structural factors such as human capital depletion during unemployment periods help explain this persistence (Guris et al., 2017). Consequently, cyclical variability may cause a transformational shift in the unemployment rate, including in post-recessionary contexts, such as in South Africa (Blanchard & Summers, 1987; Nsenga et al., 2019). The hypothesis regarding the natural rate of unemployment, advanced by Phelps in 1967 and Friedman in 1968 asserts that there is a fundamental rate of unemployment beyond which changes cannot occur due to structural factors. The main idea of this theory is that fluctuations from the NRU are only in the short run and unemployment will reach its Natural rate over time. Yet, the NRU can be altered by a shift in the labor market, for instance through technology or demography (Pikoko & Phiri, 2018). Consequently, structural factors such as industrial technology and the demographic structure of the labour market in South Africa are germane to unemployment. Altogether, these theories offer a framework for understanding the sustained presence of unemployment in South Africa that results from both cyclical factors and structural factors.

#### *Empirical literature*

Unemployment hysteresis has been investigated in several empirical works, which have produced quite diverse findings depending on the countries under consideration and the

approach used. This section critically discusses empirical studies according to the methods used, data availability and analysis, and findings. Blanchard and Summers (1987) believe that the evidence of the persistent shocks in the unemployment trend is consistent with the hysteresis hypothesis. Initial research on hysteresis mainly relied on simple and traditional stationary tests, such as the ADF test by David Dickey and Wayne Fuller (1979) and the PP test by Peter Phillips and Pierre Perron (1988). These tests confirm or reject whether unemployment rates have returned to the natural rate after a shock or remained higher in a way consistent with hysteresis. For example, Chang et al. (2007) used ADF, DF-GLS, and PP stationary tests to analyze the regional unemployment rate in Taiwan and found that the results were not favorable for most regions of the hysteresis hypothesis. Similarly, Dritsaki and Dritsaki (2013) used both of these methods to test for the persistence of the rate of unemployment in Greece Ireland, and Portugal and concluded that hysteresis existed notably during recessions.

However, these methods based on linear tests are used in many different disciplines, and, in many cases, they work with their power limitations when applied to small samples or short time series. This was pointed out by Mednik et al. (2012) who utilized linear unit root tests for Latin American countries and observed inconclusive effects. They argued that rigidities in the labor market and the autonomy in fiscal policies caused the persistence of unemployment with inconclusive evidence of hysteresis in all countries. As linear unit root tests like the Augmented Dickey-Fuller may not appropriately describe the unemployment movement due to cyclicalities, other forms of nonlinear unit root tests have gained popularity, due to their incorporation of features such as asymmetry and structural breaks. Peel and Speight (1998) pointed out that unemployment data are nonlinear and that a lack of recognition of this fact can lead to misidentification of hysteresis. Chang and Tsangyao (2011) examine hysteresis via both linear and nonlinear unit root techniques. They discovered that although linear tests provided evidence consistent with the hysteresis hypothesis, nonlinear approaches did not yield a satisfactory outcome. This implies that there was some degree of mean reversion in unemployment in the case of Taiwan, thus presenting a more complex picture than simple hysteresis. However, Munir & Ching (2015) used nonlinear techniques to identify hysteresis in 11 Asian countries. They found out that high unemployment rates in these countries mean reverting, a finding that opposes the hysteresis hypothesis. Based on these results, it can be inferred that while changes in unemployment due to short-term shocks can be identified, the longstanding trends were representative of the natural rate hypothesis.

Other more sophisticated econometric methods have also been used to control for structural breaks such as the Fourier ADF test. Marjanovic et al. (2014) used these techniques for the OECD and Central and Eastern European countries revealing that taking into account structural breaks might alter the understanding of the employment dynamics. In OECD countries, hysteresis was negated and in the CEE countries, hysteresis could not be ruled out, particularly in the centrally planned economies.

Recent developments in time series analysis have seen wavelet-based techniques as a useful tool in measuring unemployment persistence. Elike, Anoruo, and Nwala (2018) used Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) and Maximum Overlap DWT to examine hysteresis in 28 African countries including South Africa. Their evidence of the performance of wavelet-based methods was important as it compared with the unit root test methods most of which produced mixed results. In their study, unemployment hysteresis was not

supported in most countries, but it was supported only in the Rwandan case. Similarly, Yilanci et al (2024) examined unemployment hysteresis in Nordic countries by employing the Wavelet analysis. The results reveal evidence of unemployment hysteresis in the six unemployment rates in the short run. In addition, they also found the results for hysteresis in the three unemployment rates in the long run.

Investigations into hysteresis have also used panel data techniques, which amalgamate data from different countries or regions. Chang et al (2007) performed panel-based stationary tests on regional data of Taiwan and rejected the hysteresis hypothesis. Although using panel data methods enhances the statistical power of the analysis by considering cross-sectional variation, it might obscure regional heterogeneity in unemployment persistence. Similarly, Munir and Ching (2015) also used panel data to estimate the unemployment hysteresis in Asia. They discovered that though some countries featured hysteresis, it was evident that most countries did not thereby support the natural-rate hypothesis. This stems from the nature of the panel data methods in that although they offer a more general picture, they might not be as attuned to regional features or shifts in structure. In a different region, Furuoka (2017) applied the ADF, Fourier ADF, ADF with a structural break (ADFSB) and Fourier ADF with a structural break (SBFADF) unit root tests to data for Nordic countries. The findings for the ADF showed that unemployment is hysteresis was valid for all countries in the analysis period while the ADFSB test reveals the validity in only Finland and Sweden. However, the results of SBFADF unit root test indicate the unemployment hysteresis hypothesis is invalid for all countries.

Finally, in Asia Li et al (2021) applied the sequential panel selection method and the Kapetanios–Snell–Shin (KSS) panel unit root test with Fourier functions. The results were invalid for men and women in most Asian regions. But, valid for adult females in Pakistan and Nepal.

### *Gap in the literature*

Unemployment hysteresis has been defined as a factor that is evident in the developed world, but sadly, it has less existence in developing nations, not excluding the African region. Even though research such as Elike et al. (2018) has examined hysteresis in African countries, these works are limitedly concerned with a few nations and timelines. Some controversy exists regarding econometric approaches applied; early works employed “unit root tests” which are linear and thus less efficient for non-linear series or those with structural shifts. Some of the recent sources, including Raifu and Abodunde (2020), have used non-linear techniques although this approach has not had much backing. Moreover, institutions and policies connected to hysteresis like the rigidity of labor market structure and fiscal policies as highlighted by Mednik et al., (2012) are relatively ignored in the context of developing countries. This study aims to fill this gap in a South African context.

## **Research methodology**

### *Econometric framework and model specification*

The first part of the analysis follows Elike et al (2018). In this regard, the study employs the wavelet unit root process, namely the Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) as well as the Maximum Overlap DWT (MODWT) with Haar and Daubechies wavelet filters as suggested by Fan and Gencay (2010). To complement the results from the DWT, the study



implements discrete wavelet transforms partition the frequency range into finer and finer blocks. At the first scale, the frequency range is split into two equal parts. The first, lower frequency part, is captured by the scaling coefficients, while the second higher frequency part, is captured by the wavelet coefficients. In addition, this decomposition affords the ability to identify which features of the original time series data are dominant at which scale. In particular, if the spectra (read wavelet/scaling coefficient magnitudes) at a given scale are high, this would indicate that those coefficients are registering behaviours in the underlying data which dominate at said scale and frequency region.

The second part follows Raifu and Abodunde (2020), by incorporating linear together with nonlinear econometric tests to investigate the Persistent Unemployment Theory/unemployment hysteresis hypothesis in South Africa from the year 2000 to 2023. The analysis employs linear breaks stationary tests such as the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test by Dickey & Fuller (1979), the Phillips-Perron (PP) test by Phillips & Perron (1988), and Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin (KPSS) by Kwiatkowski, Phillips, Schmidt, and Shin (1992). These tests will form the first step in assessing whether the unemployment rate adheres to a stationary process or undergo hysteresis analysis. However, there is a likelihood of the presence of structural breaks in the series due to shocks from technical recession, international economic crisis and the COVID-19 outbreak amongst others. Therefore, the study also adopted the Fourier Augmented Dickey-Fuller (FADF) by Enders & Lee (2004, 2012). This test is especially helpful in detecting smooth structural breaks and non-linearities in the unemployment data and it is more effective when it comes to the hysteresis effect (Elike et al., 2018).

Based on the unit root tests (ADF, PP, KPSS), the models can be represented as follows:

*ADF and PP model:*

For levels:

$$\Delta UNEMPL_t = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 UNEMPL_{t-1} + \sum_{i=1}^p a_i \Delta UNEMPL_{t-1} + \epsilon_t \quad (1)$$

Where:  $\Delta UNEMPL_t$  is the first difference of the unemployment rate,  $\alpha_0$  is the intercept,  $\beta_1$  tests for the presence of a unit root,  $a_i$  represents lagged changes in unemployment,  $p$  is the number of lags, and  $\epsilon_t$  is the error term.

For the first difference, the model for ADF becomes:

$$\Delta^2 UNEMPL_t = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p a_i \Delta^2 UNEMPL_{t-1} + \epsilon_t \quad (2)$$

KPSS model:

$$UNEMPL_t = \alpha_0 + \epsilon_t \quad (3)$$

*FADF model:*

$$\Delta UNEMPL_t = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 UNEMPL_{t-1} + \gamma \cos\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + \delta \sin\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right) + \sum_{i=1}^p a_i \Delta UNEMPL_{t-1} + \epsilon_t \quad (4)$$

Where:  $k$  is the frequency of the Fourier component,  $T$  is the Sample size, and  $\cos\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right)$  and  $\sin\left(\frac{2\pi kt}{T}\right)$  represents the Fourier terms to capture smooth breaks.

The results obtained from the linear and non-linear tests will decide whether the unemployment rate in South Africa follows a mean reversion or process in other words, whether it supports the natural rate hypothesis or shows hysteresis (Raifu & Abodune, 2020). If the nonlinear tests fail to support the unit root hypothesis, it implies mean

reversion and failure of shocks to have a permanent impact. On the other hand, if the null hypothesis of the unit root could not be rejected, the evidence is in support of hysteresis, meaning that economic shocks like the global financial crises will have lasting impacts on unemployment.

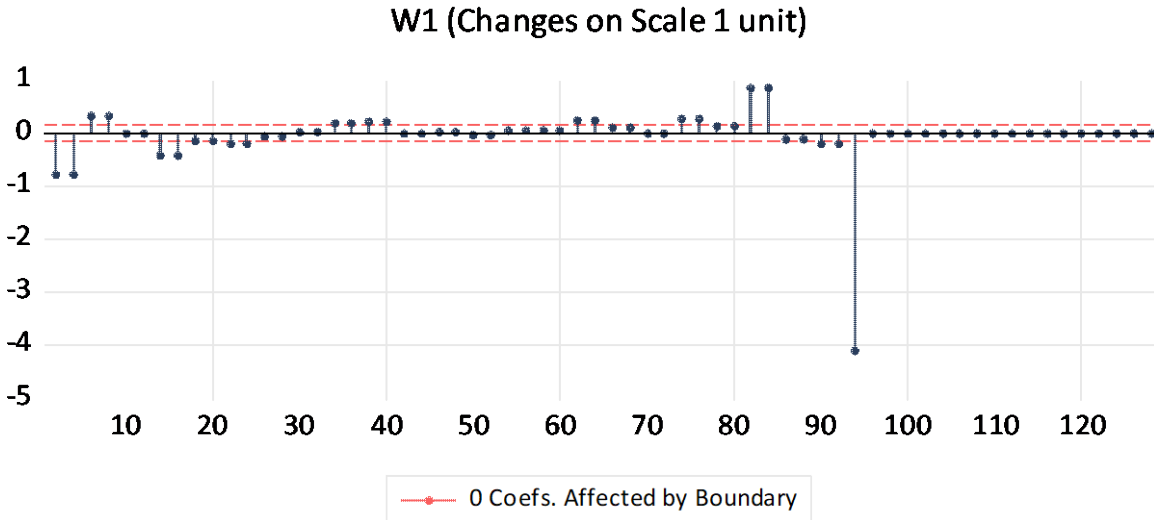
*Data*

The data used in the study are quarterly secondary time-series data for the period 2000 – 2023. Data for the variable unemployment rate was collected from the World Bank.

**Empirical analysis and findings**

*Results from the Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) and the Maximum Overlap DWT (MODWT) Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) - Haar wavelet filter*

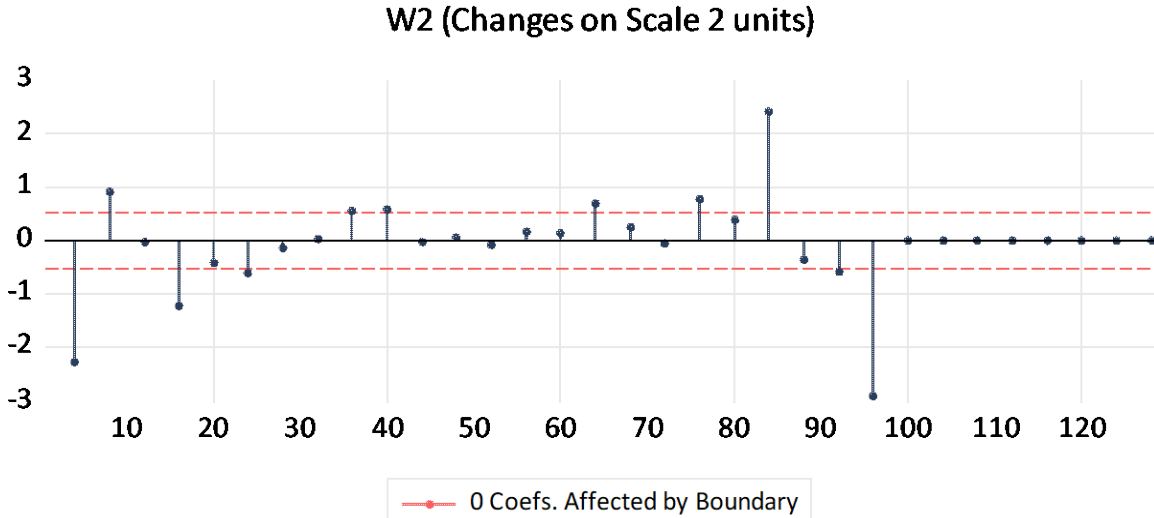
**Figure 1. Discrete Wavelet Transform**



Source: Author’s compilation

From figure 1 above and figure 2 below. The spectra characterizing the wavelet coefficients are significantly less pronounced. This suggest that the unemployment series is possibly non-stationary. Furthermore, the wavelet plot with two dashed red lines shows that the majority of wavelet coefficients at scale 1 and 2 can be discarded. This is further evidence that high frequency forces in the unemployment series are not very pronounced.

**Figure 2.**

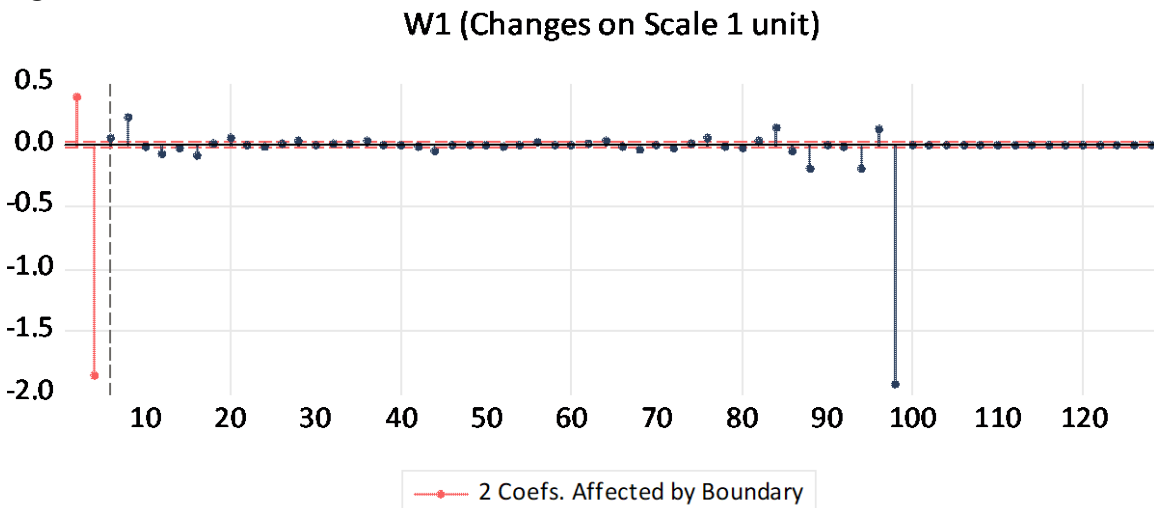


Source: Author's compilation

#### Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT) – Daubechies wavelet filter

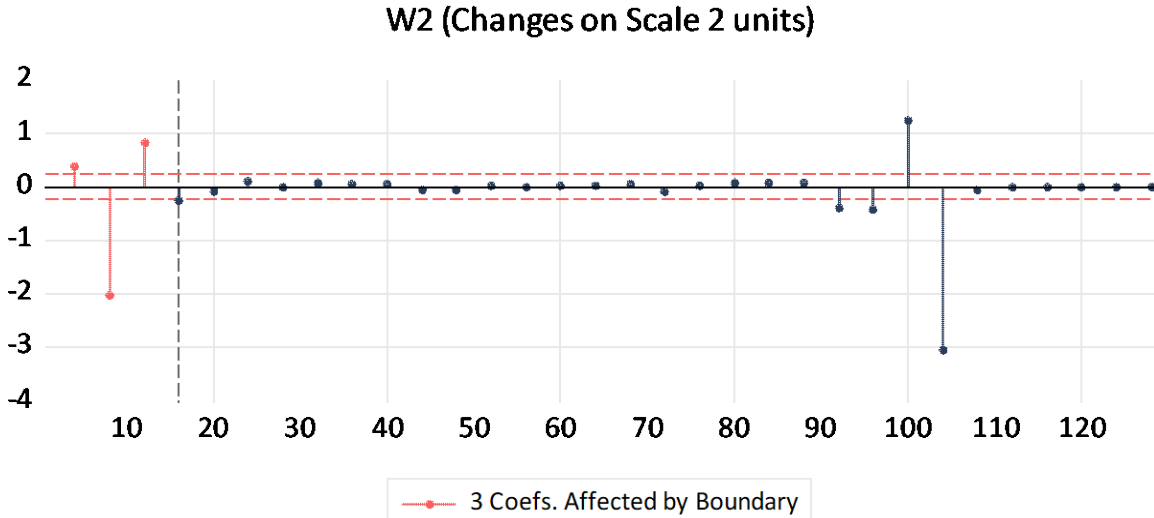
Like figures 1 and 2 above. The results from figures 3 and 4 confirms that the wavelet coefficients are significantly less pronounced. This suggest that the Daubechies wavelet filter suggest that unemployment series is possibly non-stationary as most wavelet coefficients at scale 1 and 2 can be discarded.

Figure 3.



Source: Author's compilation

Figure 4.

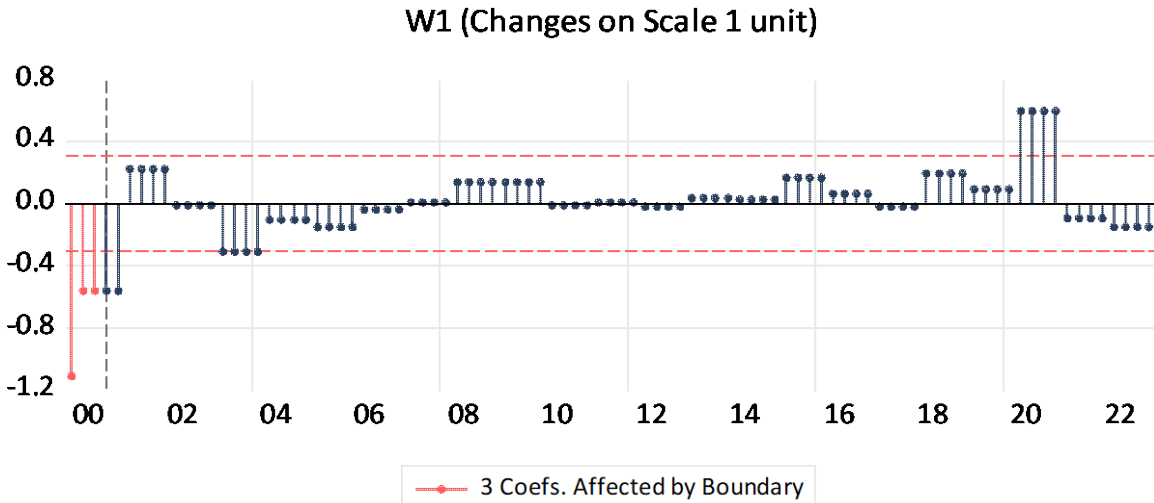


Source: Author's compilation

*Maximum Overlap DWT (MODWT) with Haar wavelet filter*

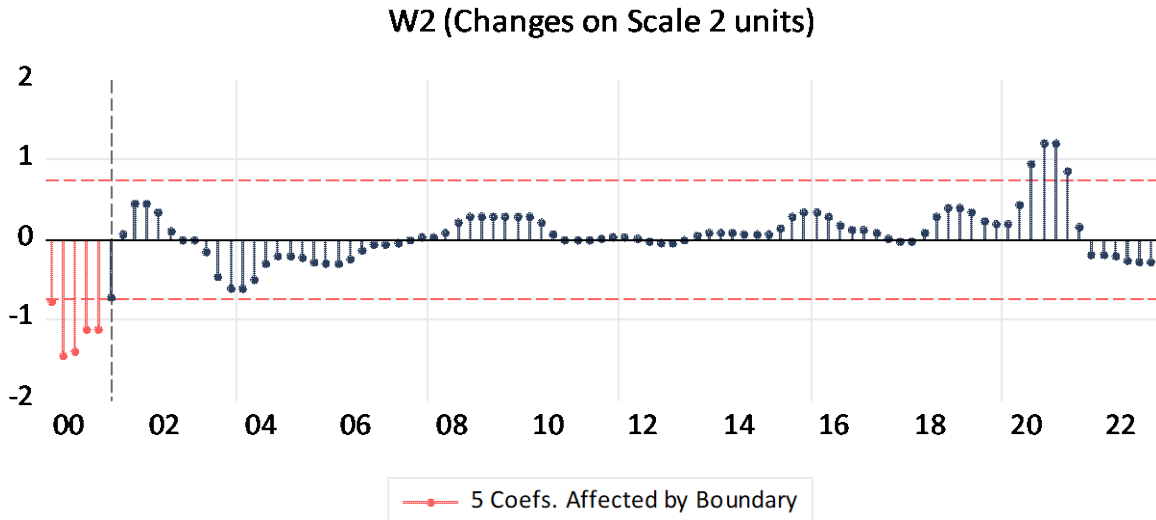
In this case, the results for the two plots were considered for comparison. These are the wavelet coefficients as shown by figures 5 and 6, while the scaling coefficients are presented in figure 7. The findings showed that the high frequency portion which is associated with the wavelet coefficients (figure 5 and 6) are significantly less pronounced. Meaning that the unemployment series is non-stationary, suggesting hysteresis.

Figure 5. Maximum Overlap DWT



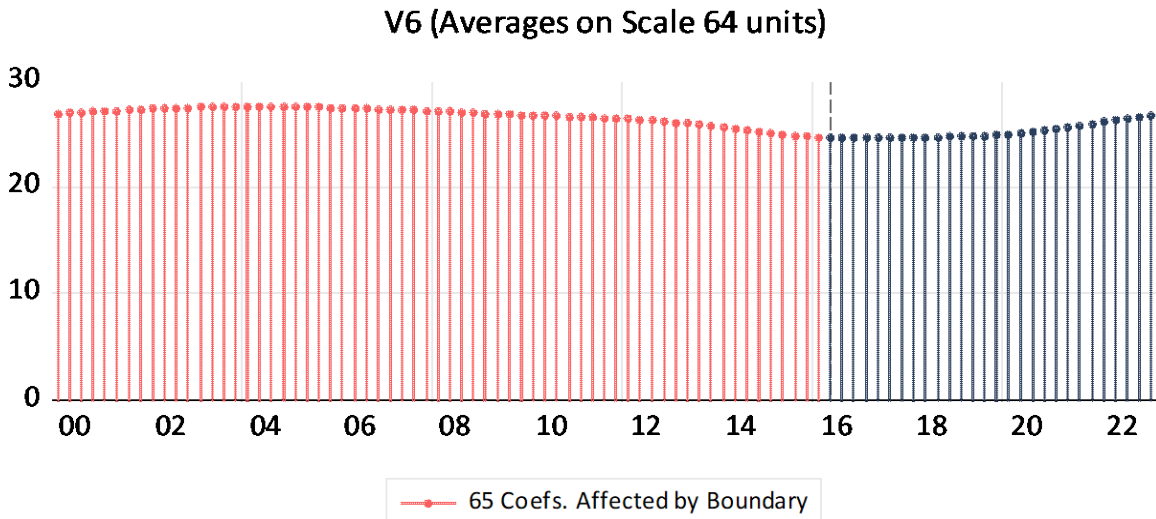
Source: Author's compilation

Figure 6.



Source: Author's compilation

Figure 7.

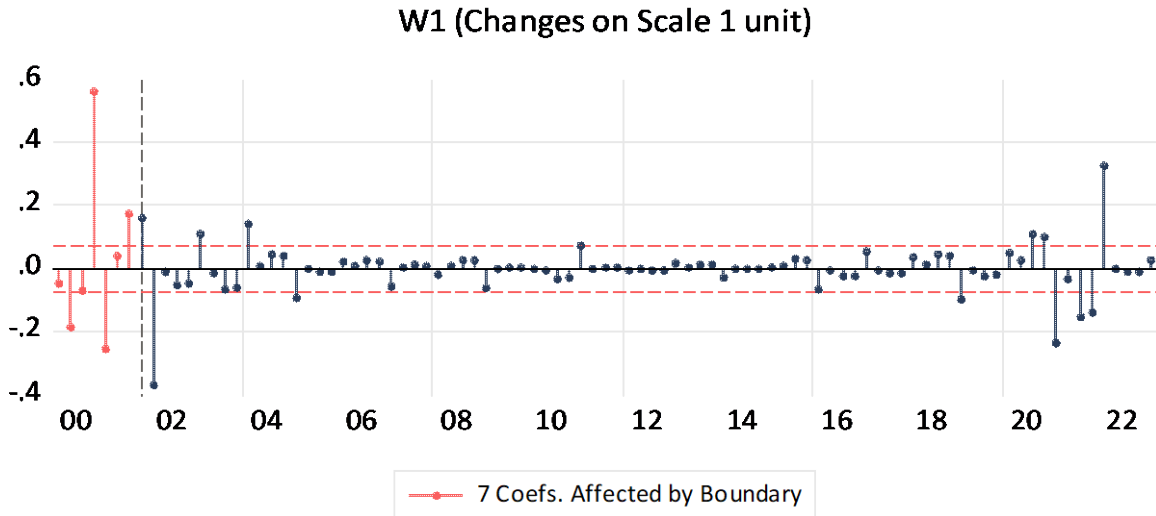


Source: Author's compilation

*Maximum Overlap DWT (MODWT) with Daubechies wavelet filter*

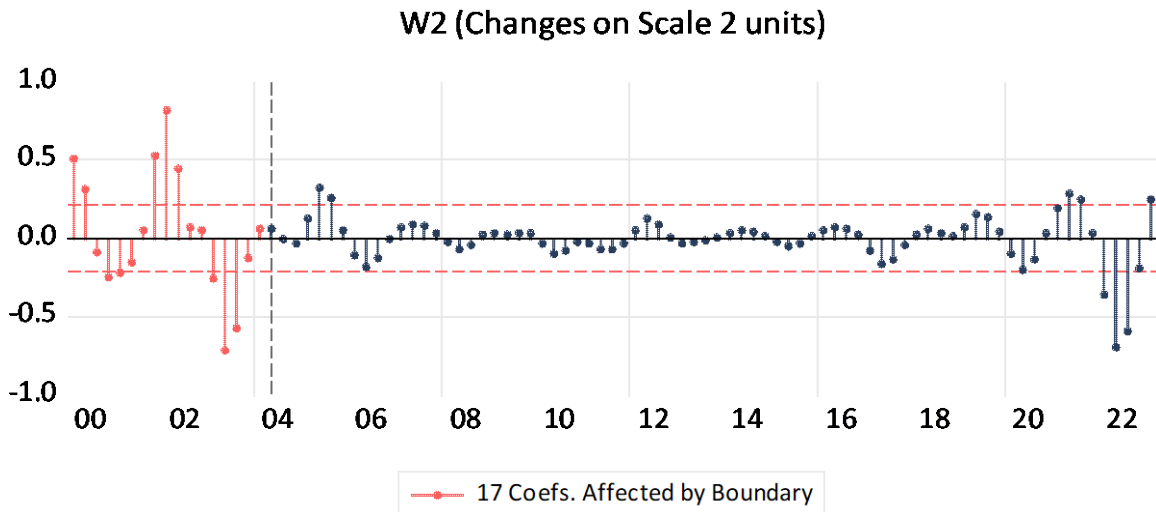
In this instance, the Daubechies wavelet filter was applied. The results are similar to the case where Haar wavelet filter. That is, the wavelet coefficients as shown by figures 8 and 9 are less pronounced than the scaling coefficients (figure 10). This support the earlier findings that the unemployment series is non-stationary, suggesting hysteresis.

Figure 8.



Source: Author's compilation

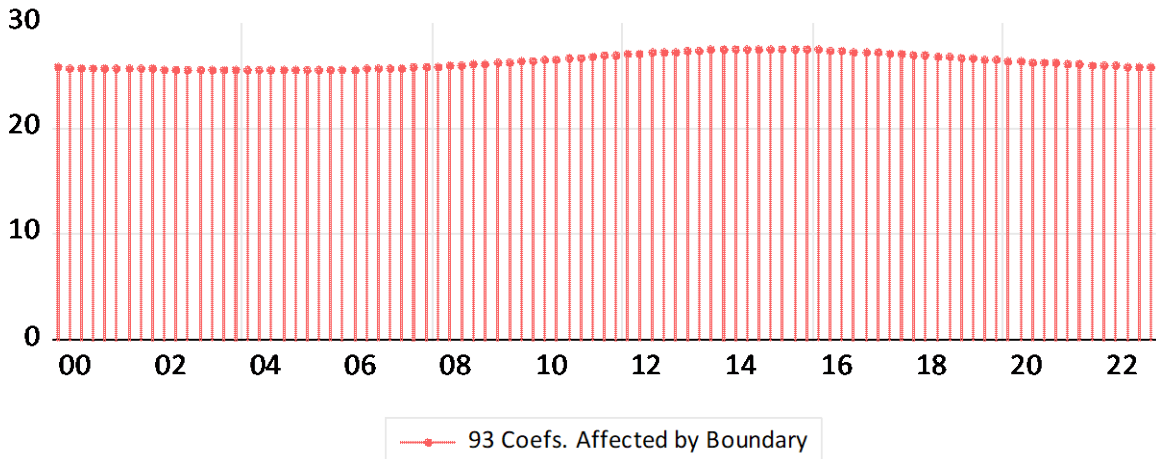
Figure 9.



Source: Author's compilation

Figure 10. Maximum Overlap DWT (MODWT) with Daubechies wavelet filter

V6 (Averages on Scale 64 units)



Source: Author's compilation

*Stationary tests: ADF, PP, and KPSS*

While testing the theory of unemployment hysteresis hypothesis within the South African context from the year 2000 to 2023. The ADF test by Dickey and Fuller (1979), the PP test formulated by Phillips and Perron (1988), and the KPSS test which was formulated by Kwiatkowski, Phillips, Schmidt, and Shin (1992) were applied to assess the stationarity of the variable. The ADF test, PP test, and KPSS test are employed to guarantee the validity of the results. The findings are presented in Table 1, where the variable is tested in both levels and the first differences with two model specifications: intercept only and trend & intercept.

**Table 1: Results of Stationary tests (ADF, PP, and KPSS) in levels, and first difference for the variable unemployment**

Model Specifications	ADF	PP	KPSS	ADF	PP	KPSS
	Levels	Levels	Levels	1st Diff	1st Diff	1st Diff
Intercept	-1.20	-0.68	0.66***	-3.93**	-4.00**	0.59***
Trend & Intercept	-2.18	-2.59	0.28	-3.86**	-3.97**	0.07**

Source: Author's compilation. Note: \*\*\* and \*\* denote rejection of the null hypothesis at the 1% and 5% significance levels respectively.

From the results presented in Table 1, there is inconclusive evidence on stationarity in the unemployment rate. ADF and PP tests in levels (both intercept and trend & intercept) indicate that the null hypothesis of stationary is accepted, and it is indicative of a non-stationary series that supports hysteresis in unemployment. This is in line with the observations made by Raifu & Abodunde (2020) in Nigeria where linear tests showed hysteresis.

However, when testing in the first differences we have; ADF and PP tests fail to reject the null hypothesis suggesting stationarity. This means that after differencing, unemployment remains fixed, implying that any changes in unemployment persist unless adjusted. The KPSS test, however, accepts the null hypothesis in support of hysteresis meaning that the series has a unit root. In terms of the first differences, all tests indicate that the null hypothesis is soundly rejected, and this confirms that unemployment is stationary after

differencing. This accords with the findings of Kouassi & Sethlare (2018) who for Southern Africa discovered mean reverting unemployment. To account for non-linearities and structural breaks, the FADF model is specified. The findings are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Fourier ADF test**

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	T-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.833	0.252	3.306	0.001
UNEMPL(-1)	-0.044	0.012	-3.626	0.000
@TREND	0.006	0.002	3.300	0.001
COS_T	-0.008	0.033	-0.266	0.790
SIN_T	-0.046	0.034	-1.328	0.188
D(UNEMPL(-1))	0.679	0.080	8.438	0.000
D(UNEMPL(-11))	-0.050	0.073	-0.682	0.497

Source: Author's compilation

The findings of the FADF aid in understanding the persistence of unemployment in South Africa over the period 2000Q1 to 2023Q4. The estimation results show that the coefficient of the lagged unemployment variable, UNEMPL(-1), estimate is -0.0445 with  $t = -3.6266$  and  $P = 0.0005$ , hence rejecting the null of no effect and implying relevance at the 1% significance level. This result implies that past unemployment rates have a significant negative relationship with the current unemployment rate, which means that shocks could be mean-reverting. In addition, the impulse response displays that there is a positive trend coefficient of 0.0066, with an associated p-value of 0.0015, which shows an ever-rising unemployment in the sample period, suggesting structural issues in the labor market. Nonetheless, the values of estimated coefficients for the trigonometric components COS\_T and SIN\_T included to capture cyclical patterns, prove to be insignificant, which suggests that cyclical factors do not have a major impact on the persistence of unemployment.

The results from the FADF estimation, especially the UNEMPL(-1) coefficient, partly support the hysteresis hypothesis. The only evidence they can present is that high levels of unemployment may not be permanent and that means reversion occurs occasionally, although the process is long.

These results are consistent with other previous studies that have identified little empirical support for unemployment hysteresis in South Africa using other sophisticated methods including the Fourier ADF test. Kouassi & Sethlare (2018) and Yaya, Ogbonna, and Mudida (2019) noted that only seven out of 42 African nations including South Africa, supported the unemployment hysteresis. This means that their assessment pointed to the fact that shocks to unemployment in many African nations, including South Africa, were mainly temporary. Kouassi and Sethlare (2018) also observed similar lagged effects of unemployment in several Southern African Development Community (SADC) economies, while the panel unit root test indicated that shock persistence may not be permanent in all countries.

On the contrary, previous studies that employed conventional linear tests like Pikoko and Phiri (2019) found hysteresis for most categories of unemployment in South Africa except the older age group. Using their results, they stressed that unemployment in South Africa may be more permanent than tests such as the FADF for non-linear characteristics suggest. The results of this study, however, provide a different perception towards the hysteresis of unemployment incidence; they only imply that it is less of a concern suggesting that policy



measures can go a long way in influencing the level of unemployment over time since shocks are not permanent.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the unemployment hysteresis hypothesis in South Africa from 2000 to 2023. In this regard, the study employed both linear and nonlinear stationary tests. This includes tests such as the Discrete Wavelet Transform (DWT), the Maximum Overlap Wavelet Transform (MODWT), the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF), the Phillips-Perron (PP), Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin (KPSS) and the Fourier ADF tests. The above findings reveal that the results are a bit 'mixed.' The linear tests present some evidence of stationarity in the first differences pointing to a mean reverting process; however, the Fourier ADF confirms partial hysteresis in South Africa's unemployment from 2000 to 2023. The results indicate that unemployment is nonstationary, so economic shocks, such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, affects unemployment trends over long time periods. Some mean reversion might take place but the persistent unemployment highlights the structural problems with the labor market. These results stress the need for early, active policy interventions such as labor market reforms and skill development programs to minimize the long-term impacts of such shocks on unemployment. Recommendations for future policies are that the long-term unemployment persistence requires addressed by active measures including skill development programs and labor market reforms.

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## TELEWORK AND TELEEMPLOYEE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. A PERSPECTIVE ON THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD

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*Abstract: Our paper provides a concise overview of several observations regarding telework and teleworkers in the public sector, based on the premise that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on public organizations worldwide, forcing them to face unprecedented challenges. The public sector, responsible for a wide range of essential services, was confronted with the need to rapidly adapt its structures and procedures to ensure continuity of operations, while also complying with social distancing and other imposed restrictions. To this end, we used a relevant and recent bibliography, as well as certain regulatory documents. In terms of structure, the paper includes the following sections: (1) Considerations on the Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Public Sector; (2) Telework and the Regulation of Certain Rights and Obligations of Teleworkers in Romania; (3) Continuous Digitalization and Its Impact on Necessary Skills; (4) Redefining Communication and Collaboration within Organizations. The final section (5) presents our Conclusions.*

*Keyword: SARS-CoV-2; post-pandemic period; public sector; human resource management; changes/trends*

### **Considerations on some implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the public sector**

First, it should be noted that telework represents "a form of organizing and/or fulfilling tasks using information technology, within the framework of an employment contract/labor relationship, where the activity that could also be carried out at the employer's premises is regularly performed outside these premises." (RG, 2021). Consequently, typical telework activities involve "performing the duties specific to the position, occupation, or trade held by the teleworker, using information and communication technology, regularly and voluntarily, at a location other than the employer's premises. Additionally, these terms are established by the signatories of the individual employment contract, the internal regulations, and/or the applicable collective labor contract" (RG, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted public organizations worldwide, forcing them to confront unprecedented challenges. The public sector, responsible for a wide range of essential services, faced the need to rapidly adapt its structures and procedures to ensure continuity of operations while also complying with social distancing requirements and other imposed restrictions (Consolo and Dias da Silva, 2022). This situation highlighted the necessity for digital transformation and flexibility, both in work organization and in interactions between employees and the served public (Koch, 2021; Kul, 2021; Lazăr Pleșa et al., 2020).

The implementation of telework and various digital solutions aimed at maximizing efficiency (Figure 1) has had a substantial impact on the organizational strategies adopted.

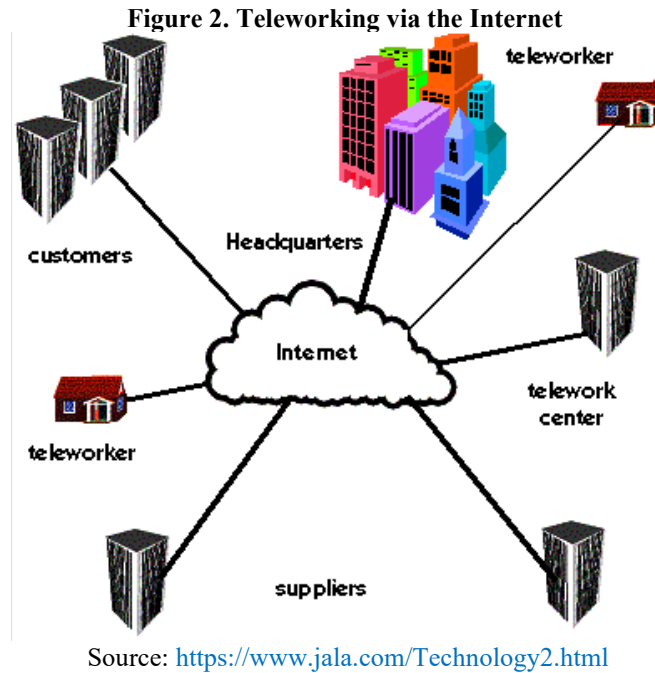
Figure 1. Effective remote work management

	Managers	Employees
<b>Adaptability</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Amplify the technology (software, hardware, web applications) and capabilities needed to enable telework.</b> Listen to the IT team. Rapidly inject resources needed for IT infrastructure and training.</li> <li><b>2. Expect problems and issues and be prepared to capture and share what is working as well as problems that need to be solved.</b> Ask for feedback and solicit ideas – be a model for continuous improvement.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Leverage the technology offered by the company.</b> Provide feedback if there are issues with technology. Ask for guidelines and trainings where necessary.</li> <li><b>2. Use this as a learning opportunity for you and for your colleagues.</b> Share your learnings about what works and what does not work with your co-workers so that the organizational competence to telework continually grows.</li> </ol>
<b>Mission</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>3. Go on hyper-drive with prioritization.</b> Emphasize the biggest priorities so that employees know what to focus on.</li> <li><b>4. Encourage employees to ask questions about company, team, and individual priorities</b> in 1:1s, staff meetings, and town halls.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>3. Focus on the priorities;</b> Not everything on your plate is equally important.</li> <li><b>4. Ask questions</b> to gain clarity about the priorities and recognize that, in this environment, those priorities can change at a moment's notice.</li> </ol>
<b>Consistency</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5. Communicate often and consistently.</b> Uncertain times require significantly higher levels of communication and it is important that consistent information and guidance is shared. Invoke the core values in communications for reassurance and stability.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5. Use the company's core values as the north star</b> in times of change. Core values can help us cut through the ambiguity and uncertainty and act in ways that reflect what is most important. If you are hearing conflicting messages, ask for clarification.</li> </ol>
<b>Involvement</b> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6. Listen to employees</b> to understand their challenges and their suggestions for how to best support them.</li> <li><b>7. Empower employees</b> in how they want to manage their work schedule and work hours. Allow for flexibility (vs. rigidity) with emphasis on clarifying the work requirements and the critical interdependencies that need to be considered.</li> <li><b>8. Maintain equity</b> in how telework is implemented for employees.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6. Determine and communicate your own work schedule;</b> be comfortable that it may change frequently based on competing home and work priorities. Be sensitive to others who depend on you and your work and stay in close communication.</li> <li><b>7. Don't hesitate to ask for meetings to be short</b> (30 minutes), if you have family members that need care on a more frequent basis.</li> <li><b>8. Take care of your personal well-being and the well-being of those who depend on you.</b></li> </ol>

Source: <https://denisonconsulting.com/transform/managing-telework-covid19>

The pandemic accelerated the transition to new work models, such as remote work and telework, initially seen as temporary solutions but which proved essential for the efficient management of human resources in public organizations (Zilincikova and Stofkova, 2021). As a result, the need for adaptability has increased, and digitalization has become a priority to support effective communication and collaboration, both internally and externally (Mazzucato and Kattel, 2020; Nilles, 2020). Public institutions have been compelled to make substantial investments in communication technologies and cybersecurity to create a secure and reliable virtual work environment (Hhs.gov, 2020).

Consequently, videoconferencing platforms, messaging applications, project management solutions, and enhanced internet capabilities (Figure 2) have become nearly indispensable for the execution of various activities.



In practice, a hybrid work model has also been adopted, allowing public sector employees to alternate between working in the office and from home. Furthermore, hybrid work has led to a reevaluation of performance criteria, with employee assessments focusing more on results achieved rather than physical presence, promoting greater autonomy and responsibility among employees. As a result, managers have had to adopt new supervision and evaluation approaches, based on clear, measurable objectives, and to promote an adaptive leadership style responsive to the needs of hybrid teams.

### **Telework and the regulation of rights and obligations of teleworkers in Romania**

In Romania, telework is regulated by Law No. 81/2018 (RP, 2018), which defines telework as a “form of work organization where the employee, on a regular and voluntary basis, performs specific tasks of their role, occupation, or profession in a location other than the employer’s workplace, at least one day per month, using information and communication technology.” Of course, teleworkers—employees working remotely—are entitled to all rights provided by labor legislation, internal regulations, and collective agreements applicable to employees who work at the employer’s office or residence. Additionally, teleworkers may be entitled to a series of additional rights, such as funds for covering telework-related expenses—utilities, internet connections, office equipment, and other necessary resources. Labor laws are increasingly evolving to protect teleworkers and ensure fair working conditions, regardless of their place of work (Morariu, 2021).

A comprehensive study on the feasibility of introducing flexible work arrangements in the public administration sector (telework, flexible hours, part-time work, hybrid systems, etc.) (INA, 2020) highlighted significant openness from both managers and staff for such

solutions. Key preferences identified include spatial flexibility (telework and working from home) and temporal flexibility (flexible schedules, individualized hours, and the possibility of accruing additional hours in a “time bank” for future time off). Regarding the implementation of telework and work from home, the study found that the main challenges faced, both at the managerial level and by staff, were technical (lack of suitable equipment and electronic signatures) and procedural (absence of clear procedures for remote work and effective task monitoring). Challenges also arose in accessing information and team coordination, as well as social issues such as feelings of isolation from colleagues and the perception that working from home required less effort.

On the other hand, the study identified several advantages of introducing flexible work modes. Firstly, these led to an increase in employee safety and motivation, as institutions demonstrated an adaptable and supportive approach. Additionally, employees’ ability to concentrate improved due to fewer interruptions from colleagues or supervisors. The transition to these flexible work modes has also contributed to developing digital skills and autonomy in managing tasks, which can help create a more efficient future for public administration in rapidly changing contexts.

In conclusion, the study recommends that work flexibility be supported through investments in digital equipment and training, clarification of remote monitoring and coordination procedures, and the implementation of solutions to mitigate the effects of isolation, thus contributing to a more resilient and adaptable public administration.

Returning to the provisions of Law No.81/2018 (Art.7), the employer has specific obligations regarding the occupational health and safety of teleworkers, including: “a) providing information technology and communication tools and/or safe work equipment necessary to perform the work, unless otherwise agreed by the parties; b) installing, inspecting, and maintaining the necessary work equipment, unless otherwise agreed by the parties; c) providing conditions for the teleworker to receive sufficient and appropriate training in health and safety at work, especially in the form of information and work instructions specific to the telework activity and the use of visual display equipment” (RP, 2018).

Regarding the obligations of the teleworker, these include: “a) informing the employer about the equipment used and the conditions at the telework location and allowing access where possible, to implement and maintain the necessary health and safety measures according to the employment contract or for the investigation of incidents; b) not altering the health and safety conditions at the telework location; c) using only work equipment that does not pose a risk to their health and safety; d) performing their work in compliance with the obligations of workers and in accordance with the provisions of the employment contract; e) complying with specific rules and restrictions established by the employer regarding the use of internet networks and equipment provided” (Law No.81/2018, Art.8, para. 2).

For certain teleworkers, recent legislative proposals to amend the Labor Code introduce new regulations on teleworkers’ rights. Among the proposed changes (Oprea, 2024) are: (i) Extending the telework period for parents of children with disabilities, allowing them to work remotely 8 days per month, double the current limit of 4 days; (ii) Increasing the age limit for telework: The proposal allows parents of children with disabilities to benefit from 8 telework days monthly until the child reaches 18, up from the current limit of 11 years; (iii) Teleworkers with multiple children with disabilities: Parents of more than one

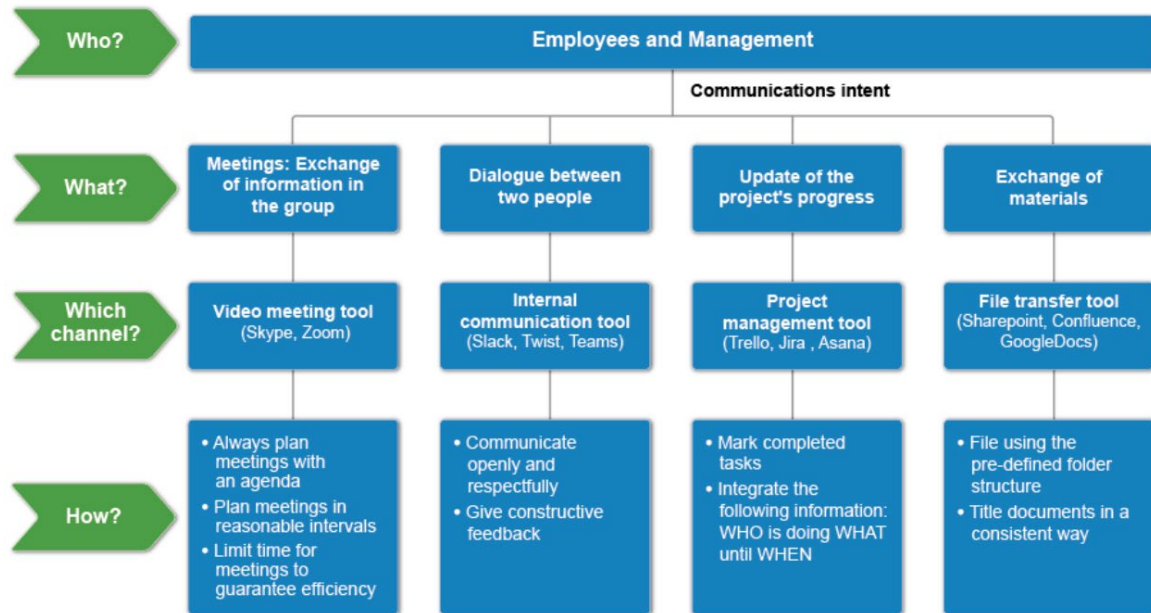
child with disabilities would receive two additional telework days on top of the basic 8 days; (iv) Protection of teleworkers' rights: Employers would not be allowed to unilaterally revoke these benefits through internal regulations, providing added stability for these facilities.

Currently, a tax-free allowance applies to teleworkers, exempting the amounts they receive for utility expenses—such as electricity, water, heating, data services, and office furniture purchases—within a limit set by the employer of up to 400 RON per month. This allowance is calculated proportionally to the number of telework days each month (RG, 2022). These measures reflect a legislative effort to adapt labor laws to the complex needs of teleworkers and ensure a favorable framework for balancing work and family life.

### Continuous digitalization and the impact on required skills

As the public sector continues to integrate digital technologies into its operations, the skills required of employees have changed significantly, with digital competencies becoming a priority in the recruitment, training, and professional development of public sector staff. The use of communication technologies, online collaboration applications, and process automation solutions (Figure 3) has become crucial for operational efficiency and for improving interaction with citizens.

Figure 3. Communication chart for virtual teams



Source: <https://www.humrro.org/corpsite/blog/effective-virtual-management-skills-for-covid-19-teleworking/#>

As a result, public institutions have invested in continuous training programs aimed at developing employees' digital skills. These programs include both training sessions for using basic digital tools and advanced courses in data management and cybersecurity, tailored to the specifics of public sector activities. By developing these skills, employees are prepared to use technology efficiently and meet the increasing demands for adaptability and innovation. In addition, the heightened requirements for digital competencies have changed employee selection criteria, especially in areas like data analysis, information

security, and digital application development. Thus, continuous digitalization, within an increasingly complex managerial context (Burciu et al., 2008), is a significant factor contributing to the modernization of human resources in the public sector, supporting the transition toward a more efficient administration that is aligned with citizens' needs.

### Redefining communication and collaboration within organizations

In the post-pandemic period, communication and collaboration have been redefined to meet the needs of distributed teams and maintain organizational cohesion. Public institutions have adopted digital communication and collaboration tools that allow employees to stay connected and work together efficiently, even when working remotely. These tools, such as video conferencing platforms, document-sharing applications, and project management solutions, have become essential for daily activities. Furthermore, when discussing telework activities in general, we should consider advantages such as (Hhs.gov, 2020): “Increase employee effectiveness • Increase management achievement of goals • Avoid delays associated with commute • Reduce office distractions • Reduce real estate costs/requirements • Increased employee morale due to improved quality of life • Commute – saves time and money • Work environment – familiarity, comfort, relaxed dress code • Personal costs – Attire, purchasing meals • Business continuity in the event of an emergency/disaster • Decentralized and distributed work is becoming more common.” At least six key reasons support the adoption of this type of work activity (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Reasons for telework adoption



Source: Hhs.gov, 2020

New forms of communication require adjustments to organizational culture, promoting openness, transparency, and accessibility of information. Team and interdepartmental communication is now more structured and results-oriented, leading to increased efficiency and reduced time needed for coordinating activities (Lund et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2024). Additionally, promoting a balance between professional and personal life has become a priority in retention strategies. Hybrid work allows employees greater flexibility,



enhancing satisfaction and reducing the risk of burnout (Goldberg and Priest, 2023). Public institutions that adopt these measures and provide support to employees adapting to new work demands are more likely to retain talent in the long term.

## **Conclusions**

Our paper confirms that telework was a necessary and effective solution for maintaining continuity of activities in public institutions, enabling compliance with social distancing rules and a swift adaptation to a global crisis context. Regulations regarding the rights and obligations of teleworkers in Romania are generally effective but still need adjustments to better meet the specific needs of the public sector. Telework has emphasized the importance of ongoing digitalization, which, in parallel, highlighted an increased demand for digital skills and adaptability among employees. Another important observation is that telework has redefined communication and collaboration within public organizations, shifting from physical interactions to virtual platforms, which has brought both benefits and challenges. In the long term, to maximize the efficiency and sustainability of telework, we recommend continuous updating of employees' digital skills, enhancing the legal framework for greater flexibility, and ensuring access to modern technological resources. Additionally, adapting organizational culture to support remote collaboration will be essential for the long-term success of telework in the public sector.

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## THE EFFECTIVITY OF TECHNOLOGY AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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*Abstract: Over the last few decades, there has been a significant increase in the use of internet and information technology, which has influenced various government departments to shift their traditional strategies of communication to digital methods of communication. The emergence of technological advancements improves the communication in the local government sphere. The problem of delayed communication between municipalities and its residents. This paper sought to investigate the role played by technology in enhancing communication between King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality with its residents. To showcase the impact played by technology on issues of local government, the open systems theory was utilised as a theoretical foundation of this paper. The literature indicated that technology plays a fundamental role in the communication process between local government and its stakeholders. Studies conducted in this research area revealed that technology plays a pivotal role in the dissemination of public information to the residents. This paper adopted a mixed method approach and a case study research design. The quantitative data was collected through closed ended questionnaires while the qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. This paper sampled a total of 96 participants in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality through simple random sampling technique in the few selected different wards of the municipality. The closed ended questionnaires were distributed to 90 participants while 6 municipal officials were interviewed. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS while the qualitative data was analysed through a thematic approach. The study found that technology is not fully utilised as a communication tool between the municipality and the residents. The study revealed that traditional and modern ways of communication are integrated by the municipality to communicate with the residents. The study concluded that technological advancements must be exploited by the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality to improve communication with its residents. The paper further recommended that new software applications must be developed by the municipality to improve communication with the residents.*

*Keywords: Technology; Communication; Residents; Local government; Municipality*

### **Introduction and background**

The public sector has been forced to adapt to the introduction of new technologies to enhance communication with the residents. Communication is defined as the process of transmitting and receiving of information among people, and this sharing of information can take place either face-to-face or through electronic or technological means of communication (Venter, 2019). Milakovich (2021) noted that in the modern days, there is a notable symbiotic relationship between technology and communication more-especially in the public sector. Technology is defined as the alteration or control of the human

environment, is the implementation of scientific knowledge to the goals of everyday life (Britannica, 2024). It is therefore the interest of this paper to investigate the effectiveness of technology as a tool of communication within local government, and in this regard King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa has been used as a case study. The 4IR is commonly defined by the technological advancement and disruptive developments in the private and public sectors worldwide (Esposito, & Kapoor, 2022). Koh, *et al* (2019) characterizes the 4IR with the recent popularization of the Internet of Things (IoT) and Cyber-Physical System (CPS), whereby capitalizing on the two emerging technologies brings hope of smoothening the connection between information and people. When considering the 4IR, the private sector has been the most responsive, but the public sector has also had to adapt to this new reality (Chalmers, 2021). The "e-government" term refers to the concept of electronic government, which is widely regarded as the focal point of almost all public sector innovation and as a conceptual platform for testing out different information and communication technologies in government (Adeniran & Adafin, 2022). In this regard, e-government reforms have always aimed at automating public service delivery models, whether they are implemented in the context of developed or developing countries (Dhaoui, 2022). As a result, it is also considered an electronic replica of an actual autonomous government, which is now enriched using a wide range of digital technologies for its primary operations: capturing, processing and delivering public information to its key stakeholders, namely citizens and government (Kassen, 2022). Zervoudi (2020) states that government lacks innovation and the capacity to instantly adapt and easily adopt the innovation introduced by the fourth industrial revolution. However, Allin (2021) states that government is making amends and is gradually embracing the integration of technological aspects to service delivery. Due to the complexity of government, the adoption of technology is low, because of the social hierarchy where people are not equal and thus cannot instantly adapt to digitally offered services. This paper is encouraged by the digitalization of government and is thus interested to assess the use of introducing technology as a tool to enhance service delivery and local government efficiency.

#### *Problem statement*

Despite the fact that the digitalization of governance is not a new phenomenon (Criado, 2021), citizens or residents frequently struggle to engage municipalities on issues of local government. This study identified poor communication between local government and the residents as a problem and thus seeks to assess the extent of the usage of technological opportunities in promoting communication between local government and the residents. Put differently, the idea is to establish how the Municipality has taken the advantages of technological developments to promote efficient and effective communication with its residents. To achieve this, King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality is used as a case study. The study also intends to identify theoretical gaps in literature pertaining to how technology affects or influences communication.

#### *Aim of the study*

The primary intention of this article is to investigate the effectiveness of King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality in using technology as a communication platform with its residents.

### *Theoretical Frameworks*

This paper adopted the open systems theory as its theoretical foundation. The open systems theory was introduced in 1956 by a biologist named Ludwig von Bertalanffy. It began as (scientific) biological theory, but due to its applicability, it spread to other disciplines or fields of study. Hence, Katz and Kahn (1966) extended the open system concept to organizations. The organisation is viewed as an energetic input-output system, with the output energy reactivating the system. Due to their material interactions with the environment, social organizations are open systems. Ghat, *et al* (2021) indicate that there are two types of systems, namely closed and open. Adams and Lanford (2021) define a closed system as structures, relationships and interdependent entities that are totally separated - or "cloistered" - from their environment. In contrast, an open system freely trades information, resources and energy with its social and cultural context, and its equilibrium is determined by these transactions (Sony & Naik, 2020). The fundamental idea of an "open system," according to Hanna (1997) and Kristian (2019), is that all organisations have the same traits as other living organisms. An organisation is an open system as, in theory, it is similar to living organisms in that it depends on its surroundings for development, maintenance, and goal achievement (Jackson, 2019). Because an organisation is an open system, its survival depends on its ability to interact, adapt, and cohabit with its surroundings. When making decisions or putting in effort to accomplish goals, organisations need to view environmental impacts as an open system. As mentioned earlier, if an organisation ignores its surroundings, it will not be able to grow and prosper (Contreras, *et al*, 2020). Like other public organisations, municipalities must evaluate their external environment since it affects their decisions, either directly or indirectly. A wide range of factors make up municipalities' external environment, including households as the primary stakeholders, the climate, the political environment, the cultural environment, and the technology environment (Ndaguba & Hanyane, 2019). Since these elements are a component of the municipality's external environment, they must be considered when providing services (George, 2021). Since technology is the subject of this study, the municipality should view it as a chance to improve communication with the public by not only informing them about services but also getting their input on those services (Rotta, *et al*, 2019). Technological advancements are a constant, and for municipalities to remain relevant to their constituents, or the external environment, they must adjust as open systems. It should be noted that municipalities must adapt to provide services in an effective and efficient manner, as their external environment is always changing and beyond their control (Mees, *et al*, 2019). The writers highlight that an organization's potential to grow and endure depends on its environment. It is widely believed that municipalities must use technology to successfully interact with their inhabitants (Kim & Kreps, 2020). According to Kassen (2022), citizens can now communicate and use government services without physically visiting municipal offices because to the introduction of technology in government. Therefore, because technology is now part of the external environment, many municipalities have adopted the use of technology in service delivery (Schoeman & Chakwizira, 2023).

### **Literature Review**

#### *The importance of effective communication in government*

Communication is essential in all spheres of government. The residents in local government and other government agencies at national government rely on municipalities for a variety of information (Zeemering, 2021). As a result, a communication strategic plan is required for every institution that needs to make changes, implement policies or projects, and to share information effectively (Farinloye, *et al*, 2020). A strategic communications strategy is a written document that outlines and guides the institution's communication initiatives (Einsohn & Schwartz, 2019). Strategic communication strategies provide a solid framework for residents' communications and marketing initiatives to take place through the appropriate channels (Mahoney, 2023). Local government, as the closest sphere of government to the people, needs to maintain continuous and effective communication with its residents about the new developments within the municipality (Munzhedzi, 2020). To do this, municipalities utilize various platforms to reach out to the residents and these include newsletters, social media, public television and radio (Rodríguez, Svensson & Mehl, 2020). Furthermore, the mandate of local government as outlined in the Constitution of 1996, requires that communication of municipalities should improve access to information, allowing the residents to participate in the affairs of local government. Mthethwa, *et al* (2023) state that the more residents understand local government issues and regulations, as well as how their objectives are acknowledged, handled and executed, the more trust they will have in the capacity of their municipality, and this makes communication so important in local government. The use of technology as a communication tool thus becomes an important platform for municipalities to engage their residents (Hatuka & Zur, 2020).

According to Russell (2021), there are various platforms in which communication may be channeled. These include face-to-face discussions, phone calls, text messaging, email, the Internet (including social media sites like Facebook and Twitter), radio and television, printed letters, pamphlets and reports (Russell, 2021). In view of these channels, it is critical to select a suitable one for efficient communication. However, each communication route has its own set of advantages and disadvantages (Alfouzan, 2021). According to Moroz, *et al* (2020), the use of technological devices to facilitate communication is a cost-effective way for municipalities to easily inform and engage the residents on issues of local governance. In view of the above, Newman and Ford (2021) indicate that, for communication to be effective, it must be understood by the receiver. For this to be possible Subramaniam, *et al* (2021) suggest that an appropriate communication channel must be chosen by the message sender to reduce misunderstanding by the receiver. Following that, a response is expected to show that the message is received and understood in order that an attempt to correct any misunderstanding or confusion can be made where necessary (Bai, *et al*, 2020).

#### *Technology as a tool of promoting community engagement*

Community participation is the process in which residents work with the government on socio-economic issues facing residents. It refers to activities in which community members frequently participate (King, *et al*, 2021), for example, deliberation at community meetings or participation in community police forums. Community participation is common in drafting government policies for service delivery, such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Municipalities consult with communities to determine their needs. This is often done through community meetings such as the 'Mayoral Imbizo' (Okeke-Uzodike & Dlamini,

2019). Community participation is a very important concept in a democratic government. This allows municipalities to become aware of the community needs (Wang, *et al*, 2021). Chapter 4 of the Municipal Structures Act (Act No.117 of 1998) emphasizes the importance of community participation in local government affairs. Feroz, Jabeen and Saleem (2020) emphasize that community participation is essential as it makes municipalities aware of community needs. Community participation also helps to build ownership, developing an informed and responsible citizenry for government developments and projects (Gaber, 2019). Considering the above discussions, it is evident that community participation in government matters is a crucial element for municipalities to consider, as it is also drafted in municipal legislations. Community participation gives a platform to the residents to raise their problems to the municipality, whilst it enables the municipality to be aware of what is happening within its communities. Community participation forges an understanding between the residents and the municipality. Therefore, the interest of this paper is to assess the extent to which technology is used to facilitate community participation in government matters in King Sabata Dalindyebo local municipality.

#### *The influence of technology on public participation*

It can also be argued that public participation is made easy using technology because citizens interact with government through social media platforms (Cortés-Cediel, *et al*, 2021). Talukder, *et al* (2022) show that basic services are provided by government using technology, for example, the municipality sends consumer accounts through digital platforms such as emails and SMSs. To this end, it is evident that the use of technology by municipalities reduces manual practices of service delivery (Velsberg, *et al*, 2020). Technology innovations have resulted in phenomena such as e-participation, which is the use of online techniques for the residents to participate in government service delivery issues, thus allowing government to better respond to societal needs (Kassen, 2022). One can argue that this mode of participation also contributes to the development of an economically efficient bottom-up approach that includes all stakeholders in decision making (Mathebula, 2021). The smooth bottom-up 4IR driven interaction helps the government to fulfil its constitutional obligation of promoting public participation in an effective and efficient manner (Arwati & Latif, 2019). According to Purwanto, *et al* (2020), service provision arrangements linked to various forms of community participation may improve service delivery by the government. Because of community participation, government officials are made aware of community needs, which has a direct influence on the public sector (Lipsky, 2023). Further, Hartmann and Lussier (2020) state that this can be improved using technology. The use of technology will enable communities to always be in touch with their municipalities (Alam, 2021). Wilson, *et al* (2019) noted that the traditional methods of community engagement are time consuming. Therefore, the use of technology by municipalities could bridge time constraints. Communities engage municipalities on their grievances and inform policies made by municipalities (Masiya, *et al*, 2019). Community participation is critical as the services offered by municipalities are based on what communities say they need from the municipality (Haldane, *et al*, 2019). Rodrigues, *et al* (2020) observes that increased community participation in local government affairs, partnerships with the local community in service delivery, flexible responses to service user complaints, providing value for money, and ensuring that service

users pay their bills on time, were found to be the primary strategies for improving service delivery. Communities need various platforms to be able to maintain interaction with municipalities, and technology provides those opportunities, for example, through smartphones (Lovari & Valentini, 2020). Furthermore, Krick, *et al* (2019) states that technology enables residents to have 24-hour access to the government database, thus proving that, indeed, technology enhances communication between the households and the government. Boulianne (2020) argues that easy access to government promotes efficiency in government offices through reducing long service delivery queues. This process enables residents to know services that are available and those that are not available to them in certain times, due to the use of technology as a tool of communication (Adeniran & Adafin, 2022). Blasi, *et al* (2022) mention that social media platforms, which are part of a broader technological innovation, can enhance public participation; for example, municipal Facebook pages, where residents can interact with the municipality. It is therefore evident that technology possesses social media elements such as Facebook pages which, when exploited by municipalities, can enhance public participation in government matters.

#### *The concept of E-government and M-government*

E-Government is commonly defined as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by governments, in conjunction with organizational transformation, to improve governmental structures and operations (Grigalashvili, 2022). Since e-government is made up of technological features, its incorporation serves as the foundation for the link between technology and government (Hariguna, 2022). As a result, the use of digital platforms and machines by the government to deliver services to the residents is the link between government and technology (Kassen, 2022). In terms of e-government, web-based initiatives have been developed to make service delivery more convenient, such as accessible information, citizen-initiated request portals, and transaction-based services such as filing taxes online (e-filing) or filing permits or paying fines online (Nokele & Mukonza, 2021). Furthermore, local facilities with online capabilities and smartphone apps have been established in several communities to provide a common space for community members to launch inquiries and file complaints with the municipality, and this space is available and used electronically (Wali, *et al*, 2019). Failure of e-government causes significant distress, including a loss of time and money, a loss of the good image of all parties concerned, and finally, a rise in future expenditures (Sterrenberg & Decosta, 2023). According to Malodia, *et al* (2021), failing e-government initiatives lead to lack of trust in e-government projects, which causes major resistance to future e-government projects due to a loss of credibility and faith in e-government as a means of transforming the public sector. This means that e-government projects must be well planned in order not to waste government funds (Choi & Chandler, 2020); hence the need to equip and capacitate both the municipality and residents to prepare themselves for the reality of e-government. The gradual implementation of e-government in least developed countries proves difficult, necessitating proper planning of e-government projects. Instant adoption of e-government has a risk of leaving some residents behind, making them unable to access government services; therefore, there is a need to equip the residents and the municipality with prospects of technology in order to effect e-government in less developed areas. Having considered the above discussions, the study would like to establish the readiness of King



Sabata Dalindyabo Local Municipality’s readiness for complete use of e-governance and investigate the challenges related to its implementation.

### Methodology

This paper utilised a mixed-methods design. A mixed approach, according to Taherdoost (2022), is a means to gather and analyse data utilising two distinct methodologies or approaches or combining quantitative and qualitative methods into a single study. Quantitative data is based on closed-ended sources like questionnaires, whereas qualitative data is based on open-ended, non-predesigned sources like interviews (Bloomfield, & Fisher, 2019). This study used both questionnaires and interviews to obtain data. 90 respondents received the questionnaires, and 6 municipal officials were interviewed. The quantitative data obtained through questionnaires was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The King Sabata Dalindyabo Local Municipality was used as a case study. The benefits of using mixed research methods in this study are that it allows corroboration of the data or results from different sources or methods, thus increasing the validity and trustworthiness of the research (Monageng, 2023). Hence, this study adopted mixed research method as a balanced approach for data collection using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods would enable the researchers to make inferences on both numerical data, as well as the experiences and perceptions of the residents of King Sabata Dalindyabo Local Municipality regarding the use of technology as an instrument of communication to enhance service delivery. This is perceived by the researchers as beneficial for the study as it would lead to the production of rich knowledge and generate new information.

### Results and Findings

This part of the paper is composed of quantitative and qualitative data that is sequentially analysed and discussed using the instruments.

Quantitative data.

**Table 1: The effectiveness of King Sabata Dalindyabo Local Municipality in using technology as a communication tool**

In your opinion, how effective is King Sabata Dalindyabo Local Municipality’s use of technology as a communication tool to promote service delivery in your experience?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Average	35	38.9	38.9	38.9
Excellent	4	4.4	4.4	43.3
Good	11	12.2	12.2	55.6
Poor	26	28.9	28.9	84.4
Very Poor	14	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors (2024)

The results in Table 1 reveal respondents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of King Sabata Dalindyabo Local Municipality (KSDLM) in utilising technology as a communication tool to enhance service delivery. The data are presented in terms of frequency, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage. In terms of the average rating,

most respondents, accounting for 35 in frequency, expressed that KSDLM is perceived as average in terms of its effectiveness in utilising technology for communication related to service delivery. This response represents 39.9% in valid percentage and contributes to a cumulative percentage of 38.9%. The positive ratings in the findings reveal that a smaller proportion of respondents, 4 in frequency, deemed KSDLM's utilisation of technology as excellent. This equates to 4.4% in valid percentage, contributing to a cumulative percentage of 43.3%. Additionally, 11 respondents rated KSDLM as good, representing 12.2% in valid percentage and contributing to a cumulative percentage of 55.6%. The negative ratings, however, reveal that the respondents expressing dissatisfaction with KSDLM's use of technology for service delivery were notable. Those who rated it as poor amounted to 26 in frequency, constituting 28.9% in valid percentage and contributing to a cumulative percentage of 84.4%.

Another subset of respondents, 14 in frequency, indicated that KSDLM's performance in this aspect was very poor. This represents 15.6% in valid percentage, contributing to a complete cumulative percentage of 100.0%. In summary, most respondents perceive KSDLM's effectiveness in using technology for communication related to service delivery as average. While there is a positive subset expressing excellence and goodness, a significant proportion holds negative views, particularly rating it as poor or very poor. These insights provide valuable feedback on areas of improvement and potential focus for enhancing the municipality's technological communication strategies. It is based on the foregoing that Table 2 below provides information about whether the suggestions of residents are considered by KSDLM.

**Table 2: Suggestions of residents are considered by King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality**

Does King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality consider the suggestions made by the residents?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	38	42.2	42.2	42.2
No	52	57.8	57.8	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors (2024)

The presented results in Table 2 capture the respondents' responses to the question of whether King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSDLM) considers the suggestions made by the residents. The data are delineated in terms of frequency, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage. The majority response to the question was "No", and a significant majority of respondents, comprising 52 in frequency, responded negatively, stating that KSDLM does not consider the suggestions made by the residents. This response represents a substantial 57.8% in valid percentage. The cumulative percentage for this group is 100.0%, indicating that all respondents who responded to this question with "No" fall into this category. These results suggest a prevailing sentiment among most respondents that their suggestions are not adequately considered by KSDLM. The minority response to the question was "Yes". In contrast, a minority of respondents, numbering 38 in frequency, indicated that KSDLM does consider the suggestions made by residents. This response represents 42.2% in valid percentage and contributes to a cumulative percentage of 42.2%. While this group is in the minority, it is essential to acknowledge that a notable portion of respondents still perceives that their suggestions are considered by the municipality.

In summary, the data portrays a significant concern among the respondents regarding the responsiveness of KSDLM to residents' suggestions, with a clear majority expressing a negative perception. These results underscore the importance of addressing communication and engagement gaps between the municipality and its residents, as identified by the respondents. Further exploration and targeted initiatives may be necessary to bridge this perceived gap and enhance collaboration between the municipality and the residents. It is also critical that the use of languages that are understood by all residents be used as the Municipality engages the residents.

**Table 3: The effectiveness of public participation in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality**

In your opinion, how effective is public participation in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Poor	7	7.8	7.8	7.8
Poor	24	26.7	26.7	34.4
Average	38	42.2	42.2	76.7
Good	18	20.0	20.0	96.7
Excellent	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors (2024)

The provided results in Table 3 above offer a comprehensive view of respondents' perspectives on the effectiveness of public participation in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSDLM). The data are presented in terms of frequency, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage. Most respondents, totalling 38 in frequency, expressed that public participation in KSDLM is perceived as average. This response represents a substantial 42.2% in valid percentage and contributes to a cumulative percentage of 76.7%. The above result or discovery suggests a prevailing sentiment among a significant portion of respondents that public participation in KSDLM falls within the moderate or average range. Some respondents, numbering 24 in frequency, indicated that public participation in KSDLM is perceived as poor. This represents 26.6% in valid percentage and contributes to a cumulative percentage of 34.4%. While this group is in the minority, their response signifies a notable concern regarding the perceived inadequacies in public participation practices within the municipality.

Respondents who regarded public participation in KSDLM as good amounted to 18 in frequency, constituting 20.0% in valid percentage. This group contributes significantly to a cumulative percentage of 96.7%, indicating a positive perception of public participation practices in the municipality. The recognition of good public participation by a sizeable proportion of respondents suggests areas of strength and effectiveness in engaging the community. A smaller subset of respondents, numbering 7 in frequency, stated that public participation in KSDLM is very poor, representing 7.8% in valid percentage. Another subset of respondents, totalling 3 in frequency, perceived public participation as excellent, contributing 3.3% in valid percentage. These groups cumulatively contribute to a cumulative percentage of 7.8% and 100.0%, respectively. The presence of respondents perceiving public participation as very poor or excellent signals polarised opinions within the study population. The results underscore a diverse range of perceptions regarding the effectiveness of public participation in KSDLM. While a significant portion view it as average, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction, other respondents' express concerns

about its poor effectiveness. The acknowledgement of good public participation suggests positive aspects, but the presence of respondents with extreme views (very poor and excellent) highlights potential areas for improvement and further exploration. These insights provide valuable feedback for KSDLM to enhance its public participation strategies and address the concerns of residents. Hence, Table 4 below provides information about the use of electronic communication, like emails, when speaking with residents.

**Table 4: The use of electronic communication, like emails, when speaking with residents**

Does King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality use electronic communication, like emails, when speaking with residents?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	27	30.0	30.0	30.0
No	63	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors (2024)

The presented results in Table 4 above illuminate respondents' perspectives on the use of electronic communication, particularly emails, by King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSDLM) when engaging with residents. The data are conveyed in terms of frequency, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage. Most respondents, comprising 63 in frequency, responded negatively, indicating that KSDLM does not use electronic communication, such as emails, when communicating with residents. This substantial majority represents a significant 70.0% in valid percentage. The cumulative percentage for respondents who responded with "No" is 100.0%, emphasising the unanimous agreement among this majority group. A minority of respondents, numbering 27 in frequency, indicated that KSDLM does use electronic communication, such as emails, when communicating with residents. This group constitutes 30.0% in valid percentage. The cumulative percentage for respondents responding with "Yes" is also 30.0%, reflecting the contribution of this minority group to the overall study. In summary, the results reveal a predominant perception among respondents that KSDLM does not extensively utilise electronic communication, specifically emails, when engaging with residents. The majority expressing a negative view suggests a potential gap in the incorporation of modern communication methods by the Municipality. The minority acknowledging the use of electronic communication signifies a recognition of some level of engagement through these channels. These results can guide KSDLM in evaluating and potentially enhancing its electronic communication strategies to better meet the preferences and expectations of the community. The use of social media is critical as communication strategies to improve communication in this Municipality. In this way, Table 5 below provides information about the use of social media platforms to communicate with residents.

**Table 5: The use of social media platforms to communicate with residents**

Is King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality sending messages through WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter (X), etc. to effectively communicate with residents?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	55	61.1	61.1	61.1
No	35	38.9	38.9	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors (2024)

Table 5 above provides insights into respondents' perceptions regarding the use of various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter by King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSDLM) for effective communication with residents. The data is presented in terms of frequency, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage. Most respondents, totalling 55 in frequency, indicated that KSDLM does send messages through WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to effectively communicate with residents. This substantial majority represents 61.1% in valid percentage, indicating a predominant positive perception among the respondents. The cumulative percentage for respondents who answered with "Yes" is also 61.1%, signifying the overall contribution of this majority group to the study. A minority of respondents, numbering 35 in frequency, responded negatively, stating that KSDLM does not utilise WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter for communication with residents. This group constitutes 38.9% in valid percentage. The cumulative percentage for respondents answering with "No" is 100.0%, reflecting the contribution of this minority group to the overall study. In other words, these results highlight a predominant perception among respondents that KSDLM effectively uses popular social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, for communication with residents. The affirmative responses suggest a recognition of the Municipality's efforts to leverage these widely used platforms for engagement. The minority expressing a negative view indicates that there is still a segment of respondents who may not perceive effective communication through these channels or are unaware of such efforts. These insights can guide KSDLM in assessing the effectiveness of its social media communication strategies and potentially addressing any gaps or concerns expressed by residents.

**Qualitative data**

The qualitative data that was obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted with the 6 municipal officials from the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality. The researchers developed themes and sub-themes based on the verbatims and comments made by the respondents as means of analyzing their actual meaning in the context of this paper. The following table labelled table 6 depicts themes and sub-themes that were derived from the qualitative data.

**Table 6 Themes**

No.	Themes	Sub-themes
1.	Use of technology to enhance communication.	Enhancing communication using technology
2.	Consideration of residents needs	Community inputs
3.	Taking advantage of technological opportunities	Exploiting technology
4.	Technology opportunities to improve communication	Technological improvement

Source: Authors (2024)

*Use of technology to enhance communication*

When the participants were asked how KSDLM can improve in using technology to effectively communicate with residents, the participants mentioned that the improvement and maintenance of technological infrastructure, such as network coverage, is crucial to

enable residents to be able to have access in social media platforms. Some participants mentioned that the KSDLM should supply free Wi-Fi or data for the residents, to enable them to be able to have access to information communicated by the municipality. Some of the participants suggested that the municipality should develop a local software application that can be used as a channel of communication between the municipality and the residents. One of the participants stated, “The municipality can implement an app which will be used to report, and complaints, recommendation, or suggestions will be lodged-in through that app, in that way service delivery in KSD will improve with immediate effect, because people are advanced these days 4IR should be put into play to make life easier for citizens.” Another respondent mentioned, “By utilizing online portals, mobile apps, and social media, municipalities can provide real-time information and update their residents. This not only improves transparency and accountability but also help to build trust between the municipality and the community.” These sentiments reveal that the residents acknowledge the presence of new technologies and their impact on governance and thus are embracing the presence of these new technologies. This is supported by the study of Sokolova, et al (2020), that there is significant community correspondence with technological modernisation in the public sector. One participant stated, “...They are supposed to simple put Public Wi-Fi in the certain spots such as Stadium (ground), Parks, Public schools, public clinics and hospitals etc. for us to connect and have access to information uploaded on the website of the municipality.” Another said, “Provide internet access to communities, for example WI-FI hotspots at clinics and libraries and through connecting with them in technology that is most familiar to them, for example by using social media to be aware of everything.” The issue of thoroughly equipping the community technological infrastructure, educating the community to prepare them to use modern technology, providing free Wi-Fi and data bundles for community members appear to be the most prevalent inputs from the participants, when answering this question.

#### *Consideration of residents needs*

The paper sought to establish the method used by King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality to meet the needs and expectations of its residents. The findings of the study, in this regard, revealed that King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality uses both technological and manual (traditional) methods of engaging the residents, with most participants indicating that KSDLM uses technological platforms and community halls for interacting with the residents. In response to this question, one participant mentioned, “The King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality usually organizes town hall gatherings, forums, or community meetings in the different wards, and this enables the residents to speak with municipal leaders directly about their expectations and concerns, this offers a forum for open discussion and debate where we robustly engage with our residents.” Another respondent mentioned, “We also do public hearing sessions where locals (residents) may voice their thoughts and offer suggestions on certain projects, policies, or concerns. This is a constitutional obligation for the municipality, and we regard this as part of public participation or community engagement in other words.” One participant also stated, “As King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality we also make use of social media, the municipality's website to allow the residents to voice their opinions, grievances, and ideas. This satisfies the residents who use the internet frequently.” The responses provided by the participants indicate that the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality uses both

a manual or physical and a technological method of engaging or interacting with the residents and this is confirmed by Nasir, *et al* (2022) that, to meet the ever-increasing demand for basic services, the government employs both technological and manual methods of service delivery. The quantitative results from the residents also confirm these findings this is noted in Table 4 where most respondents, totaling 55 in frequency and 61.1% in valid percentage, indicated that KSDLM does send messages through WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to effectively communicate with residents.

*Taking advantage of technological opportunities*

It appears that King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality relies on the already existing technological platforms that are mostly utilised by most of the people. Based on the sentiments shared by the participants in relation to the above question, the findings of the study suggest that KSDLM does not have its own developed communication software application that it uses to engage its residents. Therefore, the study sought to assess the extent to which King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality uses technology as a communication tool to deliver services to its residents. In response to the question, one participant mentioned, “Active participation on social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, enable the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality to communicate with the residents more casually and interactively while also sharing emergency information and real-time updates.” Another participant stated, “The only way we use technology as a communication tool in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality is through social media platforms such as the Facebook municipal page.” This suggests that the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality does not have a specific software application that it uses to communicate with the residents besides Facebook and Twitter that are often mentioned by the participants, whereas the study conducted by Paiva, *et al* (2021) suggests that municipalities must take advantage of technological opportunities to improve service delivery. These findings are also confirmed by the results shown in table 5 which shows that KSDLM uses the popular and common social media applications that already exist, such as Facebook and Twitter (X) to engage with the residents this is affirmed by the majority of 55 respondents, representing 61.1% in valid percentage as shown in table 5.

*Technology opportunities to improve communication*

The findings of the study suggest that King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality has numerous challenges and factors that it needs to consider when integrating technology, with some challenges emanating from unequal access to digital technologies, to reluctance of employees and residents in using technology due to unfamiliarity and insecurity, and these were some of the concerns raised by the participants regarding the above question. It is because of this that the study also catered for any challenges that are or may be affecting King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality, in terms of using technology to effectively communicate with its residents and deliver services. In this regard a participant mentioned, “Unequal access to digital technologies among residents can create a digital divide. It is imperative for us as the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local municipality to guarantee that our technology projects are inclusive and consider the varied demands and capacities of our residents. The application of cutting-edge technological solutions may also be restricted by financial limitations.” Another participant stated, “King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality carefully spends its resources to give priority to technological initiatives that

will improve communication and service delivery. Older systems or restricted internet access are also examples of inadequate technological infrastructure that might impede the adoption of digital services. Resolving infrastructure issues is essential to a smooth adoption of new technologies.” One participant mentioned, “Because of unfamiliarity with the new technology the residents and municipal employees may be reluctant to accept new technologies. It is crucial to address these issues through open communication and training with both the residents and the municipality.” This argument is supported by the study of Mikalef, et al (2022), that the integration of technology in municipal service delivery should be gradually introduced, to accommodate all stakeholders. With the introduction of the new digital era, both municipal employees and the residents need to be prepared through training. The King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality also uses the most popular electronic platforms used by most of the people to communicate with its residents although it does not have a specific electronic tool designated for the use of its own residents. The findings indicate that KSDLM uses common social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (X) to communicate with its residents. These are the platforms that were commonly mentioned by the participants when asked which electronic tool King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality mostly communicates with and how effective it is. In answer to the above question, one participant stated, “An accessible web hub where residents can get updates, services, and information, interacting with residents on social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to exchange updates and news and to have two-way communication with the residents through technological platforms.” Another respondent mentioned, “We use social media platforms such as our municipal Facebook page, and yes this is effective as we are able to interact and share information with our residents.” These responses confirm the findings in the study conducted by Blasi, *et al* (2022) that social media platforms, which are part of a broader technological innovation, can enhance public participation for example, municipal Facebook pages, where residents can interact with the municipality. The residents also confirm these findings in Table 5 where the results show most respondents, totaling 55 in frequency, indicated that KSDLM does send messages through WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to effectively communicate with residents. This substantial majority represents 61.1% in valid percentage. In conclusion, responses highlight the significance of social media and online hubs in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality's communication strategy and acknowledge their efficacy in interacting with and informing residents.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper extensively discussed and displayed the critical role played by technology as a communication tool that municipalities may exploit to reach a wider audience when sharing public information related to issues of local government. It was found that majority of residents advocate for the gradual adoption of technology as means of fast-tracking communication with residents. Evidence on technological advancements was drawn, indicating a positive change in the use of technological gadgets as a means of enhancing communication with residents. The migration to new technological gadgets does not mean the abolishment of the old communication methods that were previously used by municipalities, but however means that various innovative platforms may be used to make public information to be accessible for all residents. It is in this regard that the following recommendations were made in this paper. Banafaa, *et al* (2023) note that, for



technological devices such as smartphones to work, strong connectivity or network is required. Considering the foregoing this paper recommends that King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality should strengthen its network connectivity across its wards to ensure that all the residents are covered in terms of network connection, and to enable them to have access to information communicated through technological devices. Proper network coverage ensures that people are easily accessible, informed and engaged with whatever is happening through social media (Kozinets, 2019). Hence, boosting the network coverage would assist King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality to communicate effectively using technology.

The paper also recommends that King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality should provide internet access to its residents by providing Wi-Fi spots in public spaces and in residential areas. Javed, *et al* (2022) claim that one of the crucial elements of smart cities, which are largely technologically driven, is the availability of internet access to all residents. The provision of Wi-Fi would enable the residents to view posts in the municipal page account and receive the information they need in the comfort of their homes or at any time convenient for them. Alternatively, the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality could provide mobile data for its residents monthly; however, this access cannot be entirely free, and the residents who would have access to these services should be charged a fee as the services would be too costly for the municipality to bear. Mbunge, *et al* (2022) state that buying mobile data in South Africa is more expensive than in any other country. Hence, this paper recommends that King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality could impose a certain subsidised fee on the residents, to cover the costs associated with buying mobile data for the residents and installing Wi-Fi throughout the wards of King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality

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# THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON WORK ATTITUDES IN TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: This study explores the impact of sexual harassment on key work attitudes job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement in tertiary educational institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. Utilizing both correlation and multiple regression analyses, the study consistently finds that sexual harassment negatively influences these work attitudes. Specifically, increased levels of sexual harassment correlate with decreased job satisfaction, lower employee commitment, and reduced job engagement among employees. These findings highlight the dual role of sexual harassment as both a violation of employee rights and a major barrier to employee productivity and well-being within academic institutions. The research underscores the particular concern regarding the negative effects of harassment on employee commitment and engagement. Employees who experience sexual harassment are more likely to feel disengaged from their work and less emotionally invested in their roles. This disengagement not only impacts individual morale but also threatens overall organizational performance, potentially undermining the academic environment and institutional success. The study advocates for a proactive approach in tertiary institutions to address sexual harassment, emphasizing the importance of creating a safer and more inclusive work environment that prioritizes the well-being of employees. In light of these findings, the study proposes several recommendations for tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, to mitigate the impact of sexual harassment. These include implementing comprehensive anti-harassment policies, conducting regular training and awareness programs, establishing safe and confidential reporting mechanisms, promoting organizational support for victims, and regularly monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of harassment prevention measures. By adopting these strategies, academic institutions can enhance employee satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, fostering a more positive and productive academic culture.*

*Keywords: sexual harassment, work attitudes, job satisfaction, employee commitment, job engagement, tertiary educational institutions*

## Introduction

Workplace sexual harassment has attracted significant global attention due to its profound effects on employees' well-being, job attitudes, and organizational culture. It involves unwelcome and inappropriate sexual behavior that creates a hostile or intimidating environment. While often associated with corporate settings, sexual harassment is

increasingly recognized as a prevalent issue in academic environments, including tertiary institutions. Academic settings, which prioritize intellectual growth and personal development, are expected to promote respect, safety, and inclusivity. However, persistent incidents of sexual harassment in these institutions disrupt professional experiences and negatively impact both academic and non-academic staff.

In Nigeria, tertiary education plays a vital role in personal and national development, yet the impact of workplace sexual harassment within these institutions remains underexplored. Considering the influence of tertiary institutions in shaping societal values, it is critical to understand how sexual harassment affects job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation, in these settings. Sexual harassment in Nigerian tertiary institutions is a widespread problem that undermines the academic and professional environments of these schools. Research highlights that many students, particularly women, face various forms of harassment, including unwanted verbal, physical, and non-verbal advances such as inappropriate comments, touching, and suggestive gestures, often perpetrated by staff or fellow students. These behaviors are frequently repetitive, creating a hostile and unsafe atmosphere for victims.

The consequences of sexual harassment on students are severe, affecting their mental health, academic performance, and overall engagement. Victims often experience heightened stress, anxiety, and depression, which can lead to reduced motivation and withdrawal from academic activities (Ogbonnaya et al., 2011). Fear of retaliation or inadequate institutional support frequently discourages victims from reporting these incidents, further exacerbating the issue. Like many African countries, Nigeria faces significant challenges in addressing gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in educational institutions. Despite the existence of laws and policies aimed at combating such misconduct, weak enforcement and cultural norms often discourage victims from speaking out. For instance, "quid pro quo" harassment—where academic or professional favors are offered in exchange for sexual acts—remains a pervasive issue in many institutions (Dranzoa, 2018; Koi et al., 2018).

Delta State, located in southern Nigeria, hosts numerous tertiary institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, which play a key role in advancing education and workforce development. However, like other parts of Nigeria, the state faces societal challenges, including sexual harassment within its educational system. The prevalence of this issue in Delta State poses unique challenges, shaped by the state's complex social dynamics, cultural norms, and institutional structures. Despite government efforts to address sexual harassment in educational institutions through policies and regulations, significant gaps remain in their implementation and enforcement. Mitigating sexual harassment in Nigerian tertiary institutions requires a multifaceted approach, including educational programs, safer campus policies, and stricter enforcement of anti-harassment laws. Additionally, a societal shift toward gender equality and respect for individual autonomy is essential. Comprehensive data on the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in Nigerian higher education is also necessary to guide effective policies and interventions. Moreover, the impact of sexual harassment on the job attitudes of staff in tertiary institutions, particularly in Delta State, requires focused research to inform targeted solutions.

### *Statement of Research Problem*

Sexual harassment is a global issue that affects various government institutions, and Nigeria is no exception. The harmful effects of this behavior on society and organizations are increasingly recognized, with growing awareness of the need to address both the behavior itself and its negative consequences. It is widely acknowledged that sexual harassment involves unwelcome and unacceptable actions that undermine workplace harmony and productivity. In Delta State, sexual harassment within tertiary institutions has serious implications for job attitudes, yet this remains an underexplored area in Nigerian academic research. This study aims to bridge that gap by investigating the impact of sexual harassment on the job attitudes of academic and non-academic staff in the state's tertiary institutions. Specifically, it examines how sexual harassment affects job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee motivation—factors essential for organizational success. Research has established that sexual harassment can lead to decreased job satisfaction, reduced motivation, and lower organizational commitment (Bjørkelo et al., 2021). These outcomes negatively affect employee performance, organizational effectiveness, and retention rates. In the context of tertiary institutions, such impacts can be particularly damaging, as they influence teaching quality, research output, and overall institutional performance. Although recent studies have addressed the issue of sexual harassment in Nigerian workplaces (e.g., Ladebo, 2003; Adebokun, 2005; Yusuf, 2008; Kofi, 2010; Imonikhe et al., 2011; Ige & Adeleke, 2012; Omony et al., 2013; Idris et al., 2016), most have focused on its prevalence in public universities (Okoro & Osawemen, 2005). However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how sexual harassment impacts employees' job attitudes within tertiary institutions. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the effects of sexual harassment on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation among staff in Delta State's tertiary institutions.

#### *Objective(s) of the Study*

The main objective of this study is to empirically examine the impact of sexual harassment on job attitudes in tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria. The specifically objectives are:

To examine the extent to which sexual harassment influence job satisfaction in the tertiary institutions in Delta State;

To determine the extent to which sexual harassment influence employees' commitment in the tertiary institutions in Delta State;

To determine the extent to which sexual harassment influence job engagement in the tertiary institutions in Delta State.

#### *Research Hypotheses*

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between sexual harassment and job satisfaction in the tertiary institutions in Delta State.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between sexual harassment and employees' commitment in the tertiary institutions in Delta State.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between sexual harassment and job engagement in the tertiary institutions in Delta State.



### *Justification for the Study*

While sexual harassment has been extensively studied in other sectors, particularly in corporate settings, research focusing on the educational sector in Nigeria is scarce. This is particularly true for tertiary institutions, where the dynamics between students and staff may add complexity to the issue. Understanding how sexual harassment affects the job attitudes of staff in these institutions is crucial for several reasons:

**Impact on Institutional Performance:** The negative effects of sexual harassment on job attitudes can lead to reduced productivity and performance. In an academic environment, this can manifest in lower teaching effectiveness, decreased research output, and a general decline in institutional morale.

**Employee Well-Being:** Sexual harassment can have severe consequences on the physical and psychological well-being of staff members. By understanding these effects, institutions can develop more comprehensive support systems for victims.

**Policy Development:** This research will provide valuable data that can inform the development of more effective policies and practices within Nigerian tertiary institutions. This is particularly important given the growing focus on gender equality and workplace safety globally.

**Contributions to Academic Literature:** The study will contribute to the limited body of literature on sexual harassment in Nigerian tertiary institutions, offering a localized perspective on this issue and its impact on job attitudes in the academic context.

## **Literature Review**

### *Concept of Sexual Harassment*

Like most social constructs, sexual harassment is not easy to define, nor does it involve a homogenous set of behaviours. The interpretation of sexual harassment depends on the context. Globally, sexual harassment provisions can be found in criminal codes, labour codes, health and safety legislation, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws, as well as education licensing statutes. Some countries such as Australia, United States and the United Kingdom have legislation/policies that specifically prohibit sexual harassment in education institutions while other countries have sexual harassment legislation that do not include education institutions (Joseph, 2015). Generally, internationally instruments (such as the United Nations and Regional Treaty Systems, International Labour Organization, Organization of American States, EU Rules on Gender Equality, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), defined sexual harassment broadly as a form of violence. Like most social constructs, sexual harassment is not easy to define, nor does it involve a homogenous set of behaviours. The interpretation of sexual harassment depends on the context. Globally, sexual harassment provisions can be found in criminal codes, labour codes, health and safety legislation, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws, as well as education licensing statutes. Some countries such as Australia, United States and the United Kingdom have legislation/policies that specifically prohibit sexual harassment in education institutions while other countries have sexual harassment legislation that do not include education institutions (Joseph, 2015). Generally, internationally instruments (such as the United Nations and Regional Treaty Systems, International Labour Organization, Organization of American States, EU Rules on Gender Equality, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), defined sexual harassment broadly as a form of violence against

women and as discriminatory treatment v hue national laws focus more closely on the illegal conduct (Joseph, 2015; Myung & Park, 2016). As a result, there exists a broad continuum of behaviours that is viewed as sexual harassment so there is no single definition for what constitutes prohibited behaviour. However, implicit in all of these approaches is the fact that sexual harassment is unwanted sexual behaviour and is harmful to the victim. According to Sharma (2013), sexual harassment in educational institution includes: (i) Inappropriate sexualized comments or gestures; (ii) unwanted physical contact such as touching, pinching or grouping through to threats of exam failure; (iii) sexual assault and rape. He further stated that the perpetrators can be students, lecturers or administrative staff.

Therefore, sexual harassment is a term which is used to typically express a conclusion or set of conclusions that the behaviour at issue is properly judged objectionable on grounds that have something to do with sex (Francis, 2001) pointed out that one of these conclusions is legal; that behaviour is sex discrimination, prohibited under State and Federal Civil Right status. Another is moral; that the behaviour violates appropriated standards of respect for others when sexual differences on sexual behaviour are violated. Still another is social; that the behaviour crosses line of expected conventions of civility in the development of sexual relationships.

A wide variety of behaviour has been described as harassment, hence the need for concise definition of sexual harassment. Makaita, et al, 2015; defines sexual harassment as an “undesired conducts of a sexual nature that affects the dignity of men and women at work which can be either physical or verbal in nature”. Mackinnon (1979) has described sexual harassment as “any action occurring with the workplace whereby women are treated as objective of the male sexual prerogative”. Sexual harassment is an immoral act that has serious implication not only for the harassers but also for perpetrators, manager, organizations and Government at large. Considering its effects on victim, it undermines his/her physical and psychological state of mind. Therefore, sexual harassment is wrong. It can also be costly to employees. The problems today are likely to surface around more subtle forms of sexual harassment such as unwanted looks or comments of colour jokes, pinups display in the workplace, misinterpretations of where the line between “being friendly” ends and “harassment” begins.

Maslow’s theory of motivation subscribes to the fact the human beings perform better when their needs are well catered for. Employees are intrinsically motivated from the internal traits that influence people’s behaviours employees are motivated when they feel that their work is interesting, challenging and important (Makaita et al, 2015). However, according to Armstrong (2009), sexual harassment creates a hostile working environment, stress, anxiety and decreased job satisfaction which leads to demotivation. As per previous research, we expect that two major aspect of interpersonal job dissatisfaction will be affected namely coworker and supervisor dissatisfaction, because most sexual harassment incidents are perpetrated by either coworkers or by people in supervisory positions. Sexual harassment experiences at work may have some implications for victim’s affective attachment to the institution or organization to the extent that these employees feel that the institution is partly responsible for the occurrence and frequency of such incidents. Sexual harassment at work also result to work withdrawal and job withdrawal. These include absenteeism, tiredness, unfavourable job behaviours, avoiding work tasks, lateness, neglect

fullness, and even escapist drinking. Both types of withdrawal have been found to be significantly related to experiencing sexual harassment at work.

At this point, it is essential to discuss the impact of sexual harassment of components of job attitude:

### *Concept of Work Attitudes*

Work attitudes refer to the evaluations, beliefs, and feelings that employees hold towards their jobs, organizations, and work-related activities. These attitudes significantly influence various organizational outcomes, such as employee performance, satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. Understanding work attitudes is crucial for organizations seeking to improve productivity, reduce turnover, and enhance employee well-being. The key components of work attitudes include job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement.

#### 1. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely studied aspects of work attitudes. It refers to the positive or negative feelings that an individual has towards their job. Job satisfaction encompasses various facets, including pay, work conditions, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, opportunities for growth, and the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards associated with the work. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction can be defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences".

**Key Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction:** These include the nature of the work itself, compensation, recognition, advancement opportunities, and relationships within the workplace (Judge et al., 2001). **Impacts of Job Satisfaction:** High levels of job satisfaction are associated with better employee performance, higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior, lower absenteeism, and reduced turnover intentions (Spector, 1997).

#### 2. Employee Commitment

Employee commitment refers to the psychological attachment that an employee has towards their organization. It is an essential factor for retaining employees and ensuring organizational success. Commitment can be divided into three types: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

**Affective Commitment:** This involves emotional attachment to the organization and a desire to remain because of identification with the organization's goals and values.

**Continuance Commitment:** This is based on the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization, such as financial loss or lack of alternative employment opportunities.

**Normative Commitment:** This reflects a sense of obligation to stay with the organization due to personal values, such as a belief in loyalty or organizational culture. **Impacts of Employee Commitment:** Higher employee commitment has been linked to increased job performance, better organizational citizenship behavior, and lower levels of turnover and absenteeism (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

#### 3. Job Engagement

Job engagement refers to the level of an employee's enthusiasm, energy, and involvement in their work. It is characterized by high levels of motivation, vigor, and dedication. Engaged employees are fully absorbed in their tasks and often demonstrate a sense of purpose in their work. Schaufeli et al. (2002) describe work engagement as "a positive,

fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption".

**Key Factors Influencing Job Engagement:** These include job resources (e.g., social support, feedback, autonomy), organizational culture, leadership style, and the alignment between personal values and organizational goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). **Impacts of Job Engagement:** Engaged employees tend to exhibit higher productivity, creativity, and organizational loyalty. Additionally, job engagement is associated with lower burnout levels and greater job satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002).

#### *Sexual Harassment and Job Satisfaction in Tertiary Institutions in Delta State*

Sexual harassment in tertiary institutions has significant negative effects on job satisfaction, particularly in Delta State, Nigeria. Studies highlight that sexual harassment undermines professional and personal well-being, which is directly linked to reduced job satisfaction among staff and faculty members. **Key Impacts of Sexual Harassment on Job Satisfaction** include:

**Psychological and Emotional Consequences:** Victims often report heightened stress, anxiety, and depression, which adversely affect their mental health and job performance. These psychological effects reduce their ability to engage positively with their roles, resulting in diminished satisfaction and productivity at work (Okolie, 2018).

**Physical Health Implications:** Harassment may also lead to physical symptoms like headaches, insomnia, and gastrointestinal issues. These health challenges exacerbate workplace dissatisfaction as individuals struggle to manage their roles effectively under physical duress (Bjørkelo, B., Gjerstad & Heidenreich, 2021).

**Professional Disengagement:** Victims frequently experience reduced commitment to their institutions, including a lack of trust in the administration. This is often tied to perceptions that institutions do not adequately address sexual harassment, creating a culture of impunity and insecurity (Okolie, 2018).

**Organizational Consequences:** Sexual harassment can result in high turnover rates and absenteeism, which further strains institutional resources. The organizational culture becomes less conducive to collaboration, as individuals lose confidence in institutional policies and leadership (Bjørkelo, B., Gjerstad & Heidenreich, 2021).

**Policy Implementation Challenges:** Research has shown that while anti-sexual harassment policies exist in many Nigerian universities, their enforcement is often inadequate. Limited awareness and inclusivity in policy development reduce their effectiveness, further contributing to dissatisfaction among staff (Fasanmi & Seyama, 2024).

To mitigate these effects, institutions must prioritize the enforcement of anti-sexual harassment policies. This includes raising awareness, involving stakeholders in policy development, and ensuring transparent communication and monitoring mechanisms. Institutions should also provide psychological support for victims and establish strict punitive measures for perpetrators

#### *Sexual Harassment and Employees' Commitment in the Tertiary Institutions in Delta State*

Sexual harassment significantly affects employees' commitment in tertiary institutions, particularly in Delta State, Nigeria. These impacts manifest through diminished workplace morale, reduced organizational loyalty, and higher turnover rates, ultimately undermining institutional performance. The key impacts include:

**Psychological and Emotional Strain:** Victims of sexual harassment often experience anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, which compromise their ability to stay committed to their roles. Studies suggest that repeated harassment creates a hostile work environment, leading to a decline in job satisfaction and personal fulfillment within the workplace (Akpotor, 2023).

**Decreased Job Performance:** Harassment contributes to decreased focus, productivity, and work quality. In an academic context, this can disrupt teaching effectiveness and administrative responsibilities. Research in Nigerian universities highlights these challenges, showing that harassment affects concentration and academic motivation (Ofojebe, (2024).

**Institutional Disengagement:** Employees subjected to harassment often feel undervalued and unsupported, leading to disengagement from institutional objectives. The absence of adequate anti-harassment policies or ineffective implementation exacerbates this issue, reducing employees' sense of belonging and loyalty to the institution (Akpotor, 2023).

**Organizational Turnover:** Sexual harassment contributes to high turnover rates, as affected employees may choose to leave toxic environments rather than endure continuous abuse. This departure of skilled personnel further destabilizes institutional operations and continuity (Odor, 2023).

**Cultural and Structural Issues:** Persistent gender biases, inadequate legal frameworks, and weak enforcement of institutional policies on harassment perpetuate the problem. Institutions often lack robust mechanisms to address complaints, creating barriers for victims seeking justice (Ofojebe, (2024).

**Prevalence in Academia:** Harassment in educational settings often involves power dynamics, with perpetrators leveraging their positions against vulnerable staff or students. This systemic issue calls for targeted interventions and stricter regulations (Ofojebe, (2024). To address these challenges and foster a commitment-friendly environment, institutions should implement comprehensive policies against harassment, ensure effective reporting mechanisms and survivor support systems, provide regular training on workplace ethics and harassment prevention and promote a culture of inclusivity and respect to reduce stigma and retaliation. These interventions can help mitigate the adverse effects of harassment and rebuild employee commitment in tertiary institutions.

### *Sexual Harassment and Job Engagement in the Tertiary Institutions in Delta State*

Sexual harassment in tertiary institutions, particularly in Delta State, has a profound impact on job engagement among staff, eroding their commitment, performance, and sense of workplace belonging. Employees who experience harassment often suffer from psychological distress, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased motivation. These factors directly affect their engagement levels, undermining their ability to contribute meaningfully to institutional goals. The key impacts of sexual harassment on job engagement include:

**Decreased Emotional Engagement:** Victims often experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, leading to a loss of enthusiasm for their roles. Emotional detachment from work impairs creativity and collaboration, which are critical for academic success (Akpotor, 2023).

**Impaired Professional Relationships:** Harassment creates a hostile work environment, straining relationships with colleagues and supervisors. This lack of a supportive atmosphere diminishes trust and collaboration (Okolie, 2018).

**Lower Job Performance:** The stress associated with harassment often results in absenteeism, lower productivity, and a lack of focus, which hinders the ability to meet academic and administrative responsibilities (Akpotor, 2023).

**Turnover Intentions:** Many employees consider leaving their positions to escape the toxic environment, resulting in talent drain and increased recruitment costs for institutions.

**Reduced Organizational Loyalty:** Experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment diminishes trust in institutional policies and leadership, leading to a decline in long-term commitment and advocacy for the institution (Okolie, 2018).

In Delta State, research has highlighted the widespread prevalence of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions, exacerbated by cultural stigmas and inadequate enforcement of protective policies. Although efforts such as the Nigerian *Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institutions Bill* aim to address these issues, gaps in implementation remain a significant challenge.

A 2023 study emphasized that effective anti-harassment measures, including robust reporting mechanisms and awareness campaigns, are essential to fostering a safer and more engaging workplace for academic staff. Without these interventions, institutions risk a continued cycle of disengagement and declining organizational effectiveness (Ibezim, 2023; Eniola & Dada, 2023).

### *Theoretical Framework*

#### *Social Exchange Theory (SET)*

The proponent of Social Exchange Theory (SET) is George C. Homans. He introduced the theory in 1958 through his foundational work titled "*Social Behavior as Exchange*." Homans conceptualized SET to explain social behavior in terms of an exchange process, where individuals interact to maximize rewards and minimize costs in relationships (Homans, 1958).

Social Exchange Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is highly relevant for understanding the impact of sexual harassment on work attitudes in tertiary institutions in Delta State. SET posits that relationships in the workplace are governed by reciprocal exchanges of resources such as trust, respect, and support. Employees form positive work attitudes when these exchanges are fair and equitable. However, sexual harassment disrupts this balance, leading to negative work attitudes (Blau, 1964). The key tenets of SET include;

**Violation of Reciprocity:** Sexual harassment undermines the fundamental expectation of respect and fairness in workplace relationships. Victims feel devalued and disrespected, eroding their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

**Emotional and Psychological Costs:** Harassment adds emotional burdens that outweigh any perceived benefits of remaining in the workplace, fostering disengagement and reduced morale.

**Perceived Organizational Support (POS):** When institutions fail to address harassment adequately, employees perceive a lack of organizational support, further diminishing trust and work engagement (Hobfoll, 1989).

### *Application to Tertiary Institutions in Delta State*

In Delta State's tertiary institutions, systemic issues such as gender power imbalances, inadequate anti-harassment policies, and weak enforcement exacerbate the negative effects of harassment. Victims often experience reduced motivation and loyalty, which can influence organizational outcomes, including productivity and employee retention. Social Exchange Theory provides a robust lens for analyzing how sexual harassment disrupts workplace relationships, leading to negative shifts in employee attitudes and institutional outcomes. Any institutions in Delta State in particular and Nigeria in general that fail to implement robust anti-harassment policies exacerbate perceptions of injustice, as highlighted by recent studies on policy gaps in Nigerian universities.

### *Review of Related Empirical Studies*

Sexual harassment in tertiary educational institutions has emerged as a critical issue affecting not only the victims but also the broader work attitudes of employees and students. This empirical review synthesizes recent studies that explore the prevalence, consequences, and implications of sexual harassment within higher education settings, particularly focusing on how it impacts work attitudes such as commitment, job satisfaction, and overall morale. Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) study indicate that sexual harassment is a pervasive problem in tertiary institutions globally, including Nigeria. A systematic review highlighted that approximately one in four female students experiences sexual harassment during their academic tenure. This prevalence creates an environment of fear and anxiety, which can significantly affect work attitudes among both students and staff.

The impact of sexual harassment on work attitudes is profound. Victims often experience decreased job satisfaction and commitment to their institution. A study conducted in Taraba State, Nigeria by Akpotor (2023), found that female students subjected to sexual harassment reported lower levels of engagement and commitment to their academic responsibilities due to the distress caused by such experiences. Duru and Ofojebe (2024) study revealed that sexual harassment not only affects individual victims but also contributes to a toxic institutional climate that can deter potential students and staff from engaging with the institution. Research indicates that institutions with high reported cases of sexual harassment suffer from diminished reputation and lower enrollment rates, which ultimately affect funding and resources. Many victims of sexual harassment are reluctant to report incidents due to fears of retaliation or disbelief from authorities. A study highlighted that inadequate reporting mechanisms and a culture of silence within institutions exacerbate the problem, leading to underreporting and a lack of accountability for perpetrators (Ofojebe & Suleiman, 2024).

The need for robust policies addressing sexual harassment is critical for improving work attitudes within tertiary institutions. Effective policies should include clear definitions of unacceptable behavior, reporting procedures, and consequences for violators. Institutions that have implemented comprehensive sexual harassment policies have reported improvements in employee satisfaction and institutional climate (Ibunge & Okwuosa, 2024). The empirical evidence underscores the significant impact of sexual harassment on work attitudes within tertiary educational institutions. The prevalence of such behaviors leads to decreased commitment and job satisfaction among affected individuals while fostering a toxic institutional climate that can deter engagement from both current and

prospective members of the academic community. Addressing these issues through effective policies and support mechanisms is essential for fostering a safe and productive educational environment.

### Research Methodology

Descriptive and explanatory survey design. This design is suitable for examining the prevalence of sexual harassment and its relationship with work attitudes while exploring causality. The survey method allows for data collection from a large population, ensuring a broader understanding of the phenomenon in Delta State's tertiary institutions. The study's population includes the academic and non-academic staff of three tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. These institutions are Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku (500), Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro (500) and Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe (500). Total 1500 participants. The population was divided into two strata: academic and non-academic staff. This ensures representation from both categories of employees across the institutions. Out of the 1500 copies of questionnaire distributed, we were able to retrieved 1373 copies of the questionnaire, resulting in an 91.5% response rate.

Data was collected via physical distribution and online surveys for accessibility. Experience of sexual harassment was adapted from the *Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ)* (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Work attitudes was adapted from job satisfaction scale (Spector, 1985), organizational commitment questionnaire (Meyer & Allen, 1991) and work engagement scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The questionnaire will be subjected to content validity by experts in organizational behaviour and public administration. Cronbach's alpha was used to ensure internal consistency, targeting a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher. The coefficients of the two constructs for Cronbach's alpha range from 0.757 to 0.792. Before the questionnaire was applied, experts in the field from the Department of Public Administration were consulted extensively. Consequently, this study's constructs showed excellent internal reliability and uniformity. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) was used for data analysis with the help of statistical package of social science (SPSS) software. Responses was anonymized to protect participants' identities. Participants was informed about the purpose of the study, ensuring voluntary participation and Ethical clearance was obtained from a relevant institutional review board (IRB).

### Results

As stated in Table 1, the distribution of respondents' categories according to age, gender, and authority level is depicted by the demographic features.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics Results**

	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	853	62.1
	Male	520	37.9
Age	Total	1373	100
	<30 years	244	17.8
	31 - 40 years	434	31.6
	41 - 50 years	378	27.5
	Above 50 years	317	23.1
	Total	1373	100



Level	Subordinates	436	31.8
	Supervisors	231	16.8
	Senior Officers	390	28.4
	Directors	316	23.0
	Total	1373	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

**Gender Distribution:** Female respondents accounted for 853 individuals (62.1%). The majority of respondents are female, indicating significant female representation in the study population. Male respondents accounted for 520 individuals (37.9%). Males form a smaller proportion, reflecting either a gender imbalance in the institutions or sampling variance.

**Age Distribution:** Below 30 years accounted for 244 respondents (17.8%). This represents younger employees, likely in junior roles or early-career stages. 31–40 years accounted for 434 respondents (31.6%). This age group constitutes the largest proportion, representing mid-career professionals. 41–50 years accounted for 378 respondents (27.5%). Employees in this age range are likely to hold senior or more stable career positions. Above 50 years accounted for 317 respondents (23.1%). Older employees comprise a significant portion, reflecting experienced staff or those nearing retirement. The age distribution shows a balanced representation across different career stages, with a slight concentration in the 31–40-year range.

**Organizational Level Distribution:** Subordinates accounted for 436 respondents (31.8%). This group constitutes the largest proportion, reflecting the prevalence of junior staff in the institutions. Supervisors accounted for 231 respondents (16.8%). Supervisors make up a smaller proportion, indicating fewer mid-level management roles. Senior officers accounted for 390 respondents (28.4%). This group is substantial, showing a significant presence of mid-to-high-level professionals. Directors accounted for 316 respondents (23.0%). Directors form a sizable group, representing top-level management. The level distribution indicates a diverse mix of junior, middle, and senior management roles, with subordinates forming the largest proportion.

**Overall Observations**

The data reveals a workforce with a predominance of females and a concentration in the mid-career (31–40 years) and subordinate levels. This demographic structure may influence work attitudes, perceptions of sexual harassment, and responses to organizational policies. For instance, younger or subordinate staff might experience higher vulnerability to harassment compared to senior staff.

**Testing of Hypotheses:** The table 2 presents the relationship between sexual harassment and components of work attitudes in selected tertiary educational institutions in Delta State. The strength and direction of the relationships are determined by Pearson correlation coefficients, and their significance is assessed using a 2-tailed test at the 0.01 significance level.

**Table 2 Correlation Coefficient Matrix**

Variables		Sexual harassment
Job satisfaction	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.149** .000

	N	1373
Employees' commitment	Pearson correlation	-.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1373
Job engagement	Pearson correlation	-.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	1373

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 levels (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

The table 2, presents a correlation coefficient matrix showing the relationship between sexual harassment and three variables: job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement.

Sexual harassment and Job satisfaction: The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.149, which is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ , which is less than the 0.05 significance level). This indicates a small, negative correlation between sexual harassment and job satisfaction, meaning that as instances of sexual harassment increase, job satisfaction tends to decrease.

Sexual harassment and Employees' commitment: The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.210, also statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). This suggests a moderate negative correlation, indicating that higher levels of sexual harassment are associated with lower levels of employee commitment.

Sexual harassment and Job engagement: The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.241, statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). This shows a moderate negative correlation, suggesting that as sexual harassment increases, job engagement decreases.

Summary: All three relationships are statistically significant and negative, implying that sexual harassment has a detrimental effect on job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement. The more prevalent sexual harassment is, the lower the levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement among employees in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria.

**Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis Results**

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Beta		
Constant	-.695		-3.592	.000
Job satisfaction	-.308	-.211	-7.399	.005
Employees' commitment	-.533	-.328	-6.856	.003
Job engagement	-.379	-.330	-9.580	.001
R	-.588			
R <sup>2</sup>	.472			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.445			
F	.13.139			

\*Significant at 0.005 level

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

The table 3, presents the results of a multiple regression analysis, where the independent variable is presumably some measure of outcome (not listed here), and the dependent variables are *job satisfaction*, *employee commitment*, and *job engagement*. Below is the interpretation of the table:

Job Satisfaction ( $B = -0.308$ ): A one-unit increase in sexual harassment leads to a decrease of 0.308 in the dependent variable (job satisfaction), holding other variables constant. This negative relationship suggests that as sexual harassment increases, the job satisfaction tends to decrease.

Employees' Commitment ( $B = -0.533$ ): A one-unit increase in sexual harassment leads to a decrease of 0.533 in the employee commitment, indicating a stronger negative impact compared to job satisfaction.

Job Engagement ( $B = -0.379$ ): A one-unit increase in sexual harassment leads to a decrease of 0.379 in the job engagement, indicating another negative relationship in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria. All independent variables (job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement) have a significant negative impact on the dependent variable, with job engagement showing the strongest effect. The model as a whole is statistically significant, and about 47.2% of the variance in the dependent variables is explained by the predictor. The significant t-values and low p-values indicate that the relationships observed are unlikely to be due to random chance.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between sexual harassment and three key workplace variables: job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement. All correlations are negative, suggesting that sexual harassment negatively impacts these workplace outcomes. The statistical significance of these correlations is confirmed by the p-values, which are all less than 0.05 ( $p = 0.000$ ), indicating that these relationships are not due to random chance. For sexual harassment and job satisfaction, the result suggests a small but significant negative correlation, meaning that as the frequency or severity of sexual harassment increases, employees' job satisfaction tends to decrease. This finding is consistent with previous research that links workplace harassment to lower levels of job satisfaction (Baptiste, 2008). A decrease in job satisfaction due to harassment could be explained by the emotional distress, anxiety, and decreased morale that sexual harassment can cause among employees (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). For sexual harassment and employee commitment, the result moderated negative correlation suggests that higher levels of sexual harassment are associated with lower levels of employee commitment. Employees who experience or witness harassment may feel less loyal to their organization, reducing their emotional attachment and willingness to remain in the job (Rizzo et al., 1970). This finding aligns with studies that highlight how negative workplace experiences, including harassment, erode organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

For sexual harassment and job engagement, the result moderated negative correlation indicates that as sexual harassment increases, employees' engagement in their jobs decreases. Harassment may lead to disengagement, where employees feel less motivated and less emotionally invested in their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The reduction in engagement may be due to feelings of insecurity, a toxic work environment, and reduced trust in the organization.

Table 3 shows the results of a multiple regression analysis, where sexual harassment is the independent variable, and the dependent variables are job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement. The results of the regression analysis provide a deeper understanding of the strength and significance of these relationships. For job satisfaction, the finding suggests that for each unit increase in sexual harassment, job satisfaction

decreases, holding other variables constant. This confirms the negative relationship identified in Table 2 and reinforces the idea that harassment leads to lower levels of job satisfaction.

For employee commitment, the finding shows that sexual harassment has a stronger negative impact on employee commitment compared to job satisfaction. Specifically, for each unit increase in sexual harassment, employee commitment decreases. The larger magnitude of the coefficient suggests that harassment may have a more pronounced effect on employees' psychological attachment to the organization.

For job engagement, the finding indicates that sexual harassment leads to a decrease in job engagement for each unit increase in harassment. Job engagement is the strongest predictor of the outcome variable, suggesting that employees who experience harassment are significantly less engaged in their jobs, which could ultimately affect productivity and organizational performance.

Therefore, the regression analysis confirms that sexual harassment has a statistically significant negative impact on job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria. Among these, job commitment and job engagement are more strongly affected by sexual harassment than job satisfaction. The model explains nearly half of the variance in the dependent variables, indicating that sexual harassment is a significant determinant of these workplace outcomes. The results also confirm that the relationships observed in the correlation analysis are robust and unlikely to be due to random chance.

The findings from both Table 2 and Table 3 consistently show that sexual harassment in the workplace has a detrimental effect on key employee attitudes, such as job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement in selected tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria. These findings are consistent with the broader literature on workplace harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Schaufeli et al., 2002), which highlights how harassment can undermine organizational outcomes by decreasing employees' satisfaction, commitment, and overall engagement with their work. tertiary institutions in Delta State must take proactive steps to address sexual harassment and create a more supportive, safe, and inclusive work environment to improve employee well-being and enhance organizational performance.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has examined the impact of sexual harassment on key work attitudes (job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement) in tertiary educational institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. The findings from both the correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis consistently indicate that sexual harassment has a significant negative effect on these work attitudes. Specifically, higher levels of sexual harassment were associated with decreased job satisfaction, lower employee commitment, and diminished job engagement among employees. The study highlights that sexual harassment is not only a violation of employee rights but also a major hindrance to the productivity and well-being of employees in academic institutions. The negative impact of harassment on employee commitment and job engagement is particularly concerning, as it suggests that employees who experience harassment are more likely to feel disengaged from their work and less emotionally invested in their roles. This, in turn, can undermine organizational performance, employee morale, and the overall academic environment.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for tertiary institutions in Delta State to adopt more effective measures to prevent sexual harassment, support affected employees, and create a safer and more inclusive work environment. By addressing sexual harassment, institutions can not only protect the rights and well-being of their staff but also improve organizational outcomes and foster a more productive and positive academic culture.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the need for comprehensive policies, training programs, and support mechanisms to combat sexual harassment in the workplace. It also adds to the broader literature on workplace harassment, contributing valuable insights into its detrimental effects within the Nigerian educational context. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made for tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria:

**Implement Anti-Harassment Policies:** Institutions should establish and enforce comprehensive anti-harassment policies that clearly define sexual harassment, provide reporting mechanisms, and outline consequences for perpetrators.

**Provide Training and Awareness Programs:** Regular training programs should be conducted to raise awareness about sexual harassment and its effects on employees. These programs should educate employees about their rights and the importance of creating a respectful and inclusive work environment.

**Create Safe Reporting Channels:** Institutions should ensure that there are safe, confidential, and accessible channels for employees to report incidents of harassment without fear of retaliation.

**Promote Organizational Support:** Institutions should foster an organizational culture that supports victims of sexual harassment. This can include offering counseling services, ensuring prompt investigations, and providing appropriate support to affected employees.

**Monitor and Evaluate:** Regular assessments should be carried out to monitor the prevalence of harassment and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented policies and programs.

### *Contribution to Knowledge*

This study contributes to existing literature by:

**Providing Empirical Evidence:** It offers empirical evidence on the negative impact of sexual harassment on job satisfaction, employee commitment, and job engagement in the context of Nigerian tertiary institutions.

**Reinforcing the Link between Harassment and Workplace Outcomes:** The study reinforces the idea that sexual harassment is a significant predictor of negative employee outcomes, which is consistent with global findings in workplace harassment research.

**Contextualizing the Findings in Nigeria:** The study adds to the body of knowledge on workplace harassment in the African context, particularly within Nigerian tertiary institutions, where there has been limited research on this issue.

**Policy Implications:** The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and administrators in tertiary institutions to formulate strategies and interventions aimed at reducing sexual harassment and its harmful effects on employees.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The study relies on self-reported data from staff members, which may lead to biases such as social desirability bias or reluctance to report incidents of sexual harassment due to fear of retaliation.

Solution: To mitigate this, anonymity and confidentiality will be emphasized to ensure participants feel safe to share their experiences honestly. Additionally, the study will use a diverse sample across different institutions to capture varied perspectives.

The study focuses only on tertiary institutions in Delta State, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Nigeria or beyond. The findings will be presented within the specific context of Delta State, and comparisons will be made with studies from other regions or sectors, if applicable, to provide a broader understanding of the issue. Gaining access to institutional records and participants may be challenging due to institutional privacy policies or reluctance to discuss sensitive issues such as sexual harassment. Permission will be sought from relevant authorities in the institutions to ensure access to staff. Researchers will also build rapport with participants and emphasize the importance of the study to encourage participation.

Participants may have difficulty recalling specific instances of sexual harassment, especially if the incidents occurred a long time ago. The study focused on recent incidents and provide clear guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment to help respondents recall and report experiences accurately. The sensitive nature of sexual harassment and the cultural context in Nigeria may make some participants uncomfortable discussing such issues openly. The study will ensure that it approaches participants with sensitivity and respect, using appropriate language and framing. Additionally, informed consent will be obtained, and participants will be assured that their responses will be kept confidential.

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## ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION ON THE WELL-BEING OF THE MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: This study examined the effects of irregular migration on the well-being of the migrant households in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. A cross-sectional research design and purposive sampling technique were adopted. Questionnaire was employed as the research instrument for this study with 716 respondents deemed usable. The theoretical and analytical framework that directs this study combines the New Economics of Labor Migration theory with the neo-classical theory, making evident their shared premise that irregular migration can be seen as a household-calculated strategy to maintain rural well-being. With the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23, the acquired data were examined using percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson's coefficient of correlation, and linear regression analysis. The well-being of migrant households in the Delta and Edo States is positively and considerably influenced by irregular movement, according to the study. The study also showed that irregular migration improves welfare and means of subsistence, increases financial remittances, lowers family poverty, and promotes the construction of infrastructure in the home areas of migrants in the Delta and Edo States. The study came to the conclusion that, for all people, including those in the Delta and Edo States, irregular migration is an unavoidable human phenomenon in the modern day. To ensure that migrants understand the ramifications of irregular migration and the value of regular migration to the state and communities, not simply their family members, the government should actively engage migrants and maintain contact with them, rather than actively discouraging migration. The study concluded that many of the properties constructed in the neighborhoods are owned or occupied by the immigrants and their families; it is undeniable that irregular migration has had an impact on numerous communities in the Delta and Edo States. Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the study made several recommendations, including that the governments of Delta and Edo State should appoint honorable people, notable figures, and bright academics to develop and carry out policies aimed at promoting migrants' interest in the establishment of infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, educational institutions, transportation, renewable energy, solar power, and modular refineries. In the foreseeable future, this will significantly lessen irregular migration in the Delta and Edo States.*

*Keywords: Irregular migration, welfare, financial remittances, reduce poverty, infrastructural development*

### Introduction

Discussions and debates about the effects of international migration, particularly as they relate to destination locations and the fate of irregular migrants have become more prevalent in recent years due to changes in global migration in terms of numbers, reach,

political significance, and impact, as well as growing media interest worldwide. Public opinions have been shaped by this, and it is thought that this is a recurring theme in the contemporary worldwide political discourse. According to a Podesta (2019) study, throughout the last ten years, there has been an increase in migration, mainly from developing nations. Financial crises, displacement from natural disasters like wars and civil unrest, poverty, starvation, and underdevelopment, as well as people's desire to better their lives and shield themselves from such tragedies, are most likely the causes of this increase in migration. Additionally, migrants migrate in search of social capital, educational chances, and the chance to pick up new skills; however, these reasons are not as strong as the preceding ones. Studies have shown that there are many benefits to international migration, such as the potential for economic expansion and emancipation. But it poses a lot of challenges for migrants, their families, the communities they are leaving behind, and the place of origin (Nwafor & Onalu, 2023).

The movement of individuals across borders in a manner that contravenes the immigration regulations of the receiving nation is referred to as irregular migration. Unauthorized or undocumented immigrants are another name for irregular immigration. Globally, irregular migration has been shown to be on the rise recently, particularly from poorer to richer nations. Both inside and beyond Africa, a large number of migrants are undocumented. On the other hand, Nwafor and Onalu (2023) report that the number of those detected in Nigeria seems to be rising lately. The reasons behind irregular migration vary from person to person and from country to country. Sociologists have long used the "push-pull" model to analyze migration. Famine, flooding, low agricultural output, and poverty are examples of "push factors" that occur at home and encourage migration, whereas "pull factors" are those that exist elsewhere (abroad) and draw migrants (Uchechukwu, 2022). Unlawful immigrants run the risk of exposing both themselves and the local population to hazards including the spread of contagious or infectious diseases. This is separate from the potential for being apprehended and expelled. Many irregular immigrants engage in criminal activities, slavery, prostitution, and even death. They may also be trafficked for exploitation, especially for sexual gain. There have been reports of over one thousand irregular immigrants dying every year along the border between the United States and Mexico, among other places. During the sweltering summer months, exposure-related deaths also happen in the deserts of the Southwest region of the United States (Nwafor, Uzuegbu, Tanyi & Azubuine, 2022).

Nigerians from the Delta and Edo States have made a substantial contribution to the global outflow of migrants, with hundreds of teenagers every year using any means necessary to travel outside. The path can be challenging at times, resulting in the harvesting of organs, deaths, loss of talent, intellectual flight, and estrangement from relatives. The recognized risks of migrating in search of their calculated returns, as well as the impact of such movements on the welfare and means of subsistence of the migrant's family members, the growth of the migrant community, and eventually the states and Nigeria as a whole, do not deter the young people, though. Irregular migration frequently has a profound impact not only on the individual migrant but also on their communities and families. Based on this, the study evaluated how irregular migration affected the quality of life for migrant households in Delta and Edo states. The particular goals were to:

1. Irregular migration has not materially impacted migrant households' livelihoods or wellbeing in Delta and Edo states.

2. Irregular migration has not improved infrastructure for migrant communities in Delta and Edo states.
3. Irregular migration has no major effect on financial remittances in Delta and Edo States.
4. Irregular migration had no substantial influence on poverty reduction among migrant households in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### *Irregular Migration and Livelihood/Welfare of the Migrant's Household*

Irregular migration and livelihoods refer to the association between migration and people's and households' means of sustenance and income. The effects of migration on livelihoods can be either beneficial or detrimental, depending on a variety of circumstances, including the motivations behind the migration, the place of destination, and the finances and skills of the migrants. Migration can lead to improved living conditions, more access to educational and medical services, and new sources of income. But it could also lead to economic fragility, social exclusion, and exploitation (Das, Roy, & Mondal, 2020). In accordance to the Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration, the desire to raise one's level of life is a common driving force behind migration (Cohen, 2013). Cohen (2013) also makes the point that moving can be a coping mechanism for a number of issues, including social prejudice, political unpredictability, environmental deterioration, and economic hardship. According to Cohen (2013), the Encyclopedia, these include social connections, cultural identity, and resource accessibility in addition to money. Yendaw, Tanle, and Kumi-Kyereme (2019) assert that migration can be a means of subsistence to obtain resources not available in one's own place or to make money. They contend that migration is a process with several phases of movement and immobility rather than a single decision. Additionally, migration is a crucial livelihood approach in West Africa, as noted by Reis and Spurk (2017), and it can present chances for social network access, skill acquisition, and revenue diversification. They do, however; also point out that migration may lead to abuse, family breakup, and social disruption. According to Griffith et al. (2023), a number of reasons, including social networks, political unpredictability, economic opportunity, and degradation of the environment, all contribute to migration. They come to the conclusion that migration is impacted by each of these factors. They believe that based on the circumstances surrounding migration and whether it is advantageous or damaging; it can either positively or negatively affect livelihoods. In terms of agriculture and food production, for example, migration results in the loss of individuals, mostly young men, but also occasionally women living alone, in nuclear or large families, or in entire households. This has an impact on agricultural and livelihood practices, as the loss of young men who are probably in charge of essential production components and animal husbandry lowers the pool of labor. Food and a means of subsistence become scarce and costly unless the migrants begin to contribute by providing machinery and remittances to support food production and farming. However, the agricultural supplies and money brought by migrants can help to compensate for the manpower shortage (Yeoh, Goh & Wee, 2020). People and households have relied on the constant migration of the human population as a means of subsistence to raise their level of living (Dotsey, 2018).

In the twenty-first century, scholars, researchers, and global organizations such as the United Nations and its affiliates began to acknowledge the growing prevalence and importance of global migration as a means of subsistence. Relocating in search of greater

prospects, a source of income, and a strategy for living has become more common due to the global economic collapse, the escalating Middle East crisis, impoverishment and absence of opportunities in numerous nations, the slow rate of development, catastrophic events, and other problems (Dotsey, 2018). It is easier to understand the range and complexity of people's livelihoods when looking at irregular migration through the lens of livelihood. People's human, economic, social, natural, and tangible assets are all related to their livelihood. Therefore, through monetary and in-kind money transfers, assistance with education, and profitable investment, migration helps to enhance livelihoods in the place of origin. Remittances were utilized as a means of establishing a business or as a means of covering unforeseen expenses like accidents or family member deaths. In addition to helping migrants and their families survive, these remittances also help them become more socially and economically successful (Griffith et al., 2023).

Joblessness is one example of the type of economic failure that leads to irregular migration; it is a deliberate and planned process that is employed to create a sustainable means of subsistence and mitigate the consequences of failing or unsuccessful fiscal circumstances in the migrants' country of origin. For example, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is expected to increase from 40.6% in 2023 to 43.9% in 2024 (Tilahun & Holden, 2023); as a result, many Nigerians have decided that migrating abroad is the best way to support themselves. Furthermore, livelihood encompasses more than simply income; it also involves access to and advantages associated with public services like transportation, healthcare, education, and water supply, as well as social institutions like family, kin, and the community (Tilahun & Holden, 2023). In addition to causing loss of talent and a shortage of trained personnel in a number of industries, including medical care and education, global migration also fosters a remittance-based economy. To help support their family and make investments in local enterprises, many migrants send funds home. The local economy is strengthened and many households' standards of life are raised by this financial infusion. But it usually results in an excessive dependence on remittances and lessens the desire of individuals who remain at home to work (Liang & Song, 2018).

Livelihoods and migration are intricately linked and multifaceted phenomena that need for a sophisticated comprehension of their many facets. Migration can lead to social marginalization and economic vulnerability, but it can also present chances for diversifying one's sources of income, gaining access to resources, and generating revenue (Biswas & Mallick, 2021). As such, policy pertaining to migration ought to consider the varied requirements and goals of migrants. They should also take into account any possible dangers and difficulties related to migration. On the other hand, household welfare describes the financial security, standard of living, income, consumption, and access to essential services like housing, healthcare, and education for a household. Household wellbeing is impacted by irregular migration, and there is a complicated and nuanced relationship between the two (Akanle et al., 2019). Depending on a number of variables, including the migrant's credentials and abilities, the circumstances in the country of destination, and the social and financial support networks they have access to, erratic migration can have both good and negative consequences on the welfare of households (Griffith et al., 2023).

The financial status and standard of living of families left behind can rise as a result of migration. Migrants' money and goods can give families a reliable source of income, allowing them to pay for better housing, healthcare, and education. In certain situations,

migration can also encourage household ownership of profitable assets like businesses or land, resulting in long-term improvements in household welfare (Cuong & Linh, 2018). According to Nanziri and Mwale (2023), financial remittances from migration boost household wellbeing by 2% and lower poverty by 4%. Researchers claimed that compared to households that do not get remittances, these funds sent by migrants are inclined to be used for business, real estate purchases, or the purchase of agricultural equipment. These results support the advantages of international migration. It can, however, also have a negative impact on households because migrants may find it difficult to obtain a job that they are happy with, may experience prejudice and exploitation, or may even end up in jail or prison in their new country. For immigrants and those they have left behind, this can result in unstable economic conditions, stress within the family, and mental health issues (Cuong & Linh, 2018). Additionally, the loss of acquaintances and an increase in caregiving duties for the surviving home members might result from the separation of household members, upsetting family dynamics (Blukacz et al., 2022).

Remittances are a significant way that irregular migration affects the welfare of households. Remittances are sums of money or items that migrants send home to assist their families. The general welfare can be enhanced by these remittances by considerably increasing household income and spending. Transfers of funds have the potential to help households escape poverty in certain situations and give them access to chances for growth in their economies. Remittances can increase access to housing, healthcare, and education in addition to decreasing poverty and increasing household income (Zhunusova & Herrmann, 2018; Tsauri, 2018). Individual households gain from remittances, and the greater economy also benefits from them. Economic development, increased investment, and stimulation of local consumption are all possible. Remittances' impact to national economies can occasionally even surpass that of funding for development and foreign direct investment (Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2023).

Given that irregular migration alters job markets, it can also have an indirect impact on household welfare. In host nations, immigrants frequently make up the gaps in employment opportunities, especially in fields where there is a manpower shortage. Job prospects for immigrants and other migrants may rise as a result of this. But it can also lead to more rivalry for jobs and lower pay in some industries, which could have a detrimental impact on the welfare of some households (Brell, Dustmann & Preston, 2020). Domestic welfare is impacted socially by international migration as well. Family separation can have negative emotional and psychological effects for migrants and their remaining relatives. A relative's member absences due to migration may cause social networks as well as networks inside a household to break down. In general, irregular migration has a variable impact on household welfare depending on the situation. It depends on a number of variables, such as the socioeconomic circumstances of both receiving and sending nations, the unique traits of the migrants and their families (such as their level of education or ability), and the laws and policies controlling migration.

### **Irregular Migration and the Development of Infrastructure of the Migrant's Community**

Given that they act as a bridge between their country of origin and their final destination, irregular migrants may help their home countries increase their opportunities for foreign access to money and promote networking. They also make charitable contributions and

help build schools and healthcare facilities in their hometowns through groups connected to their hometowns (Olayungbo & Quadri, 2019). Cohen and Zotoya (2021) claim that irregular migration affects the home, and even the entire society's economic and infrastructural growth; irregular migration can provide communities with fresh resources, ideas, and talents that promote economic progress and enhance general well-being (Clemens & Ogden, 2019). In addition to fostering social networks and connections, irregular migration can improve the welfare of the migrant's household and the infrastructure of the neighborhood (Hossain & Sunmoni, 2022). Migrants frequently form transnational connections in their countries of destination, which help with resource access, knowledge transfer, and cultural exchange. These relationships can offer social assistance, employment prospects, and migration route information (Koczan et al., 2021).

According to Tipayalai (2020), there is little questioning that environmental factors are a major factor in the rising number of rural low-developed country (LDC) outmigration. The international community must play a major role in order to find long-term solutions, much as international procedures have influenced the development of environmental issues in LDCs. On the other hand, irregular migration promotes better health, education, and work prospects for both sexes as well as the long-term viability of the migrant community's infrastructure development. Therefore, irregular migration helps to address environmental issues in a meaningful and long-lasting way, which can only be achieved by eliminating poverty, lowering fertility, and implementing ecologically friendly practices (Otobo & Okoro, 2021). Olayungbo and Quadri (2019) suggest that irregular migration, despite its complexity and vulnerability, can be a viable livelihood choice for rural communities, offering social and economic advantages. It promotes Nigerian infrastructure development, which has an impact on the families and neighborhoods of the migrants. According to Sudharsanan and Bloom (2018), irregular migration reduces labor shortages and poverty in the countries of origin and promotes development by way of migrant remittances, which raise earnings and efficiency. It contributes to the development of infrastructure in developing nations where the mechanism for enhancing infrastructure development called for irregular migration.

### **Irregular Migration and Financial Remittances**

The impacts of migration on both receiving and sending societies are complex and wide-ranging. These effects span social, cultural, political, economic, and religious domains. The most tangible and noticeable impact of immigration on the nation of origin is shown in the remittances that migrants and Diaspora send home. These can be obtained by financial resources, equipment, supplies, or skilled labor (Wang, Hagedorn & Chi, 2021). Both directly and indirectly, remittances affect the economy of the sending nation. According to Francois et al. (2022), migratory has an effect on the economy through remittances, which are now vital to households in terms of assets tied to private finance; this helps lessen the severity and depth of poverty and, consequently, indirectly boosts economic activity.

During a crisis, remittances represent a substantial and reliable source of foreign cash that encourage investors and deter current account reversals (Ratha, 2021). Remittances have an effect on the economy through raising private savings and financial assistance. These factors can also improve growth prospects by encouraging self-employment, expanding micro-business funding in home countries, and amassing economic assets like farming machinery in rural areas (Olayungbo & Quadri, 2019). These remittances are also expected

to improve the sustainability of foreign debt and the financial standing of the migrant's nation of origin when appropriately taken into account in the macroeconomic evaluation (Ratha, 2021). Babatunde (2018) argued that better food security in Nigerian rural families is a result of higher remittances. Remittances from migrants, as demonstrated by Kaba and Moustapha (2021), have a positive effect on talent accumulation and well-being, lower poverty, and stabilize household and macroeconomic income. Additionally, migrants help to develop innovations in their home countries by facilitating access to knowledge and skill promotions, which lowers the initial expenditure needed to launch an international firm (Randazzo & Piracha, 2019).

Uddin and Igbokwe (2020) assert that remittances from migrants may also be in kind. These consist of apparel, footwear, boots, electrical and electronic devices, cars, smartphones, and ICT equipment like laptops and personal computers, in addition to ethnic food and beverages. In emerging economies, remittances continue to be a substantial and reliable source of independent inflows. They offer a sizable stream of foreign exchange profits that help maintain the equilibrium of payments. When there is a recession, a financial emergency, or a natural disaster, overseas migrants send additional funds home to help their families, which results in an increase in remittances. Remittances have two benefits: they help households lessen the effects on monetary surprises on the welfare of their households and enable families to participate in high-risk but additionally rewarding monetary attempts that have the ability to minimize poverty but may be challenging due to the absence of emigration (Nanziri & Mwale, 2023).

Remittances are one way that foreign exchange can enter Nigeria. Remittances totaled 17.2 billion dollars in 2020, a 41% decrease from the amount received in 2019. The reduction was brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, but by 2021, the amount was increasing and had averaged \$4.72 billion per quarter (Komolafe, 2022). Then, in 2021, it increased by 11.2% to reach 19.2 billion dollars, the greatest amount in sub-Saharan Africa and the sixth highest amount worldwide (Olanrewaju, 2022). The Edo State Investment Promotion Office's managing director, Kelvin Uwaibi, estimates that the state sent roughly USD 6 billion in remittance to Nigeria in 2017. Benin City is home to the second-largest client base for the international money transfer company Western Union in Nigeria. Because of the large number of Bini people living abroad and the significance of moving to the Bini people, Benin ranks quite highly in terms of remittances sent to Nigeria (Ohonba & Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019).

Studies demonstrates that remittances are allocated more to health and education than to other necessities, which benefits migrant children by improving their access to better education and medical care (Azizi, 2018; Beaton, Catao & Koczan, 2018). The increased revenue from remittances provides more financial resources and a better future perspective linked to incentives for pursuing higher education. Remittances from migrants, on the other hand, support households and family members back home and maintain income. Considering that only the family members of individuals who are overseas receive remittances and consequently enhance their well-being, it may contribute to increased economic inequality (Borja & Hall, 2018). The brain drain a term used to describe the loss of vital human resources to home countries is another effect associated with global migration. It wastes the public education budget of the home country, reduces productivity, and can worsen the economic environment, especially in smaller economies (Docquier & Bertoli, 2016).

The home country is impacted when competent workers leave in fields like education and health where there is a severe lack of medical professionals. Other health workers, such as nurses as well as auxiliary personnel, may experience underemployment as a result of doctors departing their native country. Return migration, on the other hand, can lessen the effects of brain drain. Return migration, also known as brain gain, occurs when immigrants utilize their foreign-acquired abilities when they return to their home countries (Docquier & Bertoli, 2016; Constant, 2019). The labour markets are affected by migration as well. As long as demand and the effects of human capital do not lower local labour demand, a movement of labour can ease labour market anxiety, improve job availability, and lower unemployment in nations where chronic unemployment is a problem (Koczan et al., 2021). Better and easier absorption into foreign investment and trade is another way that migration from abroad affects the nations of origin. Migration has an impact on the labour markets as well. A labour migration can reduce worry about the labour market, increase job availability, and reduce unemployment in countries where prolonged joblessness is an issue, provided there is sufficient demand and the impact of skilled labour do not diminish local labour demand (Koczan et al., 2021). A further means migration from abroad influences the countries of origin is through improved and simpler integration into overseas investment and trade.

### **Irregular Migration and the Poverty Reduction of the Migrants Households**

Even though irregular migration has drawbacks, it is typically done to send money home to enhance the quality of living for migrants along with their relatives who remain behind. Remittance-receiving households earn more money and, as a result, spend more money, and they are less likely than non-remitting families to experience extreme poverty (Zhunusova & Herrmann, 2018). Migration is used by developing nations, such as the majority of governments in Asia and Africa, to diversify household revenue streams and often involves family members moving. In these developing nations, successful migration is now frequently cited and understood to be a source of poverty alleviation, remittances, economic as well as infrastructural advancement in the origin regions, and strategies for improving livelihoods for both the migrants and those left behind (Gignarta, Guan & Borojo, 2020). However, irregular migration has costs because it does not always result in improved livelihoods, and because of the expenses and results of such investments, the ability of impoverished people to use migration as a means of escaping poverty is still constrained (Dotsey, 2018).

According to Cuong and Linh (2018), comprehending social, economic, and environmental change and creating successful interventions to combat poverty and advance sustainability depend greatly on regular or irregular migration. In a similar vein, Kazeem (2019) contends that either regular or irregular migration fosters financial growth for sending nations by raising incomes, reducing poverty, and improving health and educational outcomes. Olayungbo and Quadri (2019), however, contend that fiscal costs and integration issues must be resolved whether regular or irregular emigration is to promote prosperity in countries that send and receive migrants' nations. Ohagwu et al. (2021) report that returnee migrants in Edo state, Nigeria, feel that because of the high rates of poverty and unemployment, moving to a western country could be a means to better socioeconomic living situations. They contend further that the majority of Nigerian migrants, whether regular or irregular, travel to western nations (such as Europe, Canada, the USA, etc.) in



an effort to better their socioeconomic circumstances. Since the high rates of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria are the primary causes of the country's socioeconomic imbalance, most Nigerians believe that immigrating to western nations could lead to better socioeconomic conditions. Jiang et al. (2021) claim that because irregular migration offers chances for flexible and temporary work force, it greatly lowers poverty in emerging nations; similarly, Tipayalai (2020) asserts that regular or irregular migration substantially decreases the degree, intensity, and severity of poverty in developing nations; however, migrants frequently labour in unsanitary and exploitative conditions, which may result in injustice to both the migrants and the countries of origin. Furthermore, this study argues that although irregular migration has helped to reduce poverty and partially mitigate Nigeria's high rate of unemployment in recent years, resolving political and socioeconomic difficulties is essential to lowering irregular migration and advancing national development.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### *New Economics of Migration Theory*

With an emphasis on the Delta and Edo States, the new economics of migration theory sheds light on how irregular migration affects Nigerian well-being. Stark and Taylor (1989), Katz and Stark (1986), Stark and Bloom (1985), and de Haas (2010) established the new economics of migration theory. According to the hypothesis, household members relocate in order to improve their standard of living, lower their risk, and lessen difficulties arising from a variety of market failures other than those pertaining to the labour market. This perspective holds that the decision to send one or two family members abroad is taken collectively because migration is viewed as a risk diversification strategy that provides the home and family with a different source of revenue through remittances from migrants (de Haas, 2010). It contends that the logic of the human actor and the home or family units is the only factor that influences migration decisions. When deciding whether to migrate, a household makes decisions collectively in order to maximize benefits that might be accrued, minimize risk, and prepare for any economic collapse that may affect them outside of the job market. Families, as opposed to individuals, can manage risk by spreading out the usage of household resources through activities like joint ventures (Taylor, 1999). Certain members might be sent to overseas labour markets, while others would be given economic jobs in the local economy. The employment opportunities and incomes in these marketplaces are either hardly related to or inconsistent with those in the surrounding area. Remittances from migrants can be counted on to provide support in situations where the local economy deteriorates and economic activities fail to generate sufficient revenue (Wimalaratana, 2017; Constant, 2019). According to this theory's presumptions, households, families, and other culturally recognized units of production and consumption are important to include when assessing migration research not individuals. While deciding whether to migrate to another country, variations in income/wages are not a must. Pay differences might not always prevent people from travelling abroad. Assume, instead, that there are nonexistent or unreliable markets in the transmitting region, like the insurance, consumer credit, and capital markets. The notion that relocating is the proper thing to do will then arise. Low-income households employ international migration to broaden their labour pool and reduce financial instability in their home countries. Remittances from migrants increase household income, and governments can control the amount of migration

by controlling the labour market and, in the event that they do not exist or are insufficient, the consumer credit, capital, and insurance markets (Wimalaratana, 2017).

According to the New Economics of Labour Migration theory, households deliberately migrate irregularly in order to maintain their rural livelihoods. The new economics of migration theory states that families relocate to lower risks and avoid temporary financial constraints. It emphasized that household concerns about migration are not chosen at random by individual migrants, but rather collaboratively. Even after pay differences are eliminated, this irregular movement continues. Essentially, the migrant's desire to go abroad in pursuit of better opportunities and to enhance the welfare of the family must be approved by the migrant's family. Usually, family members split up the financial implications to help make such a relocation happen. People from Delta and Edo basically migrate instead of staying at home, where conditions don't seem to get better and the current system offers little prospect for the future. But it also makes sense to weigh the benefits of an effective relocation against the drawbacks of staying put, and to consider the risks associated with travel, which include losing one's present source of support, being deported, getting into an accident, or even dying, as well as the deterioration of friendships and ties with loved ones. Based on these strategic choices, migrants look for better opportunities elsewhere. There are several methods to apply the idea to the irregular movement of residents of Delta and Edo states. The primary motivation for leaving the states of Delta and Edo was to find employment and make money. According to the argument, residents of the states of Delta and Edo relocated to areas with many of prospects for earning more money and where work is in great demand and appropriately valued. Individuals or families involved decide whether or not to move. The latter is more common among residents of Delta and Edo states, who exchange family assets including homes, property, and furnishings in order to finance or convey a family member outside. Furthermore, loans were available to the citizens of Delta and Edo states for the purpose of starting a migration, which calls for sending money home after the migrant family member has comfortably adapted to his or her new home. Rather than pay disparities, the motivation is frequently the desire to increase the family's social, economic, and monetary possibilities. The immigrant is required to sustain a migratory chain by providing support to other intended migrants and their family back home after adjusting to their new circumstances in the nation of their choice.

### **Research Methods**

A cross-sectional design was used in the study. A cross-sectional study design allows the researcher to collect data from a sample of people with a variety of variables being traits and demographics for a particular point in time. Age, gender, education level, and place of residence are some of these characteristics (Devare, 2015). The study's population consists of all of the local government areas in the states of Delta and Edo. According to the Nigeria Population Commission (2022), Edo State has eighteen (18) local government areas with a total population of 4,777,000, and Delta State has twenty-five (25) local government areas with a cumulative population of 5,636,100. Thus, 10,413,100 was the total population that was anticipated for this study. The people who are targeted include those who sponsor migrants, those whose family members get remittances from migrants, and government officials who created regulations regarding illegal migration in the states of Delta and Edo. They are selected for this study due to their in-depth knowledge of the subject and ability

to offer accurate and perceptive first-hand information. By applying Yamane's formula for sample size determination, a sample size of 400 was determined. The necessary sample size is calculated as follows, taking into account the size of the population and a sampling error of 5%:

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

$$n = \frac{10,413,100}{1 + 10,413,100 (0.05)^2} = 399.98$$

n = 399.98 or approximately 400

As a result, a sample size of eight hundred (800) was chosen for this study in order to include a larger number of individuals who sponsor migrants, and government officials that created regulations regarding irregular migration in Delta and Edo states. For data analysis, the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS version 23.0, 2020) was used to code and impute the data obtained from the questionnaire. The respondents' demographic information, including their age, marital status, level of education, and gender, was analyzed using percentages and frequency, and inferential statistics was used to determine how the independent variable affected the dependent variables. At the 0.05 levels of significance, correlation and linear regression techniques were used to evaluate the hypotheses. These are judged appropriate for the purpose of this investigation.

### Research Results

**Table 1: The Impact of Irregular Migration on the Livelihood/Welfare of the Migrant's Household in Delta and Edo States**

Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
1	.749a	.569	.557	.548			
ANOVAa							
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
1	Regression	77.856	1	73.708	131.750	.000b	
	Residual	275.280	715	.436			
	Total	353.136	716				
Coefficientsa							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	.073	.124	5.247	.005		
	Irregular migration	.688	.055	.526	17.339	.000	

a. Dependent Variable: Livelihood/welfare of the migrant's household

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

In accordance with the above table 1, the R indicates a strong and positive link between the two major variables (irregular migration and the livelihood/welfare of the migrant's household in Delta and Edo States), with a R of 0.749. The R-Square indicates that the

model's overall performance in the table is satisfactory, with an R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.569. As a result, the independent variable (irregular migration) accounts for 56.9% of the dependent variable (migrant households' livelihood/welfare in Delta and Edo States). As stated in the ANOVA section above, the p-value is 0.000, and the F-value is 131.750. This indicates the test's significance, as the p-value is less than the significance level (0.05). The study found a statistically significant relationship between irregular migration and the livelihood/welfare of migrant households in Delta and Edo States ( $f(1, 715) = 131.750, p < 0.05$ ). The coefficient table also shows that every unit increase in irregular migration results in a 52.6% increase in the livelihood/welfare of migrants' households in Delta and Edo states. The p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Based on the data in the table above, it is possible to conclude that irregular migration has a positive and considerable impact on the livelihood and welfare of migrant households in Delta and Edo States. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and embrace the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 2: The Impact of Irregular Migration on the Development of Infrastructure of the Migrant's Community in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.635a	.396	.387	.558		
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	91.153	1	93.267	203.170	.000b
	Residual	126.622	715	.350		
	Total	217.775	716			
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.360	.139	9.973	.000	
	Irregular migration	.475	.030	.531	14.517	.000

a. Dependent Variable: The development of infrastructure

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

The R in the above table 2 indicates a strong and positive link between the two primary variables (irregular migration and the development of migrant community infrastructure in Delta and Edo States), with a R of 0.635. The R-Square indicates that the model's overall performance in the table is satisfactory, with an R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.396. As a result, the independent variable (irregular migration) accounts for 39.6% of the dependent variable (migrant community infrastructure development in Delta and Edo States). As stated in the ANOVA section above, the p-value is 0.000, and the F-value is 203.170. This indicates the test's significance, as the p-value is less than the significance level (0.05). The finding is statistically significant, as the independent variable (irregular migration) predicts the dependent variable (development of migrant community infrastructure in Delta and Edo States),  $f(1, 715) = 203.170, p < 0.05$ . The coefficient table also shows that every unit increase in irregular migration results in a 53.1% increase in the development of migrant

infrastructure in Delta and Edo States. The p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. As a result of the findings in the table above, it is possible to conclude that irregular migration has a positive and significant impact on the development of migrant infrastructure in Delta and Edo states. As a result, hypothesis three was rejected, and it was reiterated that irregular movement had improved the infrastructure of the migrant population in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

**Table 3: The Impact of Irregular Migration on the Financial Remittances in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.755a	.566	.545	.543		
ANOVAa						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	73.680	1	70.687	201.540 .000b	
	Residual	120.848	715	.331		
	Total	194.528	716			
Coefficientsa						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.048	.105	.425	.000	
	Irregular migration	.365	.033	.450	21.452 .000	

a. Dependent Variable: The financial remittances

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

In accordance to the above table 3, the R indicates a strong and positive link between the two major variables (irregular migration and financial remittances in Delta and Edo States), with a R of 0.755. The R-Square indicates that the model's overall performance in the table is satisfactory, with an R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.566. The independent variable (irregular migration) thus accounts for 56.6% of the dependent variable (financial remittances in Delta and Edo States). As stated in the ANOVA section above, the p-value is 0.000, and the F-value is 201.540. This indicates the test's significance, as the p-value is less than the significance level (0.05). The finding is statistically significant, as the independent variable (irregular migration) predicts the dependent variable ( $f(1,715) = 201.540, p < 0.05$ ). The coefficient table also shows that each unit increase in illegal migration results in a 45.0% rise in financial remittances in Delta and Edo states. The p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Based on the data in the table above, it is possible to conclude that irregular migration has a positive and considerable impact on financial remittances in Delta and Edo States. As a result, hypothesis four was rejected, and it was confirmed that irregular migration has a major impact on financial remittances in Nigeria's Delta and Edo states.

**Table 4: The Impact of Irregular Migration on the Poverty Reduction of the Migrant's Household in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.620a	.358	.354	.678

ANOVAa						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	85.409	1	80.393	234.108	.000b
	Residual	140.124	715	.374		
	Total	225.533	716			
Coefficientsa						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.429	.118		10.000	.000
	Irregular migration	.524	.042	.617	14.288	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Poverty reduction

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

According to the above table 4, the R demonstrates a strong and positive link between the two major variables (irregular migration and poverty reduction in migrant households in Delta and Edo States), with a R of 0.620. The R-Square indicates that the model's overall performance in the table is satisfactory, with an R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.358. As a result, the independent variable (irregular migration) accounts for 35.8% of the dependent variable (poverty decrease among migrant households in Delta and Edo States). As stated in the ANOVA section above, the p-value is 0.000, and the F-value is 234.108. This indicates the test's significance, as the p-value is less than the significance level (0.05). The result is statistically significant, as the independent variable (irregular migration) predicts the dependent variable (poverty decrease in migrant households in Delta and Edo States),  $f(1, 715) = 234.108, p < 0.05$ . The coefficient table also shows that a unit increase in irregular migration results in a 61.7% rise in poverty reduction for migrant households in Delta and Edo States. The p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. As a result of the findings in the table above, it is possible to conclude that irregular migration has a positive and considerable impact on poverty reduction among migrant households in Delta and Edo States. Therefore, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and embrace the alternative hypothesis.

### Discussion of Findings

Four hypotheses were developed for the study. Regarding the study first goal, we discovered that irregular migration had a favorable and substantial influence on the welfare and standard of living of migrant households in the Delta and Edo States. This result supports the measurement of household livelihood security of the Bangladeshi immigrant family in Gaighata conducted by Das et al. (2020). They discovered that irregular movement helps the Bangladeshi immigrant household in Gaighata maintain the security of their household livelihood. In certain instances, migration has a detrimental effect on society, leading to things like family division and children receiving insufficient parental guidance because one or more parents are away. Since it boosts the economy of immigrant homes and communities, it continues to be a preferable alternative for the welfare of immigrant families. Reis and Spurk (2017) make the case that migration is a crucial livelihood technique in West Africa and that it can present chances for social network access, skill acquisition, and revenue diversification. They do, however, also point out that migration may lead to exploitation, family breakup, and social disruption.

This result was consistent with the theory put forth by Cuong and Linh (2018), according to which migration can raise household income and raise the living standards of households left at home. In certain situations, migration can encourage household ownership of productive assets like businesses or land, resulting in a lasting improvement in household welfare. In other cases, the money and substances sent by migrants can give families a stable source of income, allowing them to afford higher quality housing, medical services, and education. Migration is a procedure that involves some family members leaving their home country in order to diversify household income sources in emerging nations, such as the majority of Asian and African governments. Remittances and infrastructural advancement in the origin countries, and livelihood enhancement initiatives for those left behind, including the migrants, have all been attributed to the effective migration from these poor nations (Gignarta et al., 2020). Dotsey (2018) contends, however, that irregular migration has costs because it does not provide automatic gains in livelihood and because the cost and return on such investments limit the ability of the impoverished to use migration as a means of escaping poverty. The livelihood and wellbeing of migrants are greatly impacted by irregular movement, which also has a considerable impact on the political, economic, and social frameworks that govern the migrant household's activities in the Delta and Edo States. Provision of drinkable water, food, shelter, clothing, and medical care are among the livelihood activities. In addition, they consist of earning money, developing human resources, supporting community growth, offering labour, and severing family ties (Akanle et al., 2019).

Addressing the second objective, the study also showed how much immigrants have contributed to the general growth of the state as well as the infrastructure in their local areas. These facilities primarily improve hospitality, particularly investments in hotels and lounges and the State's appeal to international investors. These investments haven't, however, been precisely monitored and quantified. It demonstrates that these contributions can be improved upon. The results of the study demonstrated that the infrastructure development of the migrant communities in the Delta and Edo States is favorably and considerably impacted by irregular migration. This result supports Factsheet (2020), which states that remittances which are now crucial to households as indicators of personal financial assets have an impact on the infrastructural development of the migrant populations. This study also emphasized the necessity of active government assistance for migrant fraternization in order to foster a sense of importance and belonging to the state. This is a huge contribution that will motivate immigrants to always maximize their productivity for the betterment of their states, communities, and government assistance. On the other hand, the government's intervention will motivate the migrants to foster a positive self-image and serve as role models for the states and the nation.

Additionally, the study demonstrated that remittances were positively and dramatically increased in Delta and Edo States as a result of irregular migration. This supports the findings of Zhunusova, Herrmann, and Tsauri (2018) and Zhunusova and Herrmann (2018) that remittances might be commodities or cash that migrants send to help their relatives back home. The general welfare can be enhanced by these remittances by considerably increasing household income and spending. Remittances have the potential to help households escape poverty in certain situations and give them access to chances for investment and economic growth. Remittances have the potential to provide access to housing, healthcare, education, and education in addition to reducing poverty and

increasing household income. According to Griffith et al. (2023), remittances are utilized by immigrant families to raise their social standing in addition to serving as a means of subsistence. According to Nanziri and Mwale (2023), financial remittances from migration boost household wellbeing by 2% and lower poverty by 4%. They said that compared to households that do not get remittances, these funds sent by migrants are more likely to be used on companies, real estate purchases, or agricultural equipment acquisition. These results bolster the benefits of irregular migration. It can, however, also have a negative impact on households because migrants may find it difficult to obtain a job that they are happy with, may experience prejudice and exploitation, or may even end up in jail or prison in their new country. For immigrants and their families left behind, this can result in unstable economic conditions, stress within the family, and mental health issues.

Finally, Kazeem (2019) provided support for the study's fourth objective, namely that one of Nigeria's primary migration goals is to ensure the financial stability of the families that remain behind. By finding work overseas and sending money home, it helps family members escape severe poverty. Contributing to the social well-being of their households, migrants increase the financial power of the family by sending goods like clothing, money, and other materials that the receiving family members use to accumulate wealth, adjust to changing environmental conditions, and enhance children's health and education (Jiang et al., 2021). Over the years, remittances from migrants have given Nigerian families a reliable source of income that has allowed them to afford better housing, healthcare, and education. In certain cases, migration can also encourage household investment in productive assets like businesses or land, which can result in long-term gains in household welfare. These findings support the idea that remittances raise the standard of living for migrant families in the Delta and Edo States.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study found that irregular migration positively and significantly influences the well-being of the migrant households in Delta and Edo States. The study also showed that irregular migration improves welfare and means of subsistence, increases financial remittances, lowers family poverty, and promotes the construction of infrastructure in the home areas of migrants in the Delta and Edo States. Similar to regular migration, irregular migration is a household-planned strategy that improves livelihood and welfare, increases financial remittances, lowers the poverty level of the migrant families, and advances the infrastructure improvement of the migrant communities. This demonstrates how the migrants in the Delta and Edo States have developed independent support systems, devised creative strategies to reduce risks, and made sure their unauthorized migration yields financial benefits. This study provides an in-depth assessment of the complexity of irregular migration and its impacts on numerous elements of the well-being of the people of Delta and Edo States, thanks to the combination of the new economic migration theory and the neo-classical theory.

People travel all throughout the world, and irregular migration is a common occurrence. This tendency, which is either a hereditary characteristic or an ingrained culture as a result of years of repetitive practice, has been shown by the people of Delta and Edo States. It is still apparent, though, and it encourages them to move around. The pursuit of a better living has been the driving force behind this ongoing tendency, and individuals in Delta and Edo States will keep travelling along with other people for as long as this demand for a better



life endures. Improving one's standard of life is the ultimate purpose of migration; this objective can be attained by employment, education, secure housing, efficient healthcare delivery, and other variables. The main motivation for migration among the inhabitants of the Delta and Edo States is economic advancement for themselves, their families, and their communities. Migrants need the assistance of the neighborhood and government to realize these opportunities for bettering their communities. This cooperation can be provided through the provision of administrative support, a safe environment, and proper security, among other things. A nation's political and economic progress depends on migration. It provides improved health care, education, and access to dependable, contemporary energy services for migrants, their families, and communities.

Additionally, it raises the income and level of knowledge of migrants, their families, and their communities, freeing them up to spend more on necessities. Through investments and remittances, it improves livelihood. Through the use of technology, capital creation, and innovation, remittances and investments from the Diaspora greatly contribute to the reduction of poverty, the creation of jobs, and general improvements in standard of living. This has multiplier effects on the political and economic development of the Diaspora's home country. However, irregular migration has some disadvantages that outweigh the advantages, particularly in light of the current circumstances. The loss of human capital, brain drain, racism and discrimination in the country of destination, inability to provide sufficient security because of the lack of physically fit migrants, and loss of resources for those who did not make it or whose expectations were not met are a few of these disadvantages. Situations like university graduates learning a trade, people going on to get more degrees and certificates to boost their job prospects, the rapid rise in kidnappings and bandit attacks, the graphic tale of cult killings, elections that resemble war, a situation in which ballots do not matter and mediocrity has become the norm in public life are all examples of these kinds of situations.

In conclusion, irregular migration is a modern human problem that affects everyone, including the residents of the Edo and Delta States. To ensure that migrants understand the ramifications of irregular migration and the value of regular migration to the state and communities, not simply their family members, the government should actively engage migrants and maintain contact with them, rather than actively discouraging migration. Since many of the properties constructed inside the neighborhoods are owned and occupied by the Diasporans and their families, it is undeniable that irregular migration has had an impact on numerous communities in the Delta and Edo States. Malls, retail centers, parks, and plazas are also included in this. The economics of Delta and Edo States are greatly impacted by these developments. Diverse groups of people interpret irregular migration differently. According to the survey, the residents of the Delta and Edo States mostly view illegal migration as a means of achieving economic progress and survival. The results of the investigation indicate that recommendations are required. Based on the study's findings, three main recommendations are offered:

In order to direct some of the remittances received by migrants towards the establishment and equipping of government hospitals, the work of the Delta and Edo States Diaspora Agency needs to be clearly defined, made more effective, and made visible. This will significantly lessen unauthorised migration in the Edo and Delta States. Migrant families should use their remittances to start profitable enterprises so they may maintain their standard of living and enhance their well-being.

The governments of Delta and Edo States should designate honourable people, notable figures, and intelligent academics to draft and carry out policies that support the interests of migrants in the construction of infrastructure, including transportation, solar-powered power plants, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and modular refineries. In the foreseeable future, this will significantly lessen irregular migration in the Delta and Edo States.

The governments of Delta and Edo States should develop laws to regulate irregular migration in order to direct a portion of the remittances into the government's coffers for the benefit of the migrant populations. Remittances from migrants should go towards public taps and reticulations for other community members, who are still living at home, as well as employment creation and skill development. This will significantly lessen poverty and enhance the standard of living for residents in the Delta and Edo States.

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## **THE ECONOMIC EFFECT OF SUPERPOWERS RIVALRY ON THE ECONOMY OF SUDAN**

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*Abstract: This study explores the economic effects of superpowers rivalry on Sudan, with a focus on the country's efforts to diversify its economy and achieve long-term sustainability. Through qualitative research, this paper examines how the geopolitical competition among global powers—namely China, the United States, and Russia—has shaped Sudan's economic policies, investment patterns, and development strategies. The rivalry has had a dual impact: on one hand, it has provided Sudan with opportunities for infrastructural development and foreign investment, particularly in the oil and mining sectors; on the other hand, it has reinforced the country's dependency on these resource-based industries, limiting its ability to diversify into other sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. The study also discusses how these foreign investments, especially from China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's mining sector involvement, have affected Sudan's long-term sustainability. Environmental concerns, fiscal stability, and the implications of foreign debt are also examined as key factors influencing the sustainability of Sudan's economic growth. The research findings suggest that while superpowers' investments contribute to short-term economic growth, they also hinder sustainable diversification and leave Sudan vulnerable to external economic shocks. The study recommends strategic policy adjustments to leverage superpower rivalry for long-term economic stability, with a stronger emphasis on governance reforms, sectoral diversification, and environmental sustainability*

*Keywords: Superpowers rivalry, Sudan economy, diversification, sustainability, foreign investment, China, Russia, United States, Belt and Road Initiative.*

## **Introduction**

Superpower rivalry has historically shaped the political and economic dynamics of many African countries, including Sudan. Since its independence in 1956, Sudan has been a strategic focus for external powers, especially during the Cold War. Both the United States and the Soviet Union, and later China, saw Sudan as a valuable partner due to its geographical position near the Red Sea, its rich oil reserves, and its potential for agricultural development (Khalid, 2020). These interests created a complex environment where Sudan's economy became increasingly influenced by shifting alliances and external pressures from these superpowers (Ahmed & Abdel, 2019). During the Cold War, Sudan's alignment with the United States and, at other times, with the Soviet Union created an economic dependency cycle. Initially, Western nations, including the U.S., provided development aid in exchange for strategic partnership, while the Soviet Union occasionally supported Sudanese socialist movements and left-leaning governments (Hassan & Elhaj, 2021). This shifting allegiance was marked by periods of investment and withdrawal, contributing to economic instability, as Sudan's economy became dependent on external assistance for its development projects (Mustafa, 2023). The discovery of oil in Sudan in

the late 1970s and early 1980s shifted the interest of global powers toward the country's natural resources. Oil became central to Sudan's economy, attracting multinational companies and superpowers alike. The U.S. supported Sudan's government as part of a strategy to secure access to oil resources, though civil conflict in oil-rich areas limited these ventures (Ahmed, 2022). Later, China emerged as a major economic partner, investing heavily in Sudan's oil industry, which led to significant revenue generation but also increased the economy's vulnerability to oil price fluctuations (Mohamed, 2020).

As U.S. sanctions against Sudan intensified in the 1990s over alleged links to terrorism, Sudan turned to China as an alternative economically. China's involvement grew rapidly, with Chinese companies dominating the oil sector and Beijing providing development loans and infrastructure support (Hussein & Deng, 2021). This relationship contributed to economic growth but also created a dependency on China, as Sudan's exports became almost entirely oil-based and largely directed toward Chinese markets (Musa, 2022). The imposition of U.S. sanctions in 1997 had a profound impact on Sudan's economy, isolating the country from Western financial institutions and limiting trade (Khalid, 2020). These sanctions exacerbated Sudan's economic woes, leading to currency devaluation, rising inflation, and an increase in national debt. Isolated from Western markets, Sudan relied more heavily on China and Russia for economic support, which came with political strings attached. This isolation further deepened Sudan's economic dependency and reduced its ability to diversify its trade and investment partners (Hassan & Elhaj, 2021). Sudan's shifting alliances and the strategic interests of superpowers fueled political and ethnic divisions, contributing to civil conflicts, particularly between the north and the oil-rich south. The prolonged civil wars drained economic resources, diverting funds from critical development projects to military expenditure, which further weakened the economy (Mustafa, 2023). The international community's focus on Sudan's political stability, driven by superpower interests, often overlooked the economic foundations needed for sustainable growth and peace (Ahmed, 2022).

Following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019, Sudan faced renewed challenges in balancing foreign relations with superpowers. The U.S. removed Sudan from its State Sponsors of Terrorism list in 2020, opening up new opportunities for foreign investment (Mohamed, 2020). However, Sudan remains heavily indebted, and recent Western investments are minimal compared to China's ongoing economic influence. This re-engagement with the West has been slow, highlighting the complex legacy of superpower rivalry on Sudan's economy, where dependency on a single power continues to pose risks (Hussein & Deng, 2021). Looking forward, Sudan's economic stability depends on its ability to manage relations with multiple superpowers while reducing its reliance on any single nation. Sudan's efforts to attract diversified investment, including agriculture, mining, and infrastructure, may help reduce its dependency on oil and external powers (Musa, 2022). However, the legacies of superpower rivalry have left structural challenges, and Sudan must navigate a delicate balance to leverage its strategic importance without compromising its economic sovereignty (Ahmed & Abdel, 2019).

### *Statement of the Problem*

The rivalry among superpowers has significantly impacted Sudan's economic stability, development, and dependency on foreign aid. Since the Cold War era, Sudan's economy

has been shaped by external influences, initially from the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and more recently from China. These powers sought influence in Sudan due to its strategic location, natural resources, and oil reserves. However, the resulting dependency on foreign assistance and investments has fostered economic instability, with cycles of growth and downturns often dictated by shifts in these alliances rather than sustainable domestic policies (Hassan & Elhaj, 2021). This influence has shaped Sudan's economy in ways that prioritize superpower interests, which frequently overlook the long-term needs of the Sudanese people (Ahmed, 2022).

The imposition of U.S. sanctions in the 1990s and Sudan's subsequent reliance on Chinese investment further complicated Sudan's economic landscape. While China's involvement provided some economic relief by developing oil infrastructure and facilitating exports, it also created a dependency on a single market and limited diversification in Sudan's economy (Hussein & Deng, 2021). This concentration in the oil sector left Sudan vulnerable to global oil price fluctuations, compounding its economic challenges and reducing its capacity for autonomous economic planning. Additionally, Chinese influence has prioritized resource extraction over broader development, which has contributed to the underdevelopment of other economic sectors (Musa, 2022).

This dependency on foreign powers has created a volatile economic environment in Sudan, undermining sustainable growth and resilience. The challenge for Sudan lies in balancing its relationships with competing superpowers to ensure it can leverage foreign investment without compromising its economic autonomy. Today, Sudan faces a pressing need to address the structural weaknesses created by decades of external influence and foster an economic model less reliant on superpower rivalry and more focused on diversified, self-sustaining development (Khalid, 2020). Addressing these issues is essential for Sudan's long-term stability and prosperity.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The general objectives of the study are to examine the economic effect of Superpowers rivalry on the economy of Sudan. The specific objectives are to:

Determine the effect of superpowers rivalry on the diversification of Sudan economy.

Examine the effect of superpowers rivalry on the sustainable growth of Sudan economy.

### *Research Questions*

To what extent do superpowers rivalry affect the diversification of Sudan economy?

To what extent do superpowers rivalry affect the sustainable growth of Sudan economy?

## **Review of Literature**

*Overview of Sudan's History:* Sudan, located in northeastern Africa, has a complex and tumultuous history marked by colonialism, civil war, and diverse ethnic and cultural dynamics.

*Ancient and Medieval Periods:* Sudan's history stretches back to ancient civilizations. The Kingdom of Kush, located along the Nile, succeeded Egypt as a powerful kingdom in the region, known for its great cities such as Meroë. The Kushites ruled parts of Egypt during the 25th dynasty, leaving a lasting legacy on the region's cultural and architectural development (Pankhurst, 2019). Following the decline of Kush, Sudan became a part of

various Islamic empires, and its culture was deeply influenced by Arab and Islamic traditions from the 7th century onward.

*Colonial Era:* In the 19th century, Sudan was part of the larger Ottoman-Egyptian Empire until it was effectively colonized by Britain and Egypt in the 1880s. This colonial rule led to the division of Sudanese society and created tensions between the Arab and African populations (Holt, 2017). The British-Egyptian administration promoted infrastructure development but left a legacy of political and social divisions that would affect Sudan for decades after independence.

*Independence and Civil Wars:* Sudan gained independence in 1956, but its early years were marked by political instability and conflict between the north, dominated by Arab Muslims, and the south, home to a predominantly Christian and animist population. Tensions between these two regions led to the First Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972), which ended with the Addis Ababa Agreement, granting the south autonomy. However, the promise of peace was short-lived, and after a coup in 1989, the country entered the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005), which lasted for over two decades and resulted in an estimated 2 million deaths and widespread displacement (Johnson, 2011). This conflict culminated in the secession of South Sudan in 2011, following a referendum on independence, which created the world's newest nation but also deepened Sudan's regional and ethnic divisions (Young, 2012).

*The Darfur Conflict:* From the early 2000s, Sudan also faced internal conflicts, notably in the Darfur region, where fighting between Sudanese government forces and rebel groups led to atrocities, including genocide. The Darfur conflict remains a point of international controversy, with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity (Mamdani, 2019).

### Recent Developments

Sudan has experienced a turbulent recent history, particularly following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 after months of protests against his authoritarian rule. Since Bashir's removal, the country has entered a transitional phase, aiming to establish a democratic government. The process, however, has been marred by challenges, including military coups, ethnic conflicts, and economic hardships, making it difficult for Sudan to achieve lasting stability. In 2023, Sudan again fell into conflict as the military and paramilitary forces clashed, leading to another humanitarian crisis (BBC, 2023).

Sudan's history is characterized by a complex interplay of ethnic, religious, and political factors, alongside significant external influences. The country continues to grapple with the legacies of colonialism, war, and authoritarianism, which have left deep scars on its social fabric and economic stability. Achieving peace, democratic governance, and sustainable development remains a significant challenge for Sudan today.

### *The Effect of Superpowers Rivalry on the Diversification of Sudan Economy*

Superpower rivalry, particularly involving China, the United States, and Russia, has influenced Sudan's economic diversification efforts by fostering competition over resources and strategic influence, which affects Sudan's political and economic stability. Sudan's critical location in the Horn of Africa and proximity to the oil-rich Gulf have heightened its geostrategic importance, making it a focal point for competing global interests. China has historically been a dominant investor, especially in Sudan's oil sector,



but has diversified its investments in mining and infrastructure over recent years. Although the secession of South Sudan in 2011 led to a decline in Sudanese oil production, China continues to maintain a strong economic footprint through investments in non-oil sectors to support its long-term energy and resource security (Patey & Olander, 2021), rivalry extends beyond economic interests, as the U.S. seeks to counter China's influence while fostering political stability in the region. U.S. foreign policy supports Sudan's transition to democracy and offers economic aid aimed at fostering transparent governance. This Western support contrasts with China's approach, which emphasizes infrastructure projects and economic investments without prioritizing political reform. These differing approaches have led to occasional tensions between China and Western nations, as each pursues influence over Sudan's strategic resources and political alignment (World Bank Group, 2016) has also shown interest in Sudan as part of its broader goal to increase influence across Africa. Russian companies have engaged in mining, especially gold, and there are reports of Moscow seeking a naval base in Sudan on the Red Sea. Although Sudan's instability complicates these ambitions, Russia's involvement creates another layer of superpower competition that impacts Sudan's ability to focus on internal economic diversification. The overlapping interests of Russia, China, and the U.S. in Sudan's resources and strategic location limit Sudan's capacity to independently determine its economic policies (Africa Newsroom Press, 2024; Patey & Olander, 2021) reliance on foreign powers to support key economic sectors such as mining, infrastructure, and agriculture illustrates the challenges it faces in reducing its dependency on primary commodities like oil and gold. These industries remain subject to shifts in global demand and political alliances. As a result, Sudan's diversification strategy is impacted by the economic and strategic objectives of external actors, which may not always align with Sudan's long-term economic resilience (Makol, 2023).

Superpowers such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have also increased their influence in Sudan, especially as China reduced its involvement following the split with South Sudan. These regional powers are major markets for Sudan's gold and agriculture exports, providing crucial foreign exchange and creating additional layers of dependency that complicate Sudan's economic independence. Regional alliances, often backed by superpowers, can shape Sudan's economic direction and further inhibit diversification away from traditional sectors (World Bank Group, 2016; Patey & Olander, 2021). challenges, Sudan's economic reform agenda, partly supported by international financial institutions, seeks to build a diversified economy. The World Bank and the IMF have advised Sudan to invest in human capital, diversify agricultural productivity, and strengthen fiscal policies to reduce vulnerability to external shocks. However, implementing these reforms remains difficult amid Sudan's economic volatility, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions (Africa Newsroom Press, 2024; Makol, 2023)

The superpower rivalry has brought foreign investment, it has also introduced constraints that hinder Sudan's capacity for independent economic diversification. The competition between global powers means that Sudan must navigate complex diplomatic relationships that often place strategic interests over sustainable development. This leaves Sudan in a delicate position where it must balance its economic goals with the competing demands of influential international actors (World Bank Group, 2016; Patey & Olander, 2021). Sudan's efforts toward economic diversification are deeply intertwined with the interests of superpowers and regional actors, which influence Sudan's economic policies and limit its

ability to pursue autonomous development. Addressing these challenges will require careful management of foreign partnerships and a strengthened focus on building resilient domestic sectors that can withstand external pressures.

*The Effect of Superpowers Rivalry on the Sustainable Growth of Sudan Economy*

The rivalry among superpowers like the United States, China, and Russia has significant implications for Sudan's sustainable economic growth. Sudan's strategic location, resource wealth, and economic vulnerabilities make it an area of interest for global powers with varied objectives. China's longstanding investments in Sudan focus primarily on energy, infrastructure, and mining, aiming to secure resources while creating vital infrastructure that might contribute to economic growth. However, this has also led to dependency on China and limited Sudan's ability to develop independently sustainable industries, as China's primary interest has been resource extraction rather than local economic empowerment (Patey, 2021). While Chinese investment has brought short-term economic benefits, critics argue it has not fostered sustainable growth in Sudan. China's focus on infrastructure and natural resource sectors often lacks provisions for environmental or social sustainability. These projects can also increase Sudan's debt burden, as many Chinese loans are linked to large-scale projects with high financial commitments, adding to Sudan's economic fragility and limiting budgetary flexibility for sustainable growth initiatives. This dynamic reflects a broader trend in Africa, where China's resource-driven investments can result in economic volatility due to fluctuating global commodity prices (World Bank, 2018).

The United States, on the other hand, aims to promote stability and economic reform in Sudan through development aid and diplomatic support for democratic governance. U.S. policies often prioritize transparency, anti-corruption, and human rights, which align with sustainable economic growth goals. However, U.S. aid is frequently tied to Sudan's political environment, fluctuating in response to Sudan's internal governance and alignment with American strategic interests. This conditionality, while potentially fostering long-term governance improvements, can lead to inconsistency in financial support, leaving gaps in Sudan's ability to implement continuous economic reforms (Ikenberry, 2020). Russia has also entered Sudan with a focus on strategic military and economic partnerships, notably in the mining sector. Russia's interest in Sudan includes a potential naval base on the Red Sea, which would enhance its regional influence but might also draw Sudan into the geopolitical fray. Russian investments have focused on sectors such as gold mining, with limited direct impact on the sustainable development of Sudan's broader economy. While Russia's involvement provides an alternative to Western aid, its influence often exacerbates Sudan's reliance on extractive industries rather than fostering diversified, resilient economic growth (Africa Oil & Power, 2021)

Additionally, superpower rivalry can lead to inconsistent economic policies in Sudan, as each major power pushes different priorities. For example, while the United States promotes governance and institutional reform, China's emphasis is on infrastructure and resource extraction, and Russia seeks strategic access. This clash of agendas complicates Sudan's ability to develop cohesive policies that support sustainable economic growth. Policy inconsistency, exacerbated by external pressures, undermines local efforts to build resilient economic sectors and develop long-term growth strategies. Sudan's economic reform agenda, partially supported by the World Bank and the IMF, has made strides

toward sustainable growth through programs targeting fiscal stability and governance. However, these reforms are hampered by Sudan's political instability and dependency on external funding, often tied to the interests of competing powers. The IMF has highlighted the importance of investing in human capital and non-extractive sectors, such as agriculture and services, to achieve balanced, sustainable growth. These sectors, however, receive limited investment from superpowers focused on Sudan's resource potential (IMF, 2020). Environmental sustainability is another concern impacted by superpower rivalry. Extractive industries, largely funded by foreign powers, pose environmental risks that Sudan may lack the capacity to mitigate. Chinese and Russian investments in mining, for example, often come with minimal environmental oversight, potentially leading to degradation of arable land and water resources. This environmental strain can diminish agricultural productivity, a key sector for Sudan's sustainable growth, thus reducing resilience to climate shocks and exacerbating food insecurity (Smith, 2018). To address these challenges, Sudan must balance its foreign partnerships while enhancing internal capacities to implement environmentally and economically sustainable policies. Strengthening governance structures, improving regulatory frameworks, and promoting local industry could help Sudan leverage foreign investment in a manner that aligns with its sustainable development goals. Collaborating with multilateral institutions and diversifying foreign partnerships may also reduce dependency on any one superpower and foster a more stable economic environment.

In summary, while superpower rivalry in Sudan brings opportunities for investment, it poses substantial challenges to sustainable economic growth. Sudan's reliance on foreign powers and the resulting focus on resource extraction limit its ability to develop a resilient, diversified economy. Effective governance reforms, supported by multilateral institutions, and a cautious approach to foreign partnerships will be crucial for Sudan to achieve long-term sustainable growth amid global power competition

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The dependency theory is a widely applicable framework for explaining the economic effects of superpower rivalry on Sudan's economy. Originally proposed by sociologists and economists like Raúl Prebisch (1950) and Andre Gunder Frank (1966), Dependency Theory suggests that less developed countries (LDCs) are economically dependent on wealthier, more powerful nations. This dependence often results in the exploitation of LDCs' resources, inhibiting their economic autonomy and sustainable growth. Dependency theorists argue that powerful nations drive the economic structures of weaker countries towards dependency, especially through resource extraction and infrastructure projects that prioritize the needs of the powerful states. In Sudan's context, Dependency Theory is relevant due to the influence of major global powers like China, the United States, and Russia. China's significant investments in Sudan's oil sector, for instance, have created economic dependency by aligning Sudan's economy closely with China's demand for resources. This relationship is characteristic of Dependency Theory's core ideas, where foreign investment does not necessarily lead to development but rather to dependency and exploitation. Similarly, Russia's recent interests in Sudan's mineral sector and potential military base on the Red Sea indicate a strategic hold that could further Sudan's economic reliance on external powers (Patey, 2021; Smith, 2018).

Dependency Theory has evolved to address the modern dynamics of international power. For example, Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory (1974) extends Dependency Theory by classifying countries as core, semi-periphery, and periphery, with Sudan falling into the periphery category. This framework is useful in analyzing Sudan's economic position as it highlights how superpowers' interests in Sudan's resources maintain it as a periphery state, dependent on external actors for economic opportunities, and constrained by the global capitalist system. Wallerstein's theory illustrates how Sudan's economic growth is stunted by its role as a supplier of raw materials rather than an independent, diversified economy (Wallerstein, 1974; Akpan, 2018). Recent studies on superpower rivalry in Africa continue to utilize Dependency Theory to explain the consequences of foreign investments on economic sovereignty. A 2020 study by the International Crisis Group analyzed China's Belt and Road Initiative in Africa and its implications for national economies, noting how Sudan's reliance on China exacerbates its economic vulnerabilities amid volatile commodity markets. The IMF and World Bank have similarly pointed out that Sudan's economy lacks diversification, which is a common challenge for countries experiencing dependency on foreign investment for specific resources (IMF, 2020; World Bank, 2018).

### **Research Method**

The study used the qualitative research method that relied mostly on secondary data as its sources of data. Historical research design was used to discuss trend analysis making use of past events to explain present occurrences. This way documentations from foreign and local Newsletters, articles and journals and international organizations like World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Reports, International Crisis Group (ICG) Reports, Government and Central Bank Data, News Articles and Think Tank Publications and Reports from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) were sourced. The study made use of content analysis as the analytical tool to analyze the results obtained based on the specific issues raised in the research questions

### **Major Findings**

#### *Diversification of Sudan's Economy*

Superpower rivalry, especially involving China, the United States, and Russia, has influenced Sudan's economy by reinforcing dependency on resource extraction, particularly oil and minerals, thus hindering diversification efforts. For instance, Chinese investment, predominantly in the oil sector, has provided Sudan with infrastructure and capital but has also locked the economy into oil dependency. Following the secession of South Sudan in 2011, which claimed the majority of Sudan's oil reserves, this dependency led to a substantial economic shock, highlighting the risks associated with limited diversification (Patey, 2021; World Bank, 2018). To counterbalance China's influence, the United States and European powers have aimed to support Sudan's economic diversification by providing aid and technical assistance in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. However, such assistance is often tied to political conditions, especially regarding democratic reforms, leading to inconsistencies that limit its impact. This inconsistency has made it challenging for Sudan to fully integrate diversified sectors into its economy and has underscored the need for sustained, non-conditional investment for

genuine diversification (International Crisis Group, 2020; Akpan, 2018). Furthermore, Russia's recent focus on Sudan's mining sector has added complexity. While Russia's involvement in gold mining has increased Sudan's export options, it has also reinforced an extractive-based economic model that lacks the stability and scalability necessary for long-term growth. This reliance on commodities subject to price volatility makes it difficult for Sudan to establish a robust industrial base or develop sectors less sensitive to external shocks (Smith, 2018; IMF, 2020).

### *Sustainability of Sudan's Economy*

The study found that the sustainability of Sudan's economic growth is heavily influenced by its entanglement in superpower rivalries, as each global power promotes its interests rather than Sudan's long-term economic stability. For example, China's large-scale infrastructure projects, including roads, ports, and oil facilities, are often financed through loans that contribute to Sudan's debt burden. This debt dependency can threaten Sudan's fiscal stability, reducing resources available for other essential services that could drive sustainable development (World Bank, 2018; Akinyemi, 2020). On the other hand, U.S. aid has primarily targeted governance reform, anti-corruption, and human rights initiatives. While these efforts align with long-term sustainability by fostering a stable political environment, their focus on governance rather than direct economic development sometimes limits immediate economic benefits. This approach can delay critical investments in productive sectors necessary for sustainable growth, particularly in agriculture and manufacturing, which are essential to Sudan's economic resilience (Ikenberry, 2020; Ogundipe & Ola-David, 2021). Environmental sustainability also emerges as a concern in Sudan's economic engagement with superpowers. Extractive industries, largely driven by foreign interests, pose environmental risks that Sudan lacks the regulatory capacity to manage effectively. China's and Russia's investments in oil and mining projects are often undertaken with minimal environmental oversight, which can lead to degradation of natural resources, thus jeopardizing agriculture—a vital sector for Sudan's economic stability and food security. This environmental strain further challenges Sudan's capacity to achieve a balanced, sustainable economy (UNDP, 2022; Smith, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the economic effects of superpower rivalry on Sudan highlight both opportunities and significant challenges to achieving a diversified and sustainable economy. On one hand, the influx of foreign investments, primarily from China, Russia, and to a lesser extent the United States, has provided Sudan with vital infrastructure, access to global markets, and short-term economic gains. However, this involvement has also reinforced Sudan's dependency on extractive industries, such as oil and mining, limiting efforts toward meaningful economic diversification. This dependency leaves Sudan vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices and reduces the economy's ability to withstand external shocks. Additionally, the sustainability of Sudan's economy remains at risk due to environmental degradation linked to foreign-led extractive projects and the country's mounting debt burden, especially from Chinese loans tied to large infrastructure projects. These factors strain Sudan's fiscal resources and limit investments in critical sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, which are essential for long-term resilience and balanced growth. Moreover, the differing agendas of these global powers—China's focus

on resource extraction, Russia's strategic positioning, and the U.S.'s emphasis on governance—create policy inconsistencies that hinder Sudan's ability to form a cohesive, long-term economic strategy. Addressing these challenges will require Sudan to adopt a balanced approach to foreign partnerships, prioritize governance reforms, and invest in human capital and environmental protection to foster a diversified and sustainable economy.

### *Recommendations*

Sudan should prioritize developing non-extractive sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services to reduce its dependency on resource-based revenue, which is highly susceptible to global price volatility. Investment in these sectors could be facilitated through policies that incentivize private and foreign investments with diversified outcomes, such as tax breaks for agricultural technology or renewable energy projects. This would decrease the economic vulnerabilities tied to resource dependency and build a more balanced economy resilient to external shocks. Sudan could capitalize on superpower rivalry by strategically engaging with each nation based on its economic needs. For example, while partnering with China for infrastructure projects, Sudan could also work with the United States and Europe to foster governance improvements, promote democratic institutions, and support knowledge transfer in technology and industrial practices. This approach could attract investments that benefit multiple sectors, reducing dependency on any single superpower and promoting more sustainable growth.

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# EXPLORING DEPARTMENTAL HEADS' EXPERIENCES OF MANAGING LEARNER DISCIPLINE THROUGH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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*Abstract: This qualitative research explores the experiences of departmental heads in managing learner discipline through the facilitation of parental involvement. Recognizing the critical role of parental engagement in shaping learner behavior, this study aims to uncover the challenges hindering departmental heads from involving parents in learner discipline and strategies that can be adopted to effectively enhance parental involvement in learner discipline. This study adopts a qualitative research approach through the lens of a constructivist research paradigm. 15 participants, comprising ten departmental heads and five principals, were selected for the study. Data were collected using one-on-one, semi-structured interviews and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Data indicates that the challenges hindering departmental heads from involving parents in learner discipline are communication barriers, inadequate collaboration, inadequate educational leadership training, inadequate parent commitment, as well as social and contextual factors of the parents. Amidst these challenges, the study advanced strategies that departmental heads can implement to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline, which include training and professional development, improved parent-school partnerships, orientation programs, and collaboration with parents. Keywords: departmental head, learner discipline, parent involvement, parent-school partnership, leadership training, professional development, orientation programs, collaboration*

## Introduction

Learner discipline is essential for creating a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment that supports the academic, social, and emotional development of all learners. Learner discipline is a critical factor in the effectiveness of the school environment. It is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires collaboration, communication, and a commitment to promoting positive behavior and learner success. Examples of learner indiscipline can vary widely depending on the context, age group, and cultural factors. Issues of learner indiscipline manifest in various forms, including disruptive behavior in the classroom, defiance of authority, bullying or harassment, academic dishonesty, vandalism or destruction of school property, truancy or absenteeism, substance abuse, disregard for safety regulations, disrespectful behavior towards peers, and cyberbullying or online misconduct (Ngwokabuenui, 2015; Obadire & Sinthumale, 2021). Learner indiscipline can stem from various factors, both internal and external, that influence students' behavior and attitudes towards school and authority. Some common causes of



learner indiscipline include lack of clear expectations, poor classroom management, peer influence, personal factors, family environment, socioeconomic factors, academic challenges, cultural factors, school environment, and lack of positive reinforcement (Masingi, 2017; Ngwokabuenui, 2015; Thelma et al., 2023). The effects of learner indiscipline can vary widely depending on the severity and frequency of the misconduct, as well as the context in which it occurs. Some common effects include disruption of learning, decreased academic performance, negative impact on school climate, increased teacher stress and burnout, compromised school safety, escalation of conflict, negative social and emotional development, and damage to school reputation (Dearing, 2020; Jinot, 2018; Wang, 2022).

Educational leaders play an essential role in managing learner discipline and creating a safe and conducive learning environment (Netshitangani, 2018). Effective management of learner discipline is a key responsibility of educational leaders (Narain, 2015). They are responsible for establishing discipline policies, maintaining discipline standards, and implementing effective strategies to address learner discipline problems in schools (Lumadi, 2020). It is paramount to creating and leading a secure and productive environment, which is essential for the success of educational institutions. Among school leaders, departmental heads play a significant role. School departmental heads are educational administrators responsible for overseeing specific academic departments within a school and typically hold leadership roles, managing and coordinating the activities, curriculum, and faculty within their respective departments (Tapala et al., 2022). Departmental heads collaborate with other school stakeholders, including parents, to ensure alignment with educational objectives, standards, and policies (Kalane & Rambuda, 2022). Their responsibilities often include curriculum development, teacher evaluations, student progress monitoring, budget management, and fostering a positive learning environment within their departments (Mthiyane et al., 2019). Department heads are essential in determining a school's academic course, fostering collaboration with parents, encouraging excellence, and fostering the professional development of faculty members. Among school stakeholders, departmental heads play a pivotal role in maintaining order and fostering a conducive learning environment. Narain (2015) asserts that making sure the school maintains learner discipline is one of the departmental heads' duties. Educational leaders, especially the departmental heads, are responsible for creating synergy and inclusivity in managing learner discipline through fostering positive parent involvement. They can leverage the support, knowledge, and influence of parents in promoting constructive discipline practices and developing a culture of respect, responsibility, and accountability, ultimately benefiting all school stakeholders.

Managing learner discipline cannot be accomplished in isolation and requires positive parent involvement (Lumadi, 2019). In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of parental engagement in education, particularly in matters related to student behavior and discipline. Parents are viewed not only as partners in their children's educational journey but also as essential contributors to the maintenance of discipline and conducive learning environments. Consequently, exploring the experiences, perceptions, and strategies of departmental heads in managing learner discipline through parental involvement is a pertinent area of research. A crucial aspect of educational leadership is the ability to foster the positive involvement of parents in the management of learner discipline. For educational leaders, recognizing the significance of positive parent

involvement is a key element in fostering a safe and secure environment conducive to learning and promoting positive learner outcomes. The importance of parent involvement in shaping and reinforcing learner discipline cannot be overemphasized. The involvement of parents in learner discipline has been widely recognized as an essential element of successful educational systems worldwide (Lumadi, 2019). Collaboration between parents and educational leaders has demonstrated positive outcomes, including improved learner discipline, better academic performance, stronger school-community relationships, and the overall success of schools (Munje & Mncube, 2018; Sibanda, 2021).

There is an alarming increase in learner indiscipline issues. Incidents of fighting, bullying, neglecting to complete homework and assessment tasks, and general contravention of the schools' discipline policy and learner code of conduct have become an urgent cause for concern. Management techniques such as the merit and demerit system, detention, and referral to social workers have proved fruitless due to inconsistency and a lack of reinforcement of appropriate discipline and behavioral expectations between school and home. Several studies have indicated that learner indiscipline is a common concern for educators and administrators. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that involves proactive measures to promote positive behavior, effective discipline management strategies, and collaboration among educators, students, parents, and community stakeholders. Effective management of learner discipline within educational institutions is a multifaceted challenge that demands collaboration among various stakeholders, including teachers, school leadership, students, and parents. This study therefore sets out to explore the lived experiences of departmental heads in managing learner discipline through parent involvement in learner involvement.

Main Question: What are the departmental heads experiences of managing learner discipline through parental involvement?

Sub-Questions:

1. What challenges do departmental heads encounter in involving parents in learner discipline?
2. What strategies can departmental heads implement to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline?

### **Concept of learner discipline**

Learner discipline refers to the methods, systems, and strategies employed by educators and administrators to maintain order, manage behavior, and promote a conducive learning environment among students within educational institutions (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Padayachee & Gcelu, 2022). It encompasses a range of approaches aimed at guiding students towards responsible and respectful conduct, fostering positive social interactions, and preventing disruptive or inappropriate behavior that may hinder the learning process (Ndlovu et al., 2023). Discipline in this context involves not only addressing instances of misconduct or rule violations but also instilling values, promoting self-regulation, and nurturing a sense of accountability among learners. It encompasses both proactive measures, such as setting clear expectations and establishing routines, and reactive responses, such as implementing consequences for misbehavior or providing support for students experiencing difficulties. Effective learner discipline involves a balance between firmness and fairness, emphasizing the importance of consistency, transparency, and respect for the dignity of each student (Khanyile & Mpuangnan, 2023). It is often guided

by a school's code of conduct or disciplinary policies, which outline expectations for behavior, procedures for addressing infractions, and the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, and parents.

#### Factors Influencing Parental Involvement in Learner Discipline at School

Parental involvement in disciplinary matters is influenced by a myriad of factors, including social, cultural, economic, and institutional contexts.

1. **Socioeconomic Status and Demographic Factors:** Socioeconomic status plays a significant role in shaping parental involvement in learner discipline. Studies have shown that parents from higher socioeconomic status backgrounds tend to be more actively engaged in school-related activities, including disciplinary matters, compared to those from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds (Naite, 2021; Şengönül, 2022; Vadivel et al., 2023). Factors such as parental education, income level, and occupation can influence parents' ability and willingness to participate in school-based activities, attend meetings, and communicate with school staff regarding disciplinary issues (Ndwandwe, 2023). Additionally, demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and language proficiency can impact parental involvement, with minority and non-English-speaking parents facing additional barriers to engagement due to cultural and linguistic differences (Baker et al., 2016).

2. **Communication and Relationship Building:** Effective communication and relationship building between parents and school staff are essential for promoting parental involvement in learner discipline. Research suggests that open, transparent, and culturally responsive communication channels are critical for engaging parents in disciplinary matters (Baker et al., 2016; Leo et al., 2019; Manamela, 2015). Schools that prioritize regular communication, provide clear information about disciplinary policies and procedures, and establish trusting relationships with parents are more likely to facilitate meaningful parent-school partnerships. Furthermore, efforts to involve parents in decision-making processes related to discipline can enhance their sense of ownership and investment in school discipline practices (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020).

3. **School Climate and Culture:** The school's climate and culture significantly impact parental involvement in learner discipline. A positive school climate characterized by safety, respect, and inclusivity fosters parents' confidence in the school's ability to address disciplinary issues effectively (Mousena & Raptis, 2020). Conversely, a negative or hostile school climate can deter parents from engaging with school authorities regarding disciplinary matters (Pourrajab et al., 2018). Schools that actively promote parental involvement, create welcoming environments for families, and provide opportunities for parent input in shaping disciplinary policies are more likely to encourage parent participation in disciplinary initiatives (Naite, 2021).

4. **Parental Beliefs and Attitudes:** Parental beliefs and attitudes towards discipline influence their level of involvement in school-based disciplinary practices. Gomba (2015) and Lim et al. (2022) indicate that parents' perceptions of their role in disciplining their children, their attitudes towards authority, and their cultural beliefs about discipline shape their willingness to collaborate with schools on disciplinary matters. For example, parents who view discipline as solely the responsibility of educators may be less inclined to engage with school authorities regarding disciplinary issues. On the contrary, parents who value partnership and shared responsibility in discipline are more likely to actively participate in school-based disciplinary initiatives (Lumadi, 2019).

5. Parental Empowerment and Inclusion: Empowering parents and promoting their inclusion in decision-making processes regarding learner discipline can enhance their involvement in school-based disciplinary practices. According to Bunijevac (2017) and de Wet et al. (2019), involving parents in the development, implementation, and evaluation of disciplinary policies increases their sense of agency and ownership in school discipline practices. Additionally, efforts to provide parents with training, resources, and support to effectively advocate for their children's disciplinary needs can further promote their engagement in school-based disciplinary initiatives (Lumadi, 2019).

6. Institutional Policies and Practices: Institutional policies and practices significantly influence parental involvement in learner discipline. Schools that have clear, consistent, and transparent disciplinary policies are more likely to foster parent-school partnerships in addressing disciplinary issues (Padayachee & Gcelu, 2022). Contrariwise, schools with ambiguous or punitive disciplinary practices may deter parents from engaging with school authorities regarding disciplinary matters (Duarte et al., 2023). Moreover, efforts to promote parental involvement in learner discipline must be supported by school leadership, staff training, and resources to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of parent-school partnerships (Miller, 2021). Understanding these factors is essential for designing effective strategies to promote parental involvement in school-based disciplinary practices and create supportive and inclusive learning environments for all learners.

### **Methodology**

The study fits under the constructivist paradigm, which attempts to comprehend department heads' experiences of managing learner discipline through parental involvement (Mertens, 2005). A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study, as it offers interpretive approaches geared towards examining phenomena within their natural contexts (Creswell, 2012). The research design employed was a generic qualitative approach focused on uncovering and comprehending phenomena, processes, or the perspectives of participants involved in the study. Utilizing purposeful sampling, participants were deliberately selected to best address the research objectives (Klenke, 2016). 15 participants, comprising two departmental heads and their school principal, who could attest to their experiences, were selected from five schools, making a total of ten departmental heads and five principals. The participants selected have been in their respective positions for a minimum of five years and have been involving parents in managing learner discipline. Data were collected through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews and analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Challenges departmental heads encounter in involving parents in learner discipline

#### **1. Communication Barriers**

Data revealed that communication barriers are a major hindrance that departmental heads encounter when involving parents in learner discipline. The excerpts below show how communication barriers served as a challenge, hindering departmental heads from involving parents in learner discipline. My school serves a predominantly ethnic group that speaks a variety of local languages. As a departmental head, my communication with parents, sharing of information, and collaborating on disciplinary issues have often proved to be ineffective due to my poor proficiency in local languages and the parents' limited

proficiency in English. At my school, all official communication, including our discipline policy, learner code of conduct, newsletters, and my interpersonal communication with parents, is in English. This limited my ability to communicate with parents regarding their understanding and my expectations of them in the application of the discipline policy and learner code of conduct. In my school, we serve diverse population groups with parents whose proficiency in English is limited. Communication, impeded by my poor proficiency in local languages, made it difficult to establish rapport, build trust, and effectively communicate and address disciplinary concerns with parents. I have found that parents and grandparents, particularly those of the older generations, have been hesitant to communicate with me due to a language barrier. Reflecting on language barriers, I realised that, as departmental head, I have neglected to communicate with parents on their understanding and application of the discipline policy and the code of conduct, which have been written in English. The principals also attest that the communication barrier is a change for departmental heads to manage learner discipline through parental involvement. I also realise and agree that communication regarding parent involvement in learner discipline is lacking because of language barriers. Many of our learners live with grandparents or parents who are uneducated. They are unable to understand exactly what is required of them by reading the Code of Conduct and the Discipline Policy because we publish them in English. Translating our expectations and speaking to parents in their home language is an advantage because it makes them more receptive to what is being communicated.

Mwase et al. (2020) and Ozmen et al. (2016) confirm that cultural differences in language are a significant barrier hampering parental involvement. Narain (2015) also found that for parents from disadvantaged communities, especially, English, the medium of instruction, hindered effective communication, thus contributing to inadequate parent involvement in learner discipline. Communication barriers encountered by educational leaders make it difficult to establish mutual understanding and to align expectations of the disciplinary processes of the Discipline Policy and the Learner Code of Conduct with parents (Mwase et al., 2020; Triegaardt & Diermen, 2021).

## 2. Inadequate Collaboration

Data also revealed that inadequate collaboration between departmental heads and parents serves as hindrance in foster parental involvement in the learner discipline. Inadequate collaboration has influenced my ability as departmental head to foster better parental involvement in learner discipline. Regular collaboration regarding shared expectations between parents and me has been lacking when discipline issues have arisen. Shared expectations on the application of the Discipline Policy and Learner Code of Conduct, sharing of ideas, and collaborative problem-solving regarding parental involvement in learner discipline have been inconsistent. ... Time constraints pose a major problem in collaboration with parents regarding their involvement in discipline issues. We have many responsibilities. There just isn't enough time to get everything done. Another departmental head provided reason for the inadequate collaboration: "My heavy workload and conflicting work responsibilities have impacted my ability to sufficiently collaborate with parents in order to cultivate and sustain their involvement in learner discipline and to prompt identification and action in addressing the challenges hindering parent involvement in learner discipline." One of the principals affirmed that "I can confirm that we, as SMT, have heavy workloads. The workload of departmental heads and conflicting work priorities

is an obstacle to enhancing parental involvement in learner discipline.” Munje and Mncube (2018) found that parents feel alienated and disconnected from the schooling system as a consequence of inadequate collaboration, further hindering involvement in learner discipline. Ozmen et al. (2016) also indicate that time constraints owing to departmental heads workload affect their collaborative efficiency with parents. According to Lumadi (2019), when discipline issues do arise, consistency, shared expectations, and collaborative problem-solving between parents and teachers ensure that each feels supported, in addition to learners feeling motivated and supported to improve their behaviour.

### 3. Inadequate educational leadership training

Data indicated that inadequate educational leadership training for the departmental heads constitutes another major constraint in involving parents in learner discipline. For example, one of the departmental heads remarked that: “Since my appointment as departmental head, I have not received the appropriate and relevant training from the Department of Education or my school on how to work with parents. My formal education at the tertiary level has also not given me the tools and skills to approach and respond to parents whose involvement in learner discipline matters is inadequate. The principals agreed that the departmental heads barely receive sufficient training on best practices necessary for them to involve parents in learner discipline. “Unfortunately, the Department of Education does not provide orientation and awareness training to fully equip departmental head appointees in the leadership position in all ramifications of their responsibilities.” Another principal reinforced: From my own research and studies in leadership and management, I agree that our education and training at university do not equip us to address the challenges we face in encouraging parental involvement in learner discipline. Neither are we offered in-service training nor additional courses by our employer, where we are given research-based strategies on how to deal with socio-economic factors affecting parental involvement through in-service training. According to Munje and Mncube (2018), parent non-involvement is exacerbated by the inadequate knowledge and training of educational leaders on how to foster positive relations with parents. This was further echoed in studies by Oranga et al. (2022), which report a lack of training by school leaders on parent involvement at various levels. According to Oranga et al. (2022), a lack of pre-service training at the tertiary level and a lack of in-service training and continuous professional development of school leaders on effective engagement with parents at the school level are additional barriers encountered by educational leaders in fostering positive parent involvement in learner discipline. School leaders who are ill-equipped to apply parenting models that encourage partnerships between parents, schools, and local societies are more likely to project unfavourable views of parental involvement. Netshitangani (2018) declared that educational leaders are responsible for creating a safe and conducive environment for all stakeholders, making it essential for them to undergo continuous training.

### 4. Inadequate Parent Commitment

The participants unanimously remarked that inadequate parental commitment is another factor hindering departmental heads from ensuring better parental involvement in learner discipline. One of the departmental heads shared their experience: “Parents not showing up to meetings, resisting attempts to engage with them, and not putting in the effort to align their ideas of discipline with those stipulated in the Learner Code of Conduct have been extremely challenging for me as a departmental head. My efforts to involve parents in

learner discipline are not reciprocated by the parents. Some parents have been unresponsive. Another departmental head remarked: “In my experience as departmental head, inadequate parent commitment has been a significant hindrance in my attempts to involve them in learner discipline. I have found that parents often do not attend individual and collective meetings; they do not answer or return calls.” The principals emphatically agreed that inadequate parental commitment does affect the ability of the departmental heads to involve them in learner discipline. Some of the principals indicate: “I am aware of parents not taking your calls and not coming to meetings.” “I have seen that some parents do not respond to messages, and I can attest to the fact that many do not come to scheduled meetings.” In accordance with this data, research has shown that inadequate parent commitment poses a significant challenge to educational leaders in positively involving parents in learner discipline. Ozmen et al. (2016) reported communication, cultural, and parents own negative experiences at school as reasons for inadequate parent commitment to learner discipline. According to Mbalo (2022), factors contributing to inadequate parent commitment include parents’ lack of awareness and limited understanding of their role in learner discipline. Parents have limited knowledge of relevant policies and their significance as stakeholders in contributing towards and implementing the discipline policy and learner code of conduct, especially in the case of parents with low levels of literacy and low standards of education (Mbalo, 2022).

#### 5. Social and contextual factors of parents

Another factor hindering parental involvement in the discipline of learners, as indicated in the data, is the social and contextual factors of the parent. A departmental head remarked that: “Reflecting on my interaction with parents, I have found that my lack of awareness of certain social factors affecting parents, such as poor standards of education, demanding work schedules, and a lack of family support, created a barrier preventing effective parental involvement in learner discipline.” Another departmental head also shares their experience: As an educational leader, I have observed some social and contextual factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to resources, low levels of parental education and literacy, parental work obligations, cultural differences in attitudes towards authority and discipline, and parent-school relationships capable of impeding parental involvement regarding learner discipline. These factors have posed further challenges for me as a departmental head in positively involving parents in learner discipline. Principals agree that the lack of adequate awareness regarding social factors affecting parents has contributed to the inability of the departmental heads to manage learner discipline through parental involvement.

Lack of awareness of social factors affecting parents is a major factor influencing parental involvement in learning discipline. Parents lack confidence in their abilities due to social factors and home circumstances; hence, they shy away from involving themselves in discipline and school matters. I remember during departmental head meetings with parents, they were less receptive and responsive because the departmental heads did not understand their circumstances.

Ozmen et al. (2016) identified physical distance, financial status, and time constraints as compelling factors impairing collaboration between parents and schools, thus hindering educational leaders from fostering positive parent involvement in learner discipline. Additionally, Mwase et al. (2020) reported unemployment, a poor standard of education, demanding work schedules, and dysfunctional family dynamics as significant barriers

preventing the effective involvement of parents in learner discipline. According to Mwase et al. (2020), parents feel threatened and avoid significant involvement and meaningful interaction with schools due to their own negative experiences, low self-esteem, lack of knowledge, and lack of confidence triggered by their own poor performance and lack of success at school. Mbalo (2022) also identified parents' levels of income, socio-economic and employment status, time constraints, family dynamics, competing responsibilities, and limited resources as factors hampering parent commitment, which in turn affects educational leaders' attempts to positively involve parents in learner discipline. Ndlovu (2013) also identified poverty, unemployment, single-parent homes, lack of education, lack of family structure and support, chronic health issues such as HIV and AIDS, job dynamics, and demanding work schedules as socially significant factors influencing communication and hindering parent participation and involvement in learner discipline.

Strategies departmental heads can implement to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline

#### 1. Training and professional development for departmental heads

Participants posit training and professional development as efficient strategies to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline. One of the departmental heads indicates that: Further training and development focused on improving my communication skills and my knowledge of best practices and legal and ethical considerations are essential for me as a departmental head. Training and development are also necessary for me on how to respond appropriately to the norms and values of parents and with cultural awareness and sensitivity to social factors preventing me, as the departmental head, from engaging parents in learner development. A principal also validates that: "Organising training and professional development for departmental heads will be a good strategy for them to enhance their ability to effectively communicate and involve parents in learner discipline." Mbalo (2022) and Munje and Mncube (2018) assert that training and professional development programs can potentially equip educational leaders with practical skills and attitudes to effectively increase engagement with parents. Key areas of development include communication skills with a focus on effective communication strategies such as active listening, empathy, conflict resolution, communication across racial and cultural groups, and communication in indigenous languages. In addition, Triegaardt and Diermen (2021) recommend training and professional development, such as in-service training, as avenues for learning and empowerment in understanding the vast societal and contextual factors that could affect parents in the context of the school. There is also a need for school leaders to be trained on effective communication and diplomatic skills while remaining attentive and cognisant of contextual factors in order to establish and sustain positive partnerships with parents (Mbalo, 2022; Triegaardt & Diermen, 2021).

#### 2. Improved Parent-School Partnerships

Data show that fostering effective parent-school partnerships is an effective strategy for departmental heads to improve parent involvement in learner discipline. One of the departmental heads suggest: If we encourage parents to participate in formulating the Code of Conduct at school, it will help them to add their voice and be able to monitor learners towards adhering to the rules of the school. It is good to encourage them to be part of the disciplinary programs that maintain order at school. I suggested parents' meetings where they were required to sign a contract committing their participation and engagement in school activities. We need to work closely with the parents and carry them along in



everything we do regarding learner discipline. Without this, our effort will not be supported by the parents. In agreement to this view, a principal emphasized that: “Teamwork is vitally important to the success of an organization. Particularly where children are involved. Follow-up meetings with all stakeholders are necessary for consistency in sharing information regarding learner discipline at home and at school”. Another principal also indicated that: “Including parents in our decision-making processes at school, each sharing their ideas on learner discipline and other factors that enhance parental involvement, allows parents to feel like significant stakeholders, thereby motivating them to be more involved in the discipline of the learners.” Parent-school partnerships remain one of the main strategies emphasized by Lumadi (2019) and Sibanda (2021) as being an essential component in enhancing parent involvement in learner discipline. Parent commitment plays an essential role in educational leaders being able to positively involve them in the management of learner discipline. Kaluma (2021) found a positive correlation between parent commitment and the management of learner discipline. A personable, welcoming, and inclusive school climate allows for better parental involvement in school activities, decision-making, the development of policies, and the evaluation of procedures using effective communication strategies and training programs for enhanced parent partnerships, thus increasing their sense of ownership and engagement in the school community (Lumadi, 2019; Sibanda, 2021). Collaboration with parents is crucial in fostering their involvement in learner discipline. Regular collaboration with parents, shared expectations on the application of the discipline policy and learner code of conduct, sharing of ideas, and collaboration in solving discipline problems are significant factors in fostering positive involvement in learner discipline. Lumadi (2019) reports that when discipline issues do arise, consistency, shared expectations, and collaborative problem-solving between parents and school leaders ensure that each feels supported, in addition to learners feeling motivated and supported to improve their behaviour.

### 3. Orientation

According to the data, another significant strategy that departmental heads could adopt to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline is orientation. One of the departmental heads remarked that: It is good to encourage parents to attend termly parent orientation programs to familiarise themselves and reinforce the application of the discipline policy and the learner code of conduct of the school. The orientation will create a medium for awareness and sensitisation of what learners need to know and do regarding learner discipline. This strengthened the relationship between parents and the SMT. It will help the parents understand their roles and responsibilities regarding learner discipline and empower them to effectively participate in the school's disciplinary committee. During orientation with parents, they will be able to ask questions on issues that are not clear.

The principals also agree that the parents should be orientated: It is true that parents need to be informed about what is expected of them regarding their children's discipline. I believe some of them are ignorant about the roles and duties. ... not that they are not willing to take up their responsibilities, but it seems that they are not aware of it. The orientation should be carried out for all parents, especially the new ones who are not familiar with our discipline policy and the learner code of conduct.

Orientation helps establish clear expectations and communication channels between the school and parents. Gonzalez and Ramirez (2019) state that orientation programs for involving parents in learner discipline are essential for establishing clear expectations,

fostering effective communication, and promoting meaningful parent-school partnerships. Orientation provides parents with information about school policies, procedures, and expectations regarding discipline, equipping them with the knowledge and resources needed to actively engage in disciplinary matters and the role parents are expected to play in supporting learner discipline (Smith, 2020). By clearly communicating school rules, procedures, and expectations to parents, orientation programs minimize misunderstandings and discrepancies between home and school environments, thereby promoting consistency and coherence in disciplinary approaches (Gonzalez & Ramirez, 2019).

Orientation programs serve as a mechanism for building parental efficacy by providing parents with the information and skills needed to navigate disciplinary processes effectively. A study by Watkins and Obiakor (2022) argue that parents who understand school expectations are more likely to be actively engaged in school-related activities, including disciplinary matters. Furthermore, orientation programs play a crucial role in promoting communication and relationship building between parents and school staff by providing opportunities for parents to interact with school personnel, ask questions, and voice concerns about disciplinary practices, thereby fostering positive relationships and promoting mutual understanding between parents and school staff (Lee & Kim, 2021). This open dialogue can help build trust and a sense of partnership between the school and parents, which is essential for successful parent involvement in learner discipline. This alignment is crucial for ensuring that parents feel informed, supported, and empowered to collaborate with schools in addressing disciplinary issues effectively. Alignment between school and home practices can enhance the consistency and effectiveness of learner discipline.

### **Conceptual Learning**

The study revealed that communication barriers are a primary hindrance for departmental heads in involving parents in learner discipline. The lack of departmental heads' proficiency in communicating in the major indigenous languages spoken by parents hampers them from communicating clear expectations regarding learner discipline processes and the significance of their involvement. Communication with parents whose first language is not English, regarding their understanding and application of the discipline policy and learner code of conduct, was therefore identified as a challenge in having a positive engagement with parents. Mwase et al. (2020) emphasize differences in language as a major impediment to parent involvement. The study also showed that social and contextual factors among parents could hinder departmental heads from facilitating parental involvement in learner discipline. Ozmen et al. (2016) posit that parents economic and employment status, physical distance, time constraints and demanding work schedules, poor standard of education, dysfunctional family dynamics, and poor self-esteem are crucial social and contextual factors preventing effective parental involvement in learner discipline. The study further revealed that inadequate leadership training of departmental heads could hinder them from fostering positive parental involvement in learner discipline. The lack of adequate leadership training on how to relate with parents could result in a lack of parental commitment to learner discipline. Inadequate collaboration between parents and departmental heads regarding expectations of the application of the discipline policy and code of conduct is a challenge that must be overcome in order to foster positive parental

involvement in learner discipline. Munje and Mncube (2018) found that inadequate collaboration with parents results in them disconnecting from the schooling system. The strategies departmental heads could adopt to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline include educational leadership training and professional development. The training and professional development should include strategies to enhance parent involvement in learner discipline, effective communication strategies with an emphasis on active listening, empathy, conflict resolution, communication across racial and cultural groups, and communication in indigenous languages. This could equip departmental heads with the tools to refine their skills in successfully involving parents in learner discipline. Encouraging parent partnerships and orientation programs can strengthen my relations with parents. To enhance parental involvement in learner discipline, departmental heads can organize orientation programs for parents where the school discipline policy, learner code of conduct, and other relevant information will be clarified and discussed with the parents. The orientation can create an avenue for parents to ask questions regarding learner discipline issues, leading to an inclusive environment and encouraging parents to participate in decision-making, formulation, and implementation of the discipline policy and learner code of conduct, thus enhancing departmental heads skills and practice in managing learner discipline through parent involvement.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study highlight several key challenges faced by departmental heads in involving parents in learner discipline. These challenges include communication barriers, inadequate collaboration, inadequate educational leadership training, inadequate parent commitment, and social and contextual factors affecting parents. These barriers significantly hinder departmental heads' efforts to engage parents in disciplinary matters. However, amidst these challenges, there are also strategies that departmental heads can implement to enhance parental involvement in learner discipline, which include training and professional development, improved parent-school partnerships, orientation programs, and collaboration with parents.

Recommendations: Based on the findings and conceptual learning of this study, the following recommendations are made:

**Training and Professional Development:** Departmental heads should opt for training and professional development opportunities focused on improving communication skills, cultural awareness, and strategies for effectively engaging parents in learner discipline. These programs should equip departmental heads with the practical skills and attitudes necessary for building positive relationships with parents and addressing communication barriers effectively.

**Improved Parent-School Partnerships:** Departmental heads should actively foster partnerships with parents by involving them in decision-making processes, sharing expectations regarding discipline, and creating opportunities for collaboration and shared responsibility. By establishing open lines of communication and mutual trust, departmental heads can enhance parent involvement in learner discipline and create a supportive school environment.

**Orientation Programs:** Departmental heads should organize orientation programs for parents to familiarize them with school policies, procedures, and expectations regarding learner discipline. These programs should provide parents with the information and

resources needed to actively engage in disciplinary matters and empower them to play a proactive role in supporting their children's behavior.

Collaboration with Parents: Departmental heads should prioritize collaboration with parents by creating opportunities for regular communication, sharing of ideas, and problem-solving regarding learner discipline. By involving parents in the decision-making process and addressing their concerns and suggestions, departmental heads can build trust and mutual understanding, fostering positive parent-school partnerships.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges encountered by departmental heads in involving parents in learner discipline requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes communication, collaboration, and partnership between schools and families. By implementing the recommendations outlined above, departmental heads can overcome barriers to parental involvement and create a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes positive learner behavior.

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## **POVERTY AND CRIMINALITY IN NIGERIA: THE NEXUS**

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*Abstract: The study analyses the nexus between poverty and criminal activities in Nigeria. The data for the study were gathered from secondary sources, including textbooks, academic journals, newspapers, and information from the official website of the Nigerian government. These data were subjected to content analysis. The study revealed that the increase in criminal activities is a result of inequality, caused by the conversion of state resources to personal ones by a few powerful elites who are serving their interests against that of generality. And that, the increase in the rate of crimes across the country was a reaction by the poverty-threatening population to have basic needs. The study further showed that more than 70 percent of Nigeria's youths who engaged in criminal activities realized that criminal activities are veritable economic activities. The study equally revealed that systemic poverty keeps people perpetually in drought, and traumatized them. And, that poverty has a psychological influence and controls people's thoughts, it pushes people to look for alternative ways of solving their problems, including harming others. And, those who have their desires and expectations in the areas of economic survival thwarted and cannot get their needs through legal means, may alternatively seek illegal means. The study concluded that there are strong connections between poverty and criminal activities that permeate the country. And if proactive steps are not urgently taken, the criminal perpetration may submerge the country. The study recommended that an economic summit should be convocated to discuss the economic future of the country and to address the issue of inequality.*

*Keywords: poverty, crimes, criminal activities, inequality, basic needs, and economic*

**Introduction**

Crime and poverty are part of the challenges confronting many countries across the world. Even though different studies have shown that poverty alone is not a driver of crime, but rather crimes are usually propelled by inequality (Sugiharti, Purwono, Esquivias & Rohmawati, 2023; Fleming, 2011), yet, poverty and crime are believed to normally occur simultaneously (USAID, n.d.). Crime perpetration is not an issue limited to poor countries; there are highly rich countries that have high rates of crime. For instance, the United States is one of such countries with an unusually high homicide rate despite its prosperous economy. This notwithstanding, most of the highest rates of crime come from developing areas including Africa and South America (Fleming, 2011).

Poverty and low income have been among the most debated subjects at the international level, especially by the United Nations, as regards economic development and governmental policy. While food, clothing, and shelter remain major parts of physiological needs, otherwise referred to as biological needs, many people across the globe still do not have access to them. These are the needs that are essential for life, and people naturally have the desire to have them for their survival. Given the importance of the aforementioned

basic needs to human survival and stability, every human strives to have them, yet they do not.

Many countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive are well endowed with natural resources. While these resources are well managed and have brought about transformations in some of these countries' economies, as well as; reduced the issue of poverty, the story has not been the same with Nigeria. With the poor management of Nigeria's resources, the country's economy has either been fluctuating or remained stagnant. Consequently, the problems of low, or lack of basic needs for the survival of the people have become the order of the day. In other words, the poor management of Nigeria's resources has continued to slim down the chances of people having access to basic needs. Accordingly, the desire by the people, the majority of whom are youths to have a means of survival has been found to have contributed to the high level of crimes being perpetrated in Nigeria (Adegbami & Uche, 2016). As such, the rate at which crimes are being committed in Nigeria, especially in contemporary times is unparalleled. Hardly can a day pass without a case of crime being reported across the nation.

The situation has continued to affect individuals, communities, and the country as a whole. Corroborating the extent to which the youths are involved in crimes in Nigeria, the International Organisation for Peace Building and Social Justice (2022), as reported by David, states that more than 70 percent of Nigeria's youths engaged in criminal activities as a result of low, or lack of economic opportunity, the result of which is poverty that has continued to bite hard on the country. There is, therefore, an underlying connection between poverty and crime-induced insecurity that has continued to ravage the country (David, 2022).

In Nigeria, criminal activities have continued to increase due to weakness in the country's administrative institutions. Put differently, the weakness in the administrative mechanism of Nigeria which has allowed it to be commandeered by a few powerful elites has contributed to the breeding of crimes. These powerful elites have continued to convert state resources to personal ones, thereby serving their interests against that of generality. This has consequently increased the inequality gap (Adegbami and Uche, 2016). The poor governance system being operated in the country has continued to bring untold hardship to people; especially, the youths who are the most vibrant faction of the population of Nigeria. The increase in the rate of crimes across the country appears to be a reaction by the poverty-threatening population, who now divert their energy to criminal activities which they see as economic activities to be able to have basic needs. It is on this note that the study analyses the nexus between poverty and criminal activities in Nigeria.

### **Poverty and Crime: Clarification of Concepts**

Poverty has become a continuous problem that has continued to pose political and ethical challenges to societies. Therefore, the concept has continued to be a subject of debate for centuries, and so, the explanation and classification of the word have, to a large extent, directed the development of approaches and policies to alleviate it (Ramphoma, 2014). Poverty is surely a familiar word that people believe they understand, but they do not. For this reason, the meaning ascribed to the word is largely dependent on the basic idea of people about it. In other words, poverty is experienced by different people in different ways; this has informed different meanings given to the word (Dixon & Macarov, 1998).



Poverty is no doubt a multidimensional concept that measures stages of deprivation being encountered by an individual, household, or community. Poverty could be viewed from the perspective of people's needs that are not adequately met. In other words, people could be said to be poor when they do not have their required needs, or when they lack the resources to get the things they need. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development under the auspices of the United Nations defines poverty thus:

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and civil, social, and cultural life (United Nations 1995a para. 2). Baratz & Grigsby (1971), see poverty as "a severe lack of physical and mental well-being, closely associated with inadequate economic resources and consumption" (Baratz & Grigsby, 1971, p. 120). For them, poverty is beyond physical as people could also be said to be poor when they are mentally inadequate. The International Labour Organization (1995) sees poverty from the perspectives of individuals or families who are not living well. Not living well in this context means, living below a particular standard, this is measured in terms of income versus consumption. According to the UN (1995), poverty is a condition whereby people are severely deprived of essential needs for their survival. These survivals need include - food, drinking water, sanitation services, health care services, shelter, and education, among other needs. These essential needs not only depend on their income but also on services provided by the government.

Ringen (1988) on his part avers that poverty is 'a standard of consumption which is below what is generally considered to be a decent minimum' (Ringen, 1988, p.354). That is, when one style, or pattern of living is below a minimum standard or is not appropriate enough, such a person is considered poor. The World Bank definition is not at variance with the one offered by Ringen. According to the World Bank, poverty is 'the inability to attain a minimal standard of living' (World Bank 1990:26). Thus, when an individual cannot meet the standard of living, or meet the international benchmark, such a person is considered poor and impoverished.

From the above, poverty can be seen as the inability to acquire one's basic needs. It is a situation of the lack of required resources that subjects one to physical deprivation. People in this situation cannot realize their basic survival needs including food, clothing, and shelter, which are considered as the needs of the lowest order, but of paramount importance.

Having attempted the conceptualization of poverty, there is a need to do the same for crime. The word "crime" could be seen as a broad word of wide significance that has no universally adopted or precise definition. Crime, for instance, is defined by Sowmyya (2014), as "a public wrong". That it is, it is an act of wrongdoing that contravenes the law of the state, which is strongly objected to by the society. According to Opp (2020), crimes are various actions or non-actions that flout criminal law. In other words, crime remains an act or omission prohibited by law that can attract punishment by fine or imprisonment. In the same vein as Opp, is Morrison (2013), who sees crime as some actions or omissions that causes harm to others, and as such, the person that causes harm is held to account for his or her misdeed and be punished accordingly in line with the laws of the land. According

to Williams, cited in Simester & Sullivan (2007), a crime can be seen as anything that is prohibited by criminal law. Tappan cited in Lanier & Henry (2001), defines crime as a deliberate act of violation of the criminal law (statutory and case law), committed without defense or excuse, and penalized by the state as a felony or misdemeanor. For Simester & Sullivan (2007), crimes, in essence, are wrongs that, cause or force people to contemplate deserting their normal socially stable behavior in their bid to defend themselves. According to Shankar (n.d.), crime is seen as an act contrary to a state's legal code or laws. Crimes may be categorized as legal or illegal. Crimes are illegal when they are punishable under the law, because, it has violated the rule of administration or law of the state. It is illegal as it involves the practice of wrongdoing that is harmful to self or against third parties, as documented in criminal law. Legal crimes, however, are not punishable because they are considered crimes committed in a bid to defend oneself (Sowmyya, 2014). Flowing from the above, crime is an unlawful act, a gross violation of law, or a legal wrong by someone or a group of people against individuals, group of people, or state, that contravenes the laws of the land and is punishable in the public interest.

### **Theoretical Framework: Economic Theory of Crime**

The study adopted the economic theory of crime as its theoretical framework. The theory was developed through a seminar article presented in 1968 by Nobel Laureate Gary Becker. The theory emphasizes the fact that crimes are committed by the offenders for economic motives or economic gain. Put differently, economic crimes are conceived by individuals or groups of people who deliberately act illegally for financial rewards. According to Becker's postulation, people preferred to engage in criminal activities when they considered the expected benefits and rewards from committing crimes to be more than the expected costs of perpetrating crimes, which include the costs of any foregone legal alternatives. In essence, the economic theory of crime is interpreted to be a unique case of the general theory of rational behavior under uncertainty. In other words, from an economic viewpoint, criminals are considered rational economic agents, because of their ability to weigh the probability of being arrested and apprehended before they commit any crime. And, the likelihood of getting arrested and apprehended should deter criminals, but the expected gain they assumed exceeded the costs of committing crimes encouraged them to go ahead and commit crimes (Garoupa, 2014, Raj & Rahman, 2023).

The knowledge of Becker's economic theory of crime shows that crime is induced by diverse reasons, pressures, and difficulties besetting different people in different environments. The difficulties faced by the people, especially the economic difficulties force them to make a "rational economic model of criminal behavior". That is, people commit crimes when they realize that the margin between criminal benefits and a criminal penalty exceeds benefits from legitimate employment (Kang 2016).

Nigeria can be viewed from the lens of the economic theory of crime, the country is populated by over 200 million people (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, 2023), many of whom are not faring well in terms of the economy. And so, poverty and crime are some of the key challenges faced by the country and its people, and this has become the bane to national development. Nigeria is no doubt a blessed country with vast oil riches, an expanse of fertile land, and good vegetation. Despite the country's naturally endowed blessing, it has not reflected in the lives of many Nigerians, as many of them still wallow in abject poverty. The naturally endowed resources could have earned the country a special place among the

comity of developed economies of the World, however, the resources are been shared among a few political officeholders and their top civil servants' counterparts (Adegbami & Adepoju, 2017). It is not surprising, therefore, that currently more than 133 million, in other words, 63 percent of Nigeria's citizens are in abject poverty. This set of people are experiencing deprivations in basic amenities including - safe water, a balanced diet, and adequate sanitation (Nigeria Poverty Map, 2023). The situation has got the people frustrated. Out of their frustration, they became aggressive, and desperately needed to survive. And so, "they end up in crimes as alternative and profitable business activities" (Adegbami & Adepoju, 2017, p. 2).

From the above, it is evident that poverty in Nigeria has continued to push many Nigerians into criminal activities, as these set of Nigerians especially the youths have found out that criminal activities are veritable economic activities. The need to survive has forced many Nigerians to be involved in inordinate activities such as hostage-taking, armed robbery kidnapping, human trafficking, baby-making factories, ritual killings, hired assassins; hooliganism, banditry, and insurgent groups. This has continued to threaten the corporate existence of the country. In essence, Becker must have probably had Nigeria in mind for the postulation of the economic theory of crime, for the theory accurately suits the contemporary situation of the country.

### **Poverty and Criminality Activities: The Connectedness**

Discusses concerning causes of crime have continued to rage, but revolve around causal inference in economic models that deal with the utility of crime. The discussions have shown the relationships between social and economic structure, and the frequency of crime being perpetrated (Neubeck, 2006). Although some scholars have argued that poverty has multiple causative factors, many of these factors are established in society's economic, social, and cultural structures. Therefore, the relationships between crime and poverty centered on two key premises, that is, economic inequality, as well as, social stratification. Since economic growth and development in many countries are stunted, it leads to categorizing people or creating classes in society. In essence, the categorization, vis-à-vis social and economic inequality does breed relative deprivation, as well as, social exclusion of certain people who are considered as the lower classes. This always results in higher levels of poverty, which are directly proportional to high waves of crime in society (LawBirdie, 2023).

The relationship between poverty and crime is contentious and controversial. While it is increasingly believed in some quarters that poverty does not instigate crime, there is much evidence linking them together. Suffice it to say that, the lack of access to necessities of life, coupled with the lack of opportunity for social, as well as, economic improvement, do create a breeding ground for criminal activity. As such, it is well established that those who live in poverty tend to be attracted to crimes, as a result of a lack of resources to satisfy their needs, and the poor law-enforcement structures within the state (Insidetime, 2024). In other words, poverty can push people to commit crimes, as more of the people who live in poor areas are more likely to be involved in crimes when compared with their wealthier counterparts, as these set of people are frequently driven by their need to survive and have access to basic needs for themselves and their families. The aforementioned was duly corroborated by David who unequivocally affirms the contemporary situation in Nigeria. According to him:

With around 70% of the population under 35 years of age, poverty and a lack of economic opportunity are driving many younger people to turn towards criminality and terrorism to earn a living, to confer status, and to survive. Extensive qualitative research has established a clear causal link between poverty and insecurity (David, 2022, para. 3).

In essence, systemic and protracted poverty keeps people perpetually in dearth or drought, and when this happens people are traumatized because of the lack of basic needs. The condition tends to push people to commit crimes (Nnam & Arua, 2021).

In their studies, titled “The Plight of Female Prisoners in Nigeria and the Dilemma of Health Right Violations”, Solomon, Nwankwoala & Ushi, found that most of the female offenders in many of Nigeria's prisons are poor and uneducated. They state further that woman, particularly in rural areas are poor carrying the burden of providing basic needs for their families, their inability to provide these essential needs drives them to commit crimes. (Solomon, Nwankwoala & Ushi, 2014).

Lieberman & Smith, in their studies, put forward that a high rate of poverty is a correlate of high crime rates (Lieberman & Smith, 1986). In essence, a poor standard of living, vis-à-vis lack of basic needs for the people can make them react and involved in illegal activities. Poverty, which is caused by different reasons, can make people not to be happy as a result of their inability to have what they want, and at the time they want it. Thus, poverty does determine a person's thoughts (Walton, 2018), such that, when it dawns on a person that he or she cannot get his or her basic needs, such a person can choose the easiest and alternative way of solving his or her problem by harming other people. In essence, poverty has a psychological influence on people and can make them depressed (Knifton & Inglis, 2020), and so, desperate to do anything to solve their problem, especially through crimes which are considered veritable economic activities.

According to Johnstone (2021), although measuring people's personality and success cannot be based solely on money, however, money can be the root of many challenges. Money, for instance, has the propensity of luring people into criminal lust, pushing them to lose their humanity, and violating the healthy progress of society. This is so because, most of the poor people are probable not to have access to quality education, skills acquisition, and job training. As such, they are most likely not to have a chance of being gainfully employed or underemployed. These set of people cannot afford decent accommodation, and so, are likely to be on the street where gangs and drug misuse are predominant, where they can easily dip their hands into criminal activities as the only means of getting their basic needs (Johnstone, 2021). Crime has been an aspect of people's life and is more common in poor inner-city neighborhoods when compared with more affluent environments. Crime can be seen as a complex issue that stems from various sources that are not far-fetched from lack of education, and generational poverty among others (Holzman-Escareno, 2009).

In their studies titled “Good Governance and Prison Congestion in Nigeria: The Case of Maximum-Security Prison, Ilesa”, in Nigeria, Adegami & Uche gave a detailed analysis of the connection between poverty and crimes. According to them, the majority of the prison inmates in Nigeria were youths within the age range of 18 and 45. Most of these inmates, although from poor family backgrounds managed to attend higher institutions, after which they got married with families to take care of. Most of these inmates, however, have no stable job or means of livelihood; while a few of them were underemployed earning between N11,000 and N15,000 as salaries monthly. Many of them would have

loved to work in standard government establishments including – The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd), Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, the Military, and the Universities; while some would have wished to work with banks and other multinational companies. Thus, the inmates find themselves in prison because of their desires to make money, and to keep their bodies and souls together through illegal means. The set of inmates committed crimes such as - armed robbery, burglary /stealing, forgery, impersonation, and obtaining by false pretence, in order to have food on their tables (Adegbami & Uche, 2015).

In a similar vein, Bakare attributed the rising wave of crimes in Nigeria to poverty. According to him, all the crimes in Nigeria are executed by youths most of whom have had no means of sustenance or livelihood for years. He further states that poverty is forcing the youths to become members of evil organizations. And that Nigeria is now a colony of banditry, where bandits operate at will. To him poverty is a twin sister to leprosy, while leprosy attacks the body, poverty attacks the mind, and attacked minds engage in criminal activities (Bakare cited in Nwannah, 2022).

As poverty continues to mount in Nigeria, so also do criminal activities. Once poverty is widespread, coupled with high levels of economic and social desires or expectations, the stage has already been set for criminal activities. Those who have their desires and expectations in the areas of economic survival thwarted and could not fit into the expected social status of his or her environment, through legal means, may alternatively seek illegal means for his or her advantage. He further stresses that poverty is a social problem that calls for special attention which the country's managers have not been able to adequately attend to (Odumosu, 1999).

From the foregoing, it is evident that poverty has contributed in no small measure to crime perpetration in Nigeria. As the population continues to increase without commensurate development strategies or policies from the government, the high rate of unemployment becomes the order of the day. Given the continued increase in the unemployment population, poverty continues to set in, as many people have no job, and so, have no access to the means of livelihood. Their desires to survive by all means push many of them to be involved in illegal activities to make ends meet.

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

Crime and poverty have constituted some of the challenges facing many countries across the world. Crime commission is not an issue limited to poor countries only; there are highly rich countries that have high rates of crime. While food, clothing, and shelter remain major parts of physiological needs, otherwise referred to as biological needs, many people across the globe still do not have access to them. Given the importance of the aforementioned basic needs to human survival and stability, every human strives to have them, yet they do not. While many countries across the world managed their resources well, and have brought about transformations to their countries' economies, and reduced the issue of poverty, the story has not been the same with Nigeria. With the poor management of Nigeria's resources, the country's economy has either been fluctuating or remained stagnant. The desire by the people, the majority of whom are youths to have a means of survival has been found to have contributed to the high level of crimes being perpetrated in Nigeria. Poverty has continued to push many Nigerians into criminal activities, as these set of Nigerians especially the youths have found out that criminal activities are veritable economic

activities. The need to survive has forced many of them to be involved in inordinate activities such as hostage-taking, armed robbery kidnapping, human trafficking, baby-making factories, ritual killings, hired assassins; hooliganism, banditry, and insurgent groups. This has continued to threaten the corporate existence of the country. The study concluded that there are strong connections between poverty and criminal activities that permeate the country. More than 70 percent of Nigeria's youths engaged in criminal activities as a result of low, or lack of economic opportunity. And, if proactive steps are not urgently taken, the criminal perpetration may submerge the country. The study, therefore, recommended that an economic summit should be convoked to discuss the economic future of the country and to address the issue of inequality. Any act of misgovernance should be discouraged by overhauling the anti-corruption agencies, and stiff penalties should be meted out to corrupt leaders. This could only be achieved, if Nigerian legislators can be forced by the “mass movement” to make laws in line with the above-mentioned recommendations.

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## EXPLICATING SECURITY IN TRANSBOUNDARY WATER SECURITY DEBATES: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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*Abstract: The appropriation of the concept of water security by diverse disciplines has contributed to widening the debate on water security rather than deepening it. Hence, water security is often associated with food, health, and ecology; human, environmental, and national issues; economic development, climate change, and others. Moreover, water security is often expressed as water scarcity, as a sub-set of environmental security, and as transboundary water security issues. Nonetheless, a comprehensive understanding of water security requires a close and critical examination of the variants of water security debates. Thus, this paper comprehensively and critically reviews the notion of security in the water security debate.*

*Keywords: Water scarcity | Water security | Environmental security | Trans-boundary waters*

### **Introduction**

Water is a ubiquitous and renewable source of energy. Of the 70% of the world's water resources, only 3% are fresh and 1% are found in rivers and lakes (Mishra, 2023). There are approximately two hundred and sixty-three transboundary rivers (Wolf, 2007; Bhaduri, 2016). International basins cover nearly 47% of the world's land surface, affecting 40% of the world's population and accounting for approximately 60% of global river flow (Wolf, 2007; Pahl-Wosti et al., 2016). Water security is a critical global concern. The emergence of the water security concept can be traced back to the 1970s Stockholm Environmental Conference and 1987 Brundtland Report on Sustainable Development. Following the Dublin and Rio Meetings, global water security became more pronounced among the international community and development organizations. Oswald and Brauch (2009) noted that after the politicization of water at the Dublin Conference and Rio Earth Summit in the early 1990s, the "securitization of water has upgraded water issues to a policy problem" (Oswald and Brauch, 2009: 34). Three years after the inauguration of the Water Day celebration on March 22, 1993, the World Water Council and the Global Water Partnership were established. Three global water conferences have contributed immensely to the engaged global water security policy dialogue: the 2000 World Water Foundation (WWF) held in The Hague, the 2009 WWF conference held in Istanbul, and the 2012 WWF conference held in Marseille. Each conference advanced the notion of water security within the framework of environmental sustainability and the development agenda.

Although the trans-boundary water security issue is as old as humanity itself, it has not been the UN security agenda until recently. It was after five years of UNSC's "Arria-formula meeting on water, peace and security" that Egypt has also brought a case against Ethiopia before the UNSC claiming that the GERD is existential threat to Egypt and Ethiopia should not unilaterally fill the GERD without reaching on a binding agreement.



Hence, it appears that the global water security debates after the 1990s have shifted from trans-boundary hydro-politics (Tadros, 1997; Zeitoun, and Allan, 2008; Alexis, 2006; Yacob, 2007; Cascão, 2009) to the water security agenda (Fröhlich, 2012; Rahman, 2012; Nyaoro, 2016). Moreover, the notion of water security in its own right has rarely been investigated. Water security has been widely discussed from the perspectives of environmental, human, and developmental studies (Jansky et al., 2008; Bogardi et al., 2012; Oswald and Brauch, 2009). Magsig (2015) rightly suggested that “academic debate around water security is in dire need of more deliberate and extensive examination, in order to address the vagueness that currently surrounds the concept, and ultimately deepen knowledge and understanding of the contribution that a “water security paradigm” can play in addressing the global challenges (Magsig, 2015: 6). Therefore, this study takes the concept of security seriously and delves into the water security debate within the framework of neo-realist, liberal, and constructivist explanations of security-cum-water security discourse (Oswald and Brauch, 2009; Wouters et al., 2009; Briscoe, 2009; Zeitoun, 2011; Bogardi et al., 2012; Cook and Bakker, 2012; Laute & Manthrilake, 2012). It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in the water security debate and highlight their relevance, taking some examples from trans-boundary water security issues.

The remainder of this study is structured as follows. The second section comprehensively provides an overview of ongoing debates in the stream of water security. The third section discusses the concept of security and critically engages with the neo-realist, liberalist, and constructivist water security underpinnings vis-à-vis transboundary water security issues. The last section provides concluding remarks.

### **The Water Security Debates**

Water security is an “emerging paradigm” (Cook and Bakker, 2012; Laute and Mathrilake, 2012). By and large, the water (in)security debate has four domains: human development, ecological sustainability, geopolitics and international relations, and vulnerability and risk (Jepson, 2014; Cook and Bakker, 2012). Moreover, the concept of water security framing has widened in the sense that water (in)security is treated as water scarcity, as national security, human security, and environmental security (Hoff, 2011). However, water security and water risk/insecurity are not the same: where water security is explainable in terms of water resource management (positive ideal), the notion of water risk and scarcity refers to things/dangers to be “averted or avoided” (Mason and Calow, 2012: 18). Nonetheless, water securitization stems not necessarily from immediate and imminent threats but also from discursively constructed narrations and identity formation (Gashaw and Yacob, 2025; Fana and Dawit, 2021; Turhan, 2020). At this juncture, it is important to recognize the existence of “discourse pluralism” (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2016: 13) in water security definitions, which is attributed to the diversity of disciplines, policy underpinnings, and governmental and non-governmental actors (Lautze and Manthrilake, 2012; Sadoff and Connors, 2009; Bakker, 2012; Weissner, 2016). For example, in the legal sense, water security is framed as “security of entitlement and was bound up with rules on allocation (and re-allocation)” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 54). In agriculture, it is perceived as “protection from flood and drought risk” (Smith, 2007: 74). In politics, it is framed as national water security/self-sufficiency (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2016)

or “the degree to which a state can satisfy its own water needs through internal means” (Laute and Mathrithilake, 2012: 189).

When it comes to the political sense of water security, traditionally, the discipline of security studies has mainly focused on military threats to the integrity (sovereignty) of nation states (Wheeler and Booth, 2008; Buzan, 1987; Bjørn-Oliver, 2011). Therefore, in international politics, states’ strategic moves, scientific advancement, and competition for the preservation of the status quo are the most important areas of discussion (Buzan, 1987; Wheeler and Booth, 2008). However, since the end of the Cold War, the dimension of security has broadened and included factors such as societal, environmental, and human security (Tadros, 1997; Buzan and Hansen, 2009; Wouters, 2010; Magsig, 2017). The human rights approach to water also perceives water security as “freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live in human dignity” (Annan, 2005 cited in Oswald and Brauch, 2009: 27). It is also observed that the notion of water security is perceived as “the state of having secure access to water (Bjørn-Oliver, 2011: 331); “the assured freedom from poverty of, or want for, water for life” (Wouters, 2005: 168). Tarlock and Wouters (2009: 56) also noted that “Water stress is real” and yet, it is also “presented as the result of fear in water scarcity due to climate change, draughts, water resource competition and other factors.” Moreover, “freshwater management at any governance level is expected to become more intense in the future, as accelerated change creates new threats and interconnected forces increase uncertainty and risk” (Magsig, 2015: 3).

Water resources, human development, and state power are inextricably linked. For instance, although the US is one of the most water-secure countries in the world, it associates water security with “terrorism” since 9/11 and “water engineers consider water security as “guns, gates and guards to ensure potable water infrastructure security” (Cook and Bakker, 2012: 26). Therefore, water security may not necessarily be associated with real water scarcity. Of course, “the characterization of water stress as a security problem has a long pedigree. Fear of inadequate water supplies (or the inability to manage excess supplies) has always generated fear. Fear of drought is eternal” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 54). Furthermore, the securitization of water resources “may bring up discursive absolutes that are conceived to be ‘non-negotiable, ‘nationalistic feelings’ (Bjørn-Oliver 2011: 329); weaponization/militarization of water (Magsig, 2011).

#### *Water Scarcity as Water Security*

Water scarcity-cum-water security is becoming increasingly prevalent in political agendas (Bjørn-Oliver, 2011). The concept of water scarcity as water security advances the “web of water security” of the climate–food–energy–human security matrix (Oswald and Brauch, 2009; Zeitoun, 2011; Cook and Bakker, 2012; Bogardi, et.al., 2016; Maganda, 2019). Water scarcity security framing leans towards water quality and quantity, and is often linked to water stress and water shortage (Falkenmark, 2007; Burleson, 2008; Lankford et al., 2013; Lautze, and Manthrithilake, 2014; Magsig, 2020); water “contamination and terrorism” or regarding water infrastructure security as “a cornerstone of homeland security” (Shermer, 2005: 359 quoted in Cook and Bakker, 2013: 56). Witter and Whiteford (1999) defined water security as “a condition where there is enough water at a quality necessary, at an affordable price, to meet both the short term and long-term needs” (Witter and Whiteford, 1999: 2). The Ministerial Declaration of The Hague (2000) reiterated water security as “that every person has access to enough safe water at an

affordable cost to lead a healthy and productive life and that the vulnerable are protected from the risks of water-related hazards.” Similarly, UNDP (2006) defined water security as “that every person has reliable access to enough safe water at an affordable price to lead a healthy, dignified, and productive life’ (UNDP, 2006: 3). Grey and Sadoff (2007) defined water security as “the availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies” (Grey and Sadoff, 2007: 545). Concomitant with Grey and Sadoff (2007), UN Water defined water security as “the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality of water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development” (UN University, 2013: 1).

Embracing the foregoing definitions, Wouters summarized water security as a matter of “(1) meeting basic needs; (2) securing food supply; (3) protecting ecosystems; (4) sharing water resources; (5) managing risks; (6) valuing water; and (7) governing water wisely” (Wouters et.al., 2009: 103). However, the aforementioned definitions have broadened the discussion on water security rather than deepening it. Water security is framed within the context of access, availability, quality, safety, quantity, and adequacy.

Understandably, food, energy, and health cannot be secured without water, and water security is not merely a matter of physical access. Moreover, water resources are critical for ‘the stability, continuity, and sustainable development of the states located in the arid realm’ (Al-Otaibi and Abdel-Jawad, 2007: 305). Hence, it is not surprising that arid regions regard water security as national security (Zeitoun et al., 2013; Alexis, 2006; Tadros, 1997). Some even went further and argued that if the wars of this century were fought over oil, the wars of the next century would be fought over water (Le Prestre, 2000: 443; Homer-Dixon, 2010: 4; Shiva, 2002: ix, 2002: x).

Water security is fundamentally a political concept. The political dimension of water security extends from water governance issues, such as integrated water resource management, to the securitization of water as a ‘strategic resource’ to violent conflict. By and large, water security goes beyond the water scarcity issue and has a backing of water governance and insecurity discourse, which feeds securitization tendencies. In transboundary water settings, “pairing water with ‘security’ has taken water higher in many political agendas and implies a recognition of a geopolitical urgency” (Octavianti, 2020: 146).

#### *Water Security as Sub-set of Environmental Security*

As discussed elsewhere, the concept of water security has been significantly influenced by the emergence of environmental security (Boyer, 2020). The study of environmental security since the 1980s has mainly focused on environmental degradation rather than on the constructivist approach to water (in-)security interactions (Myers, 1993; Kaplan, 1994). Acute water scarcity, resulting from prolonged droughts, environmental degradation, and water contamination, may lead to security threats. For example, Kaplan (1994) warned the US government noting “the coming anarchy” due to environmental crisis. Water security and scarcity are linked to climate change (Zeitoun, 2011) and environmental security (Ullman, 1983, Myers, 1989). The environmental security framework has also been used to help understand water (in-)security and to analyze conflict and cooperation in relation

to common water resource utilization (Wolf, 2007; Homer-Dixon 2010). Environmental degradation-induced water scarcity ‘can also be portrayed as a threat to human security’ (Barbosa and Souza, 2012: 4). On the other hand, ‘water scarcity could result in exacerbated relations and conflicting interests’ (Uitto and Wolf, 2002: 292 cited in Barbosa and Souza, 2012: 4).

Nonetheless, the focus on human security is mainly anthropocentric and often recommended not to ignore ‘the threats to environmental security, represented not only by water crises and climate change, but also by the general framework of global environmental change’ (Barbosa & Souza, 2012: 4-5). Therefore, water security as a subset of environmental security has taken a comprehensive approach; it is the redefinition of security, a move from national and human security to environmental security, which promotes prevention mechanisms, adaptation, and mitigation measures (Barbosa and Souza, 2012). However, skeptics argue that “there is a danger, and a reality in some cases, that discourses of environmental (or water) security may take us back to the days when it was often asserted that climate dictates culture and character” (Staddon and Scott, 2021: 1018 citing Liverman, 2009). Moreover, others view that environmental security “serves to legitimate new areas of military deployment, [...] a means of legitimating violence” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 30); “the idea of environmental security has also been expressed in the context of North-South discourse, with critics highlighting the inappropriate ‘colonization of environmental problems’ by security discourse” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 30). In other terms, “environmental security is committed less to the security of people on the ground than to the national interests of the industrialized world” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 30). Thus, some environmental security critics opt for “peace and conflict research that avoids the concept of security, in order to pre-empt political instrumentalization of the concept and to do greater justice to the complexity of environmental change” (Zeitoun, 2011: 29).

### **Security Theories and Transboundary Water Debates**

#### *What do we mean by Security?*

Etymologically, the term security is derived from the Latin word *s(in)e cura*, i.e. “a state of living without care and concern” (Warner and Meissner, 2008: 254). In academia, the concept of “security” is one of the most porous and widely debated concepts (Smith, 2007). This is because it is a “borderline” concept in both social and natural sciences. It has been understood and defined by scholars, depending on their time and place in human history (Booth and Wheeler, 2008). For instance, the term security has also been perceived as being free from danger to core values (Lippmann, 1943); security is a matter of degree (Wolfers, 1952); as study of ‘threat, use, control of military force (Walt, 1991: 227); as (de-)securitization (Buzan et al., 1998: 133); as an extraordinary situation call for extraordinary measures (Williams, 2003: 514); as something that “threatens drastically and over a relatively brief period of time to degrade quality of life for the inhabitants of a state or threatens significantly to narrow the range of a choices available to the government of a state [...] within state” (Ulman, 1983: 133); as “organizational stability of states, systems of government and ideologies that give them legitimacy” (Buzan, 1983: 19-20).

The narrow and traditional definition of security refers to “the preservation of nation-state integrity in the face of external threats in an anarchic world of states; the task of

guaranteeing security is seen as being ultimately a military one” (Pandey, 2009: 55). An attempt has been made to redefine and broaden the traditional understanding of the concept of security to include demographic challenges, resource scarcity, environmental crises, and economic and ecological aspects (Ullmann, 1983; Mathews, 1989; Smith, 2007; Haftendron, 1991). Thus, the broad and comprehensive definition of security moved from classical/traditional to non-traditional security studies to third world security studies (Ayoob, 1991; Chatterjee, 2003; Omeje, 2010) then the Copenhagen (Buzan et al., 1998) and later, critical securities studies emerged (Wheeler and Booth, 2008). Lippman (1943) stated that “a nation is secure to the extent that it is not in danger of having sacrifice core values, if it wishes to a void war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such war. (Lippman, 1943: 51). Put it differently, “efforts of security are bound to be experienced as a burden, security after all is nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity, a negative value so to speak [...] the efforts for security by a particular nation will tend to vary, other things being equal, with the range of values for which protection is being sought.” (Wolfers, 1952: 488). In its objective sense, security refers to “the absence of threats to acquired values”; in subjective sense, it refers to “the absence of fear that such values might be attacked” (Wolfers, 1952: 150). The first line of thought advances material accumulation (power, money, military, and others) as a source of security (for example, offensive realists may argue that the more power a state has, the more it will be secured). Here, security as a value refers to power (a state’s capability to control the actions of others) and wealth (a state’s material possession) (Wolfers, 1952).

The second line of thought advances emancipation, that is, concerned with justice and the provision of human rights. This distinction is commonly reflected in the ideas of ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom to’ (Williams, 2008: 6). In other words, security may be understood as “the absence of something threatening” (‘freedom from,’ in negative terms) or the existence of enabling environment (“freedom to,” in positive terms). That is, from a human security perspective, water security is based on three core freedoms of human security: freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live in human dignity, but is also related to the fourth pillar: freedom from hazard impacts” (Bogardi et al., 2016: 41). Therefore, security involves “gaining a degree of confidence about our relationships that comes through sharing certain commitments, which, in turn, provides a degree of reassurance and predictability” (Williams, 2008: 6).

As indicated above, the sources of (in)security may take material/objective and non-material/subjective lines of thought – the former being realist and the latter constructivist (Brauch, 2011: 61). Nonetheless, the notion of security should not be a matter of ‘either or,’ rather it encompasses both material as well as non-material dimensions – both are the continuum of one another. It must be noted that the perception of security relies on “value given by society (wertidee) and a universally applied ‘normative concept’ (Brauch, 2011: 61). The notion of security is partly socially constructed – the imagination of the parties regarding (in)security dynamics (Butler and Wolf, 2020). The extended notion of security, such as water security, explicates the “future uncertainty” and “inescapable insecurity trap” (Wheeler and Booth, 2008: 138).

However, some have shown that the ever-elastic concept of security ‘leads to a loss of analytical clarity from a research perspective as well’ (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 20). Critics argue that “if the concept of security is used in many different contexts, it becomes harder to identify security risks, responsibilities, and appropriate responses” (Zeitoun,

2011: 19-20). However, not every threat is considered a security issue. Buzan et al. provided a criterion for a threat to be a matter of security, and they stated that “they have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind” (Buzan et. Al., 1983: 25). In conclusion, security is indispensably political and plays an essential role in deciding “who gets what, when, and how in world politics” (Lasswell, 1936 quoted in Paul D. Williams, 2008: 1). It is “a powerful political tool in claiming attention for priority items [...] helps establish a consciousness of the importance of the issues so labelled in the minds of the population at large” (Buzan, 1991: 370 quoted in Paul D. Williams, 2008: 2). Therefore, “security is something that can be constructed; insecurity is not simply the given condition of the international system. Security is what states make of it’ (Smith, 2007: 87).

### *Realism and Neo-Realism*

Stephen M. Walt (1998) in his seminal work *One World, Many Theories* noted that “the study of international affairs is best understood as a protracted competition between the realist, liberal and radical tradition” (Walt, 1998: 30). The realist approach to security studies focuses on state power, anarchic structure, and military threats to the Westphalian state’s sovereignty and territorial integrity (Bjørn-Oliver 2011: 330). For realists, the common concern of all states, big or small, old or new is “continued existence, maintenance of its territorial integrity, survival of its governing regime, independence from control by other states, and the physical survival of its citizens” (Gambo and Kwaja, 2010: 44). The nexus between water resources as a center of economic development and its implication in the state’s capability to deal with competing powers underscores the conundrum of water security discourse. In the context of realism and neo-realism, water resources and their management determine not only the domestic capability but also enhance its sphere of influence. Investment in transboundary water resources helps the state secure its water, energy, food, and other demands (Biswas, 1992). Moreover, large dams built on transboundary rivers can serve as strategic offensive/defensive instruments.

Some argue that water secure state can be maintained through investment in water infrastructures which Cook and Bakker (2012) calls it “dumb infrastructure.” In this regard, an increase in water security is directly related to the number of large dams, canals, hydropower plants, and irrigation canals” under the state command (Cook and Bakker, 2012: 12). For a developing state to be water secure, it needs to massively invest in “dumb” projects. Grey and Sadoff also underscored that water security in North America came by investing “trillions of dollars in hydraulic infrastructure” (Grey and Sadoff, 2007: 552). Cook and Bakker (2012) also advised developing countries to invest heavily “in hydraulic infrastructure” (Cook & Bakker, 2012: 18).

Grey and Sadoff (2007) express the state-water security nexus as water harnessed, hampered by water, or hostage to water. Hydrology is harnessed in most industrial countries, it hampers most intermediate economies, and it holds hostage many least-developed economies (Grey and Sadoff, 2007: 560). Water-hostage countries have not yet invested in hydraulics. Hence, water hostage states experience “economic water scarcity” than “ecological water scarcity” - where the former refers to the “lack of investment in water infrastructure” and the latter refers to water scarcity resulting from an environmental (physical) change (Smakhtin et al., 2004: 65). Arsano (2007) also noted “the dilemma

between the need to develop the available water resources to overcome the debilitating poverty on the one hand, and the risk of limited institutional and financial capacity to develop these water resources on the other” (Arsano, 2007: 21). Most of the developing countries, including Ethiopia, there is economic water scarcity than physical water scarcity, and Ethiopia has remained ‘water hostage’ state (World Bank, 2006; Grey and Sadoff, 2007). Supporting the notion of economic water security, the 2006 Human Development Report (HDR) concluded that “the scarcity at the heart of the global water crisis is rooted in power, poverty, and inequality, not in physical availability” (UNDP, 2006: v). Thus, water security is not only a matter of physical scarcity but is also the result of political, social, and economic inequities (Mason and Calow, 2012).

On the contrary, a state may have the economic capability to invest in water resources but lack water resources due to the uneven distribution of freshwater resources. For instance, “no less than six African countries depend on water imported from outside their territories. Dowdeswell (1998) indicated that “Egypt 97 per cent; Mauritania 95 per cent; Botswana 95 per cent; Gambia 86 per cent; Sudan 77 per cent; Niger 68 per cent; and Senegal 34 per cent” rely on transboundary rivers (Dowdeswell, 1998: 14). Although investing in water creates a more water-secure state, it also leads to competition between the upper and lower riparian states. Leb and Wouters (2013) correctly noted that “The paradox between security and water security is one of the world’s greatest challenges. Enhancing water security within a world of sovereign states continues to be an aspiration, complicated by compounding problems related to economic, social, and environmental interests and demands and exacerbated by uncertainties affecting all of these’ (Leb, and Wouters, 2013: 41).

The history of “hydraulic civilization’s” also tells us that the “control and allocation of water was the very foundation for power empire” (Jägerskog, et al, 2015: xxiii). For instance, the US Global Water Security paper even went further and highlighted that “water eventually will be used as a weapon, with more powerful upstream nations impeding or cutting downstream flow or may be used within states to put pressure on and suppress separatist elements” (Gupta et al., 2016: 128).

In this regard, the neo-realist perspective of water security in the transboundary river context features the strategic calculus of the region (Bhaduri, 2016). For instance, Turkey’s actions over Euphrates, Israel over Jordan, and Ethiopia over the Nile have regional geopolitical and security implications. In the Indus Basin, Pakistan fears that India “could use water control as a weapon” and this perceived water security “have been exploited by extremists to keep up the pressure on Kashmir by claiming India is stealing water” (Fröhlich, 2012: 321). In fear of India’s potential to limit the flow of the River to Pakistan, the latter stated, “Muslim dying of thirst would drink the blood of India.” Water security is directly associated with state wealth, power, regime security, and development. Transboundary rivers have both geostrategic and geopolitical implications. However, an increase in water security means an increase in sacrifices of other values because an increase in water security may lead to a decrease in social or political insecurity (for example, a threat from the lower riparian states), which may lead to a water security dilemma. Wolfers (1952) rightly notes that “what a country does to bolster its own security through power can be interpreted by others, therefore, as a threat to their security’ (Wolfers, 1952: 494-5).

### *Liberalism*

Liberalists hold that states can preserve their national interests in the international arena through cooperation, laws, and diplomacy (Grey and Sadoff, 2007). It advocates that such activities provide opportunities for cooperation and mutual reciprocity rather than conflict among states. Thus, water security in the transboundary water context has increasingly moved away from unilateralism, “purely political landscape” or securitization to multilateralism to “legal domain” or securitization where co-riparian states compromise and reach on agreements. As a remedy to the rising competition and conflict between the lower and upper riparian states, the international water law provided “participation of riparian states (Art.4), equitable and reasonable utilization (Art.5), no harm doctrine (Art.7), inter-riparian cooperation, and information exchange (Art.8, 9, and 11), prior notification (Art.12), ecosystem protection (Art. 20 and 21), and dispute settlement (Art.33) (UN Convention on of International Watercourses, 1997). Thus, trans-boundary water security has been “associated with allocation rules – that seek to secure entitlements to desired quantities of water” (Cook and Karen, 2013: 55). To give legal impetus for water security, some authors have construed concepts such as hydrosolidarity (Wouters, 2000: 202; Warner and Meissner, 2008: 254; Magsig, 2019); common water security complex (Turton, 2003; Magsig, 2020); obligation of states to ‘ensure water for all’ (Ziganshina, 2014). Although water security has entered the domain of international water resource laws (see the Nile Cooperative Framework Agreement Art.14(b)), it has not been legally defined (Wouters et al., 2009: 134).

Advocates of liberal institutionalism argue that trans-boundary water resources are a reason for cooperation rather than a cause of war (van der Molen and Hildering, 2005; Wolf and Brooks, 2003). Although there is a link between relative water scarcity and different intensities of conflict, there are also possibilities for cooperation among states sharing one trans-boundary river (Bjørn-Oliver, 2011). Turton (2003) notes “the notion of common security, which has as its foundation common interests that, at a minimum, require a shared interest in survival’ (Turton, 2003: 74–5). Therefore, “the greater the degree of hydrological interdependence” between the co-riparian states, the greater the probability of formation of Hydro-Security-Complex (HSC) – which means “a set of states that are geographically part owners and users of technically shared rivers start to consider, as a consequence, this water body to be a major national security issue” (Elhance, 1999: 151). Nevertheless, developed states have “achieved a relative equilibrium in establishing fit-for-purpose trans-boundary institutional arrangements, including treaty regimes with co-riparian states that deal with issues of river infrastructure and the quantity and quality of water flows” (Grey and Sadoff, 2007: 562). One can also observe the Rhine Basin Commission (RBC) as a case where neo-realism and neo-liberalism (“neo-neo synthesis”) seem to have guided the negotiations (Smith, 2007). For example, since the 9th century, the Rhine River has established dynamic legal and institutional infrastructure that nine European countries have utilized (Dombrowsky, 2001 cited in Grey and Sadoff, 2007). Therefore, “water security cannot be achieved at the expense of the water security of others; sustainable outcomes require reconciliation of basic needs [particularly in border areas] and access to water” (Lankford et al., 2013: 3). In a liberalist sense, water security is not a zero-sum game of geopolitical and geostrategic competition. Yevjevich (1988) argued that states may come together and enter arrangements to trade water, such as critical resources such as gold, oil, and other mineral resources. The Dublin Statement suggested that “water



has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.” One may also argue that the liberalization of water is to be taken over by the market system and will lead to where the owners of the water set the price. In this way, water could be a source of cooperation and reason for shared governance grounded in international norms and institutions. However, Tarlock and Wouters (2009) outrightly object that the commoditization of water resources for “it is ubiquitous and universal,” “economically efficient to transport” and although water “has economic value, it does not trade in world markets” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 276). Biswas (2009) also noted that, “unlike oil, water is a reusable resource,” and thus, “using water abstraction as a proxy for water use is already significantly erroneous” (Biswas, 2009: 365). Furthermore, transboundary water resources are a common pool, a common resource, and thus cannot be a property of the upper or lower riparian state. Oswald and Brauch (2009: 37) rightly emphasized that lower riparian states need to be protected by all peoples, communities and nations” (Oswald and Brauch, 2009: 37). According to the Heckscher-Ohlin model, “if an upstream country is relatively endowed with more capital needed for manufacturing goods, while the downstream country is relatively more endowed with fertile land, [...] the upstream country will have a comparative advantage in producing the manufacturing good, while the downstream country will be better off in producing the agricultural good” (Bhaduri, 2016: 107).

### *Constructivism*

Constructivists propound that “reality is socially constructed by the analyst who is influenced by norms, culture, the socio-political context, and the perception of the observer” (Burr, 1995). It has been argued that “it is the distribution of shared knowledge that constitutes interests, and that those who focus solely on the material base of international politics fail to see it is shared ideas which make possible the behaviors and outcomes which are claimed to be the ‘tragedy’ of world politics” (Booth and Wheeler 2008: 93). Arguably, constructivists “share a belief that security is a social construction; it is also seen as a site of negotiation and contestation, in which actors compete to define the identity and values of a particular group in such a way as to provide a foundation for political action” (MacDonald, 2008: 67). In this regard, language shapes and limits what we think, how we think, and, consequently, how we act (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). There is a long history of using the word ‘security,’ and ‘security’ might be different from ‘securitization,’ “The words are so close to each other that they can lead to a dangerous framing of issues” (Bhaduri, 2016: 128). Securitization is grounded in constructivist thought and consists of ‘securitizing actors, ‘securitizing moves, referent objects, and audiences (Wæver, 2008: 582). The actor’s capability to impact through his decision and the audience’s response to the securitization act is an inter-subjective process (Buzan et al., 1998). Securitizing involves emphasizing “the urgency of scarcity threat to legitimize or make the adoption of measures that go beyond the normal bounds of politics acceptable to society” (Wouters, 2013: 26).

The Copenhagen School has focused on how security itself is given meaning through inter-subjective processes and (to a lesser extent) what political effects these security constructions have (Buzan et al., 1998; Buzan and Hansen, 2009). According to the constructivists, the ‘subjective perception of threat(s) drives the dynamics of security’ (McSweeney, 1999: 54–55). Conventional constructivists define security in opposite to

“materialist analyses by highlighting the importance of ideational factors, that is culture, beliefs, norms, ideas and identity” (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 35). Hence, “the central concern in outlining the relationship between security and identity is to point to how national identity helps determine the content of a state’s interests and therefore the way it will ‘act’ in global politics” (MacDonald, 2008: 62).

It is worth noting that the construction of threats has much to say about the values and interests safeguarded by actors, as well as the practices and logic associated with security. Therefore, the exploitation of the special characteristics of the securitizing speech acts of water resources has proven to be significant. The speeches suggest a concern for water security, understood as a sine qua non condition for the maintenance of political stability in these regions, as well as a precedent for the “preservation of acquired levels of civilization” (Buzan et al., 1998: 76). Clearly, the debate is not merely on water (H<sub>2</sub>O) in the material sense, but it exhibits a deeper water (in)security interaction between the lower and upper riparian states. For example, the relationship between the upper riparian and the lower riparian states in the Nile (e.g., Ethiopia and Egypt), Euphrates (e.g., Turkey and Syria), and Jordan (e.g., Israel and Palestine) have been conflicting. The draining effect of securitization has been well documented in GERD negotiations and in the Palestinian-Israeli water conflict (Gashaw, 2022). Although the Scientific Committee has indicated that the GERD has no significant harm to the lower riparian countries and hinted that it is objectively reconcilable, the issue of the water security dilemma in the ENB remained unresolved (Ostigard, 2016). Recently, Ethiopia in its strategic document entitled “The two waters prime strategy (in Amharic, Ye Hulet Abiy Wuhawoch Abiy Strategy), referring to the Blue Nile and the Red Sea, clearly stated: “due to this water, Ethiopia’s security has been under threat” (in Amharic, kezih wuha yetenessa ye Itophiya dehininet Adega lay texilowal) (Institute of Foreign Affairs, 2024). On the other hand, Egypt has argued that Ethiopia should release more water from the GERD reservoir during drought times. However, the politics of catastrophe shall apply to all the Nile basin countries – as all are ‘risk societies’ (Beck, 1992). After all, “environmental problems are the product of patterns of human activity that require substantial rethinking and deliberation” (Wæver, 1995: 65). Tarlock and Wouters (2009) also argued that: “What is needed is revolutionary re-think of the conceptual framework for water security, where the contribution of (water) law is more dynamically considered and integrated” (Tarlock and Wouters, 2009: 280). Moreover, the CFA’s Article 14(b) reads: “not to significantly affect the water security of any other Nile Basin state”; however, Egypt and Sudan want it to be phrased as follows: “not to adversely affect the water security and current uses and rights of any other Nile Basin States” (Art. 14(b) of the CFA, 2010). Obviously, the CFA’s Article 14(b) is a testament to the “constructive ambiguity” that water security offers for the Nile CFA (Dereje, 2010: 440). It also seems that the inclusion of “water security” in the CFA has “strengthened the water security discourse” (Cullet et al., 2021: 6). Nonetheless, it is apt to note that promoting transboundary water security cooperation urges legal and social scholarship to take a fresh approach “to analyze the complexities of the challenges revealed by the water security concept and develop international water law further” (Magsig, 2015: 8). Because one of the shortcomings of international water law on water security emanates from the influence of traditional realism – which “hindered cross-fertilization among relevant branches of international law that integrate water” (Cullet et al., 2021: 13; Zikos, et al., 2014: 310; Ziganshina, 2014). Thus, water security as discursive “symbolic capital”

may be defined and approached positively by the respective transboundary waters and act in a collaborative and cooperative spirit (Sinha, 2005).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Water security is a critical global concern. This article explicated the concept of security in water security debates along with transboundary water issues. The concept of water security has been associated with food, health, and ecology, including human, environmental, and national issues; economic development; climate change; and others. However, this article discusses water scarcity as water security, a subset of environmental security, and transboundary water issues. Moreover, the study of water security in its own rights has rarely been investigated, and this study has contributed to the effort to fill this gap. It has been indicated that the concept of water (in-)security encompasses both material and non-material (constructed) dimensions, for both are the continuum of one another (Smith, 2007: 87). In the context of realism and neo-realism, investment in transboundary water resources helps the state secure its water, energy, food, and other demands (Biswas, 1992). Moreover, water security in the transboundary river context features a strategic calculus of the region (Bhaduri, 2016). In liberalist sense, water security has increasingly moved away from securitization to multilateralism to “legal domain” or de securitization. In a constructivist sense, the debate is not merely on water (H<sub>2</sub>O) in the material sense, but it exhibits the deeper water (in)security interaction between the parties.

Considering the vitality of conversing with these theoretical perspectives, this article advocated for the “cross-fertilization” of theories (Cullet et al., 2021: 13). This study argues that no single theory can fully capture the concept of water security. Therefore, it has taken the concept of security seriously and explicated it within the context of water security studies and provided a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in the notion of water security and trans-boundary water settings. Hence, it has interrogated the neo-realist state-centrism, liberalists’ resource competition and constructivist’s idealism and embrace hydro-epistemic community which advance “hydro-solidarity” as state’s *erga omnes* duty to cooperate. After all, “where nature conspired to provide common resources, there can be no ultimate independence, only mutual dependence” (Smith, 1996).

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## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE EU ENERGY DEPENDENCY IN TERMS OF CONVENTIONAL RESOURCES

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*Abstract: Energy has been an important and priority subject for the European Union, while the Ukrainian war have intensified the member countries' uncertainties about the energy security. This paper aims to highlight the EU countries energy dependency on conventional resources. In this regard, this study presents a brief analysis regarding the 27 EU member states' domestic production, trade and consumption of conventional energy resources, especially oil products, natural gas and solid fossil fuels, for the period 2014-2022. The results show that there are differences between EU countries in terms of domestic production, internal consumption and trade. Although the situation for solid fossil fuels is optimistic, most EU countries need to rely on imports of petroleum products and natural gas from Russia in order to cover their consumption needs*

*Keywords: the Ukrainian war, oil dependency, Russian energetic resources, EU energetic imports.*

### **Introduction**

The European Union is recognised as one of the world's economic powers of the 21st century. Although the European Union is capable of competing with others global powers, it faces a number of weaknesses and shortcomings that have an impact on its economic development. Among these, the greatest challenge remains the EU's dependence on Russia's energy resources. Access to energy resources is one of the important elements of the welfare and sustainable development of economies. The security of energy supply is a priority topic on the agenda of EU Member States, taking into account the increasing demand and dependence on imports, the sensitivity of energy supply to geopolitical tensions (Chalvatzis & Ioannidis, 2017), such as the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the need to adapt to structural changes in international markets. The EU's energy relations are framed in terms of excessive dependence on Russia, which poses a threat to European security, especially with the emergence of geopolitical tensions (the Russia-Ukraine war) and energy crises. Considering these aspects, the aim of this paper is to present an analysis of the energy dependence on conventional resources for the EU countries, in general and on Russia, in the context of the war in Ukraine. In particular, the analysis is for the period 2014-2022 in order to capture the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia and the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine.



### **Literature review**

When it comes to the existence of an EU dependency, most studies in the literature treat the relationship between the EU and Russia in terms of the supply of energy resources. From this perspective, the literature is rich (Belyi, 2003; Finon & Locatelli, 2008; Casier, 2011; Belyi, 2012; Dyson & Konstadinides, 2016; DeBardleben, 2020; Boute, 2022; Cebotari, 2022; Crowley-Vigneau *et al.*, 2023). Paillard (2010) suggests that economic and political interdependence between the European Union and Russia is valid for long term, despite the Russian reactions in the short term. On the other hand, Krickovic (2015) notes that the interdependence between the EU and Russia is not a complex one and, therefore, their relation evolves in such direction that one side is becoming more dependent on the other. In this case, the less dependent side can use this dependence for its own purposes. Braun *et al.* (2023) confirm that the EU countries are dependent on energy resources coming from Russia. As regarding the financial and military support to Ukraine, the EU countries provide different levels of support according to their dependency on Russian energy imports.

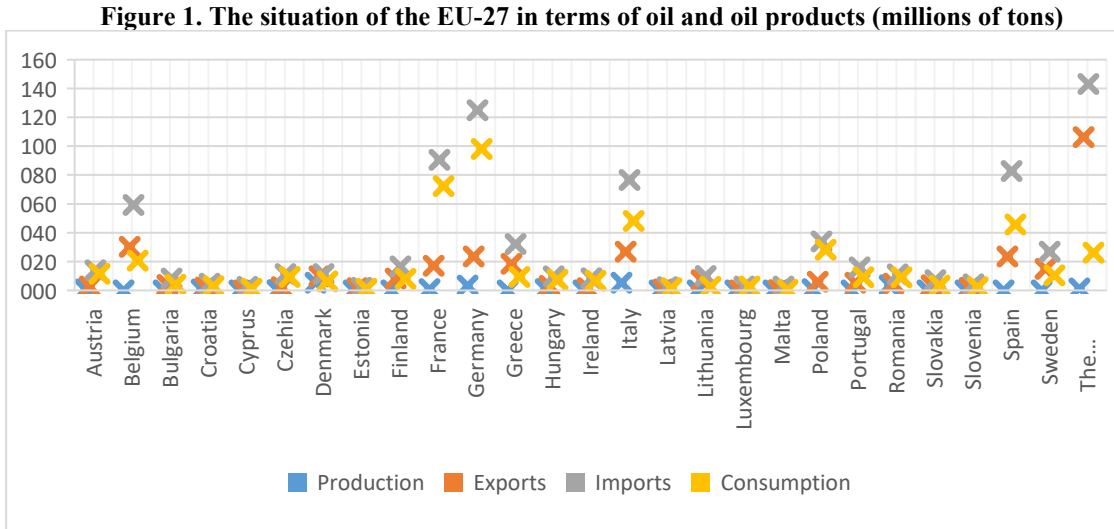
### **Data and methods**

Methodology implies a systematic analysis of several dimensions related to the energy supply of EU countries. The analysis covers the 27 EU member countries for the period 2014-2022. The year 2014 is the first point of reference because in that year Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. The year 2022 is the second reference point, when war started between Russia and Ukraine because of the Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory. The study captures the analysis of European countries from the perspective of energy supply in two phases. The first stage comprises the analysis of EU countries' domestic production, imports, exports and consumption of oil and oil products, natural gas and solid fossil fuels. The second stage deals with EU countries' imports of oil and oil products, natural gas and solid fossil fuels from Russia. Statistical data are extracted from Eurostat (2024) and are graphically presented and interpreted by the authors.

### **Findings**

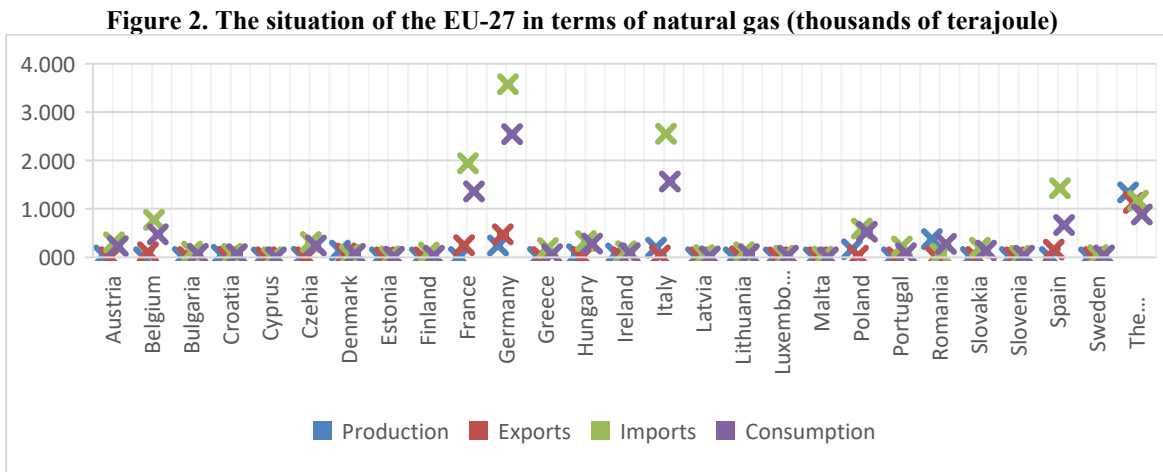
#### *The situation of EU countries in terms of conventional energy resources*

All EU member countries had, on average for the period 2014-2022, a higher consumption of oil and oil products than their own production, having to rely on imports to meet their consumption needs. At the same time, the average values of imports of oil and oil products were higher, relative to both exports and consumption. Figure 1 shows that the Netherlands, Germany and France have the highest average import values over the period 2014-2022, exceeding 100 million tons for the first two. Of these three countries, only the Netherlands is among the countries with the highest average export values, being first with 106 million tons, followed by Belgium and Italy. On the other hand, in terms of consumption, Germany and France occupy the top two places with over 70 million tons each, followed by Italy, Spain and Poland. Compared to these, the average oil production is insignificant, with the richest productions being for Denmark and Italy, each with over 5 million tons. As a result, EU countries need to rely on imports to sustain their consumption of oil and petroleum products, with their own production almost negligible.



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

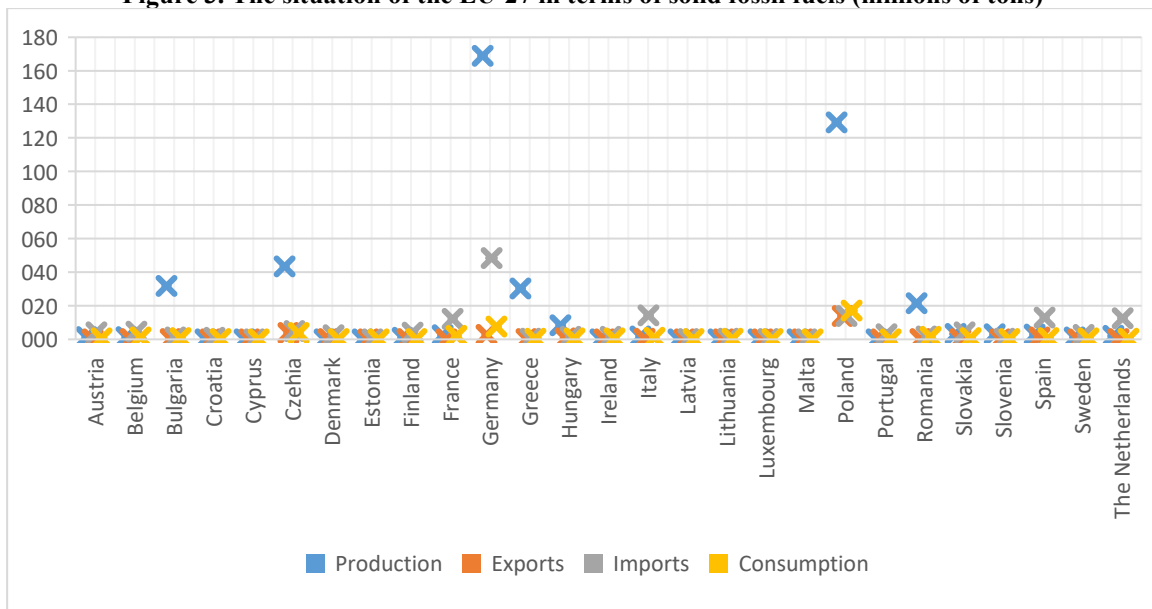
Worryingly, many EU countries are showing a downward trend in their production of oil and oil products, particularly after 2014. Following a downward trend, Austria and the Netherlands have almost halved their oil production in 2022 compared to 2012. Similarly, the Czech Republic has reduced its production in 2022 to a quarter of the capacity it had in 2012, and Denmark to a third. Lithuania, Slovakia and Spain's production has become almost non-existent over time, while for Germany, France and Romania production levels have decreased slightly. With regard to natural gas, the Netherlands, Romania and Denmark stand out, with natural gas production exceeding consumption between 2014 and 2022. On average, the surplus of production over consumption was close to 461,000 terajoule for the Netherlands, 98,000 terajoule for Romania and 67,500 terajoule for Denmark, as can be seen in Figure 2. At the same time, the Netherlands and Romania were the countries with the highest natural gas production at European level. The other EU Member States had a level of natural gas consumption that exceeded the production volume for the period 2014-2022. This demonstrates the need for member countries to cover their consumption needs through imports.



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

The link between consumption needs and reliance on imports is evident in countries such as Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Belgium and Poland, which are among the countries with the highest average gas consumption and imports. A special case is the Netherlands, which has the largest production of natural gas in the EU but is also one of the largest consumers and importers (in the top 5), although the Netherlands is also the largest exporter of natural gas among EU countries. In general, the trend in the EU is to cover consumption needs through own production, accompanied by imports, with the surplus resulting from imports being exported. In terms of solid fossil fuels, the situation in EU countries is much better. Only in countries such as Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Baltic States and Portugal has the consumption of solid fossil fuels exceeded their own production capacity, as can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The situation of the EU-27 in terms of solid fossil fuels (millions of tons)



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

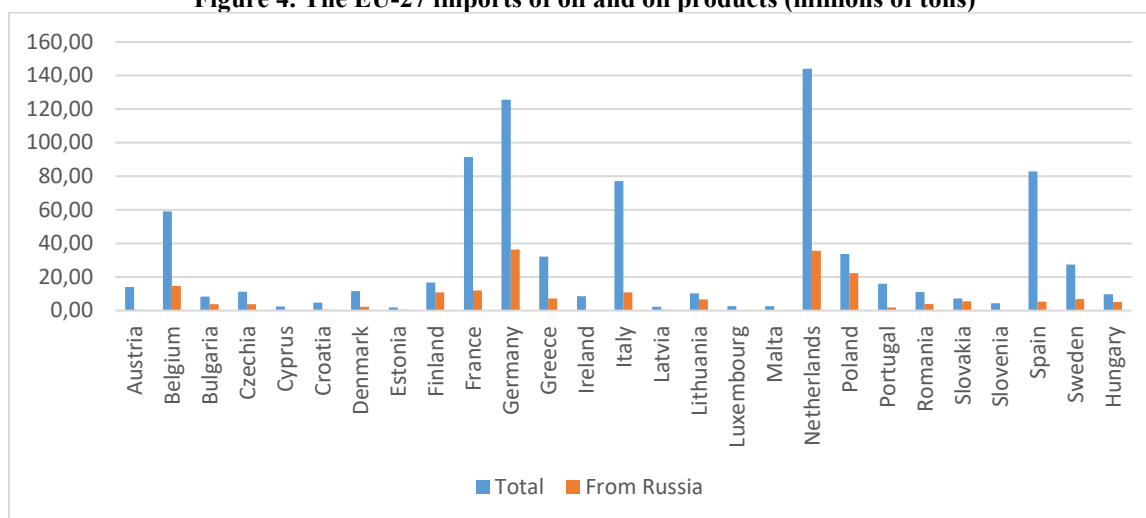
However, the differences over the period 2014-2022 between the average consumption and own production levels do not exceed 0.5 million tons for any of the countries mentioned, with the largest shortfall in this respect being in the case of Ireland (0.42 million tons). For all these countries, additional consumption needs have been covered by imports, while the highest average import values are recorded by Portugal. On the other hand, the other EU countries ensured their consumption of solid fossil fuels through their own production. Here, Germany and Poland stand out, with average own production values of over 125 million tons in the period 2014-2022, being the largest producers in the EU. At the same time, the level of consumption did not exceed 18 million tons for each of them, Poland and Germany being at the same time the largest consumers of solid fossil fuels in the EU. These two countries rank in the top three EU countries for exports of solid fossil fuels (together with the Czech Republic) and for imports (together with Italy). Together with these two countries, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Slovenia and Romania stand out as the average production level of each of them exceeds both the

average import level for the period 2014-2022 and the consumption and export levels of each.

*How energy dependent are EU countries on Russia?*

From the point of view of the supply of oil and oil products through imports, the geographical and economic size of countries plays an important role. Thus, countries with small land areas, considered as having smaller economies, have low levels of imports of oil and oil products. According to Figure 4, for countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta, the average values of imports of oil and petroleum products do not exceed 3 million tons for each country over the period 2014-2022. Large European economies such as the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and France are at the opposite pole. For the first two, the average value of imports of oil and petroleum products exceeds 125 million tons over the period 2014-2022 for each of them. At the same time, France, Spain and Italy each imported more than 75 million tons of oil.

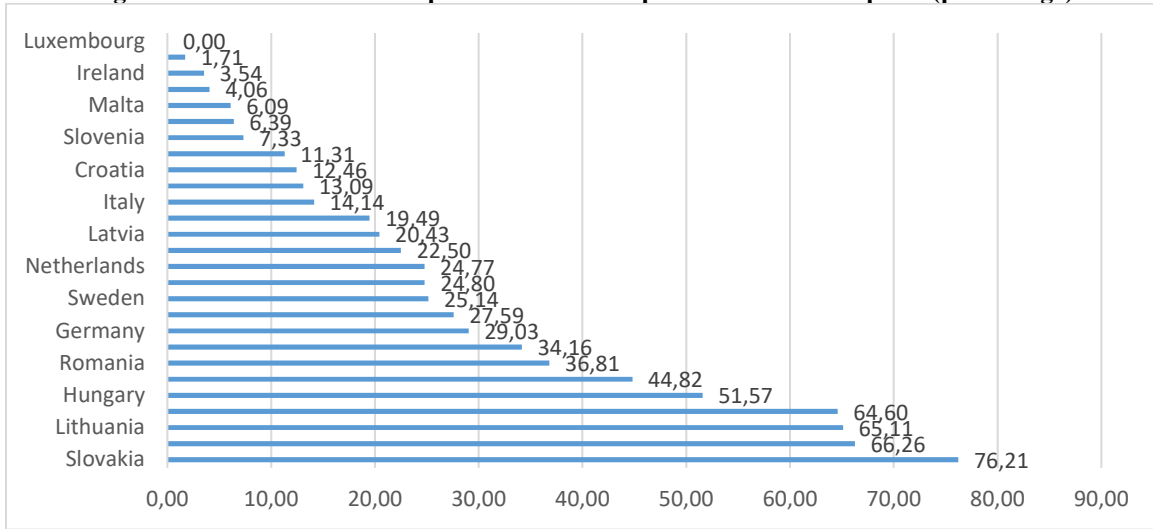
**Figure 4. The EU-27 imports of oil and oil products (millions of tons)**



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

Germany and the Netherlands are among the EU countries with the highest imports of oil and petroleum products from Russia, with over 35 million tons each. On the other hand, there is a group of nine EU countries whose Russian imports of oil and petroleum products do not exceed 0.6 million tons per country. This group includes island states like Malta and Cyprus as well as more developed economies like Austria, Croatia and Ireland. Also in this group are Estonia and Latvia, which although they have low values of total and Russian imports of oil and oil products, the share of Russian imports in total imports is over 20% each, making them exceptional cases of this group. However, for the period 2014-2022, there are also cases where the shares of Russian imports in total imports are higher. Figure 5 shows that at the top of the ranking is Slovakia, with an average of 76%, followed by a group consisting of Poland, Lithuania and Finland. At the same time, half of Hungary's total imports of oil and petroleum products come from Russia, while for Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands they account for a quarter of total imports.

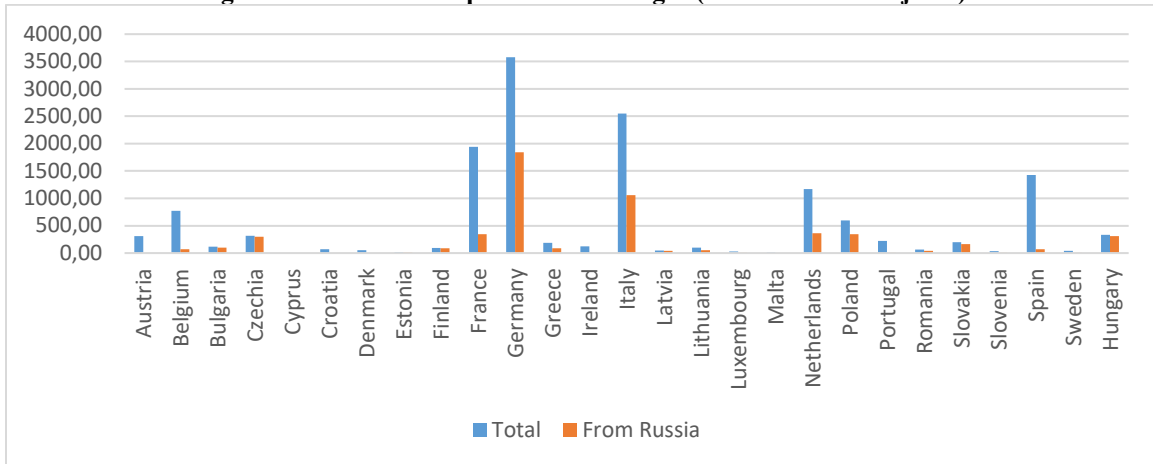
Figure 5. Share of Russian imports of oil and oil products in total imports (percentage)



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

Cases that are more fortunate may be Spain or Austria, which, while securing a relatively high level of oil and oil products through imports, the share of imports from Russia is below 7%. In terms of gas supply through imports, there are significant differences between EU countries for the period 2014-2022. According to Figure 6, Germany, Italy, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands have the highest average values of natural gas imports, above 1 million terajoule each, reaching up to 3.5 million terajoule for Germany. At the other end of the scale are the islands of Cyprus and Malta, as well as smaller countries like Estonia and Luxembourg.

Figure 6. The EU-27 imports of natural gas (thousands of terajoule)

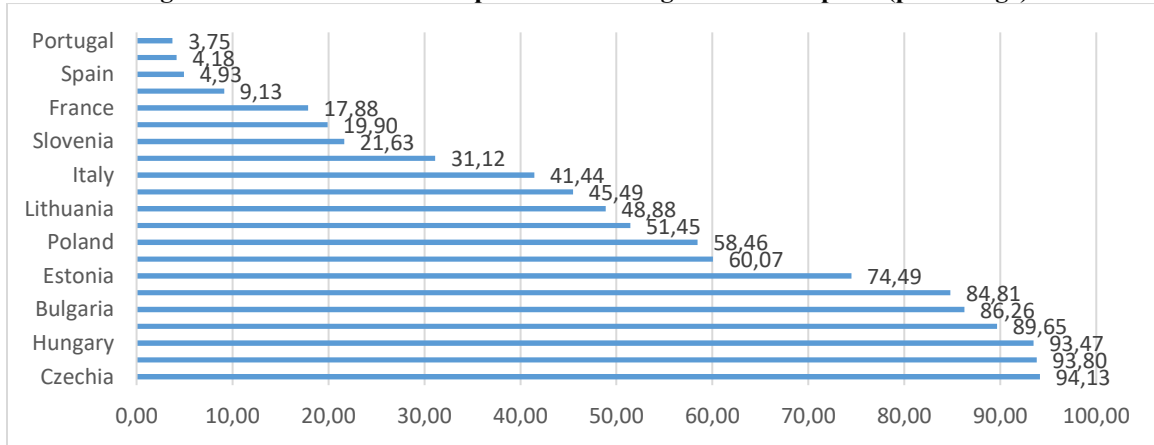


Source: own representation based on Eurostat

In terms of gas imports from Russia, countries such as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and France are among the top five importers at EU level, along with Poland. The average values of Russian gas imports for the period 2014-2022 exceed 1 million terajoule for Germany and Italy. At the other end of the scale are countries that import natural gas in general but do not rely on imports from Russia, including Austria, Ireland, Croatia, Denmark and

Malta. Looking at the percentages, Figure 7 shows the existence of several country groupings for the period 2014-2022. One of them consists of six EU member countries, whose imports of natural gas from Russia exceed 80% of the total imports reported for each country. Another group can be considered as countries with percentages varying between 40% and 60%, of which Romania stands out with about 60% of gas imports from Russia in total imports. Between these two groups is Estonia with 75% for the period 2014-2022.

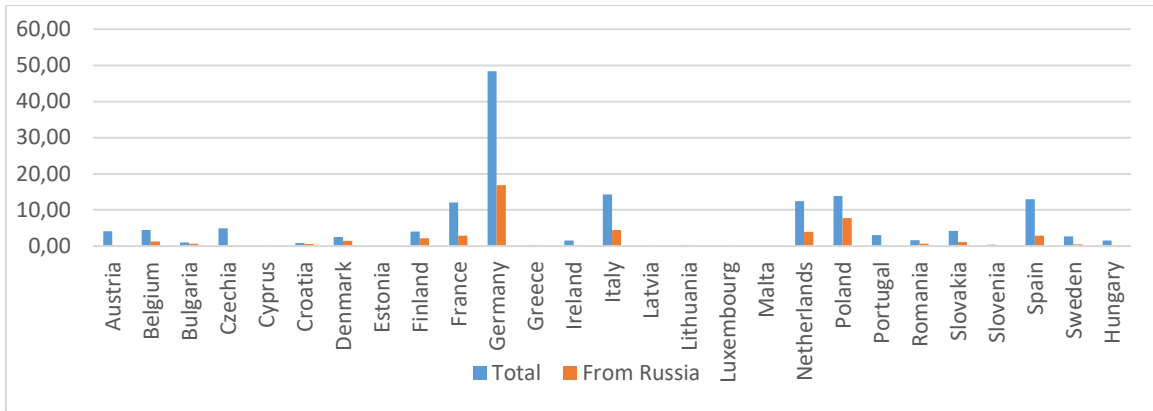
**Figure 7. Share of Russian imports of natural gas in total imports (percentage)**



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

At the other end of the spectrum, apart from the countries that do not rely on Russian gas imports at all, there are two other groups, this time with a smaller number of countries. One of these groups consists France, Luxembourg and Slovenia, with shares of Russian natural gas imports in total imports ranging from around 18% to 22%. In the second group are Portugal, Sweden, Spain and Belgium, whose imports of Russian natural gas are less than 10% of total imports for each country. From the perspective of imports of solid fossil fuels, Germany stands out as having the highest average values over the period 2014-2022, in terms of both total imports and imports from Russia. According to Figure 8, Germany's total imports are close to 50 million tons, the highest in the EU, but only 35% of them come from Russia (equivalent to 17 million tons). In contrast to Germany, the group of countries consisting of Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands and France imported somewhere between 12 and 14 million tons each, but the share of Russian imports is close to that of Germany (for Italy and the Netherlands), or even higher in the case of Poland (around 56%).

**Figure 8. The EU-27 imports of solid fossil fuels (millions of tons)**

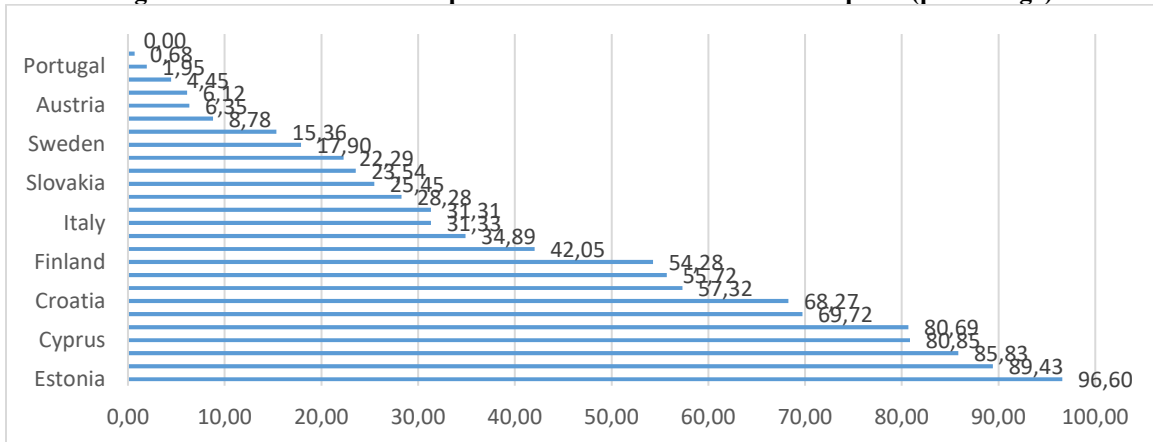


Source: own representation based on Eurostat

In fact, the highest average values of Russian imports of solid fossil fuels in the period 2014-2022 are recorded for Germany and Poland, while for the rest of the EU countries these imports do not exceed 5 million tons on a country-by-country basis. In addition, more than half of the EU countries did not import, on average, more than 1 million tons of solid fossil fuels from Russia in the period 2014-2022.

For Greece, Luxembourg, the Baltic countries, Cyprus, Malta and the Baltic States, the average values of imports of solid fossil fuels are insignificant (below 300,000 tons), but more than 80% of these imports come from Russia. The exceptions are Luxembourg and Malta, as shown in Figure 9. In a similar situation are Bulgaria and Croatia, which, although they imported on average no more than 1 million tons of solid fossil fuels in the period 2014-2022, about 70% are of Russian origin.

Figure 9. Share of Russian imports of solid fossil fuels in total imports (percentage)



Source: own representation based on Eurostat

For Denmark, Poland and Finland, about half of the imports of solid fossil fuels in the period 2014-2022 came from Russia, while for Slovakia and France they accounted for a quarter of total imports. Very low, insignificant, shares were recorded by Portugal and Slovenia, while Malta did not rely on imports of solid fossil fuels during the period under review.

## Conclusions

The analysis of statistical data from 2014-2022 on the level of own production, consumption, imports and exports of oil, natural gas and solid fossil fuels reveals several trends. The EU countries need to rely on imports to sustain their consumption of oil and petroleum products, with own production almost negligible. At the same time, only the Netherlands, Romania and Denmark have natural gas production above the level of consumption, while for the rest of the EU countries there is a high need to cover their consumption through imports. The situation for solid fossil fuels is more optimistic, with many EU countries managing to meet their consumption needs through their own production. However, most EU countries continue to rely on imports of energy resources from Russia. In some cases, the share of these imports in total imports exceeds 60% for oil and oil products or 80% for natural gas and solid fossil fuels. The differences between EU countries in terms of production, consumption and supply of conventional energy resources demonstrate that the EU's energy security objective should focus on renewable energy sources. In this way, energy measures are necessary to avoid possible future energy crises.

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## INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA: IS THERE ASYMMETRY?

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*Abstract: This research examined how industrialization influenced food security in Nigeria between 1986 and 2022. Drawing data from the Global Footprint Network, World Development Indicators, and the Central Bank of Nigeria, the study employed econometric techniques such as the ADF Test, Wald Test, and the Non-Linear Autoregressive Distributed Lag (NARDL) model to analyze asymmetric effects. The results indicated a long-term asymmetric nexus, where positive changes in industrialization significantly enhanced food security, while negative changes exhibited a relatively weaker positive effect. Short-run analysis shows positive industrial activities negatively impact food security, whereas negative changes have a weak positive effect. The study recommends firms adopt eco-friendly technologies and adhere to environmental regulations. The government should enhance these regulations and provide incentives for sustainable practices. Additionally, farmers are encouraged to adopt advanced agricultural technologies and diversify their income sources to build resilience against adverse industrial impacts on food security.*

### Introduction

The process of industrialization stands as a pivotal marker and a defining trait within the trajectory of a nation's economic advancement (Tamuno & Edoumiekumo, 2012). As societies transition towards industrialization, they undergo a profound restructuring of their economic frameworks, marked by a significant surge in the manufacturing and production sectors (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). This transformation often heralds a shift away from agrarian-based economies towards more diversified and technologically-driven landscapes (Clark, 2007). Industrialization fundamentally alters the employment structure, fostering the rise of wage labor and urbanization (Clark, 2007), and stimulates technological innovation, which in turn drives productivity gains and economic growth (Mokyr, 2016). The degree of industrialization within a nation profoundly impacts its capacity to produce vital goods and services, alleviate poverty, foster self-sufficiency, enhance living standards, ensure balance of payment stability, economize time and labor, catalyze growth across multiple sectors, cultivate skilled workforce, mitigate social unrest through job creation, augment the earning potential of its populace, and sustain overall economic progress and development (Ogbuabor et al., 2018; Ikonne & Nwogwugwu, 2020). Industrialization not only drives economic growth but also exerts a significant influence on agricultural productivity, wherein advancements in the agricultural sector often stimulate growth in the industrial domain, creating a symbiotic relationship that fuels broader economic development.

Since the 1960s, industrialization has been a core focus of Nigeria's economic policies. However, the late 1960s marked a turning point as the discovery, extraction, and export of oil in commercial volumes created challenges in advancing industrial development. By the early 1980s, the economy experienced stagnation due to inefficiencies associated with a public-sector-dominated structure. In response, the Nigerian government initiated systematic economic liberalization to promote private-sector-led growth. Privatization and commercialization efforts were implemented for some public corporations, while emphasis shifted toward fostering micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) as drivers of industrialization and economic development. These micro-enterprises align with principles such as free-market dynamics, creativity, innovation, individual and group initiatives, self-reliance, and personal fulfillment (Onyenekenwa, 2005; Chete et al., 2014). According to Isiksal and Odoh (2016), industrial policies became pivotal in accelerating economic growth and development. This strategic direction inspired Nigeria to adopt various policies aimed at advancing industrialization and achieving self-reliance as an industrialized economy.

The symbiotic relationship between Nigeria's industrial and agricultural sectors raises concerns about the impact on food security. While industrial growth theoretically boosts economic prosperity, its actual effects vary. Industrialization may strain resources and prioritize cash crops over staple foods (Nwoko et al., 2020). However, strategic industrial policies can enhance agricultural productivity through infrastructure and value chain improvements (Okafor et al., 2018). In theory, the industrial and agricultural sectors are believed to share a symbiotic relationship, where advancements in one sector can positively affect the other. However, the reality in Nigeria presents a nuanced picture. Rapid industrialization may lead to land use changes, competition for resources, and environmental degradation, negatively impacting agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods. Whether industrial development has improved or decreased food security in Nigeria remains a pressing concern. A review of existing studies showed that there is a notable scarcity of empirical research specifically addressing the impact of industrialization on food security. While there are studies examining related aspects such as agricultural productivity and environmental degradation (e.g Adeoye et al., 2019; Susanti & Maryono, 2020; Liu et al., 2018), comprehensive empirical analyses directly linking industrialization to food security are limited. Moreover, extant literature revealed conflicting results across several themes related to industrialization and food security. While some studies highlight the positive impacts of industrialization on agricultural productivity through technological advancements and improved infrastructure (Spielman et al., 2021; Ajayi & Solomon, 2020), others emphasize the negative consequences such as environmental degradation and labor diversion (Chen et al., 2018; Mupambwa & Dube, 2017). This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of industrialization on food security in Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### *Theoretical Review*

Food security, encompassing the availability, access, utilization, and stability of food (Committee on World Food Security, 2015; WHO, 2000), is a complex issue intricately linked to the economic development trajectory of a country. Industrialization, a hallmark

of economic growth, presents in theoretical literature, a multifaceted relationship with food security. In other words, while some of the theories argue about the positive response of food security on industrialization, others present the adverse effect of industrial activities on food security.

One of the key theoretical arguments for the positive impact of industrialization on food security is rooted in modernization theory. Modernization theory- developed primarily during the mid-20th century by economist Walt Rostow-was theorized on the grounds that Western industrialized nations are viewed as the epitome of development, serving as a model for other countries. Rostow's modernization theory outlines a linear path of economic development that societies must follow, consisting of five stages. In the traditional society stage, the economy is primarily based on subsistence activities, where producers consume their output and do not engage in trade. Barter serves as the primary means of trade, with goods directly exchanged for other goods. Agriculture dominates as the principal industry, characterized by labor-intensive production with minimal capital investment. Technology remains basic, and resource allocation adheres to traditional practices. In the transitional phase, greater specialization results in surplus production, facilitating trade. A transportation network starts to form to sustain this trade activity. Entrepreneurs emerge as income levels, savings, and investments gradually increase. External trade, primarily focused on primary commodities, becomes more prevalent. A robust central government begins to support private enterprise, creating a foundation for future economic expansion.

Industrialization accelerates in the take-off stage, with workers starting to move from agriculture to manufacturing. Economic growth is concentrated in specific regions and industries. Investment levels surpass 10% of GNP, and people begin saving more. New political and social institutions develop to facilitate industrialization. This growth becomes self-reinforcing, as investments drive higher incomes, which, in turn, generate more savings to fund further investments. During the drive-to-maturity stage, the economy expands into new sectors, spurred by technological advancements that create diverse investment opportunities. The production of a wide range of goods and services reduces dependence on imports. Urbanization accelerates, and technology becomes integral across various industries. Ultimately, in the stage of high mass consumption, the economy shifts its focus to mass consumption, characterized by elevated economic activity. Technology is extensively utilized, although its rate of expansion slows. The service sector emerges as the dominant force, with urbanization reaching its peak. Multinational corporations thrive, and a large portion of the population achieves income levels that surpass basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. There is also a growing emphasis on social welfare.

As a link to the current study, the modernization theory suggests that industrialization leads to economic growth, which translates to increased agricultural productivity through mechanization, fertilizers, and improved techniques. This can lead to greater food surpluses and improved food security (Kline, 2020; Robertson, 2021). However, while the theory provides a structured framework for understanding development, it has been critiqued for its linear progression model and Eurocentric assumptions (Smith & Taylor, 2019; Johnson, 2020; Chen & Patel, 2021; Ahmed, 2022).

The key theoretical arguments for understanding the challenges and limitations of industrialization on food security is evident in the dependency theory. This theory posits that the economic development of developing countries is often constrained by their

dependence on developed nations (Dos Santos, 1970; Frank, 1967). Dependency theory argues that industrialization in developing countries often does not lead to the expected benefits of increased productivity and economic growth, rather developing countries are often integrated into the global economy as suppliers of raw materials and low-value goods, while developed countries dominate the production and export of high-value manufactured goods and services. According to Frank, (1967), this unequal relationship leads to a situation where developing countries become heavily reliant on developed nations for capital, technology, and market access. In the agricultural sector, the effect of this inequality is manifested in the heavy reliance of developing countries on developed nations for essential goods, including food. Consequently, their ability to achieve self-sufficiency in food production is compromised, leading to persistent food insecurity (Clapp, 2015; McMichael, 2013). However, while this theory critiques the often exploitative nature of industrialization under global capitalism, it also suggests the potential for developing countries to leverage industrial growth to invest in their own agricultural sectors and achieve food security (Amin, 1976; Kay, 2011).

The Urbanization Theory provide insights on the ripple effect of industrialization on agricultural output in developing economies. It underscores the substantial migration of populations from rural areas to urban centers that often accompanies industrialization. According to this theory, the shift of people from rural to urban areas can lead to a labor shortage in agriculture, reducing the sector's capacity to produce enough food to meet the population's demands (Tacoli, 2003). With fewer individuals available for tasks like farming, planting, and harvesting, agricultural productivity may decline. This challenge is further intensified as urban areas typically provide more attractive and varied employment opportunities than rural farming, making it increasingly difficult to retain agricultural labor. The environmental downsides of industrialization and its extended effect on agricultural sector can be theoretically elucidated by the Ecological Modernization Theory. The Ecological Modernization Theory, propounded in the early 1980s by Joseph Huber and Martin Jänicke emphasize the growing concerns about environmental consequences of industrialization, such as pollution, resource depletion, and ecological degradation. Industrialization, while driving economic growth and technological advancement, often brings about significant environmental challenges. Industrial processes typically involve the extraction and processing of raw materials, manufacturing of goods, and the disposal of waste products. Each of these stages can contribute to pollution in various forms. For instance, improper disposal of industrial waste, including hazardous chemicals and heavy metals, can lead to soil contamination. This affects soil fertility, harms plant life, and can enter the food chain, impacting human health (Alloway, 2013; McLaughlin et al., 2000). The ecological impacts of industrialization extend beyond pollution and include broader forms of ecological degradation. Industrialization contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, primarily through the burning of fossil fuels. These emissions lead to global warming, climate change, and associated ecological consequences, such as shifting weather patterns, sea level rise, and increased frequency of extreme weather events (Stern, 2007). In the agricultural sector, these environmental changes have profound effects on food security. Climate change can alter growing seasons, reduce crop yields, and increase the prevalence of pests and diseases, all of which threaten food production. For instance, shifting weather patterns can lead to unpredictable rainfall, causing droughts or floods that devastate crops. The theory further emphasize the potential for industries to innovate and

adopt cleaner technologies that reduce environmental impact while maintaining economic competitiveness. This involves a transition to more sustainable production processes, the efficient use of resources, and the integration of environmental considerations into business strategies and government policies. As climate change continues to progress, it is essential to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and develop resilient food systems to mitigate these impacts and ensure a stable food supply for the growing global population.

From the fore going, the theoretical literature on the relationship between industrialization and food security offers a nuanced perspective, highlighting both its positive and negative impacts. The Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) hypothesis bridges these views, proposing that industrialization may initially harm food security due to environmental degradation but can eventually enhance it through technological progress and sustainable practices. The EKC hypothesis describes an inverted U-shaped relationship between environmental degradation and economic development. In the early stages of industrialization, environmental degradation—manifested in pollution, deforestation, and resource depletion—tends to rise, negatively affecting food security by damaging agricultural land and water supplies. However, once a certain level of economic development is reached, further industrialization fosters improvements such as technological innovation, stricter environmental regulations, and sustainable practices that mitigate degradation. In the context of the present study, this theory underscores the interconnectedness of industrial development with food, energy, and water resources. During the initial phases of industrialization, the emphasis on rapid economic growth often exacerbates environmental harm, including pollution, deforestation, and water contamination, which adversely impact agricultural productivity and food security. Over time, however, economic progress enables investments in cleaner technologies, efficient resource management, and sustainable practices. These advancements gradually offset the negative effects of early industrialization, resulting in improved agricultural productivity and enhanced food security.

### *Empirical Review*

Empirical studies are home with conflicting findings on the relationship between industrial activities and agricultural productivity. On one hand, studies have shown that industrialization can lead to increased agricultural productivity through the introduction of advanced technologies, improved infrastructure, and enhanced access to inputs and markets (Spielman et al., 2021; Ajayi & Solomon, 2020; Kassie et al., 2018; Mottaleb et al., 2016; Nkonya et al., 2016; Awotide et al., 2016). On the other hand, evidences from scholarly works have indicated that industrial activities pose significant challenges to agriculture by causing environmental degradation, reducing the availability of arable land, and diverting labour away from the agricultural sector (Nkonya et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2018; Mupambwa & Dube, 2017; Odjugo, 2018; Adeloye et al., 2021). The adoption of technological innovations in agriculture has garnered significant attention among development economists. This is due to the fact that the majority of the population in less developed countries depends on agricultural production for their livelihoods, and new technology presents opportunities to enhance both production and productivity. Existing empirical studies have demonstrated that agriculture advances technologically when farmers adopt new innovations (Abdoulaye et al., 2019; Michler et al., 2020; Ndiritu et al., 2021; Ogunniyi et al., 2022). Technological advancements in agriculture often come from

innovations such as improved seeds, modern irrigation techniques, precision farming tools, and advanced machinery. When farmers adopt these innovations, they can increase crop yields, reduce costs, and improve the efficiency of resource use. While technological innovations in agriculture have the potential to enhance productivity and sustainability, several empirical studies highlight significant challenges such as socio-economic disparities, limited access to resources, unintended environmental consequences, and increased risks and uncertainties for farmers (Barrett, Carter, & Timmer, 2019; Asfaw et al., 2019; Pretty et al., 2018; Antle & Capalbo, 2020).

Industrialization often leads to a shift in employment from agriculture to industrial sectors, which can have mixed effects on household incomes and purchasing power. Empirical literature has documented that while employment in industrial sectors typically offers higher wages with more stable income and purchasing power compared to agriculture (Herrendorf et al., 2019; Diao, et al., 2018; Gollin et al., 2016) the transition can also result in increased income inequality with the benefits not evenly distributed, often favoring those with better access to education and skills training, and economic displacement for those unable to find industrial jobs (Gollin, Lagakos, & Waugh, 2014; Kunal et al., 2018; Sinha, 2019; Timmer, 2015; Christiaensen & Todo, 2014). Another strand of empirical literature has demonstrated the importance of nonagricultural employment for rural households in sub-Saharan Africa. Studies have shown that rural households engaged in nonagricultural activities often achieve higher and more stable incomes compared to those solely dependent on agriculture (Haggblade, Hazell, & Reardon, 2010; Davis et al., 2017; Nagler & Naudé, 2017; Yeboah & Jayne, 2018). This additional income can enhance household resilience to shocks such as crop failures and market fluctuations, improve food security, and enable investments in education and health.

The impact of industrialization on the food supply chain is multifaceted, offering significant benefits while also presenting substantial challenges. Empirical literature reveals that industrialization has significantly improved efficiency and productivity in the food supply chain through mechanization and advanced logistics with modern storage facilities reducing post-harvest losses (Reardon, Timmer, & Minten, 2012; Affognon et al., 2015). Conversely, recent empirical studies highlight that highly industrialized and centralized food supply chains can be particularly vulnerable to disruptions from natural disasters, economic shocks, or pandemics (Manning & Soon, 2016; Suryaningtyas et al., 2019; Doherty et al., 2019; Akinwumi et al., 2021; Okechukwu & Ezirim, 2018; Alabi & Chukwu, 2022).

The detrimental effect of industrialization on food security has also been documented in empirical literature. Industrialization often leads to environmental degradation, which can negatively impact agricultural productivity and, consequently, food security. Empirical studies have shown that industrial activities such as mining, deforestation, and pollution can lead to soil erosion, water contamination, and loss of biodiversity, all of which harm agricultural land (Ezeaku et al., 2020; Chand et al., 2017; Pérez-Soto et al., 2019; Sibanda et al., 2021; Iwuoha et al., 2020; Ogundari et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is empirical evidence that the expansion of industrial zones and urbanization can result in the loss of arable land and labourers (Adeoye et al., 2019; Susanti & Maryono, 2020; Liu et al., 2018; Chand & Srivastava, 2020). These studies concluded that as industrial areas expand, agricultural lands are often converted for non-agricultural uses, reducing the amount of

land available for food production and the number of labourers to cultivate the available land.

A meticulous observation from the empirical studies reveals that there is a notable scarcity of empirical research specifically addressing the impact of industrialization on food security. While there are studies examining related aspects such as agricultural productivity and environmental degradation (e.g Adeoye et al., 2019; Susanti & Maryono, 2020; Liu et al., 2018), comprehensive empirical analyses directly linking industrialization to food security are limited. This gap is particularly pronounced in the context of Nigeria, where specific studies on how industrialization affects food security are rare. Existing literature predominantly focuses on broader regions or different countries, leaving a significant research gap in understanding the Nigerian context. Additionally, the thematic review of existing literature reveals conflicting results across several themes related to industrialization and food security. For example, while some studies highlight the positive impacts of industrialization on agricultural productivity through technological advancements and improved infrastructure (Spielman et al., 2021; Ajayi & Solomon, 2020), others emphasize the negative consequences such as environmental degradation and labor diversion (Chen et al., 2018; Mupambwa & Dube, 2017). These contradictory findings suggest a need for more nuanced and context-specific research to reconcile these differences and provide a clearer understanding of the conditions under which industrialization can be beneficial or detrimental to food security.

## **Methodology**

### *Data and Variables*

The study utilized time series data spanning from 1986 to 2022. This period encompasses significant historical events, including the implementation of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and a notable shift towards industrialization within Nigeria. In addition, the period is long enough, suitable for the intended econometric method of data analysis. The main variables of interest include manufacturing (value added) a proxy for industrialization (INDS) and Food Production Index (FPI) a measure of food security. Other control variables include Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Load Capacity Factor (LCF), and Population growth (POG).

Food Production Index (FPI), a measure of food security measures the relative level of the aggregate volume of agricultural food production for each year in comparison with the base period 2014-2016 (World Bank, 2023). Extant empirical studies widely considered food production index as more comprehensive measure than other indices because it includes all edible crops and accounts for a wide range of agricultural products (Setiawa et al., 2023; Ogundipe et al., 2019). This broad coverage ensures that the index reflects the overall food production landscape rather than focusing on a single crop or a limited set of products. FPI is treated as a dependent variable for this study. Data on FPI is obtained from World Development Indicators (WDI). Manufacturing (value added), a proxy for industrialization (IND) refers to the net output of the manufacturing sector, which includes all industries classified under manufacturing as per the International Standard Industrial Classification. Empirical studies (such as Almed et al., 2022; Opoku & Boachie, 2020; Munir & Ameer, 2020; Opoku & Aluko, 2021) used manufacturing (value added) as a measure of industrialization. While some studies (e.g., Ojeoga & Posu, 2015; Voumik & Sultana,

2022; Nasir, Canh & Lan Le, 2021) have used industry value added (including construction) as a measure of industrialization, it is argued that this metric underestimates the actual impact of the manufacturing sector. Industry value added encompasses additional components such as water, gas, electricity, mining, and construction, which can obscure the contribution of the manufacturing sector (Opoku & Aluko, 2021). Therefore, this study opts for manufacturing (value added) as it is often considered the core of industrialization and usually involves the transformation of raw materials into finished products and is closely associated with technological advancement, productivity improvements, and economic development. Moreover, many industrial policies and development strategies specifically target the manufacturing sector to stimulate economic growth and employment. This choice will help assess the impact of core industrial activities on economic development and their potential implications for food security and environmental consequences. The relationship between industrialization and food security is considered ambiguous in literature. On one hand, industrialization ought to introduce innovations in agriculture, such as mechanization or improved processing techniques, boosting agricultural productivity and hence enhancing food security (Ajayi & Solomon, 2020; Kassie et al., 2018; Mottaleb et al., 2016). Conversely, industrial activities can contribute to environmental pollution and depletion of natural resources, reducing the availability of arable land, and diverting labour away from the agricultural sector, thereby negatively impacting agricultural productivity and food availability (Nkonya et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2018; Mupambwa & Dube, 2017). Data on industrialization was sourced from World Development Indicators of the World Bank. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total monetary value of all goods and services produced within Nigeria in a specific in a year. The a priori expectation of GDP on food security is positive. Generally, higher GDP leads to increased purchasing power among households. With more income, families can afford to buy more and better-quality food, improving overall food security. Data on GDP was sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria's annual publications. In this study, the Load Capacity Factor (LCF) is utilized as a measure of environmental sustainability. Recent empirical studies increasingly give preference to Load Capacity Factor (LCF) over traditional metrics such as greenhouse gas emissions and the ecological footprint (Pata & Isik, 2021; Voumik & Sultana, 2022). These studies suggest that LCF provides a more holistic measure because it considers both the supply and demand aspects of ecological systems, while other metrics often overlook the supply side. While the ecological footprint (EF) incorporates six environmental indicators—cropland, grazing land, built-up land, fishing grounds, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and forests—making it a more comprehensive measure of environmental degradation compared to atmospheric emissions (Aladejare & Nyiputen, 2023), it does not account for the productivity of ecological assets, known as biocapacity (Voumik & Sultana, 2022). By combining EF and biocapacity, LCF offers a superior evaluation of environmental degradation, effectively assessing whether countries exceed their sustainability limits. According to the LCF metric, an environment is sustainable when the value is 1 or greater, and unsustainable when it is below 1, with 1 serving as the sustainability threshold. The LCF is calculated as the ratio of biocapacity to the ecological footprint. An increase in LCF, indicating improved environmental sustainability, is expected to positively influence food security, and vice versa.

Population growth, defined as the increase in the number of individuals within a population over a given period, has an ambiguous relationship with food security in the literature. On



one hand, rapid population growth may worsen food insecurity by escalating food demand and straining agricultural land and water resources (FAO, 2018; UNFPA, 2015). Data on population growth was obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria's statistical bulletin.

*Model specification*

This study is premise on the impact of industrialization on food security in Nigeria. The theoretical model for this study is embedded in the EKC hypothesis. The EKC hypothesis posits that the relationship between environmental degradation and economic development follows an inverted U-shape. In the context of food security, we can adapt this hypothesis to consider how industrialization impacts food security, where industrialization initially degrades food security but improves it at higher levels of development due to better practices and technologies.

Let FPI represent food security, IND represent industrialization. According to the EKC hypothesis, the relationship between industrialization and food security can be expressed in a simple equation as:

$$FPI = f(IND)$$

Including control variables that may influence food security, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Carbon emission (CO<sub>2</sub>), and Population growth (POG); equation 1.2 can be specified in a functional form as

$$FPI_t = f(IND_t, GDP_t, CO_{2t}, POG_t)$$

Assuming the asymmetric effect of industrialization on food security, equation 1.2 can be written as

$$FPI_t = f(IND\_POS_t, IND\_NEG_t, GDP_t, LCF_t, POG_t)$$

The stochastic form of equation 1.3 can be specified as

$$FPI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IND\_POS_t + \beta_2 IND\_NEG_t + \beta_3 GDP_t + \beta_4 LCF_t + \beta_5 POG_t + \epsilon_t$$

In order to be able to capture the non-linear property and heteroscedasticity of the variables, the above equation will be logged. Thus, taking a partial log of the variables, equation 1.4 becomes

$$FPI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln IND\_POS_t + \beta_2 \ln IND\_NEG_t + \beta_3 \ln GDP_t + \beta_4 LCF_t + \beta_5 POG_t + \epsilon_t$$

Following dynamic linear time series model in an autoregressive form such as:

$$Y_t = \alpha Y_{t-1} + \beta X_t + \epsilon_t$$

Applying the above typical linear time series model to equation (1.5) to assess the asymmetric impact of industrialization on food security in Nigeria, the model is re-stated as:

$$FPI_t = \beta_0 + \alpha FPI_{t-1} + \beta_1 \lnIND\_POS_t + \beta_2 \lnIND\_NEG_t + \beta_3 \lnGDP_t + \beta_4 LCF_t + \beta_5 POG_t + \epsilon_t$$

where:  $\beta_0$  is the intercept,  $\alpha$  captures the effect of lag value of food security,  $\beta_1$  captures the positive effect of industrialization on food security,  $\beta_2$  captures the negative effect of industrialization on food security, allowing for the inverted U-shape relationship,  $\beta_3$  captures the effect of GDP on food security,  $\beta_4$  captures the effect of load capacity factor,  $\beta_5$  captures the effect of population growth on food security;  $\epsilon_t$  is the Stochastic error term at time  $t$ ,  $\ln$  is Natural Logarithmic sign.

*Method of Data Analysis*

The data for this study underwent econometric analysis techniques. A unit root test was conducted to examine the stationarity properties of the dataset, which informed the selection of the appropriate estimation technique. The Pairwise Granger Causality Test was employed to determine the presence and direction of causality. This study utilized the Non-Linear Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model (NARDL) to estimate the coefficients of the explanatory variables. The NARDL model is preferred because it allows for the incorporation of asymmetric effects of positive and negative changes in the explanatory variables on the dependent variable, unlike the Linear Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model (ARDL), which assumes a constant impact of explanatory variables. The NARDL method also provides graphs of cumulative dynamic multipliers to trace adjustment patterns following positive and negative shocks to the explanatory variables and allows for asymmetry switching between the short-run and long-run (Meo, 2018; Ijirshar et al., 2021). Typically, a linear relationship exists when two quantities are proportional. However, if changes in industrialization do not cause changes in food security at a constant rate, the relationship is non-linear, which is central to this study. This assumption is based on the idea that most relationships in economics are nonlinear, meaning a change in an explanatory variable may not always result in the same change in the dependent variable. The NARDL framework is suitable for this research because it can be applied regardless of whether the regressors are stationary at level or first difference (I(0) or I(1)), and it allows for the detection of hidden cointegration while gauging short-run and long-run asymmetries. The long-run specification of the ARDL model is given as:

$$FPI_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_i FPI_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{q1} \beta_i \lnIND\_POS_{t-i} + \sum_{j=0}^{q2} \beta_j \lnIND\_NEG_{t-j} + \sum_{l=0}^{q3} \beta_l \lnGDP_{t-l} + \sum_{m=0}^{q4} \beta_m LCF_{t-m} + \sum_{n=0}^{q5} \beta_n POG_{t-n} + \mu_t$$

The short-run Error Correction Model (ECM) is specified as:

$$\begin{aligned}
 FPI_t = & \beta_0 + \sum_{t=1}^p \beta_i FPI_{t-1} + \sum_{i=0}^{q1} \beta_i \lnIND\_POS_{t-i} + \sum_{j=0}^{q2} \beta_j \lnIND\_NEG_{t-j} \\
 & + \sum_{l=0}^{q3} \beta_l \lnGDP_{t-l} + \sum_{m=0}^{q4} \beta_m LCF_{t-m} + \sum_{n=0}^{q5} \beta_n POG_{t-n} + \pi ECT_{t-1} + \mu_t
 \end{aligned}$$

The Error Correction Term (ECT) represents the speed of adjustment, denoted by  $\pi$ , which indicates the time it takes for the economy to return to its long-run equilibrium after experiencing shocks.

**Result and discussion**

*Unit Root Test*

Time series data is generally considered stationary if its mean and variance are independent of time. If the time series is non-stationary, it implies that its mean and variance are changing over time and hence the presence of unit root. Stationarity is vital in econometrics as most times the series may exhibit unit root problem. If the time series is non-stationary, the regression will produce misleading results. To prevent spurious (misleading) regression results, a stationarity test is conducted. In this analysis, the ADF unit-root test was employed because it accounts for serial correlation. The test was performed with the following hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>: The variable has a unit root, implying it is non-stationary.

H<sub>1</sub>: The variable does not have a unit root, implying it is stationary.

The decision rule is that if the absolute value of the t-statistic exceeds the critical value at a given level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Otherwise, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

**Table 1: Unit Root Test Result**

Source: Extract from Author’s computation from E-views 10

Variables	At Levels			At 1st Difference			Level of integration
	t-stat	Crit. Value (5%)	Prob. (0.05)	t-stat.	Crit. Value (5%)	Prob. (0.05)	
FPI	0.272	2.951	0.918	3.208	2.954	0.028	I(1)
LnIND	0.427	2.945	0.893	4.724	2.948	0.000	I(1)
LnGDP	3.603	3.557	0.045	-	-	-	I(0)
LCF	2.123	1.950	0.034	-	-	-	I(0)
POG	1.292	2.954	0.621	2.080	1.951	0.037	I(1)

I(0) indicate that the variable is stationary at levels while I(1) shows that the variable is stationary at first difference. The results from Table 1 show that variables such as LnGDP and LCF are stationary at levels, while FPI, LnIND, and POG are stationary at first difference, indicating a mixed order of integration among the dataset. Consequently, it can be asserted that LnGDP and LCF are I(0), whereas FPI, LnIND, and POG are I(1). This result provides favorable conditions for using the Nonlinear ARDL model to examine the effect of industrialization on food security in Nigeria. Furthermore, considering that most relationships in economics are nonlinear, this study adopts the NARDL method, which

accounts for both the short- and long-run asymmetric effects of industrialization on food security.

ARDL Optimal lag selection criteria

Understanding the criteria for selecting the optimal lag is essential for interpreting Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) models, as it determines the appropriate lag length for the variables. Given that ARDL models include lags of the dependent variables, choosing the optimal lag ensures that the model accurately captures the relevant temporal dynamics and relationships within the data. This selection process is vital for obtaining precise parameter estimates and making reliable inferences. In this study, the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) is employed to determine the optimal lag order for the series. The results are illustrated graphically in Figure 1 below.

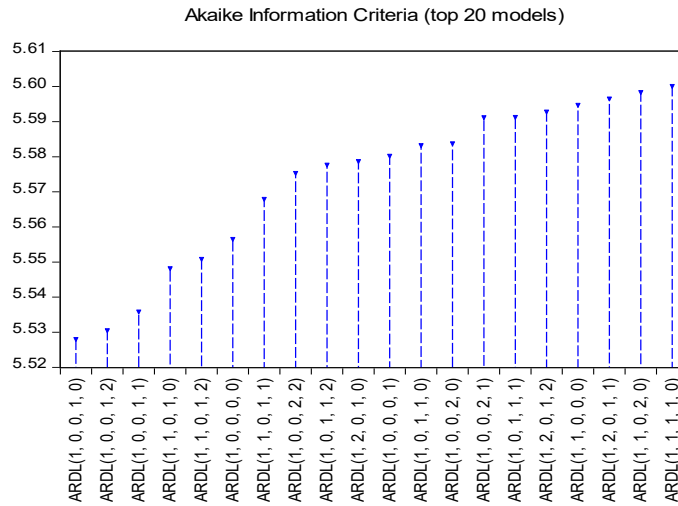


Figure 1: ARDL optimal lag selection result

From the results presented in Figure 1, it can be observed that the maximum lag length is two (2), with the optimal lag length being ARDL (1 1 1 1 0). This is based on the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), which yielded the lowest value when compared to the other top 20 models. Therefore, the model will be estimated using a lag of two (2) to ensure optimal performance and an accurate representation of the data.

ARDL Long run Bound Test

In econometric analysis, examining long-run relationship between/among variables is crucial for understanding the underlying equilibrium dynamics and the stability of economic relationships over time in order to drive insights into the economic implications and policy relevance of such relationships. The ARDL Bound Test, operating within the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model framework, is well suited for this purpose. Unlike traditional cointegration tests, it accommodates mixed orders of integration and includes lagged variables, enabling analysis of non-stationary and mixed-order integrated time series data. Thus, this study utilized the ARDL Bound Test to evaluate the long-term relationship among the study variables.

As a guideline, if the F-statistic value for the bound test exceeds the upper bound for both actual and finite samples, we conclude that, at the specified level of significance, there

exists a long-term relationship between the variables. Otherwise, if the F-statistic value falls below the upper bound, the variables do not cointegrate in the long run. The outcome of the bound test for cointegration is presented in Table 2 below

**Table 2: ARDL Bound Test Result**

Test Statistic	Value	Signif.	I (0)	I (1)
			Asymptotic: n=1000	
F-statistic	9.274500	10%	2.08	3
k	5	5%	2.39	3.38
		2.5%	2.7	3.73
		1%	3.06	4.15

Source: Author’s computation from E-views 10

Result in Table 2 indicates that there is long-run relationship among the variables incorporated in the model. This is because; the F-statistic Value of 9.274500 is greater than the Pesaran upper and lower bounds critical values of 2.39 and 3.73 respectively at 5% level of significance. This means that in the long run, there is no tendency that the variables will drift apart, and hence there is cointegration among them.

**Test for long-run asymmetry**

The study utilized the Wald Test to examine the presence of asymmetry in the long-run relationship between industrialization and food security in Nigeria. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Wald Test for Long-run Asymmetry**

Source: Author’s computation from E-views 10

Test Statistic	Value	df	Probability
t-statistic	2.681	30	0.011
F-statistic	7.190	(1, 30)	0.011
Chi-square	7.190	1	0.007
Null Hypothesis: C(2) = C(3) = 0			

The test results for the asymmetric impact of industrialization on food security show t-statistic value of 2.681481, an F-statistic value of 7.190342 and a chi-square value of 7.190342, with probability values of 0.0118, 0.0118, and 0.0073, respectively. Since these probability values are less than the 0.05 significant level, there is evidence of long-run asymmetric relationship. Thus, increases in industrial activities and decreases in industrial activities significantly differ in their long-term effects on food security in Nigeria. This implies that food security in Nigeria does not respond equally to positive and negative shocks to industrialization in the long run.

**The long-run effect of Industrialization on food security in Nigeria**

Having established that there is long-run equilibrium and asymmetric relationship between industrialization and food security, the asymmetric long-run estimates were computed at the ARDL optimal lag of (1 1 1 1 0) and the results are presented in Tables 4.

**Table 4: Long-Run Effect of industrialization on Food Security**

Source: Author's computation from E-views 10

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LNIND_POS	42.081	17.255	2.438	0.022
LNIND_NEG	13.499	13.509	0.999	0.328
LNGDP	-13.655	16.837	-0.811	0.425
LCF	-189.983	66.762	-2.845	0.009
POG	-39.536	20.139	-1.963	0.061
C	609.771	425.938	1.431	0.165

Table 4 presents the result of the long-term asymmetric impact of industrialization on food security in Nigeria, alongside the results of the linear long-term effects of other control variables on food security. Result from Table 3 reveal that positive changes in industrialization has a positive and significant effect on food security in Nigeria in the long-run by 42% whereas negative changes in industrialization exerts positive but weak influence on food security in the long run by 13%. This result implies that in the long run, increased industrial output or investment have a strong and significant effect on improving food security in Nigeria. This could be rationalized on the grounds that increased Industrialization often leads to job creation in both the industrial sector and related industries. More employment opportunities can enhance household incomes, which allows individuals to afford better and more nutritious food. This result is theoretically plausible and aligns with the empirical findings of Rao & Kumar (2021), Ahmed & Bukhari (2022), Khan & Ullah (2023) who found that industrial growth leads to increased employment and higher incomes, which in turn improve access to nutritious food. Conversely, negative changes (decline) in industrial activities, though not as pronounced as when industrialization increases, results to some level of benefit to food security in Nigeria. The weak or insignificant effect of industrial decline on food security in Nigeria suggests that while industrialization is crucial for enhancing food security, the system has some level of resilience and adaptability that reduces the impact of industrial downturns. For example, households and markets in Nigeria have alternative ways to secure food that are less dependent on industrial activities, reducing the overall impact on food security. The findings are in line with those of Ogunleye & Ayodele (2022) who found that while industrial declines do have an effect, the presence of robust agricultural policies, strategic food reserves, and infrastructure support helps mitigate these impacts. On the effect of other control variables on food security, Table 3 shows that while economic growth and population growth has a negative but weak effect on food security in the long run, load capacity factor (a measure of environmental sustainability) exerts a negative and significant effect on food security. Although contrary to theoretical expectation, this result implies that efforts to improve LCF are focused on long-term environmental sustainability at the expense of short-term agricultural productivity. This trade-off can negatively impact food security in the immediate term, even if it aims to benefit the environment in the long run.

*Short-run Effects of Industrialization on Food Security in Nigeria*

Estimates of the short-run asymmetric effect of Industrialization of food security are presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Short-run Effects of Industrialization on Food Security in Nigeria**

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-121.857	21.837	-5.580	0.000
D(LNIND POS)	-22.711	9.868	-2.301	0.030
D(LNIND NEG)	10.608	10.399	1.020	0.317
D(LCF)	-31.577	29.789	-1.060	0.299
D(POG)	-7.013	15.681	-0.447	0.658
ECM(-1)*	-0.902	0.158	-5.703	0.000

R-Square = 0.581987, Adjusted R2= 0.509916, DW=2.371369

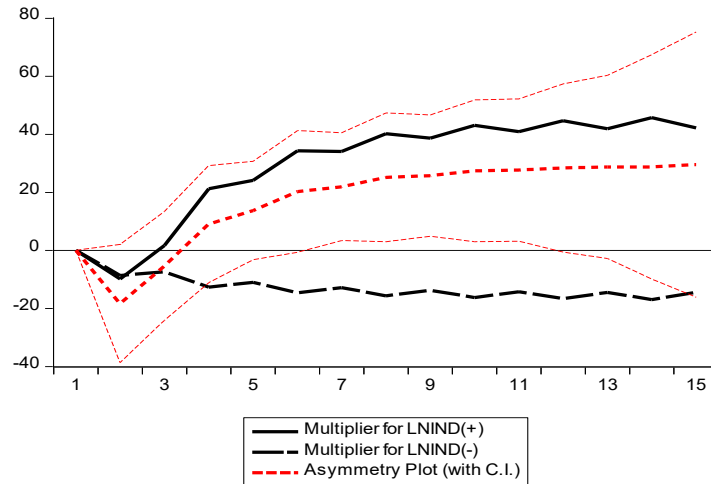
Source: Author’s computation from E-views 10

Table 5 presents the estimates of the short-run asymmetric impact of industrialization on food security in Nigeria. Result in Table 4 shows that positive changes in industrial activities has a negative and significant impact on food security in the short run by 22% while negative changes in changes industrialization exerts a positive but weak impact on food security. This result implies that in the immediate term, increased industrialization may strain food security in Nigeria. This is because in the short run, increased industrial activities can lead to environmental pollution, including air, water, and soil contamination. Pollutants from industrial processes can degrade agricultural land and water sources, negatively impacting crop yields and food quality. On the other hand, when industrial activities decline, there is a positive but weak impact on food security, indicating some level of short-term benefit to food security when industrial activities decrease. The reason is that when industrial activities decline, resources such as labor and capital may be redirected to agriculture, leading to a temporary boost in food production and security. These findings are in line with those of Singh & Sharma (2022), Okoro & Adeoye (2023) who found that a decline in industrial activities shifts labour and capital to agriculture, improving food security.

The short run result in Table 4 also indicates that, in an event of any temporary shock, the variables in the model can adjust back to the long run path at the speed of about 9% yearly. This is because the ECM coefficient is negative (-0.902322) and statistically significant at 5%.The results of the R-Squared (0.581987) and Adjusted R-squared (0.509916) show that over 58% of the variations in food security in the short run are explained by the variation in industrialization and other variables captured in the model. Also, the Durbin -Watson statistic of 2.37, which can be conveniently approximated to 2.00 shows that the model does not suffer any incidence of autocorrelation.

*The Dynamic Multipliers*

The study calculates the cumulative dynamic multipliers effect on change in food security of a unit change (positive and negative changes) in industrialization. The result of the dynamic multipliers is therefore presented in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Result of the Dynamic Multipliers**

Figure 2 shows the multipliers for positive and negative changes in the industrialization on food security over time. Figure 2 shows that positive changes in industrialization (indicated by continuous black line) starts below zero but shortly became positive and increases over time, indicating that positive changes in industrialization have a positive and increasing impact on food security. On the other hand, negative changes in industrialization (indicated by the dotted black line) starts below zero and decreases further, it indicating that negative changes in industrialization have a negative and increasing (in magnitude) impact on food security.

The graph shows that positive changes in industrialization has a progressively increasing positive impact on food security, while negative changes in LNIND have a progressively increasing negative impact. Initially, Positive and negative multipliers are statistically similar (no significant asymmetry). However, significant asymmetry emerges as the effects of negative changes diverge from those of positive changes, indicated by the non-overlapping confidence intervals. The clear divergence between the positive and negative multipliers indicates significant asymmetry in the relationship.

*NARDL Diagnostic Test*

A diagnostic examination is necessary to determine the validity of the model. Essentially, this diagnostic process is conducted to ascertain whether the developed model exhibits any issues related to goodness of fit. The criteria for residual diagnostic checks in this study encompass various tests, such as the Ramsey test for correct model specification, the LM test for serial correlation, a heteroskedasticity test, as well as CUSUM and CUSUM squared tests to assess the significance of the relationship. The results of the diagnostic tests are presented in Table 6 below

**Table 6: Diagnostic Test Results**

Test	F-statistic	Probability
Ramsey RESET Test	4.530346	0.0774
Breusch-Godfrey heteroskedasticity	1.524711	0.1957
LM Serial Correlation,	0.564447	0.4627

Source: Extract from Authors' computations in E-views 10



According to the data presented in Table 6, the test statistic for serial correlation, along with its corresponding probability value, shows insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating the absence of serial correlation. Similarly, the test statistic for heteroskedasticity does not provide enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that heteroskedasticity is not present. The Ramsey RESET Test, which checks for general misspecifications in the regression model, indicates that the model is correctly specified, as the p-value exceeds the 0.05 significance level. Furthermore, the CUSUM and CUSUM of squares tests were conducted to assess the stability of the model. The results are shown in Figures 3 and 4, respectively.

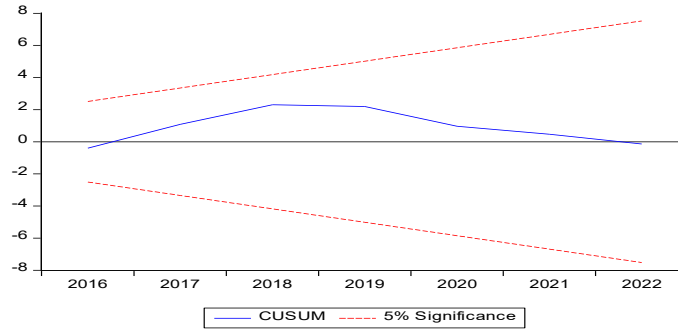


Figure 3: CUSUM Test Result  
Source: Extract from Eviews10

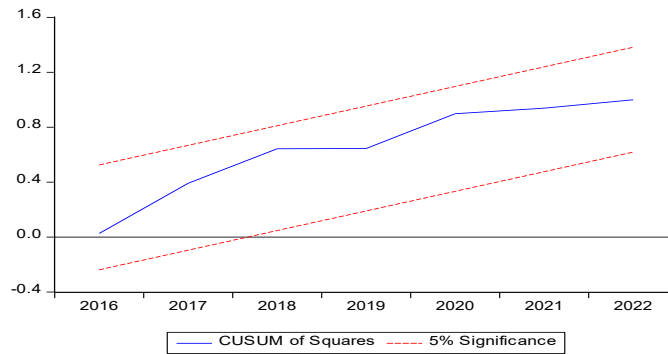


Figure 4: CUSUM of Squares Test Result  
Source: Extract from Eviews10

The results of the CUSUM and CUSUM of squares tests, presented in Figures 2 and 3, clearly show that the model is stable, as the cumulative sum of the residuals remains within the 5% confidence intervals (represented by the red dotted lines). This suggests that the findings of this study are reliable and can be used to inform the policymaking process.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that industrialization has a long-run asymmetric impact on food security in Nigeria. Specifically, positive changes in industrialization significantly and positively affect food security, while negative changes have a positive but weaker influence in the long run. Conversely, in the short run, positive changes in industrial activities negatively and significantly impact food security, whereas negative changes exert a positive but weak effect. This suggests that while industrialization can enhance food

security over the long term, short-term industrial activities might pose challenges to achieving immediate food security goals. Based on the findings presented in this study, the following recommendations are made: Firms should implement eco-friendly technologies and comply with environmental regulations to minimize negative impacts on food security. Government on the other hand should strengthen and enforce environmental regulations, and provide incentives for firms adopting sustainable practices. More so, farmers should adopt advanced agricultural technologies and diversify income sources to enhance resilience on the adverse effect of industrial activities on food security. Additionally, government should develop and maintain infrastructure to support efficient and reliable food supply chains, and offer financial support to smallholder farmers

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## FARMERS-HERDERS CRISIS AND FOOD INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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*Abstract: This study examined the effect of farmers-herders crisis on food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State. This study adopted cross-sectional survey research design and a structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool for the study. Purposive sampling method was used to select 392 respondents and resource access theory, propounded by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) served as the theoretical framework of analysis for this study. With the use of SPSS version 23.0, the collected data were analyzed using percentages, Pearson's coefficient of correlation and linear regression, respectively. The results of this study revealed that Farmers-herders crisis negatively and significantly influenced food availability, food access, food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The study concluded that farmers-herders crisis has resulted in displacement of people from their communities, women and girls' vulnerability to sexual and economic predation, huge economic burden on the government leading to loss of revenues, dwindling food supply and rising cost, increasing division among the Federating states and threat to National Security amongst others. Therefore, the study suggested, among other things, urgent upgrade response procedures to farmers-herders crisis, especially in the most vulnerable communities like Uwheru communities in Delta State. But this should be done within a larger framework that emphasizes proactive rather than reactive response to crisis. This shall go a long way to enhance food availability, access and utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.*

*Keywords: Farmers-herders crisis, food availability, food access, food utilization and stability*

### Introduction

Agricultural sector is the largest employer of labour in Nigeria because it is not age bound, as different categories of people could freely engage in it, either on a commercial or subsistence basis. By reason of difficulty in getting white collar job after leaving school, a teeming number of Nigerian youths seems to have found solace in farming activities to safe themselves from the stigma of joblessness. Those that embarked on agricultural activities on a commercial basis, apart from making their own profit, have also met the food demand of consumers that are not given to commercial farming or that are not inclined to farming activities, hence balancing the equation (Abamyan, Gwambeka & Aver, 2020; Okolie, 2022). The major aim of food security is to ensure individual access to adequate food always needed and utilization of such food to meet body growth and development. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations identified four components of food security include availability, access, stability and these components must be simultaneously satisfied to meet it objectives. The major problem confronting food security

in Nigeria today is the farmers-herders crisis. For example, there is shortage of food supply that has resulted in non-availability, hence increases prices of available one by the reason of such crises (Ogbette, Attama & Okoh, 2018). The crisis seems to have become a source of discouragement to local farmers in embarking on farming activities because most of them are pessimistic of low turnout, or zero return on their labour and investment. Today, Nigeria has been plagued with different security challenges that are gradually making the country to lose its pride of place among the comity of nations.

Nigeria, according to Modupe, Gbenga, Olanrewaju, Kehinde, Apalowo, Oluwakemi, Oladapo & Ayantunde, (2023), is a country that once pride herself as the giant of Africa but has been unexpectedly brought to her knees by the overwhelming security challenges. The security issues range from Boko-Haram insurgency, armed banditry, farmers-herders crisis, kidnapping among others. A cursory historization of the past achievement of Nigeria in terms of military might, is that of a country that had played a pivotal interventionist role in ensuring sub-regional security. For instance, Olufemi (2021) noted that the establishment of ECOMOG was a direct initiative of Nigerian government under the leadership of Gen. Ibrahim Babaginda military regime. The primary reason that informed its establishment was to introduce peace and security in troubled and wanton parts of West Africa, success was archived in this regard in Liberia, Sierra-Loen among others during its formative years.

Conversely, Nigeria that once possessed the capability to secure not only her territory but that of the whole West Africa, the reality of the present time, is a country grappling with a seemingly insurmountable internal security quagmire. It is often said that an ambience void of security of lives and property could largely serve as discouragement to prospective investors, hindered infrastructural development, and destabilized farming activities (Erondu & Nwakanma, 2018). The herders' crisis is a problem across the country and the Fulani herders in Nigeria were named the World's fourth deadliest militant organization, with 1,229 killings in 2014 (Buchanan, 2015). Also, the United Nations revealed that Fulani herders kill 1,400 people in 2019 (Nwachukwu, 2019). While according to Amnesty International cited in Okoro (2018) (as reported by the New Telegraph) on January 29th, 2018, Fulani herdsmen killed 168 individuals in January alone. In their words, The Nigerian government's response to community violence is woefully inadequate, too slow and inefficient, and in some circumstances illegal. Hundreds of people have died as a result of this violence in 2017 alone, and the government is still not doing enough to safeguard communities.

In 2017, for example, 549 people died in 14 states, resulting in thousands more people being displaced (Okoro, 2018). In 2017, 549 people were killed and hundreds more were displaced in the states of Delta, Zamfara, Ekiti Benue, Adamawa, Enugu, Taraba, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Katsina, and Cross Rivers as a result of violence between nomadic herders and local farmers (Okoro, 2020). There has been a severe economic implication as a result of this violence, which is causing food shortages and costing the Nigerian economy up to \$13 billion per year. The herders' crises of various magnitudes have caused the local, state, and federal governments a significant amount of money (Oghuvbu, 2021).

In 2016, the battle between the Fulani's herders and the Abraka indigenes was fierce as herdsmen unleashed attack on farmers thus, leading to the death of some farmers. The tear gas release into the air to disperse the angry mobs by mobile policemen caused long hours

of discomfort to inhabitants in Abraka. The situation resurfaced on the 25th of April 2017 and an indigene was slaughtered in the farm. Unlike Boko Haram which only operates in the Northern part of Nigeria, the Nomadic militants dominate the Southern and middle belt region (Ikenyei, 2020). She further argues that majority of Nigerian believe that Fulani Herdsmen are troublesome and policy should be made to restrict them to the Northern part of Nigeria or be confined to grazing their animal in a ranch, doing so is capital intensive. The cost of rising a cow in a ranch will affect the price of cows invariably meat. Thus, since they are diverse causes and consequences of herdsmen and farmer's crisis, the solutions as proffered by various authors have so far remain fruitless. The crisis has taken ethnic and religious dimension and if not, well handle could engulf Nigeria (Okolie, Onyema & Basse, 2019).

In Nigeria, the struggle between herders and farmers has become a recurrent theme. Control of land for grazing and farming, severe desertification of vegetative areas, and droughts in Northern Nigeria are all forcing herders to relocate to the middle belt and southern Nigeria in search of greener pasture and water for their animals. The nomadic herders' dwell in farming towns where there is green foliage and water, such as the Benue valley/tough, throughout their migration. Farmers sometimes accuse ranchers of intruding on their property, ruining their crops, and polluting their major source of water supplies. Farmers, on the other hand, are accused by herders of poisoning, murdering, or even stealing their animals, particularly cattle. The farmers are also accused of impeding the herdsmen's grazing paths, which were allegedly created in the early 1960s (Oghuvbu, 2021).

With the employment of modern weaponry such as the AK47 by herders who were previously known for grazing with sticks and cutlasses, the farmers-herders crisis has taken on a frightening new dimension. Unfortunately, the war has resisted the Nigerian government's security measures. Several people have died as a result of these attacks in Delta State communities. The assaults have demolished villages and damaged houses, displacing nearly 25,000 people. Constant resource-based disputes between farmers and herders, if not resolved, would surely jeopardize the economy (Okoro, 2018; Orhero, 2020).

Despite the necessary measures put in place by community heads, religious leaders, federal and state governments in Nigeria in order to bring to an end the clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers, the situation still persists in some parts of the country. As a result of the clashes, there appears to be loss of lives and destruction of farmlands. Indeed, the clashes appear to have resulted into dire consequences which include shortage of food production and supplies such as rice and yams as well as destruction of properties such as houses and fanning equipment. It is on this premise that this study investigated the causes and effect of farmers-herders crisis on food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The specific objectives were to:

Examine the effects of farmers-herders crisis on food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

Examine the effects of farmers-herders crisis on food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

Access the impact of farmers-herders crisis on food stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.



## **Literature Review**

Food insecurity results from a lack of availability of adequate nutrition within a nation; this deficiency can be either temporary or chronic. Chronic food insecurity is caused by a lack of resources to produce and obtain food, which results in a persistently inadequate diet. According to Shehu (2018) farmers-herdsmen conflict contributes to the high rate of poverty and hunger and also leads to social disorganization amongst families. Additionally, the conflict destroys the peaceful symbiotic relationships that exist between farmers and nomads. In the same direction, Dimelu, Salifu, Chah, Enwelu and Igbokwe (2017) affirm that structural factors contribute to farmers-herders' conflicts but however, not all form of conflicts basically lead to a great degree of violent and ethnic clashes rising amongst local communities. Moritz (2010) argued further that herder-farmer conflict has led to several deaths and dislodgment of many people in local communities. Also, the conflict has affected the sustainability of the agricultural and pastoral production in Nigeria and West Africa at large, because the financial base and the source of livelihood of different groups of people have been affected. Idowu (2017) posited that, whereas the Fulani herders kept up that they are free to move all over in Nigeria as a result of flexibility of development, the ranchers see this development as intrusion and infraction on their communal and individual properties acquired from their grandparents most particularly, when such development is into their farmlands. Adisa (2012) asserted that, often times the competition between agriculturists and herders has turned into extreme threats and social grinding in numerous parts in Nigeria. The clashes have illustrated tall potential to aggravate the frailty and nourishment emergency especially in rustic communities where most of the clashes are localized with muffled penalty across the nation. In his own quest, Aluko (2017) observes that the strife between pastoralists and ranchers has been in presence since the starting of the hone of farming and the strife was as a result of rare assets. Aluko (2017) further proceeded that in later times, the struggle has projected a diverse shape frailty with an increment in expansive numbers of casualties and individuals over the influenced states. In the event that the struggle is permitted to heighten, the impacts will be on nourishment and creature items for the reason of the grave misfortune of creatures, crops and profitable properties.

The Farmers-herders conflict remains the major issue in Nigeria and it has assumed very dangerous dimensions with unimaginable consequences for food security. States like Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi, etc. are still experiencing the menace of farmers-herdsmen crises, and the implication of these crises in all these communities is that economic activities including the production of food are often threatened to result in widespread hunger and malnutrition (Okolie and Atelhe, 2013). Adisa (2012) again observed that Farmers-herders crisis remains the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria found in nearly every part of Nigeria. Today, these conflicts have constituted several threats to the means of survival and livelihood of both farmers and herdsmen and have demonstrated high potential increase in insecurity and food crisis particularly in the rural communities where most of the crises are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide. Ikezue and Ezeah (2017) argue that the occurrence of farmers-herdsmen crises could impact the three main pillars of food security, as reported by the (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2006), including (1) food availability, (2) food accessibility, (3) food utilization and stabilization. The availability, accessibility,

utilization and stability are the three primary factors that determine food security (Chukwu et al., 2022):

*Farmers-herders and Availability of Food*

Food availability refers to the actual presence of food, which is based on both importation and domestic production. Food has become scarce per person as a result of population growth outpacing food supply over time. A nation's food supply must be sufficient, but it is insufficient to guarantee that its citizens have appropriate availability of food. Nigeria is under a severe internal and security threat as the threat has political, economic and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the nation and can be traced to many factors in which the Fulani-herdsmen appears to be major factor. Most worrisome in the present development is the pillaging, raping, killing and kidnapping by the so-called Fulani herdsmen. Stories are found in the national dailies on daily basis of how these shepherds strategically attack several communities and houses, with sophisticated assault guns-AK-47. According to Okereke (2012) and Bello (2013), the conflicts in most part of Nigeria especially between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash, are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. These Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other. A study conducted by Kasarachi (2016) have shown that, serious conflict erupts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers leading to loss of lives, valuable properties and destruction of vast expanse of arable agricultural farmlands thereby posing serious threat to food security since farmers for fear of attack could no longer go to farm and harvest their farm produce. The latest attacks by Fulani herdsmen are on the upsurge, with the latest attacks in February 2018 happening in Benue State, Taraba State, Nasarawa State and few cases of attack in other states. In recent times, the killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash has rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with the Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer crops. For the food availability dimension, Nnaji, Wanglin, Nazmun and Alan (2022) affirm that conflicts reduce food security through their adverse impacts on agricultural labour supply.

*Farmers-herders and Accessibility of Food*

Just having food accessible is insufficient; it also needs to be reasonably priced and appealing to consumers. Encouraging food access and producing safe, nutrient-dense food are made possible in large part by food processing and related activities. It is important to support the advancement of regional food safety, nutritional content, and indigenous technology. Conflicts affect the food accessibility dimension of food security through their harmful impacts on physical and economic access to food. For example, conflicts may lead to the destruction of infrastructure like roads, markets, and farms (Kah, 2017). This recent wave of violence in Nigeria as observed by Kasarachi (2016) has disrupted socio-economic, religious and educational activities, political instability and threatened the national unity in Nigeria. These extra judiciary killings have forced thousands of people to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety. The rate of insecurity occasioned by

Farmers-Herder's crisis in the north-central, middle-belt and southern parts of Nigeria has reduced the rate of food production and accessibility in the country, thereby making farmers not to produce food in surplus as a result of fear of being killed in their various farmlands. As such, it reduces the chances of food availability and accessibility in the country (Osumah, 2018). Ibrahim, Ismaila and Umar (2015) further observe that the farmers-herdsmen crises have caused a sharp and substantial increase in prices for crucial northern agricultural crop exports such as cowpeas, maize, millet, rice and sorghum, and to the rest of Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon. The rise in prices is mainly due to a decrease in agricultural output, uncertainties in markets and an increase in transportation. This therefore becomes a widespread and formidable challenge to food accessibility in Nigeria as urgent and sincere steps are needed to be effectively taken by the Nigerian government to end these crises.

#### *Farmers-herders and Stability of Food*

Underweight is one measure of food utilization because it improves more quickly than stunting and wasting, which can take a while to show improvements. Progress in the availability of food is frequently not accompanied by advancements in the use of food. It is noteworthy that while the rate of less than five stunting and underweight has decreased in developing nations, some still report prevalence rates above 30%, which the World Health Organization considers statistically substantial (Pangaribowo & Gerber, 2016). For the food utilization dimension, the adverse impacts of conflicts are usually captured through anthropometric outcomes (Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2019) and for the food stabilization dimension, the adverse effects of conflicts appear to be captured through its impact on variability of food prices and the value of food imports (George, Adelaja & Weatherspoon, 2020). Since most Nigerian farmers are smallholders who primarily farm for subsistence, it is challenging for them to adapt to changes in input prices and it also weakens their ability to adopt new technologies, which lowers overall production. The food supply has been impacted by short-term risk exposure such as changes in weather patterns, droughts, erosion, and fluctuations in the cost of food inputs. For instance, Nigeria has suffered significant losses in output and revenue as a result of its experiences with floods and droughts in the country's northern and southern regions, respectively. Furthermore, crop productivity now farewells the needs of the populace. Thus, the issue of food distribution persists when it comes to addressing food security in Nigeria. Nonetheless, whether a person, household, state, or nation experiences food insecurity or security depends on how frequently the aforementioned variables intersect (Chukwu et al., 2022). Farmers-herders crisis has threatened Nigeria's peace and development. This crisis is widespread and a formidable challenge to food security in Nigeria. Herder-Farmer crises have not only directly impacted on the lives or livelihoods of those involved, but have also disrupted and threatened the sustainability of agricultural and pastoral production and invariably the sustainability of livelihoods of rural communities (Moritz, 2010). Again, the crisis has reinforced circles of extreme poverty and hunger, destroys social status, food security and affects mostly the most marginalized groups which include women and children (Ikezue & Ezeah, 2017). The livelihood structure, food security and wellbeing of farmers are threatened and compromised as it further contributes to poverty, food and nutrition insecurity and poor health of farming in communities, with further escalation of conflicts (Moritz, 2010). The instability caused by the incessant conflict between farmers

and herdsmen, will likely lead to food shortages, utilization and stability for the communities that depend on subsistence farming.

### *Empirical Review*

Akerjiir (2018) assessed increasing farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria: an assessment of the clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and indigenous farmers in ukpabi-nimbo community Enugu State increasing farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria using a qualitative research approach, the study engaged 20 participants from the farmers' community and neighboring community using interview guides, Participant observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs). Data acquired was analyzed by describing the situations. The findings reveal that fingers cannot be pointed to one factor causing the increase in the clash between the farmers and the herdsmen. The various factors responsible for the escalation of the clash are soil-erosion caused by change in climate, destruction of farmlands caused by cattle grazing done by the Fulani herdsmen. More so, cattle rustle and cattle theft done by gangs and groups called "Malaysian Boys" who are also raping and using the situation in the community to terrorize the people. It was also found that the government responses to the conflict is slow, and security forces are deployed to the community after an attack has been carried out by the said Fulani herdsmen even though there was an earlier warning prior to the attack that took place in 2016. The study concludes that the investigation into the increasing farmers-herder's in Ukpabi-Nimbo community is far beyond what the eyes can see, looking at the various factors involve for the escalations and the un-clarity as to who is behind the sequences of events. Adetunji and Ukhurebor, (2020) looked at the effects of Fulani herdsmen and farmer clashes on food security on Nigeria. The research adopts qualitative research approach, the study noted that some of the advantages of livestock pastoralism includes, source of incomes, production of raw material for the industries, mass production of organic fertilizer most especially for the farmers in the developing areas who cannot afford the costly synthetic fertilizers which has been reported to constitute environmental and health challenges. Moreover, the study found that the surveillance of Fulani herdsmen has constituted several challenges on the issue of food production, environmental consequences, and destruction of natural resources, massive displacement of farmers and dilapidation of agricultural soil. The study recommended amongst others that improved and modern ways of livestock management should be employed by the government as an agricultural policy for the entire country to encourage new ways of farming. Mnguashima and Olushola (2020) evaluated Climate induced conflicts and livelihoods of farming households in Nigeria: lessons from farmers' herdsmen conflict ridden communities in Benue State. Data were collected from 110 farming households in Guma and Logo Local Government Areas (LGA) using interview schedule and focus group discussion. The majority experienced high degree of exposure to conflict incidences such as destruction of properties, homelessness and poor access to market. The respondents indicated a high effect of land use conflict on farming households' livelihoods and land availability/use following conflict regime induced by climate change. All respondents perceived the anti-open grazing prohibition law as a right step to reducing conflict occurrence. There was no significant difference in the effects of farmers herdsmen land use conflict on livelihood of farming households in Guma and Logo LGA. Farming households were highly vulnerable to the effects of farmers' herdsmen' conflict and are supportive of the current local authority's prohibition of open grazing. A concerted effort involving religious

institutions, government and non-governmental organizations including persuasion of herders to consider other options of livestock production such as ranching or settlement scheme would add impetus to the on-going efforts to resolve the conflict.

Chukwu et al. (2022) investigated the effects of Fulani and herdsman farmers clashes on agricultural development in Nigeria. The study employed survey design via descriptive method and Taro Yameni formula was used to determine the sample size of 399 respondents of Ukpabi-Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government of Enugu State. Data collected were analyzed using simple table and percentage analysis while the hypotheses formulated were tested using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 23. The study found that there is significant difference between farmers and Fulani perception of the causes of Fulani-herdsmen and farmers clashes in Ukpabi-Nimbo, Enugu State. Also, the study revealed that Fulani-herdsmen menace had significant social effect on farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo, Enugu State and Fulani-herdsmen threat had significant economic effect on farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo, Enugu State. The study therefore recommended that Both Federal and state governments should engage peace and conflict resolution experts in dealing with issues concerning herdsman-farmer clashes. This will enable effective dialogues, negotiations and of course a win-win resolution, while encouraging early warning mechanism. Nnaji et al. (2022) investigated farmers-herders' conflicts and food insecurity in rural Nigeria. The study examined the differential impacts of the incidence and severity of farmers-herders resource use conflicts on food insecurity of rural households in Nigeria. The study employs a two-stage predictor substitution model to estimate survey data collected from 401 rural households in Nigeria. The results of the study showed that both the incidence and the severity of farmers-herders' conflicts significantly increase food insecurity, and the severity of these conflicts has a larger impact than their incidence. The study also revealed that the incidence and severity of farmers-herders' conflicts positively and significantly affect food insecurity, measured by the number of days with limited varieties of food eaten. The study highlighted the importance of policy interventions that would address ongoing farmers-herders' conflicts in affected countries like Nigeria to enhance food security from a sustainable development perspective.

Modupe et al. (2023) examined farmers-herders crisis and food security in Nigeria: A case of Benue State. The focus of this study is to identify and interrogate the triggers of herder's farmer's crisis in Benue state, and how it has impacted on the quality and quantity of food in the state. The sample comprised 1600 farmers who were selected through a multi-stage cluster technique. The analysis for the study was done using simple percentage and mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were used to describe demographic and other salient information in the data. The multiple standard regression analysis was performed to determine the impact of herder's farmer's crisis on food security in Benue state. Results revealed among others that the location of the state within the tropical rain forest which has provided it with arable lands was a motivational factor for herdsman incursion to provide food for their herds. Findings also showed that the incursion of the herders into Benue state came with negative implications such as limited agricultural output that as resulted in food scarcity and shortage. Moreso, the study found out that the brazen attacks on local indigenes on their farmlands had severely discouraged them from going to their farms, while some had found alternative in other unproductive vices. These findings are wakeup call for political leaders to come up with holistic and honest strategies such as

confinement of the herds in one location, instead of open method that is in practice. The study recommended that Kinetic approach should be applied to curb the expansionist tendency of the herders for the sake of peace, and to make the state and the country food secured and sufficient.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Theories help us to arrive at a better understanding of the phenomena that we study theoretically or empirically. Theory is of fundamental importance in research as it ties the current study to the pertinent body literature. This study, adopts an eclectic approach anchored on resource access theory (RAT). The RAT, which originated in 1970s, was propounded by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik. They believe that man is dependent on resources as access and control over it, defines man's basis of power and success. Hence, needing these resources they opined, means that strategies must be considered and adopted in order to maintain open access to resources. Jeffrey and Gerald (1978), however, observed that conflict has ever been a recurring decimal in the history of humanity as it is more often than not a result of competition for scarce resources in human society. Sikor and Lund (2009) make a vital observation that access to natural resources is often contested and rife with conflicts at many levels. As such, the need for people to legitimize their rights and access to natural resources has remained central in competition and contestation for national resources. Access to authority is an important juncture in the web of powers that enables people to benefit from things. In effect, authorities are nodes of direct or indirect forms of access control where multiple access mechanisms or strands are bundled together in one person or institution. People and groups gain and maintain access to other factors of production and exchange through them. Access is often mediated by social identity or membership in a community or group, including groupings by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, status, profession, place of birth, common education, or other attributes that constitute social identity (Sikor & Lund, 2009). According to the theory, resource ownership and utilization have directly and indirectly defined the dimensions of most conflicts involving man since time immemorial. Of all resources, however, the land has remained an overwhelming source of conflicts among various user groups as well as individuals at varying threshold or degrees. This theory helps in giving a better understanding of the prevalent herders and farmers crisis in Nigeria. The inability of the Fulani herdsmen to have unhindered access to grazing areas/reserves is to a significant extent responsible for why they often go into conflict with host communities and farmers in Nigeria. The theory sees access to a resource as the main cause of conflict and violence (Ikezue & Ezeah, 2017). Sikor and Lund (2009) launched an important series of articles on the relation between access and the production of authority. They argue that access and authority are mutually constitutive. Controlling access to a resource by physically enforcing it or adjudicating conflicts over it can produce legitimacy, and, when it does, produces recognition as authority. This recognition, in turn, reinforces their powers to control (allocate, enforce, and adjudicate) access. Sikor and Lund focus primarily on property relations, the enforcement of claims as rights, and on a more or less dyadic relationship or multiple dyadic relations in the case of competing authorities. While recognizing this important contribution by Sikor and Lund, we continue to see access relationships as creating more complex hierarchies of authority, with property rights representing only one means by which to gain access (Ribot & Peluso, 2003).

This theory allows farmers converted their livestock farms to game farming. Game farming allowed these land holders to claim they were protecting nature because “game” is also considered “wildlife” and “biodiversity”. Other narrative moves included claims that transformed their identities from “just” farmers or ranchers to environmental preservationists or sustainable livestock producers. They moved from ranching methane-producing animals to the protectors of Africa’s heritage and into the domain of the “eco”. They changed from allying with free laborers to joining forces with the more powerful environmentalists. Black South Africans have lost work while colonial apartheid relations on the land are being reinstated (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). However, due to restricted access, the herdsmen have resorted to taking laws into their hands by forcing their animals into people’s farmlands thereby destroying farm produce in the process. The herdsmen believe that they should have unhindered access to grazing routes which they see as their God-given right and any attempt to deny them this right will be challenged. On the other hand, farmers seem unwilling to allow the herdsmen access to their farmlands and this has always made them resort to violence to challenge the excesses of the herdsmen (Bello, 2013).

There are many promising applications and extensions of access theory, in large part because understanding access is a critical component of any political economic or political ecological analysis of resource or environmental use, crisis, or conflict. Resource access theory aims at description and explanation of the origins of environmental and resource problems and conflicts, in part to identify prescriptions that may increase justice and security. Resource access theory’s initial premise is that every case has its own historical and place-based dynamics related to social difference. The framework’s intent is to guide analysis and identify potential points of intervention to resolve conflict or ameliorate political and ecological conditions (Ribot, 2014).

To find the origins of an environmental problem, as Agyeman (1990) presciently stated, we need to understand access: who is able to benefit from things, under what conditions, mobilizing what relations of power, and through what set of mechanisms. With that we can outline cause, identify response, indicate responsibility and promote positive change. Access theory and analysis have continually proven to be a versatile way to understand some of the most elusive obstacles to effective natural resources governance such as elite control over resources, exploitative market relations, and policies that eschew rights (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). In relation to this study, farmers-herdsmen crisis in the use of agricultural land is becoming fiercer and increasingly widespread in Nigeria, largely due to ‘intensification and extensification’ of production activities that are necessitated by increasing human population. Therefore, the farmers need the land for cultivation while the herdsmen need the land for grazing and rearing of cattle. The ultimate cause of the conflicts between farmers and herders lies in the general degradation of resources and the increased competition for access and resources capture. This theory is found useful in explaining herdsmen-farmers crisis in Nigeria.

### **Method of Study**

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. The total projected population for this study was 16 communities in Uwheru kingdom of Delta state including Orhoro, Urede, Erovie, Agadama, Owarovwo, Egbo, Oreba, Avwon, Ogode, Iwhodja, Iwhoube, Oguname, Ode, Iwhegbo, Owarie and Iwherhe. As of 2023, the total number of registered voters in Uwheru kingdom of Delta state was 20,000 (INEC, 2023). The

determination of the sample size of 400 was attained using the sample size determination of Yamane’s formula. In this study, purposeful sampling was used. Purposive sampling, according to Obasi (2000), is a technique where the researcher specifically chooses participants for the study based on their capacity to provide relevant data to satisfy the interrogation's requirements. Therefore, in order to choose respondents from the Uwheru kingdom in Delta State, the purposive sampling method was used. In order to accomplish the goals of this study, respondents with particular characteristics were involved in this study. This study applied quantitative method of data collection. This guarantee the study an opportunity to achieve a balanced data generation that was more encompassing and detailed. Data was sourced through primary means; primary data was obtained from the respondents through the administration of questionnaire. Thus, questionnaire was given to respondents to fill, retrieved and collated and sourced for useful information about the effects of farmers-herders crisis on food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State. Data collected from the questionnaire was collated, coded and imputed into the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS version 23.0, 2020) for data analysis. Pearson’s coefficient of correlation and linear regression was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. These are found suitable for the nature of this study.

**Results**

The bivariate analysis involves the test for the bivariate relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The decision rule which applies for all bivariate test outcomes is stated as follows: where  $P < 0.05$ , reject hypothesis on the basis or evidence of no insignificant relationship and where  $P > 0.05$ , accept hypothesis on the basis of significant relationship between the variables.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

**Table 1: Correlation of Farmers-Herders Crisis and Food Availability**

	Variables		Farmers-Herders Crisis	Food Availability
Spearman's rho	Farmers-Herders Crisis	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 317	-.784* .000 317
	Food Availability	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.784* .000 317	1 317

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 1 showed the relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State using Spearman’s Rank-order correlation coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that farmers-herders crisis has a very strong negative and significant relationship with food availability at ( $\rho = - 0.784$ , and  $P = 0.000 < 0.05\%$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. That is there is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.



Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

**Table 2: Correlation of Farmers-Herders Crisis and Food Access**

	Variables		Farmers-Herders Crisis	Food Access
Spearman's rho	Farmers-Herders Crisis	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 317	-.779* .000 317
	Food Access	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.779* .000 317	1 317

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 2 showed the relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State using Spearman’s Rank-order correlation coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result revealed that farmers-herders crisis has a very strong negative and significant relationship with food availability at (rho = - 0.779, and P = 0.000 <0.05%). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. That is, there is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

**Table 3: Correlation of Farmers-Herders Crisis and Food Utilization and Stability**

	Variables		Farmers-Herders Crisis	Food Utilization and Stability
Spearman's rho	Farmers-Herders Crisis	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 317	-.761* .000 317
	Food Utilization and Stability	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.761* .000 317	1 317

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 3 showed the relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State using Spearman’s Rank-order correlation coefficients techniques. From the analysis the result showed that farmers-herders crisis has a strong negative and significant relationship with food utilization and stability at (rho = - 0.761, and P = 0.000 <0.05%). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. That is there is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

Influence of farmers-herders crisis on food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State

Since correlation does not imply causation, a multiple regressions analysis was done to verify the influence of farmers-herders crisis on food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The multiple regression analysis which was conducted at 5% level of significance was used to further test hypotheses formulated for this study. Summary result of test is presented in Tables 4.6.

**Table 4: Summary of Hypothesized Direct Effects**

Direct effects	Coefficients	S.E	T-stat	P	Conclusion
Farmers-herders crisis --> Food availability	-.602	.135	-8.614	.000	Supported
Farmers-herders crisis --> Food access	-.531	.140	-5.590	.105	Supported
Farmers-herders crisis --> Food utilization and stability	-.554	.119	-7.439	.012	Supported

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 4 analyzed the coefficients and p-values of each regression line between components. The three anticipated direct effects of farmers-herders crisis on food availability, food access and food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State was significant. The influenced of farmers-herders crisis on food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State was negatively and statistically significant. Also, the impact of farmers-herders crisis on food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State was negatively and statistically significant and the effect of farmers-herders crisis on food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State was negatively and statistically significant.

**Discussion of Findings**

There were three hypotheses formulated for the study and the result of hypothesis one shows that is there is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. That is, the higher farmers-herders crisis, the lower food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. Similarly, the t-statistics of -8.614 at p-value (sig) of 0.000 obtained in the table 4 for food availability which is less than 5% level of significant also indicated that there is negative significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The coefficient of -0.602 indicated that one percent increase in farmers-herders crisis will lead to 6.02(%) percent decrease in food availability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The result of hypothesis one was supported by the findings of Nnaji et al. (2022) and Modupe et al. (2020) which revealed that the incidence and severity of farmers-herders’ conflicts positively and significantly affect food insecurity. To them improving policy interventions that address ongoing farmers-herders’ conflicts in affected countries like Nigeria will enhance food security. With this thriving crisis and violence of Farmers and Herders in Africa without proper steps by the African Government to tackle it to a standstill, food unavailability will continue to be a major challenge in West Africa (Moritz, 2010). Usman (2019) collaborating with this finding opined that farmers-herders’ crises in the country which has led to the wanton destruction of human lives and properties including livestock and farmland assets has been the major cause of the low agricultural production in the country and the displacement of farmers was due to the high level of insecurity of the farmlands due to the activities of the warring parties to the conflicts which made those places unsafe for habitation.

In support of this finding, Udosen (2021) posits that the Fulani herders and farmers issues result in low food production in the country, according to the research questions. This conclusion was founded on the belief that conflicts in various sections of the country killed and maimed both herders and farmers. As a result, many people have been displaced; most of them are farmers who no longer have access to agricultural settlements to cultivate their land. Farmers and herders have always had issues in Nigeria, but it increased as the population grew, leading to more cultivation of grassland and livestock paths. As a result of the paucity of pasture area in the north, the herders migrate south. Conflicts impair food security, putting participants and the country at risk (Moritz, 2010). With respect to hypothesis two, the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State. That is, the higher farmers-herders crisis, the lower food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State. Moreover, the t-statistics of -5.590 at p-value (sig) of 0.105 obtained in the table 4 for food access which is less than 5% level of significant further revealed that there is negative significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The coefficient of -0.531 indicated that one percent increase in farmers-herders crisis will lead to 5.31(%) percent decrease in food access in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

Oghuvbu (2021) collaborating with this finding opined that putting an end to farmers-herders crisis is vital for agricultural productivity and improve food security and by extension the realization of food access in Nigeria. Ikenyei (2020) demonstrated that in Nigeria, the destruction of crops and other properties situated in the farm are the major reason why farmers barricade herders and their cattle. The burning of rangelands and blockage of stock routes and water points to avoid encroachment on farm lands and destruction of crops herald attacks against farmers by herders who force their way to graze their animals. Generally, insecurity and stagnation deepened as reprisal attacks threatened lives and social order including food insecurity. The study by Oghuvbu (2021) revealed that destruction of crops, stealing of farm produce and killing of herders are among the most predominant causes of farmers-herders crisis in Agadama which led to reduction in farm output, displacement of farmers/herders and reduction in farmers' income.

The above assertion was corroborated by Ogbette et al. (2018) who submitted that the major aim of food security is to ensure individual access to adequate food always needed and utilization of such food to meet body growth and development. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations identified four components of food security to be: availability, access, utilization and stability and these components must be simultaneously satisfied to meet it objectives. The major problem confronting food security in Nigeria is the Farmers-herders conflict. For example, there is shortage of food supply that has resulted in non-availability, hence increases prices of available one by the reason of such crises (Ogbette, *et al*, 2018). The conflict seems to have become a source of discouragement to local farmers in embarking on farming activities because most of them are pessimistic of low turnout, or zero return on their labour and investment.

Thus, Modupe et al. (2023) argue that the most prevailing issue in human developmental process in Nigeria is inadequate food supply that has resulted to malnutrition, hence reducing the quality of life of the people. Food security addresses the risks of people not having access to needed food. Household food security exists when every person within

the family has unhindered access to food items in terms of quality or quantity, for an appropriate and beneficial meals and sustainable lifestyle for a good standard of living. Food security is a condition when there is access of all people at all times to a nutritious staple food for a healthy living. However, Kah (2017) study revealed that farmers-herders crisis affects food access in host communities. With respect to hypothesis three, the study showed that there is no significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. That is, the higher farmers-herders crisis, the lower food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. More so, the t-statistics of -7.439 at p-value (sig) of 0.012 obtained in the table 4 for food utilization and stability which is less than 5% level of significant further revealed that there is negative significant relationship between farmers-herders crisis and food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The coefficient of -0.554 indicated that one percent increase in farmers-herders crisis will lead to 5.54(%) percent decrease in food utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

This result is consistent with earlier studies by Moritz (2010); Martin-Shields et al. (2019) and George et al. (2020) who found that farmers-herders crisis negatively affects the utilization and stability in the host communities. Chukwu et al (2022) argue that the crisis over land, and desire to occupy the land by the herders has destabilized most of the local farmers, which has affected food security negatively in terms of quantity and quality. This study is in line with Ahynet al (2018) who concluded that farmers-herders crisis has far-reaching implications on Nigerian national integration. The study also found that each region affected by the crisis suffers food crises in terms of availability, access and utilization and stability of food. This study was significant since it confirmed that disputes between the two groups impacted food production, availability, distribution, and utilization and stability.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study examined the effects of farmers-herders crisis on food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The study found that farmers-herders crisis negatively influenced food availability, access and utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State. The causes of farmers-herders clash in recent times were identified to be a function of several factors not only limited to climate change resulting in drought and desertification soil degradation; growing population size, global terrorism, crime (rural banditry and cattle rustling) amongst others. Previous and present government responses to this crisis have been most disappointing with no clear cut and sustainable policy both by the federal and state government. In conclusion, farmers-herders crisis has resulted in displacement of people from their communities, women and girls' vulnerability to sexual and economic predation, huge economic burden on the government leading to loss of revenues, dwindling food supply and rising cost, increasing division among the Federating states and threat to National Security amongst others. In the past, there was little confrontation between herders and farmers because land was abundant and colonial authorities could designate free land as grazing reserves and grazing routes. Contacts between herders and farmers were too brief and uncompetitive. This sustained the fabled hospitality between them. Today, farmers and herders have always had issues in Nigeria, but it increased as the population grew, leading to more cultivation of grassland and livestock paths. As a result of the paucity of pasture area in the north, the herdsmen migrate

south. Conflicts impair food security, putting participants and the country at risk. Conflicts disrupt and imperil Nigeria's ethnic harmony and agricultural output.

The Nigerian government's approach to the conflict tends to swing between military deployment and mediation by people with a good reputation. Using military soldiers to quiet individual outbreaks of violence has become a major political and security concern. Extrajudicial executions and other human rights abuses cannot be underlined. Despite the Nigerian government efforts, farmers-herders conflicts persist in the country. Between 2002 and 2010, the federal government organized four committees to investigate violent conflict (primarily between herders and farmers) in Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States. Commissions of Inquiry into community conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba States headed by Justice Okpene in 2002 and 2004 respectively there has not been much political will to implement the multiple commissions' findings.

Observation of the various events surrounding the conflicts between farmers and herdsmen has revealed that criminal elements have come to hide under the label of 'bandits' to perpetrate all sorts of heinous activities like attacking farmers, rustling cattle, and kidnapping for ransom. Based on the findings, this study concluded that farmers-herders crisis has cause wanton devastation of human lives and property, including livestock, farmland assets and food insecurity in Uwheru communities in Delta State. In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

Urgent upgrade response procedures to farmers-herders crisis, especially in the most vulnerable communities like Uwheru communities in Delta State. But this should be done within a larger framework that emphasizes proactive rather than reactive response to crisis. This will go a long way to enhance food availability, access and utilization and stability in Uwheru communities in Delta State.

In order to avoid or reduce farmers-herders crisis in Nigeria, it is proper for all states in the federation to come together and have a common policy on land use to reduce the likelihood of food insecurity in vulnerable communities in Nigeria, especially Uwheru communities in Delta State. The herders should embrace modern day style of animal husbandry in Uwheru communities in Delta State and also work with government research institutions to produce cattle species that can withstand current situations which will help reduce land, water conflict and food insecurity. This can be achieved by vigorously promoting the advantages of ranching over open grazing.

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## E-GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE IN LAGOS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

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*Abstract: Lagos State has significantly transformed public sector performance by leveraging technology to improve service delivery, enhance transparency, and foster citizen engagement. Despite the adoption of technology like e-governance in the state, there is a growing concern about the effectiveness of e-governance in improving public sector performance. This study examines the impact of e-governance on public sector performance in LAMATA, Lagos State, Nigeria. The study is anchored on the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework, as the study employed the interpretivism philosophy and a qualitative approach in data collection and analysis. An exploratory research design was considered appropriate because of its flexibility to consider many different aspects of the phenomenon. Similarly, newspaper reports and opinions were content analysed as the study adhered to the qualitative model of social research, which included textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, and other publications. The results show that e-governance has improved public sector performance in Lagos State, particularly in terms of transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. However, the study also identifies some challenges facing e-governance in Lagos State, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of skilled personnel, and limited access to technology. The study concludes that e-governance has the potential to improve public sector performance in Lagos State but requires careful planning, implementation, and evaluation to overcome the challenges.*

*Keywords: E-governance, LAMATA, Public Sector Performance, Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE)*

### Introduction

E-governance has become an essential tool for improving public sector performance in many countries. It refers to the use of digital technologies to enhance the delivery of government services, improve communication between government and citizens, and promote transparency and accountability in public administration (Olatunji & Adebayo, 2020). In Nigeria, the adoption of e-governance has significant implications for public sector performance. E-governance is increasingly being recognized as a key factor in improving public sector performance (UNDESA, 2014). Lagos State, being the economic hub of Nigeria, has also adopted e-governance as a means of enhancing its public sector



performance. The state has been at the forefront of e-governance initiatives in Nigeria, with the aim of improving public sector performance (Lagos State Government, 2019).

It is noteworthy to say that e-governance in Lagos State has significantly transformed public sector performance by leveraging technology to improve service delivery, enhance transparency, and foster citizen engagement. Lagos State has implemented various online platforms for services such as tax payments, business registrations, and permits. This reduces the need for physical visits and minimizes bureaucratic delays (Ayo & Adebayo, 2018). It is a gain that the state government has embraced open data principles, making information about budgets, expenditures, and public services accessible to citizens, which fosters accountability. Further, e-governance allows for real-time feedback from citizens through social media and dedicated platforms, facilitating a more responsive government through the e-government portals and digital platforms (Onuoha, 2020). These portals provide information on government activities, enabling citizens to track the performance of public services and projects. For instance, the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority's (LASTMA) mobile app helps citizens report traffic issues and improve urban mobility. The mobile app and platform would enable feedback mechanisms and public participation across residents to voice their opinions on policies and initiatives of the government.

Despite the adoption of e-governance in Lagos State, there is a growing concern about the effectiveness of e-governance in improving public sector performance (Eze & Chinedu, 2020). The state government has invested heavily in e-governance initiatives such as the Lagos State Integrated Revenue System (LAIRS). An online platform for paying taxes and other revenues to the state government like vehicle registration, land transactions, and utility bills (Okunola, 2019). It is evident that the e-health platform promotes healthcare service delivery, including online consultations and appointment scheduling; however, there is limited empirical evidence on the impact of these initiatives on public sector performance. Specifically, there are concerns about the lack of transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the delivery of public services, which are critical to the well-being of citizens.

In recent years, the Lagos State government has invested heavily in implementing e-governance initiatives aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the public sector leading to efficient service delivery (LSG, 2019). The Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), responsible for regulating and managing transportation in Lagos State, has also adopted various e-governance platforms to improve its operations. However, despite these efforts, there are growing concerns about the impact of e-governance on the performance of LAMATA and the public sector in Lagos State. Even with the adoption of e-governance platforms, LAMATA still faces challenges in providing efficient and effective services to the public, leading to delays, inefficiencies, and dissatisfaction among citizens (Adeleke & Ogunleye, 2020).

The lack of transparency and accountability in LAMATA's operations has led to allegations of corruption and mismanagement, undermining public trust and confidence in the agency (Ojo & Omoare, 2021). One could argue that LAMATA's limited infrastructure and resources, such as inadequate internet connectivity and outdated technology, impede the effective implementation of e-governance initiatives. It is evident that LAMATA staff may lack the necessary skills and training to effectively utilize e-governance platforms, leading to inefficiencies and errors in service delivery (Ibrahim & Olasunkanmi, 2021). The lack

of effective citizen engagement and participation in LAMATA's decision-making processes has led to a disconnect between the agency's services and the needs of the citizens. These problems raise important questions about the impact of e-governance on public sector performance in Lagos State, specifically in the context of LAMATA.

In spite of the importance of e-governance in improving public sector performance, there is a minor empirical study on the impact of e-governance on public sector performance in Lagos State agencies. Previous studies have focused on the benefits of e-governance in general, but there is a need for a study that specifically examines the impact of e-governance on public sector performance in Lagos State agencies. The existing literature suggests that e-governance has the potential to improve public sector performance by increasing transparency, reducing corruption, and enhancing citizen participation. However, the literature failed to address the challenges of implementing e-governance in the state public enterprise, especially in the areas of inadequate infrastructure, dearth of skilled personnel, and limited access to technology. This is the gap in knowledge that the study intends to address. Based on this, the study investigates the impact of e-governance on public sector performance in Lagos State, with a view to identifying the benefits and challenges of e-governance and providing recommendations for improving e-governance to enhance public sector performance.

Objectives of the study

To assess the impact of e-governance on public sector performance in Lagos State.

To determine the challenges of implementing e-governance in Lagos State.

To provide recommendations for improving e-governance to enhance public sector performance in Lagos State.

## **Literature Review**

### *E-Governance and Public Sector Performance: A Conceptual Review*

E-governance, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve public sector performance, has become a global trend (Udo & Bassey, 2020). It offers numerous benefits, including increased efficiency, transparency, and accountability. However, its effectiveness depends on various factors, such as the level of technological infrastructure, human capital, and institutional readiness. Meanwhile, the use of ICT help government in streamlining processes and reducing administrative burdens hereby reducing costs associated with traditional government operations. According to Ojo and Omoare (2021), e-governance enhancing public access to information and decision-making, especially for marginalized groups. It is evident that it improved governance by making public officials more accountable to deliver government services to citizens.

Adebayo (2021) alluded to the fact that e-governance improve public sector performance, and has emerged as a critical tool for modern governments. Its impact on public sector performance can be seen across various dimensions:

**Efficiency and Effectiveness:** E-governance can streamline processes, reduce bureaucratic red tape, and enhance decision-making, leading to more efficient and effective public services.

**Transparency and Accountability:** The digital nature of e-governance can increase transparency by making information accessible to citizens. It can also enhance accountability by providing a digital audit trail.

Citizen Participation: E-governance can facilitate citizen participation in governance processes through online platforms and e-consultation.

**Economic Development:** E-governance can promote economic development by attracting investment and improving the business environment.

#### *E-Governance on Public Sector Performance in Lagos State*

E-governance has been increasingly adopted as a means to improve public sector performance, enhance transparency, and increase citizen participation (Okunola, 2019). In Nigeria, Lagos State has been at the forefront of e-governance initiatives, with the aim of improving public sector performance and service delivery. It is gainsaying that the state has made significant strides in the of implementation e-governance in Nigeria. Lagos state has implemented some notable initiatives, including:

Online citizen services: Providing online platforms for citizens to access government services, such as passport applications, tax payments, and business registrations. Consequently, Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) has implemented online tax filing and payment systems, reducing the burden on taxpayers and increasing revenue collection. This has attracted investment and improved the business environment, contributing to economic growth in the state. For instance, **Lagos State Residents' Registration Agency (LASRRA) is a government** agency that has digitized the process of registering residents, improving efficiency and accuracy. The availability of online information has increased transparency and accountability in government operations.

E-health: Implementing electronic health records and telemedicine services. Further, **Lagos State Ministry of Health (LSMoH)** has launched electronic health records and telemedicine services, improving access to healthcare. This initiative has streamlined processes, reduced waiting times, and improved service delivery.

Smart city initiatives: Using technology to improve urban planning, transportation, and infrastructure.

Oluwafemi (2020) identified the key effects of e-governance on public sector performance in Lagos state below;

Improved Service Delivery: E-governance platforms enable citizens to access government services online, reducing the need for physical visits to government offices. This is particularly beneficial in a country where bureaucratic inefficiencies can hinder service delivery. Further, it promotes speed and efficiency through automated processes streamline service delivery, minimizing delays in processing applications, permits, and other requests. This leads to faster response times and improved citizen satisfaction.

Enhanced Transparency and Accountability: E-governance promotes the publication of government data online, making information accessible to the public. This transparency helps reduce corruption and promotes accountability among public officials. It helps in monitoring and evaluation by adopting the digital tools for better tracking of government projects and expenditures, enabling citizens and oversight bodies to hold officials accountable for their actions.

Increased Citizen Participation: E-governance facilitates citizen engagement through online feedback mechanisms, surveys, and social media. Citizens can voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes, leading to more responsive governance. It encourages e-petitions and forums via online platforms by allowing the citizens to petition

the government and participate in discussions, fostering a sense of community involvement and ownership in governance.

**Cost Reduction:** E-governance reduces operational costs by minimizing paperwork and streamlining administrative processes. This can lead to significant savings for government agencies. It enables resource allocation through the digital systems. The system enable better allocation of resources by providing data-driven insights into service demands and usage patterns.

**Capacity Building:** The implementation of e-governance requires training for public servants in digital skills and technology management, enhancing the overall capacity of the public sector workforce. Knowledge sharing are fosters through the collaboration among government agencies, improving coordination and service delivery.

### *Theoretical Review*

The study is situated around Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework, which posits that the adoption and implementation of e-governance initiatives are influenced by technological, organisational, and environmental factors. This theory was first introduced by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), and it has since been applied to various contexts, including e-governance, which is a widely used theoretical framework in the field of information systems and technology adoption.

Meanwhile, the TOE framework consists of three dimensions, which are the Technology (T) dimension. Onuoha (2020) asserts that the characteristics of the technology itself, including its complexity, compatibility, and perceived benefits whereas the Organisation (O) dimension refers to the organisational factors that influence the adoption and implementation of technology, including organisational size, structure, and culture (Udo & Bassey, 2020), while the Environment (E) dimension is the external factors that affect the adoption and implementation of technology, including government policies, market conditions, and competition.

In the context of e-governance, the TOE framework can be used to examine the factors that influence the adoption and implementation of e-governance initiatives (Adebayo, 2017). The TOE framework can be applied to e-governance complexity, compatibility, and perceived benefits. The complexity of e-governance technologies, such as online portals and digital payment systems, can affect their adoption and implementation (Siau & Long, 2005; Ogunleye, 2020). The compatibility of e-governance technologies with existing systems and infrastructure can influence their adoption and implementation; the perceived benefits of e-governance technologies, such as increased transparency and efficiency, can influence their adoption and implementation (Ojo & Omoare, 2021).

As for the organisational size, the government organisation can influence its ability to adopt and implement e-governance initiatives (Adeleke & Ogunleye, 2020). It is noteworthy that the structure of the government organisation, including its hierarchy and decision-making processes, can influence the adoption and implementation of e-governance initiatives. By applying the TOE framework to e-governance, researchers and policymakers can better understand the factors that influence the adoption and implementation of e-governance initiatives and develop strategies to overcome the challenges and barriers to e-governance adoption (Ibrahim & Olasunkanmi, 2021). The TOE framework can help Lagos State agencies understand the factors that influence the adoption and implementation of e-

governance initiatives, enabling them to develop more effective strategies for e-governance adoption.

Further, organisational factors that influence e-governance adoption allow Lagos State agencies to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to enhance their organisational readiness for e-governance implementation (Okunola, 2019). The TOE framework can help Lagos State agencies select technologies that are compatible with their organisational needs and capabilities, reducing the risk of technology failure or underutilization. It is evident that by automating manual processes and improving the efficiency of government operations, Lagos State agencies can reduce costs, improve productivity, and enhance the overall quality of service delivery (Adeleke & Ogunleye, 2020). Lagos State agencies can help develop e-governance initiatives that are more responsive to citizen needs, enhancing citizen engagement and participation in government decision-making processes.

Meanwhile, Lagos State agencies may not have a thorough understanding of e-governance concepts and principles, making it difficult for them to apply the TOE framework effectively. This state agency may not have the necessary technology infrastructure to support e-governance initiatives, making it difficult for them to implement the TOE framework (Heeks, 2006; Ayo & Adebayo, 2018). Further, they may resist changes to their organisational structures and processes, making it difficult for them to adopt and implement e-governance initiatives. There may not have sufficient funding to support e-governance initiatives, making it difficult for them to implement the TOE framework (Eze & Chinedu, 2020). Lagos State agencies may not have personnel with the necessary skills and expertise to design, implement, and manage e-governance initiatives (Ogunleye, 2020). The state agencies may face interoperability issues between different agencies and technology systems, making it difficult for them to implement the TOE framework, and they may not have a clear understanding of citizen readiness for e-governance initiatives, making it difficult for them to design and implement effective e-governance services.

Also, the state agencies may face challenges in managing and integrating data from different sources, making it difficult for them to implement the TOE framework (Ojo & Omoare, 2021). For instance, the Lagos State Ministry of Agriculture faced challenges in applying the TOE framework due to limited understanding of e-governance concepts and principles, as well as inadequate technology infrastructure; likewise, the Lagos State Ministry of Environment faced challenges in applying the TOE framework due to organisational resistance to change and limited skilled personnel (Olatunji & Adebayo, 2020). More so, the Lagos State Ministry of Transportation faced challenges in applying the TOE framework due to citizen readiness and interoperability issues, and the Lagos State Ministry of Health faced challenges in applying the TOE framework due to data management challenges and evaluating and monitoring mechanisms.

Ojo and Omoare (2021) identified the following challenges to e-governance implementation in Lagos State, and they are highlighted below:

Technological Challenges:

Infrastructure: Lack of modern and reliable IT infrastructure, including hardware, software, and network connectivity, can hinder the implementation of e-governance in Lagos State agencies.

Digital Literacy: Limited digital literacy among citizens and government officials can make it difficult to adopt and utilize e-government systems effectively.

**Cybersecurity:** The risk of cyberattacks and data breaches can compromise the security and integrity of e-governance systems, making it essential to invest in robust cybersecurity measures.

**Organisational Challenges:**

**Resistance to Change:** Inertia and resistance to change can hinder the adoption of e-governance systems, particularly among government officials who may be accustomed to traditional methods of governance.

**Lack of Standardization:** Inconsistent processes and systems across different government agencies can make it difficult to integrate e-governance systems and ensure seamless interaction between agencies.

**Insufficient Training:** Inadequate training and capacity building can limit the ability of government officials to effectively use e-governance systems.

**Financial Challenges:**

**Limited Budget:** Insufficient funding can hinder the implementation of e-governance systems, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development and cybersecurity.

**High Maintenance Costs:** The cost of maintaining and upgrading e-governance systems can be prohibitively high, particularly for smaller agencies with limited budgets.

**Cultural Challenges:**

**Trust and Transparency:** Building trust among citizens and government officials is essential for the successful implementation of e-governance systems, but this can be challenging in environments where there is a lack of transparency and accountability.

**Citizen Engagement:** Encouraging citizen participation and engagement in e-governance systems can be difficult, particularly among marginalized or underserved populations.

**Interoperability:** Ensuring that different e-governance systems can seamlessly interact and share data can be a significant challenge, particularly across different agencies and levels of government.

**Data Management:** Managing and integrating large amounts of data from various sources can be a challenge, particularly in areas such as data analytics and visualization.

**Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** The lack of clear legal and regulatory frameworks can hinder the implementation of e-governance systems, particularly in areas such as data privacy and security.

By understanding these challenges, Lagos State can better prepare themselves to overcome the obstacles and successfully implement e-governance systems that improve the delivery of public services and enhance citizen engagement.

## **Methodology**

The study explored e-governance and public sector performance in Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) Lagos State, Nigeria. The study employed the interpretivism philosophy and a qualitative approach in data collection and analysis. An exploratory research design was considered appropriate because of its flexibility to consider many different aspects of the phenomenon. Similarly, newspaper reports and opinions were content analyzed as the study adhered to the qualitative model of social research, which included textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, and other publications. Multiple secondary sources were used to reduce the risk of error and improve the study's reliability and validity.

### **E-Governance in Lamata (Lagos metropolitan area transport authority)**

LAMATA is a transport authority responsible for regulating and managing transportation in Lagos State, Nigeria. With a growing population and increasing demand for transportation, LAMATA recognized the need to improve its services and operations through the use of technology (LSG, 2021). In 2015, LAMATA launched an e-governance initiative aimed at digitising its operations and services. The initiative included the development of an online portal for citizens to access information and services, as well as an internal system for staff to manage and track transportation-related data (LSG, 2019).

Ojo and Omoare (2021) identified the following key components of the e-governance initiative embraced by LAMATA, which include

**Online Portal:** A citizen-facing portal was developed to provide information on transportation services, including routes, schedules, and fares. Citizens could also submit feedback and complaints through the portal.

**Internal System:** A web-based internal system was developed for staff to manage and track transportation-related data, including vehicle registration, licensing, and permits.

**Data Analytics:** A data analytics platform was developed to analyse transportation data and provide insights to improve services and operations.

**Mobile App:** A mobile app was developed to provide citizens with real-time information on transportation services and to enable them to report incidents and provide feedback.

Ogunleye (2020) asserts that the e-governance initiative in LAMATA has resulted in several benefits, including:

**Improved Transparency:** The online portal and internal system have improved transparency in transportation services and operations.

**Increased Efficiency:** Automation of manual processes has increased efficiency and productivity in transportation operations.

**Enhanced Citizen Engagement:** The online portal and mobile app have enhanced citizen engagement and participation in transportation planning.

**Better Decision-Making:** Data analytics has enabled LAMATA to make data-driven decisions to improve services and operations.

**Cost Savings:** The e-governance initiative has reduced paperwork and manual processes, resulting in cost savings.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to highlight the lessons learnt from the e-governance initiative in LAMATA, including:

**Importance of Change Management:** Some staff members resisted the change to digital systems and processes. It is evident to say that effective change management is critical to ensure a smooth transition to digital systems and processes.

**Need for robust IT infrastructure:** Limited IT infrastructure in some areas of Lagos State hindered the implementation of the e-governance initiative. Also, technical issues, such as system downtime and data loss, were experienced during the implementation phase. It is instructive to note that a robust IT infrastructure is essential to support e-governance initiatives.

**Cybersecurity:** Cybersecurity concerns were raised during the implementation phase, and measures had to be taken to ensure the security of the system and data. Hence, cybersecurity measures must be taken seriously to protect the system and data from cyber threats.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Stakeholder engagement is critical to ensure that the needs of citizens and staff are met.

Consequently, the e-governance initiative in LAMATA has improved transparency, efficiency, and citizen engagement in transportation services in Lagos State. However, the implementation phase was not without its challenges, and lessons learnt from the experience can inform future e-governance initiatives in other organisations.

### **Recommendations for Improving E-Governance by the Lagos State Government**

**Invest in infrastructure and technical capacity:** The Lagos State government should invest in developing the necessary infrastructure and technical expertise to support e-governance initiatives. This will help improve internet connectivity and technological infrastructure, particularly in underserved areas, to ensure equitable access to e-governance services.

**Promote digital literacy programs:** Implement training programs to enhance digital skills among citizens, ensuring that more people can effectively use e-governance platforms. This could be done by encouraging public officials to embrace digital transformation through training and awareness campaigns that highlight the benefits of e-governance.

**Address organisational and cultural barriers:** Lagos State government should address organisational and cultural barriers to e-governance adoption, including resistance to change and lack of institutional capacity.

**Prioritize citizen engagement and participation:** The Lagos State government should prioritize citizen engagement and participation in e-governance initiatives to ensure that citizen needs are met.

**Strengthen cybersecurity measures:** develop robust cybersecurity policies and practices to protect government data and build public trust in digital services.

**Establish Clear Policies and Regulations:** Create comprehensive policies and regulatory frameworks to guide the implementation of e-governance, ensuring consistency and accountability in service delivery.

**Conduct Further Research:** Further research is needed to fully understand the best practices for e-governance implementation on public sector performance in Lagos State.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, e-governance has the potential to significantly improve public sector performance in Lagos State. By addressing the challenges and maximizing the opportunities, the state can create a more efficient, transparent, and responsive government. E-governance has significantly enhanced by improving service delivery, promoting transparency, increasing citizen participation, and reducing costs. However, addressing the challenges of infrastructure, digital literacy, resistance to change, security, and regulatory frameworks, technical constraints, organisational and cultural barriers, and privacy concerns is critical for realizing the full benefits of e-governance. With strategic investments and a commitment to digital transformation, LAMATA can harness the power of e-governance to foster more effective and accountable public administration. It is a gain that e-governance initiatives have shown promise in Lagos State, but more research is needed to fully understand the impact on public sector performance.



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