



INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, KRIRK UNIVERSITY

ASEAN Journal of Research



Volume 3, Number 1
January - June, 2025

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Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the Volume 3, Number 1 (January-June, 2025) issue of the ASEAN Journal of Research (AJR). The AJR is an academic journal published by the British International College (BIC) at Krirk University.¹ The journal accepts papers in any of the disciplines taught at the International College and BIC. Papers will be subjected to a rigorous double-blind peer-reviewed process prior to being considered for publication. As ever, the editor's decision is final.

In this issue, I am pleased to be able to include papers from a good geographical spread of nations, including Nigeria, Bangladesh, Taiwan and Thailand. I have also been able to include papers from a wide range of subjects, across the social sciences and including music, religion, philosophy and community studies. I would invite all actual or potential authors to consider submitting your papers to the AJR for sympathetic but rigorous treatment.

We find the world in disarray in the middle of 2025. Illegal wars, invasions and the starvation of the people of Gaza do not leave much cause for optimism. Let us hope that our own scholarly disciplines will permit us to contribute to a better future to the extent of our abilities.

John Walsh, Editor

¹ The BIC became independent during the editing of this issue. Hence, the front cover still uses the name of the International College.

Peer Reviewed Academic Papers

Unveiling Gender Dynamics: Exploring Historical and Contemporary Manifestations of Gender Discrimination in Societal Structures and Policies

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Abstract

This study explores gender discrimination by examining its historical roots and modern-day expressions, particularly in ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach, it integrates qualitative analysis of biblical texts (Numbers 1-11) and historical commentaries to identify gender-specific roles in ancient Israel, alongside interviews and literature reviews to explore patterns of discrimination in Nigeria. Surveys among pastors, leaders, and church workers in Lagos State helped quantify the prevalence and impact of gender bias. Lagos was chosen for its multicultural setting, which mirrors broader gender issues in Nigeria. The research is grounded in Marxist feminist theory and production and property relations theory, providing frameworks to analyse systemic inequalities. Empirical findings highlight persistent gender disparities across sectors such as education, employment, healthcare, and political representation. The comparative analysis reveals both enduring similarities and evolving differences in gender dynamics between the two societies. Seven core recommendations are made to tackle gender discrimination. These include reforming discriminatory policies, strengthening institutional accountability, and launching awareness campaigns to promote equality and inclusivity. The study emphasizes the need to dismantle patriarchal ideologies embedded in societal structures. By revealing the historical and contemporary forces behind gender inequality, the study contributes valuable insights for social justice advocacy, gender-sensitive policymaking, and the pursuit of equitable societal development.

Keywords: gender discrimination, gender dynamics, societal structures, patriarchal ideologies, policies.

1. Introduction

Gender discrimination within ancient Israel, as depicted in the Book of Numbers chapters 1-11, reflects societal norms and practices that favoured men over women. One striking example is found in Numbers 5:11-31, where scholars argue that the law regarding a jealous husband and his wife places a disproportionate burden on women, implying a gender bias within the legal system (Matthews, Chavalas, & Walton, 2000). In these narratives, only male individuals aged twenty years and above are considered in census-taking processes, overlooking the broader contributions of women and children (Numbers 1:1-3). Despite prophetic verses suggesting a future scenario where women outnumber men (Isaiah 4:1), the exclusion of women from decision-making reflects a systemic issue.

Further, regulations concerning Nazirites in Numbers 6:1-21 subtly differentiate between male and female obligations, indicating a gendered aspect to religious practices (Knohl, 2007). Similarly, the absence of female leaders participating in offerings in Numbers 7:1-89 underscores the patriarchal structure of ancient Israelite society (Levine, 2000). Scholarly works by Ackerman (2005) and Meyers (2012) further illuminate the marginalization of women in familial and religious roles, reinforcing the presence of gender discrimination within ancient Israel.

In Numbers 3:11-12, male Levites are designated for specific roles, overlooking females, perpetuating gender bias in religious duties and leadership positions. Legal provisions within the Hebrew Law, such as those regarding marital fidelity, predominantly favor husbands, reflecting inherent gender inequality (Numbers 5:12-16). Nonetheless, instances like the Nazarene vow in Numbers 6:1-7 hint at a recognition of spiritual equality. In contemporary contexts, initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals underscore the imperative of promoting gender equality and empowering women (United Nations, 2000). Although the attainment of these goals warrants further scrutiny, the discourse surrounding the empowerment of women signifies a crucial step towards inclusivity and equitable societal progress.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In ancient Israel and other parts of the world, including Nigeria, women face significant discrimination, often being viewed as inferior and sidelined in national and economic development efforts. The researcher contends that disregarding women's contributions hampers societal advancement, given their substantial portion of the population. To address this, women must be empowered to participate fully in all sectors of the economy. This study aims to explore how both the Church and government can serve as instruments for mitigating gender discrimination and promoting national development. By examining strategies to amplify women's roles, this research seeks to pave the way for more inclusive and equitable societies.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What are the natures of discrimination against women in the ancient Israel and in Nigeria?
2. What are the consequences of discrimination against women?

1.3. Definitions

Patriarchal Ideologies: social systems prioritizing male dominance.

Gender Disparities: differences in treatment based on gender.

Socio-Cultural Norms: shared societal expectations and behaviours.

Gender discrimination: bias based on gender, denying rights or opportunities.

Gender dynamics: shifting interactions and roles between genders over time.

Discrimination: unfair treatment or prejudice against individuals or groups.

Societal structures: frameworks shaping social organization and interactions.

Policies: official rules or guidelines governing actions or behaviours.

1.4. Theoretical Frameworks

Marxist feminist Theory: Marxist feminism examines the intersection of class and gender oppression. Marxist feminists argue that capitalism perpetuates gender discrimination by exploiting women's labour and reinforcing patriarchal structures (Hartmann, 1981). Another relevant theory is standpoint feminism, which emphasizes the importance of considering marginalized groups' perspectives to understand social phenomena (Harding, 1991). Standpoint feminists argue that women's experiences provide unique insights into power dynamics and societal inequalities, challenging dominant narratives constructed by privileged groups.

Production and Property Relations Theory: socialist theories, particularly Marxism, attribute social inequalities, including those faced by women, to material inequality stemming from private ownership of production means (Engels, 1884). They propose that eliminating or greatly reducing material inequality can lead to the eradication of most social hierarchies. According to Marxism, the revolutionary proletariat's expropriation of privately owned means of production and their communal administration will eliminate inequalities for the benefit of all members of society (Marx & Engels, 1848).

1.5. Limitations of the Study

1. The study focused on gender discrimination in ancient Israel (Numbers Chapters 1-11) and contemporary Nigeria, potentially overlooking nuances in other historical periods and geographical regions.
2. Limited availability of historical records and empirical data may have constrained the depth of analysis, particularly regarding ancient Israel.
3. The study may not fully capture the diverse cultural, social, and religious factors influencing gender dynamics in both contexts due to the broad scope and generalizations.
4. There is a possibility of bias in interpreting historical texts and cultural practices, impacting the accuracy of conclusions drawn.
5. Time constraints may have limited the ability to conduct more extensive fieldwork or qualitative interviews, potentially restricting the depth of insights gained.

1.6. Delimitations of the Study

1. The study deliberately focused on ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria to provide a comparative analysis of gender discrimination within specific historical and geographical contexts.
2. The study primarily examined gender discrimination as manifested in societal structures and policies, rather than individual experiences or interpersonal interactions.
3. By exploring gender dynamics across historical epochs and contemporary settings, the study aimed to offer a comprehensive understanding of how gender discrimination evolves over time.
4. The study integrated perspectives from history, sociology, and gender studies to provide a holistic analysis of gender dynamics, acknowledging the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon.
5. Policy Implications: The study aimed to inform policy interventions and advocacy efforts by highlighting the persisting challenges of gender discrimination and proposing recommendations for promoting gender equality in societal structures and policies.

2. Review of Literature

Gender discrimination is deeply rooted in societal norms and practices, manifesting in both ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria. In ancient Israel, patriarchal structures and religious traditions relegated women to subordinate roles, limiting their participation in decision-making processes and denying them equal rights and opportunities (Ackerman, 2005; Meyers, 2012). Similarly, contemporary Nigeria grapples with systemic discrimination against women, evident in disparities in education, employment, and access to resources (Akanle, Adesina, & Nwaobiala, 2018). Cultural practices like early marriage and female genital mutilation further marginalize women and perpetuate gender-based violence (Awolola & Ilupeju, 2019).

Gender discrimination in ancient Israel finds archaeological support in various aspects of material culture and burial practices. Excavations of ancient tombs have revealed significant disparities in grave goods and burial locations between men and women (Ackerman, 2005). Men were often buried with more elaborate items, suggesting higher status and social standing, while women's graves contained fewer and less valuable goods (Ackerman, 2005). Additionally, inscriptions and reliefs depict men in prestigious roles such as rulers, warriors, and priests, while women are portrayed in domestic settings or subservient positions (Meyers, 2012). The absence of female names and titles in official records and legal documents further indicates their exclusion from public life and decision-making processes (Ackerman, 2005).

These archaeological findings provide tangible evidence of the gender disparities and discrimination prevalent in ancient Israel, corroborating biblical texts that also reflect similar social norms and hierarchies.

The consequences of gender discrimination are profound and multifaceted. In ancient Israel, marginalizing women limited their ability to contribute to societal development and hindered overall progress (Meyers, 2012). By excluding women from decision-making processes and denying them access to education and resources, ancient Israel missed out on the potential contributions of half its population (Meyers, 2012). In contemporary Nigeria, discrimination against women perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, contributing to disparities in health, education, and economic opportunity (Akanle, Adesina, & Nwaobiala, 2018). Limited access to education and healthcare has negative impacts on women's health outcomes and perpetuates intergenerational poverty (United Nations, 2019). Additionally, gender-based violence and discrimination undermine women's safety and well-being, creating barriers to their full participation in society (Awolola, & Ilupeju, 2019).

The Church has the potential to serve as a powerful force for change in addressing gender discrimination. With its moral authority and widespread influence, the Church can challenge traditional norms and advocate for gender equality within religious teachings and practices (Casimir, Chukwuelobe & Ugwu, 2014). By promoting inclusive interpretations of religious texts and emphasizing the inherent dignity and equality of all individuals, the Church can contribute to shifting societal attitudes towards women (Casimir, Chukwuelobe & Ugwu, 2014). Additionally, the Church can play a vital role in providing support and resources for women affected by gender-based violence and discrimination (Ojo, 2018). Through initiatives such as gender-sensitive preaching, leadership training, and community outreach programs, the Church can empower women to assert their rights and advocate for gender equality.

Governments play a critical role in combating gender discrimination through legislative reforms, policy interventions, and institutional mechanisms. In Nigeria, enacting and enforcing laws that protect women's rights and promote gender equality are essential steps towards addressing systemic inequalities (Adesina & Onyishi, 2018). Additionally, implementing gender-sensitive policies in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment can help bridge gender gaps and promote women's empowerment (United Nations, 2019). Governments can also establish specialized agencies or task forces to monitor and address gender-based violence and discrimination (Kore-Okiti, 2024). Furthermore, investing in programs that promote women's economic empowerment and political participation is crucial for advancing gender equality and fostering societal development (Ojo, 2018).

Gender discrimination remains pervasive in Nigeria across various domains, despite legislative efforts to promote gender equality. Scholars highlight the stark underrepresentation of women in Nigerian politics as indicative of systemic discrimination (Oyewumi, 2003). This phenomenon, attributed to entrenched patriarchal structures, significantly limits women's access to leadership roles and decision-making positions. Economically, women face disparities in employment opportunities and wages (Akanji, 2018). Women encounter significant barriers to formal employment and often face segregation into lower-paying sectors. Moreover, gender discrimination is prevalent in Nigeria's education system, particularly affecting girls' access to schooling (Nakpodia & Urien, 2012). This study examines gender discrimination in Nigeria's educational system, highlighting societal biases that limit girls' access to

education. The authors discuss the cultural belief that women's place is in the kitchen, leading to the perception that girls do not need formal education. Gender discrimination persists as a complex and multifaceted issue in both ancient and contemporary societies. Addressing this challenge requires concerted efforts from governments, religious institutions, and civil society to dismantle patriarchal norms, promote women's empowerment, and foster inclusive and equitable societies. Only through collective action and commitment to gender equality can societies realize their full potential and ensure the well-being and dignity of all individuals, regardless of gender.

The synthesis of gender awareness within religious and political spheres represents a dynamic convergence of principles, actions, and initiatives aimed at addressing gender inequalities comprehensively. Religious teachings, rooted in moral principles and spiritual values, provide a foundation for advocating gender equality and social justice. For instance, religious texts often emphasize the inherent dignity and equality of all individuals, regardless of gender, laying the groundwork for challenging discriminatory practices (An-Na'im, 2015). Moreover, religious communities serve as platforms for promoting gender-sensitive interpretations of sacred texts and challenging traditional norms that perpetuate gender biases (Ali, 2011).

Simultaneously, the paper identifies several barriers limiting women's political participation in Nigeria, such as socio-cultural norms, economic challenges, and institutionalized patriarchy. Women face discrimination within political parties, cultural bias against female leadership, and limited access to resources that are crucial for political campaigning and networking. (Arowolo, & Aluko, 2010). Government initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality in areas such as education, healthcare, and economic empowerment contribute to dismantling systemic barriers and fostering women's empowerment (United Nations, 2019). Additionally, political advocacy campaigns and grassroots movements mobilize support for gender-inclusive policies and challenge entrenched patriarchal structures (Chiluwa, 2021).

This synthesis underscores the interconnectedness of religious and political dimensions in addressing gender issues, recognizing that both spheres are essential for effecting meaningful change. By uniting religious values with political action, societies can create more inclusive and equitable environments that uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of gender.

Gender discrimination, entrenched for centuries, remains a formidable barrier to achieving true equality (Ackerman, 2005; Agu, 2019; Meyers, 2012; United Nations, 2019). Its pervasive nature perpetuates cycles of inequality and marginalization, impeding societal progress and development (Adesina, 2007). Governments, religious institutions, and civil society must collaborate to dismantle patriarchal norms and empower women, unlocking the full potential of human capital for inclusive growth (Asaju & Adagha, 2013). Urgent action is needed to address discriminatory practices and promote gender equality, ensuring a fair and equitable society for all (Abdullahi, 2015). By advocating for the abolition of gender discrimination, we pave the way for a more just and prosperous future.

This study, in strongly advocating against gender discrimination, has the potential to contribute significantly to knowledge by shedding light on the pervasive nature of gender inequality and its detrimental effects on society. By examining gender discrimination in both ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria, the study provides a comparative analysis that deepens our understanding of the historical and cultural roots of this phenomenon. Furthermore, by highlighting the commonalities and differences in the manifestations of gender discrimination across different contexts, the study offers valuable insights into the complex interplay of social, economic, and political factors that perpetuate inequality. Ultimately, the findings of this study can inform policy interventions and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting gender equality and fostering inclusive societies.

2.1. Ancient Israel and Contemporary Nigeria: Commonalities and Differences in Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is a pervasive issue that has persisted throughout history and across cultures. In both ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria, patriarchal ideologies have shaped social norms and practices, resulting in the marginalization and subordination of women. The Hebrew Bible provides insights into the patriarchal nature of ancient Israelite society, where men held primary positions of power and authority (Ackerman, 2005). Women were often excluded from decision-making processes and leadership roles, with legal frameworks favoring male heirs in matters of inheritance, marriage, and divorce (Ackerman, 2005). Jenyo (2018) discusses how patriarchal norms in Nigeria perpetuate gender inequality, limiting women's roles in economic and political spheres.

Historically, both societies have upheld laws and customs that reinforce gender inequality. In ancient Israel, women were subject to patriarchal traditions that limited their agency and autonomy (Kirk-Duggan, 2012). These traditions extended to religious practices, where women were often excluded from leadership positions within the temple and other religious institutions (Bako & Syed, 2018). Udoh, Folarin and Isumonah (2020) examine how cultural norms and religious interpretations in Nigeria influence women's property rights, revealing systemic discrimination despite supportive religious doctrines. Gender-based violence and cultural practices further perpetuate discrimination against women, with issues such as female genital mutilation and early marriage prevalent in both contexts (Agu, 2019).

Moreover, patriarchal norms have restricted women's roles and contributions in both ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria. Despite women's significant contributions to various sectors, including agriculture and household management, their efforts have often been undervalued and overlooked (Olawoye, 1985; Awe, 1990). In both societies, women have been relegated to subordinate positions, with limited access to resources and opportunities for advancement (Olanrewaju, Adeyemi & Emezi, 2018). These shared experiences highlight the enduring nature of gender discrimination and the need for concerted efforts to address systemic inequalities.

While ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria share commonalities in gender discrimination, there are notable differences in the manifestations and underlying factors between the two contexts. In ancient Israel, religious institutions played a significant role in shaping gender norms and practices, with women often excluded from leadership positions within the temple and other religious institutions (Bako & Syed, 2018). This exclusion extended to legal and social frameworks, where women were subject to patriarchal laws that favoured male heirs (Ackerman, 2005). In contrast, contemporary Nigeria exhibits a more complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, and political factors contributing to gender disparities (Oyewumi, 2003).

Olaogun et al. (2009) examine how cultural preference for male children influences family planning decisions in Nigeria, revealing that societal norms significantly impact reproductive behavior and desired family size. This bias often results in unequal treatment of girls and boys, with boys receiving preferential access to resources such as education and healthcare. Okoroafor and Iwueke (2019) explore how gender inequality, cultural norms, and patriarchy hinder women's economic development in Nigeria, advocating for inclusive policies and empowerment initiatives to promote equality. They asserted Furthermore, that gender-based violence, including domestic abuse and female genital mutilation, remains widespread in Nigeria, perpetuating cycles of oppression and inequality. These examples underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of gender discrimination in Nigeria, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies to address deep-seated cultural norms and promote gender equality.

Advancements in science and technology have led to new forms of discrimination in contemporary Nigeria, such as selective abortion based on the sex of the foetus (Bastola, 2007). This phenomenon was absent in ancient Israel but reflects evolving challenges in modern societies. Additionally, the legal and policy frameworks addressing gender discrimination differ between the two contexts, with

contemporary Nigeria having more explicit laws protecting women's rights (Adesina & Onyishi, 2018). Despite these differences, both ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria grapple with gender discrimination, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address systemic inequalities.

3. Methodology

The research methodology for comparing gender discrimination in ancient Israel (Numbers chapters 1-11) and contemporary Nigeria involves a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative analysis of biblical passages will identify gender-specific roles and limitations in ancient Israel, supplemented by historical commentaries. Similarly, qualitative analysis of existing literature and interviews in Nigeria will reveal contemporary gender discrimination patterns. Surveys will quantitatively measure discrimination prevalence and impacts in Nigeria. Data will be compared using comparative analysis techniques to identify similarities, differences, and trends across contexts. Findings will be interpreted within gender studies and social justice frameworks to inform policy recommendations. This approach ensures comprehensive understanding of gender discrimination's historical roots and contemporary manifestations, aiding in the formulation of targeted interventions for equitable societal development. The study was carried out among the pastors, leaders and church workers among the Pentecostal churches (PC), mainline churches (MC), evangelical churches (EC) and African independent churches (AIC) in the three Senatorial Districts of Lagos State. Lagos state was specifically chosen as being a multicultural city where people from diverse cultures in Nigeria are domiciled. The choice of Lagos State brings to reality the problems of cultural diversity on gender discrimination against women. Lagos State is made up of three senatorial districts which cover twenty local government areas. A total of 120 questionnaire was administered but only 84 pieces were retrieved for analysis.

In terms of demographic characteristics, it was found that 51.2% of respondents were male and 48.8% female (n = 84). For age, 21.4% were under 20 years, 35.7% were 20-30 years, 26.2% were 31-40 years, 9.5% were 41-50 years and the remaining 7.1% over 51 years (n = 84). For marital status, 54.8% were single, 39.3% were married, 3.6% were single parents and 2.4% were widowed (n = 84). These results highlight the relatively young profile of the sample obtained. This was reinforced by a subsequent question on employment status, which showed that 3.6% were apprentices, 45.2% students, 31.0% civil servants and 20.3% business owners (n = 84).

4. Findings and Discussion

The major findings resulting from the data collected and analysed in this study includes the following.

The study investigates gender discrimination in ancient Israel with nine key aspects explored. Firstly, it reveals that only male children over twenty were officially counted, disregarding women (Numbers 1:1-3). Secondly, it highlights Yahweh's demand for the sanctification of only firstborn sons, excluding daughters (Exodus 13:1-2). Thirdly, it indicates that only male offspring were consecrated for Tabernacle service, further emphasizing gender disparity (Numbers 3:11-12). Fourthly, it reflects a legal bias where only husbands had the right to be jealous over marital infidelity, perpetuating gender inequality (Numbers 5:12-16). Additionally, it underscores how women lacked a sign of covenant community as men did in circumcision (Genesis 2:18, 20). Moreover, it suggests a fundamental role for women as companions to men (Genesis 2:18). Furthermore, it notes that only males of the Levitical lineage were chosen for Tabernacle service (Numbers 3:3-10). Lastly, it points out that women were not included in the census of leadership generations and were often treated as property with no right to inheritance (Numbers 3:2). These findings illustrate pervasive gender discrimination deeply ingrained in ancient Israel's societal fabric.

Statements (%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Only male children above twenty years get counted officially in Ancient Israel. Women were not reckoned with.	46.4	23.8	11.9	17.9
Yahweh demanded only firstborn Son of man and beast that opened the womb be sanctified unto Him.	23.8	46.4	17.9	11.9
Only human male sons that opened the womb were consecrated to take parts in the work of the Tabernacle.	35.7	27.4	11.9	25.0
Only husbands have the right to be jealous over their wives' sexual misconduct	23.8	31.0	23.8	21.4
A woman does not possess any sign of the covenant community as did the male in circumcision.	21.4	47.6	15.5	15.5
The essence of a woman is linked with her function as a companion to Man.	23.8	39.3	29.8	7.1
Only the males of the Levites lineage were chosen and dedicated to do the service of the Tabernacle	35.7	47.6	1.0	7.1
During the census of the generations of leaders, women were not reckoned with	6.0	47.6	34.5	11.9
A woman was rated the property of her father or her husband and thus has no right to inheritance	11.9	56.0	20.2	11.9

Table 1: *Perceived Nature of Discrimination against Women in Ancient Israel; source: Original Research*

Statements (%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Discrimination against women blocks the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace	57.1	35.7	1.2	3.6
Discrimination against women discourages them from playing their roles and contributing their quota to the development of the society	35.7	57.1	2.4	2.4
Discrimination against women comes with a high burden of poverty on women	34.5	47.6	11.9	6.0
The huge population of women in Nigeria has the potential to transmute the country from being poverty-stricken to being vibrant	39.2	35.6	11.9	13.1
Discrimination affects the capacity of women to participate fully in society which in turn has harmful psychological effects	35.7	47.6	8.3	8.3
Discrimination against women leads to their feelings of misery and shame, and even death	35.7	35.7	11.9	7.1

Table 2: *Perceptions of Consequences of Discrimination against Women to National Development; source: Original Research*

Table 2 above outlines the perceptions of the consequences of discrimination against women on national development. We shall discuss each item as follows:

1. The majority (92.9%) agree that discrimination hampers achieving equality, development, and peace, supported by Asaju and Adagba (2013).
2. The majority (92.9%) believe discrimination discourages women's contributions to society, which is aligned with Ejumudo (2013).
3. The majority (82.1%) aligns with Kolawole et al. argue that gender discrimination, reinforced by culture and tradition in Nigeria, significantly limits women's opportunities and access to resources, thereby deepening poverty—echoing Awodun and Ogunjemilua (2015) stance.
4. The majority (75.0%) assert that Nigeria's large female population could transform the economy, echoing PwC Nigeria's 2024 report that Nigeria's large female population could transform the economy. PwC Nigeria (2024) underscores that Nigerian women account for 41% ownership of micro-businesses, with 23 million female entrepreneurs operating within this segment, placing Nigeria among the highest entrepreneurship rates globally. The report also notes that women's participation in the formal sector is increasing, although challenges remain in achieving gender parity in leadership roles and the Gender in Nigeria Report (2012).
5. The majority (83.3%) agree discrimination limits women's societal participation, affecting mental health, consistent with mental health studies.
6. The majority (81.0%) recognize discrimination's psychological, physical, and spiritual toll on women, leading to misery and even death, supported by Ali (2011).

These findings underscore the pervasive impact of gender discrimination on various facets of society and highlight the urgent need for measures to address and eradicate such discrimination.

5. Conclusion

The comparative study of gender discrimination in ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria reveals striking similarities and differences in the manifestations and consequences of gender bias. Through a literature review and empirical analysis, this study sheds light on the multifaceted nature of gender discrimination and its profound implications for societal development.

In ancient Israel, patriarchal norms and religious traditions entrenched gender disparities, relegating women to subordinate roles in society. Archeological evidence and biblical scriptures illustrate the systematic exclusion of women from decision-making processes, inheritance rights, and religious practices (Nakhai, 2019). Moreover, cultural and legal frameworks perpetuated gender bias, limiting women's agency and autonomy (Guarneri & Dudley Poston, 1975).

Similarly, contemporary Nigeria grapples with entrenched gender discrimination, fueled by socio-cultural norms and economic inequalities. Studies reveal pervasive disparities in education, employment, and healthcare, with women facing barriers to full participation in society (Ejumudo, 2013; Unagha, 2006). Discriminatory practices such as early marriage and gender-based violence further marginalize women, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality (Awodun & Ogunjemilua, 2015).

The empirical findings corroborate the prevalence of gender discrimination in both contexts. Survey results indicate significant agreement among respondents regarding discriminatory practices in ancient Israel, such as the exclusion of women from official counts and inheritance rights. Similarly, contemporary Nigerian respondents highlight systemic inequalities in education, employment, and access to resources, underscoring the enduring impact of gender bias on societal dynamics.

The consequences of gender discrimination are far-reaching and multifaceted. Discrimination obstructs women's participation in socio-economic development, hindering progress towards gender equality and

sustainable development goals (Asaju & Adagba, 2013). It perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality, limiting women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (Ejumudo, 2013). Furthermore, discrimination undermines women's mental and physical well-being, contributing to psychological distress and health disparities.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of gender discrimination in ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria underscores the persistent challenges and urgent need for action to address systemic inequalities. By recognizing the shared patterns of discrimination and understanding the diverse contexts in which they manifest, policymakers, civil society organizations, and religious institutions can work towards dismantling patriarchal structures and promoting gender equality. Empowering women, challenging discriminatory norms, and fostering inclusive policies are essential steps towards building a more equitable and just society for all individuals, regardless of gender.

5.1. Recommendations for Future Studies:

We advise that future studies could further explore the similarities and differences in gender discrimination across diverse cultures and historical contexts, expanding the scope beyond ancient Israel and contemporary Nigeria.

We recommend that new research should examine how intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, class, and religion intersect with gender to shape experiences of discrimination and privilege. Intersectional approaches can provide a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics and inform targeted interventions.

We propose that longitudinal studies tracking changes in gender attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes over time can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions and policy reforms aimed at promoting gender equality.

We canvas for qualitative studies using interviews, focus groups, and participant observation can capture the lived experiences of individuals affected by gender discrimination, providing rich contextual data to inform policy and practice.

We advocate for evaluating the impact of existing gender equality policies and initiatives is essential for identifying gaps and areas for improvement. Rigorous evaluation methods can assess the effectiveness of interventions and inform evidence-based policymaking.

We advocate that future research should consider the cultural and historical contexts shaping gender norms and practices, recognizing the diversity of experiences within and across societies. Understanding the root causes of gender discrimination is essential for designing contextually relevant interventions.

Further studies should explore innovative strategies for empowering women and challenging gender discrimination, including community-based approaches, digital technologies, and creative advocacy campaigns. Empowering women to assert their rights and advocate for gender equality is key to driving social change.

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Shifting Livelihoods: Occupational Changes and Socio-Economic Impact on Dalit Communities in Dhaka

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Abstract

This study investigates the changing occupations of the Dalit community and the socio-economic impacts of this shifting in their lives with the help of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital, Erving Goffman's stigma theory, and Louis Dumont's purity and impurity theory. Dalit is a term used to refer to any member of a wide range of social groups that were historically marginalized. The Dalit community in Bangladesh is living in poverty, faces a lack of education, healthcare, safe housing, and employment opportunities. They are exposed to unsafe environments, insecurity, and violence, which severely hinder their socio-economic progress. Their marginalization extends to cultural practices and social interactions, leading to further isolation. Key statistics reveal the dire conditions of Dalits in Bangladesh. Only about 10% of Dalit children enroll in school, and of these, 95% drop out, leaving just 5% literate. The shift in occupational patterns among Dalit communities, particularly in urban areas like Dhaka, is driven by a complex interplay of social, economic, and structural factors. Reasons like inadequate housing and infrastructure, settlements being frequently overcrowded and lack essential services such as clean water, electricity, and sanitation, as well as constant threats of eviction make their living conditions are unstable and insecure, healthcare inequality like lacking access to affordable and adequate medical care, pushing many to seek alternative livelihoods that may offer slightly better financial or social security all contribute to the economic problems they face. Additionally, structural poverty and generational social exclusion continue to affect Dalit communities, influencing their occupational decisions and shifting livelihoods. The persistence of caste-based labour stigmatization, especially in jobs like sanitation work, has led many younger Dalits to reject these roles in pursuit of dignified and socially respected alternatives. Despite their essential contributions to urban maintenance and public health, Dalits remain economically marginalized and politically underrepresented. In response to these challenges, many are seeking new employment opportunities in the informal sector, skilled labour, or small businesses, often facilitated by NGO initiatives, community mobilization, and increasing awareness of rights and entitlements. These occupational changes reflect not only a rejection of caste-based roles but also a strategic adaptation to urban socio-economic pressures, signaling a shift in identity, aspirations, and survival strategies. Their traditional jobs like pork farming, sweeping, Bede, cleaning sewerage are no longer the only jobs they are doing, due to reasons like stigmatization of their identity, social and cultural exclusion.

Keywords: Dalits, marginalization, stigma, social exclusion, traditional jobs

1. Introduction

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the evolving occupational patterns among the Dalit community, exploring the underlying factors contributing to these transformations and the resultant socio-economic impacts. Dalits, often marginalized across social, political, economic, and cultural spheres, have been historically classified as 'outsiders' within the broader social fabric. They are frequently described using pejorative terms such as "dirty," "untrustworthy," "aggressive," and "uncivilized" (Chowdhury, 2009). Globally, approximately 260 million individuals are classified as "untouchable" or Dalits (IDSN, 2025), with an estimated five million Dalits residing in Bangladesh.

Dalit social isolation is further cemented by the historical association of a substantial portion of Dalit identity with stigmatized labour jobs, especially those related to sanitation. The "spoiled identity"

hypothesis developed by Erving Goffman provides a useful framework for comprehending this phenomenon. According to Goffman (1963), certain characteristics or actions might exclude a person from complete social acceptance, resulting in a "spoiled" identity. The social identities of Dalits are based on roles that are considered "impure" by prevailing social norms, which further contributes to their marginalization. Owing to these prejudices' enduring effects, Dalits have come up with innovative ways to renegotiate their oppressed identities, such as changing careers.

The present study underscores the challenges that Dalits continue to face, including widespread discriminatory practices and socio-cultural exclusion. These challenges have led to a significant shift in the occupational trajectories of Dalit individuals, as they increasingly seek alternatives to the traditional tasks of sweeping, sanitation, and pork farming. This transformation is partly driven by governmental and non-governmental interventions, which have sought to address the socio-economic conditions of Dalit communities. Notably, the transition to alternative occupations is also influenced by the desire to escape the impure status historically associated with their traditional labour, as framed within Louis Dumont's purity-impurity theory (1970). According to Dumont, social divisions based on purity and impurity necessitate the separation of "pure" and "impure" categories, which has perpetuated Dalits' exclusion from mainstream society.

One significant factor contributing to these occupational shifts is the increasing educational engagement among Dalit populations. This shift aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's capital theory (1986), which suggests that various forms of capital - economic, social, cultural, and symbolic - play a crucial role in shaping individuals' social positions and their ability to navigate societal structures. In the context of Dalits, education serves as a form of cultural and symbolic capital that facilitates access to new economic opportunities, thereby altering their occupational landscapes.

Data from the present research highlights that Dalits, traditionally associated with occupations such as sanitation work, are diversifying into alternative employment sectors. This shift is attributed not only to changing societal attitudes but also to the growing political awareness, higher literacy rates, and greater participation in social and religious activities among the Dalit community. As a result, Dalits have witnessed a rise in income and a transformation in their living standards. Nevertheless, while these changes are noteworthy, they remain insufficient in overcoming the deep-seated inequalities faced by Dalits.

Despite the emergence of new economic opportunities, the Dalit community continues to encounter various forms of discrimination, both overt and subtle. The persistence of social stigmas and the systemic exclusion of Dalits indicate that the existing socio-political structures are insufficient to fully integrate them into the mainstream societal framework. This underscores the need for concerted efforts from both governmental and non-governmental sectors to address the socio-economic challenges faced by Dalits.

In conclusion, the evolving occupational patterns of Dalits in Bangladesh reflect the broader dynamics of social marginalization, poverty, and institutionalized discrimination that continue to shape their lives. While the shift in occupations has contributed to improving their socio-economic conditions, significant structural reforms are necessary to ensure that Dalits are not only included in the workforce but also afforded equal opportunities for advancement. Further, development initiatives should prioritize the voices of Dalits in the design and implementation of policies aimed at improving their socio-economic position. Only through such inclusive approaches can the long-standing social inequities faced by Dalits be meaningfully addressed, ensuring their full participation in society.

1.1 Research Questions

1. To what extent have the types of occupation have changed among the Dalits?
2. What are the traditional ideas/stigmas associated with Dalit communities' occupations?
3. How has the Dalit community changed because of the transformation in the nature of previous occupations?

2. Theoretical Context and Literature Review

In the research, we used Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital, Erving Goffman's stigma theory, and Louis Dumont's idea of purity and impurity. We performed both structured and unstructured interviews with the participants. This description is based on theoretical grounds. So, before starting to describe something, it is important to think about the points of view of different theorists who have looked into descriptive methodologies. Consequently, the description encompasses several types, methodologies, and applications, which are rigorously examined to formulate a literary perspective.

Naher and Hasan (2017) conducted a study on the Dalit community in urban areas of Bangladesh. It highlights their social, economic, and political conditions. The study analyzes the demographic representation of Dalits, appropriate census procedures for their enumeration, and proposals for their recognition. Members of the Dalit community primarily inhabit urban areas under state jurisdiction, often in impoverished conditions. Notwithstanding the increase in population, the condition of their dwellings remains inadequate. Their living conditions are unsanitary, and systematic attempts to improve these situations are minimal. The study reveals that Dalits predominantly participate in manual cleaning and sanitation professions. They are spotted operating in hospitals, educational institutions, and various other organizations. Despite their qualifications, individuals have challenges in securing advanced employment opportunities in both public and private sectors. As a result, their economic contributions are limited. Dalits encounter barriers in accessing healthcare services owing to stigma and marginalization. They often rely on specific medical practitioners, indicating limited choices. This particular writing helped to understand the traditional jobs of the Dalits.

Islam and Parvez, in their 2013 work *Dalit Initiatives in Bangladesh*, analyze the various forms of injustice faced by the Dalit community and the repercussions for their social, political, and economic conditions. Their inquiry analyzes the impact of caste-based identification on Dalits' access to education, employment, healthcare, justice, housing, and religious practices. The book highlights systematic exclusion that perpetuates their marginalization.

A survey reported on by Chowdhury (2009) indicated that 43% of Dalits are engaged in sanitation and cleaning occupations. Among this category, 22% are involved in agriculture, whereas 14% of Dalits are employed in tea plantations. The survey revealed that 42% of Dalit households own an average annual income of approximately 36,000 Bangladeshi Taka, 18% earn around 30,000 Taka, 17% earn between 60,000 and 90,000 Taka, and 12% have a yearly income between 90,000 and 120,000 Taka. Only 11% of Dalit households reported an income exceeding 120,000 Taka.² Dalits face significant barriers to education, housing, and cultural engagement due to widespread societal discrimination and economic inequality. Despite their efforts, Dalits are often relegated to traditional occupations, hence perpetuating their impoverished conditions.

Sultana and Subedi (2015) delineate the conditions of Hindu Dalit households in Bangladesh as characterized by historical marginalization and exploitation. Caste-based discrimination deprives Hindu Dalits of educational, housing, and employment prospects. The presence of religious bias leads to systemic marginalization, affecting both Hindu and Muslim Dalits in Bangladesh. This article provided the understanding of religious seclusion of the Dalit Community in Dhaka.

Islam (2012) analyzed the economic conditions of the Santal and Oraon communities in the Barind region of Bangladesh. His studies reveal that these indigenous populations often experience exploitation and discrimination by dominant Muslim societies. This encompasses issues such as forced migration, fear of violence, and limited access to resources. The Santals and Oraons, traditionally engaged in agriculture, have diversified into various vocations such as manual labor, small-scale enterprises, and temporary employment, leading to incremental improvements in their economic conditions. However, these changes also impact their social and cultural lives, illustrating how economic revolutions touch

² US\$1 = 122 Bangladeshi taka, approximately.

broader aspects of human existence. This particular literature helped to understand the transition of livelihoods of the Dalits in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Chowdhury (2009) analyzed the socio-economic conditions and caste-based discrimination experienced by Hindu and Muslim Dalits in Bangladesh. His findings indicate that Dalits have restricted access to institutional support and opportunities. The insufficient educational attainment of Dalits, coupled with poor living conditions, underscores the widespread injustice they face. Hindu and Muslim Dalits are consigned to low-wage, manual labour, often lacking in essential needs such as education and sanitation.

Daize (2018) wrote about the challenges and efforts in Dalit identity formation and the modification of various social, economic and political realities. Despite constitutional safeguards against caste-based discrimination, Dalits persistently face social ostracism and systemic marginalization, leading to intricate issues in their social interactions. The study analyzes the diverse factors that contribute to these issues, encompassing culture, structure, politics, education, and economic conditions. Presently, Dalit's experience transformations in their traditional structures due to factors including access to higher education, economic progress, employment challenges, and mental health issues. It stresses how important it is for the world to recognize Dalit cultural history and supports development projects that give them modern amenities, better living conditions, better communication systems, and other improvements in their social and cultural lives in general. The younger generation is increasingly outspoken in promoting reforms and pursuing swift improvements. They seek education, employment, and healthcare services. If individuals have opportunities across many sectors, they will be able to work and improve their lives. This literature helped to understand the discriminations against Dalits and the reasons behind the change in the occupations.

3. Methodology of the Study

The study uses qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, analysis and presentation to address the research questions effectively.

3.1. Selection of Research Area

This study focuses on Dalit students at Dhaka University. The primary participants of this research are Dalit students who are actively engaged in education or employment. We conducted fieldwork at the dormitories of Dhaka University, where many individuals from the Dalit community are employed, primarily in sanitation positions. We additionally performed fieldwork in the Dalit communities of Bangshal and Hazaribagh. Dhaka University was chosen because it houses a significant number of Dalit students, facilitating access to diverse perspectives.

3.2. Sampling

In this research, purposive sampling has been used, where the researcher intentionally selects participants or sources directly relevant to the study's objectives (Robinson, 2023). This approach ensured that only individuals knowledgeable about or experienced in the topic were chosen. For this study, 120 participants were selected who had direct involvement or understanding of the research subject, ensuring comprehensive insights into the topic.

3.3. Sources of Data

This research employed both primary and secondary data sources:

Primary data were collected through interviews and observations conducted with students from various departments at Dhaka University who belonged to the Dalit community.

Additional (secondary) information was gathered from existing literature, including reports, books, journals, newspaper articles, online resources, and statistical documents. This provided a broader context for analysing the primary data.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

The data collection process is a critical aspect of this research, employing several techniques, including personal interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and ethnographic observation.

A significant portion of the data was gathered through interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility, where open-ended questions encouraged participants to share detailed insights. These interviews covered topics such as family background, employment history, individual experiences, and perceptions of societal conditions.

Semi-structured questionnaires helped collect qualitative data by providing predetermined questions while allowing space for additional responses based on participants' answers.

Field visits facilitated direct observation of the participants' behaviour and living conditions, allowing them to analyse their real-life situations comprehensively. Digital and physical tools. Various tools like field notes, audio recorders, and digital logs were used to ensure all data were documented accurately.

3.5. Language of the Research

We conducted our interviews in Bengali, later we translated all the transcripts into English. To avoid difficulties, we followed the language glossary used in Dalit community and rechecked our translations after completion of the process. In this case we kept out original hand written and digital transcripts in front of us.

3.6. Data Analysis Methods

The fieldwork for this research was completed on 24th July 2022. Before leaving the research site, we collected respondents' contact numbers for further clarification if necessary. This ensured the resolution of any ambiguities or unanswered questions. After completing the fieldwork, the we organized a collective discussion to finalize their collected data. Following this, the data underwent verification and analysis through various qualitative methods which includes case study analysis and life history and oral history analysis. Eight case studies were included to provide an in-depth analysis of specific scenarios, ensuring a robust understanding of the subject matter.

We have incorporated different case studies and with the help of the theories we explained the particular case. In case of life history analysis, we rearrange different topics thematically and explained that with the help of theories. Furthermore, data enriched through academic sources like books, articles, and online materials was incorporated for a more comprehensive analysis. The analysis applied both qualitative and quantitative methods. However, the primary focus was on qualitative analysis, with quantitative analysis employed where necessary to support insights.

3.7. Ethics Maintained in the Field

We have not hampered the time of the participants and did not harm a single living and non- living things while conducting the fieldwork.

Given practical limitations, some participants hesitated to answer sensitive questions fully or declined to engage in the survey due to their reservations. To mitigate this, we used pseudonyms to maintain anonymity, which proved effective in encouraging candid responses.

To avoid non-response bias in the field we spent time in the community before starting formal research. We were involved in informal conversations, attend local events, and communicated with community leaders already trusted by the community. In our case we built rapport to avoid biasness and in our study we took the help from the Dalit students to enter to the community. This helped participants feel safe and respected, making them more likely to respond and we did follow up interviews frequently therefore we got the responses we needed to conduct our research.

3.8. Research Validity

Ensuring the validity of the research was a key priority. To this end, necessary measures were taken to ensure that all collected data was authentic and relevant to the research objectives. Before conducting interviews, the research objective was clearly explained to participants to build trust and transparency. Additionally, participant consent was documented to avoid issues related to recording interviews or other privacy concerns. Challenges, such as reluctance or lack of comfort during interviews, were addressed by maintaining flexibility in the approach and providing participants with a safe environment for expression. To ensure the reliability of data, utmost attention was given to maintaining accuracy during collection and avoiding personal biases or misinterpretations during analysis.

3.9. Research Limitations

Despite efforts to maintain rigour, the researchers encountered certain limitations. Some participants were hesitant to fully engage in discussions due to the sensitive nature of the research topic. The findings also reflect contextual and economic constraints that shaped the participants' responses. Additionally, fieldwork opportunities were limited in scope, and variations in participant responses affected data consistency. While the research aimed to be comprehensive, these factors occasionally restricted its breadth and depth. Thus, opportunities for broader investigations and future refinements remain open.

4. Results

4.1. Changes in Occupation

It is evident from the research that because of various factors the professions of the Dalit community have been changed (Fieldwork, 2022).

Previous occupations

The majority of Dalit community members used to work as day labourers and still do that. Further analysis reveals that 80% of Dalits are engaged in manual labour, illustrating the persistence of economic marginalization. The other traditional occupation for them were 'sweeper', 'barber', 'bede (water gypsy)', 'medicine seller', 'hawker,' which were more or less stigmatized and people see these kinds of jobs as dirty jobs (Fieldwork 2022).

Current occupations

Now their occupation has been changed drastically and it is seen that different member of the same family are pursuing different career. For example, within the same family, members might pursue different occupations, such as business, agriculture, or salaried employment, depending on their skills and opportunities. They are now involved in public and private sectors.

4.1. Impact of the Transformation in Occupations

Increased Income Level:

Changes in occupation have led to an increase in income levels. In different regions, many day labourers have transitioned to other types of jobs, including salaried positions. For example, certain Dalit

individuals are now employed in public and private sectors, which has significantly contributed to their financial growth. Field data reveals that families with an income between 40,000–49,000 BDT often have multiple income earners. This diversification in occupations has resulted in varying income levels within the same household.

Changes in Annual Expenses

In case of annual expenses, it is observed that the expenses have also increased as the income level increases. Most Dalits are now spending more than the previous time. The increased spending among Dalit communities is a multifaceted development that signals economic advancement. As income levels rise, so too does the potential for dignity, and participation in the broader societal mainstream. Ensuring this growth is equitable and sustainable remains a key objective for scholars, policymakers, and civil society.

Changes in Savings

It was found that now the saving capability among Dalits has increased. It is evident from the data that the previous annual savings were 5000-7000 BDT, which is now 20,000-30,000 BDT, only because of the changing occupations among Dalits.

Here are the changes found in the Dalit communities in terms of occupation and economic status. But there are many underlying factors behind these changing occupations which have to be acknowledged.

Changes in Life-style

The improvement in economic conditions has had a profound impact on various aspects of the Dalit community's lifestyle. Changes in their occupational patterns have directly influenced their overall social and political lives.

Changes in Education

The transformation of occupations within the Dalit community has led to significant changes in their approach to education. They now place greater importance on education and encourage their children to pursue it. For example, as a result of improved income, Dalit families can now enroll their children in reputable schools and colleges, fostering better opportunities for their future. This marks a notable positive shift in the community's outlook toward education.

4.2 Reasons Behind the Transformation of Occupation and Economic Status in the Dalit Community

This section analyzes the reasons for changes in occupation and economic status within the Dalit community, based on field observations and evidence. The impact of modernization, urbanization, and education has played a significant role in these changes. Owing to these factors, members of the Dalit community have gradually moved away from traditional manual labour and have diversified into various occupations, resulting in economic transformation.

4.2.1 Role of Education

Education has emerged as a key factor driving this transformation. Compared to the past, there is a noticeable increase in the emphasis on education within the Dalit community. Government and private initiatives have facilitated greater access to education for this group. As a result, many Dalit families are now prioritizing the education of their children. This focus on education has opened doors for better employment opportunities in diverse sectors, significantly improving their economic condition. The awareness and motivation to pursue education are reshaping the socioeconomic status of the Dalit community, enabling them to break free from traditional occupational limitations.

4.2.2. Housing Transformation

Over time, there has been significant improvement in transportation infrastructure. As a result, many members of the Dalit community have migrated to various regions for better housing opportunities and have started engaging in different occupations. Consequently, their income levels have increased, leading to improvements in their economic condition and overall quality of family life.

4.2.3. Developmental Activities

Governmental and non-governmental organizations have undertaken various initiatives for the development of the Dalit community. For example, approximately 58 crore³ BDT has been allocated to address housing issues for this community. This has led to noticeable progress in improving the housing conditions of the Dalit population.

4.2.4. Political Awareness

Over time, the Dalit community has experienced a rise in political awareness. They are increasingly conscious of their rights, actively engaging in various movements to secure them. For instance, community members participate in protests and hold awareness programs to educate others about their rights. This growing awareness has enabled them to challenge discrimination and demand their entitlements. Consequently, political consciousness within the Dalit community is playing a pivotal role in shaping their social and economic progress.

Their living conditions are unstable and risky due to a lack of basic utilities like clean water, power, and sanitary facilities, congested settlements with inadequate housing and infrastructure, and constant threats of eviction. Many are compelled to look for alternative sources of income that may offer slightly greater social or financial security due to healthcare disparities, such as restricted access to affordable and high-quality medical treatment. Additionally, generational social exclusion and structural poverty continue to affect Dalit people, influencing their evolving professional paths and means of subsistence. Because caste-based labor is still stigmatized, especially in sectors like sanitation, many younger Dalits have turned down these positions in favor of more respectable and dignified alternatives (Fieldwork, 2022).

5. Discussion

“Education brings back the stability in our (Dalits) lives”

Ranthu Chandra Das (pseudonym), a 38-year-old, represents this transformation well. His family has benefitted greatly from education. One of his relatives is employed as a master's officer at Dhaka University, having passed a general recruitment exam. Ranthu himself is pursuing higher education through an open university program. He states, “Even while working this job, I continue to study because education provides opportunities to find other jobs and improve earnings.” Ranthu's family reflects this upward mobility. His younger brother works at a private hospital, another is studying biotechnology at Dhaka University, and another sibling supports the family financially through skilled labor. Ranthu proudly notes, “Because my brothers have been able to study, they have stable jobs now. I hope my younger brother completes his education and secures a government position. Although we struggle to cover school costs, it's worth the effort.” This progress is evident in the aspirations of Ranthu's youngest sibling, currently in high school, who dreams of passing the SSC exams and pursuing higher education for a better future.

This case highlights how changes in economic status and a focus on education are collectively driving substantial improvement in the lives of the Dalit community members. According to Pierre Bourdieu's

³ 1 crore is 10,000,000.

Capital theory here “Education” worked as the capital and thus worked behind the reason of the transformation of occupation.

“Now society see us as human not Dalits”

Owing to their historical association with sanitation work, members of the Dalit community have made attempts to break away from their traditional roles (Ambedkar, 1948). However, they often face societal resistance and cultural barriers that hinder their integration into broader social structures. In rural areas, Dalits frequently find themselves marginalized from community resources and facilities, exacerbating their social isolation. Prejudices and superstitions persist within the community, impeding broader social development. These societal barriers often stem from entrenched discriminatory practices, limiting the community’s access to opportunities in employment and business. For instance, Dalits are often subject to stigma and segregation, which further marginalizes them (Goffman, 1963). Despite these challenges, improved economic conditions have begun to dismantle some of these barriers. Superstition is gradually being replaced by more progressive ideas, and discriminatory practices like untouchability are diminishing in some areas. Increased literacy among the Dalit community has positively influenced their social standing, enabling younger generations to pursue education and participate in economic activities.

Durga Das (60), a resident of Mymensingh, has been engaged in cleaning work for over 37 years, earning a monthly salary of BDT 45,000. His four children are receiving education and are free from the burden of continuing their father’s occupation. Two of his children are employed in respected positions at public institutions, and Das aspires for his remaining children to achieve similar success. He believes that access to education has allowed his family to move away from traditional stigmatized jobs, reducing societal discrimination.

This case can be explained by Goffman’s stigma theory (1963) where he described that individuals are often excluded from full social acceptance due to perceived "spoiled" identities or attributes. Societal norms shape the ideas of “normal” (Goffman, 1963) and according to the case stated above being a cleaning worker is not a normal job. Because of the changing occupations among Dalits, gradually progressive ideas took the place of previous superstitions.

“My job makes me feel included”

Cultural practices among the Dalit community are often shaped by their historical exclusion and marginalization. Despite this, they actively participate in Hindu religious festivals like Durga Puja, Kali Puja, and Saraswati Puja. Additionally, they observe unique rituals related to birth, marriage, and death within their community. However, modern economic advancements have begun influencing these traditions.

Radhika Das (26) mentioned, “We celebrate all Hindu festivals just like any other Bengali Hindu family, but because of my Dalit identity it was difficult to take part in the cultural and religious activities, but since when I have started my job as a banker it has become very easy for me to take part in in activities like these.

Improved economic conditions because of changing occupations have also allowed Dalits to expand their participation in cultural activities. They can now afford to host and attend grander festivals, enhancing their cultural and social lives. However, some traditional rituals have either disappeared or undergone significant transformation due to socio-economic pressures. According to Louis Dumont’s Purity and Impurity theory now because of the contribution of the Dalits in religious and cultural celebration has blurred the boundary between Purity and impurity of the identities.

“Politics is still far away from us.”

Members of the Dalit community are generally not very active or visible in mainstream politics. They are often excluded from political participation, which leaves them unable to benefit from the opportunities that political engagement can provide. The stigma associated with their caste often prevents them from being involved in political or business leadership roles, as they are not widely accepted in these spheres (Goffman, 1963). In many cases, Dalits have reported that business people from higher castes dominate local leadership and marginalize them. However, recent developments have brought some improvements. Dalits are now beginning to participate in different types of professions and leadership activities.

Parvati Das (43) remarked, We are rarely involved in politics. Unity among us is limited, and as a result, collective actions for our rights often falter. However, whenever someone faces a serious issue, like illness or other crises, we come together as a community.

Recently, government initiatives have focused on the development of the Dalit community, but the benefits of these efforts are yet to reach the grassroots level. The community remains concerned about the inadequate distribution and management of resources allocated for their welfare.

The structure of society and the economic capital of the elite encompass wealth, assets, trade, and commerce. According to Bourdieu's theory (1986), this economic capital plays a critical role in shaping the way of life for the elite.

Owing to changing occupations, the Dalit community has shown significant progress in education, access to employment, and participation in social and cultural events, all of which have contributed positively to their economic and social status. The improvement in their economic condition due to the changes happening in their occupations which has brought about noticeable changes in their way of life. As a result, there has been an increase in educational attainment, greater participation in social and cultural celebrations, and enhanced political awareness within the Dalit community.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has critically examined the changes in the socio-economic conditions due to the transformation in the occupations of the Dalit community, focusing on their evolving identities and livelihoods. The narrative combines anthropological analysis and literary discussions to explore the culture, history, and transformations within the Dalit community. Using diverse sources of data, this research provides a comprehensive depiction of the subject. The study highlights that traditionally, Dalits have been associated with sanitation-related work, day labour work and many other occupations which are not considered as normal in the society but through various governmental and non-governmental initiatives, global influences, and increased awareness, members of the community are diversifying into other such as occupations like, business, entrepreneurship and government and private-sector employment.

There are some limitations as well, this research only explores the changes in the occupations and the socio-economic impact of these changes which is not adequate to understand the life-style of Dalit communities. This research includes only the Dalit people from urban areas, therefore the changes in rural areas in the communities of Dalits are not present and lastly it is a small-scale analysis which only focus on the particular aspect, but the macro-level analysis is absent from this study.

While the current study provides valuable insights into changing occupations among Dalits, future research could expand the sample size and diversity to enhance the generalizability of the findings across different populations or contexts. Moreover, exploring Dalit communities from different aspects in more depth could provide a richer understanding and it will help the policy makers to understand the Dalit community well and implement the necessary policies that will help the Dalits to have a better life.

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Are You a Dessert Pervert? A Study on the Cultural Modelling of Western Desserts at the Mercy of Asian Sugar Addicts

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Abstract

This research examines how Western bakery and confectionary is interpreted by Asian and Chinese cultural mental models of desserts, resulting in similar yet very distinctly different new treats to enjoy. Though historical research on the introduction of foreign food, this paper discusses how they are culturally assimilated by the new culture, finally even becoming a national dish. It answers the questions what makes a dessert special to the recipient culture, and why some desserts become commonplace while others continue to hold a place in the hearts and minds of dessert lovers as special, high-end treats? The researchers made great health sacrifices in the data collection process, by having to identify and taste various Asian cakes, then figuring out the flavour and appearances of the original Western source. Our theoretical framework draws on cultural modelling (CM) of perverted Western desserts, through which we conduct a qualitative study of the Asian concept of the sweet food category.

Keywords: cultural assimilation; cultural modelling; sugar addiction; Western and Asian desserts

1. Introduction

The act of eating has long been associated with pleasure across all living beings, but it is perhaps most pronounced in humans. Unlike other species, humans possess the ability to manipulate raw ingredients through various culinary techniques, resulting in complex flavors and textures. This ability has evolved over centuries, contributing to gastronomy as an art form that prioritizes pleasure at its core (Montanari, 2006). Among the diverse categories of food, desserts hold a particularly esteemed position due to their universally appealing sweet taste.

In cultures worldwide, the significance of desserts is reflected in idioms and proverbs. For instance, the adage "Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first," attributed to Ernestine Ulmer, underscores the desirability of sweets. Literary figures such as Wendell Berry have also poetically expressed the pleasures of eating, further emphasizing the cultural importance of desserts. Given this, the present research explores the processes of cultural adaptation and assimilation in relation to foreign desserts, analyzing the factors that contribute to their successful integration into new markets.

With China and India emerging as two of the world's largest consumer markets, understanding the reception of Western desserts in these regions provides valuable insights into broader patterns of cultural adaptation (Sen, 2015). This study examines the perspectives of younger consumers, assessing the extent to which foreign desserts continue to be embraced by new generations. The research begins with a literature review to contextualize historical and contemporary cases of successful dessert assimilation, ultimately identifying key factors that contribute to their global success. We explore the role of desserts within different cultural frameworks, considering their historical development, symbolic meanings, and contemporary transformations due to globalization. Additionally, it examines the intersection between food and social cohesion, questioning whether the rise of global food markets has altered the authenticity of these culinary traditions.

2. Literature Review

Sweet foods hold a unique place in human culture, often symbolizing love, celebration, and social bonding. Research has demonstrated that desserts evoke positive emotions and are associated with happiness and nostalgia (Sipple *et al.*, 2022; Kedzierski & Hernandez, 2022; Chow *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, their psychological impact extends beyond consumption; Riquelme, Robert and Arancibia (2022) found that merely hearing the word "dessert" can evoke pleasant associations, even among elderly individuals.

2.1. A Brief History of Western Desserts

In ancient Greece, cheesecake - dating back over 4,000 years - was considered an energy source and was served at weddings and athletic events (Dalby, 2003). The Romans later adapted this recipe, introducing ingredients such as crushed cheese and eggs, which were baked under a hot brick. As the Roman Empire expanded, variations of cheesecake spread across Europe, eventually evolving into distinct regional styles. Italians favored ricotta-based versions, while Germans used cottage cheese, and Americans introduced cream cheese as the defining ingredient of New York-style cheesecake in the C19th (Kraus, May & Hamblin, 2011).

Europe's diverse culinary landscape is reflected in its rich dessert traditions. Early European desserts were crafted using natural sweeteners such as honey and dried fruits. Sugar, introduced during the Middle Ages, significantly transformed confectionery practices. Affluent individuals enjoyed delicacies such as preserved fruits, gingerbread, marzipan, and jellies, with the Tudors famously using marzipan to create elaborate edible sculptures (Albala, 2011).

The Industrial Revolution marked a pivotal shift in dessert production, enabling mass manufacturing, preservation, and commercialization. Cakes, biscuits, gelatins, and puddings became widely available, evolving from artisanal products into commercial goods. The 19th and 20th centuries saw the introduction of iconic confectionery items such as chocolate bars, toffees, marshmallows, and ice cream novelties (Mintz, 1985; Lambert, 2013). Mass production made sweets more accessible, fueling their popularity across socioeconomic classes.

To understand better the mechanisms of cultural adaptation, this study examines two case studies: ice cream and cake, both of which have successfully transcended cultural boundaries. Ice cream's origins can be traced back to China as early as 3000 BCE. It was later refined in C17th Italy, where it became a staple of European cuisine. Historical records suggest that ice cream was introduced to England by the 1670s, with the earliest English recipe appearing in Mary Eales' 1718 cookbook (Davidson, 1999). In the United States, ice cream gained prominence in the C18th century, particularly after the American Revolution, as French culinary influences permeated American society (Stallings, 2009). By the C19th century, technological advancements facilitated widespread consumption, establishing ice cream as a global delicacy (Ayto, 2002).

Food historians have documented ice cream's transformation from an elite indulgence to a universally enjoyed dessert. Hesse (1981) notes that the first American ice cream recipe was published in *The New Art of Cookery* in 1792, signaling its growing acceptance. Similarly, Dickson (1972) describes how Parisian cafés played a crucial role in democratizing frozen desserts, making them accessible to a broader population. Today, ice cream remains a key example of cultural adaptation, with flavours and formulations tailored to regional tastes.

From the accidental invention of the Tarte Tatin in 1889 France to the refined elegance of Austria's Sachertorte, desserts represent more than indulgence; they symbolize national identity, social bonding, and even economic prestige. As food historian Krondl (2011) describes, the Sachertorte is "... an edible manifestation of an urban, cosmopolitan Vienna, as smooth and fitted as a little black cocktail dress."

Its deep association with Viennese heritage underscores the broader relationship between food and culture.

The European dessert landscape is deeply intertwined with artisanal craftsmanship and historical influences. In Austria, beyond the famed Sachertorte, the Fåchertorte, "... a layered combination of yellow cake, poppy seeds, and apples wrapped in brioche" remains a lesser-known but equally treasured confection (*ibid.*). Meanwhile, in the Middle East, desserts such as baklava, with its "... thousand and one sweet layers," demonstrate the historical importance of nuts, honey, and filo pastry in the region's culinary identity (Davidson, 2014). Similarly, Japan's kasutera cake, introduced by Portuguese traders in the C16th century, exemplifies how foreign influences shape local food traditions (Hosking, 2015).

The evolution of European desserts extends into modern culinary experimentation, particularly in the realm of molecular gastronomy. Pioneered by Ferran Adrià of El Bulli, this movement challenges traditional forms by deconstructing flavors and textures. Krondl (2011) describes how Adrià's creations included "... oysters with gin and tonic foam" and "... seared foie gras served with cherries and octopus," reflecting a scientific approach to dessert-making. Today, such innovations influence global dessert trends, from London's Eccles cakes at St. John Bakery - served uniquely with Lancashire cheese - to the Ispahan croissant at Pierre Hermé in Paris, which combines classic French pastry with raspberries and marzipan.

2.2. Globalization and the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Desserts

With increased mobility and international trade, desserts have transcended their places of origin, adapting to new cultural landscapes. For instance, the honey cakes of Prague, traditionally found in Central European cafés like Café Savoy, now exist in various iterations across the globe. Italian gelato, once exclusive to Italy, is now a staple in dessert parlours worldwide, often adapted to local taste preferences. Even cannoli, a Sicilian pastry, has seen variations that incorporate different fillings and toppings outside its original context (Capatti & Montanari, 2003).

A particularly illustrative example of cultural adaptation is Sweden's Prinsesstårta (Princess Cake), a layered dessert of sponge cake, jam, vanilla custard, and whipped cream covered in green marzipan. At Stockholm's Taxinge Slott Café, this cake remains a visual and culinary icon.

Meanwhile, in Poland, paczki - yeast doughnuts filled with jam or chocolate - are not just a delicacy but a food tied to tradition, particularly on Fat Thursday, a pre-Lenten festival. The poppy-seed cake (Makowiec), traditionally served during Easter and Christmas, further exemplifies how desserts reinforce cultural rituals (Wojciechowska, 2017).

2.3. Desserts and Social Bonding: The Role of Cultural Models

Cultural models (CM) are defined as cognitive structures and shared patterns of behaviour that shape how individuals within a society perceive and interact with the world (Holland & Quinn, 1987). They provide a framework for understanding the deeply ingrained ways in which food is produced, consumed, and valued within different cultural contexts. According to Rozin (1996), food attitudes and preferences result from a complex interaction of biological, psychological, and cultural influences.

CMs also dictate food trends, influencing the rise of health-conscious alternatives such as organic, vegan, or plant-based desserts. In modern food culture, the preference for "healthier" desserts such as dairy-free ice cream or sugar-free chocolate is an extension of broader societal shifts towards wellness and ethical consumption (Arbit, Ruby & Rozin, 2017). However, individuals often remain unaware that their food choices are culturally conditioned, assuming instead that their preferences are universal rather than contextually shaped.

In the context of desserts, cultural models shape how individuals experience sweetness, pleasure, and social bonding. The shared consumption of desserts reinforces group identity and belonging, as observed in rituals surrounding birthday cakes, wedding cakes, and celebratory pastries. Desserts, in particular, carry implicit meanings associated with celebration, luxury, and hospitality. For example, in European societies, desserts are often linked to generosity and gift-giving. The practice of offering sweets to guests or bringing a cake to a gathering is a culturally ingrained norm, reinforcing the idea that food serves as a gesture of care and friendship. This is reflected in the popularity of shared desserts in public spaces, such as shopping centers and street cafés, where people gather to enjoy pastries, chocolates, or ice cream together. The act of sharing food, rather than merely consuming it alone, is central to the social experience of desserts (Fischler, 1988).

Consequently, food consumption is more than a biological necessity; it is deeply embedded in social structures. As Parker and Freeman (2005) suggest, the act of sharing dessert is deeply embedded in European social practices, often serving as a medium for strengthening relationships, fostering social cohesion, and even reconciling historical tensions. For example, Europeans not only enjoy desserts with close friends but also with individuals from cultures they once colonized, highlighting how food can act as a bridge in post-colonial interactions.

While the consumption of desserts is frequently accompanied by messages of moderation and restraint - particularly in contemporary health-conscious discourse - their social and symbolic significance remains profound. As Rozin (1996) notes, food is not merely sustenance but a vehicle for psychological and cultural meaning. In the case of desserts, these meanings are intertwined with rituals of pleasure, hospitality, and generosity. This section explores how CMs influence dessert consumption, how food meanings vary across societies, and the tensions between the pleasures and dangers associated with indulgence.

Finally, food consumption is linked to status and identity. Research suggests that consumers perceive foreign desserts as more luxurious or desirable than local counterparts. Brunsø, Grunert and Bredahl (1996) argue that while the tangible qualities of food matter, perceived quality - driven by branding and origin - often carries greater significance. This phenomenon explains why French macarons or Belgian chocolates are viewed as high-status desserts, even when comparable products exist locally. Moreover, desserts play a role in shaping cultural identity and well-being. Guptill, Copelton and Lucal (2022) highlight how restricted access to culturally significant foods can lead to cultural stress, particularly among immigrant populations. In cases where traditional desserts are unavailable, individuals may experience a disconnect from their heritage, reinforcing the importance of preserving food traditions in a globalized world.

2.4. The Pleasures and Dangers of Dessert Consumption: Understanding Perversion

From a sociocultural perspective, dessert consumption can be seen as an act of resistance against dietary restrictions. Contemporary discourses on health often emphasize moderation, calorie-counting, and guilt associated with indulgence. However, the pleasure derived from eating desserts - particularly in social setting - suggests that food is more than a sum of its nutritional components. The phrase "to hell with the calories" encapsulates the idea that the social experience of eating dessert outweighs concerns about dietary restraint. People derive emotional satisfaction from indulging in "forbidden" treats. This perspective aligns with cultural models of food, where pleasure and restriction exist in a delicate balance. This aligns with Brillat-Savarin's (1825) assertion that food should be enjoyed as a fundamental aspect of human pleasure rather than merely evaluated through the lens of nutrition.

While desserts bring joy and cultural continuity, concerns over sugar addiction and overconsumption have prompted debates about their role in modern diets. Studies indicate that sugar triggers the brain's reward centers similarly to addictive substances, leading to cravings and habitual overindulgence (Avena, Rada & Hoebel, 2008). Excessive consumption of sugary desserts is linked to health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and metabolic disorders.

At the same time, dessert consumption can be viewed as an act of pleasure and resistance against dietary restrictions. Desserts are more than mere confections; they are vessels of tradition, social connection, and evolving consumer preferences. The globalization of desserts demonstrates how culinary traditions adapt while maintaining their cultural roots. However, as foreign influences shape dessert consumption in emerging markets like China and India, questions arise about the longevity of these adaptations. Will global marketing redefine traditional palates, or will cultural heritage prevail in shaping dessert preferences?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the phenomenon of successful and enduring foreign-origin desserts that have been embraced as national favorites by youths in China and India. Qualitative research is particularly suited for this investigation, as it allows for a deeper understanding of cultural preferences, consumer perceptions, and the socio-cultural dynamics influencing food consumption (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Given that China and India represent the world's largest consumer markets, both in terms of domestic populations and global diasporas (Kshetri, 2013), these countries provide a rich context for examining cross-cultural dessert preferences.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Fournier's (1998) relationship theory, which examines the emotional and symbolic connections consumers form with brands and products. Fournier's framework suggests that consumer-brand relationships evolve over time and are shaped by cultural and individual experiences. Applying this theory to the realm of food consumption, we investigate how foreign-origin desserts have been adapted and localized to create a sense of cultural belonging and widespread national appeal.

3.3. Sampling and Data Collection

The research employs purposive sampling, selecting key informants who are Chinese and Indian youths with a demonstrated interest in desserts and active participation in food-related discussions on social media platforms. Purposive sampling ensures that respondents possess relevant knowledge and experience to contribute meaningful insights.

Data were collected through semi-structured focus group discussions, a method well-suited for capturing diverse perspectives and uncovering shared themes. The research team, composed of scholars from Chinese, French (Western European), and Indian backgrounds, facilitated these discussions, ensuring a nuanced and cross-culturally informed approach. A discussion guide with open-ended questions was developed to explore the participants' favorite foreign-origin desserts and the specific localized adaptations that contribute to their appeal. A total of 14 mainland Chinese, 6 Taiwanese Chinese and 13 Indian young people were interviewed for the project.

Each respondent was asked to name a single foreign-origin dessert that they perceived as having been fully assimilated into their national culture. Follow-up questions probed their rationale for this perception, including identifying the unique "wow factors" that contribute to the dessert's success within their culture. This approach aligns with prior studies on food globalization and cultural adaptation (Mintz, 1996).

3.4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and categorize recurring themes and patterns emerging from the discussions. A systematic coding process was used to analyze responses, allowing for the

recognition of key factors contributing to the cultural assimilation of foreign desserts. Themes were categorized based on elements such as flavour adaptation, ingredient modifications, branding strategies, and emotional associations with national identity. A total of nine Chinese desserts and three Indian desserts were identified through this process.

Comparative analysis was then conducted to highlight similarities and differences between the two countries in terms of dessert preferences, adaptation processes, and consumer perceptions. This cross-cultural comparison provides valuable insights into the broader phenomenon of localized food globalization, illustrating how foreign desserts are integrated into national culinary identities.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent before participating in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process, adhering to ethical guidelines for qualitative research. The study was conducted in accordance with institutional review board (IRB) guidelines to ensure ethical integrity.

By employing a qualitative approach grounded in relationship theory, this study offers a culturally rich analysis of how foreign-origin desserts become embedded in national identities. The combination of focus group discussions and thematic analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing dessert preferences and their successful localization in China and India. Future research may expand upon these findings by incorporating a broader demographic sample and quantitative methods to assess market trends more extensively.

4. Findings and Analysis

It is important to note that Indian desserts are not just about the food; there are the stories, the history, and the cultural tapestry that each dish represents. There are several desserts in India that have originated from Persia (Iran). The following examples emerged from our discussion, and constitute the core description on which we based our subsequent analysis.

4.1. Dessert Selection and Cultural Association

Respondents in both China and India identified foreign-origin desserts that have become deeply integrated into national food culture. In China, desserts such as egg tarts (originating from Portugal), matcha-flavored pastries (influenced by Japan), and tiramisu (Italy) were frequently mentioned. Indian respondents highlighted gulab jamun (with Persian influences), jalebi (Middle Eastern origin), and Black Forest cake (German origin) as desserts widely considered to be part of their local cuisine.

4.2. Adaptation Strategies

A key theme in the findings was the adaptation process, which allowed these desserts to be embraced as national favourites. Respondents highlighted several adaptation strategies:

- Flavour Modification: many desserts were altered to incorporate locally favored ingredients, such as red bean paste in Chinese pastries or cardamom in Indian sweets.
- Texture Adjustments: some desserts were reformulated to match local preferences, such as making egg tarts less sweet for Chinese consumers.
- Branding and Marketing: local brands often emphasized the desserts' connection to national traditions, further cementing their cultural belonging.

4.3. Emotional and Social Factors

The success of these foreign desserts was linked to emotional and social factors. Many respondents associated these desserts with childhood memories, family celebrations, and cultural rituals, reinforcing their status as local delicacies. Additionally, the role of social media was highlighted as instrumental in popularizing and sustaining the appeal of these desserts, particularly among younger generations.

4.4. Comparative Insights

While both Chinese and Indian youths embraced foreign-origin desserts, differences were observed in adaptation strategies. Chinese respondents emphasized subtle modifications that preserved the original flavors, whereas Indian respondents highlighted the importance of integrating local spices and textures to create a fusion product. Moreover, globalization and urbanization were noted as key factors driving dessert consumption patterns in both countries.

5. Discussion and Managerial Implications

By employing a qualitative approach grounded in relationship theory, this study offers a culturally rich analysis of how foreign-origin desserts become embedded in national identities. The combination of focus group discussions and thematic analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing dessert preferences and their successful localization in China and India. Future research may expand upon these findings by incorporating a broader demographic sample and quantitative methods to assess market trends more extensively.

Qualitative data gathered from experience-sharing sessions with dessert enthusiasts in China and India reveals several critical adaptations made to foreign desserts to align with local preferences and conditions. Firstly, ingredient adjustments are commonly driven by the availability and convenience of local resources. For instance, ingredients originally used in foreign recipes may be substituted with locally accessible alternatives that fulfil similar functions. Taste profiles are modified according to regional flavour preferences and the availability of raw materials, reflecting a nuanced adaptation to local palates. Moreover, cooking methods are often tailored to fit the prevalent lifestyle and the utensils and equipment commonly used in the locality. This includes modifications in preparation techniques and cooking processes that align with local practices and available technology.

Packaging is another crucial aspect that undergoes adaptation to resonate with local cultural norms, consumption habits, and lifestyle. Effective packaging must reflect local aesthetics and practical needs, enhancing the product's appeal and functionality within the specific cultural context. The successful introduction of foreign products and services, such as cars, machinery, and various service businesses, necessitates similar considerations for long-term success in a globalised market.

This involves not only adjusting raw materials and production methods - such as incorporating local skills, machinery, and tools - but also aligning with local ergonomic designs, sizes, and shapes. Ensuring that packaging meets local cultural and consumption preferences is equally important.

From a managerial perspective, these adaptations have several implications. First, companies must invest in market research to understand local preferences and cultural norms, ensuring that packaging and product modifications align with consumer expectations. Managers should establish partnerships with local suppliers and production facilities to facilitate the integration of region-specific ingredients and materials, which can enhance efficiency and reduce costs. Additionally, adapting production methods to utilise local machinery and tools can optimise manufacturing processes and support the development of a sustainable supply chain. Furthermore, understanding local ergonomic and design preferences can guide product development to better meet consumer needs and preferences, potentially increasing market acceptance and customer satisfaction. In essence, a comprehensive strategy that

integrates local insights into packaging, ingredient selection, and production processes is essential for the successful and sustainable introduction of foreign products into new markets.

6. Conclusion

Despite the outlined managerial implications, this research is not without its limitations. One primary limitation is the reliance on qualitative data, which may not fully capture the breadth and depth of local preferences and cultural norms across diverse regions. Additionally, the generalisability of findings may be constrained by the specific markets studied, limiting the applicability of insights to other geographic or demographic contexts. The effectiveness of local partnerships and adaptations is also influenced by dynamic market conditions and evolving consumer preferences, which may not be fully accounted for in static research. For further research, a more comprehensive approach could include quantitative studies to validate qualitative findings and assess their broader applicability. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into how local preferences and production methods evolve over time. Exploring case studies from a wider range of industries and regions may also offer a more nuanced understanding of how adaptations impact market success. Finally, incorporating feedback from consumers and local partners through iterative research could enhance the practical relevance of findings and support more effective strategy development.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Chinese Youths expert informants: Mrs. Pushpa Khimesra, an Indian dessert enthusiast and hobbyist pastry chef (see <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/foods-you-thought-were-of-indian-origin-but-arent-1474267809-1>).

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Pentecostalism and Its Implications on Social-Economic Development in Post-Independence Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of Pentecostalism on Nigeria's socio-economic development since independence, with a focus on how Pentecostal churches foster economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, education, and social values. Anchored in Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1930), the research views Pentecostal teachings on hard work, discipline, and divine reward as drivers of entrepreneurial ambition and financial independence. Many Pentecostal churches offer practical skills training in areas like tailoring, ICT, farming, and small business development, thereby promoting a form of spiritualized capitalism rooted in religious ethics. Additionally, using Social Capital Theory, the study examines how Pentecostal congregations foster strong social networks built on trust, shared values, and mutual support. Through fellowship, charity, and community service, Pentecostalism enhances social cohesion and collective responsibility. However, the study also critiques the excessive focus on prosperity in some Pentecostal teachings, which may fuel materialism, widen the gap between clergy and laity, and divert attention from structural poverty and inequality. The findings underscore Pentecostalism's potential to drive positive change, but also warn against imbalances that could hinder inclusive development. A more holistic theological and social approach is recommended—one that merges spiritual growth, economic upliftment, and communal care for national transformation.

Keywords: community participation, entrepreneurship, Pentecostalism, prosperity gospel, socio-economic development

1. Introduction

This study explores how Pentecostalism - one of the fastest-growing Christian movements in Nigeria - has shaped the nation's social and economic development since independence in 1960. Pentecostalism is known for its lively worship, emphasis on personal encounters with God, and belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. Since its rise in Nigeria, the movement has gone beyond religious practices to influence values, social behaviour, and economic practices (Obadare, 2023; Omenyo, 2021).

Many Pentecostal churches have introduced programs that promote self-reliance, personal development, and economic empowerment. These include training in entrepreneurship, support for education, and various forms of charity aimed at improving people's lives. In doing so, Pentecostalism has played a role in reshaping family structures, encouraging youth development, and boosting community participation. It has empowered many Nigerians to take charge of their economic futures and has introduced new ideas about success and progress (Ukah, 2022).

However, critics point out that Pentecostalism's emphasis on prosperity messages - often called "prosperity gospel" - can lead to unhealthy materialism and may widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Some argue that this focus on individual success can take attention away from addressing broader social and economic inequalities (Adedibu, 2020a). This study, therefore, aims to investigate whether Pentecostalism has ultimately been a help or a hindrance to Nigeria's overall development.

Historically, Pentecostalism emerged as a global Christian revival movement in the early C20th, gaining widespread attention through the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in Los Angeles. In Nigeria, it began to spread rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, largely through indigenous revival movements and charismatic leaders (Ukah, 2022). It emphasizes spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecy, which believers see as signs of divine empowerment. These spiritual experiences appeal deeply to many Nigerians who seek personal and transformative encounters with God in their daily lives (Omenyo, 2021).

Scholars such as Ruth Marshall (2020) and Ebenezer Obadare (2023) argue that Pentecostalism in Nigeria is more than a religion: it is a social force. Churches use radio, television, social media, and public crusades to influence public behaviour and national values. They often promote messages of hard work, honesty, personal discipline, and financial prosperity (Obadare, 2023; Marshall, 2020). These values have helped shape the aspirations and lifestyles of millions of Nigerians, especially young people.

At the same time, Pentecostalism's focus on individual financial success and miraculous breakthroughs may reduce attention to systemic problems like poverty, unemployment, and corruption. Critics warn that this individualistic outlook can overshadow the importance of collective responsibility and social justice (Adedibu, 2020b).

This study addresses a critical gap in research by examining how Pentecostalism has practically had an impact on Nigeria's social and economic development. While Pentecostal churches are known for their focus on charity, education, and financial empowerment, it remains to be seen whether these efforts produce long-term societal benefits or simply offer short-term emotional or financial relief.

1.1. Study Objectives and Questions

The primary objective is to assess the positive and negative impacts of Pentecostalism on Nigeria's post-independence development. Specifically, the study asks:

1. How has Pentecostalism influenced Nigeria's socio-economic development, especially in entrepreneurship, education, and charity?
2. In what ways do Pentecostal churches support self-reliance, personal growth, and financial empowerment?
3. How has Pentecostalism shaped social values such as family, community life, and moral behaviour?
4. Has the prosperity gospel contributed to materialism or increased economic inequality?
5. What overall role has Pentecostalism played in Nigeria's post-independence progress?

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it sheds light on how religious movements can influence a country's development. Pentecostalism not only teaches spiritual values but also promotes economic self-sufficiency and social engagement. The study shows how Pentecostal churches have helped many Nigerians gain skills, education, and financial confidence. It also explores whether their prosperity teachings are helping or hurting society in the long run.

Understanding this relationship can help religious leaders, policymakers, and development experts create better strategies for social and economic growth. It also offers insight into how faith-based institutions can either support or challenge development goals.

1.3. Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and their influence on social and economic development since independence. It examines church-led programs in entrepreneurship, education, and welfare, as well as how these influence social structures like family and community life. However, it does not cover all Pentecostal denominations or account for all individual experiences due to Nigeria's large religious diversity. Data limitations and regional variations in church practices may affect the generalizability of findings.

The study practically clarifies the following relevant definitions of terminologies:

Pentecostalism: a Christian movement emphasizing spiritual gifts like healing and prophecy.

Socio-Economic Development: growth that improves people's social welfare and economic opportunities.

Entrepreneurship: creating businesses to generate income, employment, and economic growth.

Community Participation: active involvement in community projects and social improvement efforts.

Prosperity Gospel: belief that faith and giving lead to material wealth blessings.

This study aims to fill key gaps in understanding how Pentecostalism affects Nigeria's social and economic growth. Although Pentecostal churches are known for supporting entrepreneurship, education, and charity, little research has been done on whether these efforts bring lasting improvements or only short-term help. Past studies also tend to miss how Pentecostal values shape social behaviours, family life, and moral standards, and how these factors impact economic development. Additionally, there has been limited focus on the effects of prosperity preaching, which may encourage materialism and increase economic inequality. By examining these areas, this study provides a clearer picture of both the benefits and potential challenges of Pentecostalism in Nigeria's progress since independence.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two major theories: Max Weber's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and Social Capital Theory. These help explain how Pentecostalism affects social and economic development in Nigeria after independence. Max Weber (1930) believed that certain Christian teachings, especially among Protestants, encouraged people to work hard, save money, and avoid wasteful lifestyles. These habits, he said, helped societies to grow economically. Today, many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria also teach their members to work hard, start businesses, stay disciplined, and trust God for success. These teachings can help people become more financially stable and confident (Weber, 1930).

The second theory, Social Capital Theory, focuses on the importance of relationships, trust, and support among people. Scholars like Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (2000) say that people who are part of close-knit communities often share help, ideas, and opportunities. In Nigerian Pentecostal churches, members often support each other through mentoring, business partnerships, prayers, and welfare support. These relationships can help reduce poverty and promote personal growth.

By using these two theories, the study shows how Pentecostal churches in Nigeria provide not just spiritual help but also practical support for development. These churches influence how people live, work, and relate with others, which can lead to better lives and stronger communities.

2.2. Understanding Pentecostalism in Nigeria and How It Has Affected the Nation's Growth

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the country went through many changes, politically, economically, and spiritually. One of the biggest spiritual movements that took root and grew rapidly in this period was Pentecostalism. Simply put, Pentecostalism is a type of Christianity that strongly believes in the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles, speaking in tongues, healing, and lively worship. Unlike older churches like the Catholic or Anglican churches, Pentecostals focus more on personal experience with God, modern preaching styles, and practical teachings about success, wealth, and personal breakthroughs (Kalu, 2008).

Pentecostalism started slowly in Nigeria during the early C20th, but it became much more noticeable after independence. Many Nigerians, frustrated by the economic hardship, political instability, and corruption that followed independence, were attracted to the hope and promises of a better life that Pentecostal churches preached. By the 1980s and 1990s, popular churches like the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Winners' Chapel, and Christ Embassy became household names, attracting large crowds with their energetic worship and teachings on prosperity (Marshall, 2009).

These churches did not just grow in numbers but they also they began to play a big role in the country's socio-economic development. Many Pentecostal leaders began to encourage entrepreneurship, education, and hard work. Churches started building schools, universities, and vocational centres. For instance, Covenant University (established by Winners' Chapel) and Redeemer's University (established by RCCG) have helped thousands of young Nigerians access quality education (Ukah, 2020).

Also, Pentecostal churches became platforms for social mobility. Members are often taught to dream big, start small businesses, and trust God for success. Through teachings, mentorship, and even financial support like church-run cooperatives and business seminars, these churches have empowered people, especially the youth and women, to start businesses and become financially independent (Ojo, 2010).

However, it is not all positive. Some critics argue that the prosperity message can sometimes lead people to ignore hard work or social responsibility, focusing only on personal wealth. There have also been concerns about manipulation and the lavish lifestyles of some church leaders (Adedibu, 2020a). Despite this, many still see Pentecostalism as a force for good, helping people cope with Nigeria's tough economic conditions and providing hope where the government often fails.

In summary, Pentecostalism in post-independence Nigeria has been more than just a religious movement. It has shaped the way many Nigerians think about success, wealth, and community support. While not without its flaws, its influence on education, entrepreneurship, and youth empowerment has played a role in Nigeria's socio-economic development.

Pentecostal churches in post-independent Nigeria have significantly contributed to the economic empowerment of their members, particularly by promoting skills development, financial assistance, and social values. First, many Pentecostal churches offer practical skills training, like tailoring and farming, which enable members to launch their own businesses and work towards financial independence (Ilo, 2020). Additionally, these churches often provide microloans or financial support, helping members start small businesses, especially when traditional loans are unavailable (Ukah, 2016). Another critical component is Pentecostal teachings that promote discipline, hard work, and saving, encouraging members to manage their finances responsibly (Obadare, 2018). Furthermore, churches provide networking opportunities where members support each other's businesses, fostering growth through shared resources (Gifford, 2004).

Pentecostalism in Nigeria also profoundly influences social values, particularly in areas like family life, community involvement, and moral standards. Firstly, Pentecostal teachings emphasize strong family bonds by encouraging marriage, fidelity, and child-rearing within a Christian framework, which strengthens family unity and instills values such as respect and discipline (Gifford, 2004). Secondly,

these churches advocate active participation in church and community activities. Members support one another through prayers, financial help, and community service, which fosters social ties and builds support networks for those in need (Marshall, 2009). Lastly, Pentecostal teachings promote moral living by encouraging behaviours like honesty and integrity while discouraging actions such as premarital sex, smoking, and drinking (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). This clear moral guidance benefits individuals and families (Gifford, 2004). Thus, Pentecostal teachings have a positive impact on Nigerian social values by nurturing family relationships, encouraging community engagement, and promoting high moral standards.

However, the emphasis on prosperity preaching within Nigerian Pentecostalism, known as the "prosperity gospel," has both economic and social implications. This doctrine often links financial success with strong faith, prompting members to give money to the church in exchange for promises of material blessings. Many church leaders grow wealthy from these donations, while much of the congregation remains poor, widening the economic disparity between leaders and followers (Gifford, 2004). Additionally, this message sometimes shifts focus away from practical poverty solutions, such as education and saving, causing members to rely on miracles rather than their own efforts (Ukah, 2016). Prosperity preaching can also lead to materialism by framing wealth as a symbol of God's favour. This viewpoint encourages people to pursue luxury items as a demonstration of their "blessed" status, which contributes to consumerism and materialistic values (Marshall, 2009; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). In summary, while the prosperity gospel offers hope, it can also increase economic inequality and encourage materialism.

Pentecostalism's effects on Nigeria's socio-economic growth are both positive and negative. On the positive side, Pentecostal churches promote entrepreneurship and self-reliance, inspiring members to start businesses and become financially independent, which boosts job creation, skills development, and economic progress (Ojo, 2008). Many Pentecostal churches also engage in charitable work, such as providing education, healthcare, and social services, especially in areas lacking government support. These efforts help reduce poverty and support local communities (Ukah, 2016).

Conversely, the prosperity gospel's unbalanced emphasis on wealth as spiritual success may contribute to materialism and create a wealth divide between church leaders and members. By focusing on individual prosperity, some teachings overlook larger social challenges like corruption and unemployment, thus limiting the church's capacity to address systemic socio-economic issues (Ilo, 2020). While Pentecostalism aids economic growth through entrepreneurial support and charity, it may also encourage materialism and fall short of addressing broader socio-economic challenges.

2.3. An Overview of Other Historians on the Concept of Pentecostalism/Pentecostals

Pentecostals are Christians who highlight personal experiences with God through the Holy Spirit. This movement began in the early C20th and has rapidly expanded globally. A defining belief among Pentecostals is the practice of speaking in tongues, viewed as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. They assert that being filled with the Holy Spirit enables believers to express their faith more powerfully. Furthermore, Pentecostals place significant importance on divine healing, prophecy, and miracles, holding the belief that God can intervene in daily life to instigate positive changes.

Worship services in Pentecostal churches are characterized by their lively and energetic nature, often incorporating contemporary music, dancing, and passionate preaching. This vibrant worship style fosters a strong sense of community and belonging among congregants. Many Pentecostals believe their faith should translate into practical action, motivating them to participate actively in their communities through social work and evangelism.

Pentecostalism encompasses a broad spectrum of groups and churches, ranging from those adhering to traditional practices to those embracing modern approaches. Despite these variations, what unites Pentecostals is their focus on personal spiritual experiences and a desire to share their faith with others (Adogame, 2013; Olowu, 2015).

Several scholars have investigated the role of Nigerian Pentecostals as a public policy issue, emphasizing moral reform through disciplinary functions rather than engaging in deliberative discussions. Afe Adogame (2013) highlights that Nigerian Pentecostalism responds to perceived moral decay in society, advocating for values such as honesty and family cohesion while limiting open discussions of differing opinions. This focus on moral rectitude fosters a community centred on conformity to specific Christian values.

Dele Olowu (2015) supports this view by describing these churches as "disciplinary institutions" that promote certain moral standards through teachings designed to ensure adherence among members. The emphasis on controlling individual behavior and reinforcing communal moral codes tends to prioritize discipline over dialogue, making these communities less willing to consider varying perspectives. Birgit Meyer (2014) also notes that Nigerian Pentecostal churches often position themselves as moral guardians in a swiftly changing society, providing spiritual solutions to social challenges. This further strengthens their role as advocates for moral reform, focusing on behavioural change instead of fostering public debate on broader societal issues. Together, these scholars demonstrate that Nigerian Pentecostals function as a counter public that promotes specific moral values while sidelining the need for deliberation and dialogue. Adeboye (2016) asserts that Nigerian Pentecostals represent a counter public with primarily "disciplinary" functions, emphasizing moral reform over deliberative debate. She further states that Pentecostalism is a public phenomenon, not as a state creed, but in terms of its visibility in public life. Her perspective views Pentecostalism from a functional and output-driven angle. John Ojo (2017) contends that Pentecostalism has transformed the Christian message by emphasizing the Holy Spirit and creating an environment to practice spiritual gifts. Ojo represents Pentecostalism as a litmus test for the Christian message, suggesting that the presence of the Holy Spirit signifies the potency of that message. Meanwhile, Rosalind Hackett (2018) notes that in Nigeria, the term "Pentecostal" is often used by revivalist movements to highlight the centrality of the Holy Spirit in church activities. Finally, Adedibu and Benson (2019) argue that "Pentecostalism" should be understood as experiential Christianity, culminating in believers' baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues. Thus, Pentecostalism is inherently linked to tangible expressions of faith through speaking in tongues.

2.4. Brief History of Pentecostalism in Nigeria: Pre- and Post-Independence

Christianity was introduced to Nigeria with the return of Christian slaves, starting in 1838. However, missionary efforts began earlier in 1786 when the Methodist Wesleyans from England initiated their work. The slave trade was also significant during this time. On September 24th, 1842, Freeman arrived in Badagry from a ship that brought him from Cape Coast, marking the true beginning of missionary activities in Nigeria. Other important figures in the early church establishment included Rev. Henry Townsend of the Anglican Church, who arrived in 1842; Rev. and Mrs. Hope Wadhell of the Presbyterian Church in 1846; T.J. Bowen of the Baptist Church in 1850; and Father Joseph, who began Catholic missions in Lagos in 1862 and in Onitsha in 1885. These churches are collectively known as the mainline churches (Falk, 1997).

The post-independence era of Christianity in Nigeria can be classified into several stages. According to Maxey's classification, the civil war revival in the 1960s and 1970s marked one significant period, followed by the emergence of Neo-Pentecostal churches in the 1980s. Komolafe (2013) categorized these as Neo-charismatic churches, which include both 3rd Generational Pentecostals and independent Pentecostals. Adeboye noted that a remarkable aspect of Nigerian Pentecostalism is its local roots, which have been enhanced by external influences from the global Pentecostal movement (Komolafe, 2013).

Matthew Ojo (2008) described the characteristics of the Holy Spirit's movement in Nigeria as a charismatic movement. He pointed out that while the charismatic renewal began as an indigenous initiative, by late 1972, the influence of American Pentecostalism became apparent. This was facilitated by U.S. Pentecostal evangelists who either visited Nigeria to conduct evangelistic programs, often labeled as crusades, or sent literature that spread their teachings. Ojo (2008) outlined three phases in

the development of this movement in Nigeria. The first phase, from 1974 to the late 1970s, saw Christian Corpsers laying the foundation of the renewal. The second phase, from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, involved the movement's growth, primarily sustained by southern Nigerians moving to the North. The third phase began in the mid-1980s, characterized by indigenous Northern Christians taking on leadership roles and adapting the movement to reflect regional and cultural factors (Ojo, 2008).

Gaiya, in his analysis of the Pentecostal revolution in Nigeria, cited Gifford, stating that the terms "Charismatic/Pentecostal" and "Evangelicals" or "Fundamentalists" are often used interchangeably in Africa. He argued that much of African Pentecostalism is influenced by American and British teachings on faith, prosperity, miracles, speaking in tongues, and the concept of being born again. Gaiya concluded that Nigeria's Charismatic/Pentecostal churches are not uniform; they vary from conservative to innovative and even syncretic (Gaiya, 2002.). This raises questions about how the influences of early Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria shaped the responses and developments seen in the post-independence period.

2.5. The Public Impact and Responses on Socio-Economic Development in Post-Independence Nigeria and Future Prospects

The following points highlight the public impact and responses regarding socio-economic development in post-independence Nigeria, along with future prospects:

- a. *Addressing Local Issues/Epidemics/Pandemics:* Joseph Babalola and Garrick Braide from the Anglican Church effectively addressed local health crises. Their use of blessed water to treat serious diseases was a notable aspect of the Pentecostal movement. According to Omoyajowo (1995), many individuals suffering from various illnesses were healed when they visited Oke-Oye. Significant miracles were reported through prayer bells and the consumption of a consecrated stream called Omi Ayo, meaning "Stream of Joy." This practice was essential to the early Pentecostal movement in Nigeria.
- b. *Social-Political Context:* Pentecostals engaged actively in political activities, forming associations that influenced contemporary politics. Their response to colonial authorities was advantageous, despite enduring significant persecution and, ultimately, sacrificing their lives for their beliefs (Odukoya, 1999).
- c. *Eliminating Gender Barriers for Ministers:* Adedibu and Igboin (2013) note that the spiritual awakening led by Pentecostalism, especially African Pentecostalism, challenged traditional roles in ministry, breaking down gender barriers. This shift represented both a new opportunity and a challenge for established churches in Africa and beyond.
- d. *Promoting Integrity and Honesty in Business:* Pentecostalism aimed to eradicate dishonesty and corruption. Adherents who embodied the principles of true Pentecostalism were often recognized for their integrity in business practices. However, recent trends indicate a decline in these values (Hawthorne, 2020).
- e. *Education:* The establishment of schools and the provision of scholarships significantly contributed to the growth of Pentecostalism. Notable institutions include the CMS Grammar School in Bariga, Lagos, and Barth Freeman Secondary School in Obalende (Adeyemo, 2002).
- f. *Employment Opportunities:* The growth of schools resulted in increased job openings for teachers and lecturers. This expansion created numerous employment opportunities linked to the educational institutions established by Pentecostal churches (Akinyemi, 2015).
- g. *Healthcare Service Delivery:* The construction of new hospitals, equipped with medication and qualified medical staff offering free services, was a critical advantage of the Pentecostal movement, positively impacting community health (Ogundipe, 2018).

h. *Contextualizing Salvation and Empowerment Programs*: Pentecostalism shifted from traditional evangelism to include empowerment initiatives for its members. This change led to rapid growth, particularly in the development of evangelistic programs and liturgical practices (Adeleke, 2017).

i. *Probity and Accountability*: Initially, the values of integrity and accountability characterized Pentecostal communities. However, these principles have diminished over time. The future of Pentecostalism appears promising if these values are retained and strengthened (Olayiwola, 2019). In conclusion, the Pentecostal movement has had a significant impact on socio-economic development in Nigeria. By addressing local health issues, promoting education, and fostering employment, it has established a foundation for future growth. Retaining core values like honesty and accountability will be essential for sustaining this progress.

3. Discussion

Pentecostalism has changed the landscape of Christianity worldwide since it began during the Azusa revival in 1901. This movement found its way to Nigeria both before and after the country gained independence. The early reactions to Pentecostalism were largely positive and widely accepted. The movement has significantly contributed to education by establishing schools that offer free tuition, leading to increased employment opportunities. In the health sector, Pentecostal churches have built hospitals and provided free medical services. Additionally, the values of integrity, honesty, and good character were central to the early movement, promoting positive responses from the community.

However, it is important to note that the original characteristics of Pentecostalism, along with its key principles, seem to be fading. This decline is concerning because if the values of integrity, accountability, and holiness - hallmarks of the early Pentecostal pioneers in Nigeria - are not maintained, the movement could face negative reactions from the public. Such a shift could threaten the future of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

Since Nigeria's independence, Pentecostalism has grown into a significant movement, impacting millions of people. Its teachings combine faith with practical advice, providing both hope and challenges for Nigeria's development. Many Pentecostal churches promote economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, and education. They encourage their members to start businesses and acquire essential skills. This focus on personal growth has resulted in numerous success stories, with churches offering programs on financial management and business development, which ultimately benefits the community.

However, there are drawbacks to this movement. The growing emphasis on prosperity in sermons often shifts the focus to material wealth, overshadowing important spiritual and social values. The concept of the prosperity gospel implies that wealth is a sign of divine favour, which pressures individuals to pursue riches. This can lead to materialism and create a divide between church leaders and ordinary members, especially when financial blessings are not realized by everyone. Moreover, this focus on wealth can divert attention from critical social issues like inequality and unemployment.

While Pentecostal teachings have fostered strong family bonds and encouraged community involvement, the emphasis on personal success can also detract from a sense of collective responsibility. This shift may result in neglecting broader societal issues that require communal action.

In conclusion, Pentecostalism has empowered individuals in Nigeria, providing them with spiritual and economic uplift. However, it also presents risks of increased economic inequality and materialism. By maintaining a careful balance, Pentecostalism can continue to have a positive impact on Nigeria, fostering both spiritual growth and economic development. It is crucial for church leaders and members to focus not only on personal success but also on the collective well-being of the community to ensure a brighter future for Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

The study examines how Pentecostalism has positively impacted Nigeria, particularly in education and health. It highlights the establishment of free schools, which have provided many young people with opportunities for learning and employment, and the building of hospitals that offer free medical care, improving community health. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of core values like honesty and integrity practiced by early leaders of Pentecostalism, which helped create trust and a positive reputation for the movement. However, the study also warns about the risks of focusing too much on wealth and success, which can lead to materialism and the neglect of important social issues. By addressing both the positive contributions and potential challenges of Pentecostalism, the study contributes to our understanding of its role in Nigerian society and encourages further research on how the movement can continue to uplift individuals and communities while tackling issues like economic inequality and the need for collective responsibility.

4. Conclusion

Even though this study is a desk research, recommendations for this study can strengthen its practical impact and guide future research. Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made for future research and practice regarding Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Future studies should explore how Pentecostal churches can maintain and promote core values like honesty, integrity, and accountability, as this can help preserve the positive reputation of the movement and foster community trust. Researchers should also examine how Pentecostal churches can engage more actively in addressing critical social issues such as poverty and unemployment. This involvement can strengthen the church's role in the community and demonstrate a commitment to collective responsibility.

In addition, future studies should investigate how churches can balance the emphasis on prosperity with spiritual and social values, including teaching members that wealth is not the only measure of success and that helping others is equally important. Research should focus on how churches can develop programs that support economic empowerment and education; by offering skills training and financial management courses, churches can help members improve their lives and contribute positively to society. Lastly, future research should assess the long-term effects of Pentecostalism on individual and community development, as understanding these impacts can guide church leaders in making informed decisions that benefit their members and the wider community. By following these recommendations, scholars and church leaders can work together to enhance the positive impact of Pentecostalism in Nigeria while addressing potential challenges.

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Revisiting Soviet Russia and Contemporary Russia's Language Politics

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Abstract

Multilingual polities have always been confronted with problems associated with linguistic and ethnic identity, with Soviet and contemporary Russia included. Language politics of the Russian state revolves around the way language and linguistic disparities amidst varying peoples are dealt with. Extant studies on the discourse of Russia since 1991, upon the collapse of the USSR, have espoused the link between the USSR and contemporary Russia, with little attention paid to the linguistic factors that constitute identity and cultural significance, as well as the language politics devised. This implies that language politics attempt at crafting a unique identity for the Russian state and this calls for holistic review. This study is, therefore, carried out to look into this very important aspect in order to better understand contemporary Russia's relations within the global space. Historical methods enriched the study, while interpretive design was used. Secondary data were collected and subjected to historical analysis. The concerns addressed in this study stemmed from the idea of Soviet authoritarian expression. Language use in socio-cultural and socio-political spheres indicates identity construction. The creation of political ideology is an essential component of the complex indicators that determine the identity of the Russian state. The study unravelled the significance of language use in Russia's relations. Russia's world is preoccupied with language politics which showcases lines of allegiance, friendship and enmity. The linguistic relevance of "US," that is, Russia and its allies, and "THEM" that are against Russia, becomes instrumental in better understanding the language politics of Soviet and contemporary Russia.

Keywords: cultural significance, identity, language politics, Russia

1. Introduction

Language politics is an attribute of multi-ethnic and multilingual socio-cultural polities. The major focus of language politics is identification of linguistic problems associated with the presence of varying ethnic nationalities in society and devising efforts at addressing such phenomena. Of course, Soviet Russia and contemporary Russia exemplify a typical multi-ethnic and multilingual society. The choice of these two phases in the trajectory of the metamorphosis of Russia is very significant as the two phases typically exemplify plural societies with degrees of ethnic and language disparities, with measures of curbing language and identity question (Oluwafemi, 2025). Although the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) ceased to exist owing to its collapse in 1991, it symbolised a model of language politics to plural societies across the globe. Little wonder that the contemporary Russia, though it inherited the overlapping ethnic pluralism from the defunct USSR, also, since its inception in 1991, has devised measures in addressing its multi-language situation, thereby serving as a contemporary prototype in the discourse of language politics. Within the context of language politics, this study explores how these regimes employed specific vocabulary, historical references, and emotional appeals to forge a sense of national unity and legitimize their rule as multilingual states.

The era of the USSR is very symbolic in the academic debates that revolve around the politics of contemporary Russia (Bacon, 2014). Significantly, the discourse of Russian cultural studies is overlapping language politics of Russia as language serves as a medium of cultural expression and often explores how culture and media intersect to fashion societal norms, values and identities in relation to peoples' language(s). What this implies, of course, is the focus on the analysis of how media representations influence perceptions of the Russian culture domestically and internationally. This study focuses on language politics, that is, it serves as an overview of the broad spectrums in which cultural production reflects and responds to the holistic social and political dynamics in relation to addressing multiple language related problems in the society (Abimbola *et al.*, 2024; Omotade and Oluwafemi, 2023a).

Language and cultural expression, affiliation and inclination among the peoples of Russia significantly reveal the manner and dynamism of state control, censorship and influence on language policy and planning in the country. The apparent show of politics cannot be over-emphasised in order to better explain the political values of Russian authoritarian regimes. This justifies the historical method used in this study. The historiography of the USSR reveals the imposition of the Russian language on other non-ethnic Russian populace, provoking protracted nationalist agitations. Although the early stage of the formation of the USSR universally embraced multilingualism under Vladimir Lenin via the mass literacy campaign and the development of orthographies for other republics languages (Omotade, Oluwafemi & Abimbola, 2024), Stalin's language politics was very critical to the promotion of what is termed *Russification*, a language politics of upholding Russian as a lingua-franca, and making non-ethnic Russians embrace the Russian language and culture at the expense of theirs (Omotade & Oluwafemi, 2018). This review is supported by the authoritarian language definition. This has been introduced essentially with the attempt to remind the people of Russia of their nationality, personality and worldview. The concerns addressed in this study stemmed from the idea of authoritarian expression. The Soviet leadership, as it was well known, followed an ideology defined as Marxist-Leninist.

This philosophy is portrayed as a totally objective philosophy, focused on self-evaluation. So, in relation to internal expressions and in negotiating international policies, Communist Russia appears objective regardless of domestic and international tensions (Oluwafemi & Abimbola, 2020). This often culminated in a scientific debate, marked by attempts to minimise the complexity of word choice and practically avoid the push of the meaning towards interpretation. The language politics of the Stalinist regime was totalitarian, thus, it became a demonstration of force. Having identified this, it has become clear that language politics has an indescribable implication for the substantive form of language, particularly words and significance boundaries, within the general language functions of the speech communities.

Extant scholarly debates have established the relationship between language and ideology (Bakhtin & Voloshinov, 1929). Language politics goes beyond articulated linguistic elements to even incorporating semiotic consideration of attributing meanings to concept within the society (Reis, 1993). Of course, it has been established that different discourses have scholarly debated semiotic dictions in dealing with language politics, which hitherto, becomes a reality on identity construction in relation to a certain ethnic inclination (Zichermann, 2006). Language politics is evident in language use in political campaigns. This plays significant roles in relation to the importance that is attributed to different languages in a multilingual society as well as meanings that various given sign convey (Clark & Jacobs, 2002).

Importantly, semiotic significance cannot be underrated in the language politics of the USSR. It was used to explain the language situations in the Soviet language politics, having implications for cultural properties. In the administration of Stalin, the totalitarian language of the Eastern Bloc took its peak. It became very instrumental in understanding detailed features of Soviet language ideology which helped in understanding the Soviet leadership in relation to Soviet Russia's language politics (Mcilwain, 2007: Undusk, 2003; Lepik, 2008; Ventsel, 2006; 2007).

2. Research Design and Method

The historical method of research was used in this study. An interpretive design formed the basis on which historical events are communicated without bias. Interpretive design is usually intertwined with the historical method of research because of its uniqueness in communicating meanings in historical study (Rabiya, 2014). With the aid of interpretive design, code messages were simplified, synthesised, organised and utilised (Schwartz-Shea, & Yanov, 2012). Veritable academic debates have shown that the development of an effective research approach is important to the progress of any project and must be informed by the research problem and information or condition in the field under review. It is commonly maintained that the only way to accomplish a given research goal is through a mixture of methodologies. Consequently, the research employs an historical method. Historical methods of research border on historicising and obtaining facts via exposition of historical past, relating historical

events in the past with the present in order to proffer solutions to future problems (Taiwo, 2021; Nevins, 1938; Jovita, 2015). Of course, one cannot but see the importance of primordial discourse in ethnicity and identity fragmentations among groups in a plural setting. The historical method is significantly employed in this research because of the scope and the subject matter that the study encapsulates. With the aid of the historical method, the importance of the study of language politics becomes a necessity, having understood the socio-cultural setting of the coverage of the contemporary Russian society.

Trailing the historiography of the metamorphosis of Russia over the years, how it became a plural society via expansion, invasion, hegemony, annexation and cultural assimilation, the historical method in the study enhanced proper integration of the needed facts and figures required in unravelling issues bordering on nationalism, ethnicity and factors of self-determination amidst groups in the USSR and modern-day Russia. Significantly, interpretive design was adopted for better interpretation of historical facts. This research, as well as methodology used, is purposely chosen because of the present state of the Russian Federation, having gone through various stages of transformation and power build up from the period of the Russian empire, through the era of Soviet Union, till the disintegration of the Union in 1991, when Russia became a fully-fledged geopolitical entity trailing its identity internally and externally in the global relation.

It is important to note that the most critical findings and viewpoints in connection with this research subject are explored for the scope of language politics in USSR and contemporary Russia. This is done to explain language and identity question and its related phenomenon in Russia from a very fascinating viewpoint with a view to Russian identity. To summarise this, the study uses interpretivism as a mean to get knowledge by finding meanings through deeper interpretation of the whole. The fundamental principle of interpretivism is that the whole is to be studied for a phenomenon to be interpreted. Interpretivism attempts to gather and analyse evidence from portions of a concept. Thus, crucial elements of an interpretation which other approaches may ignore are taken care of by interpretivism to attain detailed results, thus, justifying the choice of the method employed in this study.

2.1. Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

Data for the study were collected via secondary sources. As the historical method of research and the interpretive design were used, the research relied on individuals, anthropological facts and historical evidences which the use of secondary sources significantly embodied. These included archival resources via Russian government official archives. Secondary sources included published books, journal articles, dissertations, theses and internet materials. Data were collected and interpreted in relation to the discourse of language politics in the USSR and contemporary Russia. On this note, the historical materials were collected. Hence, the published and unpublished books, academic journals and articles, periodicals, as well as authenticated materials which are available on the internet, having direct and indirect relation with language or identity issues in general, and the narrowness of the discourse to language politics in the Russian state were collected, thus, forming the bulk of data for the study. The data for the study were analysed and presented in relation to the methodology employed. As the bulk of the data for the research revolve around historical method, incorporating secondary sources, the research resources were historically content analysed.

2.2. Conceptualisation: Multilingualism, Identity and Language Politics

Multilingualism, identity and language politics are conceptualised for better understanding of the subject matter of this study. These concepts as enumerated earlier, are very important in relation to debates that revolve around both Soviet and contemporary Russia. Also, these concepts are interrelated in plural polities such as the Russian state. Multilingualism simply implies a situation of having two or more languages co-functioning in a society. As a result of many languages, the concept of identity sets in. A typical instance in identity inclination can better be explained using a multilingual country like Nigeria. Here, there are over 400 languages attributed to divergent ethnic groups within Nigeria. As such, a Yoruba man/woman sees himself/herself firstly, as a Yoruba, before an attribution of being a Nigerian (Oluwafemi, 2025). The questions of language use and language attitude manifest in language

politics. Hence, language politics is conceptualised as attempt at crafting a unique identity and socio-cultural function for language(s) in a multilingual state, Russia inclusive.

Going by historical methodology, Russia has been a plural state from time immemorial, especially, trailing the formation of the Kievan Rus state, which comprised the Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian. Thus, identity and language politics could be said to have been an attribute of the Russian state but with salient attention drawn to its scholarly debates. Russian empire is of great attraction in the discourse of multilingualism and identity polarisation. The growth of the Russian state was empowered via invasion and colonisation of new territories and subsequent transforming such groups into Russian territory. Thus, more peoples of alien languages and cultures were incorporated into the Russian linguistic coverage, thereby compounding identity and language situations in Russia. The Soviet Russia is a typical prototype of a multilingual states as a result of the conglomeration of fifteen (15) formerly independent states, with their varying individual diversities and peculiarities, coming together to form a formidable USSR. This important peculiarity of the USSR was inherited by the contemporary Russia in 1991 upon the collapse of the USSR (Omotade *et al.*, 2024).

Importantly, in order to proffer a better understanding of a subject-matter, it is very expedient to substantiate and attribute meaning to certain concepts around which the discourse revolves, such as multilingualism, identity and language politics, as in the case of this study. In other words, it is important to ascertain the locum that upholds virtually every scholarly debate in academic enquiry. The term conceptualisation involves mental parameter by which holistic ideas or concepts about academic enquiries are formulated. It is significant in scholarly debates as it serves as a link between raw sensory experiences, that is what is conceived, and the general explanation that will offer better understanding of the conceivable, thereby, allowing expert categorisation of objects, events as well as interrelated relationships. This endeavour helps shape the framework for unravelling prevailing discourses.

Extant studies have shown that there are two main aspects to conceptualisation (Smith & Medin, 2018; Valentine & Oaksford, 1990). According to Smith and Medin (2018), conceptualisation is important in scholarly debates as it enhances formation of concepts. As aptly captured by these scholars, it involves obtaining data via senses, while at the same time, upholding the key features in the obtained data for analysis. Thus, similar things are grouped together, considering their shared characteristics, similarities and dissimilarities, while in general, creating a mental representation, overtly making a concept understandable (Smith & Medin, 2018). The importance of conceptualisation is upheld also by Valentine and Oaskford (1990) to be an instrument of the interpretation of reality.

According to these scholars, it is believed that the moment concepts are formed; they are significantly adopted for the provision of valid interpretation to new academic enquiry. By so doing, the making of predictions, problems solving as well as effective communication is enabled with the aid of conceptualisation (Valentine & Oaksford, 1990). It is very important to note that conceptualisation is not a process that is static in nature. This implies that conceptualisation is a dynamic process of proffering explanations to enquiry. Generally, the understanding that one has of a concept may be modified based on the circumstances that revolve around it. Also, additional encounters in relation to new discoveries can lead to modification in interpretation so as to better showcase the significance of the enquiry. It is worthy of noting that there are new discoveries, especially in the field of science, which may obviously result in a shift in the manner and nature by which the conceptualisations of things are done.

As it has been scholarly noted for instance, “disease,” as a conceptualised phenomenon, has undergone notable dynamism in historiography, ranging from spirituality to a germ causative matter (Rosenberg, 2009). It is very important to note that theoretical perspectives on how conceptualisation occurs are divergent. While certain scholarly propositions claim that experience and interaction with the environment result into the formation of concepts (see Smith & Medin, 2018), that humans possess distinctive certain innate cognitive structures which are significantly responsible for the guidance of the mannerism of categorizing information was aptly upheld by others (Carey, 1985). Be that as it may, the most important reality is that these schools of thought play significant roles generally in relation to

conceptualisation. Thus, human interaction with nature around him is dependent upon the manner by which conceptualisation of things and the world around man is conceptualised. For instance, our conceptualisation of time can impact our planning and decision-making (Boroditsky, 2011).

Also, cultural background, in the same vein, can shape the manner by which social norms and behaviour are conceptualised (Nisbett *et al.*, 2003). Hence, the understanding of conceptualisation as an academic enquiry exerts implications across divergent fields. Taking a cursory look at the field of education, it is crucial to recognize the importance of helping students develop a strong conceptual understanding. This goes beyond memorizing facts and involves grasping the underlying principles and relationships between them (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000). The term conceptualisation becomes very relevant in every research as it helps in developing explanations that can lead to effective learning and the reasoning which requires understanding the manner in which concepts are formed and utilised (Lake *et al.*, 2017).

Conceptualisation is a fundamental cognitive process that allows us to make sense of the world around us. Through forming concepts and using them to interpret new experiences, we build a framework for understanding and interacting with our environment. Conceptualisation is an on-going process, continuously influenced by new information and experiences. By delving into this concept, we gain a deeper understanding of how our own minds work and how we construct our knowledge of the world. This study conceptualises multilingualism, identity and language politics in relation to shaping narratives in the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia. Thus, language politics is viewed as the strategic use of language to construct and manipulate national identity by USSR and contemporary Russia. This, therefore, has been a potent tool in shaping the socio-political landscape of both the USSR and contemporary Russia.

Conceptualising language politics is essential to this study. Significantly, language politics, as conceptualised, enhanced overt and insightful concerns in understanding the role of language in identity construction and political mobilisation. In both Soviet and post-Soviet contexts, language has functioned not merely as a medium of communication but as a symbolic marker of inclusion and exclusion. During the Soviet period, the promotion of Russian was associated with access to higher education, urban employment, and social mobility. The instrumental value of Russian remains high in contemporary Russia, but minority languages are often relegated to the private sphere, if not completely endangered.

Thus, stratification reinforces hierarchies of power, where Russian-speaking populations are perceived as normative citizens, and speakers of minority languages are frequently marginalized. The sociolinguistic implications are profound: language policies shape not only how people speak but also how they perceive their cultural heritage and political agency (Blommaert, 2006). This dimension is especially pronounced in conflict-prone regions like Tatarstan or the North Caucasus, where language politics intersect with broader struggles for autonomy and recognition (Zamyatin, 2016).

3. Lingo-Identity Rhetoric and Political Discourse in the Soviet Russia: Implications for the Russian Federation

Very significant in the discourse of lingo-identity rhetoric in the USSR is the fact that the Soviet Union's political discourse was a carefully constructed instrument that was used to fashion the identity of the Soviet states and citizens. This process, known as lingo-identity rhetoric, involved the strategic use of language to promote a unified Soviet identity that transcended pre-existing ethnicities and nationalities. It has been revealed that the term "Homo Sovieticus," that is the (Soviet Man) was upheld as the locum of the USSR's rhetoric. This implies that the state constructed its own peoples, distinct from other people, socially and politically. According to Harris (2010), the term referred to a prototype national of the Soviet state who has attributed the core values of the state as well as ideologies and the Communist Party. As ably pointed out, elements of these core values comprised loyalty, collectivism, and dedication to building a socialist society. Thus, this concept was at various occasions employed by political office holders, politicians and other stakeholders as well as the media in order to construct a constant image

of the ideal Soviet citizen. It is very interesting to acknowledge the fact that the pre-existing ethnic and national identities were downplayed by the Soviet government.

Although there were divergent nationalities and ethnic formations within the vast coverage of the USSR, these peoples were officially acknowledged by the government and their ethnic identity formations were often seen as secondary to the overarching Soviet identity (Geyer, 2009). As Gödlik (2018) has substantiated, concepts such as the 'Soviet people', 'fraternal republics', among others, became the yardstick for portraying unity in diversity. Within the context of external relations, lingo-identity rhetoric pragmatically involved the demonization of the "Other." The West, particularly capitalist countries and the United States, were often portrayed as enemies of the Soviet state and the "Soviet Man." This created a sense of "us" against "them" mentality, further solidifying the in-group identity of Soviet citizens (Subtelny, 2004). The philosophy of the Soviet period has been acclaimed to be scientific based on extant academic debates. This means that the philosophy has taken an objective world description. Thus, it was maintained as: (1) the scientific base for society creation, (2) the scientific explanation of the struggle of the working class, (3) the justification for revolution staged by the proletarian, (4) the scientific reason for building society for the socialists (Lühikursus, 1951:38). This was also the principle which has been called the theory of Marxist-Leninism. The underlying scientific essence of Stalin's Russian identity was thus demonstrated by Marxist ideology. After claiming that science critically represents the universe, the scientific representation of the world is the only perfect medium that describes truth (Arendt, 1973: 460-483).

In the 1920s, a number of bodies in the Soviet Russia addressed the genuine base by which the universe emanates from the consciousness of the right proletarian class, the circumstances that recall such, and the obligations it entails. The Association of Proletarian Authors was representative of these. Stalinist social realism took full shape, having been inspired by the scientific representation of the environment, monopolised and made axiological theory of the philosophy of Soviet Russia (Groys, 1992). Whatever is incompatible with Communist ideals is deleted and has a negative meaning from current practices. The criterion of scientificity that the Soviet philosophy upholds is widely recognised in this discourse. The idea of objectivity in relation to law and order from the viewpoint of Soviet totalitarianism was of great significance for the analytical view of the world, and indeed the objective rules that are in line with history and the laws of life and nature synonymously synchronised with the subjects of science and reality (Chalmers, 1992). In line with the above, it has come to light on a daily basis that science in a language which is distinct and simple and does not have any sort of ambiguity can communicate the worldview.

Ideally, the changing of meanings in relation to context should be avoided, and each word should conform to a highly clear substance. As it has been scholarly affirmed by Marr (1936), the Soviet language theory had to be based on mainly straightforward scientific reasoning. In these theories, the masses should be identified in an intercontinental novel language that is connected with the emergence of a new set of language users. In this sense, therefore, expression in relation to material culture is clarified by the speech community. According to this description, language is represented by human collectivism as a creative force, not only the imaged viewpoint but the social rank that continues in the lexis, syntax, grammar and the semantics. As a consequence, language itself does not exist in isolation. It only survives in an intrinsic association that is connected with human beings, material culture and the historiography of human society, most especially, past occurrences. Within the context of this language framework, the signs and what they imply are closely related. Whatever the signs are, the real instances of the symbol being used are (Romanenko, 2003: 189).

Whatever systemic change in the physical world should be, it must specifically be interpreted in language in the human consciousness. Kupina (1995) says that the theoretical analyses of the varying degrees of the Stalinist Russian language directions are thoroughly represented in *Totalitarian Language: The Dictionary and Utterance Reactions*. A dictionary showcases the linguistic aspect and requirements of a given time, via scholarly exposition. It then defines and prescribes the rules for using the signs and sign systems correctly and assigns them accordingly. Here, the dictionary is an apt analysis with its normative uses to address state language policies and encourage totalitarian language. As

Kupina (1995) claims, the Soviet totalitarian vocabulary is ably depicted. The first one which is established was the movement towards continuous, ideological semantic concepts reduction and transformation. Secondly, the propensity to synthetic and quasi-ideological growth is established.

The following is the propensity in the directions of dualistic linguistic axiologisation. The ideological extension of frontiers concerns the various layers of the semantic organisation of a word, defines the meaning of the word, and puts the word on the divided axis of good and bad values concurrently. There is also a propensity to establish antonymic rows that synonymously confirm ideological dogmas. Normally, terms that generally should not be ideological at first glance, or every day, turn into ideologies. Finally, there has been an important trend to codify ideologically untraditional lexical compounds. The ideological rationales for pronouns, adverbs, among others are inclusive as well. This is the political dimension's subordinate position to the other fields that make up society. In the Stalinist totalitarian vocabulary, this became evident in a specifically radical and explicit way. The main ideologies are established in political debate and other semantic domains gain political and ideological meaning from them (Kupina, 1995: 23). This will be the groundwork for the creation of principal semantic-ideological disparities and of axiological laws. In this way a new set of ideological principles will be chosen.

This of course, becomes an important aspect of Soviet Russia's totalitarian language, culture and it obviously conformed to either the Marxist approach to language or the Soviet ideology's emphasis as being a scientific-based world. This can be said to postulate that the authoritarian language is the language that focuses primarily on explaining a primitive person's linguistic consciousness. The sense of selfishness and superiority is clearly primitive reasoning. Thus, an absolute value evaluation, which showed us to be the image marker of positive value, became openly apparent in relation to the authoritarian language. In addition, this is considered to prevent multifaceted reasoning practices which may pose a serious threat to break the already-existing world view (Vygotsky & Luria, 1993: 74-75).

The whole approach towards the said political and ideological argument can be summed up in two common lines of derision from the discourse in relation to the true theory. These two wings are considered in the lines of two pronouns that are metaphorical in nature, namely: (1) the *us* and, (2) the *them*. In other words, *(us)*, which refers to the Russians, is favourably showcased. On the other hand, *(them)*, meaning other people, is negatively depicted. In these two terms, there is a strong difference. As Dijk (1998) has shown, people can never talk negative about *(us)*. At the same time, whoever is in friendship with *(them)* is against the Russians. The essence and strength of the interest groups that contributed to the development of the ideology are focused on how these pairs of opposition surface in texts, whether covertly or openly.

It can be discussed that an asocial societal personality was created through the intrusion of the repressive language in order to obstruct fully the social dealings of people. The spiritual and educational essence of authoritarian language indoctrination during the Stalinist regime has been proactively and clearly articulated. The average Soviet citizen was an adult child whose conscience the authorities of Soviet Russia would easily direct and exploit (Dobrenko, 1993: 45). This linguistic primitivism, axiologically polarized, directly opposes the transparency and excludes empirical debate in principle. A dialogue on the position of political rhetoric provides the key parameter to understand this inconsistency. This is simply because it is politics that are the subject matter of totalitarianism and other semanticised fields. From the context of the modern-day Russia, the Contemporary Russia rejects Western-style democracy as inauthentic. From the perspective of the Russian Federation, especially under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, concepts such as "sovereign democracy" are adapted in redefining democracy. Of course, this is done in relation to Russian values and historical experience, justifying limitations on political freedoms. Lingo-Identity Rhetoric in Post-Soviet Russia is importantly discussed in relation to the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced the challenge of forging a new national identity. While Soviet-era rhetoric lost some influence, lingo-identity strategies continue to shape political discourse.

4. The Russo-lingual Metamorphosis; Origin and Development

Russian is regarded as one of Europe's largest mother tongues of communication. Many scholars have provided the possible variety of the Russian language speakers in Europe at large (Babich, 2007; Lewis, 2009; Nikonov, 2011). The dominant language of about 175 million Russians, Belarusians, Uzbeks, Kazakhstans and Kirghizstans is Russian. In most of the countries that disintegrated after the USSR's official breakup, Russian speaking was also substantial. The Russian language has been said to be the widest geographically-used language on the borders of Eurasia since it is spoken in the former republics of the USSR. Lewis (2009) argues that approximately 144 million native users in about 33 countries, potentially including African countries, use Russian as a communication medium.

The native speaker is estimated to be about 160 million in relation to number (Nikonov 2011). This accorded Russian the glory of being the 8th most widely spoken language in the world. Babich (2007) affirmed that Russian is acclaimed the world's fifth most widely spoken language. Thus, its speakers are increasing above 275 million, after only the English, Chinese, Spanish and Hindi languages. Russian is among the most used languages in cyberspace and has always been among the top ten languages used to communicate in the Internet (IWS, 2013; Economist, 2012; Minenko, 2012).

The history of the Russian language is concise (Cubberley, 2002). The provision of important dates for the growth and development of Russian is known by everyone in Russia, as well as the lingo-cultural rhetoric. It was significantly argued that only rarely had Slavs formed any formal state from Slovenian expansion into the Balkans in the sixth to the mid-ninth centuries. It is reported that the West Slavs, in the Bohemian and the Moravian region, established one under Samo in the early seventh century, especially following the defeats of the Avars in 623 (Cubberley, 2002). This lasted for some years and the death of Samo in 658 brought it to an end. In 680, the Asparuch Bulgarian Khanate was established. Significantly, this was first founded in the beginning of the 9th century and lasted until the beginning of the 11th century (1014) (Cubberley, 2002). The eastern Slavs lived in tribal groups until the middle of the ninth century. Cubberley (2002: 12) vividly captures this period as it is maintained that during this time.

The 'Norsemen' or Vikings, also identified as Varangians, were invited by those residing in the Novgorod region to step in and help them set up a state; the confirmed date for this invite is 860, and between then and 862, the first incoming Norsemen arrived in Novgorod.

In Novgorod, Rurik, who was followed by Oleg in 879, was the first king. The Kievan Rus was founded around 882 as Oleg moved his seat to Kiev. Cubberley (2002) further argues that the name 'Rus' is contested. Some academics observe that perhaps the name adapted from Scandinavians, and possibly to the Scandinavian ethnonym of ancestry, which was then linked to the population of the nation and, in turn, to the nation as a whole. On the other hand, particularly from the Soviet, it represents the old Slavic tribal name, with the variant 'Ros,' from which the toponym 'Rossija' was later established in the fifteenth century, premised on the European-Latin-Style nomenclature of states (Cubberley, 2002).

In the course of this process, a novel strategy has begun to reshape cultural norms, particularly in relation to names and naming systems. Rulers, in particular those supporting Rurik, have slavicised the Scandinavian names. Originally, Kievan Rus composed of several principalities and became very loose in nature as a supranational state. However, the popularity of the Grand Prince, the Prince of Kiev, was acknowledged by the Kievan Rus Principality. Cubberley (2002) argues that the State endured with numerous high and low points throughout the ensuing two hundred and fifty (250) years - the key high points were the dominion of the powerful grand princes of Vladimir I (Great) who saw the state baptism, that is to say, its formal adoption of Christianity by Jaroslav I (the Wise) and the flowering of the Faith by the Great, in the course of which there was a religious flourishing (1113-39).

With the death of Jaropolk, Cubberley (2002) maintains that the seventeen princes of Kiev had been squabbling over the Principality of Kiev for the next thirty years, rendering the state very small. Other principalities then began demanding dominance of them. Multiple reforms took effect. Novgorod,

among others, became autonomous in 1136. The events continue until the advent of the Tatar-Mongols, the Tatar yoke in the Russian history that held the entire area for about 250 years (Cubberley, 2002). Russia was led by Peter the Great, who effectively implemented various reforms such as 'Europeanisation' or 'Westernisation' of Russia as a linguistic conduit. Russia passed through different training stages. He occupied the Baltic coast, where he established his new capital, St. Petersburg, in 1703, and divorced church and state in cultural matters, including language and writing. In accordance with Cubberley (2002; 15), Peter introduces a 'civil script,' creating his first newspaper, and establishing the Academy of Sciences, founded in 1725, for non-religious publications.

Russia's history has been one of regular expansion and political consolidation since that time. The Russian language was the normative and standardising sector. Finally, Russian developed its traditional forms in the nineteenth century. This will summarize the historical evolution of the language with Cubberley's study. (1). Sixth and ninth centuries: East Slavs live by geographical boundaries segregated from West Slavs and establish dialectal features. (2). Nineteenth and fifteenth centuries: The languages of Kievan Rus are linguistic parameters, and they are an ancient Russian language. (3). 14th and 16th centuries: The Western and the South political division between Lithuanians and Poles thus lead to separate language trails in the Nord-East and the South-West. Later Moscow's rise as a hub led to the rise of the 'central' transitional dialect community. (4). 17th-18th centuries, creating a formidable, Western-facing Russia, particularly under St Peter the Great, and a rising empire, standardizing with the liberation from religious bonds of the literary language and the production of western debts. (5). 19th-20th century: the creation of modern standards.

5. The Russian Language as an Identity Factor in USSR and Contemporary Russia's Discourse

As with most major languages in the world, Russian has increased its regional achievement and the overall number of speakers by imperialism, a fact indicated by the list of countries in which it is still used at an elevated level of everyday use (Oluwafemi, 2025). Like English, French and Spanish, Russian was used in a relatively limited location worldwide some 500 years ago, compared to its present linguistic coverage with a relatively small population. Russian was promoted by the Romanov Empire for many decades. Russian also became the official language of Soviet Russia when it metamorphosed into the USSR. Although they tried to gain more land, over the course of the Moscow history Fireman (2009) said that Russians marched in lock-step with Russian imperialists as both their mother tongue and language, eventually turning westward to the Pacific Rim, to the south of the Karakum Desert, to the Pamir Mountains, north of North America. As verified by other well-known scholars, Russian is represented in the various directions and at all stages, as a language of business and trade, a language of science, a legal and literary language at its core, a language of naval and military knowledge, as a language younger than Armenian or Georgian, but accruing territories (Medvedev, 2007; Lomsadze, 2012).

Russia extends the tentacles of Russian through public education and a comprehensive body of bureaucratic instruments in early Soviet era to ensure that Russian is understood and used even in the very remote areas of the USSR (Oluwafemi, 2024). Paradoxically, Russian fluency evolved in parallel with the emergence of formalised written local language types across Eurasia. Languages such as Evenki and Khakas were also encouraged by the new Soviet education system (Aitmatov, 2008). It is noteworthy that the target of full Soviet Russian bilingualism was a mere shadow-hunting objective of the Soviet leadership by the end of the 1970s (Solchanyk, 1982). Nevertheless, the language enjoyed some direction of internationalism (Fierman, 2009). As capitals of the numerous republics teeming with Russian speakers, the rhythm of Russian in nearly every schoolroom and media outlets across 10-time areas became perverse within Soviet Russia's geographical coverage. During the Cold War, the Russian language has played a key role as a lingua franca among the various Russian allies, especially the allies of the COMECON. This led to the participation of millions of speakers in Eastern Central Europe and Mongolia as well as in countries further afield, such as Vietnam, Cuba and Syria. Russian language was a precipitous drop in prestige outside of the Soviet Union's borders, following the political system in

the 80's, as a foreign language under the Gorbachev regime, as well as the following decades, especially in relation to Russia-European Union integration (Omotade and Oluwafemi, 2016).

In places like Poland and Czechoslovakia, the off-shooting nationalism in the East Bloc decreased Russian standing. The political-economic challenge within the Kremlin resulted in less fervour for Russian language study in foreign allies and African countries like Nigeria (Omotade & Oluwafemi, 2023b). This shift has also always impacted the study of Russian in enemy countries as a consequence of the Cold War, which has been the interest and government funding for the regional studies programmes. Competition has also started. As Fodor and Pelau (2003) argue, German, known in Eastern Bloc as a fraternal language, and a language known as having a long history in the area, has already attracted reasonable speaker populations from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. German witnessed an upsurge at the end of the 1980s and also in the 1990s with the coming realization of an increased inclination among people for Western European society and culture.

In recent decades, English appeared in the countries of Poland, Hungary and other central European countries as a popular choice for learners of foreign languages, showing itself as a globally widespread language of modernity, modern technologies and communication. Gorbachev's policy of perestroika and glasnost in Soviet Russia opened the way for the Baltic-Georgian centrifugal nationalisms that had been agitated against Soviet linguistic Russification since the late 1970s (Solchanyk 1982). In the regions of the Central Asian republics, the influence of *Korenizatsia*, called native action, became fruitful. This is why the formerly only Russian language of trade, education, industry, research, transport, technology, medicine, construction and high culture is the only practical language (Mikhalkchenko & Trushkova, 2003). When the USSR split up in the 1990s, 14 non-Russian republics gained freedom and their nationalist elite instantly used their newly developed independence for language policy, steadily depleting Russian speakers in millions in the next 20 years. The number of native Russian users was estimated at around 188 million in 1994, according to Rudensky (1994).

In the last twenty years, 44 million have dramatically contracted. The consequence of this decrease is aligning the people of Russia with a catastrophic drop in life expectancy within the first decade of independence. Analogous falls also occurred among Russophones who lived in newly independent republics. As noted by Atnashev (2011) in the conflict regions of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan, this decrease in the number of Russian speakers is evident in conjunction with a sharp drop in birth rates among Russian-speakers and ethnic Russians in general.

However, it should be determined, as Clover (2012) pointed out, that current developments in Russia are representative of a stabilised population rise. The greatest possible end result of the late and post-Soviet language policies developed by post-Soviet nations is the most significant decline of a critical observation beyond the demographical causative agents (Brubaker, 1996), particularly Central Asia, the Baltic States, Moldova and Ukraine, where Russian bilingualism once stood as a reality of higher Soviet institutions. According to Singer (1998), the fall in the populace of Russian-speaking individuals depicts the decline of global Kremlin influence after the end of the West-East ideological war. Not only that, Russia's failed post-socialist authority remains remarkable (Kolossov & Treivish, 2009), particularly in its relation with countries that were formerly of the USSR (Abimbola *et al.*, 2024).

6. Discussion

This section aims to synthesize findings, reflect on their implications, and connect to broader themes. Language politics in both the USSR and contemporary Russia reflect broader socio-political dynamics, including nationalism, identity formation, state control, and minority rights. While the Soviet Union engaged in complex language politics as a means of consolidating power and promoting ideological conformity, contemporary Russia exhibits both continuity with and divergence from these policies. Thus, this discussion evaluates the findings, identifies key limitations of the study, and proposes directions for future research. The examination of language politics in the USSR and contemporary Russia showcases a multifaceted interconnectedness of ideology, identity, and state power, by shifting of political agendas and evolving conceptions of nationhood were shaped. Throughout the Soviet era,

language politics was a central tool in the state's effort to construct a unified socialist identity while simultaneously managing the diversity of its vast multiethnic citizenry. The policy of *korenizatsiya* (indigenization), followed by a gradual shift toward Russification, reflects the tensions between promoting local languages and consolidating Russian as a unifying force. This duality was never fully resolved and laid the groundwork for contemporary challenges in the language politics of contemporary Russia.

In the USSR, language politics was inherently ideological. For instance, while minority languages were promoted by the early Soviet state for the main purpose of garnering support among non-Russian groups, the garnered support was conditional and of course, superficial. Over time, the advantage accorded Russian language became more evidently pronounced, especially under Stalin, who saw linguistic unification as a means of centralizing power. The Soviet state framed Russian as the "language of internationalism," masking coercive assimilation policies as instruments of modernization and unity. Yet, this policy generated resistance, particularly in the Baltic states, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, where language served as a marker of cultural autonomy and national identity.

In contrast, language politics in contemporary Russia is shaped by post-imperial anxieties, nationalistic revivalism, and the geopolitical recalibration of Russia's place in the world. Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has sought to reassert the dominance of the Russian language within its borders and in the "near abroad," particularly through educational reforms and media outreach. The revival of Russian as a symbol of national pride is coupled with a more assertive stance against minority languages. This discussion underscores the instrumental role of language in constructing political legitimacy. In both Soviet and contemporary Russia, language policy has been used not only to manage diversity but to define the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within the imagined political community. As Soviet language politics was tailored towards centralisation under the guise of multiculturalism, language politics of the contemporary Russia appears more overt in its centralisation efforts and at the same time, reflects holistic ethno-nationalism in relation to peoples of the Russian Federation.

Furthermore, the legacy of Soviet language politics continues to influence post-Soviet states, where questions of language remain deeply entwined with issues of identity, sovereignty, and geopolitical alignment. Ukraine's recent linguistic reforms, for instance, cannot be fully understood without reference to the long shadow of Russification and the politics of language during and after the Soviet period. Similarly, in Central Asia, language policies oscillate between de-Russification and pragmatic bilingualism, illustrating the enduring complexities of post-colonial linguistic landscapes. Ultimately, the comparison between Soviet and contemporary Russian language politics reveals both continuity and change. While the mechanisms and ideological justifications have evolved, the strategic use of language to assert control, shape identity, and influence regional dynamics remains a constant. Understanding this continuity is essential for comprehending the broader political trajectory of Russia and its interactions with both its internal minorities and neighbouring states.

The USSR and contemporary Russia served as prototypes to addressing multilingualism and its ethnic related issues via the language politics. Language politics unravelled how language itself was manipulated to promote a Soviet identity. Russian, the dominant language of the USSR, was promoted in non-Russian republics through education and media. While other languages and linguistic functioning were not prohibited, Russian fluency was often seen as a mark of loyalty and advancement (Jahn, 2012). The *lingua franca* status of Russian in Eastern Central Europe in the years following the Second World War was typically hyperbolic. Mikhalkenko and Trushkova (2003) noted the importance in categorically defining and of course, attributing significance to Russian which in no small measure is the expression of the peoples' cultural values and norms. Russian, the only higher education portrayal in the territory of USSR in the past, was rapidly replaced in the New Independent States by the national linguistic function. The former titular languages of the former member countries of the USSR were these national languages. Similarly, in place of Russian as the second language of choice in post-Soviet Eurasia, languages such as English, German, Turkish, and even Chinese soon emerged.

Not only was the Russian language confronted with the other languages in countries like Slovakia, Romania and Mongolia, which once were the natural option of Foreign Language Studies. Furthermore, the Russian language has lost its place as an eminent second language in developing states, such as Ethiopia, India, Nicaragua and Nigeria and the collapse of the Soviet Union has greatly affected the status of the Russian language worldwide. Although the Soviet Union has collapsed, its language politics of us and them, which was basically for the construction of political borderlines of relations, via identifiable friends and foes in both domestic and international dealings are still very much attributable of the contemporary Russian Federation, especially via the leadership of Putin, whose political fingerprints in Russia's political discourse are traceable to the tail end of the year 1999, upon the voluntary resignation of President Boris Yeltsin, with Putin completing the tenure, and the year 2000, upon his selection as the elected president of the Russian Federation. Cultural significance in Russia's political discourse is subject to Russia's linguistic rhetoric.

7. Limitations to the Study

The current study includes a number of limitations that should be discussed despite its contributions. First, a large portion of the analysis is predicated on policy documents and secondary literature, which might not accurately represent linguistic communities' actual experiences. Interviews with minority language speakers or ethnographic fieldwork may provide deeper, more complex understandings of the sociocultural effects of language policy. Furthermore, the comparative approach may unintentionally mask regional unique characteristics even though it is helpful for detecting overall continuities. Owing to differences in historical legacies, demographic makeup, and local government, minority groups' experiences in places like Buryatia or Chuvashia are very different from those in Chechnya or Dagestan. Our comprehension of language politics at the local level would be improved by a more dissected approach. Furthermore, the study may have underestimated the significance of informal language usage, community action, and digital media because it mainly concentrates on formal language rules and state-level activities. To encourage linguistic revival, minority language supporters have been using internet platforms more and more in recent years. The literature currently in publication does not adequately examine the effects of these bottom-up initiatives. Lastly, the study's temporal focus covers over a century, from the early Soviet era to modern-day Russia. The post-Stalinist thaw, perestroika, and the emergence of ethno-nationalism in the 2000s are only a few examples of significant temporal ruptures that could be flattened by this long durée perspective, notwithstanding its benefits. A more stratified approach that emphasises these pivotal moments in greater detail may be beneficial for future research.

8. Suggestions for Future Research

In light of the above raised constraints, a number of directions for further research become apparent. First and foremost, researches that advocate for minority language usage across several generations may provide information about the processes of language change and maintenance. When evaluating the long-term impacts of governmental reforms on language vitality, this kind of research would be quite helpful. Also, it is important that additional comparative approach to studies in relation to various post-Soviet states is carried out. Although Russia is the biggest and most powerful successor state, other nations have pursued different language politics with differing results, including Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and the Baltic states. The precise elements that lead to effective revival of languages or extinction may be identified with the use of a comparative model. Furthermore, the study of language politics may benefit from interdisciplinary purviews, which draw on knowledge from media studies, anthropology, and political science. This implies that a more comprehensive view of the current situation may be obtained, for example, by investigating how language politics mediates nationalist discourses or how multilingualism, nationalism, linguistic and ethnic identity is debated on social media outlets. In addition to the foregoing, the influence of legislative structures and international bodies on language politics, policy and planning should also be considered. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is one of the international agreements on minority rights that contemporary Russia has ratified. Nonetheless, there is still disparity in how these pledges are being implemented domestically. The discrepancy between national practices and international norms may be the subject of future studies. In a nutshell, further research on the emotional and psychological aspects of language

loss is required. Native language loss is not just a linguistic issue; it can also result in identity conflicts and cultural upheaval. Thus, creating more effective and sympathetic language policies requires an understanding of how people and communities deal with these changes.

9. Conclusion

Notwithstanding that the language politics of the USSR and contemporary Russia favoured the Russian state in ascertaining lines of friendship and enmity within the international space, it still faced significant challenges. It is very important to note that the vastness and ethnic diversity of the Soviet Union that made forging a singular identity difficult. National and religious traditions remained strong in many regions, often clashing with the imposed Soviet identity. Not only that, the realities of life in the USSR often fell short of the utopian ideals promoted official discourse and created a sense of disillusionment among some citizens. In a nutshell, the Soviet Union's political discourse heavily relied on language politics to construct a new type of citizen, that is, the "Soviet Man." Through the use of specific terms, the downplaying of ethnicities, and the promotion of Russian language, the government attempted to forge a unified national identity. However, the project faced significant obstacles, and the ultimate success of language politics in shaping Soviet citizens remains a subject of debate till date as evident in the modern-day Russian Federation. Despite significant differences in ideology, both the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia share some commonalities in their language politics. Notably, both regimes use historical narratives to legitimize their rule and foster national pride. This study is mainly limited to language politics in Soviet and contemporary Russia, further studies on language politics in other multilingual climes are also welcome, having the outcome of this study as a template for further discourse. Based on the findings of this study, new research on the emotional and psychological aspects of language loss is required in relation to language politics in the multilingual Russia, as native language loss is not just a linguistic issue, but also results in identity conflicts and cultural upheaval in addressing language politics in multilingual settings.

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Representation of Religious Trauma in Sefi Attah's "Hailstones from Zamfara" in *News from Home and Other Stories*

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Abstract

This study examines Sefi Attah's depiction of the psychological burden on women of the trauma of violence and projects religion as a factor which engenders that violence. This is with a view to identifying the patterns of faith-based domestic violence, and their implications on the psychological and emotional well-being of the victims. The study employed qualitative descriptive content analysis. It draws its theoretical insight from Rational Choice Theory (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). This is relevant to the study because it attempts at providing a link between domestic abuse and religion. The study revealed that the private and personal lives of women are one of the unrecognised issues which affect their mental health. The findings further showed that there is degradation and the sublime traumatisation of women under the guise of religion in some cases. Moreover, victims of faith-based violence experience layers of complex psychological distress as a result of being constantly abused in marriage. It concludes that religious practices which enforce male dominance are central to the aggressive and violent tendencies exhibited by perpetrators of domestic violence.

Keywords: *faith-based violence, religious trauma, Sefi Attah*

1. Introduction

Although there have been various polemical discussions on the issue of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in religion and gender discourses, only a few studies in the humanities have investigated the theoretical and textual explanations to show readers that novelists are not confined to mere aestheticism and verbal entertainment. This paper improves the discussion on how religion contributes to creating an environment in which violence against women has been normalised. The significance of this discovery is to reveal that though faith traditions disapprove of VAWG, patriarchal interpretations of religious books and practices strengthens the pattern of male dominance and oppression. The WHO (2024) noted that about one in three women worldwide have been subjected to some form of physical or sexual violence their lifetime. In a similar vein, the global estimate in a statistic published by WHO in 2021 reported that 31% of Nigerian women experience physical intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. The UN General Assembly (1993) defines VAWG as "... any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women (and girls) including threats to such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."

On the praxis of faith and spirituality, Bell & Mattis (2000) and Porreca, Magiabosco, Pereira de Suza (2024) note that religious beliefs should function as a protective factor against intimate partner violence, and females who seek partners who have similar religious and spiritual values experience less violence. Additionally, these scholars observe that the irony in the dilemma of faith and spirituality is that the intersection between both serve as mechanisms for achieving resilience in the face of domestic assault or as contributors to women's vulnerability. This position corroborates with Giesbrecht and Sevcik's (2000) summation that the experiences and recovery of victims of VAWG occur within the context of their faith.

2. Religion and Patriarchy in Context

Bartkowski (1997) avers that all world religions appear connected by the seeds and common threads of male patriarchy: a hypothetical social system based upon the absolute authority of the father or an elderly male over the family group (The concept is often used, by extension (in anthropology and feminism, for example), to refer to the expectation that men take primary responsibility for the welfare of the community as a whole, acting as representatives of a male God via public office.

According to Buzawa and Buzawa (2003), religions simply affirmed male-dominated family structures that were already in existence. From the earliest record, 'most societies gave the patriarch of the family the right to use force against women and children under his control' (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003:57). Roman law, for instance, gave legal guardianship of a wife to her husband. This concept of *patria potestas*, according to Buzawa & Buzawa, (2003), included the largely unfettered ability of the husband to beat his wife legally, who became, in legal effect, his "daughter." By extension, patriarchal beliefs reserved leadership roles to males -while limiting female involvement in rituals - in the belief that women were less connected to God.

Highlighting the significant roles of religion in violence against women and girls, the *Quran* succinctly states:

"Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient guarding in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. But those (wives) from whom you fear arrogance (first) advise them, (then if they persist), forsake them in bed; and (finally), strike them. But if they obey you (once more), seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is Glorious! (The *Quran*, Surah An-Nisa 4:34)."

This suggests that beliefs regarding sex/role expectations within society contribute to a patriarchal system that assigns women a subordinate role to men. This is especially evident within religious circles as men assume primary leadership roles within nearly all facets of Islam as a religion. Likewise, in many mainline Christian denominations, the idea of women seeking ordination and positions of authority is generally discouraged. Many seminal texts, including the Torah, the Bible, and the Koran all contain passages that, if literally read, seem to subordinate women, or emphasize family solidarity and preservation to the exclusion of concerns over the physical safety of the wife.

In Christianity, much of the rationale between religiosity and intimate partner violence is predicated on the assumption that members of the more fundamentalist groups tend to be more patriarchal. After all, strong patriarchal beliefs are "founded on the conviction that in the beginning Eve was created from Adam's rib in order to serve him" (Scanzoni, 1988). Consequently, and in close alignment with feminist interpretations, patriarchy tends to influence the reading of scripture.

Moreover, male and female biblical scholars alike tend to 'read as men having internalised the norms of androcentric scholarship in which the male focus and patriarchal worldview of the biblical text is paralleled in the practice and history of biblical exegesis' (Reinhartz, 2000). This position by Reinhartz is regarded by some as patriarchal, misogynistic, and biased in its interpretation. Corroborating Reinhartz's views on the male reading of scripture is Schussler's (1985) who critique accordingly that: 'Not only is (the) scripture interpreted by a long line of men and proclaimed in patriarchal churches. It is also authored by men, written in androcentric language, reflective of religious male experience, selected and transmitted by male religious leadership. Without question, the Bible is a male book.'

The submission of the aforementioned scholar acknowledges the undeniable singular influence of the male voice and value system in the composition, reading, and interpretation of scripture. Over time, various religious bodies have begun to recognise and acknowledge the symbolic reality of patriarchal scripture, proof-texting, and the potential for 'intimate partner violence' within this context. Indeed, many denominations have taken reasonable measures to eliminate 'intimate partner violence' and the

physical domination of women. Some denominations have sermons especially designed to acknowledge and raise awareness about this issue. Yet, the transition from male domination to equality has been neither swift nor smooth. Rather, some victims, seeking refuge in the wisdom and comfort of clergy, often times received further unexpected condemnation instead of sympathy and compassion (Alsdurf & Alsdurf, 1988).

For instance, women are reminded that marriage is God's holiest institution and encouraged to remain silent, persevere, and lean on His everlasting words. Moreover, they are re-minded that 'what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' *The King James Version* (KJV, 2014, Matthew, 19:6). To this end, this injunction is often a part of the Christian marriage ceremony that re-emphasises God's authority over man, and by extension, man's authority over women.

Additional accounts of male domination and control over women in the Bible is found in Genesis, 2:22 which reads: 'And the rib that the Lord God has taken from the man he made into a woman' (KJV, 2014). Deeply ingrained within the above passages is the image of subservience, obedience, and submission of women unto men (i.e., wives unto husbands). What this means is that failure to adhere to these marital expectations creates conflict that originates as emotional abuse, moderate chastisement which eventually culminates severe violence and trauma. The progression of the aforementioned could result from a selective reading of the following passage (where female adultery intersects with male jealousy), which provides enough ammunition for some men to use violence.

"This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man and he is jealous of his wife; then he shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. (KJV, 2014, Numbers 5:29-30)."

Given the general tendencies of religious leaders to ignore or fail to acknowledge abuse within its congregation—even in instances of adultery—where the women might appear complicit in the eyes of many. Some men might insist on their right to control their wives and justify that claim by referencing the expressions of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. There, he wrote:

"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. (KJV, 2014, Ephesians 5:22-24)."

While this directive tends to perpetuate the control of wives by husbands, the larger problem is that some men do not acknowledge the verses that immediately follow, where husbands are instructed on how to treat their wives. It reads:

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (KJV, 2014, Ephesians 5:25-28)."

The above scripture serves to remind Christians (and others) of an obligation to do unto others, as they would have others do unto them: to love their neighbours as they love God, and to love their wife as God loves the church.

3. Religion and Domestic Violence

Religious traditions are often misinterpreted, particularly by abusers, to justify their abusive behaviours. Usually, such support comes from citing selected passages from sacred scriptures or teachings of a particular religious community, or from arguing for the authority of traditional practices from the past that justify violence, especially against women. Similar arguments could be made for any number of social behaviours that are deemed unjust or oppressive today, such as racism and economic enslavement. At the same time, religious beliefs can also be a source of spiritual and moral strength. Religious teachings are often sources of hope and inspiration. A wider community motivated by faith can provide sanctuary in the form of support, shelter, and safety from domestic violence. In addition to physical, sexual, psychological and/or financial abuse, domestic violence may also include spiritual abuse. This could result in people questioning their spiritual and religious beliefs and values, and could also make them fearful of escalating the abuse if their partner has forbidden them to practice their faith. Religion and spirituality can often be a source of support and healing for those experiencing domestic violence. However, religion and spirituality can also be used as a tool to control or manipulate an individual.

4. Literature Review

Pertek *et al.*'s (2023) summation is critical in its delineation of religious resources and gender- based violence. With a focus on survivors rather than the injurious nature of the violence and its long- lasting effects, the scholars provide relatable evidence for how the victims map out coping strategies on domestic violence.

Similarly, notable scholars like Carlson (2005); Ghafournia (2017) Khalaf-Elledge (2021); Chitu (2023); and Le Roux and Pertek (2023) among others have identified that male centered perspective interpretation of religious texts make women susceptible to physical, sexual, and psychological harm. While Ghafournia (2017) identified Muslim women as victims of domestic violence, Carlson (2005), Khalaf-Elledge (2021); Chitu (2023); Le Roux and Pertek (2023) observe that religion reinforces violence against women. This point is clearly highlighted by the religious convictions of the perpetrators of marital violence and the experiences of the women.

Reasoning from a sociological perspective, Simister & Kowalewska (2016) specify that Catholic women have a higher risk of VAWG because of the ban on divorce by the Catholic churches. McPhillips and Page (2021) on the other hand while enunciating their views contend that religion play a role in upholding violent norms, whether through the disciplining of the body or through discursive control that may lead to women being harmed physically, sexually, psychologically and spiritually. McPhillips and Page's (2021) explication of the role of religion in engendering trauma may have been borne out of the traumatisation of women as a result of VAWG. Clearly, both Simister & Kowalewska (2016) and McPhillips and Page (2021) foreground their views of religious trauma and they relate them to sublimation of trauma by women in religious and cultural space.

4.1. Theoretical Framework

Tedeschi and Felson (1994) in *Violence Aggression and Coercive Action* provide a structural and theoretical framework which provides the link between wife battering and religion. They developed a social-interactionist theory by showing that violence serves specific social and religious purposes such as establishing subjective justice and enhancing or defending social identities. For Tedeschi and Felson (1994), there are certain religious tenants that inevitably binds women to abusive relationships. In a style reminiscent of McPhillips and Page's (2021) delineation of religious trauma, it could be explained that batterers selectively misinterpret scriptures to rationalise or justify violence, a position akin to Attah's creation and recreation of how religious traditions and socio-cultural institutions support GBV through patriarchal interpretations and practices.

4.2. Purpose of the Study

The study examines representation of religious trauma in Sefi Attah's *Hailstones from Zamfara*. The aim is to consider how patriarchal interpretation of religious text influence unequal distribution of power within the cultural and domestic space leading to feasible exploitation, oppression or marginalization of the female gender. The objectives are to highlight the patterns and dimension of violence, investigate how wrong exposition of religious texts make women vulnerable to domestic violence, determine how religious convictions reinforce violence in Sefi Attah's *News from Home and Other Stories*.

4.3. Method

Sefi Attah's *Hailstones from Zamfara* constitutes the data for this study. The study adopts a qualitative research design. Excerpts were purposively selected from Attah's *Hailstones from Zamfara* after a close reading of the text relating to VAWG activities in insurgencies. The motivation for the choice of the sampled excerpts lies in the representation of religious trauma in the text. The selected excerpts of the protagonist is interrogated to discover the effects of trauma on the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of the characters.

The approach focuses on investigating how the thoughts, emotions, feelings, acts, inactions, and motivations of the perpetrators of religious trauma are in relation the theoretical framework in the study. Specific experiences are described in terms of how they portray religion as engendering trauma. The study engages Tedeschi & Felson's (1994) Rational Choice Theory to examine how patriarchal interpretation of religious text foster women's vulnerability to violence. The study attempts to offer a nuance understanding of how religion engender violence against women and girls. In the novel under study, the significance of religion in reinforcing misogyny is projected in the novel; religion shape power imbalances and women's susceptibility to violence.

5. Findings and Discussion

Religious trauma is a deep emotional wound especially when it is perpetuated by tenets of high control religious system. This form of trauma is as a result of psychological or emotional distress resulting from individual's involvement in a religious system or faith community. It also occurs when the beliefs, practices or experiences within a religious context becomes harmful or traumatic for someone. The complexities of trauma are summated in the fact that in most religious and cultural communities, the practice of wife battering or VAWG has been accepted as ordinary. Additionally, a characteristic feature of religious trauma is that it often takes subtle and less overt form.

Ideologically, religion and the society places women with subservient and defined roles. Suffice to say that contemporary Nigerian female novelists such as: Chimamanda Adichie, Sefi Attah, Diana Evans, Oyinkan Braithwaith and Lola Shoneyin have explored constellation of socio-cultural practices such as gender subjugation, domestic violence, sexual assault, polygamy, and poverty as a subtle form of trauma. In *Hailstones from Zamfara*, Attah amplifies the sublime traumatisation of women across social, cultural, religious and political space. She portrays a subservient and subdued image of a woman who breaks off from culturally defined roles. Attah specifically takes a polemical look at religion and the mental health of women as she interrogates the influence of religion as a factor capable of engendering trauma in women.

The novelist's stance on religious extremism, domestic violence, and child marriage and the trauma resulting from the conflagration of cultural and religious misinterpretation shows the nature of traditional African society. A society that expects a woman to condone whatever happens to her under the guise of the experiences that must be endured in marriage. In *Hailstones from Zamfara*, Attah captures the experiences of Amina Lawal Kurami, a woman in Northern Nigeria who was sentenced to death by stoning for adultery and for conceiving a child out of wedlock in an Islamic Shariah court. In the context of this study, religion has a huge influence on women's emotional stability.

A situation where a man attributes his being constantly drunk to his wife's illicit affair and is absolved of whatever violence he inflicts on the woman when he is drunk leaves the woman vulnerable and in a state of psychological and emotional trauma. The narrator also suggests that it is almost impossible for a woman to reach a state of piety. Thus, apart from the guilt the narrator feels, she looks forward to death and seems to suggest that only in death will she reach a magnificent state, like the mother of the Holy Prophet.

The ethical standard of "I divorce thee" twice described in the Holy Quran as substantiated by the narrator's husband initiates the throng of emotional trauma for the narrator and her subsequent clandestine relationship. In *Hailstones on Zamfara*, Attah recounts the domestic abuse of a fourteen-year-old girl by her husband. Apart from being married as an under-aged bride, she became partially deaf due to constant beating. Attah turns our attention to the constant trauma she suffers from as a result of domestic violence. Informing her husband of the physical and psychological assault she often suffers from her marriage she reports: "My left ear is damaged from the beating you gave me."

Sometimes I hear, sometimes I don't even if I face Mecca' (*Hailstones from Zamfara*, p.16). While the woman in actual life is unmarried, Attah's character was married and had borne children for her husband who constantly batter her once he is under the influence of alcohol. In a bid to handle the psychological and physical torture she is often made to pass through; she resorts to having an affair with an invisible man who is only seen by her. While there is no justification for a woman to be emotionally involved with another man outside her home, the unnamed character sought relief from emotional, physical and psychological trauma and by resorting to an extra-marital affair.

Hailstones from Zamfara contains accounts of both physical and psychic pain. Gender violence is perpetrated on women's bodies in order to create a new symbolic entity; the repressed female. Inadvertently, there is a difficulty in crossing rhetorical divides regarding the effect of intimate violence on young brides, which has frequently been a source of contention in national discourse. This may probably be a result of diverse religious opinions on the subject. Adimula & Ijere (2018, p.20) identify 'wife-rape' as a social stigma. These scholars assert that such experience arises from the unwritten law imposed by the society that forces women against their will to have sex with their husbands irrespective of their psychological or emotional preparedness. This type of trauma has the psychological implication that these women are physically and emotionally forced and threatened with sexual activities.

The culture of remaining silent and not being able to tell their family the actual state of things in their marriages traumatises women. In a home where the husband drinks to a state of stupor, resistance to orgy sex on such occasions brings about beatings. Thus, the unnamed female character often acts as a recluse in her home because tradition and religion forbid her from returning to her parents. Here, Attah pitches humanity against under-aged marriage, domestic violence, and religious extremism in a society like ours which fails to take cognizance of trauma arising from such experiences. Through the unnamed character in *News from Home*, Attah recapture trauma of intimate partners abuse in its sublimity. To the novelist, when a religious structure upholds spousal control, the society attains a height of decadence that does not only violate women but keeps them in perpetual subjection.

Attah also criticises such debauchery which expects a woman to be enthusiastic about the betrothal of a second wife. The character is battered by her husband for refusing to chaperone 'his new bride, a girl the same age as my eldest daughter Fatima' (*Hailstones on Zamfara*, p.16). With men like Mallam Sanusi, who cut off his daughter's foot for running away from her husband's house, women have to remain in marriage irrespective of the physical, psychological and emotional torture meted out on them by their husbands. For the protagonist, therefore, her inability to deal with the constant abuse by her husband coupled with the knowledge of the violent treatment she would receive from her father if she mistakenly returns home makes her develop a form of condensation; an inherent inability to fuse the repressed unconscious in her relationships. The trauma she suffers leaves her morose as she drifts aimlessly around the house.

Another form of trauma inflicted on the vulnerable females in 'Hailstones' could be traced to the libidinal deposit of masculinist ego, authoritarianism, arrogance, and sheer disrespect for womanhood, among many vices that have been observed as a characteristic of narcissistic spouses. The impunity enjoyed by the unnamed husband in the story under the guise of religion and marriage makes him feel invulnerable and omnipotent, despite the fact that he is feared and is the source of that fear.

Bergen, (1996) and Alokan, (2013) assert that sexual abuse is prevalent in violent relationships and most women who have been raped in marriage have been physically assaulted by their husbands. They seem to suggest that the violence which men have exhibited towards their wives is overtly or indirectly indicative of the general perception the larger society has towards women. The truncation of dreams and wishes of the subjugated female character seems to be another source of trauma for most Nigerian women. Unfortunately, the age-long tradition of patriarchy and phallogracy has hindered most women from fulfilling their political, social, economic, and educational capabilities.

The humiliations, mistreatment, and vexations from the husband have an adverse effect on the self-esteem of the protagonist. Similarly, fear, anxiety, distress, and desperation often affect the personality of abused victims. Hence, the inability of victims of domestic trauma to come out of their anguish and connect with their psychological and internalised stress has practically made it impossible for most of them to maintain significant healthy relationships. This factor could be traced to the beginning of the adulterous relationship of the unnamed protagonist in Attah's Hailstones from Zamfara.

Also, the fragmented relationship the unnamed protagonist has with her husband confirms her as an objectified being whose existence is solely to bringing forth children and satisfying her husband's sexual desire. This process constitutes traumatic psychoses the character exhibited whenever the husband is around. In most cases, this does not last long when the traumatised finds solidarity or binary cord with someone who understands the physical pain they are experiencing. As a result, the woman tries to connect with anyone and everyone she can. As a result of being victims, the traumatised individual gathers what has been spoiled, re-arms her shattered personality, and craves to meet someone who accepts, appreciates, and values her, including what has been done to her.

Besides, Attah's deliberate refusal to give the abused women names and voices further portends their deprivation and lack of choice as they are reduced to objects of sexual gratification within the confines of their matrimonial space where they should have experienced a sense of wholeness. Rishipal (2013) stresses further that such a condition affects an individual's behaviour and performance such that they are unable to cultivate or sustain respectable inter-personal relationships.

Other effects of traumatisation that are frequently ignored include: the inability to make rational decisions, display of inappropriate behaviors or emotions in ordinary situations, having a general or pervasive depressive mood, having a propensity to manifest physical symptoms of psychosomatic disorders, or having fears related to personal issues. Learning difficulties, immaturity (irrational crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills), hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness), aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting), withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others, retreat from an exchange of social interaction, excessive fear or anxiety), and (academically performing below grade level). For Attah, the litanies of experiences that induce trauma in Hailstones on Zamfara include: polygamy, domestic violence and poverty.

Living with the perpetrator of domestic violence, in this instance, the supposed husband of the unnamed protagonist constantly exposes the victim to constant emotional, physical and verbal abuse. The consequence of this is Post Traumatic Stress. Attah notes that women experiencing intimate partner abuse frequently experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For the senior wife, infidelity becomes a means of coping with the ongoing abuse. Also, since it is practically a difficult task to discern repressed emotions, especially in life-long relationships such as marriage, the victims in such relationships are left to grapple with the pain of repressed emotional, physical, and psychological pain in marriages.

The implication of PTSD in the marital relationship which Attah explores provides a model for examining the causes of neuroses in young brides who are given out in marriages without physical, emotional, and psychological preparedness. Most especially, it provides a pattern for examining what goes on in the minds of women who have co-wives in marriages and those whose husbands abuse physically, verbally, and emotionally.

6. Conclusion

The study investigated the representation of religious trauma in Sefi Attah's *News from Home and Other Stories*. Religious trauma as seen from this study emanates from religious practices which makes the women susceptible to domestic violence. In this case, the depiction of religious trauma operates through unequal power structures and disadvantage position religion has placed on women. Attah's representation of trauma sets a stage for a consciousness that aim to propel women to the place where they can negotiate trauma and healing. Findings from this research established that women's individual and sexual freedom cannot be guaranteed because of doctrinal teachings which binds women to abusive relationships. The study advocates that a proper understanding of the tenets of religion and regular sensitization of religious leaders are vital for minimizing misinterpretation of religious texts. It is therefore recommended that counselling and therapy sessions should be organized for victims of spousal abuse to achieve emotional stability, healing and recovery from the trauma of domestic violence.

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Community Engagement and Participation in the Implementation of Community Development Projects in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study seeks to highlight how community participation and engagement could influence a community development project and the challenges faced, especially in Lagos State where there are many abandoned projects and community development associations. The study adopted a descriptive design to have a full perspective. Data was collected through close ended questionnaires from 10 Community Development Association (CDA) members. Two hundred and eight (208) respondents were selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure community members are selected from rural and sub-urban CDAs in seven local governments out of the twenty local governments in Lagos State and the data were analyzed with frequency and chi square tests. The study found that community engagement empowers communities to have their say over decisions that affect their lives; community projects are made easier through community development agency participation and lack of qualified professionals in the community affects participation in community development projects. CDAs are encouraged to participate and engage in any project within their jurisdictions. The study therefore recommended the community member to participate actively and discuss with the project financiers before the commencement of projects for their community. Consequently, the study concluded that community participation and engagement encourages the community to claim project ownership.

Keywords: *Community Development Associations, community engagement, community participation, community projects development*

1. Introduction

Community development has existed in developing nations like Nigeria for a long time, despite the fact that it has been practiced knowingly or unknowingly. It started when people came together to clear bushes to make a pathway to bringing resources together to build houses for themselves and community recreational centres. Despite all these being done without formal recognition and with less mobilization efforts, society had more achievements with fewer abandoned projects. With different authors defining community development in Nigeria, most definitions refer to it as the process where local communities actively identify and address their needs, leading to sustainable socio-economic growth. This participatory approach ensures that development projects align with each community's unique cultural, social and economic contexts.

According to Oyeleye *et al.* (2018), community development involves efforts on the part of the people in a community. This effort is shown in the active participation of the people in the program designed for their well-being in their community. This participation may take the form of expenditure of time, energy, financial and physical resources. It also involves the resources of some outside authority, governmental or non-governmental, by which the community must manage to solve their community problems. The significant goals of community development, according to Ekong (2002), cited in Oyeleye *et al.* (2018), are to induce social change to balance human and material betterment, for strengthening the institutional structure in such a way as to facilitate social change and the process of growth; to ensure the fullest possible popular participation in the development process and promote social justice by permitting less privileged groups to give expressions to the aspirations and to participate in development activities. The definition did not include who the less privileged groups are and what made them such in their country or area.

Moreover, it is recognized that development efforts cannot be sustained without the active participation of all people concerned without regard to gender, age or wealth. This is because the participation process, to a considerable extent, is determined by, among other things, the institutional structure of decision-making and implementation and the orientation of people. Such institutional structures and orientations grow and crystallize in a society over a long period. Wordu (2018) defines community participation as the involvement of community members in activities designed to improve their condition and better their community. It is often seen as citizen participation in the community project. It is a process by which citizens respond to public concerns and take responsibility for the development of their community. It is a process whereby the marginalized in a community take the initiative to determine their future and improve their lives with full responsibility for their needs and assert themselves as subjects of their history.

Community engagement is primarily part of a dialogue where organizations and communities can make decisions to create social capital. It can lead to improved outcomes for communities when government organizations and public decision-making entities seek out the aspirations, concerns and values of communities, who, in turn, share their aspirations, concerns and values with governing entities. Community engagement ensures access and community empowerment are done through the values of access and inclusivity, where community members are informed and educated on issues at hand, locals are able to contribute meaningfully to engagement and have the capacity to shape those activities. Community engagement ensures that community members have access to valued social settings and activities, feel that they are able to contribute meaningfully to those activities, and develop functional capabilities that enable them to participate fully.

Scholars such as Lee (2021), Obetta & Okide (2011), Green (2008) & Wordu (2019) have suggested so many approaches to participation and engagement such as top-bottom approach, bottom-top approach, participatory rural approach and technology of participation, economic theory and community-driven development (CDD) approaches of community development. While all these approaches try to handle development projects from different angles, there are still some gaps left behind. Hence, despite all these approaches being used in various developing countries, there are still many abandoned community development projects in the nooks and crannies of highly populated cities like Lagos State.

Ayodele & Alabi (2011) submitted that Nigeria is characterized by lots of abandoned community development projects due to lack of coordination from the community, urbanization, poor infrastructures and roads. Consequently, residents of major cities, especially Lagos State, living in erosion-prone areas have to leave their houses because of flooding and fear of reptiles. Some school buildings have been abandoned due to neglect by successive governments which has turned them into hideouts for criminals and cultists. The causes and effects of these project abandonments are not just peculiar to a particular reason but rather cut across several reasons (Ayodele & Alabi, 2011), as well as creating a total dwindling effect on the values of developed properties located nearby and within the vicinity. Most of this abandoned residential building usually turned into hide-outs for criminals and has a tremendous effect on the physical environment, poses a serious threat to the sustainability of the environment and attracting the most hopeless of any city's destitute population. Hence, this represents a set-back in developing the community to the fullest.

1.1. Statement of Problem of the Study

Community participation and engagement is of absolute importance when it comes to community development success. This is to ensure that all the major stakeholders in the community are not left behind in the development project. With scholars having different approaches to participation and engagement in records, there have been lots of abandoned community development project due to lack of coordination from the community, urbanization, poor infrastructures, and roads in major cities like Lagos and these questions the various approaches. Moreover, the level of community involvement in the planning, financing, execution, operation and management of community development projects is still in doubt in some communities. Without detailed assessment of the effectiveness of community engagement and participation, it is difficult to justify the extent to which they have been utilized in

community development projects. Hence, it is important to research the influence of community engagement and participation in the implementation of community development projects. It is also imperative to look at the challenges faced by the community members in implementing various projects. Consequently, it is the thrust of this study to examine the community engagement and participation in the implementation of community development project in Lagos State.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are to:

1. assess the influence of community engagement in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State
2. determine the influence of community participation in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State
3. identify various challenges of the community in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What is the influence of community engagement in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State?
2. What is the influence of community participation in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos state?
3. What are the challenges community members are confronted with in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos state?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

H_0 1: There is no significant influence of community engagement on the implementation of community developments project in Lagos state.

H_0 2: Community participation does not significantly influence the implementation of community developments project in Lagos state.

H_0 3: There are no significant influence of community challenges in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Community Development

The United Nations defines community development as a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It is a broad concept, applied to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. Lee (2021) stated that community development is rooted in a broad understanding of citizenship that sees people as having a right to influence and participate in the decisions that affect them and to have their experiences and views listened to and acted on. It is potentially a means or process whereby people can achieve such a right. This means that for us to develop as a nation, there is a need to ensure that every aspect is developed. This will ensure that no sector is left unattended to and everyone will unanimously bring about the desired development.

In the opinion of Obetta & Okide (2011), the approach to delivering community development and social welfare services has been changing from time to time over the past three decades. Presently, a bottom-top service delivery approach is in vogue. The approach implies that the beneficiaries of a service are helped to understand their problems and take part in suggesting and providing possible interventions towards solving that particular problem. In other words, bottom-top service delivery approach is a demand-driven approach showing that communities are helped to identify a problem affecting them and, hence, the need to solve it. Rather than imposing development projects on the community, its members should be allowed to participate right from planning and execution of projects. The bottom-top approach contrasts sharply with the top-bottom approach where the bureaucrats thought over problems for the communities and suggested interventions on their behalf. The top-bottom approach presupposes that communities have no capacity to understand their problems and nor do they have any capacity to suggest any meaningful intervention to solve their problems (Obetta & Okide, 2011). This type of approach became very popular during the colonial and post-colonial era up to the 1980s. The top bottom approach had shortcomings as their services did not meet the communities' needs. Also, the communities had to look at the interventions as foreign and impositions on them.

2.2. Concept of Community Participation

Wordu (2018) defines community participation as the involvement of community members in activities designed to improve their condition and better their community. It is often seen as citizen participation in the community project. It is a process by which citizens respond to public concerns and take responsibility for the development of their community. It is a process whereby the marginalized in a community take the initiative to determine their future and improve their lives with full responsibility for their needs and assert themselves as subjects of their history. According Wordu (2018), community participation is concerned about:

- a. The involvement of people in cooperative projects to improve their living conditions
- b. Involvement of people in the activities to acquire skills that enable them to adjust to changing realities and
- c. Involvement of people in public issues which grow out of individual or local interests.

Viewing community participation in the context of community-based organizations, Wordu (2018) suggests that community participation is driven by local residents interested in increasing the visibility of perceived neighborhood threats and defending their rights. It is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them.

2.3. Concept of Community Engagement

According to Weil, Reisch & Ohmer (2021), community engagement is the involvement and participation in an organization for the welfare of the community. It is volunteering, which involves giving personal time to projects in humanitarian NGOs or religious groups, are forms of community involvement. The engagement is generally motivated by values and ideals of social justice. Community engagement can be volunteering at food banks, homeless shelters, emergency assistance programs, neighborhood cleanup programs and so forth. Community engagement is a community-centered orientation based in dialogue. Community engagement enables a more contextualized understanding of community members' perceptions of the topics and contexts, and facilitates stronger relationships among and between community members. The outcome of community engagement is ultimately social capital and stronger relational networks. While community organizing involves the process of building a grassroots movement involving communities, community engagement primarily deals with the practice of moving communities toward change, usually from a stalled or similarly suspended position.

2.4. Community Engagement, Community Participation and Community Development

Granicus (2023) opined that with the rise in deepening and expanding public engagement globally, the importance of community engagement has become pivotal for well-functioning, twenty-first century democracies. Constructive relationships between communities and the institutions of government make community engagement not only desirable, but necessary and viable as it is likely to lead to more equitable, sustainable public decisions and improve the liveability of local communities. This is why community engagement is important for individuals, public organizations, and governments alike. Where traditional, executive-led approaches are ineffective, community engagement is important in its collaborative approach to the design and/or delivery of services. For the complexity of issues in any given community where traditional approaches have been ineffective if non-inclusive in the extreme, community engagement enables better understanding of communities' needs and aspirations.

Granicus (2023) further submitted that community engagement builds and sustains cohesive communities. It is primarily part of a dialogue where organizations and communities can make decisions to create social capital. Community engagement leads to improved outcomes. It can lead to improved outcomes for communities when government organizations and public decision-making entities seek out the aspirations, concerns and values of communities, who, in turn, share their aspirations, concerns and values with governing entities. Incorporated into decision-making processes, public decision makers are better informed and better able to meet community needs.

Olukotun (2017) opined that community engagement drives social transformation. With an emphasis on collaboration and the promise of influence on decision making, the importance of community engagement is clear as it drives social transformation. It promotes advocacy that not only works to raise awareness, but passionate, locally-informed voices can be heard – especially during election time. As voters, communities have the power to make their voices heard. And elections represent a significant opportunity to drive change. Advocacy campaigns are at their most effective when local governments, municipalities and councils activate communities, mobilizing on issues that impact their everyday lives. For it is in the local, place-based arena that community members can have their most direct impact on policy. Traditionally, local government advocacy priorities have been determined by executive-led approach essentially, without community input (and often buoyed by third-party research and data at times, leading to advocacy campaigns that worked to benefit external agencies).

Olukotun (2017) submitted that community participation in project development is about ordinary citizens assessing needs and participating in project planning and budgeting, implementation and monitoring. This improves public resource management and reduces corruption. Thus, making civil servants and political leaders accountable to the people. The exemption of weak and powerless citizens from decision making is one of the causes of poverty, most especially in Nigeria because it denies them their rights and creates unequal power relationship. Mongbala (2003) indicated that community members are easily mobilized to participate in community development programmes through the agency for community-based association. The community-based association in the short period of time can mobilize a large ring of community members to participate in community development programmes.

2.5. Challenges of Community Engagement and Participation

Gboku & Lekoko (2016) noted that one of the factors affecting the utilization of community engagement for community development project implementation is poor participation by the people resulting from the fact that majority of the community members are not involved in the planning and implementation of community development projects. The resultant effect is that community resources utilization process is faced with lack of co-operation by the members of the community. It has also been reported that the utilization of community participation for community development projects is also faced with the problem of personnel skilled and unskilled labour, non-availability of expertise as well as mismanagement of community resources by some people.

According to Asuka and Pully (2008), the dearth of skilled, qualified and competent manpower in the various communities, especially in executive capacity, affects projects execution and frequently ends in abandoned projects. Executive capacity involves those professional and experts such as agronomists, medical consultants, engineers, architects, accountants, and policy analysts, among others who are needed for project execution. These experts and other skilled manpower are in short supply in most communities, thereby limiting the possibility of project execution and ultimately ending up in an abandoned project. It has also been submitted that another factor that has led to the ineffective utilization of community participation is the issue of corruption. This is usually perpetrated by politicians, contractors and local communities through outright embezzlement of project funds or misappropriation of funds or through over invoicing of project materials and equipment. In all the cases, the consequence is abandoned projects occasioned mainly by the depletion of projects funds caused by corrupting tendencies of actors and stakeholders.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to obtain adequate information from the concerned Community Development Association (CDA) members in Lagos State. Two hundred and eight (208) respondents were selected from 10 CDAs through a random sampling technique among the 639 CDA members in Lagos State. The chosen CDAs are in rural and sub-urban parts of Lagos State and they cut across seven Local Government Areas (LGA) out of the twenty LGAs in Lagos state. This was done to ensure that major community members were captured and to generalize the study. A self-constructed questionnaire with a modified Likert four-point scale was used to obtain data from the different community development associations in different areas in Lagos state. The questionnaire was drafted in English since most of the respondents have graduated from O-level at least. Face and content validity of the instrument were done, while the Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient was used to check the reliability of the instrument and 0.86 was obtained at a coefficient of 0.05. The result was analyzed with simple percentages to answer research questions raised and Chi square was used for hypotheses formulated at 0.05 significant level.

4. Results



Figure 1: Community Development; source: Authors

Research Question One: What is the influence of community engagement in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State?

The findings on research question one as presented in Table 1 and show the influence of community engagement on community development project in Lagos State. The finding shows that community engagement influences the involvement of the community member in the development of their community, deals with the practice of moving communities toward change, empowers communities to have their say over decisions that affect their lives and builds and sustains cohesive communities. Hence, the success of the community development project relies on community engagement and other factors as shown in Figure 1 above.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of community participation in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State?

The findings on research question two as presented in Table 1 and Figure 1 above and show the influence of community participation on community development projects in Lagos State. The finding shows that community participation influences monitoring of the project by the community member made the project easier through community development agency and it is about assessing needs and planning of important task. Hence, the completion of the community development project relies on community participation and other factors as shown in Figure 1 above.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges community members are confronted with in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State?

The findings on research question three as presented in Table 1 and show some of the challenges confronting community members in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State. The finding shows poor participation by the community members, lack of qualified professionals in the community, corruption and fund limitations are the major challenges facing the community members.

4.1. Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis (%)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	n	p
1. There is no significant influence of community participation on the implementation of community developments project in Lagos State.	8.2	23.1	27.9	40.9	208	<0.05
Hypothesis 2: Community participation doesn't significantly influence the implementation of community developments project in Lagos State	13.0	26.9	24.0	36.1	208	<0.05
Hypothesis 3: There are no significant influence of community challenges in the implementation of community development projects in Lagos State	9.6	7.7	43.3	39.4	208	<0.05

Table 1: Hypothesis Testing; source: Original Research

Table 1 above demonstrates the hypothesis testing process. It was found that all three null hypotheses could be rejected and that, therefore, the alternative hypotheses are accepted.

5. Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question one and hypothesis one show that respondents opined that community engagement is the involvement of the community member in the development of their community, which primarily deals with the practice of moving communities toward change, usually from similarly suspended position and empowers communities to have their say over decisions that affect their lives. This is in line with Lee (2021) in that community development is rooted in a broad understanding of

citizenship that sees people as having a right to influence and participate in the decisions that affect them and to have their experiences and views listened to and acted on. It is potentially a means or process whereby people can achieve such a right. This means that for a nation to develop, there is need to ensure that every aspect is developed. The finding is also in tandem with Oyeleye *et al.* (2018), that community development involves efforts on the part of the people in a community. This effort is shown in the active participation of the people in the program designed for their well-being in their community. It also involves the resources of some outside authority, governmental or non-governmental organization, which the community must manage to solve their community problems. Weil *et al.* (2021) observed that community engagement is the involvement and participation in an organization for the welfare of the community. It is a volunteering, which involves giving personal time to projects in humanitarian NGOs or religious groups, are forms of community involvement. The engagement is generally motivated by values and ideals of social justice.

Findings from research question two and hypothesis two show that community participation in project development is about assessing needs of the community, it involves monitoring of project by the community member and community projects is made easier through community development agency. This is in line with the findings of Olukotun (2017) that community participation in project development is about assessing needs and participating in project planning and budgeting, implementation and monitoring. This improves public resource management and reduces corruption. The study is also in tandem with the findings of Mongbala (2003) that community members are easily mobilized to participate in community development programmes through the agency for community-based association. Meanwhile, the study of Granicus (2023) submitted that community participation builds and sustains cohesive communities. It is primarily part of a dialogue where organizations and communities can make decisions to create social capital. It can lead to improved outcomes for communities when government organizations and public decision-making entities seek out the aspirations, concerns and values of communities, who, in turn, share their aspirations, concerns and values with governing entities.

Findings from research question three also shows that poor participation by the people is an issue in the implementation of community development projects, lack of qualified professionals in the community affects participation in community development projects and corruption affects effective participation of community member in community development project. This is in line with the findings of Gboku & Lekoko (2007) that one of the factors affecting the utilization of community engagement for community development project implementation is poor participation by the people resulting from the fact that the majority of the community members are not involved in the planning and implementation of community development projects. The resultant effect is that community resources utilization process is faced with lack of co-operation by the members of the community. It is in tandem with the study that the utilization of community participation for community development projects is also faced with the problem of personnel skilled and unskilled labour, non-availability of expertise as well as mismanagement of community resources by some people. Meanwhile, the study of Asuka and Pulley (2008) showed that the dearth of skilled, qualified and competent manpower in the various communities, especially in executive capacity affects projects execution and most times ends in abandoned projects. These experts and other skilled manpower are in short supply in most communities, and thereby limiting the possibility of project execution and ultimately end up in abandoned project.

5.1. Implication of Findings

The utilization of community engagement and participation in community development projects will go a long way in ensuring that both Federal and State Projects in Lagos State reach the grassroots. This has been trial-tested through the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP), which has improved access to basic services for more than 23 million Nigerians across 29 states, contributing to poverty reduction. Similarly, the World Bank has employed a similar approach, known as Community-Led Development (CLD), in many countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence to improve infrastructural, livelihoods, and community participation.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that there is a need for community engagement and participation in the community development project so that people could claim more ownership of the project and it would enhance project completion. The study also showed that community engagement and participation are voluntary action for every member of the community. It demands joint participations from every member of the community as it helps in building projects in due time. Community engagement and participation in the development project would also make the people to be involved in the project planning, budgeting, monitoring and taking possession of the development project.

6.1. Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- Community development associations should encourage their members especially the experts to participate in the ongoing project in their community even if they are not involved in the planning.
- Government or donor agencies should always include the community stakeholders in the planning of community project to enhance project success and management.
- The community development association should be transparent in the way in which projects are being handled.
- The idea of making participation in community project seamless should be imbibed to entice people into participating and engaging in the work.
- The community should be made to see community development project as a self-help project and this involves giving them ample opportunity to participate in the community project.

6.2. Limitations and Further Suggestions

The study was carried out at ten (10) different CDAs out of the 52 CDAs in Lagos State because of the high population of Lagos State. Rural and sub-urban Lagos sites were also used in the study. The authors suggest that further research be conducted in other CDAs within Lagos State to compare the results between the two settings.

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Unplanned and Unsustainable: Impacts of Urbanization in Purbachal

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization and unplanned development activities have become serious problems in developing countries and Bangladesh is in that category as river pollution, land grabbing and unplanned construction works are ongoing here. The secondary effects of rapid urbanization include environmental problems, health difficulties, and poverty. This paper finds that the environmental condition of Purbachal is unbearable as developers are doing construction work for commercial purposes. The biodiversity of Purbachal is threatened due to several types of pollution, wherein air and water pollution are prominent. The River Balu is polluted by unplanned activities surrounding the study area. Moreover, the land acquisition process did not bring any positivity; instead, it took away the affluent life of the locals and, indeed, it is the prime factor in causing vulnerable socio-economic conditions. Unplanned development activities make residents more likely to be subjected to respiratory and waterborne diseases. The study also shows the authorities' apathy in protecting the area from unsustainable activities. This research concluded that careful actions of responsible bodies are badly needed to protect the area from unsustainable activities as well as environmental catastrophes.

Keywords: environmental problems; health problems, land acquisition, poverty, urbanization

1. Introduction

Urbanization is observed in developing countries, as the development of towns and cities and the conversion of the villages into towns due to a massively growing population is evident. The form of urbanization that started in Bangladesh can be attributed to the year 1947 (Hossain, 2008). However, the rate and type of urbanization in contemporary Bangladesh is unbalanced and unplanned, and because of that, it is impossible to make it sustainable. Without diminishing generative resources, sustainability means fulfilling people's desires and requirements through human actions (Mensah, 2019). Considering the developing world, it is regrettable that urbanization has not brought about any remarkable changes in the lifestyles of the citizens (Bodo, 2019). Despite steady urbanization advancement in South Asia, there are still issues of dissymmetrical urbanization, development gaps, and infrastructure disparities between development cities and the rural countryside (Bhagat, 2018). Dhaka is one of the largest megacities in South Asia, and urbanization is taking shape without thinking about the future. Because of the gigantic size of the population, Dhaka is struggling to preserve the quality of urban life, incorporating infrastructure, water demand, sanitation, and housing (Swapan *et al.*, 2017). The overall area of Dhaka's green space is diminishing over time, but these have effective natural, social, and economic potentialities (Byomkesh, Nakagoshi & Dewan, 2012).

To mitigate the population pressure on Dhaka city, a project called "The Purbachal New Town Project" was launched by Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha, or the RAJUK (Rahman & Alam, 2021). Though the project celebrated its 28th birthday in 2023, it did not positively affect overpopulated Dhaka. Land acquisition by the developers is often contended in Purbachal. This process is the main factor in wiping away the conventional occupation of the locals, as lands are used for housing purposes. In Dhaka, developers transform cultivable lands into apartments (Alam & Ahmad, 2011). The environmental quality of the study area is too deplorable to discuss. Environmental degradation and insufficient infrastructure are two causes of dichotomous allotment of land use in urban features (Swapan *et al.*,

2017). As air pollution and water pollution are the linchpins of the residents' health problems are the major issue. Characteristics of urban life are significant factors in perceiving the outbreak of diseases (Gmelcj & Kuppinger, 2018).

While some studies have explored the plan and structure of the Purbachal New Town Project, they have yet comprehensively to examine the land acquisition process, environmental consequences, and overall socio-economic scenario of the locals. So, the objectives of the paper are to understand the impacts of urbanization in Purbachal, considering the environmental, socio-economic, and health conditions of the locals.

2. Methodology

The Purbachal 300-feet area at the Rupganj Thana of Narayanganj district has been selected for the study.

The study sample was 20. I selected informants through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is an effective way of collecting information in a small group where one or more key individuals assist the researcher in identifying other informants (Bernard, 1995). In my study, I have used the snowball sampling technique for selecting respondents who are actually sufferers of the speedy process of urbanization in Purbachal. First of all, I introduced myself to the key informant, a local businessman of the area who is well acquainted with the people of the area. Then, I told him about my research objectives. Thanks to him, I defined the list of the primary respondents. Then he introduced me to other people experiencing similar situations and, thus, I interviewed a total of 19 respondents. My informants were residents who lost their cultivable lands due to acquisition, who are the worst sufferers of the urbanization process, and who changed their livelihood strategies. The informants belong to the 40-70 age group. One key informant interview and 19 in-depth interviews were conducted during the fieldwork.

Primary data have been collected through key informant interviews, in-depth interviews (IDI), and case studies. Key informant interviews (KII) have been used to gather an overview of the area. Moreover, to explore detailed information about the overall urbanization process of Purbachal, IDIs have been used during fieldwork as people feel more comfortable sharing confidential information in that form. Field notes, a recorder, and a checklist were used in the study. Some information has also been collected from secondary sources. Thus, for the secondary sources of information, this research has primarily relied on books, newspapers, and journal articles.

Key informants are those who possess the necessary information and are willing to provide it to the researcher (Bernard, 1995). One of the sub-inspectors (SI) of Rupganj police station helped me identify a key informant as he has a close connection with a local businessperson. The key informant was a prominent local businessman who had firsthand knowledge of the area's urbanization process. With his help, nineteen informants were selected for In-Depth Interviews.

Nineteen in-depth interviews were conducted during the fieldwork in 2022. The survey questionnaires were semi-structured, and respondents were encouraged to share their experiences of rapid urbanization.

Specifically, this study has collected three case studies to understand the health problems, vulnerable conditions of the locals, and environmental conditions of the area.

2.1. Data Analysis

Case studies and oral histories have been used to process and analyze data. All the data have been classified and organized considering the research topic and objectives. In this case, the locals' reaction regarding the urbanization process, environmental impacts, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and health difficulties, have all been considered. In the case study, two or three problems have been identified, and efforts have been made to understand why these exist and who is responsible for them. Then, possible solutions have been uncovered. Finally, based on solid evidence, the best solution has been selected.

3. Results

The study found that urbanization has been relentless in Purbachal and has had negative consequences. The KII and IDIs revealed that deforestation, river pollution, and unchecked development interventions were common. Among several problems, environmental effects are at the top of the list as various consequences are associated with them. Health problems are also prevalent in Purbachal. It is likely that careful intervention by the relevant authority is required to overcome difficulties.

3.1. Impact of Socio-economic Conditions

There is a close connection between poverty and urbanization. Residents of Purbachal stated that urbanization has negatively impacted their livelihood strategies. It has taken away their conventional patterns of livelihood. Previously, they had everything a household needed except oil and turmeric. Urban projects have made Purbachal an unplanned urban area. Many land development projects and express highway projects have also played vital roles in creating urban centres in Purbachal. Developers build their offices and construction sites in the arable lands, and that is partly why the traditional way of survival – cultivation- has vanished. Development means a positive change in a society or community. However, the development issues should not be taken as simple; in fact, it is a very complex issue, which is why a prominent anthropologists Gardner and Lewis (1996) termed development 'problematic.' In contrast, Arturo Escobar termed it as 'discourse' (Escobar, 2011). The development works of the Purbachal new town project have worked to the detriment of the locals. The people of Purbachal are now on the poverty line and can scarcely support their families. Many have left their homeland because of extreme poverty. The brokers trap them. Most people of the Purbachal area have enrolled in small businesses like vegetable buyers, tea sellers, and sweets sellers, which are too small to feed their families. Owing to poverty, savings for the future are low among the residents. Sometimes, people have to spend some of their remaining money on special events or crises, despite scarcely having enough for their basic needs (George & Kuppinger, 2018). Though some households have cows, which represent a source of earning extra income by selling milk, this is rarely enough to tackle urgent situations such as weddings or illness. As a result, a loan is the final destination when handling any unusual circumstances. The tendency among people to eat fancy foods and buy new clothes is relatively rare. Respondents said they usually buy a pair of new clothes, either at Eid or Puja, once a year.

Moreover, expensive food items like beef or mutton curry are hardly on their menus. Fish like Tilapia or Pangasius are eaten twice or three times a week, while chicken is usually eaten once a week or twice a month. Most of the money is used for daily survival, so the expense of education is scanty. 80% of respondents completed their primary education at the local primary school, whereas the other 20% are illiterate. In the developing world, high poverty rates are among the major issues that prevent reluctant dwellers from achieving a prosperous life (Boadi *et al.*, 2005). One of the respondents stated that "... about 80% of the people in the area are now destitute."

Case Study: Where Is Our Resourceful Life?

Samir Das, 54 years old, is a sweet seller who hardly is able to support his family, which consists of seven members. He said: "My main occupation was farming from around 2002. We were blessed with everything - trees filled with fruits and the river filled with fish. We had not bought anything, but everything has changed due to rapid urbanization. Some grassland on the side of Kanchan Bridge and Purbachal was formed by merging these lands with the Neela market. We used to catch fish and cultivate land to feed ourselves. The land was full of everything that a family needed. Actually, the main sources of vitamins were the fruits that we found on many trees, but these were cut down for the sake of development activities. Nevertheless, now, if I can earn money, then I will be able to eat. Otherwise, I will have to die without food. It does not feel good to reminisce about the glorious past. We led a very resourceful life."

Box 1: An Example of Extreme Poverty in the Study Area; source: Fieldwork, 2023

The case of Samir Das indicates how urbanization has negatively impacted his and his family's socioeconomic conditions, resulting in impoverishment.

3.2. Land Acquisition

As the local people's lands are used for apartments and commercial purposes, land acquisition has become a common phenomenon in Purbachal. Before the project's inauguration, the area had several small canals. These canals have been removed under this project, which is the Purbachal New Town Project. Cultivable lands have become covered with the sand with which the canals have been filled for project purposes. A stadium now under construction next to the Neela market was once a place used as housing by many residents. Influential local people, more precisely, local intermediaries, help the developers and industry owners to acquire land. Land is bought by brokers from locals for about 100-150,000 BDT.⁴ Currently, the brokers then sell it for thirty or forty times as much. Most of the respondents stated that, twenty years ago, they did not perceive the consequences of development projects and urbanization as the brokers misled them. Purbachal new town project has now turned into a machine for collecting money for third parties (Mamun, 2023). Neither the RAJUK nor the residents are the real beneficiaries, only the third party.

According to Islam (2022), in the new town project, plot location and developer reputation are two important elements for selling land. Relying on these two factors, each *katha* of land (approximately 126 square metres) is being sold for anywhere between 300,000-55,500,000 BDT in RAJUK's Purbachal new town project. The total area overseen by RAJUK is 6,213 acres (2,514 hectares) (Chambugang, 2023). Some prominent companies, including Purbachal American City, Probashi Polli Abashon project, Purbachal Marine City, and Green Purbachal Developer Ltd. are developing the sites to establish residential, commercial, and institutional districts. One of the respondents, Abdur Rashid, stated that the broker told him to sell his land as the project was being done for the locality, and he would reap the benefits soon. Since he is illiterate, he did not really understand what was going on and accepted what he was told. Now, the brokers are selling plots such as his at much higher prices.

3.3. Environmental Problems

Development activities have adversely impacted the environment, so air pollution, river pollution, and deforestation are common occurrences in Purbachal. The River Balu is the lifeblood of the locals. The river is being polluted heavily as industry owners use it as a dustbin to dump industrial garbage, which

⁴ US\$1 = 120.6 Bangladeshi tikals (BDT), approximately.

has made the river's natural flow stagnate. Moreover, dirt from Tongi and Demra came into the river later and increased the amount of pollution. Four hundred and fifty cubic litres of toxic liquid waste mixed with chemicals from various factories, which represents 1,000,000 cubic metres of sewage, is entering the Balu regularly (Shikder, 2023). The river water is now brackish and cannot be drunk or used for other purposes. Owing to the river pollution, the people's sufferings beggar description. Noxious odours rise from the water and are almost unbearable. As a result, the nature and environment of Purbachal is endangered. Once river water was entirely fresh and clean with solid flows. At that time, fishing was considered the second largest income source after agriculture because the river was filled with fish. Now, there are no fish in the river due to the polluted water.

Moreover, some brickfields in Purbachal have been built close to the river. Brickfields (responsible for 58% of the total amount) are the main polluting factor in Dhaka's air, and unplanned urbanization and unregulated development are other significant factors (Ahmed *et al.*, 2024). Owing to the lack of proper guidelines and waste management policies, industrial activities harm surface and subsurface water (Boadi *et al.*, 2005). As a result of the lack of proper monitoring and surveillance, the river is dying day by day. If the government had properly managed the course of the river, the amount of water flow would have increased, but the government did not take any such initiatives. Recently, RAJUK started supplying water through a deep tube well in Purbachal (Hossain, 2023). However, owing to the adverse effects they can cause, deep tube wells are considered enemies of the environment. They lower the level of groundwater, which damages biodiversity. In addition, the frequency of natural disasters is increased. Respondents said that RAJUK could easily save water from being polluted by taking proper steps and that a sustainable way of collecting water was quite feasible. However, it is not possible right now as the water is polluted. The area around Purbachal is full of dust as fumes are produced at the construction sites.

At the same time, the developers indiscriminately cut down trees, which resulted in desertification. During field visits, it was discovered that the project area was full of dust, which was once greenery, according to the respondents. There is a large number of polythene bags everywhere, which have mostly been dumped by tourists. Local people try their level best to conserve the area, but the required careful attention of the authorities is rarely to be found. Under the circumstances, unscrupulous people can misuse the local environment to the fullest extent for their own purposes.

Case Study: The River Has Almost Died

Bimal Chandra Das is 52 years old and a vegetable seller. He said: "I have nothing to say about the environment. If we calculate, Dhaka will be number one in environmental pollution, and Purbachal will be at the top of the list considering the unchecked activities - let the river suffer, let the plants uproot, but let the building rise. Once upon a time, there were many fish in this river. I, Bimal, used to sell fish. This place filled with sand was once part of the river. The water of the left-dried river is black due to heavy wastage. As the water has rotted, fish no longer live in the river. Certain people are responsible for destroying the river. There used to be various canals that kept the river alive. Besides, the canals were full of fish, providing a large portion of our daily life. But now, alas! We have been left with only a half-dead river."

Box 2: An Example of the Worsening Condition of the River; source: Fieldwork, 2023

The case of Bimal Chandra Das depicts that river pollution has adversely impacted the environment and people's lives, removing a substantial source of their protein.

3.4. Health Problems

The local population of Purbachal suffers from a wide range of waterborne diseases due to inadequate arrangements for safe drinking water and poor sanitation. Diarrhea is prevalent as there is not enough safe drinking water in the study area. During the rainy season, people generally have to live in an unhygienic environment, and the sanitation system is seriously damaged. As a result, the inhabitants are easily attacked by waterborne diseases. In Purbachal, the manufacturing industry and vehicle emissions are leading causes of air pollution, which results in respiratory diseases such as asthma. By failing to meet important social and ecological variables, developing nations can encounter unwanted problems (Baer, 1996). During the monsoon season, dengue fever is prevalent in the area as stagnant bodies of water are breeding sites for Aedes mosquitoes. The dirty water of the River Balu helps pests and parasites thrive and that is why scabies has become a regular feature of life for the residents. Modernization has many negative health effects when countries try to optimize natural resource collection without considering the social and environmental aspects of development (Baer, 1996).

Case Study: My Son Looks Older than Me

Karim Uddin, 60 years old, asserts that: "Once upon a time, the air was fresh, and we breathed freely. Now, the air is polluted, and people suffer from many respiratory diseases. Last year, my wife and I were sufferers of dengue fever, and the feelings at that moment were horrible, with both body pains along with other difficulties. It was not only us but also other residents who were the bearers of this fever as it is common in the monsoon season. Apart from that, other diseases afflict the body's structure, and that is why the young generation is feeble and cannot do much physical work. The most important thing is that I am 60 years old, and my son is only 38, but he looks older than me as he is suffering from asthma and other health difficulties due to the negative impacts of urbanization."

Box 3. An Example of the Prevalence of Asthma in the Study Area; source: Fieldwork, 2023

Noise pollution in the study area is common as vehicles from Sylhet and Narsingdi often use the Purbachal expressway as their route. Moreover, riders frequently ride motor bikes with loud horns at night; this is an area that is very suitable for night rides. As a result, noise pollution causes migraines and sleep disorders among the residents. As the residents are deprived of sound sleep, obesity and indigestion have become quite common among them. Respondents stated that they often had to take painkillers and digestion pills to overcome migraine headaches and indigestion. In the study area, the condition of mental health is as deplorable as physical health. Robbery and bag-snatching are routine hazards in several parts of Purbachal, creating mental pressure among the local people. Owing to the fear of robbers, shoppers close their shops in the evening. Now, this place has become famous for dumping dead bodies, especially murdered ones. In the last seven years, police have found seventeen dead bodies in Purbachal (Ahmed, 2023). Apart from that, economic uncertainty and fear of the future create severe depression among some of the residents.

4. Discussion

Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing and developing countries in terms of urbanization and industrialization. In most cases, urban plans and policies do not consider the potential threats of the results of unplanned urbanization. The conventional approach of the urban master plan in Bangladesh is invalid now, which is why it creates environmental problems, health problems, poverty, and income disparity (Hasan, 2022). Many authors have recorded the negative impacts of urbanization. Air pollution is the main factor of environmental degradation in cities, while the unavailability of safe drinking water leads to water-borne diseases (Boadi *et al.*, 2005). There are many challenges Dhaka is facing now -

inadequate green spaces, overcrowding, and poor living conditions, which adversely affect the residents (Rahaman, Kalam & Al-Mamun, 2023). In my study, residents reported that ongoing urbanization activities have hit them negatively. Air pollution is one of the main problems the residents face as brickfields emit black fumes that pollute the air and, indeed, are unbearable to breathe. Moreover, the construction site is another big culprit in Purbachal, discharging its black fumes. Green spaces are virtually zero in the area as developers cut down trees for more space to build apartments. As a result, residents are deprived of green spaces for walking and breathing fresh air.

The River Balu was once the primary income source for the residents after agriculture, but damage to the river has taken away this source, which has resulted in poverty. As river filling diminished the ample places that hold the rainwater, waterlogging is a common incident in Purbachal during monsoon. Moreover, river water is polluting as industrial discharge and waste are dumped into the river. Ten lac cubic meters of sewage is entering the Balu River regularly (Shikder, 2023). River water is polluted, and residents are unable to drink it and use it for other purposes. However, this river was the primary source of drinking before these unplanned activities. Residents suffer from respiratory and water-borne diseases. Poor sanitation systems and the shortage of safe drinking water leads to water-borne diseases. In the rainy season, dengue is common among the locals as stagnant water bodies enable mosquitoes and other pests to thrive. Apart from water-borne diseases, respiratory diseases are also endemic. The main agents of respiratory diseases in Purbachal are emissions from vehicles, industry, and construction sites. Many people in Purbachal experience migraines due to intolerable sounds from brickfields, construction sites, and vehicles. Dhaka city's speedy and wayward expansion, notwithstanding the residents' perspectives and other potential issues, has brought about various problems that damage the biodiversity and living conditions of the citizens (Rahaman *et al.*, 2023). The land acquisition process did not bring any positivity among the residents; instead, it created poverty; people are barely able to meet their daily needs. Reducing agricultural lands for urban expansion has profound social implications (Satterthwaite, McGranahan & Tacoli, 2010). People had been affluent in that they were able to obtain everything that a household needed on an everyday basis, but the land acquisition process changed this as arable lands were transformed into apartments. Brokers were able to take advantage of residents and, in some cases, forced them to sell lands at minimal prices; now they are selling them at much higher prices. As cultivation is wiped out due to urban encroachment, they enroll themselves in small businesses, which are not enough to lead a family.

5. Conclusion

The study shows how urbanization has impacted the lifestyles of the local people. Once, people were able to rely entirely on natural resources, from river water to land crops. Continued land encroachment made people destitute as it lessened their access to natural resources. In fact, the whole urbanization process of the Purbachal project is unsustainable and happening without consideration of the impact on the existing population. Moreover, the area's biodiversity is hampered by unfriendly environmental activities, such as the air pollution, river pollution, and deforestation that developers have caused. The air condition of the area is not good at all, which means people are more susceptible to respiratory diseases. The study finds that local governments are apathetic to proper monitoring to conserve the river and environment. However, to address the effects of urbanization and the overall vulnerable conditions of the residents, much more research is needed in the study area. Finally, the government should be able and willing to intervene in order to conserve the area from unplanned activities.

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Digital Music Marketing in Nigeria Music Industry: Perspectives of Selected Music Marketers in Ibadan

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Abstract

The quest for survival among musicians in the music industry and the question of how artists get known, as well as how existing artists maintain their fans in the music industry, continues to raise a bubble of voices in the sector. This calls for a discourse in popular musicology and specifically in music marketing studies. In order effectively to market music in the vibrant and diverse music industry, Nigerian music marketers need a vibrant approach. Digital streaming platforms offer a broad reach and awareness for music releases, encompassing both local and worldwide services. This study defined the functions of music marketers and concentrated on the tactics utilized by marketers in this field. Both primary and secondary data were used in the investigation. In this discussion, a few chosen music marketers were interviewed. Results showed different platforms used in marketing and that public relations contribute to attracting and maintaining a favorable public image. Musicians attract and retain fans by using fan engagement methods including targeted digital advertising, free performance tickets, and online contests. The study concludes that the success of music marketing depends on understanding audience interest and application of digital marketing strategies. It recommends for consistent further studies on currents trends as new digital technologies emerge.

Keywords: digital, marketing, music, music industry

1. Introduction

The Nigerian music industry has experienced significant transformations in recent years, largely driven by advancements in digital technology and the growth of social media platforms. With the proliferation of smartphones and internet access, digital music marketing has become a crucial component of how artists and music marketers reach and engage with audiences. Traditional methods of promoting music through physical sales, radio airplay, and live performances have been complemented and in some cases replaced by digital channels such as streaming platforms (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube), social media and digital advertising.

In Nigeria, a country with one of the largest and most dynamic music scenes in Africa, digital music marketing has become an essential tool for the commercialization and global reach of Nigerian music. Artists, record labels, and marketers now rely heavily on digital platforms to distribute and promote music, create brand awareness, and foster fan engagement. Despite the rapid adoption of digital marketing strategies, there remains a lack of comprehensive research that explores the perspectives of local music marketers in specific Nigerian cities, such as Ibadan, which serve as key hubs for regional music production and consumption. Music marketing essentially consists of promoting music via online distribution and selling music locally as well as social distribution like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and others, to link artists with their fans and promote success in the industry, it includes a variety of components like branding, advertising, public relations, social media marketing, influencer alliances, and live events.

All facets of the entertainment industry have been impacted by digital technology and digitalization, but the music sector has been particularly hard hit. The music industry had not altered much for a while. The marketing sector is crucial to the music business. Finding a marketing company that can effectively promote one's music can help it come alive in a time when there are billions of diverse musicians, everyone is trying to be the next big thing, and there seem to be few people with long attention spans. One crucial lesson in marketing is that one cannot just do marketing. You must have a game plan in place before releasing content on digital music platforms, or there is a risk of not getting the favorable feedback desired. The coordination of activities both before and after the release plays a significant role in the process of releasing music. Budgeting is a further crucial element. The amount of money spent on releasing a song or music video is not as crucial as making sure the intended audience hears the song. Even when the song has been released, poor marketing decisions could prevent it from being successful.

Other musicians are competitors, just like in any other field, and they may prevent your fan base from listening to your music. However, effective marketing may set you apart from the competitors. It makes it possible for your music to be properly branded, heard, and viewed by the right audience. It is a sincere technique to advance your reputation and increase visibility among potential listeners. The more creative and unique the marketing concept, the more probable it is that an artist will stand out, be noticed, and find success. To understand the subject matter and succeed in the field, one must be knowledgeable of marketing strategies. When using marketing, the marketing mix takes into accounts each of the following elements: product, price, place, promotion, process, people, and physical evidence. The marketing mix is crucial and effective.

In Nigeria, a country with one of the largest and most dynamic music scenes in Africa, digital music marketing has become an essential tool for the commercialization and global reach of Nigerian music. Artists, record labels, and marketers now rely heavily on digital platforms to distribute and promote music, create brand awareness, and foster fan engagement. Despite the rapid adoption of digital marketing strategies, there remains a lack of comprehensive research that explores the perspectives of local music marketers in specific Nigerian cities, such as Ibadan, which serve as key hubs for regional music production and consumption.

This research, therefore, seeks to examine the role and effectiveness of digital music marketing in the Nigerian music industry, specifically from the perspective of selected music marketers in Ibadan, Oyo State. Ibadan, being a city rich in cultural heritage and home to a growing number of music professionals, offers a unique lens through which to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the digitalization of music marketing.

2. Research Method

In this research study, personal interviews were the primary method of data collection. The interviews allow for a deep exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights, making them particularly suitable for this study, which seeks to understand the opinions of selected music marketers regarding digital music marketing strategies in Ibadan. To gather qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected music marketers in Ibadan which allowed for flexibility in probing deeper into specific responses. The interview process was structured around key topics such as digital marketing strategies used in promoting music, social media platforms and streaming services, challenges in digital music marketing and impacts of digital platforms on the success of Nigerian music. A purposive sampling technique was used to select three prominent participants who are actively involved in music marketing in Ibadan. The three participants are also involved in Music production. The interviews were conducted in-person at their studios and also **audio-recorded** with the informed consent of the participants. The interviews were thematically analysed.

2.1. Entrepreneurial Marketing Theory

This study is based on entrepreneurial marketing theory. Entrepreneurial marketing refers to actively seeking opportunities and taking risks to a certain extent through innovative methods of risk management, resource utilization, and value creation. Bjerke and Hultman (2002) established the four fundamental components of entrepreneurial marketing: actors, resources, process, and entrepreneurship. The desire and strategy to recognize and take advantage of chances to create value for customers, with an emphasis on initiative, opportunity-seeking, and creativity, is referred to as entrepreneurship. The process dimension encompasses all of the methods and techniques a business uses to try to add value for its customers. This theory is applicable to this discourse because a musician is seen as an entrepreneur who seeks to make his music acceptable, embraced and sold to the music industry for consumption.

2.2. Digital Marketing

In order to reach clients, digital marketing promotes goods and services using a variety of digital media (Kamal, 2016). According to Cruz, Leonhardt and Pezzuti (2017), content-based marketing techniques like blogging and posting on well-known social media platforms have become mainstays of modern digital marketing strategy. Social media influences every step of the decision-making process for consumers in the modern world (Appel *et al.*, 2020). Because social media allows brands to engage with customers more personally and interactively, it has become essential for branding. The internet's development has made it feasible to contact significantly larger numbers of potential customers than were before possible (Du Plessis, 2017). The extent of disruption and the increasing speed of digitization have had a significant influence on modern marketing strategies (Ruyter, Kruger & Ngo, 2018). Digital marketing is a multifaceted marketing platform that is used to promote all kinds of goods and services online or through other electronic media. It has emerged as the most successful way to conduct business online (Jaya & Jaya, 2016). Sales of music cassettes and CDs fell off significantly throughout the 1970s digital period, which forced producers to come up with creative ways to improve their products by modifying technological advancements. Thus, technological advancements also contributed to the resurgence of music-related products. As consumer preferences changed, more music items utilizing internet technology were sold (Kannan & Li, 2017).

In their 2016 review, Hamari *et al.* examined online collaborative consumption and the impact of the internet on the customer-provider relationship. The researchers proposed that as enjoyment is a key motivation, services should be enjoyable to use. Since major labels' financial clout prevented their music from being widely published in the past, independent musicians now have greater options to network, connect, promote, and distribute their work (Haynes & Marshall, 2017).

2.3. Social Media Marketing

Social media is the collective term for a number of well-known online platforms and social networking sites, each with distinctive features chosen by users for a range of private purposes. In addition to social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, which are open to registration for individual musicians, there are other choices with a significant social media component, such as websites with user-generated material like YouTube, Soundcloud, Bandcamp, Songkick, WordPress and Spotify. Social media is a great platform for marketing campaigns because of its wide consumer base.

Social media is the collective term for a number of well-known online platforms and social networking sites, each with distinctive features chosen by users for a range of private purposes. Social media, according to Choi and Burnes (2017), is a marketing and business tool; yet, little is known about the reasons small businesses use social media and how consumer interaction increases customer loyalty.

While acknowledging that there are examples of musicians who have successfully used social media to support themselves and their careers, Choi and Burnes (2017) also express doubts about how representative these success stories are and whether they accurately reflect the experiences of the vast majority of musicians in the modern music industry.

According to Haynes and Marshall (2017), the term "social media" refers to a wide range of web-based apps that collectively comprise a vast ecosystem of connective media. Among its primary aspects are social networking and the creation and exchange of user-generated content. As social media grows more crowded and makes it harder for artists to monetize social media activity, traditional ways of contacting or developing audiences are more successful in generating the cash needed to thrive (Faisal, 2016). It is still possible to target audiences efficiently with social media.

Despite the challenges, social media has had a big impact on the interactions between artists and audiences, according to researchers (Oswari *et al.*, 2019). Music marketers and artists utilize social media as a medium to interact with fans, interact with their existing following, draw in new ones, and

find interesting content. Maximizing online engagement involves creating posts that emphasize intimacy, intimate knowledge, artist authenticity, and quick reaction times.

Saboo, Kumar and Ramani (2016) assert that social media plays a significant role in the music industry and influences customers' purchase decisions. Since music songs are digital goods, buying them via social media platforms provides users with a complete shopping experience as well as rapid gratification. Evans *et al.* (2017) claim that social media has developed into a customer-facing online advertising platform.

Before the internet, an artist's only chance of landing a recording contract was to get recognition from major record labels. Technology created an even playing field and made it possible for independent performers to record, promote, and release their own music. Independent musicians need to take a more calculated approach that requires both business acumen and the possibility of financial gain (Tarassi, 2017).

A career in music required a number of positions to be filled, including managers, bookers, venue owners, and musicians. With the advancement of home recording equipment, music production became more accessible and gives musicians greater control over composition and recording. Independent musicians refined their recording and promotional methods with creative marketing approaches and a desire to spread their own ideas to a global audience (Walzer, 2016).

2.4. New Trends in Marketing Music to Consumers

Prior to the internet, major record companies' publicity was the primary source of support for musicians who were able to secure a recording contract. Technology has leveled the playing field by giving independent musicians additional opportunities to produce, promote, and release their own music. Tarassi (2017) argues that independent artists should take a more nuanced approach that requires both the possibility of financial benefit and entrepreneurial skills. To sustain themselves financially, musicians, venue owners, bookers, managers, and other professionals were required. With the advancement of home recording equipment, music production became more accessible and gave musicians greater control over composition and recording. Independent musicians refined their recording and promotional methods with creative marketing approaches and a desire to spread their own ideas to a global audience (Walzer, 2016). The diverse duties that were previously filled by various artists and departments under major labels were the responsibility of the independent artist.

Although the independent artist was in charge of all sectors, such as marketing, legal, songwriting, music production, and artist development, Thomson (2012) points out that running an independent career may have presented logistical and financial challenges.

2.5. Becoming Marketable

In order to progress in their professions within the music sectors, the majority of independent musicians seek assistance with marketing, administrative, and managerial tasks. Music intermediates, according to Pride *et al.* (2017), have multiple uses in the music industry. These uses include enhancing the skills and resources of independent musicians and offering benefits to the marketing channel and, ultimately, end consumers. These intermediaries include traditional participants like record labels, music publishers, management firms, booking agencies, and recording studios in addition to digital actors like streaming services, online PR firms, website content management systems, email marketing platforms, and so on.

This is considered too risky due to the unpredictable nature of the marketing environment. Donnelly (2014) claims that the digital music industry (DMI) no longer supports the traditional business model in which music companies develop artists from the ground up. Instead, they make the assumption that independent musicians are already capable of displaying some level of success or market readiness. "Market readiness," a well-known business term, describes how to assess if a product, in this case, an

independent musician and their recorded music offerings is ready for commercialization. For an independent musician, quality production and songs are crucial. Songwriting and music production are included in this.

3. Results from the Interviews

"The global market for Nigerian music has expanded thanks to streaming services like Boomplay, Apple Music, and Spotify. We used to just reach local audiences, but today anyone in Europe, America, or Asia may listen to our music with a few clicks. It has increased our opportunities and reach Adeyeye (2024)."

"For our artists, Instagram and TikTok are revolutionary. One 30-second video has the potential to become viral and attract global fan attention. Millions of views have been attained by artists, which was unthinkable only a few years ago. My clients; musicians have direct access to their audience thanks to these channels Ajayi (2024)."

"The way we promote music has been totally changed by social media. Waiting for radio jingles is no longer an option. We share teasers of new songs on Twitter or Instagram, and the buzz starts to grow in a matter of hours. One major benefit of social media is that we may reach a worldwide audience in addition to local ones (*ibid.*)."

Bolaji (2024) stated that "Digital marketing has revolutionized how we connect with fans. Before, you had to tour extensively or rely on TV shows and radio to promote an album. Now, we can interact with our fans directly through social media posts, live streams, and even virtual concerts. It's much easier to build and maintain a fanbase." Adesoye (2024) agreed, arguing that now, artists can be compensated according to how many times their songs are streamed. Relying exclusively on physical music sales is a significant change. The problem is that services like Spotify only pay a small percentage for each stream, so musicians must receive millions of plays in order to earn a sizable sum of money. Meanwhile, Ajayi (2024) observed:

"The internet infrastructure in various areas of Nigeria is one of our largest problems. Even while more individuals are using digital platforms, many still struggle with erratic internet access, which degrades streaming quality and makes it difficult to find material quickly. This may reduce digital marketing's efficacy."

Bolaji (2024) opines that: "The music industry here is still playing catch-up when it comes to digital marketing. While the younger generation is fully embracing it, there's a gap in knowledge among older professionals who might still prefer traditional methods like radio airplay. We need more training and awareness about the power of digital tools." According to Olusanya (2024):

"Digital ads on platforms like Facebook and YouTube allow us to target specific audiences. If we want to reach younger listeners or a particular geographic location, we can customize our campaigns. It's more efficient than traditional forms of marketing, and we can track our results in real-time."

According to Adesoye (2024), marketers must be exceptional communicators in order to effectively and captivatingly convey ideas and messages to music enthusiasts. Equally important is computer proficiency for engaging an online audience. This implies that a music marketer can create a deeper bond with the intended audience and utilize the right strategies to cater to their specific needs and preferences. Data analytics and reporting, according to Ajayi (2024), are crucial in the digital age because they let marketers evaluate and understand the wide range of behaviors displayed by today's more perceptive consumers.

Ajayi (2024) explains that marketers are always looking for new brands with innovative products, as well as established brands. Music Marketing is well recognized in the industry for abilities of marketers

to select more so that most music marketers are musicians; and thus understands the needs of music listeners.

Social media platforms have also been a platform for marketing in the digital age. Music marketers use various social media platforms they are conversant with and depending on the audience they intend to reach. Adesoye (2024) admits he uses Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and has professional profiles online. A wide range use of functions applicable for marketing, such as communicating and collaborating with other users, scheduling posts, using monitoring and analytics tools and integrating different social media platforms to increase brand awareness and online presence depends on the expertise and experience of every music marketer.

Managing a launch or the release of a new album is a major issue in music marketing. It behooves a music marketer to be acquainted with the best practice for the music to trend or gain popularity. Ajayi (2024) observes that marketing a new album begins with the process of identifying and understanding the target audience before selecting the right strategies to reach them. A thorough evaluation of the music becomes necessary; the solutions it provides are those the music addresses, age range, class and status. With this assertion, then, it becomes very easy to create a strategic plan to attract and engage the audience, gain feedback from them and assess the risks involved. Adeyeye (2024) opines that after developing an effective plan, the next thing is to fix the most timely launch date and establish a clear timeline for campaign deadlines. It is important to make a list of the necessary resources and people needed for a successful launch, and then select a project team made up of department leaders who meet regularly to discuss progress, identify challenges and come up with the appropriate solutions for any issues that arise. Getting feedbacks from team members on the plan to find any areas that can be improved or streamlined is also necessary.

Adeyeye (2024) claims that the marketing manager develops the promotional plan for a performer's next album or tour. They collaborate closely with the artist to craft the campaign's message, as well as with the label's artists, organizing promotional campaigns to connect with both current and new fans. It indicates that music marketers form alliances with other industry professionals, ranging from tastemakers, DJs, and curators to press contacts at media companies. They work with the press department of the record company to arrange artist interviews with radio shows, print magazines, blogs, podcasts, and music streaming platforms.

Additionally, music marketers help create electronic press kits for reporters and interviewees that contain information on the musicians. Music marketers monitor statistics to evaluate the effectiveness of email marketing campaigns, social media posts, and other approaches to reaching music lovers, whether they operate on their own or as part of a record label's marketing division. According to Adesoye (2024), music marketers create advertisements to promote an artist's music in collaboration with advertising agencies, record labels' internal advertising departments, or art departments.

These could be print advertisements in publications, radio commercials, social media adverts, or billboards. An artist's online presence is managed by the music marketing team, who also make sure that new music videos are posted on the official artist page and the record label website, and that the artist's latest tracks are accessible through online music streaming services. To make sure they have access to both the artist's new music and back history of releases, music marketers collaborate with radio stations, streaming services, and playlist curators.

In addition to drawing in new fans, marketers utilize social media as a medium to share music, videos, interviews, and other content with people who already follow the artist. You can utilize social media to build relationships and continue conversations with fans and other independent musicians, as well as to increase fan involvement. Social media marketing data provides marketers with important demographic details about an artist's fan base, such as age range, geography, and listening preferences.

4. Discussion of Findings

The importance of social media in Ibadan's music promotion was one of the most notable conclusions drawn from the interviewees. Platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok were cited by music marketers as crucial resources for expanding fan bases, reaching audiences, and generating excitement about new music releases. This research supports the global trend that social media platforms are essential for music marketing, particularly for up-and-coming musicians. The capacity of Ibadan's music marketers to interact with both domestic and foreign audiences on social media advances our knowledge of how digital marketing has dissolved regional borders in the African music sector. This information can be used to investigate further how social media can be used by music marketers in developing nations to increase exposure without having to make large financial investments. According to Bolaji (2024): "An artist's career path can be drastically altered in a matter of days by a single Instagram post or TikTok challenge. We are no longer constrained by conventional media like TV or radio. This illustrates how music advertising is moving toward more participatory, immediate, and economical methods.

The revolutionary influence of music streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, and Boomplay also surfaced as a major issue. In contrast to traditional distribution channels like CDs and physical sales, the marketers highlighted how these platforms have made it possible for Nigerian music to reach a worldwide audience. This finding contributes to the body of knowledge on the global expansion of Nigerian music. It underscores the increasing importance of digital distribution, which has made Nigerian music more accessible on a global scale. As Nigerian music continues to gain international recognition, this insight can inform discussions about the role of digital platforms in promoting cultural exchange and the global rise of Nigerian artists. Ajayi (2024) said: "Spotify and Apple Music have opened up a world of opportunities for Nigerian artists. Artists no longer need a major international label to go global. These platforms are the modern-day equivalents of music distribution hubs like the record stores of the past." This emphasizes the democratizing effect of streaming platforms in the global music industry.

Digital platforms present many opportunities, but Adesoye (2024) also pointed out important drawbacks. Recurrent themes included problems like the high expense of digital advertising, the unreliable internet infrastructure in some areas of Nigeria, and the low level of digital literacy among some industry professionals. Participants also mentioned that some audience segments still favor more conventional methods of discovering music, like listening to the radio or seeing live performances, even with the availability of digital tools. The difficulties found shed important light on the obstacles that still stand in the way of Nigeria's adoption of digital marketing, especially in areas outside of major cities like Lagos. This draws attention to the problem of digital literacy and internet access. Policy and initiatives targeted at enhancing digital infrastructure and training in Nigeria's music industry can benefit from an understanding of these obstacles.

Olusanya (2024) pointed out that not everyone, particularly in Ibadan's more rural areas, has reliable internet access. Even though streaming services are very popular in cities, not everyone can use them. When creating marketing strategies, we must take that into account. This comment highlights the necessity of hybrid marketing strategies that combine traditional and digital media, particularly when aiming to reach audiences with lower levels of digital connectivity. The interviews also showed that the Nigerian music industry is moving toward professionalizing digital marketing. To optimize the impact of digital marketing initiatives, a number of marketers in Ibadan talked about the necessity of increased understanding of digital tools, strategic planning, and focused campaigns. This realization will aid in comprehending the development of the music marketing sector in Nigeria. The increasing sophistication of digital tools necessitates professional expertise to use them efficiently. This research can help guide industry best practices and educational programs that aim to increase the marketing skills of African musicians.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shed light on how digital marketing has changed the Nigerian music scene, especially in Ibadan. Through emphasizing the pivotal function of social media and streaming platforms, the obstacles encountered by marketers, and the increasing significance of video content and digital advertising, the study provides significant insights into the evolving landscape of music promotion in Nigeria. The study also highlights that in order to utilize fully the potential of digital tools, there is a need for increased professionalization and the removal of obstacles related to digital infrastructure. These findings offer useful suggestions for musicians, music marketers, and industry stakeholders in addition to enhancing the body of knowledge already available on digital music marketing in Nigeria. The growth and success of Nigerian music, both domestically and internationally, depend on an understanding of the viewpoints of local marketers as the country's music industry continues to change in the digital era.

Nigerian music marketers use a wide variety of tactics successfully to market and promote music in the nation's vibrant and developed industry. The title of a song or piece of music has a bearing on the necessity of continual observation, investigation, and study of modern techniques for the development of marketing plans for up-and-coming musicians. With their limitless talent, young musicians are limited to their target audience since they lack knowledge about public relations and marketing. When promoting a recently released song, determining the ideal market or target audience is crucial.

It is important to note that the discussion revolves around the need for ongoing observation, research, and exploration of cutting-edge methods for advancing the marketing plans of nascent musicians and maintaining established performers in the music business. This study's goal was to determine marketing tactics for established and up-and-coming artists by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of a well-known music marketer. During the investigation, it was discovered that the public relations approach was effective in producing excellent results in the field of music marketing.

In conclusion, because technology has spread quickly, marketers understand how critical it is to adjust to digital or technological approaches to music marketing. The dynamic and lively music industry in the nation necessitates adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and a thorough comprehension of the varied audience. Nigerian music marketers who are successful overcome these obstacles by interacting with fans directly, welcoming teamwork, and use social media to highlight and promote the country's diverse musical heritage. Nigerian music marketers are at the forefront of a worldwide music industry thanks to their continuous blending of tradition and innovation. It suggests conducting regular follow-up research on current patterns as new digital technologies become available.

Finally, while Ibadan in Oyo State does not cover the whole states in Nigeria, future research could expand to include music marketers from other Nigerian cities to compare and contrast how digital music marketing strategies vary across different regions of the country.

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Book Reviews

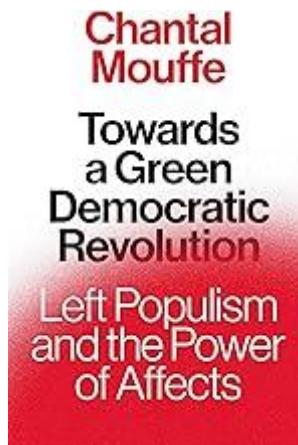
Towards a Green Democratic Revolution: Left Populism and the Power of Affects

Chantal Mouffe

London and New York, NY: Verso, 2022

ISBN: 978-1-83976-750-0

85 pp.



In *Towards a Green Democratic Revolution*, Chantal Mouffe provides a brief (and hopefully not final) coda to a lifetime in scholarship in the arena of political discourse. In one of her more influential works, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?” (1999), she outlines one of the great dangers of the contemporary world, which is that so many people in the developed world now seem to have tired of the promise of democracy and are becoming increasingly willing to consider authoritarian alternatives as a means of actually getting things done. The problem, of course, is rooted in neoliberalism and its ability, as she explains in the current book, “... capacity to adopt in different situations and respond to changing regulations of capitalism has been revealed by the way it incorporates aspects of new countercultural movements (p.9).” She draws here on Gramsci’s concept of ‘hegemony through neutralization,’ which is “... a situation where demands and affects that challenge a hegemonic order are recuperated and satisfied in a way neutralizes their subversive appeal (p.10).” My mind goes to John Lydon, who was once the face of destructive anarchistic republicanism but who has now become better known for his TV advertisements for butter and for parroting tedious right-wing misogyny.

Many people would quibble with whether this actually matters: should one not be concentrating on what Tony Benn called ‘the issues?’ When people hear the truth in open debate, of course they will realise the superiority of leftist arguments and the battle will be won? It is a seductive idea but one which, alas, may be shown to be untrue. It was the logic of the failed remain campaign against Brexit. It has long been one of Mouffe’s most characteristic arguments that politics, to be successful, must recognize the need for emotions, for passion and for affects. The affect is based on the work of Spinoza, who provides one epigraph claiming that people are more commonly controlled by emotion than reason and another that an affect can only be challenged by one of a contrary nature which proves to be more powerful. Working through the implications of these ideas forms the basis of the book.

Completed shortly before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as revealed in an endnote, the book focuses on the two great dangers currently facing humanity, which are authoritarianism and the climate emergency. She draws upon the work of Freud and Lacan, in addition to Spinoza, to describe people as being motivated by a combination conatus-libido-affect model which is at the root of understanding our

nature. The move towards psychology to explain human behaviour has been a regular feature of leftist thinking since it became evident that most working people were not going to overthrow the bourgeoisie even though the causes of the ruins of their lives had been explained to them by Marx. Lenin realised that Marx's beliefs would never be made concrete without a vanguard organization unafraid to break a few eggs. Mouffe, writing in a different age, would bring about transformational change through a democratic process in which the importance of the behavioural model remains central. She refers to the relative success of Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn when they have campaigned on hope and the failure of the latter, in particular, in a subsequent election against Boris Johnson, who had no policies but popular and powerful slogans. It is certainly true that one of the seminal moments in the most recent presidential election in the USA was an interview given by Kamala Harris, who was asked how things would change should she succeed Joe Biden. Alas for the world, motivated perhaps by loyalty to her ex-boss or just suffering from a catastrophic failure of understanding, she replied that nothing would change. By permitting Trump to be seen as the agent of change, she sealed her electoral failure (although it might be argued that her defeat was overdetermined in this case).

Embracing the use of affects and deploying them effectively is certainly an important way of achieving political success but it is clearly not sufficient. Palestinian people were able to console themselves that if the world only knew the suffering they were forced to endure the outrage of the rest of the world would bring about an end to it. However, the genocide in Gaza is widely available to view in real-time, owing to the omnipresence of the internet and its ability to slip through the mesh of censorship.

Towards the end of the book (p.70 – I said it was a short book), Mouffe observes that: "Intense moments of crisis provide an occasion to choose between clearly defined alternatives." This is where the left is currently failing, in part because of neoliberalism's ability to neutralize threats as previously noted but also because of the difficulty in building broad political alliances on the one hand and identifying a single, coherent vision on the other hand. We must, nevertheless, try.

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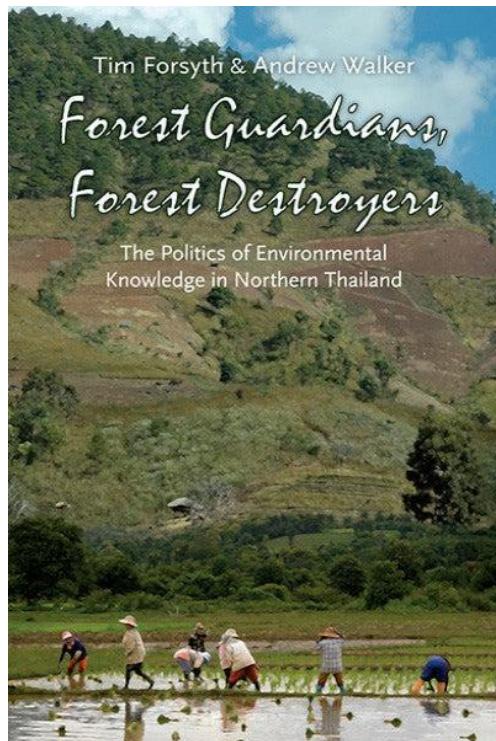
Forest Guardians, Forest Destroyers: The Politics of Environmental Knowledge in Northern Thailand.

Tim Forsyth & Andrew Walker

Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2008

ISBN: 9789749511527.

312 pp.



In this book, the authors explore how the environmental problems of northern Thailand have been defined and represented and the gap in addressing the main issues. The book is very helpful in understanding the process of state-making, the simplified nature of development, and the politics of environmental knowledge. The book questions the simplified representation of environmental problems and asserts that these general interpretations hinder environmental management and sustainable development. In reverse, these interpretations have to be deeply analyzed both biophysically and politically to address actual environmental changes. Politically, northern Thailand is very important and has become a highly researched area of Southeast Asia. Ethnic minorities of the upland are so different from their lowland neighbors that they have always been of interest to researchers, development, and NGO workers. To discuss the issues of environmental change without understanding this region's complex political history is very difficult, and this instability creates two types of debate:

1. Nature-Oriented: the main aspect of this group is to protect upland lands to continue the active flow of water in lowlands and conserve forests.
2. People-Oriented: aims to protect the lifestyles of the uplands.

However, the book critiques both groups as each reflects certain social and political implications of environmental knowledge production. Accepting the importance of positivist science, the authors said that positivist science does not consider the impacts of language while addressing environmental problems, as a single word contains important information on environmental issues. As a result, scientific knowledge increases the state's authority rather than determining the real problem.

The loosely termed local knowledge has been cited problematically in this book. First, anthropologists have questioned what it means, as local knowledge can often vary by wealth, gender, status, and other social determinants (Geertz, 1983; Pottier, Sillitoe & Bicker, 2003). Besides, uplanders are perceived as "exotic" and "distant" in the guise of local knowledge, which marginalizes rather than empowers them (Cohen, 1989).

The book beautifully shows how the lowland people are socially and politically dominant over the neighboring uplanders. The differences between upland and lowland have widespread cultural importance, and lowlanders are seen as the seat of chief power and civilized, as well as the holders of proper cultural and agricultural development of northern Thailand. Culturally, lowland livelihood is

considered naturally suitable for Thai people to live in, and there is a common notion that hills are areas covered by plants and wild animals where evil spirits roam. Actually, this notion spatially and symbolically divides the upland and lowland. Though, formally, upland is counted as forest in a true sense, lowlanders consider upland culturally backdated and savage, and a common tendency of lowlanders is to denote them as civilized and culturally powerful.

One of the important aspects of this book is how the “Hill Tribe” categorization helps establish discourse coalitions in which debates about environmental management in the uplands focuses selectively on certain groups and certain forms of agricultural activity that are seen as problematic. Politically and numerically, the dominant Khon Muang people are considered the principal victims of upland environmental degradation, whereas upland Hmong farmers are considered the main culprits for upland environmental degradation as they (used to) cultivate opium. Actually, the Hmong are the main targeted group for development interventions. Still, due to the simplified notions of development and lack of proper research, these interventions had negative impacts on the upland environment and Hmong society.

Another strength of this book is that it identifies how a hydrological statement was transformed into a political debate by blaming a specific group. Actually, the Chom Thong dispute is very important in understanding the relationship between the state-making process and social order- the state legitimizes the repressive activities. In northern Thailand, a symbolic relationship has been drawn between forests and water, and the role of forests has been given the top priority above water resources. Seemingly, “the forest is the source of water,” which is a process of state-making and validating this process, during which different knowledge has been produced. The most prominent knowledge is that the main reason for water shortages in northern Thailand is deforestation by upland farmers, especially for shifting cultivation. This concept is very important to perceive the production and use of environmental knowledge. However, these environmental knowledge productions are supported by specific groups and fields, and statistical information shows that there is no relationship between forests and rainfall. Undoubtedly, forests contribute to atmospheric moisture, and this information does not fully deny the popular concept that rainfall decreases due to forest clearance. However, rainfall in northern Thailand is mainly monsoonal and comes from marine sources. Astonishingly, based on these shallow concepts, the forest department and state relocated the upland farmers to avoid the disruption of water supply and river flow. Bamboos have been painted with the colors of the Thai flag in forest-conserved areas to uphold the notion that forests are an integral part of Thailand and, indeed, draw a symbolic relationship between forests and Thailand. In fact, these types of selective narratives clearly represent the interests of socially and politically dominant groups.

In this book, the authors perfectly summed up the problems of scientific generalization. In a true sense, environmental narratives of northern Thailand are determined by different famous hypotheses both in and outside of Thailand, which hardly count the actual contexts of the upland. For instance, the application of the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) -famous in the USA - in northern Thailand could not bring any effective result as slope length, rainfall, and soil management practices are totally different from the USA. This ineffective USLE method considers shifting cultivation as the main factor for soil erosion where there is enough evidence that supporting shifting cultivation increases soil fertility as farmers adopt the soil mounds method, an innovative conservation practices that carefully preserves and improves soil fertility. This evidence challenges the popular statement that is influenced by state officials regarding environmental degradation. Despite proper evidence, these narratives are widely used to justify the control over upland agriculture. In reality, upland areas are being geologically eroded through naturally occurring deep gullies, which is why agriculture is not the prime factor for downstream sedimentation.

The authors depict how dominant perceptions of agrochemicals are shaped by political concerns. These concerns represent the appropriate upland livelihoods rather than clarifying the proper benefit and loss of using agrochemicals. In the environmental politics of northern Thailand, Hmong farmers are seen as being linked to excessive chemical use and as responsible for producing vegetables with chemicals. These stereotyped notions claim that chemical use is responsible for soil degradation and contamination

of the water supply, and this viewpoint regarding environmental crisis helps spread rumours. In fact, the common vision of biophysical processes and stereotyped beliefs about environmental degradation help to control and limit the activities of upland farmers. However, deeper analysis and investigation must be needed to detect real problems.

Addressing the environmental crisis, the authors said that specific reasons that claim environmental degradation are not fully appropriate as there is a lack of valid evidence. As a result, in spite of being researched by different disciplines, environmental problems are influenced by common, misleading, and highly selective environmental beliefs, and state officials take innovative steps, e.g., presenting news on television and newspapers to recognize these general environmental beliefs. Moreover, value-laden knowledge is produced by different parties to facilitate different visions and policies for the upland, and surprisingly, all of these aspects create a common environmental discourse that the upland is in danger. The main element of this process is problem closure, where a certain way of environmental change has strengthened, and it is the starting point of developing discourses. Therefore, scientific knowledge simply supports conserved observers - state regulators and lowlanders - which is why the views of hill tribe farmers are considered environmentally destructive.

Considering the upland's environmental crisis, different groups support different approaches to proper environmental management. Conservationists and state bodies use different language and uncontested certainty of science. On the other hand, another group implies that indigenous knowledge is very important to overcome environmental crises. Nevertheless, this book depicts that it is a very unproductive debate about uplanders: Are they forest guardians or destroyers? It relies on many hypotheses and questioned beliefs regarding environmental processes. State regulators also talk with experts about environmental issues curtailing the uplanders, which indeed is a bridge between environmental knowledge and the state-making process.

Finally, to perceive the problems of environmental knowledge, a lot of research and effective communications are needed, and due to the communication gap between scientific research and policymakers, this actually does not happen. Though research is being done, it is failing to change society's prevailing attitudes. In fact, scientific research strengthens the dominant existing views.

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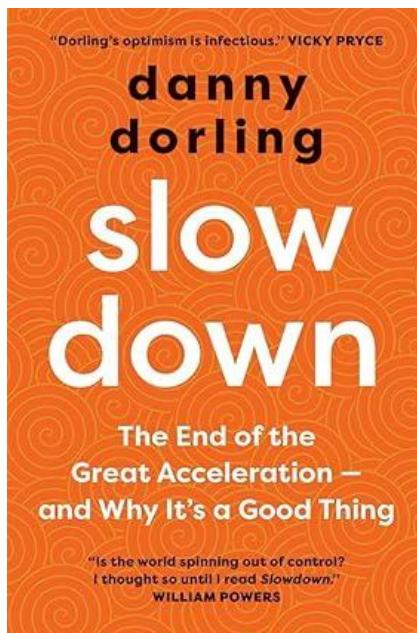
Slow Down: The End of the Great Acceleration – And Why It's a Good Thing

Danny Dorling

New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2021

ISBN: 9780300257960

404 pp.



Danny Dorling has established a deserved reputation as one of the UK's leading (and increasingly prolific) social scientists. That reputation is based on the accumulation of large amounts of high-quality data which is then scrupulously considered and engagingly presented. This is certainly the case with this book, *Slow Down*, which features extensive use of timelines as a means of displaying data as it changes through time. This method shows not only the magnitude of observations but also changes year-on-year. The timelines use smoothed data to reduce oddities and aberrations in individual observations. As Dorling notes, this approach is one that is rarely used in western social science but it is one which does effectively show how change occurs in complex data sets.

Dorling's central thesis is that while we have been living in periods of enormous, unprecedented change, the rate of change is now slowing down, hence the title. The data are drawn principally from the past five generations, which has a beginning in 1901, although longer perspectives are taken when required. The start date may be taken as a proxy for the great accelerations of the current age. A main plank of his argument concerns global populations. The threat of apparent over-population has been an issue in political discourse since at least 1798 when Malthus famously wrote his treatise that starvation would follow the continued increase in population. He was evidently wrong about this contention, as advances in technology have hugely increased the productivity of agricultural systems. Nevertheless, this has not stopped a series of mostly ill-meaning people arguing that it was not exactly over-population that is the problem but over-population by the wrong type of people. However, it has become apparent in recent years that populations will not increase forever because as people's standard of living increases, they feel less need for relatively large numbers of children. After all, if people have one or two children they can be sure will survive them into adulthood, then why not stick at that number so that more resources can be concentrated on them as individuals? Greater freedom of choice for women in the form of reliable contraception combined with more justice in the workplace (albeit there is still a long way to go) has further contributed to reducing the number of children being born. Stories from countries such as Italy and South Korea about women becoming increasingly uninterested in starting a family have become commonplace. However, Dorling goes further than this by showing how family sizes have been declining around the world, including the less developed parts of Africa, Haiti, Guatemala and so forth. He has been proven right in the past when UN figures have been revised downwards as he had predicted. Now he argues that peak population will come sooner than predicted and so too will be its diminution.

This part of the book is well-grounded in data and quite credible. Other parts of his argument are a little less so. For example, he claims that the era of enormous gains in productivity from technological advancement are over and that its trajectory arcs back towards the mean. Perhaps it is a result of where I live and my exposure to the changes taking place in China that incline me to see a more dynamic period coming. Further, these additional sections are not as well-supported by data and citations – it may be argued that the book is aimed at a general audience but it is, nevertheless, published by Yale University Press. This updated paperback version of the book contains an epilogue dealing with the recent coronavirus pandemic. Using his by now familiar timeline method, he carefully shows how the pattern of mortalities played out differently in different countries, even though the disease followed the same progress everywhere. If there are significant variations here, can there not be in other spheres of human activity? In fact, significance as a concept is strangely lacking from the text. Perhaps I am doing it wrongly but whenever I am teaching or just thinking about research methods, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, I am much concerned with finding significant results that permit the discarding of the null hypothesis. In this way, the claim for contribution to academic knowledge can be made. It may be that this is too academic an approach for the concept of the book; Dorling is an excellent communicator of social science to the public and writes with a pleasing inclusion of cultural allusions and comparisons to well-known phenomena as a means of making his various points.

One that this is particularly endearing about Dorling is his optimism – he might be the living embodiment of Gramsci's dictum of pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will. He finds in the sense of slowing down opportunities for people to rest from endless exhausting change and start to work out how things may be made better for everyone. As he has persuasively written elsewhere and mentions here, it is inequality which is at the heart of much that is wrong with the world. Above all, deceleration will enable us to tackle the one thing that is not slowing down – global climate change. While others have found that only in degrowth will we be able to take the steps necessary to survive the climate emergency, Dorling can see a world in which that is going to happen of its own accord. Let us hope he is right in this.

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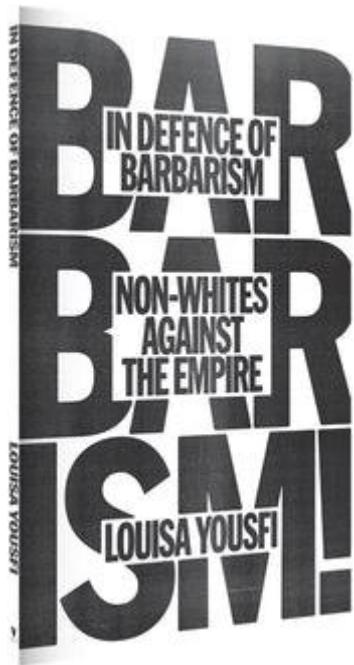
In Defence of Barbarism: Non-whites against the Empire

Louisa Youfsi

London and New York, NY: Verso, 2025 [2022]

ISBN: 978-1-80429-443-7

Translated by Andy Bliss



French journalist and political activist Louisa Youfsi published her first book, *Rester Barbare*, in 2022 and this has now been published in English by Verso courtesy of a translation by Andy Bliss. It is a noticeably slim volume. Several of the sections review French rappers of non-European ethnicity who have been brought to France one way or another as the result of empire. As a Brisih person, I am rather more familiar with the history of the British Empire, although I have had to find out about it by myself. One distinction that may be made between major European imperial systems is that (this is slightly reductionist in nature) the Spanish wanted to save people's souls, the British wanted to take their money and the French wanted to share the benefits of French culture and society by making their subjects little French people. Now that President Macron has signalled the end of the French presence in Africa, although (absurdly) expecting people to say thank you to the armies and support people, so that the field is left clear for the Chinese, Turkish and Emiratis to take their place (Barnay, 2025). Yet the river having been entered cannot be returned to its pre-entry stage. The French that empire has created must be treated as exactly French as everyone else. That this has given rise to various political and identity issues is at the heart of Youfsi's arguments. She points out that being a hyphen person, French-Arab, French-African and so on, is a symbol of the process of integration: "Gradual integration into the Empire is what this hyphen denotes, a line on the page to which the second part clings." However, this is a process rejected by the rappers and other dissenters she discusses, who want to remain, as she terms it, barbarians (while noting that barbarians are not savages).

As a non-white woman, she writes in the autobiographical concluding section, *The Path of Blame*, she says that progressive circles now welcome her and her fellow writers into their presence, as part of the process of integrating her into the fold. This, she argues, may be seen as completing the work of empire and, by allowing herself to have fallen for this trap, she has betrayed herself. It is a situation that has afflicted a number of women writers such as herself and the responses have been sub-optimal:

"Faced with such a dilemma, my unfortunate fellow female writers have made a choice: reluctant to act as native informants, but nevertheless willing to tell our stories, we have built museums."

Museums, she suggests, are no longer living places with meaning attached to the objects displayed but lifeless nicknacks, in which people can feign a superficial interest while at the same time guiding the curator to the more sophisticated and developed artifacts of the culture of the present and the future.

To fight back meaningfully, she embraces the raucous anthems of rappers (of whom I confess I had never heard) and their aggressive and non-standard approach to the French language, as she observes in Ounga Ounga:

“This is the privilege of the dispossessed: to perceive better than anyone else the potential of a language that overfamiliarity and servility have prevented others from imagining.”

It has long been a truism, of course, that the institution intends to control the use of the French language, deciding which new words should be permitted and which declared unconstitutional. The rappers pose a critical threat here, challenging the state with both their behaviour (which is often *outré* in the way rappers tend to be around the world) and their refusal to speak properly but still be understood. At this point, I would like to acknowledge the work of the translator, Andy Bliss, since this may be a short work but rendering the rap in English in an understandable way which nevertheless contravenes the generally accepted rules of grammar must have made for quite a challenge. Notwithstanding the misogyny prevalent in rap wherever it might be found, Youfssi claims that it speaks for her, not about her. She should, she claims, have retained some of her barbarism.

It is perhaps trite to observe that this is a book that can only have been written in France because no other country has the same combination of bloody history and approach to multiculturalism that the French do. Nowhere else really has the same *banlieus*. As a consequence, I am not how much her thesis can be generalized beyond her own situation. Clearly there are similarities evident elsewhere but these seem mostly to be on the surface. The foreword to this book notes that she is at work on a novel and when this becomes available it will be interesting to see the extent to which she sees the need to broaden the focus of her gaze.

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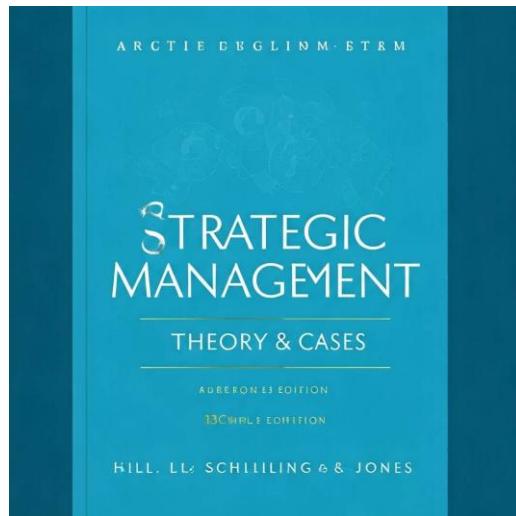
Strategic Management: Theory and Cases

Charles W.L. Hill, Melissa A. Schilling and Gareth R. Jones.

Boston, MA: Cengage, 2019 (13th edition).

ISBN: 978-0357-033845

736 pp.



Introduction

Strategic Management: Theory and Cases by Charles W. L. Hill, Melissa A. Schilling and Gareth R. Jones stands as a foundational text in the field of strategic management, offering a comprehensive and cohesive framework for understanding the formulation and implementation of business strategies. Now in its thirteenth edition, the book reflects the dynamic nature of the global business environment and addresses both traditional and emerging issues in strategic thinking.

Charles W. L. Hill, a renowned professor at the University of Washington, and Gareth R. Jones, formerly of Texas A&M University, are distinguished scholars whose contributions to management theory have been widely recognized. Melissa A. Schilling is the John Herzog Chair Professor of Management at New York University Stern School of Business. She received her Ph.D. in strategic management from the University of Washington. Their combined background in academia and consultancy strengthens the book's legitimacy and applicability.

Although the book is primarily intended for students in undergraduate and graduate programs, academics and business professionals seeking a robust analytical toolkit for strategic decision-making can also benefit from reading it.

As it successfully blends theoretical rigor with practical application, Strategic Management Theory: An Integrated Approach is ranked as one of the best textbooks in the subject. The book might be improved by providing more in-depth discussion of digital strategy as well as sustainability challenges, even though it succeeds in its methodical approach and application of real-world case studies.

Summary of the Book

The book is divided into four extensive parts that methodically walk the reader through the fundamental ideas and procedures of strategic management. From basic concepts to strategy implementation, the book's structure exhibits a logical flow, making it especially appropriate for both academic study and real-world application.

Part 1: Introduction to Strategic Management sets the stage by exploring the fundamentals of strategic leadership, competitive advantage, and the strategy-making process. It introduces the concept of a business model and highlights the significance of aligning internal capabilities with external opportunities and threats. Tools such as SWOT analysis, Porter's Five Forces Model, strategic group analysis, industry life-cycle analysis, PESTEL framework are introduced, providing the analytical basis for strategy formulation.

Part 2: The Nature of Competitive Advantage delves into internal analysis, emphasizing the role of distinctive competencies, VRIO framework, value chain, the building blocks of competitive advantage and resource-based strategies. The authors explain how organizations can build and sustain competitive advantage through efficiency, innovation, quality, and customer responsiveness. This section also examines profitability and the durability of strategic positions.

Part 3: Strategies focuses on the various strategic choices available to firms. It discusses business-level strategies such as Porter's Generic strategy and Blue Ocean strategy, strategy in global environment such as Porter's Diamond model, global standardization strategy, transnational strategy, international strategy, localization strategy, and various entry modes, corporate-level strategies including vertical and horizontal integration, related and unrelated diversification, and strategic alliances. The authors also provide a thorough exploration of the dynamics of industry environments, including fragmented, embryonic, mature, and declining industries.

Part 4: Implementing Strategy discusses corporate governance, strategic control systems, organizational architecture, and ethical issues in strategy implementation. The last chapters discuss how to use strategies in diversified and single-industry firms, including those that operate internationally. The importance of reward systems, culture, and structure in the effective execution of a strategy is emphasized.

The book's main contribution is its integrated approach, which creates a cohesive structure for strategic management by blending ethical issues, real-world case studies, and analytical models. Through a combination of theory and practice, the writers give professionals and students the skills required to evaluate complicated strategic contexts and arrive at sound conclusions. All things considered, the book presents a comprehensive view of strategy that is applicable to many sectors and industries, ensuring its position as a top resource in the field of strategic management.

Critical Analysis

Strengths

Accuracy: The book stands out for its comprehensive analysis of the topic of strategic management. The authors expertly integrate several theoretical models, such as Porter's Five Forces, SWOT analysis, the Value Chain, Industry Life Cycle Analysis, Strategic Grouping, VRIO structure, Porter's generic strategy, Blue Ocean strategy, and Porter's Diamond model, into an organized and integrated framework. Because of this, the book is especially beneficial for students looking for an excellent conceptual foundation. The methodical flow from strategy development to execution guarantees that readers comprehend not only the essence of strategy but also its practical application at various organizational levels. The book's comprehensiveness is further demonstrated by the incorporation of strategy formation at the corporate, company, and functional levels.

Real-World Implementations: The book does a fantastic job of putting theoretical ideas into context with engaging and pertinent case examples. Every chapter contains closing case studies and strategy in action boxes that are based on real-world company situations. For instance, the opening case on T-Mobile's Un-carrier strategy demonstrates how a business can effectively use innovation to gain a competitive edge. Similar to this, instances including Starbucks, Nordstrom, Southwest Airlines, Boeing, McDonald's, Ford, Microsoft, Netflix, and Google give academic theories life and improve student engagement and real-world comprehension. In addition to strengthening conceptual learning, these examples foster critical thinking by motivating students to relate theory to actual business problems.

Structure and Clarity: A wide audience can understand the text because it is logically organized and written clearly. The use of frameworks, summary tables, and diagrams makes it easier to understand complicated concepts. Each chapter is well-suited for educational purposes because it starts with a summary and concludes with exercises, applied projects, and discussion questions. The chapters' logical order reflects a real-world strategy formulation process, which begins with leadership and progresses through competitive advantage, environmental analysis, strategic choice, and implementation.

Multifaceted Approach: The book's interdisciplinary viewpoint is additionally one of its strong points. By connecting strategy to operations, marketing, human resources, economics, and organizational behaviour, it demonstrates how strategy is interconnected with every aspect of business. Additionally, it discusses issues like corporate governance, ethics, global competitiveness, and innovation. These topics might be covered in more detail in later editions, but their inclusion shows that the writers understand how complex strategic decision-making is.

Weaknesses

Coverage gaps: Considering its thoroughness, the book has certain gaps in its coverage, especially in areas that are now more important than ever in modern strategic management. Most notably, digital transformation - a major factor changing industries - is barely mentioned. Concepts such as blockchain technology, big data analysis, artificial intelligence (AI), digital disruption, and platform-based enterprise models are either not discussed at all or are discussed insufficiently. These groundbreaking advancements must be carefully considered in a modern strategic management textbook given the shifting corporate landscape.

Green strategy and sustainability are also emphasized in connection with ethical considerations, but they are not discussed as major strategic issues. As ESG (environmental, social, and governance) frameworks become more popular worldwide, future editions can benefit from extra chapters or sections on circular economy models, green supplier chains, and sustainable corporate strategy.

Applicability to current business difficulties: Although the book covers classic strategic ideas, it does not adequately address contemporary strategic concerns. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, or VUCA, is increasingly influencing the global corporate environment in addition to problems like unstable geopolitical situations, climate change, and technology upheaval. Although the book's core ideas remain relevant, applying them in today's increasingly digitalized as well as social aware business environment calls for a more critical viewpoint. For example, their static presentation might be improved by discussions of the shortcomings of models like Porter's Five Forces in rapid, platform-dominated companies.

Overuse of examples from large corporations: Another drawback of the book is its heavy focus on big MNCs like Google, Dell, Ford, Microsoft, and Boeing. Although these examples are illuminating, readers from a variety of geographical and business contexts might not always find them relatable, particularly those in small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) or emerging markets. The area of applicability is limited by the absence of startup case studies and examples of entrepreneurial strategies, especially at a time when digital-native businesses and agile startups are changing the dynamics of the industry. The book's relevance and appeal would be increased by including case studies from digital startups, social companies, and SMEs.

Contribution to the Field

Strategic Management: Theory and Cases makes it stand out among strategic management textbooks for its systematic, comprehensive, and practice-oriented approach. Hill, Schilling, and Jones provide a

more application-focused approach that combines theoretical models with real-world case studies in contrast to other typical works in the subject, such those by Hanson *et al.* (2016), Barney and Hesterly (2019) or Grant (2021). This book stands out due to its comprehensive integration of strategy design and implementation, whereas many other texts focus on theoretical elements in isolation.

The authors offer a concise conceptual framework for comprehending strategy at the corporate, company, and functional levels. It is enhanced with useful instruments including Porter's Five Forces, SWOT analysis, and the Value Chain Model. Using a variety of real-world examples improves learning and fosters critical thinking, making the material approachable and applicable to professional as well as academic environments.

Students obtain a strong foundation in analysis, while researchers acquire a point of reference for empirical applications. The book's practical focus will also be helpful to practitioners, especially in topics like performance evaluation, strategic decision-making, and competitive positioning

The book is highly recommended for executive or professional academic syllabuses, as well as undergraduate and MBA programs, due to its depth and consciousness. It is equally helpful for professionals in the industry who want to improve their ability to think strategically and make decisions. Even if it has some drawbacks when it comes to addressing sustainability and digital trends, its fundamental frameworks are still relevant today, making it a useful tool in professional as well as academic settings.

Conclusion

In general, this is a thorough and organized textbook that effectively bridges the gap between theoretical understanding and real-world strategic management application. It is a useful learning resource for comprehending the complexity of strategic decision-making in fast-paced business settings because of its clear explanation, logical structure, and real-world case studies.

Although the book's core models and analytical frameworks are still very helpful and relevant, it might benefit from more information on digital transformation, sustainability, and the strategic problems faced by small and medium-sized businesses.

For undergraduate and graduate business students, especially those enrolled in executive education and MBA programs, this book is strongly recommended. Additionally, it is a helpful resource for consultants and professionals in the field who want to improve their strategic planning abilities. Readers seeking a strong foundation in fundamental strategic ideas, together with real-world applications and global case studies, are going to discover this book to be both perceptive and relevant.

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