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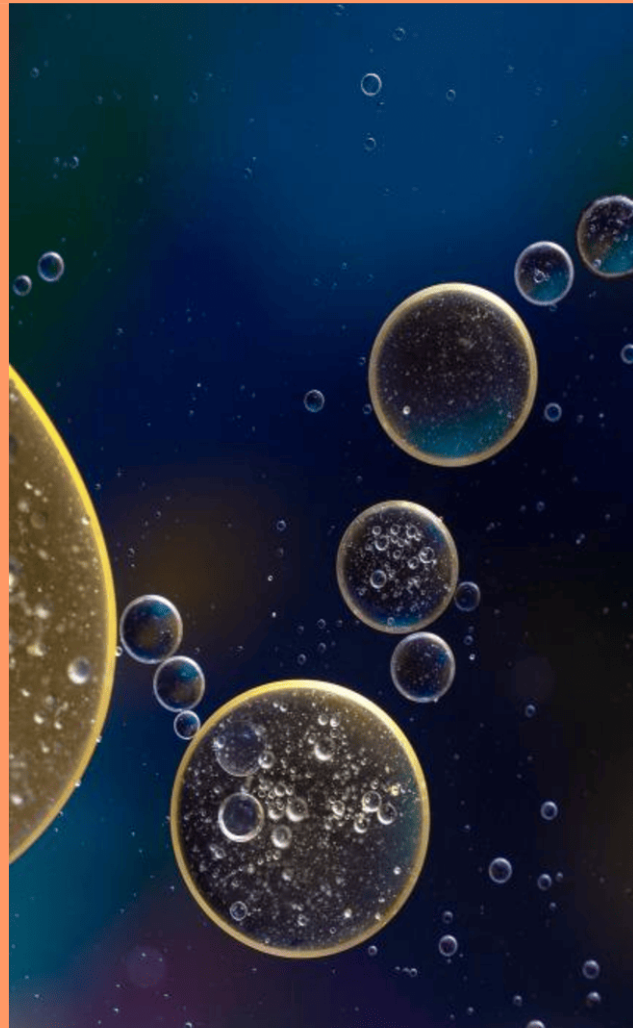
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Analysis of Stylistic Devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*

Abdullahi Umar Evuti & Ebenezer Oluseun Ogungbe

Abstract

This paper is an analysis of stylistic devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's poetry collection, *The Poet of Dust,* with the aim of unraveling its intricate layers and exploring its contributions to contemporary Nigerian poetry. The objectives of the study include to examine the lexico-semantic stylistic choices employed by the poet, in order to shed light on their roles in constructing the enigmatic themes and evoking a range of poignant reader emotions; to explore the syntactic stylistic structures utilised by Sidi so as to uncover how his nuanced syntax amplifies the collection's mystic allure and creates a distinctive and engaging poetic experience; and to investigate the use of various rhetorical stylistic devices with the goal of elucidating their significant roles in reinforcing the collection's core mystical motifs and enriching the overall artistic vision. By employing a qualitative research design, the study undertakes meticulous text analysis, drawing upon Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework as the theoretical base for examining the complex interplay of stylistic elements within the poetry collection. The study found that the poet employs a diverse range of stylistic features to convey mystical experiences and spiritual insights delving into the transient nature of life and the enigmatic essence of existence. Through an intricate interplay of lexico-semantic stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, and alliteration; syntactic stylistic devices including enjambment and parallelism; and rhetorical stylistic techniques such as hyperbole, allusion, anaphora, and zeugma, the poet crafts a captivating narrative that leads readers towards profound encounters with the mystical dimensions of human existence, creating a bridge between the earthly and divine realms, and also enhancing persuasion and emotional resonance within the text. The study concludes that the effective utilisation of lexico-semantic stylistic devices, syntactic stylistic elements, and rhetorical stylistic devices within the poetry illuminates its mystic essence, inviting readers to contemplate the profound insights embedded within the transient nature of human existence, underscoring the poet's ability to intertwine figurative language with thematic depth, thus emphasising the transformative power of poetic expression.

Keywords: analysis, stylistic devices, poet of dust, lexico-semantic, Nigerian poetry

1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The study of literary texts, with their unique language properties, has long been a focus of scholarly attention, leading to an ongoing exploration of their artistic and linguistic precepts. Situated within the broader Formalism theory, Stylistics serves as a critical junction where scholars delve into the interaction between language and meaning, drawing from the foundational contributions of renowned figures like Charles Bally, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, and Geoffrey Leech. Wales (2001, p.372) has emphasised Stylistics' enduring dedication to analysing the language and structure of texts, thereby providing a thorough understanding and appreciation of various texts, whether literary or non-literary, across extensive time periods. The essence of Stylistics lies in its careful scrutiny of the language elements within a text, enhancing its interpretation and critical examination. This research delves into the intricate realm of stylistics, emphasizing its evolution from ancient rhetorical traditions to contemporary literary analysis. Scholars like Wales and Toolan (2013) have established stylistics as a comprehensive study of linguistic and textual characteristics, aiming to interpret and appreciate both literary and non-literary texts over extended periods. Toolan underscores the importance of understanding the anatomy and functions of language, positing that stylistics encompasses the examination of language within texts, emphasizing excellence in craft across various fields beyond literature, such as advertising and political discourse.

Burke (2014, p. 1) provides a historical context, revealing that stylistics, or 'literary linguistics', involves analyzing and interpreting texts, particularly literary ones, with origins dating back to ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical traditions. Crystal views stylistics as a subfield of linguistics dedicated to investigating language use in various situations and developing theories to explain specific language preferences of individuals and social groups. The diverse linguistic choices influenced by factors such as formality, social setting, and audience underscore the significance of stylistics in unveiling the underlying principles that govern language use in different contexts.

Amidst the historical origins rooted in ancient rhetoric, Stylistics, also referred to as 'literary linguistics', has evolved into a specialised field, examining the characteristics of language use across various contexts. Crystal (2008, p. 460) emphasizes Stylistics' exploration of language variations influenced by factors such as formality, social setting, purpose of communication, and audience, leading to the identification and analysis of distinct linguistic features. This meticulous analysis engages the underlying principles shaping individuals' and social groups' linguistic preferences and choices, providing a valuable lens for

understanding the intricacies of communicative situations and their linguistic underpinnings.

The enduring academic interest and critical acclaim garnered by Sidi's collection highlight the need for an in-depth stylistic analysis, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities embedded within the poet's unique language style. The study seeks to fill the existing gap in critical appraisal by unraveling the stylistic intricacies that underpin the thematic preoccupations of Sidi's work. The absence of comprehensive stylistic analyses within the existing academic discourse emphasizes the timeliness and significance of this proposed study, which aims to offer fresh perspectives and enrich the existing body of knowledge.

Building on this foundation, this paper aims to conduct a stylistic analysis of Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*, in order to explore its unique language style and aesthetic ingenuity. Despite existing analyses focused on thematic exploration, a comprehensive stylistic appraisal of Sidi's work is notably absent. The research intends to bridge this gap by shedding light on stylistic features overlooked in previous analyses, highlighting the use of the title, *The Poet of Dust,* as an intriguing motif suggestive of spiritual essence and cultural context. The study seeks to explore Sidi's poetic influences rooted in Sufism and Surrealism, proposing the integration of Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework to examine the impact of these influences on the linguistic choices made by Sidi and their implications in the text. This integrated approach allows for a nuanced exploration of reader cognition and the linguistic intricacies employed by Sidi, unveiling the interplay between readers' preexisting knowledge and the linguistic elements shaping the poetry collection's interpretation and aesthetic appeal. The integration of Sidi's poetic influences of Sufism and Surrealism within the context of the Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework serves as a lens through which to explore the linguistic choices and their implications in his poetry.

The proposed study aims to unravel the linguistic features that define Sidi's poetic style, thereby providing an understanding of the interplay between his thematic expressions and the underlying linguistic devices at play. *The Poet of Dust*, authored by Umar Abubakar Sidi, represents a striking departure from conventional poetic norms, as it ventures into the uncharted territories of meta-poetry and iconoclasm, seeking to dismantle the constraints of imaginative canonisation. Sidi's work is deeply influenced by Sufism and Surrealism, two ideological underpinnings that advocate for unrestricted creative expression, challenging the shackles of censorship and literary dictatorship. Despite its bold linguistic trajectory and profound thematic exploration, the scholarly attention afforded to *The Poet of Dust* has not been much, with a dearth of comprehensive academic engagement analyzing its linguistic intricacies. The

current research endeavours to fill this void by undertaking a stylistic analysis of the text, aiming to unearth the subtle nuances embedded within Sidi's poetic language. This study aspires not only to shed light on the linguistic dimensions of the collection but also to ascertain how these linguistic properties contribute to the structure and thematic fabric of the text.

Furthermore, it seeks to identify potential gaps in the stylistic framework. By carrying out a stylistic study of *The Poet of Dust,* this research aims to provide a new understanding of Sidi's innovative poetic expression, situating his work within the broader context of contemporary literary discourse. It seeks to explore how Sidi's fusion of Sufi and Surrealist influences fosters a dynamic interplay between conscious and subconscious realms, facilitating a deeper contemplation of the essence of existence, poetry, and life itself. The study also seeks to highlight the significance of unbounded creative expression, particularly in the context of contemporary socio-cultural dynamics, where the exploration of diverse perspectives and voices is crucial for the enrichment of literary dialogue. Through stylistic analysis, this research aims to establish a solid foundation for engagement with *The Poet of Dust,* unlocking its potential as a pivotal contribution to the evolving landscape of poetic innovation and creative expression.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the lexico-semantic stylistic features in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*.
2. To evaluate the syntactic stylistic devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust.*
3. To examine the rhetorical stylistic devices in Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust*

Theoretical Underpinning

This paper incorporates two essential theoretical frameworks: Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework. Schema Theory, rooted in cognitive psychology, emphasizes readers' mental structures and their impact on text interpretation. Frederic Bartlett's pioneering work highlighted the active role of memory, proposing the idea of "schemas" as cognitive frameworks for organizing and interpreting new information. Jean Piaget further developed the concept, emphasizing how individuals construct and modify schemas to accommodate new knowledge. Schema theory has since been applied to various fields, including education, linguistics, and artificial intelligence, to understand how prior knowledge shapes perception and understanding.

Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework, employed in the dissertation, provides a systematic method for studying linguistic elements in a text. It categorizes analysis into lexical, grammatical, cohesion and context, and figures of speech categories. The lexical level scrutinises vocabulary choices and their semantic effects, while the grammatical level examines sentence structures and syntactic patterns. Figures of speech analysis delves into the use of metaphors, similes, and other rhetorical devices, while the context and cohesion level considers the text's broader context and its organizational coherence. While Leech and Short's framework has contributed significantly to the field of stylistics, critics have cautioned against potential limitations, such as a possible overemphasis on linguistic analysis at the expense of emotional and aesthetic aspects. Moreover, they have acknowledged the need to select specific elements for analysis, recognizing the essential interplay between literary criticism and linguistic criteria. By combining these two aspects, the framework identifies style markers within a text, aiding in a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between linguistic choices and literary content.

The incorporation of both Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework in the dissertation promises a comprehensive exploration of how readers' preconceived notions and linguistic devices employed by the author influence the text's interpretation and stylistic qualities. The application of these frameworks opens up new avenues for uncovering the intricate relationship between cognitive structures, linguistic choices, and the overall meaning and impact of literary texts.

Justification of the Study

The study's primary objective is to provide a fresh perspective to the understanding of Umar Abubakar Sidi's poetry collection, *The Poet of Dust,* through a stylistic analysis. By incorporating the Schema Theory and Leech and Short's Stylistic Analysis Framework, this research project aims to justify its significance within the realm of scholarship. The current academic landscape has not had much appraisal of Sidi's work, despite its bold departure from conventional literary norms. The research's intention to bridge this gap through a stylistic analysis signifies its potential contribution to the broader discourse on contemporary poetic innovation and creative expression. By filling this gap in the existing scholarly research, the study seeks to establish *The Poet of Dust* as a significant contribution to the evolution of contemporary literary discourse, drawing attention to the rich interplay between linguistic innovation, thematic exploration, and readers' cognitive engagement.

Methodology

This study utilises a qualitative content analysis design, which is recognised for

its objectivity in capturing events and processes in their natural contexts, to conduct a stylistic analysis of Umar Abubakar Sidi's *The Poet of Dust.* The primary data are gotten from people selected from the text under study. However, the research makes use of other secondary sources of data collection.

Review of Related Literature

Several researchers, through their diverse experiences and research requirements, have conducted studies that intersect various domains of applied linguistics, particularly stylistics, in the realm of poetry. These investigations have yielded the following outcomes:

Bamigboye (2020) in his study entitled, "Text and Terror: How Boko-Haram Terrifies Nigerians Using 'Ordinary' Words" used the Schema theory in analyzing the dynamics of how Boko Haram employ words to incite fear and terror in the minds of the people. Bamigboye argued that the readers of Boko Haram statements "interpret same with the residual knowledge they have of the world" implying that the readers' previous conceptions of fear and terrors foster a deeper degree of interpretation and connection to the Boko Haram statements that they read. According to Bamigboye, the study found that "the source of a text goes a long way in determining how it is digested by readers. Also, readers make sense of texts based not just on what is read, but the surrounding information they mentally impose on it." He concluded by asserting that a reader's level of comprehension is contingent on his or her level of education and world exposure. Just like the present study, Bamigboye used schema theory to explore the relationship between the chosen stylistic elements and how they are informed by or fit into the reader's reception. Limiting the essay to stylistic analysis overlooks other important factors that influence language use and meaning, such as sociolinguistic and cultural contexts. By focusing solely on stylistic analysis, the research misses out on valuable insights that a critical discourse analysis (CDA) or sociolinguistics study could provide, such as how social power dynamics or cultural norms shape language choices and meanings. It is important to consider a multidimensional approach that incorporates various perspectives to fully understand the complexities of language use by the terrorists and its social implications.

Ibraheem (2014) performed "A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Poems in Segun Adekoya's 'Here And There.'" The study set out to investigate the "stylistic analysis of selected poems of Segun Adekoya's "Here and There". The author used the theoretical framework of "M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, with particular reference to his concepts of form, substance and context, on which Leech and Shorts (1981) have based their four levels of language description, such as syntax, semantics, phonology and graphology."

The study discovered that Segun Adekoya uses Systemic Functional Linguistics concept to "stylistically project messages such as the ridiculously sluggish pace of growth in Africa, the terribly ugly conditions of living in Nigeria, the proud cultural heritage of the poet, the agonies of misgovernment, the saddening reverberations of the Nigerian civil war, and the disillusioning truths about the much-hyped, technologically advanced United States of America." This work, also an analysis of stylistic features provides different perspectives on stylistic analysis which further confirms the claim of the current research that stylistics is a wide field. Both studies aim to analyze the stylistic features of literary works. However, this study does not fully capture the complexity and diversity of stylistic choices in language because of the theory used. The theory's focus on grammar and function did not encompass all the aspects of style, such as rhetoric or literary devices.

Nweze (2012) in his "Stylistic Study Of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Wizard Of The Crow* And Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*", sets out to "analyse the stylistic peculiarities of the texts with the crucial aim of bringing to the forecourt of the readers mind the intended messages of Okri and Ngugi through their unique individual styles." He performed a comparative analysis that highlighted the stylistic choices of the authors and how these approaches enhance readers' perception of their representations of society, especially in the context of postcolonial realities. Nweze observed that in both Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow* and Okri's *The Famished Road*, there is a shared feature of "grand, mixed and low styles" in their "stylistic mannerisms and methods." He also discovered that both authors' works "reveal a universal human condition through the characteristic style of their language", which is apparent throughout the texts. He concluded that by performing a stylistic analysis of the texts, it is easy to deduce and "to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the texts in order to relate literary effects to their linguistic causes." The study clearly focuses on the stylistic peculiarities of the texts and the aim of bringing forth the intended messages of the authors through their unique styles. The comparative analysis approach used by Nweze enhances the understanding of how the authors' stylistic choices contribute to the portrayal of society in a postcolonial context. At best, there is a tangential nexus between the study and this dissertation. While both involve the analysis of stylistic choices in literary texts, they differ significantly in terms of focus, genre, and subject matter. This study primarily discusses a comparative analysis of two novels in a postcolonial context, while this dissertation centers around a mystical poetry collection. But, they are both stylistic explorations.

Nzeakor (2020) undertook "A Stylistic-Accommodationist Analysis of Adichie's Language Use in *Half of A Yellow Sun*" in which she analyzed Adichie's "stylistic virtuosity from the general use of language to specific

character's language use." She set out to understudy the stylistic choices employed by Adichie to communicate the undercurrents of the Nigerian civil war and to contextualize the language of the text. Nzeakor came to the following conclusion on the stylistic choice of the text thus, she observed that "Adichie's language use or style is simple and her simplicity in language use made her accommodate numerous readers." She further opined that this stylistic choice is responsible for Adichie's acclaimed fame as a literary giant of her generation. She also posited that Adichie's "accommodative stand took both downward and upward convergence and divergence respectively", implying that her stylistic choice enabled the accommodation of divergent readers' interests. At the core of Nzeakor's analysis is accessibility to a text's representation which enabled by a simple language choice as she observed in her recommendations. She posited that "writers or communicators should always make their language as simple as possible for their readers or listeners, so as to pass their messages across, in order to get the desired results." She further recommends that writers should take into account the interests of readers by considering more accessible language choice in their works. The study does not strike a balance between convergence and divergence. But, this Accommodation Theory employed in the study also lacks scientific rigor and the absence of a more comprehensive theory of stylistic analysis. By focusing solely on accommodation, the study overlooks other significant factors that influence language use, such as sociolinguistic variation, genre analysis, or discourse analysis.

Oseni and Odebiyi (2021, p.43-54) similarly conducted "A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Naming and Describing in Nigeria Budget Speeches", to examine the language used in Nigeria's budget speeches and enhance understanding of its social and linguistic significance, the researchers utilized a combination of primary and secondary information. Their analysis was conducted through the application of Jeffries' critical stylistic method. They came up with the following findings: their analysis uncovered that "each of the budget speeches included in the study was titled or designated in various ways such as budget of restoration, budget of transformation, budget of rescue, and so on." They also found that "positive naming was extensively used to bring about positive attitude towards the situations in the country." Their conclusion suggested that the governors employed different semantic devices to convey political ideologies through slogans when naming and describing financial statements in their respective states. Additionally, they noted that "critical stylistics proved instrumental in providing valuable insights into the political dynamics of budget speech delivery." This paper and the ongoing research involve a stylistic analysis of written texts, albeit in different genres. Additionally, both studies aim to unravel deeper meanings and themes within texts. The study is limited by its narrow focus on budget speeches of selected governors in

Nigeria, limiting the generalizability of the findings, and the subjective nature of the analysis, which may be influenced by biases and preconceptions.

Oyedeji and Idoko (2021, p.48-54) conducted "A stylistic study of selected poems in Jide Balogun's 'The Desert in the River'". The study set out to x-ray the thematic nuances as discussed in Jide Balogun's 'The Desert in the River' using stylistic tools." The study found that "the theme of corruption and bad leadership pervades the texts and the duo stood as the hydra-headed monster to the growth and development of the nation. Also, the theme of power and unity is evident in the text." The study concludes by saying that for meaningful industrialization to be achieved, corruption and bad leadership must be addressed holistically. They also proposed the creation of an avenue for unity and effective dissemination of power and justice. It is however unclear how that is to be achieved given the lack of commitment by the government to such matter. The study introduces the context of Nigeria's hindrances in its pursuit of growth and development, and sets the stage for the present study to explore the thematic issues impeding the development of the country. Although a stylistic study, it does not consider phonological level in its evaluation which is a weakness because the aesthetics of poetry is primarily fixated on sound.

Data Analysis and Discussion

This part of the paper focuses on examining randomly selected data from the collection. This approach is in line with Sarfaz's (2022) argument, referencing Leech and Short's (2007) acknowledgment that analysing stylistic elements in a text involves choosing specific aspects while disregarding others. The following stylistic elements have been analysed:

Lexico-semantic Stylistic Features in *The Poet of Dust*

The poet makes use of various lexico-semantic stylistic features in order to convey deeper meanings, evoke spiritual experiences, and explore the mystical dimensions of human existence. These devices have profound implications in the text as they shape the reader's understanding and create a transformative and immersive experience. Below are some of the lexico-semantic devices employed by the poet:

Synonymy

Synonymy is a lexico-semantic stylistic device that involves the use of different words or expressions with closely related meanings to convey a particular concept or idea. It allows for variation, nuance, and emphasis in language, enabling speakers and writers to choose the most appropriate synonym that aligns with their intended message or rhetorical effect. Examples from the text:

Bad poets see poetry as the giant fork

Which rakes through the flesh of hearts

Bad poets perceive poetry as the blackness of black

The invisible tube, the darkened cave of enlightened ghosts

Bad poets define poetry as the aesthetic amalgamation of words to

evoke a waterfall of bliss ("Things Poets do", stanza 1-3)

In the excerpt above, the poet uses synonymy to convey a negative and distorted perception of poetry held by "bad poets." By employing various synonyms, the speaker emphasizes the misguided understanding of poetry by these individuals. In the first line, the persona exerts that "Bad poets see poetry as the giant fork." Here, poetry is replaced by the synonym "giant fork." This substitution creates a vivid and provocative image, suggesting that these poets view poetry as a tool that aggressively pierces and wounds the hearts of people. The choice of synonym implies a harsh and painful nature of their perception of poetry. In the statement "Which rakes through the flesh of hearts," he emphasises the negative connotation of their perception by using the synonym "rakes" to describe the destructive action of poetry. The use of this synonym intensifies the image of poetry inflicting harm or causing distress to the emotional well-being of individuals, according to bad poets. "Bad poets perceive poetry as the blackness of black." The use of synonymy here serves to evoke a sense of darkness and obscurity. By employing the phrase "blackness of black," the speaker emphasizes the extreme nature of their perception. The synonym "blackness" highlights the negative and despairing associations commonly linked to darkness and the absence of light. In the invisible tube, the darkened cave of enlightened ghosts," the poet replaces "poetry" with the synonymous phrases "invisible tube" and "darkened cave of enlightened ghosts." These synonyms evoke a sense of mystery and spiritual significance. The phrase "invisible tube" suggests a conduit or pathway through which enlightenment is sought, while "darkened cave of enlightened ghosts" implies a realm where ethereal beings reside. These synonyms portray the distorted perception of poetry as an esoteric and unearthly concept in the eyes of "bad poets." Furthering this line, "Bad poets define poetry as the aesthetic amalgamation of words to evoke a waterfall of bliss," he employs the synonymous phrase "aesthetic amalgamation of words" to describe how these poets perceive poetry. By using this synonym, the speaker implies that these poets define poetry solely in terms of its surface-level beauty and the pleasing arrangement of words. The phrase "waterfall of bliss" reinforces the idea that

their perception focuses primarily on the pleasurable emotions evoked by poetry, disregarding its deeper meaning or substance.

Polysemy

Polysemy refers to the phenomenon where a word or phrase has multiple, related meanings or interpretations. Following are some instances of the use of polysemy in the text:

A poet is broken porcelain splintered
Upon the mountains of the sky
A poet is a disgusting worm
Lying around the spaghetti of life ("The Peninsula of Poets (II)", stanzas 8 and 10)

In the given lines from the poem "The Peninsula of Poets (II)", the use of polysemy adds depth and richness to the poetic imagery, allowing for multiple interpretations and layers of meaning. The initial line states, "A poet is broken porcelain splintered upon the mountains of the sky a poet is a disgusting worm lying around the spaghetti of life." Here, the poet employs polysemy to convey different aspects of the poet's existence and nature. The phrase "broken porcelain splintered" utilizes polysemy to evoke multiple images and ideas. On one hand, "broken" implies that the poet is fractured, damaged, or fragmented, suggesting a sense of vulnerability or brokenness in their emotional or creative state. On the other hand, "porcelain" conjures images of fragility, delicacy, and artistry, emphasizing the poet's sensitivity and the beauty that can arise from their brokenness. Thus, polysemy allows for both a metaphorical interpretation of the poet's state of being and a literal visual description. Similarly, the phrase "mountains of the sky" exhibits polysemy by combining concepts of height, grandeur, and elevation. This phrase can be interpreted both metaphorically and literally. Metaphorically, it presents the poet as someone who reaches extraordinary heights in their artistic pursuits and aspirations. Literally, it evokes the image of mountains reaching into the sky, emphasizing the poet's connection to the vastness and majesty of the universe. Polysemy allows for the simultaneous existence of these different interpretations, enriching the symbolism and impact of the description.

Moving on, the phrase "disgusting worm" also demonstrates polysemy. On one level, it suggests a negative or degrading view of the poet as something repulsive or unappealing. This interpretation may stem from societal perceptions of artists as unconventional or outside the norm. At the same time, the word "worm" can also symbolize the poet's humility and their rootedness in the earth, implying a deeper connection to nature and the cycles of life. By utilizing polysemy, the poet invites multiple perspectives on the poet's identity and role. The phrase "spaghetti of life" further exemplifies polysemy. On one

level, it metaphorically represents the chaotic and tangled aspects of human existence, suggesting a sense of disorder or complexity. However, it also implies a sense of interconnectedness and the potential for creative exploration within the twists and turns of life's experiences. Polysemy allows for both interpretations to coexist and contribute to the overall meaning of the line.

Syntactic Stylistic Devices in *The Poet of Dust*

Syntactic stylistic devices such as parallelism and enjambment were deployed by the poet so as to arrange and organise words, phrases, and sentences. This is with the view of consolidating the mystic atmosphere, and to also protrude meaning and impact of the poems.

Parallelism

One syntactic feature that stands out in *The Poet of Dust* is the use of parallelism. This is evident in the repetition of certain phrases and structures throughout the text, creating a rhythmic and lyrical effect. See the following examples:

Laikhur offers me a river of wine
   I drink, I stagger, I stutter: (In "The Peninsula of Poets II")

Here, we can see the parallel structure of "I [verb]," repeated three times, emphasizing the poet's experience of drinking and its effects. In the Peninsula of Poets, parallel structure is used to emphasize certain ideas or to create a rhythmic effect. For instance, the repetition of the phrase Holy Holy Holy Holy Holy and the repetition of the phrase Hukkuyyakkuhuhhuhuk both employ parallelism, creating a sense of pattern and emphasis. Also in Peninsula of Poets the following parallel structure was found:

What is P?
When is P seen as P?
Who made P P?
Why is P considered to be P? (Stanza 8 line 4 - 7)

It exhibits parallel structure through the repetition of the question on "P" and the structure "is P seen as P," "made P P," and "considered to be P." This repetition creates a balanced and rhythmic effect, drawing attention to each question and emphasizing the importance of understanding "P". Thus, the parallel structure in this passage helps emphasise the clarity, coherence, and impact of the questions being posed. That is, what is "P"? In my opinion, the "p" as in the sense it is used by the poet refers to poetry. This means that the poet is curious to know what poetry is.

Enjambment

Through enjambment, the poet is able to suspend thoughts or sentence over multiple lines, with the line break occurring in the middle of a phrase or clause so as to create a sense of flow, continuity, and fluidity. See some instances below:

MARTIN Espada welcomed me with a slap
On my left cheek, he pulled my ear
& tossed me into the 'Academy of Poetry' where Gogol
An ancient ape, the Peninsula's poet laureate
Sat me up and taught me:
Hukkuyyakkuhuhhuhuk
The ABC of poetry & the 7 articles of a poet's faith ("Peninsula of Poets", stanza 1)

In the given excerpt, enjambment is used to create a sense of movement and continuity in the description of the speaker's experience. The lines "MARTIN Espada welcomed me with a slap" and "On my left cheek, he pulled my ear & tossed me into the 'Academy of Poetry'" flow seamlessly without a pause or punctuation at the end of each line. This enjambment allows the actions of Martin Espada to unfold rapidly and forcefully, conveying the abruptness and intensity of the encounter.

Similarly, the line "where Gogol An ancient ape, the Peninsula's poet laureate" continues the description of the location without a pause, emphasizing the significance and authority of Gogol as a revered poetic figure. The enjambment here creates a sense of anticipation and curiosity, urging the reader to keep reading to discover more about Gogol and his role in the speaker's poetic education.

Rhetorical Stylistic Devices in *The Poet of Dust*

Rhetorical stylistic devices were deployed in the text as techniques used enhancing the impact and persuasiveness of the personas. Specifically, allusion was deployed by the poet to give reference to person, event, or work of art from literature, history, mythology, or culture, in such a way that it draws upon the reader's existing knowledge.

Literary Allusion

Literary allusion is the intentional reference to a specific work of literature, author, or character within a new text, allowing the reader to make connections and associations with the original source material. Following are instances of the use of literary allusion by the poet:

I forget Borges & the half written Borgesian story titled:

A Treatise on the Permissibility of Marriage Between

Mankind & Djinn (The Veiled Secret of the Kama Sutra or the Way a Certain Poet interprets the Surrealist Manifesto at Night, Stanza 3)

In this excerpt, allusion is made to the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges and his hypothetical half-written story titled *A Treatise on the Permissibility of Marriage Between Mankind & Djinn*. By alluding to Borges and his literary work, the poet employs an allusion to add depth and richness to the poem. Borges is widely regarded as a master of magical realism and is known for his intricate and imaginative stories that often blur the line between reality and fiction. In this context, the allusion to Borges and his hypothetical story serves to evoke a sense of mystical and fantastical possibilities. The concept of marriage between mankind and Djinn, supernatural beings from Arabian mythology, presents a union between different realms or dimensions. It symbolizes the merging or union of the human and divine, the tangible and the ethereal. The use of the allusion also suggests that the poet is drawing inspiration from Borges' literary style and sensibilities, utilizing his evocative language and the interplay of reality and imagination. It adds a layer of intellectual and literary reference to the poem, inviting readers familiar with Borges' work to delve deeper into the themes of mysticism and the exploration of otherworldly possibilities.

Mystical Allusion

Mystical allusion is the deliberate referencing of religious texts, sacred symbols, or mystical traditions in poetry or literature, imbuing the work with spiritual depth and inviting readers to access deeper levels of meaning and transcendence. See following instances:

ADONIS handed me the key to The Peninsula's treasury.

He spoke through many voices:

The voice of Mihyar of Damascus

The voice of sand and salt

The voice of the blood of Adonis

The voice of the interrupting sky ("The Peninsula of Poets", stanza II)

The allusion to "ADONIS" refers to a figure from ancient Greek mythology, known for his beauty and connection to nature. Adonis is often associated with love, passion, and the cycles of life and death. By mentioning Adonis, the poet taps into the rich symbolism and archetypal significance associated with this mythical figure. The act of Adonis handing the poet "the key to The Peninsula's treasury" is a metaphorical gesture. The "treasury" symbolizes a hidden or

sacred knowledge, perhaps representing spiritual wisdom or enlightenment. The poet being given the key implies access to this deeper understanding. The reference to "many voices" underscores the mystical nature of the experience. By evoking different voices, such as "The voice of Mihyar of Damascus," the poet suggests a connection to various ancient cultures and wisdom traditions. Mihyar of Damascus, a famous poet from the 5th century, is known for his romantic and mystical poetry, further emphasizing the mystical nature of the experience.

The mention of "the voice of sand and salt" alludes to the harsh and elemental nature of the desert. Sand and salt symbolize the arid and harsh conditions of the environment, suggesting a connection to the land and the raw, primal forces of nature. The voice of the blood of Adonis" is a reference to the myth of Adonis, where his blood is said to have fertilized the earth, giving rise to life and new growth. This allusion reinforces the cycle of life and death and underscores the transformative power of Adonis. Finally, the mention of "the voice of the interrupting sky" further adds to the mysterious and transcendental quality of the experience. The sky, representing the vast and infinite, interrupts the earthly realm, suggesting a sacred or divine intervention, and further emphasizing the mystical nature of the encounter.

Vulgarism

The poet also use vulgar, offensive or derogatory language to express certain ideas or concepts, more like poetic alchemy, with the aim of transforming base and profane elements into something transcendent and meaningful. An example of vulgar language used by the poet is as follows:

> I love you like I love the goddess, secret heroine of this poem & the stupid bard who sat down in the 'Republic of Poets' to spit out a drunken poem about goddamn things & similes vomited by a motherfucking goddamn bard ("Poetry in the Republic of Love or A Goddamn Poem about Goddamn things & Similes Vomited by a Motherfucking Goddamn Bard," Stanza 22)

The line "to spit out a drunken poem about goddamn things & similes vomited by a motherfucking goddamn bard" contains explicit and vulgar language. The use of words like "goddamn," "spit," and "motherfucking" serves to convey a sense of frustration, intensity, and perhaps even disillusionment with traditional poetic conventions or the limitations of language itself. By incorporating vulgar language, the poet may be aiming to rupture the confines of polite language and engage with a more visceral and authentic expression of emotion or experience. This can, in turn, provide a stark contrast to the lofty and elevated language often associated with mystic poetry and challenge readers to confront the messy and less refined aspects of existence. The inclusion of

vulgar language in this context also serves to break down barriers and create a sense of immediacy and intimacy. By using language that can be considered profane or taboo, the poet may seek to bridge the gap between the divine and the mundane, highlighting the inherent connections and shared experiences between the sacred and the profane.

Discussion of Findings

The Poet of Dust employs a variety of stylistic devices to convey its message, evoke spiritual experiences, and explore the mystical dimensions of human existence. The use of synonymy is notable in the text, as the poet utilises various synonyms to depict the distorted perception of poetry held by "bad poets." These synonyms create vivid and provocative images, emphasizing the negative and despairing associations commonly linked to their understanding of poetry. Moreover, the use of polysemy adds depth and richness to the poetic imagery, allowing for multiple interpretations and layers of meaning. By employing polysemy, the poet highlights the poet's state of being, their connection to nature, and their role in the chaotic aspects of human existence, inviting multiple perspectives on their identity and role. Syntactic stylistic devices such as parallelism and enjambment contribute to the creation of a rhythmic and immersive experience. Through parallelism, the poet emphasizes certain ideas and creates a sense of pattern and emphasis, while enjambment helps to create a sense of flow, continuity, and fluidity, thereby contributing to the immersive and transformative nature of the poems. Rhetorical stylistic devices, such as allusion, are employed to enhance the impact and persuasiveness of the personas. The use of literary allusion to figures like Borges and mystical allusion to figures like Adonis helps create a sense of depth and richness, drawing upon the reader's existing knowledge and inviting them to access deeper levels of meaning and transcendence within the text. Finally, the use of vulgarism serves as a form of poetic alchemy, transforming base and profane elements into something transcendent and meaningful. By incorporating explicit and vulgar language, the poet challenges traditional poetic conventions, aiming to create a sense of immediacy and intimacy, as well as bridge the gap between the divine and the mundane.

Conclusion

Through the skillful deployment of carious stylistic techniques, Sidi crafts a rich tapestry of imagery and meaning, inviting readers to delve into the complexities of human existence and the enigmatic realm of poetic expression. The vivid and provocative images created through synonymy and polysemy serve to highlight the poet's exploration of the mystical dimensions of life, inviting readers to contemplate the profound implications of their existence and perception of the world. Furthermore, the strategic use of syntactic stylistic

devices, including parallelism and enjambment, contributes to the immersive and transformative nature of the poems, creating a rhythmic and fluid experience for readers. These devices help to accentuate the thematic depth and emotional resonance embedded within the text, reinforcing the interconnectedness between language, perception, and spiritual experiences. Lastly, the deployment of rhetorical stylistic devices, such as allusion and vulgarism, serves to expand the thematic and emotional scope of the poems, challenging traditional norms and inviting readers to confront the intersection between the divine and the profane. Overall, "The Poet of Dust" stands as a testament to the profound impact of stylistic devices in conveying deeper meanings, evoking spiritual experiences, and exploring the enigmatic dimensions of human existence through the medium of poetry.

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Fuel Subsidy Removal and Its Negative Impact on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

Anthonia Onyinye Ilodigwe

Abstract

Fuel subsidy has been a leverage that has aided SMEs operations in Nigeria as it has helped in reducing the amount of resources spent on fuel by SMEs. Thus, the removal has no doubt negatively affected the activities and operations of SMEs across the country. This study investigated the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra State. The study adopted a mixed method research that used structured questionnaire and In-depth Interview (IDI) in collecting data from 105 SMEs systematically selected from the 21 Local Government Areas in the state. Data collected for the study was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result of the quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency tables, charts and graphs) while the qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study hypothesis was tested using Chi-square inferential statistics. The study found that fuel subsidy removal has a very high negative impact on SMEs in Anambra State. The study also found that the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs include increase in production cost, reduced profit as a result of high overhead costs, low sales and income resulting from low patronage and financial strain in the general activities of SMEs. The study thus recommends that strategic planning and policies that can combat the negative effect of fuel subsidy removal should be put in place by the Federal Government as this will help SMEs thrive and still carry out their operations without many difficulties irrespective of fuel subsidy removal.

Keywords: fuel subsidy, fuel subsidy removal, SMEs, negative impact

1. Introduction

Oil in Nigeria was first discovered around 1956 and, since then, Nigeria has been ranked by Organization of the Petroleum Export Countries (OPEC) among the world's largest crude oil reserves and producer of crude oil (United Nation Environmental Programme UNEP, 2017). Despite Nigeria being among the world's top producers of crude oil, the country has been facing challenges

in refining crude oil domestically in recent times. This is as a result of several factors such as corruption, poor maintenance of infrastructure, etc. (Adeola, Akingboye, Ore, Oluwajana, Adewole, Olawade & Ogunyele, 2022). The challenges resulting from crude oil and petroleum refining has led to increase in the overall cost of fuel in the country (Ogbuigwe, 2018). In order to enable its citizens and organisations to purchase fuel at an affordable price, the government of Nigeria decided to subsidize the cost of fuel by paying some part of the money to fuel producers while the citizens and organisations pay the other part each time they purchased fuel at the filling stations (Soremekun, 2023).

Fuel subsidies have been a significant and contentious issue in Nigeria for many years. Nigeria has a long history of fuel subsidies dating back to the 1970s when the government began regulating fuel prices to keep them artificially low for consumers (KPGM, 2023). This was done to provide affordable fuel to the Nigerian population. Over the years, fuel subsidies became a burden on the Nigerian economy. The government was spending a significant portion of its budget on subsidizing fuel, leading to fiscal challenges. The fuel subsidy system in Nigeria was plagued by corruption and fuel smuggling, where subsidized fuel was often illegally sold in neighboring countries for a higher price (McCulloch, Moerenhout & Yang, 2021).

Several Nigerian administrations attempted to reform the fuel subsidy system to reduce the burden on the government and increase transparency. These efforts were met with resistance and protests from the public. In 2020, the Nigerian government announced plans to fully deregulate the downstream sector of the oil industry, which included the removal of fuel subsidies. This move aimed to allow market forces to determine fuel prices and reduce government spending on subsidies (Iroanusi, 2021).

Fuel subsidies have historically been implemented to stabilize fuel prices, control inflation, and ease the financial burden on the populace. For SMEs, fuel subsidies have helped reduce operating costs, making transportation more affordable and ensuring the availability of energy at a reasonable price for production and distribution activities (Adeniran, 2016).

Small and Medium Enterprises are the lifeblood of Nigeria's economy, contributing significantly to job creation, economic growth, and poverty reduction. These enterprises operate across diverse sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, retail, and services, providing essential products and services to both urban and rural communities. The functions of SMEs have been greatly enhanced by fuel subsidy over the years because it helps in reducing the cost of operations of SMEs. The recent removal of fuel subsidy by the federal government necessitated the present study which is aimed at

investigating the negative impact it has on SMEs in Anambra State.

Statement of the problem

Small and medium scale businesses in Nigeria from time past have been very significant to the growth of Nigerian economy through their operations and activities. The impact of SMEs cannot be overemphasized because they can be found in every part of the country and their existence contributes to GDP, social and political growth and development of the country. However, SMEs are faced with lots of challenges in Nigeria, the latest being the total removal of fuel subsidy by the Federal Government of Nigeria. SMEs, unlike large enterprises and corporations, leverage on opportunities and resources presented by the subsidization of fuel to grow and sustain their businesses. In the situation where fuel subsidy, a major leverage to SMEs, is removed, it poses a great threat and risk to the existence of SMEs. Because the power or energy problem of the nation is yet to be fixed, these SMEs heavily depend on private power generation to run their business and, in the process, they pay heavily to carry out their business activities.

The removal of fuel subsidy automatically led to increase in the price of fuel which directly led to increase in cost of production or rendering services. Also, SMEs in Nigeria depend heavily on physical distribution for their marketing unlike large industries in technologically advanced nations that adopt electronic online marketing; hence, removal of fuel subsidy increases their marketing expenses, leading to reduction in their profit. The challenges being faced by SMEs in Nigeria, in spite of their huge contributions to the country's economic growth, and the impact fuel subsidy removal has on SMEs made this study to investigate the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of the negative impact fuel subsidy removal has on SMEs in Anambra State?
2. What are the negative impacts of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra State?

Research Objectives

1. To ascertain the level of negative impact fuel subsidy removal has on SMEs in Anambra State.
2. To find out the negative impacts of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra State.

Study Hypothesis

1. Fuel subsidy removal is likely to have high negative impact on small scale businesses than medium scale businesses in Anambra State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Fuel Subsidy

Fuel subsidy is a government policy in which the government provides financial assistance to reduce the cost of fuel for consumers. This is typically done by selling fuel at a price lower than the market rate, with the government covering the price difference through subsidies. The main goals of fuel subsidies are to make fuel more affordable for citizens and to stabilize domestic prices. However, fuel subsidy can have economic, environmental, and fiscal implications, as they often lead to increased government spending and can encourage over consumption of fuel.

Fuel subsidy removal

Fuel subsidy removal refers to the government's decision to eliminate or reduce subsidies on petroleum products, such as gasoline and diesel. This can have significant economic and social implications. On one hand, it can reduce the burden on the government's budget and promote more efficient resource allocation. On the other hand, it often leads to higher fuel prices, which can result in increased costs for consumers and businesses, potentially causing inflation and impacting lower-income individuals and organisations disproportionately. The decision to remove fuel subsidies is a complex policy choice that government might have weighed carefully, taking into account various economic and political factors.

Small Scale Enterprise

SMEDAN (2013) described a small scale enterprise as an enterprise engaging between 10 to 49 employees with asset base of 5 million naira but with less than 50 million naira (excluding land and buildings.) The levels of technology and skills are relatively high when compared with micro enterprises. Organizational and control systems are better structured when compared with the micro scale enterprises. Small scale enterprises may be incorporated companies or partnership firms. Small scale enterprises have the potentials as sole proprietorship or partnership. They also have better potential to source funds from the formal sector such as deposit money banks or other financial institutions when compared with the microfinance enterprises. They may be members of professional groups and trade associations. This category of enterprises is also found in all sectors covered by Micro Enterprises including service sectors such as schools, hospitals, publishing organizations and

professional firms for lawyers, accountants, architects, etc. According to Central Bank of Nigeria, small scale enterprises are enterprises in which total investment (including land and capital) does not exceed N500,000 and/or annual turnover does not exceed N5 million.

Medium Scale Enterprise

Medium scale enterprises are enterprises that have between 50 to 199 workers and an asset base of 50 million naira and not less than 500 million naira excluding land and buildings (Ufua, Olujobi, Ogbari, Dada & Edafe, 2020). They are involved and found in key sectors such as manufacturing, information and communication technology, transportation, building and construction, multiple and departmental stores, etc. They have highly developed technology and resources. They have access to many sources of finance ranging from commercial banks to development banks. They can also easily go to the capital market to source for additional capital such as equity and debenture. According to CBN, medium scale enterprises are enterprises with a labour size of between 101-300 workers or a total cost of over N50 million but not more than N200 million, including working capital but excluding cost of land.

Impact of fuel subsidy removal on businesses

The impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs can vary depending on several factors, including the industry, location, and the overall economic environment. However, below are some impacts fuel subsidy removal can have on SMEs.

Increased Operating Costs: Fuel subsidy removal often leads to higher fuel prices, which can directly increase operating costs for SMEs that rely on transportation, such as logistics, delivery, and manufacturing companies.

Inflation: Rising fuel costs can contribute to overall inflation, affecting the purchasing power of consumers and potentially reducing demand for certain goods and services from SMEs.

Profit Margins: As a result of fuel subsidy removal, SMEs may see their profit margins squeezed as they absorb higher fuel costs or pass them on to consumers, potentially impacting competitiveness.

Transportation and Logistics: SMEs that heavily rely on transportation may face challenges in managing their supply chains and distribution networks efficiently, leading to increased costs and potential delays.

Energy-Intensive: Energy-intensive SMEs like manufacturing enterprises may face increased production costs, potentially impacting their global competitiveness and contribution to their country's growth and development.

Empirical Review

Goddey, Iheagwara and Otu (2014) investigated the effects of fuel subsidy removal on small business performance in South-East Nigeria. Two research questions were raised as a guide to this study while data generated through the questionnaire were analyzed using the Nonparametric Kruskal Wallis test. The statistical software package MINITAB version 16.0 was used for the analysis. The use of Bartlet's test of homogeneity of variance shows variation in the data, and the test for normality assumption rejected the null hypotheses which lead to the use of non-parametric methods. The study found that fuel subsidy removal has significant impacts on the financial performance of small businesses in Nigeria, and fuel subsidy removal has a significant impact on the market performance of small businesses in Nigeria.

Ozili and Obiora (2023) investigated the implications of the 2023 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria using the discourse analysis methodology. The study found that the negative implications of fuel subsidy removal included decreased economic growth in the short term, increased inflation, increased poverty, increased fuel smuggling, increased crime, and increase in the prices of petroleum products and loss of jobs in the informal sector.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted mixed methods research design. Questionnaire schedule which is a quantitative instrument for data collection and a structured interview guide which is a qualitative research instrument were used to collect data for the study. Again, the study population was made up of Managing Directors and CEOs of 105 SMEs (Small and Medium Scale Enterprises) selected from all the 21 local government areas of the state using simple random probability sampling techniques (hand drawing and balloting). Also, 5 participants that were not administered questionnaires were purposively selected for the In-Depth Interview. Quantitative data collected from the study were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) while the data collected for the interview were sorted before been used for analysis. The quantitative data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics (tables, graph and charts) while thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data collected from the interview sessions. The study hypothesis was tested using Chi-square inferential statistics. Further, the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the field were further complemented in order to arrive at the findings of this study.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Distribution of SMEs used in the study

Enterprise	Frequency	Percent
Small Scale Enterprise	53	50.48
Medium Scale Enterprise	52	49.52
Total	**105**	**100**

Field survey, 2023

Data presented in table 1 shows that 53(50.48%) of enterprises used for the study were small enterprises while 52 (49.52%) of the enterprises used were medium scale enterprises.

Research question 1: What is the level of the negative impact fuel subsidy removal has on SMEs in Anambra State?
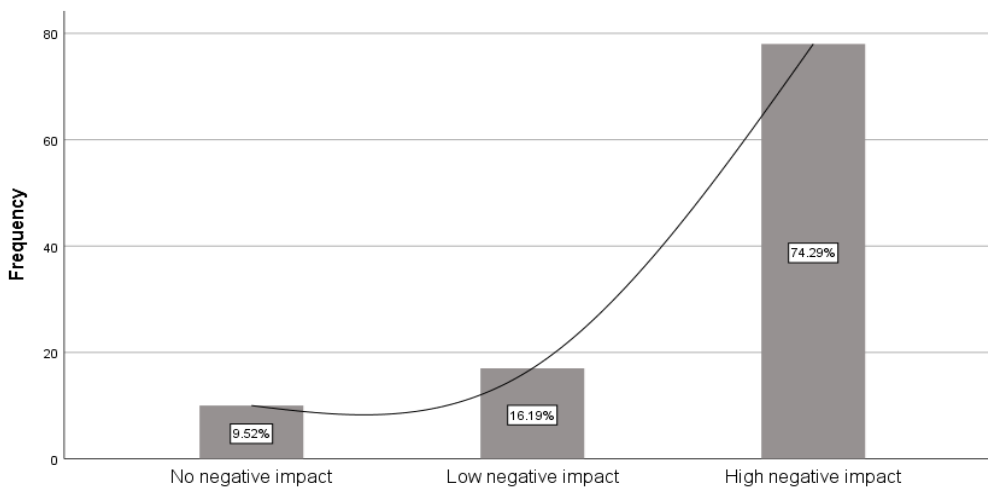
Fig 1: Graphical representation of the level of negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs

Figure 1 shows the level of negative impact fuel subsidy removal has on SMEs in Anambra state. Data from the figure shows that 78 (74.29%) of the respondents indicated high negative impact, 17 (16.19%) indicated low negative impact while 10 (9.52%) indicated no negative impact. Data presented in the figure also shows that the line trend of the impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs went high towards negative effect in Anambra State and this implies that fuel subsidy removal has high negative effect on SMEs. The result in Figure 1 aligns with the response of an IDI respondent who opined that:

> The impact of fuel subsidy removal can be felt in every sector of Nigeria but to small organisations like us that compete with larger organisations, the impact is more. Apart from the cost paid for fuel for generators, other costs, especially transportation during distribution, is on a very high side and this has greatly

> affected our operations. A litre of fuel is over 600 Naira and I will tell you that it is really telling on the organisation (32 years, Male, Managing Director, Onitsha North).

This response implies that fuel subsidy removal affects both the transportation and production costs of SMEs, making it difficult for them to carry out their daily activities.

Another respondent stated that:

> The activities of our organisation have not been easy since the removal of fuel subsidy. Definitely, it is obvious that the production cost of everything is up. The price for raw materials is no longer the same and the amount that is supposed to be spent on fuel has also increased. All these put together makes production not to be the same because if plans are not accurate, the organisation will really suffer. Electricity bill is also on the high side and when there is power failure, we pay heavily for diesel (35 years old, Male, CEO, Awka South).

This response implies that fuel subsidy removal has a serious negative impact on the activities of SMEs, especially in the area of electricity cost.

Another respondent also said that:

> The removal of fuel subsidy has really affected our business operations even in a short period of time that the subsidy was removed, the impact is already felt and it is not small. The impact is something that have really affected our activities it is massive (47 years old, Female, Director, Idemili North).

This response means that the impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra is massive and it affects their operations and activities.

Research Question 2: What are the negative impacts of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents' views on the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on profitability of their organisation

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Leads to increased production cost	11	10.48
Leads to reduced profit as a result of high overhead costs	13	12.38
Leads to low sale and income as a result of low patronage	7	6.67
Leads to financial strain in general activities	9	8.57
All of the above	65	61.90
Total	**105**	**100**

Field survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs profitability in Anambra State include

increase in production cost, reduced profit as a result of high overhead costs, low sales and income resulting from low patronage and financial strain in the general activities of SMEs. This result partly supports the response of an IDI respondent who explained that:

> The removal of fuel subsidy is not a welcome development to me because a lot of things were not put in place before it was removed abruptly. This is seen in the high cost of living and the challenges companies face in carrying out their production activities and day-to-day operations. The cost of production is really on a high side and one of the major contributors is gas for generator and vehicles (40 years old, Male, CEO, Nnewi North).

This IDI's response shows that some of the major negative effects of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs is increase in production and operational cost. Another respondent saw the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs as decrease in profit when she opined that:

> The major negative impact of this whole fuel subsidy removal is the decline in my daily earnings. The removal of fuel subsidy has brought about economic hardship no doubt and this has led to reduced patronage from my clients. Most people have reduced how they feed, how they make use of their purchased items and this has really affected the level of income and profit I make on a daily basis (29 years old, Super Market Owner, Njikoka).

Test of Hypothesis

The study hypothesis was tested using x^2 inferential statistics at 0.5 level of significance.

H0: Fuel subsidy removal is not likely to have high negative impact on small scale businesses than medium scale businesses in Anambra State.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation between SMEs and level of negative impact of fuel subsidy removal

			Level of negative impact of fuel subsidy removal			
			No negative impact	Low negative impact	High negative impact	Total
SMEs	Small scale Enterprise	Count	4	8	41	53
		% within SMEs	7.5%	15.1%	77.4%	100.0%
	Medium scale enterprise	Count	6	9	37	52
		% within SMEs	11.5%	17.3%	71.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	10	17	78	105
		% within SMEs	9.5%	16.2%	74.3%	100.0%

x^2=.654 df=2, p=.721

Table 3 shows that there is no significant relationship between SMEs and level of negative impact of fuel subsidy removal. Since p-value (.721) is greater than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis was rejected. This implies that fuel subsidy

removal is not likely to have high negative impact on small scale businesses than medium scale businesses in Anambra State. Thus, both small and medium scale businesses are negatively affected by fuel subsidy removal.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study investigated the impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs in Anambra State. Through the first research question asked, the study found that fuel subsidy removal has a high negative impact on SMEs. Through the second research question, it was found that the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs profitability in Anambra State include increase in production cost, reduced profit as a result of high overhead costs, low sales and income resulting from low patronage and financial strain in the general activities of SMEs. This result partly supports the findings of Goddey, Iheagwara and Otu (2014) who found that fuel subsidy removal has significant impacts on the financial performance of small businesses. The hypothesis tested showed that fuel subsidy removal is likely to have high negative impact on small scale businesses than medium scale businesses in Anambra State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study, based on its findings, concludes that there are several ways in which fuel subsidy removal impacts negatively on the activities and operations of SMEs and this negative impact greatly affect SMEs in Anambra State. Thus, the study recommends that the negative impact of fuel subsidy removal on SMEs can be eradicated if strategic planning and policies that can combat the negative effect of fuel subsidy removal are put in place by the Federal Government as this will help SMEs thrive and still carry out their operations without much difficulty.

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Tracing a Conceptual Sketch of African Music

Jude Toochukwu Orakwe

ABSTRACT

This essay explores the multifaceted landscape of African music, tracing its evolution and diverse forms. The author, using mainly the tools of library research and literature reviews, grapples with the challenge of defining African music, highlighting the terminological and linguistic complexities. The study encompasses traditional, popular, and art forms, offering a comprehensive understanding of a rich musical heritage. The characteristics of African music, including timbre, texture, rhythm, and call-response patterns, are scrutinized, shedding light on the nuanced aspects of its performance. The essay also delves into the classification of African musical instruments, utilizing the Sachs-Hornbostel taxonomy. In conclusion, the importance of approaching African music holistically is given a particular emphasis while a strong advocacy is made for a deeper appreciation of its cultural significance in the global context.

Keywords: African music, traditional, popular, art forms, characteristics

INTRODUCTION

The question of African music is one that has generated an enormous interest, especially in the 20th century. This is especially because of the advent of the field of ethnomusicology which originated in Germany with people like Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877-1935) and Carl Stumpf (1841-1936) who are acclaimed as the fathers of the Berlin School of Comparative Musicology (Christensen 1991:201). As comparative musicology evolved into ethnomusicology, a number of researches have been and are still being conducted on African music by various scholars. The scholarly interest in African music had a corollary in the upsurge of popular interest in the performance of African music.

Contributing to the growing interest in African music is its migration to foreign lands. Citizens of African countries of the post-independent era, in an attempt

to escape the harsh economic realities of life in their countries, have sought to find greener pastures in foreign lands. As has always been the case, when people migrate, they migrate with their culture, music inclusive. By this very fact, the wave of African immigration that started from the later part of 20th century onwards brought about a situation in which the new emerging African diaspora in many parts of the world especially Europe and America become flooded with sounds and performances of African music. This is bound to have some implications.

DEFINITION OF AFRICAN MUSIC

To speak about African music is not as simple as it sounds. In fact, one can argue that the very concept of African music is problematic terminologically and linguistically. The English word 'music' does not easily translate into any known African vocabulary. According to Charles Keil, there is no word in any African language that is linguistically identical to the English word 'music':

…a word corresponding to our term "music" could not be found in one African language after another-Tiv, Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, Birom, Hausa, assorted Jarawa dialects, Idoma, Eggon, and a dozen other languages from the Nigeria-Cameroons area do not yield a word for "music" gracefully (Keil 1979:27).

Corroborating Keil's position, Ruth Stone maintains that "it is …difficult to find a word in any West African language that is equivalent to the Western idea of 'music' (Stone 2005:15). Similarly, Omojola, argues that a univocal or absolute concept equivalent to the western notion of music does not exist either in Igbo or Yoruba language (cf. Omojola 1989). The foregoing exposition of the problem inherent in applying the term 'music' to African performance, while not eliminating the need for a definition of African music, serves to prevent an unqualified juxtaposition of European and African music and musical concepts. The term 'African music' is a conceptualization that is certainly useful for understanding the phenomenon of African music/dance performance, but its linguistic value is only relative.

In defining the term 'African music' it is important to remember that African music is not a repertoire that can be easily circumscribed. African music is more of a potentiality than a finite or reducible collection of music (Agawu 2003:xiv). This is especially because of the place of improvisation and transformation in African music. Given that a good deal of African music is not committed to manuscript, and given that "idioms, which are known in the West as 'folk,' 'popular,' 'religious,' and 'art' are closely bound together" (Stone 2005:17) in some parts of Africa, any amount of change can happen to any African musical entity. For example, in composing the *Scenes from Traditional*

Life (1970), Akin Euba translated what is essentially a symphony of sound of African musical instruments into a musical score, to be played on the piano which is an instrument of Western origin.

Nevertheless, in order to do justice to a proper understanding of African music, some definition is still necessary, at least at the provisional level. In my opinion, a definition of 'African music' must involve an understanding of the term in its widest and most inclusive sense, without a recourse to stereotypical notions about what African music should be or sound like (cf. Stone 2008:32). I find such wide understanding of African music in the definition proffered by Agawu. According to him, "African music designates those numerous repertoires of song and instrumental music that originate in specific African communities, are performed regularly as part of play, ritual, and worship and circulate most orally/aurally, within and across language, ethnic, and cultural boundaries" (Agawu 2003:xiv). For the purpose of this proposal, I will adopt Agawu's definition, but only as a practical working definition. I do not intend to project his as the only possible and final definition.

FORMS OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Agawu's definition of African music can be understood at three levels. These three levels give us insight into the three broad forms of African music together with their sub-species. At the first level, the definition embraces African traditional music, that body of music that was part of the African traditional heritage before the occurrence of cultural contact between Africa and the Western world. B. Aning sees traditional African music "as that music which is associated with traditional African institutions of the pre-colonial era. It is the music that has survived the impact of the forces of Western and other forms of acculturation" (Aning 1973:16). In this traditional sense, Agawu's definition would be applicable to African folk music, strictly speaking and this would include, among others, "funeral dirges, children's songs, recreational dances, music marking harvests, healing ceremonies, and court celebrations" (Agawu 2003:xiv). Also to be included in the category of traditional music are occupational music, music for the celebration of life cycles, religious ritual music, music of political institution (Aning 1973:17-19).

The next class of African music that fits into the definition would be the popular musical forms, "forms associated with urban life, such as highlife, jújù, soukouss, makossa, afrobeat, mbaqanga, taarab, and fújì, among others" (Agawu 2003:xiv). These contemporary popular forms, usually seen as "the modern counterpart of the traditional …music," are products of acculturation, filled as they are by "an unusually heavy amount of Western musical

mannerisms, even though the composers may try to give their music an African rhythmic touch" (Aning 1973:22). In other words, they are characterized by cultural commingling of European and African musical values, especially as can be seen from their use of a medley of European and African musical instruments. Thus, in their performance, one finds such a combination like electric or acoustic guitars, trumpets, saxophone as well as other wind instruments, the electronic organ and a jazz percussion set, all mingled with such African instruments like the clapperless bell, the hourglass drum or the atumpan (Aning 1973:22). Their dissemination as artifacts of world music is facilitated by both the international and local music recording industries. Nevertheless, their origin must be traced back to the situation of urban life in many cities of Africa.

A complete picture of African music requires the acknowledgement of what has been described as African art music. According to Aning, African art music can be subdivided into three categories. The first sub-category embraces choral songs written for church choirs by amateur composers with simple rudimentary harmonies. This class also includes cantatas usually meant for secular and private semi-professional choirs. Missa Kwango, coming from the Republic of Zaire and the Dagari Mass of northwestern Ghana are good examples of the first group of African art music (Aning 1973:22). The second sub-category of African art music would include vocal works, produced by African composers with much training in Western music and meant "for solo voice with chiefly Western instrumental accompaniment as well as for all types of choruses - male, female, and mixed" (Aning 1973:23). Composers in this camp, while writing in local languages, seek to inject the African rhythmic character into their music, even as their composition reflect the use of Western classical, romantic, and modern styles of harmony. In the third and final sub-category of African art music are instrumental works written for solo or combinations of western instruments, although there could be addition of some African instruments. This category of African art music makes "use of African melodic themes and some characteristic rhythmic patterns" (Aning 1973:23). African composers of art music include people like Fela Sowande (1905-1987), T.K. Ekundayo Phillips (1884-1969), Ikoli Harcourt-Whyte (1905-1977), Akin Euba (1935-till date), Ayo Bankole (1935-1976), and Joshua Uzoigwe (1946-till date) (Agawu 2003:xiv). Others are Ghanaian composers, like Ephraim Amu, Walter Blege, George Dor (Dor 2005:441).

CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Many scholars have sought to define the features of African music. Often their definition is a result of their observation from the particular place in Africa

where they conducted their research. Thus, it would be difficult to say that any delineation of characteristics of music performance in Africa applies to every single instance of African music performance. Nevertheless, I would mention and briefly comment on four characteristics of African music that seem to recur in the analysis of many authors.

Timbre: African music is generally characterized by its percussive delivery. Both in singing and instrumentation, the percussive tendency is dominant. According to Stone, "many African musicians learn rhythmic patterns through phrases, known as mnemonic devices (memory aids) that convey timbre as well as timing" (Stone 2005:47). Varied timbres can be produced on a drum by way of open, closed and slap strokes (Reed 2003:136). Africans usually want to communicate emotion with their music. Often their music performance has a message to give, for which reason they "pay close attention to the shading of sound and the various colors embedded within a performance" (Stone 2005:47). In order to procure an additional timbre, many African instruments are often furnished with secondary rattles (as in the case of some African drums and lamellophones like the mbira) or gourd resonators covered with spider's egg sac (as obtains in some African xylophones, like the balafon) that give to the instruments a buzzing quality. This is the case with many species of drums. The same buzzing quality is sought from human voice in some specialized music events like masked (i.e. masquerade) performances "to create sounds which are meant to be perceived as deriving from a nonhuman (e.g. spiritual) source" (Lifschitz 2004:1012).

Texture: Regarding the texture of African music, the tendency is towards heterophony, that is, the simultaneous sounding of two or more pitches. This happens when different pitches of the same song are sounded together. When the resultant sound is combined with African musical instruments having different sounds and pitches, then the heterophonic texture of the music becomes amplified. Without mentioning the word heterophony, Hornbostel made a reference "to the simultaneous sounding of more than one pitch by different singers and instrumentalists" as one of the characteristics of African music (Merriam 1959:17).

Rhythm: A most distinguishing character of African music is its rhythm. According to Karolyi (1998:14-15), African musicians see rhythm as "the main organizing force which not only holds together the music they play, but can be the music itself…" He went further to assert that the ability of Africans "to hear music not only in terms of common beats, but also in subdivisions… displays musical sophistication and an instinctive musical logic of a high order." One way of manifesting this sophistication is through the use of polyrhythm. This occurs when a contrasting independence is created between two or more parts sounding simultaneously with contrasting rhythmic patterns

(Karolyi 1998:15). The sounding of two or more rhythms at the same time give rise to what is described as asymmetric rhythm (also known as additive and divisive rhythms) as well as to interlocking of patterns that present a Gestalt image of a single sound production (cf. Stone 2005:97). A polyrhythm may also have the aspect of hemiola whereby there is a successive combination of simple triple and compound duple pattern often occurring in the repetitive form of ostinato (Karolyi 1998:12, 16). A way of manifesting the rhythm in African music is through dancing. Rhythm is at the root of inseparability of music and dancing in many African cultures ((Karolyi 1998:14; Stone 2005:15).

Call-Response: Repetitive call-response is also a well-known feature of African music. Merriam gives a description of the call-response pattern:

In vocal music, it is fairly well agreed that the outstanding formal pattern is the antiphonal call and response in which a leader sings a phrase and is then answered by a phrase sung by the chorus. The leader's phrase is often improvised, while the chorus phrase tends to remain relatively steady, thus providing the identifying phrase of the song (Merriam 1959:16).

Thus, the soloist sings the solo variations while the chorus enters at the end of the solo. The recurrence of the chorus becomes an opportunity for the soloist to create spontaneous variations. This is what improvisation in African music is all about. According to Ruth Stone, call-response can be both non-overlapping and overlapping. Non-overlapping call-response results in a situation "in which the call, once the song gets underway, is very extended – an entire verse" (Stone 2005: 66-67). But in a situation where "some call-response phrases between solo and chorus are constructed so that the soloist has a fixed length and the chorus always responds after an identical interval" then an overlapping of solo and chorus may occur, especially if the response is in the form of ostinato (Stone 2005: 67, cf. 68).

AFRICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Although many Western instruments have become part and parcel of contemporary African music performance, one cannot overlook the reality of musical instruments that are strictly speaking of African origin. In speaking about classification of African musical instrument, it is important to remember that different cultures in Africa have different ways of classifying their musical instruments. In fact, as Kartomi reveals, "…cultures around the world have developed their own formal or informal ways of classifying instruments or ensembles" (Kartomi 1990:3). For example, the Kpelle people of Liberia classify their musical instruments into two categories: "either blown (*fee*) or struck (*yale*)" (Stone 2005:19). Ozah indicates that Igbo people of Nigeria

classify their musical instruments according to whether they are struck (i.e. percussive), blown or plucked (Ozah 2008:121-124). In the Hausa culture, instruments are classified in relation to their players. The players are thus classified in five categories: "'drummers,' 'blowers,' 'singers,' 'acclaimers' and 'talkers'" (Ames and King 1971, 61 quoted in Kartomi 1990:251-252)

For the purpose of this essay, however, it is necessary to invoke the Sachs-Hornbostel classification scheme which, while clearly etic-oriented, nevertheless helps us to get a panoramic view of the array of instruments that are used for African music performance, since it would be difficult to get to state how each culture in Africa classifies its musical instruments. According to the Sachs-Hornbostel taxonomy then, the first group of instruments are aerophone and this refers to "musical instruments that produce sound by using the air tube as the primary element of vibration or as in the case of free aerophone… the air surrounding the instruments" (Kartomi 1990:318). This would include various kinds of flutes and horns used in Africa like the Igbo *oja*, Hausa *kakaki*, South African *vuvuzela*, Ethiopian *washint*, Malagasy *sodina*. Next is the chordophone category whose "sound originates from stretched strings" (Stone 2005:19). The Ghanaian *goje*, Malian *ngoni* and the Senegalese *kora* comes readily to mind here as good examples. But there is also the Igbo *une* and *uboakwara* as well as the Kenya *nyatiti*. Further, African musical instrumentation also includes the membranophones which refer to "musical instruments that produce sounds from tightly stretched membranes" (Kartomi 1990:319). As an example, one would readily remember the *jembe* from northern part of West Africa, the Yoruba *bata* drums, the Ghanaian *atumpan*, and several kinds of drums in use in Africa. Finally, there are also the idiophones. Here, the "sound originates from vibration of the material of an instrument that has not been altered, through stretching, for example" (Stone 2005:19). Examples of idiophones in African music performance are many: clapperless bell (*ogene* in Igbo), Shona *mbira* and similar lamellophones like the Burkinabe *kalimba*, the West African *balafon* or *gyil*, rattles (worn for dance performance or shaken), shekeres, etc.

CONCLUSION

In the above exposé, I have dealt with the question of the definition of African music. It is important to reiterate the need of conceptualizing African music from a holistic rather than from essentialist perspective. Such a holistic approach is precisely in reference to the integral 'folk-popular-art' triangular or triadic vision of African music. A grounded and thorough study of African music can be a very wonderful way of folklorists and ethnomusicologists creating a requisite knowledge database regarding the cultural values that are

inherent in the music of the African continent, especially given that the Black continent often seems to be conveniently disregarded as having nothing to contribute in the making of the civilization of the global village. Nevertheless, the rich cultural heritage of Africans which is rooted in and especially manifest in their solid religiosity and music traditions can perhaps become a humanizing factor in a world that is fast turning into a chaotic and confused mass of relative opinions and values.

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Discourse Stratagies and Discourse Markers in 2019 Presidential Campaign Advertisements

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Abstract

The use of social media to advertise presidential candidates and to get support for them has increased drastically. However, many research efforts have not been done to critically investigate the discourse strategies and the meanings that text composers try to portray with campaign advertisements. This study, therefore, attempts a critical content analysis of discourse strategies and discourse markers used to garner support in the 2019 presidential campaign advertisements. 14 texts were purposively selected from social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter and other online media, like punch.ng.com, sunnews.com, to mention but a few. The chosen texts featured the two major political candidates in the 2019 presidential campaign advertisements: Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The study adopted Vadijk's socio cognitive model and his principles of ideological stances for the analysis of texts in this study. The findings revealed that there was a deliberate choice of certain words by text composers to create certain desired meanings. Other notable discourse strategies used were rhetorical questions, repetition, symbolism and the use of emotional appeal. The study also found out that discourse markers were ideologically used to show contrast, consequence and time that an action took place. The study concludes that semantic stratagems were used to show polarity between the out group and the in group.

Keywords: discourse strategies, discourse markers, advertisements, ideology

Introduction

Presidential campaign advertisements are done to garner votes for a preferred candidate but this purpose cannot be achieved if the message is not conveyed properly; the message should be conveyed in a manner that enables the reader get the understanding of what the message is. This is why Emodi (2011) says that the choice of diction in an advertisement to create the right meaning

involves exceptional skills. The 2019 presidential campaign advertisements combined written texts and visuals to create meaningful texts. The visuals were also carefully chosen to create a discourse that engages the reader to get a desired meaning.

Asemah and Edogoh (2012) defined advertising as any communication that is paid for, directed at a target audience, through the various mass media like radio, television, newspaper, magazine, motion pictures and the internet. The aim is to create awareness about goods and services and also to sell a candidate. That is, to make the candidates known to the electorate. Crystal and Davy (1983) in Keiko (1994) state that there are two main functions of advertising, namely, informing and persuading. According to Mello (2020), a political advertisement is any paid mass communication or advertisement that has the goal of influencing voters directly or indirectly. Mello added that for a political advertisement to be effective, it has to be convincing to get people to vote or not vote for a candidate.

Nott (2020) avers that political ads on social media have several unique qualities that distinguish it from the media that came before it. The first noticeable advantage is that there is no limit on how social media platforms exist. For example Facebook and its subsidiaries (Whatsapp and Instagram), Google, YouTube and Twitter are not like the newspaper and television stations. Social media platforms are not conventional publishers; rather, they are internet service providers, and so they are not liable to what other people post on them. They cannot be sued for allowing false political ads. This is in line with the view expressed by Halpern (2019) that the problem of political advertising on social media is that, in spite of the high cost of money spent on social media advertising, one cannot ascertain that they are true and the service providers do not care what the content is. For example, the Trump team falsely accused Biden on Facebook of offering Ukrainian officials a billion dollars to drop a case against his son, Hunter. The ads were seen by over four million people and a second video was edited to make it seem like Biden openly confessed to the scheme. Nott (2020) asserts that this is a very bad situation that any politician can find him or herself in because most times before a new advertisement is released to counter or repair the damages done by the false political advertisement, the damages would have become fatal.

Discourse markers are words or phrases used to show the relationship between texts. It is sometimes called linking words because it binds a piece of writing together. It makes a text logically constructed. Camarero (2012) opined that discourse markers link textual fragments, facilitating the transition between them and ensuring that the texts become cohesive. He further added that discourse markers have the ability to connect elements like sentences or a group of sentences inside a paragraph and they can even introduce a linguistic

element which connects with an extra-linguistic event. Discourse markers include words such as the following: because, consequently, but, when, also, however, then, to mention but a few.

Methods and Theory

This study is basically a qualitative research. It is a critical content analysis of the meaning of language and visuals used in the 2019 Nigerian presidential campaign advertisements and the functions of discourse markers utilized in those advertisements. The texts were purposively selected from social media platforms, with the largest selection taken from WhatsApp. Other platforms from where selections were made include Facebook, Twitter and online media outlets like punch.com, tribuneng.com, among others. The texts reflect presidential campaign advertisements of the two major political parties and their presidential candidates. The two major parties were the ruling APC (All Progressives Congress) and the major opposition party PDP (Peoples Democratic Party). The candidates were Muhammadu Buhari of APC and Atiku Abubakar of PDP. 12 texts were purposively selected which were products of the text creators from the parties, party supporters or cartoonists. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model and his principle of ideoligical stances (2012) were adopted for this study.

Van Dijk (2000) espoused his four principles regarding the use of subtle ideological analysis to express various ideological stances. They are summarised below:

1. Emphasise positive things about us. This when all the things that will make 'US' look good are said, and images that portray 'US' in good light are used in text creation.

2. Emphasise negative things about them. Here all the texts are written in the negative about 'THEM' and images that portray 'THEM' are all negative.

3. De-emphasise negative things about us. This is when any written text that will make 'US' look bad is avoided and all negative images are also avoided.

4. De-emphasise positive things about them. This is when there is a deliberate avoidance of written texts and images that will recognize positive things about 'THEM'. Even when they have done what is praise worthy, it is not mentioned.

These four moves, according to Ramanathan and Hoon (2015), play a vital role in broader contextual strategy of positive self presentation and negative other presentation. Self presentation, they argued further, presents the individual's action as a member of the group while firmly expressing various ideological notions. Positive self-representation emphasises the individual's positive behaviour by saying positive things about 'US' and saying negative things

about 'THEM'. This positive stance is an abstract characteristic of group conflicts as the interaction pattern opposes the other group. They explained further that the negative other representation depicts that no negative saying shall be directed to 'US' and no positive saying should be directed to 'THEM'. In other words, the pronoun 'US' always refers to positive sayings and beliefs in a social context while the pronoun 'THEM' refers to negativity, condemnation and other negative stances about the other group.

Data Analysis

The Use of Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are questions asked to make a point and not to get an answer. Its purpose is to make an effect. They were used in the 2019 presidential campaign advertisements to make effects on the reader. Some examples are shared below:

A

The rhetorical question in text A is 'Next 4 year with a president who is not aware?'This text is not meant to be answered but to create an effect on the reader who is likely going to be voting whether they are ready to have this clueless president for the next four years.

B
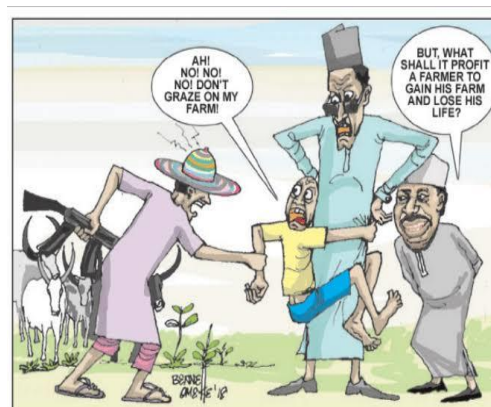
The rhetorical question in text B is; 'What shall it profit a farmer to gain his farm and lose his life?' This question is very pregnant with a lot of meanings. This is because the question is coming from a close ally of Buhari. The effect it creates on the reader is that the government is indirectly tolerating the nefarious activities of the herdsmen. The presentation of visuals and written texts portray the president and the man behind him as members of the out group.

The Use of Emotional Appeal

Another semantic stratagem used in the 2019 presidential campaign advertisements is emotional appeal. An emotional appeal is the use of words in such a way that it sways the emotion of the readers of a text. Emotion could be used as the basis of an argument without factual evidence; writers may appeal to the emotion of the reader by using ethos, pathos and logos in their writing.

Ethos has to do with citing authority to claim that a text is credible. If it is true, then it can appeal to people's emotions. Pathos is the use of language and images in such a way that they appeal to people's emotion. Logos is the use of logic and reasoning to appeal to people's emotion. Here are some examples:

Text D

This picture is a good example of the use of pathos to appeal to the emotion of reader. Buhari became very popular before the 2015 presidential elections because there was a lot of hype about his incorruptibility. This text is coming before the 2019 presidential election; the text composer has created a picture that this man is not actually what people think he is and that this is what he does as represented in the picture. The EFFC (The Economic Financial Crimes Commission) is actually a lap dog that only barks at those it is commanded to bark at. Criminals can get away with their loot if they join the president's party, the APC, which is represented by the broom (the party's symbol).

Text E
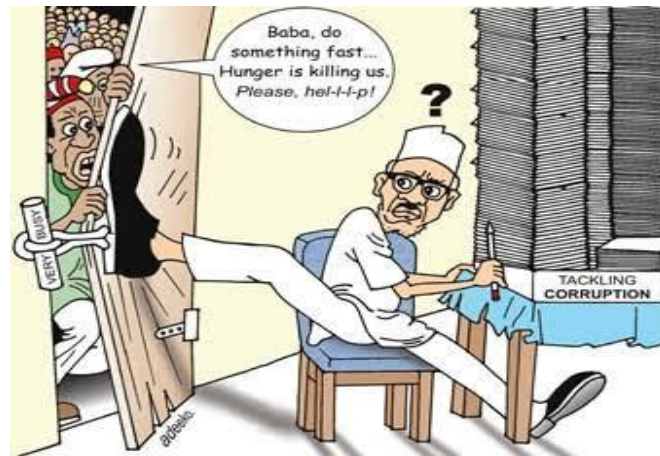
Text E, like text D, is on the theme of corruption. Buhari's government claimed it would fight corruption during the campaigns, a claim that gave them a lot of support at the beginning of his first term. But later on, the president seemed to be too busy with files to care about basic policies that will improve the economy and give people food. This text has the ability to appeal to the emotion of the reader and create the impression that Buhari is insensitive to the plight of the reader or the masses.

Text F

Another interesting text is F, the words and visuals in this text appeal to the emotion of the reader. It is a good example of pathos. The visual shows Buhari and his vice president Osibanjo laughing heartily and the purpose of their laughter is that they have deceived the youths about giving them N5000 monthly during the 2015 presidential election campaigns. The text has the ability to evoke anger from the reader.

Text G
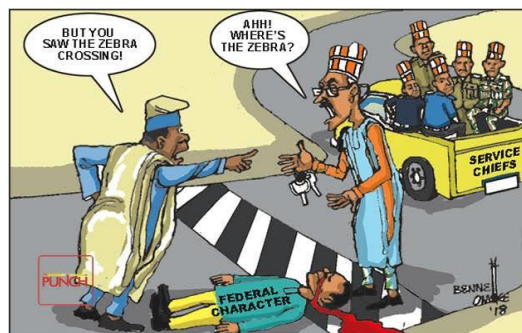
Text G appeals to the emotion of the reader by presenting president Buhari as a man who does not play by the rules. The text creator has used pathos which is the use of visual and language to evoke the emotion of neglect in the reader who does not share the same ethnicity with Buhari. The Federal Character is enshrined in the Nigerian constitution since 1979. It states that appointments into Federal Service, admissions into Federal Schools must fairly recognize the ethnic, religious and geographical diversity of Nigeria, but Buhari concentrated on choosing his service chiefs from the same ethnic group, region and religion, hence killing Federal Character. This stratagem is very effective, if many feel left out, they might not vote for Buhari for a second term in office. It is interesting to note, especially from his outfit (the cap and *agbada*) that the complainant is most likely a Yoruba man from south west Nigeria; Buhari and all the service chiefs are wearing the same cap which represents their being from the north, and their sharing similar religious and ethnic background. Buhari feigned ignorance of the zebra crossing after killing the man symbolizing Federal Character.

**Text B**
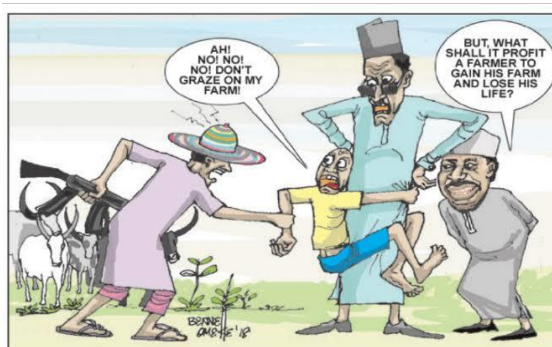
The herders'/farmers' clash escalated shortly after the election of Muhammadu Buhari into office in 2015 and many Nigerians have claimed that government is tolerating the activities of the herders. The text has been able to provoke the emotion of neglect on the part of the farmers who are constantly threatened by the armed herders and the emotion of empathy from other Nigerians who are

not in their shoes but also fear that this may soon come near them too. The body language of the president is very important; his hands are at akimbo, not making any attempt to help the farmer. The response of the man behind him, 'What does it profit a farmer to gain his farm and lose his life?' further reveal that the herders are being aided.

The Use of Repetition

The use of repetition is another semantic stratagem used in some of the 2019 presidential campaign advertisements. Repetition is a literary device that repeats a word or phrase. It helps to stress or highlight important points. A number of them are used in the chosen texts.

Text H
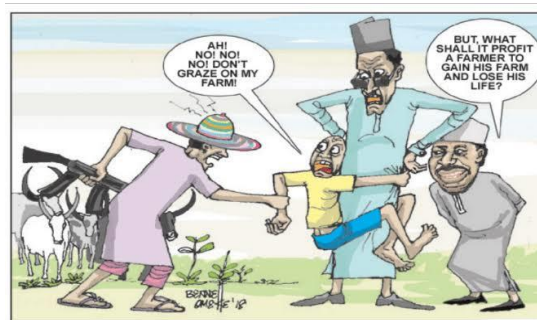
In this text, the word, 'NO! 'NO! NO!' is repeated three times with an exclamation mark. This relates the meaning of desperation on the part of the farmer. He does not want the cattle to graze on his farm but he is helpless because the herdsman is armed while he is not. This text portrays the plight of many farmers. It is their livelihood, their investment of several months that is often destroyed within hours.

Text I
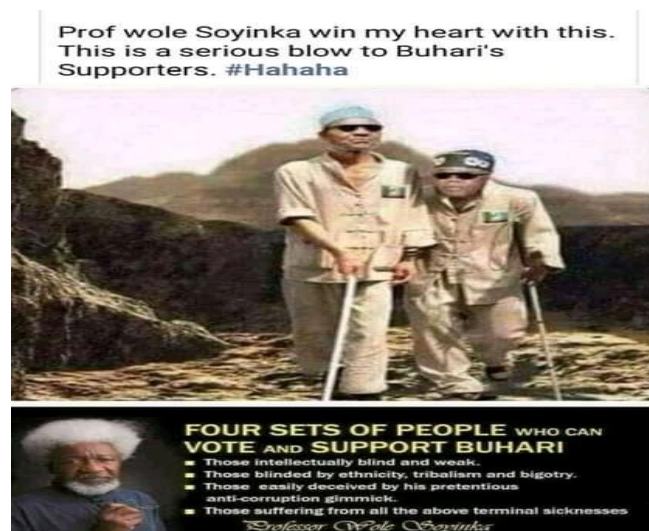
In this text, the pronoun 'Those' is repeated four times. It lays emphasis on the group of people who can vote for Buhari's second term bid. The repetition is used to categorize these four sets of people in the negative. The reader unknowingly tries to see if he belongs to any of the categories.

Text J

This text repeated Buhari three times. The purpose is to draw attention to the personality of the president as a trust worthy man that is being ganged up against because he 'failed to steal' and 'refused to let them loot the treasury'. Buhari is the hero in this text; this is the meaning that the text creator tries to portray: that 'Buhari must succeed' by being voted for.

Discourse Markers in the Selected Data

Text A

The discourse marker in text A is 'While'. This word makes the whole written text in text A logical. It tells us when the corruption that the text composer alleges that Atiku Abubkar was guilty of happened. In connects the subordinate clause 'they were in power'. It is ideologically used because it tells us that this corruption happened the last time Atiku was given the opportunity to be a vice president. It implies that he should not be given the opportunity to steal again.

Text B

The discourse marker in text B is 'But'. The use of but here serves as a contrastive element between the agitations of the farmer who is concerned about the destruction of his farm and the comment of the man behind the president who thinks that his land is not as important as his life.

Text C

The discourse marker in text C is 'But'. It functions as contrastive maker in this context. It sheds more light on the initial statement, 'I don't know'. The speaker is of the opinion that restructuring might be the slogan that would replace 'Change'. It presents the politicians as people who do not mean what they say to the electorates.

Text D

Text D has a discourse marker which is; 'As a result of'. This discourse marker shows us the consequence of Buhari's actions of refusing to steal and loot the treasury. The consequence is that 'They' are broke and want to retire Buhari. The text composer is saying that the reason why Buhari is being opposed is that he is incorrupt.

Text E

The discourse marker in text E is, 'When'. This discourse marker connects the clause, 'The cow was grazing peacefully…' with the subordinate clause, 'Two hungry looking fanatics pounced on it and slaughtered it'. It makes the whole statement more cohesive. It is ideologically presented because the cows seem so important to the president that he is being briefed about their welfare.

Text F

Text F begins with a discourse marker; 'And'. This marker indicates continuity of a discourse that is not stated in the text above but the statement continues an idea that others were not spared but the speaker and his partner were spared because Buhari saw the broom. This paints the president's anti-corruption fight

as biased.

Text G

The discourse marker here is, 'Then'. The marker in this context was used to start a response to the little boy's ambition to become a president. It shows continuity in discourse in relation to the boy's statement. It functions as a marker of consequence. The consequence of wanting to become a president according to the mother is to read hard and earn a good certificate.

Conclusion and Findings

The meaning that readers get from campaign advertisements is highly dependent on the choice of the right words to establish the original meaning behind textual composition and the ability to make the structure cohesive by using the right discourse markers. The study set out to look at the discourse strategies and ideological discourse markers used in the 2019 presidential campaign advertisements. The study found out that presidential campaign advertisements were used to communicate messages to the electorates during the 2019 presidential campaign. The study showed that rhetorical questions were used to create effect of doubt about the candidates, and to show lack of commitment on the part of the government. For instance, 'Next 4 years with a president who is not aware?', 'What shall it profit a farmer to gain his farm and lose his life?' are excerpts from the texts analysed. Emotional appeal is another semantic stratagem used to garner votes in the campaign advertisements that were analysed. Emotions like anger, fear, neglect and empathy were portrayed using emotional appeal. Symbolism was also an effective tool used to create discourse and meanings like APC is a disunited party, Buhari's corruption fight is insincere, Buhari's administration encouraged nepotism and tribalism, and that Buhari has improved Nigeria in his first term in office. Repetition is another semantic stratagem used to draw the attention of the reader to certain effects in the texts used. Examples are 'Buhari', 'Mr President was not aware', 'No!' The instances tried to portray Buhari as a patriotic Nigerian, and desperation and fear was communicated using, 'No!' The study also showed that discourse markers were used not just for linking purposes but to show

ideology. For example, the use of 'while' is ideological because it does not just connect the clauses, it lays emphasis on the time or period that Atiku Abubakar allegedly squandered 5 million dollars. This is to make the electorates or readers reconsider their support for Atiku Abubakar. Other discourse markers used are 'and', 'but', 'then' and 'as a result'.

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Interrogating the Relationship between WhatsApp Political Use and Active Political Participation among Nigerians: Implication for Online Democracy

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Abstract

Massive use of social media by the citizens has led to a shift from conventional political rally for political mobilization and marketing of candidates to online political advertising. While the masses engage in political discussion online, some politicians take social media discussions of politics for granted claiming that there are no polling units online. The general objective of this study is to examine the relationship between WhatsApp use for political discussion and active participation in real time among residents of Awka metropolis. Specifically, the study examined how often WhatsApp is used for political information; the degree of political education gained by the respondents; the extent to which the use of WhatsApp encouraged physical political participation, and whether the rate of use of WhatsApp for political purposes corresponds to the rate of participation in real life by the respondents. The study used the survey research method in studying 379 WhatsApp users in Awka Metropolis sampled using purposive sampling technique. The study found expression from the theoretical provision of the reasoned action theory of the media. Findings revealed that WhatsApp use for political discussion does not only increase political awareness and knowledge but also heavily encourages real-time political participation among the respondents. It was concluded that WhatsApp use has been a viable means of political mobilization and participation in Nigeria. The study among others recommended that politicians and political parties that want to survive politically should take social media criticisms very seriously or get ready to be voted out in elections.

Keywords: WhatsApp political use, interrogation, relationship, active political participation, implication, online democracy.

Introduction

The rate at which the masses gain access to the internet in recent time has given a wide range of opportunity for them to get exposed to the new media and its advantages as an alternative to the mainstream media means of

gathering information. The normal human activities that have characterized the pre-internet era had drastically been influenced by the advent of the internet. Generally, the internet had changed the life that men live and the mode of doing everything in the world, including politics (Abheeshai, 2022). Among the internet-enabled networking sites that have touched as well as changed the lives of the people in the world is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is one of the most vibrant social media networking sites in the world that have taken over the political space of different countries of the world.

Since its birth in 2009, WhatsApp has gained customers and subscribers around the world following its ease of use. Having penetrated the people and effecting the observed transformation in their lifestyles, social media became a veritable tool of information dissemination and persuasion. The kind of presence it creates is such that it gives one an opportunity to feel free to disseminate any kind of persuasive content to target audience. Its existence encouraged all time communication and dismissed all kinds of barriers of either distance or language. This is because social media allow all users to use their dialects either through written message or voice notes. This was captured more clearly in Abheeshai (2022) who argued that the popularity and the rise of WhatsApp is because of its ability to grant users the freedom to express themselves freely to an audience.

Naturally, people love to express themselves and share their opinions on matters of national and communal concerns. Significantly, the evolution of WhatsApp had served a retinue of purposes such as promotion of businesses by enhancing social listening, connecting buyers and sellers of different products, encouraging education, entertainment and even banking. Nigeria has reasonable active internet users of WhatsApp (Statista, 2023). This means that reasonable communication is taking place in the WhatsApp media space about political activities in the country which is capable of enhancing political awareness and consciousness among the people. While citing Castells (2012), Uwalaka (2021) argued that earlier studies have demonstrated the significant impact of social media in fostering political participation in emerging democracies. The impact of social media use also has been documented to have the strength to encourage demand for social change in autocratic regimes as can be seen in the #EndSars (Abosade, 2020; Adekoya, 2021) and the Black Lives Matter protests in US (Amnesty International, 2020).

Generally, these political participations most times emanate from social unrest in the society. Research evidence has shown that there has been an increase in collective and connective actions across the globe. Importantly, these collective actions as can be seen in the 2011 Arab Spring, the 15 Million men march in Spain, and the 2012 Occupy Nigeria social unrests were made possible as a result of accessibility of digital media platforms (Ashiekpe & Mojaye, 2017).

These platforms encourage these collective actions through its ability to disseminate mobilizing information, propagating enthusiasm and enabling emotional contamination which makes the people eager to participate in the physical action (Ufuophu-Biri & Ojoboh, 2017; Uwalaka, 2017; Uwalaka, 2019; Uwalaka, 2020).

As an instrument of massive mobilization for social action, at the wake of the 2023 general elections, the WhatsApp social media was heavily engaged by both politicians, political parties and the citizens to mobilize for different activities involving the electoral process ranging from the continuous voter registration to the voting at the polling stations as people and political parties disseminated different political slogans and messages aimed at mobilizing and encouraging the people to participate in the process. Even the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) subscribed to the use of the digital platforms to persuade the citizens to participate in the process. The continuous voter registration was also digitalized to accommodate many voters and reduce the crowd at the registration centers. With all these and the degree of commitment and assurances by INEC that the elections were going to be the best in terms of credibility and fairness, the internet and all social media platforms were awash with discussions on political developments, especially concerning the Bimodal Verification and Accreditation System (BVAS) and the IRev which were seen as the game changers of the 2023 elections.

The use of social media in communicating issues on the election got the youths so involved in the election that awareness was high among them. It reawakened the political consciousness of the youths leading to observed desires among them to participate and change the narrative, considering the fact that they are the ones bearing the brunt of bad leadership in the country. Importantly, it was the youth that face all socio-economic challenges ranging from unemployment, poor infrastructure, lack of health facilities, insecurity, to poverty. The National Bureau of Statistics reports that Nigeria's unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2023 moved from 33.5 per cent to 41 per cent in 2023 (Onuba, 2019; Proshare.com, 2020). Relying on the degree of social media use and involvement of the youth in the online discourse of the election and its process, one may not be wrong to conclude that there would be massive turn out at the polling stations for the voting proper. The burning desire among the youth to express their dissatisfaction with the leadership of the country is not new. According to Obisesan (2019), Nigerian youth have often shown interest in turning around the peculiar challenges which are holding back the country and mortgaging their economic fortune.

Since the origin of WhatsApp social media and its use in political activities, researchers have paid attention to the influence of WhatsApp in electoral processes. However, despite an abundance of research investigating social

media effects on political participation, little or insufficient attention has been paid specifically to WhatsApp use in political mobilization and physical participation in electoral processes in Nigeria. Limited enquiry has evaluated the relationship between WhatsApp political use and active political participation among Nigerians. Against this background, whether these burning desires and involvement expressed in the social media translate to physical participation is a great question that this study is set to answer.

Statement of the Problem

Public use of social media platforms of different kinds has forced many political parties and their candidates into the creation of different social media accounts to reach out to the electorates. The reason for this is that social media control the main sources of information dissemination among the voting population in Nigeria. The advent of the social media gave the masses the needed opportunity to participate in the discussion of issues influencing their lives as a people in a society. Through these media, the citizens see and get exposed to what is happening in the political space and decide to take a stand on how best to save themselves from different kinds of political misfortunes. If WhatsApp social media platform has exposed the people to dangers of political apathy and the likely political behaviour to change the narrative, it becomes important to investigate how the masses utilized the opportunity provided by this medium to effect the needed correction in the political leadership space. Considering the fact that keeping silent in the midst of oppression is a demand for more oppression, this study answers the question: what has changed after being aware through WhatsApp that the polity needs reformation through active participation of the masses? It was in line with the above question that this study investigated whether heavy WhatsApp use for political discussion of political activities encourages physical participation in politics with special reference to the 2023 general elections.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To ascertain how often WhatsApp is used for political information seeking among the respondents.

- To find out the degree of political education gained by the respondents through WhatsApp use.

- To ascertain the extent to which the use of WhatsApp for political discussion encourage physical political participation in real time politics by the respondents.

- To examine whether there is a significant relationship between respondents' rate of use of WhatsApp for political purposes and the political participation in real life by the respondents.

Significance of the Study

This study is very important to the society, the electoral system and the political parties. To the society, the study will expose what the people do with the political information they gain from their WhatsApp use for political purposes. This will help political parties and the policy makers engage the audience in future outing for positive political participation. With the understanding of what the audience do with political education disseminated on WhatsApp, the political parties will design communication strategy that can encourage social listening with their audience in order to know what they need and proffer solution on how to provide them. This will certainly help in initiating good governance to the people. Apathy will as well dwindle if good governance gets initiated into the Nigerian political space. Moreover, this study will form a source of literature for future studies on the use of social media for political campaigns and participation in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Reasoned Action

Propounded by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975, the Theory of Reasoned Action which is usually classified as the Theory of Planned Behavior, is a theory that is designed to help make sense of human behavior in specific contexts, such as whether or not people will take up healthy habits (LaCaille, 2020). As a cognitive theory and mathematical model, the theory allows scientists to predict behavioural intentions as a function of attitudes and subjective norms (Nickerson, 2022).

The theory is based on a tripod of audience beliefs, attitudes and intentions. In this context, the individual's belief explains the chances that the individual thinks that a certain action will generate a favourable outcome. For instance, '*if participating in real time politics is a means of being a governor tomorrow, one may end up participating in order to get the chance to rule one day*; a WhatsApp user thinking this way can join political activities because he is certain that a reward awaits such an action. On the other hand, the attitudes towards an action are where the individual examines what action to be taken while paying attention to whether or not the individual thinks that the expected outcome (to desire to get a better political office) is favourable or unfavourable (being a victim of political violence). The attitude is what helps the individual to positively and/or negatively evaluate an action which he or she intended to take. Any user that thinks that joining will lead to desirable outcomes will have

a positive attitude towards putting all his efforts in it.

Meanwhile, someone who thinks that following *politicians* will lead to being victimized on the day of election will shun real life political participation after weighing the cost and benefit. This will amount to negative attitude towards offline participation. At the component of intention, the individual examines the best way to take the action in response to beliefs and attitudes. Significantly, the theory equally relates to the possible expectations of other people around the actor. Drawing from the above explications, the proponents of this theory are of the view that any action taken by an adult is well thought of and well calculated. It is the views of the proponents of this theory that actions are taken after the actor had concluded the examination of what he wanted to do and what he stands to gain. Being a matter of interest, political participation is mainly motivated by the expected interest subject to outcome. The theory posits that any action is voluntary and not forced. Applying the theory to this study, to participate or not participate in political activities offline is seen as a reasoned action which is considered by the WhatsApp users and concluded to be of positive interest and at the same time acceptable to those who matter to them.

The Review

WhatsApp Use for Political Discussions and Political Participation

Despite the serendipity surrounding these inventions, instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp have become a popular medium for political mobilization and activism in Africa (Omanga, 2019; Colom, 2022) and elsewhere (Treré, 2018; Pang & Woo, 2020; Velasquez *et al.,* 2021; Gil de Zúñiga, *et al.,* 2021), especially when they act as tools that enable common people to create online communities. The instant messaging app, WhatsApp, given its "more intimate and controlled environment" (Gil de Zúñiga*et al.,* 2021, p. 201), is particularly popular in Africa which is characterized by several inhibitions related to political participation including media censorship, citizen surveillance, and intrusion of privacy, among others. As such, it provides the much-needed safe environment for political participation often characterized by minority and unpopular views against the establishment, even though some studies report the contrary. While citing Brady (1999, p. 737), Knoll & Matthes (2018) defined political participation as any behavior by the citizens aimed at influencing some political outcomes. Among Nigerian population, WhatsApp is a highly utilized social media networking site where political activities are discussed and its effects are largely dependent on how people make use of it. Findings on motivation and user behavior demonstrate that demographics and predispositions largely determine how people use social media and that people may either avoid or actively seek political information

(Tang & Lee, 2013; Baek, 2015). In this same manner, people are most likely to decide to abscond from real time participation after taking active online participation for a period of time.

Importantly, the basis of the current study is that exposure to online political content may not actually encourage citizens into engaging in political participation in real life. Earlier study by Nekmat, Gower & Zhou (2015); Kim & Khang (2014) have revealed that there is significant relationship between WhatsApp use and political participation. Overall, studies measuring political use of social media constantly found positive political participation effects (Ekström, Gil de Zúñiga Olsson & Shehata, 2014). However, studies investigating the effects of general social media use produced inconsistent results (XenosVromen & Loader, 2014). Furthermore, in contrast to intentional exposure, even relatively uninterested users may get incidentally exposed to political information.

Specifically, the 'rise of social media has arguably further contributed to the phenomenon of accidental or unintentional exposure to public affairs content because such contents are often "pushed" to people by their acquaintances' (Tang & Lee, 2013, p. 2). Accordingly, research frequently looked at contextual factors increasing the chance of such incidental exposure. Tang and Lee (2013) suggested that direct connections to political actors increase exposure to shared political information and at the same time increase political participation. They identified network heterogeneity as a predictor of political participation. This is due to the fact that people embedded in a more diversified social network are usually exposed to a wider range of viewpoints and, thus, more likely to feel addressed. Similarly, sheer network size was assumed to increase the probability of being exposed to opportunities for political participation (e.g. Gil de Zúñiga *et al.,* 2012; Theocharis & Quintelier, 2016).

The lion's share of research distinguished between online and off-line political participation (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Bode, 2012; Kim & Khang, 2014; Towner, 2013). Online political participation usually refers to activities such as signing an online petition or sending a message to a public office holder. Off-line political participation refers to more traditional forms of Political Participation, such as voting or working in a party organization. Some scholars argued that there is a qualitative difference between these participative activities which are not accounted for by the simple online versus offline distinction. Specifically, certain online activities encourage the so-called 'slacktivism', characterized by inefficacious 'feel-good' forms of political participation that should be distinguished from more effective and effortful kinds of political participation (Vitak *et al.,* 2011). Against this background, it is believed that it makes sense to describe participatory activities in terms of the effort needed to accomplish them (for a similar approach, see Bakker & de

Vreese, 2011). As a result, various kinds of PP can be predicted from user motivation since motivation is seen as an antecedent of effort (Naylor *et al.,* 1980, cited in Knoll, Matthes & Heiss, 2018). This distinction is crucial because political participation, as a behavior, is clearly driven by goals (Kruglanski Jasko & Chernikova, 2015). The implementation of goals depends on the amount of necessary effort. This effort is crucial for the question of whether someone acts or not, rather than the distinction between online and off-line.

It is important to note that most studies investigating the relationship of social media use and political participation employed cross-sectional research designs. Clearly, such designs provide only a snapshot in time and do not account for long-term effects. The few existing panel studies indicated that general social media use does not or weakly trigger political participation in the long run (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2016). This finding is being tested in the current study for either confirmation or dismissal. These studies challenge the view that social media have capability in facilitating social ties, providing space for personal expression, and encouraging social interaction which is sufficient to exert long lasting influence on political participation. Whether this is true is a function of the outcome of this study.

Empirical Review

Through the application of focus group discussion method, Ooko (2023) examined the contribution of WhatsApp social media to political participation considering the fact that there has been heavy media censorship and citizen surveillance in Kenya. The mainstay of this study was the freedom that WhatsApp has given to the citizens to express themselves in their political environment. Relying on the provision of the Actor–Network Theory of social media, the study concludes that although both human and non-human actors strive to construct a safe community for political participation on WhatsApp, modes of exclusion and inclusion arise from the socio-technological interaction which could pose a threat to the newly founded "safe space". It was recommended that more efforts should be made to free other social media from threats and surveillance of the government to encourage safer media space that can encourage political participation among the population. This study is related to the current one in the sense that they are particular about WhatsApp and political participation. On the other hand, they are different. While the previous study is relying on the freedom of expression granted by WhatsApp away from the threat and surveillance that other social media platforms like twitter and Facebook users face, this current one is interested in how the use of WhatsApp has encouraged real time participation of the people in the political activities in Nigeria's 2023 election.

In another study, Obisesan (2022) examined the roles of social media on youth's political participation in the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria. In this study, attention was on the roles played by social media in the emancipation of the youth as well as the double-edged implications that the use of social media may have on the democratic processes. The study relied on both in-depth interview of social media influencers and textual analysis of social media accounts of prominent politicians. Premised on the uses and gratifications theory of media effect, the study found that social media played a vital role in the 2019 General Election in Nigeria. The study concluded that social media contributed to citizens' power through debates and narratives which were instrumental in agenda-setting for the ruling class and citizens' democratic expectations. Again, this study is connected to the current one in the area of its base. However, the previous study is looking at social media generally while the current study is interested in the WhatsApp networking site. It also pays attention to the influence of its use for political activities on the respondents' political participation in Nigeria, especially in 2023 general elections.

Similarly, Fleur (2022) investigated the influence of using the internet on whether citizens participate in politics. The main objective is to investigate the role that the internet plays in predicting different and separate forms of political participation, like voting behaviour or signing petitions. The study adopted the logistic regression and ordinary linear regression analysis in studying the extent to which citizens participate in politics as a result of their internet use among 41,041 respondents from 24 European countries. The study found that Internet use among the individuals positively influence political participation. It was concluded that the internet has significant influence on the respondents' political participation in the areas of the study. This study is related to the current one being a study premised on the political participation as a dependent variable. However, they differ in area of target and objective. While the previous one is on the internet use generally, this current one is on WhatsApp use particularly. Again, as the previous study was conducted in Europe, the current one is looking at the influence of WhatsApp political use on political participation among Nigerian audience.

In another closely related study, Abheeshai (2022) investigated the relationship of social media use and political participation among Indian natives. The study which was conducted using the survey research method explored different social media used by the respondents in different spheres of life, including politics. Relying on the technological determinism theory of the media, the study found that heavy social media use has significant relationship and positively affects both political efficacy and real-life political participation. This study is related to the current study because it also examined the dependent variable in the study which is political participation. However, it

could be pointed out that while the previous study is looking at all the social media platforms and their use among Indian natives, this current study is interested in understanding the influence of use of only WhatsApp social media platform on the real time participation of the people in the political activities of Nigeria.

Gil de Zúñiga, Ardèvol-Abreu & Casero-Ripollés (2021) examined the mediating role of WhatsApp political discussion in the relationships between different types of news use and various forms of political participation. The study which used the survey research method found that WhatsApp discussion has a positive influence on political activism, and a more significant effect on conventional participation. While this study is on the role of WhatsApp, the current one is interested in whether its use for political activities in Nigeria encourages real time participation in politics among the respondents.

Methodology

This study adopted the Survey research method. The population according to 2006 census figure is 363,764. The implication of this is that the sample was drawn from the above population. To get the up-to-date population of this area, the researcher used the projected population index thus: Therefore, to work out the new projected population figure the following formula was used thus: PP = GP x Pi x T+GP

Where: PP = Projected Population

GP = Given Population (363,764)

PI = Population Increase Index 2.28%

T = Period between the given population and year of study (2023-2006=17).

Therefore PP = 363,764x 0.023 x17=142,231.724 +363,764=502,996

The sample size of this study was determined using Rakesh (2013) sample size determination formula

$$SS = \frac{PS}{[1+(PS \times PE^2)]}$$

Where SS = sample size
PS = population size =502,996
PE =precision error =0.05

$$SS = \frac{502,996}{[1+(502996 \times 0.05^2)]}$$

$$SS = \frac{502996}{[1+502996 \times 0.0025)}$$

$$SS = \frac{502996}{[1+(1257.49)]}$$

$$SS = \frac{502996}{1258.49}$$

$$SS = 400$$

The purposive sampling technique was used to select residents who use WhatsApp social media and participated in political discourse in the platforms during the election. The instrument used in collecting data for this study is the questionnaire.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed among the respondents, 379 were returned and found valid for the study.

Thematic data

Table 1: How often WhatsApp is used for political information seeking among the respondents

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	178	46.9
Often	102	26.9
Not often	67	17.6
Sparingly	32	8.6
Very sparingly	0	0
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

Data in the table above demonstrated that WhatsApp is an instrument of political mobilization and education. The number of responses to each response category shows that the channel has been veritably used in the discussion of political activities in the country by the citizens. The implication of the data is that the respondents mainly use WhatsApp to discuss political issues and that widens their political exposure and knowledge of the political state of things in the country.

Table: 2: The degree of political education gained by the respondents through WhatsApp use

Response degree of political education on WhatsApp	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	172	45.5
High	126	33.2
Moderate	68	17.9
Low	13	3.4
Very low	0	0
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

The above data demonstrate the gravity of the use of WhatsApp social media among Nigerian citizens. This is also a demonstration of the fact that the social media are instruments of political education and awareness creation among the users. The implication of this is that constant use of WhatsApp in discussing political issues increases the rate of political education among the respondents.

Table 3: The extent to which the use of WhatsApp for political discussion encourage physical political participation in real time politics by the respondents

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
To a very great extent	130	34.3
To a great extent	158	41.7
To no extent at all	0	0
To a minimal extent	12	3.2
To a very minimal extent	79	20.8
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

Generally, this table suggests that WhatsApp use for political activities and engagement stimulates physical participation of the users in real time politics. The response category of *"To no extent at all"* receiving no response from any of the respondents is an indication that WhatsApp has an impact on real time participation following the education and political enlightenment it presents to the users.

Table 4: Whether the rate of use of WhatsApp for political purposes correspond to the rate of participation in real life by the respondents.

Variables	SA	A	UN	DA	SD	Total	X
WhatsApp use for political discussion encourage participation in real life politics	106	109	110	38	16		
	530	456	330	76	16	1408	3.7
Many WhatsApp users have no voters card	102	55	46	38	138		
	510	220	138	76	138	1082	2.8
Many online users are afraid of real politics	72	64	80	75	88		
	360	256	240	150	88	1094	2.8
Being online is different from voting	78	89	77	68	67	1180	3.1
	390	356	231	136	67		
Those who stay online also go to the poll	103	76	70	52	78		
	515	304	210	104	78	1211	3.1

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

The information in the above table is very significant on the likely relationship between WhatsApp use and political participation in real life. It shows that the use of WhatsApp for political discussion positively influence people's sense of reasoning and motivates political participation among the respondents.

Discussion of Findings

While investigating how often the respondents discuss political issues through

WhatsApp platforms, the researchers found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents discuss political issues on WhatsApp very often. The massive exposure of the people to WhatsApp in the dissemination of political information as found in this study supports the position of the democratic participant theory which sets the ground that decentralization and democratization of the press is to allow for easy access and popular participation among the citizens (Nwabueze, 2014, p. 52). Apart from the universality of the new media and its enabling technologies, this finding is a confirmation that WhatsApp is one of the social networking sites where political issues are being discussed everyday by users. The finding, further, shows how rampant and popular the 2023 election was among the audience. Moreover, the high degree of discussion of political issues through WhatsApp cannot be divorced from heavy WhatsApp users occasioned by influx of cheap android phones in Nigeria. This finding shows how significant the WhatsApp social networking site has been to the political development of Nigeria.

Research question two was set to investigate the degree of political education gained by the people through the use of WhatsApp for discussion of political issues ahead of the 2023 general election. On this research objective, it was found that majority of the respondents gained high political education from their discussion on WhatsApp. From the table, 172 respondents accounting for 45.5 percent of the sample admitted that political education they gained is high. This figure was followed by 126 others representing 33.2 percent of the sample who admitted that their political education was high. On this same question, 68 respondents have moderate political education while 13 gained low political education from their WhatsApp use in the discussion of political issues ahead of the 2023 election. Significantly, none of the respondents said that he or she gained very low political education from the discussions they have had in the social media during the election. Importantly this current finding is a confirmation of the finding made in Erubami (2020) where it was found that social media use for political activities is perceived to have positive influence by enhancing free dissemination of vital political information capable of re-awakening public political consciousness to participate in real time voting.

While examining the extent to which WhatsApp use for political discussion encouraged physical political participation among the respondents, it was found that majority of the respondents are influenced into participation to a *"great extent"* by WhatsApp use. According to the table, 158 respondents admitted that they are influenced to participate in the election *"To a great extent"* whereas 130 others admitted that they are influenced to *"a very great extent"* by WhatsApp political discussion. On the other hand, 79 respondents accounting for 20.8 percent said that they are influenced to a very minimal extent with 12 others accounting for 3.2 percent who said that they are

influenced *"to a minimal extent"*. Importantly, the fact that none of the respondents choose *"to no extent at all"* response category revealed that the impact of WhatsApp use for political discussion is high among the respondents. The implication of this is that gone are the days when politicians ignore social media criticisms as the surprises arising from the outcome of the 2023 election shows that people are getting wiser by the day. This finding is in line with that of Uwalaka (2020) who found that political efficacy and online political discussion significantly increased students' intention to join politics. The study also corroborated that of Erubami (2020) where it was found that social media use for political activities is perceived to have positive influence on Nigeria's democracy by enhancing the flow of political information and awakening public political consciousness to participate in real time voting. The finding further corroborated Gil de Zúñiga, Ardèvol-Abreu & Casero-Ripollés (2021) who found that WhatsApp discussion has a positive influence on political activism, and a more significant effect on conventional participation. The study justifies the view in De Zúñiga *et al.* (2019) where it was argued that an increase in public political debate through the use of the internet significantly encourages citizens' feelings and arouses the need to participate in politics more than before their exposure to such debates.

On the research question that sought to ascertain whether respondents' use of WhatsApp for discussion of political issues influence real time participation in politics, it was found that the use of WhatsApp in political discussion drastically influenced positive political participation among the respondents, especially in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. This finding corroborated that of Taufiq, Aima & Muhammad (2019) where it was found that political efficacy is significantly dependent on level of online political participation. This accounts for the surprises that the election sprang up in the election results. Some politicians who abused the people on the ground that there are no polling units in the social media were proven wrong by the action they witnessed. A visit to table 4 will show the details of the influence of WhatsApp use on political participation. This finding agrees with that of Ikegbunam & Obiakor (2021) who found that WhatsApp use encouraged popular participation and monitoring of the electoral process. Further, the above finding is in tandem with that of Omotayo & Folorunso (2020) who found that social media are veritable instruments for political mobilization and participation among the youth.

Summary

This study examined the relationship between WhatsApp use and real-life political participation. The reason that informed this study was the claim by some politicians that polling units are not online. The study was set to find out if discussing political issues online encourage the discussants to engage in

politics in real life, the respondents' frequency of discussing political issues online and whether what they say online are taken to the polling units. The study found that discussing political issues online improves political awareness and knowledge and as well encourages real life participation to a significant extent.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research findings have shown a great impact on people's political participation as a result of engaging in online political discussion through the WhatsApp platform. Based on this, this study concludes that WhatsApp is a veritable instrument for political mobilization and participation. It also concludes that parties or politicians taking social media criticisms for a joke are doing harm to themselves as the surprise will hit them on the day of election. Generally, the influence of WhatsApp use for political participation has been significantly acknowledged by this study.

Relying on the research findings, this study recommended as follows:

- That the use of social media for political mobilization should be encouraged considering that it has impacted the people's political knowledge and participation. Through the use of WhatsApp, more people have participated in the 2023 election. This reduced apathy and increased monitoring of political actors and activities in Nigeria.

- That politicians and political parties that want to survive politically should take social media criticisms very seriously or get ready to be voted out in elections. WhatsApp use has widened people's political consciousness to the extent that what politicians think that the electorates are ignorance of are now at their fingertips. The era of 'there is no polling unit online' has gone.

People should increase their political discussion online as it has been found to positively correlate with real time political participation.

Nigerian youths should continue to act in line with their pains based on informed political education as that can serve as the only way to recover the country called Nigeria.

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