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ASSESSMENT OF TEST CONSTRUCTION COMPETENCE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA.

by

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Abstract

This study on the assessment of test construction competence among senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state has five objectives, one research question and four corresponding null hypotheses. Survey research design was employed, and the population comprised of public senior secondary school teachers in the state with a total number of 3,178 (males = 2,219 and Females = 959). Using the Research Advisor (2006) a sample of 346 teachers were sampled via the multi-stage cluster and simple random techniques. Test Construction Skills Inventory (TCSI) was adapted from Agu; Chika & Aloysius. (2013), after pilot testing the questionnaire, it was found to have 0.83 as coefficient reliability. Data were analyzed using mean scores, t-test for independence and Analysis of variance ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that there is a significant difference between teachers' gender, qualifications and years of experience but in the area of specialization no significant difference was observed. The paper therefore recommends that government at the state level should sponsor teachers to attend educational conferences and workshops.

Keywords: Assessment, Test, Test Construction, Competence, Senior Secondary School & Teachers

Introduction

Teachers play a vital role in any education setting apart from imparting knowledge, observing and managing the classroom during teaching and learning process they also construct tests which are used to determine the extent to which stated behavioral objectives have been achieved or not. This test provides information for decision-making about the teachers, students and program, for these reasons there is a need for teachers to be competent in constructing the test. The competency of a teacher is the ability of the teacher to adopt the requisite test construction steps when constructing a test.

Adodo (2013) concurred that not much attention has been paid to the area of teachers' competencies and that it is not unusual to find teachers who lack a grasp of basics. Teachers in Gombe State have a good understanding of the general principles of test construction but they lack specific knowledge and skills in this area and do not have access to resources and support to develop their test construction competence. Test construction competence and quality are essential tools required by any teacher before teaching and learning goals are to be achieved. The significance of tests in a school system is bountiful since it is how any meaningful

educational goal is attained. (Rufina, Abubakar & Stephen, 2015). Adodo (2014) defined teacher competency as the ability of a teacher to exhibit on-the-job skills and knowledge gained as a result of training. Teachers need not be experts in educational measurement and evaluation to construct valid and reliable tests. There are basic test construction skills which every teacher ought to possess to construct a qualitative test. These skills help teachers to: structure items to elicit clear and concise answers from students; construct tests that will be appropriate for learners with different ages, abilities, and genders; and set tests so that students finish within time and do not grow scared of tests.

Senior secondary school is a level of education where students are prepared for tertiary education. Students who perform wonderfully in the teacher-made classroom tests at this level are expected to perform well in the standardized tests equally which is a prerequisite for gaining admission into tertiary institutions such as the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) and any other standardized tests taken at the end of every secondary education. However this appears not to be so. Research evidence indicates that teachers' competency in test construction is below expectations among senior secondary teachers of science, Technology and math (Asim, Ekwi & Eni, 2013). The construction of valid and reliable tests in various subject areas has not been given enough attention in senior secondary schools in Nigeria (Osadebe, 2014).

Statement of the problem

Personal experience shows that for years, there has been a great deal of employment of unqualified teachers in the teaching profession. Teaching is used as a stepping stone to greener pastures. Test construction has been a major source of anxiety among senior secondary school teachers, especially the less experienced ones and this anxiety stems from a lack of competence in test construction procedures. The quality of Teacher Made Test is a thing of concern. Ugodunluwa (2008) posited that the qualities of items on Teacher Made Test generally unknown and low when compared to standardized tests. The issue of validity and reliability of Teacher Tests calls the attention of researchers (Ngozi, Chika & Aloysius, 2013). These researchers observed that most of the Teacher Made Test lacks validity and reliability because teachers seem to lack competent in test construction procedures that enable them to construct valid and reliable tests. According to Anikweze (2014), feedback from well-constructed Teacher Made Test could help to improve students' performance either through the correction given by the teacher or by learners' effort to cover the lapses that account for failure. Testing provides feedback on which educational decisions are made. Jane, A; Taynan, L.S; Hoffman and Algina, S (2022) believe that teachers' knowledge of psychometrics, teaching years of experience and high qualifications, were positively related to their ability to develop a science test as were more likely to have greater knowledge of the principles of test construction. In view of these, the researcher seeks to conduct an assessment of the senior secondary school teachers' competence in test construction to address the issue in Gombe State.

Therefore, the purpose of the study is to,

1. to determine the level of senior secondary school teachers' competencies in test construction procedures in Gombe State;
2. to find out differences in test construction procedure competence between male and female senior secondary school teachers in Gombe State;
3. to investigate the difference in test construction procedures competence between the qualified

and unqualified senior secondary school teachers in Gombe State;

4. to find out the difference between science and non-science senior secondary school teachers with regards to their competencies in test construction procedures in Gombe State; and,

5. to determine the difference between experienced and experienced teachers concerning their competence in test construction procedures in Gombe State.

To aid this, the following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of teachers' competencies in test construction procedures among senior secondary school teachers in Gombe State?

The following hypotheses were equally generated thus:

1. There is no significant difference in test construction procedure competence between the male and female senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state.

2. There is no significant difference in test construction procedure competence between qualified and unqualified senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state.

3. There is no significant difference in test construction procedures competence between the science and non-science senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state.

4. There is no significant difference in test construction procedure competence between experienced and experienced senior secondary school teachers in Gombe State.

Method

The research design for this study was a survey which is considered appropriate for this study because it is a design that is used to determine and report the way things are; it involves a collection of numerical data to test hypotheses or answer questions about the current status of the subject of study. (Gay; Mills; Airasian. 2009). The population of the study comprised all the senior secondary school teachers in the Government-owned schools in Gombe State. Presently there are one hundred and sixteen (116) senior secondary schools with a total number of two thousand one hundred and seventy eight (3,178) teachers in Gombe State out of which males constitute 2,219 Males and females 959 (MOE Gombe, 2023). The teachers come from various ethnic, social, religious and cultural backgrounds. Based on the provision of the research advisor (2006). A total number of three hundred and forty- six (346) was drawn from the population as sample size using the MultiStage Cluster sampling technique in all the stages the selection was randomization. The instrument used for data collection was a thirty items inventory adapted from the Test Construction Skills Inventory (TCSI) developed by Ngozi, Chika and Aloysius (2013), administered to the respondents with the help of the research assistants, Cronbach alpha was employed to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire after running the data using SPSS 23 version. It was found that the entire items measure a high reliability of 0.837. This is in line with the benchmark that an instrument with a coefficient of 0.60 is regarded to have average reliability while a coefficient of 0.70 and above shows the instrument has a high-reliability standard from 0.713 to 0.956. This questionnaire with a coefficient of 0.83 is regarded as high reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson 1967; Sekaran & Bongie, 2010).

In analyzing the data, the mean score was used to answer the research question, t-test and analysis of variance were employed in testing the null hypotheses.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Level of teachers' competence in Gombe state

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Test Construction					6.341
Procedures	346	11.00	82.00	22.92	0.341
Competencies					
Valid N (listwise)	346				

From the above table considering the mean score of teachers of 22.92, the maximum score 82.00 and the minimum score 11.00 it was concluded that the level of test construction competence among senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state is high which is influenced by their qualification, teaching experience and professional qualification, this contradicted the findings of Donker; Osei-Tutu and Amoah (2018) with low level.

Research Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in test construction procedures competence between male and female teachers.

Table 2: Result of t-test Analysis of Genders in TCPC

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	SE	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Df
TCPC	Male	191	24.73	6.05	.438	6.199		
	Female	155	20.69	5.98	.480		.000	240

* = Significant at 0.05 -level

An independent t- test was performed at 0.05 level to examine the differences in test construction competence concerning gender, Male teachers had a mean score of 23.97 and standard deviation of 4.35, female teachers had a mean score of 20.13 and a standard deviation of 6.49. Based on the results showed a significant difference at .000 as gender differed in test construction competence among senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state. This is in line with the findings of Aku; Agbo and Agama (2020).

Research hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in test construction procedures competence between the qualified and unqualified senior secondary school teachers in Gombe State

Research hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in test construction procedures competence between the qualified and unqualified senior secondary school teachers in Gombe State.

Table 3: Result of t-test analysis of teachers' qualifications in TCPC

	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	sig	df
Qualified	246	24.42	6.21	.396	344	.000	344
Unqualified	100	19.24	5.04	.504			

*** = Significant at 0.05 –level**

Ascertaining whether a difference was observed in test construction competence between the qualified and unqualified senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state, the total mean score obtained from different groups of qualifications was subjected to analysis of t-test and presented in the table above. The results revealed that teachers teaching Qualifications had a significant impact on their test construction competence in Gombe state thus, the null hypothesis was rejected as qualifications differed in test construction competence.

Research Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in test construction procedures competence between science and Non-science senior secondary school teachers in Gombe state.

Table 4: Result of t-test analysis of science and non-science teachers with regards to their competence in test construction procedure in Gombe state.

SAS	N	\bar{X}	SD	SE	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	df
TCPC Sci.	204	23.03	7.58	.531	0.384	.537	240
Non sci.	142	22.77	3.94				

*** = Significant at 0.05 -level**

The summary of the calculation contained in the above table shows that the computed t- t-value was found to be 0.618 with a degree of freedom of 240 at 0.05 level of significance level, hence there is no significant difference, implying that the null hypothesis was accepted, as an area of specialization does not differ in test construction competence in Gombe State.

Research Hypothesis four

There is no significant difference in teachers' teaching experience concerning their competence in test construction procedures.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of teachers' experience in TCPC

	N	Mean	SD	SE
High experience	72	26.20	3.38	.398
Very experienced	88	26.73	6.79	.724
Less experience	112	20.47	4.59	.434
In experience	74	18.90	6.16	.716
<u>Total</u>	346	22.925	6.341	.3409

The table above provides information in relation to the teacher's teaching experience and competence in test construction which were categorized into four: the higher experienced teachers with a total number of 72 teachers and a mean score of 26.20, very experienced teachers with a total number of 88 and a mean score of 26.74, less experienced teachers with a total number of 112 teachers with a mean score of 20.47 and Inexperienced teachers with a total number of 74 and the mean of 18.90 so the higher the experience of a teacher, determine the teacher competence in test constructing.

ANOVA

Table 6: Result of an analysis of variance of teachers' experience in TCPC

	Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	392.93	3	1308.308	44.982	.000
Within Groups	9947.12	342	29.085		
Total	13872.046	345			

In determining whether a difference was observed in test construction competence between experienced and inexperienced teachers, the total mean score obtained from different groups of years of experience was subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) it shows that there is a significant difference as presented in the table above. The results of analysis of variance in the above table revealed that a significant difference was observed at 0.05. Thus, there is a significant difference in teachers' teaching experience with regard to their competence in test construction in Gombe State. The post hoc analysis below indicated where the differences lay which showed that long-serving teachers are more experienced than the new beginners in the profession which makes them more competent than the newly employed teachers in test construction competence based on their experience in the teaching profession.

Table 7: Post hoc analysis of teachers teaching experience scheffee

(I) Years of experience	(J) Years of experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Higher experience	Very experienced	8.62*	2.096	.001
	Less experience	20.316*	2.043	.000
	Inexperience	32.697*	1.831	.000
Very experienced	Higher experience	-8.621*	2.096	.001
	Less experience	11.696*	2.227	.000
	Inexperience	24.076*	2.035	.000
Less experience	Higher experience	-20.316*	2.043	.000
	Very experienced	-11.696*	2.227	.000
	Inexperience	12.380*	1.980	.000
Inexperience	Higher experience	-32.697*	1.831	.000
	Very experienced	-24.076*	2.035	.000
	Less experience	-12.380*	1.980	.000

Summary of findings

The major findings of this study showed that:

1. The level of teachers' competence in test construction procedure in Gombe State is high considering the maximum score of teachers is 82.00 and minimum score of teachers is 11.00 and the general mean score is 22.92, we can say that the level is high since it is more than 50 as anything below 50 considered as low.
2. The study discovered that no significant difference exists between male and female teachers with regard to the competence in the test construction procedure.
3. The study discovered that teachers with professional qualifications such as B.A Ed, B.Sc. Ed, M.Sc Ed and M.A Ed considered as qualified teachers are more competent in test construction

procedure than teachers with B.SC, B.A and HND holders are regarded as unqualified teachers.

4. The study also discovered that there is no significant difference between science and nonscience teachers with regard to their competence in test construction procedures in Gombe State.

5. The study revealed that the length of time spent in the teaching profession plays a vital role in test construction procedure competence. The study showed that a significant difference exists between those (teachers) who spent longer years in the teaching profession and are more competent in test construction procedures than recently employed teachers in Gombe state.

Conclusion

The results of these findings revealed that the level of teachers' competence in Gombe State is moderate. The study showed teachers' test construction competence can be measured using a combination of self-report and objective measures and that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers in test construction procedure with regards to competence in test construction procedure, results of this study further showed that professional teaching qualifications play a vital role in test construction procedure. Teachers with teaching qualifications are more competent in constructing tests than those without professional teaching qualifications. The results also revealed that there is no significant difference between science and nonscience teachers in the competence in test construction procedures. The last aspect of the study shows that long-serving teachers in the teaching profession are more competent than beginners in the profession who are considered inexperienced teachers.

Recommendations

1. The unqualified teachers should be encouraged to go for post-graduate studies in education in order for them to acquire the skills required for test construction.
2. The government should enlighten the teachers more on the appropriate techniques for test construction through seminars and workshops as this will improve the outcome of assessment.
3. Test and measurement/evaluation processes are vital in educational dispensation, as such there is a need to have test and measurement experts in the state ministry of education.
4. Further research is needed to explore the impact of teachers' test construction competence and any other barriers that teachers face in developing their competence.
5. Provide opportunities to practice crafting and administering assessment
6. The government should create a system of accountability and shared understanding of test construction literacy among all stakeholders including parents, students and administrators
7. Provision of recognition and incentives for teachers who construct high-quality tests.

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APPRAISING JUDICIAL SEPARATION AS AN INTRODUCTORY STEP TO DIVORCE

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Abstract

This paper appraises judicial separation as an introductory step to divorce. Judicial separation is a preliminary step to divorce and not a divorce under the law. The court's pronouncement of judicial separation enables husband and wife to be judicially separated from each other. The court will grant judicial separation, on the petition of one of the spouses. A decree of judicial separation relieves the petitioner of the duty of cohabiting with the respondent. It enables the court to make orders about the division of money and property. This paper discusses the ground upon which the pronouncement of judicial separation can be made. The paper states that the order for judicial separation is similar to the orders which can be made on divorce, without actually terminating the marriage. The paper further states that, a petition for a decree of judicial separation may be based on one or more of the facts and matters, which are contained in Section 15(2) and 16(1) of the Matrimonial Causes Act, 2004. This paper is aimed at revealing the fact that, judicial separation is an introductory step to divorce. The researcher adopted the doctrinal method of research. The paper recommends that there is a need for the law to be reformed to enable the grant of judicial separation by the court to automatically be converted to a decree *nisi* of divorce two years after the pronouncement of judicial separation by the court if the parties are unable to resume cohabitation. The paper concludes that judicial separation is an introductory step to divorce.

Keywords: Marriage, Cohabiting, Judicial Separation, Husband, Wife, Divorce,

1. Introduction

Judicial separation is an introductory step to divorce and not a divorce under the law. But, a petition for which judicial separation is granted can also attract the grant of a decree of divorce. This is because the ground for which a petition for divorce is made is the same as the ground for a petition for judicial separation. Thus, a grant of a decree of judicial separation is an introductory step to divorce. Judicial separation is a formal separation sanctioned by the court, similar to the orders made on divorce, without terminating the marriage. Sections 39 to 46 of the Matrimonial Causes Act¹ contain provisions for judicial separation. A judicial separation is based on one or more of the facts and matters contained in Sections 15(2) and 16(1) of the Matrimonial Causes Act². Thus, it is important to note that most issues relating to divorce are also applicable to judicial separation. But a marriage that is judicially separated is not a marriage that has been dissolved by the court as earlier mentioned, but can be referred to as a partial divorce. Judicial separation enables husband and wife to be separated by the court on the petition of one of the spouses, based on the same ground for a petition for divorce.

There are ways in which judicial separation differs from a divorce. For instance, with respect to judicial separation, a party may still have hope that, there could be reconciliation that may lead to

a discharge of a decree earlier made. But with respect to divorce, none of the parties will nurse the hope that, there could ever be any form of reconciliation, although reconciliation may still occur. However, in Nigeria the prohibition on the institution of proceeding for a decree of divorce within two years of the celebration of marriage except where the leave of court is obtained, is also applicable to petitions for judicial separation.³

Moreover, section 44 of the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act provides that, the grant of judicial separation shall not prevent the institution by the parties to a marriage of proceedings for dissolution of marriage and that the court may in any proceedings for a marriage to be dissolved on the same, or substantially the same facts as those on which judicial separation has been made treat the judicial separation as sufficient proof of the facts that constitutes the ground for which judicial separation was pronounced. In addition, the section provides that, a dissolution of marriage shall not be granted by the court without the petitioner providing evidence that will support the petition. Thus, this paper evaluates judicial separation as an introductory step to divorce. It gave a conceptual examination of judicial separation, the ground for judicial separation and divorce and the application of absolute and discretionary bars to divorce and judicial separation.

2. The Concept of Judicial Separation

Judicial separation is a preliminary step to divorce. It is not a divorce under the law. The degree of judicial separation enables husband and wife to be judicially separated from each other, by the court on the petition of one of the spouses. Judicial separation is a case of a separation of husband and wife, wherein they are ordered to live apart, but remain technically married to themselves because they cannot celebrate a marriage with a third party. The fact is that, they are separated from cohabitation, but are still husband and wife who do not have the privilege of cohabiting with each other.

Divorce *a mensa et thoro* is popularly used in the definition of judicial separation. This is because it was formally or originally known and referred to as divorce *a mensa et thoro*. Hence, judicial separation is a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, which can be said to mean a partial or qualified divorce by which the parties were separated and allowed or ordered to live apart, but remained technically married. The parties are said to remain technically married because they cannot re-marry a third party because a final divorce has not been decreed or pronounced by the court. This form of divorce may be rather freely translated as “from bed and board”.⁴ Divorce *a mensa et thoro* has been defined by Black's Law Dictionary⁵ as, bed and board or from board and hearth. Divorce *a mensa et thoro* has also been defined to mean a divorce from table and bed, or bed and board and that, it is a divorce that is partial or qualified that enabled the parties to be separated and forbidden to live or cohabit together, without affecting the marriage itself.⁶ It has been held that this form of divorce did not sever the marital tie, and the parties remained husband and wife.⁷ It has also been held that, where this form of divorce is pronounced, neither party could remarry during the spouse's lifetime, and the husband was normally required to provide his wife with permanent support.⁸ Thus, this type of divorce, that was abolished in 1857 in England, was the forerunner of modern judicial separation.

Judicial separation is defined to mean a pronouncement of separation of a husband from his wife by a court that is not a complete or absolute divorce and that, it is a “limited divorce” or a “divorce *a mensa et thoro*.”⁹ Judicial separation has also been defined as a separation of a husband from his wife by the High Court or the country court, which has the effect, so long as it lasts, of making the wife a single woman for all legal purposes, except she cannot marry again and that, similarly the

husband, though separated from his wife, is not by a judicial separation empowered to marry again.¹⁰ Judicial separation was not defined by the Oxford Dictionary of Law,¹¹ but the reference was made to separation order, with respect to judicial separation order. Separation order was however, defined by this Dictionary to mean a court order that a husband and wife should not cohabit, known as a judicial separation order under the 1973 Matrimonial Causes Act but renamed by the Family Law Act 1996 and that, the order frees a husband and his wife from their marital obligation, but fails to terminate marriage.¹² Thus, separation is appropriate when there are religious objections to divorce or when the parties have not made up their mind whether to divorce or not.

3. The Nature of Judicial Separation

Judicial separation is a creature of statute and was first introduced by the English Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 to replace the old ecclesiastical divorce which that Act abolished.¹³ The prime purpose of a grant of judicial separation is to free the person who petitioned from the duty of cohabiting with the respondent. The action for judicial separation is rarely brought and the courts are very reluctant to make the order for parties to a marriage to be judicially separated. This is because of the fact that, the decree keeps the parties together legally in a dead marriage. It is however, imperative to note that, judicial separation permits the parties to live separately in and apart, while they are still married to each other under the law.

It is not common to find couples petitioning for judicial separation. However, few people file for judicial separation because they hope for a future reconciliation with the other spouse. Some file for judicial separation because their religion forbids divorce. As a result, in order for them to continue to belong to their religious groups they file for judicial separation instead of divorce, to enable them to continue in such religion. Moreover, few people file for judicial separation plainly out of spite, as they wish some form of problem for the other party. For instance, some people petition for judicial separation in order to deprive the respondent of the freedom to contract a marriage with the co-respondent. For such set of people, who are mostly women, it is a way of punishing the man for committing a matrimonial offense against them, in most cases, adultery with another woman, whom the respondent intends to marry if he has the opportunity. The only way to deprive the respondent of such an opportunity, is to file a petition for judicial separation, which will make the respondent to be single for all legal purposes, except that, he will not have the right to re-marry. Thus, it is a preventive punishment for adulterous men, which prevents them from marrying the women they commit adultery with. The same position is applicable to men who marry adulterous women, whom they also wish to prevent from marrying the men with whom they commit adultery. Thus, judicial separation can be said to be a preventive punishment decree, which separates a man and his wife, and the petitioner is relieved from the duty of cohabiting with the respondent.

Judicial separation does not allow the respondent the freedom to marry the co-respondent, as it is with respect to a decree of divorce. As a result, women prefer to petition for judicial separation to be granted by the court, instead of a decree of divorce. This is because, they believe that, they could reconcile with the respondent. For example, in the case of *Lawoye v. Lawoye*,¹⁴ the wife petitioned for judicial separation and was not prepared to consider the dissolution of the marriage on the ground that, if their troubles were happily settled, they could still live together as man and wife. In this case, the wife petitioned for judicial separation, alleging adultery and cruelty in the petition. However, both adultery and cruelty were established. It was pointed out that, the petition for judicial separation is rare and that, though there may exist in this case scruples or reasons for not asking for a complete divorce and that the petitioner appears unwilling to reconsider her plea.

But the petitioner remarked that if their troubles were happily settled, they could still live together as man and wife, but said in cross-examination: “*I am not willing to return. I wish to live separately and look after the children. I do not desire a divorce*”. However, the court was satisfied that the petition is presented *bonafide* and accordingly was bound to grant the judicial separation prayed for.

4. Ground for Judicial Separation and Divorce

A petition for a marriage to be judicially separated may be upon the same facts and matters which may ground a petition for a marriage to be dissolved as specified in section 15(2) and 16(1) of the Act.¹⁵ Thus, the existing facts to be relied upon by a petitioner who petitioned for a marriage to be judicially separated are also the facts to be relied upon for a petition for divorce. In the case of *Comfort Bamgbala v. Fatal Bamgbala and Ibiroinke Otufowora*,¹⁶ the wife petitioned for judicial separation, because of the respondent's adulterous relationship with the party cited and for behaviour that the petitioner could not put up with. At the time the petition was heard by the court, the 1970 Matrimonial Causes Decree provides under section 39 that:

Subject to this Division, a petition under this Decree by a party to a marriage for a decree of judicial separation may be based on any of the facts and matters provided in Section 15(2) and 16(1) of this Decree. The grounds for judicial separation are the same as those for divorce.

The above pronouncement of the court confirms the fact that, the facts to be relied upon for judicial separation are the same for a petition for divorce and that judicial separation may be based on any of the facts and matters which are contained in the Matrimonial Causes Act, under sections 15(2) and 16(1).¹⁷ Moreover, the facts and matters referred to in the case of *Comfort Bamgbala v. Fatal Bamgbala and Ibiroinke Otufowora*,¹⁸ are the facts and matters contained in the same sections of the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act. Under section 15(2), the Act¹⁹ provides to the effect that, when the court hears a petition for dissolution of a marriage, it shall hold that, the marriage has broken down irretrievably if, the petitioner can satisfy the court of any of the following facts:

- (a) that the marriage has not been consummated because the respondent willfully and persistently refused to consummate it;
- (b) that the petitioner is finding it intolerable to live with the respondent because, after the celebration of the marriage, the respondent has committed adultery;
- (c) that after the celebration of the marriage the respondent has behaved in a way that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to reside with him;
- (d) that before the petition was presented, the petitioner had deserted the petitioner for a continuous period of at least one year;
- (e) that before the petition was presented, the husband and his wife have lived apart for a continuous period of at least two years and the respondent is not objecting to the grant of a decree.
- (f) That before the petition was presented, the husband and his wife had lived apart for a continuous period of at least three years;
- (g) That for a period of not less than one year, the respondent has failed to comply with a decree of restitution of conjugal rights made under this Act;
- (h) That the husband or the wife has been absent from the petitioner in such circumstances that enabled reasonable grounds to presume that he or she is dead.

Under Section 16(1), the Matrimonial Causes Act,²⁰ provides for other facts, any of which if proved will constitute behaviour for which the petitioner will not reasonably be expected to

reside with the respondent as follows:

Section 16(1) Without prejudice to the general Section 15(2)(c) of the Act, when the court hears a petition for dissolution of marriage, it shall hold that the petitioner has been able to satisfy the court of the fact mentioned in section 15(2)(c) if the petitioner satisfied the court that:

- (a) After celebrating the marriage the respondent has committed rape, sodomy or bestiality or
- (b) After celebrating the marriage, the respondent has been a habitual drunkard or has habitually been intoxicated after taking or using to excess any sedative, narcotic or stimulating drug or preparation, or has for some period, been a habitual drunkard and has, for some other period, habitually been so intoxicated for not less than two years; or
- (c) After celebrating the marriage, the respondent has within five years:
 - (i) frequently suffered convictions for crimes for which he has been sentenced, in the aggregate to imprisonment within three years; and
 - (ii) habitually leaving the petitioner without any means of support; or
- (d) After celebrating the marriage, the respondent has been in prison for about three years after conviction for an occurrence that carries death sentence or life imprisonment for about five years or more, and where the respondent is still in prison when the petition was filed; or
- (e) After celebrating the marriage and within one year before the petition was filed, the respondent has been convicted;
- (f) The respondent has attempted to murder or unlawfully kill the petitioner; or have committed an offense that involved the intentional infliction of grievous harm or grievous hurt on the petitioner or that the respondent intends to inflict grievous harm or grievous hurt on the petitioner; or
- (g) The respondent has habitually and willfully refused, to pay maintenance for the petitioner, two years before the petition was filed:
 - (i) ordered to pay an order of, or a registered order in, a court in the Federation; or
 - (ii) agreed to be paid under an agreement between the parties to the marriage providing for their separation; or
- (h) the respondent:
 - (i) is, at the date of the petition, of unsound mind and he is not likely to recover; and
 - (ii) six months after celebrating the marriage and before the petition was filed, has been confined for periods aggregating, about five years in an institution where persons with unsoundness of mind are confined in accordance with law, or in any of such institution.

According to Itse Sagay,²¹ what we have in sections 15 and 16 are twenty-two independent grounds of divorce rather than one ground as section 15(1) claims misleadingly. It will be interesting to mention here that, the ground mentioned by the MCA under Section 15(1), is that, the marriage has irretrievably broken down, but based on the twenty two facts contained in sections 15(2) and 16(1). Thus, the ground for a petition for a marriage to be dissolve is only one, but the petitioner must satisfy the court of the twenty two facts contained in Sections 15(2) and 16(1) of the Matrimonial Causes Act.²² Thus, section 15 of the Act,²³ cannot be said to be misleading as there is one ground for a petition for divorce, based on twenty two facts. However, the above ground and facts are also applicable to judicial separation. But section 15(2) is applied in conjunction with section 16(1).

5. Application of Absolute and Discretionary Bars to Divorce and Judicial Separation

All the bars applicable to divorce apply with equal force to a petition for judicial separation.²⁴

Section 40 of the Matrimonial Causes Act ²⁵ provides for the application of some sections to judicial separation to the effect that, the provisions of section 18 to 24 and section 26 to 32 of the Act shall apply to judicial separation and its proceedings and the purposes of those provisions that apply a reference in those provisions to the dissolution of marriage shall be a reference for judicial separation.

Thus, the absolute bars of condonation, ²⁶ connivance ²⁷ and collusion, ²⁸ and the discretionary bars, ²⁹ are applicable to any suit for judicial separation. It is therefore necessary for these applicable bars to judicial separation to be examined as follows:

(i) The Absolute Bars

Absolute bars are absolutely the petitioner's right under the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act. There are in all three bars to a petition under the Act. ³⁰ They are condonation which is a reinstatement of a spouse to the position he or she was before committing marital misconduct for which he or she was forgiven, collusion which can be said to be an agreement to procure the initiation of divorce proceedings and connivance which can be said to mean an acquiescence by the petitioner for the matrimonial offense committed by the respondent.

(a) Condonation

Condonation is the reinstatement of a spouse to his or her position, after the forgiveness of a spouse who committed a marital misconduct, based on a condition. It operates to bar to a party from getting a divorce and is also applicable to judicial separation on the fact of adultery or unreasonable behaviour. Accordingly to Sir Jocelyn Simon P. in the case of *Inglis*: ³¹

Condonation is when a spouse who has committed a matrimonial offence is reinstated to his or her former matrimonial position with knowledge of all the material facts of the offence committed, with the intention to remit it, that is, having the intention not to enforce the rights, which has accrued to the wrong spouse in consequence of the offence.

Flowing from the above, condonation implies the act of forgiveness and reinstatement. Thus, condonation has two essential ingredients:

- (i) forgiveness by the wronged spouse, and
- (ii) the reinstatement of the spouse who committed a wrong in his former position.

Since forgiveness implies knowledge and so, there cannot be condonation without knowledge of the offence. ³² A mere promise to forgive without reinstatement of the spouse who committed an offence to his former position will not amount to condonation. Evidence of reinstatement is the resumption of living together by husband and wife. Evidence of long cohabitation, couples with knowledge of the wrong may give rise to an inference of forgiveness and reinstatement, which may constitute condonation. ³³

At common law, a single act of intercourse by the husband with the wife was conclusive of condonation on his part. While with regards to the wife, it was only a presumption of condonation. ³⁴ In the case of *Beeby v. Beeby*, ³⁵ Lord Stowell stated as follows:

It would be hard if condonation by implication was held as a strict bar to the wife. It is not improper that she should for some time show a patient forbearance; she may find difficulty either in quitting his house or in withdrawing from his bed. The husband on the other hand cannot be compelled to the bed of his wife, a woman may submit to necessity.

In the case *Sotomi v. Sotomi*, ³⁶ the wife cross-petitioned for the marriage to be dissolved on the fact of the petitioner's adultery. She confirmed during cross-examination that:

“whenever the petitioner committed adultery, we would quarrel and I always forgave him.”

The court then concluded that, the adulterer was on each occasion of adultery reinstated to his former position. It was therefore held by the court that, the respondent had condoned the acts of adultery, the cross-petition was then dismissed.

It is however important to note that, if condonation is obtained by fraud, it cannot prevent the petitioner from getting a dissolution of marriage from the court. In the case of *Roberts v. Roberts*,³⁷ the court held that the petitioner could succeed if he had forgiven the respondent as a result of her falsely telling him that she was seduced whilst dragged and this turned out to be true.

Although, in the case of *Henderson v. Henderson*,³⁸ it was held by the court that an effective condonation cannot be on a condition, an act condoned can be revived if the petition is on the condition that the guilty spouse commits no further matrimonial offence. Hence where a spouse is found guilty of an offence against matrimony, which the other spouse condones on the fact that the guilty spouse commits no such offence again, and he or she does so, the injured spouse may commence an action for divorce on that revived ground.

(b) Collusion

Under section 27 of the Matrimonial Causes Act, 2004 the court shall not give order for a marriage to be dissolved if the petitioner is guilty of collusion with the intention to prevent the course of justice, in bringing or prosecuting the proceedings. According to the section:

Dissolution of marriage shall not be pronounced if the petitioner has been guilty of collusion before filing or prosecuting the proceedings with the intention to cause justice to be perverted.

Collusion means an agreement or bargain between the spouses or their agents or between the parties, as to procuring the initiation or conduct of the divorce proceedings.³⁹ In the case of *Brine v. Brine*,⁴⁰ it was stated by an Australian court that:

The meaning of collusion, like that of any other language, may vary according to the circumstances in which it is used, its context and the subject matter dealt with. It may be an agreement of deceit or compact existing between two or more for a party to sue the other for some evil purpose, or in a certain context and with regard to certain subject matter, mere agreement or acting in context.

To constitute collusion, the act complained of must have been taken by the party concerned to thwart the course of justice or prevent it by deceiving the court. It is however doubtful whether there is any practical effect, once collusion has in fact been established. However, it was held in the case of *Ogunleye v. Ogunleye*,⁴¹ that there was nothing collusive in an agreement between two spouses under which the husband undertook to pay three pounds to the wife as a monthly maintenance allowance for the only child of the marriage.

Collusion exists where the parties agree between themselves to have the court deceived into pronouncing a divorce that it would not have granted. In the case of *Olajumoke v. Olajumoke*,⁴² living apart for three years was alleged and the exhibits brought to court included a document that was titled “Document of Mutual Understanding” signed by the parties. It was also stated that each party had children that were born out of wedlock and that neither would contest the divorce proceedings. It was concluded by Segun J. that the parties' agreement was collusion under section

27 of the 1970 Matrimonial Causes Act. The learned Judge therefore stated as follows:

It seems that the parties were kind of tired of each other after choosing other partners and bearing children for them and therefore resolved to put an end to their association. While what they have done affects public policy and therefore void, I do not think it was done with any intent to cause perversion of justice. They were anxious to do away with each other and to reduce their relationship into writing. I will therefore not use the collusion in accordance with established practice to bar the marriage to be dissolved.

Divorce was then granted by the court. It has been stated that, there will be collusion where a spouse, on the promise of substantial financial settlement is induced not to contest the petition.⁴³ In the case of *Churchman v. Churchman*,⁴⁴ the husband made an effort several times to induce his wife with money to commence divorce proceedings against him, and in 1937, the wife accepted her husband's financial over times of 15 (pounds) on the agreement that she could apply it in filing her petition. She petitioned for divorce for her own comfort as she was about to establish a hotel business and would not to be disturbed or molested by her husband. This agreement was disclosed to their counsel by the parties. Their counsel then told the court about it. The sole evidence relied upon by the wife in her petition for divorce was a confession made to her by her husband that he spent a night in a hotel with an undisclosed woman. It was then concluded by the court that, the circumstances in which the husband made the confession of adultery gave strength to its suspicion of collusion.

(c) Connivance

Connivance is implied when a party acquiesced, encouraged or has given permission either expressly or impliedly for adultery to be committed.⁴⁵ It is provided under section 26 of the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act, that, except where section 16(1) (g) of the Act applies, dissolution of marriage shall not be pronounced where the petitioner has condoned, or connived at the conduct that constituted the facts for which the petition was based. Thus, connivance is the intentional or passive acquiescence by the petitioner in the adultery that was committed by the respondent.

Where two married couple, consent to the exchange of spouses, connivance may be said to be expressed.⁴⁶ In the case of *Obiagwu v. Obiagwu*,⁴⁷ the spouse was married in 1942 and from 1944, the love formerly existing between the spouses started to diminish, because of the inability of the petitioner to bear children for the respondent and in 1954, the petitioner agreed that the respondent should cohabit with a lady called Patricia Nwodo in their matrimonial home in order for the said Patricia to bear children for the respondent. As a result of Patricia's relationship with the respondent, four children were born. The wife then petitioned for the marriage to be dissolved because her husband committed adultery with the co-respondent (Patricia Nwodo). The court then refused to order a dissolution of the marriage based on the ground that the petitioner connived at the respondent's adultery. Moreover, in the case of *Gorst v. Gorst*,⁴⁸ the petitioner reluctantly agreed that the respondent should have a sexual relationship with the co-respondent in the hope that, that would cure his sexual inhibitions towards her. It was held by the court that, she connived at the adultery and therefore barred from taking a proceeding against the respondent on that ground. Connivance concerns the fact that no act will be actionable at the suit of a person who expressly or impliedly assented to it contemporaneously or in advance, *volenti non fit injuria*.⁴⁹ In the case *Okala v. Okala*,⁵⁰ the respondent was absolutely barred from alleging the intolerability of her husband's adulterous acts, not only because she was found to have condoned the acts, but also because she seemed to have connived to the brining about of the act. It was then stated by the court

that, “Her evidence in the case of the housemaid, leaves the impression that she was a lady in-waiting ready at the beckon on the singer. Surely, if anything, this was a case for tolerable adultery or adultery by connivances.”

(ii) Discretionary Bars

Under section 28 of the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act, the court may apply its discretion to refuse to pronounce dissolution of marriage if after the celebration of the marriage,

- (a) the respondent has not condoned the adultery committed by the petitioner or, if condoned, was revived.
- (b) the petitioner has willfully deserted the respondent before the matters relied upon by the petitioner occurred or, where the matters involved matters that occurred during or that extended over, a period, before that period expired; or
- (c) the petitioner's habits have, or the petitioner's conduct has, conducted or contributed to why the matters relied upon by the petitioner existed.

Thus, the discretionary bars are:

(a) Petitioner's adultery

This is provided under section 28(a)⁵¹ which states that, the petitioner's adultery that the respondent has not condoned, is a discretionary bar. According to section 28(a) of the Act,⁵² the discretion of the court may be exercised and refuse to dissolve a marriage, if the respondent has not condoned the adultery that has been committed by the petitioner after the celebration of the marriage or where it was condoned, has been revived. Thus, where the respondent has condoned the adultery, it then becomes an absolute bar, unless it has been revived by the petitioner's subsequent matrimonial misconduct.

In the case of *Ambe v. Ambe*,⁵³ the evidence before the court showed that when the petitioner first had knowledge of her husband's adultery with his ex-wife, she confronted him and the respondent had stated that, she had to leave if she would accept it. The wife continued to live in the matrimonial home with her husband. When she discovered the respondent's adulterous act, a second time, with another woman, the respondent told her that, she was lucky that she did not find the adulterer in the matrimonial home on her return from her visit to her native country – Malaysia. The husband who had already started divorce proceedings withdrew them. The wife later moved out of the matrimonial home, and subsequently committed adultery. She petitioned for divorce based on the husband's adultery and his intolerability of it. The husband cross-petitioned on the fact of the petitioner's adultery and intolerability of it. Delivering judgment, the court allowed both the petition and the cross-petition to succeed, and then the decree of divorce was granted.

(b) Petitioner's Desertion

Desertion occurs when a spouse voluntarily and without a reasonable cause abandons the other spouse against his or her will and with the mind of permanently ending cohabitation. Under section 28(b) of the Matrimonial Causes Act,⁵⁴ the court has the discretion to deny a decree of divorce in favour of a petitioner prior to the occurrence of the ground for the petition. Thus, there is a defence, if the petitioner can satisfy the court that there is a good cause for deserting the other spouse.

(c) **Petitioner's Conducting or Contributing Conduct**

A petitioner may be barred from obtaining a decree dissolving the marriage, where his or her conduct contributed or conduced to the occurrence of the fact or facts relied upon in the petition for divorce. In the case of *Cunnington v. Cunningham*⁵⁵ the petitioner was sentenced to ten years in prison for theft. His absence provided the respondent ample chance to commit adultery with a third party. During the defence, she argued that the vacuum created by her husband's absence was the conduct that caused her to commit adultery. It was however held by the court that, the theft was not misconduct towards her. However, by virtue of section 16(c)(ii) of the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act, the fact that the respondent's action has caused the petitioner to suffer within five years and has left the petitioner habitually without reasonable means of support, now constitutes a ground for divorce.

Similarly, in the case of *Coulthart v. Couthawaite*,⁵⁶ it was held by the court that, a petitioner who knowingly married a loose woman and then left her for four years without any means of survival is guilty of conduct conducing to the adultery committed by her. Moreover, in the case of *Cox v. Cox*,⁵⁷ it was held by the court that, the petitioner's continued flirting with other women in spite of his wife's objections constituted conduct that caused his wife to commit adultery with the co-respondent.

In the case of *Opajobi v. Opajobi*,⁵⁸ the wife petitioned for the marriage to be dissolved with the allegation of one-year desertion by the husband. The husband later cross-petitioned on the allegation of the petitioner's adultery. The court then found that, the respondent had left the matrimonial home for further studies, in spite of the objections of the petitioner and the wife's adultery which resulted in the birth of a child, which occurred a few year later, on her being transferred by her employer's away from the place of the matrimonial home. The husband's cross-petitioned was then dismissed by the court on the ground that his conduct had contributed or conduced the wife's adultery.

Moreover, in the case of *Dixon v. Dixon*,⁵⁹ the court held that willful refusal to have the marriage consummated or failure to show further sexual relationship after the initial act of consummation amounts to conduct conducing, if the deprived spouse solicits for sex outside the marriage.

The above absolute bars of condonation, connivance and collusion, and the discretionary bars applicable to petition for divorce are equally applicable to judicial separation.

6. Conclusion

This paper appraised judicial separation as an introductory step to divorce and examined the concept of judicial separation. The paper also examined the grounds for judicial separation and divorce. In addition, the application of absolute and discretionary bars to divorce and judicial separation was examined. The paper has shown that a petition for a marriage to be judicially separated may be filed on the basis of the facts and matters, which are contained in Section 15(2) and 16(1) of the 2004 Matrimonial Causes Act. The paper recommends that, there is a need for the law to be reformed to enable judicial separation to automatically be converted to a decree *nisi* of divorce two years after the pronouncement of judicial separation, where the parties are unable to resume cohabitation. Therefore, judicial separation is an introductory step to divorce.

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THE EFFECTS OF THE BRITISH COLONIAL COURT SYSTEM ON THE NIGERIAN JUDICIARY: THE BADE NATIVE COURT EXAMPLE, 1906-1945

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Abstract

This paper examine the root causes of the plethora of challenges currently plaguing the Nigerian judicial system. This became necessary as a result of the incessant threats to the independence of the judiciary as an independent organ of government. The paper will assist legal professionals and stakeholders in their quest to proffer lasting solutions to these undesirable malaises inflicted on the Nigerian judicial system. The researchers used the historical method and combined extensive library and archival research with information collected from knowledgeable informants to trace the root causes of the sharp practices that have compromised the credibility of the Nigerian judiciary. Using the Bade Native Court as a case study, the paper found that the decadence in the Nigerian legal sector could be traced to the colonial court system. It therefore recommends a complete overhaul of the Nigerian legal system with the aim of removing alien practices that are not compatible with indigenous traditions and/or cultures of Nigeria.

Keywords: British Colonialism, Borno Province, Bade District, Native Court, Nigerian Judiciary, Courts of Law

Introduction

Before the imposition of British colonial rule on the various ethno-linguistic groups of the Nigerian area, the primary responsibility of the indigenous judicature had been to dispense justice following established laws of the land. Such established laws emanated from the indigenous cultures, traditions and/or belief systems of the people. However, after the attainment of political independence from Great Britain on 1st October, 1960, the capacities of law courts in Nigeria to credibly discharge their constitutional duties have continued to suffer major setbacks. These setbacks have placed the independence of the Nigerian judiciary in a near-compromised position. It is against this backdrop that this research was conducted to uncover the root causes of the plethora of challenges presently faced by the Nigerian judiciary. Understanding the subtle connection between the British colonial court system and the Nigerian judiciary is a necessity to help fast-track the reformation processes of the Nigerian legal system. To sustain the ethos of

democracy and ensure transparency in governance, there is every need to restore the trust and confidence of Nigerians in the ability of the law courts to credibly dispense justice without any form of interference or biases.

This paper examines the impact of the colonial court system on the Nigerian judiciary. It aims to uncover the salient features of the British colonial court system and its effects on the Nigerian Judiciary. It also assesses the roles of colonial officials in institutionalizing sharp practices in the colonial courts of law.

The paper consists of ten sections. The sections are Abstract, Introduction, Methodology and Sources, Location of the Area of Study, History of Bade Polity, British Colonisation and Reactions, Colonial Court System in Bade District, Effects of the Colonial Court System on the Nigerian Judiciary, Conclusion and Recommendation.

Methodology and Sources

The researchers used the historical method combining extensive library and archival research with information collected from knowledgeable informants from Nigeria. The oral information obtained from informants was primarily meant to supplement those derived from archival records and books. The corroboration of information obtained from published articles and books, unpublished theses and manuscripts, diaries, reports, and oral interviews of knowledgeable informants helped the researchers to ascertain the authenticity and reliability of the sources consulted

Regarding the sources, the researchers utilized published books and articles, unpublished PhD thesis, General Reports, Assessment Reports, special reports, oral history, and newspapers. These sources were located and assessed at different higher education institutions, heritage institutions and repositories including the National Archive, Kaduna; AREWA House, Kaduna; Bade Emirate Palace, Gashua; Bade Local Government Council, Gashua; Jakusko Local Government Council; History Department, Yobe State University, Damaturu; and History Department, University of Maiduguri.

Location of Bade District

Bade District covered an area of about 1,844 square miles (4775 square kilometres). It was situated in the west of Bornu Province and located approximately between latitude 12°0"N and 12°52"N, and longitude 10°30"E and 11°13"E¹. Its southern boundary with Fika and Allaguerno districts was bisected by the Komadugu Gana River; to the west it was bordered by Komadugu and Hadejia emirates of Kano Province; to the north by the Nguru and Gashua districts; and to the east by the Borsari district of Bornu Province². From north to south, its greatest length was 60 miles and measured 40 miles from east to west in breadth³.

A Brief History of the Bade Area

The term Bade (Bedde) describes a socio-linguistic group, as well as a political entity. The History of Bade could be traced to 1400 A.D. when the first wave of Bade migrants (of the Muguram stock) migrated westward from Dadigar and founded Tagali⁴. These Bade migrants became known as the Tagali Bade group. Other Bade Migrants soon followed suit, and as a result, organised themselves into semi-autonomous Bade Chiefdoms along the rivers Komadugu, Katagum, and Hadejia. The Gidgid group (first Bade migrants to Gidgid) soon emerged as the dominant Bade group and took over from the Tagali group as the leading Bade group. Subsequently, the political and administrative system of the Bade area was gradually centralized under the Gidgid rulers. A centralized political and administrative system of government evolved from 1842, although some Bade and Ngizim polities were still independent of the central government at Gorgaram. This was the political situation in the Bade area when the British forces

occupied Gorgaram in 1904.

British Colonisation and Reactions

In 1904 a detachment of the British colonial army entered and occupied Gorgaram. Mai Saleh ibn Aji knew about the approach of a British force further west of Gorgaram⁵. The colonial army entered Gorgaram from the western gates. As the British colonial army marched towards Gorgaram from Hadejia to Nguru en route Gorgaram, Mai Saleh, a shrewd and far-seeing leader with an innate gift of administrative acumen summoned Bade chiefs to Goragaram. The Mai persuaded them to submit to the British, thus averting what would have been a massive massacre of the Bade people. Thus, the first challenge encountered by the British after the rather peaceful annexation of the Bade area was how to bring the Bade and Ngizim political units independent of Gorgaram under the control of the central administration at Gorgaram. This constituted the basis for the British introduction of the Emirate System, and the subsequent creation of the Bade District in 1904.

Obviously, the reaction to the British occupation of Bade was relatively peaceful. There are no records of open confrontations between the forces of Mai Saleh and the British troops. Even the British officials testified that Gorgaram was never conquered but merely occupied⁶. Contrary to reports that Bade country was among the Border areas of the extreme north of Borno that offered protracted resistance to the British⁷, Bade experience on the eve of British occupation of Gorgaram was an exception, and reactions to the British colonisation of Bade country was comparatively non-violent.

Colonial Court System in Bade District

The Native Court was an integral component of the Native Authority. Bade Native Court was established on 1st March, 1906, as a Grade "C" Court. The jurisdiction of the court covered Gorgaram town and the entire Bade District. By 1908, the court was authorized to impose fines which were paid into the Native Authority Revenue. All Bade Native Court receipts were to be paid into the Native Treasury with effect from 1st April, 1911, by which expenses and salaries were paid⁸. Half of the revenue generated by the court was used for its upkeep, and half went to its handlers. Mai Saleh ibn Aji served as the first president of the Bade Native Court, while Mallam Muhammed served as the first scribe. Sadly, Mallam Muhammed passed on and was replaced by Mallam Kura in 1909. The other members of the Bade Native Court as of 1916 included Maina Kiari, Galadima Grema, Makinta, and Kachella Jalikwa.

Upgrading of the powers of the Bade Native Court to exercise Grade "B" powers was applied for on 30th June, 1919. The application was subsequently approved on 14th October, 1919, by H.A. Goldsmith, Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria. A Grade "B" Native Court Warrant for Bade Native Court was received on 3rd December, 1919, by G.C.Whiteley, the Assistant District Officer (A.D.O), who was at the time in charge of Potiskum Division.⁹

The Grade "B" Native Court Warrant empowered Bade Native Court to sentence offenders to a maximum of two years imprisonment and twenty four strokes of the Cain, depending on the magnitude of the offence committed. In 1933, new legislation was passed (by the British parliament) which reduced the punishment to a maximum of one year imprisonment and twelve strokes. In 1936, E.C. Figgis, the Assistant District Officer noted that the Alkali Talba of the Bade Native Court carried out the greater part of court work, with the Mai rarely present to officiate most court sittings. It is important to note that the Alkali Talba was not Bade by birth, but a native of Damagaram, but had imbibed the Bade culture, including language, due to his long sojourn in the Native Authority. He was also a scribe. Aggravate offences (such as murder) were transferred to Yelwa courts which had a grade "A" powers of the Appeal court.¹⁰

A Grade "C" Alkali's Court was established on 16th April, 1942, for Bade District. The Alkali

presided over the Alkali's Court which appealed to the Mai Bede's Court. The Mai Bede's Court was elevated to a Native Court of Appeal, with further appeal to the District Officer. Its power to sentence convicted persons was extended from one-year imprisonment to two years imprisonment. While the jurisdiction of the Alkali's Court was limited the nature of cases it could try, punishment, and fine, the new 1942 Native Court Warrant granted Mai Bede's Court jurisdiction over all persons within Bade District. The court could try anyone who consented to come under its jurisdiction. It could exercise jurisdiction over any person as directed by the Governor through the Resident, irrespective of the person's background. The Bade Native Court could hear criminal, civil, and land related cases. The limit of its power was by its grade.

Effects of the Colonial Court System on the Nigerian Judiciary

There are complicated series of connections between the colonial court system and the post-colonial court system in Nigeria. In other words, the colonial court system had far reaching effects on the Nigerian judiciary. Using the Native Court in Bade District as a case study, it can be safely inferred that some of the major challenges faced by the Nigerian judiciary (i.e. defiance of laws of the land and court orders, neglect of the independence of the judiciary, inadequate training mechanism for lawyers, corruption in the judiciary, etc.) are the long term effects of the colonial court system. In fact, the causes of these problems are deeply rooted in the inadequacies of the British colonial court system. Some of the major effects are listed and explained below.

Defiance of Laws of the Land and Flouting of Court Orders

Colonialism was a violation of existing laws embodied in the customs, traditions and norms of the various indigenous social groupings that occupied the Nigerian area. The changes it brought were bound to have widespread economic, political, social, and legal ramifications. The so-called Indirect Rule System was a hoax, only indirect in theory. In practice, it was a direct imposition of the British way of life on the people of the Nigerian area. In fact, whenever the British colonial officials found that the laws of the land were too dicey to be defied, the British reviewed and/or modified such laws to suit their imperial interest.

In Bade for example, after the British had occupied and annexed Gorgaram, they embarked on a comprehensive re-organisation of the entire Bade area. They introduced a caricature Emirate and elevated the *Mai Bade* to an *Emir*. According to the laws of Bade land, the recognised and acceptable designation for the leader of Bade at the time was *Mai Bade*. The British ignored the stipulation of the laws of Bade and went on to impose the *Emir* title on the *Mai Bade*.

The British went on to create the Bade Native Authority and Bade District for colonial administrative convenience. To ensure that the newly created administrative enclaves contained enough taxable population, the British forcefully incorporated Ngizim villages and settlements into these new administrative enclaves, while at the same time separating other Bade settlements and villages from their kindred. Thus the British acted in defiance to the laws of the land.

The unacceptable manner by which the British colonialists disregarded the laws of the land and people of the Nigerian area was remotely responsible for the current disrespect for the laws of the land and the flouting of court orders by private individuals and members of the executive and legislative arms of the Nigerian government. This practice is particularly detrimental to the nurturing of democratic principles in post-colonial Nigeria. Justice Onnoghen sums it up thus:

“Disobedience of or non-compliance with judicial orders is a recipe for breakdown of law and order. Such developments are at variance with the principle and tenets of the rule of law in a democratic government”¹¹

Neglect of the Independence of the Judiciary

Another effect of the colonial court system on the Nigerian judiciary is the neglect of the

independence of the judiciary. The concept of the independence of the judiciary stipulates that the existence and functioning of the judiciary should be absolutely free from the interference and improper influence of other arms of government, private individuals, and representatives of foreign governments and institutions. This is in order to create a conducive environment for the judiciary to exercise its constitutional duty of dispensing justice without fear, favour, and/or bias.

Unfortunately, the British colonialist by defying the laws of the land had paved the way for a gagged post-colonial Nigerian judicature. A number of practices were responsible for the neglect of the independence of the judiciary. These included appointment and removal of court officials; security of tenure; remuneration and budgetary provision; and unwarranted interference in the judicial processes by individuals, bodies, agencies, and organisations outside the legal system.

These practices that militate against the independence of the judiciary can be traced to the colonial court system. It has been observed that officials of the Native court in Bade district were recommended for appointment by the District Officer through the Resident. These appointments were subject to the ratification/confirmation of the Commissioner/governor of Northern Nigeria. Removal of members of the jury panel also followed the same process *verse versa*. A situation whereby the jury panel of a court was appointed by certain individuals meant that the entire operation of the court will be subjected to the whims and caprices of the individuals that constituted it. After all it is said that he who pays the piper dictates the tune. This practice continued into the post-colonial Nigerian judiciary system where the President/Governor must confirm the appointment of the Chief Justice of Nigeria/Chief Judge of a State, with prerogative powers to remove same.

Another practice of the colonial court system that gagged the independence of the judiciary was the practice whereby the tenure, remuneration, and budgetary provisions were determined by the British colonial administrators. Subsequently, the tenure of the jury panel of the Native Courts was secured for as long as it continued to protect British imperial interest, even to the detriment of the laws of the land. This practice was subsequently inherited by the post-colonial government and has continued to gag the independence of the judiciary. Justice Auta, a prominent legal practitioner lends his voice to the unpleasant practice, thus:

“I give credit to the federal government that the money due to the judiciary, they give them through the National Judicial Council (NJC) and they spend according to their budget. But in states, where it is stated categorically in the constitution that it should be given to heads of courts, it is not being done. The Chief Judge goes cap in hand to the governor and gives them what they want.”¹²

All of these sum up to unwarranted inference with the judicial process. It in turn works against the Independence of the Judiciary and its constitutional responsibility of dispensing justice without fear, favour and bias.

Corruption in the Judiciary

Corruption is one of the biggest problems threatening public confidence in the Nigerian judiciary. The menace of corruption has eaten deep into all the hierarchy of the judiciary so much so that the judiciary has lost its leadership role in dispute resolution.

The liberalists maintain that corruption which is not peculiar to any human society is a generic phenomenon. According to this school of thought, corruption is deeply rooted in every human society and institution, and as such, can never be eliminated, but can be managed. In other words, corruption in human institutions can never be stopped, but its effects can be minimized through various anti-corruption campaigns, planned policies and programmes. The interpretation of the position of the liberalist school is that it is wrong to view corruption of the Nigerian judiciary as one of the effects of the colonial court system.

The African conservative scholars on the other hand insist that corrupt practices as they exist

today were forced into the African culture by the European colonialists. According to these schools of thought, even though there may have been few instances of corrupt practices in the pre-colonial African setting, the impacts of such isolated cases were far less when compared to what was obtainable in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Going by the postulation of the African conservatives, it is assumed that corruption in the post-colonial Nigerian judicature is an effect of the colonial court system.

At present, we have not found any recorded evidence of any official member of the native court in the Bade district indicted for corrupt practices. However, there were unconfirmed rumours of some wealthy individuals who occasionally approached the Resident at Maiduguri through the District Officers to persuade/convince him to intervene and overrule verdicts of the native court not in their favoured. If these rumours were presumed to be true, then corruption must have been introduced into the colonial court system by the colonial administrators. Justice Walter Onnoghen confirmed the prevalence of corruption in the post-colonial Nigerian judiciary when he stated thus:

“If I say there is no corruption in the judiciary, I will be lying. But we are doing something about it”¹³. Justice Auta also observed thus: “It is regrettable that the image of the judiciary has been tarnished by the notion that the Nigerian judiciary is bedevilled by corrupt elements, hence, the need for an image-building parade”.¹⁴

Inadequate Training Mechanism of Lawyers

There are complaints about the lack of synergy between law faculties in the Universities and the Nigerian Law school. In other words, teachings in university law faculties are theory-based, with little or no practice. The lack of synergy has been said to be responsible for the increasing poor performances at Nigerian law schools. The challenge of inadequate training mechanisms for lawyers has a direct link with the colonial court system.

It has been pointed out that the jury panel of the Bade Native Court consisted of members of the Bade Native Authority. The *Mai Bade* (Emir of Bade) served as the president of the court and was assisted by selected members of the Bade Native Authority. These were individuals that had no prior training on the British legal system, therefore incorporating elements of the British law into the indigenous laws only complicated things. Consequently, the jury panel were mostly in a state of dilemma when cases that contained elements of Western offences and indigenous crimes were brought before it. Hence, the inability to develop adequate training mechanisms that will combine and accommodate elements of Western law and indigenous law has continued to hinder the effective training of lawyers to date. This has constituted one of the effects of the colonial court system on the post-colonial Nigerian judiciary.

Conclusion

The British colonialists defiled existing laws of the polities of the Nigerian area via the imposition of colonial rule. Colonialism was a violation of existing laws of the indigenous people of the Nigerian area. The changes it brought were bound to have widespread economic, political, social, and legal ramifications. Hence, the Colonial court system had far-reaching effects on the Nigerian Judiciary.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the research, it is recommended that the executive, legislative and executive tiers of government should collaborate to design frameworks and implement policies that will inculcate in Nigerians the spirit of patriotism and selfless service to the motherland. This will help minimize defiance of the laws of the land prevalent among the younger generation.

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should be reviewed to prescribe stricter

penalties including commiserate fines and/or prison terms to ensure obedience to court orders.

The principle of separation of powers should be strictly adhered to by the executive and legislative organs of government to ensure and uphold the independence of the judiciary.

The existing training mechanisms for Nigerian lawyers should be reviewed and redesigned to accommodate elements of indigenous laws and allow for greater synergies between Nigerian universities and law schools.

The working conditions of judicial workers should be reviewed to include befitting remuneration and welfare packages to minimize cases of sharp practices in the dispensation of justice in Nigerian courts of law.

There should be a complete overhaul of the Nigerian judicial system with the aim of removing alien practices that are not compatible with the indigenous traditions and/or cultures of Nigeria.

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FABRICATION OF SOLAR DRYER TOWARDS PRESERVING SEASONAL CROPS AMONG RURAL WOMEN FARMERS IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This paper examined the fabrication of solar dryers towards preserving seasonal crops among rural women farmers in Gombe State, Nigeria. A solar dryer is a device that utilizes solar energy to remove moisture from various agricultural products, such as fruits, and vegetables, thereby preserving their quality and extending their shelf life. The study had three objectives, and three research questions and utilized the qualitative research design. A sample of thirty (30) rural women farmers participated in the study from Billiri LGA. Data collected was analysed qualitatively using the thematic approach. The findings of the study show that the rural women farmers desired a cost-effective fabricated solar dryer. Also, the dryer was easy to manage and was very effective in drying their seasonal crops. The study recommended that community efforts should be pooled into the fabricating solar dryers in order to reduce spoilage of perishable food when in season. The Federal government should also support rural women farmers by supplying them with solar dryers needed to preserve their crops due to poor storage.

Keywords: Fabrication, Rural Women Farmers, Seasonal Crops, Solar Dryer

Introduction

Food spoilage is caused by moisture leading to the growth of mould, yeast, bacteria, and enzymes in the food. In order to control and stop this unwanted situation, human beings have practised food preservation. According to Kumar et al. (2022), food preservation has been practised in many parts of the world and it applies to a wide range of foods, including fruits, vegetables, cereals, and meat. It is also seen as any method by which food is kept from spoilage after harvest or slaughter (Desrosier et al., 2024).

Food preservation prevents, delays and also helps to reduce food spoilage (Olaide, 2022). There are many methods available for food preservation. Some of the techniques have been practised for many years worldwide. They include: curing (smoking or salting), drying, refrigeration and fermentation. Others are canning, freezing, pickling, irradiation and the use of

chemicals. One of the cheapest means of preserving food is by drying especially in regions that have abundant sunshine. This is particularly helpful in preserving seasonal foodstuffs whether cereals, fruits or vegetables.

With the advent of solar technology, many farmers have taken to solar dryers which are equipment made to deliberately dry food items in order to preserve them for out-of-season use. Kumar et al. (2022) identified two types of solar drying systems for the preservation of food: Passive solar drying (those that use direct or indirect heating) and Active solar drying (those that use solar energy diversified). In addition, the authors outlined three main subcategories for every class which are seen according to the design and arrangement of the components and mode by the type of solar energy utilised. These are tagged: Distributed-type solar dryer, Integral-type solar dryer and Mixed mode-type solar dryer. Generally, the use of solar dryers for the Preservation of farm produce was a quest for sustainable and efficient methods of food preservation. Hence the solar energy dryer has emerged as a promising solution.

The traditional methods of drying agricultural produce often involve extensive exposure to sunlight, which can be unreliable and inconsistent. However, with the advent of solar dryers, farmers now have access to a reliable and efficient means of preserving their harvests while minimizing post-harvest losses (Kumar 2005; Dissa et al, 2019). Solar drying is a centuries-old technique that harnesses the sun's energy to remove moisture from various agricultural products. It provides a natural and cost-effective alternative to traditional drying methods, such as air drying or mechanical drying, which often require expensive equipment or large amounts of energy.

By utilizing the power of the sun, solar dryers offer an environmentally friendly and sustainable approach to food preservation. Solar dryers are specifically designed structures that optimize the capture and utilization of solar energy for drying farm products. These dryers consist of a transparent or translucent cover, which allows sunlight to enter and trap the heat inside, creating a greenhouse effect. The trapped heat raises the temperature within the dryer, creating a controlled environment that accelerates the drying process. Additionally, the dryer is equipped with vents or fans that facilitate airflow, aiding in the removal of moisture from the products.

According to Dissa et al (2019), the need for utilizing solar dryers for preserving farm products is numerous, because, they provide a consistent and predictable drying environment, reducing the risk of spoilage and contamination. Unlike traditional drying methods that are subject to weather conditions, solar dryers can operate even in cloudy or humid climates, ensuring a continuous supply of dried produce. Furthermore, the controlled drying environment helps maintain the nutritional value, colour, and flavour of the farm products, resulting in higher quality dried goods and the cost-effectiveness of solar drying. The utilization of solar energy eliminates the need for costly fuel sources or electricity, making it an economically viable option for small-scale farmers and rural communities.

Moreover, solar dryers require minimal maintenance and have a long lifespan, reducing operational costs in the long run. The utilization of solar dryers holds great potential for improving food security and reducing post-harvest losses. By preserving farm products through solar drying, farmers can extend the shelf life of their products and access markets during off-seasons, thereby increasing their income and contributing to local economies. Additionally, solar drying enables farmers to process surplus produce into value-added products such as dried fruits, vegetables, or herbs, expanding their product range and market opportunities (Sarviya & Saha, 2011; Katiyar et al, 2017). In addition, solar dryer improves the product quality of crops in terms of taste and colour and does not have any harmful effects on the environment (Nukulwar, 2020).

Solar drying shields food material from rain, moisture, dust, insects, birds, roaming pests, and microbial contamination. This is due to the closed system design which prevents or minimises the contamination of food. Food items that can be solar-dried by the rural women farmers include Moringa leaves, chilli pepper, tomatoes, Okra, Ugu leaves, Melon, Thyme, Coriander, Stevia, Tea, Curry, Basil, Lemongrass, Garlic, Ginger, Turmeric, Herbs, Spices, Crayfish, Melon, Cassava Chips, Yam Chips, bitter leaves, Hibiscus flowers (Zobo), Utazi, Melon, Mango Slices, Black pepper, Coffee, Cocoa beans, Maize, Fish, meats, livestock feed, etc.

Studies such as Udomkun et al. (2020), Matavell et al. (2022) and Ndukwu et al. (2022) opined that solar drying is one of the most efficient and cost-effective, renewable, and sustainable technologies for conserving agricultural products. Implementation of solar dryers as a sustainable and cost-effective solution for drying agricultural produce will hopefully promote eco-friendly practices, reduce energy consumption, and preservation of arable crops. This study is concerned with the fabrication of solar dryers towards preserving seasonal crops among rural women farmers in Gombe state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Farmers often experience significant post-harvest losses due to inadequate drying methods. Without proper drying, crops such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and herbs can spoil quickly, leading to reduced quality and market value. The traditional sun drying methods relied on by farmers are highly dependable on favourable weather conditions, such as sunlight and low humidity. Adverse weather conditions, such as rain or high humidity, can prolong the drying process or make it impossible altogether. Many farmers resort to using conventional drying methods that require fuel, such as firewood or electricity. These methods can be costly, especially for small-scale farmers, and contribute to deforestation and environmental degradation.

Without proper drying facilities, farmers often lack the means to add value to their produce. For instance, drying fruits can extend their shelf life, create new market opportunities (such as dried fruit snacks), and increase their value. Farmers often face challenges accessing

distant markets due to the perishable nature of their produce. Rural areas where many small-scale farmers are located, often lack proper infrastructure and storage facilities for drying and storing agricultural produce.

By addressing these challenges, the invention and adoption of solar dryers can significantly be of benefit to local farmers, empowering them to improve their productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, add value to their produce, access better markets, and contribute to sustainable agricultural practices. This research work is aimed at solving the rising issue of loss in farm products with an innovation that could address the problem steering at farmers face using solar dryers.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. design and fabricate a cost-effective solar dryer for rural women's use.
2. **determine the workability of a fabricated solar dryer for** rural women farmers.
3. determine the effect of the fabricated solar dryer on rural women farmers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What type of fabricated cost-effective solar dryer can the rural women farmers use?
2. **What is the workability of the fabricated solar dryer for** rural women farmers?
3. What is the effect of the fabricated solar dryer on rural women farmers?

Methodology

The research design for the study is the qualitative research design which utilized interviews and a focus group (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population for the study comprised women rural farmers from Tal Community, Billiri Local Government Area of Gombe State. Billiri LGA is blessed with abundant sunshine and fertile soil which the women rural farmers cultivate for some seasonal crops such as vegetables (Tomatoes, spinach, moringa etc) and fruits. These vegetables and fruits are perishables which are in abundance during their season. Thirty (30) women were selected systematically in the community to participate in the study. The women were placed in three (3) focus groups (10 each) for easy interaction. A phone recorder was used to record the interviews and all interviews were fully transcribed verbatim.

The interview schedule was structured into the following five sections:

- i. participant's demographics
- ii. types of crops cultivated
- iii. experience with drying crops

iv. Knowledge of dryers/solar or sun drying

Fabrication of Solar dryer

The design for the fabricated solar dryer was very simple and cost-effective using local materials that are affordable by a group of women who are willing to collaborate on a solar dryer project. The following materials were used: Food Grade stainless material, Pr module (200W x 3), GEL Battery (100AH x 2), fans (6), heaters (6), Solar charge controller (30AH) and Inverter (3.5 KVA/12). The fabrication of cost-effective solar dryers is very essential to rural farmers worldwide (Ndukwu et al., 2022). The design is presented in figure 1.

Solar Dryer Design

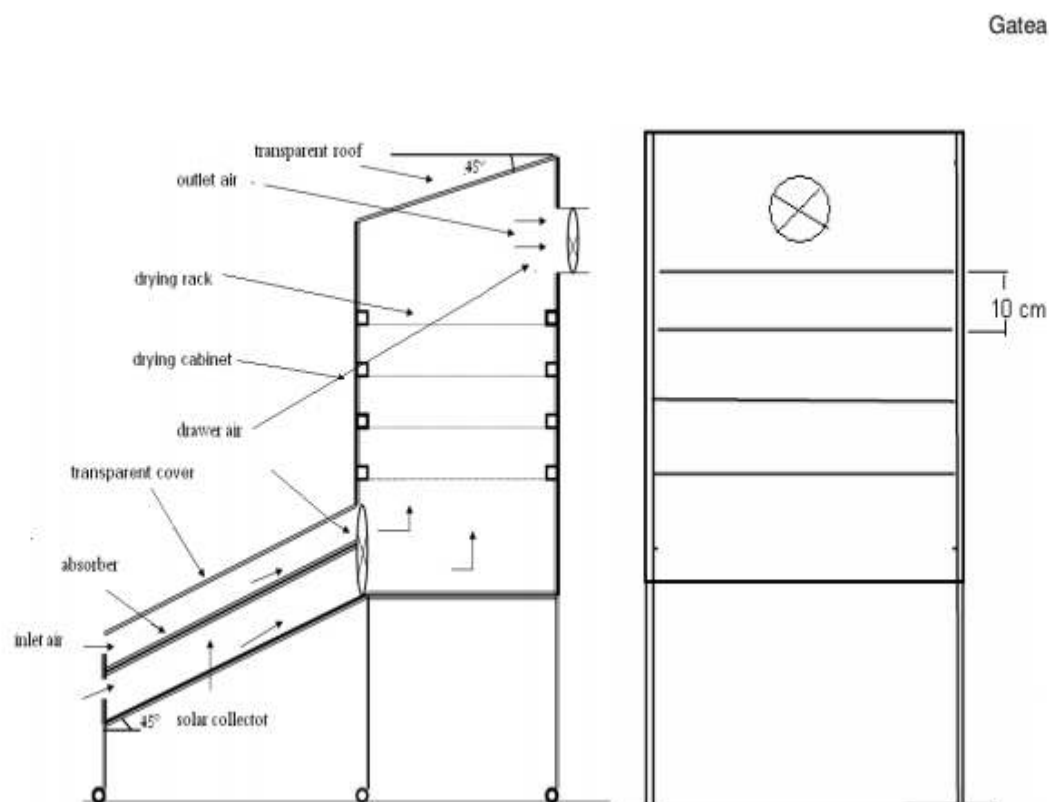


Figure 1. Shows section of the mixed-mode solar dryer.

Figure 2 and 3 is the finished cross section of the solar dryer



Figure 2: Cross section of the fabricated solar dryer with some vegetables being dried.

Monitoring and Evaluation

After fabrication, the solar dryer was tested by using it to dry some vegetables. The rural women farmers were trained on how to use the solar dryer to dry vegetables for three days. Thereafter they were allowed to use the dryer for a week.

The researcher interviewed the women and discussed with the focus group during every stage of the study from fabrication to utilization of the solar dryer in order to determine the objectives of the study which are: **the workability of a fabricated solar dryer for rural women farmers use** and the effect of the fabricated solar dryer on rural women farmers.

Results

What type of fabricated cost-effective solar dryer can the rural women farmers use?

This question was posed to select participants and the focus group to respond to. Many answers were given. From the coded data a popular theme of low-cost, affordable, easy-to-manage solar dryers, made from local materials was extracted. Hence, from the themes, it is clear that the rural women farmers desire a solar dryer that is low cost, made from local materials and easy to manage.

What is the workability of the fabricated solar dryer for rural women farmers?

From the interview conducted and the focus group discussion, data was collected and coded. Themes such as 'it is good', 'I like the way the dries the crop', 'this is amazing' 'it is working very well', the fabricated solar dryer worked well' evolved.

What is the effect of the fabricated solar dryer on rural women farmers?

The themes identified from the code are: 'it has made drying faster and better', 'the solar dryer makes life easy', 'it is hygienic', 'better than sun drying', 'the solar has made drying crops a fun chaos', 'it helps to dry large quantity at a go'. In addition, to **the interview conducted and the focus group discussion, data was collected and coded. Themes such as 'it is good', 'I like the way the dries the crop', 'this is amazing' 'it is working very well', the fabricated solar dryer worked well' evolved.**

Discussion

From the first question which was on a type of fabricated cost-effective solar dryer the rural women farmers can use, the findings from the interviews and focus group discussion revealed that the participants desire a low-cost, easy-to-manage solar dryer made from local materials within their reach. This amplifies the study of Udomkun et al. (2020), Matavell et al. (2022) who reported similarly on farmers' quest for solar dryers.

The discussion with participants on the **workability of the fabricated solar dryer among rural** women farmers indicated that: the fabricated solar dryer was good works well. The rural women farmers are optimistic that it will serve the purpose for which it was made evidenced by the trials carried out on some of their crops for which the results were astonishing. This finding supports the assertion of Dissa et al (2019), Nukulwar (2020), Udomkun et al. (2020) and Matavell et al. (2022) whose study puts a case for the utilization and workability of solar dryers among farmers and people living in remote places.

On the effect of the fabricated solar dryers, the rural women farmers generally agreed that it was effective for drying their crops and added that the fabricated solar dryer was more automated, produced faster results, more hygienic when compared to the conventional sun dryers they have been using. This corroborates with Sarviya & Saha (2011), Katiyar et al. (2017), Udomkun et al. (2020), Matavell et al. (2022) who reported that solar dryer use has produced similar outputs. Also, the participants attested that the solar dryer improves the product quality of their crops, the taste and colour were retained and it does not have any harmful effect on their environment. This finding aligns with Nukulwar (2020) report.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the fabrication of cost-effective solar dryers for rural women farmers is a very important venture that should be pursued. In addition, it was observed that the fabricated solar dryer was found to be workable and appreciated by the rural women farmers who used it in drying some of their seasonal crops. The solar dryer helped in the preservation of the crops, improved their taste and retained their colour in a hygienic environment. Moreover, the fabricated solar dryer was found to be very effective in the drying of crops because it is automated, produces faster results, more hygienic when compared to the conventional sun dryers they have been using.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the paper the following recommendations were made:

The study recommended that community efforts should pooled into fabricating solar dryers in order to reduce spoilage of perishable food when in season.

The Federal, State and Local governments should also support rural women farmers by supplying them with solar dryers needed to preserve their crops due to poor storage.

The Government should also give credits to rural women farmers to acquire cost-effective solar dryers. This will help save perishable crops and improve food retention and supply in the economy.

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RADIO DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

by

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Abstract

Development at the grassroots occupies the key position in government policies. Projects and programmes executed with the aim of improving the lives of the rural populace have in most cases been a failure. Increasing concern over the failure of these programmes and projects necessitated this study. The survey research method was adopted in this study. Also, the random sampling approach was employed in the collection of data through a designed questionnaire. The data generated were carefully presented and analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages for easy understanding. The outcome of the study has proven that an integrated approach to development communication using radio is the best strategy towards affecting development at the grassroots. The study then recommends among other things that both the traditional and modern mass media channels be used in carrying out community development programmes, especially radio, considering its unique features and advantages.

Keywords: Communication, development, radio, broadcasting, community development.

Introduction

Development communication is essential in the provision of vital information required for the transformation of rural communities. It provides details needed to encourage a change in the attitudes of people towards socio-economic change.

Development communication is simply concerned with communicating the development message. (Okunna, 2002). Supporting the above premise, Edeani (1993) adds that “it is the use of all forms of communication in the reporting, publicizing and promotion of development at all levels of a society”. Therefore, it is not out of place to say that development communication serves as an instrument for the provision of information and mobilization of the entire rural folks for development at the grassroots.

The rate of development at the grassroots seems so slow that they have either been unnoticed or neglected for decades. If community development has in the past been that slow and therefore produced minor results, then the rural machinery or agent for development must be faulty. This accounts for why Akonobi (1990) believes there is the a need to carefully examine the characteristics of the rural audience with a view to ascertaining the best strategies towards mobilizing them for development.

Rural and urban areas show disparity in literacy levels, and most of the population in the country live in rural areas and are grossly illiterate (National Population Census, 2001). This observation that urban residents are more literate than their rural counterparts is due to the fact that there are more educational facilities in the urban areas than in rural areas. Also, migration

from rural to urban areas regularly involves literate people. If these people need to be properly informed on how to recognize national interest, appreciate attitudinal change in order to embrace change necessary for development, then they have to learn how to keep surviving in their environment and be aware of their rights as citizens of the country. This is why Owuamalam (2004) insists that “it is development communication that can provide the needed tonic that can accelerate change and facilitate community development”.

If the populace is largely illiterate, it means that the conventional media approaches may not be strictly applicable in the provision of vital information necessary for community development. Such media require high-level literacy, economic sufficiency and basic infrastructure. Since the electronic media, (particularly radio), produce programmes in native tongues, unlike the print media to address people in most remote localities who are illiterate, it then becomes reasonably effective for use in development communication for community development. At best, the print media can play a complementary role in reinforcing the experience needed for community development.

Also, the literacy level of the rural communities makes the consumption of print media very minimal in localities. The bulk of the people neither have access nor can even read the content of the print media like newspapers, posters, books, pamphlets and magazines.

The aim to reach out to the grassroots remains the driving force for the rapid expansion of mass media facilities, but ironically, the media have been criticized as being too urbanized in content. According to Chiakaan (2013), the impact of radio diminishes as one gets away from the cities into the rural areas. Likewise, Opubor (1985) notes that the content of the mass media is oriented towards the needs of the ruling class. Udoakah (1998) also observed that the rural areas are alarmingly neglected in the same manner that the developing countries are neglected by the international news media.

Statement of problem

A number of development programmes aimed at enhancing the lives of rural dwellers have been attempted by various governments both at national and community levels. Most of these programmes failed to achieve the goals for which they were created. This could be attributed to the design and implementation resulting from a lack of effective communication strategies. Development communication strives to promote development by systematically applying the processes, strategies, and principles of communication to bring about positive social change (Akakwandu, 2015). It therefore means that before development could be said to have taken place, there must be change for the better in the lives of the people. Community development on its own part, seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities (Chiakaan, 2013)

Based on the background of a high level of illiteracy, lack of accessible, preferred and available media, lack of basic infrastructure and mistrust of modern media messages, it becomes pertinent to find out the best strategies towards effecting successful community development programmes in rural communities through radio.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To find out how effective radio strategizes towards bringing about community development, with a focus on the Southern Senatorial Zone, Nasarawa State.
- ii. To examine how illiteracy as a barrier to information consumption could be tackled in rural communities.
- iii. To verify the authenticity of radio in promoting rural development.
- iv. To establish best approaches in the provision of vital information necessary for community development.

Research questions

- i. How effective are radio strategies in enhancing community development?
- ii. What best ways can illiteracy as a barrier to information consumption be prevented in rural communities?
- iii. How veritable is radio as a tool for community development?
- iv. What approaches are best for providing vital information for community development?

Conceptual clarification

Communication

Sambe (2005) defines communication as “the process of exchanging, transmitting, transferring, expressing or imparting ideas, sentiments, information or opinion between individuals, groups or organizations”. This definition reveals deeply that communication is something that goes on over something that is shared between or among parties involved in it. Communication therefore is all about the exchange or sharing of information, ideas, views, emotions, gifts, etc.

Development

Development is a process. Even the highly developed states are still undergoing developmental challenges. Development in human society is a continuum. The process however showcases change, progress, and improvement in the quality of people's lives. This accounts for why development is multidimensional. For Okunna, (2022) “Development is a process of change which aims at achieving self-reliance and improved living conditions for the underprivileged majority of the population”. Development therefore means progress in the economic, social, political and cultural realities of a people.

Development Communication

Development communication is the use of all forms of communication in the reporting, publicizing and provision of development at all levels of society. (Edeani, 2002). Thus, it can be said that development communication is concerned with communicating the development message.

Rural Development

Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas, often relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development is traditionally centered on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry.

Radio

Ahmad, J. I and Anthony, O.E (2022) define radio as an electronic process of sending and receiving messages through the air, using electromagnetic waves. It is also about the activity of broadcasting programmes for people to listen to the programmes being broadcast (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 6th edition). Radio is everywhere. Taxi drivers, farmers, herders, and other menial workers pursue their daily endeavours with their radio. Importantly, however, this expansion has not made radio any less sensitive to its social and development roles. Within a few years in existence, radio metamorphosed from being an object of private concern to a political and development instrument in the hands of government and NGOs.

Review of related literature

Development occurs when there are changes in a society positively inclined for the betterment of people living in it. Looking at development from the same angle, Uche (1999) in Ciboh (2005) asserts: that development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced in a social system for higher per capita income, living standards by modern methods and improved social organization. It is the continuous process of harnessing resources in a manner compatible with culture for equality, liberty, freedom, justice, happiness and progress. It is a spontaneous, nonlinear, irreversible process inherent in all societies which implies structural differentiation and factual specialization which can be stimulated by external factors and measures.

The definition above no doubt unveils the fact that development is simply continuous; it does not start in one place and ends there. It does not take place today just to end the next day. As such it is a process. This defines the sustainable nature of development.

Radio on the other hand is seen as the system of sending sounds over a distance by transmitting electric signals. Radio on the basic available definition is a broadcast that limits itself to the transmission of messages which are aurally received by members of the public. This defines the fact that radio is a limited sensory broadcast channel; limiting itself to only sound transmission, requiring just one sensory organ (ear, hearing, listening) of its audience. Transmitted radio messages or programmes can reach the public as a result of what is technically known as metre bands. These bands are internationally recognized, namely: the short waves (SW), medium waves or amplitude modulation (MW or AM) and frequency modulation (FM) bands.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on two theories. First is the Uses and Gratifications theory of mass communication. It recognizes the notion of an active, obstinate and unyielding audience. This theory therefore seems appropriate for this study since it explains why change occurs when information is consistent with people's needs and interests. This is because the gratifications to be derived serve as motivating factors towards change as envisaged by the communicator, source or change agent. This theory postulated by Elihu Katz et al argues that “media do not do things to people; rather people do things with the media”. This then suggests that the influence of the media is limited to what people allow it to be.

The second theory employed in this study is the development media theory. This arose from attempts by media scholars to give a fair description of the nature and character of the media system in developing countries. Folarin (1998) supports this by saying that “the theory seeks to explain the normative behaviour of the press in countries that are conventionally classified as developing or third world. These are countries with differing political and economic arrangement, having large populations, high poverty rate, low income and high illiteracy, among others.”

Some of the tenets of this theory according to Chiakaan (2006) cited in McQuail (1987) include the following:

- i. To accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy.
- ii. Restriction of media freedom in the interest of the economic priorities and developmental needs of society.
- iii. Priority in media content should be given to the national culture and language.
- iv. The media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries which are close culturally, geographically and politically.
- v. The media in this case radio are therefore seen as partners with the government and the

governed to accelerate the wave of development. This they do genuinely and truly, providing adequate information to the society, educating and galvanizing support for government programmes and policies. This makes for enhanced mobilization and participation in state affairs for the purpose of development.

Methodology and Sources of Data

The study employed a survey research method to generate data. The survey was used because it is a more natural way of studying any issue. Moreover, it is less expensive compared to the amount of data obtained from it.

Even though the data obtained from secondary sources were used, the main source of data was the primary source of a questionnaire. In addition, an oral interview was conducted to complement the questionnaires. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered to respondents in the affected areas with multiple sampling employed in collecting data.

The researchers concentrated on local governments within the Southern Senatorial zone of Nasarawa state comprising: Lafia, Awe, Obi, Keana and Doma. This choice is not unconnected to the fact that the zone is still underdeveloped compared to other senatorial zones in the state. A sample size of twenty (20) residents from each of the five Local Government areas selected randomly was carefully studied, bringing the population of the study to one hundred (100). The respondents include youths, adults and the aged; both male and female.

Furthermore, the researchers employed simple random sampling in this regard. Meanwhile, data about the population of various local governments in the state were obtained from the state population commission.

Data collected are presented and analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages for easy understanding.

Data presentation/analysis

Table 1. Gender of respondents

Sex	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	80	80
Female	20	20
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Data in the table above shows that the majority of the sampled respondents are males. This may not be completely shocking and out of place as women are not seen with portable radio sets in most cases.

Table 2. Age of respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-30	18	18
31-45	50	50
46-above	22	22
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Information represented in the table unveils the fact that adults constitute a majority of the sampled population. This is good enough as it will give credence to the research considering the maturity of the respondents.

Table 3. Respondents' educational background

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Primary school	38	38
Secondary school	50	50
Tertiary education	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

From the table above, it is obvious that the sampled respondents are knowledgeable about understanding and assimilating different developmental programmes broadcast via radio.

Table 4. Do you have a radio set?

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	80	80
No	16	16
Undecided	4	4
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Information in the table above is an indication that the majority of the respondents have access to radio sets despite living in rural areas. This is an indication of their willingness to be informed.

Table 5. How do you access/listen to programmes on the radio?

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Radio	70	70
Mobile phone	15	15
Internet	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Data above proves that the respondents have more access to information through radio compared to other media.

Table 6. Are you familiar with any radio instructional/developmental programmes?

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	30
No	60	60
Undecided	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Information from this table makes it clear that despite the fact that the majority of the respondents have radio sets and listen to its programmes, it is however obvious that there are only a few developmental programmes aired on the radio. This indeed calls for concern.

Table 7. To what extent has radio programmes/messages impacted you?

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Immensely	70	70
Scarcely	25	25
Not at all	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Data here is a clear indication that radio programmes/messages have a huge impact on the respondents. This is suggested by the information in the table above.

Table 8. Has radio enhanced the level of literacy in your community through its programmes?

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	75
No	20	20
Undecided	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

While some of the respondents disagree that radio programmes have improved literacy level among them, 75% of others remain affirmative.

Table 9. How would you rate radio programmes on community development?

Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Good	60	60
Fair	35	35
Poor	5	5
Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2023

Information presented in the table above reveals that radio developmental programmes are influential and impactful to the respondents. The table above is proof.

Discussion of findings

Data in the tables above have proven that the majority of the people are knowledgeable enough to handle the questionnaire and do justice accordingly. While revealing that the male folk constitute a majority of the sampled respondents; showing their activeness, it is also discovered that the respondents are mainly adults and mature enough, thus have been carefully selected for this study. This is evident in the fact that over 80 percent have a radio set and thus can access information on developmental programmes compared to other media such as television, internet, print, etc.

Further analysis of the information obtained reveals that despite the fact that a few developmental programmes are produced and broadcast on radio, the respondents believe that radio still remains a very viable tool for community development. This is why 75 percent of the respondents are affirmative that radio community developmental programmes are impactful and enhance their literacy level.

Conclusion

The outcome of the study has proven that an integrated approach to development communication using radio is the best strategy towards affecting development at the grassroots. While other available approaches towards the transformation of a community may be employed where necessary, radio remains a veritable and authentic medium for the development of communities considering its unique features of portability, accessibility and friendliness. The use of local dialects in addressing the rural audience through packaged programmes on radio is essential and must not be relegated to the background.

Knowledge and information are crucial for people to respond to the opportunities and challenges of socio-economic and technological changes; this accounts for why the radio as a medium of communication must be seen and utilized in tackling illiteracy among rural dwellers. This is because meaningful, developmental communication is mainly anchored on sharing meanings and trying to affect or influence behaviour. This research has established the fact that most key radio developmental programmes executed with the aim of transforming the lives of rural communities will see the light of the day if well planned and executed. Planning therefore remains key in overall community development. The study has amongst other fruitful outcomes x-rayed the role of radio as a veritable mechanism towards grassroot development.

While encouraging positive change in the attitudes of people at the grassroots and beyond towards socio-cultural, economic and political growth, it has however improved their literacy level by making them acquainted with communication roles in human and nation building. This is evident in the people's strong will to accept, adapt, tolerate, become patriotic and shun unnecessary quest for urban migration. Generally, this study has shown that the best mass medium needed for overall development at the grassroots is radio.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected and from the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that more radio programmes aimed at transforming communities be enhanced and well-packaged for general enlightenment. There is a need to pay keen attention to the provision of more educational facilities in the rural areas to avoid incidences of unnecessary migration to urban areas, but rather learn how to survive in their environment and be aware of their rights as citizens of the country.

In addition to the introduction and use of local languages and dialects in the course of radio developmental programmes to accommodate the illiterate people, the study further recommends that both the traditional and modern mass media channels be used in carrying out community development programmes, especially the radio, considering its unique features and advantages.

Government, non-governmental organizations and other well-meaning individuals must rise to the occasion of investing handsomely in programmes that will enlighten and enhance growth in rural communities. For instance, construction and establishment of schools, including tertiary institutions are very easy and fast means of transforming rural communities irrespective of how primitive those localities are.

The provision of social amenities such as pipe-borne water, electricity, accessible roads, education, communication and security will undoubtedly transform rural communities and by this, the rural dwellers will live contentedly without unnecessarily craving for migration. The role of communication and feedback mechanisms cannot be overemphasized. The rural dwellers should be provided a platform through which their voices can always be heard. They should by this mechanism be given an audience and attention to their plights. Thus, they should always be kept abreast with goings on within and outside their environment. Adequate security should be made available at rural communities for overall protection of lives and properties.

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AS IT RELATES TO CREATIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF NORTHEAST

BY

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Abstract

The study aims to determine the relationship of school environment on attendance achievement in the English language and creativity. This study employed a correlational design. The population of the study were 147,488 students. A sample of 384 were selected. A purposive sampling technique was used to select schools and simple random sampling to select students. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaires, titled: Student's Perception of School Environment Questionnaire (SPSEQ) and Thinking Skills and Creativity Questionnaire (TSCQ). The instrument was validated for face and content validity. The reliability coefficient was 0.67 and 0.62. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation for research questions and Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 to test a hypothesis. The findings of the results show that school environment has no relationship with student's attendance and achievement but has a relationship with creativity. Government and educational stakeholders should intensify efforts in providing a school environment with good facilities.

Keywords: Student perception, School environment, Creativity, Government, Relationship

Introduction

Ensuring a safe and hygienic learning environment at the Secondary School level is crucial for effective teaching and learning, as emphasized by Obi, Johnson, & Lawani (2014). The school environment encompasses all the resources, both human and material, that enable students to engage their senses securely. According to the Safe School Manual (2014), a clean and

secure school environment significantly impacts the academic performance of Senior Secondary School students in Nigeria. The concept of environment, as articulated by Mangal (2012), originates from the French term "Environia," meaning surroundings. It encompasses both living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) components. The environment constitutes the entirety of the surroundings in which organisms, including humans, reside, regulating their existence. Humans interact with their environment more profoundly than other organisms. Essentially, the environment encompasses everything Harshita (2024) pointed out that the term "school environment" is often ambiguous and can encompass one or more of the following aspects:

- a. School culture: This refers to the rituals, traditions, and distinctive modes of interaction that distinguish one school from another.
- b. School climate: It pertains to the attitudes and perceptions held by individuals within the school, contributing to a friendly and supportive atmosphere.
- c. Physical environment: This includes the structures, classrooms, aesthetics, indoor air quality, and other physical attributes of the school buildings.

Despite the critical importance of a healthy and safer school environment in promoting learning in senior secondary schools, research findings indicate that student's performance has been consistently poor or low over the years (Chike, 2016). Poor attendance of lessons by students has been correlated with decreased performance and creativity. Okanlawon, Yusuf, Metu, and Yunusa (2016) are of the view that fostering safe and secure school environments will help facilitate an increase in learners' enrolment, retention, and attainment of quality education.

Influence of School Environment on Creativity

The study conducted by Batey and Furnham (2006) addresses the creative environment and seeks to understand the physical and social circumstances in which creativity is more likely to develop. Promoting creativity is associated with interactions a person has with their family, school, and society. Therefore, a conducive environment for creativity development is linked to the quality of these interactions and the life experiences individuals have within those contexts. Consequently, schools play a crucial role in fostering creative skills. Many people assume that creativity is an innate ability that only applies to certain individuals. In other words, some people are perceived to be born creative, while others are not. At first glance, this assumption may seem valid, but upon closer examination of research, we find that creativity can be nurtured in the right learning environment. This study suggests that we can teach students to be creative thinkers if we provide them with the necessary tools and create the appropriate conditions for practice. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of cultivating new ways of thinking and innovation is

essential. While standardizing public schools can ensure equal opportunity, it's important to recognize the need to foster creativity within this framework.

The study conducted by Hayes (2015) observed that the physical environment of the school can either facilitate or hinder students' creativity development. Factors within the physical classroom environment, such as lighting, temperature, ventilation system, size of the classroom, flooring, walls, desks, chairs, chalkboard, and the surrounding environment, including threats, noise, and fear, can all impact creativity. Creative classrooms have the potential to significantly alter the way students acquire education and apply it in real life. In fact, creative expression plays a pivotal role in a student's emotional development.

A study conducted by Gallagher (2017) addressed the Impact of the Classroom Environment on the Creative Thinking of Elementary Learners at Western Oregon University. The researcher examined factors such as physical space, classroom flexibility, desk arrangement, available resources, curriculum design, hierarchical systems, and the variety of activities and subjects offered. The study also explored changes in room arrangement, seating arrangements for students, and broader shifts in the public education system. In the current Nigerian education system, children are often taught in a manner that discourages originality. Consequently, creative thinking is frequently lacking. The researcher's interest in this topic stemmed from concerns about the limited emphasis placed on creativity and its importance in Nigerian classrooms. Failure to appreciate creativity risks losing the potential for new ideas and discoveries, as well as inhibiting critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, all of which are essential skills for our society. Addressing these issues is crucial for the development of future generations.

Statement of the Problem

The safety of the school environment is a fundamental requirement for learning. When school environments are safe, both students and teachers can enjoy teaching and learning, leading to enhanced psychological well-being and success in academic and daily activities. However, many of our schools fall short of providing such safety. This is also true for secondary school students in the North East region. Numerous students are often found roaming during class hours or engaged in hawking activities. Additionally, many schools struggle to display students' work, possibly due to threats posed by insurgents, gender-based violence, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, fire outbreaks, kidnapping, and drug abuse. Some students may also feel threatened by their peers, making it challenging for them to communicate effectively in English, which is the primary language of instruction in schools. These factors significantly impact students' creativity development in secondary schools and may lead parents to withdraw their children from school. Those who remain, often live in fear and anxiety about potential risks. It is against this backdrop that the researcher became interested in investigating the perception of the school environment concerning students' creativity among senior secondary school students in

the Northeastern part of Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives

1. To determine the perception of school environment among senior secondary school students in North Eastern part of Nigeria.
2. To determine how students' perception of the school environment influences creativity among North Eastern senior secondary schools in Nigeria
3. To determine the association between school environment and creativity

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of the school environment among senior secondary school students in the Northeast?
2. To what extent can student's perception of the school environment influence creativity?

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁ - There is no significant association between the perception of the school environment and creativity of public senior secondary school students in the North East.

Methodology

The study employed a correlational survey research design. The population comprised all SS II students from public senior secondary schools in the northeastern part of Nigeria. According to data from the Ministry of Education in the selected states, the population of SS 2 students was as follows: Adamawa State: 84,734; Bauchi State: 39,576; and Gombe State: 23,178. Thus, the total population of SS2 students from the selected states was 147,488. A sample of 384 students was selected using the Research Advisor 2006 software. Purposive sampling was utilized to select students from both boarding and day schools, while simple random sampling techniques were used to select individual students. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaires titled "Student's Perception of School Environment Questionnaire (SPSEQ)" and "Thinking Skills and Creativity Questionnaire (TSCQ)." These instruments underwent validation by three experts in test and measurement for face and content validity. Pilot testing was conducted on students who were not part of the sample schools to determine the reliability of the questionnaires: SPSEQ with a reliability coefficient of 0.62 and TSCQ with a reliability coefficient of 0.67.

The researchers, along with trained Research Assistants, distributed the questionnaires themselves and explained the procedures for filling them out to the respondents. A total of 346 questionnaires were retrieved from respondents, while 38 questionnaires were missing. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviation, for

research questions, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. A Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agreed" (4 points) to "Strongly Disagreed" (1 point) was used for responses, with a total score of 10 points, $10/4 = 2.5$. therefore, the decision benchmark for accepting is 2.5 mean and above while any mean that is below 2.4 is rejected.

Data Analysis and Result Presentation

Research Question One: what are the perceptions of the school environment among secondary school students in the North- Eastern part of Nigeria?

Table 1: Perception of School Environment among Secondary School Students in North East.

S/NO	ITEMS	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Learners in this school trust their teachers	0.0	3.0	Accepted
2	Fighting among learners often takes place in school	1.1	2.5	Accepted
3	The teachers respect the learners in school	0.7	3.4	Accepted
4-	The facilities are adequate for learning activities	1.1	2.3	Rejected
5	Learners often take things from other learners	1.2	2.7	Accepted
6	Learners feel safe at school	1.0	2.9	Accepted
7	Learners use offensive language at school	1.1	2.9	Accepted
8	Teachers apply discipline consistently	1.2	2.9	Accepted
9	Learners bring weapons to school	1.2	2.4	Rejected
10	The learning environment in this school is conducive	1.1	2.9	Accepted
11	Learners intimidate teachers to get what they want	1.2	2.4	Rejected
12	The school rules are enforced for peace and stability	1.1	3.0	Accepted
13	Learners often vandalize school property	1.2	2.5	Accepted
14	The building of the school is in good condition	1.3	2.6	Accepted
15	Our school have trained security guard	1.2	2.5	Accepted
16	class rooms have doors at opposite sides for fire escape	1.1	2.9	Accepted
17	Learners can count on teachers to be fair	1.1	2.9	Accepted
18	The lack of a fence for securing the school grounds stopped students from attending school	1.2	2.4	Rejected
19	Most of the roof leak	1.2	2.7	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2023

From Table 1 above, 19 items were responded to by the sample for the study regarding senior secondary school students' perception of the school environment in the northeastern part of Nigeria. The responses from 346 students indicated that items 4, 9, 11, and 18 were rejected due to their mean score being below 2.5, while all the remaining items were accepted, as their mean score was above 2.5.

Research Question Two: To what extent can student's perception of the school environment influence creativity?

Table 2: thinking skills and Creativity

S/NO	ITERMS	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	A variety of resources are available to students	1.1	2.5	Accepted
2	A variety of work areas are available to students	1.1	2.7	Accepted
3	The furniture is comfortable and flexible allowing for multiple arrangements	1.1	2.7	Accepted
4	Disorderliness and noise are tolerated	1.1	2.4	Rejected
5	Students are involved in active discussion among themselves and with the teachers	0.9	3.1	Accepted
6	Students are members of a learning community	0.9	3.1	Accepted
7	The atmosphere is collaborative and friendly	0.9	2.8	Accepted
8	Differences were value	1.1	2.9	Accepted
9	Students are involved in tasks that are open-ended and involve choice	1.0	3.0	Accepted
10	Mistakes and risk-taking are encouraged	1.1	2.7	Accepted
11	Students are intrinsically motivated	1.0	3.0	Accepted
12	Students are given time for the development of ideas and for creative thinking	0.9	3.2	Accepted
13	Multiple ways of knowing and learning are encouraged or used	0.8	3.3	Accepted
14	Students reflect on their learning	1.0	3.1	Accepted
15	Students work at their own pace	1.1	2.8	Accepted
16	Students are involved in real life/ authentic tasks that may include inquiry, project	1.0	2.9	Accepted
17	Examples of student work appear in the space	1.0	2.9	Accepted
18	The teacher is the co- learner,explorer, and resource person supporting students	0.9	3.2	Accepted
19	Students are encouraged to use multiple perspectives/ viewpoints or alternative modes of investigation/problem-solving	1.1	2.9	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2023

From Table 2 above, details of responses from the sample for the study, which consisted of senior students from public secondary schools in the Northeastern part of Nigeria, were provided. Nineteen items were included. The results obtained from the respondents regarding thinking skills and creativity indicated that only Item 4 was rejected, with a mean score of 2.4. All the remaining items were accepted, as their mean score was above 2.5.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of the association between perception of the school environment and creativity.

Environment	Creativity			Df	X ²	p.value
	High creativity	Low creativity	Total			
Secured	22(25.3)	156(60.5)	178	1	32.237	0.00
Unsecured	65(74.7)	102(39.5)	168			
Total	87(100)	259(100)	346			

Percentage within creativity in parenthesis

The results in Table 3 revealed that 65 respondents reported high creativity in an unsecured school environment, representing 74.7% of the expected value, while 102 respondents reported low creativity in an unsecured school environment, representing 39.5%

of the expected value. This suggests that students who perceive the environment as insecure tend to have lower creativity. Furthermore, the results in Table 3 indicated a statistically significant association between school environment and creativity, with a chi-square value of 32.237, degrees of freedom (df) of 1, and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that a significant association was found between school environment and creativity. Consequently, based on the obtained results, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant association between school environment and performance, is rejected.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study revealed the perception of students towards the school environment in the North Eastern part of Nigeria as follows: Students generally trust their teachers, Incidents of fighting among learners are frequently observed within the school, teachers are respected by students, and there is a sense of comfort at school, the use of foul language is common among students, teachers endeavor to discipline erring students in the hope of moulding them into better citizens, there is a conducive environment for learning in the schools, and teachers strive to ensure that school rules are followed, contributing to the peace and stability enjoyed. These findings are not entirely consistent with those of Chika (2016), who stated that a conducive school environment plays a significant role in students' lives. It is unfortunate to note that despite the good structures and well-trained security guards, students still engage in criminal activities, vandalizing school properties. While classroom structures are designed with fire exit doors, some classrooms have leaking roofs. However, teachers make efforts to treat students fairly.

Furthermore, the following results were obtained regarding thinking and creativity skills among students in senior secondary schools in the North Eastern part of Nigeria:

A variety of learning resources and workshops, such as creativity art workshops and food and nutrition labs, are available, furniture is readily available for students to utilize, positive discussions among students and with teachers foster a learning community atmosphere, the school environment is conducive and friendly, allowing for productive thought and innovation, differences among students are valued to prevent ridicule, students participate in multiple tasks that are open-ended, with mistakes encouraged as part of the learning process, students are internally motivated, multiple ways of knowing and learning are encouraged, students engage in real-life tasks such as project writing and inquiry, products of students' thinking and creative skills are displayed, teachers guide students as they explore creative thinking skills and multiple perspectives in problem-solving or investigation are encouraged by the teachers.

This study revealed a significant association between the perception of the school environment and the creativity of students in the North East. This implies that the school environment plays a significant role in fostering creativity among students. This finding aligns

with the research of Gallagher (2017), who also found a significant relationship between school environment and students' creativity. Additionally, it is consistent with the findings of Hennessy (2004), who emphasized the vital role of the school environment in students' creativity. Moreover, this study's results are in line with the findings of Hayes (2015), Ngohemba (2016), and Okafor (2016), all of whom reported a significant association between school environment and students' creativity.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

- i. The study revealed that students often trust their teachers, incidents of fighting among learners are frequently observed within the school, teachers have respect for their students, and students feel comfortable at school. Additionally, the use of foul language is common among students, and teachers exert effort in disciplining erring students with the hope of moulding them into better citizens. Moreover, a conducive environment for learning is present in the schools, and teachers make efforts to ensure that school rules are maintained.
- ii. Regarding thinking and creativity skills among students in senior secondary schools in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, the study found that there is a variety of learning resources available, including workshops such as creativity art workshops and food and nutrition labs. Additionally, there is adequate furniture readily available for students to utilize. Positive discussions among students and teachers foster a sense of community and collaboration, reflecting a learning community through their actions. The school environment is conducive and friendly, facilitating productive thought that leads to innovation. Furthermore, differences among students are valued to prevent anyone from being ridiculed.
- iii. The findings of the study indicated a significant association between school environment and students' creativity. This suggests that the majority of students who perceive the school environment as unsecured exhibit lower levels of creativity at school.

Conclusion

The study focuses on the roles of school environment plays in the development of students' creativity by providing some number of objectives to guide the study and the study was conducted within the North Eastern state of Nigeria. Related literature was reviewed and some variables were discussed, the method of data analysis was descriptive statistics and chi-square test to test the hypothesis, and findings were discussed. When ample facilities are provided and maintained it will boost students' creativity and it was

also discovered that the school environment can influence students' thinking and creativity skills, ultimately contributing to their significance both to themselves and to the community at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. School administrators and the immediate community should exert efforts to ensure that students are shielded from social vices and that structures/facilities designed to enhance their learning environment are protected from destruction.
- ii. Teachers and stakeholders in education should collaborate to maintain the facilities provided by the government in order to enhance the school environment and foster students' creativity across various fields.
- iii. Given the significant association between the school environment and students' creativity revealed in the study, it is recommended that efforts should be made to sustain the positive relationship between the school environment and students' creativity.

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EXAMINING LEGAL REMEDIES FOR MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

By

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Abstract

This paper carefully examines and raises awareness regarding various legal remedies available for victims of medical negligence. Medical negligence occurs when healthcare professionals fail to provide a standard level of care, resulting in harm or injury to patients. Understanding the legal avenues for seeking compensation is crucial in ensuring justice and accountability. This paper explores the different types of legal remedies, such as civil liability, Medical Negligence as a Tort, vicarious liability and defences in Medical Negligence cases. The paper aims to analyse key principles and elements required to establish a successful medical negligence claim, including the standard of care, causation, and damages. The researcher adopted the doctrinal method of research. The paper therefore recommends public awareness, valuable insights for academics, students, and individuals seeking justice in cases of medical negligence. Conclusively, the paper advocates for a safer and more accountable healthcare system.

Keywords – Negligence, Legal Remedies, Standard of Care, Causation, Damages and Medical

Introduction:

Medical negligence is a concern that has plagued healthcare systems globally. When healthcare professionals fail to provide a standard level of care, patients suffer harm or injury. In such cases, it becomes crucial to understand the legal remedies available to the victims of medical negligence. This paper aims to examine and raise awareness about these legal remedies, creating a comprehensive understanding of the options for seeking justice and compensation. It delves into the essential elements necessary to establish a successful medical negligence claim, such as demonstrating the breach of the standard of care, establishing causation, and quantifying damages. Through this investigation, the paper seeks to promote academic understanding and contribute to the discourse surrounding medical negligence and its legal implications.

1. Concept of Medical Negligence

Medical negligence, in simple definition in the context of Nigeria, refers to a situation where a healthcare professional, such as a doctor, nurse, or other medical personnel, fails to provide the standard of care and skill expected of them, resulting in harm or injury to a patient. It can occur through acts of commission, where the healthcare provider does something that they should not have done, or through acts of omission, where they fail to do something, they should have done. It

could also mean doing something differently from the way a normal prudent person would do it. Section 317 of the Nigerian Criminal Code Act¹ provides that a person who unlawfully kills another without intending to cause death or grievous harm to the person killed is guilty of an offence of manslaughter, according to the circumstances of the case. **Section 343** of the Act² provides that any person who gives medicine or medical or surgical treatment in a rash or negligent manner as to endanger life or likely to cause harm to a person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour. As such, under the Nigerian criminal law system, liability will arise even where life has not been lost but endangered, in the course of treatment. Similarly, Section 303³ of the Act prescribes that persons who undertake to administer surgical or medical treatment should possess reasonable skill and use reasonable care in acting except in cases of necessity.

In line with the above provisions, a negligent medical practitioner can be criminally prosecuted for medical negligence. Any person seeking redress for medical negligence under criminal law in the circumstances can file a report at the Police Station. The Police will then investigate the suspected medical practitioner(s) and where their investigation reveals gross negligence, they may prosecute the matter. In this instance, the Police can file a criminal suit against the medical practitioner in court for gross negligence or for manslaughter, where the death of the patient has occurred. The Medical and Dental Practitioners Act is the primary legislation governing medical practice in Nigeria. It establishes the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) to regulate the practice of medicine and dentistry in the country.

There are three implications of negligence for this research work. These are:

Duty of Care, Breach of Duty and Causation and Damages. The above three key implications of negligence in Nigerian law, are supported by judicial authorities. In Nigeria like in many parts of the world, negligence is a legal concept that holds individuals or entities responsible for their failure to exercise reasonable care, resulting in harm or injury to others. As abundantly pointed out in the preceding pages of this research paper, medical negligence is a significant concern in Nigeria, as patients may suffer harm and seek redress for substandard medical care. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the legal remedies available to victims of medical negligence under Nigerian law. It explores the legal framework, relevant statutes, and case law, examining the challenges and areas for improvement within the Nigerian healthcare system. The Nigerian legal system recognizes medical negligence as a breach of the duty of care owed by healthcare professionals to their patients. Victims of medical negligence have several legal remedies available to seek compensation for their injuries. This paper will clarify and analyse these legal remedies within the Nigerian context.

2. Legal Remedies

The available legal remedies for victims of medical negligence are as follows:

i). Civil Liability:

The origin of the civil nature of negligence is enshrined in the old case of *Donoghue v. Stevenson*.⁴ Under this head, the court may order specific performance, award damages or order rescission where the claims of the victim of medical negligence is successful. In a medical negligence claim, patients can file civil lawsuits in Nigerian courts against healthcare providers for medical negligence. To succeed, plaintiffs must establish four elements as follows: duty of care, breach of duty, causation, and damages. These factors were emphasized by the court in the case of *Olaye v. Chairman, Medical & Dental Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal*.⁵ Here the tribunal found three medical doctors liable for medical negligence for not attending to their patients.

Civil liability under Nigerian medical negligence case law refers to the responsibility that

healthcare professionals may bear for injuries caused to patients due to negligence or a breach of the duty of care. In recent years, there has been increased awareness about patients' rights and the need for accountability in the Nigerian healthcare system. Medical negligence cases have played a vital role in shaping the legal framework surrounding civil liability. One of the key aspects of medical negligence cases in Nigeria is the duty of care owed by healthcare professionals to their patients. This duty requires doctors, nurses, and other medical practitioners to exercise a reasonable standard of care and skill when treating patients. It means that healthcare professionals must take all necessary precautions and provide treatment that is consistent with accepted medical practices.

In order to establish civil liability in a medical negligence case, the aggrieved party must prove three essential elements which are, duty of care, breach of duty, and causation. Firstly, it must be demonstrated that a duty of care exists between the healthcare professional and the patient. This is typically established by showing that the healthcare professional-patient relationship existed and that the patient sought and received medical treatment. Thus, in the case of *Anya v. Imo Concorde Hotel Ltd*⁶, the Supreme Court of Nigeria held that the most fundamental ingredient the court should look for in a case of the tort of negligence is whether there exists a duty of care.

Secondly, in *First Bank of Nigeria Plc v. Banjo*,⁷ the Court of Appeal per Bage JCA held that the plaintiff needs to establish that there was a breach of that duty of care. To determine this, the court would assess whether the healthcare professional failed to meet the reasonable standard of care expected of them. This is usually established by presenting expert medical testimony to establish what a reasonably competent healthcare professional would have done under similar circumstances.

Lastly, causation must be proven, which means demonstrating that the breach of duty caused the patient's injury or harm. It must therefore be noted that causation rests on the shoulders of the plaintiff to prove that it would not have happened if not for the fault of the doctor. This was the basis of the judgement in the case of *Cork v. Kirby Maclean Ltd*.⁸ This requires showing that the injury would not have occurred if the healthcare professional had provided appropriate care. Expert medical testimony is also essential in linking the breach of duty to the specific harm suffered by the patient.

If a patient successfully demonstrates civil liability in a medical negligence case, they may be entitled to various forms of compensation.⁹ This can include economic damages such as medical expenses, lost wages, and rehabilitation costs. Non-economic damages, such as pain and suffering, emotional distress, and loss of enjoyment of life, may also be awarded. It is important to note that the burden of proof lies with the patient in a medical negligence case, and establishing civil liability can be a complex and challenging process. Furthermore, it should be noted that medical practitioners are generally covered by medical indemnity insurance, which helps mitigate the financial burden of compensation awards.

Civil liability under Nigerian medical negligence case law holds healthcare professionals accountable for their actions or omissions that result in harm to patients.¹⁰ By establishing the duty of care, breach of duty, and causation, patients have the opportunity to seek fair compensation for injuries caused by medical negligence. Increased awareness of these rights and the legal framework surrounding medical negligence has contributed to the ongoing efforts to improve the quality and safety of healthcare in Nigeria. A patient must be duly informed of medical procedures to be carried on him.¹¹

3. Contributory Negligence

Nigerian law recognizes the principle of contributory negligence, which may affect the amount of compensation awarded to the injured party. If the patient's actions or omissions contributed to their injuries, the court may reduce the damages accordingly. Contributory negligence under Nigerian medical negligence law refers to a legal principle that allocates responsibility for an injury or harm between the healthcare professional and the patient. It recognizes that in some cases, patients may have contributed to their own injury through their actions or lack of care. Contributory negligence may reduce or even eliminate the patient's right to claim compensation for damages.

In Nigeria, the principle of contributory negligence is derived from common law, and its application in medical negligence cases is based on the Contributory Negligence Act of 1945. Section 1 (1)¹² provides thus:

Where any person suffers damage as the result partly of his fault and partly of the fault of any other person or persons, a claim in respect of that damage shall not be defeated because of the fault of the person suffering the damage, but the damages recoverable in respect thereof shall be reduced to such extent as the court thinks just and equitable having regard to the claimant's share in the responsibility for the damage

According to this E.C. Nwoke et al in line with the Act, if a patient's own negligence contributes to their injury, the court has the discretion to reduce the amount of compensation awarded accordingly.¹³ In a medical negligence case, the defence of contributory negligence may be raised by the healthcare professional or institution against the patient. For example, if a patient fails to disclose essential medical information or disregards medical advice and as a result, suffers harm, the defendant may argue that the patient's own negligence contributed to the outcome.

To establish contributory negligence, the defendant must prove that the patient breached their duty to take reasonable care for their own safety and that this breach resulted in their injury. The court will consider the actions, or lack thereof, of both parties involved and assess the extent to which each party's negligence contributed to the harm suffered by the patient. If the court finds that the patient's contributory negligence contributed to their injury, it has the authority to reduce the compensation awarded based on the degree of the patient's contribution. This means that the patient may receive a reduced amount, or in extreme cases where their contribution is deemed significant, they may be denied compensation altogether.

It is important to note that the application of contributory negligence in medical malpractice cases can vary depending on the specific facts and circumstances involved. The court will carefully evaluate the evidence and weigh the actions of both the patient and the healthcare professional when determining liability and awarding compensation.¹⁴ It is advisable for individuals who believe they have suffered harm due to medical negligence in Nigeria to consult with legal professionals experienced in medical malpractice cases. These professionals can guide how contributory negligence may impact their case and help navigate the legal process effectively.

4. Criminal Liability

Under certain circumstances, medical negligence in Nigeria can be deemed a criminal offence. If a healthcare provider demonstrates gross negligence or recklessness that results in death or severe harm, criminal charges may be pursued. Medical negligence cases involving harm to

patients raise important questions regarding the potential for criminal liability and prosecution for healthcare professionals. While civil liability primarily focuses on compensation, criminal liability aims to hold individuals accountable for their actions or omissions through criminal proceedings. This paper delves into the context of Nigerian medical negligence law and explores the concept of criminal liability in such cases.

The pursuit of criminal liability in medical negligence cases poses various challenges. Firstly, distinguishing between genuine cases of gross negligence and unintended medical errors can be complex, requiring expert evaluation and evidence of the circumstances. Additionally, lack of awareness among law enforcement agencies and limited expertise in medical malpractice investigations and prosecutions may impede progress in criminalizing medical negligence. Although relatively rare, a few Nigerian cases have dealt with the criminal prosecution of healthcare professionals for medical negligence. Such cases play a critical role in shaping the understanding and application of criminal liability and prosecution in Nigerian medical negligence law.

Under Nigerian law, criminal liability in medical negligence cases requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the healthcare professional acted recklessly, with gross negligence, or with an intent to cause harm. The Criminal Code Act Section 316 establishes criminal liability for negligent acts causing harm or endangering life. However, the prosecution bears the burden of proof, adhering to the high standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt' in the Nigeria's Criminal Law. This was the basis of judgment in *Okusami v. A.G., Lagos State*.¹⁵

5. Professional Regulation

Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) is the regulatory body responsible for the registration and discipline of medical professionals. It has the power to investigate complaints, conduct hearings, and impose sanctions such as suspension or revocation of licenses. Section 15 (3) Medical and Dental Council Act provide thus:

- (3) There shall be established a body to be known as the Medical and Dental Practitioners Investigation Panel (hereafter in this Act referred to as “the Panel”), which shall be charged with the duty of –
 - (a) conducting a preliminary investigation into any case where it is alleged that a registered person has misbehaved in his capacity as a medical practitioner or dental surgeon, or should for any other reason be the subject of proceedings before the Disciplinary Tribunal.¹⁶

Many Nigerian hospitals have established internal committees called Hospital Complaints Committees to handle complaints and investigate allegations of medical negligence. These committees can mediate disputes and recommend appropriate actions for redress.

6. Medical Negligence as a Tort

This paper explores the application of medical negligence as a tort under Nigerian law, with a focus on recent Supreme Court cases. The Supreme Court set precedents on medical negligence as a Tort in Nigeria in several cases which include: -

Medical and Dental Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal v. Okonkwo,¹⁷

Where the Supreme Court emphasised the importance of holding medical practitioners accountable for their negligence. The court held that a patient has the right to seek redress for medical negligence through tort law, despite the existence of professional disciplinary procedures. This landmark decision reinforced the viability of medical negligence as a tort in Nigeria, affirming patients' rights to compensation for negligence.

Ajayi v. Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex Management Board,¹⁸ where the Supreme Court elucidated the burden of proof in medical negligence claims. The court emphasized that the plaintiff has the burden of proving that the healthcare professional breached their duty of care. Furthermore, the court clarified that evidence must establish a causal link between the negligence and the harm suffered by the patient. This ruling underscores the importance of gathering compelling evidence in medical negligence cases.

Anuforo v. Nwokocha,¹⁹ where the Supreme Court expanded upon the duty of care owed by healthcare professionals. The court held that healthcare professionals, including doctors and nurses, have to exercise reasonable care towards their patients. The court emphasized that this duty arises from the doctor-patient relationship, and a breach of this duty can result in liability for medical negligence. This decision highlights the responsibility of medical practitioners to uphold the highest standards of care. Under Nigerian law, medical negligence is classified as a tort, falling under civil law. A tort is a wrongful act resulting in injury or harm to an individual, for which the injured party can seek compensation. Medical negligence claims are typically grounded in the general principles of negligence.

7. Medical Negligence and Vicarious Liability

In Nigeria, the principle of vicarious liability applies to medical negligence, it is well-established and has been widely recognised by the courts. Under the doctrine, healthcare institutions can be held liable for negligent acts or omissions committed by their employees during their employment. In *U.B.A Plc v. Ugochukwu*,²⁰ the court held that vicarious liability means that one person takes the place of another. This means that a master can be held liable for the wrongful acts of his servant even if it is a criminal offence, provided it is committed on the line of duty in the employment of the master. This extends to doctors, nurses, medical technicians, and other healthcare professionals.

In *Medical and Dental Practitioners' Disciplinary Tribunal v. Okonkwo*,²¹ in this case, the Supreme Court of Nigeria held that a hospital could be held vicariously liable for the negligence of its medical personnel. The court emphasized that for vicarious liability to arise, the negligent act or omission must have occurred within the scope of the employment relationship. The Supreme Court however held that there may be additional grounds to explore to establish vicarious liability in a medical negligence case involving a government hospital. The court established that the hospital was vicariously liable for the negligence of its doctors and nurses because they were employees acting within the scope of their employment. The court also emphasized that the hospital could not shirk its responsibility by claiming that the doctors were independent contractors.

Some Nigerian researchers have given deep insight into the doctrine of vicarious liability. T.A. Ibrahim²² discusses the application of vicarious liability in medical negligence cases in Nigeria. His work highlights the criteria that must be met to establish vicarious liability and analyse the role of the employment relationship, the scope of employment, and the standard of care expected from healthcare professionals. Asua²³ examines vicarious liability in medical negligence cases, focusing on Nigerian jurisprudence. His work discusses the various tests for establishing vicarious liability and the impact of recent Supreme Court decisions on the liability of healthcare institutions and suggests reforms for a more effective application of vicarious liability in medical negligence cases.

Vicarious liability is an important legal doctrine in medical negligence cases in Nigeria. As demonstrated by Nigerian Supreme Court cases and academic researchers, the courts have consistently applied and recognized the concept of vicarious liability, holding healthcare institutions responsible for the negligent acts or omissions of their employees. Healthcare institutions, healthcare professionals, and patients must be aware of their rights and obligations under this doctrine to ensure accountability and the protection of patients' interests. It is important to note that Nigeria recognizes and provides legal remedies for victims of medical negligence, aiming to ensure justice and compensation. Civil liability, professional regulation through bodies like the MDCN, and criminal liability serve as important avenues for redress under Nigerian law.

8. Defences in Medical Negligence

Medical negligence cases in Nigeria often involve complex legal issues, with healthcare professionals defending against claims of malpractice. When facing a medical negligence lawsuit, defendants can assert various defences to challenge the plaintiff's allegations. This segment of the research paper explores the defences available to healthcare professionals in medical negligence cases under Nigerian law, drawing insights from recent Supreme Court cases.

In *Adekunle-Alaba v. Yusuff*,²⁴ the Supreme Court highlighted the defence of "contributory negligence." The court ruled that if the plaintiff, through their actions, contributed to their injuries or exacerbated their condition, it could diminish or even eliminate the defendant's liability. The decision thus emphasizes the importance of determining the extent to which the plaintiff's own actions may have contributed to the harm suffered.

Also in *Ogieva v. Nwazor*,²⁵ the Supreme Court shed light on the defense of "informed consent." The court emphasised that healthcare professionals must obtain informed consent from patients before administering treatment or conducting procedures. If the defendant can prove that the patient was fully informed about the risks and voluntarily consented, it can serve as a defence against medical negligence claims. The ruling underscores the significance of clear and effective communication with patients.

Moreover, the case of *Medical and Dental Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal v. Okonkwo*²⁶ provides insights into the defence of "reasonable care." The Supreme Court acknowledged that if the healthcare practitioner can demonstrate that they exercised reasonable care and adhered to accepted medical practices, it can help establish a strong defence against medical negligence claims. This highlights the significance of demonstrating adherence to professional standards and guidelines.

9. Conclusion

This article has thoroughly examined the various legal remedies available to victims of medical negligence, shedding light on pathways for seeking justice and compensation. By exploring options like malpractice lawsuits, disciplinary actions, and patient compensation funds. This paper has also provided valuable insights into the avenues through which accountability can be pursued. Additionally, it has highlighted the essential elements required to establish a successful medical negligence claim, including demonstrating a breach of the standard of care, establishing causation, and quantifying damages. By raising awareness and understanding. The work also contributes largely, to a broader discourse on medical negligence and its legal implications, ultimately aiming to foster a safer and more accountable healthcare system.

Endnotes

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- 2 Section 343 CCA
- 3 Section 303 CCA
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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AS A VEHICLE FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN GOMBE SOUTH

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Abstract

The study examined the role of tertiary education as a vehicle for sustainable national development in Gombe South. Tertiary education which is all the formal post-secondary education, including public and private universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, mono-technics, technical training institutes, and vocational schools given to individuals who volunteer for it, is to the education system what the head is to the body. It is through it that proficient and high-skill manpower are produced, with a fundamental base for innovation, growth, and a productive drive for all-round national development. From the stated objectives of the study, four (4) research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a survey research design with a population of four hundred (400) respondents selected through a simple random sampling technique. That is one hundred (100) respondents from each of the four (4) Local Government Areas. From whom data were carefully collected and generalizations made on the entire zone of the state. A self-developed structured questionnaire titled "An assessment of the role of tertiary education as a vehicle for sustainable national development was used for the collection of data with observation. Face and content validity were determined thoroughly for the instrument. A simple percentage was used to answer the four research questions raised. The study showed that tertiary education is a catalyst for sustainable national development in the zone. That is, tertiary institutions trigger development where they are sited and the output of these institutions is equipped to cause development also through the training and skills they acquire. The study recommended the expansion and development of existing tertiary institutions in Gombe South and the opening of campuses in Shongom and Balanga Local Government Areas that do not have such to meet the demand for tertiary education, as well as increase the funding of the existing institutions to accommodate more applicant who are unable to be admitted as a result of lack of space and facilities to cater for them.

Keywords: Tertiary Education, Institution, National development, Applicant, Local Government

Introduction

It is the vision and desire of every government to achieve sustainable national development, which is the progress and improvement in every sector of the economy which also reflects in the well-being of its citizens. This kind of attainment comes with pride because it leads to a higher

value of influence among the comity of nations, and it also draws citizens to be attached to their government due to the vast benefits they get from it. But no nation can achieve any meaningful progress without education, we believe in Nigeria that “education is an instrument for national development” (FRN,2004:6). This justifies the government huge investment in the sector. And more so, the sector services other sectors of the economy. For sustainable national development to be achieved, tertiary education is the vehicle that must be employed for that journey. The quest for a strong, self-reliant nation as well as a great and dynamic economy full of bright opportunities for all citizens can only be achieved through qualitative tertiary education.

Tertiary education means all formal post-secondary education, including public and private universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, monotechnics, technical training institutes, and vocational schools. In other words (FRN, 2014) says it is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses. Wikipedia (2023) defines tertiary education to mean the third level or third stage education given to graduates of post-secondary schools which culminates in the receipt of certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees. However, Unesco (2019) sees tertiary education as those institutions of learning which focus on learning endeavours in specialized fields. To them, it includes academic and higher vocational education. Voga (2022) opines that tertiary education is commonly referred to the post-secondary education or academic pursuits undertaken after high school. He added that you can find tertiary education programmes at vocational schools, community colleges, technical schools, professional schools, colleges and universities.

This advanced level of education is germane in fostering growth, creating employment, averting poverty, enhancing economic prosperity and fast tracking development in every region or state. It is through tertiary education that a proficient and high skill workforce is made and produced, with lifelong access to a solid foundational base which is a prerequisite for innovative ideas, sincere growth, productive drive for all-round growth and development of a nation. Tertiary education is not important just for the individual attaining it, but it is beneficial to the larger or entire society as a whole. The relevant job skills that society needs in order to grow and develop are obtained mainly from tertiary education. According to the World Bank Group (2023), graduates of tertiary education possess skills that secondary school graduates do not have and will earn more than twice as much as their secondary school counterparts over a lifetime. When we talk about tertiary education, we are not just focusing on University and Polytechnic education. It equally implies tertiary technical and vocational education and training that is given to seekers for effective and efficient complementary to traditional university skills and knowledge relevant to the growth and development of society. Tertiary education must reflect the social, political, scientific, sports, cultural, agricultural and economic needs of the global knowledge economy, which constantly demands a better-trained, more proficient, and adaptable human capital. Tertiary education is to the education system what the head is to the body it produces high level manpower, develops proper values and intellectual capabilities in citizens, encourages scholarships and also promotes international understanding.

Over the years, the outcry has been that graduates of tertiary education in the country do not possess the prerequisite knowledge technical wherewithal, and relevant skills needed to drive the various sectors of the economy for national growth and development. Experts allege that graduates of tertiary education lack the quality and capacity to effectively function successfully in the labour market and its requirements. No nation can attain National Development outside of education and tertiary education is key to attaining that goal. Gboyega (2003) opines that national

development implies the improvement of a nation, economically, socially and politically to better the living standard or living conditions of the people. Olajire (2022) corroborates Gboyega's view by adding that national development implies the process by which a country improves the social and economic well-being of its citizens through the provision of amenities such as quality education, good roads, medical facilities and other social infrastructure. And these are instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty, and boosting shared prosperity, triggering innovation, and growth.

Gombe State which is located in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, blessed with a number of both Federal and State Tertiary Institutions. But the focus of this investigation is Gombe South which comprises five (4) Local Government Areas of Balanga, Billiri Kaltungo and Shongom. With basically three (3) tertiary institutions established within this zone. They are the Federal Polytechnic Kaltungo, College of Health Technology Kaltungo (state) and College of Education Billiri (state) to assess the reason for siting these institutions in the zone, the roles they are expected to play for the development of the zone and the quality of man-power they are producing; whether they are in line with their core establishment mandates and meeting the expectation of the zone, state and nation at large. Since, Tertiary education institutions produce better better-trained population, and a more skilled and adaptable workforce.

Statement of the Problem

Education is the most important instrument of change and a potent tool for national development. While universal tertiary education has remained the major catalyst for economic, scientific, and technological growth and innovative development, the Nigerian tertiary education sector is faced with a myriad of challenges that impede its contribution to national development. Despite the proliferation of tertiary institutions in the country, the value and contribution of tertiary education has significantly declined. The goals of tertiary education include the contribution to national development through high level relevant manpower training, inculcating proper values for the survival of individuals and society, developing the intellectual capability of the individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments and give self-reliant skills, producing useful members of society, encouraging scholarships and community service while promoting national unity and international understanding can also fast-track the growth and development of the places where they are sited. But these are not being achieved as expected.

Again, because education is in the matrix of politics, Nigerian politicians sometimes wake up to establish some of these tertiary institutions without any recourse to the existing ones. They see tertiary institutions as dividends of democracy. No wonder our tertiary institutions are faced with many challenges such as infrastructural decay, inadequate qualified staff and facilities for learning and research, incessant strike actions, poor remuneration of staff and inadequate funding, poor conditions of service and poor working environment amongst many.

It is in the context of this that this research work seeks to assess the role of higher education in Gombe South Zone of the State to uncover the rationale for their establishment, functionality, challenges and contributions to national development.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to assess the role of tertiary education as a vehicle for sustainable national development in Gombe South. Specifically, the study is geared towards achieving the following objectives:

- i) To find out the motive of siting College of Education in Billiri, College of Health Technology in Kaltungo and Federal Polytechnic also in Kaltungo in Gombe South.
- ii) To assess how these institutions are meeting the man-power need of the zone
- iii) To evaluate the socio-economic impact of these institutions on the developmental strides of the zone and the state at large.
- iv) To appraise whether these institutions are meeting their establishment core mandates and suggest ways of improving for optimal results and development of the zone.
- v) To determine the extent to which graduates of these institutions are contributing to the development of the zone.

Research Questions

The following critical research questions guided the study:

- i. What factors motivated the siting of the College of Education in Billiri, College of Health Tech. in Kaltungo and Federal Polytechnic in Kaltungo in the Southern Zone of Gombe State?
- ii. In what ways are these Tertiary Institutions serving the manpower expectation of the Zone?
- iii. In what ways have these institutions (College of Education, Billiri, Health Tech, Kaltungo and Federal-Poly) impacted the developmental strides of the zone?
- iv. Are these Institutions (College of Education, Billiri, Health Tech, Kaltungo and Federal-Poly) meeting the core mandates of their establishment?

Operational Definition of Terms:

Tertiary institutions- the education given to recipients after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses.

National development- all round growth and sustained wellbeing of the citizens

Vehicle- is the means for the attainment of national growth and development.

Methodology

The research design used for this research was a combination of case study and descriptive survey research design. Survey research according to Awotunde and Ogunduluwa (2004:11), is the collection of data from a larger population through sampling or representative of members of the studying groups that possess all the features of the larger population. This could be done through the use of a questionnaire, interview, observation and test. The main purpose is to describe the characteristics of the entire population. Survey research in studies provides information on facts, opinions, and attitudes of individuals on educational institutions, problems or objectives. Since this study is about tertiary institutions and the opinion of the people of the zone about the institutions, this design is therefore suitable for the study. The population of this study consist of people from the four (4) Local Government Areas in the Zone. Which are Balanga, Billiri, Kaltungo and Shongom.

Four hundred (400) respondents were selected for this study through a simple random sampling technique within the area. That is one hundred (100) respondents comprising students of the aforementioned institutions from each of the four (4) Local Government Areas to give us a total of 400. Generally, male and female respondents were involved. The selection of the respondents administered with the questionnaire for this study was through the simple random sampling technique. Pieces of paper were folded with yes/no and mixed together and the respondents picked one after the other. The respondents who picked yes were sampled with the questionnaire

while those who picked no were allowed to go. This simple method of selection of respondents was the best approach used in this study as it eliminated chance multiplicity and allowed a chance to determine only those who picked yes to be sampled and to remove the possibility of researcher bias and influence.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher's self-made and validated questionnaire. The use of the questionnaire became very expedient because of the large size of the respondents and the coverage of the study. The instrument was thoroughly subjected to content-face validity. This determines the reliability of the instrument and validity. To achieve content validity and reliability of the instrument a trial testing was conducted on NCE 3 students of College of Education, Billiri. This gave it the internal consistency reliability estimate determined by using the K-R formula with the internal consistency application at 0.86 which was seen best for the survey. Respondents ticked options that applied to them provided for in the questionnaire with Section-A and Section-B. Section A Captured Bio-data or the demographic information of the respondent while Section B was the Likert Scale proper with options from Strongly Agree –SA, Agree-A, Strongly Disagree-SD and Disagree-D. The descriptive statistical method of simple percentage was employed to analyze the data received from the research questionnaire for the study.

Research Question One: What do you think motivated the siting of C.O.E in Billiri, College of Health Tech in Kaltungo and Federal-Poly in Kaltungo all in Gombe South?

Table 1: Responses on the motive for siting College of Education in Billiri, College of Health Technology in Kaltungo and Federal Polytechnic in Kaltungo all in Gombe South Zone.

S/n	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	Resource availability	159 (39.75%)	141 (35.25%)	49 (12.25%)	51 (12.75%)	400 (100%)
2.	Government policy	181 (45.25%)	129 (32.25%)	43 (10.75%)	47 (11.75%)	400 (100%)
3.	For Local development	170 (42.5%)	149 (37.25%)	36 (9%)	45 (11.25%)	400 (100%)
4.	Population size of the zone	142 (35.5%)	138 (34.5%)	57 (14.25%)	63 (15.75%)	400 (100%)
5.	Educational need and demand	181 (45.25%)	134 (33.5%)	35 (8.75%)	50 (12.5%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey,2023

Responses in Table 1 shows that the siting of College of Education in Billiri, College of Health Technology in Kaltungo and Federal Polytechnic Kaltungo must have been motivated by the availability of financial, material and will at the coffers of government. About 75% of the respondents proved in that direction while only 25% responded against it. Similarly, 79.75% of respondents were positive that the siting of the institutions in the zone was for a local drive to develop the region. As most tertiary institutions can transform localities due to their value-ridden

approach. Again, 80.75% of our respondents responded positively that the siting of the institutions within the zone was to meet the educational demand of the region since education was a right of every citizen and that the population size of the zone was enough to attract such tertiary institutions.

Research Question Two: In what ways are these institutions (College of Education, Billiri, Health Tech, Kaltungo and Federal-Poly) serving the man-power expectations of the zone?

Table 2: Responses on the extent to which these schools are serving the man -power need of the zone

S/n	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	By Providing specialized educational training in various fields.	110 (27.5%)	120 (30%)	84 (21%)	86 (21.5%)	400 (100%)
2.	By Providing adequate training and workshops to local workforce.	100 (25%)	111 (27.75%)	89 (22.25%)	91 (22.75)	400 (100%)
3.	By Providing graduates to the workforce of the state.	169 (42.25%)	132 (33%)	47 (11.75%)	52 (13%)	400 (100%)
4.	By Providing skilled employees.	120 (30%)	131 (32.75%)	74 (18.5%)	75 (18.75%)	400 (100%)
5.	Through the Conduct of research to address local issues and provide solutions.	110 (27.5%)	110 (27.5%)	91 (22.75%)	89 (22.25%)	400 (100%)
6.	Through Professional development and collaborative projects.	114 (28.5%)	120 (30%)	82 (20.5%)	84 (21%)	400 (100%)
7.	Through Community services.	128 (32%)	132 (33%)	69 (17.25%)	71 (17.75%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey,2023

Responses in Table 2 show the man-power need of the zone is being gradually met because 75.25% of the respondents reacted positively. Only a fraction of 24.75% responded negative. This is very obvious since the 3 institutions in question are not of the same type and do not offer the same type of certificate or run similar programmes. The College of Education produces teachers while the College of Health deals with health-related programmes and lastly the Polytechnic is majorly centred on humanities with a National Diploma as its certificate. Similarly, 55% of respondents' and 65% are positive that the zone benefits from the research conducted by these institutions and other community services they render to address the problems of the zone.

Research Question Three: How have these institutions (College of Education, Billiri, Health Tech, Kaltungo and Federal-Poly) impacted the zone?

Table 3: Responses on the significance and impact of the Institutions in the Zone

S/n	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	In skills development.	134 (33.5%)	126 (31.5%)	75 (18.75%)	65 (16.25%)	400 (100%)
2.	In job creation.	201 (52.5%)	180 (45%)	09 (2.25%)	10 (2.5%)	400 (100%)
3.	Providing access to education.	156 (39%)	159 (39.75%)	40 (10%)	45 (11.25%)	400 (100%)
4.	By providing business opportunities.	165 (41.25%)	130 (32.5%)	49 (12.25%)	56 (14%)	400 (100%)
5.	In cultural exchange and engagements.	103 (25.75%)	101 (25.25%)	99 (24.75%)	97 (24.25%)	400 (100%)
6.	In improved infrastructure and local tourism	149 (37.25%)	141 (35.25%)	60 (15%)	50 (12.5%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey,2023

Responses in Table 3 show that these institutions are of immense value to the inhabitants of the zone. 97.5% of respondents are positive that the presence of these institutions in the zone does not only provide access to education which is the main focus but that it has created many job opportunities for the people of the zone, state and the nation at large. About 73.75% also supported that business opportunities have been enhanced within the zone especially around where the institutions have been located. This also attracts people and leads to cultural exchange and infrastructural growth of the zone as against what it was before the arrival of the institutions.

Research Question Four: Are these institutions (College of Education, Billiri, Health Tech, Kaltungo and Federal-Poly) meeting the core mandates of their establishment?

Table 4: Responses on the extent to which the Institutions are meeting their establishment mandates

S/n	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	Adequately.	110 (27.5%)	116 (29%)	81 (20.25%)	93 (23.25%)	400 (100%)
2.	Need financial support to achieve that.	115 (28.75%)	116 (29%)	90 (22.5%)	79 (19.75%)	400 (100%)
3.	The challenges of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are peculiar to them.	159 (39.75%)	141 (35.25%)	49 (12.25%)	51 (12.75%)	400 (100%)
4.	Not suited for the zone.	110 (27.5%)	104 (26%)	91 (22.75%)	95 (23.75%)	400 (100%)
5.	Infrastructural inadequacies in the zone hampering performance.	112 (28%)	119 (29.75%)	88 (22%)	81 (20.25%)	400 (100%)

Source: Field Survey,2023

Responses in Table 4 show that the institutions are meeting their establishment mandates 56.5% of the respondents argued so while 43.5% responded in the negative that not adequately. Similarly, 57.75% responded that the institutions need adequate funding from the government for them to perform optimally that the challenges of tertiary institutions in the country are peculiar to these and that some of the infrastructural inadequacies of the zone such as lack of constant power supply and water is a hindrance.

Discussions

The first objective was to uncover the reason for the siting of these 3 institutions in the zone. The study revealed that resource availability, government decisions, the interest in local development, the population size of the zone and the educational needs of the people of the zone necessitated the reason for the establishment of the institutions in the zone. This is in line with the government's desire to provide the people with the basic needs for sustenance, survival and development. Since education is an instrument of excellence for meaningful growth and development.

The second objective of the study examine how the manpower need of the zone is being met. The study revealed that the specialized educational training being provided by these institutions is meeting the man-power needs of not only the zone but also those of the state and the sub-region at large as some graduates of these institutions work outside the state. So, on the whole, these institutions are professionally developing the people of the zone and technically addressing some of their local problems through the research they conduct and the community services they render. The study also found out the schools have impacted the zone in many ways; aside from serving as easy access to education for the people of the zone, they have provided the residents of the zone with many job opportunities to some academic while others non-academic positions which were hard to come by before the arrival of the institutions. While business opportunities have been opened up for the people of the zone and many outsiders that are interested are serving as avenues for cultural exchanges and infrastructural appeals. Meanwhile, the institution needs to be supported with improved funding and other essential infrastructure that the zone lacks such as electricity, good road networks, pipe-borne water supply and guaranteed security and safety of the residents.

Conclusion

This study of an assessment of the role of tertiary education as a vehicle for sustainable national development in Gombe South empirically showed that tertiary education is a catalyst for the growth and development of a place. Apart from the main goals of contributing to national development through high-level relevant manpower training, inculcating proper values for the survival of individuals and society, developing the intellectual capability of the individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments and to give self-reliant skills, producing useful members of society encouraging scholarships and community service with the promotion of national unity and international understanding, they can also fast-track the growth and development of the places where they are sited. As it is the case with Gombe South where the study showed that the zone is better with the establishment of these institutions than without them.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is true that education is in the matrix of politics; the political class in most cases determine the siting and location of schools and colleges in the country. In recourse to the above mentioned fact, the paper therefore proffer the following

recommendations:

1. The siting and establishment of schools no matter the category should be determined by need and the availability of resources to support such a creation and the existing ones should be properly funded to operate at optimal levels before establishing new ones.
2. The establishment of tertiary institutions in the country should not be driven by politics but by dire necessity and availability of resources to back the creation.
3. The provision of education should be driven not by quantity but by a combination of quantity and quality. Because our progress as a people is hinged on the provision of quality education as John F. Kennedy captured it very succinctly by saying “Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education” That is, if an institution is not poised to train in excellence, it is no institution at all.
4. Since tertiary education is what the head is to the body and education is a vehicle for sustainable national development. It should be given to people or locations who deserve it the most not an instrument of oppression and domination.

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A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPACT OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BILLIRI L.G.A

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Abstract

The study explores the impact of juvenile delinquency on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Billiri, Gombe State. From the outlined objectives of the study, four (4) research questions were formulated to direct the study. The research adopted a descriptive survey design to study the population of four hundred and twenty-two (422) students from fourteen (14) government senior secondary schools in Billiri L.G.A, Gombe State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and ten (210) senior (SS1-3) students from seven secondary schools in the study area from whom data was collected and generalizations made on the entire population of the study. A self-developed structured questionnaire titled “The Impact of Juvenile Delinquency on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary Students Questionnaire” was used for the collection of data. A simple percentage system was used to answer the four research questions raised. The study revealed that there are various behavioural patterns displayed by juvenile senior students; such as cheating and examination malpractice, fighting, disobedience and threats to teachers. Other indulgences include drug abuse and illicit substances, late coming to school and truancy, inappropriate dressing and shabby appearance at school amongst many others. The study also showed that home, school and societal factors are responsible for juvenile delinquency since no child is born delinquent. It is an environmental factor and these factors are inimical to learning and academic achievements in schools. Although our study showed that the menace of juvenile delinquency could be dealt with. The paper recommends that prevention of such adverse behaviour is far better than its cure.

Keywords: Juvenile Delinquency, Impact, Academic, Achievement and Secondary School

Introduction

Every individual desire to grow and become a functional member of the society. In the process of growth, he gains empowerment through learning in school and society. Bola (2013), observes that stakeholders in the education industry such as the government, school proprietors, teachers and parents have a role since they contribute hugely to the educational development of these learners. To ensure the high academic achievement of students in school, factors that impede on learning must be rid of. According to Esuabana (2017), there has always been a disparity in the

performance of students in school. While some students perform or achieve high grades, others perform poorly to the extent that some of the students are withdrawn. However various reasons have been advanced for the disparate performance among learners; some include intelligence level, socioeconomic background, school environment, student attitudes, sex of student and the like.

In every society, there are sets of norms which members are expected to adhere to for the common good of all. However, not every member of the society abides by these norms. Members who are under age that flaunt such norms are referred to as delinquents. Bello (2006) defines juvenile delinquency to be abnormal behaviours exhibited by people below the age of 18 years. And this trend is becoming alarming today. Stakeholders in the education sector are disturbed about this problem which affects mostly children of school-going age. That is why the menace of juvenile delinquency is being discussed on television, radio and other social media platforms. This problem seems to thrive despite efforts by religious bodies, moral instructors, parents, teachers and others to eliminate it. Adamu (2001) opines that the number of students affected by juvenile delinquency in schools is estimated to have increased in Nigeria among students of school going age. But Igbimoria (2010) views it differently, to her, juveniles in Nigeria do not operate in gangs, but there are instances of assault and vandalism committed by small groups of juveniles such as looting, stealing attacks, and threats. Some of these juvenile acts are encouraged during political campaigns and other tense occasions. Some of these crimes committed by juveniles which is a bridge of the law if committed by adults will be treated as crimes and serious punishments applied. The youths of this country are over 40% of the entire population, (Jide 2000). Among them are young adolescents, a bulk of the rest are in various secondary schools across the country. Although, we may say that the problem of juveniles can be understood concerning the discovery of new body features and it is a separate stage of life with hormonal imbalances which indicates why misbehavior of juveniles is different from adult crime. Many juvenile acts are committed in school such as smoking, harassment of teachers, bullying, drug abuse, cultism and other anti-social activities. These behaviours are very harmful to learning and obtaining high academic achievement.

One will wonder what is the result of juvenile delinquency if such anti-social behaviours are not limited to a particular geographical area in the world. Most of these delinquent behaviours are very ubiquitous and universal in scope. Although these acts have been accepted to be detrimental to the growth and proper development of children because of the negative consequences they extend on learning. Billiri in Gombe State is not completely free from such crimes perpetrated by under age children mostly of school-going age. Many people assert that juvenile delinquency is a result of the failure of parents and teachers to perform their expected role on learners at home and in schools.

Society is also to be blamed for enhancing such consumables that lead to the exhibition of such tendencies and behaviour among minors. This problem poses a serious concern to all rational minds in society especially among those who believe in healthy living and in harmonious development of the youth. It becomes obvious and necessary to promote a culture of discipline by teachers, parents, counsellors and religious leaders. A close observation of what is happening in secondary schools will show that juvenile delinquency is a serious obstacle to students' academic achievement. Observation has shown that young people are at risk of juvenile delinquency because they often live in different circumstances such as parental alcoholism, poverty, family breakdown, abusive conditions in the home, death of parents, lack of means of sustenance and necessities and other inherent challenges.

However, juvenile delinquency of a student has a strong effect on his/her learning process. The

scope of juvenile delinquency is one of the predominant factors that impede on the academic progress of a student and must be properly tackled with all sense of seriousness. Although young adolescents who engage in juvenile acts are not born with it naturally, most studies show that the surroundings in which a child is brought up largely influence them such as lack of discipline at home and in school. This deep problem does not only affect the victim of the delinquent but also affects the delinquent, his family and the entire society as a whole. The majority of them are not able to predict the effects of their crimes by themselves, but they are badly affected by these crimes. The adverse effect of these crimes affects their academic welfare because they are forced to miss academic activities or to attend such under some influence which retard performance. Elliot (2013) argues that most of the crimes done by juveniles are largely a result of failure on the part of primary groups to offer the children appropriate social guidance such as role model with other forms of social control which will ensure other forms of socially acceptable habits which are under the expectation of the society. To this end, Unicef (2022) categorized delinquents as

1. Unsocialized delinquency- this category of delinquent is violent, malicious and lacking in remorse. They are psychopaths and mostly dangerous in their conduct. The distinguishing features of the psychopathic group are very dangerous and full of young criminals
2. Socialized delinquents- they are the most common group of delinquents they keep bad company but are less dangerous. Their simple desire is to conform to peer pressure or norms. They are mostly a frustrated group of young adolescents

A rapid attention to what is happening in secondary school today will reveal that juvenile delinquency is a monster, menace and an obstacle to learning among secondary school students. There is therefore the need to address these antisocial problems within our young people and give them the leverage they need to learn and achieve high academic progress in schools.

Definition of terms

For this study, the following terms are defined and used in this instance.

Juvenile delinquency: Juvenile delinquency is the habitual committing of offences or crimes by young people, especially those below the age of 18 years at which criminal prosecution is possible. It is the act of participating in unlawful behaviours as a minor or younger person who is below the statutory age of 18 years. Bartol (2011), explained juvenile delinquency to mean the involvement of a child in extreme antisocial behavior. Children are supposed to be a sign of innocence and loyalty; they are involved in behaviour that is detrimental to the well-being of the society. Walter (2007) opines that the term juvenile delinquency refers to a large variety of behaviour that young people and adolescents engage in that society does not approve of. This is explained further to mean the failure of young children to meet certain obligations expected of them by the society in which they live. This applies to the violation of the criminal code and the pursuit of certain patterns of behavior in children or young adolescents.

Academic performance

"Academic" means the result of school work. For example, test scores. When "achievement" is used as a noun, it refers to the results obtained in a career. Wang (2021) believed that academic achievement can be equated with academic performance. In a study of personality traits and academic achievement of secondary school students, academic achievement was measured using students' midterm and final grades in language, mathematics, and foreign language subjects.

Academic achievement entails the ability of a student to attain the objectives of the educational system as prescribed by an institution. It includes the performance of such a student regarding grades, test scores and meeting the requirements for completing a certain level of education. This is reflected in the knowledge acquired and the ability to perform specific tasks and application of concepts which have been learned.

Statement of the problem

Despite proactive measures being put in place by the government and its law enforcement agencies regarding the fight against drug proliferation and abuse, this social menace has continued to dig deep into the lives of Nigerian youths. This cuts across diverse communities and in recent times noticeable across different tribes, cultures, and religions and it exists irrespective of gender disparity.

One can safely assert that most juvenile delinquents abuse drugs and their actions are usually not unassociated with the same. The relationship between these two socially interconnected factors indicates that an increase in one can be the cause or a result of the other. It is in light of this factor that the rate and extent of the continuous increase in cases of juvenile delinquency and school drop-out require a community-based study, irrespective of the extensive research already carried out on the phenomenon on a general basis. This study seeks to investigate the remote causes of juvenile delinquency and the relationship it has on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Billiri Local Government Area.

Objective (s) of the study

The objective of this research work is to critically find out the impact of juvenile delinquency on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Billiri LGA. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. The various causes of juvenile delinquency in our schools
2. To identify the consequences of juvenile delinquency in our schools and society
3. To ascertain and assess the relationship between juvenile delinquency and the academic achievement of senior secondary school students
4. State the relationship between juvenile delinquency and learning
5. Proffer possible solutions to the problems identified

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are some of the vices associated with students in schools?
2. Are there some factors that trigger juvenile delinquency among secondary School students?
3. Is poor academic achievement by students in school associated with juvenile delinquency?
4. Are there proven ways by which juvenile delinquency could be curbed among senior secondary students in Billiri?

Methodology

The research design used for this study was a survey research design. Survey research is mainly concerned with the collection of data from a representative sample using a questionnaire, interview, observation and test. The intention is to describe the characteristics of the population (Awotunde and Ugodulunwa, 2004:34). In education mostly, this provides information on facts, opinions, and attitudes of individuals on problems or educational issues. Since the study is about the population of students in Billiri L.G.A, this design is very suitable and matches the study. The population of this study consisted of all senior secondary students in all the Government Secondary Schools in Billiri Local Government Area of Gombe State. There are fourteen (14) Government Secondary Schools in the Local Government Area with a population of four hundred and twenty-two (422) senior students for the 2022/2023 academic session.

Two hundred and ten (210) senior secondary students out of the four hundred and twenty-two

were selected from seven (7) randomly sampled schools in the study area, representing 50% of the total population of four hundred and twenty-two students including male and female students within the seven (7) schools. This is significant enough and justifiable for this study. The researcher used the following secondary schools from the study area as samples for the study: Government Science Secondary School Billiri, Government Day Secondary School, Ibinola, Government Day Secondary School Billiri, Government Day Secondary School Tal, Government Day Secondary School Todi, Government Day Secondary School Ayaba and Government Technical College Tanglang. The selection of these schools was done using a simple random sampling technique. The names of these schools were written on pieces of paper, the papers were folded and thoroughly mixed in a bowl after which the researcher picked them one after the other and were recorded. This procedure was equally adopted in the selection of the respondents for the study. This method of sampling gives every element in the population an equal chance of being included in the sample and it removes the possibility of a researcher's bias.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher's self-developed questionnaire, titled, "The Impact of Juvenile Delinquency on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Billir L.G.A." For the instrument to measure what it was intended to measure, it was subjected to content, face validity and reliability test. The respondents were presented with the option of ticking the statement that best expressed their opinion on the issues presented on the questionnaire. While the simple percentage was employed to analyze the data generated.

Results

Research Question 1. Are Juvenile Delinquent students associated with some negative vices in schools in Billiri L.G.A?

Table 1: Responses on the negative vices associated with juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students in Billiri L.G.A

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	SD %	D %	Total %
1.	Examination malpractice and cheating	71(34%)	61(29%)	38(18%)	40(19%)	210(100%)
2.	Fighting, disobedience and threats	68(32%)	64(30%)	39(18%)	39(18%)	210(100%)
3.	Drug abuse and bullying	81(39%)	64(30%)	32(15%)	33(16%)	210(100%)
4.	Late coming and truancy	63(30%)	64(30%)	29(14%)	54(26%)	210(100%)
5.	In-appropriate dressing and shabby appearance	91(43%)	60(29%)	40(19%)	19(9%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Responses in Table 1 show that there are certain vices displayed in schools by delinquent students. 63% responded that juvenile delinquent students are easily associated with examination malpractice and cheating because they are not always studious and lack concentration. While 62% of the respondents also responded positively that acts such as fighting, disobedience to teachers, parents and other members of the school authority and threats are common among juvenile delinquent students. Drug abuse and bullying of younger students are also some of the common vices exhibited by this category of students as over 69% of our respondents responded in that direction. On late coming to school, truancy, inappropriate dressing and shabby appearance over 70% of the respondents responded positively. The responses revealed that juvenile delinquency cannot be separated from vices that are inimical to learning and such outward displays are signals of who delinquent learners are in schools.

Research Question 2. What are some of the factors that are responsible for Juvenile Delinquency among senior secondary school students in Billiri?

Table 2: Responses on the factors that are responsible for juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students in Billiri L.G.A

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	SD %	D %	Total %
1.	Unchecked school and home environments.	72(34%)	59(28%)	40(19%)	37(18%)	210(100%)
2.	Peer pressure and negative influence	90(43%)	71(34%)	24(11%)	25(12%)	210(100%)
3.	Bad parenting, teacher's influence and moral decadence.	60(29%)	61(29%)	50(24%)	39(19%)	210(100%)
4.	Poor performance in school and lack of self-esteem among students.	55(26%)	52(25%)	61(29%)	42(20%)	210(100%)
5.	The pernicious influence of mass media and social media	59(28%)	57(27%)	50(24%)	44(21%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Responses in Table 2 show that juvenile delinquency is not an inborn trait. There are some factors that could trigger such unruly behavior in young people. In most cases, unchecked home and school environments are responsible for juvenile delinquency among students. 62% of the respondents responded positively while only 37% responded negatively. Some of the factors attributed to being responsible for juvenile delinquency include peer pressure, bad parenting, moral decadence in society and the harmful influence of Westernization and mass and social media on students. Most of the respondents responded positively in that direction.

Research Question 3. Juvenile delinquency is responsible for the poor achievement of most senior secondary School Students in schools in Billiri LGA.

Table 3: Responses on the relationship between juvenile delinquency and the academic achievement of senior secondary students in Billiri L.G.A

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	SD %	D %	Total %
1.	Drug abuse and consumption of illicit substances affect students' academic achievement in schools.	63(30%)	59(28%)	45(21%)	43(20%)	210(100%)
2.	Delinquent students suffer from a lack of concentration leading to poor performance	57(27%)	61(29%)	47(22%)	45(21%)	210(100%)
3.	Hard work, good character and a positive mindset enhance student performance.	70(33%)	59(28%)	31(15%)	50(24%)	210(100%)
4.	Student disposition, environment and parent's genetic influence determine performance in school	91(43%)	62(30%)	27(13%)	30(14%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Responses in Table 3 show although teaching and learning involve the teacher being ready while the learners are also expected to be ready for it to be effective. Where the teacher is very ready and determined to teach but if the student is not in a stable mental or behavioural state of mind to learn, learning may never take place. 58% of the respondents responded positively that since most juvenile delinquent students are associated with vice or the other such as taking drugs and other illicit substances such acts affect their academic performance negatively. This is so because delinquent students lack concentration in school which is key to effective learning leading to high academic achievement. This shows that students who are not into such delinquent acts stand a better chance of achieving high in school than those who are delinquents. 73% of the respondents revealed that for high academic achievement, students must exhibit concentration, hard work, good character, a positive mindset and be in the right environment. That is, hard work favourable environment with a good combination of parents' genetic makeup and high academic achievement are possible.

Research Question 4. Are there ways of preventing juvenile delinquency among Senior Secondary School Students in Billiri?

Table 4: Responses on whether there are ways of curbing juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students in Billiri L.G.A

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	SD %	D %	Total %
1.	School and home counselling by teachers and parents.	65(31%)	68(32%)	39(19%)	37(18%)	210(100%)
2	Suspension, solitary confinement and expulsion of students.	55(26%)	54(26%)	51(24%)	50(24%)	210(100%)
3.	Discipline or punishment of recalcitrant students.	83(40%)	69(33%)	30(14%)	28(13%)	210(100%)
4	Serious engagement of students in Extracurricular activities.	56(27%)	51(24%)	51(24%)	52(25%)	210(100%)
5	Involvement of students in school decision-making processes	52(25%)	51(24%)	56(27%)	51(24%)	210(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Responses in Table 4 show that it is possible to curb juvenile delinquency or bring it down to the barest minimum. 63% of the respondents revealed that school and home counselling could be an effective way of dealing with students who have exhibited such negative tendencies. This implies that when such negative behaviours are noticed, teachers and parents must come together to deal with it. Other disciplinary measures should also be applied. 52% of the respondents agreed with such measures. Teachers and parents are encouraged to always keep an eye on their students and wards, where bad behaviours are noticed, they should be immediately tackled before it is allowed to fester and become intractable. 51% of respondents argued that when students are kept busy both at home and in school, it helps them to avoid peer pressure which leads to negative influence culminating in juvenile delinquency.

Discussion

The first objective was to look at the various manifestations of juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students in Billiri L.G.A, Gombe State. The study revealed that juvenile

delinquency is a big problem for learning in schools which manifests in the area of cheating and examination malpractice, fighting and bullying of junior students, disobedience and threats to teachers, drug abuse among students, truancy and late coming to school, inappropriate dressing and shabby appearance by students. All these are harmful to the school environment. This is consistent with Bartol (2011) who said juvenile delinquent students has a negative influence on other students in school.

The second objective was to look at some of the factors responsible for juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students in Billiri L.G.A in Gombe State. The study revealed that unchecked home and school environments, peer pressure, bad parenting, moral decadence in society, and pernicious influence of westernization with social and mass media are all factors that if allowed could lead to juvenile delinquency among senior secondary students. Therefore, parents are to watch out for such factors and ensure that they eradicate them from their homes and encourage teachers to do the same in school immediately after such behavioural anomalies are noticed.

The third objective of the study examined the relationship between juvenile delinquency and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Billiri L.G.A of Gombe State. The study showed that there is a serious relationship between juvenile delinquency and the academic achievement of senior secondary students because no matter how intelligent a student is in school, if such a student is involved in acts that are inimical to learning the student may not achieve anything significant. Behavioural problems such as drug abuse and consumption of illicit substances, truancy and lack of respect, lack of focus and concentration do not aid learning.

The fourth objective of the study was to find out if there are ways to curb the menace of juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students. The study revealed that there are some ways of dealing with delinquent students with the aim of assisting them to get over such behavioural tendencies such as school and home counselling setups, discipline and corporal punishment of recalcitrant students by teachers and parents, homework and assignments to make them busy, engagement in extra-curricular activities of their choice and also involving students in decision-making processes.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of juvenile delinquency among senior secondary students in Billiri L.G.A of Gombe State. From the empirical pieces of evidence revealed, it is right to conclude that juvenile delinquency harms the academic achievement of students. Learning is a serious business that requires the holistic mindset of the learner. Any act or vice that derails the attention of the student and eats into his/her studious time does not aid in high academic achievement and so it should be dealt with appropriately for effective learning. Irrespective of how a student is gifted and book tough, the need for hard work, focus diligence, and dedication to learning cannot be over-emphasized for high academic success. For an effective fight against this social menace, there should be an extensive all-encompassing commitment from stakeholders and all possible measures must be explored to tackle and forestall further escalation of juvenile delinquency. Adequate awareness must be created so that all stakeholders will become aware of the various contributions they can make in creating a delinquent-free generation for the youths and the entire society.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, there is a need for a re-examination of our societal values by all stakeholders. Parents, teachers, the school system and the community at large all have distinct but interrelated roles to play in curbing socially unacceptable behaviours in young adults.

Parents should ensure that they leave no traces of defiant behaviours before their children. Children are very susceptible to the impact of such adverse behavior. The behaviours of children in most cases are the result of what their parents exhibit. There should be a strict behavior prism at home and as they relate with their peers. Adverse influences and behaviours are inimical to learning should be immediately dealt with before it is allowed to fester. They can also help in developing a strong positive self-concept in their children as this might help in serving as a social-psychological vaccination against delinquency. Parents should also create some sense of inner containment in their children, this will help protect them against peer pressures and possible influences outside the home environment.

Next to parental influence is the influence teachers have over the behaviours of their students. Young adults spend most of their time outside the home in school with their teachers. Teachers are therefore encouraged to be trained and developed intensively so as to present themselves as effective role models to their students. Teachers can also report unruly behaviours noticed in their students for early intervention. Such can help in preventing further degeneration of the behavioural patterns identified.

The school system should create early-age targeted interventions that can prevent the exposure of students to delinquent behaviours and ensure that counselling services are made available and constantly updated to meet up with prevailing situations. Students can be engaged in interesting and various school programs, such will keep them occupied with less free time to derail unwanted practices.

The community at large can also be involved by setting and observing strictly acceptable patterns of behavior in young adults. Where possible security enforcement can be used to provide corrective measures, which are age appropriate. As such will create a conducive environment for effective education of these young adults.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS AND COMPLIANCE TO SCHOOL RULES IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GOMBE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, GOMBE STATE

by

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Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse among students and compliance with school rules in senior secondary schools in Gombe LGA. A correlational research design was used. 1307 teachers participated in the study. 306 teachers constitute the sample for the study. A self-developed questionnaire titled "Teacher's Perception on Drug Abuse and Compliance to School Rules Among Students (TPDACSRAS)" was used to collect data. The instrument was validated and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Data was analysed using PPMC and t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse and compliance with school rules among students ($r=.290$; $p=.000$); there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse among students ($t=.184$; $p=.854$) and there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teacher on compliance to school rules among students ($t=.569$; $p=.570$). It was recommended that there should be a school-wide approach in dealing with drug abuse whereby students, teachers and non-teaching staff should be involved to curb drug abuse among students in schools.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception, Drug Abuse, School Rules, Students and Relationship

Introduction

Drug abuse is one of the most critical problems facing the world today, which has a ripple effect on Nigeria because no nation is an island. Drugs can affect student's concentration and interest in school and extracurricular activities (Okoye & Adebisi, 2015). This increased absenteeism and dropouts. Declining grades are problems associated with teenage and adolescent substance abuse, low level of commitment to education and higher truancy rates appear to be related to drug abuse (Okon, Ajah, & Ekarika, 2022). Drug addiction is a wildfire that will consume us if left unchecked. Some of these substances consumed include alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, nonmedical use of prescription medication, tramadol, diazepam, heroin, codeine among others. However, a number of researchers and authors showed that, drugs addicts are affected through various ways depending on the type of drugs one uses (Sadik, 2018). For example, marijuana is

said to be the cause of relaxation, intensifies perception of stimuli, increases self-confidence, a sense of enhanced awareness and creativity, impairs motor coordination, reduce short term memory and distort judgments Obiamaka (2009).

Therefore, when such situation reaches students, they might not be able to remember some things taught in the classes such as mathematical facts, different theories or any other material needs not to be decoded in the classroom setting. (Manbe, 2008). Apart from marijuana, cocaine is another type of drug abuse which is said to be a stimulant whereby it increases feelings of stamina, enhances mental capabilities, excitability and occasional hallucination. Cocaine has also been reported to have side impacts on individuals such as depression and this is true due to the fact that, a depressed learner might never be actively responding in class as a result, his or her class performance may be low academically (Okon, Ajah & Ekarika, 2022). Tobacco and alcohol are also used almost universally by people throughout the world. Tobacco is rewarding to for their manufacturing company but is associated with danger such as cancer of the lung, coronary heart diseases which lead to premature death, the federal government made it compulsory that every advertisement on any branch of cigarette must carry warning e.g. "cigarette is dangerous to health and smokers are liable to die young". Alcohol is a substance that man has ingested in other to get special bodily sensation many centuries ago and is deeply embedded in diverse cultures of the world. In Nigeria, alcohol has contributed immensely to various road accidents, crime and poor academic performance among teenagers (Samuel, George, Ogbu, Agba & Yisa, 2020).

Moreover, recent surveys from the World Health Organization estimate that in 2018, over 155 to 250 million people, or 3.5% to 5.7% of the world's population aged 15-64, used other psychoactive substances, such as cannabis, amphetamines, cocaine, opioids, and non-prescribed psychoactive prescription medication. Globally, cannabis is the most commonly used Alcohol and drug abuse are a major public health problem in our secondary schools (Manbe, 2008). This makes the students not comply with the school's rules and regulations. School compliance is a variable that could reveal situations about the student populace and affect student outcomes Compliance to school rules and regulations is made not to be broken. Rules are made for the safety and better welfare of the students in school. Another is to promote good behavior among students and to maintain the good image of the school. Parents send their children to school in order for them to learn not only academic values but also moral values. Implementing school rules will help the students mould their character and values expected from them by other people. There are certain factors why nowadays, students tend not to follow rules disseminated by the school despite the punishments they will have to face for doing such actions. One such factor is drug abuse (Samuel, George, Ogbu, Agba & Yisa, 2020).

Evidence suggests that teachers' perceptions are the most important school based influence on student academic achievement and that they account for up to 30% of the variance in student achievement (Hattie, 2012). Behaviour, specifically teacher behaviour, is in turn influenced by students, social, physical environment and policy level factors that impact the decisions made by the teacher with respect to the pedagogical approach adopted. The perception of teachers in education will help to apply key knowledge and skills within theoretical and practical contexts. Finding what constitutes the 'optimal methodology' (Hattie, 2012) is a constant challenge for teachers of senior secondary perception if they are to influence student academic achievement. Teacher perception and effectiveness have been strongly linked to student achievement and, as one aspect of teacher quality, can be measured by student achievement in standardized tests. It is commonly accepted that more effective teachers with good perceptions towards their students have a greater impact on positive student outcomes than less effective teachers (Hattie, 2012).

Drug abuse has become a challenging problem to the lives and success of the youth as it can be

evident not only as a source of sorrow to the parents, guardians, and relatives but it is a big challenge to the nation wholly because a drug abusive youth or student cannot be very productive or efficient. Therefore, stakeholders and members of the public need to put their hands together to urgently and adequately address this menace for the good of our children and for the wellbeing of our society.

Statement of the Problem

Problems of drug abuse and lack of good teachers' perception seem to be very growing concern globally as well as in our contextual setting among youth in secondary schools. The research was born in mine by the growing rate of drug abuse and unethical conduct by most adolescents in secondary schools. Based on personal experience, the researcher had on several occasions witnessed a display of aggression by some suspected drug users among students to their contemporaries, and persistent show of lackadaisical attitude to their studies.

It was reported by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Gombe State command that most drugs that youths, particularly students abuse persistently in the state are Indian hemp, cigarette and inhaler known as 'solution and that no fewer than 214 youths were suspects of drug abuse between January and July, 2023 and that most of those youth are secondary school students. Some pieces of evidence have shown that the consumption of drugs by school going youth do not only decreases their academic performance but also lowers their Intelligence Quotient and makes them vulnerable to crime. Furthermore, drug abuse exposes them to health risks among other myriad problems. Also, students nowadays are not abiding by the school's rules and regulations, they formed a habit of violating or disobeying all the rules and regulations which are governing their conduct in school settings, these violation of rules includes: drug abuse, disrespecting their teachers, fighting with their colleagues, late coming and running before the official closing time, all these are problems that prompted the researcher to carry out this research work.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between teachers' perception, drug abuse and compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe local government area. Specifically, the research will determine the:

1. determine the relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse and compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.
2. determine the difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.
3. determine the difference in the perception of male and female teachers on compliance to school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing at 0.05 level of significance:

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse and compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.
2. H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.
3. H_{03} : There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.

Literature Review

Falco (1988) as cited by Sambo (2008) states that "chronic use of substances can cause serious, sometimes irreversible damage to adolescent's physical and psychological development; also the use of drugs could be beneficial or harmful depending on the mode of use. A drug refers to a

substance that could bring about a change in the biological function through its chemical actions (Okoye, 2001). It is also considered as a substance that modifies perceptions, cognition, mood, behaviour and general body functions (Balogun, 2006). They could thus, be considered as chemical modifiers of the living tissues that could bring about physiological and behavioural changes (Nnachi, 2007). Drug abuse is a major public health problem all over the world (UNODC) (2005). The use and abuse of drugs by adolescents have become one of the most disturbing health-related phenomena in Nigeria and other parts of the world (NDLEA; 1997). Several school-going adolescents experience mental health programmes, either temporarily or for a long period of time. Some become insane, maladjusted to school situations and eventually drop out of school. Students, especially those in secondary school tend to see the drug user as one who is tough, bold and strong. Many youngsters have been known to use drugs at the instance of peers, elders or siblings. Students who usually feel inadequate have been known to use drugs to achieve social acceptance. Esen (1979) stated that Nigerian secondary school adolescents under the influence of Indian hemp shed all inhibitions and produce behaviour that is inconsistent with school discipline.

He went further to observe that the increasing incidence of drug abuse among secondary school students is a contributory factor in the ugly confrontation between school administration and students. Students, especially those in secondary school tend to see the drug user as one who is tough, bold and strong. Many youngsters have been known to use drugs at the instance of peers, elders or siblings. Students who usually feel inadequate have been known to use drugs to achieve social acceptance. Esen (1979) stated that Nigerian secondary school adolescents under the influence of Indian hemp shed all inhibitions and produce behaviour that is inconsistent with school discipline. He went further to observe that the increasing incidence of drug abuse among secondary school students is a contributory factor in the ugly confrontation between school administration and students.

Fayombo and Aremu (2000) in their research on the effect of drug abuse on the educational performance of some adolescent drug abusers in Ibadan found that the misuse of marijuana had reached an epidemic level in the present Nigeria society and that drug abuse could lead to reduce academic achievement or even halt one's entire academic process. Adesina, (1975); Ekpo, (1981); and Orubu, (1983) in their studies dwelled extensively on reasons students use drugs including success in examination, social acceptance and initiation of peers.

Theories of drug abuse indicate that some people truly depend on certain drugs for their survival due to several factors. The major emphasis of the theories is that people have their reasons for depending on one type of drug or the other. Such reasons, according to Eze and Omeje (1999) are explained by the following theories. Personality theory of drug abuse, learning theory of drug abuse, biological theory of drug abuse and socio-cultural theories (a) Personality Theories of Drug Abuse: The main emphasis of the theories is that there are certain traits or characteristics in the individuals that abuse drugs. Such personality characteristics, according to Eze and Omeje (1999) are inability to delay gratification, low tolerance for frustration, poor impulse control, high emotional dependence on other people, poor coping ability and low self-esteem. Individuals with these personality characteristics find it difficult to abstain from drug abuse. (b) Learning Theory of Drug Abuse: It maintains that dependence or abuse of drugs occurs as a result of learning. The learning could be by means of conditioning, instrumental learning or social learning. (c) Biological Theory of Drug Abuse: The theory maintains that drug abuse is determined by the individual biological or genetic factors which make them vulnerable to drug addiction (d) Socio-cultural Theories of Drug Dependence/Abuse: The theories maintain that abuse is determined by socio-cultural values of the people.

Drug abuse leads students to have behavioural problems such as fatigue, stress, anxiety, bullying and even committing murder Maithya, (2009). Students under the influence of drugs could even beat up their teachers, rape them or kill their colleagues Kyalo and Mbugua, (2011). In secondary schools, students nowadays form a habit of taking too many drugs, that is over dose, taking too many sleepy drugs both at home and at school. This hinders them from improving their academic performance, Wanja (2010).

Declining grades, absenteeism from school and other activities, and increased potential for dropping out of school are problems associated with adolescent substance abuse. A study by Horwood, Fergusson, Hayatbakhsh, Najman and Coffey (2010) on cannabis use and educational achievement; findings from three Australasian cohort studies found that low levels of commitment to education and higher truancy rates appear to be related to drug abuse among students. Again drug abuse affects the brain; this results in a major decline in the functions carried out by the brain.

Drugs affect the students' concentration span, which is drastically reduced and boredom sets in much faster than for nondrug and substance abusers. The students will lose concentration in school work including extra-curricular activities. Most of the psychoactive drugs affect the decision-making process of the students; creative thinking and the development of the necessary life and social skills are stunted. They also interfere with the awareness of an individual's unique potential and interest thus affecting their career development Kikuvu, (2009) cognitive and behavioral problems experienced by drug-using youths may interfere with their academic performance and also present obstacles to learning for their classmates United Nations, (2013). Drug abuse is associated with crime maintenance of an orderly and safe school atmosphere conducive to learning. It leads to the destruction of school property and classroom disorder.

Teenage is an interesting period in the life of individuals. It is the time in which the spirit of adventure and youthful exuberance seems to take possession of people propelling them to actions sometimes with dire consequences. There are also complaints about the recalcitrant nature which pervades children at this age: their unwillingness to follow instructions, their stubbornness and seeming difficulty in obeying orders or cooperating with authority. Children at this age become very active, inquisitive, and at times rebellious. This also coincides with the time many children transition from junior to senior secondary education. This time in the life of children can be difficult and distracting, because of the tendency to experiment with what they had read in books, discussed with their peers, watched in movies, and even the little information they gained from eavesdropping on adult conversations (Hatter, 2016).

They can, at this age, develop a serious sense of self-admiration, adoration and feeling that they are old enough to take care of themselves. Being likely to be between the ages of 14 and 17 years, they are minors who demand that their environment and activities be well monitored and controlled for proper guidance so that they may develop the right attitudes and behavior in life. Part of the control mechanism recommended for schools that train these children is the introduction of school rules and regulations. School rules and regulations, according to wordpress.com (2013) are general standards of conduct formulated for reasons of discipline in schools. Formulating rules and regulations is one thing, but making students obey and become compliant with them is another issue. As the saying goes, you can take a cow to the river, but you cannot force it to drink the water. You can only find a way of persuading it to. While the relevant section of the Nigerian constitution has empowered principals and school authorities to make rules and regulations for the reason of students' welfare and education, the problem of persuading them to obey these rules has remained. The purpose of this research work therefore is to explore the variables associated with school rules and regulations and students' compliance with them

(Hatter, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

This study hinges on two theories of substance abuse; the comprehensive theory of substance abuse prevention which was proposed by Alan Markwood (2011) and the Assertive Discipline Model by Lee and Marlene Canter (2001).

The comprehensive theory of substance abuse prevention posits that the development of substance abuse lies in two distinct main routes of risk: profoundly challenged children and socially influenced teens. The theory notes that those children below the age of 10 who begin regular use of alcohol or other drugs are most likely to have faced profound social developmental challenges in their early years. The theory postulates that preventing substance use due to profound childhood challenges is best done by preventing or intervening in the causes of the challenges. Human service systems that can provide appropriate help to young parents or soon-to-be parents are vital to prevent or intervene in situations that pose a threat to children. Equally, preventing teen substance use due to social influences involves preventing or intervening in either the messages of influence or substance availability. Parents and teachers are therefore advised to communicate disapproval of youth substance use, establish family/school rules against it, and attempt to keep teens out of situations in which peer drug use will occur or is occurring (Charles and Mutsotso, 2019).

The Assertive Discipline model relies on the assumption that teachers have the right to teach in an orderly classroom with the expectation of obedience by students (Baron, 1992). However, students have the right to learn in a conducive and orderly classroom if they are to be taught effectively (Charles, 2008) as cited in Charles and Mutsotso (2019). Moreover, the teachers deserve support from parents and administrators as they work to help students to learn (Wolfgang, 2005). The theory postulates that teachers who are effective have the ability to interact with their students, they clearly express their expectations and are fully prepared to back up their words with predictable actions (Baron 1992). This theory stresses that in order to make compliance with school rules effectively; teachers must in their lessons teach students about substance abuse and its effects.

Research Methodology

This study employed the use of a correlational research design. A sample of 306 (184 males and 122 females) were randomly selected from the total of 1307 (935 males and 372 Females) senior secondary school teachers in Gombe local government area, Gombe state. Three research hypotheses were formulated for testing at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument used to collect data was a researcher's developed questionnaire titled "Teacher's Perception on Drug Abuse and Compliance to School Rules Among Students (TPDACSRAS)". The instrument is a 20-item with a four-likert scale response format which will solicit information from the respondents on four-likert scale format as follows; Strongly agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly disagree (1). The maximum obtainable score is $4 \times 20 = 80$ and the minimum obtainable score is $1 \times 20 = 20$. The instrument was validated by experts in the College of Education (COE) Billiri which ensured both face and content validity. To ensure reliability, a Kuder Richardson (KR 22) was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained and the instrument was adjudged reliable for the study. Data was analysed using Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) and an independent sample t-test. Hypotheses 1 was tested using Pearson product moment correlation while Hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested using independent sample t-test all at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results are presented below

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception on drug abuse and compliance to school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.

Table 1: Correlational Analysis Between Teachers' Perception on Drug Abuse and Compliance with School Rules

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	R-cal	P	Decision
Teacher's Perception of Drug Abuse	306	42.50	6.073	.290	.000	Rejected
Compliance to School Rules	306	41.84	6.577			

The result from Table 1 revealed a significant relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse and compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA ($r = .290$; $p = .000$). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perception on drug abuse and compliance to school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA could not be retained. Hence, there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse and compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA. This implies that teachers in senior secondary schools in Gombe LGA perceived that drug abuse among students contributes to their level of compliance with school rules and regulations.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.

Table 2: Independent Sample T-test on Difference in the Perception of Male and Female Teachers on Drug Abuse.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std.	Df	T	P	Decision
Teachers' Perception of Drug Abuse	Male	184	42.55	6.054	304	.184	.854	Accepted
	Female	122	42.42	6.125				

Source: Field Work

Results from Table 2 showed a non-significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse ($t = .184$; $p = .854$). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA is retained. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA. This implies that male and female senior secondary school teachers in Gombe LGA do not differ in their perceptions of drug abuse among students.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA.

Table 3: Independent Sample T-test on Difference in the Perception of Male and Female Teachers on Compliance to School Rules.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std.	Df	T	P	Decision
Teachers' Perception of Compliance to School Rules	Male	184	42.01	6.468	304	.569	.570	Accepted
	Female	122	41.57	6.755				

Source: Field Work

Results from Table 3 showed a non-significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on compliance to school rules ($t = .569$; $p = .570$). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on compliance to school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA is retained. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe LGA. This implies that male and female senior secondary school teachers in Gombe LGA do not significantly differ in their perceptions of compliance with school rules among students.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of drug abuse and compliance with school rules among senior secondary school students in Gombe Local Government Area, Gombe State. This finding implies that teachers in senior secondary schools in Gombe LGA perceived that drug abuse among students contributes to their level of compliance with school rules and regulations. This finding aligns with the earlier findings of Samuel, George, Ogbu, Agaba and Yisa (2020) who investigated opinions of students and teachers on drug abuse among senior secondary schools in Zaria education zone, Kaduna State, Nigeria reported that students who abuse drugs lack discipline and their compliance to school rules and regulations is low. This is true because students who mostly abuse drugs lack discipline and therefore do not comply with the school rules and regulations. Based on the result, teachers believe that drug abuse among students causes them not to concentrate in school thereby affecting their academics. The National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism (2005) study in the United States of America, reported that some students experience difficulty in academics due to drug use. Such difficulties include earning low grades, doing poorly on tests, missing class and falling behind in academic performance. Even students who do not use drugs may suffer academically as a result of their peers taking drugs. This influence is called the secondary influence of drugs and includes taking care of friends on drugs and being victims of assault which affect the school work of students; who do not take drugs. Drug use undermines the academic mission of schools. Drug use and its influence on students' performance lead to a decline in the overall academic performance of a school as a result, schools may face declining retention rates and poor reputations. Schools with a reputation for "drug use" may attract students who engage in high-risk behaviours and may discourage students from looking for good academic schools. The finding of this study agrees also with the findings of Murigi (2020), Yusuf, Peter and Adam (2023), Samuel, George, Ogbu, Agba and Yisa (2020) and Adamu (2019) who all reported similar findings in their studies.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that senior secondary school teachers perceived drug abuse among students to be related to the level of indiscipline and non-compliance to school rules and regulations. Drug abuse in schools is increasingly becoming a big concern that calls for immediate attention. It is one of the main causes of indiscipline and violence in schools and has to some extent led to serious physical assault and school fires. In fact, the advent of modern technologies has fueled sexual harassment, particularly cases of pornography which are now commonplace. Due to drug abuse, a decline in academic performance by students is viewed as a consequence. This is because of the multiplier effect and vicious cycle of drug abuse. There is an urgent need to address this problem of drug abuse among students in schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper the following recommendations are therefore made;

1. There should be a school-wide approach in dealing with drug abuse whereby students, teachers and non-teaching staff should be involved to curb drug abuse among students in

- schools.
2. The school principals should strengthen guidance and counselling departments so that they can provide quality services to the students who are addicted and those affected by drug abuse.
 3. School principals should ensure close supervision of students perceived to be abusing drugs based on specific indicators for instance; sneaking out of school, absenteeism, failure to do class assignments, and general rudeness among others that would help improve academic performance.

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THE EFFECTS OF PICTURE BOOKS ON READING ABILITIES OF PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper made an overview of the effects of picture books on teaching reading. The research design for the study was a quasi-experimental research type. Specifically, the design is a pre-test post-test controlled group designed with a sample of 20 pupils each from both experimental and control groups. T-test for an independent sample was used to analyze the data. Three research questions were raised. Also, three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significance level; the decision taken was that no hypotheses were accepted against the alternative hypotheses. The study found that there was a significant difference in the post-test mean scores of pupils in the experimental group as compared to the control group. The study recommended that teachers should employ the use of picture books to teach reading. Therefore it has become imperative for stakeholders in educational sectors including parents to put more effort into providing relevant picture books in schools in order to enhance reading, and consequently improve the performance of pupils in all subjects.

Keywords: Stakeholder, Picture, School, Post-Test, Education, Pupils,

Introduction

Dyslexia is a common characteristic of pupils with reading problems, a specific problem that is neurobiological in origin. A child with dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. Chadha (2015) stated that these difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities, and the provision of effective classroom instructions. In other words, dyslexia may be referred to as a reading disability, it occurs when an individual has significant difficulty with speed and accuracy of word decoding, comprehension of text and spelling. Stoke (2007) stated that dyslexia primarily affects the ability

to learn to read and spell, and sometimes affects mathematics ability. The author further stated that dyslexia is not related to general intelligence. It comes from difficulty in dealing with the sounds of words. The author stressed that people with dyslexia often find it hard to remember a list of things they have heard or to remember names or facts quickly, although they often have strength in reasoning, visual and creative fields. In another concept, The International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2002) cited in Pilgrim (2017) Defined dyslexia as a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. The authors further stressed that these difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to cognitive abilities and the provision of effective class room instructions. Heward, Sheila and Konrad (2019) stated that about 90% of all children identified as having dyslexia, are referred for special needs education because of reading problems. This is to say, that children who have not learned to read by first grade tend to fall farther behind their peers, not only in reading but in general academic achievement as well.

Reading is more than just seeing words clearly, calling or pronouncing printed words. Kwalzoom (2017) defined reading as understanding the thoughts, and ideas of another person, about entering different imaginary and real words created by the author. Adewole (2001) stated that reading is a crucial form of communication through which we get most of the information required in teaching and learning situations and everyday life.

The skills acquired in reading can promote the acquisition of language skills like listening, speaking and writing. The fact is that some primary school pupils find it difficult to read and understand, despite the fact that reading is indispensable. Mangal (2012) stated that some of the notable problems faced by children with dyslexia may be identified as follows:

- i. They may exhibit severe reading disabilities for example, difficulty in recognizing letters, learning the names of letters and breaking words down into the sound of letters and letter combinations (phonemes).
- ii. The vast majority of children with dyslexia have phonological core deficits experiencing great difficulty in word reading skills.
- iii. They may experience difficulties with regard to spelling and writing.

In seeking treatment for children with dyslexia, it should be remembered that learning disabilities caused on account of dyslexia vary widely in their nature and occurrence, and it has many remedies for the different cases of dyslexia, so it is advisable to use many techniques for teaching children with the problem.

In view of these problems, the researchers place much emphasis on the use of picture books with our children during infancy and continue as they get older. Because learning to read pictures is an important literacy skill and using picture books for children can play an important part in the process of developing visual literacy.

Statement of the problem

There are indications of serious reading problems at all levels of our education system. These problems manifest themselves in the pupil's inability to read and comprehend what was read, recall or even effectively use materials read to tackle examination and another daily tasks. In other words, most teachers are not acquainted with the best strategies for teaching reading especially to beginners. Perhaps the teacher does not teach reading with pictures.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine the effects of picture books on the reading performance of pupils with dyslexia in the Gombe metropolis of Gombe the objectives of the study are to:

1. Establish how effective the use of picture books influences word recognition skills for children with dyslexia;
2. Determine the level of reading ability of pupils taught using picture books in reading fluency ability;
3. Find out the level of reading comprehension ability of pupils taught with picture books;
4. Determine the extent to which pupils show interest in learning to read using picture books.

Research Questions

For this study to be guided properly, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent do picture books influence word recognition of primary three pupils with dyslexia after intervention in the Gombe metropolis?
2. To what extent will picture books influence the reading fluency of primary three pupils with dyslexia after intervention in the Gombe metropolis?
3. To what extent will the use of picture books improve reading comprehension scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia after intervention in the Gombe metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated, thus:

1. There is no significant difference between the pretest word recognition mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the pretest reading fluency mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups.
3. There is no significant difference between the pretest reading comprehension mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups.

Methodology

The research design for this study is the quasi-experimental research type. Specifically, the design is a pre-test post-test controlled group designed was used. This has to do with making a change in the value of the variables, referred to as dependent and independent variables, and observing the effect of that change. (Awotunde & Ugodulunwa, 2004). The design therefore features two groups, experimental and control groups. Both experimental and control group were administered a pretest (O_1 and O_3) before the commencement of the treatment. In the process only the experimental group was exposed to treatment (X) and, that was the use of picture books to read in order to establish the effect of the intervention on the participant's reading performance. The control group received no treatment (without the use of a picture book) and was post-tested (O_4). The experimental design is chosen because it aims at seeing the effect of these variables.

Moreover, In this study, the pre-test provided baseline information regarding participant's reading performance. In addition, the outcome of the pre-test was used in making a comparison with the post-test to see how effective or otherwise the treatment had been.

The population of this study was made up of pupils with dyslexia in primary three (3) from two public primary schools in Gombe metropolis (Hassan Central Model Primary School and Tudun Wada Primary School). The choice of these public schools was because of their homogeneity. In other words, such schools share similar characteristics in terms of requirements for admission of pupils. All the pupils in the two schools who cannot read constituted the population. From the population, the researcher used a Reading Ability Test Instrument (RATI) to select pupils with reading problems (Dyslexia). From the outcome of the test, the researcher then picked (10) pupils

who could not read up to 75% of the words from each of the schools totalling twenty (20) pupils.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two instruments were used for collection of data in this study. The instruments are: Words recognition test of 100 high frequency words (WRTHFW) which was adopted from Umolu and Mallum (1985). The researcher made the 100 flash cards of high frequency words according to their sequence in which the children were asked to identify from the first to the last words as they were arranged by the use of the flashcards which were bold enough for easy identification.

The choice of this (100 HFW) instrument was necessitated by the fact that the words are mostly encountered during reading process, whereas; recognizing these words laid good ground for improved reading performance of children with dyslexia. These instruments were administered to all participants in this study.

Researcher-made Picture Book Test is a researcher-made test instrument for assessing the reading performance of children with dyslexia in primary 3. The picture books were constructed by the researcher, taking into consideration the level of the children with dyslexia. The book comprised four (4) sections and each section carried pictures of objects selected from the (100 HFW) for the purpose of data collection and analysis.

Section (1); **sight word recognition** of 100 HFW in English

Section (2); **Word recognition**, this section of the book contains names and pictures of the following objects; Lion, Boy, Tortoise, monkey, book, bird, stone, flower, king, table, One, two, rat, dog, house, School, tree, meat, man, and snake. These pictures were for the learners to see, identify and read. The pupils were taught to recognize the picture and taught to read the names of the objects and see how they were written and spelled as well.

Section (3); **words matching and pictures**, this section of the book carried both pictures and their names scrambled so that the learner located and matched words with relevant pictures together, just like a puzzle game.

Section (4) of the book contained **wordless pictures** of the aforementioned objects for the child to identify, read and write the names of the objects correctly on the worksheet provided.

The word recognition test of high-frequency words (WRTHFW)

In analyzing the data, all research questions were answered using the data obtained from the pupils, pretest and posttest word recognition, reading fluency, word matching and picture scores. These scores were presented in tables where the mean scores, percentage gain scores and percentage difference were calculated as follows:

Hypothesis 1 – 3 were tested using t-test for independent samples. This was because the posttest means scores of the experimental group were compared to the posttest means scores of the control group. This was done at 0.05 level of significance.

The hypotheses tested that is, hypotheses 1-3, the calculated values were compared to the table value and inferences were drawn to either accept or reject the null hypotheses.

When the calculated value was less than or equal to the tabulated or t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was upheld or accepted. But when the calculated value was greater than the tabulated t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected thereby accepting alternative hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent does the use of picture books improve word recognition use of children with dyslexia in the Gombe metropolis?

Table 1: Reading Ability of Primary Three Pupils with Dyslexia before Intervention

S/N	WORDS RECOGNITION			READING FLUENCY			READING COMPREHENSION	
	EXP. PRE-TEST	CONT. PRE-TEST	S/N	EXP. PRE-TEST	CONT. PRE-TEST	S/N	EXP. PRE-TEST	CONT. PRE-TEST
	20	22	Child 1	24	23	Child 1	27	17.5
Child 2	25	20	Child 2	23	23	Child 2	23	20
Child 3	19	20	Child 3	20	20	Child 3	26	28
Child 4	19	20	Child 4	21	22	Child 4	24	22
Child 5	21	19	Child 5	22	19	Child 5	32	26
Child 6	21	20	Child 6	20	20	Child 6	30.5	24
Child 7	18	22	Child 7	24	18	Child 7	19	19
Child 8	20	19	Child 8	24	12	Child 8	18.5	18.5
Child 9	21	21	Child 9	27	25	Child 9	20	30
Child10	22	23	Child 10	23	24	10	17.5	32.5
Total	208	206	Total	228	206	Total	237.5	237.5
Mean	20.8	20.6	Mean	22.8	20.6	Mean	23.75	23.75

Table 1 presents the reading ability of both the experimental and control groups of the primary three pupils with dyslexia before intervention. The mean scores of the experimental and control groups in word recognition before intervention were 20.80 and 20.60 respectively.

The mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the reading fluency before intervention were 22.80 and 20.60 respectively. Also the mean scores of experimental and control groups in reading comprehension were (23.8) and (23.80) respectively.

Research Question 2

To what extent will picture books influence the reading fluency of primary three pupils with dyslexia after intervention in Gombe metropolis?

Table 2: Reading Fluency Mean Scores of Pupils with Dyslexia after Intervention

S/N	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		S/N	CONTROL GROUP	
	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST		PRE-TEST	POSTTEST
Child 1	27	38	Child 1	22	24
Child 2	20	36	Child 2	24	25
Child 3	19	28	Child 3	19	20
Child 4	22	34	Child 4	23	27
Child 5	20	38	Child 5	20	26
Child 6	22	42	Child 6	19	24
Child 7	23	30.5	Child 7	16	19
Child 8	25	34.5	Child 8	14	20
Child 9	24	30	Child 9	20	21
Child10	26	33	Child 10	29	20
TOTAL	228	344	TOTAL	206	236
MEAN	22.8	34.4	MEAN	20.6	23.6

MEAN INCREASE B/W

PRE & POSTTEST 11.6 3

% MEAN INCREASE B/W

PRE & POSTTEST 50.9% 14.6%

MEAN DIFF B/W EXP

POST AND CONTROL POST 10.8

% MEANS DIFF B/W EXP & CONTROL POST 45.8%

Table 2 presents the pretest and post-test reading fluency mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia. From the table, the mean scores of the experimental group before intervention were 22.8. However, this rose to 34.4 after the intervention, giving an increase of 11.6 (50.9 %). While the mean score of the control group before intervention was (23.60) giving an increase of 3.0 (14.6%). The difference between the posttest reading fluency means scores of the experimental and control groups was 10.8 (45.8%) in favor of the experimental group.

Research Question 3

To what extent will the use of picture books improve reading comprehension scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia after intervention in Gombe metropolis?

Table 3: Reading Comprehension Scores of Primary Three Pupils with Dyslexia Before and after Intervention.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP			CONTROL GROUP		
S/N	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	S/N	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
Child 1	27	44	Child 1	17.5	24
Child 2	23	43.5	Child 2	20	26
Child 3	26	37.5	Child 3	28	37.5
Child 4	24	37.5	Child 4	22	37.5
Child 5	32	37.5	Child 5	26	30
Child 6	30.5	37.5	Child 6	24	20
Child 7	19	43	Child 7	19	30.5
Child 8	18.5	44.5	Child 8	18.5	40
Child 9	20	37.5	Child 9	30	31
Child 10	17.5	37.5	Child 10	32.5	31.5
TOTAL	237.5	400	TOTAL	237.5	312
MEAN	23.8	40.0	MEAN	23.8	31.2

Table 3 presents the pre-test and post-test reading comprehension skills mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia. From the table, the mean score of the experimental group before intervention was 23.8. However, this rose to 40.0 after the intervention, giving an increase of 16.2(68.1%). The pretest mean score of the control group was 23.8 and after the post-test was 31.2 giving an increase of 7.4(31.1%). The difference between the posttest reading comprehension skills means scores of the experimental and control groups was 8.8(28.2%) in favor of the experimental group.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the pretest word recognition mean scores of the primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental group and control groups.

Table 4: Comparison of the Pretest Word Recognition Mean Scores of Primary Three Pupils with Dyslexia in Experimental and Control Groups on Word Recognition.

Variable	No. of Sample	df	Mean	SD	t-Value cal	t- crit	Value	Sign (p)	Level
EXP. Group	10	18	20.8	1.865	0.290		1.730	0.05	
CONT. Group	10		20.6	1.281					

Table 5 presents the independent t-test statistics result of the pretest word recognition scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups. From the table, the t-value calculated (0.290) is less than the t-value critical (1.730) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group (20.80) and that of the control group (20.60) on word recognition at the pretest. Therefore, hypothesis 1, said that there is no significant difference between the pretest word recognition mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups is upheld.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the pretest reading fluency mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups.

Table 5 : T-test Comparison of the Pretest Mean Scores of Primary Three Pupils with Dyslexia in the Experimental and Control Groups on Reading Fluency Skills.

Variable	No. of Sample	df	Mean	SD	Value cal.	t- crit	Value	Sign (p)	Level
EXP. Group	10	18	22.80	2.040	0.285		1.730	0.05	
CONT. Group	10		20.60	3.583					

Table 5 presents the independent t-test statistics results of the pretest reading fluency mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups. From the table e t-value calculated (0.285) is less than the t-value critical (1.230). With the significant level 0.05.

This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group (22.80) and that of the control group (22.60) in reading fluency at pretest. Therefore, hypothesis 2 which says there is no significant difference in pretest reading fluency mean score of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the pretest reading comprehension mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups.

Table 6

T-test Comparison of the Pretest Mean Scores of Primary Three Pupils with Dyslexia in the Experimental and Control Group on Reading Comprehension Skills.

Variable	No. of Sample	df	Mean	SD	t-Value cal	t- Value crit	Sign Level (p)
EXP. Group	10	18	23.75	4.940	0.000	1.73	0.05
CONT. Group	10		23.75	5.013			

Table 6 presents the independent t-test statistics result on the present reading comprehension skills mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in experimental and control groups. From the table, the t-value calculated (0.000) is less than the t-value critical (1.730) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group (23.75) on reading comprehension skills at pretest. Therefore, hypothesis 3 which says there is no significant difference between the pretest reading comprehension mean scores of primary three pupils with dyslexia in the experimental and control groups is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Table 7: Summary of Hypotheses Tested

Hypotheses	Df	Table Valuable Calculated	Critical Value	Sign. Level 0.05 (p)	Decision
Hypotheses 1	18	0.290	1.730	-	Accepted
Hypotheses 2	18	0.285	1.730	-	Accepted
Hypotheses 3	18	0.000	1.730	-	Accepted

Table 7: showed that the hypotheses tested were accepted due to the fact that after all three hypotheses had been tested with the degree of freedom (df) 18 and 0.05 significance level using each of the table values calculated their critical values were greater than the calculated values. Therefore, the decision was to accept all three null hypotheses stated in the study and thereby reject alternative hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of this study revealed the reading performance of pupils with dyslexia using picture books. The word recognition of all the pupils in the experimental and control groups was below average, before the intervention, the results were consistent with the findings that as pupils move from one grade level to the other, they are expected to recognize at least 95 per cent of the words in the passage they are reading, else they are considered to be reading at a frustration level. The result further revealed the word recognition level of all the participants before and after an intervention.

The result showed that pupils with dyslexia in the experimental group had means twice better in their post-test than they had in their pre-test.

The control group had a very small increase in their posttest compared to their pretest mean scores.

The difference in the experimental group's pretest and posttest word recognition scores was tested and the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the experimental and control groups. The posttest word recognition scores presented revealed there was a significant difference; however, the experimental group improved significantly in the acquisition of all skills after an intervention.

Table 5 revealed the reading fluency skill level of the participants in experimental and control groups before and after the intervention for both pretest and posttest. This result showed that the experimental group improved in reading fluency skills as a result of teaching with the aid of picture books.

Furthermore, the null hypothesis that compares pre-test and post-test reading fluency mean scores presented in Table 6 showed there was a significant difference. This result shows a significant change in the participants of the experimental group.

Table 6 shows the result of the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the experimental and control groups on comprehension. The result revealed that the pupils with dyslexia in the experimental group did better in their comprehension scores than the control group, the result of the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the comprehension pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group revealed that the difference was significant in favor of posttest.

The finding of this study indicated that the program resulted in positive, substantial and significant improvements in reading comprehension and it was summarized that all three null hypotheses were accepted.

Conclusion

From the result of the findings on the effects of picture books on the reading performance of pupils with dyslexia, much has to be done in providing adequate picture books and other relevant instructional aids, to improve reading abilities in public primary schools and other institutions of learning. The application of picture books cannot only remediate reading problems in pupils with dyslexia but also in those called average or skilled readers, in primary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Experienced and qualified teachers should use different teaching interventions in reading such as Language Experience Approach (LEA), News on the Board (NOB), Literally Awareness Program (LAP) Word Recognition Approach (WRA), (100 HFW) and many others.
2. The government should provide enough textbooks and language studios equipped with both audio and visual aids to assist the child in comprehending the subject easily.

3. Professionals in the field of reading should be encouraged to publish picture books, storybooks, board books and many others that portray the experience of the Nigerian child.
4. Teachers should also embrace the culture of improvising learning materials such as picture books during teaching.

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DEMOLISHING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NNEDI OKORAFOR'S *WHO FEARS DEATH*

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Abstract

This paper explores the Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* with focus on racial discrimination and sexual violence against women. The theoretical framework adopted for this study is African Feminism. The eponymous narrator who discovers the ugly truth about her conception begins to piece together the history of her people and the purpose of her future. The discovery that she has inherited magic with which she may fight against the injustice of her heritage and the problems associated with racism begins a journey of discovery. Onyesonwu's gender places her at a disadvantage in her society but even more pressing, is her label as an *Ewu* child. Okorafor's novel shows that the power of racism and gender discrimination can be dismantled by the use of comradeship as a tool for resisting racial discrimination, the termination of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the no-violence philosophy and rewriting of the Canon. The protagonist of *Who Fears Death* is transformed from an insecure adolescent to become a character with messianic qualities among her people. Her resilience in overcoming every obstacle that arises against her, uplifts her personal development and her acceptance as an integral part of the erstwhile hostile community. Like a true heroine, she struggles against many adversaries and emerges victorious to achieve mythological proportions for the oppressed people of her community. Through the lenses of African feminism, Okorafor's novel reveals that gender roles can be reconciled if there is unity of purpose, complementarity and a reworking of old traditions.

Keywords: Discovery, Mythological, Proportions, Oppressed People & Community

Introduction

Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* is written in the mode of magical realism. Therefore, a quick search about the novel and author will reveal descriptions such as Afrofuturism, Sci-fi and Speculative fiction. This is an appropriate description of the kind of stories that the author writes. A close reading of Okorafor's novels reveals her oeuvre embraces themes such as feminism, ecocriticism, climate change, African mythology, etc. Lester Malgas' study approaches Nnedi's *Who Fears Death* and *Lagoon* by taking as its point of departure, a critique by Amitav Ghosh which suggests that literary realism presents shortcomings concerning the depiction of climate change in literature:

My assertion is that African science fiction should be seen as prominent among the radically new modes being called for. Its use of deep-time mythical figures as employed in magical realism in combination with the far future extrapolations of science fiction renders it able to contain the *longue durée* associated with climate change impacts...I intend to show how African science fiction provides innovative techniques for responding to a range of environmental concerns, particularly those ensconced within discourses of postcolonial ecocriticism (32).

This study departs from Malgas' approach by using African feminism as its theoretical

foundation. Other voices are Robert Sum, J.K.S Makokha and Prof. Speranza Ndege who assert that Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*, *Akata Witch* and *The Book of Phoenix* appropriate elements of the Gothic tradition, offering fresh ways of highlighting Africa's complex reality. These authors believe that aspects of the Gothic tradition which include monstrosity, villainy and morality are applicable to Nnedi's writings. According to them:

Okorafor's fiction does indeed portray many monsters and fantastic beings in a positive light. There are many monsters in Okorafor's fiction – masquerades shapeshifters and mutants yet only a few of them have villainous traits...it would seem that Okorafor chooses to design her villains by tapping more into their latent, innate monstrosities than manifest monstrosities (27).

These scholars note that Okorafor's female protagonists are strong, brave and self-confident, which contradicts their portrayal in early Gothic works as weak, sentimental and prone to having fainting attacks. This type of stereotypical depiction of women in literature has been challenged by many female writers. The advent of feminism in literature has often been misunderstood as a theory where all or many of its adherents are radically anti-men. Goredema explains that African feminism invites more theorization in its tenets. This scholar explains that:

In an effort not to be overwhelmed by issues of heterogeneity, African feminism returns to iconic categories that put a spotlight on the differences between African and Western feminisms initially – they are the following 1.) Culture/tradition, 2.) socio-economic and socio-political issues, 3.) the role of men, 4.) race, and 5.) sex and or sexuality (35).

Fwangyil illuminates some distinguishing features of African feminism: “African feminism emphasizes female autonomy and cooperation, addresses issues peculiar to African women such as the oppression of barren women and widows, female genital mutilation, child-bride and the resultant vesico-vaginal fistula and other forms of oppression (227).” Therefore, according to Fwangyil, African feminism is more focused on liberating the African woman from the chains of the past that have hindered her from reaching her full potential as a productive individual in society.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative research and basically, a textual analysis of Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*. The inclusion criteria for this study is based on aspects of the novel which are used as tools of oppression against the major and minor characters. The exclusion criteria involve aspects of the novel in which the characters willingly submit themselves to the power/influence of those tools of oppression.

Discussion

Comradery as a Tool for Resisting Racial Discrimination

*The theme of comradery is depicted in Okorafor's Who Fears Death from the vantage point of young Onyesonwu. She finds filial love in the arms of her mother and stepfather, the blacksmith of Jwahir. But outside the home, she is called by the derogatory name *Ewu* which marks her difference in skin tone, hair type and origin. Many people react towards Onyesonwu by sneering, cringing or pointing at her. Psychologically, she feels guilty for her own existence, therefore; she wants to gain acceptance from her society. Her attempt in this regard is voluntarily offering herself for female genital mutilation. This ritual is not necessary for her but she thinks of it, as a sure way to break away from the ostracisation. She meets more than she bargains for, as she understands that she will eventually share a lifelong bond with the girls with whom she performs the rite. Therefore, Diti, Luyu, Binta and Onyesonwu perform the rite together and also attend the same school. Very soon, two boys are included in the group: Mwita and Fanasi. These boys accompany the ladies out of a sense of duty and love as their partners in order to protect them and*

enjoy their companionship. The friends follow her as she intends to find her biological father and seek out the sorcerer with whom it was prophesied that he would rewrite the “Great Book” (*Who Fears Death* 110) and change the relationship between the Nuru's and the Okekes. The friends are told by an older and more experienced sorcerer, that their journey together could lead to their deaths. Although the journey begins physically, it also has spiritual dimensions as liminality is crossed intermittently. Onyesonwu's leadership among her friends also means that whatever happens to her in the spiritual realm also influences what happens in the physical. Their commitment to this friendship makes them continue on the journey until Binta and Mwita are killed. Diti and Fanasi abscond after an initially turbulent relationship. Mwita's relationship with Onyesonwu is romantic. Diti and Fanasi are betrothed, while Luyu is sexually adventurous. Binta is portrayed as a victim of incest by her biological father. Initially, she is timid, but as her character develops, she poisons her father's tea and later dies trying to defend Onyesonwu from a mob of haters. The ages of the friends range from nineteen to twenty-one.

The relationship between Mwita and Onyesonwu gradually gains stability after he accepts that Onyesonwu may be his partner, but her gender does not restrict her from leadership abilities. Onyesonwu and Mwita had to struggle through their relationship, simply because Mwita felt that it is his rightful place to occupy the position of leadership. According to Onyesonwu: “Those old beliefs about the worth and fate of men and women, that was the only thing that I didn't like about Mwita. Who was he to think he was entitled to be the center of things because he was male? This had been a problem with us since we'd met (284).” Occasionally, he has to fight off the feeling of envy when she succeeds in areas in that he has failed. Sometimes Mwita understands issues before she does. But his passion and dedication to Onyesonwu always conquers his envy. As their journey progresses, it becomes much more than a hunger for revenge. It becomes a quest to liberate the Okeke people and the Nuru's from their stereotypical views about each other. They realize that the source from which this philosophy of supremacy of one over the other, emanates from the Great Book in which a creation story is told about the goddess Ani and her reason for placing the Nurus above the Okekes:

Thousands of years ago, when this land was still made of sand and dry trees, Ani looked over her lands. She rubbed her dry throat. Then she made the Seven Rivers and had them all meet, making a deep lake. And from this lake she took a deep drink. 'one day,' she said, I'll produce sunshine. Right now, I'm not in the mood.' She turned over and slept. Behind her back, as she rested, the Okeke sprang up from the sweet rivers. “They were aggressive like the rushing rivers, forever wanting to move forward. As centuries passed, the spread over Ani's lands and created and used and changed and altered and spread and consumed and multiplied...she was horrified by what she saw. She reared up tall and impossible, furious. Then she reached out into the stars and pulled a sun to the land. The Okeke people cowered. From the sun Ani plucked the Nuru. She set them on her land. That same day, flowers realized they could boom. Trees understood that they could grow. And Ani laid a curse on the Okeke. “Slaves,” Ani said. (*Who Fears Death* 111).

It was therefore believed and accepted that by reason of the record narrated in the Great Book, the Okekes must remain slaves to the Nurus. The greatest embodiment of this status quo is found in the person of Daib, Onyesonwu's biological father. Despite the power that he wields, the unity of purpose which is found in Onyesonwu, Aro, Sola, Mwita, unites to weaken him significantly. Looking critically at this chain of command, it can be inferred that there must be a collective approach to dismantle the hierarchy of supremacy of men against one another. The philosophy of supremacy is shown in *Who Fears Death* as being institutionalized and transferable from generation to generation through tutelage. Mwita proves that a new generation can receive tutelage from the extreme ideas of supremacy to choose their own preferred path. Mwita hates

Daib's tutelage as his former student but respects Aro as the only father figure he can emulate. He teaches Onyesonwu that they can map out their path without bloodshed. He therefore chooses self-defense and sacrifice instead of anger and vengeance.

Okorafor positions magic and supremacy as concepts that are discoverable and teachable. By eleven years, Onyesonwu discovers that she has special magical abilities to mutate or shape-shift into different animals, she discovers that this ability is a heritage from the unpleasant history of her conception. Just as the Okeke and Nuru people also discover that they live in a segregated community for a reason: "The Okeke people have skin the colour of the night because they were created before the day. They were the first. Later, after much had happened, Nuru arrived. They came from the stars and that's why their skin is the colour of the sun (*Who Fears Death* 25). It is significant that it is not through magic or supremacy alone that equality will be achieved for the people of the Seven Rivers but through the rewriting of the Great Book.

In the narrative, this group of friends begin their journey by pursuing the prophecy of a Seer who foretold that a tall, male, Nuru sorcerer would come and rewrite the Great Book, and bring about change for both peoples. They soon discover that it is Onyesonwu that is to fulfil that which was prophesied. This realization, although heavy to bear; is manageable with the comrades that follow her through the actualization of this epic event. Okorafor through her characters, implies that comradeship is essential to achieving success in their quest to change the message of the Great Book. Okorafor's description of the Great Book suggests that it is popular and available for all citizens to read. More importantly, the book is respected and is instrumental to the attitudinal orientation of the people living around the seven rivers.

Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* presents Onyesonwu's quest as a complementary effort between the sexes. There is no denial about issues pertaining to sexuality, envy or personal insecurities but despite these challenges, their support for one another is more significant than the battle for dominance among the sexes.

Termination of Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War

The sexualization of war has long been an ugly occurrence in the history of warfare. In *Who Fears Death*, Okorafor graphically depicts the horror of sexual violation and explains the philosophy behind this heinous act:

They wanted to create Ewu children. Such children are not children of the forbidden love between a Nuru and an Okeke, nor are they Noahs, Okekes born without colour. Ewu are children of violence. An Okeke woman will never kill a child kindled inside of her. She would go against even her husband to keep a child in her womb alive. However, custom dictates that a child is the child of her father. These Nuru had planted poison. An Okeke woman who gave birth to an Ewu child was bound to the Nuru through her child. The Nuru sought to destroy Okeke families at the very root (*Who Fears Death* 29).

The rape of Onyesonwu's mother was particularly cryptic because as he forces himself into her, he sang sweetly, recorded the act and willed her to conceive a son. Najeeba, counters the attack using her power to "alu (345)" by praying that she conceives a daughter instead. This change of her choice of gender, makes Onyesonwu a foe instead of an accomplice to her biological father. According to a UN report about atrocities committed in Ethiopia, Haiti, and Ukraine, there exists a "horrific use of sexual violence to torment civilian populations; punish ethnic, political or cultural rivals to assert and maintain control (np)". The report states that international law provides protections against sexual violence but the enforcement of the provisions is weak. The UN proposes that "International organizations need to build a framework for developing country-specific, survival-focused responses – centered on investing in local organizations

when possible – that can provide resources and avenues to justice for victims (np)”. In *Who Fears Death*, justice is meted out to Daib, through the daughter he conceived and the apprentice he scorned. His downfall comes through their collective effort. Mwita applies some inscriptions he had received from a Ssolu sorcerer, and sticks it on Daib's neck. While the physical scuffle is going on, Mwita is fatally injured. Onyesonwu finds the power within herself to continue the fight after it is clear that Mwita cannot survive the injuries. She does not kill Daib when he is most vulnerable but he sustains crippling injuries before his final retribution. It can be deduced that Okorafor is suggesting that dismantling sexual violence against women must be strategic, collective and local in its approach.

The No-Violence Philosophy

Onyesonwu's partner, lover, healer, and only other Ewu character in the novel, is called Mwita. He epitomizes the philosophy of no-violence. He patiently explains to Onyesonwu that the circumstances of her birth is not the same for all people who share her skin colour. In his case, his biological mother was not raped. He is ostracized simply because his parent's love was forbidden by the society in which they lived. Mwita tutors Onyesonwu to control her emotions of anger and vengeance. He explains that Okeke rebels who had staged a rebellion against the Nuru's also committed heinous crimes. Mwita tells Onyesonwu: “It's not as you think... there is sickness on both sides. Be careful. Your father sees things in black and white, too. The Okeke bad, Nuru good. (*Who Fears Death* 177)”. Mwita's uncle and aunt were murdered by the Okeke's just because they were Nuru's but they were not guilty of any wrongdoing. In the novel, genocide is portrayed as a weapon that is blind to justice. Conversely, Onyesonwu does not kill Daib when she has a chance because she remembers what Mwita had taught her. The logic of reasoning is that the cycle of vengeance would continue endlessly until a different kind of retribution is allowed to take its course. Onyesonwu deliberately goes “alu” to conceive for Mwita releasing the potent power of a sorceress. She tells Luyu “I don't know how far it went. I don't think it touched the other towns. But where there are dead men, there are pregnant women”. (414). This action simultaneously eliminates the army that Daib had prepared to march over to the East, an army, brainwashed by his philosophy of violence, torture and rape. Daib himself had confessed that:

I let men have their way and leave most of the Okeke women alive. Turning them loose is like sending a virus to all those eastern communities. The disgraced women run there to give birth to their Ewu babies. I brought that part of the plan to the Seven Rivers council head myself. I am her greatest general and my plan was brilliant. Of course, she listened. She's a weak puppet. (*Who Fears Death* 407).

Resorting to magic to execute judgment against violent male oppressors instead of physical force becomes a counteracting action. Daib's method is what he calls “easy juju (407)” so that his soldiers sexually and incessantly attack the women without getting exhausted. The use of magic was put into motion even at the very conception of Onyesonwu. Mwita explains that:

Your mother knew exactly what she was doing when she asked that you be a sorceress once you were born and a girl. It was her revenge. Your mother can travel within, she can alu. The word from the mythical creature we know of as the Alusi comes from the actual sorcerer's term 'to alu' to travel within: (*Who Fears Death* 345).

The fact that Onyesonwu was born a female, is a fact that Daib greatly regrets. He plainly tells Onyesonwu: “Why are you a girl (407)?” An interpretation of events in *Who Fears Death* reiterates the idea that justice for the victims of sexual violence should come through non-violent means. This is demonstrated when Onyesonwu herself was almost raped by some young men in Banza town. She had been angry enough to summon powers to work violently against the men who were attacking her, but she was constrained by Mwita's reminders not to employ any form of violence.

Rewriting the Canon

The story about Onyesonwu resonates as a rewriting of the Abrahamic faith in world religion. In the Holy Bible for example, some have argued that the Negroes are cursed because they are descendants of Ham, one of Noah's sons who laughed at his father's nakedness. But this has been a disputed topic for lack of proof that negroes are descendants of Ham. Second, the prediction of Onyesonwo's coming and her mission of bringing change is similar to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, her persecution and public execution are very similar. Onyesonwo's body is buried alive except for her head which is stoned repeatedly until she dies. She is portrayed as a victim of wrongdoing by a majority of haters. She is abandoned by some of her followers, and there is an earthquake or shaking of the ground after she dies. The major difference between her death and Jesus Christ is that Okorafor embellishes its description with more supernatural elements like lights flowing out of her and the melting of the sand around her body. There are however some clear differences, like the twins who cremate her body. The ending of the novel is consistent with the metafictional tradition of writing. There are two endings written for the narrative. The first ending is found in the epilogue of the novel, the narrator is switched from Onyesonwo as the first-person narrator to another first person narrator, who is writing Onyesonwo's story and observing events. This other narrator is a twin from Chassa town who was allowed to see Onyesonwo in her prison cell before she is executed. In the second ending, the narrative voice moves to the third person omniscient where Sola, Aro and Najeeba, three sorcerers witness how Onyesonwo overpowers six young men who had come to arrest her. A blood thirsty crowd of Nuru men and women eagerly await her execution but she changes into a *Kponyungo* firespitter and shoots into the sky.

After her death, major changes begin to manifest: All women, Okeke and Nuru discovered that:

Some could turn wine into fresh sweet drinking water, others glowed in the night, and some could hear the dead. Others remembered the past, before the Great Book. Others could peruse the spirit world and still be in the physical. Thousands of abilities. All bestowed upon women. There it was. Onye's gift. In the death of herself and her child, Onye gave birth to us all. This place will never be the same. Slavery is over (*Who Fears Death* 425).

Even the powers that the women possess are similar to the miracles of Christ as written in the Bible but in reverse. It reads like a literal rewriting of the holy scriptures. According to Setzer:

Women's rights advocates had the same two puzzles to solve as abolitionists did: Jesus' silence on their issue and Paul's (and deutoro-Paul's) verbosity. Although Stanton, Gage and others accuse Christianity for its long standing anti-woman bias, they hold Jesus remarkably innocent of it, preferring to indict Paul. Frances Willard called Jesus "her [woman's] Emancipator", and "Woman's liberator, possessing both motherly and fatherly qualities.... (np)

In Okorafor's *Who Fears Death* the rewriting of the canon places an unlikely individual who is dually colonized as a woman and an Ewu child to carry the burden of being the "messiah" who rewrites the Great Book to bring equality between the Nurus and the Okekes in the Seven Rivers that the goddess Ani has created. These seven rivers can be interpreted as an allusion to the seven continents of the world. Through this, it can be deduced that Okorafor is suggesting that people have the power to redirect and rewrite the social changes that they believe in.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Onyesonwu's insecurities as a child who thought she had brought shame and dishonour to her parents shift to boldness and great renown by the end of the novel. She becomes a living legend to the people of the Seven Rivers. Even though she undergoes daunting challenges, she emerges as a successful heroine no matter the kind of ending that the reader chooses to adopt: either as a staunch believer in fate, or a believer in the unfettered strength of

magical power. The problems of contemporary reality which Okorafor addresses in the novel, resonate with anger and sympathy for the victims who have suffered from the abuse.

Recommendation

This study has shown Okorafor's major thematic concerns as seen through the portrayal of characters and events in the novel. However, there is still room for interpretation and analysis with regards to her portrayal of female genital mutilation in *Who Fears Death*. It is depicted as an accepted norm in the society because of its strong roots in tradition.

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