ABOUT THE BOOK:

The book is a collection of more than thirty chapters focused on the conference themed: **Childhood Identities and Wellbeing in Nigeria: Being, Belonging and Becoming**. It is a proceeding of a national conference. Scholars from the north and south of Nigeria contributed incisive scholarly articles that speaks to the realities of Nigerian children and its interface with motherhood and fatherhood. The sub-themes revolve around culture, literature, crisis, health care, labor, crime, trafficking and education.

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CHILDHOOD IDENTITIES AND WELLBEING IN NIGERIA: BEING, BELONGING AND BECOMING
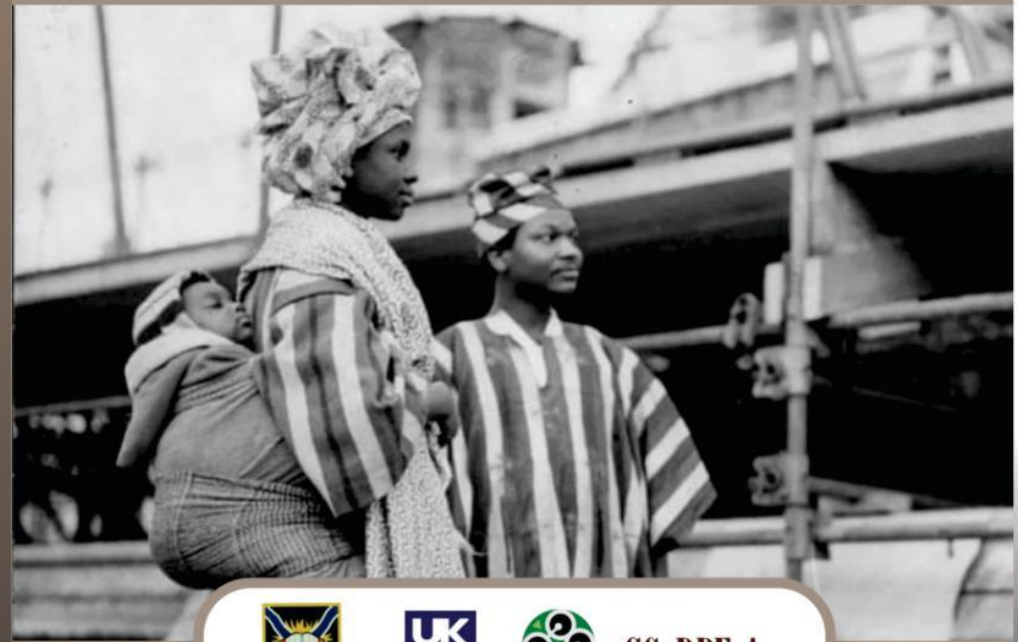
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CHILDHOOD IDENTITIES AND WELLBEING IN NIGERIA: BEING, BELONGING AND BECOMING

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PREFACE

This book of proceedings is a collection of chapters on the conference theme: *Childhood Identities and Wellbeing in Nigeria: Being, Belonging and Becoming*. Scholars across Nigeria converge at the University of Ibadan to present papers. The national conference is an initiative of SCaRPE-A Nigeria team to convey scholars to discuss research centred around children wellbeing. The book is edited by Mutiat T. Oladejo, Sharon A. Omotoso, and Mofeyisara O. Omobowale. The multidisciplinary pool of researchers focused on thematic issues as follows:

- Childhood Identities, Social Status and Culture
- Child Health and Wellbeing
- Child Labour and Livelihood
- Issues in Education
- Crisis, Wars, Child Soldiers and Childhood Identities
- Child Trafficking
- Juvenile Matters
- Children, Literature and Media

Lead papers are presented by two scholars. Prof. Rasheed Olaniyi of the Department of History, University of Ibadan explains the historicity in "Reckoning with Cycles of Abuse: Historical Perspectives on the Labour Exploitation of Children in Nigeria". He ponders on questions of: How do we use historical lessons and perspectives to understand contemporary prevalence of child labour in Nigeria? How can we eliminate child labour in the contexts of economic crises and social menace? In Nigeria, child labourers work under precarious conditions including farm plantations, quarrying granite, artisanal mining, construction sites, commercial sexual exploitation, armed conflict, hawking, criminality and as victims of human trafficking. Child labour occurs within the contexts of culture, social instability, economic crises and weak institutional framework.

Prof Olukemi K. Amodu of the Institute of Child and Adolescent Health, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, presented the holistic interventions in child and adolescent health and the interconnectedness with policy and society.

The conveners of the conference- Dr. Mutiat Titilope Oladejo and Dr. Sharon Adetutu Omotoso (SCaRPE-A Nigeria investigators), are grateful for the support of United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI), ARUA/COE in Notions on Identities in Makerere University, Uganda. We are deeply honoured to have the institutional support of University of Ibadan to host the conference.

SECTION A: CHILDHOOD IDENTITIES, SOCIAL STATUS AND CULTURE

CHAPTER ONE

THEORIZING ETHNIC IDENTITIES ACROSS DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

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Abstract
The journey of identity is a lifelong odyssey, marked by distinct milestones and transformative experiences that shape and redefine one's sense of self. By theorizing ethnic identities across developmental milestones, this paper highlights the intricate interplay between hereditary perspectives, cultural affiliations, individual development, societal dynamics, and rational choice. This exploration delves into the multifaceted dimensions of ethnic identity construction, acknowledging that these identities are not static but evolve in response to the dynamic interplay of life's pivotal moments. From the formative years of childhood, through adolescence, to the complexities of adulthood, this narrative provides an understanding of the landscape that underpins the theorization of ethnic identities across these diverse and interconnected milestones of the human lifespan.

Introduction
The notion of the world evolving into a global village is linked to the process of westernization. Western trends have swept across far-reaching regions of the globe, compelling both individuals and groups to actively participate in the exchange of ideas that transcend geographical, ethnic, religious and cultural boundaries. Embracing these trends have brought about modernization, economic development, and improved living standards; however it has introduced some challenges such as cultural homogenization, the erosion of traditional values, and challenges to local identities (Sibani, 2018). It is beyond dispute that westernization is exerting a profound influence on the identity formation of ethnicities in developing nations, with many African nations currently grappling with eroding ethnic identities and a deep-seated identity crisis (Eegunlusi, 2017). This has prompted scholars, stakeholders and relevant agencies to concentrate on proposing effective interventions designed to help individuals, entangled in the web of westernization, to rediscover and preserve their ethnic identities (Marks et al., 2020; Umaña-Taylor, 2018). While efforts are being directed at this challenge, a crucial question that could impact the effectiveness of these interventions is frequently overlooked; *'do members of this target group acknowledge that they have an ethnic identity crisis?'* This question points to the notion of identity being a product of design or choice; therefore ignoring this question may be tantamount to proffering solutions to a non-existent problem. Thus, this paper strives to provide a theoretical understanding of the amenability in identity constructs, by contributing a scholarly discourse on the theorization of ethnic identity across lifespan milestones.

Ethnic identity refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group and the emotional connection to the cultural practices, traditions, language, and heritage associated with that group (Hachem & Toro, 2022). It is a crucial aspect of one's overall

identity, encompassing the recognition and affiliation with a shared ethnicity or cultural background. This definition suggests that individuals possess the capacity to align with an in-group based on shared ethnicity, a premise congruent with Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory. Despite the theoretical underpinnings supporting the notion of identifying with a shared ethnicity, individuals often grapple with the intricacies of finding and understanding their ethnic selves across diverse developmental milestones throughout their lifespan (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). The struggle between aligning with a specific ethnicity and simultaneously harboring views which are at variance to ethnic perspectives is not just an existential conflict but a developmental one (Chernyn & Monin, 2005). Individuals are often caught up in this personal debate as they develop a sense of self that is both independent from and connected to peers, friends, and family. This indicates that ethnic identity is not a fixed or singular construct; people may identify with multiple ethnic groups or experience changes in their identification over time (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). This dynamism may be influenced by individual experiences, interactions with diverse cultures, and societal changes. Individuals may navigate and negotiate their ethnic identity throughout their lives, especially in multicultural and diverse environments. Within the social sciences, many writers have asserted that ethnic identity is crucial to the self-concept and psychological functioning of individuals (e.g, Umaña-Taylor, 2005; Kiang et al., 2006), therefore understanding and exploring the origins of the dynamism in ethnic identity across lifespan would contribute to a broader understanding of the complex nature of human identity.

Primordialism and ethnic identity in childhood
Primordialists argue that ethnic identity is innate, grounded in the deep-seated connections to one's ancestors and shared cultural heritage (Adlparvar & Tadros, 2016). Primordialism is a theoretical perspective that seeks to explain ethnic identity by attributing its origins to deeply ingrained, inherent factors such as shared ancestry, biological ties, and historical continuity. This approach posits that individuals' affiliations with their ethnic groups are not mere social constructs or products of external influences but rather are deeply rooted in the primordial aspects of human existence (Maxwell, 2020). At the heart of primordialism is the emphasis on biological ties and ancestral connections as foundational elements of ethnic identity. According to this perspective, individuals inherit their ethnic identity from their forefathers, creating a sense of continuity and belonging that transcends time and societal influences. The notion of a shared genetic heritage becomes a powerful force in shaping a collective identity that is perceived as both inherent and immutable (Wiese et al., 2018). Primordialism extends its roots into cultural continuity, asserting that ethnic groups possess distinctive cultural elements passed down through generations. These cultural elements, which may include language, customs, and rituals, contribute to a sense of shared identity among individuals within the group. The preservation of cultural traditions becomes a crucial aspect of primordial ethnic identity, reinforcing a sense of belonging and distinctiveness.

In line with the primordialist perspective, *'a child is because his/her parents are'*. Beyond the actual inheritance of genetic traits, children embark on a journey of absorbing rich elements of cultural practices, language, and customs that become the very fibers of their identity (Ravitsky, 2002). As such, parents emerge as the guardians of culture, serving as the vital conduits through which the essence of traditions, folklore, and the collective wisdom of their ethnic background are transmitted to the next generation (Sianturi et al., 2022). The role of language in this cultural inheritance is

especially poignant. Parents, recognizing the significance of language as a powerful carrier of cultural identity, consciously cultivate linguistic connections within the family. Through spoken words, parents provide a link to the ancestral past, creating a language-rich environment that becomes a fundamental resource through which the child identifies with his parents' ethnicity (Perszyk & Waxman, 2018). The choice of words, expressions, and idioms carries the weight of generations, shaping not only communication but also the very essence of the child's sense of belonging. This linguistic connection extends beyond mere verbal communication. It becomes a bridge between generations, facilitating the transmission of stories, myths, and cultural narratives that are integral to the family's identity. Through bedtime stories, folk songs, and intergenerational conversations, parents impart not just language proficiency but also a deep understanding of the cultural value in each word and phrase. Perszyk and Waxman (2018) have highlighted processes through which the child, in turn, internalizes these linguistic treasures, cultivating a profound sense of belonging and continuity with their cultural heritage.

Family traditions, rituals and celebratory festivals are also integral to the child's understanding of his ethnic identity and cultural heritage. From the rhythmic beats of traditional music to the vibrant hues of festive attire, parents become architects of joyous celebrations that imprint lasting memories on the canvas of their children's lives (Hannon & Trehub, 2005). In these festive moments, the child is not a mere spectator but an active participant, stepping into the rhythm of their ancestors and absorbing the cultural essence that permeates the air. Equally significant are the everyday rituals in mundane family routines witnessed by the child. Whether it is the morning prayers, the preparation of recipes, or specific *'modus operandi'* of house chores, children are bathed in habitual processes that strengthen the connection to their ethnic identity (Selman & Dilworth-Bart, 2023). As the child engages in these shared experiences, they begin to construct their understanding of who they are within the context of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, in participating in family traditions, rituals and celebratory festivals alongside family members, the child learns the importance of shared values, cooperation, and the interdependence that underpins their ethnic identity. The rituals become a communal bridge, connecting generations and reinforcing the bonds that define the familial and cultural lineage.

Primordialism also places significant importance on emotional attachments and the establishment of symbolic boundaries between ethnic groups. The emotional ties individuals feel toward their ethnic identity are often described as innate and instinctual. These emotional connections, coupled with the delineation of symbolic boundaries, create a sense of 'us' versus 'them' and contribute to the formation of a strong group identity (Tajfel, 1974). This suggests that individuals are naturally predisposed to perceive external threats to their ethnic identity. This perception of threat often leads to ethnocentrism, where individuals prioritize their own ethnic group over others. The fear of dilution or extinction of one's ethnic identity in the face of external influences reinforces the primordialist notion that ethnic identity is a resilient and enduring aspect of human existence. This may explain the stance observed in certain traditional African communities that strongly discourage inter-ethnic marriages (Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2021).

While primordialism provides a compelling explanation for the roots of ethnic identity, it has faced criticisms and challenges from alternative perspectives. Critics argue that

this perspective tends to oversimplify the complexities of identity formation, neglecting the dynamic interplay between individuals and their social environments (Bayar, 2009). Additionally, the deterministic nature of primordialism, which implies a predetermined and unchanging ethnic identity, has been questioned in light of the fluid and evolving nature of human identity. In various regions of the world, particularly those marked by ethnic diversity and historical tensions, primordialist ideas may influence political ideologies, nationalistic movements, and conflict dynamics (Ahmed, 2020). Understanding the primordialist perspective is therefore crucial for navigating the intricate relationships between ethnic identity, politics, and social cohesion. Thus, irrespective of its narrow view, primordialism stands as a significant theoretical framework for understanding ethnic identity, emphasizing the role of shared ancestry, cultural continuity, emotional attachments, and perceived threats in shaping a collective sense of belonging.

Social constructionism and ethnic identity in adolescence
Contrary to primordialism, social constructionism posits that ethnic identity is a socially constructed phenomenon. This perspective emphasizes the role of societal factors in shaping one's identity, suggesting that individuals are not merely bound by biological ties but actively participate in constructing their ethnic identity (Li & Niemann, 2016). This theoretical framework recognizes the dynamic nature of ethnic identity, asserting that individuals engage in a continuous process of construction influenced by the socio-cultural context in which they exist. At the heart of social constructionism is the rejection of the notion that ethnic identity is an inherent and unchanging aspect of an individual. Instead, proponents of this perspective argue that ethnic identity is a product of social interactions, historical narratives, and cultural norms (Nasir & Hand, 2006). This stance challenges the deterministic nature of primordialism, proposing that identity is malleable and subject to ongoing negotiation. One fundamental tenet of social constructionism is the idea that individuals are not passive recipients of their ethnic identity but active agents in its construction. Rather than being born into a fixed identity, people are seen as participating in the creation and negotiation of their ethnic identity throughout their lives. This process involves interactions with others, exposure to diverse cultural influences, and the assimilation of societal norms that contribute to the formation of a complex and multifaceted identity. This perspective is particularly relevant when examining the development of ethnic identities during adolescence.

Adolescence is a critical period marked by profound psychological and social developments. One prominent aspect of this developmental milestone is the construction and negotiation of ethnic identities (Marcia, 2010, Phinney, 2006). Societal factors and institutions such as education, media, and religion are identified as key agents that contribute to the construction of identity during adolescence. Educational environments serve as microcosms of society, exposing adolescents to diverse perspectives and cultures. The interactions with peers from different ethnic backgrounds provide opportunities for identity exploration and the challenging of preconceived notions. Social constructionism suggests that these interactions shape and redefine ethnic identities, emphasizing the malleability of identity in response to social influences (Phinney, 2006). Media also plays a crucial role in the social construction of ethnic identities among adolescents. In an age where technology facilitates constant connectivity, media influences shape perceptions of self and others. The representation of diverse ethnicities in media can either reinforce or challenge existing stereotypes. Social constructionism also highlights the role of religious institutions in constructing

and disseminating narratives that contribute to the ongoing negotiation of ethnic identities during adolescence. As adolescents are exposed to conflicting and debatable doctrines, they contend with questions, differing opinions and engage in an ongoing dialogue of self-identity (Matemba, 2021).

Furthermore, the concept of *'othering'* is central to understanding the social construction of ethnic identities in adolescence. Social constructionism posits that the categorization of individuals as 'us' and 'them' is a social construct rather than an inherent truth (Tajfel, 1981). Adolescents interrogate the dichotomy of belonging and exclusion, influenced by societal attitudes and prejudices. This process can lead to the internalization of stereotypes, impacting the formation of ethnic identities (Umaña-Taylor, 2014). Social constructionism prompts an examination of the power dynamics at play in the construction of these dichotomies and encourages understanding of identity formation. Similarly, social constructionism acknowledges the role of larger societal narratives in shaping individual identities. Adolescents are not isolated from the historical and cultural currents that surround them. Events and movements, such as immigration patterns, cultural shifts, or social justice movements, contribute to the construction and reconstruction of ethnic identities among this cohort (Lara, 2018). Social constructionism encourages an exploration of these broader contexts to understand the intricate interplay between individual and societal identity construction.

The emphasis on the fluidity and context-dependent nature of ethnic identity within the framework of social constructionism underscores a departure from the rigid and deterministic perspectives of primordialism. Its rejection of the notion that ethnic identity is fixed and timeless recognizes the inherent variability in how individuals perceive and express their ethnic belonging. As such, identity is seen as a continuous process of negotiation and construction that can be shaped by a myriad of influences. This adaptability and flexibility inherent in social constructionist perspectives become apparent as individuals navigate different social environments. People have the agency to foreground or background specific aspects of their ethnic identity based on the prevailing circumstances and the nature of their interactions. In a multicultural and diverse society, individuals may emphasize certain cultural practices or linguistic affiliations when interacting within their ethnic community, while adopting a more inclusive or assimilative approach in broader social contexts (Sáenz-Hernández et al., 2020). The malleability of ethnic identity within social constructionism becomes particularly evident in situations of cultural exchange, globalization, or migration. Individuals exposed to diverse cultural influences may incorporate new elements into their identity, leading to a more hybridized and pluralistic sense of self (Boland, 2020). For instance, during times of social upheaval, individuals may dissociate from an identity as a form of resistance or solidarity, while in periods of stability, they may adopt a more inclusive or cosmopolitan perspective.

Rational choice and ethnic identity in adulthood
As individuals transition from adolescence to adulthood, the ongoing construction and negotiation of ethnic identities take on a new dimension. In this phase of life, the theoretical framework of rational choice becomes a lens through which we can explore the conscious decisions and choices individuals make in defining and shaping their ethnic identities (Aguiar & deFrancisco, 2009). Rational choice theory, borrowed from economics, posits that individuals make decisions by weighing the costs and benefits associated with each option. Applied to identity, this theory suggests that people can rationally evaluate the merits and demerits of embracing or rejecting their ethnic identity

(Aguiar & deFrancisco, 2002). The principles and application of Rational Choice Theory enable one to gain valuable insights into the ways individuals strategically evaluate, negotiate, and redefine their ethnic affiliations in relation to contextually reasoned judgments. This means that individuals make deliberate choices about being identified with part or whole aspects of an ethnicity based on a rational assessment of the perceived advantages and disadvantages associated with each option (Calvert, 2000). In the realm of ethnic identity, individuals are confronted with various factors that can influence their choices. Costs may include potential discrimination, social stigma, or constraints on personal freedom associated with a particular ethnic identity. On the other hand, benefits might encompass a sense of belonging, cultural enrichment, social support, or potential advantages in specific social, economic, or political contexts.

Social networks and affiliations also play a crucial role in rational choice regarding ethnic identity in adulthood. Individuals may choose to identify more strongly with an ethnic community if they perceive social benefits, such as support systems, networking opportunities, or a sense of belonging (Bobowik et al., 2017). In the same vein, personal experiences and life events can shape rational choices regarding ethnic identity in adulthood. Life milestones, such as marriage, parenthood, or career changes, may prompt individuals to reevaluate their ethnic identity (Yap & Kapitan, 2017). Rational considerations come into play as individuals weigh the impact of their identity choices on familial relationships, societal perceptions, and personal well-being. The negotiation of ethnic identity in adulthood is therefore not static; it is an ongoing process that adapts to changing circumstances. Rational choices in this context involve a continuous evaluation of the perceived benefits and drawbacks associated with one's ethnic identity. For example, an individual might choose to actively engage with their ethnic heritage during certain life stages when they believe it aligns with their goals, and adjust this engagement based on evolving priorities. Additionally, individuals may consciously choose to embrace or explore their ethnic background as a means of self-discovery, personal growth, or fulfillment. In such cases, the decision is driven by an internal desire for authenticity and a deeper understanding of one's roots, reflecting a rational choice aligned with personal well-being (Carden et al., 2022).

The concept of rational choice in ethnic identity becomes particularly relevant when considering the dynamic nature of identity negotiation among African diaspora in multicultural societies. The erosion of African ethnic identities, particularly among the generations of children born to African emigrants who have settled in Western countries (Rogers, 2018) has garnered scholarly attention. This process of identity erosion raises important questions about the preservation of cultural heritage and the long-term impact of emigration on African ethnic identities. As a result of this mass movement, questions about cultural assimilation, integration, and the preservation of African heritage have become increasingly relevant (Paolo & Letizia, 2022; Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023). However, acknowledging the principles of rational choice theory may provide a deeper understanding of these trends as not necessarily being a problem but a matter of choice for survival within an alien system. Individuals are also capable of reassessing their ethnic identity based on evolving life circumstances, personal experiences, or shifts in societal attitudes. This adaptive quality aligns with the theory's core tenet of individuals as rational decision-makers, capable of adjusting their identity strategies to optimize their well-being in changing environments. This framework not only provides insights into the dynamic nature of identity in diverse societies but also highlights the

agency individuals possess in actively shaping their ethnic identities in response to a complex interplay of internal and external factors.

Conclusion

From formative childhood years, through adolescence, to the complexities of adulthood, this narrative provides an understanding of the landscape that underpins the theorization of ethnic identities across these diverse and interconnected milestones of the human lifespan. The different schools of thought which have been applied to provide an illustrative understanding of identity dynamics across life span milestones are interesting and may be viewed from contextual lenses. Personal experiences, cultural influences, and socio-economic factors intertwine to shape one's ethnic identity in ways that may not fit neatly into established or proposed paradigms. This complexity underscores the need for a flexible approach in the scholarly exploration of ethnic identity. Nevertheless, every individual is able to situate their ethnic identity construction along a continuum of rigidity and amenability; whether consciously or otherwise. These perspectives lay credence to the multifaceted nature of identity as a construct, and provides an avenue for scholarly attention in determining applicable empiricisms to support their external validation. This opens the door to interdisciplinary studies, inviting insights from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other relevant fields to enrich our understanding of the intricate linkages between individual agency and societal structures in shaping ethnic identities. As we navigate the rich literature of identity theorization, it becomes clear that the exploration of ethnic identity is not just an academic pursuit but a journey that resonates with the lived experiences of individuals and communities across the globe.

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CHAPTER TWO

BURDEN OF MOTHERHOOD IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Several literary and non-literary sources have described the various tales of Motherhood in Nigeria overtime. Buchi Emecheta in her novel "Joy of Motherhood", give a vivid depiction of the overwhelming struggles of financially incapacitated married mothers with absentia husbands. Pre-Colonial time is awashed with history of women birthing children and using them as work labour on farmland as agriculture was the predominant economic activity of that era. Colonialism came with major economic change and with the establishment of Western education and formal professions. The economic shift continues into post colonial time as parents, most especially mothers, foster their children with the sole aim of expecting enormous financial reward from them when they come of age. However, there have been a number of consequences to this practice, as the children usually go to extra length which at times involve engaging in crime, prostitution and even suicide etc. in order to reward the parents. This paper seeks to analyse the trend of the burden of Motherhood both on the mother and the child in Nigeria, overtime. This research will take a multidisciplinary approach and historical interpretation methodology will be adopted. Sources will range from archival newspapers, literary texts, social and electronic media.

Introduction

Women are usually known to speak through their common identity as biological, surrogate and communal mothers. Motherhood is a powerful institution that is associated with the mystery of transformation and the authority to activate or suspend life. It is also esteemed as the gateway to lineage, rule and personal immortality. Motherhood may also be used as a metaphor for communal organising and as a catalyst for familial, economic, political and social transformation (Women Writing Africa, 2005). Filomina Steady (1981) argues that motherhood was and is still as much as a socioeconomic institution as a political one. It connotes more than the responsibilities of childbirth and child rearing; it also indicates identification within a network of similarly obligated females as well as their male relatives and their dependents. In some environments, motherhood controlled huge numbers of workers – including slaves – on farms, in the marketplace as well as within the domestic sphere (Women Writing Africa, 2005).

Motherhood as an institution, enables women to operate as an interest group through a network whose members provided services for one another. It empowers

women to have an agency with which they can affect lives positively or negatively, most especially the lives of their offspring. Therefore, motherhood remains a unifying element in the symbiotic relationship between reproduction and immortality, which meant that women were both respected and feared (Amadiume, 1997).

Several sources have demonstrated that African motherhood is not purely idyllic (Women Writing Africa 2005). Motherhood as an icon of cultural discourse, functions through a system of institutions that works for, as well as against, women themselves. In spite of enormous maternal symbolism, motherhood has been a source of social discontent and upheaval as well as outright oppression – such as the case of forced marriage, lineage disputes, cowives and the treatment of widows. Additionally, women are constantly reminded that motherhood exists at a crossroads of life and death where a woman risks her own life as an arbiter of immortality (Women Writing Africa 2005).

In Women Writing Africa; West Africa and the Sahel (2005), the significance of motherhood was demonstrated with the analysis of the celebration of birth among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria, which is usually celebrated by women in the community. The celebration comprises of a day being dedicated for the visit to the home of the new born, not just to celebrate with the new mother but also to reaffirm themselves as a community of mothers. Beneath this joy is the relief that the new mother has escaped the fate of a woman denied her personhood and fulfilment due to her inability to procreate.

Therefore, by producing a child, the new mother vindicates all mothers and this is supported with dancing and singing by the mothers of the community. Although the celebration is open to all, the songs are mostly begun and sustained by those with unique expertise in the practice. During this process, some women dance may be described as frenzied, thus marking the deep emotion associated with the ritual of birth.

Majority of the songs are vintage in nature even though some performers may embellish them. However, this does not preclude the coining of new songs in performance. The songs possess an air of cockiness, defiance and pride. Even though the texts of the song covers a range of themes, they basically eulogize womanhood with special emphasis on the exclusivity of maternal fulfilment. Through this ritual practice, women remind themselves as well as others of their accomplishments, making themselves, in this respect, superior to men as agents of reproduction and therefore of perpetuity. Therefore, childbirth provides a guarantee against oblivion. The ritual is both individual and private as well as communal. Two of such song texts; where is it from? And If not for Childbirth? (Women Writing Africa 2005) are displayed below:

WHERE IS IT FROM?

Where is it from, eh? It is from the womb.

Where is it from, eh? It is from the womb.

A policeman—he is from the womb.

A lawyer—he is from the womb.

A doctor—he is from the womb (Women Writing Africa, 2005).

The above text, which is a sample of the song Igbo mothers sing and dance to during the birth of a new child, highlight the significance attached to motherhood – procreation and

the need for women to achieve this feat as well as the appraisal attached to it. The song eulogize the power of the womb as a center of creation and the harbinger of life.

IF NOT FOR CHILDBIRTH

If not for childbirth!

If not for the power of giving birth,

Who will give me?

Buy white fowl, who will give me?

Bring white palm-wine, who will give me?

If not for the power of giving birth,

Who will give me? (Women Writing Africa, 2005).

The second text, "Who will give me", describes the economic benefit of motherhood and the power that childbirth gives to mothers. However, most of these benefits are usually expected from their immediate family such as the in-laws and the children themselves.

Challenges of Motherhood

Infertility

Buchi Emecheta (1979) in her novel *The Joys of Motherhood,* gives a vivid description of the challenges of motherhood through the main character, Nnu Ego, who left her first marriage due to her inability to conceive within few months of marriage. Throughout the short period of the marriage, Nnu Ego suffered psychological and emotionally abuse as a result of her barrenness especially as her junior wife was able to conceive and gave birth to children which signals that the infertility issue is with her and not her husband. After the end of the marriage, she remarried a man who is from her village Ibuza, but worked as a white man's house help in colonial Lagos. Nnu Ego's father consented to the marriage because he believed that this second husband will have patience with his daughter as regards the issue of her infertility, while Nnu Ego was indifferent as she was only willing to obey her father's wish even though it meant her leaving her village for faraway Lagos. She was not pleased with the physical attribute of her husband when she arrived at her second matrimonial home in Lagos, however, she was hopeful that the marriage will be productive. Nnu Ego decide that:

> She would rather die in this town called Lagos than go back home and say, "Father, I just do not like the man you have chosen for me." Another thought ran through her mind: suppose this man made her pregnant, would that not be an untold joy to her people?
> "O my *chi* ," she prayed as she rolled painfully to her other side on the raffia bed, "O my dead mother, please make this dream come true, then I will respect this man, I will be his faithful wife and put up with his crude ways and ugly appearance. Oh, please help me, all you my ancestors. If I should become pregnant ---hm ..." She nursed her belly, and felt her rather sore legs. "If I should

ever be pregnant." She smiled wistfully at the whitewashed ceiling, and as she watched a house lizard scuttled from a crack to the slightly open windows. She stared until she fell into a light sleep (Emecheta, 1979).

The thought of becoming a mother was enough to make Nnu Ego accept her father's choice of husband for her.

Poverty

Child fostering is financially demanding as well as emotional and psychologically tasking and as a result, few youths usually stay away from child reproduction until they are financially capable for it. Few parents also subscribe to giving birth to a few number of children based on their capacity while majority prefers the large procreation of the distant past which was practiced them due to the need for sufficient manpower on the farmlands. Either married or unmarried, parenthood comes with many sacrifices which most parents expect to be rewarded for. Mothers specifically, are known to go all and above for their children's survival and in return, prays to eat the fruits of their labour. Lack of financial resources have been one of the major discussion on motherhood as mothers sacrifice themselves for financial gain for their children and vice versa.

Several times, some Nigerian mothers have been accused of giving their daughters to suitors for monetary gains. And in most cases, these daughters also play along with their mothers in this "business'. A lot of these stories have been portrayed in Nollywood pictures overtime, in both local and English languages. An example of this situation was reported in *Lagos Weekend Newspaper* in 1975, it was titled 'Mother, daughter in court over marriage proposal'. The report states as follow:

> Ilorin businessman, Malam Mohammed Yakubu Anifowose, has taken a mother and daughter to court over money that he allegedly gave them during a marriage proposal. In a suit at the Ilorin High Court, Malam Anifowose claimed #2,677.94k from the two money has been received from him. He claimed that the mother, Mrs. Binta Idiaro daughter to the Kwara State Commissioner for Works, Alhaji Yahaya, "readily consented" to his association with her daughter, Afusatu. And as a result, Afusatu allegedly received #1,362.94k in cash and goods while her mother got #1,315 on loan basis and provisions for her training.

> In his statement of claim, Malam Anifowose said he had been treated as prospective son-in-law but now the marriage consideration had failed. When the case was called up last week Afusatu, an ex-student of the Kwara State College of Technology, and her mother said they were ready to defend the claim (Lagos Weekend, 1975:3).

In a newspaper column, titled *'Prostitution: A service to mankind'* the columnist, Supo Ibikunle, analyse his first experience with Lagos prostitution and the nature of prostitution during the latter part of the 1970s in Lagos.

> My first experience with Lagos prostitution was a shocking experience. I had known of professional roadside prostitute who solicited for men visiting the pubs. I had known all there is about whores who kept rooms for men on short visits. All in my city up country. But I had never seen mothers selling girls and women for upkeep.

I had just been in town and was keeping friendship with a mate. He led me into the secret. He knew of a madam who had sent for her married daughter to rush back home from the state where she lived with her husband. The madam planned to cash on the increase number of soldiers then returning from the war fronts. They would go for whatever women they could have, and at a very high price.

The daughter, unaware of her mother's intention, rushed back home into the warm embrace of the wolves. In a short time, the mother had a reception centre set up for 'customers', including for her daughter. She did not stop there. She went further to act as the contract broker, joining both daughter and men together. Unaware of the intents, but succeeding in the making of plenty money, the innocent girl succumbed and contributed enough of her best to the happiness of her customers. Right through the episode, no one of the two, mother and daughter, pretended they were conducting an illicit affair – does it matter? (Lagos Weekend, 1977:6).

Asides from this experience, another 'sex for money' experience was cited by the columnist as thus:

What of mother and daughter-in-law limited? Another shocker, you will say. But it was alright with the two, since mutual agreement was reached as the operation of the company. The mother secretly implored her son's wife to take leave of her husband who was also in the states. The innocent, or what not, girl was then set up to provide the much-needed satisfaction for men.

It was during a time of boom, and it seemed there was much money in circulation. Men had enough to squander about; and no one could grudge the old woman who wanted to collect enough money from the sale of her daughter-in-law's body to pay for the debt incurred on her dowry ((Lagos Weekend, 1977:6).

While the above cited examples by the columnist centers on the exploitation of daughters for prostitution by mothers and mother-in-laws, a reverse case is cited in a Lagos weekend headline dated April 8-10, 1977. It is titled "Hungry Mum has Sex on Highway". The reporter, Emmanuel Osisiogu narrate the incident as thus:

A hungry nursing mother stood beside the road to cut some 'job' to buy food for her two-month-old child. And when she saw a car coming towards her, she thanked her star. When the driver, James Nyam pulled up a few metres away, she smiled because she was sure of some business to enable her care for the baby and herself. The man himself could no longer bear it as he saw the radiating beauty of his 'guest' so he pulled up beside the road, and made love to the woman inside the car.

But to her disappointment, the man refused to give out a kobo, instead, he tried to push her down from the car. This was the story told an Area Court judge, Alhaji Inusa Ahmed in Tudun Wada, near Kaduna, by the nursing mother, Helen Augustine of Tudun Wada village, Kaduna. Helen was among the ten people brought before the court by the police for wandering during late hours. The prosecution had told the court that the electrical engineer James Nyam of 46, Ginginya Road, Kaduna, Helen and eight others were arrested by traffic police patrol men in the early hours of March 18, along Costain Road, Kaduna.

Helen told the court that she left her two-month old child with an aged woman and went to Costain club to seek someone to make love with her in order to get some money to buy food for her child and herself. She said since she had the baby all her lovers had deserted her. She said she stood near the Costain Club and the electrical engineer pulled up near her.

"He picked me in his car and after driving a few metres, he stopped, put off the engine and made love to me in the car," she told the court. "But when we finished, he told me to jump down which I did and then demanded money but he refused to pay. He tried to push me off and we started to struggle when the police patrolmen came and arrested us" she further said.

Nyam denied making love with Helen. He told the court that it was another person who struggled with her and he had gone to separate them. "But when I asked what the matter was, she told me that the man had sex with her but failed to pay her", he said. Nyam said he wanted to be a good Samaritan by giving the woman a lift when the police came and arrested them. At this stage the judge, Alhaji Inusa Ahmed, adjourned the case for March 29th and asked each of them including the other eight accused persons to go on bail for #60 and one surety in the same amount. When the case finally came up, the Judge Alhaji Inusa Ahmed, fined each of the accused #10 (Lagos Weekend, 1977:1).

The above is a case of a sacrifice of motherhood gone wrong, as not only did the nursing mother lose the financial gain she expected through the sexual intercourse with Nyam, she also accrue more lost when she was fined #10 and made to pay #60 for her bail. This was no doubt, a bad day and a bad experience for her 'business enterprise'.

Spirituality

It is commonly known that Nigerian mothers are superstitious beings with most practicing religious syncretism. Several mothers have been known to visit herbalists on behalf of their children to make divination regarding their destinies and fostering their path to success. In a true life story reported on page 5 of Lagos Weekend on January 4, 1974, titled "The true confession of Miss F. M, from Akure; The Sour Half of the Native Doctor", a lady gave her personal account of a fake native doctor which her mother forced her to visit in a bid to 'protect' her spiritually. Unknown to her mother, the herbalist was fake and had his own selfish purpose for requesting the daughter's visit to his abode:

My story began one hot afternoon when I was returning home from work. My mother who who was expected to leave some food for me for that afternoon was not at home. But my brother Tunde was in. Surprisingly, my mother left no word as to where she had gone. It was almost unusual. Ten minutes later, my mother returned home beaming with smiles and satisfaction. She had been out with Olu's mother she said.

A little later mother still beaming with excitement walked into the living room and called on me saying, "You're following me to a herbalist this evening." "He said I should bring you along" she added. "What for?" I queried bewildered wiping off the sweat from my brows. By now, my mother's countenance had changed. Instead of the beautiful effervescent young woman she was before I left for work that morning, she stared at me miserably and sighed. Then she spoke

again. "Olu's mother came here and begged me to accompany her to a herbalist who lives nearby. After the consultation, he asked if I had a daughter by your name and I couldn't lie as he had earlier told me almost everything about our past".

Inwardly, I shook with fear wondering how to tell her that I couldn't go with her. I knew she was trying to 'protect' me the way any superstitious Nigerian mother would her daughter, but after all the tales about herbalists from other girls around, I had decided to keep out of their way. I had never disappointed my mother before and I couldn't now, especially as it was for my 'safety' she was after. So, eventually, I agreed to go with her.

We got on a bus minutes later and soon we were being ushered into the tiny room where the 'doctor' did his practice. Everything in the cramped room sent shudders of fear down my spine, and when the haggard thing asked confidently if I had a child, I couldn't help answering yes. He smiled with satisfaction. And I thought the smile would give way to a wry face when I told him the truth minutes later but it didn't. He must have been used to such minor miscalculations because he still worn that feigned smile on his face and pretended he didn't actually mean to ask that question.

Oh! he went on, 'it is a pity your husband will divorce you very soon. You have not followed the guarded path of your star by marrying him. "Who should I have married," I asked fooling him on and managing to look confused. "A herbalist who will take care of you and wash you very well." He answered and then added, "I will help you trace your way back." From then on I nodded my approval to every proposal he made. "After the consultation he said my mother could go home and ordered me to wait behind for a special bath.

When she had left, he said I should undress, I did. Then he told me he had done the 'same thing' before – with a nursing mother and that nothing happened to her three-month-old baby. I knew the story was false and also got the message. He cupped my palm to hold some reddish powder ad began to rub it with his thumb. In no time the flakes had 'disappeared' – through the back of my palm into a basin of water below. It was surprising, and it made me shake with fear.

Miracle no.2 came minutes later. The herbalist gave me a loose sheet of paper on which he spread some black powder, and after murmuring something poured a liquid on it. The paper caught fire immediately. I was frightened. He did many more wonders. Finally, he asked for my name. I told him and he brought out a gourd from underneath his bed. Then he began to say some incantations. "Sleep across the bed and spread your legs out". He ordered. He pushed something made from honey into my vagina and after covering my face with a white cloth began to massage it with his right thumb. Then his organ went into work.

I felt his feeble pressure as it glided into through the already lubricated entrance waking up my whole being. I got the message alright, but before he had me completely under his power, I sprang out of bed accusing him of indecency. "It would have been better if you demanded for sex in a civilized manner, I rattled. "O.K. I am sorry let me have it now", He begged. "Not with me", I howled. Then I pushed past him ran to the sitting room and began to dress. He followed me almost reluctantly still pleading. "If you don't want it again today, give me

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another date" he begged. "Tomorrow evening" I said by way of burying my freedom.

Then he ordered me to sit promising he was only going to tell me something. "I like you so much" I heard him say. "You are brave. That was how I married my last wife. If you had let me go on, that thing I put in your vagina would have made you mine forever, even if I drive you out you'll refuse to leave my house. Then he taught me several ways by which a woman could charm a man. Before I left, he made me promise again to come back the following day. I did – but just to escape from his clutches (Lagos Weekend, 1974:5).

Sacrifice and Rewards

Regardless of a woman's class or financial status, sacrificing career for motherhood is commonly practiced in Nigeria as it is generally believed that the children will make it worthwhile when they become adults. Buchi Emecheta portrayed this in *'The Joys of Motherhood'* when Nnu Ego had to console herself for being financially poor due to her motherhood activities during the birth of her second child, who she couldn't give a glamorous naming ceremony.

> Her only regret was that for this baby she could not afford a naming ceremony like the one they had given Ngozi. She had not felt inclined to do any kind of trading after Ngozi's death, and throughout the term of her second pregnancy she had been so apprehensive that something would happen to make her miscarry that she took things easy, concentrating solely on having the child safely. She had reminded herself of the old saying that money and children don't go together: if you spent all your time making money and getting rich, the gods wouldn't give you any children; if you wanted children, you had to forget money, and be content to be poor. She did not remember how this saying had originated among her people; perhaps it was because a nursing mother in Ibuza could not go to the market to sell for long, before she had to rush home to feed her baby. And of course babies were always ill, which meant the mother would lose many market days. Nnu Ego realised that part of the pride of motherhood was to look a little unfashionable and be able to drawl with joy: "I can't afford another outfit, because I am nursing him, so you see I can't go anywhere to sell anything." One usually received the answer. "Never mind, he will grow soon and clothe you and farm for you, so that your old age will be sweet." (Buchi Emecheta, 1979:80)

With these expectations of the 'fruit of the womb and labour' comes a huge strain and burden on the children as depicted in the novel when Oshia, the first child of Nnu Ego failed to secure a scholarship for his college education. The following conversation ensued between him and his parents:

> "Why did you not win a scholarship like other boys?" Nnu Ego demanded. "Only a few people win scholarships, and they have to be very clever." "Then why aren't you clever?" retorted Nnaife.
> "Maybe if I had a peaceful childhood, and not had to spend my young days selling paraffin and carrying firewood---"
> "Shut up!" shouted Nnu Ego. "So it's all my fault, is it?"

Nnaife laughed and said, "You answer your father back, eh, son? Well, maybe if your mother was not so keen on getting money, maybe you would have won a scholarship. I had to go and fight. I did not choose to go. And whenever I could get a job, I always did so. So don't blame me."

It was all so hopeless that Nnu Ego simply broke down and gave in to self-pity. Oshia, her son, blaming her as well. Of course to him his father was a hero. He was a soldier. He was a fighter. He brought money into the family. All the poor boy had ever seen of her was a nagging and worrying woman. Oh, God, please kill her with these babies she was carrying, rather than let the children she had hoped for so much pour sand into her eyes (Emecheta, 1979:186).

Oshia eventually got a university scholarship after his college studies and this time all hell was let loose as his father, Nnaife was already expecting him to take up the family responsibility with his college qualification:

"What is it, Father?" Oshia asked.

Sensing that there was trouble coming, Nnu Ego suggested weakly, "Nnaife, why don't you eat before you start your man-to-man talk?"

"Woman, why don't you go to your cooking place and let me talk to my son? Now, young man, when are you going to take on your family responsibilities? Have you not sense enough to know that a father shouldn't have to ask that of his son, he should do it automatically?"

"What responsibilities, Father?" Nnaife's bottled-up wrath exploded, and he thundered: "Adim! Nnamdio! You two come here." He turned back to Oshia. "These are your responsibilities, to say nothing of myself and your mother, who still carries firewood like a paid carrier."

"I don't understand, Father. You mean I should feed them and you too? But you are alive and well and still working---"

"Shut up! Shut up before I lay you flat and show you that you haven't grown too big for me to handle. Didn't you hear my friends saying the other day that I should soon rest after the work I have done all these years and that you should take over?"

"I can't take over, Father. I am going to the States. I have won a scholarship, though I shall have to pay for my board. I did even hope that you and Mother might help me out--"

"Help you? Help you!" Nnaife's voice had become a menacing whisper (Emecheta, 1979:200)

From the above exchange, it was becoming clear to Nnu Ego that her first child might not be in a hurry to solve the family's financial problems and thus, her hope in her son soon became dashed. She accepted her fate and when departure time arrived for Oshia to leave the country for his university's studies, Nnu Ego and other well-wishers escorted him to the airport.

Friends and well-wishers were surprised to see that she did not cry; and when they predicted that soon her son would be back and driving her about in a big car, she knew that they had all missed the point. She was not destined to be such a mother. She realised that now. Her joy was to know that she had brought up her children when they had started out with nothing, and that those same children might rub shoulders one day with the great men of Nigeria. That was the reward she expected. (Emecheta, 1979:202).

Therefore, Nnu Ego accepted that not all motherhood travails results to 'retirement benefit' as most times, the children usually have a different plan for themselves and might not be capable in helping their parents to offload their burdens when expected.

Conclusion

The burden of motherhood in Nigerian society do not only rest on the shoulders of the parents, as offspring also have a share of the responsibility. This burden, usually untimely do overwhelm the children and as a result, make them get involve in unholy affairs just to make their parents proud. Most of these engagements are usually supported by the parents while some are even facilitated by them. Although Buchi Emecheta's book was centered in colonial Lagos during the second World War, similar situations as depicted in the story still prevails till post-colonial Nigeria. A suicide news went viral in January 2024 about a bank official who committed suicide due to the overwhelming burden of sustaining her family financially (Vanguard Newspaper). This information was decipher in the suicide note she left behind which was recovered at the death scene in bank's toilet where she ended it all. *The Blooms Boy* is a Nollywood movie that was released in February, 2024 and although the lead family in the movie were well of financially, the mother was seen encouraging her daughter to marry someone in a higher class than them and the marriage ended badly for the daughter.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE PRESSURED CONDITIONS OF THE MODERN AFRICAN CHILD IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETAL COMPLEXITIES AND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

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Abstract

The modern African child faces numerous conditions of pressure and emotional insanity, and this has affected his/her well-being. The pressure emanates from the factors of insensitive traditions and permissive Western modernity. Both have brought about unfavorable rules and practices inimical to the social sanity of the African child. Illustratively, the traditional Yoruba society suppresses the potential and capabilities of a child in the philosophy *ki l'omode mo*? In addition to this, Yoruba tradition has also yielded communal moral imposition on the child, motivating all moralists in the community to assault the child. The child is battered by many educators and elders on daily basis for his/her innocence. In the context of modernity, liberalism and mercantilism have created unfavorable conditions for the child. The core of modernity is freewill, which permits migration and interrelations - intermarriage for instance. When intermarriages occur in the Diaspora because of migration, across religions, the child is left to struggle with the complexities of identities in terms of culture, nativity and religion. In the same vein, the fervent struggle of parents to meet socially-benchmarked mechanized, materialistic, and epicurean demands has increased their mercantilist engagements. These have resulted in bonding denials for the child. The infractions should be reexamined in order to ensure the emotional sanity of the modern African child.

Introduction

The modern African child encounters a lot of terror and tension in his own land and by his own people. This misnomer has been in practice for donkey years. The African society has taken advantage of the innocence and incapacities of the African child to unleash terror and tension of immeasurable extent on the African child. In the African society in the contemporary times, emotional imbalance and insanity of the African child is rife. On this, Koester and Zeleke (2021) opine that this social ill demands urgent care responses in order to ascertain the emotional well-being of the child in Africa. At this juncture of the paper, it is important to state categorically that the emotional torture that the child is subjected to has made him/her struggle to compare with his counterparts from other continental climes in the global community. Even the potentially-endowed ones and the geniuses among them are affected by the consequences of the torture and battery that the traditional African society metes out to the child in their ignorance and in the pressured conditions in which the child has found himself or herself.

As Africa is making concerted efforts to move out of the mire of socio-economic setback into progressive innovations, the potential and the endowment of the child should not be undermined. Therefore, the potential and precocity of the child should be watered at the tender age rather than kill such in the name of fulfilling self-will and observing aboriginal practices. This is the crux of this paper as it examines the causes of the maltreatment of the African child. The paper also discusses the situations of the society at the time of the practice of communalism with emphasis on the temporal variations, cognitive evolution, as the impactful effect of globalization. This signifies that both insensitive traditions and permissive Western modernity which Africans have observed are inimical to the well-being of the African child especially in the age of Western globalization.

Methodological Approaches

For the purposes of achieving the core goals of this study, the author has employed a number of methods and instruments. The first of such is the qualitative nature of the paper. The author made the study qualitative by the nature of the social ills being appraised. The logic of the argument requires rational explanations in order to achieve the acceptability of the line of thought advanced. To ascertain this, substantiating cultural and social citations are made for rational line of thoughts. In addition to this method, the Yoruba instance has been cited to represent the African circumstances that are of concern in the paper. This is necessary because citing situations across all of Africa for adequacy of representation could be cumbersome. In the same vein, the author applied the Social Change Theory to account for the revisiting of the societal perception of the African children. These methods and approaches are tools for the acceptability of viewpoints in the paper.

Conceptualization of the Definition of the African Child

In the context of this study, the African child is conceived as a young person between the ages of one day and sixteen/eighteen years. The young person must have been living in Nigeria all through his/her life. That is, the young person must have been raised in Nigeria. In addition to this, the parents of the child must both be Africans. The Africans in the Diaspora are excluded because of culture diffusion and contamination as a result of their Western or Eastern cultural exposure. Ages sixteen and eighteen have been taken as age benchmarks because both are the minimum requirements for university admission and exercise of franchise in Nigeria, respectively. Either of the accomplishments in life is conceived in this paper as transition from childhood to adulthood.

Principles of Modernity in Africa

Modernity has been defined in many divergent ways in an attempt to account for the different situations where modernity has had relevance. It has its peculiar definition and characters in the context of the African worldview. Modernity in Africa could be explained as the ways of life and practices that did not originate from the continent of Africa. Modernity is therefore conceptualized in Africa as the new way of doing things in the socio-life context. The concept of modernity would not be meaningful without tracing it to the West, which comprises the cultural and societal influences from the United States of America and countries from Europe. Such influences have reflected in religion, nature of the civil society which emphasizes liberty and freewill, education, democratic politics, governance, capitalism, and technology. Of these characteristics,

peculiar attention is on liberty and freewill as this preaches that individual citizens or indigenes are free to engage in activities as such may please him or her. The acculturation of this principle has had dire consequences in the African society as is the cardinal pursuit in this study.

Core Principles of the Africa Traditional Culture

African traditional culture is the culture or the worldview indigenous to the people of Africa. It has been noted that the African peoples pride themselves in uprightness and moral righteousness. This is the core of the culture. This is the reason for the communal discipline that the African peoples practice such that it is held that the discipline of the African child is a communal duty and not the duty of the parents alone. The result of this is that the African child is beaten by community elders when they feel that the child has erred regardless of the personal situations including health challenges that the child is passing through. This is not leaving out the misjudgment that the elder may be guilty of on the child at that point in time. The sense of communality is still being advocated and practiced in Africa, today. The position of this paper however is that such a practice and its advocacy is ill-timed, inappropriate, and regressive in today's world.

Obeisance of Western Modernity in Africa and Implications on the African Child

Western modernity, for the convenience of this study, is conceptualized as the new ways of doing things or conceiving ideas in Africa as influenced by the social consciousnesses of the United States and European countries, especially the United Kingdom. The core of the value of Western modernity is liberty or the freewill to do one's wishes. The exercise of freewill in Africa has led to despicable consequences especially as the African child is concerned. Out of the many circumstances marking the expression of freewill in Africa, two dimensions are interrogated in this study. These are the freewill to migrate and the freewill to intermarry. These two expressions of liberty have put the African child in jeopardy. Illustratively, the migration of Africans to the West or to the East often results in intermarriage especially because such intermarriages can guarantee the Africans the Green Card. Such has now been seen as a means of survival by many Africans. The children born in this circumstance often experience dislocation, disorientation, and confusion as far as lineage and cultural roots are concerned. This often occurs because since the union was originally contrived for personal aggrandizement and mercantilist intention, the validity of the nuptials usually lapses soonest. When this occurs, the child whose paternity is traced to Africa is retained in the West. Or in some rare cases, the child might be taken to Africa. In either case, the child usually loses the other lineage. This however has psychological implications. It is traumatic for the child to live with the inability to locate the paternal or maternal relatives. This in many circumstances will or even ever again lead to isolation, identity loss, and cultural disorientation. This is particularly so because often times, there is no love lost between the two parents.

This situation is particularly worse if the intermarriage is cross-religion. That is if the two parents are of different religions. It is the child that bears the sufferings. Usually, the father insists that it is the religion he practices that the children would practice. The mother, with whom, most times, the children are much closer, redirects and, often, succeeds in making the children practice her own religion. Or if the children prefer the religion of their father, the mother may become antagonistic even to the children feeling a sense of total loss after the children have adopted the family name of the husband. Either way, there is always tension between the father and the mother on the

adoption of religion for the children. This is usually downplayed as the consequence of their mixed relationship at the outset. The child bears the tension consequences of the religion-induced intermarriages. This is topical because it is Africa where religion matters a great deal due to the fact that the African continent is a deeply religious continent. Alesina et al (2021) opine that Africa hosts very strong Muslim, Christian and communities and, due to the demographic circumstances, it will be known terrain to the biggest numbers of the creeds in the nearest decades. Religiosity is very high on the continent of Africa, with 75 per cent of Christians and Muslims attending churches and mosques in the minimum of once a week. This is in accordance with the 2016 Afrobarometer Surveys. In summary, religion is of peculiar essence in Africa, and this situation makes the parents tenacious with the issues of faith as it concerns their children.

There is the mercantilist dimension to the obeisance of Western modernity in Africa and the African child receives the despicable fallout of the tense situation that the mercantilist social situation orchestrates. The mercantilist social practice is the situation where everything used or consumed is paid for in monetary value. The paid consumption culture has been heightened by the mechanical nature of the modern existence. To this end, most, indeed, all of the consumed products and services must be paid for. These include, electricity, housing, food especially packaged foods, transportation, water, education, banking, as well as communication. The internationalization of the African economy especially along the economic principles of the Global North in most cases has made the bills subject to constant hikes. This puts a lot of pressure on the West-styled households, on both of the father and the mother. The implication of this is that parents have to mercantilise their activities in the expectation of meeting the bills. In most cases, there is a tremendous negative effect on the child. This is seen most in the 'dumping' of the African baby at the daycare centers as early as 7:30 am so that the mother can make the time for resumption at her duty post in offices. Every day, with this time zone, the harsh sounds of crying babies rend the atmosphere as mothers rush to work. The most unfortunate situation to this is that the African baby has to be woken up as early as 5am even sometimes earlier when he/she is enjoying his/her sleep. Most babies do not see their mothers again for upward of ten hours feeding on all sorts including stale preserved breast milk. Yet because of the mercantilist tendencies, the daycare proprietors take in as many babies as possible because the many more the babies, the higher the incomes. The deplorable outcome of this practice is that infrastructures are stressed. The environment will be unhygienic, resulting in contraction of communicable diseases. This is awful for the African child and such jeopardizes his/her well-being. As a result of the mercantilist activities that occupy the time of the parents, time is always unavailable to make good food for the child at tender ages of three, four or older. The time unavailability as a result of mercantilist engagements has also exposed the child to societal evils such as incest, rape, drug abuse, as well as sex trades.

Obeisance of African Social and Cultural Philosophies and Practices

The obeisance of certain African ethical principles and cultural philosophies has been injurious to the African child. It needs to be stated unequivocally at the outset that this viewpoint at this juncture of the study is not to bemoan African culture, rather it is to draw attention to certain areas of the culture that are inimical to progress for modification since culture is subject to constant change. To this end, there are some practices in African culture that are not favorable to the well- being of the African child. These are broadly categorized as ethical philosophies. The first is the subjugation of the African child by belittling his existence, identity, and capability potential. This is seen in, citing the

Yoruba example, the *ki l'omode mo?* (what does a child know?) philosophy. Perhaps at the primordial times in the Yoruba history, the child might not know much or anything in the context of the moderate community and their worldview at the time. This is because that age was not as developed as the situation is today with the advent of technology, science, and global competitiveness. Over time, there have been progress and advances in the world, the Yoruba / African society inclusive. Therefore, continuation of the philosophy may make the society lose the potential of the today's African child. It is the same sense of downgrading the presence and importance of the African child that makes elders ignore the African child when they see each other expecting that it is the duty of the child to greet them always as community elders. Any day the child does not do this, he/she has become proud to the elders. There are two fundamentals to this. The first is the purpose of greeting itself in interpersonal relationship. The second is the failure of elders in the community to realize that the society we live in the age of hyper globalization is one which is complex, mechanical and competitive. Commenting further on these two factors, the purpose of greeting is not an imposition but a means of expressing goodwill, regards, and compliments, which could be expressed by anyone including community elders to anyone else. The second fundamental is that today's world is complex and competitive and the African child has his /her share of the harsh economic and life challenges. He/ she may be thinking about his/ her forthcoming examinations. He may be thinking about his unpaid school fee. His health may not be sound. It may be his time of low excitement. In addition to all these, the personality of the child should be respected. He has his own world and identity. These peculiar personal considerations should also be put in place when a community elder is sending a child on random errands. He may be on an errand for another. He might have received an instruction from his parents to stay close home. He should enjoy his stay in his community and not be under constant fear of who may be offended or having to run errands in the community at the expense of his homework, moment of relaxation, and his peace of mind. As it is currently, the African child lives in perpetual fear in the clan or community.

The teachers who are supposed to be educators have turned themselves to beasts flogging rather than re-explaining concepts which the pupils have not understood. It should be underscored that the teacher has not been hired to flog, primarily. He/she has been hired to teach. Complex concepts cannot be understood at once, except by the precocious ones among the pupils. The geniuses are few in human world. It would be recalled that most of the pupils are registered at school at tender ages. Understanding of concepts is not by flogging the innocent pupils, but by friendship right from the outset. A teacher who teaches abstract concepts such as Quantitative Reasoning without illustration and animations, who generally has not improved himself/herself for a long time through workshops, for example, is being unfair and committing crimes if he/she flogs the pupils for not grasping such abstract concepts at once. Controlled beating can be meted out to pupils who have committed infractions such as fighting, immorality, or stealing. Teachers are solely responsible for the discouragement that pupils experience in the course of their studies as a result of the fear and tension that teachers create around themselves and which permeates the entire school compound.

Denials of the Child Rights in the Home Front

Apart from the community and the school, the home is another place where tension and fear is created around the African child. There are many practices and belief systems that parents perpetrate which to them help to actualize their vision in the course of training their children. These are injurious to the peak attainment purpose of the child. Though

the commission of these infractions by the parents is both deliberate and inadvertent, they still bear the brunt of the bemoaning. This, respectively, is because, they are aware that the infractions are elements of culture, but that the parents are not aware of the consequences of obeisance of the cultural philosophies. The first of these anti-child practices is moral teaching that children that eat eggs or meat are thieves. This belief is common among the Yoruba people in Southwest Nigeria. Children are therefore given little meat or fish. Egg consumption is uncommon. This essentially has been in practice for so many years. The practice still subsists today in homes that still hold the African traditional consciousness. However, the children feel the aura of inferiority when they see parents eat these food items even in excess. This cannot be seen as appropriate because the teaching is false and inappropriate. It is common knowledge that both egg and meat are very rich sources of protein which children need at their tender ages. Indeed, Puglisi and Fernandez (2022) have noted that eggs contain a lot of nutrients including bioactive components which are likely to help in the prevention of chronic diseases. They assert that protein quality in eggs is assessed by the protein digestibility-corrected amino acid score, emphasizing that the higher the value of the protein digestibility-corrected amino acid score, the better the protein would meet the requirements for all essential amino acids citing children aged from 6 months to 5 years, they point out that protein digestibility-corrected amino acid score for eggs is 118%.They state that meat also has 92–94% for meat and fish have 90–93. The core point of their hypotheses is that egg protein is good for the health of children especially also that egg protein is the lowest-priced protein if compared to the cost of other sources, indicating that it is affordable for low socioeconomic population categories. To this end, it is asserted that such a dichotomy in the home front has denied children so much health benefits and caused so much pain for the African children in the process. This has always made the children feel to be second-level members of the family. This would naturally generate fear, tension, and frustration in the children in their homes.

Still on the home front, tension and trauma is created in the child when domestic violence is perpetrated and the child experiences it first-hand. Domestic violence involves fighting, maiming and killing as a result of the use of fatal weapons. The perpetration of violence in the home could be either partner. However, controvertibly it is more commonly perpetrated by men against their wives. In any case, the consequence of this by the child is capable of making him/her disorientated. Lloyd (2018) notes that in many cases domestic violence at early childhood often leads to psychological and emotional behavioral and attitudinal complications in the child. Among many pre-school children domestic violence is capable of causing withdrawals and anxiety. It can also lead to restricted ability for coping among pre-school children due to their young ages and this means that there is behavioral and psychological disengagement as one way this category of children reacts to inter-parental violence in the presence of the children. The picture that Lloyd paints here is despicable. It suggests that this social ill should be eliminated for the emotional stability of the African child.

There is another practice that signifies that children are treated in average African homes as second-tier members of the family. This is dominant ownership and use of home infrastructures such as the TV where the father's choice of program overrides other choices especially that of the child. The average African home is constructed as the father being the Lord. This denies the children freedom, inclusion, and ownership of the household. The lack of love and inclusion from the home front affects the social sanity of the child. This is because the home ought to be his natural habitat, haven, and

sanctuary. He then is compelled to choose the street, strangers as confidants. Children from loving homes, where there is gelled inclusion and ownership, do not become street urchins or drug pushers. Instances are rare.

In conclusion

The African child is facing situations of trauma as a result of the obeisance of traditional African cultural philosophies and practices. The exercising of Western modernity with freewill as its principle is making the African child trapped in complex social systems such as loss of cultural identity and lineage. These have led to domestic dislocation or rejection and withdrawal from the immediate society due essentially to constant communal assault. This situation needs to be eliminated in our social system because it is weakening the potential of the African child. It also affects the mental and emotional health of the child. The current social system in Africa does not accommodate the interpretations and applications of Western conception of freewill and the African society that gave rise to the cultural philosophies examined earlier was different from the contemporary West-oriented African society. Therefore those philosophies do not apply to the present situations especially as they are inimical to the sustainability of the future of the African society. That is the disorientation of the African children is the losses of the future of Africa as it is the children of today that will run the continent, tomorrow. Investment should be made on them today. Such investment includes acceptance, respect, inclusion and the acknowledgement of the rights and identity of the African child. The disorientation that affects the child negatively should therefore be eliminated from the consciousness of the African peoples.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL DYNAMICS, FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD AMONG THE YORUBA OF SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA SINCE PRE-COLONIAL TIMES

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Introduction

The Yorùbá is not necessarily a homogenous group, scholars have contended with defining the identities of sub-ethnic groups. But mostly the Yorùbá have shared culture with affinities that are barely distinguishable. In the words of Biodun Adediran, the Yorùbá have the dominant culture and settlements with organized systems (Adediran, 1994). The historical process that dispersed the Yorùbá was profound in the period of migration from Ife to various locations (Johnson 1921). Sixteenth century evidences showed that Oyo and Ijebu sub-ethnic groups were already established. The non-homogeneity of Yoruba across spaces from savannah to the coast manifest in the nineteenth century wars where differing affinities and interests shaped the identities in newly formed societies of Egba and Ibadan. Basically, the new Yoruba societies gradually transformed into areas of advantage during the British rule. Atanda highlighted the features of tradition and modernity in the new societies. (1980). The phases of change especially in the colonial era imperatively led to adaptations and the entanglements of what is traditional to Yorùbá, or lost in the context of imperial control, religious encroachment, social reconstruction, modern health systems, and western educational systems among others.

The Yoruba social space and cultural institution have experienced tremendous change over many decades. To be specific, since the advent of colonialism, the Yoruba have experienced change in all aspect of what constitute the Yoruba culture. The family structure and processes have changed with the introduction of western education, religion, and occupation pattern. One of the social institutions that experienced change is the family, particularly childhood remains one of the social processes that is ever changing. In this article, we scan through cultural, social processes in the pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary Yoruba society. The focus was placed on family and childhood as point of reference and discourse.

Pre-colonial Yoruba Society

W.H. Clarke's (Àtàndá, 1978) *Travels and Exploration in Yorùbáland* gave a detailed account of Yorùbá social systems in the nineteenth century. Communal living was fundamental to everyday life. The description brings to fore communalism as it were, expressed thus:

> The size of a compound varies with the family and sometimes encloses a quarter, sometimes half an acre. Every side of the building is roofed as house ordinarily with rafters, ridgepoles and gable ends and stretched with grass of a peculiar kind, which when put on sufficiently thick presents a roof tolerably rainproof. The thatching of houses varies indifferent localities. Some form a network of small squares through which the grass, if introduced, lapped over the reeds forming the squares, while the others tie the grass together. Within these courtyards are enclosed all domestic animals, especially at night fold, when the great gate is shut and all is safe (Àtàndá, 1978:23).

The aforementioned creates an impression about the efficiency of the social structure in the nineteenth century. The building culture observed affirms the fact that Africans had sustainable levels of civilization before the twentieth century modern influences. Central to this housing system, is the consideration that families live in communal forms while the economic and political system. As families live together, strong bonds and ties are maintained as several families are accommodated in rectangular-shaped compounds. Beyond the rectangular compounds, inter-family relations occur at designated places such as under tree shads, cool spots, market sides where people meet for playing games drinking, merriment. Also were eating amusement activities for mental, cognitive and psychomotor development (Àtàndá, 1978; 238-239). This portrays how the Yorùbá maintain a balanced life. All spheres of life as documented by Clarke especially the social systems creates a sense of equal development in public and domestic sphere, across generations, gender and work.

Food cultures, as it were in the pre-colonial era sustained in the communal family system as domestic and commercial cooking technologies were adopted by women. W.H. Clarke observed how thousands of children troop to the streets to have the prepared foods, but with concerns for how healthy it was (Àtàndá, 1978). The scenario in the description about children's health as regards the food given raise questions about dietary components in children's nutrition of which puts into perspective the reasons for colonial developmental interventions in nutrition cultures among Africans, especially for children (Ọládèjọ, 2019).

In the case of Lagos, it is quite different, its level of stable and settled environment when compared to other Yorùbá societies. Nineteenth century cultural forms in Lagos houses suggested that similar to other Yorùbá towns, but by the British take over in 1861, the housing structures changed. The change as reflected in the account of John Whitford narrates Lagos of 1861 as:

> Filthy beach of the wretched naïve tenements and for a considerable distance back from the Lagoon border destroyed them and formed a wide promenade and constructed wide streets for the sea-breeze to blow

through. The consequence is that on the promenade
fronting the Lagoon, merchants have erected brick stores,
with comfortable luxurious dwelling above, fronting the
glorious life-sustaining sea-breeze…markets have been
regulated…soldiers and a police force organized, a race-
course established schools, courthouses. Government
House and barracks build and lastly a cemetery (which
drives a brisk trade) (Whitford 1967:87; Cole, 33).

The description of Lagos encounter of colonial rule showed how fast it experienced
colonialism. The displacement is a passage from tradition to modernity. The African
housing system of huts that vastly accommodated large families wretched off. In the
scheme of tradition, the pre-colonial features were more profound in the politics and
government because the connections with trade networks required the actions of the
King and chiefs.

Dynamic of Family Customs in Colonial Yorùbá Cities

Central to the smallest social unit of the family, is the children. The process
upbringing appeared complicated in the colonial era. Yet much philosophical emphasis
is placed on the necessity of child bearing. The importance of child bearing after
marriage manifest in the Yorùbá cosmology where a newly wedded wife chants:

My inner head, do not let me live
A life of loneliness
My creator do not let me live a
 life of loneliness
Eating alone, drinking alone
Living alone in a parlor like an animal
My inner head do not let me
Live a life of loneliness (Olaiya (2017:620)

For a woman, the custom expects childbirth as the hallmark of success in marriage. Thus,
the Yorùbá ramifications of childbirth dovetail into how Anna Davin described the
politics of reproduction in imperialists' agenda for the colonies (Davin 1997). The
philosophies of family living and child bearing have been identified by scholars in the
concept of Ọmọlúàbí (good manners). Ọmọlúàbí which maps across the constructs of
how Yorùbá theorized and practice tradition suffices. The custom-serving role of
Ọmọlúàbí transcends they pre-colonial ways, rather it revolves the new categories in the
arts and realities of being Yorùbá in the cities and rural areas.

In describing the family in colonial Yorùbá cities, the pre-colonial lineage
contexts put forth was rarely acceptable to colonial administrators. Naming of families
distinctly emerged as it was required in officialdom. Yet, the Yorùbá elderly still
preferred the nomenclature of name calling which Toyin Fálọlá described as mark of
respect in Yorùbá customs. In his memoir; he noted:

It was the British who insisted on the use of last names,
compelling all of us in my family to add Fálọlá to our first
names. But for the British, I would simply be known as
OloruntoyinIsola, both of which were my own names

> people knew I did not give birth to myself, and they knew
> my compound and parents. If there was a need to identify
> me, they could say (Ìṣọ̀lá, the son of Adésínà) or Ìṣọ̀lá plus
> compound's name rather than Ìṣọ̀lá Fálọlá (Fálọlá,
> 2013:150).

Fálọlá's description of his life history on the memoir enables understanding the family culture that sustained relationships, such that he analysed the notions of motherhood and fatherhood. The principle here still suffice communalism because in Yorùbá culture, biological fathers and mothers are not singled out in parenting, rather the identity of parenting are complex and often associated within families and neighbourhood networks. This brings to fore the role of surrogate and foster parenting which was typical of the colonial Ìbàdàn. Therefore, name calling of parents is associated with respectability as it was tagged to eldest child, wifely position, family/lineage affiliation, work, and location. Thus, the Yorùbá concept of father (Bàbá) and Ìyá (mother) was a social institution that had to contend with modernity. The economic and political connotations of the colonial state was not directly critical of this culture, but the structures of formality gradually eroded. This level of formality challenged all forms of Yorùbá cosmology as Fálọlá summed up that:

> In a new world, the government has appointed a
> timekeeper to check ages and give notice when someone
> is due to retire, when he has to renew some licences,
> receive immunization, proceed on leave, or even die
> (Fálọlá, 21).

The new word refered to here was the colonial era, where modern features required details into age, health, qualification and so on. Hence, the sense of being Yorùbá gradually accustomed to the modern times. Atanda (1980) explicityly analysed the colonial developments that unfolded in Yorùbáland.

Going by Sheldon (2017) explanations about the impact of urbanization in Africa, it is vivid that family structures changed and it eroded the communal culture as it were in the pre-colonial Yorùbá societies. As Sheldon noted the changes that:

> In the urban areas, some women were able to find factory
> employment while others entered new occupation as
> profession also such as teachers or nurses, or they worked
> in the informal sector, including market vending. Other
> women continued rural activities such as urban farming
> and beer brewing as a way to support themselves and their
> families; such work indicated the permeable boundaries
> between urban and rural life (Sheldon, 2017:212).

The dynamics meant that women's lives form in different categories and it affected family structures. Urbanization of the colonial era made women change jobs in the city, they became head of household as men abandoned families after perpetrating series of domestic or family violence. Furthermore, the drift to urban areas led women to prostitution as Adérìntọ́ (2015) noted. Phenomenal nature of prostitution in the city proved a lot of risk to rural life and it eroded family structures, while the status of children in illicit relationships aggravated the propensity of criminality in Yorùbá cities of Lagos and Ìbàdàn.

While women sourced for livelihoods in the city, the markets became the space of work and it was of essence that market women questioned the economic implications

of policy imposed by the colonial state. The awkwardness created by colonial policies was manifest in Ìbàdàn of the 1930s when market women specifically noted that such changes affected parental finances to cater for their children (NAI IbaDiv 1/1 1651 Union of Women Traders in Cotton Goods). Concerns raised in the petition by market women affirms the trajectories highlighted by Sheldon (2017) that several policies were designed to favour men in the colonial and postcolonial years without focus on improving women's agricultural work. The concerns raised by market women across Yorùbá cities was germane to understand the phenomenon of crime as economic challenges drifted children to precarious growing conditions. This manifest in the work of Simon Heap (1997) as the phenomenon of pick pocketing pervaded the cities and challenged the security frameworks. The disruptions caused by migration to the cities, resulted in youth joblessness which emanated from dysfunctional family systems. The dysfunctionality in the family structure was aided by disrupted marriages, or marriage commodification coupled with neglect of agriculture. The spreadsheets then indicated that child upbringing was endangered.

However, the colonial state introduced measures to cater for children from birth. Here, the question of modernity was well stated and tied to the politics of imperial expansion (Omobowale, 2018). It was expected that child health in the colonies was vital to increase the population. This agenda manifested from the nineteenth century, when European nations scrambled for colonies. Thus, quality reproduction in the colonies was a strategy to breed healthy citizens aimed to be immersed in the philosophies of the metropole. Anna Davin's (1997) analysis of population and power explained that:

> Around the beginning of this century infant life and child health took on a new importance in public discussion, reinforced by emphasis on the value of a healthy and numerous population as a national resource (Davin, 1997:87).

In practice, this philosophy manifest as there were programmes for the promotion of public health and domestic hygiene through colonial health departments. The policies initiated for mother and child by colonial baby shows were meant to train women to raise children in the modern way (Ọládèjọ, 2019). In the words of Anna Davin, (2017), prizes were distributed to healthy babies at these shows. This concept as it were in Yorùbá societies started in Lagos of the 1920s. (Adérìntọ́, 2012) Newspapers of the colonial era in Lagos featured photographs these shows and it inspired women on the modern ways of childcare.

The notions of a Yorùbá mother gradually emerged in the outlook of women at the shows. Despite the modern way of child care, traditional ways of caring such as backing babies with wrapper meant a lot. The ethnic art of being a Yorùbá women as it were since the pre-colonial era suffice with wrapper tying which was a dress culture that was integrated into good ways of culturally safeguarding babies.

In analyzing the risk status of Yorùbá women as featured in anthropological connotations of the twentieth century, Yorùbá women's work are influenced by environment perceptions. Due to lack of scientific innovation agricultural and food processing work engaged by Yorùbá women indicate hazardous exposures which often affect family health, that is women and children. Risk factors such as processing with fire wood, lack of access to health care impoverished the status of women in Yorùbá cultural systems of the twentieth century. Yet female reproduction rights were not

debatable because women were expected to give birth irrespective of risk exposures. The state of this as it were was summed up by Ọ̀pẹ́fẹ̀yítìmí (2009) that:

> But resulting from "high-risk fertility behaviour caused by lack of family planning procedure in Yorùbá families of old, the health of mothers and even their children stood at risks, in the face of poverty and substandard economic living conditions(Ọ̀pẹ́fẹ̀yítìmí, 2009:44).

Health issues in family and the myths of Yorùbá culture complicate the exposures to risk. Blood as it manifest in the constructs of the family and its binding effect on women and children's health remains perpetually challenging in the mythical interpretations associated with it. In Yorùbá cultural beliefs, menstruation was largely problematic and it had paradoxical effect on the family in the twentieth century. The Yorùbá beliefs, then, was that menstruation was not normal, thus, certain features, such as menstrual pain as it sets in affirms the myth of abnormality. The traditional ways of managing the pains with herbal medicines accounts for risk factors that affects women's reproductive health. Furthermore, Yorùbá metaphysics in family health such as in the female body regarded for instance, breast problems is related Yorùbá charms of *Ẹta* and *Èmù* which is targeted (Ọ̀pẹ́fẹ̀yítìmí, 2009). This belief negates the role of modern health systems in treating breast cancer. The belief system advocates the use of traditional medicine by herbal concoctions which may be effective but lacks modern scientific innovation and precision. The features of these myths constantly resonate the way Yorùbá culture become paradoxical in the historical processes of modernity.

In understanding family structures for women, marriage changed the lifestyle and they tend to form new families. Lloyd (1967) identified the new changes brought by marriage to women and often they tend to live their hometown and move to the city. The fact that spouses are not usually from the same hometown made elite formation of families in the city a modern culture. Making the cities of Lagos and Ibadan evolved from new family systems where educated elites take advantage of colonial infrastructures. As Lloyd (1967) portrayed pictures elite formation of families in the city of Ibadan; a photograph showing a couple and family members in celebration depicts the characteristics of new family systems in Ibadan city. Apart from normal marriages, profound by and influenced by colonialism, certain cultural practices matter in the Yorùbá culture that influence what summarily accounts for foster parenting.

Unlike the cities of Lagos and Ibadan, childhood and parenting in other Yorùbá towns are not typical of that from a nuclear family culture. For example Ololajulo (2018) examined the phenomenon of posthumous paternity in a Yorùbá town of Èkìtì, where marriage and family system revealed dynamics that matter in child upbringing. Furthermore, in the villages of Ibadan of the colonial and immediate post-colonial era, biological parents will off their children to extended family members, (Oral interview with Akinkunmi village Head, October, 2018) such act affirms, the culture of communalism, that maintains the notion, that a child is nursed by cooperation of multiple parenting.

Modernity and Yoruba Childhood Cultures

Just like many other African societies, the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria amidst several encounters with modernity, have over the years developed child-rearing patterns that easily shape children into different sub-cultural ideals. The child-rearing

patterns socialize children to learn their positions and roles in the society. Being a child among the Yoruba comes with many definitions, perspectives, pleasure and social roles. Despite the fact that children are considered as minor, inexperience, weak, new, fresh, but they are also considered as wealth, (marital) security, and insurer of social and biological continuity (Omobowale, Omobowale, and Falase, 2019). These are reflected in some Yoruba adages like *"omoniiyun, omoni ide, omolaso, omolododo eye" (child is wealth, priceless jewel, and hournor);Bolodekosiniile, omoenini n wole de ni, bi a babunilehin, omoenini so fun ni, omoniase yin de" (In Olode's absence, her/his child holdforth, ….…..).* Apart from children being social and biological security they also have roles to play in the development and sustainace of the society, for instance the Yoruba will say "owo omode ko to pepe, to agbalagba kowo kerengbe" meaning although a child cannot reach the roof, but an adult's hand cannot also enter into gourd".

Over the years many values and practices pertaining to child rearing among the Yoruba have changed dramatically, even agents of socialization, for instance, the education system, diet, language, childhood games, and child right/cultural rites. In the past many children learn from the family occupation and thus find their livelihood to adulthood, but since the introduction of western education, schooling became an integral part of childhood among the Yoruba. In the past schooling start from about age 5 or 6 when the hand can conveniently be wrapped across the head to reach the ear lobe (ti owo ba ti to eti), but in contemporary times, due to increasing urbanization, and capitalism among other factors, schooling starts from "birth" for many children, this new education pattern is not devoid of negative social and health consequences for children involved.

Another integral part of childhood among the Yoruba is the children diet. Food and drinks that are associated with children. In the past, "proper" food like cooked beans, rice, fried plantain, amala, eba, fufu, akara, pap, fried yam, and boiled yam were more associate with children diet, but in the contemporary times the Yoruba childhood diet has been Macdonalized and indominilized, in the representation of fast foods with associated health risk to children one of which is the current increasing rate of incidence of over-weight and obesity among Nigerian children and adolescents (Oyom et al 2016). In the past childhood games are associated with outdoor activities. A healthy child in the past will engage in games that encouraged movement like jumping, running, clapping, dancing among others. The story telling was a sure means of passing social norms and values to children. The television stations had time fixed for children entertainment and the viewing times do not deprive them their sleeping hours. In the contemporary time childhood game now includes different electronic games devoid of physical exercises. These games are advantageous to children but its demerits include physical inactivity which may be a risk factor to overweight and obesity, addiction and game addiction has been classified as disease and inability to socialize with others.

The contemporary Yoruba childhood is also marked with unlimited and uncontrolled access to cartoon stations even to the deprivation of sleeping hours for children. The contemporary child right acts prohibit certain practices associated with childhood rites among the Yoruba, for instance, Female Genital Cutting (FGC). In the past one of the important rites for childhood especially for a female child is genital circumcision. Female circumcision has many health problems and with the child right acts and many enlightenment campaigns against FGC, it has reduced drastically. Another important observable pattern in Yoruba child rearing pattern is the increasing individualism in living pattern. The Yoruba of the past were more communal in living pattern, houses are built in compounds and everyone in the whole community has a social responsibility of rearing neighbours child. This communal child rearing is evident

in Yoruba saying that "*Ojukan ni m bimo, Igba oju ni o nwo*" meaning a child is given birth by a parent, but the rearing is for all. In the contemporary time, many urban dwellers hardly know their neighbors not to talk of helping in the "social child rearing". Many children can no longer play with their neigbours, they are so restricted that all they do is to watch television and play games, with little or no physical activities. All these changes in the child- rearing pattern are direct and indirect results of changing parenting styles of the Yoruba in the contemporary times, especially among the city dwellers.

Shifting Dynamics of Parenting in Contemporary Yoruba Cities

Among the elites, parenting became sophisticated and intertwined with the aspirations for western education. Specifically, Nigerian children became a focal point in the policy scheme of childcare in Britain. This was due to the fact that Nigerian women flocked Britain to study for higher education. In the words of Miss H.L. Harford: "The home countries are full of Nigerian babies" (Nigerian Students 1964).

This shows the kinds of dynamics of modern parenting which the British called for the establishment of private foster home (Bailkin 2009). The traditional way of foster parenting became desired in a modern way in Britain. Hence it is desirable to understand the fact that the Yorùbá culture of parenting in the immediate postcolonial era manifest as a cultural method where the extended family mattered. Modern, postcolonial parents among the Yorùbá of Southwest Nigeria valued exposure to western education and it was aided by the introduction of free education. (Ajayi, 2008) while it is understandable that modernity changed the dynamics of parenting, the non-literates still adopted the foster method and it reflected in the apprenticeship system. Oladejo (2017) articulated how Yorùbá culture of parenting influenced vocational learning and apprenticeship. The child at a teenage age is taken to learn a vocation under the cultural meaning of foster parenting with a learned crafts professional. Without any form of learning contract, the child spends years of teenage and adolescent learning a craft. This was similar to the descriptions given by Fafunwa (1973) in the component of the seven cardinal principles of Traditional African Education. As it were in the colonial era, marriage and motherhood subsists as a culture adopted. Against Anna Davin's explanation, the philosophy of reproduction among Yorùbá was not for state expansion, rather as prestige. Families as it were in the pre-colonial era were maintained in issues of reproduction which was cultural but was reinforced by the colonial state. The cost and easiness in the production of babies was enhanced by antenatal and postnatal care. Hence, towards the end of the twentieth century, the hope to have large families and successful children increased population. Inspite of modernity, the need to have children was a prestige and increased family worth. Spectacular was the fact that in Yorùbá families, western education was vital and an end that increased the population of enlightened citizens.

Successful motherhood in Yorùbá culture is as measured when a daughter/son gives birth to the first child. Important naming festivities are held to publicly entertain guests and the grandmother displayed her fulfillment by inviting friends and associates. Sheldon (2017) regarded this as part of urban changes that define the status of Yorùbá women. It is important to note that the culture of uniform ceremonial dressing (*Aṣọ Ẹbí*) which had been part of the Yorùbá family culture since the 1930s, (Délànọ̀, 1930) usually reinvigorate as a marker of identity and social cohesion among work, religious, political, familial and group affiliations. The cultural behaviours evolving from uniform dressing however remains paradoxical in contemporary times as economic power and class determined the quality of *Aṣọ-Ẹbí* used. Hence, class status determined the layers

of *Aṣọ-Ẹbí* practices among the Yorùbá. Often, it remains a family social culture which generations of Yoruba children socialize into. And the intra-gender roles of motherhood, parenting, are embedded in the cultural ways.

In contemporary times however, the dynamics of parenting is laced with religious interpretations based on Christian and Islamic principles. The question of being Yoruba in child upbringing is subjective to a peripheral status, because the content and contexts of education are being modified to suit an emerging scientific generation, highly faith conscious.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the phases of parenting and childhood among the Yorùbá of Southwest Nigeria are multifaceted. The Yorùbá concept of *Òhùn bí ẹni, kò tó ònwo ẹni* meaning the biological parent is not as important as the foster parents speaks a lot about childhood experiences. In this chapter, it is established that modernity and British colonialism played vital roles in the making of modern family, child and parents. Understanding these perspectives is considered as a nuanced reality that unravels class status, and all influenced by dynamics of the post-colonial era. The understanding of postcolonial era is itself a long historical process in Africa. Hence there are emerging research themes in the dynamics of culture and childhood issues, especially among the Yorùbá.

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SECTION B

CHILD LABOUR AND LIVELIHOOD

CHAPTER FIVE

CHILD LABOUR AND CASSAVA FARMING IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA 2004- 2021

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Introduction

Child labour is not a recent phenomenon, but in recent times It has been recognised as a developmental and ethical challenge and has garnered global attention, especially because of its widespread and how vulnerable children are, according to ILO, 60 % of child labourers work in agriculture, livestock to mention a few. (ILO, 1996). In Nigeria, the high rate of child labour cannot be overlooked, with an estimated 8.7 million child labourers according to the Bureau of Statistics as of 2019 with a lot of them in the Agricultural sector with 60 % of child labour involved.(FMANR , 2006)

Nigeria has been trying to combat child labour through policy implementations, and one of the notable policies since Nigerian gained independence is the Nigerian labour act was amended to classify a child as a young person under 15 years in 2004, this implementation informs to start date if the research, Also in 2021 Nigeria validated the National policy on child labour and the National action plan for the elimination of child labour which informs the terminal day for this research work. The most recent is the Child Right Act in 2003 Nigeria.

Thus, the importance of understanding child labour in Nigeria, most importantly child labour in cassava production in South Western Nigeria makes this work viable. It is against this backdrop that this paper aims to examine the utilization of child labour in cassava farming in South Western Nigeria, it will go further to analyse how these children end up as child labourers, and how this has affected the children. Lastly, it will explore the role of government in combating child labour and how effective the policies put in place to address child labour in agriculture

This work adopts the use of a historical approach in gathering and interpreting of data. This includes the use of both primary and secondary data. Primary data includes newspapers and archival materials. Secondary sources include books, journals

Conceptual clarification

Child

There are several definitions of who a child is, it has been undergoing changes and transformation in definition and to a large extent there is no absolute definition. According to section 25 of the children and young person's ordinance of 1943, a child is a boy or girl under fourteen (Aderinto S. 2012 p 243) Another definition of a child is someone or an individual under the age of 18 years age. (Ogunleye K Y., Yekini O.T

and Adebo A.A. 2007. P62). In relation to this work a child is someone who is below the legal age of 18 years.

Child Labour

There is no precise and widely accepted definition of the term child labour, thus, the definition varies from one country to another, but some scholars have seen Child labour as the exploitation of children from enjoying their basic human rights. It is also referred to as a working child who has been engaged in income generation. Historically child labour is seen as the practice of having children for economic activities. The term child labour has two perspectives, namely economic practice and social evil and exploitative. From the economic practice perspective, child labour is "admission to work or employment of children in economic activities to increase income for their family" while the social evil and exploitative view sees it as a negative social construct that exposes children to working employment that is hazardous, and disadvantageous to a child's physical and mental development. (Momen N. 2020, p1-3) This work adopts the UNICEF features of child labour as its yardstick for definition, This is that child labour is any job that is a full-time, that puts social and phycological pressure in performing them which involves horrible situations, insufficient wage, extreme responsibility that destroys the dignity and self-confidence of a child, that prevent a child from going to school and is exploitative and affects all-round development of a child.

An overview of the Global perspective on Child labour

Globally, about nearly 250 million children are estimated to be engaged in child labour around the world and about 70% or 170 million work in agriculture. (Human right watch , 2006). It is important to note that child labour is not just limited to the poor country of the world, it is a part of life of the poor sectors in different societies but the developing countries have being faced with the worse features of child labour. In Brazil, 18 per cent of the workforce is constituted by children, in Nigeria, an estimated 12 million children are work, In India there is an estimated 44 million children workers . Also in Pakistan there are records of 7.5 million to 10 million child labourers (Boyd R. 1994, p154-155).

Also, Child labour is mostly concentrated in Asia and Africa which amounts to about 90 percent of total child employment. (Adeoti , Coster and Gbolagun. 2013 p47) Child labour has been recognised as a capitalist expropriation, it is not a new ethical and development challenge in Africa, especially since post-colonial time (Aderinto S. 2012 , 243) In Africa, child labour has reached an alarming rate with over 60 million children between the age of 5 to 14 involved in child labour, from working in gold and salt mines , to plantations, slaughterhouses, as domestic workers, street vendors , child vendors to mention a few. (Kpodar T. 2002. P 32)

The areas which have been recognised globally to be at the forefront of child labour and child work is direct employment in industries, sometimes children are sold into these industries by their parents, example of these industries are carpet-making industries, gem polishing and garment making industries to mention a few. The second globally recognised area which child labour is made use of is the agricultural farm labour, child labour in this sector constitute part of family labour, there is also the presence of forced labour from these farms to urban centres . The third area is the informal sector area which is majorly characterised by the worst forms of child labour and illicit acts such as child prostitutes, street vendors, begging to mention a few. This sector is very alarming

and detrimental to the children. The fourth aspect recognised globally for child labour is the household and domestic labour, in this area, children are made to work for long hours as house helps and domestic servants. (Boyd R. 1994, p156-157).

The other area where the use of child labour is prevalent is as child soldiers and most of the time, these children die in armed conflict. (Kpodar T. 2002 p 32). This is detrimental to children and there is a need to tackle it at a global level, this is evident in the global and legislative means by which international organisations have embarked.

Nigeria and the Presence of Child Labour

In Nigeria, child labour is a severe problem. Child labour in Nigeria has taken a different transformation since the precolonial times, thus, what cannot be overlooked is how children have been an integral part of the economy but have an invisible category of the workforce (Aderinto S. 2012 p243) An overview of child labour work by sectors and activities shows children working in the Agricultural sector, Industrial sector, service sector, and several forms of labour

 Scholars and researchers have recognised that children in Nigeria have been subjected to the worst forms of child labour such as in illicit activities, commercial sex exploitation, farm labour workers used in armed conflicts, working in mining sites to mention a few. for the illicit activities that is the worst form of labour, research has shown that Nigeria among other countries is the source, transit and destination for forced labour, there is evidence of sex trafficking of both children and adults. Girl children are used for domestic service and sex trafficking while the boy child is recruited in domestic service, street vendors, agriculture, mining, begging to mention a few. Benin city is one of the trafficking hub, while in the north, there is an increase of child labour most especially with the boy child, they used for forced labour and are being forced to beg, while some of the boy child are recruited to fight and become child soldier. (Nigerian moderate Advance. 2021. P1-p2)

One of the effects of this is that children are no longer allowed to be children and there is an increase of children dropping out of school. According to UNESCO, at least 10.5 million children were out of school in 2012 and this is because of several reasons such as poverty, economic hardship, kidnapping, village raids to mention a few.

Reasons why children end up in child labour

Several reasons have led to some of these children ending up as child labourers, one of the most recognised reasons is poverty and lifecycle of extreme poverty. Thus it can be said that the use of child labour in general and agriculture in particular is attributed to the poverty status of the parent and child's household.

Other reason on how children are found in the position of child labour has been traced to children being held as debt bondage by their employers, this is sometimes possible when there is a repayment to be a made , or a family debt. Also, children are also trafficked from another country. (Adeoti , Coster and Gbolagun. 2013 p47)

Other reasons why children end up as child labourers have been traced to the child being disadvantaged in the society, the presence of war, lack of education and basic literacy, minority status and also the absence of protective mechanisms for the children.

It is perceived that the capitalist system and its quest for cheap labour is also one of the reason why child labour is an issue that affects the globe. This is because, "capitalist

system continues to increase the economic motivation for the cheapest source of labour, and in this case, it is child labour" a global example of this the carpet industry in India (Boyd R. 1994, p159).

Child Labour in Agriculture in Nigeria

Child labour exists in different sector of the economy, but for this research, child labour in the agricultural sector with specific focus on cassava farming is being looked at. According to ILO most children who are working in rural areas are found in agriculture and the agricultural sector generally have been said to have the largest share of working children (ILO 1996). Some scholars have referred to the child labour in agriculture as "informal child labour" which simply denotes children who are working in small family shops and farms. (Odinachuachkwu and Amanze. 2013 p2). In Nigeria and the South West in particular, there have been records of the usage of child labour according to FMARD child labour are used in some of these farms, one of the reasons have been traced to the fact that Nigeria is the largest cassava producer in the world (FAO, 2008)

The utilization of child labour in Agriculture is on the high side which is detrimental to a child's health physically, mentally and educationally. Some of the usage of child labour can be seen in agriculture, it ranges from production of coffee, working on cotton farms, children working on tea farms, children working on manioc/ cassava farms, also child labour is used on rice farms and tobacco farms. for cassava, there has been s steady growth.

Apart from food and cash crop farms, it is evident that child labour is exploited in fishing activities such as mending of net activities. Additionally, another aspect that children are used or forced to work in is the herding of livestock, this includes cattle, goat, chicken and ram rearing. Children are forced to clean the surrounding area of the form, made to gather grass or feed the livestock.

Child labour and cassava farming in South Western Nigeria

In Nigeria at large and South western Nigeria to be precise, cassava is recognised as one of the most important crops and it plays an important and dominant role in the economy. Cassava has been documented to serve about 50 million Nigerians, meeting up to 70 percent of the daily calories intake. Among the different food crops grown, Cassava also generates 25 percent of cash income (Odinakachkwu and Amanze. 2013 p2) Also, Nigeria is the highest producers of cassava in the world and the production and processing of cassava involve a lot of activities and agricultural farm labour. The geographical location of South western Nigeria covers about 12 per cent of Nigeria land mass, and it comprises six states namely Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Lagos and Ekiti. In these states most especially Oyo and Ogun state, cassava production is prominent. Among the five geopolitical zone, South west is known to be the largest producers of cassava.

Agricultural farm labour with regards to cassava production is mostly organised around families, and hired very expensive labour. The labour most times that non is manual in nature, it is very intensive and rudimentary. In cassava farms, there is division of labour which is mostly along gender lines. Child labour is used for planting and cultivation of cassava, this activity involves long hours of work on the farms and fields. Sometimes

the children start working on these farms from early childhood and spend hours in the farm which affects the child ability to attend school.

One of the activities that children perform in cassava farming is weeding. Due to the nature of cassava been a long duration crop, it tends to need a lot of attention for maintenance especially because of the fast pace at which weed grows. Thus, weed has been recognised as one of the constraints to cassava production, and it involves hours of weeding to keep the farm clean, this involves women, children and sometimes men. In some cases, the cassava farms become faced with overgrown weeds and extra hands are needed, this leads to Children being withdrawn from school to help their parents to weed. (Nigerian Tribune. May 5 2020)

When it comes to the harvesting of cassava, the utilization of child labour cannot be overlooked. These children sometimes endure harsh work conditions and spend long hours harvesting. The impact of this on a child is that the child has limited opportunity to attend schools, acquire skills and training which in future affects the possibility of the child's advancement economically and socially.

Processing of cassava produce which involves peeling and slicing of cassava involves s long stretch of either sitting down or standing up, in the long run will affect the childs health and physical development as there would be complaints of body pains, possible injuries from slicing cassava to mention a few. Child labour is utilized when trying to achieve the final products of cassava and also marketing cassava products. The effect of this on the child is that, when the child is marketing the finished goods or hawking on the street, they tend to see children their age attending school, this affects the child phycological and mentally.

According to research children between the age of 9-11 years are more in child labour force for the production of cassava and most of the children who work on these farms are working for their parents, in order words the cassava farm belongs to their parents. These children work with dangerous tools, sometimes the children helps in applying agrochemicals which in turn affects them health wise and they sometimes have physical injuries and developmental harms. This have been evident in Oyo and Ogun states. there is also evidence of children between the age of 14-17 working in almost all farm activities such as field preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting transportation and processing of cassava (Adeoti , Coster and Gbolagun. p49-50)

The impact of Child labour on children

The increase of child labour is an issue to be tackled especially because of the several impacts it has on the children and society at large. The impact of child labour on children is multifaced, it is important to note that child labour of any sort is detrimental to a child and has affected the children academically or educationally, socially, health-wise, and mentally. It also have a strong implication and serious consequences on the psychological development of children.(Momen N. 2020, p2)

Educationally, child labour affects access to educational institutions which in turn affects a child's academic performance. Once this happens, the child then lags educationally and there is a negative consequence on the cognitive development on the child or children. This in turn reinforces a cycle of unskilled manpower and the persistence of poverty. (Momen N. 2020, p1) In the case of children working in cassava

farms, because of the long hours needed in work, they are unable to go to school which compromises their education and undermines the children's future.

Child labour also affects a child, the children who are exposed to child labour is more times than not exposed to violence ,

The role and impact of government activities to combating child labour

In tackling child labour, several legal, administrative, and political measures have been taken to try and eradicate the worst forms of child labour and in Nigeria, the government have played an important role in combating child labour, this has been done through the creation of acts, policies and plans. Also government have created organizational bodies and institutional mechanisms saddled with the mantle to tackle child labour, and different programs have been introduced, Also government have adopted and ratified some international child labour conventions to tackle child labour. Additionally, the federal government have partnered with NGOs, international organisations etc. in a bid to tackle this issue. All these will be discussed below.

In Nigeria before independence, one of the most comprehensive legislation to protect children was introduced in 1943, this was called the children and Young Persons Ordinance. The ordinance constructs a child to be a boy or girl under the age of 14, it further argues that a child needs to be protected by law, This ordinance was also created to provide a tool to persecute any offence against children. (Aderinto S. 2012. P 246)

Also to tackle child labour,, most especially the worst forms of child labour, Nigeria validated the National policy on child labour and the National action plan for the elimination of child labour in 2021 which is to run from 2021-2025.

It has been recognised that poverty is one of the reasons why the utilization of child labour is on the increase, thus in a bid to tackle poverty and reduce child labour, the Ministry of Labour and employment have created a program to provide for vulnerable households with seed capitals to fund new businesses, especially in areas where there is high rate of child labour. (Nigerian moderate Advance. 2021. p1)

Another effort to tackle child labour is through the Child Act Right. The act codifies issues on rights of children in Nigeria based on the principle enshrined in the 1989 Convention on the right of a Child (CRC) and the 1990 African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of a Child.

Additionally, combating the presence and increase of child labour is deemed a serious issue which has led to the federal government ratifying all key international conventions concerning child labour. Some of these conventions are ILO C. 138 minimum age, ILO C. 182. The worst form of child labour, UN CRC, UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflicts, UN CRC protocol on the sales of children, child prostitution and child pornography. There is also Palermo Protocol on trafficking persons. (Nigerian moderate Advance. 2021. p3)

In a bid to enforce the laws on child labour, the Nigerian government has established some institutional mechanisms in several agencies and bodies such as the labour inspections of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, NAPTIP , and Nigeria Police, to mention a few. (Nigerian moderate Advance. 2021. p3-5)

A question that comes to mind is how effective the policies put in place to address child labour in agriculture. Thus, in tackling child labour in Agriculture and cassava

production, The federal government in partnership with ILO have introduced and participated in the Acceleration for the elimination of child labour in supply chains in Africa, This is an ILO-sponsored program project. (Nigerian moderate Advance. 2021 p7)

Some of the outcomes of government efforts and activities are evident in 2021, when it was recorded that 1,1193 children were rescued from child labour situation, and 120 children were provided with social services. Also, in November 2020 according to the Ministry of Defence, there were no children in military detention. There was also a provision of social programs and shelters (Nigerian moderate Advance. 2021. p6)

Challenges faced by government to tackle child labour

Despite these activities to tackle child labour, there are still evident gaps and challenges with the operations and implementations of activities to tackle child labour in Nigeria.

1. One of the things that has hindered adequate enforcement of the child labour force is lack of resources
2. Another challenge is limited man power and insufficient child labour inspectors.
3. Lack of infrastructure to monitor the rights that are agreed on between states.

Possible prevention and solutions

Tackling child labour is not an easy fit, it would take everyone from the littlest structure of the society to the global level to tackle. From the family to the local community, to the state level, federal level, regional and continental level and global level. Also, to tackle child labour and prevent it, there is a need for a body that is functional to protect child rights and properly address disadvantaged children.

Other possible solutions and preventive measures are

1. Improving access to education
2. Mobilization of public support
3. Children should not be employed in cassava production farms
4. More poverty alleviation measures and activities should be put in place
5. Policy creation and implementation to protect children and eradicate children from work force or regulate their work hours.
6. Intensification of public enlightenment and adult literacy
7. Creation of a functioning and effective mechanism to monitor and enforce the acts and rights to combat child labour.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the prevalence of child labour is a challenge to development around the world, this paper has given an overview of the concept of child and child labour. The work examines the utilization of child labour in cassava farming in South Western Nigeria, It has gone further to analyse how these children end up as child labourers and the reason why. A question this work has looked at is how child labour has affected the children. The work has also explored the role of government in combating child labour and how effective the policies put in place to address child labour in agriculture.

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CHAPTER SIX

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CHILD LABOUR AND APPRENTICESHIP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The impact of child labour and apprenticeship on the development of entrepreneurial skills is explored in this study. The research employed the qualitative research design with a sample size of ten (10) respondents who are mainly stakeholders within Ilorin business metropolis. The results show that children who are exposed to labour and apprenticeship at a young age tend to develop strong entrepreneurial skills, such as resilience, adaptability, and risk-taking. However, the study also found that there are negative consequences of child labour, such as hindering access to education and potential exploitation. On the other hand, apprenticeship programs were found to have a positive impact on the development of technical skills and knowledge. The findings of this study suggest that a combination of structured mentorship and entrepreneurship education introduced in primary and secondary schools, with proper guidance and regulations, may aid in the development of well-rounded and successful future entrepreneurs.

Introduction

Child labour remains a persistent and complex issue affecting millions of children worldwide. Defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2015) as work that deprives children of their childhood, potential, and dignity, child labour is a violation of fundamental human rights and a barrier to sustainable development. Despite global efforts to eradicate child labour, it continues to exist in various forms, ranging from hazardous work in mines and factories to domestic labour and agricultural tasks (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, 2019). The consequences of child labour extend far beyond the immediate exploitation of children, impacting their education, health, and future opportunities (Akor, 2015).

One often overlooked aspect of child labour is its profound impact on the development of entrepreneurial skills among affected individuals. Entrepreneurial skills encompass a broad range of competencies, including creativity, problem-solving, risk-taking, and resilience, essential for navigating the complexities of the modern economy. While conventional wisdom may suggest that exposure to exploitative labour at a young age stunts skill development, emerging evidence suggests a more nuanced relationship between child labour experiences and the cultivation of entrepreneurial mindset and abilities. In countries where there are few opportunities for decent work requiring advanced skills, and where returns to education are therefore limited, parents have less reason to delay their children's entry into work and to incur the costs associated with their children's schooling. By the same reasoning, in countries where the demand for

skilled labour is high, and returns to education are therefore significant, families have a strong incentive to postpone their children's transition to work and instead invest in their education (ILO, 2015).

Simultaneously, apprenticeship programs offer a promising pathway for skill development and economic empowerment, particularly for vulnerable populations. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, apprenticeships provide individuals with practical training, mentorship, and hands-on experience in various trades and professions. By immersing apprentices in real-world work environments and facilitating knowledge transfer from experienced practitioners, apprenticeship programs foster the acquisition of technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial skills critical for success in today's dynamic labour market.

In this exploration, we delve into the intricate interplay between child labour, apprenticeship, and the development of entrepreneurial skills. We seek to uncover how experiences of child labour, often associated with exploitation and deprivation, shape the entrepreneurial capacities of individuals, and examine the role of apprenticeship programs in mitigating the adverse effects of early labour engagement while fostering skill acquisition and empowerment.

At the heart of our inquiry lies a fundamental question: How do early life experiences of child labour influence the development of entrepreneurial skills, and to what extent can apprenticeship programs serve as a remedial mechanism to enhance skill development and economic opportunities for affected individuals? By addressing this question, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics underlying skill formation and entrepreneurship in contexts marked by adversity and inequality.

Through an interdisciplinary lens drawing on insights from economics, psychology, sociology, and development studies, we aim to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of child labour and apprenticeship, shedding light on their implications for individual well-being, social mobility, and economic development. By synthesizing existing research, empirical evidence, and real-world case studies, we endeavor to provide a comprehensive analysis of the pathways through which early life experiences shape entrepreneurial aspirations, capabilities, and outcomes.

Moreover, our exploration is guided by a commitment to advancing evidence-based policy and practice aimed at addressing the root causes of child labour while harnessing the potential of apprenticeship programs to foster skill development and entrepreneurship among marginalized populations. By identifying effective interventions and innovative approaches, we aspire to inform policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders engaged in efforts to promote inclusive economic growth, social justice, and sustainable development.

In Nigeria, the issue of child labour persists as a significant social and economic challenge, with millions of children engaged in exploitative work instead of attending school or acquiring skills for their future (Larai et al, 2022). Yet, amidst this adversity, lies the potential for transformative change. This introduction explores the nexus between child labour, apprenticeship, and the cultivation of entrepreneurial skills within

the Nigerian context. As we delve into this complex terrain, we aim to unravel how early experiences of child labour shape entrepreneurial aspirations and capabilities, while also examining the role of apprenticeship programs in providing a pathway for skill development and economic empowerment. Through this exploration, we seek to shed light on innovative approaches and policy interventions that can harness the entrepreneurial potential of Nigeria's youth, driving sustainable development and social progress in the nation.

In the subsequent sections of this exploration, we will delve deeper into the dynamics of child labour and apprenticeship, examine their respective impacts on the development of entrepreneurial skills, and explore strategies for leveraging apprenticeship programs to empower individuals and communities affected by child labour. Through rigorous analysis and critical reflection, we seek to illuminate pathways toward a more equitable and prosperous future, where every child has the opportunity to realize their full potential and contribute to the creation of a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Literature review

The concept of child labour, apprenticeship and entrepreneurial skill development

The intersection between child labour, apprenticeship, and the development of entrepreneurial skills has been a subject of considerable interest and debate in both academic circles and policy discourse. Child labour, often associated with negative connotations, is prevalent in many developing countries where children are engaged in various forms of work from an early age (Akor, 2015). On the other hand, apprenticeship, when properly regulated and structured, can serve as a pathway to acquiring valuable skills and knowledge. This literature review aims to explore the complex relationship between child labour, apprenticeship, and the development of entrepreneurial skills, shedding light on both the challenges and opportunities inherent in this dynamic.

Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, potential, dignity, and is harmful to their physical and mental development. It is often driven by poverty, lack of access to education, and cultural factors. Studies have shown that engagement in child labour can have detrimental effects on children's health, education, and overall well-being (Basu, 1999). Moreover, the type of work children are engaged in may not necessarily contribute to skill development, but rather perpetuate cycles of poverty and exploitation (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005).

However, it is essential to recognize that not all forms of child labour are inherently negative. In certain contexts, children engage in work that provides them with practical skills and knowledge relevant to entrepreneurial activities. For example, children involved in family businesses or small-scale enterprises often acquire hands-on experience in various aspects of entrepreneurship, including resource management, customer relations, and basic financial literacy (Beegle, Dehejia, & Gatti, 2009).

Unlike exploitative forms of child labour, apprenticeship programs offer structured learning experiences designed to equip individuals with practical skills and knowledge within a specific trade or profession. Apprenticeships provide opportunities for mentorship, hands-on training, and exposure to real-world business operations. Research

suggests that participation in apprenticeship programs can lead to improved employability, higher wages, and long-term career success (Lerman & McKernan, 2008).

Moreover, apprenticeship has been identified as a valuable pathway for fostering entrepreneurial skills among youth. By working closely with experienced mentors and gaining firsthand experience in business operations, apprentices can develop a range of competencies essential for entrepreneurship, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and leadership (Zibrowius, 2017). Apprenticeship programs that integrate entrepreneurship education alongside technical training have shown promising results in nurturing the next generation of business leaders (Ertel, 2020).

The relationship between child labour, apprenticeship, and the development of entrepreneurial skills is multifaceted and context-dependent. While child labour in its exploitative forms can hinder skill development and perpetuate cycles of poverty, there are instances where children engaged in productive work within supportive environments gain valuable entrepreneurial insights. Moreover, apprenticeship programs offer a structured pathway for skill acquisition, including entrepreneurial competencies, thereby mitigating the negative impacts of child labour and empowering youth to pursue economic opportunities.

However, it is crucial to address the systemic barriers that perpetuate exploitative child labour practices and ensure that apprenticeship programs are accessible, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of marginalized communities. Policy interventions aimed at combating child labour should prioritize education, social protection, and vocational training initiatives that equip children and youth with the skills and resources necessary to thrive in the labour market (Cunningham & Talbot, 2014).

In conclusion, the impact of child labour and apprenticeship on the development of entrepreneurial skills is a complex and nuanced issue that requires careful consideration of socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and policy frameworks. While exploitative child labour poses significant challenges to skill development and well-being, apprenticeship programs offer a viable pathway for nurturing entrepreneurial talent and empowering youth to create positive change in their communities. Moving forward, efforts to address child labour and promote apprenticeship should be guided by principles of equity, social justice, and sustainable development, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to realize their full potential as future entrepreneurs and leaders.

Theoretical review

Entrepreneurship is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by various theoretical perspectives that aim to explain the motivations, behaviors, and outcomes associated with entrepreneurial activities.

Some Psychological theories, including the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), emphasize the role of cognitive processes and social influences in shaping entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors. TPB suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence individuals'

intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activities. SCT, on the other hand, emphasizes the impact of observational learning, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations on entrepreneurial behavior. While Resource Based Value (RBV) posits that a firm's competitive advantage stems from its unique bundle of resources and capabilities. In the context of entrepreneurship, RBV highlights the importance of leveraging internal and external resources effectively to create value and sustain competitive advantage. Entrepreneurs who can identify and exploit underutilized resources are more likely to succeed in dynamic and uncertain environments (Grant, 1991).

On the other hand, Institutional theory suggests that entrepreneurs are influenced by formal and informal institutional contexts, including regulatory frameworks, cultural norms, and social expectations. Institutional entrepreneurs seek to create, disrupt, or change institutions to address societal needs or capitalize on emerging opportunities. Understanding institutional pressures and constraints is essential for navigating the socio-political landscape and shaping entrepreneurial strategies. Whereas the network theory emphasizes the significance of social networks and relationships in facilitating entrepreneurial activities, here, entrepreneurs leverage social capital, including ties to mentors, investors, suppliers, and customers, to access resources, information, and support. Strong networks provide opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and market access, enhancing the likelihood of entrepreneurial success.

These theories offer complementary insights into the complex phenomenon of entrepreneurship, highlighting the interplay between individual attributes, environmental factors, and strategic actions in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes. While no single theory provides a comprehensive explanation of entrepreneurship, integrating multiple perspectives can enrich our understanding of the dynamic processes underlying entrepreneurial activities

Empirical review

The review focuses on empirical evidence derived from surveys, case studies, and longitudinal studies conducted in various contexts globally. These studies show a positive impact of apprenticeship on entrepreneurial skills acquisition, but mixed effects of child labour on entrepreneurial skills were evident.

Ertel (2020) demonstrated that structured apprenticeship programs significantly contribute to the development of entrepreneurial skills among participants. These programs provide hands-on training, mentorship, and exposure to real-world business environments, leading to improved problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, and business acumen.

Kanu, (2020). highlighted the role of apprenticeship in fostering creativity, innovation, and risk-taking behaviors among Nigerian Igbo youths. Participants in apprenticeship programs demonstrated higher levels of entrepreneurial intentions and aspirations to start and manage businesses.

Ogunleye and Ajao (2018) revealed that structured apprenticeship programs in Nigeria significantly contribute to the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among participants. These programs provide practical training, mentorship, and exposure to business

operations, leading to improved problem-solving abilities, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

A longitudinal study by Salami and Sule (2019) indicated that children involved in apprenticeship-like activities during early adolescence showed increased entrepreneurial self-esteem, leadership capabilities, and business management skills.

Zibrowius (2017) found that apprenticeship opportunities facilitate the acquisition of creativity, innovation, and risk-taking capabilities, essential for entrepreneurial success. Participants in apprenticeship programs often demonstrate higher levels of entrepreneurial intentions and venture creation propensity.

Larai, et al. (2022) identified challenges associated with exploitative child labour in Nigeria, including limited access to education, poor working conditions, and lack of legal protections. However, they also noted that children engaged in family-based businesses or vocational training gained valuable entrepreneurial experiences and practical skills.

Beegle et al. (2009) conducted longitudinal research indicating that children involved in apprenticeship-like activities during their formative years develop higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy, initiative, and motivation to pursue entrepreneurial careers.

Basu (1999) highlighted that while exploitative forms of child labour can hinder skill development and perpetuate poverty cycles, certain types of work, such as involvement in family businesses or informal apprenticeships, can provide valuable entrepreneurial experiences. Children engaged in supportive work environments gain practical skills, resource management capabilities, and business insights.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative research design, which was found to be the most appropriate because it sought to understand the attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of the respondents. Furthermore, this methodology is commonly utilized when the investigator wishes to evaluate the independent and dependent variables via observation or interview. All businesses in Ilorin metropolis that hire people under the age of 18, particularly for apprenticeship or mentorship, were included in the study's population. By using the purposive sampling technique to select businesses that were found to have the category of such personnel, the sample size of ten (10) firms was established.

Result

The qualitative analysis results provide a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and contextual nuances related to child labour, apprenticeship, and entrepreneurship skill development in Nigeria. The thematic insights and policy recommendations derived from the analysis contribute valuable insights to inform evidence-based strategies, interventions, and advocacy efforts aimed at creating inclusive and empowering opportunities for youth in the Nigerian context.

Table 1. Code assigned to participants

S/N	RESPONDENTS	CODE ASSIGNED
1.	Employers/Mentors	M1, M2, M3, M4, M5
2.	Activists, Educationists, Parents	S1, S2, S3,
3.	Social workers, Government official	A4, A5

Theme One: Specific Child Labour Types
- Street Vending
- Agricultural Activities
- Craftsmanship
- Family Business Involvement
- Service Sector Engagement

Theme Two: Apprenticeship Programmes and Entrepreneurial Skills
- Hands-on Experience
- Mentorship and Guidance
- Entrepreneurial Mindset
- Creativity and Innovation
- Business Management Skills

Response to research questions

Research question 1: What are the specific types of child labour prevalent in Ilorin metropolis, and how do they impact the development of entrepreneurial skills among children?

Based on the interviews conducted with the participants, street vending, agricultural activities, craftsmanship, family business involvement, and service sector engagement formed the major types of child labour in Ilorin metropolis. Some of the views of the participants are given below:

According to M1, he opined that:

> *"From my perspective, one prevalent type of child labour in Ilorin metropolis is street hawking, where children as young as 10 years old are seen selling various items on the streets. This type of labour can have both positive and negative impacts on the development of entrepreneurial skills among children. Street hawking being a common form of child labour here. It provides children with hands-on experience in selling and managing finances, which can contribute to their entrepreneurial skills development."*

The view of M2 and S1 is that:

> *"As an employer in Ilorin, I've observed that children often work in informal sectors like car washing, petty trading, and domestic chores. These experiences can teach them valuable skills such as time management, problem-solving, and teamwork, which are essential for entrepreneurship. From an educational perspective, we acknowledge the challenges of child labour in Ilorin metropolis,*

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especially in households facing economic hardships. However, we also recognize that some children gain practical skills and resilience through their work experiences, which can translate into entrepreneurial success later in life."

A4 opined that…"While it's important to address exploitative forms of child labour, we must also acknowledge that not all work experiences are detrimental. In Ilorin, many children engage in activities like artisanal crafts or assisting in family businesses, which can foster creativity, independence, and entrepreneurial thinking."

Similarly, the opinion of A5 is that:

> "*Our data shows that child labour in Ilorin metropolis is prevalent in sectors like street hawking, agricultural work, and household chores. We are working on initiatives to provide alternative education and skill development programs to ensure that children involved in labour activities also have opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills for their future. Having worked closely with families and children affected by child labour in Ilorin, I've seen firsthand the challenges they face. However, I've also witnessed how supportive environments and vocational training can turn these experiences into learning opportunities, building resilience and fostering entrepreneurship among children."*

In view of the foregoing, the mentioned specific types of child labour, when provided with supportive environments, ethical guidelines, and opportunities for skill development and education, can contribute positively to the development of entrepreneurial skills among children, empowering them to become future business leaders and change agents in their communities.

Research question 2: How do the present apprenticeship programs contribute to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among participants in Ilorin, and what are the key factors influencing their effectiveness?

Given the interview conducted with participants, the major contributions of apprenticeship programmes include hands-on experience, mentorship and guidance, entrepreneurial mindset, creativity and innovation, business management skills. Some of the views of tha participants are given below:

M3 and M5 opined that:

> *" I highly value hands-on learning experience provided by apprenticeship programs in Ilorin. I believe that working directly in a business environment allows them to apply theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills, and gain real-world experience in entrepreneurship. I also recognize the diversity of skills they acquire through apprenticeship programs. From technical skills specific to their trade or profession to soft skills like communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, these programs offer a comprehensive skill development experience."*

According to M4, he opined that:

> *"I believe that they interact with industry professionals, fellow apprentices, suppliers, customers, and stakeholders, building valuable relationships, partnerships, and networks that can support their entrepreneurial endeavors in the future.Effective apprenticeship programs provide access to resources such as tools, equipment, technology, and financial support. These resources are essential for participants to implement their business ideas, scale their ventures, and overcome barriers to entry in the entrepreneurial landscape."*

S2 and S3 opined that:

> *"I value the mentorship and guidance they receive from experienced professionals in apprenticeship programs. Mentors play a crucial role in providing advice, sharing industry insights, and nurturing entrepreneurial mindset and competencies among participants. The effectiveness of apprenticeship programs is influenced by the supportive environment they create. Factors such as positive mentorship relationships, clear learning objectives, structured training modules, and opportunities for feedback and reflection contribute to program success."*

Overall, participants in Ilorin view present apprenticeship programs as highly beneficial for acquiring entrepreneurial skills due to the practical learning experience, diverse skill development, networking opportunities, access to resources, mentorship and guidance, and supportive environment they provide. These key factors collectively contribute to shaping participants into competent and successful entrepreneurs.

Discussion of findings

Based on the first research question, which focused on the specific types of child labour prevalent in Ilorin metropolis, findings reveal that Street vending and engaging in informal trade are common types of child labor observed in Ilorin. Children often sell goods such as snacks, drinks, or small items in bustling marketplaces or busy streets. This type of work exposes them to basic business operations, including pricing, sales, customer interaction, and budgeting. While street vending can provide children with early exposure to entrepreneurial activities and financial literacy, it often comes with challenges such as irregular income, lack of legal protection, and limited opportunities for skill development beyond basic salesmanship. Also, many children in Ilorin are involved in family-owned businesses, such as small shops, food stalls, or artisan workshops. They also engage in craftsmanship and artisanal work, such as carpentry, tailoring, shoe-making, or traditional crafts like beadwork or weaving. These activities provide children with hands-on experience, technical skills, and creativity in producing goods or providing services. The finding of the study aligns with the study of Ijadunola et al (2014) explored the prevalence and consequences of street hawking and begging among children in urban areas of South Western Nigeria. The study highlighted the economic motivations behind these activities and their impact on children's education, health, and well-being. Ofuoku and Ugbechie (2017) focused on child labor in agricultural settings in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas. The research explored the roles and contributions of children in farming activities, the challenges they encounter, and the implications for their education and development. Similarly, Folami (2007) investigated cases of child trafficking and exploitative labour in Nigeria, particularly in sectors such as domestic service, street vending, and commercial agriculture. The study

identified patterns of trafficking, vulnerabilities of children, and challenges in combating this form of child labor.

Based on the second research question of the study on the contribution of apprenticeship programmes on entrepreneurial skills development, findings reveal that apprenticeship programs in Ilorin provide participants with a hands-on learning experience that is essential for acquiring entrepreneurial skills. By working directly in a business environment, apprentices gain practical knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking skills. They learn to apply theoretical concepts to real-world situations, enhancing their understanding of business operations, market dynamics, and customer needs. In the same vein, findings indicate that participants in apprenticeship programs gain exposure to diverse aspects of business operations. They learn about production processes, quality control, inventory management, pricing strategies, marketing techniques, customer service, and financial management. This comprehensive understanding of business functions prepares apprentices to manage their own businesses or contribute effectively to entrepreneurial ventures. Also, the effectiveness of apprenticeship programs is influenced by the supportive environment they create. Factors such as positive mentorship relationships, clear learning objectives, structured training modules, opportunities for feedback and reflection, and recognition of participants' achievements contribute to program success. A supportive environment fosters motivation, engagement, and continuous learning among apprentices. Kanu (2020) examined the impact of apprenticeship programs on the development of entrepreneurial skills among participants in Nigeria. Findings indicated that apprenticeship programs significantly contributed to skill acquisition, including technical skills, business management, customer relations, and financial literacy. Key factors influencing program effectiveness included the quality of mentorship, relevance of training to market needs, access to resources, and supportive learning environments. Ojomu et al. (2023) conducted a study to assess the outcomes of apprenticeship programs in Nigeria in terms of entrepreneurial skill development. The study found that participants reported improved problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, and confidence in starting and managing their businesses after completing apprenticeship programs. Mentorship quality, exposure to diverse business operations, and networking opportunities were identified as critical factors shaping program effectiveness. Alla-Mensah (2023) highlighted the role of practical learning, mentorship, skill diversity, and ethical business practices in enhancing program effectiveness. Participants reported increased confidence, innovation, and entrepreneurial mindset as outcomes of their apprenticeship experiences.

Conclusion

The qualitative exploration of the impact of child labour and apprenticeship on the development of entrepreneurial skills in Kwara State, Nigeria, has provided rich insights into the complex dynamics shaping youth empowerment, skill acquisition, and socio-economic development. Through in-depth interviews, this study has uncovered valuable perspectives, experiences, and challenges faced by children engaged in work activities and apprenticeship programs, illuminating key factors influencing their entrepreneurial journeys. The findings reveal a spectrum of experiences related to child labour in Kwara State, ranging from supportive family-based work arrangements to exploitative practices

in informal sectors. Children engaged in family businesses often acquire practical skills, financial literacy, and a sense of responsibility, laying a foundation for entrepreneurship. However, instances of hazardous work, educational deprivation, and vulnerability underscore the need for protective measures and supportive interventions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

i.   There is a need the government to improve access to education, by not only providing free education at primary and secondary levels but also investing in infrastructure, teacher training, and educational resources.

ii. Policymakers should develop and expand vocational training programs that offer practical skills and mentorship in various trades and industries.

iii. Strengthen apprenticeship initiatives with clear guidelines, ethical standards, and child protection measures to ensure safe and supportive learning environments.

iv. Collaborate with law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and community leaders to raise awareness about child rights and advocate for child protection.

v.   Government should enhance enforcement of child labour laws and regulations to protect children from exploitative work practices through its agencies.

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<div align="center">

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF STREET CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Street children are a vulnerable population, and it is important to raise awareness of the challenges they face and the potential solutions. This study was motivated by the surge of street children in Nigeria. In recent years, it has become common to find a large number of children growing up in the street without a home or proper adult guidance across Nigerian states. Due to the economic downturn, children are compelled by prevailing situations to support themselves or their families, which exposes them to perilous work that is detrimental to their development. Street children are faced with unique challenges, including a lack of resources, hunger, and limited access to services. This study investigated the challenges and prospects of street children in Nigeria. This paper employed a secondary *source. The result of the findings revealed that* children are most frequently compelled to fend for themselves and even their families due to the present economic situation. Additionally, it was found that children are not showcased in the inclusive growth and sustainability framework in Nigeria. It was recommended that the Nigerian government pass legislation prohibiting parents from engaging their children in street trading and labour.

Introduction

The issue of homeless children is a global problem. In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, it is more prevalent. A child's life on the streets is often initiated by poverty, social issues, abuse or abandonment, family splits due to disagreements or death, and neglect. The most crucial time in a person's life is their childhood; it's the stage in which people lay the groundwork for leading successful, healthy lives as adults. Childhood is the most important period of a person's life since it is when people set the foundation for successful, healthy adult lives. Many children are compelled to start working at an early age instead of being raised in a loving and enjoyable environment. The number of children living on the streets is clearly increasing as a result of numerous unavoidable events occurring all around the world. Many developing nations throughout the world view street children as a social burden. The majority of the government and civic society are concerned about the growing issue of street children. While several nonprofit organizations have begun to address this problem on a national and worldwide scale, they are still a long way from implementing a deliberate plan to end this annoyance. The reality on the ground has not altered due to the indifferent attitude of those who hold power. As the issue worsens, the dedication and hard work required to integrate these children into society are completely overlooked.

In Nigeria, children living on the streets belonged to dysfunctional and packed households with six to ten children each, making them psychologically and emotionally disturbed as a result of abuse, neglect, family pressures, and the country's rapid urbanization and industrialization. With the exception of a small few who had formal education, they were largely illiterate. Family dissolution, poverty, unemployment, and disabilities were the most frequent causes. According to the World Bank, Nigeria has one of the biggest young populations in the world, with a population of about 202 million people. Poverty is thought to afflict 67% of people, and the percentage of homeless people in Nigeria is about 13% (8.6 million children are homeless').

Literature Review

Children are viewed as the future of a country because they constitute the adults of tomorrow. As such, they will ultimately be the ones making decisions for their family, community, nation, and society at large. Amnesty International described street children as children living on the streets but working in some capacity, including scavenging in dust buns, begging, working as slaves, carrying loads in marketplaces, and strolling around residential neighborhoods in order to get hired to mow lawns or perform other menial tasks.

According to Friberg and Martinsson (2017), a child is considered to be a street child if they run away from home and live on the streets, where they not only make their home but also earn a living and take full responsibility for their own lives. 'On the street' and 'of the street' are two further classifications for street children. Additionally, . Street children can be considered as either 'on the street' or 'of the street'. Street children have their homes and only come to the streets to beg for money during the day and return home in the evening, while the children 'of the street' live and sleep on the streets in urban areas. UNICEF (2001) described a street child as any boy or girl who has not yet reached maturity, for whom the street has become their normal home and/or source of income, and who is not receiving enough protection, supervision, or guidance from responsible adults.

Hum, Darnawati, Uke, and Irawaty (2018) stated that ,street children are those who are between the ages of 7 and 15 and who live, work, and spend their time on the streets or in public spaces virtually every day. Children under the age of eighteen who live on the streets for the majority of their lives are considered street children. (Nte, Eke, and Igbanibo, 2014). According to Akuffo (2001), a street child is any child who considers the street to be his home and other street families to be his relatives. They also include any child who lives, eats, sleeps, and does nearly everything on the street.

They live alone, in pairs or in groups, and sleep on railway, launch, and bus terminals, by the sides of high roads, pavement, market places on under-the-over bridges, water-logged areas, abandoned homes, slams and shunts, broken cars, mosques and temples, working places, i.e., hotel and employer's shops, manholes and ceramic pipes, etc. (Hai, 2014). They, even most of the time, do not take a bath during the day and only wear one set of clothes until it is ripped. They eat discarded food considered to be medically hazardous and harmful (Hai, 2014).

In view of this, the United Nations has added one more item, which is that the street is the source of livelihood. The remaining sentences use the same image to say, "Any boy or girl for whom the street in the widest sense of the word has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by a responsible adult" (cited in Swart-Kruger & Donald, 1994, p. 108; Panter Brick 20003, p. 149). "This is the most thorough and appropriate description of the issue of street children that has been offered up to this point. Over the past 25 years, it has been increasingly difficult to estimate the statistical statistics of "street children" worldwide, within countries or even continents. In each instance, UNICEF provided a figure of 100 million, although between 1989 and 2005, it estimated that there were tens of millions of homeless or street children worldwide (UNICEF 1989, 2002, and 2005).

Given the more practical and realistic growth in statistical data, global economic and financial conditions have deteriorated over the past ten years, particularly in underdeveloped and developing nations; as a result, the prevalence of extreme poverty and hunger has increased in these regions. It seems logical to anticipate that as poverty rates rise throughout the developing globe, parental irresponsibility will become a greater threat, leading to an increase in the number of street children, especially in developing nations. A conservative estimate of between 100 million in UNICEF's 1989 estimate and a projection of 150 million "street children" by various authorities between the years 2004 and 2006, in agreement with the claims of authors, sociologists, and development analysts on the subject, statistically sound realistic given the rising levels of poverty and declining living standards in developing countries, as well as the various effects of war and disasters worldwide, particularly in developing countries in the last two decades, which have worsened the fragile economics of family units.

There is no evidence for the estimates of 100 or 150 million that have been quoted. There is controversy over whether society is becoming more aware of the "issues of street children within societies that have grown" or whether the number of street children worldwide is rising. It is true that within the previous ten years, manageable mathematical advancement has been outmatched by the devastation brought about by conflicts, political upheavals, and the multiplier process of street children in the northern part of Nigeria, where various sorts of turmoil have continued. worldwide insurgencies, especially in Africa, with a symbolic case pertaining to the unparalleled theological and political disarray and depravity of the Boko Haram resurgence in Nigeria. Nigeria's estimations of its street children must have resisted statistical regularity, especially in the northern region, where the Almajiri's have historically posed a threat to the populace and the government.

Challenges Faced by Street Children

From an early age, street children are subjected to the harsh and challenging realities of life; they work outside in the rain and the sun, two extremely unpleasant weather conditions. Consequently, they are vulnerable to many health-related conditions, including pneumonia and other similar illnesses. On a daily basis, they battle to obtain food, healthcare, and comfort, not to mention the mistreatment they experience at the hands of society and its disdain, mockery, and cruelty. Many of these children are run over by cars, some are kidnapped, and many young girls are defiled by unscrupulous adults. The trauma of these incidents permanently changes the course of their lives; the effects are dire. A number of these children die from illnesses and car crashes. These

events have an impact on these children, and there's a good chance that they will react negatively to them. According to Fakoya (2009), the phenomenon of street children may be a concerning societal issue that frequently leads to the development of adult social offenders referred to as "yes, sir boys" or "area boys." They could also become violent extremists, deadly gangs, thugs, armed robbers, rapists, and abductors. Women who have been sexually raped and exploited might carry on with their immoral sexual lives and eventually become prostitutes. They might even use dangerous drugs alongside the men and take part in armed robberies, frequently as a kind of revenge against those who have taken advantage of their situation to abuse and exploit them. Nonetheless, a few of them might choose to see life and its prospects from an optimistic standpoint. Not to mention the possibility of depression and suicidal thoughts in adulthood for these street youngsters.

Solution to the Challenges

Issues with street children: reaching out to street children directly to learn more about their issues and learn how to support them. Street children struggle with a variety of issues, such as lack of food, shelter, and protection, as well as how to get an education. Maybe we can help them with some of their difficulties, but we might not be able to help them with all of them.

Public awareness: The majority of people are not even aware that there are street children. By raising awareness, we can educate as many people as possible about the issues facing homeless children and the things that we can do to support them. Raising public awareness can be highly beneficial in this context. By sharing the experiences of many types of street children, we can portray the people. We can help people who don't know about the problems faced by street children by drawing attention to them and providing possible solutions. We have to knock on people's doors and guarantee that they are set to help these children in order to accomplish this.

Development centers ought to be elevated. The best organizations and services for children living on the streets are development places. It is imperative that we understand the issues facing these kids and how to support them if we are to assist the homeless.

Development centers should offer large-scale support to street children because they are better able to comprehend their problems and offer more appropriate solutions. Through these development facilities, the comforts that ordinary children take for granted at home are offered to homeless children. The children who attend these institutions are never made to feel like they are somewhere other than home. The goal of development centers for street children is to prepare them for all the healthy activities of life.

Educational institutions: When it comes to helping street children, education always aims to produce notable individuals for the country and the world. The schools can take these children to their destinations in order to decrease their numbers. But schools can also assist children in avoiding negative behaviors, such as drug addiction, which is particularly crucial for children living on the streets. Children in schools can learn and receive support to pursue careers as engineers, surgeons, or pilots, just like any other

child. They will be able to lower the number of children attending school if they know how to deal with the problem of street children and their desire to abandon their homes and live on the streets.

Volunteers work for the street children. Given their willingness to understand the problems and offer solutions in mind, public welfare free workers are always working to improve the lives of street children. In order to reduce the number of street children, it is highly recommended that the public utilize their free services. There may be fewer street children now that there are more volunteers, which might be really beneficial. Understanding the issues that street children face is necessary in order to come up with solutions.

Governmental reactions: Without a doubt, some governments have taken steps to address the problem of street children and come up with complete solutions, such as putting the children in juvenile homes, orphanages, or correctional facilities. Several governments have also battled to support or maintain these organizations and quasi-governmental services. Instead of relying solely on institutions and organizations to care for homeless children, the general public may aid these kids and assist the government in realizing how to address the issue of homeless children. The rehabilitation facilities are crucial in helping the street children recover and be ready to return to their homes because the streets are not their homes.

Conclusion and Recommendation

No child would ask for a life on the streets since parents should take care of and educate their children. Children always see opportunities in the world and want to take advantage of them. The government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the church, families, parents, and the general public should all work together to address the issue of street children. Above all, parents ought to raise as many kids as they are able to sustain financially. All pupils have the right to free education, at least through the secondary level, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution, No. 18 (3) of 2011, as amended. In an effort to show compassion and altruism, financially comfortable parents may educate the children of the less fortunate in their towns and villages, keeping them off the streets and preventing them from becoming homeless. For these children to successfully participate fully in society, the Nigerian government should collaborate with non-governmental organizations to establish rehabilitation institutions. Although some street kids struggle to support their families, parents shouldn't push their kids to live on the streets, as this will shorten their future. Even more, parents ought to refrain from hiring their children as domestic help. In conclusion, it is appropriate to penalize and dissuade parents who seek their children from home. The Nigeria Child Rights Act, which was enacted in 2003, ought to be put into effect in order to raise the bar for adult/child rights relationship management and the Social Welfare Department as well as other government organizations like the Nigerian Police Force.

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ALMAJIRANCI CHALLENGES AND ETRASH2CASH: FOSTERING WELL-BEING IN THE NIGERIAN CHILD

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Abstract

This paper delves into the pervasive Almajiranci system in northern Nigeria, where children, primarily aged 5 to 12, undergo religious education far from their homes, often resorting to begging for sustenance. With an estimated seven million Almajiri, this practice has historical roots but has intensified due to economic challenges. While some associate it with potential recruitment for violence, research gaps persist. The eTrash2Cash project emerges as a social enterprise aiming to address Almajiri issues by providing professional resource recovery training, cleaning the environment, and fostering economic growth. The paper details the Almajiri practice, its challenges, and the innovative eTrash2Cash solution, emphasizing its impact on childhood, entrepreneurship,
and social well-being.

Introduction

The concept of Almajiri is deeply ingrained in the northern region of Nigeria, signifying a method for acquiring religious knowledge. This system, known as Almajiranci, involves less fortunate families sending their children away for Islamic instruction. Traditional teachers, referred to as Mallams, act as guardians for these youngsters. Primarily between the ages of five and twelve, these children embark on extensive journeys across northern states, usually to predetermined locations. However, custom dictates that their Mallam guardians cannot provide for their basic needs.

- In the rare instances where children are brought to unknown destinations, the parents or guardians seek out established traditional schools at their final stop and settle there. Regardless of the final destination, these children are expected to take on odd jobs and support themselves through begging. During the rainy season, they are obligated to assist their designated Mallam with his family's needs by performing agricultural labor.
- The National Council for the Welfare of the Underprivileged (NCWD) estimated the current Almajiri population in Nigeria to be around seven million in 2001. According to Abdulkadir (2010), these children fall into two broad categories: the most vulnerable being children aged five to eleven, and at-risk youth aged twelve to twenty-six. The majority belong to the Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups and have minimal or no formal education (Abdulkadir, 2010).
- Historically, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when significant Islamic learning centers flourished, this practice was a recognized and accepted social-religious custom. However, due to Nigeria's challenging economic climate, many rural Hausaland residents are forced to migrate to urban areas to improve their livelihoods. This has resulted in the widespread adoption of Almajiranci among low-income rural parents, further jeopardizing the well-

being of innocent children entrusted to a Mallam who would take them elsewhere for proper Islamic education.

- The issue of Almajiranci in Nigeria, particularly in the north, has been a persistent social challenge for decades. Numerous attempts have been made by scholars, researchers, political leaders, and concerned Nigerians to develop and implement a long-term solution to curb the rampant growth of Almajiranci. Some have alleged that the practice serves as a cheap method for recruiting agents for violence and terrorism, but these claims lack solid research backing (Ogunmade, 2013). Nevertheless, researchers have documented the increasing prevalence of Almajiranci, attributing the trend to parents who see it as the quickest way to enroll their children in informal Quranic schools, which they find culturally acceptable and affordable (Hoechner, 2011).

- The eTrash2Cash project was launched as a social enterprise to offer an immediate solution to the Almajiranci social problem in Nigeria. The project equips the affected children with professional training, enabling them to earn money from resource recovery and waste collection activities. These activities simultaneously clean the local environment and stimulate economic growth.

- This chapter is broadly divided into two sections. The first section provides a more detailed portrayal of the current Almajiranci practice in northern Nigeria. It explores the author's personal experience, the perceived practicality, appeal, challenges, and impact on child discipline, along with the documented economic and social consequences. The second section delves into the sustainable eTrash2Cash solution, the enterprise's history, its youth employment and entrepreneurship program, and how the affected children benefit from it and similar programs.

- **The Present Almajiranci in Northern Nigeria**
- Today, the term "Almajirai" (plural of Almajiri) often refers to individuals who beg or struggle to survive, consequently wandering urban streets. Opponents of the current Almajirai system in northern Nigeria argue that it's a far cry from its traditional form. These critics, including progressive Islamic scholars within Nigeria, worry about the extensive negative consequences on youngsters deprived of the comfort and protection of their families at a very young age. The impact isn't just personal; the nation loses the potential contributions of its future leaders – young people who might otherwise pursue respectable professions like law, accounting, or engineering (Sa'id, 1992).

- Since the Mallam guardian, as per tradition, isn't obligated to provide for the Almajiris, the children are forced to beg for food and other necessities (Garba, 1996). They navigate scorching streets, approaching car passengers and pedestrians for financial help. The children become entirely dependent on strangers – and each other – for their sustenance, shelter, and other fundamental needs, which often go unmet (Ibrahim, 2008). This turns them into victims of economic hardship, neglect, and abuse, all under the guise of Quranic education (Salis, 1995).

- As the Almajiris traverse streets, bus stations, and markets, moving door-to-door in search of sustenance, some latch onto vendors selling daily Hausa food items like bean cakes, bread, and groundnut cakes, hoping to elicit sympathy from

customers willing to share a portion of their purchases (Babangida, 1993). Most Almajiris embark on temporary migrations from rural areas to urban centers seeking better opportunities (Ibrahim, 2008). Many travel to nearby cities, with some venturing as far as Lagos or neighboring African countries like Benin, Senegal, and Chad. The availability of Almajiris as a source of cheap labor is believed to contribute to adult unemployment in the poorest communities of northern Nigeria. Conflicts often arise at public places like markets and movie theaters between Almajirai and non-Almajirai adults regarding who deserves payment for watching parked vehicles. The growing influx of migrants from neighboring African nations like Ghana, Mali, and Niger further exacerbates the issue.

- The children and youth receive instruction in the Quran within Almajiri schools, typically located on the grounds of the local mosque or tsangaya, an informal structure designated for Quranic education. Religious teachings may also occur in casual settings, near the Mallam's residence, under the shade of a tree, often utilizing slates as learning materials (Ya'u, 2001). Instead of adhering to a standardized curriculum, most Quranic schools develop their syllabi, teaching methods, academic calendars, and learning plans.

- The learning conditions for Almajiris can be harsh, affecting both their physical and mental well-being. They typically receive instruction while seated directly on the floor due to a lack of mats, residing in cramped classrooms that serve as both their learning and sleeping spaces. Coeducation is a rarity in Almajiri schools, with girls seldom sent for Almajiri education away from their birthplace. Even when girls attend as day students (studying during the day and returning home to sleep), they are strictly separated from boys. These informal Almajiri schools, overseen by one Mallam, have an average enrollment of 180 pupils, primarily or entirely boys, making it challenging for the Mallam to keep track of daily attendance without a formal register. It's not uncommon for all instruction to occur in a single small classroom designed for around 50 pupils, significantly less than the actual population (Sule, 1994). Bathroom facilities, where available, are limited and often unsanitary. Due to the significant number of children under one Mallam's care, who typically earn a modest income, it's not unusual to find an Almajiri school without any bathroom facility.Under these conditions, Almajiris resort to using bushes, the city's fringes, or any other incomplete structures, if available, to relieve themselves.

- Despite the health risks, contemporary Almajiris lack access to even the most basic medical care. Consequently, they remain untreated for common ailments or injuries like diarrhea, wounds, and malaria, all stemming directly from their unsanitary and precarious living situations. Some purchase medication for self-treatment, following recommendations from medical professionals, including supportive nurses within the system and pharmacists. Even when free hospitals and healthcare are available, their marginalized social status excludes them from receiving treatment (Perverz, 2005).

- To supplement their begging, some Almajiris take on menial jobs like washing dishes in restaurants and, in controversial settings, in restricted establishments like the residences of sex workers, hotels serving alcohol, bars, and nightclubs. This involvement might expose them to undesirable adult behaviors.

- Almajiris also find themselves vulnerable to exploitation by the Mallams entrusted with their care by their parents. They become entangled in an informal

child labor system, forced to sustain themselves through begging to not only feed themselves but also contribute to the Mallam's household by tending to his farm, fetching water, collecting firewood, and occasionally offering a portion of their begging earnings (Sulaiman, 1996). Furthermore, they encounter various forms of verbal abuse, including curses aimed at them and their parents, insults targeting their appearance, and expressions intended to humiliate them. These experiences can inflict severe harm on a child or young person's psychological and physical development (Kabir, 2002). The Almajiri child faces a difficult life, marked by disapproval, mistreatment, open assault, and disdain solely due to their Almajiri status (Hoechner, 2011). The accumulated psychological effects of experiencing rejection contribute to a perception of emotional instability, possibly explaining reported instances of suicide among Almajiri children for reasons that remain undocumented.

- Traditionally, and to a large extent especially within rural communities, the Almajiranci system is revered and held in high esteem for its emphasis on Quranic education, symbolizing religious devotion and serving as a pathway to cultivating moral character.

- The arduous challenges inherent in the Almajiranci journey force youngsters to cultivate positive traits within themselves, such as developing an exceptional level of tolerance and humbleness. These qualities are highly valued as essential tools for navigating life, especially in rural settings. They also happen to be core principles of the Islamic faith that the Almajiri children embrace (Ware, 2014).

- Recent research sheds light on how entrenched extreme poverty and a lack of access to better options fuel the Almajiri tradition (Hoechner, 2015), which has gradually morphed into something resembling severe forms of child neglect. The practice is common among families characterized by multiple wives, financial hardship, and limited educational opportunities (Perverz, 2005). Hoechner (2015) has demonstrated that the Almajiri phenomenon persists despite no longer guaranteeing access to political influence or an elevated social standing. In other words, its economic viability has been undermined, and its religious value has been questioned. Structural factors limiting opportunities for impoverished farming families play a significant role in sustaining its demand.

- The decline of Nigeria's rural economy following the oil boom in the mid-twentieth century, the economic reforms imposed by international organizations in the mid-1980s, coupled with the country's substantial population growth – its population has more than quadrupled since 1950 (United Nations, 2008) – have collectively contributed to distortions in what was traditionally seen as a customary coming-of-age experience for Muslim youth. The consequence is the continuation of both poverty and educational disadvantages. The poor quality of Nigeria's current education system, especially in rural areas, its associated costs (students are regularly expected to acquire their own textbooks and other learning materials), its historical connection in the public's memory with Christian missionaries who introduced it during the colonial era, and its limited returns in terms of employment opportunities explain low enrollment rates.

- Simultaneously, the weakening of the rural economy compels many to migrate seasonally or permanently to urban centers. Faced with such constraints, families justify their decisions to send their children to live as Almajirai in the cities not only based on their deep respect for Quranic learning but also with an understanding of the educational value associated with a certain degree of

hardship for the social and moral development of their children (Hoechner, 2015).

- **Witnessing the Almajiri Struggles**
- Hailing from Zaria, a bustling heart within Kaduna State, Nigeria, Abubakar grew up embraced by a pious, middle-class family steeped in religious devotion. His foundational education, encompassing primary and secondary levels, unfolded within the walls of conventional day schools. Evenings were dedicated to delving into the tenets of Islam through a modern Islamic education program. During his adolescent years, Abubakar bore witness to societal discrimination directed towards Almajiri children, frequently neglected by their families. His family's act of offering accommodation and sustenance to Almajiris and their guardians fostered close bonds with them, allowing him to observe their fragility and unwavering spirit in the face of adversity.
- Through meaningful connections with Almajiris, Abubakar gained insight into their life stories, unraveling the motivations behind their pilgrimage on this "sacred" journey. Many expressed a fervent desire to swap places with him, harboring dreams of parents residing and working in the city, capable of providing them with a formal education. This trust extended to entrusting him with a portion of their meager daily earnings, saved for emergencies and celebratory attire.
- Over time, Abubakar observed the dedication, hope, and aspirations that fueled most Almajiris. Yet, the hardship and vulnerability they faced made some susceptible to being drawn into undesirable activities. However, his personal experience and unwavering belief led him to believe that with opportunity and resources, the majority of Almajiris would mature into responsible citizens, shunning paths marred by violence or social unrest.
- Childhood memories of Almajiri friends like Musa, orphaned at a young age, solidify this conviction. By 13, he had mastered the Quran and independently financed his secular education, currently pursuing a political science degree at Kaduna State University. While some Almajiris achieve success, research findings highlight the lack of political will and the ailing economy in northern Nigeria as significant constraints on their potential to break free from poverty and achieve a prosperous future.
- Usman, another childhood Almajiri friend, embodies this harsh reality. Despite two decades passing, he hasn't fully memorized the Quran, and his progress in secular education is limited. With a semblance of stability, Usman works as a sanitation worker, earning less than $30 monthly to support his family. According to Abubakar, some of his friends, unfortunately, grapple with drug addiction, with little hope for a fulfilling life, abandoned by their relatives for years. Recognizing the current Almajiri system as a perceived practical form of education necessitates a comprehensive solution, acknowledging the beliefs and exploitation of those caught within this system.
- **Imagined Benefits of the Almajiri System**
- While critics denounce Almajiranci as a return to outdated customs within impoverished northern Nigerian households, it functions as an alternative to the seemingly modern education system, which has lost public trust. At the Nigerian National Symposium on Almajiri Education, Khalid (2013) argued that traditional and religious Almajiri schools remain the preferred choice for many Hausa/Fulani communities. Their adaptable schedules cater to rural farm-

dependent communities, allowing students to learn at their own pace. Unlike formal schools with fixed enrollment periods, traditional Almajiri schools offer flexible entry points throughout the year, aligning with seasonal agricultural activities. Dr. Khalid stressed the schools' egalitarian approach and affordability, making them attractive to parents struggling with the expenses of formal education.

- Beyond academics, Almajiranci is seen as an environment that enforces discipline on children and young adults. It's believed to instill a sense of responsibility towards parents, teachers, and society at large. Additionally, Almajiranci is considered a last resort for reforming youth labeled as unruly or disobedient (difficult children). Some parents argue that modern "reformist" Islamic schools, Makarantar Islamiyya, lack the same disciplinary standards as Almajiri schools, giving the latter an edge. Many Almajiri schools enforce strict codes of conduct, expelling students for transgressions like theft or fighting, and imposing harsh punishments for dishonesty. In some schools, extreme measures like using chains to beat "unruly ones" are reported (Y. Badamasi, personal communication, July 25, 2022; Anas, 2017).

- The previous section described how Almajirai functions as a source of cheap labor, particularly in cities like Kaduna, where youth engage in menial tasks for survival. Notably, the youngest children are willing to accept minimal compensation for their services. The prevalence of child labor, especially in Hausaland, benefits families seeking low-cost part-time household help. Some landlords enlist these youth as unofficial "security guards" for vacant or under-construction buildings, while others provide them shelter in the zaure, the entryway to a house. For the youth, these practices offer accommodation they might not have otherwise (Abba & Kurfi, 2012).

- Mature adolescents actively contribute to the extensive production of the traditional embroidered headwear, known in Hausa as kube; within Hausa/Fulani culture, wearing a kaptan and kube signifies complete formal attire. A Hausa/Fulani man traditionally wears this outfit for work or at the office. In many cases, without the headgear, it's considered casual dress. Therefore, it's unsurprising that roughly eight or nine out of every ten men in Hausaland can be seen sporting these locally-made headpieces. The demand is high, particularly in specific local Hausa communities, leading many Almajirai to abandon their Islamic studies and pursue cap-making as a career.

- Almajiri children have silently borne their hardships—conditions shaped by adults and a broken system. Deep poverty and persistent misinterpretations of the Quran wrongly link the Almajiri practice to Islam, hindering efforts to reform or abolish it. However, activists dedicated to providing lasting solutions to the plight of children have devised alternatives to liberate twenty-first-century Almajiri youths. One such program, eTrash2Cash, utilizes waste management micro-entrepreneurship support and training to grant economic independence to Almajiri youth, enabling them to sustain themselves while continuing their Islamic education.

- **Almajiri Aid: Education & Economy**

- Nigeria's Bauchi State faces a significant waste management problem. According to the Bauchi State Environmental Protection Agency (BASEPA), the state generates over 9,000 metric tons of waste every day. Unfortunately, inadequate infrastructure and limited facilities mean that less than 10% of this

waste is collected (BASEPA, 2012). This uncollected waste poses a major threat to the environment, contaminating the land, air, and water. Additionally, it contributes to deforestation, flooding, and greenhouse gas emissions. Low-income communities, struggling to survive, are most affected by this environmental degradation. Blocked drainage systems caused by waste lead to regular flooding during the rainy season, increasing the spread of diseases like malaria, which is most prevalent during this time (BASEPA, 2012).

- In 2012, the Nigerian Federal Government, the World Bank, and the Department for International Development (DFID) collaborated to launch YouWiN6 through the Federal Ministry of Finance. YouWiN6 is a program designed to address youth unemployment in Nigeria by supporting young entrepreneurs. The program offers grants and technical assistance to help young people launch new businesses or expand existing ones.

- Haleematus-Sa'adiyya is a social enterprise founded in Azare, Bauchi State, as part of the YouWiN6 program. The founders identified a critical need for local and sustainable waste management solutions through a comprehensive feasibility study, guided by Mr. AbdulKadir Sarauta, an environmental scientist at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University. The name, which translates from Arabic to English as "The Patient One," honors the co-founder's younger sister.

- The founders envisioned Haleematus-Sa'adiyya as a platform that would address a multitude of social issues in the community, including environmental challenges, educational limitations for girls (particularly Almajiri education), and economic hardship. They believe that educating girls is crucial for societal progress. Their vision is for Haleematus-Sa'adiyya to have a significant and positive impact on the lives it touches, mirroring the positive influence the co-founder's sister will have through her education.

- The feasibility study revealed a disturbing lack of awareness about proper waste disposal methods and the environmental consequences of improper waste management. Only 12% of residents surveyed disposed of waste responsibly and understood the environmental risks, such as climate change. Over half of those surveyed did not connect waste burning to global warming, and less than 20% recognized the potential value of most waste materials.

- Azare, the state's largest town, generates nearly 4,000 metric tons of waste daily. However, the government has very limited facilities for collecting waste from homes and businesses. This lack of infrastructure forces residents and industries to dispose of waste improperly in landfills or open spaces, creating a major public nuisance.

- In early 2012, amidst rising unemployment and a mounting waste crisis, Haleematus-Sa'adiyya Enterprises emerged as a trailblazing for-profit waste management company in Bauchi State. The company addressed both issues by targeting informal waste collectors, often referred to as scavengers. These individuals could exchange specific types of plastic waste for cash. Haleematus-Sa'adiyya then took this plastic waste and repurposed it into reusable shopping bags made of polyethylene. These bags were then sold to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).

- From its launch in 2012 through the end of 2015, the company diverted an impressive 10,000 metric tons of waste from landfills. This waste was then reprocessed and transformed into various reusable products, such as the aforementioned shopping bags. Beyond diverting waste, Haleematus-Sa'adiyya

- also empowered over 200 local waste pickers. These individuals were transformed from informal collectors into professionally trained and motivated waste managers, significantly improving their livelihoods.

- The company behind this success story, Haleematus-Sa'adiyya Enterprises, was founded by a passionate team of four young entrepreneurs: Muhammad Salisu Abdullahi, Chiroma Hassan, Usman Abubakar, and Ibrahim Sale. All four were born and raised in Azare, Bauchi State, and hold bachelor's degrees in disciplines related to natural sciences and the environment. Their local upbringing equipped them to design sustainable solutions for the persistent waste management challenges in their community. They specifically targeted uninformed communities with limited awareness of waste management and the climate change crisis.

- While none of the founders had personally experienced the informal Almajiri education system, all had attended a formal Islamic education system. This formal system presented none of the hardships faced by Almajiri children. Their local roots in Azare allowed them to easily distinguish between the two systems based on their own experiences and their daily interactions with Almajiri children.

- eTrash2Cash is a new initiative launched by Haleematus-Sa'adiyya Enterprises in northern Nigeria. The program is a collaboration with another local non-profit organization, the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD).

- Both organizations saw a chance to address pressing social issues by targeting a specific group: Almajiri children. They recognized that major Nigerian cities, like Kano, Kaduna, Lagos, and Ibadan, generate massive amounts of waste daily – exceeding 10,000 tons in each city. This waste creates significant environmental hazards, including pollution, flooding, deforestation, and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

- Their observations in Kano State, Nigeria's second-largest city, were particularly concerning. Here, less than 16% of the waste is collected and recycled, even though over 84% of it has the potential to be reused (Hyuwa, 2010). Furthermore, unemployment rates are high, with over 100 million Nigerians living on less than $1 per day. The situation is further complicated by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has displaced over two million people (more than half of them young people) from their homes, straining already limited resources in urban areas.

- In response to these challenges, eTrash2Cash was created. This program leverages technology to improve the environment and public health, while also empowering underprivileged young people to earn an income from waste collection. The initiative also includes training for Almajiri children, providing them with expanded entrepreneurial and educational opportunities.

- **ETrash2Cash: Empowering Almajiri Youth and Communities Through Waste Management**

- eTrash2Cash, a program based in Kano, Nigeria, connects low-income residents with opportunities to earn cash for their recyclable waste. Individuals can register as "waste providers" on the eTrash2Cash website and exchange items like plastic, paper, food scraps, and metal for financial incentives.

- eTrash2Cash collects this waste and transports it to their Material and Resources Recovery Facility (MRF) located in Kano State's Dakata Industrial Area. Here, the waste is sorted and transformed into new, usable products. For instance, plastic waste is repurposed into floor tiles and shopping bags, while paper waste is recycled into tissues, and food scraps are composted into organic fertilizer.
- The program encourages registered households to use their earned rewards to support girls' education initiatives. Young people who sign up are offered specialized entrepreneurship training programs. These programs equip them with the skills and knowledge needed for safe waste collection, sorting, recycling, and business management. Participants learn how to develop business plans, manage finances, and identify potential funding sources. This empowers them to not only earn more from waste collection but also potentially become self-sufficient by establishing their own social enterprises focused on waste management.
- While eTrash2Cash is a for-profit venture that generates revenue from selling the recycled materials they produce, the program delivers significant positive impacts across several key areas:

- **Environmental Benefits:** eTrash2Cash helps to collect, remove, and recycle various types of waste that would otherwise pollute the air, land, and water. By diverting waste from landfills and promoting recycling, the program reduces overall pollution, lessens the risk of flooding by preventing clogged drainage systems, mitigates the effects of climate change, and reduces deforestation by providing alternatives to wood products.

- **Training, Social Support, and Job Creation:** The program offers training in waste management and entrepreneurship to marginalized, low-income youth who register as "waste providers." Additionally, their waste collection, sorting, and recycling activities create numerous direct and indirect job opportunities.

- **Community Awareness and Education:** eTrash2Cash utilizes a proactive online presence and leverages social media, traditional media outlets (radio, television, and newspapers) in local languages to raise awareness about critical environmental issues and encourage community participation in waste management solutions.

- eTrash2Cash not only transforms waste into reusable products but also creates a source of raw materials for local industries, strengthening the overall economy. The recycled end products generated by the program further contribute to economic development.
- The program places a strong emphasis on education. Households registered as "waste providers" are encouraged to allocate a portion of their earned cash incentives towards supporting girls' education within their families.
- eTrash2Cash has successfully registered 923 "waste providers" in Kano, Nigeria, with the help of 19 social micro-entrepreneurs. Nearly half (434), or 47%, of these registered providers are young Almajiri individuals. These Almajiri participants are some of the most active contributors, bringing in various types of waste. The remaining participants are a combination of low-income households and individuals.

- Without eTrash2Cash, these Almajiri youth would likely remain under the guidance of their Mallams, focused solely on Islamic studies – the primary reason they left their families. eTrash2Cash offers them a path to financial independence by providing them with opportunities to earn a living. Through waste collection and delivery to designated hubs, they can earn income based on the weight and quality of the waste they collect. Participation in eTrash2Cash eliminates their need to resort to begging or low-paying odd jobs. In fact, the program enables them to earn close to Nigeria's minimum monthly wage.
- Recognizing the economic disadvantages and vulnerabilities faced by Almajiri children, eTrash2Cash prioritizes providing them with support and opportunities. The program specifically targets young people between the ages of 9 and 14, including both boys and girls. Through eTrash2Cash, these young people gain valuable new knowledge and skills. This empowerment allows them to potentially increase their earnings from waste collection or even launch their own similar ventures through participation in the Youth Entrepreneurship Training program. To streamline this process, eTrash2Cash collaborates with several informal schools with high Almajiri student enrollment.
- The program has encountered minimal resistance from parents, who are often not involved in their children's lives, and from the Mallams, who may benefit indirectly from the program when the Almajiri children earn money. Some Mallams reportedly have established a system where they share a portion of their students' earnings.
- eTrash2Cash has faced some hurdles during its initial stages. One challenge is the limited literacy and numeracy skills of some vulnerable Almajiri children. These limitations can hinder their understanding of the program and their ability to benefit from business mentoring opportunities.
- Limited funding creates a barrier to enrolling participants in basic literacy and numeracy courses. These foundational skills are crucial for maximizing the program's impact and enabling Almajiri youth to fully benefit from business mentorship opportunities. Additionally, the program faces limitations in its capacity to handle the large number of vulnerable children interested in its training programs and waste-to-wealth social micro-entrepreneurship ventures.
- However through the invaluable support of community partners, such as the Modern Almajiri Creative School (MACS). This organization raises awareness about the challenges faced by vulnerable Almajiri children. Additionally, the Mandela Washington Fellowship experience at Rutgers University provided an opportunity to research various sustainable methods for waste recovery and the creation of eco-friendly products. This knowledge will be especially helpful as the program expands its operations and anticipates collecting larger quantities and types of waste from empowered Almajiri youth who transition into micro-entrepreneurs.
- The program's long-term sustainability hinges on its ability to create marketable, income-generating products for reuse within communities. The research and partnerships fostered during the program's initial stages will be instrumental in achieving this goal.
- The Almajiranci system, with its historical significance, poses significant challenges for vulnerable children in northern Nigeria. The eTrash2Cash project provides a promising solution by offering these children professional skills,

economic opportunities, and a path to a brighter future. Combining social responsibility with environmental and economic benefits, eTrash2Cash paves the way for a more sustainable and equitable future for both Almajiri youth and their communities.

- While eTrash2Cash's entrepreneurship training program in waste management is a valuable opportunity for Almajiri youth, its current capacity limits reach. This program represents just a starting point for expanding educational and economic pathways for these young people.
- A more comprehensive solution is needed in northern Nigeria to address the vast number of disadvantaged youth, not just the Almajiri population. Estimates suggest millions of young people across the country face economic vulnerability. Interventions on a larger scale and with greater capacity are crucial.
- However, the eTrash2Cash model offers promise for replication. The program's focus on waste management aligns with a common challenge faced by many African cities struggling with waste disposal. Additionally, the prevalence of the Almajiri system in various regions presents a similar target population. Countries like Senegal, Ghana, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso all grapple with similar social issues.
- Implementing variations of the eTrash2Cash program in these nations has the potential to empower young people, fostering self-reliance and social responsibility. Beyond individual benefits, these programs can create jobs, improve community health and education, and contribute to a more sustainable future for Africa and the world.

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CHAPTER NINE

GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN LABOUR USE AMONG COFFEE PRODUCING HOUSEHOLDS IN KOGI STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

Men and boys are mostly involved in the production of tree crops such as coffee while women and girls are involved in the marketing and processing of these crops. This study examined the labour use across gender in coffee producing households in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Data from one hundred and twenty (120) coffee farming households were sourced for using well structured questionnaire. Information on socio-economic characteristics, different activities in coffee production and costs of inputs used for coffee production was collected. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and gross margin.

Average age and household size were 60.8±16.1 and 7±5 persons, respectively. Most of the farmers (75.0%) were married, while 54.2% had primary education. In addition, nursery activity revealed boys and men (male gender) of 41.7% and 20.8%, respectively, while girls and women were 20.8% and 16.7%, respectively were involved in this farming operation.
Men were involved in all the activities examined for coffee production in the study. Women were involved in all the activities except clearing, weeding, pruning, herbicide application and insecticide application while boys and girls were also involved in activities such as nursery, harvesting, sorting, drying, packaging, marketing and transportation. Hence, for efficiency in coffee production, each of the gender should be empowered to participate in the farming operations they have comparative advantage over.

Introduction

Coffee, one of the most consumed beverage in the world today is a tropical tree crop with African origins. The crop belongs to the Rubiaceae family and genus Coffea. According to Beenhouwer *et al*. (2015), the two most popular species of coffee across the globe are the *Coffea Arabica* L. whose origin can be traced to Ethiopia and *Coffea canephora* A. which is commonly referred to as Coffee Robusta originates from Central to West Africa.

According to Dube and Vargas (2013), coffee production is a highly labour intensive activity implying that it is a source of employment for many especially in Ethiopia and other producing areas in Africa. Smallholder farmers are responsible for the production of over 90 percent of the total coffee produced in Africa. According to FAO (2020) coffee is produced in thirty African countries, one of which is Nigeria.

According to Alli *et al*. (2021) coffee production began in Nigeria around early 19[th]century.Nigeria's Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA) noted that coffee had been imported there as early as 1920. The crop was, however, first grown earlier, as evidenced by export figures of 5.5 tons in 1896 and 25.2 tons in 1909, respectively (Alli *et al*., 2021)**.** Coffee *liberica* and Coffee *abeokutea*, which are native to Nigeria, were the most extensively cultivated species before the FDA introduced *C. canephor*

(Robusta) and *C. arabica*. The farmers were exposed to other commercially significant *coffea* species in the 1930s as a result of the declining market for the local coffee.90% and 4%, respectively, of coffee exports come from C. canephor (Robusta) and *C. arabica*.

Over 5000 hectares of land in 14 states of the federation are planted with coffee. Robusta, *Arabica*, and *Liberica* are the three main species grown in Nigeria today (94%, 4%, and 2%, respectively) (Williams,1989). Therefore, the market for instant coffee has Nigerian coffee as a focus. However, of the grown Robusta, Java and Quillou account for 8.5 and 15%, respectively. Coffee *Arabica* is grown in mainly in Mambilla, Taraba State and some parts of Obudu in Cross River state. While Coffee Robusta is grown in Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Kwara, Kogi, Edo, Delta, Abia, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Taraba, Bauchi, and Jos (Adepoju et al., 2017). Majority of those cultivating coffee in Nigeria are small scale farmers limiting the level of production. Nevertheless, coffee still played a major role in the Nigerian economy especially prior to the discovery of oil.

Labour plays a crucial role in coffee production, as it involves several stages that require human effort. The extent and nature of labour use in coffee production can vary depending on factors such as the type of coffee (Arabica or Robusta), the region where it is grown, and the level of technology and mechanization employed. According to Mohammed *et al.*(2013), activities in coffee production such as planting, maintenance, harvesting and drying are still very much labour dependent in Nigeria. Hence, the role of labour in coffee production cannot be overemphasized.

Gender differentials in labour use in Nigeria, like in many other countries, reflect disparities in the types of work that men, boys, women and girls typically engage in, as well as differences in access to resources and opportunities. These disparities are influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors. According to Aigbokie (2021), there exist a form of gender differential in many sectors in Nigeria and agricultural sector in particular, studies (Amadi *et al.* 2019; Asante *et al.* 2023) such as have identified the presence of gender differentials in rice and cassava production to mention a few. Given the labour intensive nature of coffee production in Nigeria, there is a need to examine the existence of gender differentials in coffee production in Nigeria. This study therefore seeks to examine the use of information technologies among coffee producing households in Kogi North Central Nigeria

Objectives

To determine the socio economic characteristics of coffee producing households in the study area.
To determine gender use/ differentials among different activities in Coffee production
To assess input used and costs for coffee production

Methodology
The study area is Kogi State in the North Central zone of Nigeria. Kogi State is a State known for major production of coffee in Nigeria. The variety of coffee majorly produced in the State is Coffee robusta. Within the State, Ijumu Local Government Area (LGA) was purposively selected being a high coffee producing LGA in the State. In the LGA, Iyamoye community was also purposively selected for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 130 coffee farming households from the selected community. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the selected

farming households and the data retrieved from the information collected were analysed with the use of simple descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages. One hundred and thirty well structured questionnaires were distributed among coffee farming households. After sorting out for missing data, information from one hundred and twenty farmers was eventually used for the analysis.

Results and discussion

Table 1 presented the socio economic characteristics of coffee producing households in North Central Nigeria. The mean age of coffee farmers in the study area was 60.8 ± 16.1. Sixty percent of them are above 60 years. This reveals that coffee farmers in the study area are old. This could limit their acceptance of improved technologies and techniques as they might prefer to stick to their old practises. Also if young farmers are not introduced to coffee farming coffee production may go into extinction in the study area. Young farmers need to be supported with finance and inputs to enhance their interest in coffee production. Seventy five percent of the respondents are married. Eighty three percent of the farmers have primary educational level. Their educational level could help in their adoption of latest farming techniques. The mean household size in the study area was 7 ± 5 persons. Their medium household size could mean they are spending more money on running their families and lesser on inputs and farming activities. Eighty percent of coffee farmers in Kogi state belonged to a socio-economic group. They belonged to groups such as town union, cooperative and Coffee Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN). These socio economic groups especially CFAN help farmers to get support and inputs from the government and Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. Majority (83.3%) of the farmers own their own farm and cultivated ≤2 hectares. Majority of the coffee farmers are smallholder farmers. The mean years of experience is 28 ± 10 years. The farmers have great experience in coffee production which is of great importance for their business. Sixty percent of the farmers in the study area grow coffee with kolanut. They practise mixed cropping to maximise the use of their farmland. Majority of the farmers grow coffee Robusta. Half of the farmers get their planting material from fellow farmers and 80% of the farmers affirmed that coffee planting material is readily available for sale.

Table 1: Socio economic characteristics of Coffee producing Households in North Central Nigeria.

Variable	Freq	%
Age		
31-60	60	50.0
61-84	60	50.0
Mean 60.8 ± 16.1		
Marital status		
Single	30	25.0
Married	90	75.0

Educational Level		
No formal education	20	16.67
Primary	100	83.3
Household size		
1-5	40	25.0
6-10	80	75.0
Mean 7 ±5		
Socio economic group		
Yes	100	80.0
Membership of Socio economic association		
Non-member	20	16.7
Cooperative	30	25.0
Town Union	20	16.7
CFAN	50	41.6
Roles performed by the socio economic group		
Financial assistance	60	50.0
Supply of inputs	50	41.7
Purchase of the farm output	10	8.3
Type farm ownership		
Own farm	100	83.3
Rented farm	20	16.7
Farm size		
≤2	100	83.3
2.1-5.0	20	16.7
> 5.0	0	0
Farming experience		
≤20	20	16.7
21-40	80	66.6
41-60	20	16.7
Mean 28 ±10		
Other crops grown with coffee		
Kolanut	60	60.0
Plantain	20	20.0
Maize	20	20.0
Cassava	20	20.0
Cropping system		
Coffee/arable	50	41.7
Coffee/tree crops	70	58.3
Variety of coffee planted		
Robusta	120	100.0
Source of planting material		
CRIN	30	25.0
ADP	30	25.0
Fellow farmers	60	50.0

Is the planting material available to buy?		
Yes	80	66.7
No	40	33.3

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 presented the gender use/ differentials among different activities in Coffee production. For nursery activity, table 2 revealed that male gender (boys and men) of 41.7 percent and 20.8 percent, respectively, while female gender (girls and women) were 20.8 percent and 16.7 percent, respectively were involved in this farming operation. Furthermore, clearing activity showed 41.7 percent and 50.0 percent for both male gender and 8.3 percent for adult women. Also, for transplanting activity 41.7percent of adult men and women and 8.3 percent of boys and girls, respectively were engaged in this activity. One hundred percent of the boys were involved in weeding activity. For herbicide and insecticide application 100 percent of men participated in each of these activities. In sorting activity it was revealed that 41.7 percent of girls, 37.5 percent of women and 12.5 percent of men and 8.3% of boys were involved in this activity. In addition, 41.7 percent of female gender (girls and women) 8.3 percent of male gender (boys and men), were involved in drying activity of coffee production.

Moreover, the result revealed that 41.7 percent and 33.3 percent of female gender (girls and women), 16.7 percent and 8.3 percent of male gender (boys and men) participate in packaging activity. Also for marketing activity, 16.7 percent of men, 8.3 percent of boys, 58.3 percent of women and 16.7% of girls were involved. Lastly, 16.7 percent of boys, 8.3% of men, 41.7% of girls and 33.3% of women were involved in transportation activity.

Table 2: Gender use/ differentials among different activities in Coffee production

Activity	Who participated more			
	Boys	Men	Girls	Women
Nursery	50 (41.7)	25 (20.8)	25 (20.8)	20 (16.7)
Clearing	50 (41.7)	60 (50.0)		10 (8.3)
Transplanting	10 (8.3)	50 (41.7)	10 (8.3)	50 (41.7)
Weeding	70 (58.3)	50 (41.7)		
Pruning	40 (33.3)	40 (33.3)		
Herbicide Application		120 (100)		
Insecticides Application		120 (100)		
Sorting	10 (8.3)	15 (12.5)	50 (41.7)	45(37.5)
Drying	10 (8.3)	10 (8.3)	50 (41.7)	50 (41.7)
Packaging	20 (16.7)	10 (8.3)	50 (41.7)	40 (33.3)
Marketing	10 (8.3)	20 (16.7)	20 (16.7)	70 (58.3)
Transporting	20 (16.7)	10 (8.3)	50 (41.7)	40 (33.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2022   *% in Parenthesis

Table 3 presented the inputs used and costs for coffee production. The total cost expended on coffee seedlings was ₦4,500,000 and ₦1,836,000 was spent on herbicides. For insecticides ₦240,000 was spent, ₦720,000 on labour, ₦827,400 on basins, ₦420,000 on cutlass, ₦234,000 on fuel and ₦320,000 on transportation, respectively. The Total Variable Cost was ₦9,097,400 and the average cost per farmer per annum was ₦75,812.

Table 3: Inputs used and costs for coffee production

Input	Quantity	Unit Cost (₦)	Total Cost (₦)
Coffee Seedlings	30000	150	4500000
Average cost per farmer			37,500
Herbicides(Lt)	1020	1800	1836000
Average cost per farmer			1530
Insecticides(Lt)	20	12000	240000
Average cost per farmer			2000
Labour(No of person)	360	2000	720000
Average cost per farmer			6000
Basins(No)	240	3500	827400
Average cost per farmer			6895
Cutlass	360	1000/1500	420000
Average cost per farmer			3500
Fuel (Lt)	1200	180/270	234000
Average cost per farmer			1950
Transportation	20	16000	320000
Average cost per farmer			2667

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Total variable cost = ₦9097400

Total variable cost per farmer = ₦75812

Conclusion and recommendation

Men were involved in all the activities examined for coffee production in the study area except weeding. Women were involved in all the activities except clearing, weeding, pruning, herbicide application and insecticide application while boys and girls were also involved in activities such as nursery, harvesting, sorting, drying, packaging, marketing and transportation. The use of labour among boys and girls should be reduced to promote their well being.

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SECTION C

ISSUES IN EDUCATION

CHAPTER TEN

APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN RAISING INTERRACIAL AND INTERETHNIC CHILDREN IN NIGERIA AND DIASPORA

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Abstract
This study explores the appraisal of Social Studies Education in raising interracial and interethnic children in Nigeria and diaspora. Understanding and addressing the complexities of interracial and interethnic relations are vital for fostering inclusive societies and promoting harmony in diverse communities. Social Studies education serves as a powerful tool for promoting social cohesion, empathy, and mutual respect, laying the foundation for a more just and harmonious world. It serves as a means of navigating the challenges and opportunities inherent in interracial and interethnic dynamics, both in Nigeria and its Diaspora. Through an exploration of historical contexts, socio-cultural barriers, and educational disparities, it becomes evident that interracial and interethnic children face unique challenges in identity formation, educational attainment, and social integration. These challenges underscore the importance of developing effective strategies for enhancing Social Studies education to promote understanding, empathy, and respect for diversity. By incorporating multicultural curriculum content, adopting culturally responsive teaching practices, providing experiential learning opportunities, investing in teacher training, and fostering collaborative partnerships, stakeholders can work towards creating inclusive learning environments that empower students to become informed and engaged citizens. Therefore, curriculum revisions should ensure that Social Studies curricula incorporate diverse perspectives, histories, and experiences of interracial and interethnic communities. They should reflect the multicultural realities of society and promote empathy, respect, and understanding among children.

Introduction

Interracial and interethnic dynamics are central to understanding the complex tapestry of societies, particularly in countries like Nigeria and its Diaspora, where diverse ethnicities and cultures intersect. Social Studies education plays a pivotal role in addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from these dynamics, providing a platform for nurturing inclusive societies and fostering intercultural understanding. This paper provides an overview of the importance of Social Studies education in navigating the complexities of interracial and interethnic relations, focusing on Nigeria and its global Diaspora.

The significance of studying interracial and interethnic relations lies in its relevance to societal cohesion, identity formation, and social justice. Nigeria, with its diverse ethnic groups and languages, serves as a microcosm of the broader global context, where interactions among individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds shape social, political, and economic dynamics. The Diaspora, comprising Nigerian communities dispersed across the globe, further underscores the transnational nature of interracial and interethnic relations and the need for nuanced approaches to Social Studies education. Understanding the historical context is crucial for comprehending

contemporary interracial and interethnic dynamics. Colonial legacies, such as the divide-and-rule policies implemented by colonial powers, continue to influence social structures and ethnic identities in Nigeria and its Diaspora (Ozodi, 2018). These historical factors have contributed to persistent challenges, including ethnic tensions, discrimination, and marginalization, which Social Studies education endeavours to address.

Social Studies education encompasses a broad range of disciplines, including history, geography, civics, and sociology, aimed at fostering informed and responsible citizenship. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education underscores the importance of Social Studies as a vehicle for promoting national unity, integration, and understanding among diverse ethnic groups (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Similarly, in the Diaspora, Social Studies curricula often incorporate multicultural perspectives to reflect the diversity of student populations and promote respect for different cultures and identities. By exploring the role of Social Studies education in raising interracial and interethnic children, this appraisal seeks to shed light on effective strategies for promoting social cohesion, empathy, and mutual respect. It will examine the challenges faced by interracial and interethnic children, the role of curriculum content and pedagogical approaches in addressing these challenges, and the potential impact of Social Studies education on broader societal attitudes and behaviours.

Concept of Interracial and Interethnic

Interracial refers to interactions, relationships, or marriages between individuals of different racial backgrounds. It signifies the crossing of racial boundaries or distinctions, often involving individuals from distinct racial groups. For example, in the United States, interracial relationships may involve individuals from racial groups such as White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, or Indigenous heritage forming connections, partnerships, or families across racial lines (Foner, 2017).

Interethnic refers to interactions, relationships, or dynamics between individuals or groups belonging to different ethnicities. Ethnicity encompasses cultural, linguistic, and historical characteristics shared by a specific group of people. Interethnic interactions involve individuals from various ethnic groups engaging with each other within social, cultural, or familial contexts. For instance, in countries like Nigeria, interethnic interactions occur between ethnic groups such as Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, and many others, reflecting the diverse cultural landscape of the nation (Falola & Heaton, 2018).

Historical Context of Interracial and Interethnic Relations

Understanding the historical context is fundamental to grasping the intricacies of interracial and interethnic relations in Nigeria and its Diaspora. Prior to European colonization, Nigeria was home to a multitude of ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language, culture, and social structure. Interactions among these groups were characterized by trade, intermarriage, and occasional conflicts, yet overarching patterns of cooperation and coexistence often prevailed (Falola & Heaton, 2018). Pre-colonial societies were often organized along ethnic lines, with kinship ties and communal affiliations serving as the basis for social organization and governance.

The advent of European colonization in the late 19th century profoundly altered the social and political landscape of Nigeria. British colonial rule introduced a system of indirect rule, whereby traditional rulers were co-opted to administer local territories on behalf of the colonial authorities (Afigbo, 2012). This strategy exacerbated existing ethnic divisions and fostered competition for power and resources among different ethnic groups.Colonial policies, such as the imposition of arbitrary boundaries and the

favoritism shown towards certain ethnic groups, further deepened ethnic tensions and inequalities (Nnoli, 2010). The divide-and-rule tactics employed by colonial administrators exacerbated interethnic rivalries and sowed the seeds of mistrust and resentment that continue to reverberate in contemporary Nigerian society.

Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, ushering in a period of optimism and nation-building efforts. However, the legacy of colonialism persisted, as ethnic rivalries and power struggles hindered efforts to forge a unified national identity (Suberu, 2011). Successive military regimes exacerbated ethnic tensions through discriminatory policies and uneven distribution of resources, leading to cycles of violence and instability (Ikelegbe, 2011).

In the Diaspora, Nigerian communities grappled with the challenges of integration and identity formation amidst racial discrimination and cultural assimilation pressures (Olupona & Rey, 2018). Diasporic experiences varied widely, with some communities thriving economically and culturally, while others faced marginalization and social exclusion (Feldman, 2016). Nonetheless, Nigerian Diaspora communities played a vital role in fostering transnational connections and preserving cultural heritage across generations.

Social Studies Education: Concepts and Curriculum

Social Studies education is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses the study of history, geography, civics, economics, and sociology, among other disciplines (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017). It seeks to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to participate actively and responsibly in democratic societies. Social Studies educators strive to cultivate informed and empathetic citizens capable of understanding and addressing complex social issues, including those related to race, ethnicity, and culture.

In Nigeria, the Social Studies curriculum is designed to promote national unity, integration, and understanding among diverse ethnic groups (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Key themes include citizenship education, cultural heritage, human rights, and environmental sustainability. Emphasis is placed on exploring the shared history and cultural traditions of Nigeria's various ethnic groups, as well as fostering respect for diversity and tolerance of different perspectives.

In the Diaspora, Social Studies curricula often incorporate multicultural perspectives to reflect the diversity of student populations and promote cross-cultural understanding (Banks & Banks, 2010). Curriculum content may include units on immigration, global citizenship, and the contributions of diverse racial and ethnic groups to society. Educators seek to challenge stereotypes, promote positive representations of minority cultures, and foster an appreciation for cultural diversity.

Effective Social Studies education relies on engaging and interactive pedagogical approaches that encourage students to critically examine social issues and develop empathy for others. Inquiry-based learning, cooperative group activities, and service-learning projects are commonly used to promote active student engagement and meaningful learning experiences (Kemmis et al., 2014). By exploring real-world problems and perspectives, students develop the skills needed to navigate complex social dynamics and contribute positively to their communities.

In both Nigeria and the Diaspora, educators recognize the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices that validate students' diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences (Gay, 2010). Culturally relevant curriculum materials, including literature, music, and artifacts, are used to connect students' lived experiences with academic content and foster a sense of belonging in the classroom. By incorporating students'

cultural identities into the learning process, educators create inclusive and empowering learning environments.

Strategies for Enhancing Social Studies Education

Enhancing Social Studies education is crucial for promoting interracial and interethnic understanding and fostering inclusive societies. Below are the various strategies and initiatives aimed at improving Social Studies education in Nigeria and its Diaspora, drawing on research and best practices.

Multicultural Curriculum Development: Developing a multicultural curriculum that reflects the diversity of student populations is essential for promoting interracial and interethnic understanding (Banks & Banks, 2010). Curriculum developers should incorporate diverse perspectives, voices, and experiences into Social Studies content to ensure that all students see themselves represented in the curriculum. This can include incorporating literature, historical narratives, and case studies that highlight the contributions of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to society.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices: Culturally responsive teaching practices are critical for creating inclusive and empowering learning environments (Gay, 2010). Educators should strive to connect classroom instruction to students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences, using culturally relevant examples, materials, and teaching strategies. By validating students' diverse identities and perspectives, educators can foster a sense of belonging and promote positive intergroup relations.

Experiential Learning Opportunities: Providing experiential learning opportunities, such as field trips, service-learning projects, and community engagement activities, can enhance students' understanding of interracial and interethnic issues (Kemmis et al., 2014). These hands-on experiences allow students to interact with diverse communities, explore real-world problems, and develop empathy and perspective-taking skills. By engaging directly with diverse communities, students gain a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and social justice issues.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: Investing in teacher training and professional development is essential for equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to effectively teach about interracial and interethnic understanding (Banks & Banks, 2010). Professional development programs should provide educators with opportunities to learn about multicultural education theory, culturally responsive teaching practices, and strategies for addressing sensitive topics related to race, ethnicity, and identity in the classroom.

Collaborative Partnerships and Community Engagement: Building collaborative partnerships with community organizations, cultural institutions, and local stakeholders can enrich Social Studies education and enhance students' understanding of interracial and interethnic issues (Okeke-Uzodike, 2019). Collaborative projects, guest speakers, and cultural exchanges can provide students with opportunities to learn from diverse perspectives and engage with real-world issues affecting local communities. By fostering partnerships with diverse stakeholders, educators can create meaningful learning experiences that promote social justice and equity.

Challenges in Raising Interracial and Interethnic Children

Raising interracial and interethnic children presents unique challenges stemming from the complexities of navigating multiple cultural, racial, and ethnic identities. This section explores the key challenges faced by interracial and interethnic children in Nigeria and its Diaspora, drawing on research and empirical evidence.

Socio-Cultural Barriers: Interracial and interethnic children often encounter socio-cultural barriers related to identity formation and belonging. In Nigeria, where ethnic

diversity is a defining feature of society, children of mixed ethnic backgrounds may struggle to reconcile competing cultural norms and expectations (Nwosu, 2016). Similarly, in the Diaspora, children born to parents from different racial or ethnic backgrounds may face challenges related to cultural assimilation, racial discrimination, and identity confusion.

Educational Disparities: Interracial and interethnic children may also experience educational disparities stemming from systemic inequalities and discrimination. Research has shown that children from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to experience lower academic achievement, higher dropout rates, and limited access to educational opportunities compared to their peers. In Nigeria, disparities in educational access and quality persist, particularly among marginalized ethnic groups (Okeke-Uzodike, 2019). Similarly, in the Diaspora, racial disparities in educational outcomes continue to be a pervasive challenge, with minority students facing barriers to academic success and advancement.

Family Dynamics: Family dynamics can also influence the experiences of interracial and interethnic children, particularly in terms of cultural socialization and identity development. Parents may struggle to navigate cultural differences and instill a sense of belonging in their children (Nwosu, 2016). In Nigeria, interethnic marriages may face opposition from family members and communities, leading to tensions and conflicts within the family unit. Similarly, in the Diaspora, interracial families may encounter societal stigma and prejudice, which can impact family cohesion and interpersonal relationships.

Peer Relationships: Peer relationships play a crucial role in the social and emotional development of interracial and interethnic children. Research suggests that these children may experience social exclusion, bullying, and peer rejection based on their racial or ethnic background (Olumide, 2015). In Nigeria, ethnic-based cliques and peer groups may reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate intergroup tensions among children (Olumide, 2015). In the Diaspora, interracial children may struggle to find acceptance and belonging within peer groups, particularly in racially homogeneous environments.

Role of Social Studies Education in Promoting Interracial and Interethnic Understanding

Social Studies education according to Adediran (2022) plays a crucial role in fostering interracial and interethnic understanding by providing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to navigate diverse societies. The following is how Social Studies education contributes to promoting empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity in Nigeria and its Diaspora, drawing on theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence.

Fostering Empathy and Perspective-Taking: Social Studies education encourages students to develop empathy and perspective-taking skills by exploring historical and contemporary issues from multiple viewpoints (Banks, 2016). Through the study of diverse cultures, histories, and worldviews, students gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. This fosters empathy and promotes appreciation for the complexities of human diversity, helping to break down stereotypes and prejudices.

Cultivating Critical Thinking and Civic Engagement: Social Studies education cultivates critical thinking skills and promotes active citizenship by encouraging students to critically analyze social issues and engage in informed dialogue (National Council for the Social Studies, 2017). By examining the root causes of racial and ethnic inequalities and exploring strategies for social change, students develop the skills needed

to challenge injustice and advocate for equity. This empowers students to become agents of positive social change and promotes a sense of shared responsibility for building inclusive societies.

Promoting Intercultural Competence: Social Studies education equips students with the intercultural competence needed to navigate diverse social contexts and interact respectfully with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Bennett, 2018). By learning about the cultural practices, norms, and values of diverse racial and ethnic groups, students develop the skills needed to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and collaborate across cultural boundaries. This promotes mutual respect and understanding, fostering harmonious relationships in diverse communities.

Addressing Contemporary Issues: Social Studies education provides a platform for addressing contemporary issues related to race, ethnicity, and social justice in Nigeria and its Diaspora (Banks & Banks, 2010). By examining current events, analyzing media representations, and exploring local and global perspectives on racial and ethnic identity, students gain insights into the complexities of contemporary interracial and interethnic relations. This promotes critical awareness and encourages students to take action to address systemic inequalities and promote social justice.

Conclusion

Understanding and addressing the complexities of interracial and interethnic relations are vital for fostering inclusive societies and promoting harmony in diverse communities. Social Studies education serves as a powerful tool for promoting social cohesion, empathy, and mutual respect, laying the foundation for a more just and harmonious world. It serves as a means of navigating the challenges and opportunities inherent in interracial and interethnic dynamics, both in Nigeria and its Diaspora.Through an exploration of historical contexts, socio-cultural barriers, and educational disparities, it becomes evident that interracial and interethnic children face unique challenges in identity formation, educational attainment, and social integration. These challenges underscore the importance of developing effective strategies for enhancing Social Studies education to promote understanding, empathy, and respect for diversity.By incorporating multicultural curriculum content, adopting culturally responsive teaching practices, providing experiential learning opportunities, investing in teacher training, and fostering collaborative partnerships, stakeholders can work towards creating inclusive learning environments that empower students to become informed and engaged citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

1. Curriculum revisions should ensure that Social Studies curricula incorporate diverse perspectives, histories, and experiences of interracial and interethnic communities. They should reflect the multicultural realities of society and promote empathy, respect, and understanding among students.
2. Government should implement professional development programs to equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed to teach about interracial and interethnic relations effectively. Offer training on culturally responsive teaching practices, inclusive pedagogies, and strategies for addressing sensitive topics related to race and ethnicity.
3. Institution of learning should empower students to become advocates for interracial and interethnic understanding within their schools and communities. Encourage student-led initiatives, dialogue sessions, and awareness campaigns to promote inclusion, diversity, and social justice.

4. Government should invest in research initiatives to assess the effectiveness of Social Studies education in promoting interracial and interethnic understanding. Conduct regular evaluations to identify best practices, challenges, and areas for improvement, and use research findings to inform policy and practice.
5. There should be collaborations between community organizations, cultural institutions, and local leaders to enrich Social Studies education. Engage in joint initiatives, such as guest lectures, cultural events, and service projects, to provide students with opportunities to learn from diverse perspectives and experiences.
6. Government should launch public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of interracial and interethnic understanding and the role of Social Studies education in fostering inclusive societies. Engage media, policymakers, and community leaders in disseminating messages of tolerance, respect, and unity.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

PARENTS SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS A ROOT CAUSE TO HIGH LEVEL OF ILLITERACY AMONG CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:
In rural areas of Nigeria, high levels of illiteracy among children persist, influenced by various socio-economic factors. This paper explores the significant role of parental socio-economic status as a root cause of childhood illiteracy in this region. Through an analysis of existing literature, this paper examines how factors such as poverty, lack of access to quality education, and limited resources contribute to this issue, this paper presents evidence-based recommendations to address this systemic challenge and promote literacy in rural Nigerian communities.

Introduction:
Despite efforts to improve education access in Nigeria, childhood illiteracy remains a pressing issue, particularly in rural areas. While numerous factors contribute to this phenomenon, parental socio-economic status emerges as a critical determinant. This paper aims to elucidate the relationship between parental socio-economic status and childhood illiteracy in rural Nigeria.

Literature Review:
Numerous studies have highlighted the correlation between parental socio-economic status and children's educational outcomes. In rural Nigeria, poverty often deprives families of essential resources, including access to quality education, educational materials, and adequate healthcare. Additionally, low parental education levels and unemployment further exacerbate the cycle of illiteracy within these communities (Ajayi, 2019; Obiwuru et al., 2017)

Furthermore, socio-cultural factors such as gender disparities and early marriage practices contribute to reduced educational opportunities for girls, perpetuating intergenerational illiteracy. Limited infrastructure, including inadequate school facilities and insufficient teaching staff, also hinders educational attainment in rural areas (Adebayo & Olojo, 2020; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2018).

Discussion:
Parental socio-economic status significantly impacts children's access to education and literacy development in rural Nigeria. Families living below the poverty line struggle to afford school fees, textbooks, and uniforms, leading to high dropout rates and diminished learning outcomes. Moreover, parents facing economic hardship may prioritize immediate financial needs over their children's education, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and illiteracy (Afolabi, 2021; Oyinlade & Adediran, 2019).

Addressing childhood illiteracy requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both economic and educational disparities. Interventions aimed at poverty alleviation, such as microfinance initiatives and skills training programs, can empower parents economically and enable them to invest in their children's education (Omonijo & Adediran, 2016). Additionally, improving access to quality education through the construction of more schools, recruitment of qualified teachers, and provision of

scholarships can enhance educational outcomes in rural communities (Babalola et al., 2020; Ogunkola et al., 2019).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, parental socio-economic status serves as a fundamental determinant of childhood illiteracy in rural Nigeria. Poverty, lack of access to quality education, and socio-cultural factors perpetuate this cycle, hindering the educational attainment of future generations. By implementing targeted interventions that address economic disparities and improve educational infrastructure, stakeholders can mitigate the root causes of illiteracy and promote sustainable development in rural community

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CHAPTER TWELVE

EDUCATION, NOT JUST LITERACY: DRAWING A NEXUS BETWEEN SCHOOLING AND SOCIALISATION

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Abstract

Although, the traditional African past was not characterised by a predominance of literacy, notwithstanding, educating the young ones is an inalienable responsibility of the parents and the community. This education was defined basically as vocational training and socialisation into the moral and conventional norms of the human community. In this view, a child did graduate to become an adult having thoroughly internalised the social norms of his community and has a vocational skill with which he/she can contribute meaningfully to his society and earn a living. The wake of colonialism changed the rule of the game to an ill-founded "literacy" as Education. Hence, a person is educated since he/she can read, write, and speak the foreign language fluently. As a result, contemporary African parents transfer their educational role to school environments where the best they give is a cut-and-dry literacy system in place of holistic education. The consequence is manifested at both interpersonal, national, and international levels, producing citizens who are not well socialised into the basic ethical norms of their human community. Taking an expository and comparative approach, the paper argues that socialisation should go *Pari-passu* with schooling to engender a holistic education in Nigeria and beyond.

Introduction

History records that the early encounter between the European world and the African continent was harmonious as they were reported to have exchanged many tangible and abstract things as equals. However, this did not last long before the European world began a conquest mission on African nations. This was done not only with the aid of physical weapons but also with psychological weapons of massive destruction. They had to condemn everything about Africa as shared nonsense to establish a justifying ground for the adoption of the Western styles at the expense of indigenous ones, even when the indigenous ones were at par with the best of the Europeans or at times, better than what was obtainable on their social sphere then.

They condemned many African indigenous ways of life including politics and government system, craft and arts, history, religion civilisation and, of course, the education system. Their intelligentsia wrote so many brutal comments about Africa, denying, even, the African traditional education until the Europeans came to "civilise" Africa with their so-called "formal education." David Hume, Emmanuel Kant, and GWF Hegel, all painted derogatory pictures of traditional Africa. Hume accounts, falsely, thus:

"I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to whites. There never was a civilised nation of any complexion than white" (Hume 1996: 228). Kant corroborates Hume with an addition that "so fundamental is the difference between two races of men, and it appears to be as great to mental capacities as in colour" (Kant 1997). By "two races of men," he means the White and Black races. Hegel, in his historical account states that: "Africa is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit" (Hegel 1956: 99). This caricature of the African continent was succeeded by imperialisation and, eventually, the balkanisation and colonisation of African continent. Although colonisation has come and gone in theory, its persistence in practice is more real than apparent as, even after independence, *Things Fall Apart, the Centre Cannot Hold*, just to borrow words from Chinua Achebe.

Central to this paper is the replacement of the traditional African education system with the ill-founded Western-type schooling, in the name of education. The worst part of it is that, just like every pirated idea, the education curriculum that was bequeathed to Africa, as a substitute for the indigenous one, is an outdated and poor copy of the education system on European soil, from which it was pirated. The outcome of it is that Africans have been alienated from their homeland. They are still far away from getting to the strange land, which happens to be their promised land. Still, they are entrapped in a thick forest in-between their original home and the destinated strange land. Hence, like a Yoruba proverb would say: *Bi odo ba ko itu, ti o ko iwe, ko ye ki o ko ipada*, meaning (if a river refuses both sailing and swimming, it cannot refuse to turn back).

With the aid of the expository method, this paper aims to present a short but critical exposition of the traditional African's, as well as Western-type, education system; their defining characteristics and values and in what sense is each of them is education. With the aid of comparative and critical analysis methods, the paper will juxtapose the duo of the Western-type education system that is bequeathed to the contemporary African nations and the traditional African education system and how the former falls short in many African values. Rather than making a case for a radical "return" that might be chimeral and uncalled for, the paper shall conclude by appealing to Nyamnjoh's *Incompleteness* to make a case for a perfect blend of the good elements of both to arrive at a hybrid education system that would better serve the contemporary African needs.

Socialisation: An African Traditional Education System

To claim that a people exist without an education system is a total denial of their survival because how can a people survive without having a system of education with which they would be passing their discovered experiences from one generation to another? Tradition African societies are not exempted from this reality. They lived, gathered experiences, and had a system through which they passed these experiences to their offsprings, whether it is formal or informal, since it served, efficiently, the purposes for which it was designed.

Hence, what is education? As Balogun (2008: 228) rightly points out, there is "no univocal definition of education as the concept has been exposed to different and often contradictory interpretations." However, Sifuna and Otiende's (1992) definition of the term is informative here. According to them, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values from one

generation to another. Education so defined has a transmission of knowledge, skill, and values of a society at its heart. With all manner of sincerity, Western-type schools, as we have it today, were not predominant in traditional African societies until the advent of Christian missionaries and Arabs to Africa. However, they did achieve an education that was second to none in any part of the globe at that present time. They had cultural values and norms which they transferred actively and consciously from one generation to the next. This assignment was, solely, the responsibility of the elderly ones. In that education system, Katola (2014: 32) reports, "no effort was spared by parents, grandparents and elder siblings during the socialisation process to bring up community members who perpetuated the values that helped the community to be integrated." The aim of this education is the socialisation of its members to bring about an ideal individual that would fully fit into, and be accepted by, society.

Hamm posits that the term 'education' has three uses viz-a-viz sociological, institutional, and enlightenment use. The sociological use implies that education is an instrument used by societies to develop conscientious new members and entrants (including children) to know and understand the beliefs, values, and ways of life of a people or group. The second sense of the term is the education that goes on in formal schools, which he attributes its use as "institutional use". Schooling is another name for this type of education. This implies that the education that goes on in schools has institutional use. The third use of education, for Hamm, is the "general enlightenment use" which blends the elements of the earlier two uses though not tied to each independently (Hamm 1989: 30-31). A firm understanding of the term education, in a generic sense, paves the way for an understanding of traditional African education, in a specific sense. In which of these senses can we say that traditional Africans have education? According to Ndofirepe and Ndofirepe (2012: 14), traditional African education is the process of transmitting values and customs rooted in African cultural heritage. Traditional African education, they stress further, thus refers to Africa's heritage in education. In Boateng words, traditional African education is "the education of the Africans before the coming of the Europeans- an informal education that prepared Africans for their responsibilities as adults in their communities" (Boateng 1983: 322).

While this paper acknowledges the fact that there is no overarching "African culture" or "African education," nevertheless, African cultures share many more things in common than what could be obtainable in, say, any nation in the far part of Europe or America. Dei (1994: 6) puts this point thus: "African cultures have more in common with each other than they have, for example, with European culture(s), (thus) beyond ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity there are underlying commonalities or affinities in the thought systems of African peoples." Extending this view to the similarity of African societies in the education system, Sifuna and Otiende (1992:149) stress this point further in their words thus:

> The basic similarities in the African education system were strongly adapted to the environment; aimed at conserving the cultural heritage of the family, clan and ethnic group, adapting the children to their physical environment and teaching them how to use it, explained to the children that their future and that of community depended on the continuation and understanding of their ethnic institution of laws, language and values they had inherited from the past.

The above exposition shows a similarity between socialisation and education, at least in the African context. In this view, the premium is placed on skill acquisition and socialisation in the cultural community.

As some African philosophers have rightly revealed, African ways of life, beliefs and values were rooted in some philosophy just like the Indians, Americans and the British had philosophies relevant to their existential circumstances (Gyekye 1987, Serequeberhan 1991, Wiredu 1980). One of these underlying philosophies, as Ramose argues, is ubuntu. Accordingly, "ubuntu may be seen as the basis of African philosophy (and) there is a 'family atmosphere', that is, a kind of philosophical affinity and kinship among and between indigenous people of Africa (Ramose 1999: 49). More than a mere doctrine, ubuntu is a way of becoming humane with others in any given African community. Unlike the Western style of living which is decidedly individualistic, the traditional African style is communitarian in style whereby a person becomes a person through other persons.

This boils down to the problem of personhood in traditional African settings. This perspective defines the concept of a person differently from the enlightenment conception of a person where rationality is the measure of personhood. In other words, personhood is conferred on a person based on his ability to conform with the norms of the society. With specific reference to Africa, personhood connotes *humaneness* rather than *humanness* (Musana, 2018: 27). While the latter is defined by the potential rationality status of every human, the former, according to Chieka Ifemesia, is "a way of life that emphatically centred on human interests and values; a mode of living characterised by empathy, and by consideration and compassion for human beings" (Ifemesia 1979: 2). Personhood is a dignity that an individual earns through successful socialisation into the community. In the contemporary African that was influenced by the Western worldview, money is translated to dignity and whichever way you earn it, you are celebrated. Riches are defined in terms of material acquisition and accumulation, whereas in most societies in Africa, good relationships imply a good life of rest and satisfaction. In this context, 'riches' implied an extensive establishment of both natural and supernatural relationships with the living, the dead and the eco-system (Musana, 2018: 23). Fay illustrates that: "coming to be a person is appropriating certain material of one's cultural tradition, and continuing to be a person means working through, developing, and extending this material and this involves operating in terms of it" (Fay 1987: 160).

The underlying assumption of traditional African education is that human offspring are born ignorant of their group or cultural identity but in time they acquire it through socialisation (Nsamenang 1999: 25). Socialisation and becoming a person are synonymous in traditional African communities and the real meaning of ritual pedagogy is for the child to "pass from the state of *nature* to that of *culture*" (Erny 1973: 26). Elders were the impactors and moderators in this education setting. Consistently, there used to be evening gatherings when the father or an elder member of the family would tell stories and pose riddles to children of the compound. This provides children with entertainment as well as a form of education. They are asked to repeat the previous night's episode as a test of memory and of narrative expressiveness although this can be criticised for promoting dogma and indoctrination and a denial of access to critical reasoning on the part of the learners. Competition in solving riddles helps to speed up

their natural wit. Such evening sessions thus train children's verbal ingenuity and at the same time introduce them to a wide range of oral literature: myths, folktales, local history, and proverbs. For Callaway "this education gave young people a heightened awareness of moral values, ethical discernments, and the comic and tragic dimensions of human life" (Callaway 1975: 29).

In these settings, oral tradition, as Omolewa (2007: 598) argues, remains "a reservoir of inexhaustible wisdom where Africans learn about their origin, history, culture and religion, about the meaning and reality of life, about morals, norms and survival techniques." Hence, as the elders theorize and teach oral literature that covers fables, folktales, legends, myths, proverbs and stories, children receive their socialisation and education. Fables are yet another subject taught in the traditional education scheme. Fables in the form of trickster stories convey moral lessons and are more pedagogic devices rather than literary pieces (Abraham 1962). In traditional Yoruba settings, the tortoise is one of the most invoked characters as a personification of corny. Riddles are another pedagogic device. It was a method of instruction that was crucial in imparting knowledge and sharpening the memory and reasoning ability of both the young and the old. According to Gelfand, this method of instruction is useful in forming the memory and reasoning powers of the child. In his attempt to solve the riddles, he had to consider different possibilities and probabilities and through repeated questioning, he comes to know many features of life (Gelfand 1979: 131). Riddles served the function of the contemporary days' Mathematics and Mental Sums.

Proverb is yet, another reservoir and educational pedagogy in traditional African settings. Proverbs differ in terms of function and level of theoretical meaning in respect of time and place in Africa. For instance, the proverb has become so interwoven with living speech that can be heard at any time and on each occasion among the Yorubas. It also serves as a means of achieving clarity and conciseness in discourse. There is a proverb among the Yorubas that says "*òwe l'eṣin ọ̀rọ̀, b'ọ́rọ̀ ba sọnù, òwe la fí ńwa*" which can be translated as "a proverb is the horse which carries a subject under discussion along; if a subject under discussion goes astray, we use a proverb to track it." This implies that in every statement made to reflect decisions taken by Yoruba people, proverbs are vehicles used in driving home their points. Proverbs in this case throw light on the concrete reality of lived experience; they serve as important pedagogical devices because they provide essential case material on which pedagogical reflection is possible. Fables, myths and legends are also important pedagogical materials. They not only supply accounts of the community's origin but also the present-day beliefs, actions, and codes of behaviour (Segy 1975). Committing thought to myths is not peculiar to traditional African societies alone as some of the ancient philosophers of Greek origin, including Socrates, also did so. Myths become the tools by which abstract realities are captured to meet understanding.

Besides, the children also used to play together in the boundless spaces of the community. They could fight to the extent they could swear not to play with one another again but within a couple of minutes, they would reconcile. Malice has no place in their dictionary. This is also an important pedagogy for the traditional African system whereby children learn poems that were handed over to them by the tradition, share skills, arts, and artefacts, imitate their parents in the name of "daddy and mummy" play, hide and search game, among others. All this goes a long way to teach them wisdom that

was embedded in humour and fun and, in the process, exercise their body. In addition to that, every child acquires the vocational skills that are obtainable in his/her immediate family, exhaustively before adulthood is attained. They may only choose to either go for an external vocational skill outside their family or serve their father for a short time before establishing their families. With all these rich pedagogies, unblemished education would be impacted to the young ones which becomes the guide with which they navigate in their future courses. In the next session, the Western education system that was bequeathed to Africa shall be briefly exposed.

Schooling: A Western-Type Education System

The encounter of the Christian missionaries and Arabs with the traditional Africans brought about a change in the rule of the game. They came along with them a new education system that displaced the traditional education system that had been the main sustainer of traditional African values. This new education system enjoyed a welcome and acceptability on African soil as it was sold in the name of civilisation. Following Hamm's three uses of education as we have presented earlier on, this kind of education falls under the second category. Unlike the traditional African system of education which takes socialisation form, this form of education is rightly regarded as schooling. In this system, learning, strictly, takes place within the four walls of the classroom and its immediate environments, whereby the teachers stand as the sole moderators. Western system of education tends to place a premium on the promotion of autonomy. Unlike the traditional Africans' assumption that every child was born *tabula rasa*, Western's is premised on the assumption that every child was born with an innate idea. This becomes the premise for their untamed liberty for children which has become a great threat for the Westernised children today.

Curtin and Millei (2017: 1) define schooling as "a formal way of educating children in preschools, schools, and higher education. Schooling usually involves teachers instructing students in a formal curriculum or syllabus comprised of distinct subjects." Transcending the traditional means of educating children, mass schooling, and the emergence of schooling as a means to educate the general population, came onboard in human history. It is premised on the assumption of the potentiality of a human as a rational being. The liberal democratic interpretation of schooling views schools as key institutions that progress individuals towards a freer and more democratic, caring, and humane society. Because it was born out of our democratic way of life, schools are places where children should develop to their full potential so they can fully, with all their competencies, participate in our democracy (Curtin and Millei, 2017: 3). John Dewey and Amy Guttman (1999) are active contenders of this assumption. The latter has these points to say:

> A democratic state recognizes the value of political education in predisposing children to accept those ways of life that are consistent with sharing the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society. A democratic state is therefore committed to allocating educational authority in such a way as to provide its members with an education to participating in democratic politics, to choosing among (a limited range of) good lives, and to sharing in the several

subcommunities, such as families, that impart identity to the lives of its citizens (Guttman, 1999: 42).

The above shows that individuation, autonomy, freedom, and other ideals of democracy, are the defining principles of schooling. This was climaxed by the *agency* the UN Conventional on the Rights of the Child, released in 1989, in which almost all countries became signatories. Although, there is a critical interpretation of schooling, which is antithetical to the liberal one. This ideology was influenced by Marx and neo-Marx ideology which sees schooling as the oppressional tool of the elites. Apple (1990), Bowles and Gintis (1976), Connell (1982, 1993), Friere (1970/2007) and Giroux (1983) are active contenders of this view. Making recurs to the history of mass schooling that originated in the Age of Reason, Hunter concludes that, the popular schools of the 1800s had the goal of taming "wild human beings" (Hunter, 1994: 11). Hence, mass schooling, according to him, became "a pedagogical machine capable of enclosing the wretched children of Britain's industrial citizens in morally formative environments" (Hunter, 1994: 78). It was an attempt to solve a problem created by the Industrial Age, where most parents could not have time for their children anymore. Hence, to teach children to be responsible, "kindergartens and schools used teachers, timetables, routines, classroom layout, examinations and playtime, and provided moral guidance and skills, like literacy, numeracy and self-reflection" (Curtin and Millei, 2017: 10).

In this system of education, teaching inherently involves surveillance, where surveillance is defined as "supervising, closely observing, watching, threatening to watch or expecting to be watched" (Gore, 1995: 169). The examination is another defining characteristic of schooling. Meadmore (2000) states that the examination is a form of supervision that educators, school systems and governments exercise over children and students. The examination has the goal of judging students' performance (Foucault, 1977: 304). Power play sets between the students and the teachers (Ford, 2003: 8) which turns to favour the students at the expense of the teachers in nowadays relations (Porter, 2003). In such a setting, immorality becomes unavoidable because discipline would be administered with great care so as not to be blamed for it. In the next session, the good elements of both schooling and socialisation shall be brought together.

Conclusion: A Nexus Between Schooling and Socialisation

It is undeniable the fact that both socialisation and schooling, as traditional and modern systems of education, have their advantages and shortcomings. The Bible say: "You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew, 7: 16). On the one hand, taking a pragmatic approach, the traditional African system of education produced citizens with commendable moral standing and a just society. In Yoruba land, a "graduate" from the traditional schools of thought is referred to as *Omoluwabi*. *Omoluwabi* is a person who has fully internalised the moral standard of the tradition, outstanding wisdom, and vocational skills with which he/she can contribute meaningfully to society. Unlike Western education, indigenous education is very practical and pragmatic and prepares the individual for life passing on the values of life that have evolved from experience and tested in the continuing process of living (Ndofirepi and Ndoforipi, 2012: 19). However, it is never with criticisms. It has been criticised on the gerontocratic ground (Muyila, 2006: 43) and communitarian ground (Gyekye, 1992, 103-104, 108)), where both are considered to delimit children's potential. Some would also charge that tradition

is disappearing and that it is "simply no longer able to provide the thread needed to keep the social fabric of social life from unravelling" (Gross 1992: 3). I agree with Ociti's dismissal of the allegation that: "Since the Africans knew no reading or writing, they, therefore, had no systems of education and so no content or methods to pass on to the young" (Ociti 1973: 105). The fact that every society, in some way or the other, has values that have transcended generations, should be reminded. No traditional way of doing things, if subjected to the criteria based on modernity, will pass the test in total, and this is also the case with traditional African education (Ndofirepi and Ndoforipi, 2012: 15).

On the other hand, graduates from modern-day universities become useless job seekers, internet fraudsters, gamblers, drug pushers, and lack of moral standing, just to mention but few, on top of their good ability to read, write and speak foreign languages fluently. According to Mugambi (2003), schooling is based on institutions designed to impart specific knowledge and skills often unrelated to the actual needs of the learners and the communities to which they belong. Indeed, he continues, schools became centres of cultural alienation instead of being centres of cultural affirmation. This has resulted in many people looking down upon most of their cultural values as inferior and out of date. Such people are more comfortable speaking and writing foreign languages than speaking or writing their mother tongues. This is a serious anomaly in a curriculum of education if it socialises the learner with foreign cultures while allowing him to remain in his own culture. Proper education should upgrade culture but should not be a means of vilifying it. For this reason, parents in traditional African societies were convinced that the child should not only be oriented to all that is good in the culture of his community but should respect the culture.

Katola (2014: 33) observes that the education system tends to promote rote learning whereby its main goal for most students and their teachers is not an education for professional competence but passing the examination. As a result, genuine learning, creativity and imagination receive minimal attention in many African curricula. This relegates many Africans to a credential society where employability is reduced to degrees and diplomas. Illich comments, bitterly, thus:

> Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better the results; or escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question. (Illich, 1973, p. 9)

No system, be it traditional or modern, is complete. This is a reality of life. Nyamnjho, in his *Incompleteness*, underscores this point. What is more, he calls for conviviality of

this incompleteness, not as a ploy to become complete but to always be open to *conversation* rather than *conservation* or *conversion* (Nyamnjho, 2015: 1).

While the dangers, which are implicit by retreating to the so-called "better" past rather than responding to our world as it appears to us, are envisaged, the paper holds that it would be foolish for Africans to ignore the spaces of experiences and meanings that have been nurtured for generations, and on which they can draw for insights about nourishing their own lives. There are numerous aspects of tradition in Africa and elsewhere that can be recovered, reclaimed, and reconstituted by Africans today in their endeavour to reproduce and better their lives. This point was stressed by Fay (1987: 160) thus: "Coming to be a person is appropriating certain material of one's cultural tradition, and continuing to be a person means working through, developing, and extending this material and this involves operating in terms of it". It is on these points that this paper makes a case for a return to those aspects of traditional African education that were and are still deemed to be valuable and can therefore inform educational reconstruction, especially in the education of children in Africa. At the same time, it argues that literacy, foreign linguistic ability, and scientific and technological innovations, among others, which are the good legacies of Western education style, should be retained without compromising the indigenous ones. Handcraft and vocational training should be (re)introduced into the education curriculum. It is a perfect blend of the good elements of both, that I call holistic education.

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IMPACT OF SUPPORT SERVICES ON QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAMS IN NIGERIA: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM KWARA STATE

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of support services on the quality of early childhood education (ECE) programs in Kwara State, Nigeria. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews with 20 participants and a survey of 364 respondents to gather comprehensive data on the topic. The interviews provided qualitative insights into the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, and policymakers, regarding the role of support services in ECE. The survey, on the other hand, collected quantitative data to assess the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of support services in ECE programs. The findings reveal that support services such as health services, nutrition services, parental involvement, professional development for teachers, and monitoring and evaluation play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State. Participants highlighted the importance of access to healthcare, nutritious meals, and opportunities for parental engagement in improving children's learning outcomes. Additionally, professional development for teachers and regular monitoring and evaluation were identified as key factors in ensuring the effectiveness of ECE programs. The study underscores the importance of prioritizing support services in ECE programs to enhance their quality and impact on children's development. The findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders involved in ECE, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and policies to improve support services and ultimately enhance the quality of ECE programs in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Quality ECE programs are essential for ensuring that children receive the necessary support and stimulation during their formative years (Adesuyi-Fasuyi, 2023; Lewis et. al., 2024; Yusuf, Abdulkareem & Popoola, 2023). The quality of ECE programs is influenced by various factors, one of which is the availability and effectiveness of support services. Support services encompass a wide range of interventions and resources that are designed to enhance the quality of education provided to young children. The services include teacher training and professional development, access to educational materials and resources, parental involvement programs, health and nutrition services, and infrastructure support, among others. The support services on the quality of ECE programs has been a subject of increasing interest among researchers and policymakers

(Aghnaita & Norhikmah, 2023; Alam et. al., 2020; Seymour, 2023; Sosu & Pimenta, 2023).

Despite the recognized importance of early childhood education (ECE) in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development, the quality of ECE programs in Nigeria, particularly in Kwara State, is often hindered by inadequate support services. These support services encompass various aspects such as infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum development, parental involvement, and community engagement (D'Souza et. al., 2023; Gyekye-Ampofo, Opoku-Asare & Andoh, 2023; Velandia et. al., 2024).

Kwara State, located in North-Central Nigeria, is home to a diverse population with varying socio-economic backgrounds. The state has made significant strides in promoting access to ECE programs, but there remain challenges related to the quality of these programs. Understanding the impact of support services on the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State is crucial for informing policy decisions and improving the overall quality of early childhood education in the state (Ajadi, 2021). However, there is a lack of comprehensive empirical evidence on the specific impact of these support services on the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State, Nigeria (Kamilu, Baba & Abdulkareem, 2022). This gap in knowledge hinders the formulation of effective policies and interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of ECE in the state. This study aims to empirically investigate the impact of support services on the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State, Nigeria via mixed-methods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have highlighted the positive impact of support services on the quality of ECE programs (Ajadi, 2021; Modise et. al., 2023; Rashid & Akkari, 2020; Yusuf, Abdulkareem & Popoola, 2023). For instance, Ogunkoya (2023) found that access to health and nutrition services in ECE programs led to improved cognitive development and academic achievement among children. Similarly, research conducted by Okunaiya and Olajide (2023) demonstrated that parental involvement in ECE programs was positively correlated with children's social and emotional development. Agarry (2022) study conducted a comprehensive assessment of support services available for ECE programs in Kwara State, Nigeria, and their impact on program quality. Findings revealed that while there were some support services in place, such as teacher training workshops and provision of learning materials, their effectiveness varied. The study identified challenges such as inadequate funding and lack of coordination among stakeholders, which hindered the provision of quality support services.

The study of Ekure (2022) explored the role of school programs in enhancing the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State via quantitative approach. Through interviews and surveys with ECE teachers and administrators, the study identified support services such as mentoring programs for teachers, parental engagement initiatives, and community outreach activities. The findings highlighted the positive impact of these support services on program quality, including improved. Study by Olayonu (2022) examined the role of parental involvement as a support service in ECE programs in Nigeria. The study found that parental involvement positively correlated with the quality of ECE programs, leading to improved outcomes for children. This suggests that efforts to

increase parental involvement can contribute significantly to enhancing the quality of ECE programs in Nigeria.

Another study by Haq and Roesminingsih (2024) investigated the impact of infrastructure and facilities on the quality of ECE programs in Nigeria. The study found that the availability of adequate infrastructure and facilities, such as classrooms, play areas, and learning materials, significantly influenced the quality of ECE programs. This highlights the importance of investing in infrastructure and facilities to improve the quality of ECE programs in Nigeria. Furthermore, a study by Joo et. al. (2020) examined the impact of teacher training and professional development on the quality of ECE programs. The study found that teachers who received adequate training and professional development opportunities were more effective in delivering high-quality ECE programs. This underscores the importance of investing in teacher training and professional development to enhance the quality of ECE programs. In addition to these studies, research examined by Kamiya and Nomura (2023) highlighted the importance of government policies and regulations in shaping the quality of ECE programs. Adequate funding, regulatory frameworks, and quality assurance mechanisms are essential for ensuring high-quality ECE programs that meet the needs of children and families.

The current study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The theory is a comprehensive framework that helps us understand how various environmental systems influence an individual's development (Elliott & Davis, 2020). The theory consists of several interconnected layers, each representing a different level of influence. These layers include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem is the immediate environment in which the child lives, such as family, school, and peer group. In the context of early childhood education, the microsystem includes the child's home environment and the early childhood education setting. The interactions between the child and these immediate environments play a crucial role in shaping the child's development (Nolan & Owen, 2024). For example, positive relationships with parents and teachers can foster a sense of security and support healthy development. The mesosystem refers to the connections between different parts of the child's microsystem. In early childhood education, the mesosystem includes the interactions between the family and the ECE setting. For example, effective communication between parents and teachers can enhance the child's learning experiences and overall development. The macrosystem refers to the broader cultural context in which the child lives, including societal norms, values, and beliefs. In early childhood education, the macrosystem influences the curriculum, teaching practices, and educational goals. For example, cultural beliefs about child-rearing and education may shape the expectations and practices within ECE settings. The chronosystem recognizes the importance of time in shaping development. This includes historical events, life transitions, and developmental stages. In the context of early childhood education, the chronosystem could include changes in educational policies, advancements in research on child development, or societal shifts that impact early childhood education practices (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022).

Research Questions

1. What are the key support services that contribute to the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State, Nigeria?

2. How do the availability and accessibility of support services affect the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State?

3. What are the challenges faced by early childhood education providers in delivering high-quality services in Kwara State?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect involves a survey questionnaire administered to ECE teachers, while the qualitative aspect includes semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders such as government officials, ECE policymakers, and community leaders.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

For qualitative part, the population of the study consists of parents/guardians of children enrolled in ECE programs, government officials responsible for education policy, ECE policymakers, and community leaders in Kwara State, Nigeria. For the quantitative part, the population of the study consists of 7,236 ECE teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria. Stratified, purposive and convenience techniques were used to select 20 participants (parent/guardians of enrolled children, ECE administrators and officials of Ministry of Education). In the same vein, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table was used to determine the sample size of 364. Furthermore, the stratified, purposive and simple random techniques were adopted to select participants in ECE schools across the senatorial zones in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Instrumentation

A modified version of Yusuf, Abdulkareem and Popoola's (2023) interview protocol, dubbed the "Interview Protocol on Early Childhood Education (IPECE)," was used to gather information from participants about their views on the issues and problems related to the caliber of early childhood education programs in Kwara State. In order to gather quantitative data from participants, a structured questionnaire named ''Early Childhood Education Questionnaire (ECEQ)'' was modified. The questionnaire covers themes on support services offered for Early Childhood Education programs and consists of both closed-ended and Likert-scale items. Also, experts' inputs from the Departments of Early Childhood Education and Educational Management and Counselling from Kwara State University and Al-Hikmah University were taken into consideration to ensure the validity of the interview protocol and questionnaire. This was done to make sure that the survey's questions matched the study's research questions. Lastly, a pilot test was carried out with a small sample of 3 participants for the interview procedure and 50 respondents for the survey, respectively, to ensure the reliability of both the questionnaire and the interview protocol. This makes it possible to address any doubts, misinterpretations, or problems with the questions, guaranteeing that the final versions of the protocol and questionnaire are unambiguous and simple to read.

Procedure for Data Collection

To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent was acquired from participants and respondents for the survey and interviews, respectively. The informed permission form also helps the researcher to follow moral principles and norms, putting the participants' privacy and well-being first. The participants were interviewed utilizing an audio tape recorder, jotter, laptop, biro, and digital camera. Depending on the accessibility of the participants, the survey was conducted via phone interviews, in-person meetings, and online platforms (Google Form). To guarantee uniformity, data gathering was carried out with the aid of qualified researchers.

Method of Data Analysis

To obtain deeper insights, a theme analysis was conducted on qualitative data obtained from open-ended interview questions. Additionally, using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22), descriptive statistics (such frequencies and percentages) were used to assess quantitative data. This thorough research design combines qualitative and quantitative viewpoints for a nuanced analysis, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the impact of support services on the quality of ECE programs.

RESULTS

Qualitative Approach

Transcription and data codification are indeed crucial components of qualitative research, especially in studies focusing on complex phenomena such as the impact of support services on the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State, Nigeria. Transcription involves converting audio recordings of interviews into written text, capturing verbal responses, non-verbal cues, and contextual information. This process is essential for capturing rich data and facilitating in-depth analysis. The aim of transcription is to accurately represent the interviews, preserving nuances of speech and meaning. Data codification, on the other hand, involves systematically organizing and categorizing interview data to identify patterns, themes, and insights. This process is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study. In the present study, the transcription of interviews with key stakeholders in early childhood education programs in Kwara State produced a 15-page document. This transcription serves as a valuable resource for analysis and interpretation. Similarly, data codification in the study focusing on support services on the quality of early childhood education programs helps to systematically organize interview data from key stakeholders. This process facilitates the identification of patterns and themes that contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The tables depicting the codes assigned and general themes of the study are given below:

Table 1: Code Assigned to Participants

S/N	Participant	Code Assigned
1	Schools	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10
2	Parents	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
3	Officials from Ministry of Education	M1, M2, M3, M4, M5

Table 2: General Theme on Support-Services and Quality of ECE Programs in Kwara State, Nigeria

Theme One: Key Support Services for ECE Programs

- Teacher Training
- Infrastructural Service
- Curriculum Implementation Service
- Learning Material Service
- Health and Nutritional Service
- Psychosocial Service

Theme Two: Availability and Accessibility of Key Support Services
- Availability of Support Services
- Accessibility of Support Services

Impact of Support Services on Quality of ECE Programs
- Teachers' well being
- Increase in Pupils 'Achievement

Theme Three: Challenges Associated with ECE Programs in Kwara State
- Inadequate Infrastructure
- Inadequate Qualified Teachers
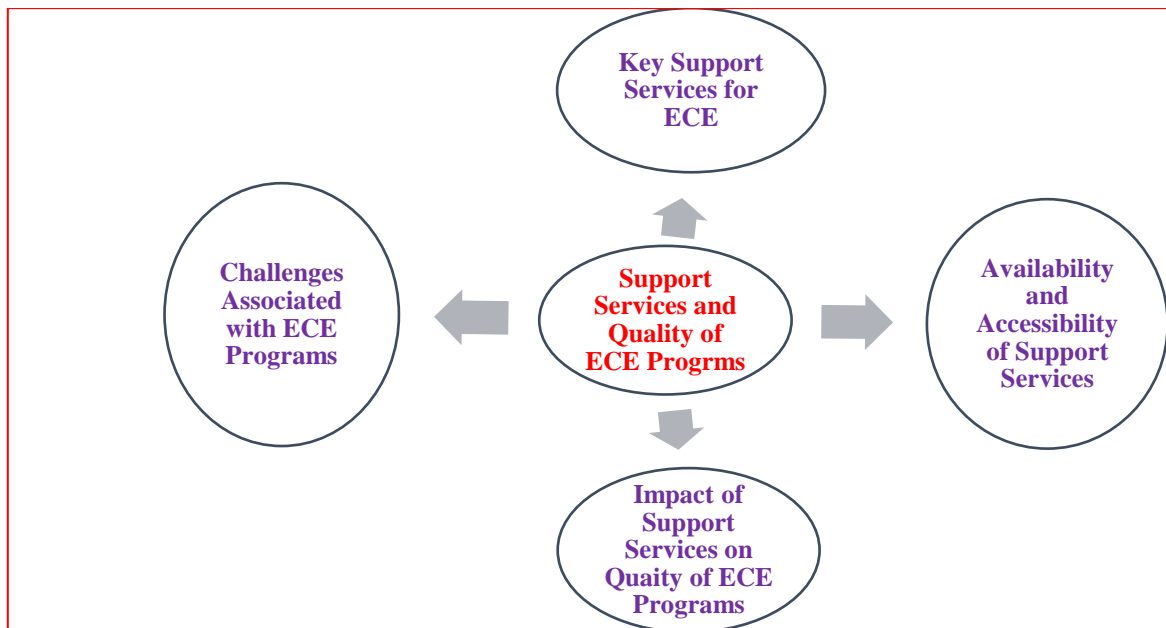- Inadequate Funding
- Limited Access

Figure 1**:** General Model on Impact of Support Services on the Quality of ECE Programs in Kwara State, Nigeria

Response to Research Questions

Research Question I: What are the key support services that contribute to the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State, Nigeria?

In view of the interview conducted with the participants, majority of the participants agreed that teacher training, infrastructural, curriculum implementation, learning material, health and nutritional, and psychosocial services are the key support services that are provided for ECE programs in Kwara State. Some of the views of the participants are given below:

According to S1 & S8, they opined that:

> *I believe that teacher training and professional development are crucial for enhancing the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State. Teachers need continuous training to keep up with the latest teaching methodologies. Curriculum development and implementation play a significant role in ensuring that children receive a well-rounded education. A well-developed curriculum can cater to the diverse needs of children."*

The view of S3 is that:

> *Parent and community involvement are essential for the success of early childhood education programs. When parents are actively involved, children tend to perform better academically and socially. Health and nutrition services are critical for the overall well-being of children in Kwara State. Access to healthcare and nutritious meals can significantly impact a child's ability to learn and thrive. Psychosocial support is vital for children who may be experiencing emotional or behavioral challenges. Providing a supportive environment can*

help children develop essential social and emotional skills. Infrastructure and learning materials are fundamental for creating a conducive learning environment. Schools need adequate facilities and resources to support quality education."

P1 and M1 opined that…"Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to assess the effectiveness of early childhood education programs. Regular assessments can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that programs are meeting their goals." S7 is of the view that…"Policy and regulatory support are essential for creating a conducive environment for early childhood education. Clear policies and regulations can help ensure that programs meet quality standards."

The figure below depicts the key support services for ECE programs in Kwara State.
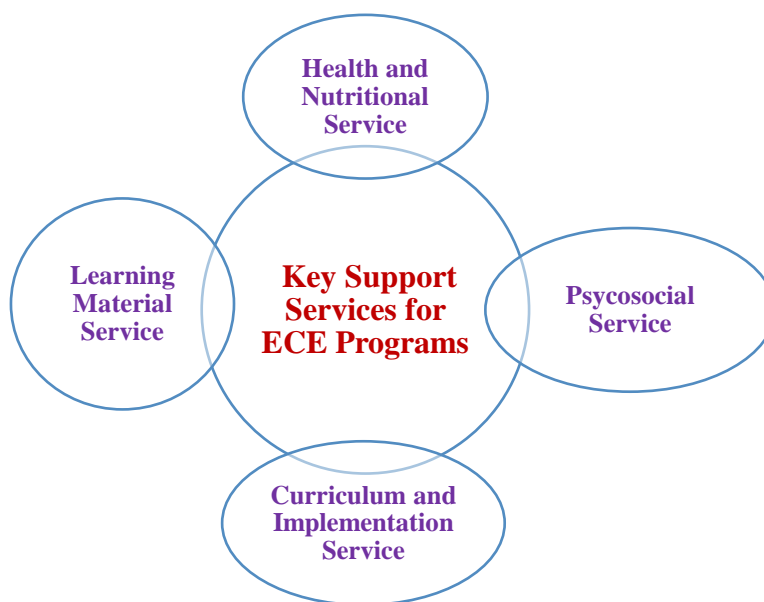
Figure 2: Perception on Key Support Services for ECE programs

Research Question 2: How do the availability and accessibility of support services affect the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State?

The views of participants regarding how availability and accessibility of support services affect the quality of ECE programs are given below:

According to S9…"The availability of support services such as teacher training and professional development can significantly enhance the quality of ECE programs in Kwara State. When teachers are well-trained, they can provide better support to young children." S8 opined that… "Accessibility to support services is crucial. If parents and communities can easily access these services, they are more likely to be involved in their children's education, which can improve the overall quality of ECE programs."

P1 and S7 are of the view that:

> *"Curriculum development and implementation should be accessible to all ECE programs in Kwara State. A standardized curriculum ensures that all children*

have access to quality education. Health and nutrition services should be readily available to children in ECE programs. Access to these services can improve children's overall health and well-being, which can positively impact their learning.''

S4 opined that…Psychosocial support should be easily accessible to children who need it. When children have access to support services, they can better cope with emotional or behavioral challenges, which can improve their overall development."

The view of M1 and P4 are:

"Accessibility to support services is crucial for ensuring that all children in Kwara State have access to quality ECE programs. If these services are not easily accessible, some children may miss out on important educational opportunities. The availability of a standardized curriculum that is accessible to all ECE programs in Kwara State is essential for ensuring consistency and quality in early childhood education. The level of availability and accessibility of health and nutrition services can significantly impact children's health and well-being, which in turn affects their ability to learn effectively in ECE programs."

The view of M2 is that…''The availability of support services is low. However, accessible infrastructure and learning materials are crucial for creating a conducive learning environment in ECE programs. The level of availability of these resources directly affects the quality of education provided."

The figure below shows perceived availability, accessibility and impact of support-services on ECE programs.
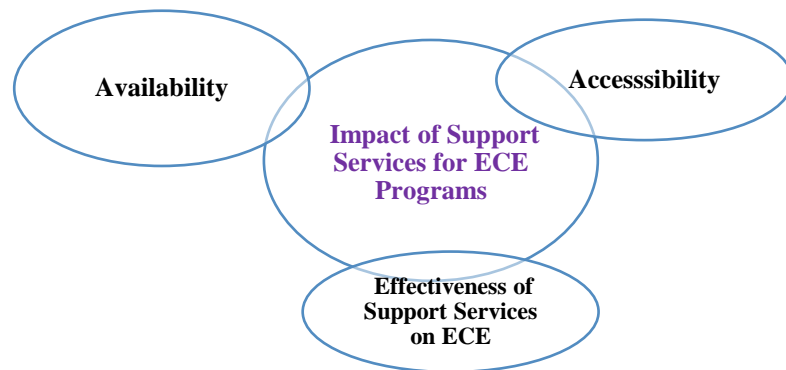
Figure 3: Perception on Impact of Support Services on Quality of ECE programs

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by early childhood education providers in delivering high-quality services?

According to S7, he opined that:

> *''Parental involvement can be a challenge. Some parents may not be actively engaged in their children's education, which can impact the quality of services provided. Cultural beliefs and practices can also pose challenges. Some communities may have different views on early childhood education, which can affect the implementation of quality programs. Health and nutrition issues can impact the quality of services. Without access to proper health and nutrition services, children's overall well-being and ability to learn may be affected. Lack of government support and policies can hinder the delivery of high-quality services. Without adequate support, ECE providers may struggle to meet standards and provide quality education.''*

S1: "Limited funding is a significant challenge for ECE providers. Without adequate resources, it is challenging to maintain high-quality services and meet the diverse needs of young children."

M2: "Monitoring and evaluation processes can be challenging to implement effectively. ECE providers may struggle to assess the quality of their services and identify areas for improvement."

P2: "Limited access to health and nutrition services can be a challenge for ECE providers. Ensuring that all children have access to these services can be difficult, particularly in rural areas."

S7: "Limited availability and accessibility of support services, such as monitoring and evaluation processes, can hinder ECE providers' ability to deliver high-quality services."

S8: "Limited funding is a significant challenge for ECE providers. Without adequate resources, it is challenging to maintain high-quality services and meet the diverse needs of young children."

These views highlight some of the key challenges faced by ECE providers in delivering high-quality services in Kwara State, Nigeria. These challenges include limited funding, difficulties in implementing monitoring and evaluation processes, and limited access to health and nutrition services. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the quality of ECE programs and ensuring that all children have access to high-quality early childhood education.
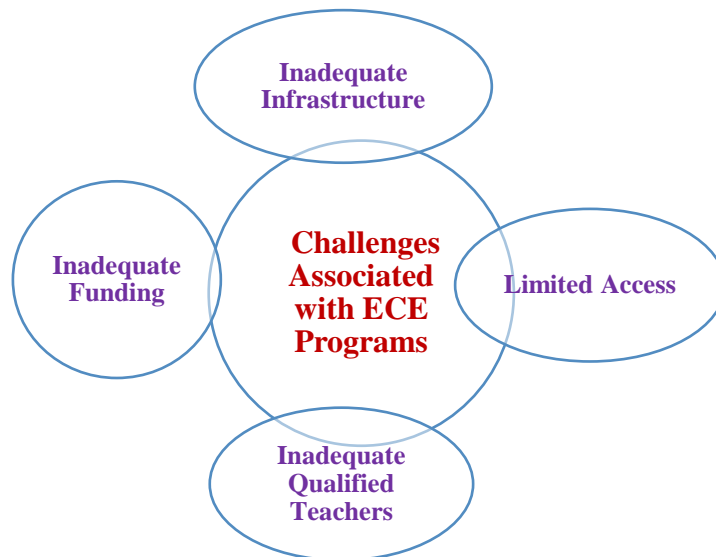
Figure 4: Perception on Challenges Associated with ECE programs

Quantitative Approach

Table 3: Perception on Availability of Key Support Services for ECE Programs

S/N	Item	N	SD	D	A	SA	Remark
1	Health and Nutritional Service	356	14	33	201	108	Agreed
2	Psychosocial Service	356	28	25	191	112	Agreed
3	Learning Material Service	356	11	05	158	182	Agreed
4	Curriculum Service	356	31	18	134	173	Agreed
5	Teaching Service	356	17	32	161	156	Agreed

The table indicates that a majority of participants agree that health and nutritional services are adequate, while a smaller number disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Also, the table suggests a range of perceptions regarding psychosocial services, learning material service, curriculum service and teaching service with a significant number of participants expressing agreement or strong agreement, but also a notable minority expressing disagreement or strong disagreement.

Table 4: Perception on Quality Support Services for ECE Programs in Kwara State

S/N	Item	N	SD	D	A	SA	Remark
1	Curriculum and Pedagogy	356	09	36	209	101	Agreed
2	Instructional Materials	356	26	21	193	116	Agreed

| 3 | Facilities | 356 | 154 | 173 | 21 | 08 | Disagreed |
| 4 | Teachers | 356 | 203 | 114 | 39 | 10 | Disagreed |

The above table suggests high number of participants who agree or strongly agree with the quality of curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional materials is a positive indicator for ECE programs in Kwara State, suggesting that these programs are likely providing a high-quality educational experience for young children. In contrast, high number of participants who strongly disagree with both the quality of teaching and facilities suggests a significant issue or concern in these areas.

Table 5: Perception on Challenges Associated with Support Services for ECE Programs in Kwara State

S/N	Item	N	SD	D	A	SA	Remark
1	Inadequate Qualified Teachers	356	02	14	128	212	Agreed
2	Limited Access	356	12	32	171	151	Agreed
3	Inadequate Funding	356	28	21	181	126	Agreed
4	Inadequate Infrastructure	356	-	19	235	102	Agreed
5	Inadequate Learning Materials	356	-	-	169	187	Agreed

The number of participants who agree or strongly agree that children have limited access to ECE programs also highlights a perceived issue in Kwara State. Limited access can be due to various factors such as geographical location, affordability, and availability of ECE facilities. Also, high number of participants agreed that funding, inadequate access to learning materials and inadequate infrastructure for ECE programs in Kwara State is insufficient.

DISCUSSION

In view of the first research question, which based on key support services that contribute to the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State, Nigeria. Evidence from interviews and survey conducted reveal that access to healthcare services, including regular check-ups and immunizations, is crucial for ensuring the well-being of young children in ECE programs. Results indicate that training and professional development opportunities for teachers are critical for improving teaching practices and staying updated with current trends in early childhood education. In addition, evidence from both methods indicate that psychosocial social service, learning material service and infrastructural service are key services that are needed for ECE programs. The findings coincide with the study of Ajadi (2021) who found that access to health services, including regular check-ups and vaccinations, positively influenced children's attendance and participation in ECE programs. The study of Yusuf, Abdulkareem and Popoola (2023) highlighted the importance of providing nutritious meals and snacks to children in ECE programs, as it was found to positively impact their health and cognitive development. Ogunkoya (2023) found that parents who were actively involved in their child's education, such as attending parent-teacher meetings and volunteering in school activities, had children who performed better academically and socially.

The second research question was based on how the availability, accessibility and impact of support services affect the quality of early childhood education programs in Kwara State. Evidence from the interviews conducted reveal that support services, such as learning material, psychosocial and health and nutrition services are available and accessible for children in schools. In contrast, evidence from survey indicate that some of the quality of the support services such as infrastructure and teachers are very low. Ekure (2022) explored the availability and accessibility of early childhood care and education (ECCE) services in Nigeria. The study found that while there has been an increase in the number of ECCE centers in the country, many children still lack access to quality ECCE services, particularly in rural areas. The study of Okunaiya and Olajide (2023) examined the availability and utilization of ECE facilities in Nigeria. Findings indicate that while there is an increase in the number of ECE facilities, many are underutilized due to factors such as location, affordability, and quality of services. Olayonu (2022) assessed the availability and accessibility of ECE. Results revealed that while there is a high availability of ECE centers, many are not accessible to children from marginalized communities, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies. The finding is also in tandem with ecosystem theory, which provides a comprehensive framework that helps us understand how various environmental systems influence an individual's development (Elliott & Davis, 2020).

The third research question of the study was based on challenges faced by early childhood education providers in delivering high-quality services in Kwara State. Evidence from interview and survey reveal that challenges such as limited access, inadequate qualified teachers, and inadequate learning materials hindered ECE programs. Wong et. al. (023) examined the challenges facing early childhood education, including issues related to funding, infrastructure, and teacher quality. The study found that while there has been some progress in expanding access to ECE in Nigeria, significant challenges remain in ensuring quality and equitable access for all children. Von Suchodoletz et. al. (2023) examined an overview of the development of early childhood education, highlighting key milestones and challenges. The study emphasized the need for increased investment in ECE, particularly in terms of funding, infrastructure, and teacher training, to improve the availability and accessibility of ECE services in the country.

CONCLUSION

The study on the impact of support services on the quality of early childhood education (ECE) programs in Nigeria, with a focus on Kwara State, provides valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of ECE programs. Through empirical evidence and participant views, several key findings have emerged. Firstly, the availability and accessibility of support services, such as teacher training, curriculum development, health and nutrition services, infrastructure, and psychosocial support, play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of ECE programs. These services are essential for creating a conducive learning environment and meeting the diverse needs of young children. Secondly, the level of availability and accessibility of these support services significantly impacts the quality of ECE programs. Limited availability and

accessibility can hinder the effectiveness of programs and negatively impact children's learning and development. Thirdly, challenges such as the lack of trained and qualified teachers, limited access to resources, funding constraints, parental involvement, cultural beliefs and practices, and inadequate government support pose significant barriers to delivering high-quality ECE services. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased investment in ECE, improved teacher training, better infrastructure, and greater community involvement and awareness. In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of support services in enhancing the quality of ECE programs in Nigeria, particularly in Kwara State. By addressing the challenges and ensuring the availability and accessibility of support services, stakeholders can work towards improving the overall quality of early childhood education and promoting the holistic development of young children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to enhance teacher training programs to ensure that ECE teachers are well-equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality education.

2. Government need to implement strategies to increase parental and community involvement in ECE programs, such as parent education workshops and community outreach programs.

3. There is need for government to develop and implement a robust and culturally relevant curriculum that meets the needs of young children in Kwara State, with a focus on play-based learning and holistic development.

4. There is need to ensure that all ECE programs have access to adequate health and nutrition services, including regular health check-ups and nutritious meals for children.

5. Government must ensure Implement psychosocial support programs for children and families in ECE programs, including counseling services and support groups.

6. Government and other stakeholders need to Invest in improving infrastructure and providing adequate learning materials in ECE centers to create a conducive learning environment.

7. Implementation of regular monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the quality and effectiveness of ECE programs, and use the findings to make improvements.

8. Government need to allocate more funding to ECE programs to ensure that they have the resources needed to provide high-quality education and support services.

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SECTION D

CRISIS, WARS, CHILD SOLDIERS AND CHILDHOOD IDENTITIES

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE 21ˢᵗ CENTURY NIGERIAN CHILD AT THE CROSSROADS OF IDENTITY CONFLICTS AND THE PHENOMENON OF CHILD SOLDIERING

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Abstract

The issue of child soldier in Nigeria is worrisome, with its effects on children such as, exposure to the culture of violence, death, school drop-outs, drug-addictions, and identity crisis among others. The 21st century Nigerian child traverse difficult landscapes of identity conflicts, portrayed by the recurring theme of child soldiers. Children have become entangled in cycles of violence and exploitation as "child-soldier," and during periods of sociopolitical, religious and economic upheaval, childrens' identities are shattered with unknown futures. In examining the complex issues Nigerian children experience at the intersection of identity conflicts, this paper focuses on the subject matter of child soldering. This study uses theoretical frameworks of social identity and conflict transformation theory to investigate the causes and effects of child soldiering in Nigeria. It also examines real-life scenarios, literature, and international legal frameworks. The paper intends to inform policy conversations and actions aimed at protecting the rights and well-being of the most vulnerable members of society and illuminate how identity conflicts and soldiering have impacted the lived experiences of Nigerian children. The study proposes a multifaceted approach, such as education, reorientation, economic empowerment, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes to reintegrate ex-child-soldiers into the society.

Introduction

Africa, Nigeria in particular, in recent times, have been plagued by a complex web of violent conflicts, banditry, and wars, with the unsettling phenomenon of child soldiers deeply entrenched within its fabric. Nigerian children nowadays find themselves caught between the terrifying phenomena of child soldiering and conflicts over identity in the twenty-first century. Nigeria, a country characterized by great cultural variety and complicated historical circumstances, has several social, political, and economic obstacles that frequently put its children in dangerous scenarios. Children in Nigeria negotiate a landscape rife with identity issues and dangerously vulnerable to recruitment into armed conflict within the kaleidoscope of the country's diverse citizenry. The fundamental topic of identity, which is profoundly ingrained in Nigeria's rich tapestry of nationalities, religions, and traditions, is at the center of this intersection. The Nigerian children must reconcile their personal identity with the larger communal identities that

society has placed upon them while the country struggles with issues of ethnicity, religious extremism, and socioeconomic inequality.

The disturbing issue of child soldiering, which has a negative impact on the lives of several Nigerian adolescents, exacerbates these difficulties. Nigeria is still dealing with the problem of children being forced into military duty, even in spite of worldwide attempts to end the plague of child recruitment into militia groups. The recruitment of minors into armed conflict not only robs them of their innocence but also feeds cycles of violence and instability inside the country, regardless of the motivation—ideological zeal, economic desperation, or simple deception. To buttress the above postulation, UNICEF decries that thousands of boys and girls are used as soldiers, cooks, spies and more in armed conflicts around the world. They posited thousands of children are recruited and used in armed conflicts across the world. Between 2005 and 2022, more than 105,000 children were verified as recruited and used by parties to conflict, although the actual number of cases is believed to be much higher.

In light of this, it is essential to investigate the complex dynamics influencing the lives of Nigerian children in the twenty-first century. We may start to identify the underlying causes of these occurrences and work to build a more inclusive, egalitarian, and safe future for Nigeria's younger generation by exploring the complexity of identity conflicts and the subtle menace of child soldiering. This investigation not only clarifies the difficulties Nigerian children face, but it also emphasizes how urgently coordinated action is needed on both a national and international level to defend their rights, preserve their futures, and create conditions that support their complete development, despite precious efforts notwithstanding.

Operational Terms Defined

The definition of a "child" is arbitrary and dependent on the sociocultural norms of the individual's environment. It goes without saying that the Convention and Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989, was a document that emphasized the early efforts made by the international community to safeguard and preserve children's fundamental human rights, such as the right to life, access to quality healthcare, and freedom of expression, conscience, and religion. The establishment of an international standard for the definition of a "Child" is one of the significant turning points. "A child means every human being below eighteen (18) years old, unless under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier," reads Article One of the treaty.

The definition of "child soldier" is debatable. Scholars approach it from many angles. According to Dowdney (2000:37), "Youth and children involved in organized armed conflict are not child soldiers and ought not to be referred to as such. On the other hand, "Any person under the age of eighteen who forms part of an armed force in any capacity such as a fighter, cook, messenger, spy, human shield, suicide bomber, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members, as well as girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced labor," is what the United Nations Report (2005:5) refers to as a child soldier. As such, this study subscribes the United Nations Reports' definition of child soldier as its working definition.

The numbers of child soldiers worldwide, as reported by several international organizations and researchers, are frighteningly real. According to some, the number of child soldiers is probably between 250,000 and 300,000 (Child soldier 2008; Brett and McCallin, 1996; Amnesty International, 2008, UNICEF, 2006). The numbers above

represent the number of minors fighting as soldiers in about 30 to 35 different conflicts worldwide. Wessels (2006) asserts that although the number has been constant for about two decades, children are frequently enlisted informally and that army chiefs and commanders are especially reticent to publicly offer trustworthy and accurate information on the recruitment of minors.

Identity conflicts can be characterized as issues pertaining to an individual or between individuals, such as Blacks and Whites, Yoruba and Hausa, Fulani and Tiv, and so on; they can also involve gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other sexual orientations; Christianity, Islam, and African traditional religions, among other groups. According to the preceding comparison, identity conflicts might be connected to race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender. "The part of an individual's self-concept that is nourished by his awareness, membership in a social group or groups, and the value and sentimental considerations associated with that membership" is defined identity conflict according to Tajfel (Tajfel, 1978:63). As a consequence, identity can be imagined or actual; so it is with identity conflict, it is frequently a social construction that individuals or groups of individuals make about themselves or others, such as them versus us, you versus me, and so on.

The Dilemma

Okolie contends that very few people recall their childhood without a flutter of emotion (Okolie, 1998:29). As such, the rights and well-being of Nigerian children in the twenty-first century are seriously threatened by the practice of child soldiering. Nigeria still experience incidents of child recruitment into terrorist groups in spite of international attempts to stop it.

Child recruitment and exploitation by armed organizations, both as fighters and non-combatants, has been widespread in Nigerian regions impacted by conflicts. According to a UNODC estimate, since Boko Haram and ISWAP began operating in 2009, they have recruited almost 8,000 minors. The coercion, manipulation, or compulsion of these youngsters into violent acts, such as spying, acting as messengers, working as domestic help, or enduring sexual slavery, has a lasting effect on their everyday lives. It is difficult for the Nigerian government to adequately address the needs of children since it is difficult to discern between the active and passive roles that they perform. The United Nations and the Nigerian government had to adopt a Handover Protocol as a result of this circumstance in order to guarantee that children who are thought to have connections to Boko Haram are handed over to civilian authorities for integration.

A recent report in 2023 mentioned 685 children recruited into armed groups by UNICEF. Alarmingly, 63 percent of this figure are girls (Okoye, 2023). UNICEF argued that the report is in contrast to the recruitment and use of 136 children verified in 2023, adding that the increase which could not be comprehended shows that involving children in conflict by armed forces and armed groups is not getting better. The UNICEF chief of Borno Field Office, Ms Phuong Nguyen made the disclosure at the commemoration of the 2024 International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers (Red Hand Day), organized by UNICEF in collaboration with the Borno State government. This is especially true in conflict-affected areas like the northeast and northwest, where the Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping and banditry have wrought wanton devastation to tremendous lives and property. Youngsters are kidnapped, forced, and manipulated into joining armed groups, where they endure psychological trauma, exploitation, and acts of violence. This not only robs adolescents of their youth but also feeds the nation's cycles of violence, instability, and violations of human rights. Furthermore, the confluence of

identity conflicts and child soldiering compounds the vulnerabilities that Nigerian children encounter, hence increasing the likelihood of adverse effects on their physical, emotional, and mental welfare. Armed organizations may recruit children from minority ethnic or religious communities disproportionately in an effort to take advantage of societal tensions and grievances. Likewise, children experiencing identity crises could be more receptive to recruiting strategies that provide a sense of empowerment, purpose, and belonging.

Given these interrelated issues, it is clear that Nigerian children in the twenty-first century are at a pivotal crossroads in their lives, with their identities, rights, and prospects all at stake. The core reasons of identity conflicts and child soldiering must be addressed with a comprehensive and all-encompassing strategy that addresses underlying socioeconomic disparities, encourages social inclusion and cohesiveness, fortifies child safety measures, and supports long-term peacebuilding initiatives. Failing to do so imperils not just the welfare of Nigerian children but also the nation's chances for peace, stability, and progress in general.

A Mix-bag of Childhood experience?

Indeed, Freeman's observation emphasizes how important it is to take cultural circumstances into account when trying to comprehend children. The sociology of childhood emphasizes how cultural norms, beliefs, and practices influence people's conceptions of childhood, which are not universal. This realization encourages us to value many viewpoints on children, which improves our comprehension of and methods for social policy, education, and child development, even within the Nigerian context.

Our lives are securely grounded and constructed on the foundation of our childhood. The foundation for our character, morals, and worldview is established during these formative years. Childhood is defined as a time of sensitivity, curiosity, and innocence. This is the period when empathy, fortitude, and inventiveness are planted. It is also a stage in life when a person is more vulnerable to outside influences, which might change their course. Childhood experiences have a great influence on how people grow up and how they go on to contribute to society. Unarguably, love, support, and nurturing are the hallmarks of positive experiences, which promote emotional stability, self-assurance, and a feeling of community. Conversely, neglect, abuse, or poverty, on the other hand, might impede a child's ability to develop to its full potential and have long-term effects that could prolong cycles of disadvantage such as, juvenal delinquencies, rape, violent-acts like, kidnapping, banditry, child-soldier and so forth. This assertion is succinctly coined in Okolie's words that, it is not surprising that most evocations of childhood assume the tone of a romantic regret of a 'paradise lost' (Okolie, 1998: 31). In essence, it is in those terms that Leopold Sedar Senghor talks about the paradise of his African childhood and in spite of many years of sojourn in Europe, in spite of near-perfect assimilation into French culture he still kept intact his 'African soul' nourished by the beauty of African rights and the souvenirs of his childhood Eden where birds swarmed ceaselessly (Okolie, 1998: 31). 'Perfection' as contended by Eliade, 'lies in the origins' (Eliade, 1957), symbol of innocence and the state of edenic harmony between man and cosmos. This perfection belonged to all Africans before the 'fall' brought about by the devouring, conquering hands of colonization. Evocation of childhood is tantamount to a return to this first state of primeval beatitude and splendor characterized by spontaneity and natural simplicity (Okolie, 1998: 31). Regrettably, the 21st Century Nigerian and African-child by extension, is irredeemably caught in between the wild-wind-web of Western civilization and the effects of globalization in all its gamut. As a result, the 21st

child resorted to a culture of silence in the midst of their horrorful and traumatizing violent conflicts and war experiences as the next section would reveal.

A Culture of silence

A "culture of silence" among fighters or child soldiers is a term used to describe a social context in which members of militarized groups do not divulge secret details, intimate stories, or atrocities they suffer or witness. Fear, intimidation, and the normalizing of violence within the group are common strategies used to maintain this silent. The issue has relevance to social identity theory, which posits that people repress their own voices and experiences in order to adhere to group standards and feel accepted and belonging. This silence-based culture prolongs the pain suffered by individuals involved, prevents trauma healing and reconciliation, and perpetuates the cycle of violence.

This picture of the inability of the child soldier to voice out violent experiences is culled from Chinodya (1989)'s novel, *Harvest of Thorns*, which captures the trajectories of the Zimbabwean child soldier's historical war experiences of inequality, injustices and land contestations as documented by the writer is apt to illustrate. It was necessary for the militants from Zimbabwe for instance, the marginalized group, and other war-affected citizens to remain silent. The guerilla camp inhabitants in the novel adequately illustrate this claim as follows: 'Every week the numbers swelled. Combatants, refugees, people caught up in crossfire, fugitives whose tongues were clamped by the horror of what they had left behind, whose muted eyes spoke of suffering' (Chinodya, 1989:132). The terrifying reality of combat zones, when people are forced into the mayhem against their will, is eloquently captured in this quotation. It draws attention to the extreme trauma and silence that permeate these settings, when people are unable to express the atrocities they have seen. The increasing numbers are a reflection of the constant flood of individuals escaping violence, each with a unique story of loss and pain. It emphasizes how critical it is to provide understanding, encouragement, and advocacy in order to end the taboo and deal with the lasting effects of war. This practical experiences of the Zimbabwean combatants or child soldiers as depicted in the above historical documentation is not too far from the experiences of the 21st century Nigerian child today.

Another instance of the depiction of the internalized culture of silence is reflected in Benjamin's conversation with his mother after he has returned home from the war as a child soldier. 'Why don't we just not talk about it, mother? (Chinodya 1989:9). Perhaps, the futility in renarrativizing his ordeals, is tantamount to crying over a spilt milk. This evading of the narration of all that transpired during his engagement as a child solder is summarily uncovered in the next quotation made towards the end of the novel. 'There's nothing to talk about really. If the bush could speak then it could tell the story. When you are trying to piece together the broken fragments of your life it hurts to look back… What is there to talk about when people are too busy to listen and too quick to forget?' (Chinodya 1989:272). The tremendous sense of isolation and despondency that follows pain and loss is captured in this moving quotation. It represents the difficulty in finding words to describe the unimaginable atrocities of war, when there seems to be no way to adequately express the extent of the suffering. The bush's metaphor as a mute witness highlights how survivors lack a platform or an open audience on which to tell their story. It draws attention to the unpleasant truth of feeling lost and ignored in a world that changes much too fast.

The inability to disclose horrifying violent events connected to a specific person via the anonymity lens presents a new case situation. Nzakana is nameless throughout the rescue

operation and the village burning; her sole connection to the event is by implication, since Benjamin subsequently tells Dickson about the killing of her parents. The wartime experiences of Benjamin's family provide another example of a situation in which there is no memory of what happened to them. Written in an enjambment style, Benjamin gradually finds his voice and uses italics and no punctuation to describe his experiences in a way that is incoherent;

> *'you'll never see these words or hear them because I have no pen or paper on which*
>
> *to write them and not even these trees and rock can hear them… I'm saying this*
>
> *because I have to say something sometimes because we don't talk about these*
>
> *things among ourselves…* (Chinodya 1989:148).

This quotation beautifully expresses the intense difficulty of expressing one's self when faced with hardship. Lack of methods makes it impossible to write down ideas, which is a metaphor for the larger difficulties in processing and articulating trauma in settings that discourage free communication. The reference to trees and rocks as mute witnesses emphasizes the seclusion and hush surrounding suffering on a personal level in conflict-affected areas. The speaker's impulse to express their feelings reveals a deep-seated yearning for recognition and connection despite the obstacles to communication. It highlights how crucial it is to provide safe spaces for conversation and storytelling in order to break the silence and foster understanding and healing among survivors.

Theoretical Frameworks

According to Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, people's sense of self is largely shaped by the social groupings they belong to (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). When this theory is applied to the Nigerian children of the twenty-first century, it implies that competitiveness and intergroup dynamics between various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in Nigerian society may give birth to identity conflicts. When their group memberships are threatened or questioned, children may internalize these identities and encounter more conflict, prejudice, and violence. The idea also emphasizes how children can get seduced into armed organizations in an effort to protect their perceived in-group interests and strengthen their sense of group identification, which feeds vicious cycles of violence and conflict.

On the other hand, the conflict transformation theory introduced by Paul Ledrach (2003), maintains that conflicts will always arise in human society but may be used as a springboard for improvement via cooperative efforts, constructive involvement, and communication. When this theory is applied to identity conflicts and child soldiering in Nigeria, it then means that efforts to address these issues should concentrate on addressing historical grievances, underlying structural inequalities, and socioeconomic disparities in addition to resolving immediate tensions. Nigerian children can be empowered to negotiate their identities in manners that foster understanding, cooperation, and social cohesion by fostering inclusive processes of conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. This will lessen the appeal of armed groups and lessen the negative effects of conflict on their lives.

From the foregoing, these theoretical frameworks could guide pragmatic efforts towards creating holistic and contextually relevant interventions that support the resilience and well-being of 21st-century Nigerian children at the intersection of identity conflicts and the phenomenon of child soldiering. They also offer important insights into the complex dynamics shaping these children's experiences within the Nigerian sociopolitical and ethnoreligious context.

Findings

It is very glaring that in Nigeria and Africa by extension, the concept of the child soldier is ingrained in sociopolitical, ethnoreligious and economic processes and is a reflection of institutional deficits in social welfare, education, and governance. As a result of the complexity of the disputes and the vested interests of the individuals involved, issues remain intractable despite significant attempts by the international community and other stakeholders to resolve this issue.

In the convoluted tapestry of 21st-century Nigeria, the plight of the Nigerian child at the crossroads of identity conflicts and the phenomenon of child soldiering remains a poignant and pressing concern as this discussion has illuminated how the 21st Century children face the grave threat of being coerced or recruited into armed groups, robbing them of their innocence and subjecting them to untold horrors and severe trauma, resulting to their inability to speak out or express what they have been through during their combatant or child soldier experiences.

Way-Forward

However, amidst these challenges lies a glimmer of hope—a recognition that concerted action and holistic approaches can pave the way for positive change. By drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory and Conflict Transformation Theory, stakeholders can gain deeper insights into the root causes and interconnected dynamics driving identity conflicts and child soldiering in Nigeria. Armed with this understanding, they can develop interventions that prioritize the well-being, rights, and agency of Nigerian children, fostering environments that nurture their identities, safeguard their futures, and promote sustainable peace and development.

Furthermore, raising children is a communal duty rather than just an individual one. The prosperity and sustainability of society as a whole are correlated with the well-being of children. To provide a strong foundation for future generations, it is imperative to invest in early childhood education, healthcare, and social services. Additionally, this section highlights how crucial it is to establish safe spaces in post-conflict cultures for empathy, listening, and healing of pinned down trauma where the culture of silence will be done away with. Thereafter, paving way for the ex-child soldier to be seamlessly disarmed and demobilized for an absolute reintegration back into the society.

Conclusion

This paper discusses the 21st Century Nigerian child at the intersection between identity conflicts and child soldiering. It has unpacked the pros and cons confronted by the Nigerian child and proffered some remedies out of this intractable quagmire.

Importantly, tackling the situation of the Nigerian child in the twenty-first century necessitates a multidimensional strategy that includes cooperation across sectors and stakeholders and crosses traditional disciplinary lines. In order to address the root causes of conflict and inequality, it necessitates expenditures in community development, social services, and education. To mend the scars from previous grievances such as, socio-cultural ethnoreligious or political, it is imperative that child safety procedures be strengthened and that communication and reconciliation be encouraged. It means enabling Nigerian children to become change agents by providing them with the knowledge, set tools, and networks of support they need to navigate their conflicting identities with resilience and self-assurance through breaking the syndrome of the culture of silence and manipulations.

Nigeria must face the harsh realities that face its youngest citizens as it progresses further into the twenty-first century with compassion and commitment. Nigeria may lead the way toward a more promising and inclusive future for Africa and the world at large, free from the constraints of injustice and violence, by addressing identity conflicts and child soldiering head-on. By doing this, Nigeria not only complies with human rights norms and international law, but it also confirms its commitment to establishing a society in which every child's rights and dignity are respected and safeguarded.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CRISIS, WARS, CHILD SOLDIERS AND CHILDHOOD IDENTITIES

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It's really heartbreaking to think about the impact of crisis and wars on children. Childhood should be a time of innocence and joy, not one filled with violence and uncertainty. Child soldiers are forced to grow up too quickly and carry the burden of war on their shoulders. Raising awareness about these issues and working towards a world where every child has a safe and happy childhood is crucial.

 Child soldiers end up as adults shaped by traumas of a messed up life. In the year 2015, a movie titled "Beasts of no nation" was released. The movie centres around the life of a young boy named Agu whose life changes in the blink of an eye as war ravages his village and he ends up loosing his family. Agu ends up becoming a child soldier and a cold-blooded killer so he can survive.While the movie may be a work of fiction, it shows an insight to the horrific world of child soldiers and the evil things unheard that should not even be witnessed by children which ends up shaping them and making them unfit to live a normal life in the society.

>*Compelled to become instruments of war, to kill and be killed, child soldiers are forced to give violent expression to the hatreds of adults*
>*-- Olara Otunnu*

Who are children?

  The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child is 'every human being below the age of eighteen.

Kunle and Chike playing with stick at the end of your street are children.

Gafar and Praise running around your neighborhood shouting "up Nepa" at the top of their lungs after school closes are children.

 Agu and Sonya that were snatched from their beds in the middle of the night after their village was set on fire as a result of a war and are forced to become child soldiers in order to survive also children!

While the world moves on, Kunle, Chike, Gafar and Praise are doing well in respective areas of life, Agu and Sonya cannot fit into the society. They were stripped of their childhood, stripped of their innocence, they cannot even have a good night's rest as they're constantly jerked back to life with nightmares. The love in their hearts substituted for hatred, they know no other way apart from the way of pain, terror, agony and anguish even beyond humans comprehension.

A child soldier is not just someone who is involved in fighting. They can also be those in other roles such as cooks, porters, messengers, human shields, spies, suicide bombers or those used for sexual exploitation.

In November of 2023, an anonymous user uploaded a video of a child soldier that served in the Sierra Leone's Civil War on **Reddit** to the **r/combatfootage** section. The young boy says " I've killed women, pregnant women and children. I grew wild inside myself, I saw people as animals. The rebels asked me "do we kill you or will you join us?", I joined them to survive. I remember clearly the first time I killed, I was injected with cocaine. Whenever we attacked, the children were in front, we were fearless. We chopped off people's hands and legs and hung them on tree trunks, if we were heavily injected with cocaine, we spare no one".

A small girl in the same video said "they told us we were about to taste the bitterness of war, they chopped off my hand and told me to ask the president for a new one". What horror!

On Tuesday, 20th of June, 2023, a reddit user **u/LostGirl4525** posted about the horrors she faced while she was a child soldier. She said " I spent 4 years doing it (being a child soldier), sometimes it's hard to remember this period of my life but I did horrible stuff. Everyday was just surviving. Being raped by older soldiers wasn't something rare and when one started to lurk on me, I thought I was done for. The way they treat girls there was is....there are no words. Recently, I start to shake for nothing, sometimes my hearts beats so fast that I can't breathe, everytime I close my eyes, I remember pieces of things,faces, smells, it is disgusting. I feel disgusted by my own self. I feel like I don't deserve anything. Sometimes I spend hours washing my hands in the bathroom but the feeling never just goes away, I feel like they're still covered in dirt and blood". Even though she was able to escape to the border and is receiving treatment, the horror she has seen and has been put through still lingers in her body till this very day.

Childhood identities are profoundly impacted by the experience of being a child soldier. These children are stripped of their autonomy, forced to conform to the rules and ideologies of the armed groups they are associated with. They are indoctrinated, often subjected to physical and psychological abuse, and forced to commit acts of violence against others.

The recruitment of child soldiers is a violation of international law, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, despite these legal protections, thousands of children around the world are still affected by this issue. Poverty, lack of education, and social instability are some of the factors that make children vulnerable to recruitment.

Long term effects of being a child soldier

The long-term effects of being a child soldier are profound and can have lasting impacts on physical, psychological, and social well-being. These children often endure unimaginable trauma and face numerous challenges as they try to rebuild their lives.

Child soldiers are at risk of physical injuries sustained during combat, such as gunshot wounds, shrapnel injuries, and amputations. Physically, child soldiers may suffer from injuries, substandard nutrition, and inadequate access to healthcare, leading to long-term health issues. The lack of proper medical care and exposure to hazardous environments can have lasting effects on their physical development.

Psychologically, child soldiers are highly susceptible to developing mental health disorders. They often experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and other trauma-related conditions. The continual exposure to violence, witnessing or participating in atrocities, and losing loved ones can leave lasting emotional scars that may not fade away until adulthood.

Socially, child soldiers face significant challenges in reintegrating into their communities. They may be stigmatized and ostracized due to their association with armed groups and the acts of violence they were forced to commit. Rebuilding trust and establishing positive relationships can be difficult, as they often face discrimination and rejection.

The long-term effects of being a child soldier can also impact education and future opportunities. Many child soldiers are denied access to education during their time in armed groups, leading to limited academic skills and knowledge. This lack of education can hinder their ability to pursue higher education or gain meaningful employment, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and marginalization.

It is crucial to provide comprehensive support and rehabilitation for former child soldiers to address these long-term effects. This includes access to quality mental health services, psychosocial support, and specialized care for physical injuries. Educational programs and vocational training can help equip them with the skills needed for a brighter future.

Efforts should also focus on creating a safe and inclusive environment for these individuals, promoting acceptance and understanding within their communities. Advocacy for their rights and addressing the root causes of conflict and recruitment can help prevent the cycle of violence and protect future generations from the devastating impact of being a child soldier.

It's important to remember that each individual's experience and journey towards healing is unique. By giving support, understanding, and opportunities for growth, we can assist former child soldiers in reclaiming their identities, rebuilding their lives, and becoming valued members of society.

Child soldiers data

In the world today, there are an estimated 250,000 child soldiers in at least 20 countries of the world. And about 40% of these child soldiers are females that are often taken as slaves and "wives" by older male soldiers.

Fifty(50) countries still allow for child soldiers to be recruited into the armed forces according to Child Soldiers International. Some of the countries that were named are Myanmar, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Yemen.

The reports state that there were at least 4000 verified violations by even government forces and over 11,500 by non-state armed forces in the 20 countries it examined.

How can we help child soldiers?

A comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders is necessary for helping child soldiers, which is a crucial endeavor. There are a few ways we can contribute to the support of these children:

1.   Child soldiers are rehabilitated and reintegrated by organizations and programs that play a vital role. Psychosocial support, counseling, and education are provided by them to aid these children in healing from trauma and reintegrating into their communities.

2.   Access to Education: Education is key to breaking the cycle of violence and giving child soldiers a chance at a better future. Supporting initiatives that provide access to quality education, vocational training, and life skills development can empower them to pursue their dreams and build a brighter future.

3.   Mental Health Support: Child soldiers often suffer from severe psychological trauma. Supporting organizations that offer mental health services, including counseling and therapy, can help them heal and recover from the emotional scars of their experiences.

4.   Advocacy and Awareness: Raising awareness about the issue of child soldiers is crucial in garnering support and resources. By advocating for their rights and sharing their stories, we can contribute to creating a global movement against the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

5.   Addressing Root Causes: Tackling the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education, is essential in preventing the recruitment of child soldiers. Supporting initiatives that address these underlying issues can contribute to long-term peace and stability.

Remember, supporting organizations that specialize in helping child soldiers is a meaningful way to make a difference. Whether through donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness, every effort counts in providing these children with the support and opportunities they deserve.

In conclusion, Child soldiers' protection and awareness should be raised and advocated for. Supporting organizations that work to rehabilitate and reintegrate child

soldiers into society is crucial. Donating to these organizations or volunteering your time can make a difference. Additionally, putting pressure on governments and international bodies to enforce laws against the recruitment and use of child soldiers is essential. We can work together to safeguard the rights and futures of these vulnerable children.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR, 1967-1970: CHILDREN MOST VICTMIZED

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Abstract

Nigeria gained independence from the British in 1960. Interval of six years, the military took over the government through coups. The first coup was on the 15th of January, 1966 and the second was on the 29th of July, 1966. These coups led to the Nigerian Civil War that began on July 6th, 1967, and ended on January 15th, 1970. When General Philip Effiong surrendered on behalf of the Biafrans to General Gowon, he (General Gowon) declared the war, no victor, no vanquished. Gowon went ahead to embark on three R's of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. Divergent views have been presented concerning the Nigerian Civil War, 1967 – 1970. While some scholars wrote on the causes, others dealt with the course of the war. Some dealt with the role of the Niger Delta in the war, and others still wrote about the economic stagnation amongst others. The victimization of children in the war has not been fully documented. This work examines the victimization of children in the Nigerian civil war, 1967 – 1970. The study depended on a multi-disciplinary approach and historical research methods. In the findings, children were observed as most victimized. They suffered most in the war; some died in crossfire, others died of starvation, and some were even killed by parents to avert their cries from attracting enemy soldiers amongst other challenges. As a result of the above and others mentioned in the main article, the researcher recommended a true federation to avoid other wars in the country to save children good identity who are most vulnerable and victimized in wars and for the general peace of humanity.

Introduction

Nigeria gained independence on October 1st, 1960 from Britain. The country experienced a coup that changed the civilian government to military on January 15, 1966 that resulted in Major General Arguiyi Ironsi emerging the head of the military government. He replaced Alhaji Tafawa Balewa in the previous civilian government. Arguiyi Ironsi promulgated the Decree 34th of 24th May 1966 which stipulated the unitary government. He also appointed Colonels Hassan Katsina, Odumegwu Ojukwu, David Ejor and Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi as military administrators of the four regions. The Hausa people did not welcome the unitary government due to the fear of southern domination, hence they revolted. They said they would secede (Araba).

Also General Arguiyi Ironsi was accused of not trying the coup plotters as supreme military council (SMC) stipulated. He rather promoted 21 officers to the rank of lieutenant colonels, eighteen (18) of whom were from Igbo. Meanwhile he took a Hausa man as his guard (Ademoyega, 1981: 30 -50). In the midst of pacifying the north in a

nationwide tour he was assassinated by Brigadier Murtala Mohammed and his group at Ibadan on the 29th of July 1966 along with his host Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi; the administrator of the Western Region (Etire, 2019:20-70). They went ahead and killed easterners in groups in other parts of the country. The massacre of the easterners in the north made Ojukwu to ask all easterners to come to the east since the Federal Government could not save them. Early January (4th and 5th) 1967, a meeting was held at Aburi in Ghana for the settlement between Gowon and Ojukwu. There, they agreed on confederation (Etire, 2019:70-77). This was pushed by Colonel Ojukwu. This means a region could control its resources only to contribute an agreed percentage to the centre. They all signed at Aburi under the watch of General Ankrah.

On reaching Nigeria, Gowon reneged from the implementation of the Aburi Accord. Ending February 1967, Ojukwu told Gowon that if Gowon refused to implement the accord signed at Aburi, he would resort to self -help by March 31st. By March 31st, Ojukwu declared the Revenue Collection Edict 11 of 1967. He seized all the revenue and resources of the Federal Government in Eastern Nigeria. According, to Ojukwu, it would be used to feed the Igbo people who were displaced and deported to Eastern Nigeria. Still, Gowon created the twelve states on May 27, 1967, from the regions.

In Eastern Nigeria, Rivers and Southeastern States were carved out. East Central State remained the one for the core Igbo having no link with the Atlantic coast. The Federal Government did this with advice from the eastern minorities who were marginalized in the former eastern region. On 30th May 1967, Ojukwu responded by declaring the Republic of Biafra. Hence, the Nigerian Civil War became inevitable. On 6th July, 1967, the war started at Garkem in Ogoja in Cross River State by the Federal Government with the zeal of reintegrating the secessionists back to Nigeria. In this war, it was deadly for both the Federal and the secessionists Biafra to the end of the war. General Philip Effiong surrendered to the Federal Troops on behalf of the secessionists. Then, General Gowon declared the war, no victor no vanquished on the 15th of January 1970 and also went ahead to embark on the three R's. These were reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Liberation of the Eastern States and the Niger Delta during the Nigerian Civil War

Here, only few communities in the Eastern region would be taken as samples of the battlefields. The liberation of the Eastern states by the Nigerian troops was in stages. After the attack of Mid-West and formal declaration of Mid-West as part of the Republic of Biafra, Gowon in a way to keep Nigeria one decided to regroup or organize his army in a total war strategy. Gowon did this with the advice givenby Major Apollo that the Biafra army was serious and the police action used by Gowon was not proper or match to the determination of the Biafra army (Etire, 2019: 85).

Also the Chief of Army Staff Colonel Hassan Katsina advised Gowon to release Adaka Boro the Niger Delta warlord from kirikiri prison. The delay of Gowon to release Adaka Boro and his lieutenants would make him Katsina to do by himself. Hence Gowon ordered for the immediate release of Isaac Adaka Boro. Gowon also regrouped the army into three divisions, 1[st]Division to be led by Colonel Mohammed Shuwa to be assisted by Theophilus Danjuma; second by Murtala Mohammed to be assisted by Major Haruna and third by Colonel Benjamin Adekunle to be in charge of the 3rd Marine Commando to be assisted by Colonels Alani Akinrinade, Alabi Isama and Major Isaac Adaka Boro

(Achebe, 2012:133). The first division was to capture and liberate Ogoja and Onitsha down, while the second division to capture Mid-Western down to eastern and the third division to be led by Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle which was detailed to conquer from Calabar, Bonny to Port Harcourt. They were all kitted for the mission in the liberation of Eastern Region (states) where Biafra had held sovereign.

Plate 1: Major General Olusegun Obasanjo of the Third Marine Commando Division (3MCDO) during the Civil War.He succeeded Colonel Benjmin Adekunle (Black Scorpon).

Source: Daminabo,2013:137.

Plate 2: Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle (Black Scorpion) – The Head of the Third Marine Commando Division (3MCDO) in-charge of the Niger Delta liberation during the Civil War Nigerian Civil War.

Source: Alabi ,2013: 416.

However, in September 1967, Murtala Mohammed succeeded in conquering Biafra with their leader Colonel Victor Banjo at Mid-West. Murtala Mohammed pushed the Biafra army back to Ore and conveyed them down to Asaba where they killed so many Igbo both military and civilians led by Major Haruna who was bossed by Murtala Mohammed the commander of the 2nd division. Here, international figures like His Holiness Pope Paul VI sent Monsignor George to see and confirm the massacre that took place. As Murtala

Mohammed tried to cross the Niger Bridge to Onitsha they were driven back by the Biafra army under the leadership of Colonel Achuzia with casualties on the Federal side. Hence the Federal troop could not succeed the first time in their attempt to penetrate the east from the north through the Niger Bridge (Achebe, 2012:135).

Colonel Mohammed Shuwa and his second, Lieutenant Colonel Theophilus Danjuma went and ravaged the town and University of Nsukka as they were aided by Egyptian pilots on the side of Nigeria with Ilyushin (IL) 28 Aircraft. Many people deserted the towns hence these refugees moved down to Umuahia where a new capital was stationed for the Igbo (Biafra).

Abagana was also a place where the opposite forces met and about 500 casualties occurred on the Nigerian side more than the secessionists. It was the second time that the Federals conquered. (Achebe 2012:74).

The Calabar Massacre

From Lagos, the Nigerian soldiers overran Calabar as they were led by Benjamin Adekunle in early 1968 after defeating the Biafra soldiers there. Here, the Federal troops used the Cortes style of Mexico entry for the gold. Cortes from Cuba entered Aztec scuttled the ships to reduce mutiny among his 500 men. According to General Alabi when they reached Calabar, from Lagos, they pushed the ships ashore to make the soldiers fight for life. For behind them was the sea while up shore were the Biafra soldiers. They fought gallantly and defeated the Biafra soldiers and overran Calabar (Alabi, 2013 :79-82).

In April 1968, the Nigerian army decided to block strategically to cut Biafra off from the sea and to be led by Colonel Benjamin Adekunle. The Third Marine Commando Division engaged in an amphibious, land and air onslaught on the Delta of River Niger to Port Harcourt.

The Battle for Oron from Calabar to Port Harcourt

The Third Marine Commando Division (3MCD) troops rendezvous at Calabar for the landing at Elder Dempster company jetty at 9:00pm on 16th April, 1968 under rain. They left Calabar to Oron on 17th April 1968. Early in the morning, the Navy started shooting signaling the troops to land and for Major Isaac Boro to advance from the east to draw enemy fire while the ambush troops to position at Uyo.

The Oron battle was won due to the combined forces of army, navy and air force. The taking over of Oron was the beginning of the fall of Biafra through the Calabar to Port Harcourt plan. They (3MCDO) remained there at Oron and started hot pursuit of the enemy on seeing them. They planned to advance with speed with massed forced relentlessly, to destabilize them (Biafra) not for them to reorganize. It was pursuit all day and night, down to Opobo River. From Opobo river, they crossed eastward with dingy boats with Adaka Boro through James Town across the Creek to Ibono South West of Oron. The problem was the transportation of the heavy ammunition and weapons to move on the difficult terrain. The 3MCDO deceived the Biafra by attacking Widengham Creek so when the Biafra left their Oron position, they (3MCDO) landed at Oron both air force and Navy and conquered them at Oron. Some of the rebels ran back

to Opobo River but were disappointed. Major Isaac Boro had taken the pontoon (ferry) already hence the enemy lost focus. Some ran through Azumini where the 3MCDDO kept for them to escape (Alabi, 2013:215-217).

The Nsan People -Western Niger Delta during the Nigeria Civil War.

The civil war rumour reached Isan West later in I968. They took over Isan village for nearly four to five months. They did not harm any person but only exchanged bullets with the federal army for one period. Hence Isan village was peaceful untill the federal came to chase them away to liberate the place. Both combatants exchanged fire during the period of liberation by the federals on the Baptist high school field which the Biafran soldiers used as their barracks. Before the Nigerian soldiers came in Isan, the Biafra soldiers heard, and ran away again because of the Nigerian army. Some Nsan indigenes aided the Biafra soldiers to run away when the Nigerian armies entered Isan.

The first shots of the initial police action were fired at Garkem in Ogoja on the 6th of July 1967 by the Federal Government (Madiebo, 1980:125). Gowon wanted to maintain the unity of Nigeria but Ojukwu due to reasons pressed by his people, decided to carve the former Eastern Region away from Nigeria. This was a song that was popular during the crises.

Ojukwu wanted to separate Nigeria.

But Gowon says Nigeria must be one,

We are working together with Gowon.

To keep Nigeria one (Etire, 2019:81)

Another statement that reigned in the same period was *Go On With One Nigeria "GOWON".* To meet this task of keeping Nigeria one, General Gowon did this. The Federal army was divided into three divisions by General Gowon. The First Division was led by Colonel Mohammed Shuwa and seconded by Colonel Theophilus Danjuma. The Second Division was led by Colonel Murtala Mohammed whowas assisted by Major Haruna. These two divisions attacked the Eastern Region (Biafra) from the North.

The Third Division called Third Marine Commando Division (3MCDO) was led by Colonel Benjamin Adekunle. He was assisted by Majors Alabi Isama, Alan Akinrinade and Isaac Adaka Boro (B. Okpokpo, March, 10, 2024). They liberated the Niger Delta (Southern part of Easter Nigeria) from Calabar, Uyo, Oron, Opobo, and Eket including Port Harcourt. It was the 1st division led by Colonel Mohammed Shuwa that moved to Nsukka where Kaduna Nzeogwu was killed (Etire, 2019:81).

On the 9th of August, Biafra captured Mid-West; hence the Federal Government changed their police action to a total war. For Major Apolo and Lieutenant Colonel Hassan Katsina advised Gowon to release Major Isaac Adaka Boro from the Kirikiri prison and Gowon did including mass recruitment. Major Isaac Boro had supporters like Samuel Owonoro and Nottingham Dick who regrouped and swelled the 3MCDO under the leadership of Colonel Benjamin Adekunle. They swept the Niger Delta though with some challenges (Egba, Personal Communication, March,10,2024). With the conquest of the Niger Delta communities from Calabar to Port Harcourt, an economic blockade was made against the secessionists.

The Federal Government also changed her currency to paralyze Biafra economically. In the course of the war, Britain, Russia and Egypt assisted Nigeria though for their economic reasons like oil. Other countries also were Cameroon, Togo, Niger, Liberia, Ghana, Libya, and Chad among others. Some countries also fought against the Biafra who also attracted sympathy from Israel, France, Gabon, Sweden, Tanzania, Haiti, Zambia and so forth (Etire, 2019:82).

The war lasted and became so unbearable on both sides that General Yakubu Gowon changed the leadership of the three divisions. This was in the period of the Niger Delta liberation by the lieutenants of the Black Scorpion; Colonel Benjamin Adekunle in the persons of Colonels Alan Akinrinade, Alabi Isama and Major Isaac Adaka Boro before Boro's death. Gowon changed the leadership of the divisions as they were to conquer the Igbo heartland.

Mohammed Shuwa was changed by Brigadier Bisalla, Murtala Mohammed was changed by Brigadier Sanda Jallo while Colonel Benjamin Adekunle was changed by Brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo (Etire, 2019:82).

The Federal side used an Operation Tail Wind and Scotched Earth Policy against the secessionists. This Scotched Earth Policy was directed by General Yakubu Gowon, after different war strategies proved abortive. This was to keep Nigeria one. He decided to embark on the "Scotched Earth Policy". This policy has been successfully adopted by Saka the Zulu who used this policy in South Africa during the Mfecane crisis in the 19th century. Still Stalin used this policy and succeeded during the German attack of Stalingrad in Russia in the Second World War (1939-1945). General Gowon therefore used this policy and stopped Biafran resistance and kept Nigeria one.

The secessionists really meant business to secede but with the dogged will of General Gowon and his other Generals and subordinates to keep Nigeria one brought Port Harcourt (Daminabo2013: 62-63), Kalabari, Nembe, Abua, Yenagoa, Engene, Ikwerre (Chinda, 2015:256-259), Bonny (Deekor,2014:20-34), Okrika, Andoni, Oguta ,Owerre, Umuahia,Ogoni, and other parts of former Eastern Region of Nigeria called Biafra back to Nigeria with different dates of liberation. That by January 15th, 1970, secessionist Biafra was surrendered to General Yakubu Gowon by General Philip Effiong (Commander in Chief of the Republic of Biafra).

This is what Ojukwu said while leaving to Ivory Coast.

> *Fellow countrymen and women, God grant peace in our compromise. Proud and heroic Biafrans . Biafra shall live. God bless you all*

(Pre-recorder and broadcast over Biafran radio 6:090am.11 January 1970 (Text from B.B.C.ME/3277/B1) in Ajawara 2009:41-42).

It was his army Commander, General Philip Effiong that surrendered to the Federal Government. This surrendering exercise was done after the conquest of Uli-Ihiala Airport, their centre of gravity. Hence at Amichi, General Philip Effiong asked Lieutenant Achuzia to meet Akinrinade with white handkerchief symbolizing peace. Akinrinade went with Lieutenant Colonel Tomoye to General Philip Effiong and arranged the surrendering exercise ceremony on the 15th of January 1970.

The words of General Philip Effiong as he announced the surrender of Biafra.

> *Fellow countrymen, as you know, I was asked to be the officer administering the government of this Republic on the 10th of January, 1970. Since then…… May God help us all*

(Text taken from transcription of actual radio broadcast over the Biafran radio at 4:40pm, on Monday 12 January 1970 in Ajawara 2009: 43-44).

For when Uli-Ihiala of Owerri the centre of gravity of the Igbo (Biafra) was taken over by Akinrinade and the 3rd Marine Commando Division, Achuzia the Army Commander of Biafra crept to Akinrinade with white handkerchief signifying peace and then said to Akinrinade that their head, Colonel Philip Effiong had officially agreed and that they should come to Amichi for the surrendering exercise. Lieutenant Colonel Tomoye and Lieutenant Colonel Ola Oni accompanied Colonel Akinrinade to see the Biafra General Philip Effiong at Amichi. The military rank of Philip Effiong on the Surrendering Instrument was Major General, while the status was Officer Administering the Government of the Republic of Biafra(Etire, 2019).

They then called General Olusegun Obasanjo the Head who replaced Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle for the surrendering procedure (Alabi,2013:646-647). Then General Philip Effiong said……

I, Major General Philip Effiong, officer administering the Government of Biafra now wish to make the following declaration:

That we affirm we are loyal Nigerian citizens and accept the authority of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria.

That we accept the existing administrative and political structure of the Federation of Nigeria.

That any future constitutional arrangement will be worked out by representatives of the people of Nigeria.

That the Republic of Biafra hereby ceases to exist.

Done on the 15th January,1970" (Etire,2019:84).

The war was then declared by Gowon as "No Victor No Vanquished" (Alabi, 2013:646-647). *Gowon, on his own welcomed the secessionists.*

The Speech of General Yakubu Gowon in Welcoming the Secessionists

"My dear compatriots, we have arrived at one of the greatest moments of the history in our nation. It is a great moment of victory…………

Long live one united Nigeria. We thank God for his mercies" (Broadcast at Midnight on 12 January 1970, Federal Ministry of Information Press Release No .31/1970 in Ajawara, 2009:45).

The refugee experience started with counter coup and early 1967 even before the War. As many easterners were made to run to the east due to the insecurity of their lives as a

result of the massacre. Children followed their parents, parents became jobless and homeless. Some children witnessed their parents killed or dehumanized hence trauma. Even those who managed to reach their homes. They met hardship and immediate destitute (Ukpabi ,1989 (ed.): 202-203).

On food supply, the isolation of the eastern region as a result of the crises and of the ensuing War made the people recognize in their dietary habits. Yes, because food become scarce.

Also agriculture was threatened, even the crops that could General Gowon in the main Biafran heartland could not be assured. They (refugees) turned from meat–eating (Northern Nigeria) to a predominantly vegetarian diet, just to sustain life. (Ukpabi, 1989: 203).

When Gowon declared it illegal in 1966 to move food stuff from other parts of Nigeria, the suffering increased. They had to depend on leaves of cassava, cocoyam, paw-paw, and hibiscus flowers, to cover vegetable protein which was never adequate. Hence children suffered, parents become mad, seeing their children dying in hunger.

Another big problem was salt. All the salt used in Nigeria was imported before the war. When the war broke out, it became expended for local production to be encouraged. Hence they sought for local evaporation of the seawater along the coast hire. It was not enough, because the salinity of the mangrove swamps was so low, and hazardous. Hence Port-Harcourt was soon to become an active War theatre. They also tried to mine salt at Uburu and Okposi in Okigwe Division but was not also not sustainable. Hence the nutrition level of the easterners including children became more precarious and dangerous (Ukpabi, 1989: 205).

Very close to the above, some children died of hunger and starvation. Many children lost their fathers who were conscripted in the war and mothers died due to death of stray bullets or crossfire. Children were left to fend for themselves. Since they could not fend for themselves, they died in their numbers (Ajawara, 2009:41-45).

Closely related to the above, children became friends and companions to vultures. They became friends and scavenged dead animals or rotten things look or resembled food due to this poor sanitary condition they died in their numbers (Ajawara, 2009:41-45).

Still in eastern Nigeria, children became pregnant with producing tummies. This was as a result of lack of an adequate and balanced diet. No food even if there was food it was never a balanced diet. Hence children continuously depended on the available staples like cassava, cassava stems or leaves, lizards, and other reptiles for food. There was no provision of rationalizing protein and carbohydrates. Stomachs and tummies protruded due to malnutrition kwashiokor became the norm of the day in Biafra land. Some children were given urine in the absence of water. (R.T.Etire, Personal Communication, March,10,2024).

Also, children were killed willingly, especially by both forces. Places where the enemy soldiers wanted to clear every moving object, children became among the targets. Meanwhile, this was against war rules. Women, children and civilians were not supposed to be killed in war (Egba, Personal Communication, March,10,2024).

Still, some children were deliberately killed by parents in the bush where they refuge to escape enemy bullets due to the children's cry in the bush. Since children cried due to

the horrors of war, parents for fear of the enemies hearing the cry of their children and killing them all, it was better to strangle that child to avoid extermination of the whole family in the refugee camp.

More so, in eastern Nigeria where soldiers were sought for by conscription, some children became child soldiers. How can children of less than eighteen handle guns and fight war in the battlefield? This practice reduced human beings to nothing. Unlike before the civil war, children were not meant to see dead bodies but after the Nigerian Civil War, children who were conscripted into the war and participated in the war even as bag carriers saw dead bodies hence that phobia of seeing dead bodies became a thing of the past (B. Okpokpo, Personal Communication, March,10,2024).

More, lack of food made children grow slimmer and slimmer till there was no more strength weight to stand. They fell in their numbers on the ground and as they fell, no more standing and that was death (Ajawara, 2009:41-45).

Conclusion

The adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach and historical research methods, the study has been able to expose how children were victimized in the Nigerian Civil War,1967-1970. They were seen as they gathered together in a sorrowful state looking up for a better future that was not forthcoming. Hence the poor conditions of children in the Nigerian Civil War areas, especially in the eastern Nigeria called Biafra ever in the Biafra refugee camps, their condition was not better. Mismanagement and corruption from the top to the bottom admitted the children to making profits, the attendance and contractors played their own part that seriously made the children in the refugee camps suffer and die psychologically.

Still, the war exposed children to trauma. They generally suffered incessant bombing, epidemics, deliberate extermination, and death. They suffered abuse and violence, sexual assault, exploitation, forced conscription, imposed labour and forms of inhuman treatment. In war zones, when the Biafra soldiers bombed the shell tank everybody running, girls, women and children were seen crying for help. In fact, Children were the most vulnerable and victimized in the Nigerian civil war. The researcher went further to recommend true federalism to avoid other wars. This would contribute in maintaining good children identity even by them and other age groups in now and the future for a better nation.
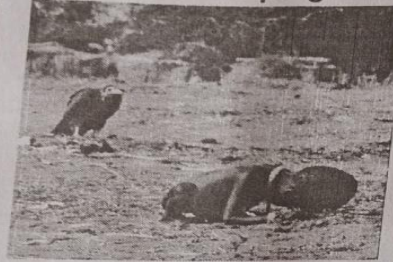
Plate 1: Ajawara, 2009:41-45

Plate 2: Ajawara, 2009:41-45)

Biafran children died in numbe

Plate 3 : Ajawara, 2009:41-45

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

ARMED CONFLICTS AND THEIR IMPACTS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the armed conflicts and their impacts on children's right to education in Northern Nigeria. The continuous armed disputes ranging from the activities of Boko haram to the invasion of banditry on villages and local communities across the northern region of Nigeria, have forced many children, including their families, to flee from those attacks. This has resulted in millions of children being denied the opportunity to enroll in basic education. The study adopted qualitative research method and used various secondary sources, such as articles, academic papers, government reports, and the internet. The findings from the study indicated that many children were sacked from attending schools, high levels of kidnapping, teachers and children's deaths during displacement, and human rights violations. Childrens right to education remains in strong jeopardy due to lack of protection, which maneuvers the child's identity and development. This study concluded that the government and stakeholders should tackle armed conflicts and protect children's rights to education across the country. Also, the Nigerian government should provide security around schools situated in rural communities.

Introduction

Armed conflict remains a contending issue to children's rights to education in northern Nigeria. For more than 12 years, the activities of terrorist groups like Boko haram, the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), and other criminal groups have worsened insecurity in the region. The northern region comprises 19 states, and most are faced with armed conflicts.

Education is essential to a country's economic, social, civil, and political growth as it relates to the application of human rights. Government choices regarding the education of its citizens are subject to legal obligations due to the right to education. The right to education is guaranteed by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasizes in Article 26 the requirement that primary education be made mandatory. According to Section 18(1)(3) of the Nigerian Constitution (1999), the government of Nigeria must direct its policies to ensure that free, and equitable education is available at all levels while working to eradicate illiteracy. In support of these constitutional obligations, the Nigerian government relaunched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program in 2000. The Universal Basic Education Act governs it.

The level of violence in Nigeria puts schoolchildren at serious risk. Numerous educational institutions have been reduced to rubble as a result of attacks by armed non-state actors. Examples are more common in the northeast region of Nigeria, where the Boko haram insurgency has been going on for more than twelve years. Due to

widespread kidnappings at educational institutions, banditry also poses serious dangers to education in the northwest and north-central zones of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the prevalence of terror severely restricts school enrollment. There is a problem with out-of-school children in the country; 18.5 million are thought to be affected (Agence France-Presse, 2022). The number has increased significantly from 10.5 million in 2021 (Nextier SPD, 2022). UNICEF attributes the upsurge to banditry and terrorism in the northeast and, central and northwest areas. Beyond the bloodshed, there are obstacles to helping the large number of children imprisoned in conflict-affected regions, frequently because of security concerns. In addition, a large number of children reside in areas of conflict with few social assistances. Services related to education seem to be secondary when it comes to a protracted humanitarian crisis.

According to UNICEF (2022), six northern states (Sokoto, Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Niger, and Yobe) closed no fewer than six hundred eighteen schools in March 2021 due to fear of student and staff abductions and attacks. Learning losses were greatly exacerbated by the closure of schools in these states for more than two months.

The government should prioritize children's right to education. In Nigeria, every child is entitled to a free, compulsory basic education. However, despite this entitlement, many children may need help to receive high-quality education due to issues including poor infrastructure, insecurity, and pervasive poverty. The Child's Rights Act of 2003 and Nigeria's constitution guarantee children's health and education rights (Magbadelo, 2019). Therefore, this study examines the armed conflicts and their impacts on children's rights to education in Northern Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study will engage in the following research questions that will enable thorough examination:

1. What are the nature and drivers of armed conflicts in Northern Nigeria?
2. What are the impacts of armed conflicts on children's right to education in Northern Nigeria?
3. What are the legal instruments for the protection of children during armed conflicts?
4. What are challenges in protecting children's rights during armed conflicts in Northern Nigeria?

Research Method

The qualitative content research method was adopted for this study. This method condenses data into categories or themes based on reliable inference and interpretation. This method uses inductive reasoning, in which the researcher carefully examines and continuously compares the data to extract themes and categories. A research technique called content analysis is used to find specific words, themes, or concepts in a given set of qualitative data or text. Using content analysis, researchers can measure and examine the occurrence, significance, and connections of particular words, topics, or concepts. For instance, researchers can look for prejudice or partiality in the language used in news articles. The various secondary sources from articles, academic journals, government reports, newspapers, and the internet were interrogated. Data obtained from all these sources are analyzed to answer the four research questions that were stated above.

Conceptual Discourse

Child: Any person under eighteen is considered a child according to Article 2 of The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) (Miamingi, 2014). "….every human being below the age of eighteen years" is another definition of a child found in Article 1 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Armed conflicts: Armed conflicts can be defined as open, violent confrontations involving power struggles over territory and administration that continue between two or more centrally organized parties (Smith, 2004). According to international law, armed conflicts fall into two main categories:

a. International armed conflict (IAC) describes situations of violence involving the use of armed forces between states, even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them and regardless of whether a declaration of war has been made (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 2016). Therefore, whenever there is a resort to hostile armed force between two States, there is an international armed conflict, irrespective of the duration and intensity of the hostilities and the number of casualties caused by them. The definition of international armed conflict also includes all cases of partial or total belligerent occupation, regardless of whether this occupation meets with armed resistance.

b. Non-international armed conflict (NIAC): Under Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, non-international armed conflict refers to protracted armed confrontations occurring between a state's armed forces and one or more organized armed groups or between such groups arising on the territory of a State (ICRC, 1949). As shown, this definition emphasizes two key elements:

Protracted armed violence is taking place, meaning that the violence must reach a certain threshold of intensity;

The parties to the conflict must exhibit a certain degree of organization.

These factors distinguish non-international armed conflicts from other more sporadic situations, such as internal disturbances, riots, and insecurity.

International humanitarian law regulates behaviour during armed conflicts. Its goals are to lessen the effects of armed conflicts and minimize human suffering by safeguarding individuals who are not or are no longer involved in hostilities, such as civilians, prisoners, and injured, and by placing limitations on the weapons and tactics of war. The primary sources of humanitarian law are the two 1977 Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the four 1949 Geneva Conventions. Common Art. 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II govern NIACs, while the four 1949 Geneva Conventions (apart from Common Art. 3) govern IACs.

Education: Education can be defined as acquiring information through study or imparting knowledge through instructions, tutorials, or other means (Adiela & Chinuru, 2021). According to Kumar & Ahmad (2008), Aristotle described education as guiding individuals toward their objectives by utilizing all their skills to the fullest extent possible as responsible citizens.

Education is not limited to what occurs in a classroom or other defined setting. Children watch the world around them and learn from the people, things, and experiences outside the classroom. As a result, there are two types of education: formal and informal.

Formal education, or learning, generally occurs on school grounds, where students might gain basic, intellectual, or professional skills in settings like nursery school, primary school, secondary school, university, etc.

Informal education embraces the rejection of particular pedagogical approaches. It can be done without the purposeful actions and procedures of a formal education. Learning does not require a set curriculum or schedule; it can happen anytime, anywhere. It involves the observation, practical application, and narrative of skills and information.

Education is crucial for a meaningful existence because it enables people to actively participate in and contribute to society by bettering society and themselves.

Children have rights that some have referred to as essential and inalienable to human existence, just like any other human being (Adiela & Chinuru, 2021). Among these rights is the right to education, vital to advancing both the individual and society.

Rights to Education: Numerous international conventions have acknowledged the right to education as a human right, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which recognizes the right to free primary education for all people, the obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally through the progressive introduction of free higher education, and the obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all people through the progressive introduction of free secondary education. One hundred seventy-one states were parties to the Covenant as of 2021 (United Nations Treaty Collections, 2021).

Fnding and Discussion

1. **What are the nature and drivers of armed conflicts in Northern Nigeria?**

Armed conflicts have been employed to hide instances in which defenseless people, including children, have been attacked, murdered, abducted, held hostage, raped, and had their property and livestock pilfered in Northern Nigeria (Egwu, 2018). It can be regarded as a type of illegal activity that is usually driven by financial gain. Armed conflict actors, which include warlordism, robbery, terrorism, and interethnic violence, are a combination of criminal activity and locally rooted conflicts. Its dynamics are always shifting based on the specific players and aspects involved. Armed conflicts are a type of issue of non-state armed groups that terrorize civilians by taking advantage of social grievances against the state and among communities and ethnic groups (Barnett and Rufia, 2021).

Armed conflicts, which include inter-ethnic conflict, warlordism, robbery, and terrorism, are a hybrid of criminality and locally ingrained conflicts. Depending on the various actors and factors, its dynamics are always shifting. A type of non-state armed gang known as armed Boko haram and Bandits terrorizes populations by taking advantage of social grievances that exist between communities and ethnic groups as well as against the state. They can frequently single out the weak and pressure government officials to comply with their requests.

The rise in the armed conflict can be connected to Boko haram in 2009 and other criminal groups in the country. According to data from Ojewale (2021), the north-central states of Benue, Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Kwara, and the Federal Capital Territory reported 1,412 violent occurrences and 7,399 deaths in the past ten years. The local economy is extremely uneasy due to the increasing violence. The foundation of the region's economy, agriculture, has taken a serious knock. Many farmers in the impacted areas have given up on their farms for fear of being attacked. The Nigerian government loses an estimated $13.7 billion in revenue yearly due to the herder-farmer rivalry. According to Ojo, Oyewole and Aina (2023), the following are considered to be the drivers of armed conflicts and armed banditry in northern Nigeria:

    a. Resource rivalry and climate-induced migration
    b. Ungoverned areas,
    c. Shaky security and ineffective border control
    d. Endemic poverty
    e. The religious extremism and ethnocommunal dimensions
    f. A further significant catalyst for armed conflict in northeast Nigeria is the relationship between terrorism and crime.

With the above, armed conflicts still continue to create gaps in the children's right to education in northern Nigeria.

2. What are the impacts of armed conflicts on children's right to education in Northern Nigeria?

Armed conflicts have various, frequently unresolvable effects on children's rights to education. Among the most serious impacts of armed conflicts on children's right to education are the deaths of educators and children, as well as the damage to educational infrastructure. One thing to note right away is that in addition to using schools as their main targets for attacks, Boko Haram's ideological opposition to education, especially for girls, is another factor behind the group's actions.

The circumstances of armed conflicts in Northern Nigeria significantly impact the predicament of girl children. Because the majority of parents now raise their female children at home, conflicts worsen gender inequities. Early pregnancy, rape, and sexual exploitation are all very dangerous (Save the Children UK, 2005). This is one aspect of the often-low school enrollment rates in conflict-affected areas. In Northern Nigeria, the school enrolment rate has drastically dropped and continues to deteriorate. This location is known for having Nigeria's lowest proportion of school enrollment and, as a result, the biggest number of unenrolled children worldwide, according to UN statistics (Abdulmalikz, 2013).

The academic calendar being shortened or permanently disrupted during an armed conflict is evidence that the quality and standard of education are typically lower during these times. (Shemyakina, 2011). Many children are denied the opportunity to attend school in some states in the north as the wave of Boko haram and bandits continue to attack communities. Armed conflicts make economic disparities even more pronounced in society, which makes it more necessary for the less fortunate members of the community to drop out of school.

Armed conflict has an impact on children's rights to education through lowering standards, destroying schools, encouraging inequality, exposing students and teachers to assaults, rape, and other sexual violence, exposing children to kidnapping and

recruitment as child soldiers, escalating poverty, diverting funds from education to the military, and resulting in widespread internal displacement (Bakare, 2018:165).

3. **What are some of legal instruments for the protection of children during armed conflicts?**

During an armed conflict, protection is provided under international humanitarian law. Nonetheless, Protocol II has extra rules that offer direct protection for children. Although Nigeria has ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2003 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 19991, respectively, the Protocol has not yet been domesticated in that country. The Child Rights Act of 2003 is the domesticated version of this. It includes several clauses that protect children's rights during armed conflict. Some of the legal instruments for the protection of children and education during armed conflicts include the following:

International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

The right to education, as the other human rights enshrined in IHRL, doesn't cease to exist during armed conflicts or crises, and its protection remains an obligation under all circumstances for all states that have ratified the relevant treaties.

In situations of armed conflict children's right to education is further protected by international humanitarian law, which therefore complements and reinforces the protections already set forth in IHRL and adds provisions aimed at ensuring the protection of education for specific groups or situations, such as:

- orphaned or unaccompanied children (Art. 24, IV Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949)

- education under military occupation (Art. 50, Fourth Geneva Convention)

- education for interned children and young people (art. 94 IV Geneva Convention)

- education of children during non-international armed conflicts (Art. 4(3)(a), Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977)

Children enjoy special protection from the harms of armed conflict, and, as such, the recruitment or military use of children is strictly prohibited in a variety of IHRL and IHL treaties and constitutes a war crime.

IHL also provides for the protection of children, educational staff, and facilities through its foundational principles, such as:

1. The principle of distinction between civilian and military persons and objectives

2. The principle of proportionality

It is worth mentioning that the rules and the principles discussed above constitute international customary law, meaning that they apply to all parties to armed conflict, irrespective of their ratification status of IHL treaties.

1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The CRC's Articles 28 and 29 guarantee a child's right to an education. A crucial outcome is the guarantee that elementary education be free and compulsory for all children, and that secondary education be equally accessible and affordable for all children, with financial assistance provided as needed (UNICEF, 2007).

The Safe School Declaration

In supplement to the legal requirements outlined in international humanitarian law and human rights law, "soft law" mechanisms and efforts further recognize and safeguard children's right to education during armed conflict. The Safe Schools Declaration, adopted in 2015 due to a consultation process spearheaded by the Global Coalition to Protect Education under Attack (GCPEA) and supported by Argentina and Norway, represents a significant turning point. The Declaration is an intergovernmental political agreement that aims to decrease the use of colleges and universities for military operations, increase the protection of education against attack, and guarantee the continuation of education during times of conflict. The Declaration serves as a foundation for cooperation and communication and ratifies government commitment to frequent meetings to assess the Declaration's implementation and Guidelines' application.

The Nigerian Constitution and Human Rights

Children in Nigeria are granted various rights under Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution. Because these are unchangeable and unalienable, they are fundamental human rights (Eso, 1985). Similar clauses can be found in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which the National Assembly passed with the help of an enabling Act (African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 2004). Since men are the standard of measurement, it has been noted that these essential human rights do not encompass the protection of women; as a result, there is a contradiction between the law and practice resulting from their interpretations (Agomo, 2004).

Nigerian Child's Rights Act 2003: Child's rights now have broad frameworks thanks to this Act. According to Section 16(1) of the Act, a child who requires protective measures has the right to one that is appropriate for their requirements and promotes their active participation in the community (Adiela and Achinewhu, 2021:235).

4. What are challenges in protecting children's rights to Education during armed conflicts in Northern Nigeria?

Children face several significant obstacles. Socio-cultural and socioeconomic problems hinder the growth and well-being of many children in northern Nigeria. Additionally, millions of children in the region face daily hardships related to deadly conflicts and widespread insecurity. The risks to human insecurity, sexual assault, being used as a weapon of war, restricted access to healthcare, education, and health rights, and the most basic necessities of life.

The activities of Boko haram and bandits have pushed away the opportunities of many children. While the President has promised to grant amnesty to any member of the sect who voluntarily surrenders and lays down his arms, it is indicated that this approach does not jeopardize the need for justice through the country's legal system. Once again,

the inability of the Nigerian government to impartially investigate and appropriately prosecute Boko Haram leaders has become intolerable (Bakare, 2018). Nigeria can still hold the group accountable under its current flawed legal system. The failure to achieve this needs to be addressed. As a result, children in northern Nigeria are always in danger due to severe issues, including malnourishment, insecurity, and begging for alms (Ogunniyi, 2018; Assim, 2020).

The impasse surrounding the adoption of the Child's Rights Act by the states can be largely attributed to Nigeria's dual legal system, and the fact that matters about children are on the residual list (Nwozor and Okhillu, 2022). The President can only accede to laws that the National Assembly enacts to execute treaties if they are approved by the majority of the legislative chambers of the member states in the federation (Egede, 2007).]

The reasons for the development discrepancies among young Nigerians are poverty and restricted educational opportunities. Approximately one in five children who are not in school worldwide reside in Nigeria, according to UNICEF. These children are at risk of sexual assault and terror from armed groups. The Almajiri system serves the majority of Nigeria's 13.2 million out-of-school youth. Of this demographic, children from Northern Nigeria make up about 69% (Nextier SPD, 2022).

Nigeria passed the Child's Rights Act in 2003, formally endorsing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. It is anticipated that the Act will shield children against cruel treatment in any way.

According to Kabir (2022), nineteen years after its domestication in the southern parts of the nation, the Northwest and Northeast states still need to catch up. States like Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Kebbi, Yobe, and Zamfara are among those that have yet to domesticate the Act.

In the north, the socio-cultural Almajiri system is still widely used in place of the formal education system outlined in the Act. Nevertheless, many become homeless as young beggars, depending on menial labour and alms to get by each day.

According to Section 11 of the Child Rights Act, a child cannot be subjected to any of the following:

   a. Physical, mental, or emotional harm
   b. Torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
   c. Attacks on the Child's honor or reputation
   d. Held in slavery or servitude while under the care of a parent, legal guardian, school authority, or any other person or authority having the Child's care. This includes sexual abuse.

According to research from the London-based child rights organization Save the Children International, 78% of girls in Nigeria are married before the age of 18, even though sections 21, 22, and 23 of the legislation also prohibit child marriage.

Conclusion

Research on armed conflicts on children's rights to education indicated that millions of children remain denied access to quality learning in northern Nigeria. Most children and their families experience pivotal moments of violence, attacks, and displacement across

the northern region. There are tales of resiliency and personal growth in the memoirs of children who are victims of armed conflicts from banditry, Boko haram insurgency, local communal conflicts, and other violence.

Many children in many states affected by armed conflict will carry emotional wounds for the rest of their lives as the wave of conflicts remains high. The study indicated that the government and stakeholders, e.g., the United Nations, should pay more attention to the needs of children and the protection of schools from attacks. Every intervention program must have multiple facets and target different population tiers. The engagement in creating and adopting the existing legal protocol that protects children's rights to education should be strongly implemented by the Nigerian government.

Recommendations

After considering an extensive understanding of the armed conflicts and their impacts on children's right to education in northern Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

1. It recommended that in order to hold non-state actors like Boko haram accountable for children's rights abuses in general and the violation of the child's right to education in particular, it is necessary to improve both domestic and international institutions.

2. It is imperative that the Nigerian National Assembly promptly passes the 2007 Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol Bill. This will make it possible for the Northern region's children to use the unique clauses found in the Additional Protocol for Children.

3. The 11 northern states that have not yet domesticated the Child's Rights Act are the target of increased talks to encourage them. In order to guarantee the law's implementation, stakeholders in the child's rights project should also interact with the northern states that have domesticated it;

4. Increased child-focused interventions are required, particularly in violent areas. Because they are more susceptible, more children run the risk of being abducted or forced to join armed groups.

5. The northern states must immediately enact the Child Rights Act. It will offer the required legal foundation for these areas' child protection.

6. The necessary structures and funding should be provided by the political will of the relevant parties to guarantee that the laws above are implemented.

7. To guarantee a consistent flow of funding for children living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, the pertinent national and international stakeholders should be enlisted.

8. Sustainable security across the northern region should be provided.

9. The Government should invest more in providing livelihood opportunities for displaced families in the region.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
CHILDREN WITHOUT CHILDHOOD: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICTS ON CHILDREN IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper explores the impact of armed conflicts on children in Northeast Nigeria. Globally, children constitute one of the most vulnerable groups affected by war and armed conflicts. In Nigeria, the last two decades have witnessed an increase in armed conflicts perpetrated by Boko Haram and ISWAP, particularly in the Northeast states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. The incessant activities of these groups have deprived children of the typical childhood experience and their basic rights to life, education, healthcare, food, and shelter, particularly because children in this region are increasingly being abducted, tortured, recruited and used as child soldiers, suicide bombers, and sex slaves. Using research data generated from primary and secondary sources such as newspapers, published books, journal articles, and online sources, the paper addresses the following questions: 1) How do armed conflicts affect children in Northeast Nigeria? 2) How effective are the child protection policies in dealing with the implications of armed conflicts on children in Northeast Nigeria. The research finding indicate that their childhood experiences of war has implications on their identities and physical and psychological wellbeing. The study also reveals that despite the existence of various child protection policies, children's right in Northeast Nigeria remains compromised.

Keywords: Child Protection, Children, Boko-Haram, Child Soldier, Northeast Nigeria

Introduction

Armed conflicts and wars impact individuals of all ages, yet globally, children often emerge as one of the most vulnerable victims in such conflict settings. According to Okoli and Nwokolo (2023:1), children bear a significant impact in every aspect of war, armed conflict, and post-conflict settings. Kabir, Shenoda, & Goldhagen (2019:1) further highlight that over ten percent of children worldwide are either directly or indirectly affected by armed conflict. Recent years have seen a worsening of this situation, particularly due to the prominence of civil wars and conflicts lacking clearly defined state actors. In these irregular conflicts, children suffer disproportionately, facing abduction, recruitment, and exploitation by terrorist and armed groups, and often forced into roles as child soldiers, spies, or subjected to sexual slavery among other support roles (Honwana, 2009:63).

According to the 2023 Report of the United Nations Secretary General on children and armed conflict, the United Nations documented 27,180 grave violations against children. Of these, 24,300 occurred in 2022, while an additional 2,880 violations were reported from previous years but verified in 2022 (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2023:2). The report highlights that the most prevalent violations included the killing (2,985) and maiming (5,655) of 8,631 children, followed by the recruitment and use of 7,622 children, and the abduction of 3,985 children. Additionally, the report indicates that 2,496 children were detained due to actual or alleged associations with armed groups, including those designated as terrorist organizations by the United Nations or for reasons related to national security (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2023:2).

Specifically, the northeast region, especially Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states, has witnessed mounting insecurity since 2009, with peaks between 2013 and 2015 and resurging since 2021, particularly following the demise of the leaders of JAS and ISWAP. UNICEF (2023:1) reported that over the past thirteen years of armed conflict, the BAY states have collectively suffered over 100,000 deaths directly related to these conflicts. Consequently, this region remains a significant security concern as Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, such as JAS and ISWAP, continue to carry out brutal attacks against civilians, including children. Put simply, due to the violent activities of various armed groups in northeast Nigeria, children in this area continue to endure prolonged fear and anxiety.

This paper explores the impact of armed conflicts on children in Northeast Nigeria, focusing specifically on the states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, collectively referred to as the BAY states. It is guided by two central research questions: 1) How do armed conflicts affect children in northeast Nigeria? 2) To what extent are child protection policies effective in addressing the consequences of armed conflicts on children in northeast Nigeria? The data for this study was generated from a variety of sources, including primary and secondary outlets such as United Nations official documents, newspaper reports, official reports from civil society organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, published books, journal articles, and reliable online sources. After the introduction, the subsequent section provides a conceptual clarification that explains key terms such as "child", "childhood", "child rights", and "child protection". It also examines some existing policy frameworks on child rights and child protection, particularly within the context of armed conflicts, at global, regional, and national levels. The third section offers a brief historical background on the nature of armed conflicts in northeast Nigeria. This is followed by an analysis of the impact of armed conflict on the lives of children in the region. The subsequent section evaluates the effectiveness of the various child protection policies in Nigeria in addressing the implications of armed conflicts in the region. Finally, the paper concludes by summarising the key findings and providing recommendations based on the study's findings.

Child, Childhood, Child Rights, and Child Protection

Like many socially constructed phenomenon, defining the concept of child and childhood, including when it starts and its characteristics, can be subjected to various interpretations. However, this paper adopts the definition outlined by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Nigeria Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003, which defines a child as an individual below the age of eighteen years. The term "childhood" typically denotes the phase of being a child, marked by learning and development. For most individuals, childhood signifies a period of safety, free from fear, violence, abuse, or exploitation. It encompasses a child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and language growth. Yet, in many regions globally, some children lack positive memories of their childhood due to exposure to war and armed conflicts.

Child rights refers to those rights that every child enjoys concerning their survival, development, participation, and protection. Likewise, child protection entails the proactive prevention and response to instances of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence directed at children. In conflict settings, those involved in child protection work thoroughly to prevent risks such as sexual exploitation, recruitment into armed forces or

groups, and separation from families (Wessell, 2016:201). Child rights and child protection are comprehensive measures aimed at safeguarding the well-being of children, irrespective of their race, socioeconomic background, or religious affiliation. Globally, numerous legal declarations, laws, and treaties have been established to uphold children's rights, particularly in times of armed conflict. Prominent among these are the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child (1990), and the Child Rights Act of 2003.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) serves as a comprehensive framework of rights aimed at safeguarding children from various forms of maltreatment and violations. Initially adopted and opened for signature, ratification, and accession through UN General Assembly resolution 44/25 on 20 November 1989, the CRC officially came into effect on 2 September 1990 as per Article 49. Nigeria ratified the CRC on 19 April 1991 (Ofuani-Sokolo and Okunrobo, 2023:105). Recognising that a child's full and balanced development requires a nurturing family environment filled with happiness, love, and understanding, the Convention emphasises the child's right to protection as outlined in Article 19. This provision aims to establish child protection services to ensure that children can grow and experience their childhoods in a secure family setting (Falch-Eriksen and Backe-Hansen, 2018: v). Article 19 further stipulates that children have the right to be protected from physical and mental violence, neglect, sexual abuse, and exploitation while under the care of their parents or any other individuals (Sandberg, 2018:16).

Article 38(2) of the CRC mandates that State parties must undertake all feasible measures to prevent individuals under the age of fifteen (15) from directly participating in hostilities. Furthermore, Article 38(4) extends this obligation by requiring State parties to take all feasible measures, in line with their responsibilities under international humanitarian law, to safeguard and provide care for children affected by armed conflicts. Article 39 emphasises that State parties must implement appropriate measures to facilitate the physical and psychological recovery as well as social reintegration of child victims who have suffered neglect, exploitation, abuse, torture, or any form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including those impacted by armed conflict. It stresses that such recovery and integration efforts must occur in environments that promote the health, self-respect, and dignity of the child (United Nations, 1989).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) stands out as the first regional treaty dedicated to protecting children's right. It includes provisions aimed at promoting and safeguarding the rights of children across Africa. Adopted by the Organisation of African Union (OAU), now the African Union, in July 1990, it officially came into effect in November 1999. Nigeria ratified the ACRWC on 23 July 2001. This Charter shares similar provisions and fundamental principles with the CRC but extends its scope by addressing issues specific to African nations, such as harmful traditional practices, internal conflicts, and forced displacement.

The Child Right Act: At the national level, the Child Rights Act (CRA) serves as the major legislative act guaranteeing the rights of all children in Nigeria, providing a robust framework for the protection of children affected by war. Enacted by the then president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, in September 2003, the CRA has emerged as a pivotal child protection policy framework, protecting Nigerian children from various

forms of inhumane treatment. However, being a federal law, its jurisdiction does not extend to the state level unless ratified into law by individual state assemblies and assented to by state governors. Despite its significance, not all states in Nigeria, particularly those in the northern region, have ratified the CRA. Notably, Borno State assented to the Child Rights Act on 10 January 2022, while Adamawa has passed the Act but awaits assent, and Yobe State assented to it on 27 May 2022. Pertaining to armed conflict, Article 34 of the CRA explicitly prohibits the recruitment or involvement of children in military operations or hostilities, mandating the Nigerian government and relevant agencies to ensure that no child is directly engaged in armed conflict (Ofuani-Sokolo and Okunrobo, 2023:105).

The Nature of Armed Conflicts in Northeast Nigeria

Armed conflict can be defined as any coordinated dispute that entails the use of weapons, coercion, or violence, occurring within or beyond national boundaries, and involving either state or non-state actors (Shenoda et al, 2018:2). Over the past few decades, the armed group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda' adati wal-jihad (JAS), commonly known as Boko Haram and led by Mohammed Yusuf, has been the primary instigator of the prolonged conflict and humanitarian crisis in northeastern Nigeria. This crisis has forced millions of individuals to seek humanitarian aid or face forced displacement from their homes. Boko Haram originated in 2002 as a religious movement aiming to reshape society according to its interpretation of Islam. Initially focused on opposing Western education, promoting Islamic schooling, and implementing Sharia Law in northern Nigeria, the group has since become synonymous with violence and instability in the region (UNICEF, 2023:10; Amnesty International, 2020:14).

The Boko Haram became more violent from 2009 onwards after their founder, Mohammed Yusuf, was extrajudicially executed by Nigerian security forces. Under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, who succeeded Yusuf in 2010, the group embarked on a series of deadly attacks resulting in the loss of thousands of lives, including civilians and Nigerian security personnel, and extensive property damage worth millions of naira. Their tactics encompassed burning homes and markets, carrying out suicide bombings, and perpetrating kidnappings. By 2013, the group had expanded its influence and control over more territories in the region, with their attacks increasingly targeting civilians, notably children.

Between 2010 and 2013, the annual average of direct fatalities from the conflicts reached 2000 leading the former president of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, to announced a state of emergency in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe in May 2013 states citing security concerns following a series of deadly attacks perpetrated by Islamic militant groups, notably the Boko Haram (Premium Times, 2013; UNDP, 2020). Borno State stands as the epicentre of the conflict, while other parts of northeast Nigeria have witnessed a gradual decrease in violence over time. The deadliest period of the conflict unfolded between 2014 and 2015, with incidents involving JAS/Boko Haram resulting in nearly 8,000 deaths in 2014 and an alarming 9,000 deaths in 2015 (UNICEF, 2023:10).

In 2015, the Boko Haram terrorist group, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and changed its name to the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) or the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). However, in 2016, ideological differences led to division within the group, with one faction reverting to the name Boko Haram (JAS) while the other retained the name ISWA or ISWAP. In May 2021, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of JAS, was reportedly killed during clashes with ISWAP, leading to the

weakening of JAS. Subsequently, in October of the same year, the leader of ISWAP, Abu Maisab-al-Barnawi, and his successor Malam Bako were announced dead by Nigerian security forces. Since then, there has been an increase in violent activities, with Boko Haram and splinter groups extending their operations beyond northeast Nigeria into the northwest part of the country (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2022:3).

The death of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau in 2021 appears to have exacerbated conflicts between the two Jihadist factions. Since then, clashes have erupted between the Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) and Boko Haram militants. For example, on August 19, 2023, ISWA gunmen launched an assault on Boko Haram fighters near Lake Chad in Borno State. Boko Haram responded, resulting in approximately 100 casualties on both sides, with Boko Haram suffering heavier losses than ISWA (Global Terrorism Index, 2024: 8). Consequently, the conflict between Boko Haram and ISWA has led to a significant surge in terrorism, notably in Borno State, which saw a 63 percent rise in terrorism-related fatalities in 2023 compared to the previous year. Additionally, attacks in Borno State escalated from 48 in 2022 to 73 in 2023 (Global Terrorism Index, 2024: 26).

Impact of Armed Conflicts on Children in Northeast Nigeria

In conflict-affected societies, children endure severe violations of their human rights perpetrated by both state and non-state actors engaged in armed conflicts. In 1996, Graca Machel, an independent expert appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General, conducted a comprehensive study on the impact of armed conflict on children. Her influential report, widely referred to as the 'Machel Report', emphasised that children were not merely collateral damage in conflicts but increasingly became direct targets of grave violations and atrocities (Machel, 1996; UNICEF, 2009:8). These violations, as outlined by the United Nations, encompass a range of grave acts such as the killing and maiming of children, sexual violence, abduction, recruitment or use of children as soldiers, attacks on educational and medical facilities, detention of children associated with armed groups, and denial of humanitarian assistance for children (Okoli and Nwokolo, 2023:1; UNICEF, 2023:10). In 1999, recognising the urgent need to address these issues, the United Nations Security Council issued its first resolution specifically focusing on children and armed conflict. The resolution expressed deep concern regarding the grave violations inflicted upon children and called for the UN Secretary-General to submit a report the following year, thereby placing the matter squarely within the council's peace and security agenda (UNSC, 1999).

In Nigeria, grave violations of children have been on the increase particularly due to the activities of various armed groups in northeast Nigeria. Children have been tragically caught in the dual roles of victims and perpetrators due to the enduring impact of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Exposed to profound levels of violence from a tender age, they have become deliberate targets in the country's armed conflicts. This vulnerability manifests in various forms, including repeated assaults on schools, recruitment and exploitation as child soldiers, widespread abductions, sexual abuse, forced marriages of young girls, sexual slavery, kidnappings, and brutal killings. Regrettably, they have been weaponized in warfare, coerced to join armed groups and, in some instances, utilized as human bombs (UNICEF, 2015; Amnesty International, 2020:7). In northeast Nigeria, children are occasionally abducted and coerced into becoming child soldiers or suicide bombers. Additionally, young girls are sometimes subjected to sexual assault or forced into marriage with their captors. Alarmingly, in

some instances of forced marriage, Boko Haram fighters often continue to perpetrate widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence (Honwana, 2009:65; Amnesty International, 2020:7). In 2022, the United Nations verified 524 grave violations against 307 children (135 boys, 172 girls) in northeast Nigeria, including 139 children who were victims of multiple violations (Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2023:34).

Armed conflicts impose a significant burden of suffering and repercussions on children, depriving them of the essential care, protection, and mentorship typically provided by parents or other adult caregivers, especially during their formative years when they are most dependent on others. However, persistent attacks by armed groups in northeast Nigeria have resulted in the death or displacement of parents and other family members, leaving many children to navigate their upbringing without this vital support system. Despite this reality, discussions surrounding the impact of armed conflicts on children often prioritize physical assaults, such as those perpetrated by bullets and bombs, overshadowing the broader spectrum of harm inflicted. Yet, the full extent of the detrimental effects of war and armed conflict on children becomes apparent when considering the profound psychological trauma, they endure, alongside the deprivation of basic necessities and security, and the loss of crucial sources of social support essential for their well-being (Wessell, 2016:198).

Physical and Health Implications: Armed conflicts directly impact child mortality and morbidity. The violence in northeast Nigeria has resulted in the deaths of numerous children, while many others endure various war-related injuries and disabilities. In 2017 alone, approximately 880 children were killed or injured by the Boko Haram terrorist group and the Nigerian Security Forces. Between 2017 and 2021, the United Nations recorded 2,619 cases of flikking or maiming of children in northeast Nigeria. Between January 2020 and December 2021, a minimum of 212 children lost their lives in clashes between the Nigerian security forces and non-state armed groups in northeast Nigeria (Okoli and Nwokolo, 2023:2). Additionally, due to the armed conflicts in this region, numerous children succumbed to treatable illnesses such as malaria and diarrhea, primarily because of the absence of quality healthcare facilities. These facilities are often targeted by armed groups, further exacerbating the situation. In the most severely affected areas of northeast Nigeria, less than forty percent of healthcare facilities remain functional, leaving families and communities with limited or no access to crucial healthcare services for children, including routine immunization and maternal and child care. This lack of access increases the risk of malnutrition and other health-related issues for children in the region. Moreover, many children, especially girls, have been forcibly subjected to sexual violence and rape, which can have severe consequences for their physical health and overall well-being.

Social Implications: Children require love, care, protection, and support from family and adult caregivers, especially during childhood when they are unable to provide certain things for themselves. However, due to Boko Haram activities in northeast Nigeria, children's access to such care, empathy, and attention from loving adults has been severely restricted or almost non-existent. Many children affected by war in this region have also lost access to adult protection due to forced displacement and other consequences of the conflict. The armed conflict often forces children to flee their homes and reside in refugee or internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where they may endure years of extremely difficult conditions while waiting for normalcy to return. Additionally, their war experiences make it challenging for children in this area to form meaningful relationships and actively contribute to the development of their

communities and country. Similarly, some children in the region, who may have been involved in the conflict as child soldiers or brides, continue to face stigma and shame even after their release and reintegration into society.

Impact on Educational Development: The armed conflict in northeast Nigeria has significantly hindered children's access to education. Since the onset of the Boko Haram insurgency, schools have been a primary target due to their association with secular education. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), school enrollment in the region notably declined between 2013 and 2018. Continuous attacks on schools and the abduction of students have resulted in the closure of many educational institutions, with some remaining inaccessible to this day. Deliberate targeting of students and teachers by various armed groups has resulted in the severe damage or destruction of over 300 schools, and the loss of more than 400 lives between January 2012 and December 2014. For example, in April 2014, Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State. Similarly, in February 2018, 111 children were abducted from a girls' school in Dapchi, Yobe State. Tragically, some of these abducted girls remain in captivity, forcibly married to Boko Haram militants. This disruption has not only impeded the educational and intellectual growth of children but has also deterred many from attending school out of fear. In some internally displaced camps, children lack access to education, affecting not only their childhood experiences but also their future prospects and life choices. Furthermore, the absence of education complicates the reintegration of these children into civilian life post-conflict, as education plays a crucial role in facilitating their return to normalcy within their communities.

Psychological Effects: Due to their direct exposure to armed conflicts, a significant portion of children affected by war in northeast Nigeria experience mental health issues such as various forms of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is exacerbated by the violent attacks from groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP, forcing many children to be separated from their families as they flee their homes. The uncertainty of whether they will be reunited with their loved ones leaves these children emotionally distressed. Additionally, witnessing atrocities like torture, killings, and abductions of family members by these armed groups deeply impacts them. Many have had to endure dangerous journeys to safety, while others have been coerced into committing violent acts such as suiciding bombing and killing. Sadly, most of these children lack access to the necessary psychosocial support to cope with the profound psychological effects of war.

Overall, the repercussions of armed conflict on children in northeast Nigeria persist long after the cessation of violence or their reunion with their families. These effects often transcend childhood, leaving some individuals unable to fully recover and consequently altering their life trajectories and potential.

Child Protection Policies and its Effectiveness in Handling the Implications of Armed Conflicts on Children in Northeast Nigeria

Nigeria has committed to numerous international agreements concerning child rights and protection, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Despite pledging to undertake suitable actions to facilitate the physical and psychological rehabilitation as well as social reintegration of children impacted by armed conflicts, the Nigerian government has regrettably fallen short in fulfilling this commitment. Instead, it has been implicated in severe transgressions against these

vulnerable children, exacerbating their anguish, as noted by Amnesty International (2020:7).

Despite the active involvement of government agencies and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), such as the Child Protection Network and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, in safeguarding children in northeast Nigeria, particularly through case management, psychosocial support, and reporting of child abuse, Nigerian children's rights continue to be violated, especially during armed conflicts. Both state and non-state actors, entrusted with protecting these children from violence and abuse, have been found to perpetrate violations. Instances include government security agencies arresting children suspected of ties to Boko Haram, detaining them for extended periods in overcrowded cells meant for adults, and subjecting them to inhumane conditions. Consequently, upon release, these children often bear severe psychological scars, which may affect them for the rest of their life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research investigated the impact of armed conflicts on children's lives in northeast Nigeria. The findings indicate that children in this region often become unwitting victims of armed conflicts, leading to exposure to violence and insecurity. Moreover, the research suggests that the childhood experiences of war in northeast Nigeria have profound implications for children's identities, as well as their physical and psychological well-being. The ongoing activities of terrorist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP further worsen the situation, compromising children's fundamental human rights such as the right to life, food, shelter, education, and healthcare services.

Furthermore, as a direct consequence of the conflict in northeast Nigeria, numerous children have been forced to separate from their families, upon whom they depend for physical and psychological security and support. Consequently, the disruption of this vital familial support during the children's formative years due to the regional conflicts yields severe and enduring consequences for them. The study also highlights that despite the existence of various child protection policies, children's rights in northeast Nigeria remain compromised due to the activities of various armed groups operating in the region. Following the conflict, many of these children are left vulnerable and are susceptible to being drawn back into violence, whether as rebel fighters in new conflicts, members of criminal organizations, or participants in other illicit activities. Consequently, the armed conflict in northeast Nigeria significantly impacts childhood itself, as many of these children are deprived of the typical attributes of a normal childhood, including the right to play, leisure, and other activities that safeguard the unique experience of childhood, particularly during their developmental stages.

The paper recommends the need to address community stigma and discrimination against children, particularly following their reintegration into communities at the end of the conflict. It further suggests that both federal and state governments should prioritize the provision of comprehensive trauma and grief counselling, mental health services, and psychosocial support for children affected by armed conflicts. These measures are crucial for restoring the dignity of the child and equipping them with the necessary tools to effectively cope with the aftermath of war. Additionally, the paper proposes increased community sensitization and the implementation of socio-economic and psychological empowerment programs for both communities and family members. These initiatives aim to better equip them to navigate the challenges arising from armed conflicts affecting children in the region. Lastly, the paper emphasises the need for the

Nigerian government to enhance existing child protection frameworks particularly because strengthening these frameworks is essential for effectively responding to and ultimately ending grave violations against children in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION TERRORIST ON THE CRISIS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Out-of-school Children have been a major challenge confronting the Nigerian educational system, particularly in Northern Nigeria. With an estimated figure of over 10.5 million out-of-school children in the country and the region recording over 50% of this figure, the chances of recruiting and growing the next generation of terrorists is set in motion given unrestricted access by terrorist groups to most of these children. Given the forgoing position, this paper x-rays the complex challenges of terrorism and other forms of insecurity in Nigeria from the lens of the recruitment processes and the possibility of leveraging on the growing poverty in the country coupled with the number of children who have become vulnerable given the public exposure. This paper which explores the issues and challenges of out-of-school children as the avenue for growing the next generation of terrorists in Nigeria relies on secondary data obtained from published works and internet sources. The study discovered that poverty, poor governance system, defective policing and security architecture, and lack of political will have contributed to the growth and expansion of terrorist networks in Nigeria and this has further afforded them the opportunity to explore the lapses in the system for recruiting vulnerable children as the next generation of terrorist. The paper recommends amongst other things the urgent need of government across all levels should put in place measures that will curb in the free movement of terrorists and the same light take adequate and proactive actions that would reduce significantly the number of out-of-school Children in the country.

Introduction

Insecurity has become a major pressing issue in Nigeria with negative consequences. The implication and magnitude of insecurity have left a huge price on the quest for development and in meeting the numerous aspirations of people. The various dimensions of insecurity have further raised fundamental performance questions on the security structure of the state such that, insecurity and its accompanying consequences have become a major point of discussion across the country with a call at different times for a holistic assessment of the role of actors in the security structure of the country. The contention around the existence of security and a secured nation is therefore seen as primary for driving the development narratives or otherwise of any country.

What becomes the provision of a secure environment for the pursuit of individual and collective aspirations is now solely dependent on the responsiveness of government and its agents (security agencies) to the primary responsibility of government which is the provision of security to the masses for the pursuit and actualization of individual aspirations. Specifically, the 1999 constitution as amended noted the primary function

of government as the provision of security for the masses major function of government. The inability to achieve this is therefore a major subject of failure or inability of successive governments in Nigeria especially since the country's return to democracy to meet its core function.

The inability to meet the above is however attributed to several factors which include but are not limited to the growing rate of poverty, influx or unchecked migration of foreigners, porous borders, corruption, and lack of capacity on the part of security agencies. Commenting on the inability of the government and its agents to meet the security needs of the citizens and in the same light, furthering the growing challenge of development, Bankong-Obi (2012) opined that, the country's security challenges are traced basically to successive government's apathy and the lack of institutional and operational capacity of security agents to discharge their primary functions of security the lives and property of the masses to whom government was established.

Consequently, if security is tied to human existence, the lack of same becomes an issue to the collective existence of the people and the state. In an unsecured environment, the most vulnerable are the women and their children. The appreciation of this has birth a number of international convention, which seeks to ensure the safety of those considered as exposed or vulnerable in war and conflict situations, especially the children who in some cases are forcefully conscripted or enlisted into violent groups. Specifically, the 2007 Paris International Conference sought primarily the agenda of 'Freeing Children from war' and their illegal use by violent non-state actors.

Having access to these children and their eventual recruitment in the Nigerian case becomes most possible because of the crisis of out-of-school children who are already exposed to the societal danger of monumental dimension which is evident in the failure of the state to perform its core function

This contention is premised on the understanding that, children and women because of their status are always exposed to the negative consequence of insecurity. Specifically, the deleterious consequence of insecurity on children has negative implications on their access to the basic amenities that should be available for their development. One of the most important requirements for children's development is unrestricted access to quality learning and a conducive learning environment, which is accounting for the growing number of out-of-school children in Nigeria and by implication exposing them to becoming tools for perpetuating insecurity through forced recruitment and other forms of enticement. The UN document on Youth Involvement in Conflict (2013) specifically noted that, in a situation of conflict or insecurity, perpetrators of insecurity rely on youths and children who are affected by poverty and have become vulnerable to recruitment. It noted that a good number of these children and youths are currently undergoing training as agents by state and non-state armed groups.

At the core of security discourses are the question of a secure learning environment and the place of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Since the famous Chibok and Dapchi girls kidnap, concerted efforts and frameworks have been raised which have questioned the place of insecurity to ensuring safe schools either for male or female gender or for children as a whole. The challenge of school security was brought to the fore by Netsayi, Eliya, and Izugbara (2008:99) who noted that the general discussion of insecurity has moved from the macro level to the micro level given different events within and outside Nigeria which points to the fact that safety in the learning environment is currently under threat by different forms of attack against the institutions and also the learners

The consequence of insecurity as a challenge to school attendance and the existence of the academic environment has become a subject of immense concern across all sections of the country, particularly with the growing crisis of poverty which is daily making life unbearable for the majority of the people and reducing the capacity of the masses to access quality education thereby increasing the numbers of out-school children in the country and most especially in Northern Nigeria.

The raging challenge of poverty and access to quality education has further extended the conversation around what a lot of the citizens and access to quality education especially in a society with an alarming rate of poverty, access to quality living conditions and insecurity. This position agrees with the view expressed by Adebayo (2011) who described security as the availability of measures for the peaceful co-existence of people within a society and within that existence having access to unimpeded capacity to pursue developmental aspiration at whatever scale so desired. Access to safe schools for quality education are fundamentally tied to the measure of security put in place for the learners including ensuring that poverty is kept at the lowest level and out-of-pupil are reduced.

The issues that this paper seeks to interrogate are basically within the premise and understanding that, out-of-school children is a major crisis in Nigeria; that insecurity in various dimensions is threatening the peace and lives of the Nigeria people and finally, the intersection between out-of-school children roaming the streets of the country and the vulnerability of exposing children to forced recruitment by terrorist groups, and in the same light, the kidnap of girls who are forced into marriages and for making babies who are exposed to radical inclinations from birth.

Insecurity in Nigeria: a conceptual analysis

Insecurity as a defining movement in any country or society is simply described as the absence or lack of a secured environment where the lives of the unarmed civilians and their property are constantly exposed to danger from within and in some other cases from aggressors from outside. Following this position, Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) noted that insecurity is the antithesis of security, or generally noted as the absence of security. Given the many dimensions and effects of security, the concept has been given different meanings and descriptions within the literature. Some common yardsticks used to define insecurity, include: "want of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection; and unsafe, to mention but a few" (Achumba et al, 2013). Beland (2005) would describe insecurity as "the state of fear and anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.

Furthering the above position, Achumba et al (2013) concisely noted that, insecurity that it deeply rooted in the following important premise "not knowing, a lack of control, and inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or what make them vulnerable." This insecurity nurtures the phenomenon of terrorism. In this light, Oriakhi and Osemwingie (2012) averred that insecurity and terrorism are two inseparable phenomena given the object of fear that accompanies both at every material time. It was further argued that domestic terror and other social vices are perpetrated in the absence of a strong security structure and lack of political will from the state. This has been the case of Nigeria for some time, especially since the large-scale violence and terrorist act that characterised the actions of the Boko Haram insurgents. Not only that terrorism had held sway in the country, it had progressed from Niger Delta militancy to the present seemingly intractable Boko

Haram insurgency which has become a major threat to the continued existence of the Nigerian state and its people.

The question of out-of-school children in Nigeria

The issue of out-of-school children is a global phenomenon that is major affecting developing or third world countries with Nigeria at the center stage with a whopping figure of about 20 million children not having access to quality education or being affected by the challenge of insecurity and poverty. Basically, according to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics Report (2018), more than 85% of global children who have not attended formal learning environment or are currently out-of-school live in Sub-Saharan Africa. this number is however increasing daily due to a number of internal factors such as poverty, government and institutional failure to adequately address institutional challenges and most importantly the ravaging actions of insecurity which has led to internal displacements. This position was buttressed by Ikiyei, Donkemezuo, Precious and Seribofa (2022:19) thus "it would be appropriate to maintain that while there could be many underlying reasons for the nation drifting to its present level of insecure state, the out-of-school children may not be possibly exonerated from the complexities of the spate of security challenges the nation is experiencing."

According to the United Nations, out-of-school children refer to children who are yet to be enrolled in any formal education, excluding pre-primary education. The age range for out-of-school children is 6-11 years. Out-of-school children are school-age children who are supposed to be in schools but are not in schools due to parental and governmental failures to provide accessible quality education for them. Out-of-school children are young children in the age group of 1 to 12 who are roaming the street without access to a functional educational system (Ojelade, Aiyedun & Aregebesola, 2019). Out-of-school children are the children whom the government and the parents have failed to provide quality basic education for. The term "out-of-school children" is a non-attendance of the school of school-age children for some established factors.

According to Amede (2022) out of school children are pupils of school age who have never been privileged to enrol as students or who dropped out of the system as a result of poor academic records, lack of sponsors, employment or being disillusioned with the educational system, insecurity, poverty and other pressing issues. They are kids who leave school without completing their course of study. This position places the children to internal and external vulnerability to attacks and the risk of illiteracy in the future. In the same light Odeyemi in the *Guardian Newspaper* (2021) reported that for every five (5) out-of-school children in Africa, one is a Nigerian and the number is daily increasing.

The crisis of out-of-school children in Nigeria is of national dimension and outlook given the fact that, all the regions are affected and grappling with its effect on the citizens and the task of delivering quality education to the people, but the worst hit of this is the Northern region of the country which records over 50% of the about 10.5 million out-of-school children in the country given the peculiar challenges the region is facing. In line with this position, Ikiyei, Donkemezuo, Precious and Seribofa (2022:19) noted that, no region or state in Nigeria can strictly beat her chest and say confidently that they are not contending with this hydra-headed monster known as out-of-school children. This notwithstanding, the north-eastern part of the country is by far the worst hit by this man-imposed damage on herself due largely to the challenges of security which has led to the displacement of families and children from their homes.

The reasons for children dropping out of school were listed to include poverty, ignorance or illiteracy on the side of parents, religious and cultural barriers placed on the children either because of their gender or societal understanding of Western education, lack of planning by both parents and government with respect to population growth and birth rate, corruption especially among the political class and above all, insecurity in most parts of the country. Beyond the wanton damage done to property, insecurity has also led to the death of thousands of Nigerians including children and teachers. This is minus the number of school children that have been captured and taken as hostages by bandits and unknown gunmen. The fear of the unknown has made most parents scared of sending their children to school.

On the issue of corruption standing as the primary cause of the declining educational system and by implication causing the increase in a number of out-of-school children, several works including that of Ogunode and Stephen submitted copiously that the corruption network and cartel in the administration of basic education initiatives and the misuse and squandering of resources allocated for basic education is causing an uncontrollable increase in the number of out-of-school children across the country.

Furthermore, Adegboyega (2019) study revealed that Transparency International reported a whopping that 66 percent of funds allocated by the Nigerian governments both at the state and federal level for the delivery of education are diverted for private use by government officials who are saddled with the task of ensuring policy framework are formulated and implemented for the delivery of quality education thereby engendering the future of education and lives of the citizens in the country. This singular action accompanied by other factors contributes to the increase in the number of out-of-school children.

Recruiting the next generation of terrorists and the crisis of out-of-school children

The challenge posed on the vulnerability of children especially in their unwilling recruitment as tools for terrorist attacks or for radicalization as the next generation of terrorists is a major point of discourse for the country and the international system as whole. The magnitude of this problem was recognised at the Paris International Conference "Free Children from War" in 2007 where the goal was conceived to call together for concerted efforts of countries, NGO's and international organizations to discuss ending the unlawful recruitment and use of children in warfare and as tools by terrorist groups or for radicalization as the next generation of terrorist. The Paris Commitments and Paris Principles served as significant political-level instruments with strong commitment expressed by 76 Member States, including a number of conflict-affected countries. The Paris Commitments and Principles provide guidelines on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all categories of children associated with armed groups.

The place of security in achieving a country's developmental aspirations and objectives was aptly noted by Iregbenu & Uzonwanne (2015), the object of security of peoples' live, property and interest is a major need for any country that is desirous of development. Without this important object, the country, the citizens and their assets or interests have become vulnerable and exposed to all forms of attacks. Therefore, a secure environment is a major requirement for driving the business of governance and also attaining the enviable status of development with a good standing amongst partners and comity of nations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The challenges of security, out-of-school children and the recruitment of these children for radicalization as the next generation of terrorists and tools in the hand of terrorists for carrying out their dastardly act had raised fundamental questions on the capacity of the state to perform its primary function of ensuring the protection of the citizens and also meet the fundamental objective of providing access and enabling environment for quality education. The issues and challenges they portend for the Nigerian state, its leadership responsibility and existence has been critically addressed in this paper and it was discovered that, failure to address these challenges has exposed children of school ages especially those affected by insecurity and its concomitant effects to kidnapping and eventual radicalization procedures which when they survive, they stand in the line as the next generation of perpetrators of insecurity or even terrorist.

Given the forgoing position, the paper recommends the following;

i)   The government should holistically address the raging crisis and the various dimensions of insecurity which is threatening the peace and livelihood of Nigerians especially those in Northern Nigeria who are exposed to kidnapping, banditry and terrorist attacks.

ii)   There is an urgent need to address the institutional and fighting capacity of security agents to confront the challenges posed to the peace and security of the country. These capacities when adequately addressed will empower security agents with the needed expertise to confront perpetrators of security challenges.

iii) Government should ensure adequate collaboration with international agencies especially the United Nations on education and other non-governmental organisation in addressing and consequently reducing the growing numbers of out-of-school children through adequate funding and policy formulation.

iv)   It is important to also critically consider the number of children roaming the streets because of poverty and inability to access quality education and because of these and other security issues are recruited and radicalized as the next generation of terrorists and perpetuators in insecurity in the country.in doing this, the government should engage leaders and religious institutions on the urgent need to promote religious and moral education which will dissuade parents from exposing their wards to street begging and roaming the streets.

v)   The government should expand security efforts around ungoverned space in the country. Radicalization and other actions that threaten the peace and security of the country are planned from these spaces. When kidnap occurs such as the cases of Chibok and Dapchi girls, they are taken to bushes. Some of these girls are still in kidnap dens and have even given birth to children who have the tendency to become radical terrorists.

vi)   Finally, the Nigerian government should criminalise and take very hard measures on terrorists and groups or individuals found perpetuating insecurity and in the same light ensure the adoption of international agreements that provide for capital punishments for individuals or groups caught in the act of violently recruiting children or using them as tools for executing their criminal intentions.

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CHAPTER TWENTY
CHILD EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE NORTHEAST REGION OF NIGERIA: SEARCH CREDIBLE PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACHES

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Abstract
Violence has dominated contemporary issues in the Northeast region of Nigeria. Caught in the middle of the myriad of humanitarian problems associated with the violence is the vulnerable Nigerian child, who is confronted with an already harsh socio-economic challenges which portend danger. This study examines the impact of violence on children in Northeast region of Nigeria since 1999, with the aim of providing credible problem-solving approaches. Focus is on basic human rights of minors, children's learning and education, access to essential amenities, shelter, food security and physical protection from forced conscription and sex slavery. The study adopts a qualitative survey design and relies on primary and secondary data sources. The historical, narrative and analytical approaches to analysis and interpretation are adopted for data gathered from written and oral sources. The study also employed the use of content analysis to assess the relationship between primary data and literature or secondary data used for the study. The study posits that armed conflict affects all aspects of a child's physical, mental, emotional, and psychological growth and development, hence requires credible problem-solving approaches to avoid a metamorphosis into a crisis.

Introduction
Violent conflicts involve the use of physical force to advance competing interests and/or claims by two opposing parties. Despite the fact that a violent conflict may involve only non-state actors, the term is frequently used as a synonym for war involving at least one government (Kilkulen, 2006:90). It has been identified that violent conflicts are a significant cause of human displacements, particularly refugee and IDP migrations. Africa was responsible for approximately 4.5 million refugees in 2013, the majority of whom were women, children, and the elderly (Ngandu & Swai, 2003:19). Akhain (2012) noted that women and girls are at a significant risk of experiencing gender-based violence. They require assistance to regain control and begin restoring their lives.

Conflict between the government of Nigeria and armed opposition groups (AOGs) has resulted in violence and insecurity in the North East of Nigeria for over a decade, causing civilian deaths and injuries. In July 2021, interviews were conducted with Maiduguri-area civilians, traditional leaders, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), humanitarian actors, and a government official in order to examine the impact of shifting AOG tactics on civilians and the Nigerian military's response. The escalation of Boko Haram-related violence in 2014 led to an increase in population displacement. Nevertheless, estimates vary between agencies. In May 2014, a multisectoral assessment by the United Nations revealed that there were 650,000 IDPs in the northeast, primarily in the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, and Taraba. As the number of attacks in rural areas increased, many residents escaped in advance. They frequently migrated

from rural to urban areas within the same state, putting pressure on larger cities (Abadi, 2020:123).

People fleeing violence in the three most affected states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe have also migrated in the neighboring states of Gombe, Bauchi, and Taraba in central Nigeria and the Middle Belt region (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – UNOCHA, 2014). Others sought sanctuary in neighboring nations. Many IDP-receiving areas in Nigeria were also affected by conflict and violence, and the competition between IDPs and host communities for resources has increased. Midway through 2014, with the escalation of violence, Boko Haram-controlled local government areas (LGAs) in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states experienced secondary displacement as a consequence of the insurgency. A growing number of IDP sites were established, although the overwhelming majority remained with host families. In the northeast, roughly 1.5 million IDPs were identified by April. Borno and Gombe saw the greatest increases between February and April (Ige, 2020:26). The increase was a result of the deteriorating security situation and the continuous return of Nigerian refugees who were unable to return to their homes. In the midst of these, the fate of young children remain unknown.

Despite the fact that disasters and violence do not discriminate, children and young girls are the most vulnerable group affected. Among other necessities, these victims of displacement confront a lack of fundamental amenities such as essential dietary materials and nutrients, clothing, shelter, poor sanitation, and poor hygiene. Yet, with the incessant end to hostilities in the northeast region, the extent of impact on children may not be well-known.

Purpose of the study: This study examines the impact of violence on children in Northeast region of Nigeria since 1999, with the aim of providing credible problem-solving approaches. Focus is on basic human rights of minors, children's learning and education, access to essential amenities, shelter, food security and physical protection from forced conscription and sex slavery.

Theoretical Framework: Liberalism is a development theory that emphasizes multilateral approaches to societal issues as humanitarian crisis that focus on vulnerable populations. According to Akpan (2012:55), "liberalism has a long history of serving as the alternative to realism." Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham, both of the Enlightenment, criticized the 'brutality' that characterized international relations; Kant described it as "the lawless state of savagery", at a time when domestic politics "was on the Cusp of a new age of rights, citizenship, and constitutionalism" (Dunne, 2008:188). These two philosophers' abhorrence and loathing for the anarchic character of international relations compelled them to propose liberalism's "Perpetual Peace" concept. According to Akpan, these manifestos contain germs of fundamental liberal ideas, namely the belief that reason can deliver freedom and justice in international relations (2012:56).

Liberalism derives from stoicism's emphasis on the equality of people and the factors that unite them rather than what divides them, whether geographical, cultural, ethnic, or political. This is the notion that all humans are members of the same human community, regardless of their political or cultural backgrounds. The central focus of liberal analysis is the individual, as both they and their respective states assert rights. The imperative for perpetual peace, according to Immanuel Kant, necessitated the transformation of the consciousness of the individual. The 1943 publication of David Mitrany's 'A Working Peace System' emphasized the need for a new type of international system to supplant the pre-World War II era. Lieber (1973:43) provided an explanation for this concept,

thus stated that: peaceful change would come not through a shift of national boundaries but by means of actions taken a cross them. States would not surrender formal sovereignty which they certainly remained reluctant to do in any case, but would transfer executive authority for specific ends. World Peace could best be promoted if international activities were to be organized around basic functional needs such as transportation, health, and welfare necessities, scientific and cultural activities, trade, and even production. The successful performance of functional activities by bodies that had taken over specific tasks and authorities from governments would bring nations closer together and build a common interest in peace as governments ceded more and more of their tasks to these worldwide organizations, economic unification would not only promote a working peace, but would build the foundation for broader political agreement.

This theory is pertinent to the current study because it emphasizes the significance of global integration in resolving many of humanity's problems, such as circumstances that impose serious threat to children's development. For instance, addressing numerous human problems, such as welfare and other social-economic challenges, through interdependence could aid in combating the effect of terrorism and other repercussions of violent conflicts on children in Nigeria.

Methodology: The study adopts a qualitative survey design. It made use of primary and secondary data sources, while applying strict ethical standards such as voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, consideration of potential for harm and results communication. Primary sources were interviews, and prior to the interviews, verbal approval for the various interviews were sought and obtained from identified agencies and individuals respectively. The participants in the interviews were selected through purposive sampling. All interviewees were told the purpose of the research and they gave their informed consent to participate in the survey. Two research assistants (Language Interpreters were) volunteered for the study.

The secondary data sources included reliable articles from aid agencies such as International Office for Migration (IOM), World Health Organization National Emergency Management Agency ect websites; newspapers; magazines, journal articles, books and also periodicals. The dynamic nature of conflict and conflict management required the application of an interdisciplinary approach to data gathering. According to Alagoa (2003), for a historian to successfully adopt inter-disciplinary approach, he would require knowledge of the techniques and methodologies of these disciplines in other to use relevant and often specialized documents. Consequently, this study relied on works from the Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences on conflict dynamics. Knowledge from these disciplines helped to further strengthen the essential historical data.

Method of Data Analysis: The historical, narrative and analytical approach to analysis and interpretation were adopted for data gathered from written and oral sources. The primary data collected were analyzed after transcriptions from notes at the different interview sessions. As an essentially qualitative study, the principal analytical methodology for this work was the descriptive summary structured according to the needs of the study. Both the oral and written materials were subjected to critical evaluation and analysis to ensure validity.

Results and Discussion

Impacts of violent conflicts on children in northeast region of Nigeria

Armed conflict affects all aspects of a child's physical, mental, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. According to interviews with Zainab Alkali (a local instructor

who worked with the Nigerian Red Cross – NRC in Maiduguri), Ibrahim Baba (a teacher who was forced to emigrate to Maiduguri from his hometown in Bama), and Galadima Abubakar Gwarzo (a local farmer who forcefully relocated to Wukari and later the FCT), the humanitarian situations in the northeast region led to the kidnap, rape and forced conscriptions of children as young as young 8 years old and women. The inability of security agencies and counterinsurgency operations to curtail the insurgents' activities led to assaults on vulnerable groups such as children and young women (Non-governmental Organization staff, personal communication, 21/08/2021). In this context, Cohen (1999) noted that forcible displacement poses significant protection challenges, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, adolescent females, and children. These entities may not avail their own security. However, when the government fails to safeguard them, they become vulnerable to assaults and kidnappings.

In another account, an IDP, noted that while women and young girls became sexual objects in the hands of insurgents, after abductions, children, particularly young boys, were forcibly conscripted into armed groups and used as suicide bombers (B. Ahmed, personal communication, 31/072021). Reports gathered agencies such as the Internally Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2015) and the UNHCR (2014) revealed that the majority of IDPs are children, women, and the elderly. This study revealed that minors who are internally displaced and reside in colonies in the region encounter the following challenges:

i.   Lack of access to essential amenities exposes children to various forms of abuse, forcible recruitment of children as child combatants by insurgents, suicide bombing, and sex enslavement (NGO Staff, Personal communication, 31/07/2021). Armed groups usually block humanitarian aid or restrict access to conflict-affected areas, depriving children of essential food, water, shelter, and medical assistance. This exacerbates the already dire situation and increases children's vulnerability to disease and malnutrition.

ii. Discontinuity in children's learning and education. The devastation of schools and the multiple kidnappings and murders of students and instructors, according to research has deprived children of an adequate education (UNHCR, 2018). The Northeast Nigeria Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) estimated damages to education infrastructure in the three states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe at 249 million USD; and the estimated needs for education at 721 million USD (Hamisu, 2022:19). However, the education sector has received limited funding and only a handful of international development partners are currently implementing education programmes.

iii. Inadequate housing that, in most cases, cannot withstand the test of time and weather. As a consequence of protracted conflict, numerous shelters have been damaged or destroyed. This has resulted in IDPs residing in churches, mosques, town halls, abandoned and incomplete structures, and other forms of improvised settlements that are inadequate for housing the large influx of displaced populations. This also increased security concerns especially for children.

iv. Inadequate access to medical health care has led to an increase in disease outbreaks and fatalities among IDP children. Access to vaccinations is another issue (UNICEF, 2018). For example, cholera cases among IDP children are usually on the rise. Due to the absence of health screenings in many of these facilities, a number of ailments go undiagnosed. Armed forces or armed groups may target schools, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure, depriving children of their right to education and healthcare. Such attacks not only cause

physical harm but also disrupt children's access to essential services and support networks. Inadequate access to the necessities for their survival. There are over 750 unaccompanied and separated children in IDP shelters (UNHCR, 2018).

v. Acute malnutrition: Acute malnutrition is a significant issue for displaced populations, particularly vulnerable groups such as young children, expectant women, the elderly, and the ill. Some of the causes of malnutrition are insufficient nutrient-rich foods, poor feeding practices such as inadequate breastfeeding for infants, incorrect food consumption, and a child's inability to obtain sufficient nutrient-rich foods (WHO, 2018). Inadequate ingestion of essential nutrients, limited access to food, and irregular distribution of cuisines and nutrients required for a child's growth and development have led to a high rate of malnutrition among children in IDP camps in Nigeria (WHO staff, personal communication, 20/07/2021). Malnutrition affects individuals of all ages throughout the globe. Children of all ages are susceptible to malnutrition and its repercussions. Blossner and Onis (2005) identified malnutrition as a cause of child mortality, and inadequate diet or severe and recurrent infection have accumulated as causes of malnutrition during that time period. In Nigerian IDP settlements, malnutrition disproportionately affects children. Child malnutrition in IDP camps has resulted in a variety of complications, such as maladies, deformities, stunted growth, and infections, along with their concomitant complications and, in extreme cases, mortality. Children have borne the brunt of malnutrition among IDPs.

In a March 2015 inspection conducted by Action against Hunger (ACH) in the states of Gombe, Yobe, and Bornu, it was reported that a greater number of children under the age of five were malnourished, including 39.5% who were severely malnourished. This is an increase from the 27.8% and 38.7% found in January 2015 in the same regions. In informal settlements, the proportion is somewhat higher than in camps (Igwe and Paul, 2015:11). In January 2021, 60% of IDP children in compounds in the states of Adamawa, Borno, and Gombe did not have access to nutritious sustenance (INGO staff, personal communications, 12th June, 2021).

Compared to the national average, chronic malnutrition is prevalent in northeast states. In 2014, 48% of children in the northeast were stunted, compared to 32% of children nationwide, including 12% who were severely stunted (Hamisu, 2022:65). In Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe, stunting ranged from 46% to 57%, with severe stunting ranging from 15% to 24%. Yobe has the greatest chronic malnutrition rates (Njoku, 2020:23). In September 2017, global acute malnutrition (GAM) was 9.5% in Borno and 8.8% in Yobe among children aged 12 to 59 months (Hamisu, 2022:21). This author also estimated that 450 children between the ages of one and five perished of malnutrition in Borno State.

Physical attacks

Children are particularly vulnerable during armed conflicts, often becoming targets of various forms of violence and abuse. Children may be directly targeted by armed forces or armed groups through airstrikes, shelling, shootings, or other forms of violence. This can result in death, injury, or permanent disability. In the northeast, the intractable conflict in the region has subjected millions of children to several forms of attacks during armed conflicts and they include the following:

i. Recruitment as child soldiers: Armed groups may forcibly recruit children as soldiers, exposing them to combat roles, including carrying weapons, laying

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mines, or serving as human shields. They are also subject to physical and psychological abuse within these groups. In 2018, Nigeria had the second-highest number of children (1,947; 1,596 boys and 351 girls) forcefully recruited for roles in the conflict (United Nations General Assembly, 2019). More so, this report noted that the country recorded the third-highest number of abductions in 2018. By 2017, Boko Haram had recruited approximately 8,000 children (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017:45). Further, while many children are harmed by Boko Haram, others have been detained by the country's security forces due to their parents' association with Boko Haram (INGO, personal communication, 30/07/21). The absence of basic needs makes these attacks common. Boko Haram appeals to the survival needs to recruit children and youth. For example, while in initial recruitment, a child may have limited food; but once they adopt the group's ideology, they begin receiving regular meals, as well as meat stew on Fridays (Topol, 2017:2). O'Connor et al. (2021) noted that recognizing how Boko Haram exploits the nutritional needs of youth presents an opportunity for interventions focusing on safer ways to meet these needs.

ii. Sexual violence and exploitation: Children, especially girls, are at risk of sexual violence, including rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage. Both armed forces and armed groups may perpetrate these crimes, leading to severe physical and psychological trauma. Multiple instances of grave violations against children have been reported, including death, maiming, rape, other sexual violence, detention, and attacks on schools and hospitals in the northeast region of Nigeria (United Nations General Assembly, 2019:12).

iii. Abduction and trafficking due to forced displacements and separation from families: Armed conflicts often result in the displacement of families, leading to children becoming separated from their caregivers. These children are at risk of exploitation, abuse, and trafficking while on the move or in overcrowded refugee camps. As a result children are abducted from their homes and schools by armed groups for various purposes, including ransom, forced labor, or sexual exploitation; and some children were also being trafficked across borders or internally within (B. Ahmed, personal communication, 31/07/2021).

The Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria is responsible for the highest number of lives lost in Africa in the past decade. The country has witnessed significant violations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Nigeria has signed and ratified. For instance, Nigeria had the second-highest number of children recruited to armed groups and the third-highest number of abductions in 2018. Not surprisingly, nonstate actors often do not comply with the minimum standards stipulated for the protection of children in humanitarian settings. Further, there is a low level of coordinated response in general to ensure the protection of these children (O'Connor et al., 2021:2). Nigeria, as with many conflict-affected countries, suffers from a disjointed and weak child protection structure and a dearth of evidence-based interventions, begging for systems that are responsive to the human rights threats facing children in the country.

Strategies for mitigating the impact of violent conflicts on children

i. Strengthening regional cooperation and humanitarian diplomacy: The term humanitarian diplomacy has emerged as a key concept in peace and conflict studies, conflict management and transformation processes, and forced migration studies. Practitioners, researchers, and governments have come to recognize the need for a greater focus on the needs of individuals who are

forcibly evicted from their homes. Ball (2013) defines the term as the use of specific diplomatic techniques to resolve humanitarian crises. Hansen (2011) elaborated the concept to include the coordination of efforts by governments, local and international agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Food Programme (WFP, 2017), UNHCR, regional groups, etc., and local communities in the management of the problems of displaced persons who experience dehumanizing circumstances. This study therefore argues that a priority area of humanitarian diplomacy is the protection of vulnerable groups such as children. The importance of protection for children during armed conflicts should be emphasized to state and non-state actors.

Ball (2013) argues that humanitarian diplomacy arose from the principles of common humanity and the duty to protect. Consequently, states and the international community as a whole collaborate to find solutions to the problems afflicting children who have been affected by violence, conflicts. Over the course of the 20th century, humanitarian diplomacy has been used to salvage humanity (Hansen, 2011:89). The significance of non-state actors in international relations has been demonstrated by recent intervention events.

Through bilateral or multilateral diplomacy, parliamentarians, humanitarian agencies, practitioners, non-governmental organizations, religious and political bodies, community leaders, and academics should be included in the negotiation of solutions to the plethora of problems confronting victims of armed conflicts in the northeast. Specifically, the negotiation levels afforded by multilateral diplomacy increase the likelihood of resolving a number of the humanitarian problems in the northeast. For instance, aid agencies operating in emergency situations or environments require effective collaborations, monitoring, and evaluations of their roles, particularly in terms of intelligence collection, information sharing, and media collaborations. Aid agencies that operate in unfamiliar terrains must collaborate with indigenous institutions and organizations to prevent disruptions in humanitarian aid and attacks against them. The government should have the capacity to coordinate collaborations effectively.

ii. Improved education services for children: While children in all countries and from all backgrounds have had their education interrupted by violent conflicts, those who have been internally displaced – or forced from home within their country's borders – are now more at risk than ever of missing out on an education. These children require transformative measures to ensure their right to learn is respected. Children face heightened risks during displacement and have specific needs that must be considered when designing interventions and policies for displacement. Infants may require vaccination and nutritional supplements, school-age children may require educational support, and young people may require vocational training. Displacement can exacerbate existing obstacles to girls' education and increase their risk of sexual violence and abuse. Their education is often interrupted by displacement itself, as children leave their habitual school behind and may need time to register in a new school in the host community, or as schools serve as emergency shelters for displaced people. School records or personal identification may be lost as a families move, resulting in registration complications. But education is most deeply affected by

the displacement's impact on families' financial resources (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999:11).

Displaced families may no longer be able to afford school fees, transportation or school materials for their children. Children who work to help support their families may face responsibilities that limit their time for school (Bano, 2018). Psychosocial trauma linked with displacement or with the event that triggered it, whether a conflict or a disaster, can also shift children's abilities to concentrate in class and lead to lower educational achievement levels and higher drop-out rates (Njoku, 2020). Language barriers, cultural differences and discrimination are additional obstacles on internally displaced children's path to education.

The provision of education services is crucial for displaced children, particularly in the northeast where millions of children are already out of school. According to UNICEF (2018), an estimated 52 percent of school-aged children have never attended school, and the annual drop-out rate for children in the north-east is the highest in Nigeria, illustrating the gravity of barriers to education.

To reduce out-of-school children (OOSC), there must be a multi-sectoral approach involving governments, the private sector, and communities (Abdulai, 2021:111). Consequently, it is necessary to expand interventions in this regard to include not only the Borno State Universal Basic Education Board (BOSUBEB), but also the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), the Borno State Ministry of Religious Affairs (BoSMoRA), and the Borno State Agency for Mass Education.

The Northeast is already ranked lowest on access to education for children (Njoku, 2020). Children and young people deprived of education are more susceptible to Boko Haram recruitment, which could contribute to further regional destabilization and an increase in the use of child soldiers. Responding to the immediate educational needs of children and youth through safe non-formal and formal education, while laying the groundwork for the sustainable improvement of education systems at the community and government levels are significant. This can be achieved through the following ways, according to the Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children (1999):

- Enhancing the ability of local governments to plan, administer, and supervise education services that are responsive to changing requirements by collaborating with key stakeholders, undertaking rapid education risk analyses, and enhancing education monitoring and policies.
- Rejuvenating and establishing non-formal learning centers, while sustaining formal institutions
- Helping communities and school personnel devise safety protocols and set up early warning systems
- Developing learning materials by enhancing existing curricula to emphasize age-appropriate, fundamental literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning skills
- Training teachers and instructors to deliver conflict-sensitive instruction and offering ongoing support by means of in-service training, teacher learning circles, classroom observations, and mentoring. Training local participants in the community action cycle, a method community members use to identify barriers to accessing education and resolve them through activities such as implementing school safety plans.
- The provision of safety for educational and learning environments.

iii. **Eradication of child poverty:** Poverty is a feature of the IDPs situation. Poverty has been identified as both a cause and a consequence of violent conflicts (Ngung, 1999:87; Ayegba, 2015:66). While there is no one-to-one relationship between poverty and radicalization, weak governance, sustained economic hardship, and rising inequality have all been found to foster the growth of radical extremist groups (Abadi, 2020:86). With little infrastructure, near constant physical insecurity, and limited industry, there are few viable paths toward economic security for youth in northeast Nigeria (O'Connor, 2021:6). These economic challenges impact the other realms of child safety – namely, access to security and family connection. Because of the conflict, families have abandoned or lost access to their farms and livelihood and are dependent on humanitarian aid (B. Ahmed, personal communication, 31/07/2021). Education, trade, agriculture, and fishing industries are all precarious due to the violence, leaving little opportunity within the regional infrastructure for skilled or nonskilled employment for youth or caregivers (Topol, 2017:1).

Policies must focus on human capital to prevent lifelong gaps in social and economic development. More so, cross-cutting policies for successful solutions must address employment opportunities, inequality in host communities, security issues in return areas, and sustainable solutions for permanent settlement (Abadi, 2020:9). Having poverty reduction programs integrated with livelihood opportunities and transferable skills programs can be instrumental in helping agricultural IDPs find a stable exit from poverty in urban areas (N. Dikwa, personal communication, July 12, 2021). Improving the security situation and increasing economic opportunities in return and host communities are crucial elements (Kurtzer et al., 2021: 3).

iv. **Integrating child protection into military training**: Integrating child protection into military training is crucial to ensure that armed forces understand and uphold the rights of children during armed conflicts. This can begin by educating military personnel about international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly the provisions related to the protection of children in armed conflict, such as the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Provide comprehensive training on children's rights, emphasizing the principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child, and the right to protection from violence, exploitation, and abuse. This education should raise awareness among military personnel about the specific vulnerabilities of children in conflict situations.

Military personnel should be trained to identify situations where children are at risk of harm, including recruitment by armed groups, exposure to violence, exploitation, and displacement (Dadson, 2017:68). Teach them to recognize signs of distress or trauma in children and how to respond appropriately. Incorporate child protection considerations into rules of engagement (ROE) and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Ensure that military personnel understand when and how to engage with children in a manner that prioritizes their safety and well-being while still fulfilling their mission objectives. There is also a need to integrate conflict sensitivity training into military education to help personnel understand the broader impact of their actions on civilian populations, including children. Emphasize the importance of minimizing harm to children and their communities during military operations.

Also important is the provision of scenario-based training exercises that simulate interactions between military personnel and civilians, including children (O'Connor et al, 2021:3). By integrating child protection into military training, armed forces can play a crucial role in upholding the rights of children and minimizing the impact of armed conflicts on their lives. This approach fosters a culture of respect for human rights and strengthens the capacity of military personnel to fulfill their duties responsibly in diverse and challenging environments.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of violence on children in northeast region of Nigeria since 1999, with the aim of providing credible problem-solving approaches. The study has shown that addressing basic human rights of children, children's learning and education; providing access to essential amenities, shelter, food security and physical protection, and the application of effective diplomatic strategies, the impact of violent conflicts on children could be mitigated. Consequently, the study concludes that the humanitarian crisis in the northeast region of Nigeria could have been extensively minimized if such strategies for child protection were introduced.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1) Civil society organizations should increase and expedite advocacies for child protection in violent conflicts. This can be done in collaboration with governments at all levels. This advocacy should including the application of international humanitarian law and other child protection laws.
2) There should be effective advocacy for the prioritization of humanitarian assistance to children during violent conflicts since they are more vulnerable.
3) The Nigerian military should collaborate with other national security institutions such as the police and civil defense to provide security for aid workers in the region; revise the existing military strategy to include protection to civilians beyond garrison towns, and encourage the creation of channels for civilian leaders and interest groups to report protection concerns and continue to respond to these concerns, undertake patrols, and carry out other activities that mitigate risks to civilians.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
MASCULINITIES IN NORTHERN NIGERIAN CRISIS NARRATIVES: THE (UN)TRIUMPHANT HERO IN HABILA AND JOHN

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Abstract

This study projects crisis as the ultimate impetus of northern Nigerian fiction (which brings about continuity and change--for both the narrative form and the plot of the narrative). It submits the texts under study as crisis narratives which speak to society's crises in historical time and interrogates the concerns of masculine identity-through the hero archetype, as relating to the physical and social aspects of crisis. Again, the paper explores the significance of the interrelation of the latter as embodiments of crisis narrative in northern Nigerian fiction. This argument is centered on the image of the hero which recurs in northern Nigerian and the larger subset of Nigerian crisis fiction, although with a few changes here and there, additional features which ''mythos take over time and usage.'' The archetypal literary theory is utilized as the framework of the argument of this study. It is employed with a phenomenological outlook, to examine the issues and characters in the selected texts: *Measuring Time* by Helon Habila and *Born on a Tuesday* by Elnathan John.

Introduction

Northern Nigerian fiction, the subject of this paper and, a subset of the bigger group of Nigerian literature can be deduced to be fiction that expresses the northern Nigerian sensibility. Focus will be on this fictionabout crisis narratives, especially with regard to specific northern Nigerian fictional texts: *Measuring Time* by Helon Habila and *Born on a Tuesday* by Elnathan John. Crisis broadly denotes a ''disruption or threatening circumstance usually within a specific context, such as an environmental, economic, or political event... some abnormal event or events that threaten values, goals, and resources'' (Seeger and Sellnow, 2016:10). It is characterized by high uncertainty, threat and risk and often requires relatively rapid response to reduce, contain, or mitigate the potential harm (Seeger and Sellnow, 2016:11). It is also varied and could be manifested by humans and or living beings psychologically, physiologically and physically. Since narratives are fictional depictions of the artistic capabilities of writers, narratives of crisis or crisis narratives signify works of fiction that seek to make meaning from crises. A recurrence and presentation of similarities in such meaning making shapes conversations, culture and institutions. Hence, the trajectory of this paper and its approach to northern Nigerian fiction as crisis narrative. Robert Heath (2004), notes that through the crisis narrative, "the world and people's actions reflect a logic that explains

what happens, why it happens, who makes it happen, when it happens, and how people should respond to these events" (171).

Literature on crisis narratives/narratives of times of crisis are not uncommon. There have been focus on financial, political, religious and environmental disasters as crisis (Jessop 2012; Boin, McConnell and 't Hart 2021; Mori 2021; Maslow and Wirth 2021; Konare 2021).   This paper extrapolates a simple description of crisis narratives as narratives which focus on specific disruptions in a society or an individual's conception of normalcy and wellness, resulting in attempts, successful or otherwise, of reinventing normalcy and reconstituting wellness.

In exploring the sensibilities portrayed in the larger body of Nigerian fiction over time, literature has focused on the physical and social aspects of cultural portrayals concerning national politics as embodying crisis (Ossana 2021; Anyokwu 2008; Akung 2012; Uwasomba 2014). Copious examinations of identity in Nigerian fiction as expressions of crisis exist (Achebe 1966; Soyinka 1965; Adichie 2013; Opkaranta 2015). However, in criticism, such issues are explored under religious, political, psychological or migration discourses (Ogundare 2021; Dauda 2016; Ogundipe 2018; Onyangyo 2016; Dauda 2016), and, violence and sexuality (Olaoye and Zink 2020; Chukwuemeka 2019; Ile and Dauda 2016). What this paper does is: project crisis as the ultimate impetus of Nigerian fiction; submits the primary texts as crisis narratives that speak to society's crises in historical times; and, interrogate the concerns of identity through the hero archetype. It also explores the significance of the interrelation of the latter as embodiments of crisis narrative in northern Nigerian fiction. It does this by juxtaposing the issues of concern with the characters as presented in the selected texts.

The archetypal literary theory is utilized as the framework of this paper. This is employed with a phenomenological outlook, to examine the issues and characters in the selected texts; *Measuring Time, Season of Crimson Blossoms,* and *Born on a Tuesday*. These texts are selected for several reasons: their representation of the issues under study, their preoccupation with nuances in mainstream northern Nigerian sensibilities and their seeming lack of copious critical attention. For decades past, research on northern Nigerian fiction has emphasized female characters and matters related to them (Ladele and Adetunmbi 2019; Mahmud and Rabiu 2019; Egya 2011; Chukwu 2005; Acholonu 1986). However, emerging literature have begun to cover more encompassing issues in northern Nigerian fiction, transcending feminism and religious fanaticism to interrogate other pertinent issues like trauma and nation-building (Saje and Mahmud 2020; Egbunu and Umar 2018; Umar 2016; Amase, Tsavmbu and Kaan 2014). This study emulates the focus on male characters while foregrounding crisis and the hero image in narrative.

For the reason that the hero is an image which transcends historical time to exist in mythic time configuration, we find this figure in crisis narratives, in various epochs of Nigerian fiction. At the inception of written Nigerian fiction when concerns of politics and culture dominated the themes projected, the nature of crisis in narrative was political and cultural. Hence the image of the hero in these narratives fits the description of an outlier, dissatisfied with the seeming normalcy of political and cultural affairs in society, initiates an action in defiance of this normalcy and ends up consumed by it or in a fortuitous turn of events, changes it. We find this image reflected in Achebean heroes-Okonkwo, Ezeulu, Odili, Chris; Soyinka's intellectuals- Egbo, Ofeyi, Duyole Pitan-Payne and others. These novels are crisis narratives in that they speak to the disruptions

threatening the values, normalcy and growth of society. In like manner, our focus texts' hero figures: Mamo, LaMamo and Dantala, attempt to make sense of threats to society as they know it. They become consumed not by the Thanatos instinct but by their very eros of self-preservation and the crisis around them as they adapt or perish. There is no short walk to freedom for these ones as their very existence portends struggle. These struggles reveal the texts as crisis narratives which speak to society's crises in historical times and, interrogate the concerns of identity, physical and social aspects of crisis, their interrelation and significance as embodiments of crisis narrative in Nigerian fiction.

The Triumphant Hero: Mamo and LaMamo

The archetype of the hero finds expression in folklore, myths, legends and literary texts (Akwanya, 2015:37). In *Measuring Time*, folklore tells of two men from Pargatak and Layange-heroes with mystical powers who in partnership with the leader of the people, founded Keti. Other hero images such as: Uncle Haruna after whom LaMamo model's his quest and, Uncle Iliya, are also present in the narrative. Ancient texts such as the *Bible* portray this image in the characters of Moses, Joseph and Jesus Christ amongst others. Joseph is born as a son to the favoured wife of Jacob. He grows up as a pampered child with many incidences which prepare him for and indicate his great future. Nevertheless, imbricating his role as hero is the scapegoat or sacrificial element. Hence, his life is characterized by struggle. The struggles to do good for society while faced with jealous adversaries, lack an understanding of his vision, and seek to destroy him. The element of sacrifice which indicates suffering is vital in the hero's journey of self-realization which also involves fulfillment of purpose. Often, ''what is searched for varies considerably from one quest to another; it may be either proximate, a real object, or ultimate, an abstraction…. the goal, … is related to the self-realization of the quester (Aróstegui 87). Thus, the quest of some heroes like Mamo who seeks to be famous is grand. That the hero is born under unusual circumstances, has peculiar gifts and seeks to fulfill a particular quest are other traits of this archetype. Emmanuel Obiechina (1990), says of the hero: ''He goes in quest of something or some ideal and usually undergoes harrowing ordeals before attaining his objective, then emerges full of confidence and triumph. He owes his escape from disaster and defeat to personal courage, chance, divine intervention, or magic'' (26).

In *Measuring Time*, the protagonist who we refer to as bearing the hero archetype is born under extraordinary circumstances. Mamo's birth heralds his mother's death and is dramatic as it takes place at night, during a severe rainstorm. Habila's twins' quest is driven by a personal desire for fame and does not include at the initial stage, the greater good of society or people around them. Unlike some of the heroes of earlier Nigerian narratives (Okonkwo, Ofeyi); there is no social role or societal connection. Rather, there exists a highly personalized quest for realization. Mamo in a bid to cheat death seeks to become famous and immortalize his name before the sickle cell which ravages his body catches up with him, a dream which his twin LaMamo keys into. *Measuring Time* is a narrative about twin boys-Mamo and LaMamo, their lives in the rural village of Keti and their struggle for fame in a bid to defeat boredom and death. The story follows the adventures of Mamo whose path is that of letters as he pursues fame through writing while LaMamo plies his trade as a mercenary and freedom fighter. Entwined in their journeys are issues of parental neglect, despair, disillusionment and hope.

The crisis in *Measuring Time* is personalized in the struggles of the heroes. This crisis is set off when Lamang retrieves his twin sons Mamo and LaMamo from their

uncle Iliya's household where they have spent the first three years of their lives. The disruption to their environment threatens their sense of safety and leaves them emotionally bereft as their father does not provide the warmth and love they are used to in Iliya's household. As their sense of worth to their father diminishes, their hatred for Lamang increases. Mamo who is the older twin contributes actively to making their father's life uncomfortable. This hatred features in their disregard for whatever negative or traumatic impact their leaving home will have on their father. Even at the end, it is only LaMamo who leaves as Mamo is struck with a sickle cell crisis on the morning of their departure, on their quest to become famous. We see this internal crisis of the twins spilling over to their father and aunty, Marina, who feels distraught for much of the text.

The religious and politically motivated crisis which takes place in the later part of the narrative of *Measuring Time*, when Mamo is now an adult and LaMamo is long gone, bespeaks the ubiquitousness of Nigerian fiction as crisis narrative. Not only does Habila capture in his narrative the pervading theme of politics which lends the title of commitment to Nigerian narratives, he also portrays Mamo's crisis as spilling over and affecting to some extent the political crisis in the novel. Mamo's idealism and hatred for his father push him into telling of his cousin Asabar's involvement in electoral fraud. He writes an anonymous note to the police, neglecting to consider the negative consequences his action might result in, if his projection of events do not go as expected. Indeed, events turn out tragically. Nonetheless, it is not due to his letter but to Asabar's actions and Lamang's tolerance of these actions over time. However, Mamo does not know this and languishes in guilt, believing he is responsible for Asabar's crippled state when he is shot on election day by the police and Lamang's downfall which begins after election day.

Mamo's inability to travel the world, like his twin, pushes him to appropriate writing, using the written word to immortalize his name. In the course of pursuing this objective, he moves from being a secondary school history teacher to working as the palace secretary-a role which the recognition attendant upon his revisionist essay on the history of the Keti people in the East African journal lands him. As Palace Secretary, Mamo is given the important task of writing the biography of the Mai of Keti, a task which he is aware will require him to make moral compromises. Mamo proposes a fundraiser to create awareness about the Mai's upcoming birthday, his soon-to-be-published biography, and his genius biographer-Mamo. Because the plan of writing involves bringing his name to the fore, in a start of a walk of fame, he also seeks to assuage his conscience. The proceeds of the fundraiser are to be used in building wells for the twelve villages that make up Keti. Not only will this aid the people, Mamo reasons that his name will be associated with this good deed hence, it is a step on the ladder to becoming famous. However, this plan backfires as the Waziri and other players involved in the contract misappropriated the fifteen million naira which is raised and did not provide the people with anything. Enraged the people denounce the Mai, Waziri and Mamo as their oppressors. They rush to the palace to make their discontent known, led by LaMamo, who had just returned. LaMamo corrects the misconception that his brother is among the oppressors of the people as he tells them that Mamo was equally deceived.

The destruction which results at the palace-of lives and property due to the failure of the palace to deliver on the wells as promised and the harassment of the people by the engineers contracted to dig the wells, is connected to the twins. Both of them seem to be different aspects of the hero. Mamo informs Zara that LaMamo has everything he doesn't. They are: ''two parts of the same thing: LaMamo had been the leader who came

up with the wild, edgy ideas which would then be reviewed and tempered by Mamo's less assertive, reflective nature'' (Habila, 2007:66). The letters Mamo receives periodically from LaMamo ensures that we do not forget the wild, assertive half of the swash-bucking hero, riding into the sunset, with fantastic tales of his exploits and experiences. This is in contrast to Mamo's tame reputation, his recognition and reverence by the people of Keti as a good ambassador of the community and an inspiration to the youth.

Taken together, the two parts of a single hero, Mamo and LaMamo share an idealistic worldview; a desire to be famous; and, a hatred for their father. Additionally, they complement each other in their decisions to act on what they think will benefit Keti. Mamo even as a child, works to lessen the burden of the church drama group by writing down the dialogue of their play-*The Coming*. As an adult, he works to ensure the people have easy access to free drinking water and that the truth of their history is captured in biographic form, LaMamo, on his part, seeks to restore hope to the hearts of the people. This fuels his relationship with and love for his wife, Bintou, who he rescues from being raped by soldiers in war-torn Liberia. He also attempts to restore hope to Keti by bringing about a change in the pattern of decision-making at the palace. In pursuit of this, he leads the people (as a mob) to the palace where, despite his cries for restraint, rage takes over and lives and property are lost. We see Mamo's plans along with LaMamo's spontaneous direction of the mob to the palace, later escalates into a large-scale riot which results in LaMamo's death. ''Mamo would write that he knew the instant his brother was shot; he felt something go out of him at that moment'' (Habila, 2007:295, 298). Hence, it is evident that Mamo's and LaMamo's goals coincide and are intermixed like their relationship with and closeness to each other, signifying their mythical oneness.

In this narrative, the crisis around the hero, that which is self-created and the one outside the hero's control threatens to ravish the hero. Indeed, it takes away half of Mamo's vitality in LaMamo's death. This death seems a replication of the sacrifice of the scapegoat for society to return to normalcy. Therefore, things begin to get better for Mamo after LaMamo's death, even as he mourns his brother as a part of himself. That Mamo endures is a testament to the fact that heroic status comes not from triumph or that which is instant or immediately visible, but is evident in struggle. The struggle to retain one's essence, like Iliya says: ''This is life. There's nothing more. The trick is never to give up'' (Habila, 2007:300). In enduring, therefore, Mamo realizes a clear vision of how the biography which he intends to write will go. He is released from lying in his portrayal of the palace, his aunt Marina is released from detention and he hopes for a future with Zara whose presence will lift him to ever greater heights.

The essential element which characterizes the hero image presented in *Measuring Time* is the enduring quality of the hero in his struggle amidst the crisis which envelops him. Mamo and LaMamo have the overarching quality of endurance which seems to pull them out in the nick of time from situations that would otherwise have engulfed them. We see this in Mamo's defeat time and again, of his illness. Therefore, when LaMamo dies towards the end of the narrative in *Measuring Time*, he has given up on life. He feels he has achieved his goal of awakening the Keti people's consciousness to resist oppression; he has loved-as he has a wife, Bintou; and, he has returned to see his second half after living his dream of being a soldier. Hence, he says to Mamo: ''I want you to know I am not scared of dying… I know everything will be all right'' (Habila, 2007:297). LaMamo's peace is gotten not only from these indices but

also from the fact that a part of his image and ideals continue in his twin, so much so that his only regret is his inability to see his child. Therefore, he extracts from Mamo the promise that he will invite Bintou to Keti and that his child will be raised there. In this, we see LaMamo's belief in the essence and strength of his twin and the place of his birth as capable of building endurance and strength in his offspring.

Consequently, *Measuring Time* is a crisis narrative which speaks to society's crisis in historical time as other northern Nigerian and indeed, Nigerian fiction do (Opata and Ohaegbu, 2000:81). It does this in its engagement with contemporary history, outside fictional time, drawing historical crisis into its narrative such that it becomes the crisis of the characters who embody the hero image. Mamo and LaMamo struggle with despair caused by the politics of the time and the socio-cultural realities of their communities. Their triumphs and defeats are reflective of society's dictates and ultimately their characters demonstrate the interrelation and significance of the northern Nigerian narrative as an embodiment of crisis in society. While the hero in *Measuring Time* achieves the release of detainees from the police station after the palace riots, he does not bring readily accessible water to the community as Mamo had hoped. However, change is reflected in the hero. LaMamo achieves peace which lasts even in his moment of death and Mamo grows in love such that he decides to fight Zara's family for the right to see and help her in any way he can, during the period of her mental illness. This love leads to his understanding of the people's enjoyment of the reenactment of the play ''The Coming,'' as speaking to both his and their collective ability to endure and survive. He now knows that people are just people. His anger and hatred for his father dissipates. He feels sorry for the widows who serenaded Lamang, in both good and bad times, and, he understands Iliya's struggles, Asabar's despair, and Marina's endurance. As the remaining face of the hero in *Measuring Time,* Mamo's empathy bespeaks his growth into maturity. Thus crisis in this text is the impetus for not just change but growth as well.

The Other Face of the Hero- Dantala: Fate and Vestiges of Resistance Past

The image of the hero, we have been told, is fragmented, alters over time and usage (Brunel, 2016:560; Akwanya, 2015:51). This is the case of the character who reflects the hero image in this section. Unlike the former heroes treated earlier, this is more of a quester. His birth is not heralded by distinct signs or prophecies. Rather, his is a higher level of struggle precipitated by a more intense crisis, resulting in a somewhat dystopian outlook. The character of Dantala Ahmad in *Born on a Tuesday,* is used in this section, to portray the crisis of his fictional and historical time. He also buttresses the nature of northern Nigerian fiction as crisis narrative while interrogating the concerns of identity-through the hero archetype, as relating to the physical and social aspects of crisis and the significance of this in his interrelation with other characters in the text.

Dantala in *Born on a Tuesday* is a quintessential poor child searching for the light of education to light up the poverty of his world. Born to a poor agrarian family residing in a fictive northern Nigeria, he struggles to survive as a student of an Islamic school in the almajiri system. The hardship he faces is not just due to poverty but also as a result of political and religious motivated crises. The narrative closes with a tone of hope despite the severity of Dantala's desolation. We are not certain how he will go about it but, we hope that somehow, Dantala will recover his strength, regain hope, reunite with his friend Jibril and become a good citizen of his society. Hence we notice a prevalence of bleakness in the story. When the latter narrative opens, Dantala has little

opportunity to fulfill his dreams as his fate seems to be written from his birth as the fourth son among six children of a poor farmer and petty trader. The vagaries of fate are not kind to them as the religious and politically motivated crisis results in a further dwindling of their fortune. Thus, the birth of Dantala, instead of prognosticating an unusual or bright future, rather foretells despair and suffering in his future. In addition, his environment does not provide nurture. Nevertheless, there are outstanding features, and traits which his character reveals in the course of his struggles through the crisis periods in the narratives which align with the archetypal image of the hero.

The dreams of the hero in the text drive his quests and sustain his spirit of endurance in the face of crisis. When the narrative begins, Dantala is an almajiri in Malam Junaidu's Islamic school. However, he does not feel accepted by the Malam, and neither does he feel at home with his fellow almajirai or the rebel yan kuka boys. He seems to be marking time, waiting for an opportunity for a better life than the one he has even though his dreams are vague. His father's unexpected death results in even more hardship for him. Unable to travel home after his studies, he joins the Yan Kuka boys to thug for politicians. It is a life of hunger and drugs, fraught with risks and violence. When his thug mentor Banda dies in one of the riots they instigate during the election period, Dantala leaves Kaduna for good. Like a true quester Dantala's journey is not just physical as he embarks on a psychological journey of growth in the manner of a bildungsroman, such that when the narrative ends, he is old in experience, no longer the optimistic youth he was at the beginning of the story.

Dantala's quest is to become like Sheik Jamal. to be influential, well-read and a great Islamic scholar. He shuns vocational skills which will enable him to earn his own money. His search leads him to master literacy in both the English, Arabic and Hausa languages. He also learns how to organize events and people from the sheik and his deputy Abdul-Nur. However, this quest is truncated when the sheik is killed, the mosque is closed and he is arrested by the military in their crackdown on the Mujahideen. When he is released, the mosque as well as the school attached to it have been vandalized. Even his attempt to emulate Sheik Jamal meets with challenges, when he discovers that the Sheik is sponsored by politicians whom he helps to launder money, that there are thieves in positions of leadership in the mosque like Abdul-Nur, and that scholars with malicious intent are always ready to misinterpret and mislead the people into acts of violence in the name of the Koran. Thus, his growth and self-realization arise from his decision to choose only the good from his leaders and forbears to realize his quest.

The sacrifices which Dantala makes, in *Born on a Tuesday*, mark him out as a carrier of the primeval hero image. From a young age, he has to leave home and brave the stern Islamiya master, Mallam Janaidu, and his snide remarks about the little contributions which Dantala's family sends periodically, because his father cannot afford to keep him and his siblings at home due to poverty. Therefore, when he is less than ten years old, he is sent to a different town to study the Koran in Mallam Janaidu's Islamiya. It is here that he meets other boys who influence his growth and character development for a number of his teenage years. When he turns a new course in his life, he suffers from a tragic miscalculation. His moment of hamartia occurs when instead of calming the people down at Malam Jamal's funeral, he fires them up. In a rash moment of rage and exuberance, he gives in to the adrenal rush associated with the control he has over the crowd as he talks passionately about the soldiers, Malam Jamal and their enemies in other Islamic sects. His action continues the downward spiral of the fate of his Islamiya and mosque, all of which culminate in the loss of numerous lives and his

detention. Even though, unlike a tragic hero, he survives, his future appears bleak even as the hope in his heart endures: hope for friendship, hope for survival, and life in general. Dantala's suffering begins at the beginning of the narrative where he is given out as an almajiri all the way from Sokoto to Kaduna. Unlike his brothers Maccido, Hassan and Hussein who although are also almajiri, have the fortune of being together in the same place as twins and brothers, Dantala is alone. His teacher Malam Junaidu does not grant him special favours because, unlike the other children, his father hardly sends foodstuff for the boy's upkeep. Additionally, Dantala and the other almajirai are used as free labour to work Malam Junaidu's farm as well as beg if the situation arises. His feelings are inconsequential and it is only when he joins the Kuka tree boys that he has a friend-Banda, who looks out for him. This suffering is taken to its peak when upon losing his mentor Sheik Jamal, Dantala is thrown into detention. Dantala's detention is no ordinary one. Accompanied with physical and psychological torture, he loses the will to live but his body keeps going. When he is eventually released, he has lost all finger beds and toenails. He is bent like an old man and unrecognizable to a neighbour who saw him daily before his detention. He also loses his love, Aisha to Alhaji Usman who marries her when he is in detention.

Suffering for Dantala seems to have little sacrificial value. His suffering is reminiscent of the goat sacrificed to Azazel. In the Jewish scapegoat analogy, two goats are sacrificed-one to Yaweh, the other to Azazel, both signifying a split/duality in the personality and extremes of nature and creation (De Verteuil, 1966:213). Contrarily, Dantala's suffering does not benefit anyone. The soldiers do not get any relevant information from him neither do his family, friends, and associates fare better. His mother dies after losing her husband and daughters and having no communication with her sons. Even his aunt Khadija, is abandoned by her husband because she cares for her sister, Dantala's mother. Consequently, Dantala's suffering is aimless like the wandering of the goat sacrificed to Azazel. Unlike the heroes who triumph in the previous section-Mamo and the Ada, Dantala's suffering does not bring him close to fulfilling his quest. He is rather broken, as though fate is against him making his struggle futile.

The struggle of the hero in this section is a tragic and absurd one. Dantala seems to bear more similarity to the pharmakos image than the quester. Hence in his moment of crisis, his struggle does not result in endurance or survival but exhaustion. Dantala ends up a shell of himself: ''I touch my face. I do not know this old, shriveled person whose eyes look like that of a rabid dog… (John, 2015:197). Hence for this hero, heroic status comes not from triumph but from survival and engaging in resistance in the face of suffering. This narrative is driven by the political, social and religious crises which the hero navigates. Indeed, it is these crises that drive the trajectory of the narrative thereby demonstrating how crisis acts as an impetus for the existence and continuity of the narrative form.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to project crisis as the ultimate impetus of northern Nigerian fiction which brings about growth and/or change. It also projected the study texts as crisis narratives which speak to society's crisis in historical time, even as it sought to interrogate identity through the hero archetype, relating it to the physical and social aspects of crisis. Lastly, it explored the significance of the interrelation of the latter as embodiments of crisis narrative in northern Nigerian fiction. The hero figures in the study texts are reflective of not only their fictional time but also historical time. That

these figures struggle to assert themselves, their desires and achieve their quests regardless of the crisis around them which works against them suggests that the narratives themselves are crisis narratives. This is because, without the crisis in their various stories, the hero figures in the texts would not have faced opposition or had something to contend against, depriving their characters of growth and change--borne of struggle and determination. Their endurance of suffering which proves them as carriers of the hero image is therefore born of crisis.

While the un-triumphant hero- Dantala reflects strongly the scapegoat image, the twins are spared to some extent. Their sacrificial actions stop at suffering which results in growth and change except for LaMamo. In *Measuring Time,* therefore, one half of the hero is the scapegoat and fate is satisfied with taking away this half in death, unlike Dantala whose future seems bleak. Herein lies the essential difference between Mamo and Dantala whose resistance is but a vestige as not only does fate seem to deal him a worse hand, but, he also does not fight with a keen sense of determination or focus like the triumphant heroes-Mamo and LaMamo.

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SECTION E

CHILD TRAFFICKING

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

MODERN DAY SLAVERY IN WEST AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND BABY FACTORY PHENOMENON ON NIGERIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In the face of increasing global concern on the crisis of child trafficking, especially from the third world region such as Africa and particularly the West African sub-region, a new trend of problem where babies are raised for a commercial purpose is already having a stronghold in Nigeria. While the literature on this issue would rightly identify the vulnerable group of women and children as a common unit for evaluating this problem, the deserved attention is however yet to be given to this new development in trafficking of children around the world. This paper therefore considers the event of child trafficking alongside the rising trend of baby harvesting, focusing on the implication of these practices on the social-political development in Nigeria. This study employed secondary sources analysed through descriptive method. The study also used conflict theory to provide the basis of analysis. Findings revealed that while the harvesting of babies can be part of the consequences of Human trafficking, it equally provides a virile ground for child trafficking as the conundrum of human trafficking comes with this problem in Nigeria. There is also the ineptitude or connivance on the part of government agencies charged with the responsibility of manning the Nigerian border thereby allowing the trade to continue thriving. The paper concluded that child trafficking/baby harvesting enterprise is a major challenge to the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria and therefore deserved a renewed attention, proactive approach and political will from the government and its concerned agencies to rescue the children and future generation.

 Introduction

The contemporary widespread slavery manifested in the new mode of exploitation of men and women including children, has proven another challenge among the trend of disturbing global realities.

Questions surrounding the occurrence of trafficking of human beings as well as steps to take in assisting and protecting trafficked persons are more than ever attracting the attention of the international community. The worst of this form of crisis is the denial of

young persons (both male and female) the expected privileges of childhood while being subjected to all forms of inappropriate labour and brutal humiliation of modern slavery by a cruel taskmaster often in another country or sometimes a country of origin as well. At least it is estimated that about 5.5 million children are trafficked worldwide each year with the global child trafficking market being valued at over $12 billion a year (International Labour Organization 2009, 2017). The expression of this problem has been found to be predominant in sub-Saharan Africa and especially West African sub-region. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund report, at least one out of four of detected victims of trafficking in the world are children and 64% of such cases are from sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2017).

In the key findings of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) fifth global report on trafficking in persons submitted in Abuja, Nigeria on the 5th of February 2021, the report revealed that children represent more than 75% of trafficking victims detected in West Africa (UNDOC, 2022). Another research was conducted in over 148 countries and more than 95 percent of the world's population, using primarily official statistics on trafficking cases between 2016 and 2019. It was established that countries in West Africa tend to detect more victims of child trafficking for forced labour than other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus Out of 4799 victims detected in 26 Sub-Saharan Africa countries, 3336 were in West Africa including 2553 children. UNODC data suggests that close to 80% of victims in West Africa were trafficked for forced labour, which remains the major form of exploitation in the region. (UNODC, 2022)

Nigeria being the giant not only within the West African sub-region but Africa as a whole has represented a hub centre in all variations of this activity, thereby further asserting West Africa as a prime location of child trafficking activities within the region. Perhaps a more disturbing reality is the new trend in human trafficking which involves the setting up of facilities to raise babies for commercial purposes. An event that has been on prevalent and fast rising in parts of Africa (Onuoha 2014), especially in the west where Nigeria stands as the major participant. At least from 2006, an international report identified not less than six states within Nigeria where the 'baby factory' or 'baby farm' phenomenon have been on a large scale.(UN ESCO,2006)

Statement of problem

General discourse on human trafficking has rightly identified 'the Vulnerable', an operational concept to represent women and children, as the centre of concern and analysis of human trafficking. However due attention is yet to be given to a new trend in child trafficking where babies are illegally raised for commercial purposes with the development of 'baby factories' or 'baby farms', an event which is discovered to have been on the fast rise in parts of Africa (Onuoha 2014) such as the west, where Nigeria stands as the major participant while it is observed to have been going on for a while in some areas around the world. The increase in the rate of incidences as been daily reported is a cause for concern for both the government and the people which if not timely addressed pose a challenge to the socio-economic and political status of Nigeria globally and particularly in the sub-region. This paper therefore examined the contributory factors responsible for the various acts of child trafficking as well as

perspectives on the phenomenon of 'baby harvesting' and the socio-economic and political implications on a states such as Nigeria.

Child Trafficking and Baby Factory: A Conceptual Analysis

The 'baby factory' event is the act of commodifying and commercializing newborns from unintended mothers, usually young helpless girls or already pregnant women who are either enticed or coerced into this illegal business. Some its instruments include the use of deceit or obtaining consent by undue influence of the victims, kidnapping and adoptions.

The term 'baby factory' was first coined by UNESCO in a 2006 policy paper "Human trafficking in Nigeria: Root Causes and Recommendations", revealing how these facilities were found in some parts of Nigeria such as Abia, Ebonyi and Lagos states with later discoveries in more parts of the South East Nigeria such as Anambra, Enugu and Imo.It has since then been generally described a location where women are encouraged or forced to become pregnant and give up their newborns for sale (Esaedi et al, 2015; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2011; The Guardian, 2011). According to Madike(Cited in Esaedi2015), baby factory is usually disguised as maternity or social welfare homes, orphanages and clinics or informal water bottling factories that are operated by well-organized criminal syndicates. In this case, such perpetrators are often the owners of these facilities, some of whom are medical practitioners who run this business with the help of different employees, among them are men specifically hired to impregnate women and girls.

The term 'baby factory' appropriately refers to any place where expectant mothers and young girls of child-bearing age (who voluntarily or forcefully get impregnated) are illegally kept until they are delivered their babies are then sold for monetary gains (Eseadi et al, 2015).According, to the Organization for World Peace report by Isabelle Hamilton (2020), a baby factory would mean a black market business whereby those who are in charge hire men to impregnate women and sell their babies for profit against their will.Onuoha (2014), expressly states that baby factories 'are locations where young ladies or girls, some teenagers or little above that, are harboured and deliberately encouraged or forced to become pregnant and subsequently give up their babies for sale'.

Put differently a baby factory is any form of accommodation in which teenage girls or young ladies are kept (either voluntarily or by coercion), copulated and impregnated for the purpose of selling their babies to designated clients or agents who now use such babies for any objective of their choice. According to a BBC(2013) report 'baby factories' are often small, illegal facilities masquerading as private medical clinics or orphanages that carry out women's impregnation and conduct the negotiations and sale of babies. It is also the case in this situation that babies who are not sold are kept for forced child labour, trafficked into prostitution or even used as a ritual sacrifice.

Indeed, attempt at defining baby factory has been rather slippery because the name may assume other variations like 'baby farming' or 'baby harvesting' in many usage, although with slightly different meanings from the term 'baby factory'. While the idea of 'baby harvesting' can be said to be a criminal activity, Huntley (2013) has however noted that there is yet to be a legal definition appropriately given to this event but following the

array of media reports, baby harvesting has been described as a phenomenon of "restriction of a person's movement against such person's will, forced impregnations, sale of babies and illegal adoptions." (Huntley,2013pp 10). Baby harvesting is the unlawful incarceration of pregnant young/teenage girls or the getting of these girls pregnant for the purpose of giving birth to babies for sale or other purposes. (Kabo,2021) For aforegoing explanations therefore, 'baby harvesting' as a phenomenon will imply social event as different from 'baby factory' which depicts a social location rather than a social event. Baby harvesting also known as 'baby farming' is an event that involves the usage of the facility called a 'baby factory' baby factory is therefore the site or facility for the operation of illegal maternity units

Baby factories or baby farms are a new development in the crime of trafficking in person and most especially trafficking. Although the incidence is observed to have been going on for a while in some areas around the world, it is however discovered to have been on the fast rise in parts of Africa (Onuoha 2014) such as the West, where Nigeria is majorly involved. Nigeria today has recorded many cases where young girls and adolescents are kept in certain sites and facilities for baby production. The peculiarity of the age of many victims of this operation (who are mostly teenagers and adolescents) makes it a clear case of another form of child trafficking which is also an aspect of the conundrum of humans.

On the other hand the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000, generally describe 'Trafficking in persons as

 "*the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."*

While the protocol also admits that a 'Child' is any person under eighteen years of age, it defines child trafficking as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation" even when the of the means set forth above are not involved. The International Labour Organization (2022) has similarly described Child trafficking as the act of "taking children out of their protective environment and preying on their vulnerability for the purpose of exploitation"

In this case such exploitation at a minimum would involve prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation and forced labour such as domestic servitude, agricultural work, factory work and mining, or even forced to fight in conflicts and slavery or practices similar to slavery, as well as the removal of organs. (OSCE 2018, UN 2000)

In other words, Child trafficking can be said to be a clandestine activity that involves smuggling of minors across state borders or the admission of such across international boundaries or their transportation from one location to another within the same country for any illegal purposes such as forced labour and sexual services.

It is also important to mention that while all forms of human trafficking would commonly involve a clandestine operation, this does not preclude the fact that it can also occur when someone enters a country lawfully but for illegal objective of forced labour

and sexual exploitation among many others and it is based on this nature that made ILO Convention no. 182 (1999) on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) to classify child trafficking among "forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery" in the world today.

In succinct details, trafficking of children is a major course in human trafficking which is a contemporary slavery. Child trafficking is then the practice of enslaving children for cheap labor, including working in hazardous conditions, engaging in illicit activities, serving as domestic servants, being forced to smuggle narcotics, child soldiers and also prostitution, to mention but a few. Baby factory on the other hand which is now another aspect of child trafficking is an illicit facility for harvesting babies for sale and other wrong or illegal purposes.

Dimensions in baby harvesting and Child trafficking

To assess the dimensions of baby harvesting, it is important to first understand it as a trend in child trafficking or human trafficking as whole as many researchers would agree (Huntley, 2013)
Generally, most scholarship on human trafficking would commonly agree that discourse on the nature of human trafficking occurs in two dimensions which are internal and external
(Shelly 2010, Adesina 2014, Bello and Olutola 2021).

Indeed, trafficking of humans may either occur across international borders or can also be within borders. The latter, usually referred to as 'internal trafficking' or domestic trafficking is simply movement of people within state for the purposes of exploitation. In this situation people are simply taken or recruited from rural to urban areas where they are made to engage in various forms of exploitative labour and illegal activities. On the other hand the international trafficking is a cross-border activity which is the movement of such victims recruited for exploitation from one country to another.

Bello and Olutola(2021) have maintained that there is no major difference between the domestic form of human trafficking and the international form except for the fact that the international form exhibits a greater proportion of exploitation and have a higher demand including its costs and implications and that for most of the cross-border dimensions of human trafficking, the flows are usually between countries within the same region or neighbouring countries. (Bello and Olutola, 2021, pp) In other words the cross-border flow of most human trafficking is usually not a distance one.
However, according to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), evidences abound that there are many intercontinental activities within the nature of this human trafficking. Contemporary evidence has presented many instances of human trafficking victims from the East Asian States found in more than twenty (20) countries in all regions across the globe, including the Americas, the Middle East, Europe, Central Asia and Africa (UNODC 2008 :11). Similarly in the West African region especially, victims are also transported from places like Nigeria to North Africa and some parts of Europe. Accordingly, at least since 2006 in Nigeria, it has been reported that babies are sold either for international or domestic adoptions, which can include, slavery or sexual labour and even rituals (Kalu 2011, BBC 2013, Kabo 2021).

Irrespective of the level of transaction of this illicit business (domestic or international) poverty has been the most popular explanation among the commonly held factors that fuel the event of baby harvesting in Nigeria (Akwara and Andeshi 2014)

More importantly, the problem of baby harvesting in Nigeria is also assuming a more dangerous and complex form that is now in itself equally facilitating human trafficking and even other illegal activities. Reports, for instance have it that adolescent, teenage girls and young women are lured with false promises by traffickers to baby factories where they are confined and forced to give birth. (Huntley, 2013)

Government efforts at combating child trafficking in Nigeria

Generally , the problem of human trafficking in Nigeria is multifaceted base on different challenging inimical social conditions such growing unemployment, culturally induced gender bias, economic deprivation and lack of established social security measures amidst many other recipes for poverty that have continued to facilitate this problem, thereby further engendering dynamism in its practice. With newer developments such as the now common baby harvesting phenomenon, event like child trafficking if not the entire phenomenon of Trafficking in Person has depicted an extremely worrisome situation in the country.

In the face of this, the federal government in line with international efforts has taken different measures to checkmate this problem. One major landmark effort in this direction was the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act in August 2003.Before this time, Nigerian government then relied on provisions included in the Criminal Code or the Penal Code to address offences pertaining to human trafficking. In this case laws pertaining to forced labor, forced prostitution, kidnapping, sexual exploitation, deprivation of liberty, and slave trade were applied to trafficking cases.

However the Traffick in person prohibition act particularly address this crime by clearly stating that "All acts of human trafficking are prohibited in Nigeria" and therefore

"any person who recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives another person by means ofthreat or use of force or other forms of coercionabduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or position of vulnerability; orgiving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control or another person, for the purpose of exploitation of that person, commits an offence and is on conviction to imprisonment."(TIP act, 2015 pp 9)

At least about 26 different segments of the 51 sectioned act described different human trafficking related offences.

Sections11–28 for instance specifically define offences relating to exporting and importing or procurement of minors, with or without their consent for wrong purposes such as prostitution, drug trafficking, unlawful forced labour or even armed conflict by the means of threat, fraud, kidnapping and abduction among many others

And where these offences are committed Nigerians abroad, the act affirms that such offenders will be punished and forfeit all their assets when they return to the country

even if they have been earlier punished for the same offence abroad because they have brought the "image of Nigeria to disrepute" (Section 25). At the same time alien offenders who reside in Nigeria under the act arepunishable by imprisonment including subsequent deportation (Section 26).

In the case of an attempt to commit any ofthe substantive offences, this is also punishable under the Act (Section 27). The Act does not exclude corporate bodies or their management staffs from punishment incase of attempting to commit or actually committing anyof the offences created by the Act (Section 28).

Perhaps the most significant part of this law is the creation of agency that is charged with the responsibility of administering and enforcing this law itself, that is the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP). Apart from the administration and enforcement of the provisions of the Act, the Agency also see to the enforcement and coordination of all existing laws on trafficking in persons and
other related offences, the promotion of public awareness among many other responsibilities.

Despite this laudable government activity in combatting the crimes it has been observed that Nigeria is yet to meet the expected minimum standards for its elimination although"making significant efforts"(US department of state, 2023) as the trafficking of children and adults continue to constitute a problem in Nigeria
today. While various factors have contributed to child trafficking in Nigeria, it is however evident that one major reason why this activity is further enhanced is the alleged compromise of those who to are to enforce prohibition law but who instead collaborate with the perpetrators of the organized crime. The fact the crime is known to have been aided by many prominent figures at the corridor of powerwithin the country (Adesina, 2014) gave credence to this. Thus, mention can be made of immigration officials who help with paperwork as well as brothel owners and their pimps (UNICEF, 2006; Salihu and Chutiyami 2016).
According to a report of the US department of state Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons(2023) it was observed that officials are allegedly complicit in trafficking crimes as "Corruption remained a significant concern in the judiciary and immigration services, and it contributed to impunity for traffickers"

Impact and implications of baby harvesting and child trafficking

As noted earlier, the problem of baby harvesting is an integrant of the general conundrum of human trafficking. In practice, the two phenomena can be viewed as a coin of different sides with the two coexisting to enhance the operation of the other. Although human trafficking has been the radial of concern among contemporary social ills long before the discovery of baby factories and baby harvesting with the belief that growth in the manifestation of trafficking in person gave birth to a new dimension of human trafficking which involves the production of babies, it is also the case that the event of baby harvesting has further provide a virile ground for the human trafficking to thrive in modern times and precisely in places like Nigeria.

Generally, human trafficking is a crime against humanity with its consequences most directly felt by those who are its victims but with also varying degrees of inimical effects on states and global society at large.

Child victims are most vulnerable to trafficking. This is as a result of their immaturity, age and lack of experience with such abusive practices that may, for instance, stunt their emotional and physical growth. The implications of trafficking on children are better understood by the impact such activity has on the development of a child.

A quick way to evaluate this is to begin from the human rights implication of this social vice by considering how trafficking deprived children who are victims of their basic rights such as right to personal liberty and educational rights. Trafficked Children for instance are denied educational opportunities as well as personal freedom to pursue a worthwhile ambition that will give them place in life. While this limits their chances to enhance their mental development and skills it equally impedes the proper transition of many young ones to quality adult citizens that could move the society forward. Research has identified different adverse outcomes of educational deprivation for victims of abuse and neglect. This include "developmental delays, language and cognitive difficulties, deficits in verbal and memory skills, poorer academic performance, and grade retention" (Rafferty, 2008)

A further impact is the loss of dignity of human person and even violation of rights to life that typifies this event. The process of trafficking adolescents and young girls to impregnate them or raise babies from them comes with physical, emotional and sexual abuse through the usage of violence or torture, deprivations, forced use of substances and manipulations. Traffickers are known to employ both coercive methods and psychological manipulations to maintain control over their victims and to destroy their physical and psychological defenses (Rafferty 2008). In this case such tools like violent (physical, sexual, and emotional) isolation; deployment in areas unknown to them; dependence on alcohol or drugs; controlled access to food and water; and monitoring through the use of weapons, cameras, and dogs (Zimmerman et al., cited in Rafferty 2008) are all used to prevent them from escaping, which consequently often lead to injury or deaths of victims.

According to United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2008), unlike most other violent crimes, trafficking usually involves prolonged and repeated trauma with research and documentation describing how abused victims suffered a short and long-term physical injuries, disabilities and deaths.

A more vivid effect of this is perhaps the physical and the psychological damage that trafficking does to many of these young girls, often in their teens, who are used as baby producing machines. It has been observed that trafficked Children experience physical and emotional trauma which is associated with removal from their families, homes, and communities alongside their subsequent encounters that involve substantial harm through physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Mitchels, 2004).

Another report also has it that Victims of child trafficking are subjected to many inhumane living conditions which include beatings, abuse and neglect alongside inadequate diet and also denial of health care and protection, resulting in lasting health problems (ECPAT, 2006a; ILO-IPEC, 2001). Apart from physiological damage which may have to do with the health fertility of the victims, trafficking abuse also bears

adverse emotional effects on trafficked children, which include post-traumatic stress disorder depression, alienation, hopelessness, disorientation, guilt, shame, aggression, flashbacks, nightmares, loss of confidence, difficulty in concentrating, lower self-esteem, and anxiety (ECPAT, 2006a, UN 2008) all of which have a long-term implications on the victims " with no guarantee of recovery." (UN 2008: 9) A more destabilizing fact is the re-victimization of the abused sometimes when they did not receive the expected emotional and material aid necessary to reintegrate them back into society and re-prepare them for future due to stigmatization, thereby generating a feeling of rejection.

Consequently, trafficked victims may prove difficult to understand, be unwilling to share their experience, be uncooperative, hostile and aggressive to their environment and those around them. All these in turn have multidimensional effects on larger society. One way to uncover these effects is to consider the Socio-Economic implications on society. Undoubtedly a community where the substantial part of its young and agile population has been subjected to various kinds of inhuman treatment will have many of its youth rendered emotionally incapacitated to constructively engage the society. In the same vein a community may dampen its productivity strength where it substantially looses the lives of the dynamic part of his population to abuse relating to forced labour and sex trade. In cases where victims are moved from one community to the other whose victims usually involve the active part of the working population always results in depletion of human resources thereby creating reductions in revenue for governments and communities.

Generally trafficking in persons, especially children and young adults tends to redirects the financial gains of migration from migrants, their families, host communities or other potential legitimate employers to traffickers and their associates (UN, 2008). Accordingly the operation of baby factories may serve today as a regular and stable source of income for both local and international criminal groups apart from creating illegal wealth for private individuals.

Apart from this, other key elements of economic consequences of trafficking have been described to include "the value of all resources devoted to its prevention, the treatment and support of victims and the apprehension and prosecution of offenders"(UN, 2008:10).
 In Nigeria today there has been effort which comes with financial implication by necessary stakeholders to curb the proliferation of baby factory activities. At least from 2006 when the first cases, majorly from the Eastern part of Nigeria were reported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in its policy paper(UNESCO 2006)both governmental and non governmental agencies have been involved in support programmes for the recovered victims while also taking the lead in the prosecution of apprehended offenders.

 Overall, the prevailing incidence of luring helpless adolescent or poverty- stricken girls and pregnant women into exchanging their babies for financial reward has labeled Nigerians as one of the societies with the most dehumanizing form of child abuse, women sexual assault and trafficking (Eseadi et al 2015).

This consequently has big implications on the effectiveness of policy making, legal framework and other intervention programmes directed towards curbing and curtailing this social vice in Nigeria.

Conclusively, the 'baby factory' phenomenon which now constitutes a new major trend of human trafficking in the west African region like Nigeria is beginning to serve as a virile ground for fueling child trafficking and to further deepen the conundrum of human trafficking and all other related offences in Nigeria and Africa at large. This on the other hand has become major challenge to the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria and therefore deserved a renewed attention, proactive approach and political will from the government and its concern agencies to address the issue holistically not just to rescue the vulnerable children but much more to be able protect the future generation of Nigerian nation.

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CHILD TRAFFICKING IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION IN NIGERIA: WHERE LIES THE CULTURAL IDENTITIES OF INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTED CHILDREN?

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Abstract

Despite the criminalization of intercountry adoption (ICA) by the Children's Act of 2003, Lagos and Ogun states have laws in place that permit ICA, making it possible for foreigners and Nigerians in diaspora to adopt children from Nigeria to other countries across the globe. The lack of uniformity in child protection laws in Nigeria makes it easy for each state of the federation to enact state specific laws that contributes to this possibility. Research shows that children have been moved from different states of the federation to the states that permit ICA in order to facilitate their adoption beyond borders. Evidence also shows that documents relating to some of these children put up for ICA were falsified to ensure their suitability for ICA. This paper adopts a socio-legal method to investigate the relationship between ICA and child trafficking. The cultural attachment theory is used in this paper to argue that detaching a child from the African roots for the purpose of ICA affects the wellbeing, growth, and integration of the child in the receiving country. I therefore critically examined the legal framework for ICA in Lagos and Ogun states to determine the level of protection offered to the children placed on ICA. I found that the legal frameworks of these states are weak and gives room for child trafficking. I concluded by making recommendations that require a departure from applying the same standard in domestic adoption and ICA.

I.   Introduction

Intercountry adoption (ICA), which is the adoption of a child from a country (sending country) to another country (receiving country), became popular in Africa after major sending countries in Asia and Central America introduced strict moratorium and outright ban on ICA due to illicit practices associated with ICA (ACPF, 2012). Ethiopia, being the entry point and largest provider of children for ICA in Africa (Getahun, 2011), recorded high rate of human rights abuses going to the roots of child protection in the country. Soon attention was drawn to the continent as intending parents from the Global North shifted attention to Africa as a source for children to fulfil their parental desires. Despite the inflow of prospective parents to Africa to explore the options of adopting children, many African countries failed to ratify the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) which aims to regulate ICA and protect children placed on ICA (Makinde et al., 2017). The lack of regulatory framework therefore provides a platform for adoption agencies

to thrive while illicit practices are perpetrated by persons who stand to make financial gains out of the process (Adelakun, 2018).

Nigeria, like several other African countries, took a prohibitive position on ICA (Adelakun, 2018). Unfortunately, child welfare and protection in Nigeria are not within the exclusive national legislative framework, but rather left to both the national and states legislative frameworks (O. Adelakun, 2021). The result of this is a lack of uniform approach to child protection in Nigeria. Thus, despite the prohibitive national approach to ICA in Nigeria, Lagos and Ogun states of Nigeria permit ICA on certain grounds.

It is on this basis that I investigate the illicit practices associated with ICA in Nigeria. I adopt a cultural attachment theory to examine the effect of ICA on the growth and development of children placed on ICA. Although it was impossible to gain access to children adopted through ICA, evidence was drawn from existing literature and data available from official sources in receiving countries.

II.   Theoretical framework

The cultural attachment theory has a strong link with the attachment theory as developed by John Bowlby which links the relationship of an infant caregiver to human development from the time of birth to the time of death (Bowlby, 1969). According to Bowlby, relationships which is linked to an attachment figure influences human development throughout lifetime and determines the mental health, emotional stability, and interpersonal relationships of those attached to that relationship (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby's attachment theory was developed to understand how the relationship between infants/toddlers and their caregiver affect the infant/toddler development. The theory showed that infants/toddlers that have a secure attachment tend to approach their caregivers when in distress or when in unfamiliar situations while infants/toddlers with insecure attachment to their caregivers either cling too much to the caregiver or refuse to be comforted by the caregivers when in distress. The attachment at the early stages of life has therefore been found to shape the style of attachment to significant people in adult life (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Hong and others adapted the attachment theory to posit that the adaptive approaches to acculturation can be likened to the attachment theory of infants/toddler to their caregivers whereby people form secure attachment to their environment and the culture to enable them to survive and adapt to that environment (Hong et al., 2013). In an earlier research, Hong, Roisman and Chen argue that social groups can be a point of attachment basis that offer support and protection structures emotionally when compared to attachment figure, hence the idea of cultural attachment theory (Hong et al., 2006). Thus, where people share norms, values, traditions and beliefs, they tend to find a common ground that forms the basis of their existence and identity. In African societies, the value of kinship and community belonging cannot be underestimated and in times of crisis, these people come together to offer support too each other in a way that brings about a sense of belonging.

Globalization has brought about migration and change in domicile which makes it possible to form strong attachment to two cultures and such bicultural individuals are capable of switching from one culture to the other (Chiao et al., 2010). The question that begs for answer therefore is whether the style of the attachment to the native culture is similar to the style of attachment to the host culture. If the answer is positive, then a strong attachment to the native culture is essential for an individual to adapt effectively in a cross-cultural context. It is however worth exploring if the ability to adapt to the host culture differ in infants, toddlers, kids and adults. From the forgoing, I believe that where there is secure cultural attachment of the host culture, an individual builds resilience and will be able to adapt to the host culture but where the individual cannot form a secure attachment to the host culture, such individual will face challenges integrating into the host culture and this will affect the growth and development of the individual. This could be more severe in cases that involve children.

Adapting the cultural attachment theory to ICA, scholars have likened ICA to a new form of cultural colonization which exploits children by uprooting them from their culture and imposing foreign culture on them (Brakman, 2019; Bueren, 1995; Harf et al., 2015; Muluneh, 2015; Yuster, 2006). Smolin on the other hand argued from the perspective that in Africa, a child is not just the child of the parents but belongs to the extended family (Smolin, 2011). Unfortunately, the child is not in a position to consent to the ICA arrangement and critics of ICA have hinged on this to assert that children belong to the community of their births and to their country as a result of which children have birth rights to remain in the place where they will feel connected and truly at home, irrespective of the country's inability to care for such children.

In supporting the argument that children adopted through ICA do not necessarily suffer, Lee holds the view that the cultural competence of an adopted child in the country of birth is strengthened by the child's participation in cultural activities that makes the child to become conscious of his/her ethnicity and cultural groups (Lee et al., 2006). It is therefore the cultural competence acquired by a child that enables such child to appreciate and promote his/her cultural heritage which enables the child to live and cope with challenges such as racism and discrimination.

III.   Legal framework

The grundnorm for child protection in Nigeria is the Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) which is the supreme law of the land from which all other laws derive their validity. The state is required to focus its social policy on making sure that children are protected from all forms of exploitation and against moral and material neglect, even though the Constitution does not expressly address these issues in domestic adoption or international adoption cases. The Constitution further mandates that the state formulate social policies that support and foster the development of the family. Section 37 of the Constitution guarantees the fundamental human right to privacy and family life. Unfortunately, the fundamental human right to family life as guaranteed by the Constitution, especially in the area of child adoption, has not been effectively put to test in courts mainly due to the tolerant social and cultural nature of the citizens (Olomojobi, 2017).

In 2003, Nigeria enacted the Child's Rights Act (CRA) in furtherance of the earlier ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). Section 274 gives the CRA priority over every other legislation dealing with child welfare and matters such that inconsistencies will be resolved in favour of the CRA. Reiterating the CRC and ACRWC, section 1 of the CRA requires the best interests of the child in every matter and decision affecting the child. More specifically, section 125 of the CRA which requires the establishment of adoption services relates only to domestic adoption. For clarity, section 144 prohibits and prescribes sanctions for interstate and intercountry adoption. Interstate adoption in this context refers to adopting a child from a state of the federation with the purpose of taking that child to another state. However, in respect to adoption from other states or another country, recognition is given to such adoption by section 147.

As earlier noted, the CRA lacks uniform application in Nigeria and each state of the federation is required to legislate on child welfare and protection. Consequently, Lagos and Ogun states permit ICA by virtue of the Child's Rights Law of Lagos State (CRL), Adoption Law of Lagos State (ALLS) and the Adoption Law of Ogun State. In order to be eligible for adoption under the CRL Lagos, a married couple must both be at least 25 years old, and they must receive a court order allowing them to adopt a child together. An individual who is married and has secured their spouse's consent may also submit an adoption application. Additionally, if deemed fit, a single person at least 35 years old may be qualified to adopt a child.

When submitting an adoption application, the applicant must provide their marriage certificate, each applicant's birth certificate, two passport photos, a medical certificate from a government hospital attesting to their fitness, and any additional documentation the court may need. Because the CRL is vague about the exact nature of the requisite medical fitness, the requirement for medical fitness is unclear. It is crucial to specify if one is talking about mental, psychological, emotional, or physical fitness. The medical fitness requirement ought to be sufficiently explicit to demonstrate the ability to raise a kid, including the adoptive parents' psychological well-being. After receiving an adoption application, the court must order an investigation to ascertain whether the applicant and the child are suitable for adoption. Social welfare officers, supervision officers, and any other person the court designates to conduct such an investigation are required to carry out the investigation.

The court must be convinced that the child's parents, or in the event of a deceased parent, the child's guardian, consent to the adoption before it can issue an adoption order. Additionally, the court needs to be assured that all necessary consents have been secured. In cases when a married individual is the only applicant for adoption, the spouse's consent is mandatory; however, the court retains the discretionary authority to issue the adoption order in the event that the spouse's consent is not acquired. The court must also be satisfied that everyone who consented to the adoption understands its nature and consequences after receiving the necessary counseling before issuing an adoption order. Additionally, if the court determines that it is in the best interests of the adoptive child

to approve the adoption and if the child in question has been abandoned, neglected, abused, or mistreated repeatedly, the adoption may be granted.

Although the process of child adoption under the CRL of Lagos state relates to domestic adoption, section 7 of the ALLS permits the adoption of a child by non-Nigerian citizens and for the purpose of ICA. The process in Lagos state is similar to that of Ogun state. Upon granting an ICA order, the parental rights and obligations of the birth parents of the child are terminated and the child acquires the rights of a natural child of the adoptive parents in line with section 131.

To complement the Constitution, CRA, CRL of Lagos State, ALLS and the ALL of Ogun state, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act and the Immigration Act all have relevant provisions on child welfare and protection that apply to safeguarding the process of ICA.

A critical study of the adoption laws of Lagos and Ogun states of Nigeria which permits ICA shows that apart from the clause permitting ICA, separate provisions are not made on the key requirements for ICA. Thus, the same procedure is followed in ICA processes just like domestic adoption processes. It is noteworthy that the CRC and ACRWC emphasises the subsidiarity principle which only permits ICA as a last resort. These conventions are to the effect that ICA should only be a last resort where a child cannot be placed with a family in the country. ICA is therefore a last option to institutionalisation (O. S. Adelakun, 2018). Thus, it is only where the child is left with no option than to grow up in an institution that the child is considered to be eligible for ICA. This must have been after series of efforts and attempts to place the child with a family within the country.

IV.   Relationship between intercountry adoption and child trafficking

ICA is usually portrayed as an act of kindness to help the adoptive family and the adopted child (Smolin, 2005). Unfortunately, recurring incidences and anomalies have linked ICA with child trafficking and sale of children. Human trafficking remains one of the global challenges begging for solution and Nigeria is constantly at the centre of human trafficking activities. Despite the provision of section 27(2) of the CRA which incorporated the provision of the CRC which prohibits the removal of a child from the parents, guardian or a person having custody against the will of such person, several children continue to be trafficked and presented as orphaned in order to place them on ICA (Okoli & Udechukwu, 2019).

One would expect that the legislative provisions will prevent every form of child laundering, but this is not so in Nigeria. Although there may be times when child trafficking and the selling of children are related, the sale of children is not a requirement for the concept of child trafficking. There is no requirement that there be a sale involved when recruiting children for ICA; technically, deception is a tool. Therefore, without any element of sale occurring at any point during the process, children who are recruited by deception can be trafficked for adoption or for use in other purposes (Mezmur, 2009).

Trafficking in this context can be child trafficking in order to facilitate ICA of the child and trafficking through ICA itself for the purpose of the exploitation and abuse of the child. Trafficking for the purpose of facilitating ICA is a situation where children are abducted, kidnapped, bought or sold or otherwise obtained from their parents through deceit for the purpose of ICA while trafficking through ICA usually entails following the due process for ICA but the child is not adopted with the intention of providing family life for the child, rather the child is adopted for other reasons beyond the welfare of the child (ISS/IRC, 2017).

Irrespective of the comprehensive provisions of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 to prevent human trafficking, there are plethora of evidence and reports of booming 'baby factory' business across Nigeria (Olomojobi & Agbetoba, 2020). The first report of baby factory in Nigeria was made in 2006 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 2006). Baby factory means a dwelling place for young girls and women for the purpose of procreation for financial gains, whether they are kept voluntarily or involuntarily (Ombelet & Johnson, 2016). The girls and women that give birth to these children are denied the opportunity of knowing the buyers or having access to the child again and in most cases men are employed for the purpose of getting them pregnant over and over again (Makinde, 2016). Different places are used for the purpose of baby factories such as orphanages, hospitals, residences, traditional healing homes, social welfare facilities, religious spaces, and maternity homes. Reports have it that some of the orphanages used for this purpose are deliberately not registered and they put up orphan children up for sale for ICA purposes while using the teenage female orphans for procreation with the intention of selling the babies under the guise of ICA (Olomojobi & Agbetoba, 2020). Orphanages raided maintained that they were not selling babies but rather gave up the babies for domestic adoption and ICA despite the evidence against them that adoption due processes were not followed.

A prompt on the promoting factors for baby factories in Nigeria reveals that the demand and supply factors are hugely responsible for the booming trafficking business. The demand by infertile couples with resort to domestic adoption and ICA in Nigeria contributes largely to the booming baby factories across Nigeria (Makinde et al., 2017). In instances where the mother submits voluntarily to sell her baby, the mother, seller, buyer and middle persons are involved but where the mother is trafficked or abducted, such a mother is not presumed to be a party to the transaction (Aderibigbe, n.d.).

A question that readily come to mind after considering these body of evidence is how the perpetrators of child trafficking for ICA purpose are able to bypass the legal process to place the child on ICA. This brings us to the issue of falsification of documents such as birth certificates, identity cards, paternity reports, medical reports of disability or special need, consent letters and proof of abandonment of the child in order to claim that the child is suitable for ICA (Meier, 2008). Also, there are practices of simulated births where a child's birth is registered under false names to give the impression that the registered parents were the birth parents in order to facilitate the ICA process. Since there are no requirements of prior documentation to establish the parentage of a child, it

is easy to register the birth of a child under false names without any form of hinderance. This will be easier where the baby factories are operated by medical practitioners that could issue documents to certify that they tended to the birth of the child (Makinde et al., 2017). A way to curb the practices of simulated birth is to have a legal requirement for the court to interview the 'parents' or legal guardians of a child being placed on ICA and the adoption order should only be made after the court is satisfied that the presented parents are indeed the birth parents or legal guardians. This duty should be left to the Magistrate of Judge to conduct and not social workers.

A rationale for excluding social workers from conducting the interview with the birth parents or legal guardians of a child being placed on ICA is to prevent incidences of corruption. It has been reported that social workers take advantage of the huge demand for children to extort prospective adoptive parents by asking them to make unofficial payments so that they could get a child (Onayemi & Aderinto, 2019). The competition to get a child therefore encourages bribery and corruption which prioritises the adoptive parental needs above the best interests of the child and the subsidiarity rule of ICA procedure (Cantwell, 2017). In Nigeria, section 126 of the CRA mandates the adoptive parents to wait for a prescribed period before the adoption is processed and finalized in order to monitor bonding with the prospective parents. During this period, the social workers are tasked to monitor the progress of the bonding and prepare a report on their findings. The waiting period could be lengthy at times which put the prospective parents in an anxious state as to the outcome on the ICA process. This prepares the system for a variety of illegal and corrupt practices. It has been found that when potential adoptive parents share the same qualifications, timing of application, and preferences, their ability to adopt a child may be influenced by other unrelated factors, such as who they know or how much they are willing to pay (Onayemi & Aderinto, 2019).

The extortion from prospective adoptive parents may take the form of direct request for a bribe in order to prepare a favourable report or under the guise of investigation and mobilisation fee, all of which has been described as bureaucratic corruption (Ijewereme, 2015). It is therefore safe to posit that any unreceipted money in the ICA process is unofficial and therefore corruption.

Another major challenge in ICA process that could promote child trafficking is the lack of national database and post adoption visitation. While the law require that every adoption concluded must be registered, there is no evidence of such registration and where the adoption is indeed registered, there is no statutory requirement for the registration of abuse, exploitation or trafficking of the child if the adoptive parent is found to engage in such practices. It is essential to have a statutory requirement to ensure that the welfare of the child is recorded in order to prevent an adoptive parent who is found to have abused a child or used a child adopted for trafficking from having access to ICA in future. This register could be in the form of sexual offenders register which should be readily available upon request.

Furthermore, the lack of proper mechanisms in place to effectively follow up on the adopted child's welfare, development and ability to integrate into the new environment is a threat to the growth and development of the child. This therefore raises a question if

the ICA of the child from a country like Nigeria which did not ratify the Hague Convention is indeed in the best interest of the child.

Despite multiple laws to prevent child trafficking in Nigeria, it has been established that the focus and emphasis of the laws on punishment is largely responsible for their ineffectiveness rather than focusing on preventing the practices from occurring. It is therefore imperative to review the existing laws to focus on child welfare and development so that all adoption, whether domestic or intercountry are indeed in the best interests of the child.

V.   Way forward

Based on the key findings of this research, the following recommendations are essential to promote the best interests of the child placed on ICA in Nigeria:

a. Review of the CFRN to incorporate child welfare and protection as an exclusive legislative matter requiring federal legislations and enforcement mechanism.

b. In every statute and policy permitting ICA, the subsidiarity principle should be emphasized so that ICA is only seen as a last resort. This will strengthen the ICA process and ensure that all ICA processes are indeed in the best interests of the child. Also, effort will be made to ensure that children are raised within their cultural environments.

c. Social security measures should be put in place to support kinship care for children in need of families. This will strengthen the cultural ties and family obligations which are core values of the African family systems.

d. Although, Nigeria is not a party to the Hague Convention, the principles and minimum standard for ICA in the Hague Convention should be adapted by states that permit ICA in Nigeria to ensure that best practices are followed in ICA processes.

VI.   Conclusion

This article used the cultural attachment theory to examine the influence of cultural security on the ability of a child placed on ICA to adapt in a host culture. Specifically, the legal framework for ICA in Nigeria was examined and it was found that the legal framework is weak and inconsistent across the country. While the CRA, which is not uniformly applicable to all the states in Nigeria prohibits ICA and places a stiff penalty on whoever engages in ICA, Lagos and Ogun states of Nigeria permit ICA. Unfortunately, the most important element that forms the basis of minimum standard in ICA process, subsidiarity principle, is not statutorily provided for in these states. This therefore leaves room for exploitation and child trafficking. This article therefore makes policy recommendations to safeguard children from trafficking under the guise of ICA in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

CHILD TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Child trafficking is a societal bane that thrive on greed, poverty, and ignorance of child traffickers. This research investigates the boom in child trafficking in Nigeria, the roles of the public, and the roles of the elites in the retention of the child trafficking business. By employing a historiographical analysis, this study sourced primary sources from the colonial archival records and newspapers to understand how the child trafficking business operated, the effects on the victims, and the consequences on society. The research implicates elites as the instigators and the profit makers of child trafficking, it also reveals how society helps to create victims, and the steps taken by the government to get rid of child trafficking ranging from fines to jail terms as punishment. The social class and the wider community's social values kept child trafficking within a vicious cycle facilitating the need and supply for cheap labor, sex markets, and domestic servants.

This research further investigates the influence of society and the elites on child trafficking, while evaluating the Government's efforts towards the problem.

Introduction

Illiteracy is likely the easiest means to exploit children due to other factors like poverty that precipitate illiteracy. This means a child from a poor family is likely unable to gain formal education but instead is put to work to support their families, (Sumberg and Sabates-Wheeler, 2023:4). These features may put children at risk of several vices from society and themselves. Children represent a vulnerable social class that needs to be looked after and catered for by their immediate family and society even, to reduce the dangers they could get into. Failure to protect this class, by family and society increases the dangers they face, like kidnap, forced labor, child prostitution etcetera as stated by Peterson, *(2014:3)*. He also claims that neglect towards children can have inimical results for society. Abandoned or not properly raised children may be more inclined to participate in adverse activities which can lead to a decline in social values. It can also lead to the assent of societal problems like child prostitution, forced child labor, and child marriage. It is essential that families make plans for raising children and for society to address these issues. Families and society may not only fail children that have not been properly raised, but may also create an avenue for future disruption of peace in society as the children may become delinquents. As a result of this, bad housing, overcrowding, congestion, and slums produce delinquency as a result of neglect toward the upbringing of children is likely to have inimical results for society, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2766 VOL II:1)*.

The Advent of Child Trafficking

Olaniyi, *(2009:10)* in his work, Reviewing Child Trafficking in the 1930s argues that Nigeria's economy, like that of the rest of the world, was also devastated by the Great

Depression. This condition led to grave financial conditions as prices of agricultural products dropped, staff wages and salaries were cut, there was a rise in unemployment, forced labor was used to carry out public works, and certain allowances for bicycles and horses were reduced. Tax payments became a burden for the people and migrations to areas of economic opportunities rose. In light of these migrations, child labor and child trafficking rose especially in places like Lapai and Bida. Children end up as slaves through the pawnship system – the child is given out for debt repayment. These debts were incurred in search of money for food or food and orphaned children were more exposed to this. There were also the kidnaps of children with the intent of enslavement or selling into slavery. In places like Panchin in Plateau, parents sold their children to Fulani pastoralists and farmers. Child trafficking was considered illegal by the British colonial government. It was against the anti-slave trade and slavery laws and there was a jail term of between two and fourteen years for convicted child traffickers.

According to Ekpe-Otu *(2009:1)* study of "Child Labor in Ikot Ekpene", child labor was a tradition, a part of the socialization process that defined labor along gender lines. Children were communally owned, this allowed for the children to be transferred amongst relatives for certain periods to help with chores and learn morals and traditional obligations. The colonial period spurred child labor and commodified it as it brought about urbanization and industrialization that created more room for labor as the number of domestic servants grew. By 1944, the women's party in Lagos lobbied for the employment of more girls. By the 1930s – 1940s, the surge in the arrivals of Europeans, Africans, sailors, soldiers, and administrators into Lagos led to the migration of girls from rural areas into Lagos to sell sex which became commodified because of the purchasing power of foreigners as stated by Ekpe-Otu, *(2009:1)*.

The pawnship system was visible in the Southeastern part of Nigeria too as children were used on plantations and domestic households. The female children were economic assets and valued family members. Children were pawned for numerous reasons like payment of court fees, and payment of colonial taxes. Sometimes, they were sold or even kidnapped into the urban areas to become child laborers or prostitutes in commercial areas as stated by Chapdelaine *(2021:1)*.

The new medium that promotes child trafficking in contemporary times is the "Baby Factories" which exploits young women with unwanted pregnancies. This practice was first described in 2006 by Makinde *(2016:11)*. The children in these factories suffer immediate and long-term abuses to include, nonregistration of birth, murder, illegal adoption, child prostitution, rape, etcetera. High infertility rates and poverty are major factors behind the emergence of child factories.

The nexus between child trafficking and poverty is the pull and push factors. The pull factors prompt individuals to leave their current area in search of greener pastures, and the push factors include socio-economic environment and deep-rooted abject poverty. Due to their financial insecurity, many families become vulnerable to exploitations like child trafficking. Saki, Oyo State is one of the havens of Child Trafficking in Nigeria, it is a border town that accepts trafficked children from places like Togo and the Benin Republic to be used as domestic servants in Nigerian cities as stated by Olubukola *(2014:4)*

The Sources of "Child Trafficking" Victims

There are three major ways of recruiting innocent children for child trafficking. The first source is the children from broken homes whose parents have parted and have been left alone to suffer. These children are preyed upon by evil-minded individuals who entice them with food, toys, and sweets in exchange for little errands that look harmless to the children. The second source is from the harsh and brutal homes. These children are barely fed or clothed but are constantly flogged for simple offenses. They develop the habit of truancy and eventually, abscond from home to live in bus parks, markets, and so on where they are easily picked up by criminals. The third source is the wayward children. Their movements at home are not necessarily controlled. They frequent cheap cinema houses like "Suru Cinema" at Aroloya Street and refuse to return home choosing to walk around the streets of Lagos instead, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2690:1).*

These positions from the document, "Report of Criminals Working with Young Children" argue that the vulnerability of children can be exploited if parents fail to carry out their primary duty of overseeing the affairs of their child and children efficiently. These three sources of how criminals extract children for criminal activities feature one same concept, "absence of parents or guardians". The criminals would fill this void the parents have created, and the naive child would give his or her trust to this person who has ulterior motives that can range from selling the child, subjecting them to harsh domestic labor, forcing them into prostitution, killing them for ritual purposes, etcetera.

A newspaper report by Kolawole from the Daily Times, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:7),* argues that incompetent parenting is the cause for poaching of children by criminals for trafficking. He states that "I notice that kidnappers have properly put the windup parents everywhere, but most especially in Lagos. I blame parents for being careless in looking after their children. One way to stop children being kidnapped is to tell those of them who go to school never again to gather around Idumota or Oyingbo to beg every car owner to give them lifts to school. Who knows where the rides may end?"

Analyzing the claims made by Kolawole on parents being the cause of their children's kidnap due to their careless behavior towards the children may be drawn from events he had witnessed. These events may include kidnaps and school children around Idumota and Oyingbo seeking lifts to school from strangers. The latter events may be his basis on the carelessness accusation he made about the parents to show that they have not done enough to monitor their children's journey to school in a society where kidnap had become rampant. His argument further gives strength to the position that family has a huge role to play in the rise and decline of child trafficking.

The Elites (Instigators Of Child Trafficking)

A report on one convicted Garuba Gwandu, who kidnapped four brothers at Sabo market, Ibadan. He invited them over under the pretext of giving them jobs as he detected the boys needed jobs. They followed him to Ogunpa bus park in Ibadan from whence he brought them to Lagos. In Lagos, he locked them up in a house belonging to a Hausa fortune-teller on Moshalashi Street, Obalende. The children confirmed in court that they were not fed and men came to the house pointing to them as they bargained with Gwandu over them, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:17).* The fortune-teller confessed in the court that the accused asked him to put the boys up so that they would be trafficked to Gold Coast, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:16).*

Two Europeans visiting a house of ill-repute to seek information in their report, note how they were taken to small "*piccins*" (a Europeanized version of pikin, meaning –

child or children) – brothels with underage children. Their report states that virgins cost more than other girls, girls of any age could be provided for patronisers who mostly are of the foreign seamen stock. Lastly, their report stated that the marriage value of a girl increases if she is known to have had sex with a European. The Sobo people are known to bring their girls to Lagos for this purpose. The Calabars also secretly trafficked their girls for this purpose. In this context, trafficking children for several reasons such as prostitution transits from being just a business to a culture with the result remaining the same – generating revenue at the expense of the child, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2844:85-86).*

Female child hawkers are exposed to many dangers like molestation and unjust murder. With incidents from years back. Like the finding of the body of an under-thirteen-year-old street hawker in a stall in Oyingbo, there was also the finding of the body of another underaged street hawker on the race course with investigation pointing towards the same scenario as that of the body found in a stall in Oyingbo, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2844:91).*

From the instances made above, there have been establishments where trafficked children were being used by the elites in the society. While it is arguable that the lower class also made use of trafficked children for domestic labor, it is worth noting that the elite class used the children for more than domestic labor. Some of these children are subjected to harsh labor like working on plantations, the mines, hawking on the street, they can be used as prostitutes, etc. The wants or desires of the elites created a market for desperate financially ill families to seek financial stability. For cheap labour, the elites desire trafficked children to work on plantations, mines, factories, or hawk their goods. For pleasure, they turn to trafficked children for fulfillment. Prostitution became commodified when new strata of people with financial acumen migrated to Nigeria and created an avenue for the business to thrive. Makinde *(2016:11),* the elites' dependency on child trafficking traversed to the contemporary era and unlocked a new subset of child trafficking – Baby factories. These factories are patronized by the elites who have fertility issues and want to adopt a child illegally. Some also adopt these babies not because they suffer from infertility but for ritual purposes which could involve criminal activities like mutilation or murder of the baby.

Roles of the Government Against Child Trafficking

In a bid to curb child trafficking, individuals made positions or advised the government and agents of the government. For example, in *a* memorandum by representatives of Lagos Women to the Chief Administrative Officer, they asked that more men be employed on secret services or detectives on the kidnapping issue, severe punishment like life imprisonment should be handed to convicted kidnappers, and, headmasters and headmistresses should be more vigilant in looking after children during sessions and during breaks in schools, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:5).*

Also, on measures to curb child kidnapping. There is a suggestion for the creation of a Kidnap squad. The kidnap squad would carry out tasks like, interrogating suspected men and women on trains, searching the motor parks for suspects, visiting the ferry and wharf daily to question suspects, checking the highways and roads leading to inhabited areas, challenging anyone with a load of extraordinary size and, finding and helping stray children. It also goes on to appeal to magistrates and judges to award maximum judgment to convicted child traffickers, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:8).*

Going further, on the dangers of child trafficking. Dangers of child trafficking, including deprivation of parental care, deprivation of good training, subject to underfeeding, and over labor were discussed. There was also an argument that the activities of kidnappers in the country portray Nigeria in a bad image internationally. The solution proposed was severe punishment that ends in life imprisonment for convicted kidnappers. This is hoped to be the only way out of the kidnappers epidemic as it would discourage people who want to tow the path, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:9)*.

Another solution to child trafficking appeals to the government to pull the police forces together for an all-out onslaught on the kidnappers with severe punishment meted out to captured kidnappers. It is presumed that the activities of the kidnappers may have put many parents in fear of losing their children to the point where they no longer send their children to school without guards and prefer to keep them at home instead, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:15)*.

The government put in place measures to obliterate child trafficking through several laws and the public punishment of child traffickers. Examples of these punishments include the outcome of the court case of an alleged kidnapper, Lamidi Alabi who was accused of kidnapping three children and keeping them in a crate at Faji market in Lagos. The verdict of the court was a sentence of five years in prison, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:11)*. In the same vein, Garuba Gwandu, the kidnapper of four brothers was sentenced to a period of eight years in prison, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2481:17)*.

To this end, it is quite glaring that the government is quite active in trying to stamp out child trafficking. In a memorandum from the commissioner of the colony, propositions on the implementation of No.41 of 1943 were made to prevent child trafficking with its section 25 targeted solely at the abolition of child hawking with severe punishment to parents who compelled their children to hawk. Also, section 219 makes defiling girls below the age of 13 a felony. This memorandum proposed that the consent age be raised to 15 with severe punishment being meted out to those found wanting of this crime, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2844: 89 - 91)*. Furthermore, the memorandum states that once the laws are put in place, the police will ensure they are enforced and the legislature will make sure that defaulters receive adequate punishments. The police would also be tasked with keeping stricter control over brothel owners – their businesses appear to be the center of child prostitution.

There also were laws to restrict hawking – Another form of child labor. The law states that "No boy child below the age of fourteen and no girl child below the age of sixteen should be allowed to hawk beyond 6:30 pm or before 6:00 am". Children below these age grades can only hawk at all if they were employed by their parents or a guardian appointed by a court. Policemen in plain clothes could also arrest children and adults for questioning but, any person stopped by such police has the right to demand the warrant card of the officer with his picture, *(NAI COMCOL 1, 2844: 147)*.

These propositions, and actions (in terms of sentencing child traffickers) from the government are proof that the government actively fought the bane of child trafficking. Another worthy mention of government activities against child trafficking is; the adoption of the penal code in 1960 which states that any sale and purchase or detaining of a person against their will are punishable offenses that could accrue up to fourteen years imprisonment and also a fine (Section 279 of the Penal Code 1960). Apart from the establishment and the implementation of laws like that of the 1960 penal code, Nigeria is also a signatory to regional and international instruments aimed at fighting

against child trafficking like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) amongst others.

Conclusion

Child trafficking has an array of effects on its victims. These effects could range from loss of identity, low self-esteem, shortened lifespan, loss of internal organs, injuries, and so on in the course of being used against their will. In society, however, there are effects such as the creation of a new social class of unruly people, the loss of morals, decline in the development of society as there is a drop in the creation of intellects. Most importantly, there is the risk of the continuation of this vicious cycle by victims of child trafficking. As stated by Ekpe-Otu *(2009:1)*, trafficked children who are introduced into prostitution eventually retire into the occupation as they grow older, start the business, and recruit a new set to work under them just like they had been recruited. To this end, if a trafficked child falls under an armed robber, he is prone to learning that occupation and recruiting his gang the same way he had been recruited. This goes in line with the theory of John Locke's Tabula Rasa theory which states that we were born with blank minds that we gradually fill with experiences as we grow up.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE
RESCUED FROM THE 'RED ZONE': EXAMINING EFFORTS TOWARDS THE RESTORATION OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Trafficking in persons can be regarded as one of the most organized crimes in the history of human existence. Globally, it manifests as a form of violence against women and children. Many of the cases of human trafficking are not reported for various reasons, while some reported cases get treated with levity. This attitude has arguably emboldened the perpetrators and further encouraged this modern day slavery that presents an infringement on human rights. Often, the victims get trafficked against their will or under some form of deceit, andonly realise after they are already entangled. Many have died while being trafficked; some have survived with some rescued in between. This study will examine the legal efforts towards the restitution of trafficked children from four core areas of prevention, protection, prosecution and re-integration of rescued victims in Nigeria with reference to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) which Nigeria is signatory. The study will use both primary and secondary resources, including interviews and data from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Ministry of Women Affairs, NGOs and information from text books and journals.

Introduction:
In the last few decades, internationally organized crimes have been on the increase. Trafficking in all its forms is one of such. There are three common types of human trafficking: the sex trade, forced labor, and domestic servitude. The economic sectors that profit most from human trafficking are agriculture, restaurants, manufacturing, domestic work, entertainment, hospitality, and the commercial sex industry (A Train Education, n.d.). According to Do (2019) "the value of transnational criminal networks engaged in drug production, human trafficking and poaching has been growing and exceeded $US 1.3 trillion by 2018, equivalent to 1.5 percent of global GDP".
Human trafficking, the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit is a heinous crime that exists in almost all regions of the world (UNODC). However, it tends to be more widespread in some regions due to economic hardship and extreme poverty. Most countries that participate in this illicit trade fall within three categories of source, transit or destination points. Nigeria serves the three purposes; a destination country for other West Africa states and because of the pathetic economic situation which makes most young people leave the country in search of greener pastures, it also serves as a source and transit point (Nelson, 2021:5).
Causes and scope of human trafficking
Poverty plays a huge factor in encouraging human trafficking as most women and children who fall victim did so in response to a promise of better life in other places. Another factor is ignorance usually stemming from low level of education or outright

illiteracy. Many victims had no idea they were even being trafficked and only realised after they had gotten entangled or at their destination. Closely following is bad leadership which often than not, results into unstable system of governance and conflicts. This serves as a push factor which makes people want to migrate to other places in search of greener pastures. The most disturbing of the factors is a faulty or non functional legal system which often parades corrupt law enforcement officers who will be ready to bend the law for financial gains. They turn the other way while the traffickers get away with their victims.

The scope of trafficking increases every day. Thousands of individuals fall victim to national and international trafficking every year (Toney-Butler, T. J., Ladd, M. and Mittel, O., 2023.). Almost no country is exempt from human trafficking infractions or being the originating, transient, or destination country. Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. However, in some parts of Africa and the Mekong region, children are the majority. They make up to 100% in parts of West Africa (UNODC). According to a United Nations global assessment of the scope of human trafficking, based on data gathered from 155 countries, the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation.

The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls. Surprisingly, in 30% of the countries which provided information on the gender of traffickers, women make up the largest proportion of traffickers (UNODC). It also reported that in some parts of the world, women trafficking women is the norm. Often than not, the victims get trafficked against their will or under some form of deceit. Many have died while being trafficked, some have survived with some rescued in between. For those who survived or got rescued, they experience long time effects or consequences. These could be medical, psychological, social or spiritual which can either lead to the victims to question their faith in God or renew them. The most disturbing of these effects is the one on the family and the community. This emanates from the fear of castigation or rejection. Nigeria is one of the most affected countries in the West Africa sitting on the tripod of source, transit and destination points.

The victims, mostly women and girls are "mainly recruited for domestic servitude and sex trafficking while boys are generally forced to work on plantations or in commercial farming, construction quarries and mines or engage in petty crimes and the drug trade" (US Dept. of State Briefing Paper, 2014). Human trafficking in Nigeria dates back to the 25th Century with the European Trans Atlantic slave trade in the country. Although the slave trade was banished in 1807, trafficking continued to thrive and metamorphosed to what it is today (Campanella, 2020). Trafficking in Nigeria "takes place within, outside, and into the region; involves intermediaries or third parties especially criminal gangs and scams" (Eimma, 2003). According to a United Nations report (UN Global Report, 2014) "trafficking of young women from Nigeria to Europe for the purpose of sexual exploitation is one of the most persistent trafficking flows as it is very well organized and difficult to detect" (UN GLOBAL REPORT, 2014).

Efforts have been made towards the restitution or re-integration of victims globally, regionally and nationally. The focus is this paper is to examine the legal efforts towards same from four core areas of prevention, protection, protection, prosecution and re-integration.

Government response to the menace of human trafficking in Nigeria

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic Nigeria states unequivocally in Section 34 the right to the dignity of the human person therefore prohibiting the subjection of any person to slavery and servitude. It provides that "Every individual is entitled to

respect for the dignity of the person and accordingly; no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment; no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; and no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour." Further provisions that guarantees freedom from torture, slavery, servitude and forced labour; and that which safeguards the rights of persons to movement, personal liberty are also enshrined in Section 35 and 41 respectively, This therefore, classifies the act of human trafficking a crime against humanity in Nigeria. This is also supported by some sections in both the Penal and Criminal codes which contain provisions that classifies certain actions like inducing girls below 18 to incitation of prostitution, enticement or leading away of any woman or girl (with or without her consent); for immoral purpose or unlawful deprivation of liberty, slave dealing, forced labour, and sexual offences punishable by law in different degrees.

Trafficking as defined by Article 3 section (a) of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime states that; Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other form of coercion, of abduction of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving and receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation here infers at a minimum,

a. the exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

b. The consent of a victim of trafficking n persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

c. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of the article

d. "child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age (UN Human Rights, 2000). Article 2 of the protocol declares in the statement of purpose as follows;

a). to prevent and combat trafficking in persons paying particular attention to women and children;

b). to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking with full respect for their human rights;

c). to promote cooperation among States parties in order to meet the objectives.

 The protocol vehemently States in its preamble "declaring that effective action to prevent and comebacks trafficking in persons especially women and children requires a comprehensive international approach in the countries of origin, transit, and destination that includes measures to prevent such trafficking, to punish the traffickers and to protect the victims of such trafficking including by protecting their internationally recognised human rights"(UN Human Rights). This therefore calls for the examination of the measures taken by Nigeria to mitigate trafficking in person.

Nigeria in the bid to combat human trafficking has ratified many international conventions like the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and has gone further to transmit same into its laws. The principal legislation on this being the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPLEA) 2003 as amended in 2005 (Erimma, 2003). The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Person (NAPTIP) was established by this law and charged

with the responsibilities to enforce laws against traffic in person; and to take charge and coordinate the rehabilitation and counseling of trafficked persons; and other related matters (Kigbu, S. K. and Hassan, Y. B., 2015). Section 8 of 'The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003', created enabling departments like investigations, Monitoring, Counseling and Rehabilitation, Public Enlightenment, Training and Manpower, Research, Information and Communication all in a bid to help it dispense its duty appropriately (NAPTIP). However, while NAPTIP has made efforts to combat human trafficking, the agency faces several challenges. These challenges will be viewed through the strategies most countries utilise to combat the crime.

It would seem that most countries that are plagued with the scourge of human trafficking endeavour to address the phenomenon through prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership. An additional measure is the issue of re-integration. This is very important as it is a necessary step towards a complete absorption of the rescued victim back into the society.

1. On prevention: The NAPTIP uses strategic tools such as conferences, tools and mass media campaigns to create awareness and educate the Nigerian populace about Trafficking, its features and operational methods. This is very important as ignorance is a major factor that feeds the growth of the crime.

2. Protection: In 2013, NAPTIP developed a National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria which provides formal guidelines for law enforcement, immigration officials, and service providers in a bid to improve protection and assistance to trafficking victims (US Dept. of States, 2015). This is with the aim to rehabilitate and re-integrate victims into the society.

3. Prosecution: This involves the investigation of human trafficking cases, monitoring of cross-border movements and prosecution of trafficking cases in law courts. This has brought about many arrests which unfortunately has not led to convictions.

4. Partnership – NAPTIP works in collaboration with other regional and international agencies or bodies that may ensure elimination and prevention of the root causes of the problem of traffic in any persons in Nigeria. (NAPTIP, 2005).

In respect to the above, it can be agreed that Nigeria has made considerable administrative and legislative efforts to address the menace of human trafficking. However, a lot still needs to be done.

Conclusion

Nigeria is signatory to several conventions like the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Convention on Forced Labour and Minimal Wage, the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and even the African Charter on Human Rights (1980) at the regional level among others (Ihouma, 2019: 51.) She also has the tenacity of NAPTIP, the agency that is charged with the responsibility of sanitizing Nigeria of human trafficking. NAPTIP has also achieved a reasonable level of success in its attempt to end the heinous crime through its four mandate stated above, but several challenges still exist. For example, "the rates of arrest and prosecution of traffickers remain low in relation to the size of the problem in Nigeria as elsewhere" (Kigbu and Hassan, 2015:208). This infers that our legal system or the laws that regulate the activities or the operations of NAPTIP has to be looked into and reviewed where necessary to enhance better performance. More funds should be allocated for this. According to the NAPTIP national action plan (2022-2026) budget analysis, prevention was allotted only 24.6% while prosecution and law

enforcement received 20.2% of the estimated budget. These two are very crucial departments that need to be well equipped in order to perform maximally. Therefore, certain amendments also have to be done in respect of protection and prevention, like the promotion of social equity and the dispersal of development initiatives. This is because limited opportunities for gainful employment and the search for greener pastures is one of the major reasons that make persons vulnerable to trafficking. Moreover, as a preventive agenda, information should be made available to the populace especially in the villages and at the grassroots level. An informed people will make informed decision when faced with offers to travel or offered certain jobs with questionable demands attached.

In the area of prosecution, there should be a clear definition of kidnapping in both the criminal law and the penal code. This will deter make it clear that it is a crime. What exists in both the criminal law of Nigeria as well as the penal code are infractions of the crime of kidnapping. In this wise, it is possible for an offender to claim ignorance of the law when caught. Secondly, additional law enforcement coordinating body should be established to address the extensive international character of trafficking. A special court to try cases should be created just as t applies to Election and road traffic issues. With this in place, kidnapping cases will be given the proper legal attention it requires and timely too.

Lastly, kidnapping is a crime that leaves mental, emotional and psychological complications on victims. At both the international and national level, a collective approach is needed as an indispensable component of the campaign to address trafficking in women and children, as well as all forms of violence against women. Victims of kidnapping may experience post traumatic stress disorder as well as intense feelings of guilt, fear, shame, anger, depression, disorientation, betrayal, and distrust (UN Activities). To this end, it behoves all of us, the civil society, law enforcement agencies, service providers, community and religious leaders to mention a few to cooperate with the government towards bringing this evil against women and children and indeed humanity to an end. These cooperative efforts from everyone in the society will help towards the peaceful reintegration of the victims back into the society. The rescued victims may yet become useful informants on ways to better tackle the menace having been trafficked themselves.

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EXPLORING DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA DIGITAL GAPS AND PARENTING ISSUES AS ENHANCERS OF DIGITAL CHILD TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Unprecedented children access to modern technology and digital deficiencies among parents has significantly impacted many aspects of society. Adversely, issues of child trafficking in Nigeria as observed have been enhanced digitally. Social media platforms, like Facebook and Instagram, have become a powerful tool for traffickers to identify and target vulnerable children and coerce them into trafficking situations. Parents, however, lacks the ability to curb digital cases of child trafficking. Sadly, victims of child trafficking end up in the ruthless den of ritualistic and kidnappers. Against this backdrop, this study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Qualitatively documentary evidence as data were gathered on social media. Thematic analysis revealled that vulnerable victims are materialistically lured into the incidence of child trafficking. Parent due to digital deficiencies and economic pursuits are dormant in checking children usage of social media. Fictitiously, traffickers adopt numerous strategies, like generating fake profiles and using encoded messaging, to escape detection from law enforcement agencies. The need to check and identify suspicious behaviour, by parents and stakeholders as intervention and potential rescue for victims before they are trafficked was recommended. This will help to ameliorate incidences of child trafficking that are a menace and retrogressive to societal growth.

Introduction

The vulnerability of Nigerian children to trafficking is prompted by some indices such as prevalent poverty, large family size, and rapid urbanization with deteriorating public services, low literacy levels, and high school dropout rates. Parenting issues orchestrated by overburdened care of too many children, are prone to the trafficker's deceit and easily fall into dangerous situations (UNICEF, 2007).

Optionally as defined by the UN, child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion or abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over children (UN, 2000). The general factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking in Nigeria include extreme poverty (33% -70 million people) live in extreme poverty), lack of economic opportunities, corruption, conflict/insecurity, climate change/resulting migration, and Western consumerism. Similarly as observed by Kongnyuy (2008), parental level of education, migration, HIV

infection, place of residence, socio-cultural factors, family size, and flawed registration system are other determinants of child trafficking.

Efforts was made to eradicate the social menace of child trafficking by creating the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in 2003 to strategically combat trafficking. The NAPTIP 2020 reported that sex trafficking is particularly rampant in Nigeria, with nearly half of all rescued victims reporting they were procured for sexual exploitation, prostitution, or pornography. Ranked 38/160 of the countries with the highest incidence of trafficking Nigeria remains a major human trafficking source, transit, and destination country, with an estimated 750,000-1,000,000 trafficked incidence annually (UNODC, 2023). This awful situation of trafficking in Nigeria seem to defy are means to ameliorate and curb this social menace.

Parenting Issues and Digital Gaps

Unprecedented children access to modern technology and digital deficiencies among parents has significantly impacted many aspects of society. Adversely, issues of child trafficking in Nigeria as observed have been enhanced digitally. The analogue nature of parents creates a restriction due to the inability of parents to curb digital misuses on the internet. Despite the positive relationship between parents and children, digital gaps still thrive because parents lack the digital ability to compete with the technology speed and efficiency of children. As projected by speculations difficulty exists in the process of parents engaging in open and honest communication with teenagers on digital misuse. Parents may have to compete for children's attention as more time is rather spent with their peers and increasing technology use (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Contemporarily, the family bond between parents and children has been taken away by the inclination to technology. As observed in most developed countries indicates that Internet usage absorbed up to 91.2% of primary school children surfing on the Internet at home; in contrast to about 66% at school (Lee & Chae, 2007).

The digital crisis is reflected in the digital gap between parents and teenagers because parents consider their children as home internet digital pundits. This according to this study is the dichotomy between internet visitors (parents) and internet natives (teenagers). The digital crisis is worsened by the absence of an adequate level of e-maturity to manage digital risks. As negatively prompted, 42% of children are victims of Trafficking, cyber-bullying unwanted exposure to pornography, violence, and explicit language (Chisholm, 2006, Vanlanduyt and De Cleyn, 2007, van Rooij & van den Eijden, 2007). With the unstoppable speed at which technologies is trending, many parents have far trailed behind in curbing excesses due to inadequate knowledge of internet usage compared to teenagers (Livingstone, 2003; Sorbring, 2012; Wang et al., 2005). In Nigeria due to economic pursuit and digital deficiency parents lack the ability to cope with wider technological trends. This digital gap between children tagged as internet natives and parents who are internet visitors has generated a digital gap, parenting crisis, and digital abuses that serve as enhancers of child trafficking.

Social Media as Enhancer of Children Trafficking.
As an Emerging digital trend social media has become an important wing of the media that allows internet users to post public messages. Social media can also refer to those "web-based and mobile-based technologies which are used to send communication into interactive dialogue between organizations, communities, and individuals. Social media

is a modern interactive communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest. It connotes a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Today, there are billions of people on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter and so on, large percentage of them are teenagers. As observed by Howard and Park (2012) social media platforms have three main parts, namely, the infrastructure and instrument to create and share content; content, such as concepts, ideas, messages; information and news decoders, users and consumers, e.g., industries, organizations and individuals that provides space for people to create and send content, link up, and connect with others. Adversely, social media has been a source and enhancer of digital menace such as Trafficking, cyber-bullying unwanted exposure to pornography, violence, and explicit language (Chisholm, 2006).

Social media has adversely played a role in the recruitment stage by facilitating the identification, location and contact of potential victims for trafficking. Paolo (2022) reported the impact of Social media on trafficking of human beings is particularly concerns two stages of the trafficking process: recruitment and exploitation. As further reported, Social media serve as enhancer in various stages of human trafficking, and particularly in relation to (i) recruitment; (ii) exploitation; and (iii) exertion of control and pressure over victims. There abound cases of trafficking on social media deliberately targeting gullible victims for exploitation. These victims are lured by false promises of lucrative jobs, stability, education, income or romance to attract people. Victims might be any gender, adults, children or even newborn babies, from varied educational, socio-economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. This digital mischief most times negatively result in the victim used for ritual purposes, Kidnapping and at time use of collected naked pictures or videos of victims coercing them into prostitution due to blackmailing threat.

Curbing the numerous trafficking incidences by stakeholders has not been productive. This can be attributed to the unstoppable speed at which technologies is trending, many parents and adults have far trailing behind in curbing excesses due to inadequate knowledge of internet usage compared to teenagers (Livingstone, 2003; Sorbring, 2012; Wang et al., 2005). The pathetic scene of victims of trafficking being sexually abused or used for ritual is a growing incidence in Nigeria. Economic hardship and survival tendencies and the digital gap has handicapped parents from monitoring and checking children digital misuses on social media platforms. Past studies on parents' views and parents checking teenage Internet use; such as setting family rules, monitoring time and content of use, parents' active participation in teenagers' internet activities, installing monitoring software and so on are ineffective (Eastin , 2006; Kyung, Yop, & Bum, 2009; Lin & Yu, 2008; Livingstone & Helsper, 2009b; Wang, 2005). Worrisomely, societal values contemporarily in Nigeria such as integrity, hard work and dignity of labour has been grossly eroded. The present society is built on wrong principles that are clearly inconsistent, members' goals become ill-focused and appears orchestrating the social menace of child trafficking (Oyeyemi, 2023). The issue of social media misuse via the internet asserts that teenagers and individuals inability achieve cultural goal now resort to illegitimate means to achieve same. The new trend is the society that celebrates wealth, regardless of its source thereby producing a generation of teenagers aggressively pursuing wealth by indulging in all kinds of social vices, including cybercrime and criminality and trafficking which is a menace to Nigerian society (Oyeyemi, 2023).

Shamefully, some parents due to economic hardship supports children in this illicit social media misuse. Sadly the negative effect on trafficking is victims are killed by ruthless ritualists, brutalized or economically exploited by kidnappers. The inability of parents and stakeholders to awaken to this reality of digital abuse on social media that is enhancing child trafficking is on the verge of continuously ruining children that are family and national assets is concern of this study. Thus this study seeks sensitive major stakeholders on the need to intensify result-oriented-effort in curbing the digital menace of social media as enhancer of child trafficking in Nigeria

Theoretical Framework
The uses and gratifications (U&G) theory of Katz (1959) is the theoretical anchorage of this study. As proposed people, that is children generally switch to the application of a specific technology and media to meet explicit needs. This U & G theory was validated by Davis (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) relate the reception and use of technology in diverse situations through apparent utility (AU) and supposed comfort of usage (PEOU). Ease of use and flexibility might likely increase the quantity at which children adopt a particular technology, unlike social media for child trafficking. The massive adoption and usage of new digital internet communication technologies in on the verge of eroding parenting and societal values of the good old days (Bodomo, 2009). Relentless efforts by parents and stakeholders to curb this digital menace has proved abortive and the continuous proliferation of this digital crisis is ruining the lives of children through trafficking is gradually on the increase. However, due to economic pursuit and overzealousness of most Nigerian parents, it is disturbing to find that the majority of the parents are not supervising their child's social media usage despite the appalling aftermath effects.

Methodology.
This study, adopted a descriptive survey research design. Qualitatively documentary evidences and interviews were utillised to gather data via online social media, newspapers magazines and articles on incidences of use social media from child trafficking. Thematic and content analysis was utilized to analyse the data collected.

Results

Table 1. Selected Cases of Social Media Victims of Child Trafficking

S/N	Description	Victim	Location	Consequences	Social media Platform
1	Invite by a male friend Azeez online	Sulaimon Adijat	Ogun State Nigeria	Body part sold for ritual and fetish purpose	Faceb
2.	A Youth Corper lured by fake employment online opportunity	Adebola	Port Harcourt	Killed for rituals	Faceb
3	A notorious kidnapper that made wealth from kidnapping business	Evan	Lagos	Kidnapping and extortion	Faceb and Instag
4	A lady invited via social media to Lagos and was sexually molested and killed	Adebola	Lagos	Sexually Molested and killed	Faceb

2

5	A victim responded to fake a mouth-watering job opportunity on social media was invited to a location and was killed and body mutilated for ritual	Deji Ayinde	Lagos	killed and body mutilated for ritual	Faceb
6	Lady responded to a fake travelling opportunity to Canada online	Cynthia Uzoma	Benin	Sexually Molested and killed	Instag
7	A fake firm place an advert for employment vacancies and but was a human parts market for ritualist, most victims that responded killed and part sold		Oyo	killed and body mutilated for ritual	Faceb

Sourced online via social media reports 2024.

Table. 2. Sources of reports on human trafficking on Newspapers from 2019, to December 31, 2022

Sources of reports on human trafficking Newspaper	NAPT IP N (%)	FG N (%)	Local residents/ victims N (%)	Foreign countries N (%)	State Govts. N (%)	Others N (%)	All of the above N (%)	Total N (%)
THISDAY Online	39(31.97)	72(30.90)	30 (15.87)	5 (21.74)	28 (26.67)	44(26.83)	1(25.00)	219(26.07)
Premium Times	34(24.87)	72(30.90)	53 (28.04)	4 (17.39)	30 (28.57)	43(26.22)	2(50.00)	238(28.33)
Vanguard Online	30(24.59)	56(24.03)	77 (40.74)	10(43.48)	35 (33.33)	42(25.61)	1(25.00)	251(29.88)
Sun news Online News Online	19 (15.57)	33 (14.16)	29 (15.34)	4 (17.39)	12 (11.43)	35 (21.34)	0(0.00)	132(15.71)
122(14.52)	233(27.74)	189(22.50)	23 (2.74)	105(12.50)	164(19.52)	4(0.48)	840(100)	

(Source: *Olley, Orhewere & Omosotomhe, 2023)*

From Table 2, Vanguard Online, Sun News Online, Premium Times, and THISDAY Online were selected. The four online news sources published 5,532 e-copy from January 2019 through December 2022. The four online news outlets issued 5,532 e-copy editions from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2022. The sources of reports on human trafficking indicated the highest number of reports on human trafficking came from residents/victims, with 189 reports (22.5% of the total). The second-highest number of reports came from FG, with 233 reports (27.74%). The third-highest reports came from newspapers, with THISDAY Online having the highest reports (39 reports, or 31.97%). The lowest number of reports came from others, with only four reports (0.48% of the total).

Discussion of Findings

European Union digital study indicated that one-third of the parents reported applies a variety of measures to ensure teenage internet safety and check digital misuse, however, there still abounds pronounced level of deficiency (Livingstone, 2011 & Stahl & Fritz, 2002). In Nigeria with no digital control mechanism, digital gap and misuse has grossly generated parenting issues. The Nigerian featured problem of digital gap between parents and their teenagers, as most parents may not be as faster as their teenagers in learning and updating their knowledge and skills of using the Internet, therefore, lack the ability to curb digital misuse (Wang, 2005). Adversely, societal values such as integrity, hard work and dignity of labour has been grossly eroded. The present society is built on wrong principles that are inconsistent, members' goals become ill focused (Oyeyemi, 2023). As a parenting issue economic hardship and pursuit among some low-income parents do not allow them to query the suspicious possession of income or materials above the age level of their children. The issue of social media misuse via the internet asserts that teenagers and individuals inability achieve ideal cultural goals now resort to illegitimate means to achieve the same. The new trend is a society that celebrates wealth, regardless of its source thereby producing a generation of teenagers aggressively pursuing wealth by indulging in all kinds of social vices, including cybercrime and criminality and trafficking is a menace to the Nigerian society (Oyeyemi, 2023). The National human trafficking Hotline indicated recorded recruitment in all types of sex and labour trafficking on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat. Whatsapp, and dating sites/apps like Tinder, Grindr and Plentyfish. Through these platforms traffickers recruit, advertise and communicate with potential victims. The victims through interviews as gathered, were misinformed and lure into dangerous situations. As examined, this digital trend has posed a great danger to child safety as indicated in Tables 1 and 2 showing selected online child trafficking cases and scores of reported cases through Nigerian Newspapers. Worrisomely, despite NAPTIP finalising the National Action Plan 2022-2026, with a digital mechanism established to combat child trafficking. The Government of Nigeria still does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking either in person or digitally. Digitally, information are hindered by dearth of data collection, dissemination, and research; many offices continued to use paper-based systems for case management. Ethical restriction as asserted by OCSE (2020), stress the need for conscious management of digital data of victims, ensuring the use of technology in a way that does not infringe human rights of victims as well as those of the general population. As information released by law enforcement needs to be assessed and censored so that victims and their families are not put at risk. These infrastructural and ethical quagmires retard the pace of ameliorating, investigating, tracking, arresting and prosecuting traffickers by enforcement agencies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The basis of this study was to explore the dynamics of social media digital gaps and parenting issues as enhancers of digital child trafficking in Nigeria. As observed through the result of the study parents' digital deficiencies and pronounced digital gaps between the versatile internet teenagers prohibit parents from checking children digital misuses on social media. The escalating rate of child trafficking and the inability to curb this menace calls for concern by stakeholders as efforts put in place to check this ills appear grossly inadequate. Consequently, based on the child safety right, children have the right to grow up in a healthy environment with the opportunity to play and get a good

education and moral training, which is opposed to being exposed to dangerous trafficking situations. The outcome of this study is to sensitise and re-orientate parents and major stakeholders about the need to re-strategise by providing result-orientated measures to combat digital of using social media as enhancers of child trafficking in Nigeria. As recommended by this study, good communication, understanding and appreciation between parents and children is the key to ensure the best use of the Internet, a holistic approach by stakeholders (parents, teachers and policymakers)   to curb this digital menace to avoid digital escalation of child trafficking.

Result-oriented programmes should be organized by schools, policymakers, and social workers to enhance parents' involvement in their children's social media use. Digitally, parents should acquire skills to check digital misuse by learning how to use filtering and blocking software programmes and applications. This measure can be adopted to censor children's android portable devices.

The government should enhance coordination between the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) on law enforcement efforts to digitally combat child trafficking via social media. Pertinently, the need for efficient National social welfare scheme should be introduced to supplement income for poor families to discourage children from falling victim to child trafficking and being lured into dangerous situations due to economic hardship and survival tendencies.

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SECTION F

CHILDREN, LITERATURE AND MEDIA

AN EXPLORATION OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN STREET CHILDREN AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A LITERARY APPROACH

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Abstract

The plight of street children has garnered widespread attention from governmental and non-governmental organizations, yet gaps persist in understanding their role in the escalation of crime rates. Rooted in multifaceted factors including dysfunctional family dynamics, archaic religious practices, and harsh socio-economic conditions, millions of children endure the harsh realities of street life. While conventional perceptions of war conjure images of armed conflict, this study redefines "war" to encompass the relentless battles against hunger and homelessness faced by marginalized children daily. Bereft of stable support systems, these children resort to survival tactics akin to those employed in wartime scenarios. This research elucidates the intricate correlation between the proliferation of street children and the surge in insecurity within Nigerian and broader African societies. Employing a qualitative content approach and drawing on Postcolonial Theory, particularly Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern, this study aims to illuminate the systemic issues perpetuating this cycle of vulnerability and exploitation, using selected African novels as a unit of analysis. Through a nuanced analysis, it underscores the agency of street children amidst the relentless challenges they confront, shedding light on their involvement in a spectrum of criminal activities for survival. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to safeguard the well-being and prospects of these vulnerable youth. In light of the study's insights, recommendations are put forth, advocating for increased intervention through educational programs, care homes, and comprehensive training initiatives tailored to the needs of street children. By addressing the root causes of their marginalization and insecurity, such interventions hold promise for mitigating the high levels of insecurity plaguing Nigerian society.

Introduction

A walk along Nigerian commercial centers of urban and suburban areas across the nation will reveal the abysmal realities of the towering buildings and industrial hubs. One sees them lined along banks, malls, supermarkets, garages, and any other busy part of the metropolis, begging for alms or carrying preposterous tasks. Characterized by tattered and dirty clothes, unkempt appearances, and an unflinching resolve to survive, one day at a time, they are fast becoming the mighty eyesore to the magnificent edifices sprawling across urban centers. Their faces bear the burdens of one under an unseen weight. Their population keeps burgeoning, as they keep a sweltering rank. They are emblematic of those who have been rechristened as "street children".

Fuelled by a myriad of factors, the number of street children has witnessed a renewed surge in recent years. Fakoya (2009) posited that by 1990s, there were over 10,000 street children on the streets of Lagos. By 2023, Obimakinde and Shabir (2023) estimated that there are over 15 million street children in Nigeria. However, this figure cannot be relied on due to the transient nature of their circumstances and the lack of a comprehensive data collection mechanism. The absence of comprehensive data and precise statistics regarding the population of street children in Nigeria is indicative of a pressing concern with far-reaching implications. This lacuna in information suggests that the nation is precariously perched on a time bomb.

Street children, often marginalized and overlooked, are emblematic of this issue, with their plight exacerbated by the lack of acknowledgment and understanding of their true numbers. Consequently, efforts to address their challenges are impeded, as solutions cannot be adequately formulated without accurate data. Scholars such as Owolabi (2017) and Yusuf (2020) have underscored the correlation between the presence of street children and heightened levels of insecurity. This failure to address the needs of this marginalized demographic, colloquially referred to as the "other" in Saidian terms, epitomizes Nigeria's enduring struggle against insecurity. Street children, vulnerable to radicalization and exploitation, serve as potential recruits for various nefarious activities including terrorism, insurgency, and political thuggery. Thus, the neglect of street children not only perpetuates their marginalization but also poses a significant threat to national security.

While the horrendous plights of children in war-torn have captured massive attention in war-torn regions, the same cannot be said of the street children who only occupy a minute vital part in daily activities. However, the actions of children-turned-soldiers have largely been justified by several scholars (Kearney, 2010; Amone-P'Olak, 2015; Oyewole, 2018; Oaikhena & Ogene, 2021; Adesola, 2022), solely on the fact that they lack the agency to make sane and rational decisions, and that they have been largely brainwashed to carry out senseless killings with reckless abandons. Many have chosen to ignore the agency of these street children (Aghedo & Eke, 2015; Victor, 2015; Yusuf, 2020), jettisoning the fact that they are at "war" with the opposing counsels of hunger, homelessness and horrific conditions. Bereft of stable support systems, these children resort to survival tactics akin to those employed in wartime scenarios.

The plights of street children particularly in Nigeria, and, by extension, Africa have garnered widespread attention (Aghedo & Eke, 2015; Victor, 2015; Owolabi, 2017; Yusuf, 2020; Obimakinde & Shabir, 2023). Ugwanyi (2020) examined the representation of street children in Amma Darko's *Faceless* and Bulawayo Noviolet's *We Need New Names*. Using Freud's psychoanalysis theory, the study reveals the depth of physical and emotional abuse on street children. The study found that street children are not protected adequately from abuse. Yusuf (2020) questioned African governments' response to the multiplicity of insecurity related to street children. Relying on document analysis and interview methods, the study reveals that street children pose a serious challenge to the security architecture of the continent since African countries have not considered it as a development priority. Stephen and Udisi (2016) examined street children through the analysis of detailed empirical research on economic income. The study found that economic growth will be helpful but insufficient in reducing the number of street children in Akwa Ibom State. Victor (2015) investigated the issue of street children as a menace to human civilization and modernity using Amma Darko's

Faceless. His study concluded that a lasting panacea to the problem of streetism lies in bringing love back to the family unit. In the same vein, Capo-Chichi and Agboadannon (2015) investigated the phenomenon of street children in Amma Darko's *Faceless.* Their research focused on strategies employed by Darko in drawing attention to this phenomenon and suggested monitoring and caring centers as the intervention in reducing street children in Accra, Ghana, and its environs.

Despite the humongous research done on the phenomenon of street children, gaps still exist in understanding their role in the escalation of crime rates. This study thus elucidates the intricate correlation between the proliferation of street children and the surge in insecurity within Nigerian and broader African societies. Employing a literary approach is critical as the selected author makes use of fictionalized narrative to articulate the complicated reality of street children creatively, informatively and persuasively.

On Street Children and Streetism: The "What" and the "Why"?

The definition of street children is elusive, as it lacks a single, homogenous and acceptable definition. Simply put, it means different things to different people. While De Moura (2005) asserts that street children are young people, typically below the age of eighteen, who have made an unflinching resolve to leave their homes and find their means of livelihood on the streets, Obimakinde and Shabir (2023) note that street children refer to individuals below the age of 18 years on the streets without evident adult supervision, often due to various underlying reasons.

However, this study adopts the 2005 definition of street children by the US House Committee on International Relations. The organization delineated street children into three distinct categories:

a. Children on the street or those with consistent family ties: These youngsters engage in street labor to financially support their families, often attending school and returning home each day. Typically residing in impoverished urban areas, they often dwell in slums and makeshift housing.

b. Children of the street or those with sporadic family connections: This group, originating from impoverished backgrounds, toils on the streets without attending school and infrequently returns home. Many migrated from rural areas to urban centers, facing desperate circumstances.

c. Children in the street or those lacking any familial ties. These individuals perceive the street as their permanent abode, with many being orphans or runaways. Bereft of any family support, they navigate the challenges of street survival independently.

Several factors have been linked to the astronomical increase of street children in recent years. In developing nations, the phenomenon of street children stems from a variety of factors rooted in the realms of poverty and social marginalization. Street children emerge as a consequence of poverty, limited educational opportunities, experiences of abuse, and inadequate parental care. According to Ward and Seager (2010), push factors such as instances of abuse, domestic violence, or strained family relationships are frequently observed among this demographic. In extreme cases, the conditions within their homes become intolerable, prompting them to seek refuge on the streets. Ward and Seager (2010) highlight the significance of preventive measures in reducing the prevalence of

street children, emphasizing the importance of early intervention efforts by organizations.

Though the issue of street children has been worrisome in Europe since the turn of the 15th century spanning through the Victorian period to the modern-day era, the reverse is the case in several pre-colonial African societies. In these societies, little or nothing was heard about the phenomenon of street children as every community took care of its inhabitants. The celebrated African solidarity which stipulates that everybody is nobody without the community ensured that nobody lived on the streets, as even the mentally challenged persons were communally dragged to healing homes where they were given treatment to be part of the whole community again (Victor, 2015). The emergence of the modern African states, however, brought in its wake social problems like unemployment and rural–urban migration, evidently leaving millions of children to fend for themselves on the street.

From the Past to the Present: Historical Overview of Street Children

Throughout history, street children have been a recurring phenomenon, reflecting societal challenges and systemic issues. The roots of street children can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where economic hardships, family breakdowns, and warfare often resulted in children being displaced and left to fend for themselves. During the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, Gibson (2010) noted that rapid urbanization and industrialization led to the proliferation of street children in Europe and North America. Many children from impoverished rural areas migrated to urban centers in search of work, only to find themselves living in squalid conditions on the streets (Gibson, 2010). The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of institutions and charities aimed at addressing the plight of street children. Organizations such as the Salvation Army and orphanages provided shelter and support to vulnerable children, although their approaches often focused on moral reform rather than addressing systemic issues (Cunningham, 2014).

In the mid-20th century, rapid urbanization and political instability in post-colonial countries contributed to a surge in street children populations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Economic crises, armed conflicts, and social upheaval displaced many children from their homes, forcing them onto the streets (Cunningham, 2014). The latter half of the 20th century witnessed increased recognition of street children as a global issue, prompting the development of international frameworks and initiatives to address their rights and needs. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989, affirmed the rights of all children, including those living on the streets, to protection, education, and health care (United Nations, 1989).

In recent decades, efforts to address the root causes of street children have expanded, focusing on poverty alleviation, access to education, and family support programs. However, challenges persist, particularly in regions affected by conflict, poverty, and social inequality (UNICEF, 2021).

Connecting the Dot: Insecurity and Street Children

In Nigeria, the issue of insecurity has become a pervasive and complex challenge, manifesting in various forms across different regions of the country. From insurgencies to communal clashes and criminal activities, the impact of insecurity extends beyond mere physical violence to encompass broader social, economic, and psychological

dimensions. Amidst this backdrop, the presence of street children further complicates the dynamics of insecurity, reflecting underlying systemic issues of poverty, social exclusion, and institutional neglect.

One of the critical links between insecurity in Nigeria and the phenomenon of street children lies in the vulnerability of these marginalized youths to recruitment by insurgent groups and nefarious political leaders. Street children, often lacking parental care and necessities, are susceptible to exploitation by armed groups offering financial incentives, a sense of belonging, and purpose in exchange for participation in criminal activities or as foot soldiers in conflicts (Olley, 2006). Moreover, the insecurity prevalent in many parts of Nigeria creates an environment conducive to criminal behavior, with street children disproportionately affected. Without access to education, employment opportunities, or social support systems, these vulnerable youths resort to crime as a means of survival, further exacerbating the overall level of insecurity within communities (Kopoka, 2000).

Materials and Methodology

The study employs an intensive examination of a fictional narrative depicting "children on the street" vis-à-vis insecurity – Ayobami Adebayo's *A Spell of Good Things*. This analytical approach aligns with what scholars refer to as "qualitative content analysis" – a methodical exploration of texts to uncover underlying meanings (Leavy, 2017). Qualitative content analysis, according to Mayring (2023), facilitates a systematic examination of textual material, particularly valuable in educational research. Hawkins (2018), as cited by Yeboah et al. (2023), underscores the pivotal role of textual analysis in deciphering language, symbols, and narratives to glean insights into how individuals interpret and communicate life experiences. The research methodology adopted in this study is purely qualitative, enabling researchers to critically observe data and provide detailed explanations (Babbie, 2020). Drawing on Spivak's concept of the subaltern, the study aims to explore the nexus between insecurity and street children as depicted in the text. Specifically, the selection of the fictional novel lends authenticity to the fraying portrayal of real-life events in Adebayo's *A Spell of Good Things*, offering an archetypal reflection of a real-life scenario.

Theoretical Framework

Gayatri Spivak's Concept of Subaltern

Gayatri Spivak's concept of subaltern is an offshoot of the postcolonial theory, initially formulated and chiefly popularized by Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978. Spivak's subaltern emerged in 1988 from her seminar work titled *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak herself amplified the broader concept from the prison note of an Italian, Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci used "subaltern" to depict unorganized groups or rural peasants lacking social or political awareness, thus susceptible to manipulation by ruling classes. This concept was further developed by the Subaltern Studies Collective, spearheaded by Ranajit Guha, aimed at exploring the histories of marginalized social groups ignored in Indian narratives. Spivak criticizes the Subaltern Study Group for privileging male subalterns and neglecting marginalized women. She proposes a post-Marxist definition of "subaltern" informed by deconstruction, accommodating diverse histories and experiences, yet faces criticism for employing elitist language (Singh, n.d.).

Spivak advocates for a critical vocabulary to represent and describe the lived experiences of oppressed social groups. She views "subaltern" as a situational term, originally used by Gramsci under censorship, now encompassing aspects beyond strict class analysis. For Spivak, addressing the exploitation and oppression of subalterns in the postcolonial world is both an ethical and methodological imperative (Singh, n.d). Spivak emphasizes the systematic silencing and marginalization of subaltern groups within dominant discourses and power structures. These groups, such as peasants, women, and indigenous peoples, are often excluded from mainstream narratives and political struggles. Spivak's concept of the subaltern recognizes the intersectionality of oppression, acknowledging that subaltern identities are shaped by intersecting factors such as class, gender, race, and nationality.

Despite Spivak's attempts to reconstruct the identities of the marginalized individuals, critics like Aijaz Ahmad, Ranjana Khanna and Partha Chatterjee, among others, have pushed conflicting narratives against Spivak's subaltern. Aijaz Ahmad, in his essay *The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality* (1995), critiques Spivak's notion of the subaltern as being too abstract. He argues that Spivak's focus on discourse and representation neglects the concrete struggles and agency of subaltern groups. Ranjana Khanna, in her book *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (2003), offers a critique of Spivak's concept of the subaltern, particularly regarding its reliance on Western psychoanalytic theories. Khanna argues that this reliance overlooks the specificities of colonial and postcolonial experiences and reproduces Western-centric perspectives. Similarly, Partha Chatterjee, in his work *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1993), critiques Spivak's notion of the subaltern for its tendency to essentialize and homogenize the experiences of marginalized groups. Chatterjee argues that such essentialism undermines the complexity and diversity of subaltern identities and struggles.

However, scholars like Homi K. Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty have lent further credence to Spivak's concept. Bhabha, in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), engages with Spivak's concept of the subaltern and expands on it through his notion of "mimicry" and "hybridity." Bhabha's work complements Spivak's by further exploring the complexities of colonial and postcolonial identities. Also, Chakrabarty (2000) engages with Spivak's concept of the subaltern and its implications for historical and postcolonial studies. Chakrabarty's work builds upon Spivak's ideas to analyze the intersections of power, culture, and identity in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

This study thus adopts Spivak's concept of subaltern in providing the needed theoretical framework for this study. Spivak's concept of the subaltern provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of street children and their relationship to insecurity in Nigerian and broader African societies. Her concept offers a nuanced lens through which to analyze the systemic issues perpetuating the vulnerability and exploitation faced by marginalized groups, such as street children. By drawing on Spivak's concept, this study acknowledges the complexity of the street children's experiences and identities, recognizing them as subaltern subjects whose voices and agency have been historically silenced and marginalized. Spivak's emphasis on the intersectionality of oppression aligns with the multifaceted factors contributing to the plight of street children, including dysfunctional family dynamics, archaic religious practices, and harsh socio-economic conditions.

Spivak's concept of the subaltern enriches the analysis of street children's experiences and offers insights into the structural inequalities and power imbalances that perpetuate their marginalization. By centering the voices of the subaltern, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of insecurity in Nigerian society and advocates for targeted interventions to address the root causes of marginalization and promote the well-being of street children.

Analysis and Discussion

Ayobami Adebayo's *A Spell of Good Things* explores Nigeria's growing inequalities and contradictions. Set in Osogbo, the capital of Osun state, the fictionalized narrative chronicles the deep-seated and failed governmental system responsible for pushing children to survive on the street. In the text, the intertwined destinies of the two families illustrate how political shortcomings profoundly impact their lives, often culminating in personal tragedy.

Adébáyò poignantly portrays the collision between extreme poverty and ostentatious wealth. Following their father's job loss as a teacher, 16-year-old Eniolá and his family endure profound hardship. Forced to abandon their education due to financial constraints, Eniolá and his bright sister, Bùsólá, confront a bleak future. Eniolá's encounter with Yèyé, while running errands at a local tailor's, highlights the stark contrast between opportunity and deprivation, ultimately leading to his descent from a diligent student to a pawn in political machinations, as he fends for himself on the street to salvage the dire situation at home.

Eniola's downward spiral into being a "child on the street" culminates from years of hardship and penury his family has been subjected to, after his father's job loss. In one move by the state government, teachers taking subjects like fine arts, food and nutrition and history, which Eniola's father taught, are retrenched solely because they "would do nothing for the nation's development" (Adebayo, 2023: 27). This move does not only render over four thousand jobless, leading to untimely deaths of some retrenched teachers but also push them to the abyss of poverty. Unable to make headway in his job-hunting process, Eniola's father starts selling their personal belongings, to cushion the effects of the job loss. First, their blue car, then "the furniture, the television, the radio", and then "the fridge" (Adebayo, 2023: 30). Unable to fend for the family, Eniola's mother pushes himself and his sister to take to alms on the street, lending credence to Urban Management Programme (2000) and the US House Committee on International Relations (2005) categorization of street children as children who engage in street labor to financially support their families, often attending school and returning home each day. This correlation between poverty and street children is logical, as poverty diminishes a family's capacity to sustain itself economically, thereby fostering circumstances where children are compelled to take to the streets. Eniola's family's grace-to-grass story is thus a reflector, that many African nations are marked by severe poverty, leading to the widely accepted notion that poverty is the primary cause of the large population of street children in urban areas across Africa (Nirav, 2018).

As Adebayo avers,

> Eniọlá did not want to do it, but according to his mother, there were no alternatives…Ẹniọlá wished it would all add up and somehow be enough. For school fees, for food that week, for what was left of rent. He would even settle for just rent and school fees. He'd gone for days without food before and would gladly do so this week to avoid begging in the streets again" (Adebayo, 2023: 173).

This evidently shows that, sometimes, street children do not have an option. However, the prevailing socio-economic hardship forces them to engage in alms, and take to the streets for menial jobs, eventually culminating into a tragedian end for a majority of them. Eniolá's situation thus reflects the subaltern condition as described by Spivak. Despite his reluctance, he is compelled by circumstances beyond his control, represented by his mother's insistence and the lack of alternatives. His desperate desire for basic necessities like school fees and food highlights the systemic inequalities and economic hardships faced by marginalized individuals like street children. Eniolá's willingness to endure hunger rather than resorting to begging on the streets further underscores the precarious and oppressive nature of his existence, mirroring the struggles of the subalterns who are often voiceless and powerless within societal structures.

Despite being a street beggar, Eniola's parents are unable to raise the required fees needed to keep him and his sister at Glorious Destiny Comprehensive College, despite being a third-rated private secondary school. His parents forced him to switch to United Grammar School, a free public secondary school, bereft of standard facilities, necessary to facilitate the teaching-learning process. At United, his paths cross with Saamu and Rashidi, who are pawns in the hands of a political kingpin in the state. As demonstrated below:

> There were two boys in the room. They sat next to a desk, eating rice from a large plastic bowl. Ẹniọlá recognised one of the boys…"See as this boy is looking at our rice with his hungry man eyes." "Are you hungry, ni?" Rashidi asked, pointing his spoon at Ẹniọlá. Ẹniọlá nodded, wondering if Rashidi was going to taunt him with the food. "Why are you asking him?" the other boy said. "How is it our business if he is hungry…"Sàámú, I said he is my boy. Come here, jàre, Ẹniọlá. Come and eat" (Adebayo, 2023: 253-254).

Eniolá's presence further reflects the subaltern condition depicted by Spivak. The interaction between Eniolá and the other boys highlights the hierarchical power dynamics and social marginalization experienced by street children. Eniolá's recognition of one of the boys suggests a sense of familiarity within the marginalized community, yet his hunger signifies his vulnerability and deprivation compared to his peers. The boys' discussion about Eniolá's hunger underscores the indifference and lack of empathy often shown towards the subaltern by those in relatively privileged positions. Despite Rashidi's invitation to eat, there is an underlying tension regarding Eniolá's place and acceptance within the group, reflecting the complex dynamics of inclusion and exclusion experienced by the subaltern in society.

Exploiting the hunger of Eniola, the duo – Rashidi and Sàámú – lure him to join the foot soldiers for the politician, Honorable Fesojaye. Through the promises of food Eniolá,

representing the marginalized street children, is lured into a political scheme through promises of food and basic necessities. Rashidi and Sàámú, representing figures of power or authority, manipulate Eniolá's vulnerability by highlighting his hunger and offering him a solution in the form of free meals provided by Honourable. They claim the availability of "free food every day… [as] Honourable gives people free food" (Adebayo, 2023: 253). The promise of regular meals and the glorification of "Honourable" as a benefactor who provides for the needy reflect the power dynamics at play, where those in positions of authority exploit the vulnerabilities of the subaltern to serve their own interests. In their words, Honourable "has delivered [them] from the class of people who eat once a day" (Adebayo, 2023: 253). This offer of free food thus serves as a means of enticement and control, illustrating how basic needs such as food can be weaponized to manipulate and recruit individuals like Eniolá into political activities. This highlights the precarious position of street children who are easily swayed by promises of sustenance, exposing them to exploitation and further marginalization in society. Corroborating this, Imobigbe (2012) asserts that the abuse of children makes them extremely vulnerable to do-or-die politicians and desperate individuals who promise better life opportunities.

Furtherance to his subtle recruitment into the politician's rank, Eniola witnesses the enormous amount of young boys, in the politician's arsenal. As Adebayo puts it,

> Erelú Àdùkẹ was handing out brown envelopes to a group
> of boys when Ẹniọlá arrived in the compound…Everyone
> in the queue was at least as tall as Ẹniọlá. A few were
> brawny, with bulging muscles that strained against the
> seams of their shirts. Together, they were an intimidating
> crowd (Adebayo, 2023: 263).

Erelu Adùkẹ's, Honourable Fesojaiye's wife, distribution of brown envelopes to a group of boys highlights the exploitation of marginalized individuals, akin to Spivak's concept of the subaltern. These boys, likely street children or from impoverished backgrounds, are portrayed as physically imposing, suggesting that they may have been recruited for nefarious purposes by dubious politicians like Erelu Adùkẹ. The scene reflects the manipulation of the subaltern by those in positions of power for their own gain. The distribution of brown envelopes symbolizes bribery or payment for services rendered, indicating that these boys are likely on the payroll of dubious politicians. By bolstering their ranks with these marginalized individuals, these politicians aim to intimidate and exert control over the populace, further perpetuating their own agendas at the expense of the subaltern. This thus exemplifies how street children and other marginalized individuals are exploited and manipulated by dubious politicians to serve their own interests. It underscores the vulnerability of the subaltern and their susceptibility to coercion and exploitation in socio-political contexts, echoing Spivak's assertion that the subalterns are silenced and marginalized by dominant power structures.

Owolabi (2017) asserts that street children are susceptible and readily exploited as political enforcers, frontline fighters, and agents of terror in religious disputes, participants in criminal activities such as armed robbery, and readily enlisted members of ethnic militias. Lending credence to this assertion, Eniola soon finds himself embroiled in something bigger than him. Adebayo puts it thus:

> Holy Michael beckoned Ẹniọlá and Rashidi to
> himself…We have a special assignment that night, direct

> order from Honourable. Holy Michael snapped a finger in
> Ẹniọlá's face. "The professor and that his Ọtúnba friend,
> ehn? Honourable wants the two of them to know that the
> lion is the cat's senior father" (Adebayo, 2023: 293).

This then illustrates how colonial legacies of oppression and marginalization have forced individuals like Eniola and Rashidi into precarious positions, where they become pawns in the hands of politicians seeking to maintain power and control. The reference to "Honourable" and his directives indicates the influence of political figures who exploit the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities for their own gain. The characters' involvement in a "special assignment" ordered by Honourable reflects the subaltern's complicity in carrying out the agendas of those in power. Despite being aware of the potential dangers and ethical implications of their actions, Eniola and Rashidi feel compelled to comply with Honourable's orders due to their socio-economic circumstances and the power dynamics at play.

Much to the chagrin of Eniola, their journey to the "special assignment" comes with a total package of firearms and weapons, as "the policeman had a handgun on his knee… Lapade also had a gun. Silas and Ẹniọlá had been given machetes instead. Rashidi, who also had a gun, sat in the last row with Silas" (Adebayo, 2023: 311). The presence of firearms and weapons, including guns and machetes, further underscores the coercive nature of the situation. Eniola's observation of the armed individuals around him highlights the normalization of violence and intimidation tactics employed by politicians to maintain control over the populace, reminiscent of colonial tactics used to subjugate indigenous populations. Spivak's concept of the subaltern resonates in this context, as Eniola and Rashidi represent marginalized individuals whose agency is limited by structural inequalities and oppressive power structures. Despite their recognition of the injustices perpetuated by politicians like Honourable, they find themselves unable to challenge or resist due to their subaltern status and lack of alternative options for survival.

Due to the supposed help rendered by the Honourable, the boys on their "special assignment" engage in arson, forceful abductions and eventually murder. The subaltern, represented by Eniola, is coerced into participating in violent and criminal activities by figures of authority like Holy Michael and Sàámú. Eniola's inner turmoil reflects the psychological toll of being forced to comply with orders that go against his moral compass, highlighting the subaltern's lack of agency and autonomy in such situations, as seen thus:

> Ẹniọlá had already fetched the blindfold from the bus, but
> he'd forgotten the rag and ropes. Now he could not even
> move without his knees knocking together, and the
> blindfold kept slipping from his hands. Why had he
> thought he could do this? He wanted to be anywhere else
> but here right now. He wanted to run across the lawn and
> out of the compound, going away and away until he was
> home (Adebayo, 2023: 316).

Eniola's fear and desperation to escape the situation underscore the power dynamics at play, where the threat of violence and reprisal prevents him from resisting or seeking

help. Despite his desire to flee, Eniola realizes that doing so would only lead to further harm, as he is effectively trapped by the physical barriers and the armed individuals surrounding him.

In a final twist, representing a tragedian end for Eniola and his parents, Eniola's sister is forcefully abducted and subsequently murdered as well. Following the abduction Eniola takes part in, his moral compass sets in, as he eventually flees the scene of the event. However, in a twist, the politician's henchmen pay a visit to his family, in their dilapidated structure. Issuing a threat to Eniola and his family, Holy Michael's warning reinforces the subaltern's vulnerability and the consequences of defying those in power as displayed below:

> "You need warning. Serious warning." Holy Michael swung the torchlight towards the bed. "And, you, his parents, you need to warn him very well. Just in case he forgets, this is his first warning. (320).

The threat of violence and retaliation serves to silence Eniola and his family, ensuring their compliance and perpetuating the cycle of oppression and coercion. The use of weapons and intimidation tactics by Holy Michael and Sàámú further emphasizes the subaltern's subjugation and the normalization of violence within the socio-political context depicted in the passage. Eniola's helplessness in the face of such threats highlights the limitations of his agency and the pervasive influence of dominant power structures. This thus exemplifies how the subaltern is exploited and marginalized, forced to participate in criminal activities and subjected to violence and coercion by those in positions of authority. Eniola's plight reflects the broader systemic injustices and power imbalances inherent in colonial legacies and contemporary socio-political contexts, as elucidated by Spivak's concept of the subaltern.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delved into the complex phenomenon of street children and their role in exacerbating insecurity in Nigerian and broader African societies. The research shed light on the systemic issues perpetuating the vulnerability and exploitation of marginalized children. The findings revealed that factors such as dysfunctional family dynamics, and harsh socio-economic conditions contribute to the proliferation of street children, who resort to survival tactics akin to those employed in wartime scenarios.

The analysis presented in this study underscores the complexities of Eniola's journey from a promising student to a pawn in the hands of dubious politicians. Eniola's trajectory mirrors the struggles of countless street children who are lured into a life of crime and violence due to the absence of viable alternatives and the exploitation of their vulnerabilities by those in power. Drawing on Spivak's concept of the subaltern, this study elucidates how Eniola and other marginalized individuals are silenced and marginalized within societal structures, rendering them susceptible to coercion and exploitation. The manipulation of Eniola's hunger and desperation for basic necessities highlights the insidious ways in which politicians exploit the plight of the subaltern to serve their own interests.

Recommendations

In line with the study's insights, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Governments should prioritize investment in education and social welfare programs to provide marginalized children with access to quality education, healthcare, and basic necessities.
2. Also, efforts should be made to protect vulnerable communities from exploitation and coercion by implementing strict regulations and oversight mechanisms to hold politicians and other figures of authority accountable for their actions.
3. Finally, structural reforms aimed at addressing systemic inequalities and promoting inclusive economic growth are essential for creating a more equitable society. This includes measures to create job opportunities, improve access to social services, and redistribute wealth to marginalized communities.

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THE CRYING CHILD: CHILD TRAFFICKING AND UNWELL-BEING IN AKACHI ADIMORA-EZEIGBO'S *TRAFFICKED* AND UWEM AKPAN'S *SAY YOU'RE ONE OF THEM*

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Abstract
Childhood experience in contemporary Nigerian society is marked by various socio-economic and political indices, including child trafficking. Child trafficking has caught the attention of practitioners in different fields, including psychology, sociology, economics and literature. In view of its monstrosity, 21st century Nigerian writers have shown commitment in representing postcolonial realities ventilating its proliferation, traffickers' praxes and traumatic experience of trafficked victims. Deploying postcolonial trauma theory, this study, therefore, investigates the depiction of children's identity alteration, victimhood and traumatisation through the instrumentation of child trafficking in the purposively selected narratives – Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Uwem Akpan's *Say You're One of Them*. Situating the texts within the context of their creation, it is found out that child trafficking is promoted through the irresponsibility of post-independence leadership, economic hardship and materialistic tendencies of trafficked victims. Trafficked children's experience is characterised by neglect, death threat, psycho-emotional trauma, mendicancy, violence, *sexploitation*, loss of identity and personhood. Narrative strategies employed, including graphic imagery, appropriately blend with the matter of discourse in the texts. Considering this testament of the vulnerability of children and their traumatic struggles, the Nigerian child could be said to be a crying child due to their unwell-being occasioned by maladies like child trafficking.

Introduction

The rampancy of trafficking in Africa and across the globe in the contemporary time is indubitable. Today, trafficking is perceived as a modern form of slavery which impinges on the general well-being of boys, men, women, and girls in particular. Saeed (2015) asserts that although it has been 200 years since slavery was officially abolished, there are millions of people across the world that are still subject to slave-like conditions. Trafficking is the biggest and fastest means by which people are exploited and forced into modern slavery. Currently, child trafficking is among the most lucrative and fastest-growing sources of income for perpetrators and secretly organised criminal organisations all over the world.

Meanwhile, there are socioeconomic, political, cultural, historical, and environmental circumstances that contribute to the vulnerability of children as victims of trafficking. These include poverty, naivety, excessive materialism, lack of good parental

background, peer group influence and quest for freedom. These social issues or problems have eaten deep into the mentality of the common people in society to the extent that their moral conscience and behaviours are severely affected.

The widespread of various anti-children acts serves as afflatus for many committed Nigerian writers who have engaged their creativity in depicting the lethal effect of such acts on the well-being of children. In other words, literary artists have not relented in documenting the experiences of children who have been trafficked for different purposes to create awareness on its negative consequences. Nigerian literary artists, including Akachi Adimora–Ezeigbo, Uwem Akpan, Ifeanyi Ajaego and Ifeoma Chinwuba have depicted child trafficking and its victimisation of children. It is against this backdrop, therefore, that this paper interrogates the representation of child trafficking with a view to exploring factors fuelling its proliferation, subjection of children to all kinds of exploitation which culminates in their victimhood and traumatic engagement.

The motif of child victimisation

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) (cited in Save the Children Nigeria, 2016:2) defines a child as every human below the age of eighteen years. CRC sets standards that all children have the inalienable right to a core minimum level of well-being, including the right to nutrition, basic education, survival, protection, and the right to grow up in a family. The legal definition of child generally refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority. The meaning of a child varies in most lands but the generally accepted definition of a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

The child as a human person has all through ages occupied a central position in the discourse of universal humanity. Across cultures, religions, politics, the economy, and law, the welfare of a child has been given prominence. In recent times, considering the various dimensions of disorder and anomaly arising from industrialisation and its guaranteed impact on the nature and operation on human society, civilised humanity seems to agree that the welfare of the child has been or might be seriously undermined.

Victimisation of children is deeply entwined with the defining and redefining of historical values. Regarded as the property of their parents for much of history, children are abandoned, abused, maimed, sold into slavery, or killed knowingly or unknowingly by their parents with no legal consequences. More frequently, children are abused and neglected by parents, assaulted by neighbours, or intimidated by other children. When all of these are considered as a whole, children suffer far more victimisation than members of other age groups. Children are more prone to victimisation than adults not only because they are smaller and weaker than adults but also because they are dependent on adults for their day-to-day care and can seldom choose where and whom they will live and spend time with. Thus, the concept of victimisation is strongly related to dependency and this leaves children vulnerable to victimisation. Child victimhood is orchestrated through their involuntary and deceptive migration, exposure and subjection to (s)exploitative and (s)extortionist activities, objectification and identity alteration.

Conceptualising child trafficking

The terms "Child Trafficking" and "Trafficking in children" are routinely used to refer to cases of trafficking of girls or boys under age 18. Child trafficking involves moving

a child below the age of full maturity or physical development from one place to another through deception and purposely for economic exploitation.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012:34), child trafficking, also christened "trafficking in persons", may be defined as

> The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation.

Bastia (2005:44) posits that child trafficking may be widely practised but unrecognised as such because it is embedded in traditional forms of child patronage and cultural attitudes towards child labour. However, these customs have been abused over time as many parents give away their children for money or other gains some with a good mind not being aware of the dangers in the practice, thereby losing some of their children to trafficking.

Adepoju (1997:74) asseverates that parents are often forced by poverty and ignorance to expose their children to child trafficking hoping to benefit from their wages and to sustain the deteriorating family economic situation. That there is high level of poverty in Nigeria is indisputable and this has led to the proliferation of child trafficking in the country. Scholars have postulated that possible risk factors associated with child trafficking include lack of personal safety, isolation, emotional distress, homelessness, poverty, family dysfunction, substance abuse and mental illness. Thus, the scourge of child trafficking has deadly consequences on both the affected children and their family.

Postcolonial trauma
As a theoretical construct, postcolonial theory emerged following the failure of Eurocentric theories to address the complexities and varied cultural provenance of the postcolonial literary productions. From its origins, postcolonialism aims to interrogate effects of the Western colonial enterprise on the erstwhile colonialised nations. These effects cut across several aspects of human endeavours, including culture, language, religion, family and literature. However, in contemporary times and following the continuity of colonial experience perpetuated by post-independence leadership in erstwhile Western colonies, the tentacles of postcolonial theory now cover the postcolonial period. This is because of the semblance of colonialism and its new formation – neo-colonialism. The pioneers of postcolonialism like W.E.B. Dubois, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak among others concerned themselves with the social and cultural effects of colonisation. They view the way in which the West gained access to the orient and the rest of world as based on unsubstantiated veracities. These proponents of postcolonial studies posit in their discourse that no culture is better or worse than any other culture and literature.

On the other hand, postcolonial trauma emphasises on investigating the complex relationship between the coloniser and the colonised especially as it affects the psyche of the colonised. It is observed that the postcolonial people were trapped in the

paradoxical relationship between remembering and forgetting the traumatic past (Durrant, 2004; Kalampung, 2021). Besides, several unwholesome issues in the postcolony enhance the subjectivity of people to trauma and disillusionment.

Examining "The Theory of Postcolonial Trauma and Its Impact on the Religious Studies", Kalampung (2021:217) concludes that "The postcolonial trauma theory is a resistance theory. It strikes mainly in how western theorists have dominated the theory of trauma studies. The postcolonial scholars then developed a new field of Trauma that focused on the memory and Trauma of the postcolonial people. Because the western trauma theorists ignore that colonialism left massive Trauma to the postcolonial people, the postcolonial people need postcolonial trauma theory." In other words, postcolonial trauma theory challenges the hegemony of western theories which tend to universalise and dominate trauma studies.

Considering the postcolonial indices in the Nigerian context fuelling childhood victimhood, postcolonial trauma theory is adopted for this study. It is deployed to interrogate the traumatic experience of children characters in the selected narratives who are victims of child trafficking and other anti-children realities.

Child trafficking, victimisation and trauma in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Akpan's *Say You're One of Them*

Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* graphically portrays the complexities surrounding child trafficking. It particularly paints some tactics deployed traffickers, traumatic experiences of the trafficked victims as well as attempts to rehabilitate the shattered life of victims of child trafficking. On the other hand, Uwem Akpan's *Say You're One of Them* is a collection of short stories that contains five different but interrelated stories set in different parts in Africa. Each of the short stories thematises a set of children representing different and often violent situations. The narrativisation is done from the perspective of children in Africa and it gives a human view of such horrifying topics as ethnic cleansing, child slavery, extreme poverty, and religious warfare. According to Akinyele (2014:40),

> Often the title of a book bluntly describes the contents or a specific subject of the book. However the phrase "Say you're one of them" or a similar sentiment is invoked at some point in all of the stories and underlines the premise of an "us versus them" mentality and in many of the stories the children's only hope of survival is by blending with "them" and hiding their otherness.

Thus, Akpan's *Say You're One of Them* elucidates postcolonialist concept of alterity or otherness which reiterates the outsidedness of children as they are treated as non-human *other*.

The unfavourable economic condition of Nneoma's parents in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* is responsible for her decision to migrate. For Nneoma, her migration is an escapist strategy from abject poverty in which her family swims. The financial status of Nneoma's father, Ogukwe, is represented in the narrative. He is a pensioner who hopelessly waits for his pension. Thus, Ogukwe who is the supposed breadwinner of the family is rendered incapacitated by the irresponsibility and non-responsiveness of the

Nigerian leadership. The nature of the nation's leadership births disillusionment in people, including Mma who has no faith in the perpetually failed and mendacious leaders. Ogukwe hears a *strange* rumour that the Federal Government is going to pay outstanding gratuities to retirees. This seems to be the fulfilment of his age-long dream. However, Ogukwe's daughter, Mma, expresses pessimism saying that:

> This is cheerful news. But let's not rejoice until the money
> is in your hands. I don't trust our government. Look at the
> teachers' strike, nothing has been done about it. We have
> forgotten very thing we learned in school. No one knows
> if we will ever go back (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:110).

The foregoing attests to the sense of disillusionment, despair, pangs and angsts by which the post-independence Nigeria is characterised.

The consequence of Ogukwe's waiting for his pension is telling on him as he descends into depression and begins to take solace in alcohol. While he knows his supposed responsibilities as the head of his family, he lacks the wherewithal to carry out those financial obligations. Ogukwe's degeneration to alcoholic implies the traumatic effect of poverty, government failure and endless waiting on his psyche.

As represented in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked,* another experience of childhood is that of commodification or objectification. When Ofomata proposes to Nneoma, it seems like good news to the family. Ogukwe entreats his daughter not to turn down his marriage proposal saying: "My little mother, think of what this will mean to us, land-starved as we are in this family! I can build a house on the land" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:71). Although not intentional, Ogukwe sees Nneoma as a valuable property owned by the family through which their poverty will be eradicated.

Child traffickers capitalise on children's naivety to carry-out their nefarious acts. In Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*, Nneoma is the protagonist of this narrative. She recounts what "pushes her out":

> For personal reasons, I fled from home one Friday
> morning without telling my family. A friend and
> classmate had told me some weeks before that some
> people had helped her to secure a teaching appointment in
> the United Kingdom and she would introduce me to them
> and I could come with her (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008: 126).

While Nneoma seems not to have had deep understanding of the likely implication of her decision, she must have thought of no other alternative to get out of her frustration, economic hardship and unfavourable living condition. Thus, she agrees with her classmate's information. That she leaves home without informing her family suggests the state of her family's unhomeliness. In others, while she cannot be said to be homeless, she does not feel at home in her home.

Furthermore, trafficked characters are subject to all forms of inhuman experiences which have psychological effect on them. Nneoma's trafficking in Italy has severe consequence on her psyche as she finds it very difficult to relate properly with anyone. It takes her some time before she could get along with Efe, with whom she is deported. Trafficking leads to traumatisation and irrepressible remembering that often propel trafficked victims' seclusion and aloneness. The two narrate their tortuous experiences to each other. According to Nneoma:

> I have no say in the matter. There's a woman called
> Madam Dollar - nothing comes between her and money.
> She owns us and the man, whom we learn to call Captain,
> is her bodyguard. She keeps us prisoner in her flat. Life is
> hell in Rome - we are always walking the night, selling
> sex to Italian men and foreigners. I hate Madam Dollar.
> As soon as we arrive she sells my friend. I have not set my
> eyes on her since (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:128-129).

The above further reiterates the *thingification*, mechanisation, commodification, commercialisation and *sexploitation* of the trafficked girls. Besides, the disempowerment of the trafficked victims is shown in the power relations that exist between them and their (*s)exploiters/(s)extortionists*. Their life is also known for restlessness as they are made to *work* even at night.

Within the context of child trafficking which is a form of colonisation as it involves domination of the powerful over the less-powerful or disempowered, Madam Dollar and other perpetrators of child trafficking represent the domineering, hegemonic *self*, while the trafficked victims are dominated and subjugated *other*. The *sexploited* victims would have revolted against their madams, but the fright of becoming mad grasps them since they have sworn an oath. Thus, against their desire, they have to trade their bodies while their madams collect all the money they realise daily all in the name of paying their debts.

Although abroad looks like a paradise to many of the trafficked victims before they get there, reality dawns on the girls in Italy. This makes Nneoma to confess that "Life is hell in Rome" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:128). Apart from the fact that the weather is not helpful for them, all things seem to work against them. In other words, they are completely devastated by the kind of life they are forced to live. During winter, spring and autumn, they are always on the street waiting for customers. The girls would come back at dawn only to wash, eat and sleep.

Many at times, the girls in servitude under Madam Dollar are often assaulted by Captain, her bodyguard, should they come home with no or little money. During sexual intercourse, some customers would treat the girls like animals. Nneoma narrates her experience:

> I sometimes refuse to cooperate with the customers,
> especially when they demand positions I find despicable
> or when they refuse to use a condom or make one of the
> other nasty demands… (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:129).

Madam Dollar does not care about the way her victims are treated by the customers. For instance, men do beat them when they refuse to cooperate with them during sexual intercourse. This representation reiterates the fact that child "trafficking perpetrates 'bodyxploitation' as it devalues victims' body by subjecting it to various forms of inhumane activities such that it no longer belongs to the victims" (Olaniyan, 2021:173).

The propertisation of child trafficking victims in this narrative is foregrounded when Madam Dollar declares to "Nneoma: "You must pay me back every kobo I used to buy you" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:130).

When Madam Dollar can no longer condone Nneoma's insolence, she has to sell her to another man named Baron, whom Nneoma initially thinks is her saviour. Baron buys two other girls and ferries them to London. Baron appears like a sheep in a wolf's cloth. He drives a white car; his mind is, however, devilish. He informs the girls that he has rescued them from Madam Dollar's servitude not knowing that he has bought them, thus cancelling their debts. This does not at all guarantee them freedom. This is because they have only succeeded in changing their master. Unfortunately for Nneoma, she has moved from fry-pan to fire. Her experience at Baron's is much more painful than when with Madam Dollar. Baron sends other girls to the street, while Nneoma is kept in his flat. Men often come to have sex with her in the flat. She suffers both physical and sexual humiliation in the hand of the sadistic Baron:

> He rapes and beats me. I refuse when customers demand
> oral or anal sex and insist that they use condoms and I'm
> sometimes assaulted for this. Baron locks me up in the
> flat, and does not allow me to go out except when he takes
> me with him (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008:132).

The experience of all the trafficked girls is not in any way different from that of Nneoma. They are turned to money-making machine though they never benefit from the money.

Moreover, the myriad of the experiences of children in Akpan's *Say You're One of Them* thematises child victimhood in form of sexual and emotional exploitation. The story titled "An Ex-Mas Feast" chronicles the living condition of the family of Jigana, an 8-year-old boy. Uwem Akpan recounts the details of this family's life as simple fact, with little commentary or expression on how the reader should feel. The family expresses gratitude when they are given a gift of glue from one of the other poor families. They take turns, including the children and babies, inhaling the fumes deeply because this holds off hunger. The oldest daughter is 12 and works as a sex worker, a profession that the parents encourage but ultimately tears the family apart. In the story, the children suffer neglect and sexual and emotionally victimisation. For instance, Maisha, a twelve-year-old girl, is assigned the role of breadwinner of the family as she is meant to cater for her family. She goes out at night to work as a sex worker.

Maisha's neglect by her parents exposes her to commercialisation of her body for money. Neglect is defined as the chronic failure of a parent or caretaker to provide a child under the age of eighteen with basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, educational opportunity, protection, and supervision. Maisha's parents' irresponsibility and penury subject the children to trauma. At a very early and tender age, they have to take care of themselves:

> Now that my eldest sister, Maisha, was twelve, none of us
> knew how to relate with her anymore. She had never
> forgiven our parents for not being rich enough to send her
> to school...she came home less and less frequently,

staying only to change her cloth and give some money to
pass on to our parents (Akpan, 2008:1).

Maisha develops resentment and anger towards her parents for their failure to provide her with good education. This harrowing experience leads to her self-exile from home.

Besides, in this story, there is role swap whereby the children assume the role of the parents while the parents assume the role of the children. Thus, children become breadwinners while parents are economically dependent on their children.

Maisha is not the only one exposed to victimisation in this story; all her other siblings, even the twins who are still babies equally suffer abuse. It is revealed that Jigana and Naema, the twins, are engaged in street begging. This indicates that the children are used as means to generate money for their parents. This results in the children's vulnerability to other dangerous activities when they come in contact with other victims like them:

> Jigana, did you do well last night with baby? Mama asked
> me suddenly. 'I made a bit,' I assured her, and passed a
> handful of coins and notes. She pushed the money under
> her shuka: the zip of the purse released two crisp farts.
> Though people were more generous to beggars at Ex-mas,
> our real bait was baby. We took turns pushing him in the
> faces of the passers-by (Akpan, 2008:4-5).

Moreover, "Fattening for Gabon" is another story in Akpan's *Say You're One of Them* that is told from the viewpoint of 8-year-old Kotchikpa. It tells the story of two children and their uncle, Fofo Kpee, who sells them into slavery. One of the factors that promote child trafficking in this story is shirking of parental responsibility. The parents of Kotchikpa and Yewa transfer their parental responsibility of taking care of their children to Fofo Kpee who is an agbero because they are bedridden and have AIDS. This galvanises the exposure of the children to all kinds of harassment which Fofo himself often experiences:

> Apart from the invitation to drink, we didn't understand
> what they were talking about. But this didn't worry us.
> Having an agbero as an uncle, we were used to people
> coming to harass him for various things at all hours of the
> day (Akpan, 200:28).

Right from age three, little Yewa is introduced to gin as Fofo believes she will be a big time businesswoman and a hard bargainer in Gabon. It is depicted that:

> Fofo kpee gave up and poured some gin into the silver top
> of the bottle and then into Yewa's mouth. She swallowed,
> cleared her throat, and smacked her throat contentedly
> (Akpan, 200:36).

The above represents victimisation that children are exposed to due to absence of real and true parental care in their lives.

The deployment of homodiegetic narrative focalisation contributes to the testimonial nature and veracity of the story. A homodiegetic narrator/focaliser is also a character in the narrated world that he or she describes. Thus, Kotchikapa serves as the first person narrator/focaliser to attest to the realisticness of the narrative. To perpetrate the enslavement of the children, Fofo employs deception. The first thing he offers the children as bait is the zokeke he brings to the house. The children are elated as they never think they could actually come in close contact with one.

The children are further deceived that there are NGOs that serve as their godparents as they are responsible for their upkeep all the while:

> Your godparents are NGO people'.
> 'NGO?' I asked.
> 'Yes, NGO people,' he repeated. 'Nongovernmental
> organization.
> Bon! Tres bien! C'est une groupe of people who dey help
> poor children all over the world. NGO are good people
> and travel partout (Akpan, 2008:47).

Besides, Yewa and Kotchikpa are told that their godparents would come to take them abroad to study. Out of naivety, Yewa and Kotchikpa trust their uncle that they eagerly await the arrival of their godparents. Eventually when their godparents come, the children are served a lot of food. The essence of this is to entice the children.

In addition, Yewa and Kotchikpa are robbed of their identity as the so-called godparents inform them that they will no longer be called by their real names that but they will be regarded as Pascal and Mary. Due to their greenness in terms of exposure/experience, the newly rechristened Pascal and Mary are unsuspecting and never think of the implication of their renaming. As part of the requirement to travel with their godparents, Fofo asks them to memorise some information:

> Mama is younger than papa because papa married late'.
> 'Mama is younger than papa because papa married late',
> we said. 'We live at Rue de Franceville, nombre douze,
> Port-Gentil, Gabon' we said and repeated one after the
> other. 'Our parents run a small NGO, grace Earth'. 'Our
> parents run a small NGO, grace Earth' we said. "We are
> four in our family…. We were all born in Port- Gentil…..
> Some of our fofos lives in Benin and Nigeria….. We want
> to see them…….we had a good visit with them. We go
> every year" (Akpan, 2008:52).

The foregoing indicates falsification of the family history of the enslaved children. Fofo, a child trafficker, capitalises on his victims' inexperience, childishness and vulnerability to manipulate them. Fofo is supposed to be the children's caretaker but he fails to do what is expected of a child's caretaker. A child's caretaker could be a child's parent, stepparent, guardian, or any person entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health or welfare. Uncle Fofo, who is their care-taker, at this moment is about to sell them to their godparents since he is poor and sees it as a means to raise money for himself.

When eventually Fofo makes a U-turn by deciding not to sell them again, he and the children are arrested. Fofo is kept in a separate room and Yewa and Kotchikpa in another. It is later revealed that Fofo is badly injured and dies eventually. This incidence traumatises Kotchikpa who tries to ensure that both Yewa and he are freed. He later runs away leaving his sister Yewa behind. The killing of Fofo is a metaphorical representation of the bad end of all perpetrators of child trafficking.

In the foregoing discourse, it is observed that Adimora-Ezeigbo and Akpan employ their narratives to conscientise and sensitise the public to dehumanising nature and traumatic effect of child trafficking.

Conclusion

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Uwem Akpan's *Say You're One of Them* have been able to graphically captured the plight of children in contemporary Nigeria. The study particularly explores factors fuelling child trafficking and other anti-child activities; strategies deployed by child traffickers and traumatic experience of children. It is shown that unsuspecting children are subjected to psycho-emotional trauma, mendicancy/street begging, violence, *sexploitation/bodyxploitation*, and loss of identity. Considering the tone of jeremiad in which the narratives are told, the sorry state and unwell-being of the Nigerian child are validated. Through these narratives, Nigerian literary writers show their commitment to the well-being of the Nigerian child by decrying their unjustifiable agonies and lamentation.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

VIOLENCE AND THE MAKING OF THE CHILD SOLDIER IN SAMUEL KOLAWOLE'S *THE BOOK OF M*

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Abstract

The recruitment and use of children in violence and armed conflicts in Africa is a troubling reality on the continent. Until recently children have been victims of war and armed conflicts in zones of violence world over but now they are actively used as fighters and perpetrators of violence. This opens up a new form of warfare where children are weaponised notwithstanding their vulnerability as they are used as instruments of terror and death. This study examines how children are made as soldiers in terror taking into cognizance their coercion, victimhood, vulnerability, psychic manipulation and indoctrination, and the damage these portend for them and the society. It does this using "Mules of Fortune", a short story in Samuel Kolawole's *The Book of M* to foreground the experiences of Tobiah, who is coerced to be a child soldier and other children like him. The study adopts Coercion theory as its theoretical guide to examine how these children are forced directly and indirectly to become death machines and death victims. It concludes that violence and other conflict situations give rise to voluntary or forced recruitment of children as child soldiers, a crime occasioned by human greed for power, resources and relevance. It submits that these children, whether killed, raped, molested or used as instruments of death are all victims.

Introduction

Violence as an aggressive act permeates virtually all levels of human relationships, covertly or overtly. According to the World Bank (2011: ix), violence and the fear of it is a daily reality for millions people across the world. Maclean (2015:11) argues that "violence is ubiquitous, complex and messy". Violence is a phenomenon that cuts across every human society and underpins almost every human relation. It is thus a multi-faceted reality in human society which is very much pronounced in people's attempt to interrelate.

Violence is an action which causes physical or psychological injury, pain, suffering or destruction targeted against a person or persons. Thus, violence as a phenomenon that characterizes human relations is aggression-oriented and has a leaning towards making of victims. In a violent relationship, therefore, there is usually a victim who suffers the aggression of the violator. Violence dominates virtually every level of human relation and as such it manifests differently as political, cultural, religious, psychological and so on. Felson (2009) looks at violence as "physical aggression" a situation in which "people use physical methods to harm others". The focus in this paper is not to attempt defining violence or to establish its typology, rather it looks at how violence has been contributory to the victimhood of children and the making of child soldiers.

Child labour is a violence against children and as a form of child labour, it describes an aggressive situation in which children are coerced into violence and wars created by adults thereby resulting in an economy of damage, disorientation, dislocation,

dismemberment, disability, destruction and death. These children are exposed, first hand, to the cruelty of war and violence, and for many, their initiation to it is horrifying. This is because they are intentionally groomed as death machines. According to Human Rights Watch (2008) "many child soldiers are compelled to follow … orders under threat of severe punishment or death. To coerce children to participate in combat and commit atrocities against civilians, commanders not only use threat of violence against child recruits but also against their families as well as the possibility of torture and death in the hands of the enemy"(online).

Given the violence that these children are subjected to, they become manipulated tools in the hands of their commanders and they wreak unimaginable terror than even adult soldiers. The use of violence to compel child recruits to kill and wreak havoc against civilian is now rampant among terror groups, rebels, and government armies (HRW, 2008). Going by Honwana (2009:63),

> in recent decades, children and youth feature centrally as both the targets and the perpetrators of violence. In nearly every war and civil conflict, children are among the principal victims. The situation has worsened in recent years because civil wars and conflicts without clearly defined state actors have grown more prominent, and children suffer more in these 'irregular' conflicts.

Child soldier is a troubling reality in many African countries where civil war, insurrection, terrorisms, militias and banditry hold sway. This phenomenon is consequent of conditions of violence and war where innocent children are conscripted into the arena of violence, forced to bear guns and turned to killing machines. This reality forms one of the horrible manifestations of child labour. This, according to International Labour Office (2003:1), is "one of the worst forms of child labour" which the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182) bans. The convention prohibits "forced or compulsory recruitment of children (persons under the age of 18) for use in armed conflict".

Didier (2021:2) refers to it as "dirty war". She foregrounds how the use of children as soldiers becomes a new strategy deployed by both states and non-state actors and a form of modern slavery. According to her, "the use of child soldiers corresponds to a strategy of "dirty war". Child soldiers are used for specific purposes: to win the war, to meet the sexual needs of soldiers, to increase the workforce, to train soldiers from an early age to have a malleable and responsive army. They are no longer seen as children, but rather as weapons. This systematic campaign of violence is then carried out by young people who will never see their parents again" (Didier, 2021:2).

According to Beber and Blattman (2013:) Child soldiers… are a manifestation of the growing barbarity of war". In the words of Singer (2005), it is a new face of war, a situation where "not only have children become the new targets of violence and atrocities in war, but many now have also become the perpetrators" (2). Thus, there is the instrumentalisation of children as weapons of war in which case many of them are turned against their own people to loot, rape and kill. This is what Jezequel (2006:10) refers to as "the tragic ordinariness of the instrumentalisation of children in war" Capturing this, Daxhelet and Brunet (2013) attest that "as a military initiation, child soldiers are forced to plunder villages (sometimes their own), rape, torture, and kill under the threat of death from warlords. They then voluntarily repeat these gestures almost daily in their new life as soldiers." These children are forced to lose their innocence while they are coerced to embrace a life of brutality, violence, bestiality and terror. This

brings about an injured psyche, a wounded childhood and a precariously damaged life. In the words of Shaikh (2001:13), "some children join armed forces in order to protect or support their families or to protect themselves from threats of violence by soldiers. Others have lost their parents and siblings in war and feel the need to take revenge for the atrocities committed against their family". Thus, several reasons contribute to the making of child soldiers.

Child soldiering is an organised crime prevalent in many zones of violence and war-torn spaces in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. In these spaces of violence, children are subjected to unimaginable horror of violence as fighters, spies, cooks, sex slaves, porters, among others. This is in tandem with ILO (2003:4) that "it is estimated that more than 300,000 children under 18 are recruited to participate in armed conflict worldwide: approximately 120,000 of them are in Africa. They are used as porters, messengers, spies or armed combatants. Girls are particularly vulnerable. Victims of abduction, they often serve as sex 'slaves' and can also be sent to the battlefront". This indeed has resulted in damage to the childhood of these children, some of whom die; and, for those who survive, the damage may be a lifelong scar. As such, whether they die or not, they are all victims of adult engineered wars.

As a global phenomenon, child soldier's notoriety started making waves in the 20th century, plausibly as a result of the spate of violence and wars that held sway in the century which made it one of the bloodiest centuries in history. Consequently, the 21st century has not fared better. More and more children continue to be exposed to extreme violence, abuse, and mortal injury. Cases of street children, homeless children camp, child soldiers, malnourished children, abused/molested children, trafficked children, child labour, sexualised children, terrorised children, child suicide bombers, among others all point to the new face of atrocities against children in the 21st century. Poverty, frustration, insecurity, trauma, and the manipulation by warlords eventually make many children opt to become child soldiers. In the words of Singer (2005:2), "by the turn of the 21st century, child soldiers had served in significant numbers on every continent of the globe except Antarctica. They have become integral parts of both organized military units and nonmilitary, but still violent, political organizations, including rebel and terrorist groups. They serve as combatants in a variety of roles: infantry shock troops, raiders, sentries, spies, trench diggers, and porters. In short, the participation of children in armed conflict is now global in scope and massive in number."

In Africa, child soldiering has become a menace and a social evil prevalent in many countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia, among others. In the Rwandan genocide, conflicts in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, to mention but few, children were the most affected. They were both victims and perpetrators of violence. While some were conscripted to carry light arms as fighters, others are used in activities like cooks, messengers, spies. According to ILO (2003:5) in Burundi, they are referred to as

> doriyas ("look-out" or literally "ear agents" in Kirundi). Most of these children live in or around camps for displaced persons. They no longer go to school, either for security reasons or because they lack the financial means. They are constantly in the company of military personnel who guard the camps. Gradually, they start doing small jobs for them in exchange for food. These may be only domestic, like cooking and washing up, or purely military in nature, like acting as guards, carrying arms or ammunition or serving as spies. As time goes on, they are

initiated into the manipulation of arms and start accompanying adult soldiers for patrolling operation.

Children, in these spaces, are mostly forced to become armed fighters and a lot of them suffer unimaginably. "Some are abducted, threatened, coerced or manipulated by armed actors"(UNICEF, 2021:np) According to a UNICEF report, which gives an estimate of child victims in war in the last decade, about 2 million were killed; 4-5 million disabled and some 10 million psychologically traumatised. This is a pointer that of the many wars and conflicts in Africa and all over the world, children are virtually the most victims. According to Singer (2005:2) "of all the persons killed in African conflicts in the late 20th century, 92 percent were civilians". If this estimate is anything to go by, it becomes clear what the percentage of children would be.

In Africa, the spate of civil wars, insurgencies, terrorism, insurrections, religious extremism, political tensions, among others, has given rise to the recruitment of child soldiers. State and non-state actors recruit and force children to become armed fighters. The political instability and economic failures in these countries pave way for more children being vulnerable as victims of hunger, violence and insecurity and for these reasons they become easy targets of warlords and military recruiters "because children are often physically vulnerable, easily intimidated, and susceptible to psychological manipulation, they typically make obedient soldiers"(Human Rights Watch, 2008: np).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Coercion theory as its theoretical guide to examine how child soldiers are coerced into the fabrics of violence and war. Coercion is a term operable in the realm of force, military and violence. It is militaristic rather than dialogic. It is a militant word that denotes force. Coercion theory, therefore, explains the dynamics of brute power to compel and deter. Coercion, according to Biddle (2020:95) "has undertones of blackmail and manipulation". According to him, "Coercion theory is one of the most fully developed bodies of theory in the social sciences, one that has advanced the field of national security by illuminating the logic that underlies threats, violence, and war" (Biddle, 2020:95).

Coercion as a theory is pervasively use in diferent fields not limited to politics, law, psychology, criminology and military studies. According to Briddle, there is usually the problem of terms, definition and categories while using the coercion. This may not be divested from its multiple application in different disciplines. Coercion and violence are two variables that often characterize human relation in history. People more often than not subscribe to them to control the behavior of others around them. Through coercion, they deploy what Schelling (1966) coined as compellence and deterrence which are two forms or methods of coercion. Thus, coercion more frequently underpins violent control and manipulation of the behaviors of others. The forcefully recruitment of child soldiers is not devoid of compellence as the recruiters subscribe to for to make children do their bidding.

The Making of the Child Soldier in Samuel Kolawole's *The Book of M*

The Book of M is a collection of short stories by Samuel Kolawole. The stories in this collection aptly describe a "response to the traumatic political and cultural changes" (Lindfors 2007: 26) perceivable in many postcolonial African nations which have brought about painful experience to the people. The pervasive violence in many African

nations has elicited responses from critics, writers, historians and social commentators who try to conscientise people while decrying the prevalence of such reality. Postcolonial reality of violence in Africa reveals why immediately after independence, many African nations plunged into civil wars, insurrections, tribal wars, among others. The effects of these take toll on the human population resulting in the creation of precarious situations in these violent spaces.

Civil wars and conflicts in Liberia, Sudan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, Somalia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, among others resulted in the decimation of civilian population, particularly affecting children. This opened up myriad of atrocities against children and women. Consequently, poverty, hunger, suffering, abandonment, disillusionment became prevalent which grossly affected children in particular, much as these did not spare some of their parents. State and non-state armies see this as an opportunity to recruit and force children to be child soldiers considering the ease of coercing, manipulating and making them do whatever they want.

Political instability after independence which paved way for violence and its economy of death vis-à-vis military coups, civil wars, ethnic wars, insurgencies, and rebellions in many African countries wreaked a lot of havoc on social and economic well-being of the people. In many of these countries, the regime of violence still continues; people are yet to recover from the carnages several decades after they broke out. Children in particular continue to be major victims.

The instability occasioned by weakness of government in many African nations gave rise to the proliferation of rebel groups who oppose weak legitimate government. This has culminated in civil wars and other armed conflicts. This is aptly portrayed in "Mules of Fortune" a story in which Kolawole shows the devastating evil of rebel insurgency. The story, which focuses on the brutish and spiteful operation of rebel groups, spotlights on the contemporary sociopolitical situation in many African countries, where political failure has engineered rebel insurrection. Thus, this creates the ugly reality of child soldiers who are victims and are used as perpetrators of violence. This in turn has devastating effects not only on the population but especially on children as it opens up an avenue for child labour, war crimes, and injustices against children being generally the most vulnerable.

"Mules of Fortune": An Overview

The story, "Mules of Fortune" captures the harrowing experiences of people with particular attention on children as victims of violence and rebel insurgency in the Republic of Wahala. Tolbert a young child witnesses how his county, Phebe County is invaded by Thambo Small Boys Unit, a rebel group headed by General Goggles. Rasta leads the operation to Phebe County where Tolbert's father is killed and his heavily pregnant mother is disbowelled while they make him watch. Having watched his parents died in the hands of this rebels, he is coerced to join them as a child soldier.

The Small Boys Unit mainly consists of young boys, all of whom are almost the same age as Tolbert, with the exception of Rasta nicknamed Captain Tennis Shoes and Commander Goggles. The two girls in the unit are used as sex slaves. The experiences of these boys is such that they are used to raid and confront enemies groups and are made to smoke marijuana and eat human heart while they are brainwashed that eating it makes them invincible . Tolbert, being loved by the Commander is indulged the pleasures of

smoking marijuana, taking cocaine, eating human heart, and having sex with the commander's sex slaves. He gradually, like other boys, descends into a world of bestiality, indulgence, wickedness, cannibalism and violence. Eventually, the fondness and special treatment he receives from the commander who says he resembles his lost son, Thomas, pitches him against Captain Tennis Shoes who resents him for this. After a while, he kills the commander and vengefully amputates Tolbert's hand resulting in his permanent disability.

In another scenario, Sue a young innocent girl becomes a sex slave to Major Red Wings, the commander of the Red Wings rebels. She becomes a sex slave to the commander who eventually impregnates her and continues to molest her to the point of using her to entertain his boys when they brought the booty of a dead cow to camp. Though pregnant, they take turn sexually abusing her until she loses her pregnancy. Almost at the verge of death, she is treated by a white captive in the camp who plans her eventual escape after which she discovers that she is pregnant again for Major Red Wings.

As a result of the violence in the whole land scape, in yet another scenario, Kolawole confronts us with the story of Etty a young girl who loses her father to the war and her mother as a result plunges into a life of drugs and prostitution from which she never recovers. She is eventually captured by a rebel group, the G-string battalion. Here, fate brings these three disillusioned, traumatized and dehumanized children, Tolbert, Sue and Etty, together as they become the only survivors after a rebel escort kills all the porters he is assigned to lead to the rebel camp.

Textual Analysis

The story is one of the short stories in Samuel Kolawole's The Book of M. All the stories in the collection start with letter M in their titles. "Mules of Fortune" is the author's attempt to capture the postcolonial realities of war and violence and their atrocious effects on the population, especially children in Africa. Through the experiences of Tolbert, Sue, Etty and other child soldiers, the reader is confronted with the trivialization of evil against children.

In the case of Tolbert a young innocent boy, his father is butchered like an animal and his mother, heavily pregnant, is disbowelled in a gruesome manner. He is made to watch this while child soldiers of his age cheer to see this evil done by Rasta. The narrator in a melancholic voice captures this beastly act thus:

> Three of them broke out of the motley group. One of these three whipped out a dagger from a filthy rucksack in his hand then handed it to Rasta. The other two pounced on Mama and pinned her down. Mama twitched from side to side to side, her legs stabbing the air like a ruminant trying to escape the knife, shouting Tolbert's name. Tolbert wriggled out of their grip and leapt forward, bestirred by the prospect of his mother's annihilation, but was restrained. The disemboweling procedure was quick, as though it had been mastered. Blood gushed; deplorable scream rent the air. Tolbert was made to watch his mother go under the knife. His face turned away to avoid the horrendous scene but was wrenched back and held still. With one hand, Rasta pulled out a blood soaked, unborn infant, limp and lifeless and the boys cheered. Mama, half dead, gasped and foamed at the mouth, muttering something deep and guttural (*The Book of M*: 154-155).

Being coerced to watch while his father and mother are killed is a strategy to break him as he is being recruited and reconfigured as a child soldier. His coercion into the group is a form of compellance. His childhood and all it represents taken from him, a new reality of violence, cannibalism, bestiality, and disillusionment sets in. He thus, begins his long walk into a world of war, violence, drug, cannibalism, molestation, sex, disillusionment, pain, suffering, and disability as a child soldier. With their innocence taken and their childhood altered, these child soldiers cheer at violence and are undaunted by evil. The new condition they find themselves presents them with a trivialization and normalisatiion of evil. They go into betting frenzy when the mother of Tolbert was about to be disbowelled and their excitement when Rasta announced that the dead feotus is a girl describes how deep they have degenerated to evil.

> "A girl! It's a girl!" He roared finally and the boys hollered. Immediately those who won the bet scrambled for the stuff on the ground. Clawing fingers struggled to pry away the precious reward as the urchins pushed and kicked and raised dust and laughed. Tolbert doubled up and retched. Again the boys roared in laughter, making silly faces. (TBoM, 155).

For these children, their lives become precarious and mournable. Their identities are altered as they take on new names in the rebel camp. "They preferred names of people in American movies. Names like Junior Rambo, Captain Schwerzenegger, Tarzan, Admiral Stallone, [and] Chuck Norris Baby. The boy with the swollen eye, one of the two that pulled Tolbert out of his house, was called Chuck Norris Baby"(TBoM, 155-156). This change of identity results in an altered psyche which is deliberately part of their recruitment process. With this, they repress and forget their childhood, selfhood and identity and instead are made to embrace their new found names and identities as they embrace the violence that come with them. According to the narrator, "Chuk Norris Baby got his bad eye while trying to fight like Chuck Norris with a boy called Black Jesus. The scuffle, which ensued over food ration at a Small Boys Unit Base, resulted in a gladiatorial fight. In the fight, a rod meant for Chuck Norris Baby's skull damaged his left eye instead"(TBoM, 156).

Tolbert like other boys become deeply buried in the horror that being a child soldier offers him. This is in tandem with Schauer and Elbert's notion that "child soldiers are raised in an environment of severe violence, experience it, and subsequently often commit cruelties and atrocities of the worst kind"(2010:311). His innocence continues to depreciate and gives way to indulgence and gross degeneration. "Like a child recovering from the petulance of not getting his way, Tolbert ignored the worries of the past and became used to the life of guns, death, and human hearts. The drugs also take their toll. The more he smoked and sniffed, the more he felt fearless, powerful and drawn to the evil around him. He began to see everything as a game and people as toys"(TBoM, 163).

The situation in these rebel camps reveal the awful predicament of these children. Lost to the world of war, guns, violence and death, the girls are forced into sex slavery, and prostitution. They are used as pleasure machines to the commanders and their soldiers. Besides, they are used as porters, cooks and domestic servants. This is the case with Sue, Rose and other nameless girls who are serially abused sexually and made to carry out tasks beyond their capabilities. The narrator's voice is poignant as he talks about the Sue's experience:

Major Red Wings loved to talk whenever he slept with Sue. The more he talked, the stronger he remained. Talking to him was an aphrodisiac of a sort. This was not good for Sue but she had no control over the matter. Her role was submission. Her role was passive. Her role was pain. After Major Red Wings exhausted himself and fell into snoring sleep, Sue would clean her private part with all the mundane ritual of someone washing her hands off some plague. She would then splay her reed-thin legs apart and incline her body at an angle to drain out his semen, (TBoM, 165-166).

Sue, Rose, Etty and other children become trapped in the mess of violence as sex slaves, prostitutes, porters, domestic servants, among other. "Rose became a regular visitor at the camp, giving pleasure in exchange for looted items […] Sue often wondered how she always had her way with the rebels who picked any girl they wanted from anywhere and did whatever they wished with them"(TBoM, 166). It becomes clear the rebels forcefully rape and molest young girls. Many like Rose sell their bodies to them for survival.

The introduction of these children to violence results in a mass production of victims. For these children, their lives are injured and they become potential danger to the society. Both boys and girls, these children are tools and victims of violence. Their lives embody a circle of violence, suffering and death. They are compelled to become child soldiers and embrace the horror of war and violence which invariably damage their psyche and personality. Tolbert for instance is coerced to become a child soldier while being made to watch his parents gruesomely murdered. With this, he is forced to embrace a new reality of war and all its offers while being made to forget the meaning and essence of childhood and the fact of having parents to show him affection and care. All these are replaced with a life of war, drug, suffering, disability and death. Other children like Chuck Norris Baby, Black Jesus and other nameless child soldiers lose their lives while fighting. This shows how adult like Captain Tennis Shoes, General Goggles, Major Red Wings among others use these children as war expendables. It does not make sense to them if these children are lost at the battle. In one of their operations, Black Jesus is killed, "Chuck Norris Baby and five others boys also perished. They were machine-gunned down … the corpses were left on the streets for vultures to poke out their dismembered parts"(TBoM, 162-163).

The situation affects these children regardless of their gender; while boys are used as instruments of violence and brutality, girls like Sue, Rose, Etty are used as sex slaves, prostitutes, cooks and porters. They are forced to give pleasure to the commanders. Sue becomes a sex slave and a domestic servant to Major Red Wings and his boys. She becomes pregnant and loses the pregnancy to a turning-taking marathon sex by Major Red Wings and his boys. She escape Major Red Wings' camp only to be captured by another rebel group, the G-string battalion.

Etty suffers abuse from her mother who is disillusioned by the war after her husband joins the government troop to fight against the rebels after they set his rubber plantation on fire. This is the last time they would see him. The verbal, psychological, emotional and physical abuses she receives from her mother who has taken to drugs and prostitution for survival disorients her and she is eventually captured by the G-string battalion who turned her to a porter along side Sue who is now nursing a child, consequent of Major Red Wings' sexual abuses even after she lost her first pregnancy.

Tolbert joins the G-string battalion to revenge the cruelty of Captain Tennis Shoes, who has transformed to General Bloodthirsty. His amputation makes him unfit for this and he is forced to become a porter to the battalion. For him, General Bloodthirsty is the source of his predicament and he joins the rebel group to "go after General Bloodthirsty… He wanted him for all he had done to him, for his family, for Captain Goggles, for his right arm"(TBoM, 178).

Considering the psychological trauma that these children go through, it is alarming to note that they all suffer being separated from their families; they are dislocated and disenchanted. Their new life as child soldiers presents them with nothing but anguish and renders them as living dead. They are homeless, traumatized, molested, brainwashed and disconnected. They have no value for life as they have been brainwashed to consider any life outside their base as plunderable and killable.

Tolbert, Sue and Etty, when fate eventually brings them together having been condemned to be porters by the G-string battalion, become surviving victims of war and violence. They survive the shooting spree of the rebel escort leading them as they carry supplies to the rebel camp. It becomes troubling to see how the story ends with three children, Tolbert, Sue and Etty on a quest for survival together with Sue's newborn baby who is a product of violence, abuse, rape, war, suffering and poverty. The narrator's voice is poignant:

> Etty crushed bush leaves and Tolbert held the baby still, while she squeezed the liquid into the infant's mouth. Sue watched as they fed her bay with the bitter substance, her naked breast dangling like two withered fruits on an abandoned tree, her face swollen with tears. Lack of nourishment and unavailability of water had sufficiently taken its toll on her ability to lactate. Blessing had drawn off the last of her mother's milk and suckled her breast for more. Sue continued to nurse her baby with her dry breast, hoping it was not dry till her nipples became sore and the poor infant began to take in blood. Etty tried to be a wet nurse but failed and now they feed her with herbs…Flies swarmed all over her wet body and dry yellow mucus smeared her nose and mouth. The dark spots covering her plump face and her rheumy eyes showed signs of ill health (TBoM, 185-186).

With their harrowing experiences, these "four survivors, delivered by the mysterious game of chance had journeyed in the bush for days, trying to find any form of safety"(186). While we encounter them as victims at the beginning of the story, we continue to see them up to the end carry on the same statusquo. It becomes worrisome that despite their survival, their cycle of suffering continues. Hence, whether dead or alive, these children become victims and they continue their long work into anguish.

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CHAPTER THIRTY

CHILDHOOD IDENTITIES, LIVED EXPERIENCES AND SURVIVAL OF THE GIRL-CHILD IN *ON BLACK SISTERS' STREET*

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Abstract

This study focuses on the girl-child as the most vulnerable to and an inescapable victim of childhood victimisations. These victimisations, which make her prone to exploitative tendencies, orchestrated by adults, stem from the default patriarchal orientation of most cultures in Africa. Our engagement in the study is delimited to the formative experiences of selected female characters as children in Chika Unigwe's novel, *On Black Sisters' Street*, a novel which chronicles the untoward experiences of girls, prior to their migration to Belgium, as commercial sex workers. Deploying feminist idea of vulnerability, which harps on the susceptibility of the female gender to harm and exploitation, the study argues that owing to the etiological factors of childhood identities, largely beyond the control of the child, these girls in their innocence become vulnerable as they are exposed to complicit adults who through their sharp practices exploit and take advantage of the girls, sexually and repeatedly. Cumulatively this becomes the lived experiences and defines their strategies for survival. It concludes that the vulnerability of the girl child is a function of the conspiracy between the society, the community and family, which undermines the quality of life for her, and leaves her at the mercy of exploiting adults both male and female.

Introduction

Originally published in Dutch as *Fata Morgana* in 2008, Chika Unigwe's second novel, translated into English and published as *On Black Sisters' Street*, hereafter *OBSS*, in 2010 recounts the plights of four young ladies, caught in the web of trafficking and sex trade. The novel in the words of Anyanwu (2018: 203) is "the horror story of four young African women engaged in the booming sex trade in Europe, precisely the Red light District of Antwerp in Brussels, Belgium. Sisi, Ama and Efe are Nigerians, while Joyce hails from war torn Sudan". Unigwe in the novel employs the *Roman a Clef* technique weaving real life experiences, the story of "nameless Nigerian sex workers" (Unigwe 2010: 297) in faraway Belgium into the narration to elicit reactions from the readers. The novel thus appeals to global audience as it satirises transnational issues of trafficking and sex trade. With this, Unigwe in the novel evokes a sense of urgency for global synergy to tackle the menace of trafficking, especially for sex trading.

Literature Review

In this segment, our attention is on previous scholarly engagements of *OBSS*. A few of these engagements are reviewed to provide a basis for the present study.

In "Female Sexual Abuse and the Violation of Human Rights in African Fiction: An Example of Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*" Odinye I. E. (2018) concentrated on the female gender as the victim of sexual abuse and human rights violations – the factors responsible for and the consequences of these violations in the society in *OBSS*. These issues according to her hinder female growth and self actualisation. Deploying feminism and trauma theory, she opines that,

> [i]n Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, there is a detailed depiction of sexual violence and rape of the female characters. Unigwe's description suggests that the female gender abuse is a precursor to forced prostitution, human trafficking and other nefarious activities. *On Black Sisters' Street* captures the traumatic story of four major female characters: Sisi, Ama, Efe, and Joyce who left their homes in Africa (Nigeria) in search of good opportunities in Europe. The above mentioned four fictional characters are victims of human trafficking, rape, sexual abuse and forced prostitution as a result of many factors such as past history of sexual abuse, poverty, excessive materialism, lack of good parental background, peer group influence, lack of employment opportunities and quest for freedom. (Odinye, 2018: 72)

With the predicament of the aforementioned characters in *OBSS*, Unigwe exposes the readers to the ugly realities of human trafficking, sexual abuse, and forced prostitution as "the most common and current forms of violation of human rights" (Odinye, 2018: 79). She concludes that at the height of these violations is the use of violence, through which pains are inflicted on the victims with huge physical, emotional, psychological, social and health consequences, sometimes leading to death.

Olugbemi-Gabriel, O. (2021) in "En/Gendered and Vulnerable Bodies: Migration, Human Trafficking and Cross-border Prostitution in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*" investigated the issues of "forced migration, human trafficking and cross-border prostitution are interpreted as negative consequences of globalization" (Olugbemi-Gabriel, 2021: 1). In his words, "persons who are trafficked into sexual slavery, whether they are coerced, tricked, migrate on their own and/or willingly submit themselves to be trafficked, are victims marked out for exploitation due to their status, which is created by the globalization of economic opportunities in a highly interconnected world" (Olugbemi-Gabriel, 2021: 3). Deploying the concept of vulnerability as the theoretical insight and focusing on women as gendered and vulnerable bodies, he opines that

> *On Black Sister's Street* strongly concretizes the claim that most of the women who engage in cross-border prostitution are victims of the condition of vulnerability, both individually and collectively. […] [The novel]refracts the society through a lens that shows that women who are trafficked into prostitution are vulnerable and often poor, like Ama; jobless, frustrated and struggling to survive harsh socio-economic realities like Sisi; desperately in need of an escape route like Efe; victims of war, lonely, abandoned and lost like Joyce.(Olugbemi-Gabriel, 2021: 18)

He concludes that Unigwe in *OBSS* brings to the fore the dangers associated with human trafficking, cross-border migration, and forced prostitution with vulnerability of the

victims as a key factor and first condition crucial to trafficking of persons for sexual exploitation in the era of globalisation.

The foregoing, a representative of the engagements of Unigwe's *OBSS* indicates that largely, the interpretations of the novel bother on the experiences of the victims of trafficking, their exploitation sexually and other inhumane treatments they are subjected to in the hands of their traffickers. The current study focuses on the pre-trafficking experiences of the young ladies, especially their childhood identities and experiences, and their interactions with complicit adults before they arrived Belgium, which exposed them to the ills of the society, culminating in their being trafficked.

Theoretical Framework

Originally propounded by Martha Albertson Fineman, the idea of vulnerability is an inherent aspect of human condition, which has been adapted into feminist studies. According to Wainwright and Williams it implies an "individual's capacity to be open to a variety of wounds" (Wainwright and Williams, 2005: 27). In her theorisation, Butler links vulnerability to questions of power, agency and forms of precarity in the contemporary world. For her vulnerability is mutually interdependent on humans as well as environmental and social structures. In her words,

> […] vulnerability' should not be considered as a subjective state, but rather as a feature of our shared or interdependent lives. We are never simply vulnerable, but always vulnerable to a situation, a person, a social structure, something upon which we rely and in relation to which we are exposed. Perhaps we can say that we are vulnerable to those environmental and social structures that make our lives possible, and that when they falter, so do we." (Butler, 2021: 39).

Engaging Butler's view above, Scheibmayr submits vulnerability "is decidedly *not* conceptualized as a negative: it is a relational human condition, shared by all humans and defined by its unavoidability. At its most basic core, vulnerability is concerned with the potentiality of harm instead of considering only materialized levels of injustices" (Scheibmayr, 2023: 3). It focuses on "basic human condition, that of the potentiality of harm - pain, injury, and injustice. This potentiality is shared by all human beings, thereby creating a dependability on others".

From a feminist perspective, vulnerability is associated with weakness, susceptibility, difficulties, ambiguities, complexities, and tensions. For feminists therefore, to be vulnerable is "to be en route to harm or violation by virtue of one's compromised status" (Gilson, 2016: 75). Thus, "as a site of (negative) vulnerability, the bodies of women and sexual minorities have historically been subject to systemic violation, exploitation, objectification, and commodification". The susceptibility of the female gender to vulnerability, especially sexually is further compounded by the predominance of patriarchal misogyny, which by default defines cultural understandings. Gilson further asserts that

> [o]n dominant cultural understandings, sexual vulnerability is imagined as specifically feminine whereas male sexuality is imagined to be inherently aggressive and hence impermeable or invulnerable. If women are typically considered more vulnerable than men, it is because of their bodies, which are deemed both weaker and more sexually stimulating. Both of these traits— inferior strength and sexualization—comprise the specificity of feminine

vulnerability and constitute it as a dualist, reductively negative form of vulnerability: one is vulnerable because one's body is the kind of object on which others, active male subjects, seek to act and because one cannot prevent them from doing so. Given hegemonic perceptions of gender and sexuality, to be a woman is to inhabit the kind of body that is perceived as inciting lust and thus as inviting sexual attention, whether desired or not. (Gilson, 2016: 76)

Essentially therefore, the submission here is that vulnerability, in feminist circle, against the notion that it is relational human condition, shared by all humans and defines by its unavoidability, is an orchestration of patriarchy to exploit the female gender, socially, economically, financially, and ultimately, sexually.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of the analysis in this study, it is important to state that though varied, the individual identities and lived experiences of the girls, made them vulnerable and susceptible to being trafficked. Their vulnerabilities incidentally bring them in contact with Senghor Dele, a complicit adult and a pimp, who with connection with Belgium based Madam Kate facilitates their trafficking to Belgium and held them in perpetual financial bondage. Referring to the girls: Sisi, Ama and Efe and Joyce, Anyanwu (2018: 203) submits that "[i]ncidentally, each of them has found her way from Nigeria through a connection to a Lagos-based human hunter, named Dele. He is in collaboration with the Belgium based Madam Kate and her very taciturn, yet unpredictable pimp, named Segun". These individuals, especially Dele and Madam Kate are opportunists who for financial profiteering and through promises of better life, working and living conditions in Europe, entice young and unsuspecting ladies into prostitution. Describing Dele's preoccupation, Anyanwu further asserts that

Dele's main preoccupation is the recruitment of prospective sex workers for onward free transportation to Europe. He is an embodiment of sexual immorality, deceit, greed, brutality, ruthlessness and bloodshed. He is a shrewd business man who is ready to kill for a breach of debt bond or agreement. He lives in Lagos where he frequents places populated or patronized by young women in search of possible victims. (Anyanwu, 2018: 204)

With this disposition, Dele is portrayed as "inherently aggressive and hence impermeable or invulnerable". The fates of his victims are sealed as he holds them in a life-long servitude and bondage, not hesitating to eliminate any one who reneges on the agreement or tries to his chain of trafficking. Under the guise of offering the opportunity for a better life to his victims, he capitalises on their vulnerabilities and lures them into transnational commercial sex industry.

Sisi: The Dilemma of a Graduate turned Prostitute

Though from an average background, Sisi, originally Chisom, with her prospect of lifting her parent out of poverty gave her best education and envisaged a better life for herself and her parents. As the only child, she had

[…] studied hard at school, mindful of her father's hope for her: a good job once she graduated from the University of Lagos. She had envisaged her four years of studying Finance and Business Administration culminating, quite logically, in a job with a bank, one of those new banks dotting Lagos like a colony of Palm trees. (Unigwe, 2010: 20)

However, this is not to be as the days after her graduation were riddled with dwindling hopes, waning aspirations and uncertainties, riddled with futile search for job. "It was as if her résumés were being swallowed up by the many potholes on Lagos roads" (Unigwe, 2010: 22). In addition to her average family background, the refusal of Peter, her boyfriend for three years to settle down for marriage, and the job loss looming over her father, Sisi is further frustrated and her desperation to leave Lagos is heightened. With this. She embraces, without giving it a scrutinising second thought, the offer to travel and work abroad, offered by Dele, after their happenstance meeting at a hair dressing Salon. In the words of Unigwe,

> [w]hen she got home that night and she had to eat gari and soup for the third day in a row, she thought nothing of the man's offer. The next day, when her father came home to announce that there were rumours of job cuts in the civil service […] Chisom merely brought out the card and fingered it. As she would something beautiful, some silk underwear perhaps and put it back in her purse. When she went to the toilet and found the cistern broken and the pan overrun with squirmy maggots and a day's load of waste – there was a city wide water shortage – she felt short of breath. She needed to go out of the house. Go for a walk: And even then she had no destination in mind until she found herself at an office on Randle Avenue, standing at the address on the gold-edged card, that she had, somehow without meaning to, memorised. (Unigwe, 2010: 33)

The implication of the above is that despite the struggle within her and prevailing realities around her, played major role in her decision making. It is based on this that Olugbemi-Gabriel submits that owing to her childhood identity and lived experiences,

> [s]he watches helplessly and hopelessly as her life and dream of rescuing her family from the clutches of poverty are foreclosed. When by fortuitous arrangement she meets Dele, the pimp and trafficker who sends her on the voyage to Europe, she is past caring because the alternative to working as a prostitute in Europe is to continue to live in the margins of life and add to the grim statistics of existence in her homeland, Nigeria. Despite initial reluctance and serious misgivings, Sisi agrees to coerced migration to Europe to pursue her dreams of helping her family out of the pit of poverty and to achieve self-actualization. (Olugbemi-Gabriel, 2021: 14)

The foregoing indicates that for Chisom, her childhood identity as a lone child from an average parents, the lived experience of unemployment and emerging uncertainties makes her vulnerable to trafficking. As such, owing to the precarious status and state of existence, despite the foreknowledge in a conversation with Dele that she is venturing into prostitution, she sees and embraces the offer to migrate to Belgium as the long awaited opportunity to liberate her parents from the shackles of poverty.

Efe: The Agony of a Girl-Mother
For Efe, her childhood identity as the first child, with an alcoholic father and a deceased mother exposed her to harsh realities and sexual exploitation. This is such that she discovered sex as a novice, a teenager from Titus, a complicit adult, with numerous but scarcely fulfilled promises of better condition of living for her. According to Unigwe,

> Efe discovered sex at sixteen at the back of her father's flat. That first experience was so painful, so ordinary that she had spent days wanting to cry. She had had no notion of what to expect, yet she had not thought it would be

> this lacklustre, this painful nothing. She felt somewhat cheated *like pikin wey dem give coin wey no dey shine at all at all*. She remembered nothing but a wish that it would not last too long and that the pain within her legs will be well compensated. The man who held her buttocks tight and swayed and moaned and was responsible for all that pain was forty-five. He was old. Experienced. But most importantly, he had a fortune that was rumoured to be vast. *Money wey full everywhere like san' san'*. He has promised Efe new clothes. New shoes. Heaven. Earth. And everything else she fancied between the two as long as she let him have his way (Unigwe, 2010: 49)

As events play out, despite his numerous promises to Efe, Titus abandons her when she informs him of her pregnancy.

> The night she told Titus she was pregnant was the last time, day or night, that he turned up for their daily appointment. He had been lying in bed, stroking her shoulders. 'I am pregnant, Titus.' That was all it took to get him out of bed, get him dressed: […] Then he got u, turned his broad back to her, picked up his car keys from the bedside table and walked out of the hotel room, closing that door so gently behind him that it made no noise. (Unigwe, 2010: 59)

This abandonment, coupled with the insult from Titus' wife when she seals her fate as a single mother and a girl-mother. The referent to Efe as a girl-mother bifurcates. This is because prior to her pregnancy and childbirth, she had become a mother at a tender age, a result of the demise of her mother. With this, she assumes responsibilities and plays the role of a mother both to her siblings and son. It is with this consciousness that she strives, running shifts between cleaning jobs to maintain balance financially and live up to her responsibilities. While in the process of this, she encounters Dele through an advert.

> She was going home at the end of a working day, seated at the back of an *okada*, weaving through Lagos traffic, her arms around the driver, when she spotted an advertisement for a cleaning woman for another office on Randle Avenue. Randle Avenue was close to the location of her second job and she was sure she could juggle all three. Three jobs meant more money, more bonuses, which equaled a better life for L.I. And a better life for L.I. totalled a happier life for her. (Unigwe, 2010: 78)

In his cunningness and subtleness to entice her, Dele under the guise of generosity showered on money, arguably from the proceeds of previous trafficking. He "turn out to be the most generous of her three bosses, giving her huge bonuses at holidays and Efe showed her gratitude by calling on God to bless him, to fill the pocket from which the bonus had come" (Unigwe, 2010: 80). With this she fell prey and gullibly took the bait of a trip to Belgium when Dele threw same at her. In the words of Anyanwu,

> It is in desperate search for means of survival for her son and siblings that Efe secures a job as a cleaner in an office where Dele Senghor is her boss. In his scheming to appear sincere, Dele waits for seven months before approaching her with the offer of a job abroad. […] Conscious of the fact that her son deserves a good education, and the obvious fact that her Nigerian nation holds no hope for her youth […], not even the knowledge of the nature of the job awaiting her in Belgium […] could stop her from jumping at Dele's offer. (Anyanwu, 2018: 209)

In a slightly different situation from that of Sisi's, Efe's childhood identity as the first child of an average family, who became a girl-mother owing to realities around her makes her vulnerable to trafficking and sexual slavery through which "she would sell

men her body, rationing out fantasies twenty-five minutes at a time" (Unigwe, 2010: 87), until she is able to totally offset her indebtedness to Dele, thirty thousand euros.

Ama: Struggling with a Pedophile Stepfather and Maternal Neglect
Like the other ladies, the reader encounters Ama as one of the sex workers in Belgium, under the control of Madam Kate. It soon becomes clear as events unfold that she is victim of maternal neglect and pedophile abuse from her stepfather. Although no direct mention is made of her biological father, her hitherto happy stay with her mother and Brother Cyril, her father figure, in Enugu, soon turns out to be a nightmarish experience for her, as she becomes a victim of maternal neglect from her mother and pedophile abuse from Brother Cyril, her pseudo-religious stepfather, who rapes her on her eight birthday, and continually, under the cover of darkness. The neglect of her mother makes her turn to the pink wall. According to Unigwe,

> [i]n the dark, and dressed all in white, Ama thought he was a ghost and would have screamed if he had not pre-empted her by covering her mouth with one broad palm and smothering the scream in her throat. With the other hand he fumbled under her nightdress, a cotton lavender gown with a print of a huge grinning bear. That was the first time it happened. […] Every night her father came and as time passed she came to expect it, her palm clammy and her mouth dry. […] When she got older and wiser she would think that her mother walked around in a deliberate state of blindness. […] She wished her mother would ask her, so that she could tell her, she never did, choosing instead to complain about Ama's hair being tough as sisal. (Unigwe, 2010: 131 … 134)

With the repeated rape from her father, neglect and refusal to believe her rape story from her mother, Ama "told the walls she wanted to go abroad. […] Nobody she knew had been abroad, but every night when she prayed asked God for a miracle, whispering her prayer furiously, hoping it bypassed her father's ears and the pastor's ears, that it pierced heaven to land gently beside God's right ear" (Unigwe, 2010: 134). As such, when years later she leaves Enugu and meets Dele at Mama Eko's Cooking Empire in Lagos, the offer to go to Belgium, despite an initial resistance and the foreknowledge that she is stepping into prostitution, became answer to her prayers. In addition to accepting Dele's offer, she agrees to have sex with him as propitiation for her insult to him and an earlier refusal.

> 'I forgive you. I like you, I swear! And dat na de reason wey I go forgive you your abuse of the last time. You be fire! He pulled Ama close and she could feel his penis harden through his trousers. I shall sample you before you go! […] Ama stood still in front of his table. She knew what was coming and did not move her hand away when he pulled towards his crotch. (Unigwe, 2010: 168)

Ama's deliberate submission and yielding to Dele's decision to sample her stems from her identity as a child who had suffered maternal neglect and numerous abuses from a pedophile stepfather, Brother Cyril "who had taken what he wanted, no questions asked. No please or may I or could I. Discarding her when she no longer suffices" (Unigwe, 2010: 168).

Joyce: The Sad Story and Disappointment of a Refugee
Originally known as Alek, Joyce is the last of the four girls in the narration. Alek is encountered in the narration as a teenage victim of war and rape from Sudan. Her childhood identity as a fifteen year old daughter of an efficient policeman of Dinkan

extraction, makes her vulnerable to gang-rape, by armed men of the Janjaweed militia, after the elimination of murder of all other members of her family: her father Nyok, her mother, Apiu and her younger brother, Ater. Describing the rape, Unigwe writes that

> [t]he soldier on top of her slapped her. […] When he thrust his manhood inside her, when he *touched* her, Alek felt a grief incomprehensible that she could not articulate it beyond chanting, 'This is not happening. This is not happening.' A mantra to keep away the layer upon layer of pain that seared through her as he went in and out of her, groaning like a dying man. One by one the other men came in and thrust themselves into her, pulling out to come on her face. (Unigwe, 2010: 191).

With this, she becomes a refugee at the United Nations refugee camp, where she met, Polycarp, a Nigerian soldier on peace keeping mission, through who she finds happiness again. Through different acts of kindness to a refugee, Polycarp successfully woos Alek and effortlessly makes love to her with numerous promises of taking her from Sudan to Lagos and marrying her. "One day I will take you to Lagos. Treat you like a queen that you are" (Unigwe, 2010: 200). Her newly found happiness however soon evaporates owing to the refusal of Polycarp's parents to approve of his marriage to Alek because of the ethnic demand that Polycarp as a first son must marry from his ethnic nationality. As such, in his attempt to assuage her, and make up for the disappointment and rejection, Polycarp facilitates her meeting with Dele, who he claims will find her a job as a nanny in Belgium. It is in this process that her name changes from Alek to Joyce. Commenting on the fate of Alek in the hands of Polycarp and his parents and her meeting with Dele, Anyanwu submits that

> [i]t is in this feeling of rejection and dejection that Polycarp offers to pay a certain man to facilitate her migration to any European country of her choice. It is at this point that she meets Dele, who quickly changes her name to Joyce to suit his selfish purpose. […] To her greatest chagrin, Alek arrives Belgium to discover that she has been deceived. There are no children to babysit; rather, she has been sent here to engage in commercial sex work. (Anyanwu 2018, 211)

For Alek, her refusal to protest a change of name to Joyce and her ignorance on the destination and the nature of the job that awaits her, all stem from her lived experiences – the need to find happiness again in life.

From the analysis in this study, Unigwe's *OBSS* can be tagged a story of vulnerabilities. All the girls owing to their different vulnerabilities, subsequently embraced sex work as a means of survival having been trafficked. The novel thus reinforces the notion that the girl child becomes a victim of cross-border migration as well as transnational prostitution because of her condition(s) of vulnerability. The novel thus

> […] refracts the society through a lens that shows that women who are trafficked into prostitution are vulnerable and often poor, like Ama; jobless, frustrated and struggling to survive harsh socio-economic realities like Sisi; desperately in need of an escape route like Efe; victims of war, lonely, abandoned and lost like Joyce. (Olugbemi-Gabriel, 2021 18)

Thus, owing to their vulnerabilities, - the first and crucial condition to their being trafficked, as well as their contact and interactions with complicit adults, Unigwe's girls in *OBSS* all fall prey to the whiles of traffickers.

Conclusion

This study has x-rayed the pre-trafficking experiences of four young victims of trafficking. Through the stories of the four young ladies, with particular focus on their childhood identities and lived experiences as explicated in this study, the submission here is that beyond their experiences in a foreign land, of great import are the different reasons for which these young girls from Nigeria in particular and Africa in general fall prey to traffickers and are lured into human trafficking. These reasons include unemployment and frustration, portrayed through the story of Sisi, poverty and sexual exploitation portrayed through the story of Efe, maternal neglect and pedophile abuse portrayed through the story of Ama, as well as war, sexual abuse and disappointment portrayed through the story of Alek. In their innocence and vulnerability, their individual contact and interactions with complicit adults, chiefly Senghor Dele, a common denominator in their lives, opened is pivotal to their trafficking. In addition to this, they are all victims of men who are inherently aggressive and hence impermeable or invulnerable. With this, they all give into trafficking and sex work as their means of survival.

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SECTION G

JUVENILE MATTERS

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND CHILD PROSTITUTION IN COLONIAL LAGOS, 1942 -1946

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ABSTRACT

Child prostitution is a pervasive issue with deep-rooted historical connections. This research explores child prostitution in Colonial Lagos, focusing on the role of seamen and military personnel as the major patronizers of child prostitution and by extension the influence of colonialism, and the response of the colonial government to juvenile delinquency. By examining the historical factors that shaped child prostitution, this study aims to provide insights into the specific context of Colonial Lagos. This research adopts a qualitative approach, employing historical analysis and document review sourced from the National Archives Ibadan.

The research findings reveal that colonialism played a significant role in the emergence and perpetuation of child prostitution in Colonial Lagos. The socio-economic conditions, racial hierarchies, and urban dynamics shaped by colonial policies contributed to the vulnerability of children to exploitation. Significantly, this holds great ramifications with the outbreak and rapid transmission of venereal diseases within the Lagos Colony as a result of seamen and military officers' serial intimate escapades, especially with children. The colonial government's response to child prostitution varied, ranging from regulatory measures to attempts at suppressing the exercise; however, these measures often fell short of effectively addressing the issue. The involvement of seamen and the military as major patronisers further compounded the problem. The transient nature of seamen and the presence of military personnel created a demand for sexual services, leading to the exploitation of vulnerable children. This study underscores the complex power dynamics, social norms, and colonial control that facilitated the existence and perpetuation of child prostitution during the colonial era.

INTRODUCTION

Child prostitution is a distressing phenomenon that has plagued societies throughout history, including in the colonial era. During the colonial period, Lagos, as the epicenter of British colonial administration in Nigeria, experienced profound transformations due to the establishment of colonial rule. The influence of colonialism on various aspects of society, including the sex industry, cannot be overlooked. As Aderinto highlighted in his research on street and working children in Lagos, the socio-economic conditions and urban dynamics of the colonial period may have created an environment conducive to the vulnerability of children to exploitation, including prostitution (Aderinto, 2005: 509). It is crucial to understand the historical context in which child prostitution in Colonial Lagos emerged and persisted created forms and natures of societal gaps across the people and their immediate environment as a result of the rapid growth centred towards Lagos during the Colonial era.

Kozma in his work on Prostitution and Colonial Relations argued that prostitution was impacted by colonial dominance and power relations on a number of levels. First, colonial authorities either promoted, permitted, or controlled the movement of women for prostitution into, out of, and within Europe's colonies. Second, respectability from vice, industrial from residential, and colonisers from colonised were all divided by colonial urban planning. Naturally, this did not mean that members of other social groupings did not interact or coexist. That does, however, imply that the colonial conception of the city placed a premium on issues related to race and economic relations. The urban geography of prostitution, its interactions with the city's residents, and the divides that occur within brothels or prostitutes' quarters are all impacted by these rules. Additionally, situations with a large gender imbalance were produced by the men's temporary and permanent migration as soldiers, sailors, or industrial workers; in some of these environments, the only women who were officially permitted to work were prostitutes (Kozma, 201: 730; Levine, 2003).

Understanding the vulnerability of juvenile delinquency in Colonial Lagos centres not just only on the girl-child as even the male children are used disparagingly in the traffic of female children while they also serve as a holding institution in the colonial sex industry. Muritala argued that the emergence of the Boma Boys, a group he described that served as a sort of social security providers, pimping agents and nexus of strumpeting activities between the seamen and these prostitutes (Muritala, 2019:33).

The study by Saheed Aderinto in his work titled "Children of the 'Empire': The Street and Working Children of Lagos, 1920-1950" provides valuable insights into the social lives of street and working children in Lagos during the colonial era (Aderinto, 2005:509). Although Aderinto did not specifically focus on child prostitution, his research underscores the socio-economic conditions and urban dynamics that may have contributed to the vulnerability of children to exploitation, including prostitution. However, recent research has confirmed that the prevalence of socioeconomic pillars of colonial Lagos society directly impacted each person's psychological growth (Turner and Amanda Lehning, 2006:2). In essence, scholars have argued that colonialism had a direct impact on people's psychological makeup (Adeyemi, 2010: 28) which in turn affected their social standing and further exacerbated the tendency of exploitation and crime in Colonial Nigeria. This viewpoint is reasonable in light of the illogical responses or situations that young people may find themselves once faced with financial troubles and the crafty desperation of the people they trust (Decker, 2020) who will make 'good' use of this avenue as a means for self-aggrandizement.

Mann's research on prostitution and urban culture in Lagos, published in her book *Marriages and Morals in Colonial Africa*, explores the nuanced relationship between gender, sexuality, and power dynamics in the colonial context (Mann, 1987). Although not exclusively focused on child prostitution, Mann's work provides a broader understanding of the socio-cultural factors that influenced prostitution in Lagos during the colonial era which was deeply connected with urbanization and the urgent need to meet up with the demand of a growing metropolitan city. This argument was further corroborated by Brown in his *City of Saints and Savages: Lagos and its Cultures,* where examined the cultural and social history of Lagos and thus drew an insight off the various urban life of Lagos, including the sex industry. Brown's work was explicit on the intersection of urban landscape and emerging social factors in Lagos and the extent to which this influenced what would lay the foundation for child prostitution. By and large, scholars have been able to situate the emergence of prostitution as a broader concept of

sex for trade as consequence of the social fabric of Lagos facilitated mainly by colonialism.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN COLONIAL LAGOS

The young as a collective term were not defined in legal terms until the 1940s. Instead, there was a general category of "children" in the many succeeding ordinances, with varying age restrictions: 17 in the Alien Children Ordinance of 1878, 15 in the Native Children (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance of 1928, and 16 in the same 1928 Ordinance as amended in 1932. The Children and Young Person's Ordinance (CYPO), which was adopted in Nigeria in 1943 and clearly established two categories—children under the age of 14 and young people between the ages of 14 and 17—is thought to be where the word "young person" first appeared (NAI COMCOL 2600). Later, both children and teenagers were included when the term "juvenile delinquency" was used. Thus, after 1945, statistics on juvenile delinquency in Nigerian Police Annual Reports were separated into two categories: junior (under 14 years of age) and senior (under 17 years of age). Beginning in the mid-1920s, youth offenders in Lagos became more organised and conspicuous. Prior to it, there was no mention of particular offences involving youths in African media such as the Lagos Daily Times and the Nigerian Pioneer, or in police records. In the late 1920s, the first signs appeared in government correspondence, police records, and Nigerian newspapers. From the 1920s to the 1960s, three major factors affected the adolescent criminal milieu: an increase in the number of young offenders, the recognition of male offender youth organisations, and the establishment of an organised network of juvenile prostitution. These three issues will be addressed in turn.

Poverty according to Fourchard was the root cause of delinquency in Colonial Lagos (Fourchard, 2006:119). Put differently, the socio-economic conditions of youths and teenagers in Colonial Nigeria was a predominant factor in their exposure to delinquency. Teenagers between the ages of eleven (11) and sixteen (16) were subjected to critical living conditions such that crime rates among the people of juvenile age were becoming issues of concern for the colonial government. The Colonial government began to encourage and received letters from children between these ages asking for academic scholarship awards among (COMCOL 1, 2766). It should be noted that these set of young children who wrote the Welfare Officer of the Government were many of those who could not afford to resort to crime and have thus seen the societal gap created by education, especially with the newly emerging class of elite created by education. The elite class at this point had moved sharply from a class populated by artisans and craftsmen to technocrats and academics who are occupying employment roles in the colonial government parastatals with some of them also emerging to lead at the highest political offices particularly within the Native Administration.

It is important to note that juvenile delinquency took through two forms during the year under review. First, children were open to truancy, burglary, and moral crimes; and in some cases were used to perpetuate the channel of delinquency which their female counterparts took. Second, the female children were basically open to self-willed and forced prostitution, domestic slavery and abuse which is also core to this discussion. One such instance of male delinquency was the emergence of the Boma Boys. The Boma Boys consisted of adults and teenagers of different ages and their area of expertise was to serve as a guide to perpetuating prostitution in Colonial Lagos (Muritala, 2019:31). Juvenile delinquency in Colonial Lagos created a world torn into two shreds of reality

for the children. First, that they are poor and as such wish 'the city' could afford them the opportunities that their immediate village could not offer immediately. Second, the pursuit of this green pasture necessitated a sort of 'struggle for livelihood' which tore the fabric of their consciousness beyond their hitherto temporal lack status to becoming hardened criminals, prostitutes and organized waywards through which the commercial sex industry in Lagos became grounded.

TRADE IN WARE OR TRADE IN SEX: CHILD ABUSE IN COLONIAL LAGOS

Lagos in the 1940s ushered in strangers from different part of the country and beyond – this influx of people into Lagos had brought about rapid development and as well facilitated a more robust entertainment industry for the colony. Among these entertainment activities were public partying which of course facilitated alcohol drinking, smoking among others. However, this new development created the need for sex and thus facilitated a more gruesome aspect of prostitution which was the traffic of girls for commercial sex purposes. The girls mostly involved in this crime were majorly between the ages of twelve and sixteen and were in most cases migrated by family and blood relations from Southern Nigeria, particularly Igbos, Efik and the Isobos - to the Colony of Lagos (NAI Comcol 1, 2844: 1). The process of taking custody of these girls and introducing them into prostitution used to be that an established woman who to an extent is successful either as a trader or a prostitute would approach the parents of a girl with an offer to train her in Lagos and as well to find her a husband. Oftentimes, these women may pay off the girl's dowry after which they gradually introduce the girl into the prostitution scheme. The same young girl who started life as a virgin would become hardened and would resort to becoming an 'owner of men' who would recycle the vicious process with which she was initiated into prostitution with other young girls (NAI Comcol 1, 2844:1).

Consequent of the Faulkner circular, natives began to report sights of perceived child trafficking and child prostitution in Colonial Nigeria. One of such report was one of an informant who reported one Madam Ogouidi of being in possession of three minors aging nine, ten and twelve. The informant reported that these children were subjected to have carnal affairs with different kinds of men notable among these men was a certain seaman who defiled a young virgin under a physically threatening condition. According to Aderinto (2007:20), Being one of the most well-known clients of child prostitutes was probably made possible by the fact that sailors' line of work kept them distant from the shore for several months at a time and that they were seen as financially stable. In the majority of its releases, the Port Welfare Service expressed concern about the high rate of venereal diseases among sailors, attributing this to their promiscuous lifestyle. It was suggested that "free women" shouldn't be permitted to have sex with sailors from Europe. The situation in Nigeria appears to have been similar to that in other parts of the world. The incidence of venereal disease among seafarers caused grave worry around the world in the early 1940s.

Men were not left out in the activities of trade in children for prostitution, many of which employed tactics that were quite different from that of their female counterparts. Some of these men deployed concentrated efforts at luring young girls to themselves – most of the girls are either impoverished or are orphans. The district office of the Kukuruku Division, Auchi were alerted about the dealings of a youth by the name Osheke who was hired by Ayekumeh Izebuno who tried to lure an orphan young girl to Lagos under the guise of marriage. When queried of his action, Izebuno claimed to have married and in

fact paid the dowry of the girl in full – all of these claims were checked to have been lies (NAI Comcol 1, 2844: R.D. 765/19). Further enquiries into the personality of Izebuno showed that he was indeed an enlisted soldier and a steward of the European soldiers, this makes taking the girl to Lagos a bit controversial for Izebuno aside that he lied to have fulfilled all customary rites of marriage over her. Izebuno could subject the young girl for personal sex fulfillment or in another way, use her as his capital for sex commercialization with his colleague which he would be handsomely paid for. This corroborates studies that have argued that child prostitution and by extension the commercial sex industry in the colonial era was highly tied to military establishments. Although human sexuality is flexible and dynamic, the tension associated with soldiery may have produced an atmosphere where prostitutes' sexual labour was necessary and situated near military towns (or camps as the case may be). Nigerian prostitutes who lived close to military facilities in Lagos and other parts of the nation were affectionately referred to as "ammunition wives," a moniker that implies their indispensable status, as a recent research revealed. Officers from the Colony Welfare Service saved eighty-two young people in 1947 who were employed as child prostitutes in military barracks and brothels (Aderinto, 2007: 19).

Children who were sexually exploited were in the first place victims of helpless situations. Before a child is sexually exploited, they must first be abused as even the thought of exploiting a child could pass for abuse. Child abuse in colonial Lagos manifested through many means, one of such means was street hawking. Street hawking by young, underaged girls in Colonial Lagos was so rampant that it became disturbing and was used as an irregular conduit of child prostitution in Lagos. The tail end of World War Two saw the influx of soldiers and sailors into Lagos and the perception of the Colonial government was that subjecting girl-children to street hawking could expose them to social vulnerability of any kind especially considering the fact that their impoverished background was the facilitating factor of where they found themselves.

When the colonial government made a move to stop girl-child street hawking, the enterprise was what some natives lived on such that they kicked heavily against it. Some of the arguments put forward to establish that street hawking was right was first that, hawking was an old Yoruba custom and that it was difficult to recognize a child in their pre-pubertal stage. They further argued that these young children when only in the services of helping their old relatives who are too old or infirm to do the hawking by themselves hence they rely on these young children as a means of sustaining their livelihood activities through hawking. In response to this claim, the colonial government thought it right to subject their justification of prohibiting girl-child street hawking through every reasonable means. First, they argued in contention of the myth that hawking was part of an old Yoruba culture that such was non-existent of the culture and not only that it was not, hawking evolved as a response to the circumstances of metropolitanist trade that Lagos was becoming accustomed to. Second, there can be no difficulty in recognizing an underaged child and since the age bracket of children to be banned from this activity is defined, there would be no reason to have to deal with fake identity in the place of age and status. Third, the position that these children were only rendering help to old, feeble 'relative' was out of context as most of these said old women were still agile or could still go about their activities if they choose (NAI Comcol 1, 2844:76). Not just this was subjected to contest, the fact the supposed old woman who thrives on trafficking and abuse as a livelihood has equally failed to ask their children or grandchildren to do the same task the young girls were subjected to. This authenticates

the fact that these children were children of underprivileged background, whose parent must have 'given' out under the circumstances of an opportunity for greener pastures to later better the family with fortunes or as a means to shed off of the mounting responsibilities that comes with parenting. Fourth, the trading activities of child hawkers raised the question of legitimacy in the sense that many boy and adult hawkers were already running the affairs before and alongside the girl hawkers, as well as there well enough stalls and traders doing much of what any hawker would do. However, the activities of the hawkers was considered unfair consequent on the fact that they compete in a keenly competitive market where shop owners who pay rents and taxes. The risk of this trade became significant and had toll on the girls themselves was to an extent, the consequences of some of them falling prey of prostitution. When the girl-hawkers fail to meet up the expected sales, they are terrified by the physical consequences this may have on them with some resorting to begging to meet up sales of the unsold items (NAI Comcol 1, 2844:79) while some men could even take advantage of their predicament to sexually abuse them; hence, once these girl-children have seen this as a way to go, they become hardened by settling for it as the only option possible.

Girl-child hawkers were to a large extent victims of sexual assault and abuse at a younger age as rightly mentioned and are yet, as they grew older were continually exploited at a higher degree, such that one could say aging subjected them to a higher degree of social menace. Most of these hawker were procured, according to the police for prostitution purpose, only make street hawking as a guise or a means to legitimize the heinous crime. By 1942, young children has been so exposed to prostitution such that about 15% of females who visited the Venereal Diseases Clinic between the months of May and August were not older than 13. In fact, the trade in girl-children for commercial sex and street hawking had become so advanced that a syndicate of operation was formed such that organisations who procure and hire young girl children to desiring natives who can pay for their services. More so, the Second World War had influenced global food scarcity and by extension economic recession on a global scale. To this end, the colonial government felt it necessary to intensify the prohibition of street hawking which they observed would have not only moral and social consequences but as well could facilitate local food production particularly from the interior which most of these girls would be invaluably participatory (NAI Comcol 1, 2844:80). By 1943, prostitution in Colonial Lagos had become so rampant that the Colonial Government had began to steps to warn citizens off several gimmicks used to lure young girls into the trade. D.E Faulkner, the Colony Welfare Officer sent out a communique on the 1st of July, 1943 highlighting the *modus operandi* of the scheme which distributed across the entire country and was expected to be given the widest coverage and urgency (NAI COMCOL 1, 2844:19486/26).

The situation in Lagos concerning underage girls created different sorts of menaces surrounding the girl-child, only prostitution was the most rampant and well-publicized of these menaces. By 1946, rape, unlawful carnal knowledge, child marriage, truancy, thefts and virality of venereal disease were some of the discernible exposure of the girl-child – girls of as young as five were diagnosed with venereal diseases (NAI Comcol 1, 2844: 84). Enquiry into the activities of brothels saw that older women were the ones in charge of these brothels and they had in their custody, girls between the ages of 14-15 and in some cases 15-24. While some child prostitutes had not developed the required skill of entertaining guests, some knew their onions – they welcomed the brothel guests by luring them into attractiveness through bodily gestures. Guests may get immediate

sex with any young girl of their choice but virgins were not readily available and it took almost 24 hours to meet the demand of guests whose patronage for virgins they only desire. It is important to note that the economic fortune of Colonial Lagos interdepended on one another for survival especially the trio of the social, entertainment and transportation industries. To the Seamen who took the young girls in for pleasure, it was more of a social escapade – a break off long days of seafaring and since they have the money to spend, they are linked with gatekeepers of the commercial sex industry most of whom were young boys who are delinquents and importantly Taxi drivers who by themselves are constantly on the lookout for drunk seamen whom they could take to brothels – Crystal Garden Club, Seven Seas Hotel, Traveller's Inn and adjoining house (NAI Comcol 1, 2844: 86).

CONTAINING THE MENACE; LEGISLATION, POLICE AND PROPAGANDA, TOWARDS ANTI-CHILD PROSTITUTION CAMPAIGN

Mopping the mess of child prostitution in Colonial Lagos took addressing it through three angles. First, was to ensure every legal loophole created within the ambit of the colonial legal framework was well nipped in the bud and given proper consideration. Ordinance 41 of 1943 which stood on the legal parameters of child protection was to be amended, enforced and followed through. Section 25 of this Ordinance when enforced was to lead to the abolishment of street hawking among young girls. The process of ensuring that not only would this ordinance be passed by law but also ensuring a high level of compliance was key. Since it is a widespread affair, how do fairness and justice come into play in ensuring that while trying to solve a social menace, one does not compound the situation by breaking the head in a bid to cure an ache? The Colonial Government saw that the best way to address this is to ensure that not the victims but their guardians or parents who sent them out on the street to hawk were subjected to face the law. Age of consent was reviewed on the basis of the identity of who a child truly is. The Colonial Government in their thoughts opined that the previously held 13 years of age as the age of consent may subject some children to exploitation and to this end, it is only reasonable to think that a broader group of children are captured – raising the age of consent to 15 (NAI Comcol 1, 2844:86-88). Furthermore, once this legislation is passed through, enforcement and monitoring of compliance must be strengthened, well-regulated and controlled. The colonial police was hitherto founded on the altar of pursuing the advances of the colonial government (Oduntan and Rotimi, 2015), it does only, in most cases, required to be legitimised by the colonial government leadership, the required dichotomy of operations and leadership required of the police force was far nonexistent. However, as in the regular fashion, the police were to apply stringent force on 'dissidents' ranging from organisers of the crime, pimps, touting taxi drivers who may not pay obeisance to the legislation. The corruption of policemen especially during late hours at night could have also facilitated the free flow of activities of enablers and victims of child prostitution in Colonial Lagos. This is corroborated in the communication on the legislation of the child prostitution activities where J.G.C Allen, the Acting Commissioner of the Colony submitted that the Superintendent of the Police was expected to ensure this does not become and impediment to the actualization of zero tolerance towards child prostitution in Colonial Lagos (NAI Comcol 1, 2844:89).

The usage of propaganda in the context of prohibiting child prostitution in Colonial Lagos held notable ramifications. It was believed that residents of Lagos and Nigerians at large are unaware of the dangers of child prostitution and that if the issues of child prostitution is given wider publicity, it may garner public sympathy which is crucial to

the populace understanding why street hawking has to be prohibited and not be seen as an anti-people policy. The need for propaganda was important for certain reasons. The World War had merely ended and most of the soldiers that fought for the British Army are back home and understood to a large extent, governance and administration beyond the Colony as their experience had exposed them to several ways of doing things and if this set of people feel threatened by colonial policies, it may strike the end of colonial occupation of Nigeria. Noteworthy was the fact that this prohibition affected the commercial pursuit of women the most, knowing the power and clout women had in general politics and the tax riots such as the Aba Women Riots of 1929 and the Abeokuta Women Riot of 1940, if the larger population of these women fail to buy into the idea prohibiting street hawking, another riot was imminent. This establishes the intersection of people and power especially in the context of colonial power dynamics. Even though the government had the power to make things happen, the cross-functionality of power and people authenticates the place of people in decision making particular as it concerns a putting a stop to an industry they had survived on for quite a while.

CONCLUSION

Child prostitution and juvenile delinquency in the context of this discourse is purely historical. However, independent Nigeria still grapples with dealing with child prostitution across the country at several points. Time may pass but the processes, techniques and mode of operation of trafficking and child prostitution remains the same. Many young girls have been promised a better life once they risk their lives through the Mediterranean Sea en route Italy. As the nation continues to suffer from severe economic hardship, the prevalence of child prostitution is rising sharply. Increased population, urbanisation, and inadequate social welfare structures on the part of post-independence governments are all factors that have contributed to the adequate entrenchment of child prostitution in the social and sexual facets of modern Nigerian society. The sexual dominance implied in media portrayals of women contributes to the discursive production of this sexual objectification of women as the norm. Media advertisements use languages and photography that is sexually suggestive especially in the advertisement of beauty products, and numerous newsstands throughout the nation display pornographic films and periodicals that are suitable for both young and elderly readers. Images of the attractive, stylish lady are closely associated with this portrayal of women as objects of desire. Thus, prostitution—whether it's hidden as "campus runs" or "clubbing"—becomes a way to achieve the "ideal" appearance. Thus, the body becomes an instrument for commerce and a source of money.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

NIGERIA'S JUVENILE CRIME: A HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY

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Abstract

Juvenile crime in Nigeria has been a growing concern through the years. Hence, this study embarks on an exploration of the evolution of juvenile crime within the Nigerian context. Drawing upon a wealth of archival records, legal documents, and historical narratives, it traces the shifting patterns of juvenile delinquency from the pre-colonial era through to the present day. It explores the shifting definitions of juvenile crime, the changing demographics of young offenders, and the emergence of new criminal trends. The study illuminates how socio-economic changes, cultural dynamics, and legislative reforms have influenced the nature and prevalence of juvenile crime over time. Furthermore, it critically examines the impact of colonial rule and postcolonial rule on the juvenile justice system, highlighting the enduring legacies and contemporary challenges. It considers the impact of colonialism, economic and social changes, and the evolving legal framework on the nature and perception of juvenile delinquency. The paper argues that understanding the historical context of juvenile crime is crucial for developing effective preventative and rehabilitative strategies in contemporary Nigeria.

Introduction

Juvenile crime in Nigeria has become a significant social issue, necessitating a comprehensive historical analysis. This research traces the complex path of juvenile crime from the pre-colonial era to the present, using a variety of sources including archival records, legal documents, and historical narratives. The study examines the changing patterns of juvenile delinquency, the evolution of juvenile crime definitions, demographic shifts among young offenders, and the emergence of new criminal trends across different historical periods. It also explores the impact of socio-economic shifts, cultural changes, and legislative reforms on the nature and prevalence of juvenile crime.

Juvenile crimes cover a broad spectrum of misdemeanours and violations of legal and social norms, from minor offences to serious felonies committed by minors. In legal terms, any criminal offence committed by a person considered a juvenile under the law is treated as a crime or criminal conduct with serious legal consequences when an adult is present. In the context of social norms, the concept of juvenile crimes includes the idea that nearly all young people have committed some misdemeanour. This includes defying parental instructions and, in the context of traditional African systems, disobeying the directives of elders. Such acts are considered delinquent behaviour by a juvenile court, with penalties applied as appropriate to the delinquent act and the age of the juvenile.

A Survey of Pre-Colonial Nigerian Experience

Before colonialism, societies in what is now Nigeria had unique structures and experiences that shaped social characterisation. As these societies evolved, their social settings and behavioural responses changed, leading to new criminal trends. In traditional societies, characterised by small populations, simple technology, cultural homogeneity, and strong kinship ties, young people's criminal trends ranged from theft to disobedience and fighting.

These acts were often seen as ignorant or exuberant deviant behaviour. The family head, usually the father or an elder, was expected to take decisive action to uphold societal norms. If an act had implications beyond the family, the family head was held responsible and would administer appropriate punishment, often corporal, to the young individual.

When a young individual violated the laws, the community did not immediately resort to punitive measures. Instead, they used verbal admonitions as a primary form of correction. Respected elders would speak to the young offender, explaining the implications of their actions and emphasising their wrongness and potential consequences. These admonitions were not just reprimands; they were also educational, serving as instructions on morality, societal expectations, and the importance of upholding community values. The aim was not just to punish, but to guide the young individual towards better behaviour.

Colonial Experience of Juvenile Crimes

The advent of colonialism led to societal changes that resulted in increased criminal activities. By the end of World War II in 1945, juvenile crimes had escalated to a significant social problem, prompting colonial government intervention (NAI, 1944:3). These crimes ranged from prostitution, prevalent among children and adults, to organised bands of pickpockets and hooligans. Children involved in prostitution were often hawkers, domestic servants, or homeless girls who migrated to cities. However, societal perceptions emerged that labelled all hawkers as prostitutes, impacting even those involved in hawking for survival (NAI, 1944:8).

On the other hand, organised groups of pickpockets and hooligans became more prevalent. Their daring and violent activities were documented in colonial records. One notable incident occurred during the Christmas festivities in 1940, where a group of young people organised a parade to rob unsuspecting passers-by (NAI, 1941:2). As these young people became more organised, they formed notorious fraternities, such as the *Jaguda Boys* in 1940 (Muritala, 2012:59). Their activities, particularly in the Ereko market, Lagos, in 1941, were recorded with unfortunate consequences for innocent bystanders (NAI, 1941:4; Heap, 1997:324).

It appears that the administration's attitude toward youngsters did not change during the 1930s despite numerous complaints about *Jaguda*. Its stance most likely altered after the Governor-General stated that the *Boma Boys'* activities became "something very much worse than just a bother " in November 1940 (*West African Pilot*, 1940:14). The Unlicensed Guides (Prohibition) Ordinance, which harshly penalised *Boma Boys* for harassing soldiers from Europe and Africa, was then put into effect in December. During the same period, crime in Ibadan took a new dimension. The most serious and widespread crime in Ibadan and even across the entire Western Nigeria was burglary. The colonial authority categorized this as follows*; jaguda* (pickpockets) and *onijibiti* (swindlers), (Muritala, 2012:59) with a significant proportion of the perpetrators being young people.

The Trajectory of Juvenile Crimes Since the 1960s

Starting from the colonial period, an increased in delinquent acts is observed. Many of the act goes unnoticed, at some other times overlooked (bearing in mind their negligible consequences), and a good percentage are dealt with on the spot by any respectable adult (making clear that such acts are not entertaining and should by no means re-occur). And at some other times, the long arms of the laws take their course.

In clearer terms, delinquency by young offenders is categorised into; delinquency/crime, which is often dealt with by the juvenile justice system; criminal behaviours which attract the attention of the criminal justice system and non-status offences. (Moffitt, 2006:56) The first category relates to delinquent behaviours, which could be associated with truancy, bullying, school refusal, school absenteeism, school dropout, etc. The second category is the more serious crime-related offences, namely, sexual assault, rape, stealing, etc. The third category is associated with antisocial delinquent behaviours, which include but are not limited to adolescent fighting, street children, adolescent drug use, alcohol misuse, youth gang subcultures etc.

At the beginning of 1960, the landscape of delinquency activities began to change. One important factor at the time was the activities within the political setting.(Ige, 1995:200) Stephen Ellis' posthumous work, *This Present Darkness: A History of Nigerian Organised Crime,* captures the nexus between politics and crime significantly in the first six years of independence before the outbreak of the unfortunate civil war that unveiled unsettled challenges of nation-building in the country. The subject of the work x-rayed the political crisis that bedevilled the government of the Western Region. He argued that there was a blurred line in the perpetration of political violence, crime and organised insurgency. As indicated, the general crime figure in Nigeria shows a steady increase from 1960 to 1984 with a few fluctuations. According to the Nigerian Police Headquarters in Lagos at the time, the country at independence year recorded 66,766 total reported crimes. Within the space of ten years, the record in 1970 increased to a total of 137,021. Statistically, it was about 70,255 or 105,22 per cent higher than the figure recorded in 1960. By 1980 the reported figures of crimes had risen to 210,918 with about 144,152 or 215.9 per cent higher than the figure in 1960.(NPH, 1985)

As the figure fluctuates through the years, it did not imply that the crime rate indicted is an appropriate reflection of what is obtainable on the street. It should be noted that these are just the reported cases and thus preclude those that are not reported. For instance, the reported low figures of 1967 could be attributed to the brewing crisis in the country that thereafter culminated in a civil war. In addition, with the country in turmoil, a good percentage was ravaged as a consequence, and this must have affected crime reports. However, in the subsequent year, the country recorded a percentage increase of 4.21, which was during the civil war. The possibilities are that the reports were limited to areas that were not largely in the heat of the war. Regardless of the prevailing circumstances, there are significant pointers to the rising percentage of crime in the country, and one undisputable fact is the trend in the level of development. Across the country and particularly in major towns and cities the level of development was noticeable with the establishment of industries and other features of urbanization. These developments, in a way, contributed to the pattern and forms of crime trends in the country, suggestive of Shelley's study on *Crime and Modernization*, which examined the impact of urbanisation and industrialization on the frequency of crime within the society.(Shelley, 1981:34)

Considering the economic development of the country, which at the attainment of independence on October 1, 1960, has been described as ossified with many decades of colonial capitalism holding sway. This inflexible nature of the economy with its inequitable development was utmost in the minds and policies of the new administration to transform. As a consequence, National Development plans were initiated. And against the backdrop of this, the Western Region drew up and implemented its Development for the period 1960-1965.(NAI, 1959:1) The plan came under review in the course of the

year with restructures and adjustments to enable the plan to fit right into the regional agenda. Despite the effort during the period to transform the economy of the land from what it suffered under colonial rule, it did not reflect the desired effect. The highest priority was given to agriculture in the 1962-1968 plan. Along with this was the establishment of more industries and the training of high and intermediate-level manpower. In a sense, the plan gave complementary attention to the expansion of industries and agriculture.(CSNRD, 1969:82) The western area of Nigeria capitalised on the huge resources possessed and its potentially large internal markets to actualise these plans. The plans also made steps to combat critical shortages of high and middle-level manpower. Efforts were made to award scholarships to promising young people and establish secondary, technical, agricultural and tertiary institutions that helped to build the potentially needed manpower. But as these were accomplished, the region experienced the problem of low-cadre surplus, that is, an increasing rate of unemployed primary school leavers.

The problem of unemployment for young people has indeed been building up since the 1960s in the region. By December 1960, the first batch of students under the universal primary education scheme completed their programme. This was a scheme introduced in 1955 to encourage young people to go to school, and the Western area alone had over 180,000 young people graduating as of 1960.(Callaway, 1962:223) Moreover, this number increased in the subsequent years as more young people availed themselves of the opportunity to attend school. This number of young people had to compete for the tertiary institutions and the complementary farm settlement designed to address the problem of young school leavers by the region. Even at this, many young school leavers prioritised some form of white-collar jobs to the keenly contested space of farming settlements and further academic pursuits. With time, those interested in the line of white-collar jobs began to drift to centres where the few industries have brought about increased economic activities within the region like, Ibadan, Ikeja, Benin etc.(Callaway, 1962:223) These centres also became points of attraction for criminality for many whose desires were not met by securing legal activities by the opportunities lurking around in the cities. This again contributed to the social and political problems that bedevilled or engulfed the region between 1962 and 1966. The mass unemployment had far-reaching consequences on the young people as many were cut within the webs of social imbalance and political cross-current, which were made readily available to be used as tools and pawns in the hands of the politicians.

Between 1966 and 1979, Nigeria witnessed persistent social and economic disorder which stemmed from political mismanagement. As such, it led to the emergence of military regimes holding the reins of power. Their activities contrasted sharply with that of the civilian administration. However, it left little to desire, as the country's economy was not far from its struggles. One distinguishing feature of the period was that the socio-economic and political set-up of the country, which had hitherto been within the grasp of the region, became centralised. Put differently, the regions effectively came under the grip of Federal power. For some time, before the civil war, the economy revolved around the export of agricultural products. The ascendancy of the sale of petroleum products gradually relegated the engagement in agricultural products. By 1967, when the civil war commenced, agricultural production was at its lowest ebb as a good number of young people had abandoned it for either service in the military or even more lucrative jobs ostensibly engendered by the booming petroleum industry. Clearly, people leaving the agricultural practice at the time portends a great disarticulation within the system. The living standard was by no means satisfactory for the teaming population

of farmers, but this had far-reaching social and economic consequences. It led to the lawlessness of various kinds and a decline in agricultural products, either cash or food crops. Lawlessness in this regard was demonstrated in the *Agbekoya* uprising of 1969, where farmers had opposed instituted oppression effort.(Gavin & Oyemakinde, 1980:516) The uprising at the period demonstrated a polarised economy with the privileged and the underprivileged classes two poles apart. An underpinning issue in all of these was the sad neglect of young people. Considering the predominant wave of lawlessness ravaging the land, the idea could then be understood from the point of people disenfranchised from legal means of survival seeking solace in the illegal structures accentuated by societal development.

Another phenomenon which began across the country was the escapades of armed robbers. Their activities were well known and dreaded because they terrorised people from all works of life. As a result, many were invariably of the opinion that the police could not even match up with the deftness of the armed robbers.(Newswatch, 1986:10)

In a sense, it could be argued that the activities of prominent armed robbers in Nigeria were inspirations for young offenders. Their activities and exploits in the criminal world trilled the mind minds of young people for many years as far as they could remember. One very prominent and well-celebrated notorious criminal was Ishola Oyenusi. His reign of terror in the western region was detailed on the pages of the dailies in the 1970s. Even after his death, it was reported that a sense of fear permeated the region, considering that his untamed criminal gang might unleash mayhem of disastrous proportion in retaliation and vengeance for his summary execution.

The point that has been made here is that his activities became remarkable to many young people who have, in a way, been locked out of opportunities for the right living in society and poorly socialised within the street settings or their neighbourhood. Ishola Oyenusi was not the only one in this category, as noted in the above report by the *Daily Times*. Another remarkable name in this category was the old Bendel State (This was part of the western region at the time) born criminal kingpin Lawrence Anini. He became a daredevil, dreaded far and wide his operational base and thus earned the appellation the "Law." His activities many times caught the attention of the Military Council under the military regime of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.(Newswatch, 1986:13)

The point needs to be made that many young people who got engaged in one delinquent act or another had very poor exposure to wrong values, which society did little to shield them from. In 1972, the *Daily Sketch* reported about a schoolboy who was sentenced to death by the Western States Armed Robbery Tribunal in a case of armed robbery. According to the report, the schoolboy who goes by the name Rafiu Oyeyemi assaulted and wounded a farmer in a village very close to Ile-Ife. He did this using scissors, dispossessing the farmer of his purse containing £10.2(*Daily Sketch*, 1972:1) Now, this is only to paint a picture which reflected the prevailing circumstance at the time.

Throughout our study period, there was a lot of room for improvement in how young people perceived delinquent behaviour. In the United States, status offences include incorrigibility, truancy, sexual misconduct, using alcohol, disobeying school officials, breaking curfew, idleness, running away from home, disobeying parents, having delinquent friends, and engaging in immoral behaviour. However, no such offences have been identified within the juvenile justice system.(Seige, & Senna, 1988) In all of these, however, only a case of sexual misbehaviour and a curfew violation may

draw the police's notice, becoming what the Nigerian police refer to as status offences. Furthermore, a grownup might be detained and charged with these crimes as well. The use of alcohol and cigarettes by children is not considered a delinquent act in Nigeria, so it is important to mention that this behaviour is not considered deviant. Unlike the other six status offences, such as school absences. Profanity, disobedience of school rules, laziness, running away from home, disrespecting parents, having delinquent friends, and immoral behaviour are examples of deviant behaviour; nevertheless, because these do not constitute legal infractions in Nigeria, they are not reported to the police. Informal control mechanisms for such behaviours are parents, the juvenile's peers, the school's headmaster or administrator, and community or village residents. (Ebbe,1988:122)

Since the 1960s, delinquency and child involvement in Nigeria have evolved, with a noticeable progression in the form and method of delinquent acts. The use of hard drugs by young offenders has notably changed over time. In the initial three decades, the exploitation of tobacco, alcohol, and prescription drugs was common. However, from the 1980s, there was a shift towards the use of marijuana, cocaine, and other substances (Toyin, 1987:29).

The trafficking of these illicit drugs has paralleled their use, often associated with a sense of glamour and wealth. Between 1980 and 1991, the Customs and Excise Department seized a total of 496,563 kg of hard drugs. The highest seizures were recorded in 1989 and 1991, with hardly a week passing in 1991 without a Nigerian apprehended at an airport (Omisakin 1998:2). Despite government efforts to combat this issue, the situation has mutated, becoming more complex and damaging. The study observed the introduction of drugs like heroin, crack, cannabis, and amphetamines from the 1990s onwards. A corresponding increase in female drug abuse was also noted.

In recent times, young offenders have been observed using substances such as codeine, crystal meth, tramadol, and ingesting gum (cold patch). The objective remains the same: to achieve a 'high', either for nefarious activities or pleasure (Mustapha, 2019). It is noteworthy that the use of prohibited substances and the formation of thuggery subcultures are closely linked.

Another important and viral delinquent trend following the above is cultism. (Adegboyega, 2005:7) The self-identified characteristics that most often distinguish the groups as anti-social become more noticeable as members of the groups grow a lot older. However, as juveniles desiring opportunities to fit into the unconventional social structure as a consequence of some dissatisfaction with societal or traditional standards, they cultivate values inherent in the ideals of popular culture, cutting themselves from their origin and entwined between conflicts of culture and prevailing uncertainties. They summarily have an impression that they are on the fringe of society and that their self-conceived values supersede those of society. The country has long played host to activities of this nature, particularly in schools.

Indeed, from the above, the situation deteriorated and grew beyond expected boundaries owing to the general neglect of public utilities by those in authority. Notably, the gradual collapse of the organised system led to the abandonment of societal duties by the government combined with the poor economic conditions in the country, young but notorious elements following from above took them over and asserted their authority. Of course, this could partly explain the birth of a new breed of rascals called "Area Boys."(*The Nigerian Tribune,*1999:28) Without gainsaying it was a phenomenon which grew out of already existing structures in society. But by the

1980s and 1990s, their name became instituted with a varying demonstration of their activities across the country.

Fraudulent acts among young people have equally evolved with time regarding their form and method. In the early period of the 1960s, young offenders could be observed coming together as a band or an armed gang. Sometimes they may not even be armed with any weapon but would deceptively, through cunning means, dispossess unsuspecting victims of their belongings in very crowded city centres. Such occurrence still pervades major marketplaces in the southwest today. However, many of them have developed even more dubious means to carry out such acts. With the advancement of modern communication technology and the proliferation of internet services, the cybercrime phenomenon emerged. One newspaper describes that,

> The internet offers boundless possibilities for commercial, social, and educational endeavours. However, alongside its numerous benefits, the online world also brings about unique risks. Unfortunately, the convenience and power of information technology and the internet have been exploited by criminals for their nefarious activities. Cybercrime encompasses a wide range of offences, extending beyond the infamous online 419 scams. It involves the utilization of computers and/or the internet to perpetrate illegal acts. Examples of computer-assisted crimes include email fraud, hacking, the dissemination of malicious software such as viruses and worms, denial-of-service attacks, data theft, extortion, fraud, and impersonation.(*The Nigerian Tribune,* 2006:17)

As Nigeria embraced the digital age, corporations such as Microsoft and Yahoo! significantly contributed to this shift by establishing internet shops offering free email accounts, making it uncommon for individuals not to have one. During the late 20th and early 21st centuries, cyber cafes proliferated, and browsing the internet became a popular activity. The Nigerian government further enhanced the ICT landscape by licensing Global System of Mobile (GSM) companies, improving communication with the global community. However, this digital revolution also saw the emergence of email and chat room scammers. Traditional methods of communication, such as fax machines and postal services, became obsolete during this period.

Nigerian banks and financial institutions capitalised on the ICT revolution to enhance their services, notably the electronic transfer of funds. Services like Western Union Money Transfer, MoneyNett, and MoneyGram have simplified the process for Nigerians abroad to send money home, often for property purchases. However, these services have also been exploited by scammers due to the volume of fraudulent money entering the country (Vanguard, 2010:12).

Young people engaged in internet fraud, colloquially known as 'Yahoo boys', require no specific qualifications or training. Their primary skill is the ability to navigate the internet and manipulate their victims. Over time, these individuals have adopted more sophisticated tactics, including the use of fetish and ritual activities to enhance their success. They initially used scam letters from previously exposed cases as templates, modifying only the addresses. With improved internet browsing skills, they intensified their efforts, primarily operating at night to benefit from better connectivity and lower costs. Their tactics continue to evolve, with recent trends indicating a shift towards exploiting online sales vulnerabilities, targeting items such as laptops, computer parts, mobile phones, and cameras (Vanguard, 2010:12).

Reports indicate a marginal increase in delinquency, with its consequential impact on societal structure. Offences have evolved from hawking and assault to more audacious activities. Statistics suggest a male predominance in these activities, possibly linked to the region's rising poverty index. While hawking was primarily associated with females pre-1990s, there has been a significant increase in male involvement thereafter. Similarly, promiscuity and prostitution, traditionally female-associated, have seen an unprecedented level of male involvement. Generally, these juvenile activities are categorised as 'Beyond Parental Control', encompassing truancy, non-compliance to parental authority, illegal substance use, and varied forms of promiscuity (The Tokyo Paper, 1983:23).

By the early 2000s, statistical records indicated a shift in juvenile offending patterns. National figures showed a 63.2% increase in property-related offences, primarily theft and breaking. Moral and status offences accounted for 20.6%, offences against persons 13.3%, and public order offences 2.9% (Alemika, & Chukwuma, 2001:12). Although these figures are not specific to the southwest, the region contributed significantly to them. A 2003 study reported a 26.3% increase in offences relating to children beyond parental control, with 34.5% for truancy, 15.2% for robbery, 7.6% for public demonstrations/riots, 7.0% for drug use and abuse, and 5.3% for murder cases (Nwanna, & Akpan, 2003:45). These statistics highlight the recurring nature of specific offences over the years.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of Nigeria's juvenile crime through a historical lens underscores the necessity of understanding its evolution within the complex socio-cultural context of the nation. Through the analysis of archival records, legal documents, and historical narratives, this study has illuminated the shifting patterns of juvenile delinquency from the pre-colonial era to the present day. It has elucidated how changes in socio-economic dynamics, cultural norms, and legislative frameworks have shaped the nature and prevalence of juvenile crime over time, underscoring the multifaceted nature of its genesis and perpetuation. Furthermore, the critical evaluation of the impact of colonial rule and subsequent independence on the juvenile justice system has revealed enduring legacies and contemporary challenges that continue to shape responses to youth offending in Nigeria.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

GENDER BIAS IN PRINT MEDIA REPORTAGE OF BABY FACTORY PHENOMENON IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In many African societies, a premium is placed on having biological children as proof of fertility. Couples unable to reproduce sometimes "harvest" babies from ''baby factory'' a term coined by the Nigerian media as a subset of child trafficking. Existing literature have examined baby factory practices and its causes with little attention paid to the gender context of the media reportage. This study, therefore, investigated the gender nuances in the print media reportage of baby factory in southeastern Nigeria and the responses of journalists toward the phenomenon.

The Agenda Setting theory provided the framework, while descriptive design was adopted. Reports on baby factory were generated from *The Sun, The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* newspapers from January to June, 2014 when reportage on baby factory expanded. Key informant interviews were conducted with the three newspapers editors and nine reporters (non-crime) journalists. Two Focus Group Discussions were conducted with newspaper editors and correspondents from a crime security association. An indepth interview was also conducted with Igbo men and women. The content of the data collected were thematically analysed.

Despite accounts showing both male and female involvement in the baby factory in south-eastern Nigeria , the media, alongside men, demonstrated bias against women by criminalizing women and depicting baby factory as a female crime. However, the males who caused these women to become pregnant and then abandoned them or husbands that abandoned their "barren" wives are not criminalised in the reports. The journalists relied on stories from police parade and press releases rather than an investigation. This demonstrate a lack of a deliberate gender lens in the reporting and instead represent the kind of shoddy news that the police provide to the media, a situation the journalists blamed on the secretive nature of the phenomenon. Bias stems from the paper barely examining the motivation behind women's involvement in baby factories. A woman expressed empathy for an arrested female suspects because she sees the pregnant woman's involvement as a way to give up the child after being abandoned, and as a way to support her desire to have children in order to stay married.

The media should report more on baby factory menace as a national crisis instead of projecting the phenomenon as a female crime.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Children are valued in Africa (Okonofua, 2002). Having one's own biological offspring is cherished since children are not just the future of a family, but also of society. Any man or woman who has children is referred to as the father and mother to underline their proof of fertility. There is a strong emphasis on having children and, as a result when children are not born soon after marriage, religious leaders are contacted to perform prayer and deliverance sessions for the couple.

Some of these women fall prey to unscrupulous spiritualists who defraud them of their hard-earned cash. Some may even pay the ultimate price by being murdered by rapists or extortionists who are scared of the transaction being revealed. Many others have tried unsuccessfully to find medical and natural treatments. Faced with the aforementioned obstacles, the "infertile" couple is clearly keen to start a family. There is evidence that some people would resort to desperate tactics at this point, such as kidnapping newborns, buying and "harvesting" babies, which had vivaciously given rise to the baby factory phenomena (Huntley, 2013).

The term "baby factory" refers to an intentional conduct of individuals or organized syndicates seeking pregnant girls and women to house them in a home and sell their babies to a third party. It also entails housing women and girls who have been impregnated by a paid guy in order to sell their offspring to a third party (Huntley, 2013; Agbo, 2014). With multiple syndicates seeking for undesired pregnancies, married couples, and relatives prepared to sell their babies to balance personal costs or break out of poverty, the 'baby factory' issue has taken on a worldwide, deadly, and sophisticated dimension.

. The United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture (UNESCO) first revealed examples of "baby harvesting," "baby trade," or "baby factory" in 2006 in a policy paper titled "Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Root Causes and Recommendations." Some of the key issues stated that support the baby factory phenomenon include the emphasis placed on having one's own biological children, the government's incapacity to police foster homes, the failure to properly apply criminal laws, and a lack of adequate rules and legislation. According to media sources, at least ten children are trafficked every day in Nigeria (BBC News of 01 June, 2011).

The media is defined as the Fourth Estate, which includes Publishers, Publicists, Newsmen, Newspapermen, Journalists, Journalistic Writers, Editors, and Correspondents, according to Webster's New World Thesaurus' New Revised Edition, and the duty of a journalist is to inform, educate, and serve as the society's watchdog. The newspapers like other types of media, exposes, informs, enlightens, educates, and affects both negative and positive change. According to Ologunju (2011), newspapers are a marketplace of ideas rather than lies and half-truths.

Statement of the problem

The UNESCO 2006 report explicitly mentions three Nigerian states as hotbeds for baby factory operators: Abia, Ebonyi, and Lagos. However, since 2006, "baby harvesting" in Nigeria has moved beyond these initial areas. Given media reports of new tricks being used, and how the phenomenon has taken a dangerous turn, with married couples following suit and selling their own children to pay off debt and meet personal needs, the phenomenon appears to be growing into a major social problem, a criminal act, and a stain on the country's image. Existing research has focused on baby factory practices and their causes, with little attention given to the gender context of media reporting.

As a result, this study looked into the gender nuances in relations to the media bais in the print media coverage of baby factory in southerneastern Nigeria,

Aim and Objective

The study's aim is to examine the gender nuances as related to the bias reportage in the selected Nigerian newspapers reportage of baby factory phenomenon in southeastern Nigeria,
.
1.   Identify gender bias in the print media reportage of male and female involvement in the sales and purchase of babies.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptualising trafficking in humans: a global phenomenon

The United Nations defines human trafficking as "the recruitment and supported transit of a person inside or across national borders for the purpose of exploitation through coercion, threats, or deception.". 'Exploitation' is described as forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, or organ harvesting. According to research, trafficking harms can include significant threats to personal safety, loss of all legal rights and personal dignity, physical abuse, and, in the case of sexual abuse, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (Kelly and Reagan 2004)Human trafficking involves continual exploitation of victims. (Experts Group on Trafficking in Human Beings 2004:5).

According to the UNESCO 2006 report, "Baby factory" is an intentional act or an organized illicit ring including syndicates ranging from doctors, nurses, and scouts who look for pregnant girls and women and put them in a home so that their babes can be sold to a third party, according to (Huntley :2013:5)   It also includes the intentional housing of women and girls who have been impregnated by a paid male in order to sell their infants to a third party. Many victims and perpetrators of this crime are currently in police custody, while some of the victims are being rehabilitated by NAPTIP (Huntley, 2013).

Baby factory in Nigeria

 According to UNESCO's policy document "Human trafficking in Nigeria: Root Causes and Recommendations," published in 2006, the first incidents of "baby harvesting," "baby trade," or "baby factory" were reported in 2006. Three Nigerian states were identified as hotbeds for baby factory operators in the survey: Abia, Ebonyi, and Lagos (Huntley, 2013:6).Since 2006, the practice of "baby harvesting" in Nigeria has spread beyond these first states, with reports of baby factories in Ogun, Imo, Anambra, Enugu, and Port Harcourt (Eseadis, Amaka, Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya, Ogbuabor 2015:14).

Nigeria media and baby factory

The Nigerian media coined the phrase "baby factory" to depict this horrible scenario in Nigeria as a widespread, systematic crime, because some of the operators are supposedly serial murders and are involved in human trafficking networks. (Huntley 2013). In Nigerian media, the term "baby factory" has been used to describe a location where women are pressured or forced to become pregnant and then sell their newborns. According to (Madike, 2013), baby factories are controlled by organized crime syndicates , disguised as maternity centers, orphanages, social welfare homes, clinics, and informal water bottling businesses.

Baby factories are now common in Nigerian society, acting as a conduit for human trafficking, abuse, and sexual violence.(Oguche Emmanuel, Nnanyelugo Okoro, Michael Onyekachi Ukonu 2021) Infants in Eastern Nigeria are sold and bought in the same way that candy is acquired from a confectioner's store, according to (Ossai2013:76). What remains to be seen is a scenario where a shop or building expressly proclaims "babies for sale."

Review of related studies

Similar research to the current study are analyzed and summarized here.

This is intended to provide emphasis and direction to the current investigation (Chaudhary, A.G. 2001). "International News Selection: A Comparative Analysis of Negative News in the Washington Post and Nigeria's Daily Times." (Chaudhary 2001) investigates the slant of a week's worth of news pieces from two newspapers: The Washington Post and the Daily Times of Nigeria. We used two coders who were given definitions of negative, good, and neutral news. Based on its findings, the study determined that the newspapers, the Washington Times and the Daily Times of Nigeria, both published content that was roughly 30% positive and 30% negative.

(ii) In (Kiousis& McCombs2004) "Agenda-Setting Effects and Attitude Strength: Political Figures During the 1996 Presidential Election", used a simple yet revealing model to focus on political figures during the 1996 presidential election .The study counted news stories that focused on eleven (11)politicians over the course of five months and then compared the level of coverage with public opinion polls aimed at each politician. The study found correlations between polled approval ratings for politicians and the amount of coverage major newspapers allotted such politicians.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Agenda setting theory

The agenda setting theory served as the theoretical foundation for this research. (McCombs and Shaw 972, 1993) established the term agenda-setting to characterize a phenomenon that had long been observed and studied in the context of election campaigns; the media's focus on a topic effects the audience's perception of that topic's importance by giving news articles a specific amount of weight based on their placement, size, and frequency of presentation. (Shaw 1983:132) reiterated this viewpoint when he claimed that the media can turn an event or series of connected events into an issue by putting recurrent and considerable emphasis on them.

The mass media, according to (Umechukwu 2001, p.148) and (Folarin 2002), has an impact on agenda setting since they have the ability to choose or emphasize specific topics, causing the public to consider the issues or topic as significant. This indicates that the media shape what topics are considered essential in a given society at any given time. The print media can impose prestige and legitimacy on political leaders and issues through its agenda-setting function, making them appear significant and "correct." (Okunna1999:121-122). Further on this topic by observing that the print media can increase or boost the standing of a political candidate in a number of ways: The media can give larger headlines to the favoured candidate. The media can feature more lead stories on the candidate; Through placement, give more prominent positions to articles on the candidate; print more quotations from the candidate's speech; Photographs and other prominence-enhancing strategies can accompany stories on the candidate; and print more remarks praising the candidate.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research was used for this study since baby factories are not "open" public structures, As a result, the majority of this work was conducted through interviews in order to obtain responses toward the baby factory along gender line as well of content analysis of selected newspapers..

Population of the study

The target populations are people involved in baby factory activities such as journalists, the editors and Igbo residents (male / female) who read newspaper.

Sampling techniques /Sampling sizes

Two methods for sampling were adopted for this study- the Purposive sampling and Convenient sampling techniques. The Purposive sampling technique was used to select 61 respondents from Owerri and Umuahia in Imo and Abia states. This method was used as these cities are considered as having high prevalence of the phenomenon in southeastern Nigeria. The Convenient method was used to conduct two sessions of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) , 10 crime reporters, and 10 crime editors, from a crime reporters' association . Indepth Interview(IDI) was conducted with 10 Igbo male and 10 Igbo female . 12 Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with the three newspaper's editors and nine reporters who are non-crime journalists using the Convenient method. These data

gathering methods were employed as baby factories are not open places anyone can walk in and conduct research. Data were thematically and content- analysed.

 Secondary data for this study were generated from three Nigeria newspapers (*The Punch, The Sun and Nigerian Tribune*). The three newspapers' publications, 540 in number were between January- June 2014. 35 news items on baby factory phenomenon were obtained from a first round analysis of the 540 newspaper publications after they were categorised according to the respective newspaper, their dates of publication, the offender, the location of the crime and the title of the stories by the selected newspapers .

 A second level (thirty-five news items) on baby factory were purposively selected to identify news articles that reported the phenomenon in south eastern Nigeria and out of this 35 news items on baby factory, 14 news items were obtained as reporting on baby factory in south eastern Nigeria showing that the media underreported the phenomenon; However, because the report is focused on investigating the media bias in the newspapers , a 3rd level of sorting was conducted on the 35 reports on baby factory which shows that the reports have more number of female suspects 56 compared to the male suspects 20 ,however , the fourth round of sorting conducted on the 14 news items on baby factory in south eastern Nigeria shows that the reports has 16 female and 11 male suspects respectively which shows that both female and male have significant recorded involvements in baby factory phenomenon in south eastern Nigeria even though the female involvements is higher than the male which is due to the feminine nature of the factory which requires women to give birth, women are the midwives, nurses, clienteles that purchase the babies however both men are women are major players in promoting the factory..

Methods of Data Collection

 The primary and secondary sources of data was used for this study . The primary source of data was generated from Key informant interviews conducted with the three newspapers editors and nine reporters (non-crime) journalists while Indepth Interview was conducted with 10 Igbo male and 10 female . Two Focus Group Discussions were conducted with newspaper editors, correspondents from a crime security association. The secondary source of data was generated from *The Sun, The Punch and Nigeria Tribune* newspapers from January to June 2014. Also, two methods of data collections were employed. They are the Field method and Document Analysis method

The Field method

 The Field method which involves the use of interview was used to collect data from primary sources. Interview was used during sessions of Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with crime editors, correspondents who are members of a crime reporter's association, Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with non crime editors and correspondents from the selected newspapers - three editors -one each and nine reporters- three each from the selected newspapers   as well as Igbo men and women who read newspapers were conveniently selected.

The Document Analysis method

Document analysis method was used to collect data from secondary sources which are the newspapers using content analysis.

Data analysis
The data gotten from interviews recordings of the journalists, were thematically analysed along gender line. The parameters for collecting data from the selected newspapers included news, cartoons, features articles, editorials, special reports and news sources. They underwent content analysis/ narration techniques. the researcher analysed 540 publications of *The Punch*, *The Sun* and *Nigerian Tribune newspapers* from January to June 2014 using the method of Content Analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

To interrogate Nigeria newspaper reportage on baby factory in Southeastern Nigeria to find out the gender bias in the reportage
 To achieve this, the researcher analysed 540 publications of *The Punch*, *The Sun* and *Nigerian Tribune newspapers* from January to June 2014 using the method of Content Analysis. Table 1 below shows the newspapers, their dates of publication, the gender issues in the reportage of the phenomenon, the location of the crime and the title of the stories published by the selected newspapers.

The newspapers reports on baby factory in south eastern Nigeria and their contents

NEWSPAPER	DATE OF REPORT	OFFENDER	LOCATION OF OFFENCE	OFFENCE/TITLE OF STORY
Daily Sun	20/02/2014	Female	Abia	Man arrested for abduction and unlawful sale of a child for N200,000 pg 6
Daily Sun	27/02/2014	2 Females	AkwaIbom	Abduction of children from Cross-river and sale in Onitsha pg 6
Daily Sun	22/03/2014	1 male 1 female	Ogun	Running of baby making factory (N300,000 per baby) pg 4
Daily Sun	01/04/2014	Male	Anambra	Anambra Chieftain who aids in getting buyers for stolen children or unwanted children arrested pg 3
Daily Sun	03/04/2014	Female	Abia	Gang arrested for kidnapping 2 pupils for child trafficking and running of baby making factory pg 5
Daily Sun	25/05/2014	Female	Enugu	Sale of her own baby for N430,000 pg 6
Daily Sun	02/04/2014	3 males	AkwaIbom	Stealing and sale of babies pg 6
Daily Sun	04/05/2014	2 males	Imo	Forcefully snatched baby from mother and sold to another couple pg 14
Daily Sun	12/06/2014	2 Females	Imo	Child abduction and sale pg 12
Daily Sun	25/04/2014	3 Females 1 Male	Anambra	Child trafficking on the rise pg 6
Daily Sun	14/05/2014	Male	Abia	Medical doctor arrested for operating baby factory pg 4
Daily Sun	20/04/2014	Male	Imo	Man arrested for Running baby making factory for sale of babies and child trafficking pg 5
Daily Sun	18/04/2014	1 Male 3 Female	Abia	Gang arrested for Kidnapping and Child trafficking pg 5
Daily Sun	19/04/2014	Male	Abia	Teenage girls for baby making rescued pg 6
Daily Sun	06/04/2014	Female	Delta	Couple arrested for running Baby making factory pg 5

Newspaper	Date	Gender	Location	Headline
Nigerian Tribune	06/04/2014	Female	Delta	How we recruit girls in Baby making factory pg3
Nigerian Tribune	02/05/2014	3 Females	Anambra	Baby factory uncovered, pregnant girls, baby rescued pg 4
Nigerian Tribune	31/01/2014	Male	Ondo	Baby factory uncovered in Ondo pg 4
The Punch	3/06/2014	1 Male 2 Females	Ogun	Parents and Nurse collude to sell newborn baby pg 4.
The Punch	31/1/2014	Male/females	Ondo	Immigration clamp down on baby factory –It's a herbal clinic-suspect pg. 4
The Punch	8/3/2014	Male /females	Ogun	Ogun to rehabilitate baby factory victims --- pg 8
The Punch	8/3/2014	Female	Oyo	Woman in court over baby kidnap allegation, pg 8
The Punch	21/1/2014	1 male, 1 female	Lagos	Police arrest couple for human trafficking pg 5.
The Punch	31/1/2014	1 Male 14 Female	Ondo	Police clamp down on baby factory in Ondo pg 4 and 5
The Punch	26/2/2014	1 female	Akwa-Ibom	Police nab prophetess for operating baby factory.pg 4/5
The Punch	25/6/2014	1 female	Ondo	38 years old in court for abducting employer's child pg 5
The Punch	11/3/2014	1 female	Akwa-Ibom	Mother sells three day old baby for N260,000 pg 4
The Punch	4/4/2014		Ogun	Youths uncover baby factory , set building ablaze pg 5
The Punch	30/4/2014			Ending the baby factory menace (view point) pg 22.
The Punch	29/3/4014	9 females	Ogun	I bless babies before selling them 'baby factory operator'
The Punch	22/3/2014	1 female	Ogun	Police discover baby –making factory in Ogun pg8.
The Punch	29/3/2014			baby factories have deprieved us of abandoned babies—orphanage operators pg 16/17

The Punch	24/3/2014	1 female	Ogun	Baby merchant use vulnerable girls for business ' pg 4
The Punch *The Punch*	27/6/2011	male 2 male	Abia Abia	Father sells baby for N650, 000pg 5. Two in court for selling children pg 4

The investigation focused on the newspapers, their titles, pages, publication dates/days (daily and weekend), crimes, gender involved, and criminal location. The researcher also looked at the gender of the suspects, victims, and operators of the baby factory, as well as the placement of the story, whether it was news, feature, editorial, interviews, opinions, special reports, and gender of the suspects, victims, and operators of the baby factory. As shown in Table 1, there are 35 publications on baby factories, 14 of which are from southeastern Nigeria.

Number of Male and Female in the reports on baby factory .
> Female 56
> Male   20

Number of Male and female in the report on baby factory in south eastern Nigeria
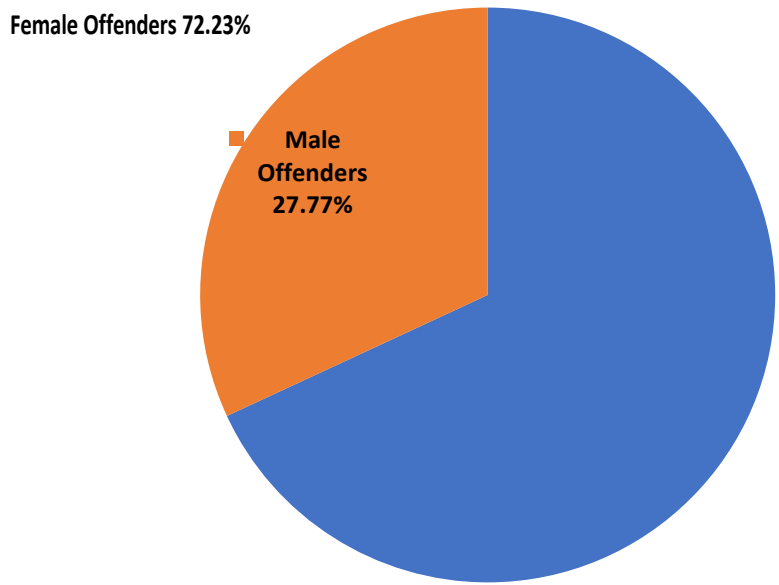Female 16
Male 11

The newspaper portrayal of male and female is prejudiced in favour of the women.

The gender dynamics of offenders in the baby factory phenomenon were investigated using print media reports on cases from selected newspapers. Table 1 demonstrates that females (56) outnumber males (20). This was accomplished by categorizing offenders according to their gender as published in newspapers during the study period (See figure 2). Figure 2 shows that more than half of the baby factory masterminds (72.23 percent) were female, with a significant number of males (27.77 percent). The findings reveal that in south eastern Nigeria, there are more female masterminds of baby factory operations 16 compared to the men 11 which can be related to the feminine aspect of the baby factory phenomena, which frequently needs infant harvesting from pregnant women. As a result, another lady might be ideally suited to run a baby factory.

Despite accounts showing both male and female involvement in the baby factory in southeastern Nigeria , the news demonstrates bias against women by criminalizing women depicting baby factory as a female crime, was attributed to the journalists relying on the parade of arrest of the suspects and victims. Instead of journalists to undertake investigations, they relied on police parade and these parades contain more women than males. The media blame their reliance on police parades on the secret nature of baby factory. Despite the fact that male suspects were detained, there were hardly account of males getting women pregnant and then abandoning them, or husbands abandoning their "barren" wives. More female suspects were discovered in the field interviews, along with a host of accomplices in the form of coworkers and clients.

The reports reveal a greater number of women being paraded, which the journalists feasted on, while the males who caused these women to become pregnant were rarely mentioned at all, criminalizing the women and demonstrating biased reporting. The stories, which come from the police rather than an investigation, demonstrate a lack of a deliberate gender lens in the reporting and instead represent the kind of shoddy news that the police and other security services that apprehend suspects in baby factories provide to the media. Furthermore, most of the reported baby factories demonstrate that professional nurses and midwives were frequently involved in the delivery of newborns from expectant mothers. The male participation in baby factory operations, on the other hand, could be in financing the operations, which are subsequently run by a variety of female collaborators. Men are paid as sex contractors, gatemen and traffickers,

The feminine aspect of the baby factory phenomena, which typically requires females to give birth, act as midwives, and care providers, was also a plausible reason for female high involvement in the baby factory, according to the thematic analysis of the transcripts of interviews. As a result, another lady might be ideally suited to run a baby factory. Furthermore, the paper barely examines the motivation behind women's involvement in baby factories. Similarly, a thematic analysis of the interviews revealed biased reporting, according to interviews with journalists and Igbo men and women.

Figure 1: The newspapers reports on the involvement of male and female in baby factory phenomenon.

This bias stems from the following reasons obtained from thematic analysis of the interviews as responsible for the high number of female involvement in baby factory in southeastern Nigeria. women are more in the baby factory due to unwanted pregnancy ,poverty ,rape reluctant mother otherwise known as trafficked female, others are cultural practice of seeking ones biological children, divorce due to bareness. scorn on adopted children not eligible to inherit, cultural practice of having biological male.

The bias also stems from the categorisation of female involved in baby factory.

From the result obtained from content analysis of the newspapers and from interviews transcripts of journalists show that there is a wide range of female in the baby factory phenomenon The female are categorized into these nine groups.

1. Women and teenage girls kept in homes (factories) and impregnated by paid men.
2. Unmarried women and girls with unwanted pregnancies whom their lovers have abandoned but do not want to abort the children go to baby factories to give birth and their children are sold.
3. Women and girls who do not have the means to go for abortion would agree to sell their children because they see such children as burden so they sell to middle men and women who later resell such children.
4. Female and male syndicates, who can be husband and wife who steal children by luring them with biscuits and other food. They take these children from their homes in one state and sell to traffickers and buyers in far away states.
5. Women and teenage girls who deliberately get pregnant and contact middle men and women to help them get buyers or they go to baby factories to give birth and collect money in return to foot bills and take care of personal needs.
6. Female and male who hunt (also known as traffickers) and lure pregnant girls to baby factories and help them get buyers for the babies. Among women in this category are widows who in one way or the other got pregnant, some have four children while still in their late husband's houses and because they cannot give any reasonable explanation how they got pregnant would want to stay in a home and give birth so the children are sold.
7. Married female who connive would deliberately get pregnant and go to baby factory to sell or look for baby traffickers to sell their children in order for them to cater for needs of other children, pay bills, and take care of other needs.
8. Elderly women who have passed menopause or women whose menstrual flow has stopped/those who are unable to conceive due to infection would visit a woman who claims to be knowledgeable about fertility herbs, and would give them such herbs.
9. Female child abductors who kill mothers and take children away for sale to a third party.

Bias in regards to the high feminine involvement in baby factory is also reflected in the female clientele of the baby factory, where some married women in need of babies, fake pregnancy to their husbands and in-laws, or what is known as crystic pregnancy, which they achieved through the use of hormone-altering medications.

> ''Baby factories are owned and managed by male and female partners possibly spouses. Media reportage of the baby factory shows that the women are many in the baby factory due to their nature of being nurturers . They are the ones the society easily point fingers to when there is no child in the marriage. Therefore these women faced with this societal complaints about their productivity will resort to the baby factory for help as she will see it as opportunity to prove to the world that she can give birth so as to wipe her shame away'' Journalist . Fieldwork 2018

. The journalists reveal that women's failure to disclose desertion by their husbands to government authorities contribute to the problem of not arresting more men.

'' We have not done enough to expose the baby factory phenomenon. We report police arrest but baby factory is existing in our communities, the operators are not in the sky so if we are serious about exposing them, we should not wait for police to arrest them and present them to us, we should actually carry out undercover investigations and follows up on parade of the suspects, ensure we report till they are prosecuted. We should put the reports in the front burners by reporting it all the time. When journalists take the issue of baby factory seriously, government too will have no choice but to take the menace seriously and stop it ''Fieldwork 2018.

According to (Treneman and McQuail 1961:.178), (Shaw 1983:132) agreed that the media can make an event or a set of related events into an issue by emphasizing them repeatedly and heavily. According to (Umechukwu 2001, p.148) and Folarin (2002), the mass media has an impact on agenda setting because they have the ability to choose or emphasize specific topics, causing the public and, by extension, the government to consider the issues or topic as significant. However, the police set the agenda for the media in this case, as the journalists relied on arrest.

''Newspapers have over the years. continued to shrink pages in order to accommodate more news items due to rising cost of production. Also, the emergence of the internet and subsequent social media interactions which can easily reach a lot of reading public, the use of the newspapers have continued to suffer decline and this has made a lot of news items to fight for the few pages.

Conclusion

The patriarchal society reflects in the media portrayal of the women in negative light .Social stigmas against teenage pregnancies out of wedlock, child abandonment, couples' infertility, and legal adoptions, according to the tales and studies featured in this study, contribute to the presence of "baby factories" in Nigeria. The first two assure that a regular supply of women, especially teenage girls, is available. Because "adoptive" parents pass off these newborns as their biological infants to avoid cultural and societal rejection, the last two factors help to boost demand for such babies and women and men are major players in the phenomenon .Newspaper reportage should see Baby faction as a national problem instead of portraying it as a women's crime and check root causes of poverty, the role of culture, the high rate of rape, and teen pregnancy, as well as providing cheap and affordable fertility options to check the menace.

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SECTION H

CHILD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES OF MOTHERS'S ATTENDING

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA TOWARDS

PREVENTION OF CHILDHOOD ANAEMIA

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Abstract

Studies carried out in the past has shown that incidence and prevalence of childhood anaemia in Enugu, southeast Nigeria is high despite various intervention programs carried out in the past by Federal government to reduce the prevalence. A cross-sectional study investigating knowledge, attitude and practices was carried out among the mothers of reproductive age 15-49 attending Abakpa health centre located in Abakpa district, Enugu, Southeast Nigeria. A total of one hundred and fifty-nine mothers attending Abakpa health centre consented and participate in the study. Sample was selected using purposive sample method. Participants were interviewed using structured questionnaire. Analysis of the data was done using statistical package for social science software (SPSS) version 23.0. Analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and their children was done, evaluation of knowledge, attitude, and practices of the participants towards childhood anaemia was done. The revealed that majority of the participant has heard about childhood anaemia in the past, but they still indulge in wrong practices and negligence that can lead to childhood anaemia. Majority of the participants do not practice exclusive breastfeeding, malaria chemo prophylaxis and good hygiene which is one the major preventive measure for childhood anaemia .The study also revealed there is a positive moderate correlation between knowledge and practice using Pearson (r) correlation at 0.649 and there is no significant level between knowledge and practice at 0.236.Reduction in childhood anaemia can be achieve if proper training and enlightenment programs are organized for mothers which help to close the knowledge gap that will result in better practices and reduction in incidence of childhood anaemia in Enugu.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

World Health Organization (WHO) recognized childhood anemia as a public health issue since 2004 due to its high morbidity and mortality rate (WHO, 2015:1). Anemia is defined as hemoglobin levels of below 11g/dl for children 6-50 months and below 11.5g/dl in children aged over 5 years and above (WHO, 2015:4). Anemia is a condition where there are either too few red blood cells or too little hemoglobin in them. The capacity of the blood to transfer oxygen to the body's tissues will be reduced if you have too few or malformed red blood cells, not enough hemoglobin, or both. Hemoglobin is required to carry oxygen. This causes symptoms like weakness, exhaustion, light-headedness, and shortness of breath, among others. Age, sex, elevation of habitation, smoking habits, and pregnancy status all affect the ideal hemoglobin concentration required to meet physiologic needs. Nutritional deficiencies, especially iron deficiency, as well as haemoglobinopathies, infectious illnesses like malaria, and vitamin B12, folate, and vitamin A deficiencies are the most frequent causes of anemia (WHO, 2023:4). Anemia happens at all stages of life but it is more widespread in under-five year-old children. World Health Organization has estimated that globally 293 million children under 5 years of age are anemic with a prevalence rate of about 47.4%, among which 50% are estimated to suffer from iron deficiency (WHO, 2015:4). Childhood anemia is caused by nutritional deficiencies, genetic hemoglobin disorders, infectious and inflammatory diseases (Gretchen, 2019). Inadequate breastfeeding and complimentary food, and diseases such as celiac diseases, peptic ulcer, autoimmune atrophic gastritis, iron refractory, iron deficiency, and inflammation which result in malabsorption of iron in the gastrointestinal tract (Cappelin et al., 2020). The first two years of life is crucial to growth and development of a child, anemia at this stage impairs the brain's capacity to develop properly which will lead to poor cognitive function later in life (Parbey, 2019).

Statement of problem

Despite intervention and treatment provided by the federal government and various international non-governmental organizations to fight childhood anemia in Nigeria, including Enugu state). However, according to the World Bank, Nigeria still has a high rate of childhood anemia at 69% (World Bank,2019:1). However, studies have indicated that mothers lack competence in good nutritional practices and hence leading to preventable childhood anemia (Mutiso et al., 2018). Nutritional inadequacies, viral illnesses, hereditary hemoglobin abnormalities and early introduction to complementary foods are the causes of childhood anemia (Gretchen, 2019). Anemia is preventable, therefore preventive measures must be put in place. Childhood anemia among children 0-24 months will impair brain development which will lead to poor cognitive function later in life (Parbey, 2019). Despite the Federal Ministry of Health and National Primary Healthcare Development Agency of Nigeria's intervention and non-profit organizations yet the prevalence of childhood anemia remain high in Nigeria and Enugu state. But little is understood about mothers' and caregivers' knowledge, attitude, and behavior towards childhood anemia in Enugu state, hence the significance of this study.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards the prevention of childhood anemia. The specific purpose is to:

- ⬜ To assess the level of knowledge of the mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards prevention of childhood anemia.

- ⬜ To assess the attitude of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards the

prevention of childhood anemia.

- ☐ To assess the practice of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards prevention of childhood anemia.

Research questions.

1. What is the level of knowledge of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards preventing childhood anemia?

2. What is the level of attitude of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards preventing childhood anemia?

3. What is the level of practice of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards preventing childhood anemia?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between knowledge and practice of prevention of childhood anemia among mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre.

Ho2: There is a significant relationship between knowledge and practice of prevention of childhood anemia among mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This was a quantitative, facility-based analytical cross-sectional study that evaluated mothers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) towards prevention of childhood anemia. In cross-sectional research, variables are recorded for each participant and a population is examined at a specific point in time, similar to taking a cross-section of a group. When attempting to determine the incidence or prevalence of a condition, belief, or circumstance, cross-sectional study designs are helpful. Studies that are cross-sectional can infer a relationship or correlation. The researcher was able to identify relationship between factors and gain an understanding of mothers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices the prevention of childhood anemia at a specific time.

Population of the study

The mothers who use the Abakpa Health Centre are the study's target audience, and the inclusion criteria include women between the ages of 18 and 60 who are willing to sign a consent form and take part in the study. Mothers who declined to participate in the study and all other mothers who are not directly caring for the kid are exclusion criteria.

Sample and sampling technique.

In a quantitative investigation, the sample size was determined using the Cochran formula (Cochran, 1977). $n0 = z^2pq/e^2$

p is the estimated proportion of the population, $q = 1-p$, and e is the desired level of accuracy. no is the sample size. z is the specified critical value of the desired confidence level.

The calculation for the necessary sample size will be as follows: $p = 50\%$ (0.5) and hence $q = 1$ $0.5 = 0.5$; $e = 0.05$; $z = 1.96$) and taking 95% confidence level with 5% precision.

When the intended level of accuracy was 95%, the standard deviation was 1.9%, where n = Minimal Sample Size and z = Constant Standard Deviation.

p stands for the estimated percentage of mothers using the Abakpa health facility.

There is no documentation of any survey that was conducted to evaluate the knowledge, attitude, and behavior of women attending Abakpa district health centre towards the prevention of childhood anemia.

The marginal error to be permitted is 5%, therefore $e = 0.05$

$n = 1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 / 0.05^2$

$n = 384$

Therefore, 384 mothers who use the Abakpa Health Centre constitute the sample size. For my population, which was fewer than 10,000.

The estimated sample size for the study population of fewer than 10,000 people is nf (n / 1+ n / N), where N is the estimated population of mothers who have visited the Abakpa Health Centre over the past three months (June = 45, July = 60, and August = 55).

N = 160, n = 384, and nf = 10,000 for the target population (mothers attending Abakpa health centre).

nf = (384 / 1+384/160)

nf = 159.

Therefore, a sample size of 159 respondents was chosen in the investigation.

Sampling technique

This study adopted purposive sampling method because every member of the population have chance to be selected but the chance is not equal among them. Mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre were interviewed during the study until the exact number of respondents needed is reached. Study variables for this study are divided into dependent variables, independent variables and confounding variables. The dependent variables for this study were prevention of childhood anemia in Abakpa Health Centre, independent variables are knowledge, attitude, and practice of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia. Confounding variables were used to give insight on the positive impact of mother's knowledge, attitude, and practice towards prevention of childhood anemia, these variables include education level, age, occupation and marital status of the respondents.

Instruments for data collection

This study used semi-structured questionnaire written in English language . The questionnaire consists of open and close ended questions for the respondents. The questionnaire contains socio-demographic information, knowledge, attitude, and practice of childhood anemia. The administered questionnaire was an instrument used to collect data from mothers attending Abakpa health centre. Those respondents that do not understand English were interview in Igbo language.

Validity

The extent to which an instrument measures what it is claimed to measure is known as validity. The questionnaire was evaluated and improved based on the aim, objectives, and research questions in this thesis to ensure content and face validity. Then, it was changed in accordance with the advice of the supervisor, who has past experience working in the field of public health, and available literature. Establishing face validity is typically the first step done in the validation of the questionnaire used for this research. My supervisor reviewed the survey for typical mistakes like double-barrelled, perplexing, and leading questions. Pilot study was conducted among a sample of the target demographic. This study used 20 participants during the pilot test. Data from the participants after the pilot test was analysed.

Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which the instrument's results are trustworthy result over several. Attempt and accurate representation of the study population. The tools are consistent. This study ensured that tools are consistent, accurate and reliable to yield results. This study conducted Test-retest reliability by conducting the survey once with a certain group of respondents and then conducting it again with that same group later on. The responses at the two-time points are then compared.

Procedure for data collection

Semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect. Data collection was carried out with the assistant of a research assistant who is a qualified and experienced health worker. The hired research assistant was trained on the tool for a day. The research assistant's capacity was built on how to collect data related to knowledge, attitude, and practice towards the prevention of childhood anemia, confidentiality, and ethics of research, distribution of questionnaires and data collection. Participants were informed about the goals and objectives of the study. Respondents gave consent. to participate in the study; the respondents who consented to the study and were eligible signed the consent form. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants were observed, a n d the respondents were allowed to ask questions for clarification in any questions they find difficult to understand.

Method of data analysis

For data entry, cleaning, analysis, and visualization in this study, IBM statistical package for social science (SPSS) software version 23 was utilized. Data cleaning were done, errors were checked to ensure the data completeness and accuracy were put into consideration. Descriptive analysis was done to determine the demographical characteristic of the participants, knowledge, attitude and practice of participants towards childhood anemia prevention. Pearson (r) correlation was preformed to test the relationship between knowledge and practice variables and statistically significant level between knowledge and practice.

RESULT AND FINDINGS

Answers to research questions

This chapter contains the findings and results on the knowledge, attitude, and behavior of mothers visiting Abakpa Health Centre in relation to the prevention of children anemia in the form of tables, graphs, histograms, bar charts, and pie charts. 159 mothers and caregivers of young children who were in the antenatal, pediatrics, and general outpatient wards of the Abakpa Health Centre agreed to take part in the study. Their replies were compiled and shown as follows:

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1: Show the distribution of respondents according to the age range source of data: field data, 2022.

Age Range	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
15-19 years	20	12.6
20-24 years	51	32.1
25-29	49	30.8
30-34	22	13.8
35-39	17	10.7
Total	159	100%

Table 1 shown above, 20(12.6%) of respondents were age range 15-19 years, 20-24 years age range were 51 (32.1%) , 25-29 years age range were 49 (30.8%) , 30-34 years age range were 22 (13.8%) and only 17 (10.7%) were age range of 35 years and above. The result shown that majority of the mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre that participated in the study are young mothers on their productive age.

Table 2: show distribution of respondents to their marital status.Source of data: field data,2022

Marital status	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Married	120	75.5
Single	25	15.7
Widow	10	6.3
Divorce	4	2.5
Total	159	100%

Table 2: showed the marital status of the respondents, the result showed that majority 120 (75.5%) were married followed by 25 (15.7%) single, widow 10 (6.3%) and divorce 4 (2.5%

Figure 1: A pie chart showing the distribution of the respondents level of education

Figure 1: showed, majority of the respondents 80 (50.3%) attended secondary school followed by 50 (31.4%) attended higher institution of learning and 29 (18.2%) attended primary school .

EDUCATION LEVEL

- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- HIGHER

18.2%

31.4%

50.3%
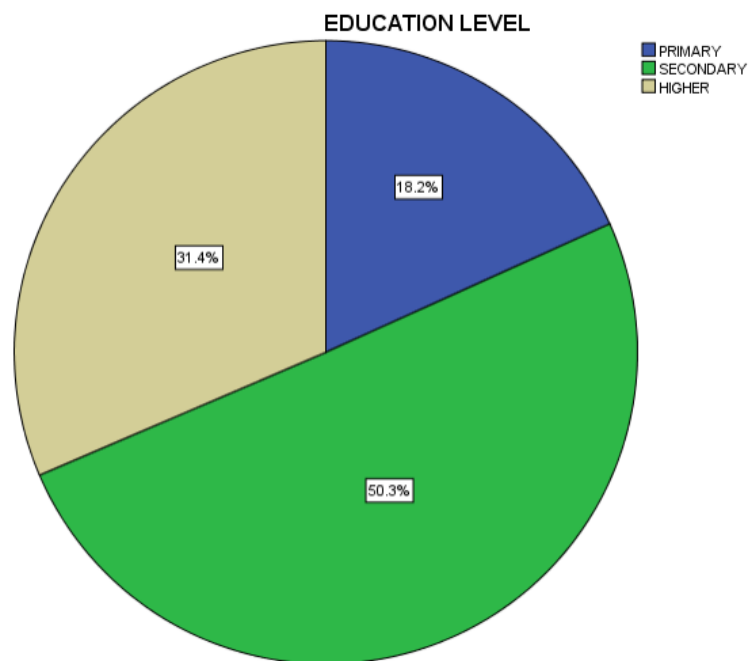
Table 3: Show distribution of respondents according to occupation.

Occupation	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Unemployed	40	25.2
Self employed	30	18.9
Business	29	18.2
Farmers	17	10.7
Housewife	23	14.5
Civil servant	20	12.6
Total	159	100

Table 3: showed that ,out of 159 respondents ,40 (25.2 %) were unemployed ,30 (18.9%) were self-employed , 29 (18.2%) were business women , 17 (10.7%) were farmers , 23 (14.5%) were housewives and 20 (12.6%) were civil servants

Figure 2: A bar chart showing gender distribution of the children.

Figure 2: showed majority of the children of the respondents were female 90 (56.6%) and male were 69 (43.4%).
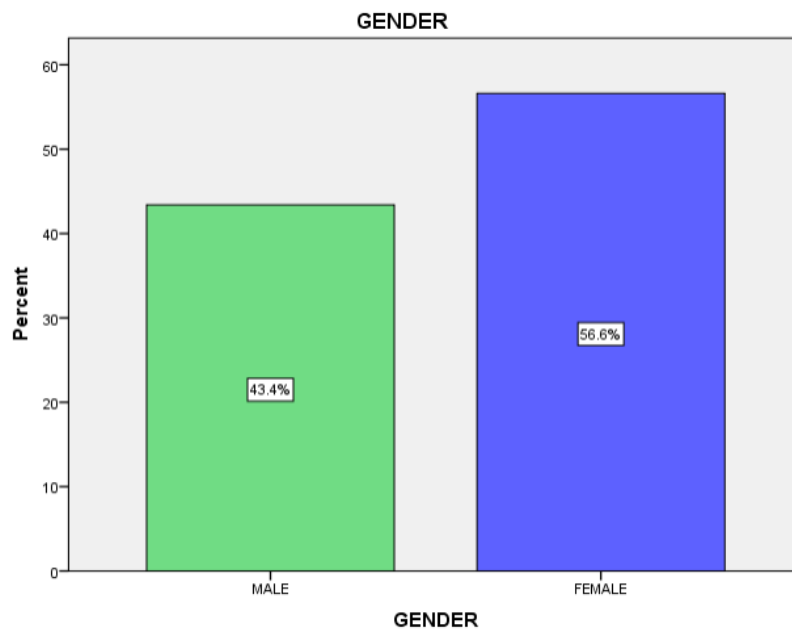
Figure 3: A bar charts showing type of family setting of the respondents.
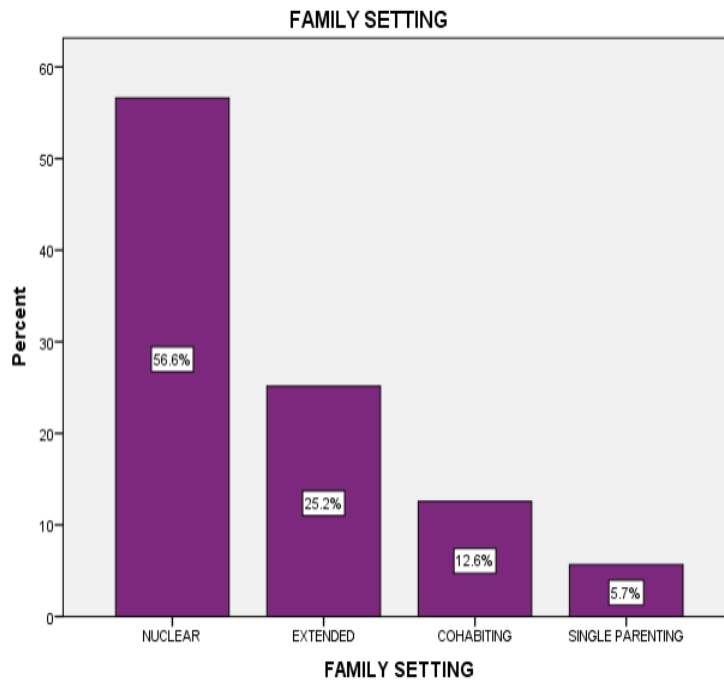
Figure 3: showed that majority of the respondents family setting were nuclear family which represents 90 (56.6%), extended family families were 40 (25.2 %), cohabiting family were 20 (12.6%) and single parenting were 9 (5.7%)

Research question 1

Knowledge of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia

Figure 4: A pie chart showing respondents who have heard about childhood anemia for the first time.
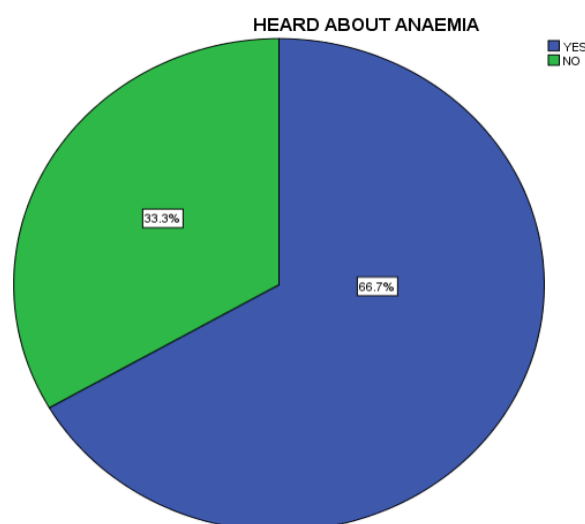
Figure 4: showed majority of the respondents 106 (66.7%) has heard about the word anemia while 53 (33.3%) of the respondents have never heard the word anemia.

Table 4: Show distribution of the respondents' source of information about childhood anemia

Source of information	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Radio	4	2.5
Television	3	1.9
Health facility	90	56.6
Family & Friends	9	5.7
Have not heard about anemia	53	33.3
Total	159	100

Source of data, field data, 2022.

Table 4: above showed that 4 (2.5 %) heard about anemia through radio, 3 (1.9%) of the respondents through television, 90 (56.6 %) heard about anemia through health facility, 9 (5.7%) through family and friends and 53 (33.3 %) have never heard about anemia

Table 5: Showed average agreement with questions that evaluate the mothers knowledge towards prevention of childhood anemia on their children using Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 =Undecided , 4 = agree ,5= strongly agree)

Questions 5)	Number of respondents	Numerical Value	Knowledge (On scale of
Breastfeeding is the first food a new born baby should receive	159	650	4
Exclusive breastfeeding means that the infant gets only breast milk and no other liquids or foods. Can exclusive breast milk prevent childhood anemia	159	360	2.3

Balance diet is meal that contains all classes of food. Eating balance diet can prevent anemia in children?	159	340	2.1
Irregular feeding can cause anemia?	159	320	2.0
Chemoprophylaxis of malaria, taken drug to prevent malaria. Chemoprophylaxis can prevent anemia in children	159	240	1.5

Source of data, field data, 2022.

Table 5: showed the evaluation of general knowledge of the mothers attending Abakpa health centre on breast feeding, balanced diet and chemoprophylaxis. These factors play key roles in prevention of childhood anemia. The evaluation was done using the Likert scale method, the respondents are required to tick the questions against the options which represent their such as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree. The options are assigned numerical value. The total numerical value gathered by each option to questions are calculated and divided by the number of respondents to get the average value which represents general opinion of the respondents towards that question.

The result gotten from the knowledge calculation using the Likert scale on the scale of 5 showed that respondents scored 4.0 on knowledge about breast feeding as first food to give a newborn baby, 2.3 on exclusive breast feeding , 2.1 on balance diet , 2.0 on regular feeding and 1.5 on chemoprophylaxis.

Research question 2

Attitude of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia

Table 6-8: shows responses from the participant mothers to attitude questions towards prevention of childhood anemia.

Table 6: Show how serious do you think iron deficiency is for a baby?

health.	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Serious	70	44.0
Not serious	89	56.0
Total	159	100.0

Source of data, field data, 2022.

Table 6: Showed above that out of 159 respondents 89 (56.0%) do not think deficiency of iron on baby's health should be taken seriously while 70 (44.0%) thinks iron deficiency on baby's health should be taken seriously.

Table 7: Show how good do you think it is good to prepare meals with

iron rich foods such as green leafy vegetables

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GOOD	140	88.1
NOT GOOD	19	11.9
Total	159	100.0

Source of data, field data, 2022.

Table 7: Shown above indicated that out of 159 respondents 140 (88.1%) think it is good to prepare iron rich food while 19 (11.9%) thinks are not good.

Table 8: Show how good do you think to give different types of food to your child each day

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Good	110	69.2
Not good	49	30.8
Total	159	100.0

Source of data, field data, 2022.

Table 8: Shown above indicated that out of 159 respondents 110 (69.2%) thinks that it is good to give different types of food to their children each day while 49 (30.8%) believe that it is not good to give different type of food to their children each day.

Research question 3

Practice of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia.

Table 9: Show average agreement with questions that evaluate the mothers practice towards prevention of childhood anemia on their children Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 =

(disagree ,3 =Undecided, 4 = agree ,5= strongly agree)

Questions	Number of respondents	Numerical Value	Practice (On scale of 5)
Whenever your child is sick you seek for healthcare assistance.	159	690	4.3
Deworming a child will help in prevention of childhood anemia.	159	360	2.3
Constant consumption of herbal tea affects iron absorption.	159	210	1.3
Poor feeding habit can lead to childhood anemia.	159	510	3.2
Keeping good hygiene, sanitation and drinking treated water can prevent anemia in children.	159	450	2.8

Source of data, field data, 2022.

Table 10: Showed the evaluation of general practice of the mothers attending Abakpa health centre on health seek behavior for their children, practice of deworming, consumption of herbal tea , poor feeding habits and good hygiene. These factors play key roles in prevention of childhood anemia. The evaluation was done using the Likert scale method, the respondents arerequired to tick the questions against the options which represent their such as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree. The options are assigned numerical value. The total numerical value gathered by each option to questions are calculated and divided by the number of respondents to get the average value which represents general opinion of the respondents towards that question. The result gotten from the knowledge calculation using the Likert scale on the scale of 5 showed that respondents scored 4.3 on practice of health seeking behavior, 2.3 on deworming, 1.3 on herbal tea consumption , 3.2 on poor feeding and 2.8 on good hygiene .

Testing hypotheses

Table 10: Show the Pearson correlation and statistically significant level between knowledge and

Correlations

KNOWLEDGE OF		THE RESPONDENTS ON CHILDHOOD ANAEMIA PREVENTION	practic PRACTICE OF THE RESPONDENTS ON CHILDHOOD ANAEMIA PREVENTION
KNOWLEDGE OF THE RESPONDENTS ON CHILDHOOD ANAEMIA PREVENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.649
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.236
	N	5	5
PRACTICE OF THE RESPONDENTS ON CHILDHOOD ANAEMIA PREVENTION	Pearson Correlation	.649	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.236	
	N	5	5

Source of data, field data,2022

Table 10: shows the Pearson correlation between knowledge and practice of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre towards prevention of childhood anemia is 0.649 which is moderate positive correlation which denote those changes in knowledge is associated with changes in practice. The significant level is 0.236 which indicate that the two variables are not statistically significant because the significant level is higher than 0.05. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Summary of the findings

This chapter presents the data and run the analysis of the data collected from the field to produce information. The chapter intends to answer the research questions and provide solutions to the problem the research is trying to solve. In this chapter, analysis of demographic characteristics of the respondents were done, demographic data collected and analysed are participants age, marital status, education level ,occupation, income , family setting and number of the children the participants have. Gender and age of their children was collected and analysed as well. The chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the structured questionnaire to answer the mother knowledge, attitude, and practice towards prevention of childhood anemia. The analysis was done using IBM SPSS. The result was presented in tables and figures for understanding. The findings has showed that despite that the majority of the mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre has heard about childhood anemia from the health centre ,they lack in-depth understanding of the childhood anemia which has led to poor attitude like not practicing exclusive breast feeding , poor diet , poor hygiene consumption of herbal tea and non-practice of malaria chemoprophylaxis, these factors play a vital part as determinant of childhood anemia and if not control can lead to childhood anemia.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION

Discussion of the findings

Knowledge of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia.

The result of hypotheses tested shows there is no significant relationship between knowledge and practices of prevention of childhood anemia among mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre and there is correlation between knowledge and practice. The Pearson correlation between knowledge and practice of mothers attending Abakpa Health Centres towards prevention of childhood anemia is at r = 0.649 which is moderate positive correlation which denote those changes in knowledge is associated with changes in practice. The significant level is at 0.236 which indicate that the two variables are not statistically significant because the significant level is higher than 0.05. These results agreed with Anjani, Suhita, and Puspitasari (2020) study on mother's knowledge and behavior of anemia prevention in children: Application of Penders Health Promotion Model. Despite that majority of the respondents has heard about anemia before from health facility, yet they do not have in-depth knowledge on preventive measure to take in order to prevent childhood anemia ,hence they continue in their poor practices and attitude, disregarding the severe side effect .

Attitude of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia.

The result from the participants' mothers for attitude questions towards prevention of childhood anemia shows that the majority of the participants 89 (56.7%) do not take iron deficiency serious, hence do not seek for medical attention or solution towards prevention and treatment of the condition while 70 (44.0%) thinks iron deficiency on baby's health should be taken serious. This is due to poor understanding about childhood anemia among the mothers attending Abakpa health centres. This finding is consistent with Samararathna, Gunaratne, & Mettananda's (2021) on mothers of young children and their knowledge and practices on iron deficiency and childhood anemia. According to the study, women who had a clear grasp of knowledge in anemia had good attitude towards supplement compliance to prevent childhood anemia.

Practice of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia

The result gotten from the practice calculation using the Likert scale on the scale of 5 showed that respondents scored 4.3 on practice of health seeking behavior which is high on health seeking practice, and scored low in deworming (2.3), herbal tea consumption (1.3) , poor feeding (3.2) and good hygiene (2.8). The result shows poor practices of mothers towards prevention of childhood anemia. This in an agreement with Khatib & Joho (2020) that carried out a hospital-based analytical cross-sectional study on the prevalence of anemia and caregivers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards its prevention in children under the age of five with the purpose to ascertain the prevalence of anemia among children under the age of five in Zanzibar and caregivers' knowledge, attitudes, and actions towards its prevention. According to the study poor hygiene practices and feeding habits are to blame for the high prevalence of anemia in children under the age of five and childhood anemia can be prevented by improving nutrition and hygiene of the children. Researchers studying pediatric anemia; they will aid in the updating of knowledge, which will improve health services.

Conclusion

Children in Nigeria and other impoverished nations suffer from childhood anemia. The findings of this study showed that mothers' comprehension of childhood anemia awareness of a child's overall health is related. Majority of the mothers has heard about childhood anemia for the first time but they do not have perceive that childhood anemia can lead to child mortality and they lack in-depth knowledge and understanding about childhood anemia which has led to poor practices .The study revealed that mothers attending Abakpa Health Centre have poor practices and attitude that can lead to childhood anemia .Poor practices like poor practice of exclusive breast feeding, poor practice of malaria chemoprophylaxis, poor practice of childhood deworming, poor practice of giving herbal tea to their children and poor practice of water, sanitation,and hygiene. Even though majority of mothers has heard about childhood anemia for the first time, but they lack in-depth knowledge and understanding on how to prevent childhood anemia.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions are made**:**

1. Use of social media platforms, radio, place of worship and community mobilization and outreach to create awareness and reach out to more target persons on childhood anemia as a vital cause of child morbidity and mortality.

2. Scale-up of health education on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, child deworming, child nutrition, malaria chemoprophylaxis and water, sanitation, and hygiene practices.

3. Demonstration and simulation approach of health education be adopted to teach practical health education to target group on childhood anemia prevention practices.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of all health promotion programme to track progress and impact of the program to ensure that the program achieve the set aims and objectives.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES OF PERINATAL MORTALITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Under-five mortality remains a global social and public health challenge, with perinatal mortality (PM) contributing significantly. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and South Asia account for approximately 65% of the global perinatal mortality rate (PMR), with Nigeria recording the second highest PMR in SSA. Nigeria's PMR has been rising (from 39 to 41 to 49 per 1,000 pregnancies in 2008, 2013, and 2018, respectively). This worrisome trend inspires the need to investigate correlates of PMR in Nigeria to inform evidence-based interventions.

The study therefore adopts the Social Determinants of Health Framework (SDOH), and examines sociodemographic correlates of PM in Nigeria using the most recent (2018) Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey data. Correlation analysis reveals that a high PMR in Nigeria is associated with a woman's age-at-first-marriage/cohabitation, poor education, occupation, wealth index and partner's education among others. These sociodemographics influence factors like parity, place of delivery, birth size, order, and interval which directly cause perinatal mortality.

The author suggests collaborative interventions of the Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Paediatric Association of Nigeria, WHO, UNICEF, and grassroots organizations in prohibiting girl-child marriage, enhancing education and employment opportunities (for women), developing health personnel and facilities, and leveraging technology.

Introduction

Perinatal mortality (PM) is a composite term for early neonatal death (ENND) and stillbirths (SB). An early neonatal death connotes the loss of a fetus after 28 weeks of gestation while a stillbirth refers to the death of a baby within the first seven days of life (W.H.O., 2006; NDHS, 2018). PM is measured per 1,000 pregnancies lasting at least seven months or per 1000 live births. It is regarded as negative and devastating (Ghimire *et al.,* 2019) and an indicator of a nation's health status (Wilkson, 1997 in Oji & Odimegwu, 2011).

Furthermore, less-developed countries particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and South Asia (SA) bear a greater proportion of the global perinatal mortality rate (PMR). Sub-Saharan Africa records 27 PMs per 1000 live births (43% of the global burden) while Central and South Asia record 23 PMs per 1000 live births (36% of the global burden) (Wang *et al.,* 2016; UN IGME, 2017). Though SA and SSA account for about 98% of the world's perinatal death burden, only 10 nations account for 65% of the burden, with Nigeria occupying the second spot (Dahiru & Aliyu, 2016).

Nigeria's PMR has remained high. In fact, according to NDHS (2008-2018), the rate of perinatal mortality has been rising over time, rising from 39 per 1000 births in 2008 to 41 in 2013 and 49 in 2018 (the most recent survey data).

Furthermore, over 70% of all postnatal deaths occur within the early neonatal period (Lehtonen, *et al.,* 2017) and perinatal mortality has a greater proportion of all child mortalities (Cooper, 2016). Despite these situations, perinatal mortality in Nigeria has not received proportionate attention.

With regards to policy, some efforts have been such as the NiENAP- the Nigeria Every Newborn Action Plan by the Federal Ministry of Health. It was developed in 2016 sequel to the global Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2014. The NiENAP has the vision of Nigeria becoming a nation "in which there are no preventable deaths of newborns and stillbirths, where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth celebrated, and women, babies, and children survive, thrive, and reach their full potential." The specific goals are to reduce neonatal mortality rate from 37 per 1000 live births in 2013 to 15 by 2030 and to reduce the rate of stillbirth from 42 per 1000 total births in 2013 to 27 by 2030.

Furthermore, the NiENAP draws its strategic objectives from the global ENAP; To:

1. "Strengthen and invest in care during labour, birth, and the first day and week of life.
2. Improve the quality of maternal and newborn care.
3. Reach every woman and every newborn to reduce inequities.
4. Harness the power of parents, families, and communities.
5. Count every newborn through measurement, program tracking, and accountability."

While these vision, targets and strategic objectives are laudable, no significant progress has been observed on a national level since the NiENAP was developed (2016). In fact, rather than a reduction in these mortalities, an increased prevalence has been observed.

In addition, research on perinatal mortality in Nigeria is primarily focused on stillbirths and neonatal mortality, with few studies examining early neonatal death, which accounts for 73% of global postnatal deaths (Lehtonen *et al.,* 2017). Nonetheless, some studies have been done to examine determinants of perinatal mortality in Nigeria. However, majority of such studies have been state-, community-, or facility-based. On a national level, very little research had been conducted, the most recent data used was from 2008. Therefore, rationale behind examining both stillbirth and early neonatal death in Nigeria on a national scale, employing the most recent and available national survey (NDHS, 2018). Moreover, these studies research have been primarily from the perspectives of medicine and public health. Based on these gaps and in response to the guiding principles of NiENAP which includes innovation and research, this study examines the socio-demographic factors that are significantly associated with perinatal mortality in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Theory, which highlights how environmental, social, and economic factors significantly influence health outcomes. Pioneered by scholars like Marmot, Wilkinson, and others, SDOH emphasizes that health outcomes are shaped more by environmental, social, and economic factors than by medical or biological ones. It posits that there are certain "conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks." It underscores the need to address socioeconomic determinants to achieve health equity. These determinants are categorized into five domains:

1. Economic Stability: Factors like employment, income, and economic status impact access to essential resources like food and healthcare, affecting prenatal and postnatal care, delivery, and perinatal survival.
2. Education Access and Quality: Higher education levels lead to better health knowledge and outcomes, influencing maternal employment, income, and perinatal survival.
3. Health Access and Quality: Proximity to healthcare facilities, insurance coverage, and service quality affect pregnancy outcomes.
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment: Environmental factors such as water quality, hygiene, housing conditions, air quality, and food options impact maternal and perinatal health.
5. Social and Community Context: Social support and cultural practices influence maternal and perinatal health outcomes.

Hence, in ameliorating the incidence of perinatal death in Nigeria (or any country at that), more attention should be paid to addressing the inequities in the social determinants of health.
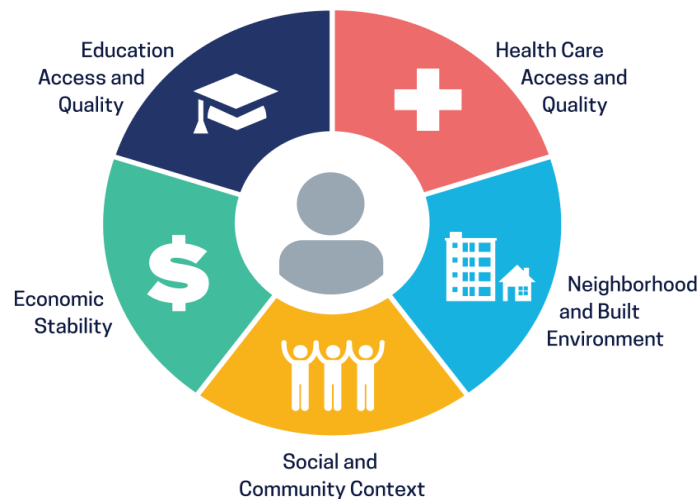
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WHO (199 ... being neonatal deaths and ... at 7.6 million, with fetal deaths being the largest portion. In 2006, 130 million children died within their first year of life (WHO, 2006). The 2020 UNICEF report revealed 2 million global stillbirths, with SSA having the highest number (42%), followed by Central and Southern Asia (34%), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (11%), Northern Africa and Western Asia (7%), Latin America and the Caribbean (4%), Europe, Northern America, Australia, and New Zealand (2%), and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) having less than 1% of the global stillbirths (Hug *et al.,* 2020).

Low- and Middle-Income Countries
WHO (1996) reported that 98% of perinatal mortality occured in less developed countries. High-income countries recorded a PMR of 10 per 1000 live births while low- and middle-income countries recorded a PMR of 50 per 1000 live births (WHO, 2006; Oji and Odimegwu (2011). As of 2020, SSA experienced an average of 27 perinatal mortalities per 1000 live births, accounting for 43% of the global burden. Central and southern Asia followed with 23 per 1000 live births, representing 36% of the global burden (WHO, 2020). Some studies have shown that 95% of the world's perinatal mortality occurs in low- and middle-income countries, with a greater proportion in SSA and SA (Wang *et al.,* 2016; UN IGME, 2017; Hug *et. al.,* 2020). In 2012, the global reported stillbirths were 2.6 million, and over 75% of neonatal deaths

occurred in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Getiye & Fantahun, 2017). South Asia has a PMR about 2 times higher than sub-Saharan Africa. 3 in every 4 perinatal deaths occur in these regions, with the highest number of annual births and neonatal deaths (Cousens *et al.,* 2011) cited in Ahmed *et al.,* 2018)

Sub-Saharan Africa
According to Hug et al. (2020), 75% of all stillbirths occur in sub-Saharan Africa or south Asia. This region recorded one of the highest occurrences of perinatal mortality, with an average PMR of 34.7 per 1000 births (Akombi & Renzaho, 2019). The rate varies across sub-regions and countries. Eastern Africa recorded 34.5 PMs per 1000 births with Tanzania being the highest (39.5); Western Africa recorded 35.7 with the highest rate (40.9) in Nigeria; Southern Africa recorded 30.3 with the highest rate (49.6) in Lesotho while Central Africa reported 30.7 with the highest rate (37.3) in Equatorial Guinea.

The Nigerian Situation
Nigeria ranks first in West Africa and second in SSA (Dahiru and Aliyu, 2016) with an increasing incidence of perinatal mortality (39 in 2008 to 41 in 2013 and to 49 per 1000 pregnancies in 2018 (NDHS 2013-2018). A meta-analysis of demographic and health surveys of 21 sub-Saharan African countries revealed that Nigeria had the highest PMR in Western Africa at 40.9 per 1000 births (Akombi & Renzaho, 2019). Nigeria also has the second highest rate of stillbirths globally (Dahiru & Aliyu, 2016; Anyichie & Nwagu, 2019), accounting for about 70% of global stillbirths (WHO (2010) in Onwudiegwu & Awowole, 2012). Studies have found a high prevalence of perinatal mortality in Nigeria, with an average PMR of 102 per 1000 births in various regions (Igberase, 2014; Suleiman & Mokuolu, 2014; Nwokoro *et al.,* 2020; Mohammed *et al.,* 2022).

Factors Associated with Perinatal Mortality

The NDHS (2008) and WHO (2006) highlight that stillbirth and early neonatal death share similar causes, although perinatal mortality's determinants differ from post-neonatal and child mortality. Factors such as poor maternal health, inadequate antenatal care, mismanagement of complications, hygiene challenges during delivery, and lack of newborn care contribute to perinatal mortality. Social factors like women's social status, early motherhood, short birth intervals, and harmful customs also play a vital role. Additionally, the absence of modern obstetric care facilities and insufficient skills among health workers contribute to neonatal deaths.

Numerous studies across various countries in Africa and Asia (especially Ethiopia and India) have examined the factors influencing perinatal mortality (Olamijulo & Olaleye, 2011; Suleiman *et al.,* 2012; Bayou & Berhan, 2012; Tayade & Kumar, 2012; Mmbaga *et al.,* 2012). Key determinants include maternal health conditions, obstetric complications, fetal factors such as prematurity and birth weight, and sociodemographic factors like maternal age and education (Engmann *et al.,* 2012; Igberase, 2014; Ghasemi *et al.,* 2015). Medical conditions like pre-eclampsia/eclampsia, obstetric hemorrhage, and neonatal infections contribute significantly to perinatal deaths (Shrestha *et al.,* 2015; Ogunlesi *et al.,* 2016). Majority have focused on direct determinants while paying little attention the sociodemographic factors that inform these determinants. Hence, addressing both medical and sociodemographic factors is crucial in developing effective interventions to reduce perinatal mortality.

Furthermore, facility-based and community-based studies conducted in Nigeria (Ogunlesi *et al.,* 2016; Igberase, 2014; Olamijulo and Olaleye, 2011) also shed light on these factors. Nkwo *et al.* (2014) also engaged 2008 NDHS data to examine the prevalence of perinatal mortality in non-hospital births and identify the major factors associated with a high PMR in Nigeria.

However, there remains a need for more comprehensive national-level investigations with most recent available national data in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Research Design
The study adopted a retrospective longitudinal study design, using data from the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey.

Study Area
This research focused on Nigeria, a sub-Saharan African country in Western Africa. With 36 states and 1 Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria is divided into 6 geo-political zones and 774 Local Government Areas. The country is culturally diverse, with 374 distinct ethnic groups, including the main tribes of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (NDHS, 2008).

Study Population, Sample Design/Selection and Size

The study population comprises women in Nigeria of reproductive age (15-49 years). A sample size of 127,545 women was selected through a stratified, multi-stage cluster sampling design. The country was divided into states, local government areas, and then enumeration areas. Households were selected based on equal probability systematic sampling and eligible respondents were permanent residents or visitors within the households.

Method of Data Collection

The woman's questionnaire designed by the MEASURE DHS program was used to gather data on women of childbearing ages (15-49 years). The questionnaire included questions regarding the background characteristics of the women and their husbands (such as education, income, ethnicity, religion, residence, and exposure to media), marriage and sexual activity, fertility preferences, birth history, history of childhood mortality, antenatal, and delivery among many others.

Variables

The independent variables of interest for the study are socio-demographic characteristics of the woman and her partner while the dependent variable of interest for this study is perinatal mortality (stillbirths and early neonatal deaths).

Data Analysis
The study utilized SPSS software for analysis of the data (being quantitative). The socio-demographic profiles of respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics while Pearson correlation analysis and cross-tabulations were used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the dependent and independent variables.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to research ethics, including confidentiality, anonymity, and non-malfeasance. Data was extracted and adapted to suit the research inquiry, with permission granted by the Demographic and Health Survey Program. (See Appendix for Authority Letter)

Results and Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents
The table below shows the sociodemographic profile of the respondents.
Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Frequency
Age	
15-19	1,461 (1.1%)
20-24	8,543 (6.7%)
25-29	19,007 (14.9%)
30-34	23,618 (18.5%)
35-39	26,740 (21%)
40-44	23,696 (18.6%)
45-49	24,480 (19.2%)
Ethnicity	
Ekoi	670 (0.5%)
Fulani	11,487 (9%)
Hausa	41,710 (32.7%)
Ibibio	1,867 (1.5%)
Igala	1,274 (1%)
Igbo	16,525 (13%)
Ijaw/Izon	2,868 (2.2%)
Kanuri/Beriberi	3,078 (2.4%)
Tiv	2,522 (2%)
Yoruba	12,570 (9.9%)
Others	32,884 (25.8%)
Religion	
Catholic	11,135 (8.7%)
Other Christian	39,316 (30.8%)
Islam	75,942 (59.5%)
Traditionalist	677 (0.5%)
Other	475 (0.4%)
Region	
North Central	21,656 (17%)
North East	26,293 (20.6%)
North West	39,928 (31.3%)
South East	14,072 (11%)
South South	12,436 (9.8%)
South West	13,160 (10.3%)
Type of Residence	
Urban	44,111 (34.6%)
Rural	83,434 (65.4%)
Marital Status	
Never married	1,581 (1.2%)
Married	11,4035 (89.4%)
Living together	3,115 (2.4%)
Widowed	5,569 (4.4%)
Divorced	1,533 (1.2%)
Not living together	1,712 (1.3%)

Variable	Frequency
Educational Level	
No education	63,699 (49.9%)
Primary	25,311 (23.4%)
Secondary	30,756 (24.1%)
Higher	7,779 (6.1%)
Occupation	
Not working	-
Professional/Technical/Managerial	6,042 (4.7%)
Clerical	1,020 (0.8%)
Sales	55,044 (43.2%)
Agricultural	26,482 (20.8%)
Agric- self-employed	-
Agric- employee	-
Household and domestic	-
Services	6,743 (5.3%)
Skilled manual	3,590 (2.8%)
Unskilled manual	67 (0.1%)
Other	175 (0.1%)
Wealth Index	
Poorest	31,148 (24.4%)
Poorer	29,448 (23.1%)
Middle	27,120 (21.3%)
Richer	23,210 (18.2%)
Richest	16,619 (13%)

Majority of the respondents were aged 35-39 years, were from the Hausa tribe, were Muslims, resided in the Northwestern region of the country, resided in rural areas, were married, had no education, were involved in sales as an occupation, and belonged to the poorest wealth index.

Sociodemographic Correlates of Perinatal Mortality

The table below shows the correlation analysis between perinatal mortality and the woman's sociodemographic characteristics.

Table 2: Correlations between Perinatal Mortality and Mothers' Sociodemographic Characteristics

		Perinatal Death	Age	Marital Status	Age at First Marriage	Educational Level	Occupation	Wealth Index	Partner's Educational Level	Partner's Occupation
Perinatal Death	Pearson Correlation	1	-.015[**]	-.008[**]	-.015[**]	-.017[**]	-.018[**]	-.018[**]	-.013[**]	0.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0.004	0	0	0	0	0	0.744
	N	127545	127545	127545	125964	127545	99163	127545	117150	117150

Correlations Cont'd

		Region	Type of Residence	Ethnicity	Religion	Sex of Household Head	Age of Household Head	Number of Other Wives	Who Makes Money Decisions	Who Makes Health Decisions
Perinatal Death	Pearson Correlation	-.008[**]	.016[**]	-.007[**]	-.006[*]	-.013[**]	-.010[**]	0	-0.005	.014[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0	0.008	0.043	0	0	0.87	0.152	0
	N	127545	127545	127545	127545	127545	127545	117150	75391	117150

At a significance level, P<0.05, age (r= -.015), marital status (r= -.008), age at first marriage/cohabitation (r= -.015), educational level (r= -.017), occupation (r= -.018), wealth index (r= -.018), partner's educational level (r= -.013), region (r= -.008), type of residence (r= .016), ethnicity (r= -.007), religion (r= -.006), sex of household head (r= -.013), age of household head (r= -.010), who makes health decisions (r= .014) were found to be significantly associated with perinatal mortality in Nigeria in 2018. On the other hand, with P values > 0.05, partner's occupation, number of other wives, and who makes decisions on how to spend money were not significantly associated with perinatal mortality in Nigeria.

In other words, the lower the woman's age at pregnancy, age at first cohabitation/marriage, educational level, occupational level, wealth index, partner's educational level, and age of household head, the higher likelihood of experiencing perinatal mortality.

Cross Tabulations

The correlation analysis reveals significant associations between region, residence type, ethnicity, and religion with perinatal mortality in Nigeria, but their direction is not observable. Hence, cross-tabulations were done to give more insights.

Perinatal Mortality and Region/Geopolitical Zone

Table 3: Cross Tabulation between Perinatal Mortality and Region

			Region						
			North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Total
Perinatal death	No	Count	20956	25333	38186	13716	12099	12710	123000
		% within Perinatal death	17.0%	20.6%	31.0%	11.2%	9.8%	10.3%	100.0%
	Yes	Count	700	960	1742	356	337	450	4545
		% within Perinatal death	15.4%	21.1%	38.3%	7.8%	7.4%	9.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	21656	26293	39928	14072	12436	13160	127545
		% within Perinatal death	17.0%	20.6%	31.3%	11.0%	9.8%	10.3%	100.0%

The table above shows that majority of those who experienced perinatal mortality where resident in the North-western region of the country.

Perinatal Mortality and Type of Place of Residence

Table 4: Cross Tabulation between Perinatal Mortality and Type of Place of Residence

			Type of place of residence		
			Urban	Rural	Total
Perinatal death	No	Count	42717	80283	123000
		% within Perinatal death	34.7%	65.3%	100.0%
	Yes	Count	1394	3151	4545
		% within Perinatal death	30.7%	69.3%	100.0%

			Count			44111	83434	127545
Total			% within Perinatal death			34.6%	65.4%	100.0%

From the table above, most of the women who had perinatal losses resided in rural areas.

Perinatal Mortality and Ethnicity

Table 5: Cross Tabulation between Perinatal Mortality and Ethnicity
The table above shows that majority of those who experienced perinatal mortality were of the

			Ethnicity						Kanuri/				Don't
			Ekoi	Fulani	Hausa	Ibibio	Igala	Igbo	Ijaw/Izon	Beriberi	Tiv	Yoruba	Other	know
Perinatal death	**No**	Count	642	11066	39914	1800	1217	16094	2819	2983	2465	12137	31783	80
		% within Perinatal death	0.5%	9.0%	32.5%	1.5%	1.0%	13.1%	2.3%	2.4%	2.0%	9.9%	25.8%	0.1%
	Yes	Count	28	421	1796	67	57	431	49	95	57	433	1101	10
		% within Perinatal death	0.6%	9.3%	39.5%	1.5%	1.3%	9.5%	1.1%	2.1%	1.3%	9.5%	24.2%	0.2%
Total		Count	670	11487	41710	1867	1274	16525	2868	3078	2522	12570	32884	90
		% within Perinatal death	0.5%	9.0%	32.7%	1.5%	1.0%	13.0%	2.2%	2.4%	2.0%	9.9%	25.8%	0.1%

Hausa tribe/ethnic group.

Perinatal Mortality and Religion

Table 6: Cross Tabulation between Perinatal Mortality and Religion

			Religion					
			Catholic	Other Christian	Islam	Traditionalist	Other	Total
Perinatal death	**No**	Count	10858	38108	72912	651	471	123000
		% within Perinatal death	8.8%	31.0%	59.3%	0.5%	0.4%	100.0%
	Yes	Count	277	1208	3030	26	4	4545
		% within Perinatal death	6.1%	26.6%	66.7%	0.6%	0.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	11135	39316	75942	677	475	127545
		% within Perinatal death	8.7%	30.8%	59.5%	0.5%	0.4%	100.0%

From the table above, perinatal mortality occurred mostly among women of the Islamic religion.

Conclusion

A woman's demographic features and sociocultural environment have implications for her well-being and that of her fetus or newborn. These sociodemographic factors affect direct causes of perinatal mortality such as parity (number of children born), mode of delivery, place of delivery, nutrition, hygiene, access to ante-partum, intra-partum and post-partum care, the baby's birth size, birth order and preceding birth interval.

Recommendations

Generally, low-resource countries (especially sub-Saharan and South Asian countries) have been reported to have a high prevalence of mortality and specifically perinatal mortality. Nigeria itself is ranked in the top 10 countries with high perinatal mortality. This is attributable to poor sociodemographic conditions including poor education, poor occupational status, poverty, inadequate health facilities, technology, and skilled personnel. Furthermore, Nigeria has some detrimental cultural practices such as girl-child marriage, deprivation of education for females, and high fertility/parity because of the perceived social, psychological, and economic values of children. All these factors among others pose higher risks of perinatal mortality.

In order to achieve the NiENAP of reducing neonatal deaths and stillbirths to 15 and 27 per total births by 2030, intense collaborative efforts of the federal, state and local government health ministries/authorities, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD), research consultants/organizations, concerned Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), other grass root organizations, private organizations, concerned associations such as Nigeria Society of Neonatal Medicine (NISONM), Pediatrics Association of Nigeria (PAN), Society for Obstetrics and Gynecologists of Nigeria (SOGON), National Association of Nigerian Nurse and Midwives (NANNM), and international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are needed.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) could collaborate with interested to improve women's empowerment and advocate for girl child education especially in the northern regions and in rural communities as these have been identified to have a higher occurrence of perinatal mortality.

In addition, the Federal Ministry of Health could collaborate with concerned international organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to increase the availability of health facilities, equipping them with the required technology and skilled personnel, increasing the coverage of health insurance for women of childbearing ages, increase sensitization on maternal and child health care as well as risk factors for perinatal mortality so as to ameliorate the occurrence of perinatal mortality in the country. These efforts should be geared mostly to the women residing in the northern regions of the country as well as those residing in rural areas as these places have higher incidences of perinatal mortality. Women with low socioeconomic status should also be prioritized.

Furthermore, there is a need for multidisciplinary research and interventions across the social sciences, medicine, public health and medical technology in order to have a Nigeria with "no preventable deaths of newborns and stillbirths, where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth celebrated, and women, babies, and children survive, thrive, and reach their full potential".

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Appendix

Authority Letter from DHS

ICF

May 19, 2022

Ayanfeoluwa Ibrahim
University of Ibadan
Nigeria
Request Date: 05/18/2022

Dear Ayanfeoluwa Ibrahim:

This is to confirm that you are approved to use the following Survey Datasets for your registered research paper titled: "Correlates of Perinatal Mortality in Nigeria, 2008-2018":

Nigeria

To access the datasets, please login at: https://www.dhsprogram.com/data/dataset_admin/login_main.cfm. The user name is the registered email address, and the password is the one selected during registration.

The IRB-approved procedures for DHS public-use datasets do not in any way allow respondents, households, or sample communities to be identified. There are no names of individuals or household addresses in the data files. The geographic identifiers only go down to the regional level (where regions are typically very large geographical areas encompassing several states/provinces). Each enumeration area (Primary Sampling Unit) has a PSU number in the data file, but the PSU numbers do not have any labels to indicate their names or locations. In surveys that collect GIS coordinates in the field, the coordinates are only for the enumeration area (EA) as a whole, and not for individual households, and the measured coordinates are randomly displaced within a large geographic area so that specific enumeration areas cannot be identified.

The DHS Data may be used only for the purpose of statistical reporting and analysis, and only for your registered research. To use the data for another purpose, a new research project must be registered. All DHS data should be treated as confidential, and no effort should be made to identify any household or individual respondent interviewed in the survey. Also, be aware that re-distribution of any DHS micro-level data, either directly or within any tool/dashboard, is not permitted. Please reference the complete terms of use at: https://dhsprogram.com/Data/terms-of-use.cfm.

The data must not be passed on to other researchers without the written consent of DHS. However, if you have coresearchers registered in your account for this research paper, you are authorized to share the data with them. All data users are required to submit an electronic copy (pdf) of any reports/publications resulting from using the DHS data files to: references@dhsprogram.com.

Sincerely,

Bridgette Wellington

Bridgette Wellington
Data Archivist
The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

PARENTING STYLES AND THE IMPACT ON ADOLESCENT

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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Department of Home Economics, Hospitality and Tourism,

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined parenting styles and their impact on adolescent social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. There were four specific objectives and research questions. The survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all the 20,012 public senior secondary school students in the 12 public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area. The multistage sampling technique was used to select 377 senior secondary school students as the sample size. A four-point scale questionnaire was used to collect data. The data for this study were collected using the direct contact method and analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. A cut-off mark of 2.5 mean score was used to answer the research questions, and a t.test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that adolescents under authoritarian parents are aggressive; unable to make decisions; shy; find it difficult to relate with outsiders. Adolescents under permissive parenting are exposed to increased alcohol usage; absconding from school, while those of neglectful parents are exposed to behave badly towards others, likely to commit crimes; while adolescents under authoritative parenting engage in teamwork, are conscious of their interactions with the opposite sex, and avoid suspicious companies. The study recommended that religious organizations, community-based organizations, and other relevant groups should engage in sensitization of parents on the implications of specific parenting styles on their adolescents among others.

Introduction

Parenting comes with diversities among families. Cultural backgrounds have a major impact on how the family unit exists and how children are reared. In Africa, the population believes that children must be brought up as responsible humans who will become useful to the community and family. Changes driven by migration (with different cultural, ethnic, and spiritual ideologies), socioeconomic status, and single families are some of the factors that determine a variety of parenting styles among families, especially in contemporary times. These patterns differ when race, ethnicity, or culture are considered. Culture refers to a pattern of social norms, values, language, and behavior shared by individuals. As a result, parents are affected by their culture. When it comes to self-regulation, parenting approaches vary across cultures in terms of promoting attention, compliance, delayed gratification, executive function, and effortful control.

A parent plays a crucial role in children's lives by providing love, support, guidance, and nurturing. Parents can be biological or adoptive, and they come in various forms such as mothers, fathers, or even same-sex couples or single parents. The role of a parent is significant in shaping a child's development, values, and overall life experiences. However, every parent has a different approach to how to interact and guide their children. A child's morals, principles, and conduct are generally established through this bond (Langer et al., 2017:640). Different researchers have grouped parenting styles into three, four, five, or more psychological constructs (Masud et al., 2019:1020). However, this study's content will focus on four distinct parenting categories: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved.

Parenting style is defined as a constellation of parents' attitudes and behaviours toward children and an emotional climate in which the parents' behaviours are expressed (Nijhof and Engels, 2017:711). In the field of parenting, Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019) typological approach of conceptualizing parenting has had a tremendous impact. They classified parenting into four types based on responsiveness and demandingness. These categories stem from work by developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind in the 1960s, but they are still used by most psychologists today. In recent years, however, parenting experts have coined a number of unofficial (and commonly debated) styles, including helicopter, free-range, and attachment parenting.

Authoritative parenting style is characterized as high in responsiveness and demandingness. Authoritative parents provide not only support and warmth but also clearly defined rules and consistent discipline (Lopez, 2018: 209). Most psychologists consider authoritative parenting to be the sweet spot between authoritarian and permissive parenting. Research shows it strikes the best balance. It is usually what ends up being most comfortable for both children and parents because it tends to reduce conflict (Langer et al., 2017:639). Children feel safer in terms of knowing where the boundaries are and that they can trust and rely on them, and parents feel safer in asserting the boundaries. Yet warmth and flexibility are also part of the equation (Nijhof and Engels, 2017:717). Authoritative parents, unlike their authoritarian counterparts, enforce rules, but not without discussing them and the reasons behind them (Lopez, 2018:2010). Children are welcome to provide input and ask questions, though they do not get the final say. Sometimes a rule might not make sense. Rather than telling them, 'just do as I say,' one can have a dialogue, respond, and be flexible.

On the other hand, an authoritarian parenting style is characterized as low in responsiveness but high in demandingness. Parents of this style tend to use hostile control or harsh punishment in an arbitrary way to gain compliance, but they seldom provide explanations or allow verbal give-and-take (Piotrowski et al., 2018:428). If a parent has ever told his/her kids to do something "because he/she is the dad or mom," that is authoritarian (Pong et al., 2002:67). It is the most traditional style because parents are clearly in charge and children are expected to fall in line no matter what. On the plus side, children whose parents take an authoritarian approach know exactly where the boundaries are and what the consequences of violating them will be. It also makes good sense in select circumstances (Leeman et al., 2016:119). Certain things, like wearing a seatbelt in a car or a helmet when one gets on a bike, might not be negotiable. The downside, however, is that this kind of model only views respect one way. Children have to respect parents but parents do not necessarily have to respect children (Piotrowski et al., 2018:429). Authoritarian parenting also lacks flexibility, because the overarching rule is, "It's my way or the highway' (Leeman et al., 2016:120).

More so, permissive parenting, sometimes called 'indulgent parenting, is a style of child-rearing that features two key traits: being nurturing and warm (which is good for kids), and being reluctant to impose limits (which is problematic). Permissive or indulgent parenting style is characterized as low in demandingness but high in responsiveness (Pong et al., 2020:66). Permissive parents are responsive to their children and satisfy children's needs, but they fail to set proper disciplinary, exhibit behavioral control, or make demands for mature behaviors (Lopez, 2018). Permissive parents want to be their child's best friend (Morris et al., 2017:369).

Furthermore, neglectful or uninvolved parenting style is characterized as low in responsiveness and demandingness. Neglectful parents are parent-centered and they are seldom engaged in child-rearing practices (Pong et al., 2020:68). They neither provide warmth nor set rules for their children (Piotrowski et al., 2018:426). This type is similar to permissive, minus the nurturing. Uninvolved parents are completely hands-off. Their mantra is 'You do what you want; I really don't care'. While even the most doting parent might drift into this category when they are worn out, no expert would suggest taking this route often time.

Adolescence is the age between adulthood and childhood, usually between the ages of 12 and 19 (Pong et al., 2020:63). **Adolescents are often confused about their role and are torn between their responsibilities as growing adults and their desires as children** (Masud et al., 2019:1017)**.**

Adolescence is a phase when children go through several changes as they journey from childhood to maturity. It is also a vulnerable time for children since they may experience several problems of adolescence, such as unhealthy social behaviours, which may lead to significant problems later in life.

Unhealthy social behavior refers to patterns of behaviour that are detrimental to oneself or others within social interactions. It can manifest in various ways and can have negative consequences on personal relationships, social dynamics, and overall well-being. **Concerns about adolescent behavior are also common during this time, making it difficult for parents to connect with their children.** Behaviorally, adolescence is associated with volatile emotions and boundary-testing behavior as individuals explore and assert personal identity, learn to navigate peer relationships, and transition to independence (Morris et al., 2017:377).

Previous research has shown that parenting styles are critical family context factors which are closely related to parent–adolescent relationships (Martínez and García, 2017:343). Despite the large number of studies on the associations between parenting styles and parent–adolescent relationships, existing research mainly has focused on the direct effects of parenting styles on parent-adolescent relationships, while the underlying mechanisms through which parenting styles are associated with adolescent social behaviour have seldom been examined. The city of Port Harcourt presents an ideal environment for studying adolescents' behavioural issues and social outcomes, as the city is characterized by serious and several social and economic challenges which could affect parents' choice of parenting style. It is against this backdrop that this study is deemed significant.

Statement of the Problem: It is a common phenomenon to witness or hear about several cases of adolescent problems unhealthy social behaviours and social malaise in Port Harcourt. Some common unhealthy social behavior issues during adolescence include defiance and being argumentative with parents or siblings, disrespectf towards others in the family and immediate neighbourhood (e.g. talking back, name-calling), fluctuations in emotions and being moody, as well as aggressive or violent behaviour. Yet, some adolescents display positive or unhealthy social outcomes in their social interactions within similar or same environments. Sometimes, parent-adolescent conflicts become frequent, causing destabilizations in the life of the adolescent and even the whole family. Several studies have focused on adolescent problems, especially in developing cities such as Port Harcourt. Others have examined the home environment and the impact on adolescent outcomes holistically. Yet, many policymakers and the general public have been concerned about the nature of parenting available to adolescents and the impact on their unhealthy social behaviours require an inquisition. Hence, the study on parenting styles and the impact on adolescent unhealthy social behaviours in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study: The study aims to examine parenting styles and the impact on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

   i. examine authoritarian parenting and its impact on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State;
  ii. examine permissive parenting and its impact on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State;
 iii. examine uninvolved/neglectful parenting and its impact on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State;
  iv. examine authoritative parenting and its impact on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study;

   1. How does an authoritarian parenting style impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

2. To what extent does permissive parenting impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
3. To what degree does uninvolved/neglectful parenting impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
4. To what extent does authoritative parenting impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Methodology

Design: The survey design was adopted for the study.

Population and sample for the Study: The population for the study comprised all the 20,012 public senior secondary school students in the 12 public secondary schools in Port Harcourt local government area, Rivers State (Senior Secondary School Board, 2022). The sample for this study was 377 senior secondary school students. The multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. In the first stage, the simple random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) secondary schools from the 12 secondary schools in PHALGA, Rivers State. Using the ballot system with each school written on a paper, the first 10 schools picked participated in the study. In the second stage, the 10 schools were grouped into 10 strata. In the third stage, the non-proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 43, 45, 46, 40, 21, 40, 45, 20, 40 and 38 respondents from each strata respectively. The sample size was determined using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Table.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was a four-point scale questionnaire titled 'Parenting Styles and Adolescent Social Behaviours Questionnaire (PSASBQ). The reliability of the instrument was determined by trial testing of the instrument on 30 students from public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor local government area, Rivers State who did not take part in the main study. The stability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to obtain a reliability index of 0.98, 0.94, 0.91, and 0.96. The data for this study were collected using the direct contact approach with the help of three research assistants who were instructed on how to administer the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis: Data obtained for this study were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. The decision rule was set based on the cut-off mark of 2.5 mean score. The implication was that any item with a mean score lower than 2.50 was disagreed with (D), while items with mean scores of 2.50 and higher was agreed with (A).

Results: The results from the research questions are presented in Tables 1-4.

Research Question 1: To what extent does authoritarian parenting impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on extent authoritarian parenting impacts on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

S/n	Adolescents under authoritarian parents: TM TSD Remark	Males n=180			Females n=197				
		$\bar{\bar{X}}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{\bar{X}}$	SD	Decision		
1.	are aggressive A	2.96	0.94	A	2.92	0.90	A	2.94	0.92
2.	unable to make decisions A	2.71	0.67	A	2.62	0.67	A	2.66	0.67
3.	shy A	2.95	0.94	A	2.95	0.87	A	2.95	0.91

s/n		$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision	TM	TSD	Remark
4.	will rebel against authorities	3.24	0.80	A	3.18	0.70	A	3.21	0.75	A
5.	will have poor self-esteem	3.24	0.77	A	3.22	0.75	A	3.23	0.76	A
6.	find it difficult to relate with outsiders	3.05	0.90	A	3.22	0.88	A	3.14	0.89	A
7.	are poor judges of character	3.34	0.74	A	3.20	0.85	A	3.27	0.80	A
8.	struggle with self-control	3.32	0.74	A	3.33	0.81	A	3.32	0.77	A
9.	will conform easily	3.59	0.75	A	3.45	0.64	A	3.52	0.60	A
10.	will easily fight with people	2.71	0.79	A	2.62	0.67	A	2.67	0.67	A

$\bar{\bar{x}}$ =Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; TM=Total Mean; TSD=Total Standard Deviation; A=Agree; D=Disagree

Agree = ≥ 2.50 while Disagree = < 2.50.

Table 1 above reveals the summary of mean and standard deviation on the extent authoritarian parenting impacts adolescent unhealthy social behavior in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The table reveals that items 1 and 10 were agreed with by the respondents because they had mean scores of 2.50 which is the cut-off mean mark. The table also revealed that the lowest mean score was $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 2.62 (item 10) and the highest mean score was $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 3.59 (item 9). The total mean score and standard deviation ranged between $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 2.66 and $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 3.52, and 0.60 and 0.92 respectively.

Research Question 2: To what extent does permissive parenting impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent permissive parenting impacts on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

s/n	**Adolescents under permissive parenting are exposed to** the following:	**Males n=180**			**Females n=197**					
		$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decis	TM	TSD	Remark
11.	increased alcohol usage	2.87	0.90	A	2.64	0.74	A	2.76	0.83	A
12.	absconding from school	2.72	0.81	A	2.70	0.81	A	2.71	0.81	A
13.	high cases of school									

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s/n	Adolescents	Males mean	SD	Decision	Females mean	SD	Decision	TM	TSD	Remark
	misconduct	3.35	0.66	A	3.11	0.86	A	3.23	0.77	A
14.	poor attitude towards studies	2.63	1.03	A	2.59	0.99	A	2.61	1.01	A
15.	lack of self-discipline	3.15	1.02	A	3.19	0.96	A	3.17	0.99	A
16.	take poor decisions	3.48	0.93	A	2.54	0.92	A	2.51	0.93	A
17.	prone to delinquent behaviours	3.00	0.81	A	2.99	0.89	A	2.99	0.85	A
18.	are rude to people	3.28	0.73	A	3.36	0.67	A	3.31	0.70	A

$\bar{\bar{X}}$ =Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; TM=Total Mean; TSD=Total Standard Deviation; A=Agree; D=Disagree *Agree = ≥ 2.50 while Disagree = < 2.50.*

Table 2 above revealed the mean and standard deviation on the extent permissive parenting impacts adolescent unhealthy social behavior in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The table shows that the respondents agreed with all the items on 11-18 because they had mean scores of $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 2.50 which was the cut-off mark. The table also showed the highest total mean score as $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 3.48 (16) and the lowest total mean score as $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 2.59 (item 14). The total standard deviation ranged between 0.66 and 1.03.

Research Question 3: To what extent does uninvolved/neglectful parenting impact adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent uninvolved/neglectful parenting impacts on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

s/n	Adolescents of neglectful/uninvolved parents are exposed to the following:	Males n=180 $\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision	Females n=197 $\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision	TM	TSD	Remark
19.	behave badly towards others	3.19	0.79	A	3.11	0.80	A	3.15	0.80	A
20.	likely to commit crimes	3.29	0.49	A	3.33	0.52	A	3.31	0.51	A
21.	engage in alcoholism	3.21	0.81	A	3.25	0.73	A	3.23	0.77	A
22.	engage in substance abuse	3.28	0.69	A	3.30	0.81	A	3.29	0.75	A
23.	likely to join secret cults	2.86	1.07	A	2.75	1.03	A	2.81	1.05	A
24.	engage in indecent dressing	3.19	0.78	A	3.25	0.78	A	3.22	0.78	A
25.	watching pornographies	3.00	0.98	A	3.06	1.00	A	3.03	0.99	A

| 26. disobey elderly persons | 2.76 | 1.01 | A | 2.69 | 1.10 | A | 2.72 1.06 A |

26. disobey elderly persons   2.76   1.01   A   2.69   1.10   A   2.72
         1.06   A

27. engage in bullying   2.65   0.97   A   2.63   0.95   A   2.64   0.96
    A

28. not obeying constituted authorities   3.29   0.49   A   3.33   0.52   A   3.31
         0.51   A

29. engage in sexual immoralities   3.14   0.87   A   3.14   0.89   A   3.14
         0.88   A

$\bar{\bar{x}}$ =Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; TM=Total Mean; TSD=Total Standard Deviation;
A=Agree; D=Disagree

Agree = ≥ 2.50 while Disagree = < 2.50.

The data Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation on the extent uninvolved/neglectful parenting impacts on adolescent unhealthy social behavior in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The results indicate that the respondents agreed with all the items because the mean scores are up to $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 2.50 which is the cut-off mark. The result also showed that total mean score ranged between $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 2.64 (item 27) and $\bar{\bar{x}}$ 3.31 (item 28). Also, the total standard deviation ranged between 0.51 and 1.06.

Research Question 4: To what extent does authoritative parenting impact adolescents unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent authoritative parenting impacts on adolescent unhealthy social behaviuor in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

s/n	Adolescents under authoritative parenting Females n=197			Males n=180			
	will do the following: TM TSD Remark	$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Decision
30.	not bold in their dealings with people 0.79 A	2.31	0.86	A	2.23	0.71	A 2.27
31.	does not engage in teamwork 0.84 A	1.26	0.81	A	2.21	0.87	A 2.24
32.	not conscious of their interactions with the opposite sex 1.98 0.94 A	2.06	0.96	A	1.89	0.91	A 1.98
33.	avoid suspicious companies 0.94 A	2.07	0.92	A	2.07	0.93	A 2.07
34.	not respectful 1.00 A	1.84	1.04	A	2.49	0.96	A 2.48
35.	not apply courtesy in their						

Item	$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD		TM	TSD	
dealings with people	2.01	0.93	A	1.84	0.94	A	1.93	0.94	A
36. not engage in domestic chores at home	1.94	0.94	A	1.79	0.88	A	1.86	0.91	A
37. do stay out late unnecessarily	1.98	0.83	A	2.02	0.85	A	2.00	0.84	A
38. not obedient to authorities	2.05	0.92	A	2.05	0.90	A	2.05	0.91	A
39. engage in violent co-existence	1.92	0.85	A	2.17	0.94	A	2.04	0.90	A

$\bar{x}$ =Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; TM=Total Mean; TSD=Total Standard Deviation; A=Agree; D=Disagree

Agree = ≥ 2.50 while Disagree = < 2.50.

Table 4 revealed the mean and standard deviation on the extent authoritative parenting impacts on adolescent unhealthy social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The results showed that the respondents disagreed with all the items because they had mean scores less than $\bar{x}$ 2.50 which was the cut-off mark. The table also revealed that the highest total mean score was $\bar{x}$ 2.48 (item 34) while the lowest total mean score was $\bar{x}$ 1.86 (item 36). The standard deviation ranged between 0.79 and 1.00.

Discussion of the Findings: This study revealed that adolescents under authoritarian parents are aggressive; unable to make decisions; shy; will rebel against authorities; will have poor self-esteem; find it difficult to relate with outsiders; are poor judges of character; struggle with self-control; will conform easily; and will easily fight with people. These findings are supported by Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019) who noted that children of authoritarian parents are aggressive, but can also be socially inept, shy, and cannot make their own decisions. Akinsola (2020) also added that children in these families have poor self-esteem, are poor judges of character and will rebel against authority figures when they are older.

The authoritarian style of parenting is low in parental responsiveness and high in parental demandingness. Authoritarian parents are not very emotional or affectionate, and critical of their children if they fail to meet their expectations. According to them, rules should always be used to conduct behaviour that is desired. When a child breaks a rule, it should be an opportunity to teach a life lesson and not be punished because they did not follow the rules. Unfortunately, strong punishment leads to more misbehaviour, rebellion and results in constant power struggles (Bubara, 2019:29). This type of parenting does not support positive parenting. In fact, research shows that children with authoritarian parents perform more poorly than kids with permissive parents (Carlo et al., 2017:149).

This parenting style involves having strict rules that must be followed. Children are punished if rules are not followed. Punishment is usually harsh and punitive. It can become abusive, physically and emotionally. Orders that are to be followed, often without explanation. Parents that feel that obedience equals love, and open communication is generally not an option in

this style of parenting. There is typically no give and take, and will exert complete and total control over the family.

Children can become stubborn and heady because they have been compelled to believe that one must go through pain for every mistake. Authoritarian parenting is extremely strict. Parents expect children to follow the rules with no discussion or compromising. Parents use this approach for many reasons. Many choose this style because of their nationality, culture or ethical backgrounds dictate it. This is why many parents in traditional Africa adopt this method (Bubara, 2019:30). Also, it may be the way they were raised and do not know any other way. Finally, they believe ruling with an iron fist is the best way to keep adolescents who are naturally explorative in line and under control.

The study also revealed that adolescents under permissive parenting are exposed to increased alcohol usage; absconding from school; high cases of school misconduct; poor attitude towards studies; lack of self-discipline; make poor decisions; being prone to delinquent behaviours; are rude to people. These findings are in agreement with Elias and Weissberg (2020) who opined that children under permissive parenting do not have many responsibilities and are allowed to regulate their behavior and the majority of their choices. D'Antonio (2018) also reported links between permissive parenting and increased alcohol use among teenagers as well as higher rates of school misconduct and lower levels of academic achievement.

Permissive parenting typically allows children a great deal of freedom to behave as they see fit. This type of parenting is often measured based on parental reports. There has been a correlation between permissive parenting and offending behaviour (Gottman and Silver, 2018:21).

Permissive parenting is a style where parents permit their children to do whatever they want to do. It is when a parent is highly responsive, meaning is quick to show and shower affection but does not demand anything from the child. They are described as loving, kind, and nurturing but are unreasonably lenient and indulgent that they spoil their children to an extreme extent. Permissive parents view themselves as more of a friend than a parent, thus, are not forced to have mature behavior (Ostbye, 2012:509). Instead of guiding them and setting rules and restrictions for their child to follow, they allow their child to figure it out for themselves. They do not discipline their child and expect little of them. Similarly, if their children perform poorly socially or in school, it is always the fault of other people. This could be why such children are exposed to indulging in crimes and committing errors that could affect their development and well-being.

Adolescents of neglectful/uninvolved parents are exposed to the following: behave badly towards others; likely to commit crimes; engage in alcoholism; engage in substance abuse; likely to join secret cults; engage in indecent dressing; watching pornographies; disobey elderly persons; engage in bullying; not obeying constituted authorities; engage in sexual immoralities. These results are in agreement with Gall and Borg (2017) who noted that uninvolved parenting style has the most negative effect on adolescent outcomes when compared to the other three parenting styles.

Uninvolved parents often fail to monitor or supervise their child's behaviour and do not support or encourage their child's self-regulation (Elgar, 2019:581). The uninvolved parenting style is described as low in responsiveness and low in demandingness. In general, these parents often show disengagement from the responsibilities of child-rearing and are often seen as being uninvolved regarding the needs of their offspring (Gall and Borg, 2017:293). Uninvolved parents do not engage in structure or control with their adolescents and often there is a lack of closeness in the parent-child dyad; therefore, adolescents of uninvolved parents often engage in more externalizing behaviors. For example, Goleman (2018) reported an association between an uninvolved parenting style and delinquent acts ranging from vandalism and petty theft to assault and rape. Also, Elgar (2019) noted that by grade 12, adolescents with uninvolved parents drank alcohol almost twice as much and smoked twice as much as their peers who lived in authoritative

households. Having an uninvolved mother can also be associated with significantly worse outcomes than families with an uninvolved father.

Adolescents under authoritative parenting will do the following are bold in their dealings with people; engage in teamwork; are conscious of their interactions with the opposite sex; avoid suspicious companies; are respectful; apply courtesy in their dealings with people; engage in domestic chores at home; do not stay out late unnecessarily; obedient to authorities; engage in peaceful co-existence. These findings are supported by Fuemmeler et al. (2012) who noted that adolescents who perceive their parents as authoritative are more likely to develop high efficacy beliefs and higher intention and subsequently are more likely to achieve better in school compared to peers of neglectful parents.

The authoritative parenting style is an approach to child-rearing that combines warmth, sensitivity, and the setting of limits. Parents use positive reinforcement and reasoning to guide children. They avoid resorting to threats or punishments. This approach is common in educated, middle-class families, and linked with superior child outcomes throughout the world (Carlo et al., 2017:150). Children raised by authoritative parents are more likely to become independent, self-reliant, socially accepted, academically successful, and well-behaved. They are also less likely to report depression and anxiety, and less likely to engage in antisocial behavior like delinquency and drug use. And research suggests that having at least one authoritative parent can make a big difference (Elias and Weissberg, 2020:189).

The implications of the findings of this study are as follows:

- Authoritative parenting appears as the most appropriate parenting style since it is characterized as high in responsiveness and demandingness.
- There is a need for sensitization of parents on the implications of specific parenting styles.
- Adolescents under authoritarian, neglectful, permissive and helicopter parenting styles may require therapies.

Conclusion

Parenting styles have specific implications for children, especially adolescents. While parents decide what style they adopt, they may not know how the specific parenting style impacts the development of the adolescent's development. This study has examined parenting styles and their impact on adolescent social behaviour in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study found that authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, and uninvolved/neglectful parenting have negative impacts on the social behaviours of adolescents in Port Harcourt. The study further shows that authoritative parenting has better implications and impacts on the social behavior of adolescents because it is characterized as high in responsiveness and demandingness. The study also revealed the need to extend support to parents on appropriate parenting styles. The study concludes that this is quintessential to achieve a healthy social developmental process for adolescents.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
  i. Religious organizations, community-based organizations and other relevant agencies should engage in sensitization of parents on the implications of specific parenting styles on their adolescents.
  ii. The government should embark on mass family education programmes through the mass media to sensitize parents on the dangers of inappropriate parenting styles and how to remedy them.
 iii. All secondary schools should establish a guidance and counseling unit to help students who are dwell under authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, uninvolved/neglectful parenting and helicopter parenting.
 iv. Specifically, authoritative parenting should be promoted as the most appropriate parenting style.

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CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY AMONG OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN ABEOKUTA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The incidence of adolescent pregnancy is highly prevalent among impoverished and less-educated adolescents who may face challenges so as limited access to education, lack of sexual and reproductive health information which can increase the rate of adolescent pregnancy. This study involved 6 stakeholders for Key Informant Interviews and 16 adolescent mothers for In-depth Interviews while 259 out of school adolescents were interviewed through the use of questionnaires. The qualitative data were transcribed, themes and subthemes were generated from the study objectives while the quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. Findings revealed that the respondents strongly agreed with the perception that a pregnant adolescent girl is a deviant. In contrary, some stakeholders perceived adolescent pregnancy as not socially bad events. Exposure to social media was identified as a strong factor of adolescent pregnancy. Caesarian section was perceived as most dreadful health implication of adolescent pregnancy to mother while neonatal death was perceived as commonest health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child. Adolescents' pregnancy is perceived as negative development to adolescents, but some factors encourage the act. Hence, there is need for targeted interventions, to identify specific risks and barriers, and provide holistic support to reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy.

Introduction

Adolescence is defined by the World Health Organization as the period between 10 and 19 years of age (Kassa *et al.,* 2018; WHO, 2020). During this period, a person's emotional and psychological development from a child to an adult as well as their development of secondary sexual traits takes place (WHO, 2020). According to UNICEF (2008) casual sexual practices, rape, unplanned pregnancies, early births, high risk of abortion, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases are the challenges that affects the majority of adolescents.

Adolescent pregnancy is a significant public health and social issue that is linked to maternal and infant morbidity and mortality (Kassa, *et al*., 2018; Ali, *et al.,* 2022). Adolescent pregnancy and childbirth must be prevented in order to improve maternal health and lower infant mortality (Wright *et al.,* 2019). Low birth weight, pre-term labour, and intrauterine development retardation (Ali, *et al.,* 2022), eclampsia, fistula, obstructed labour, neonatal death (Indarti *et al*., 2020), high maternal mortality and morbidity (Olorunsaiye *et al.,* 2022), preeclampsia, poor intrauterine growth and stillbirths (Pusdekar *et al.,* 2020), unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted illnesses (Olorunsaiye *et al.,* 2022) are some of the risks connected with adolescent pregnancy.

There are a number of risk factors that are associated with adolescent pregnancy, these factors include lack of sexual health education, (Aina *et al*., 2020) low socioeconomic status and low level of education (Aina *et al*., 2020). In addition, peer pressure, cultural permissiveness, family

instability, (Abebe *et al.,* 2020), lack of awareness about sexuality/sexual education (Aina *et al.*, 2020), ignorance and inefficient contraceptive use (Abebe *et al.,* 2020) can also influence the emergence of adolescent pregnancy.

Global efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy have been made, as evidenced by Sustainable Development Goal 3 Target 3.7, which aims to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs by 2030 (UN, 2015). This is critical given the high rates of maternal death, abortion (Merdad and Ali, 2018) and adolescent pregnancy related new-born mortality in sub-Saharan Africa (Neal *et al.*, 2018; Indarti *et al.*, 2020).

In Nigeria, the number of births per 1,000 adolescent females aged 15 to 19 has decreased from 122 in 2013 to 102 in 2021 (UNICEF, 2022). However, this estimate is still one of the highest internationally. According to Nigeria Demographic Health Survey, an estimated 19% of girls between the ages of 15 to 19 years have started having children, 14% of whom have already given birth while another 4% who are currently pregnant with their first child. (NDHS, 2018). Factors such as societal acceptance of adolescent sexual activity and premarital pregnancy as indicators of fertility before marriage (Bamiwuye, 2014), religious beliefs, poverty and inadequate sexuality education (Ajala, 2014) are elements contributing to Nigeria's high rate of adolescent pregnancies. Despite the numerous interventions, efforts of government, policy makers including sexual health education, peer education programs to encourage positive sexual and reproductive outcomes in order to reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy (Amoateng *et al.,* 2022), pregnancy among girls less than 20 years of age is still high and it has proven to be a severe and chronic public health concern as it affects both maternal and infant health (Amoateng *et al.,* 2022).

In the study conducted by Kupoluyi *et al.,* 2016, it was revealed that adolescent pregnancy and childbirth are highly prevalent among improvised and less-educated adolescents. Likewise the report by the State's Programme Coordinator of "The Youth Future Saver Initiative" a non-governmental organization working on the reduction of adolescent pregnancy in Ogun State, revealed that there is high rate of adolescent pregnancy in Abeokuta Ogun State and this is attributed to a number of factors including poverty, child neglect, lack of child protection and supervisions at home and in schools, cultural attitudes, religious convictions, and inadequate sexuality education (Adediran, 2021). The available reports and studies on adolescent pregnancy had looked more into the demography, content and epidemiology of adolescent pregnancy and there are limited studies and reports that explore in-depthly the context of adolescent pregnancy in Nigeria. Therefore, this study aims to examine the contextual understanding of adolescent pregnancy among out-of-school adolescents and stakeholders in Abeokuta South Local Government, Ogun State.

Research Questions

- How do adolescents and stakeholders perceive adolescent pregnancy in Abeokuta South Local Government Area?
- What are the factors that predispose adolescents to adolescent pregnancy in Abeokuta South Local Government Area?
- How do adolescents and stakeholders understand health implications associated with adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers in Abeokuta South Local Government Area?
- How do adolescents and stakeholders understand health implications associated with adolescent pregnancy to the child in Abeokuta South Local Government Area?

Methods

Study Design

This study adopted a cross sectional sequential mixed method among out-of-school adolescents and stakeholders in Abeokuta South Local Government Area. The categorization of the questionnaire was done to ensure that the information gotten from respondents met the research objectives. An interview guide was designed to assist the researcher to conduct an in-depth interview and key informant interview with adolescent mothers' and stakeholders respectively drawn from the various locations in the study area. This was carried out in order to gather more data that the questionnaire might not have uncovered.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Abeokuta South which is a local government in Ogun State, it is usually referred to as the premier Local Government because of the historic eminence of that geographical entity as the traditional seal of the local or native authority in Egba since 1898 as well as the seal of government of Ogun State that came into existence in 1976. Abeokuta South local government occupies an area of 57.35sqkilometre with an estimated population of 434,000 according to the 2006 population census and it has projected to 544,000 as at 2021.

Study Population

The study population comprised of adolescents within the ages of ten to nineteen years who are out-of-school during the time of the study. Also, stakeholders of the adolescents (bosses, parents or guardians) and adolescent mothers were included in the study.

Qualitative Method of Data Collection

In-depth Interview

In-depth interview was conducted among adolescent mothers from the selected communities within the study area. A total number of sixteen (16) respondents were selected. The research instrument was an in-depth interview guide which contained questions that stemmed from the specific objectives of the study. The focus of the question asked during the interview was on their socio-demographic characteristics, factors that predispose adolescents to adolescent pregnancy, perceived health implication of adolescent pregnancy to mothers and perceived health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child. Other data collection materials included a recorder, pen and notebook. The recorder was pretested to ensure that it is in good condition before use.

Key Informant Interview

Key informant interview was conducted among stakeholders from the selected communities within the study area. A total number of six (6) respondents were selected. The research instrument was a key informant interview guide which contained questions that stemmed from the specific objectives of the study. The focus of the question asked during the interview was on their socio-demographic characteristics, perception about adolescent pregnancy, factors that predispose adolescents to adolescent pregnancy, perceived health implication of adolescent pregnancy to mothers and perceived health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child. Other data collection materials included a recorder, pen and notebook. The recorder was pretested to ensure that it is in good condition before use.

Quantitative Method of Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into five sections:

Section A: The socio-demographic characteristics of the adolescents.

Section B: The perception of adolescents about adolescent pregnancy.

Section C: The factors that predisposes adolescents to adolescent pregnancy.

Section D: The perceived health implications of adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers.

Section E: The perceived health implications of adolescent pregnancy to the child.

Ethical Consideration

The study was approved by the Ogun State Ministry of Health Research Ethics Review Committee. Written informed consent was obtained from stakeholders and assents from adolescents. There was no risk involved in participating in the study, anonymity and privacy were taken with utmost importance and participants were not forced or coerced to participate in the study.

Results

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Out of School Adolescents Involved in Quantitative Survey

The socio-demographic information of the study participants revealed that majority of the out of school adolescents falls between the ages of 15 and 18 (15 = 14.7%, 16 = 34.4%, 17 = 26.3%, 18 = 17.0%). 0.8% and 6.9% of them were 14 and 19 years old respectively. The findings from this study revealed that more female participated in the study than male participants, 59.8% to 40.2% respectively. Majority (52.1%) of the out of school adolescents practiced Christianity, 46.3% practiced Islamic religion while 1.5% practiced traditional religion. Majority (93.4%) of the out of school adolescents that participated in the study were Yorubas, 4.2% were Igbos, and 2.3% were Hausas. The educational level of the out of school adolescents showed that 0.8% had none/primary incomplete education, 0.8% have completed their primary education, 55.2% had secondary incomplete education and 43.2% have completed their secondary education.

As further revealed in the study, 41.3% of the out of school adolescents who participated in the study had no occupation, 23.6% were hairdressers, 22.0% were tailors, 3.1% were mechanics, and 3.5% were barbers and sales representatives respectively and 3.1% practiced other occupation. Majority (77.6%) of the out of school adolescents' mothers were married, 15.1% were separated, 5.0% were divorced and 2.3% were widow. For the out of school adolescents' father's marital status, majority (81.9%) were married, 13.5% were separated and 4.6% were divorced. Majority (70.7%) of the out of school adolescents' mother's occupation were traders, 21.2% were artisans, 5.4% were civil servants and 2.7% were self-employed. Considering the out of school adolescents' father's occupation, 17.4% were traders, 44.8% were artisans, 10.4% were civil servants and 27.4% were self-employed.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents Involved in Qualitative Interviews

A total number of 259 out-of-school adolescents were recruited for the quantitative study. Most respondents were between the ages of 14 and 19 with the mean age of 16.64 ±1.1 and were mostly females (59.8%). A larger number of them were Yorubas (93.4%), mostly Christians and 55.2% did not complete secondary school. Twenty-two (22) respondents participated in the qualitative interviews; 16 adolescent mothers (for IDIs) and 6 participants in KIIs (3males and 3females stakeholders). In-depth Interviews respondents' age revealed that half of the respondents (8 of 16) are 18 years of age, (6 of 16) are 17 years while (2 of 16) are 19 years of age. For the KII respondents, (2 of 6) are 42 years of age and the remaining are 57 years, 60 years, 45 years and 56 years of age respectively. Many (16 of 22) of the respondents interviewed practice Christianity, (5 of 22) practice Islam and (1 of 22) practice Traditional. In respect to their occupation (8 are tailors, 1 carpenter, 7 hairdresser/make-up artist, 1 shoe maker, 1 business woman (Trader), 1 caterer, 1 sales representative and 1 no occupation.

Perception of Adolescents and Stakeholders about Adolescent Pregnancy in Abeokuta South LGA

The study revealed that 41.7% of the respondents strongly agreed with the perception that a pregnant adolescent girl is a deviant. In addition, 23.9% of the respondents who participated in this study strongly agreed that a pregnant girl does not have a future. Adolescent pregnancy makes parents devastated was strongly agreed by 36.7% of the participants while 12% of the participants strongly agreed that adolescent pregnancy means parents have failed. In addition, 20.1% of the participants strongly agreed that adolescent pregnancy result in stigmatization and 16.6% of the participants strongly agreed that adolescent pregnancy is as a result of civilization.

The above finding is evident in many responses from the interview as exemplified in the following statement: "*Haa, from my own perception what I can say is that adolescent pregnancy is not a thing of joy especially for parents, it is a shameful act for a child to get pregnant when they are still young, I do not support such act at all*" (Male- Guardian, 60years/Obantoko).

This perception was further corroborated by another female stakeholder that: "*They (adolescent girls) are young to get pregnant, those are children that we can say are still breastfeeding jokingly "awon omo enu oyan" they are too young, they are supposed to be thinking about their future and when such now happen, parents need not to neglect the child but it will definitely affect the child by slowing down her education or learning*" (Female- Hairdresser/Make-up artist, 42 years/Asero)

In contrary, a stakeholder perceived adolescent pregnancy as not socially bad events so far there is financial capability to care for the pregnant adolescent and child "*What I will say is that getting pregnant is a good thing, during the olden days most of our mothers then gave birth during this age group, if one has the money to take care of the baby there is nothing bad in it*" (Male- Tailor, 45years/Lantoro)

Factors that Predisposes Adolescents to Adolescent Pregnancy in Abeokuta South LGA

A total of 37.8% of adolescents identified exposure to social media as a strong factor that predisposes adolescents to unplanned/unwanted pregnancy. Desire for wealth and other material things was strongly agreed by 33.6% of the participants. Also, 32.4% of the participants strongly agreed that adolescent pregnancy can be influenced by the level of education of adolescents or parents. Lack of knowledge on the use of contraceptives was strongly agreed by 30.9% of the participants as a factor that predispose adolescent to adolescent pregnancy. Also, 18.9% of the participants strongly agreed that absence of comprehensive sex education in schools and at home is a factor responsible for adolescent pregnancy. Peer pressure influence was strongly agreed by 32.4% of the participants to be a factor that predisposes adolescents to adolescent pregnancy.

Furthermore, 33.2% of the participants strongly agreed that rape and sexual harassment is a factor that predisposes adolescents to adolescent pregnancy. Lack of parental love and care was strongly agreed by 29.7% of the participants as a factor that predisposes adolescents to adolescent pregnancy. Broken home (divorce) was strongly agreed by 27.4% of the participants as a factor that predisposes adolescents to adolescent pregnancy.

To buttress the responses from the out of school adolescents on the factors that predispose adolescent to adolescent pregnancy, the statements below represents the view of many respondents who participated in the qualitative study:

"*Phone hmm, you see that thing they are taking up and down can cause it. Majority of these children are exposed to a lot of pornographic content on their phones*" (Male- Shoemaker, 57 years/Isale ake)

Another respondent added that: "*Civilization, what they look on their phones "ero ibanisoro" and also bad friends, keeping bad friends those are the things that can predispose adolescents to pregnancy*" (Male- Guardian, 60 years/Obantoko).

Probing further on the fore going discourse, an IDI respondent said: "*What led to my pregnancy was that my parents do not stay together and I stay with my father and my father does not have time for me*" (Adolescent mother- 17years/Adatan)

Another respondent from IDI said that: "*My mother does not have time for me; whenever she leaves home she does not care about my where about till she returns at night*" (Adolescent mother- 18years/Asero)

Perceived Health Implications of Adolescent Pregnancy to Adolescent Mothers

The health implications emanating from adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers were revealed in the study as 37.1% of the participants strongly agreed that maternal death is a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers, Abortion was strongly agreed by 30.1% of the participants to be a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers. Also, 21.6% of the participants strongly agreed that obstructed labour can be as a result of adolescent pregnancy. Adolescent pregnancy can lead to operation (caesarian section) was strongly agreed by 40.5% of the participants. In addition, 35.1% of the participants strongly agreed that pre-term labour can be as a result of adolescent pregnancy. Pregnancy induced hypertension was strongly agreed by 28.6% of the participants to be a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers.

Respondents from the qualitative interviews were probed to discuss on the health implication of adolescent pregnancy to adolescent mothers, below are what they have to say: "*Our mothers then are strong but children of nowadays are not strong or matured for pregnancy to the extent that some will have to undergo caeserian section*" (Male- Tailor, 45years/Lantoro)

In addition, a respondent also said: "*We do hear about Vagina Vesico Fistula especially in the north this is because those children are still young to get pregnant*" (Female- Parent, 56years/Ake)

Participants of the IDI also said: "*Such adolescent may have to undergo caeserian section*" (Adolescent mother- 17years/Asero)

A respondent affirmed to this by saying: "*I had to undergo caeserian section (operation) to deliver my baby*" (Adolescent mother- 17years/Adatan)

Perceived Health Implications of Adolescent Pregnancy to the child

The health implications as a result of adolescent pregnancy to the child were also revealed in the study. Neonatal death as health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child was strongly agreed by 37.1% of the participants, Still birth was strongly agreed by 18.5% of the participants as a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child. In addition, 23.9% of the participants strongly agreed that low birth weight baby is one of the health implications of adolescent pregnancy to the child. Low growth and development was strongly agreed by 19.7% of the participants to be a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child. Also, 29.7% of the participants strongly agreed that pre-term delivery is one of the health implications of adolescent pregnancy to the child.

Further discussion by stakeholders and adolescent mothers revealed that adolescent pregnancy to child can result in various health implications: "*The baby in the womb can also be faced with different health issues whereby the growth and development of the baby may be affectedor the adolescent may give birth when it is not yet time for delivery thereby giving birth to a premature child or lose the child in the process*" (Female- Parent, 56years/Ake)

Furthermore, a respondent opined that: "*those children still need to be taken care of talk-less of them getting pregnant so there is no way they will be able to take good care of the child*" (Female- Hairdresser/Make-up artist, 42years/Asero)

Probing further, respondents who participated in IDI have these to say: "*Some are being born pre-termly*" (Adolescent mother- 18years/Adatan)

"*My child was an imbecile due to the drugs I used during pregnancy*" (Adolescent mother-19years/Lantoro)

Discussion

The age of the respondents ranged from 10 to 19 years with the mean age of 16.64 ±1.1. This is in line with World Health Organization (WHO) definition of adolescence as the period between 10 and 19 years of age (WHO, 2020). Also, respondents were more females (59.8%) than males, this can be due to the fact that adolescent pregnancy mostly affects females than males and females are the ones that get pregnant. This is similar to the study by Mgbokwere, *et al* (2015) on adolescent pregnancy in Cross River where females (62.1%) were more than males' participants in the study. In this current study, it was revealed that 93.4% of the respondents were Yorubas. This is similar with a study carried out by (Akokuwebe et al., 2017) were 81.1% of their respondents were Yorubas.

Adolescent pregnancy is regarded as a frightening and disturbing experience that can lead to dissatisfaction. This study revealed that respondents perceived adolescent pregnancy as an occurrence that makes parents devastated. Parents may feel disappointed when their adolescent becomes pregnant, particularly if they had high expectations for their child's future in terms of education and career goals. This opinion corroborate the study of Ajewole *et al* (2017) were adolescent pregnancy is believed to bring shame to the adolescent and even the family and this can be as a result of the negative societal effects of adolescent pregnancy. Furthermore, respondents in this study perceived that adolescent pregnancy can result in stigmatization. Pregnant adolescents often face various forms of stigmatization which can lead to social isolation. This is evident as study carried out by Nzeocha *et al* (2022) confirmed that pregnant adolescents experience prejuce and exclusion in their neighbourhoods.

With regards to factors that predispose adolescent to adolescent pregnancy, present study shows that social media was a strong factor that predisposes adolescents to adolescent pregnancy as the accessibility and affordability of smart phones and the problematic usage of it has made adolescents exposed to explicit content which can have negative effects such as unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted illnesses on the adolescents. Studies have supported the impact of social media on adolescents' early sexual conduct and its effects to include STIs and unintended pregnancies (Straburger, 2005; Chandra *et al.,* 2008). However, this finding contradicts with the study carried out by Coppens (2014) who predicted that social media can also be used to promote sex education and discourage early conception, especially among adolescents with low educational levels.

Majority of the respondents who participated in this study affirmed Caesarian Section (Operation) as a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the mother. Adolescents are most often at an increased risk of experiencing complications during labour and delivery due to their age and other factors that are linked with pregnancy. This agrees with the study conducted by (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2013) which revealed that adolescent pregnancy increases the chance of caesarian section among adolescents during birth.

The study further revealed neonatal death as a health implication of adolescent pregnancy to the child and this is a confirmation that adolescent pregnancy can result to neonatal death. One of the possible consequences of adolescent pregnancy is neonatal death, which is the death of a newborn within the first 28 days. This can be as a result of adolescent mothers still growing and developing, therefore, their bodies may not be fully prepared for pregnancy and childbirth, leading to an increased risk of complications during labour and delivery (Ganchimeg *et al.,* 2014)

Conclusion

The contextual understanding of adolescent pregnancy among out-of-school adolescents and stakeholders in selected communities in Abeokuta South Local Government, reveal that both adolescent and stakeholders have an understanding of adolescent pregnancy and some of its health implications for both mother and child. As much as pregnancy by adolescents is perceived in the light of negativity, there are also pockets of perceptions that welcome the practice due to associated social status elevation and factors such as low educational status, lack of economic empowerments, parental negligence, peer pressure, exposure to social media.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

INVESTIGATING THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF FAMILY PLANNING, MARRIAGE PRACTICES, AND CHILD WELLBEING IN POTISKUM, NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract:
This paper delves into the historical evolution of family planning and marriage practices in Potiskum, located in the northern part of Nigeria. The primary objective is to unravel the intricacies of social behaviors within families and the evolving norms of marriage that have shaped the region's social and cultural environment over time. The focus is on discerning historical transformations in marriage systems and stepfamily dynamics, with a specific evaluation of their impact on children's behavior and well-being, emphasizing family development. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research utilizes oral interviews and ethnographic fieldwork to construct a comprehensive narrative of Potiskum's family history. Oral history interviews with community elders provide valuable insights into family lives, while ethnographic fieldwork in the municipality allows for the identification of contemporary historical events. The study critically examines socio-economic and political factors influencing the formation, evolution, and transformation of family systems, intending to highlight children's experiences within these structures. By exploring the historical roots of marriage trends and family life in Potiskum, the research contributes not only to academic discourse but also informs contemporary discussions about family development and child well-being. This study seeks to enhance the broader understanding of family history in northern Nigeria, providing detailed information on the intersection of culture, socio-economic factors, and political influences on children's behavior. The anticipated impact extends to policymakers, historians, and scholars interested in the family chain, with implications for improving the lives of children in different family contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The early years of life are critical for a child's emotional and social development (Sroufe, 1997). During this formative stage, the bond with a biological mother, often the primary caregiver, lays the groundwork for a child's sense of security and self-worth. This attachment significantly influences their ability to build healthy relationships later in life. Marriage, traditionally viewed as a family unit with distinct gender roles, often faces the challenge of divorce in modern times. In Northern Nigeria, the increasing prevalence of divorce disrupts this traditional family structure, leaving some children in a vulnerable position. This is particularly concerning because the extended family network, historically a strong support system, may be weakened by marital dissolution (Okeke et al, 2017).

Stephanie (2004) highlights that historically, marriage served practical purposes like forming alliances, expanding the family labor force, and acquiring in-laws. Love wasn't a primary factor until recent times. The shift from family-based economies to market economies and from monarchies to democracies significantly transformed the perception and purpose of marriage. By examining both the traditional and modern aspects of marriage in Northern Nigeria, we gain a richer understanding of this evolving institution. It's a story of cultural adaptation, changing societal needs, and the ongoing quest to balance tradition with evolving aspirations.

Understanding the evolving landscape of marriage, including divorce trends and the formation of stepfamilies, is crucial for gaining insight into the experiences of children in Northern Nigeria.

Traditionally, fathers may take responsibility for children after divorce, but concerns exist about potential neglect and even mistreatment by stepmothers (Chaibou, 1994). To ensure the well-being of children in Northern Nigeria, it's vital to examine the impact of these changing family dynamics on their mental health and social development. By researching the social and psychological implications of these family structures, we can identify necessary interventions and support systems to foster a healthy environment for children in this region.

THE STUDY AREA

In northeastern Nigeria, Potiskum stands as a prominent local government area and city within Yobe State, exemplifying remarkable growth and population density. Rooted in its diversity, Potiskum originally inhabited three major ethnic groups, namely Karai-Karai, Bolewa, and Ngizim, alongside the influential Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri communities, constituting a mosaic of languages representative of Yobe State's rich linguistic of paramount significance.

Potiskum's economic influence extends beyond Yobe State, attracting individuals from neighboring states such as Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Bauchi, and Gombe. Furthermore, its prominence in the trading industry attracts individuals from countries including Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Benin, and the Central African Republic. Notably, Potiskum boasts the distinction of hosting the "biggest cattle market in sub-Saharan Africa," further bolstering its regional importance. Additionally, the city is home to one of the largest correctional facilities in Nigeria (Hassan et al, 2019). Potiskum's renown extends to its role as a thriving hub for cattle commerce and trailer transport, emblematic of their distinctive economic vigor. Signifying an integral node in Nigeria's trailer transport system, Potiskum occupies a prominent position in the nation's transport infrastructure.

MARRIAGE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Marriage in Northern Nigeria is a complex institution woven with threads of tradition and change. Steeped in history and cultural values, it has undergone a fascinating evolution that reflects the region's ever-shifting needs and perspectives. Traditionally, marriage served practical purposes that extended far beyond love. One theory suggests it emerged as a way to define clear lines of succession and land rights within tribal groups (Chaibou, 1994). Economic realities significantly influenced marriage practices, with the bride's value often playing a central role in arrangements. Socially, marriage involves a well-defined set of elaborate customs and ceremonies. However, modern times have witnessed a trend towards simplification in these practices.

As society evolved, so too has the concept of marriage. Chaibou, (1994) emphasizes the importance of a strong family system for societal stability and prosperity. Today, marriage is increasingly seen as a partnership built on equality, mutual respect, and shared values. It fosters new family connections and remains essential for the continuation of society. While arranged marriages still exist, the focus has shifted towards love and companionship, reflecting a growing desire for emotional connection within the union.

Despite these changes, remnants of the past linger. The economic value of brides can still influence arrangements, and divorce, though more prevalent than in the past, remains a complex issue with deep societal and religious considerations. Understanding the historical roots of marriage, intertwined with societal and economic structures, offers valuable context for appreciating the evolving landscape of marriage in Northern Nigeria.

THE EVOLVING FAMILY PATTERN

Examining the evolution of family patterns in Northern Nigeria reveals a deeper understanding of how marriage has changed. Traditionally, marriages were arranged without the couple's

knowledge, sometimes serving as a reward for farm labor "ladan noma" Women had little to no say in who they married.

Shifting Tides

Modern times have ushered in a wave of change. Women now have more freedom to choose their partners, often engaging in extended courtship periods before marriage. Practices like "hira," where men visit potential brides at night for conversation persist. Ironically, despite these shifts, divorces have become more commonplace. Unlike in the past when they were rare and lengthy processes, today, young widows are a frequent sight in many neighborhoods. This concerning trend has sparked discussions among religious scholars who seek to understand the root causes and potential solutions. Each divorce, especially when children are involved, creates a cascade of complexities. Children's lives are disrupted, and custody battles often arise. Traditionally, fathers take care of the children, separating them from their mothers. If the father remarries, the new wife may need to assume the caretaker role, creating further psychological challenges for the children.

Gender Roles and Societal Expectations

Hausa culture has strong expectations regarding gender roles. A woman's life cycle revolves around her ability to bear children, viewed as the "profit" gained from marriage. Women are not considered fully mature until they give birth. Even in divorce cases, where a woman returns to her family home, her sons especially remain under the former husband's guardianship (Chaibou, 1994).

DIVORCES

Divorce is a legal separation of husband and wife, leaving each other free to remarry. It is also to break off a marriage legally. In Africa, tradition has long held marriage in high esteem. Seen as a source of honor, responsibility, and strong social connections, marriage was ideally a lifelong commitment formed with mutual consent. However, this view is changing. Several factors are contributing to the rise of divorce in Africa.

One factor is the changing social and economic landscape. (Manswab, & Abdullahi, 2018) identifies political, economic, social, and religious elements that can disrupt marital stability. Couples from different backgrounds might struggle with cultural clashes, leading to disharmony and a loss of respect. Additionally, poverty and lack of understanding about marriage roles, as noted by Adamu (1998) can lead to unrealistic expectations. Couples entering marriage without proper preparation are more likely to face challenges. The decline of traditional support systems further weakens marital stability. The extended family and elders in the community once played a crucial role in guiding couples through difficulties. With their diminishing role, couples may feel less equipped to navigate marital challenges. The consequences of divorce in Africa can be far-reaching. As Odis, (2021) points out, divorce can break apart families, leaving children without adequate care and love. This can lead to behavioral issues and even criminal activity in the long run. (Anderson, 2013) suggests that a rise in divorce can contribute to increased societal problems like sexual promiscuity, immorality, and a decline in respect for marriage as an institution.

It's important to consider the historical context of marriage in Africa when discussing these changes. While some believe marriage is a divinely ordained and unbreakable bond, the concept has evolved. The formal marriage ceremony, as we know it today, has its roots in Western cultures, with evidence dating back to Mesopotamia in 2350 B.C. The emergence of marriage is linked to the shift from nomadic lifestyles to settled communities with established property ownership and production systems.

CAUSES OF DIVORCE

Although marriage is now built on peace, love, and compassion, between husband and wife, with mutual understanding and mutual respect or respect and good living between husband and wife so that they can live a long life, without anyone interfering no one else's rights.

Culturally, there's a lack of social knowledge about marriage, and individuals often rush into matrimony without adequate preparation. Educational disparities create challenges, leading to marital conflicts. Insufficient investigation into the behavior of prospective spouses before marriage is another significant issue. Family-related problems, such as conflicts with in-laws or immediate family members, contribute to marital instability. Personal shortcomings, including hygiene neglect, communication deficiencies, and inability to settle down, further strain relationships (Okeke et al, 2017). Social influences, such as the influence of the husband's grandmother, may impact decisions. Financial considerations, including marrying for money or facing poverty-related challenges, add stress. Social circles, substance abuse, family dynamics, emotional factors, and communication breakdowns all play roles in divorce. Occupational issues, financial mismanagement, lack of respect for values, health concerns, excessive family involvement, financial extravagance, and attitude problems contribute to the complex web of reasons behind the high divorce rates (Damota, Gebretsadik, & Nigatu, 2020). Addressing these multifaceted issues is crucial for promoting healthier and more stable marriages in the region.

CHALLENGES OF STEPFAMILY DYNAMICS

The institution of marriage doesn't necessarily ensure complete harmony, but historically, children had a vibrant social life playing with peers in the evenings. These interactions fostered their social and cognitive development (Odis, 2021). Additionally, in times of family dissolution, grandmothers often provided solace and care, offering stability to children. However, contemporary childhood faces several challenges (Hill, 1972). There has been a decline in recreational activities within schools and communities. Traditional sports are less common, leaving a void. This is further compounded by the challenges posed by stepmothers, whose influence can exacerbate existing issues. Strained family dynamics, particularly those involving stepmothers, can be a contributing factor to young girls engaging in street hawking.

The absence of a biological mother figure can significantly impact children's emotional well-being, especially during the crucial pre-school years. Children's social development may also be impacted as they navigate the complexities of stepfamilies, possibly experiencing feelings of displacement or divided loyalties. Some research underscore the significant impact of maternal presence on children's hygiene and overall well-being (Odis, 2021). Conversely, the relationship dynamics between children and stepmothers can be complex and fraught with tension. Children may struggle to form meaningful connections with their stepmothers, feeling neglect, exclusion, and a lack of support.

In such circumstances, a girl might feel compelled to contribute financially or seek independence by taking to the streets to hawk goods. Street hawking, while offering some income, comes with risks like harassment, exploitation, and even physical harm. It's important to remember that not all stepmother relationships are negative. However, when problems do arise, the family must address them openly and create a safe and supportive environment for all children involved.

Child street hawking has become a major societal problem, endangering the future of these young people. While poverty is often cited as a cause, this study examines the complex effects of stepmotherhood on families, taking into account security and socioeconomic factors. While economic hardship is a significant driver, it's not the sole culprit. The breakdown of traditional family structures, with the decline of the extended family support system and the diminishing role of grandmothers ("goyon kaka") who once provided stability, can leave children vulnerable. Additionally, a lack of access to quality education and alternative means of income generation further pushes children towards street begging and hawking.

Results

A. **Shifting Marriage Landscape:** Traditionally, marriages were arranged with a focus on practicality and social alliances. Love and individual choice played a lesser role. Modern times see a rise in love-based marriages and increased female agency in choosing partners. However, divorce rates have also grown significantly.

B. **Impact on Children:** The rise of divorce and stepfamilies creates complexities for children. They may experience emotional strain due to separation from their biological mothers and challenges adjusting to new family dynamics. Research suggests negative impacts on social development and behavior when positive relationships with stepmothers are not fostered.

C. **Importance of Mother-Child Bond:** The research emphasizes the enduring importance of strong mother-child bonds, particularly in a child's early years. These bonds significantly influence emotional and social development.

D. **Challenges Faced by Children:** The study identifies contemporary challenges faced by children in Potiskum. These include:

  i. Decline in traditional recreational activities (LeVine, & Price-Williams, 1974).

  ii. Economic hardship leading to child street vending.

  iii. Absence of strong maternal figures in some families due to divorce or other factors.

DISCUSSION

A. The Impact on Child Wellbeing

The historical transformations in family structures in Potiskum have likely influenced children's experiences in several ways. The emotional well-being of children may be affected by the absence of a biological mother figure, particularly during the crucial pre-school years when secure attachment is vital. Social development can also be impacted, as children navigate the complexities of stepfamilies and potentially experience feelings of displacement or divided loyalties. Research by Mece (2015) highlights the potential negative impact of stepfamily dynamics on children's behavior, particularly when positive relationships with stepmothers are not fostered.

Furthermore, the decline in maternal presence, due to divorce or other factors, can have detrimental consequences for children's hygiene and overall well-being. Studies by Lancy (1996) emphasize the crucial role mothers play in maintaining a clean and healthy environment for their children.

B. The Importance of Nurturing Bonds

Despite the historical changes, the research underscores the enduring importance of strong mother-child bonds. Early attachment formed with a biological mother serves as the cornerstone for a child's emotional and social development. While the dynamics in stepfamilies can be complex, fostering positive relationships between children and stepmothers is crucial for children's well-being. Programs that equip stepmothers with parenting skills and encourage open communication within the family unit can be instrumental in creating a supportive environment for all children.

C. Addressing Contemporary Challenges

The study also identifies contemporary challenges faced by children in Potiskum. The decline in traditional recreational activities, once a cornerstone of social and cognitive development, creates

a void in children's lives. The prevalence of child street vendors serves as a stark reminder of the absence of strong maternal figures and the economic hardships faced by some families. These challenges can be further exacerbated by the complexities of evolving family structures.

D. Towards a Brighter Future

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made to promote the well-being of children in Potiskum. Premarital counseling and education programs can help couples make informed decisions about marriage and navigate potential challenges. Programs that support mothers in stepfamilies and equip them with parenting skills can foster positive relationships with children. Community-based interventions that provide recreational activities and address the root causes of child street vending, such as poverty and lack of educational opportunities, are crucial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. **Parenting education for stepmothers:** Design programs or workshops specifically tailored to equip stepmothers with parenting skills and strategies for building positive relationships with stepchildren.

B. **Early childhood education programs:** Invest in and expand access to high-quality early childhood education programs, particularly for children from low-income families. These programs can provide a nurturing environment, promote social and cognitive development, and potentially mitigate the negative impacts of complex family structures.

C. **Recreational activities:** Develop and support initiatives that provide safe and constructive recreational activities for children and youth in Potiskum. This could involve reviving traditional sports or creating community centers with recreational facilities.

D. **Child protection programs:** Strengthen child protection services to identify and address cases of neglect or abuse faced by children in stepfamilies or those lacking strong maternal figures.

E. **Educational opportunities:** Expand access to quality education for girls and women. Education can empower women to make informed choices, improve their economic prospects, and potentially reduce reliance on child street vending.

F. **Public awareness campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of healthy family dynamics, positive parenting practices, and the well-being of children.

G. **Community dialogue:** Facilitate dialogue and collaboration among community leaders, religious authorities, NGOs, and families to address the challenges faced by children in stepfamilyhood situations.

Conclusion

The study elucidated the complex relationship among family planning, marital customs, and child welfare in Potiskum, Northern Nigeria, by examining their historical development. Divorce rates have increased in tandem with the move away from traditional, planned marriages and toward an emphasis on love and friendship. The increasing number of stepfamilies in particular is altering the face of families, which puts children's emotional and social development at risk. Strong mother-child ties are always important, and this research emphasizes the need for programs that assist stepmothers and address the modern issues that Potiskum children confront. Through an awareness of these historical shifts and how they affect families, legislators, and community leaders may create initiatives that support strong family units and guarantee.

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