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**Locus of Control as a
Predictor of
Students' Academic
Achievement in
Public Secondary
Schools in Anambra
State**

**Consolidating the
Impact of African
Women in
International
Relations and
Peace Studies**

**Corporate
Governance and the
Performance of
Quoted Industrial
Goods Companies in
Nigeria**

**Symbolic
Characterisation in
Nigerian Folk
Narratives**





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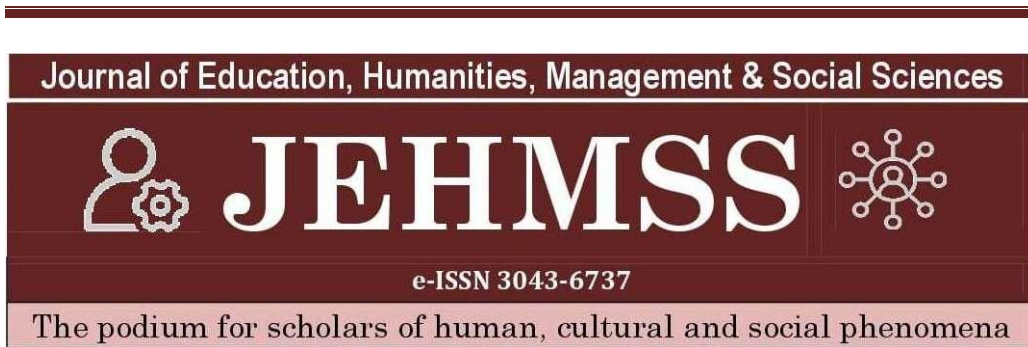
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Locus of Control as a Predictor of Students' Academic Achievement in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Ngozichukwuka A. Onyeocha, N. J. Obikeze & I. E. Obi

Abstract

The study sought to examine locus of control as a predictor of students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions. Correlational research design was used for the study. Taro Yamane Formula was used to select a sample size of 400 students from a population of 20,922 senior secondary two students in Anambra State public secondary schools. Locus of Control Behaviour Scale (LCBS) was used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument yielded coefficient alpha 0.74. The instrument was administered through direct delivery approach. Research questions were answered using simple linear regression. Findings of the study revealed among others that internal and external locus of control positively and significantly predict the academic achievement of students in English language and Mathematics. Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers should encourage students to work hard in order to achieve success and disabuse them of the notion that fate, chance, luck or powerful others are the predictors of their scholastic accomplishment.

Keywords: locus of control, academic achievement, public secondary schools

Introduction

Academic achievement is a vital aspect of attending educational institutions. It serves as a measure of success and progress in acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to obtain educational

certificates. It acts as a yardstick to evaluate the extent to which students have met the learning objectives and requirements of their educational programme. As Mary (2021) stated, academic achievement is an essential factor that determines a student's social life, status and future career. Scholars agree that academic achievement of students is a net result of their cognitive and non-cognitive attributes, including the socio-cultural context in which the learning process takes place (Arief, 2019; Zheng & Mustapha, 2022). Academic achievement is a key feature in education which is considered to be the centre around which the whole education system twirls (Anthony, 2018). The scholar further opined that students' academic achievement determines the success or failure of any academic institution. In common terminology, academic achievement is referred to as an individual's performance in subjects taught and assessed within educational institutions. For the purpose of this study, academic achievement is described as the degree to which a student or an educational institution has attained educational objectives, typically measured through the students' grade point average.

Academic achievement has ignited a wave of concern from scholars who observed a sharp drop in the WAEC results of students across the nation (Galindo et al, 2022). It is indisputable to note that the results of Nigerian students in most external examinations in recent time are usually sub-optimal. Reports of students' performance in West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Commission (NECO) examinations within the last one decade have indicated a downward trend; this is evident in mass failure recorded in the two core subjects, English Language and Mathematics, which form the foundation for good academic achievement in tertiary institutions (Iyabo, 2018). According to recent statistics, 65 percent of private candidates who sat for the second series of 2019 West African Senior School Certificate Examination failed to score five credits in English Language and Mathematics (WASSCE 2019 result released/guardian.ng). According to the report of the council's chief examiner, only 33,304 candidates, representing 35.10%, obtained credits and above in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics out of the entire 94,884 candidates that sat for the examinations in the second series of 2019 November/December West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). This is quite unimpressive.

In addition, it is regrettable to note that in the bid to ensure students' academic achievement, some education stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and school management, among others, introduce or support unprincipled practices. Hence, the ugly phenomena of examination malpractice and miracle centres have become regular features of WAEC

and NECO examinations across the nation. Leadership Newspaper (2023) reported that certificates obtained from writing Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCEs) are priority documents in Nigeria and the pressure to obtain these certificates have given rise to endemic examination malpractice. Now, instead of students to work hard to achieve success, some resort to externalities such as absconding from their schools and travelling to remote villages to register as external candidates and bribing examination officials in order to excel academically. This has resulted in the emergence of rogue schools, popularly known as miracle examination centres (MECs), which are positioned to make profit by 'helping' candidates to cheat. This trend has persisted, and even until 2022, after the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) results were released, Premium Newspaper (2022) reported that the results of 365,564 candidates, which accounted for 22.83 percent of the total number of candidates who took the examination, were withheld due to various cases of examination malpractice. It is believed that all these are occasioned by students' intent to attain academic accomplishment. Leadership Newspaper (2023) reported that the prevalence of examination malpractice and mass failure in examinations is negatively affecting the quality of education in the country. This is as a result of students' inability to take responsibility for a successful learning outcome through hard work, instead of through dependence on external factors, as a means of achieving success.

As a matter of fact, academic achievement is a construct that is associated with socio-psychological variables which include locus of control, self-concept, interest in schooling, study-habits, and so on. Based on the foregoing, the current study investigated locus of control as a predictor of academic achievement of students.

Locus of control, simply put, is an individual's perception regarding the outcome of events in their life. American Psychological Association (2022) stated that locus of control is a construct that is used to classify individuals' underlying motivational orientations and perceptions of how much control they have over the circumstances of their lives. Locus of control refers to internal or external responsibility over reinforcement emanating from operating response upon the environment (Sagone & De-Caroli, 2014). It is the development of a generalised expectancy within a person as to how he or she receives reinforcement. Locus of control is a psychological concept that refers to how individuals strongly believe that they have control over the circumstances and experiences that affect their lives (Churchhill et al, 2020). In education, locus of control refers to how learners perceive the causes of their academic success or failure in school

(Lopez-Garrido, 2020). The place of locus of control in learning is very important because, all things being equal, people will either see themselves as masters of their destiny or victims of circumstances. Learners who have internal locus of control orientation believe that their aptitudes are guided by their personal decisions and efforts whereas learners with external locus of control orientation believe that their aptitudes are guided by fate, luck or external circumstances. In the current study, locus of control is defined as an individual's belief system that their success or failure in any event or task is dependent upon their efforts, esteem, and hard work or upon external forces such as luck, fate and other powerful exterior factors.

Locus of control can be generalized into the basic dichotomy: internal and external locus of control. Individuals with internal locus of control feel responsible for their successes and failures while people with external locus of control attribute life outcomes to external forces such as fate, destiny, or powerful others (Neill, 2021). Individuals who possess an internal locus of control assume that they possess a degree of control over circumstances and events that happen to them. People with an internal locus of control believe that their own behaviours directly influence the results they experience. Students with an "internal locus of control" generally believe that their success or failure is a result of the efforts and hard work they invest in their education. Harry and Kaur (2021) posited that students with internal locus of control apportion blame on themselves as a result of their poor performance. They reason thus, "The teacher has tried, he is not to blame; I need to work harder; I am the architect of my destiny; I can make it" (Harry & Kaur, 2021). The formation of locus of control is shaped by an individual's interactions with their environment and an internal locus of control develops when a person's efforts consistently lead to positive and desirable outcomes over time (Abid et al, 2016). Sa'adiya et al. (2018) held that internal orientation needs to be accomplished by competence, self-efficacy and opportunity in learning context. Samayalangi and Yodida (2017) argued that possession of internal locus of control is fundamental for students to have a thorough learning insight. Individuals with internal locus of control are believed to have more pessimistic expectations and are more resilient (Latha et al, 2020). When an individual has an internal locus of control, they believe they have personal control over their own life and actions. If the person succeeds, they believe they did the right thing and put in the expected amount of efforts, but if the person experiences failure, they will blame themselves. An internally controlled person is likely to be driven toward success. This is because those that are internally controlled take responsibility and accountability for their actions. Such individuals have greater expectations for themselves because they do not attribute their

success to luck. In the current study, internal locus of control is referred to as an individual's belief system that their actions and decisions shape the outcomes of their life's events.

On the other hand, individuals who possess an external locus of control believe that they have no control of what happens to them, which lead them to place responsibility and appropriate blame on external variables such as luck and gods. Later researchers expanded upon Rotter's concepts of locus of control and categorized individuals with an external locus of control into two subgroups: (1) those who attribute life's outcomes to fate, luck, or chance, and (2) those who see their lack of control stemming from the decisions and actions of more influential individuals (Wallston et al., 1976). Students with an "external locus of control" generally believe that their successes or failures result from external factors beyond their control, such as luck, fate, circumstances, injustice, bias, or teachers who are unfair, prejudiced, or unskilled. Individuals with external locus of control believe that reinforcement is not in their control. Hence, they cannot influence the outcome of events. Whatever happens is believed to be luck and coincidence. Harry and Kaur (2021) observed that students with external locus of control may blame an unfair teacher or test as a result of their poor performance. They reason thus, "I didn't perform well in the exam, because my teacher doesn't know how to teach" or "that the teacher was prejudiced or unfair" or "even that the teacher didn't cover the scheme" (Harry & Kaur, 2021).

Externally controlled are more likely to believe that hard work is "pointless" because someone or something else is holding them back or treating them unfairly (Drago et al. 2018). Externally controlled students think that their efforts will not yield to success and their accomplishments will not be acknowledged. The mastery orientation of individuals with external locus of control drives them to sheer antisocial features such as deception, the use of manipulation, or ingratiation or ingratiation medium to reflect the cause of their low achievement or failures. It seems that the external belief in fate, luck and powerful others undermines people's beliefs in their environmental mastery and self-efficacy. In the current study, external locus of control is defined as an individual's belief system that the outcome of the events of their life is dependent upon external forces which could be fate, luck, god or powerful others.

Statement of the Problem

There is a lot of pressure on students across the nation to do well in studies and the struggle is immense because the society places students who attain academic success on a pedestal as they gain adulation from family, friends

and peers. The government, parents and teachers expect students to attain academic excellence. But, unfortunately, such expectations are rarely met. Rather, in recent times, the reverse seems to be the case. Students' consistent failure in WAEC and NECO examinations and their resort to unethical practices as means of achieving success is worrisome. The situation has raised doubts concerning the integrity of the education system; stakeholders are expressing concern about the increasing rate of students involved in examination malpractice and the decreasing rate of students who perform well whenever the annual results of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination are released. The public tends to blame teachers for it and, on the other hand, teachers blame the students because of their refusal to work hard and their inclination to resort to external measures in their unethical effort to excel academically. All parties involved are concerned about the factors that contribute to this trend; locus of control, an aspect linked to individual characteristics, is one of such factors, hence the need for this study. Whether locus of control can predict the academic achievement of students in public secondary schools in Anambra State is yet to be empirically established. It was, therefore, against this backdrop that the current study sought to examine locus of control as predictor of students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The central purpose of the study was to ascertain locus of control as predictor of academic achievement of secondary school students in Anambra State. Specifically, the study was aimed at

1. Investigating the predictive value of internal locus of control on academic achievement in English and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Examining the predictive value of external locus of control on academic achievement in English and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the predictive value of internal locus of control on academic achievement in English and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

2. What is the predictive value of external locus of control on academic achievement in English and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Methods

The study adopted a correlational research design. It was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study consisted of 20,922 senior secondary two students (SS2) 2021/2022 session of public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised of 400 students drawn from the population using Taro Yamane's Formula. The instrument for data collection was Locus of Control Behaviour Scale developed by Craig et al, 1984. The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A was designed to elicit demographic information about each respondent while section 'B' consisted of the Locus of Control Behaviour 17-Item scale that contains both internal and external locus of control, arranged in clusters. Cluster 'A' elicited information on the internal locus of control with 8-item statement while Cluster 'B' elicited information on the external locus with 9-item statement. The instrument has a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) (4 points), Agree (A) (3 points), Disagree (D) (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD) (1 point). The reliability was ascertained using Cronchbach Alpha which yielded a consistency index of 0.74. The researcher employed direct delivery and immediate retrieval approach upon completion to ensure a very high percentage of return with the aid of two briefed research assistants in administering the instrument. Simple linear regression was employed to analyse data obtained from the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the predictive value of internal locus of control on academic achievement in English language and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of the simple linear regression on the predictive value of internal locus of control on academic achievement in English language and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

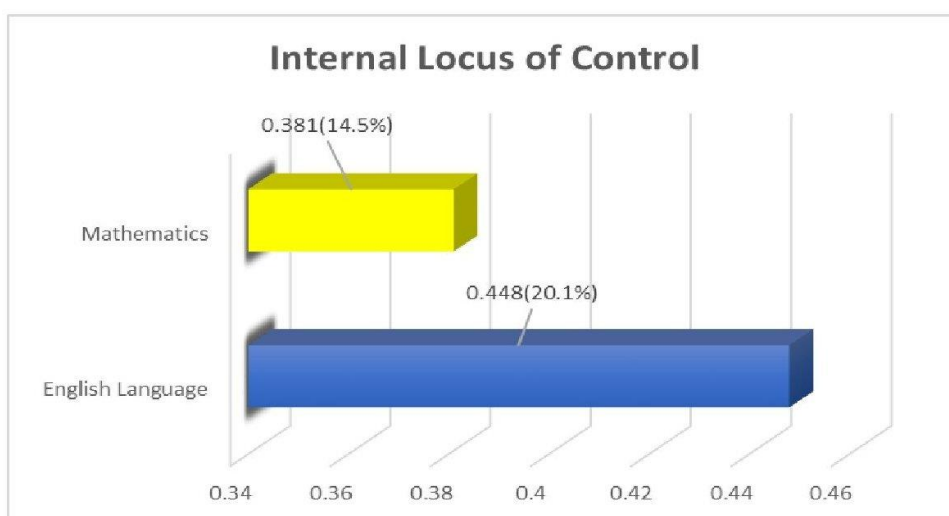
Model Summary of the Predictive Value of Internal Locus of Control on Students' Academic Achievement in English Language and Mathematics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
English Language	0.448 ^a	0.201	0.198	18.62024
Mathematics	0.381 ^a	0.145	0.143	19.60116

a. Predictor: (Constant), Internal Locus of Control

Table 1 presented the summary of the simple linear regression on the predictive value of internal locus of control on academic achievement in English language and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results revealed that the predictive values of internal locus of control for the R-value of English language and Mathematics were 0.448 and 0.381 while the R Square predictive value for English language and Mathematics were 0.201 and 0.145. These signify that internal locus of control moderately and positively predict the academic achievement in English Language and low positive prediction in Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Figure 1: Summary of the Predictive Value of Internal Locus of Control on the Academic Achievement on English Language and Mathematics.



The results in figure 1 showed the predictive value of internal locus of control on the academic achievement on English Language and

Mathematics. The results indicated that the predictive value of internal locus of control on students' achievement in English Language is 0.448 (20.1%) and Mathematics is 0.381 (14.5%).

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of external locus of control on academic achievement in English language and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of the simple linear regression on the predictive value of external locus of control on academic achievement in English language and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State

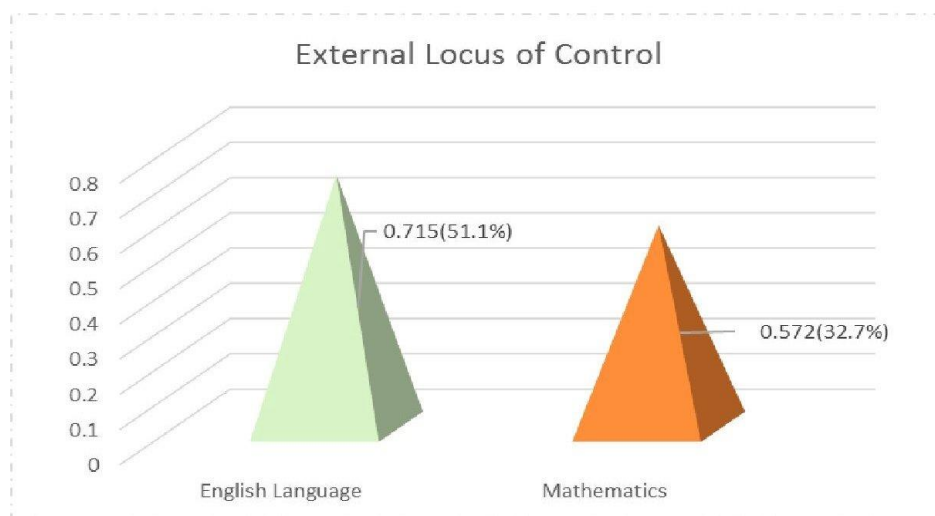
Model Summary of the Predictive Value of External Locus of Control on Students' Academic Achievement in English Language and Mathematics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
English Language	0.715 ^a	0.511	0.510	14.69823
Mathematics	0.572 ^a	0.327	0.326	17.58858

a. Predictor: (Constant), External Locus of Control

Table 2 showed the predictive value of external locus of control on academic achievement in English language and Mathematics of senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results revealed that the R-values of English language and Mathematics were 0.715 and 0.572 and also, the R Square values for English language and Mathematics were 0.511 and 0.327. These imply that external locus of control has a high and positive predictive value on academic achievement in English Language and has a moderate and positive predictive value in Mathematics. The results also showed that external locus of control predicts 51.1% of academic achievement on English Language and 32.7% on Mathematics.

Figure 2: Summary of the Predictive Value of External Locus of Control on the Academic Achievement on English Language and Mathematics.



The results in figure 2 revealed the predictive value of external locus of control on the academic achievement of students in English Language and Mathematics. The results showed that the predictive value of internal locus of control on the academic achievement of students in English Language is 0.715 (51.1%) and Mathematics is 0.572 (32.70%).

Discussion of Findings

The study examined locus of control as a predictor of students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings of this study revealed that there exists a moderate positive predictive value of internal locus of control on students' achievement in English language and low positive prediction in Mathematics. The result coincides with the report of Sa'adiyaet al. (2018) who found a positive and moderate prediction of internal locus of control on academic achievement of students in English language. Fabella and Aler (2023) postulated that English is a sine qua non for educational progress and gaining admission into the university which would have been probably responsible for the internally controlled to intensify reading for the purpose of excelling. The finding of the study also revealed a low predictive value of students' internal locus of control in their Mathematics achievement. This finding agrees with the result of Ahono et al. (2018) who indicated that students with low level of internal locus of control in Mathematics lack hard work and self-drive, and so they perform poorly in Mathematics. However, the finding does not agree with Macmull and Ashkenazi (2019) who reported that internal locus of control was associated with high and positive achievement in mathematics.

The finding of the study revealed a high and positive predictability of external locus of control on students' academic achievement in English

language. This finding is somewhat consistent with the result of Sa'adiya et al. (2018) who observed a positive but low impact of external locus of control on students' academic achievement in English language. Similarly, Ozuome et al. (2020) found that locus of control was effective in determining the academic achievement of students. The positive and high predictive value of external locus of control on students' achievement in English language as revealed in this study is in contrast with the result of David (2011) who noted a negative and low effect of external locus of control on academic achievement of students in English language.

The findings also showed a moderate and positive predictive strength of external locus of control on students' academic achievement in Mathematics. The result aligns with the findings of Akunne and Anyamene (2021), who reported that there exists a moderate positive correlation between external locus of control and academic achievement of students. The finding also corresponds with the result of Enwere and Mbakwe (2021) who found locus of control as a moderate predictor of academic achievement. However, the finding is in disagreement with the recent study of Villa and Sebastine (2021) who reported that external locus of control does not predict academic achievement in Mathematics. The scholars added that achievement in Mathematics can never be attributed to chance nor luck but rather something beyond having an external locus. The variations in the findings may be due to differences in the participants and location of the current and reviewed studies. The participants of the present study are students from public schools in Nigeria situated in rural areas who are majorly externals that do not believe in hard work but rather attribute their successes and grades to luck, the teacher's disposition, or other elements which include endemic examination malpractices unlike the Western setting where internal orientation prevails.

Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that locus of control is a significant predictor of academic achievement of students in English language and Mathematics. Therefore, students should acknowledge that their actions play a crucial role in attaining success or experiencing failure. Therefore, an insight has been provided for our children to display increased persistence, dedication and engagement with academic tasks so as to excel academically.

Recommendations

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

- Students should be made to understand that they are the architect of their academic success.
- Teachers during teaching/learning process, should encourage students to work hard and focus on personal efforts as means of achieving success and disabuse them of the attitude of external locus of control and the notion that fate, chance, luck or powerful others are the determinants of their scholastic accomplishment.
- The teacher is a major index and stakeholder in the teaching-learning process and primary implementer of any curriculum; therefore, responsibility is placed on the teacher to ensure that his or her students take responsibility of the outcome of their academics, thereby developing their internal locus of control.
- School administrators should charge students with leadership roles to enable them take responsibilities for their actions in school environment. By so doing, they will develop their internal control and then work hard to achieve scholastic excellence.
- Policy makers should formulate policies that will address the menace of unethical approaches to examination success so that students will no longer depend on externalities but rather develop their personal control and make personal efforts to succeed in learning.

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Consolidating the Impact of African Women in International Relations and Peace Studies

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Abstract

African women make diverse substantial contributions to International Relations and Peace Studies. Their works as peace activists, diplomats, researchers, and advocates have improved our knowledge of conflict resolution and human security. By emphasising individual experiences and viewpoints in our understanding of global challenges, we may create more effective strategies for advancing global peace and equality. This paper's objective is to raise awareness on the contributions of African women with a view to providing new frameworks for analysis, developing collaborative networks and offering actionable policy recommendations. It argues that although African women's contributions to International Relations (IR) and Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) are phenomenal, their inputs have received little recognition in recent years. African women have been actively or indirectly involved in conflicts throughout history, serving as combatants, spies, couriers, sex slaves, brides, and mothers. Nonetheless, African women continue to suffer gender hurdles and subjugation, which appear to have belittled or sullied their illustrious achievements. Using a desktop research approach, this work aims to recognise and celebrate the tremendous contributions made by African women researchers in shaping International Relations, Peace Studies, and Conflict Resolution initiatives throughout the world. Despite past gains and developments, African women continue to confront diverse hurdles and impediments. This paper concludes that there is need to continue highlighting and accentuating the plight of women, particularly the predicament of African women, for their utmost liberation and development; and that African women's movements should continue to pressurise national and regional bodies to put a priority on ensuring gender equity, in order to increase and intensify women's participation in the decision-making process and economic development efforts.

Keywords: African women, consolidation, global peace, international relations, peace studies

Introduction

Although seldom acknowledged over the years, the contributions and impact of African women in the study of International Relations (IR) as well as in Peace and Conflict Study (PCS) are remarkable indeed. African women in the course of global history have been involved directly or indirectly in wars, either at the logistical, ideological, and combatant levels as fighters, spies, carriers and, at the same time, as sex slaves, wives, and mothers. However, these unique roles and positions, and the adverse effects of their participation in war on women's lives, have been downplayed over the years to the advantage of male ex-combatants who usually obtained most of the benefits. This longstanding marginalization has undermined women's capacities in carrying out war operations and has also led to their being excluded from the post-conflict peace building projects (Oluwaniyi, 2019). At whatever time there has been conflict, women and children are known to have suffered excessively, both during and after wars. Women and children are often the most vulnerable victims of war, the ones hardest hit during violent conflicts.

History is replete with terrible abuses against women and children – from the 1.1 million children killed during the Holocaust to the numerous women and children raped or killed during the Rwandan genocide. According to Madzima (2013), women are usually excluded from formal peace negotiations, especially in Africa; there was the example of Sierra Leone where, at the end of the civil war, and in spite of their relentless grassroots efforts, women were left out of the final negotiations that culminated in the Lome Peace Accord of 1999. However, the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000), if implemented by relevant parties, may have the capacity to change all of these narratives; the African Union's July 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa stated thus: "We hereby agree to ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace processes including the prevention, resolution, management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa as stipulated in United Nations Resolution 1325 (2000)." The UNSCR 1325 has paved the way for more resolutions and action plans, and it took the first step in creating new international norms that protect women and integrate them into all levels of engagement. UNSCR 1325 has also identified women as active agents, which has empowered women to demand what is rightfully theirs. Unlike the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the African Union (AU), since its establishment in 2001, also has been supportive of women rights' issues.

African women have made major contributions to International Relations and Peace Studies in a variety of capacities, including as peace activists, diplomats, and researchers. Their experiences and viewpoints have improved discussions about conflict resolution, human security, and gender equality. One of the most visible manifestations of African women's influence on International Relations is their involvement in peace-building. Women have been prominent participants in global peace processes, frequently playing key roles in negotiating ceasefires and crafting peace treaties. For example, during the Liberian Civil War (1989-2003), women founded the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign, which was instrumental in persuading warring parties to negotiate. Leymah Gbowee, a key figure in this movement, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her efforts. Furthermore, African women have achieved success in diplomacy and international organisations. For example, Amina Mohammed of Nigeria is now the United Nations' Deputy Secretary-General. She formerly served as the Nigerian Minister of Environment and Ban Ki-moon's Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning. African women in academia contribute significantly to Peace Studies and International Relations via research and scholarship. Christine Chinkin, a famous expert of international law and conflict resolution from the United Kingdom, for example, is of Nigerian descent. Her research has focused on women's human rights in armed situations and the role of international law in achieving peace.

African women's experiences offer unique insights into conflict resolution and human security. Their perspectives challenge traditional approaches that prioritise military solutions over peaceful means. For example, African women have emphasised the importance of addressing root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education. They have also highlighted the need for inclusive peace processes that involve all sectors of society.

Gender Studies

Gender studies continue to add to scholarship by rethinking knowledge categories, and new frameworks, such as intersectionalism, and by developing to improve interdisciplinary studies in feminism. The book, *Holding the World Together: African Women in Changing Perspective*, contributes to this study by examining the position and duties of African women. This topical and entertaining book examines the various ways in which African women have represented themselves throughout history, from pre-colonial times to the present. The bringing together of researchers from different generations, nations, disciplines, races, genders,

ethnicities, continents, and faiths to participate in interdisciplinary discussions on an ever-changing topic – gender studies in Africa – gave rise to the book. Achebe and Robertson emphasised the multifaceted debate on gender studies in Africa while acknowledging the ongoing effort to fight inaccurate stereotypes about African women (Achebe & Robertson, 2019). Significant progress, according to Friendrich (2017), has been made in advancing women's participation into elected office and leadership positions in the public and private sectors, civil service and trade unions. As sixteen countries in the Continent of Africa have surpassed the 30 per cent mark of representation in national parliaments established at the Beijing World Conference, though mostly from Southern Africa and East Africa, of which Rwanda is maintaining the highest percent of women representation in the world.

Radical African feminists and some Western feminist scholars have together argued and emphasised moving away from an exclusive focus on women's disadvantages, and examining power relations between women and men as feminist perceptions on war connect the realities of local African women to the realities facing women globally; they describe how gender identities are socially produced and managed as a means of moving forward. Consequently, understanding how "femininity" is socially built in such a way that women become disempowered requires understanding how "masculinity" is produced and inscribed in power systems. According to White's "All the men are fighting for freedom, all the women are mourning their men, but some of us carried guns: A raced-gendered analysis of Fanon's psychological perspectives on war" (2007), women who escape wartime atrocities are frequently forced to live with the vivid and horrific pictures of rape, war, and the death of their loved one for the rest of their life. Despite the fact that African women's movements have made significant progress and played a critical role in creating a more gender-focused regional organisation, African women continue to face gender barriers and subordination, which appear to have swallowed up all of the presumed success. As a result, this dissertation evaluates the contributions made by African women to the study of international relations, as well as peace and conflict studies in Africa. Gender activists are stepping up their efforts to secure the minimum 15 ratifications required to put into effect a protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights aimed at advancing gender equality. Gender activists have also successfully promoted agreements that advance the rights of African women. In 2007, 51 of the 53 AU nations have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was enacted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and is commonly referred to as the International Bill of Rights

for Women. In 2003, campaigners successfully persuaded African heads of state to accept a protocol on women's rights. They are currently urging states to adopt the agreement, making it legally binding (Banks, 2008). According to Tripp (2016), the key elements that culminated in the expansion of women's organisations included wider political space following democratic revolutions in the 1990s, the spread of international norms related to gender equality, and donors' which increased interest in providing support for women's movements and led to the development of regional institutions many of which endorse gender equity concerns.

African Women in International Relations, Peace and Conflict Studies Historically

African women have played significant roles in international relations, including peace and conflict studies, contributing to diplomacy, activism, and community development. Throughout history, African women have demonstrated great resilience and independence in the face of adversity. Their contributions to International Relations, Peace, and Conflict Studies are frequently overlooked or underrated. However, a growing body of studies highlights their importance in shaping diplomacy, activism, and community development. African women, in particular, have achieved significant political gains in recent years. Adams (2019, p. 1) asserts "African women's movements continue to pressure national and regional actors to prioritize gender equity, advocating for the transformation of rhetorical commitments to changes in practice." The African Union (AU), the continental political entity, took a significant step towards fostering gender equality in its highest decision-making positions, culminating in the election of five women and five men as AU commissioners in 2003. In 2004, Ms. Gertrude Mongella was appointed to lead the African Union's Pan-African Parliament, which has 25% female members. Ms. Marie-Angelique Savane of Senegal leads another AU agency, the African Peer Review Mechanism, which supervises good governance criteria (Hammed & Kabo, 2013).

The fact that many African governments have signed the Beijing Platform and several international instruments that promote the rights of women have not altered the reality on ground as these instruments, up to now, have not been translated into changes that positively affect women's daily lives. As women remain or are seen to be at the bottom of the social ladder as compared to men, particularly in Africa where women have limited access to land, finance, health, and education, gender inequality remains highly apparent. African women's movements have been instrumental in establishing a more gender-sensitive regional organisation. Knowing these

women, who have been at the centre of historical movements over the centuries, allows us to gain a better knowledge of African women's major contributions to historical developments that brought us to where we are today. A few of these women are listed below:

1. Queen Nanny (1680-1750) of the Windward Maroons: She was a Jamaican political leader, military strategist and Obeah woman. Originally born in Ghana, Queen Nanny led the Windward Maroons in a successful war against the British.
2. Yaa Asantewaa (1863-1923): She was the Queen Mother of the Ejisuhene who led the Ashanti in a war against British colonization between 1900 and 1901.
3. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (1900-1978): Often remembered as the mother of the prolific musician and activist Fela Kuti, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was a pioneering African feminist, social activist, educator and anti-colonial freedom fighter; she was the founder of the Nigerian Woman's Union, which became the Federation of Nigerian Women's Societies in 1953.
4. Miriam Makeba (1932-2008): Affectionately known as Mama Africa, Miriam Makeba was an artist, activist and major participant in both the anti-Apartheid and Pan-African movement. Makeba wrote and performed music that critiqued the Apartheid government of South Africa, advocating for an end to racial disenfranchisement, both from within South Africa and while in exile.
5. Wangari Maathai (1940-2011): The famous Kenyan environmentalist, women's rights activist and Nobel Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai is remembered for her compassion and dedication to improving the lives of the most disenfranchised groups in society (Njoroge-MJoroge, n.d).

These five African women represent many others who were sung and unsung (Tume et al., 2023). Forbes Magazine, in March 2020, released its first ever Pan-African list of the 50 most powerful and influential women from across the Continent of Africa. Amongst these 50 Most Powerful Women in Africa are: Rebecca Enochong (Cameroon), Founder and CEO, AppsTech; Irene Charnley (South Africa), Founder, Smile Communications; Jennifer Riria (Kenya), Group CEO, Echo Network Africa and founding member, Kenya Women Finance Trust; Louise Mushikiwabo (Rwanda), Secretary General, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF); Charlize Theron (South Africa), Hollywood actor;

Angélique Kidjo (Benin), four-time Grammy award winner and humanitarian; Lesly Kanza (Tanzania), Head of Africa and member of the executive committee, World Economic Forum; Ibukun Awosika (Nigeria), Founder and CEO, The Chair Centre Group; and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigeria), former Chair, Board of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) and now Director General World Trade Organisation (Mogoatlhe, 2020). These personages drawn from the 50 African women listed by Forbes magazine depict the contemporary strides and contributions African women have made and continue to make, and they represent thousands of others sung and unsung.

Statement of the Problem

Despite some notable progress in addressing women's challenges in Africa and their role in social, political, and economic life in the past and in the present, more African women continue to face gender barriers in the workplace, primarily through employment policies and discriminatory employment practices. When considered from a development viewpoint, African women's contributions to social, political, and economic life remain restricted due to their lack of empowerment. The AU's increased emphasis on women's rights concerns, particularly gender equity, corresponds with the emergence of independent women's movements across the continent. Adams (2019), citing Tripp (2016), said data collected by the Association for Women's Rights in Development indicate that 40% of contemporary women's advocacy organizations in Africa were founded between 2000 and 2005; during the same time span, various AU gender institutes were founded. Despite the advancements in women's rights over the last few decades, they are today living in a regional and worldwide setting in which not only are women's human rights contested, but the historical achievements of the women's movement are under threat. The unjust treatment of women in Africa and around the world is exacerbated by the fragility of democratic institutions, a conservative backlash, an economic crisis, and weakened opportunities for feminist movements to express themselves in their fight for human rights (Adams, 2019; Hutchison & Jephtha, 2019; Pereira, 2017).

Objectives of the Study

The study considered as objectives the following:

- Evaluate the impact of African women's involvement on the effectiveness of peace processes and international relations policies both within and outside of Africa, with the goal of raising awareness about the importance of gender inclusivity in international relations

and peace studies, as well as promoting a broader understanding of African women's roles.

- Analyse how inter-sectional factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and education level affect the participation and impact of African women in international relations and peace studies, with the view of identifying emerging trends and future directions for the involvement of African women.
- Formulate actionable policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the participation and influence of African women in international relations and peace studies.

African Women's Contributions to International Relations and Peace

According to Olasunkanmi (2014), there is a notion in African civilisations that African women have the potential to link people together. In truth, peace building, family survival, and the future of marriage rely heavily on the African woman, as portrayed by Leymah Roberta Gbowee (born 1972, Liberia), a Liberian peace campaigner notable for gathering women to persuade officials to stop Liberia's civil conflict. She eventually went to Liberia and trained as a trauma counsellor, working with former child soldiers who fought in the country's civil conflict. Their efforts resulted in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on August 18, 2003. Gbowee received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her work.

Another African woman of note who has been at the forefront of peace advocacy and conflict resolution efforts include Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (born 1938), who became Africa's first elected female head of state on January 16, 2006. Sirleaf led Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction efforts and enacted measures to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Her presidency was a watershed moment for Liberian women's rights and involvement in politics.

Women's organisations were active throughout the transition from the OAU to the AU, calling for gender-balanced leadership within AU institutions and lobbying for stronger commitments to women's rights (Adams 2006). The contributions and roles of the women and women's organisations to the process of conflict resolution and peace building have often been neglected in discussions of war and peace. The appointment of African women to high positions in global governance bodies in the twenty-first century reflects a commitment to diversity, albeit parity is still far from a reality. Three notable appointments include: South Africa's Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who has been serving as United Nations (UN)

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women since 2013; Uganda's Winnie Byanyima, who served as the Executive Director of OXFAM International from 2013 to 2019; and, more recently, Nigeria's Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who made history by becoming the first woman and African to hold the office of Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a Nigerian-American economist, has contributed significantly to peace and conflict studies, notably in Africa. During her stint as Nigeria's Finance Minister, she was instrumental in negotiating an end to the Niger Delta war and supervised the execution of the Amnesty Programme. Okonjo-Iweala has promoted non-violent conflict settlement in Africa, emphasising conversations and negotiations. Her collaboration with international organisations, as well as her advocacy for African nations in global forums, has had a considerable influence on International Relations. Her contributions to peace and conflict studies have helped to stabilise and develop the continent (Bimha, P. Z. J., 2021; Alimi & Njama, 2021).

African Women's Under-Representation in Academia

African women researchers in International Relations, Peace and Conflict Studies confront considerable obstacles as a result of their under-representation in academia. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), women make up just 30% of all researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2023. This under-representation causes a lack of diversity in viewpoints and experiences, which can lead to a distorted understanding of global concerns.

Stereotypes and Bias: African women scholars frequently face stereotypes and bias, which can impede their professional development. These prejudices can be both unconscious and apparent, and they might be from co-workers, pupils, or organisational systems. For example, a research published in the *Journal of International Women's Studies* discovered that African female professors are frequently seen as "angry" or "emotional" while discussing gender and racial problems, although their male colleagues are not susceptible to the same stereotypes. African women scholars frequently have less access to resources and opportunities than their male counterparts. This may include limited access to research funds, academic networks, and publication chances. According to the literature assessment, African women academics face significant barriers to research funding, limiting their ability to conduct high-quality research and contribute to the field.

Work-Life Balance: African women academics typically face significant challenges in balancing their professional and home lives. This can be

especially tough for women who are caring for their family while still performing housework. A study published in the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* revealed that African women academics face greater work-life conflict than their male counterparts, which can have an impact on their productivity and well-being.

Inadequate Mentoring and Support: Many African female scholars report a lack of mentoring and support from their older counterparts. This might include restricted access to mentorship connections, as well as a scarcity of role models who can offer direction and support. A study published in the *Journal of International Women's Studies* found that African women scholars report feeling isolated and marginalized within their academic departments, which can hinder their career advancement (Akanji, et al., 2020; Tabassum, & Nayak, 2021; Antoninis et al., 2023).

African women scholars in International Relations, Peace and Conflict Studies face numerous challenges due to their under-representation in academia. According to UNESCO's findings for 2023, women make up around 30% of all researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa (Akinsola, & Ogunlela, 2015; Antoninis et al., 2023). This result represents a progressive gain over past years, but it also underlines the continued hurdles to gender parity in scientific research in this region. The implications of the figure not only throws light on women's engagement in research, but it also emphasises the need for policies and programs targeted at improving female representation in STEM subjects (namely, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Work-life balance is another key difficulty, with African female researchers reporting greater levels of conflict than their male counterparts. This can affect their productivity and well-being. Furthermore, they frequently lack mentorship and assistance from senior colleagues, as well as access to mentoring connections and role models. These issues are essential to the growth of African women researchers in the fields of international relations, peace, and conflict studies, thus they must be addressed.

Advocacy for Gender Equality

African women's advocacy groups have emerged as fundamental players in the global discourse on gender equality, particularly within the context of international relations. These organisations strive to influence policy, promote women's rights, and incorporate gender ideas into international frameworks. Their efforts are critical to tackling systemic disparities and fighting for women's involvement in decision-making processes at all levels. African women have historically faced enormous impediments to political and economic engagement as a result of colonial legacies,

patriarchal norms, and socio-economic constraints. In response to these issues, many advocacy groups have been formed, with the goal of empowering women and advocating for their rights. Organisations like the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) and the African Women's Association have been instrumental in mobilising women across the continent.

The key functions of African women's advocacy groups include working with national governments and international organisations to achieve gender equality. They frequently attend forums such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and regional summits like African Union (AU) gatherings. Their lobbying activities seek to influence legislation that impacts women's rights, such as health, education, and economic empowerment. These organisations offer training and tools to strengthen female leaders in their communities. They equip women for roles in government and policy-making by improving their leadership, negotiating, and public speaking abilities. This capacity training is critical to boosting women's presence in political settings.

Networking and Solidarity: Advocacy groups help women connect across areas and sectors. This solidarity helps to exchange best practices, mobilise resources, and form a united front against gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination. Conferences and seminars provide opportunities for activists from many backgrounds to collaborate.

Furthermore, educational initiatives that empower young African women are critical for developing future leaders capable of successfully navigating complicated international relations settings. By investing in education and capacity-building projects, these organisations guarantee that women's voices are heard in global talks about peace and security. Many advocacy groups do research on issues impacting African women, offering useful data for policy-makers. Through emphasising differences in access to education, healthcare, and economic prospects, they create a persuasive argument for targeted efforts to achieve gender equality.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Advocacy groups also conduct public awareness campaigns to educate communities on women's rights problems. These programs frequently target negative cultural practices like as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and domestic abuse, while also promoting positive narratives about women's contributions to society. African women's advocacy groups have a significant impact on international relations frameworks by integrating gender perspectives, ensuring that gender considerations are included in international agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and

regional treaties such as the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. Challenging global norms by raising awareness of local concerns on global platforms, these organisations challenge current standards that frequently disregard or distort African women's experiences. Building Alliances with Global group's through collaboration with international feminist groups increases their exposure and effect on global gender equality policy. Advocacy groups play an important role in monitoring governments' compliance with international gender equality commitments. They hold governments responsible via reporting procedures established by international organisations.

Methodology

Desktop research, also known as secondary research, was adopted for this study. It involves gathering existing data from various sources rather than collecting new data through primary methods such as surveys or interviews. This type of research is particularly needful when exploring topics that have already been studied extensively or when resources for primary data collection are limited. It typically includes reviewing academic journals, books, reports, policy papers, and credible on-line resources. The topic consolidating the Impact of African Women in International Relations and Peace Studies is multifaceted and requires a comprehensive understanding of historical contexts, current trends, and theoretical frameworks. Desktop research can be particularly effective in this area for several reasons. There is a growing body of literature focused on gender studies, international relations, and peace studies that highlights the contributions of African women.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory was adopted for this study because it is a critical framework that seeks to understand and address gender inequality by examining the social roles, experiences, and interests of both women and men across various disciplines. The theory has roots in Marxism, particularly that influenced by Engels' work on family dynamics and women's subordination. It originated in the 18th century and gained momentum during the equality movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Feminist theory in International Relations (IR) focuses on understanding how gender shapes global politics, emphasizing the roles and experiences of women. It critiques traditional theories that often overlook women's contributions and perspectives, particularly in the context of African women. Feminist theory emphasises the relevance of gender in understanding power relations, as well as their contributions to peace-building, conflict resolution, and political involvement. African women

have made significant contributions to peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and human rights advocacy. In practice, feminist philosophy influences policy and programs aimed at fostering gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. This involves encouraging women to participate in political decision-making and combating gender-based violence in crisis zones.

Furthermore, it guarantees that policies and programs reflect African women's unique experiences and demands. Feminist theory recognises the interconnectedness of race, class, ethnicity, and other social categories, emphasising how colonial histories, economic inequities, and cultural settings shape women's experiences. Despite their contributions, African women confront several problems, including patriarchal institutions and brutality during crises. To effectively consolidate the impact of African women in International Relations and Peace Studies, feminist theory proposes that future generations of female leaders in IR can be fostered by supporting grassroots movements through funding and resource allocation directed towards women-led organisations that focus on community-based conflict resolution and education, as well as by implementing policies that ensure women's representation at all levels of government.

Critics of feminist theory frequently focus on its apparent limits or omissions. Some believe that conventional feminist rhetoric has not sufficiently addressed inter-sectionality, the manner in which many types of identification (such as race, class, and sexual orientation) intersect to create unique experiences of oppression. This critique highlights the need for a more inclusive approach that recognizes the diverse realities faced by different groups. Feminist theory serves as both a lens for understanding oppression and a call to action against it. However, it faces critiques regarding its inclusiveness and effectiveness in addressing the complexities of identity and systemic discrimination.

Discussion of Findings

Bringing it all together, in promoting and projecting the plight of women globally four international conferences on women have been held. The first is Mexico (1975), followed by Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). Twenty six years after Beijing Conference, and UN resolution 1325 of year 2000, women's equality is still far from being a reality as ongoing high violence against women in all parts of the world is still on the increase; armed conflicts, incidences of HIV/AIDS among women, are on the increase; and there are also gender inequality in employment, lack of sexual and reproductive health rights and a lack of equal access under the law to land and property. As World Health

Organization has noted, violence against women mainly with intimate partner violence and sexual violence have become a major public health problem which is a violation of women's human rights (WHO, 2021).

African women's contributions to International Relations and Peace Studies have received more prominence in recent decades. This acknowledgement arises from a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in conflict resolution, peace-building, and governance. The data presented here emphasises African women's contributions to various disciplines, the problems they encounter, and the avenues for extending their effect. African women's leadership participation in peace processes is critical to peace discussions throughout the continent's many conflicts. For example, women played an important role in the peace talks that ended Liberia's civil war, with personalities such as Leymah Gbowee spearheading grassroots initiatives that emphasised women's engagement in peace-building efforts. Their engagements frequently resulted in unique viewpoints that prioritise community concerns and social justice. Consolidating African women's effect in International Relations and Peace Studies demands a holistic strategy that addresses structural constraints and amplifies their contributions via strategic efforts targeted at empowerment and visibility.

African women activists have been in the forefront of promoting gender equality within international frameworks. Initiatives such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security highlight the need of women's involvement in peacekeeping and security decision-making processes. African women have actively participated in these frameworks to ensure their opinions are heard. Their involvement in the importance of community resilience development cannot be overstated, since they frequently work directly with their communities to promote conflict resilience. They frequently act as mediators and educators, facilitating discussion between competing parties at the local level. This grassroots movement is critical for long-term peace because it targets the underlying causes of conflict via community participation. African women researchers are increasingly contributing to International Relations and Peace Studies by doing research and scholarship on gendered experiences of war and post-conflict healing. Their work frequently questions established narratives dominated by male viewpoints, resulting in a more nuanced understanding of security concerns.

Despite their significant successes, African women still confront a variety of challenges, including institutional barriers. Institutional impediments within political systems typically impede women's advancement to

leadership positions in both governmental and non-governmental organisations. These barriers might include discriminatory laws, cultural norms that promote male leadership, and a lack of support networks. Gender-based violence is a pervasive issue in many African countries, limiting women's ability to fully participate in public life. Conflicts exacerbate violence, making it difficult for women to engage safely in peacekeeping activities. Inadequate access to financial resources is a significant obstacle since it impedes effective advocacy and participation; yet, many women's groups operate with little funding, restricting their capacity to successfully organise or sustain long-term programs. Lack of exposure can reinforce misconceptions about women's positions in society.

There are numerous techniques that may be adopted to strengthen African women's roles in International Relations and Peace Studies. These include strengthening women's leadership networks, advocating for gender equality policies, investing in capacity building programs, establishing dedicated funding streams for women's organisations, promoting gender perspectives in conflict studies research, and investing in technology. Building strong networks may help with information sharing, mentorship, and advocacy activities, while enlisting males as allies can help influence cultural attitudes. Training programs can help women take an active part in International Relations and peace-building endeavours. Furthermore, encouraging research into gender perspectives in conflict studies may enhance academic debate and give evidence-based suggestions to policy-makers.

Conclusion

African women are not just victims in armed conflicts; they participate actively in African wars and peace-making as well as peace building, although a greater percentage of these women remain unsung. Nonetheless, some of the female combatants join willingly with the intention of escaping the crises in war situations, majority of the female combatants are compulsorily recruited into the fighting forces with male combatants utilizing various methods to lord it over them, including rape, killing of loved ones, or other threats to the lives of these women. In promoting and projecting the plight of women, especially in Africa, there is need for all round gender activism on the basis of which African women's movements should continue to pressure national and regional bodies to act equitably; there is also need for sustained advocacy for the transformation and recognition of the contributions, efforts and impact African women have made and are still making in the study of International Relations and Peace and Conflict study in Africa.

The role of African women in International Relations and Peace Studies is increasingly recognized as being vital to the achievement of sustainable peace and development across the continent. Despite historical marginalization, African women have demonstrated resilience, leadership, and a unique perspective that enriches the discourse on peace and security. African women's advocacy groups are instrumental in promoting gender equality within international relations frameworks through policy advocacy, capacity building, networking, research initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and active participation in global dialogues.

The inputs of African women not only empower them but also foster more inclusive governance structures that benefit society as a whole. Their contributions historically set a foundation for current engagement; their active participation in peace processes demonstrates their capability as negotiators; their leadership roles challenge existing norms; and their advocacy efforts push for systemic changes towards gender equality. As we move forward, recognizing and consolidating these contributions, and overcoming systemic barriers placed on the path of African women, will be crucial for achieving sustainable development goals across Africa.

Recommendations

To consolidate the impact of African women in these fields, it is fundamental to discourse these barriers through comprehensive strategies that promote inclusivity, enhance capacity building, and foster collaboration among various stakeholders, hence the recommendations below.

1. To increase African women's role in International Relations and Peace Studies, the following are recommended:

- development of educational programs that focus on international relations and peace studies for women at all levels
- establishment of mentorship programs for young women with experienced professionals
- promotion of policy advocacy at local, national, and international levels
- support for initiatives that integrate gender perspectives into peace-building frameworks and conflict resolution processes, and
- enforcement of international conventions, resolutions, articles, and protocols to enhance gender balance.

2. To increase women's representation in decision-making roles, the following are recommended:

- implementation of quotas or affirmative action policies
- promotion of female leadership through training programs
- networking of African women working in international relations and peace studies, and
- adequate and secure funding for women-led initiatives.

3. To complement the above, the following are also recommended:

- in-depth study and documentation of African women's roles and contributions to peace processes
- promotion of initiatives that involve men as allies in advocating for gender equality, and
- use of technology platforms (webinars, online courses, etc.) for advancing the knowledge of African women researchers, activists and peace workers.

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Corporate Governance and the Performance of Quoted Industrial Goods Companies in Nigeria (2012 to 2021)

Ogonna Clara Ngangah

Abstract

This study examines the corporate Governance and the Performance of Quoted Industrial Goods Companies in Nigeria from 2012 -2021 using data obtained from the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). The variables for the study are Board Size (BCIZ), Board Gender Diversity (BGD) and Board Independence (BIN) were used as Independent variables and Return on Assets (ROA) were used as the dependent variables. The findings of the study revealed that Board Size (BSIZ) has a positive and significant effect on return on asset (ROA) of industrial goods firms in Nigeria. Board gender Diversity (BGD) has a negative but insignificant effect on return on asset (ROA) of industrial goods firms in Nigeria. Board independence (BIN) has a positive but significant effect on return on asset (ROA) of industrial goods firms in Nigeria. Based on these results the study concludes that what matters most in the industrial goods firms in Nigeria is the size of the board as more board members will bring diverse ideas which if well harnessed will always lead to higher returns on assets. The study concluded that Boards of various firms in the industry should increase in size as this has shown to boost the performance of the firms. Female board members should be well utilized so as to tap from their moderate nature and improve on the performance of industrial goods firms. Measures should be put in place to prevent the dominance of the executive board members so that the independent board members can freely make good proposals that can be implemented for the success of the firms.

Keywords: corporate governance, quoted industrial goods companies, corporate board, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the Study

The success of a modern organization lies to a great extent on internal as well as external factors. While the internal factors are somewhat latent and caused by less competent and inefficient management team, external factors are caused by economic dynamics and/or regulatory bottlenecks. Thus, boards of directors must be free to drive their institutions forward, but exercise that freedom within a framework of transparency and effective accountability. This is the essence of any system of good corporate governance.

Corporate governance epitomizes the system of controls, processes, policies, rules and proceedings set up by the Board and Management of a company to ensure the smooth running of the company, maximize shareholders wealth and satisfy the interest of every stakeholder. Corporate Governance is the set of processes, customs, policies, laws and regulations affecting the way a corporation or company is directed, administered or controlled (Owolabi & Dada, 2011). In the opinions of Akingunola, Adekunle & Adedipe (2013), it has become a worldwide dictum that the quality of corporate governance makes an important difference to the soundness and unsoundness of an organization. Thus, effective corporate governance practice incorporates transparency, openness, accurate reporting and compliance with statutory regulations among others. The debates sprung following an increase in agency problem, which emanated from separation of ownership and control created in the case of *Salomon v Salomon*, (1897).

Recently corporate governance becomes a hot topic among a wide spectrum of people, government, industry operations, directors, investors, shareholders, academics and international organizations among others. Today's world has seen that organization transparency, financial disclosure, independency, board size, board composition, board committees, board diversity and among others are the cornerstone of good governance practices Shungu, Ngirande, & Ndloy (2014).

These variables are in the main agenda of most meetings and conferences worldwide including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Inyanga, 2009). Recently researchers have managed to come up with many definitions of corporate governance.

Strine (2010) pointed out that corporate governance is about putting in place the structure, processes and mechanisms that insure that the firm is directed and managed in a way that enhances long-term shareholder value through accountability of manager, which will then enhance firm performance. At the company level, well-governed companies tend to have better and cheaper access to capital, and tend to outperform their poorly governed peers over the long-term, on the other hand corporate governance reduce financial crisis. Currently many country leaders all over the world have increased concern over corporate governance due to the increase of reported cases of frauds, inside trading, agency conflicts among other corporations saga Enobakhare (2010). Corporate failure has recently been witnessed in both developed and developing countries with the reported cases of the East Asia crises of 1997/98, the collapse of Enron in 2001 and WorldCom in 2002,

One of the key constituents of corporate governance is the role of board of directors in overseeing management. Oversight function paramount on the board of directors is to checkmate the excesses of the managers because managers have their own inclination and may not always act in the best interest of the shareholders. Also, they are expected to be between company management and shareholders Oyedokun (2019). To fully understand the role of the board, boards of managements ensures that team of individuals whose competencies and capabilities collectively represent the pool of social capital are appointed as board members. In view of this, these team of individuals are expected to initiate and facilitate organizational change, formulate corporate policies, approve strategic plans, hire, advise, compensate, and, if necessary remove inefficient management, arrange for succession determine the board size subject to approval by shareholders. Doaa and Khaled (2018) added that, it is the responsibility of these team of individuals to safeguard and maximize shareholder's wealth, oversee firm performance, and assess managerial efficiency.

Consequent upon the above, the role of the board is quite compellingly complicated as it seeks to discharge diverse and challenging responsibilities as enshrined in the Nigerian Securities and Exchange Commission Code of Best Practice for Publicly Quoted Companies 2003. However, the relative neglect of board governance in Nigeria public policy is perhaps a reflection of the scarcity of empirical works in this area. Meanwhile, board of directors are criticized for being responsible for the dwindling in shareholders' wealth, both in developed and developing economies, particularly, in Nigeria where this study is based. More so, non-adherence to good corporate governance ethics have been argued as

the fore-runner of the fraud cases in and outside Nigeria since the corporate failure of major corporations, such as Enron Corporation, Tyco International, WorldCom, Global Crossing, Oceanic bank Plc, Afribank, Intercontinental bank, Bank PHB in early 2000.

Given the increasing importance of boards attributes in realization of high company performance, this study examined the effects of board attributes on the industrial good's firms' performance in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There seem to be no global consensus on the effect of corporate governance indices on various performance indicators of firms as there appears to be disagreement in respect of the effects of some corporate governance measures on some performance indicators of firms. For instance, in Adekunle and Aghedo (2014) showed that board composition and board size have positive relationship with financial performance while ownership concentration has a negative relationship with financial performance of selected companies in Nigeria. In a study by Kajola (2008), only board size and chief executive status has positive significant relationship with return on equity.

In another study on Malaysian companies, the results reveal that there is no significant relationship between board structure and return on assets as well as between CEO duality and return on equity (Ponnu, 2008). In a more recent study that modified the data make-up of the corporate governance correlates and increases the number of observations of Nigerian data, the regression result reveals a significant relationship and positive correlation between corporate governance and bank performance, Okereke, Abu and Anyanwu (2010). Unlike the Okereke, Abu and Anyanwu (2010) and earlier studies by the authors, this study attempts to examine the effect of corporate governance on the performance of quoted industrial goods in Nigeria

Also, the fall of companies in the world like Enron, Parmalat, Xerox, HealthSouth, Toshiba Corp, Lucent, Adelphia, Tyco, WorldCom, Maxwell pension scandals, Satyam, Reebok (Aggarwal, 2013; Surbakti, Shaari & Bamahros, 2017) apart from being attributed to poor accounting practices as a result of unethical conduct and misuse of power by both preparers of financial statements and auditors (Aggarwal, 2013), has also been attributed to poor and weak corporate governance (Gaio & Raposo, 2014).

This alarming rate of corporate failures as witnessed globally has necessitated this study as the failures have known no boundary and cut

across both the very big organizations and the very small corporate entities.

Most studies on corporate governance are focused on banks, a single aspect of governance, such as the role of directors or that of shareholders while omitting other factors and interactions that may be important within the governance framework. This study, however, seeks to explore the effect of corporate governance on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of corporate governance on the performance of industrial goods companies in Nigeria. The broad objective will be achieved using the following specific objectives:

- i. To examine the effect of board size (BSIZ) on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.
- ii. To evaluate the effect of board gender diversity (BGD) on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.
- iii. To determine the effect of board independence (BIN) on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The following are the Research Question formulated for this study

- i. To what extent does the board size affect the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does board gender diversity affect the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent does board independence affect the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H₀₁: Board size has no significant effect on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria

H0₂: Board gender diversity has no significant effect on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria

H0₃: Board independence has no significant effect on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be indispensable to many. The significance of this study will be useful to various organs such as

The Investors: The understanding of the effect of corporate governance on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria will enhance the ability of investors to exploit desired profitable ventures and continue to keep their vested interest in the firms.

Policy makers: It will enlighten policy makers more on the effect of corporate governance on industrial goods firms in Nigeria. It will shed light on the proceeds of corporate finance as well as formulating a trade policy.

Managers: Managers will read the findings with keen interest as a well functioning, effective and efficient board may succeed in checkmating their excesses or inadequacies.

Academics: However, the academics and the students of corporate finance will be provided with current trend in the knowledge of the effect of corporate governance on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.

Researchers: The finding might lead to enrichment of finance literature and act as a launch pad for further research.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study comprises of – industrial goods firms in Nigerian for a period of 10 years from 2012 to 2021. The 10 years period is because of the period that corporate governance became pronounced in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Corporate Governance

According to Kwakwa and Nzekwu (2003), governance is a ‘vital ingredient in the balance between the need for order and equality in society; promoting the efficient production and delivery of goods and services; ensuring accountability in the house of power and the protection of human right and freedoms’. Governance is, therefore, concerned with the processes, systems, practices and procedures that govern institutions, the manner in which these rules and regulations are applied and followed, the relationships created by these rules and nature of the relationships.

Corporate governance, on the other hand, refers to the manner in which the power of a corporate is exercised in accounting for corporation’s total portfolio of assets and resources with the objective of maintaining and increasing shareholder value and the satisfaction of other stakeholders while attaining the corporate mission (Kwakwa and Nzekwu, 2003). In other words, corporate governance refers to the establishment of an appropriate legal, economic and institutional environment that allows companies to thrive as institutions for advancing long-term shareholder’s value and maximum human centered development. The corporation has to achieve this while remaining conscious of its responsibilities to other stakeholders, the environment and the society at large. Thus, corporate governance is also concerned with the creation of a balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals. To achieve this, there is the need to encourage efficient use of resources, accountability in the use of power, and, the alignment of the interest of the various stakeholders, such as individuals, corporations and the society.

Corporate governance is now widely accepted as being concerned with improved stakeholder performance. Viewed from this perspective, corporate governance is all about accountability, boards, disclosure, investor involvement and related issues. From the foregoing, it is apparent that no matter the angle from which corporate governance is viewed, there is always a common consensus that corporate governance is concerned with improving stakeholder value, and that governance and management should be mutually reinforcing in working towards the realization of that objective. OECD (1999) opines that corporate governance is the system by which business corporations are directed and controlled. That the corporate governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different participants in the corporation, such as, the board, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders and spells out the rules and procedures for making decisions on corporate affairs. By doing this, it also provide the structure through which the company objectives are set, and the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance. A perfect system of corporate governance would give management all the

right incentives to make value maximizing investment and financing decision and would assure that cash is paid out to investors when the company runs out of viable projects i.e. investment with positive NPV Corporate governance attracts a good deal of public interest, because of its importance to the economic health of corporations, groups, countries, and society at large. But because it covers a large number of economic phenomena, it has become a subject with many definitions, with each definition reflecting an understanding of, and in the domain of an economic phenomenon being considered. In general terms, however, corporate governance deals with the way corporate bodies utilize their funds to generate financial wealth for shareholders, and social wealth for the community in which they are located. This latter consideration is what has now become known as the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of organizations. So, essentially, corporate governance deals with issues of accountability and fiduciary duty, in the main advocating the implementation of policies and mechanisms to ensure good behaviour and protect shareholders. There is also the perspective of economic efficiency, through which corporate governance should aim to optimize economic results with strong emphasis on shareholders welfare. Yet a third consideration accommodates the interest of all stakeholders, which call for more attention and accountability to players other than the shareholders; like the employees and the environment/community, for examples. So, in short, corporate governance is about how an entity is managed or run.

2.1.2 PRINCIPLES AND PILLARS OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Pandey (2005) opines that good corporate governance requires companies to adopt practices and policies which comprise performance, accountability, effective management control by the board of directors, constitution of board committee as part of professionally qualified, non-executive and independent directors on the board, the adequate timely disclosure of information and the prompt discharge of statutory duties. Of importance is how directors and management develop a model of governance that aligns the values of the corporate participants and then evaluate this model periodically for its effectiveness. In particular, senior executives should conduct themselves honestly and ethically especially concerning actual or apparent conflict of interest and disclosure in financial report.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) put forward a set of international principles of corporate governance. These principles were developed both in response to growing recognition

of the importance of governance to enterprise performance and to the spate of recent corporate failures in Asia, America and other parts of the world. The OECD principles are organized under five headings, namely: The rights of shareholders, The equitable treatment of shareholders, The role of stakeholders, Disclosure and transparency; and The responsibilities of the board.

The Rights of Shareholders: This principle deals with the rights of shareholders. It concerns the protection of shareholders' rights and the ability of shareholders to influence the behaviour of the corporation. The basic shareholders' rights include the right to: Secure methods of ownership registration; Convey or transfer share; Obtain relevant information on the corporation on the timely and regular basis; Participate and vote in general shareholder meetings; Elect members of the board; and Share in the profits of the corporation.

Equitable Treatment of Shareholders: This principle emphasizes that all shareholders, including foreign shareholders, should be treated fairly by controlling shareholders, boards and management. This principle calls for transparency with respect to the distribution of voting rights and the ways in which voting rights are exercised. The high points of the principles include: All shareholders of the same class should be treated equally. , Insider trading and abusive self-dealing should be prohibited, Members of the board and management should be required to disclose any materials interests in transactions or matters affecting the corporation

The Role of Stakeholders: A good corporate governance framework should recognize the rights stakeholders has, as established by law. Such a framework should encourage active cooperation between corporations and stakeholders in creating wealth, jobs, and the sustainability of a sound enterprise. To achieve this, corporate governance should ensure that: The rights of stakeholders are protected by law; The rights of the shareholders are respected; Stakeholders have the opportunity to redress any violation of their rights, Permit performance enhancing mechanism for stakeholders participation, Provides stakeholders with access to relevant information to enable them participate actively in the governance process

Disclosure and Transparency

This principle supports the development of high internationally recognized accounting standards. This stipulates that all the material matters regarding the governance and performance of the corporation be disclosed. This also underscores the importance of applying high quality standards of accounting, disclosure and auditing. Disclosure should include, but not

limited to, material information: The financial and operating results of the company, Company objectives; Major share ownership and voting rights; Members of the board and key executives and their remuneration; and Governance structure and policies information should be prepared, audited and disclosed in accordance with high quality standards, while the channels for disseminating information should be fair, timely and cost-effective.

The Responsibilities of the Board: The traditional view of directors is that they serve primarily to monitor management. However, there is an emerging school of thought that directors can and should add value to the enterprise (Fredrick, 1999). The principle, which reflects the value-added approach, suggests that directors are responsible for the strategic guidance of the enterprise in addition to monitoring management. Thus, the board has a definite function to perform to ensure the strategic guidance of the company, the effective monitoring of management by the board, and the board's accountability to the corporation and shareholders. In doing this, board members should: Ensure the independence of the board; Act on a fully informed basis and in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of all stakeholders; Treat all shareholders fairly, particularly in decisions that affect different shareholder groups; and Ensure compliance with applicable laws Other principles of corporate governance include Honesty, Trust, Transparency, Performance Orientation, Integrity, Responsibility, Accountability, Mutual Respect, Commitment to the Organization

PILLARS OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

In all fields of human endeavour, good corporate governance is founded upon the attitudes and practices of the society. According to Kwakwa and Nzekwe (2003), these values centre on the: Accountability of power, based on the fundamental belief that power should be exercised to promote human well-being; Democratic values, which relate to the sharing of power, representation and participation and participation; The sense of right and wrong; Efficient and effective use of resources; Protection of human rights and freedoms, and the maintenance of law and order and security of life and property; Recognition of the government as the only entity that can use force to maintain public order and national security; and Attitude towards the generation and accumulation of wealth by hardwork.. The above attributes have been reduced to four pillars on which governance is framed. These pillars encompass; Effective body responsible for governance, separate and independent of management, An approach to governance that recognized and protects the rights of members

and all stakeholders Institutions to be governed and managed in accordance with its mandate; and An enabling environment within which the institutions' human resources could contribute and bring to bear their full creative powers.

The Business Roundtable (2002) supports the following guiding principles of corporate governance:

1. The paramount duty of the board of directors of public corporation is to select a Chief Executive Officer and to oversee the CEO and other senior management in the competent and ethical operation of the corporation on a daily basis.
2. It is the responsibility of the management to operate the corporation in an effective and ethical manner in order to produce value for shareholders. Senior management should know how the corporation earns its income and what risk the corporation is undertaking in the course of carrying out its business. Management should never put personal interest ahead of or in conflict with the interest of the corporation.
3. The management, under the oversight of the board and its audit committee, should produce financial statements that fairly present the financial condition and result of operation of the corporation and make the timely disclosure investors need to permit them to assess the financial and business soundness and risks of the corporation.
4. It is the responsibility of the board and its audit committee to engage an independent accounting firm to audit the financial statement prepared by management and to issue an opinion on those statements based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
5. The independent accounting firm is responsible to ensure that it is in fact independent, is without conflicts of interest, employs highly competent staff and carries out its work in accordance with Generally Acceptable Auditing Standards. It is also the responsibility of the independent accounting firm to inform the board, through the audit committee, of any concerns the auditor may have about the appropriateness of quality of significant accounting treatments, business transactions that affects the fair presentation of the corporation's financial condition and result of operation, and weakness in internal control systems.
6. The corporation has the responsibility to deal with its employee in a fair and equitable manner.

2.1.3 Board size and firm performance

There are two opposing ideas on the relationship between board size and firm performance. The first thought holds that the lesser the board size the more it can greatly contribute to the company's success.

A study by Yermack (1966) found an inverse relationship between board size with company's value and favorable financial ratios such as profitability, asset utilization, and Tobin's Q. Empirical evidence of S. Cheng showed that companies that have more board members, the variability of the firm performance would be lower.

The second thought argued that a large board size will increase the firm performance. Board size is a determinant of the ability of directors to monitor and control manager. R. Adam and H. Mehran argued that the company should have a large board size to be able to monitor effectively. Large board size will support a more effective management of the company. Large board size will be easier to obtain information.

2.1.4 Board Gender Diversity

Board gender diversity is the mixture of men and women, people from different age brackets, people with different ethnic groups and racial backgrounds (Enobakhare, 2010). Currently board diversity is a highly debatable corporate governance topic. The topic put more emphasis on, gender diversity, i.e. the inclusion of women on corporate boards of directors, considered as an instrument to improve board variety and thus discussions Anastasopoulos et al (2002). This is calculated as the total number of women in the board over the board size in a given over a period. It's believed that board diversity affects corporate governance either a direct or an indirect effect on the firm. Though board diversity might be a constraint according to Goodstein, nevertheless it goes without doubt that for boards to be effective there is need for diverse perspective Ogbachie & Koufopoulos (2009). With reference to the relationship between gender diversity and firm performance, the few existing empirical studies show contrasting results. Dutta and Bose, (2006) reported a statistically significant positive relationships between both the presence and the percentage of women on the board of directors and market value added (MVA) and firm value.

2.1.5 Board Independence

Fuzi, Halim, Abdul, and Julizaerma (2016) submitted that, the board comprises of executives and non-executives who are either independent or

non-independent directors. The Independent directors specifically are the person entrusted by shareholders to represent them and will help to reduce agency problems.

As recommended by the Code of Corporate Governance and regulators, every organization must have a board room that consists of independent directors. However, mere compliance with the recommendations is not enough if the independent directors did not do their work well. In view of this, independent directors may not necessary leads to high firm performance.

2.1.6 Return on Assets

The return on assets ratio, often called the return on total assets, is a profitability ratio that measures the net income produced by total assets during a period by comparing net income to the average total assets. In other words, the return on assets ratio or ROA measures how efficiently a company can manage its assets to produce profits during a period.

Since company assets' sole purpose is to generate revenues and produce profits, this ratio helps both management and investors see how well the company can convert its investments in assets into profits. You can look at ROA as a return on investment for the company since capital assets are often the biggest investment for most companies. In this case, the company invests money into capital assets and the return is measured in profits.

2.2.0 Theoretical Framework

There are a number of theoretical perspectives which are used in explaining the corporate governance and performance of industrial goods firm in Nigeria.

2.2.1 Agency Theory

Agency theory is a theory that has been applied to many fields in the social and management sciences: politics, economics, sociology, management, marketing, accounting and administration. The agency theory a neoclassical economic theory Ping & Wing (2011) and is usually the starting point for any debate on the corporate governance. The theory is based on the idea of separation of ownership (principal) and management (agent). It states that "in the presence of information asymmetry the agent is likely to pursue interest that may Hurt the principal. Sanda, Mikailu & Garba (2005). It is earmarked on the assumptions that: parties who enter into a contract will act to maximize their own self-interest and that all actors have the freedom to enter into a contract or to contract elsewhere.

Furthermore, it is concerned with ensuring that agents act in the best interest of the principals. The agency role of the directors refers to the governance function of the board of directors in serving the shareholders by ratifying the decisions made by the managers and monitoring the implementation of those decisions. The focus of agency theory of the principal and agent relationship (for example shareholders and corporate managers) has created uncertainty due to various information asymmetries Deegan (2004). The separation of ownership from management can lead to managers of firms taking action that may not maximize shareholder wealth, due to their firm specific knowledge and expertise, which would benefit them and not the owners; hence a monitoring mechanism is designed to protect the shareholder interest (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). This emphasizes the role of accounting in reducing the agency cost in an organization, effectively through written contracts tied to the accounting systems as a crucial component of corporate governance structures, because if a manager is rewarded for their performance such as accounting profits, they will attempt to increase profits which will lead to an increase in bonus or remuneration through the selection of a particular accounting method that will increase profits. Arising from the above is the agency problem on how to induce the agent to act in the best interests of the principal. Jensen and Meckling (1976) defined agency costs: the sum of monitoring expenditure by the principal to limit the aberrant activities of the agent; bonding expenditure by the agent which will guarantee that certain actions of the agent will not harm the principal or to ensure the principal is compensated if such actions occur; and the residual loss which is the dollar equivalent to the reduction of welfare as a result of the divergence between the agents decisions and those decisions that would maximize the welfare of the principal. However, the agency problem depends on the ownership characteristics of each country. In countries where ownership structures are dispersed, if the investors disagree with the management or are disappointed with the performance of the company, they use the exit options, which will be signaled through reduction in share prices.

2.2.2 Stakeholders' Theory

The stakeholders' theory was adopted to fill the observed gap created by omission found in the agency theory which identifies shareholders as the only interest group of a corporate entity. Within the framework of the stakeholders' theory the problem of agency has been widened to include multiple principals (Sand, Garba & Mikailu 2011). The stakeholders' theory attempts to address the questions of which group of stakeholders deserve the attention of management. With an original view of the firm the

shareholder is the only one recognized by business law in most countries because they are the owners of the companies. In view of this, the firm has a fiduciary duty to maximize their returns and put their needs first. In more recent business models, the institution converts the inputs of investors, employees, and suppliers into forms that are saleable to customers, hence returns back to its shareholders. This model addresses the needs of investors, employers, suppliers and customers. Pertaining to the scenario above, stakeholder theory argues that the parties involved should include governmental bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade unions, communities, associated corporations, prospective employees and the general public. In some scenarios competitors and prospective clients can be regarded as stakeholders to help improve business efficiency in the market place. Stakeholder theory has become more prominent because many researchers have recognized that the activities of a corporate entity impact on the external environment requiring accountability of the organization to a wider audience than simply its shareholders. One must however point out that large recognition of this fact has rather been a recent phenomenon. Indeed, it has been realized that economic value is created by people who voluntarily come together and cooperate to improve everyone's position Freeman et. Al (2004). Jensen (2001) critiques the Stakeholder theory for assuming a single-valued objective (gains that accrue to a firm's constituency. The argument of Jensen (2001) suggests that the performance of a firm is not and should not be measured only by gains to its stakeholders. Other key issues such as flow of information from senior management to lower ranks, interpersonal relations, working environment, etc. are all critical issues that should be considered. Some of these other issues provided a platform for other arguments. An extension of the theory called an enlightened stakeholder theory was proposed. However, problems relating to empirical testing of the extension have limited its relevance (Sanda et. al., 2005). The stakeholders' theory proposes that companies have a social responsibility that requires them to consider the interest of all parties affected by their actions. The original proponent of the stakeholders' theory suggested a re-structuring of the theoretical perspectives that extends beyond the owner- manager-employee position and recognizes the numerous interest groups.

2.2.3 Stewardship Theory

Stewardship theorists suggest that directors have interests that are consistent with those of stakeholders. According to Donaldson and Davis (1991) "organizational role-holders are conceived as being motivated by a need to achieve and gain intrinsic satisfaction through successfully performing inherently challenging work, to exercise responsibility and

authority, and thereby to gain recognition from peers and bosses”. They contend that where managers have served an organization for a number of years, there is a “merging of individual ego and the corporation”. Managers may carry out their role from a sense of duty and responsibility. Psychological and situational review of the theory holds that there is no inherent, general problem of executive motivation.

“A steward protects and maximizes shareholders wealth through firm performance, because, by doing so, the steward’s utility functions are maximized” Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson (1997). The steward identifies greater utility accruing from satisfying organizational goals than through self-serving behaviour. This suggests that the attainment of organizational success also satisfies the personal needs of the steward. Stewardship theory recognizes the importance of welfare structures that empower the steward which in the long run provides maximum autonomy built upon believe and trust in the organization. This in effect reduces the cost of mechanisms aimed at monitoring and controlling behaviours (Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson, 1997).

2.2.4 The political model

The political model recognizes that the allocation of corporate power, privileges and profits between owners, managers and stakeholder is determined by how governments favour their various constituencies. The ability of corporate stakeholders to influence allocation between themselves at the micro level is subject to the macro framework, which is interacting subjected to the influence of the corporate sectors.

2.3 Empirical Literature

Bebehuk, Cohaen, and Ferrell (2004) also finds out that, board size, board composition, and whether the CEO is also the board chairman have shown that well governed firms have higher firm performance. Though, there is a view that large board are better for corporate performance because they have a range of expertise to help make better decisions, and are harder for a powerful CEO to dominate.

Adekunle and Aghedo (2014) examined the relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of selected quoted companies in Nigeria. Both return on assets and profit margin were adopted as proxies for financial performance and they served as the dependent variables while board composition, board size, CEO status and ownership concentration were used as proxies form corporate governance as well as the independent variables. Findings of the study showed that board

composition and board size have positive relationship with financial performance while ownership concentration has a negative relationship with financial performance of selected companies in Nigeria.

Cheema and Din (2013) investigated the relationship between corporate governance and profitability of Cement industry in Pakistan for the period 2007 to 2011. The study relied on data from 15 (fifteen) cement manufacturing firms and board size, CEO's duality and board diversity were chosen as proxies for corporate governance. Return on assets was used as the proxy for profitability and it served as the dependent variable. The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple regression method was used to carry out the empirical analysis. Findings showed that board size does not have any significant relationship with profitability while CEO duality has a significant effect on profitability in the 15 cement companies selected for the study.

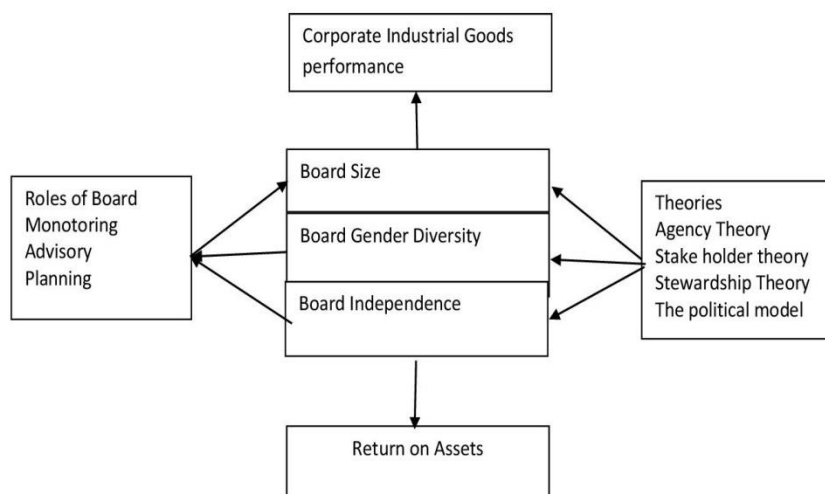
Sathyamoorthi, Baliyan, Dzimir and Wally-Dima (2017) carried out an investigation into the impact of corporate governance on financial performance of listed companies in the consumer services sector in Botswana for the period 2012 to 2016. The study adopted return on assets as proxy for financial performance as well as the dependent variable while board size, gender diversity, composition of executive and non-executive directorship, number of sub-committees and frequency of board meetings were used as proxies form corporate governance. Findings of the study showed that gender diversity has a negative relationship with financial performance. Also, the study revealed that composition of executive and non-executive directorship and frequency of board meetings have negative relationship with financial performance of listed companies in Botswana. Finally, the study revealed that only number of sub-committees has a significant effect on financial performance of listed companies in Botswana.

Dzingai and Fakoya (2017) investigated the effect of corporate governance structure on the financial performance of firms in Johannesburg for the period 2010 to 2015. The study relied on data collected from 37 mining firms listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Board size, board independence and sales growth were adopted as proxies for corporate governance and they were used as the independent variables while return on equity was used as the dependent variable. Findings of the study showed that there was a weak negative correlation between return on equity and board size while a positive relationship was established between board independence and return on equity. The study further revealed that sales growth has a weak positive relationship with return on

equity while firm size has a negative and weak relationship with return on equity.

George & Karibo (2014) studied the impact of corporate governance mechanisms on firm financial performance using listed firms in Nigeria as case study for two years 2010 and 2011. The study adopted a content analytical approach to obtain data through the corporate website of the respective firms and website of the Securities and Exchange Commission. A total of 33 firms were selected for the study cutting across three sectors: manufacturing, financial and oil and gas. The result of the study showed that most of the corporate governance items were disclosed by the case study firms. The result also showed that the banking sector has the highest level of corporate governance disclosure compared to the other two sectors. The result thus indicates that the nature of control over the sector have an impact on companies' decision to disclose online information about their corporate governance in Nigeria; and that there were no significant differences among firms with low corporate governance quotient and those with higher corporate governance in terms of their financial performance. Thus among others the study recommends that deliberate steps be taken in mandatory compliance with SEC code of best practice for all sectors in Nigeria.

Carter, D'Souza, Simkins, and Simpson (2007) examined the impact of board gender and ethnic diversity on the financial performance of all firms listed on the Fortune 500 over the period 1998-2002. Their results show support for the positive effect of diversity on financial performance measured by Tobin's Q. Smith, Smith and Verner (2005) examined the relationship between gender diversity and firm performance using 2,500 largest Danish firms over the period 1993-2001, and find that the proportion of women on the board have positive effect on firm performance. Oxelheim and Randoy (2001) examined the effect of foreign board member diversity on firm value in Norway and Sweden, and the result indicates a significantly higher performance for firms with foreign board membership.



Variables	Agency Theory	Stakeholder Theory	Resource Dependence Theory
Board Size	This theory holds that larger board sizes improve bank performance more than smaller board sizes.	Board size improves bank performance especially if their actions are geared towards achieving high shareholders value.	This theory favours a large board since it can enhance connections between a firm and external environment.
Board Gender Diversity	Female directorship helps to reduce agency costs since they can bring new insights to boards and make complex decisions	Board gender diversity has positive effect on financial performance	Women on a board can reassure stakeholders of the firm's diversity; increase its legitimacy; and the connection with its external environment.
Board Independence	Large proportion of independent directors helps promote effective monitoring of the firm's executives.	Both board independence and financial performance are linear	Both board independence and financial performance are linear

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted the ex-post facto research design method because secondary source of data was employed for the study. This is justified because procedure demands that this method be used when the data for the study are secondary. Hence, the study relied on historical secondary data collected from the financial statements of the companies under study to quantitatively investigate the effect of corporate governance on performance of the companies.

3.2 Nature and Sources of Data

Data collection is a crucial element in which the data gathered could make a major effect to the thoroughness and viability of the investigation. In this research, secondary data were used and were obtained from listed companies in the NSE from their existing financial audited annual reports uploaded in the internet, within the range of 2012-2021 accounting year.

3.3 Population of the Study

Population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics. Population can be seen as the aggregation of elements from which actual sample is selected. The population of the study comprises industrial goods companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE).

3.4 Sample size

By sample size, we understand a group of subjects that are selected from the general population and is considered a representative of the real population for that specific study. Sample size refers to the number of participants or observations included in a study. The sample size was drawn from 12 listed industrial goods companies in the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) out of which 7 were selected due to complete availability of materials.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Giving that observations were across several companies, the appropriate tool used was the simple panel least squares. By blending the inter-individual differences and intra-individual dynamics, panel data have several advantages over cross-sectional or time-series data. It is said to yield more accurate inference of model parameters

3.6 Model Specification

Model specification is the expression of a relationship into precise mathematical form.

Thus, this study introduced static OLS equation and following the research objectives, the functional form of the variable are hereby developed in form of

$$Y = B_0 + \dots B_1X \dots\dots\dots 3.1$$

The specification of any relationship will be guided by existing theory or empirical evidence from previous studies. The model relevant to this study is therefore adopted from the studies of Cheema, and Muhammad (2014)

Stated:

$$\text{Performance} = a + a\text{Boardsize} + a\text{Duality} + a\text{FCF} + \varepsilon$$

The model is modified in this study to

$$\text{ROA} = f(\text{BSIZ}, \text{BGD}, \text{BID}) \dots\dots\dots 3.2$$

$$\text{ROA} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{BSIZ} + \beta_2 \text{BGD} + \beta_3 \text{BIN} + U \dots\dots\dots 3.3$$

Where ROA is returns on assets, BSIZ is board size, BGD is board composition, and BID is credit committee composition, β_0 is the value of ROA when there is no corporate governance, β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are coefficients of the independent variables in the model.

Equation (3.3) is the general model specification. The static model assumes that all the variables are well behaved. That is, each of the variables is stationary at order zero.

Apriori Expectation

Denotations	Nature of Variable	Operational Definitions	Expected Sign
ROA	Dependent	Profit after tax/Total Asset	Not Applicable
BSIZ	Independent	Total Number of Board Members	Positive
DGD	Independent	Ratio of Total Number of Women to Board Size	Positive
BIN	Independent	Ratio of non-executive directors to board size	Positive

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Data Presentation

In order to answer the questions derived from the objectives of the study and equally test the subsequent formulated hypotheses, Panel least squares regression analysis statistical techniques have been employed. A 5% (0.05) level of significance or 95% confidence level was chosen for the purpose of the study. However, before a regression analysis was conducted; a descriptive statistic was carried out.

4.1.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

	ROA	BSIZ	BGD	BIN
Mean	3.597500	9.640625	15.82969	64.08000
Median	3.470000	8.000000	16.67000	68.63000
Maximum	36.77000	19.00000	60.00000	88.24000
Minimum	-26.37000	5.000000	0.000000	0.000000
Std. Dev.	11.24834	3.876536	15.64828	20.04076
Skewness	0.038986	0.910856	0.887696	-1.534795
Kurtosis	3.620940	2.535992	3.396024	5.152355
Jarque-Bera	1.044390	9.423838	8.823604	37.48005
Probability	0.593217	0.008988	0.012133	0.000000
Sum	230.2400	617.0000	1013.100	4101.120
Sum Sq. Dev.	7971.078	946.7344	15426.73	25302.82
Observations	64	64	64	64

Return on Assets (ROA) expresses the relationship between the net profit after taxes of the firm and its net assets. Like the other profitability ratios, the higher the ROA, the better. A low level of ROA may be the result of a low level of profit margin or low turnover of total assets which may partly result from poor loan performance. From Table 4.1, the combined ROA for the eight industrial good industries studied averaged 3.59% for the period under study with a minimum and maximum values of -26.37% and 36.77% respectively. Within the same period, board size (BSIZ) fluctuated between 5 board members to 19 while averaging about 9. Meanwhile board gender diversity (BGD) and board independence (BIN) fluctuated between 0% to 60% and 0.0% to 88.24% respectively.

Result of Normality Test

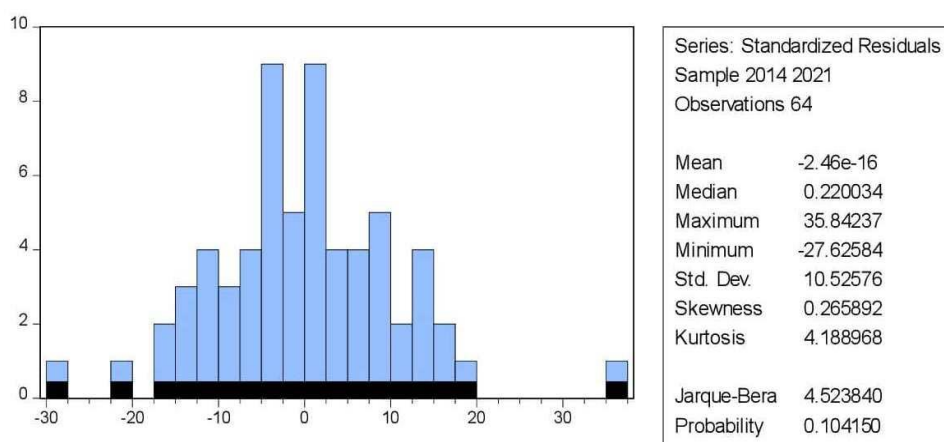


Figure 1: Result of normality test

In order to ascertain that data used for this study was normally distributed, so the result of the study could be used for inferences, the normality test was carried out. The Jarque-Bera Normality test which requires that for a series to be normally distributed, the histogram should be Bell-shaped was used. The result of the test is presented in Figure 1. From the figure the distribution has a bell shape as required. The null hypothesis for Jarque-Bera test is H_0 : Data follow a normal distribution at .05 level of significance. From Figure 1, the P-value is 0.104150, which is greater than 0.05. The Null hypothesis of normal distribution can therefore not be rejected. Thus, the data for the study followed normal distributed.

4.2 Data Analysis

Table 2 Panel Least Squares Regression

Dependent Variable: ROA
 Method: Panel Least Squares
 Date: 04/04/23 Time: 01:33
 Sample: 2014 2021
 Periods included: 8
 Cross-sections included: 8
 Total panel (balanced) observations: 64

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
BSIZ	0.971378	0.418553	2.320803	0.0237
BGD	-0.009854	0.087730	-0.112323	0.9109
BIN	0.017251	0.081631	0.211328	0.8333
C	-6.716649	5.067543	-1.325425	0.1901

R-squared	0.124667	Mean dependent var	3.597500
Adjusted R-squared	0.080901	S.D. dependent var	11.24834
S.E. of regression	10.78374	Akaike info criterion	7.654418
Sum squared resid	6977.344	Schwarz criterion	7.789348
Log likelihood	-240.9414	Hannan-Quinn criter.	7.707573
F-statistic	2.848457	Durbin-Watson stat	1.153571
Prob(F-statistic)	0.044900		

The regression result in Table 2 is a panel least squares aggregate regression of all the industrial goods companies under study. The result showed from the coefficients of the variables that Board size (BSIZ) and board independence (BIN) each has a positive effect on returns on asset (ROA) as expected. However, while the effect of BSIZ is significant at 5% level of significance, bin is not significant. Specifically, the coefficient of BSIZ of 0.97 and its probability of 0.00237 ($P < .05$) shows that board size has a positive and significant effect on industrial goods companies performance as measured by ROA. It implies that the Null hypothesis H_{01} of no significant effect of BSIZ on ROA is hereby rejected.

It shows that an increase of one unit increase in board size will lead to an increase of returns on asset (ROA) by 0.97 units.

Although not significant at 0.05 level of significance, the coefficient of board independence (BIN) is 0.017251 and its probability is 0.833 ($P > .05$) implying that we fail to reject the Null hypothesis H_{02} of no significant effect of board independence on industrial goods companies performance represented by returns on asset (ROA). However, it shows that an increase of 1 independent board director will result in an increase of 0.017 unit of returns on assets (ROA) which is however, not significant.

Also, the result of the least squares panel regression analysis in Table 2 shows that the coefficient of board gender diversity (BGD) is -0.009854 and its probability is 0.9109 ($P > .05$). This implies that board gender diversity (BGD) has a negative, but insignificant effect on ROA. It therefore implies that we fail to reject the Null hypothesis H_{03} of no significant effect of BGD on ROA.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.12806 shows that the variables used in the model can explain 13% of the changes in the value of ROA and 87% by other variables not employed in the model.

The F-statistic of 2.9 and its corresponding probability of 0.040 ($P < .05$) shows that the variables in the model have a joint positive effect on returns on assets of industrial goods companies under study and the effect is significant at .05 level of significance.

Table 3 Summary of the Hypotheses

Variable	Coefficient	Probability	Conclusion
Constant	2.167445		
BSIZ	0.971	0.0237	Positive and Significant
BGD	-0.0098	0.9109	Negative but Insignificant
BIN	0.0172	0.833	Positive but Insignificant

Test of Hypotheses

Decision Rule

If $P \leq 0.05$ reject H_0 ; If $P \geq 0.05$, fail to reject H_0

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Board Size has no significant effect on the performance of industrial good firms in Nigeria.

From Table 3 above, since the probability value is less than 5% ($0.0237 < .05$), the null hypothesis is rejected

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Board Gender Diversity has no significant effect on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria as measured by return on assets.

From Table 3 above, since the probability value is greater than 5% ($0.9109 > .05$), we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that BGD has no significant effect on the performance of industrial good firms in Nigeria as measured by return on assets.

H₀₃: Board independence has no significant effect on the performance of industrial good firms in Nigeria as measured by return on assets.

From Table 3 above, since the probability value is greater than 5% ($0.8333 > 0.05$), we fail to reject the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis which says that board independence has a significant effect on the performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The result showed that Board Size (BSIZ) has a positive, and significant effect on Returns on Asset for the aggregates values for the industrial goods firms. This result is consistent with that of Adekunle and Aghedo (2014) whose study of selected companies showed a similar impact.

A study by Sathyamoorthi, Baliyan, Dzimiri and Wally-Dima (2017) on impact of corporate governance on financial performance of listed companies in the consumer services sector in Botswana for the period 2012 to 2016 showed that gender diversity has a negative impact on firm performance just as is the case of this study although the negative impact here is insignificant. The study also revealed that composition of executive and non-executive directorship have negative relationship with financial performance of listed companies in Botswana. However, Carter, D'Souza, Simkins, and Simpson (2007) showed a positive impact of the proportion of women in a company on performance.

A study by Dzingai and Fakoya (2017) that investigated the effect of corporate governance structure on the financial performance of firms in Johannesburg for the period 2010 to 2015 showed that board independence has a positive impact on return on equity. This is similar to this study in which board independence has a positive impact on returns on assets although the effect is insignificant.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

The focus of this chapter was to highlight the findings of the study, draw conclusion as well as made recommendations concerning corporate governance and its effect on performance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.

1. Board Size (BSIZ) had a positive and significant effect on return on asset (ROA) of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.
2. Board gender Diversity (BGD) has a negative but insignificant effect on return on asset (ROA) of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.
3. Board independence (BIN) has a positive but significant effect on return on asset (ROA) of industrial goods firms in Nigeria.

The F-statistic of 2.9 and its corresponding probability of 0.040 ($P < .05$) shows that the variables in the model have a joint positive effect on returns

on assets of industrial goods companies under study and the effect is significant at .05 level of significance.

However, the coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.1246 showed that just about 13% of changes in the performance of Industrial goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the level of corporate governance. The implication is that there are many other factors outside corporate governance that contribute to the performance of Industrial goods firms in Nigeria. The F-statistics (2.84) with probability $p: 0.04 < 0.05$ indicated that all the independent variables used in the model have significant effect on the performance of Industrial goods firms in Nigeria.

5.2 Conclusion

Findings of the study have shown that board size has positive and significant effect on return on assets of industrial goods firms in Nigeria, at least within the period covered by the study. Board independence equally showed a positive effect on ROA, although the effect is insignificant. However, gender diversity showed a negative though insignificant effect on ROA of industrial goods firms implying that the moderating role of female directors is not well utilized in the governance of industrial goods firms in Nigeria. The study therefore concludes that what matters most in the industrial goods firms in Nigeria is the size of the board as more board members will bring diverse ideas which if well harnessed will always lead to higher returns on assets.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Boards of various firms in the industry should increase in size as this has shown to boost the performance of the firms.
2. Female board members should be well utilized so as to tap from their moderate nature and improve on the performance of industrial good firms.
3. Measures should be put in place to prevent the dominance of the executive board members so that the independent board members can freely make good proposals that can be implemented for the success of the firms.

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Writer's Brief Data



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Symbolic Characterisation in Nigerian Folk Narratives

Bukar Usman

Abstract

Folk narrative characters make sense to the local audience of folktale narrators primarily because of the social and symbolic values attached to the characters by the indigenous communities whose culture and cosmology gave birth to the tales. Unlike a modern short story, where the events of the story mainly determine how the character is viewed, the folktale utilizes the label placed on each given character by the culture to develop the conflict and unfold the theme or themes of the tale. This researcher undertook a study of one thousand (1000) folktales of Nigeria with a view to classifying them based on how the characters are socially valued and symbolised by their local audiences. The research was necessitated by the fact that the classification classes adopted by the well-known AT and ATU systems were found to be functionally inadequate when applied to folktales emanating from non-Western traditions, including Nigerian folk narrative traditions. Although there are other ways of classifying Nigerian folktales, this study undertook a classification of Nigerian folktales based on their character types. The result is an 8-character type classification of 1000 tales of Nigeria published in the voluminous book, *People, Animals, Spirits and Objects: 1000 Folk Stories of Nigeria*. This academic paper, adapted from my introductory notes to the book, sheds light on the symbolic values of Nigerian folk characters and why they can inspire a taxonomic distribution of Nigerian folktales.

Keywords: characterisation, symbols, social values, Nigerian folk narratives

Introduction

This exposition will briefly discuss two complementary topics. The first is the social values associated with folkloric tales while the second is symbolic characterization, a literary device which, in the arena of fictional tales, is socially mediated.

One of the most enduring qualities of folktales is their social relevance. Folktales convey and stabilize social values such as respect for constituted

authority, respect for spiritual ordinances, hard work, good neighbourliness, honesty, patience, courage, moderation, and love for one's family and kindred. The need to preserve stories that propagate these social values was one of the reasons the Dr Bukar Usman Foundation conducted the Pan-Nigerian tale-collection projects which generated the tales of the Treasury of Nigerian Tales series. *People, Animals, Spirits and Objects: 1000 Folk Stories of Nigeria* is one of the books published under the series. All the folktales I will be referring to in this paper are taken from this collection.

Social Values in Folktales

Folktales are vital aspects of any nation's folklore and this fact is clearly acknowledged by Emmanuel Obiechina, one of Nigeria's pioneer literary critics. In the informed view of Obiechina (27), folklore

embodies the values and attitudes (of a people) in its proverbs and fossilised saying, its belief in myths and religion, and its consciousness of its historical life, collective outlook and ethics, in its legends, folktales and other forms of oral literature.

Concurring with Obiechina, the literary scholar, Saradashree Choudhury (3-11), says: "The folklore in traditional African societies has a highly educative value. It imparts knowledge on the groups' history, values of warfare, morals, wise sayings etc". In many areas of the world, the tale is the vehicle by which these communally-generated attributes are communicated and entrenched in the consciousness of the people. In Nigeria and other parts of Africa where, despite the fast-fading trend, it is still orally narrated to family groups, the folktale reflects the social pulse of the common folk. Carroll-McQuillan (1993) elaborates on this pulse:

The African oral tradition embodies this pulse in an especially inclusive and expressive way. Stories in Africa weave music, audience participation, chants and choruses, even dance, into their fabric. Storytelling in Africa is an integral part of the culture. It is a common and effective means of teaching, preserving values and

historical events, entertaining and is also an essential aspect of most ceremonial rituals.

There is something about stories that make them appealing across all cultures, but folktales have a distinct rural flavour which makes them so fascinating. People love stories, especially stories that reflect their everyday realities; and sometimes the more removed the stories are from the common features of the immediate environment, the more charming they seem. This is one of the reasons many of us, rural- and city-dwellers, are initially attracted to folktales. Reading or listening to the stories gives us concrete benefits that urge us to explore further. Carroll-McQuillan (1993) explains:

When we explore folk stories, we explore ourselves and our many facets as human beings. We see the reflection of humankind: its strength, flaws, fears, and hopes. The settings and characters may change but the heart and soul feelings are always there. They are timeless; they are ageless...in folk stories, we encounter a mirror in which we can see who we are and what we have been. It is a mirror charged with echoes of the past and hints of the future.

Characters as Social Mirrors

Writers and narrators mirror the realities of their environment through the various aspects of their story, namely theme, setting, plot and characters. But no matter how profound the theme of a narrative, how exotic its setting, and how excellent its language, it cannot succeed in delivering a competent story without a character or group of characters.

Characters energize stories; they awaken and sustain our interest in the plot. Indeed, a story's plot cannot unravel without characters. Those actions or inactions which make reading fiction worth it all happen around the characters in the story. A story moves from one episode to another because of the activities of its characters. The way in which an oral narrator or a writer portrays his fictional characters, and this is very important, is known as characterisation. Bernardo clarifies:

What does characterization do for a story? In a nutshell, it allows us to empathize with the protagonist and secondary characters, and thus feel that what is happening to these people in the story is vicariously happening to us; and it also gives us a sense of verisimilitude, or the semblance of living reality...In the best of stories, it is actually characterization that moves the story along, because a compelling character in a difficult situation creates his or her own plot.

A story's characters interest us because we see our society, if not ourselves or those we know, through them. Characters are social mirrors. No matter the theme or orientation of a narrative – be that narrative a modern story or a folktale – the characters play the role of reflectors through which we see the variegated experiences of life.

A character's success in achieving this role depends on a number of factors most of which we need not dwell on here. But suffice it to note that the type of characters deployed by the storyteller is very crucial. While a major character in a modern short story tends to be round and generally realistically portrayed, the typical character we encounter in folktales tends to be flat in the sense of having one kind of personality trait. It should be stated that this apparent lack of complexity is compensated for by the stimulating symbolic nature of many folktale characters.

Symbolic Relevance of Folktale Characters

Although they are not endowed with complex traits, many characters we meet in folktales are significant and entertaining because of their attributes as symbolic characters. A symbolic character is one who reflects or represents an idea or concrete reality. Narrowed to folktale characters, this symbolic representation is invariably socially determined, thus ensuring that such characters personify culturally-fixed concepts, virtue or vice.

The symbolic nature of its characters is a major reason a folktale is set in a familiar world of people, animals, spirits or objects and why its characters are drawn from this easily recognizable terrain. For this reason, as well, folktales are characterized by formulaic plots and traditional motifs. All of these make the folktale a communally-delivered art form.

Symbolic attribution enables the narrator's audience (or the reader of a written folktale) to get inside the head of a character and predict what the next move is likely to be. Depending on the narrator's manipulation of the plot, during a story-telling session, or introduction of some elements of surprise, such predictions may turn out to be true or false.

The symbolic attributes of the characters are outside the prerogative of the folktale narrator. They are socially determined over several generations and involve a "sociopsychological" process which is outside the manipulative powers of the narrator. In this process, according to J.L. Fischer,

at least three semi-independent systems are involved: (1) the tale itself, considered as connected and rather tightly structured discourse; (2) the modal personality of the typical audience-narrator group for the tale; and (3) the social system relevant to the tale, including not only that segment of the society in which are found the active and passive participants in the tale (i.e., the "bearers" of the tale as an item of culture) but the pattern of the whole society.

In the tale-bearing environment, this connection is easily established since the concerns expressed in folktales are usually the concerns of the common folk whose worldview is shaped by the collective consciousness of the community. It is this communal consciousness that had, over time, attributed symbolic meanings to the folktale's typical characters. Thus, symbolic characters, in folktales, are cultural in origin and make customary sense because they spring from the age-old "memory" of a given ethnic or linguistic group. This description of cultural symbols by Carl Jung (93) is very definitive:

The cultural symbols...are those that have been used to express eternal truths...They have gone through many transformations and even a long process of more or less conscious development, and have thus become collective images accepted by civilized societies. Such cultural symbols nevertheless retain much of their original numinosity or spell. One is aware that they can evoke a deep

emotional response in some individuals...They are important constituents of our mental make-up and vital forces in the building up of human society....

Cultural symbols in the context of folktales function within a given social system which may be limited to a community or ethnic group or encompass many ethnic, linguistic or social groups. The relevance of these symbols, however, may be expanded, through migration and some other form of social integration, to wider social settings. Infact, due to cultural affinities among Nigerian ethnic groups and the prevalence of similar traditional motifs across folktales collected from different parts of the country, many stories of this collection have similar cultural symbols.

A good number of characters the reader would be encountering through the 1000 tales featured in this book are symbolic. It is, therefore, important to briefly examine the subject of cultural symbols as they relate to characters featured n Nigerian folktales.

Symbolic Characterisation in Nigerian Folktales

Symbolic characterisation is the use of characters as symbols. This is a device employed in all fictional narratives, oral or written. In the case of folktales, including Nigerian folktales, the symbolic value of the characters are culturally derived. In modern short stories, the symbolic relevance of a character usually rests on the character's engagements within the story. Unlike what obtains in the folktale, a character is not normally labeled outside the context of the contemporary short story. This is an important distinction worth exemplifying.

Two short stories from *Through Laughter and Tears: Modern Nigerian Short Stories* can be used to illustrate this point. In Helon Habila's "The Embrace of the Snake," Lamang, the heartless manipulator of peasants from his own community, is the symbol of oppression whereas in Wale Okediran's "Just One Trip," Grace, the drug courier who swallowed a wrap of cocaine now tearing her health apart, is a symbol of foolhardiness. Both symbolic meanings are achieved purely by the actions of the characters within the stories, and not by any external cultural attribution.

In a folktale, on the other hand, a typical character's symbolic meaning is ascribed by the tale-bearing culture. This culturally determined label or symbolic value is so strong that presumptively the characters are portrayed in the tale in the manner dictated by the narrator-audience culture. For example, the hyena, in the stories where it featured in this book, symbolizes awkwardness, greed and foolhardiness. These are the qualities attributed to it by the story-bearing cultures of northern Nigeria and this informs the narrator's portrayal of the hyena in any tale. This stereotypical characterization of the hyena delights the audience who has been culturally raised to expect the display of these symbolic qualities from the hyena.

A few examples of stories (published in Usman's *People, Animals, Spirits and Objects: 1000 Folk Stories of Nigeria*) featuring the hyena include "The Rabbit, the Tortoise and the Hyena" (No. 241), where the rabbit and the tortoise kill the hyena; "The Hyena's Offsprings and the Rabbit" (No. 253), where the rabbit fool the hyena and malnourish its offsprings; and "The Hyena and the Ant" (No. 278), where the hyena is almost drowned by the ant's schemes; and "The Wasp and the Hyena" (No. 303), where the wasp trick the hyena to drink itself to death.

Some other instances are "The Hyena and the Spider" (No. 352), where the spider defeats the hyena in a wrestling match; "The Hyena's Desire to Fly" (No. 436), where the hyena, on a monkey's mischievous advice, tries to fly from a tree top but crashes down and dies; and "The Boy, His Pets and the Hyena" (No. 649), where the hyena steals food, is killed and eaten by other animals. In all of these scenarios, the hyena was discomfited or destroyed by physically inferior opponents.

The hyena's self-destructive miscalculations above delight the audience of each of these stories because this character's behaviour in each instance matched its symbolic mould. Should the hyena behave contrary to its cultural tag, as in "The Hyena's Dawadawa" (No. 606) where the hyena displays uncharacteristic patience, the story would seem unreal and the symbol-guided audience would most likely find it uninteresting. Can any group of Nigerian youngsters believe or appreciate a folktale where the tortoise, the nationally-acclaimed trickster, is portrayed as honest, faithful,

truthful, reliable, or selfless? Not likely. These qualities are simply not in the tortoise's symbolic character. Because the tortoise's crafty nature is culturally fixed, a narrator trying to make it behave otherwise may lose credibility with his audience.

The fact is that symbolic value is ascribed to the character by the culture and the folktale narrator and his audience is customarily led to respect this. However, the narrator is expected to freshen up these characters by engaging them in interesting episodes. The narrator may even borrow episodes from two or more stories and weld them into one story. This is permissible as long as the narrator remains faithful to each character's symbolic trait.

Good narrators can also introduce elements of surprise by manipulating the plot or the motifs instead of tampering with the symbolic tendencies of the characters. This is a major reason narrators have created thrilling versions of a specific tortoise story without compromising the personality of the tortoise. In fact, the tortoise has featured in far more stories than any other single character can lay claim to, and in each story it plays a major role.

And the tortoise plays out its symbolic role mostly through its shell. At least 12 different stories in *1000 Folk Stories of Nigeria* are weaved around the motif of the tortoise's patchy shell. They include the stories numbered 281, 332, 343, 366, 371, 372, 388, 396, 499, 502, 591 and 937. In all of these stories, the tortoise is characterized in accordance with its symbolic nature.

Symbolic values differ not only from one animal character to another but also from one narrator-audience environment to another. While the tortoise features prominently in the oral narrative of every region of Nigeria, some other interesting animal characters feature mainly in tales associated with a particular linguistic or regional group. A good example is Gizo, a popular character found in many folktales from northern Nigeria. Although the rabbit can play different symbolic roles in other areas of Nigeria, for the Fulani it symbolises cleverness in a self-serving sense. All in all, there is more cultural unity than variations among Nigerian groups.

Symbolic characters in Nigerian folktales are not limited to animals. People, spirits, and even some objects are imbued with symbolic meaning. In many tales of this collection, the king is characterized as a symbol of authority and social order. In some stories, however, such as in “The King’s New Robe” (No. 6), the king can diminish his dignified symbolic stature through ignoble or atrocious behaviour. Among the king’s subjects, some categories of individuals are uniquely symbolically represented. They include the old woman (symbolized as a mysterious rescuer or avenger), the juju priest (the communal prophet), the hunter (usually associated with bravery and adventure), and the orphan (a symbol of the triumph of providence over adversity). The orphan’s symbolic character accounts for the reason none of the many tales featuring the orphan in this collection portrays the orphan as a villain. The orphan is almost always a victim of circumstances who ends up triumphant through some fluke of good fortune, supernatural rescue or magical transformation.

Women are not so uniformly characterized. While they are represented as caring mothers in some tales, they are painted as vengeful mean antagonists in other tales. The latter picture is prevalent when narrators are characterizing the jealous co-wife. Generally, folktales simply reflect the roles the culture has traditionally assigned to women. The same cultural prerogative also dictates the way the menfolk are characterized in tales. Male and female characters, in general, play different roles – symbolic and otherwise.

Even trees are characterised symbolically in many of these folktales. The iroko and baobab trees symbolise mystery, strength, or fertility. “The Child from the Iroko Tree” (No. 878) and “Oluronbi” (No. 894) illustrate the latter symbol. But in spite of the strength of the baobab tree, the soldier ant (characterized in these tales as a symbol of wisdom, industry and resilience) successfully brings down the baobab tree in “The Cock, the Baobab Tree and the Soldier Ant” (No. 941) by attacking its roots.

It should be re-stated here that not only characters are of symbolic significance in folktales. Themes, plots and settings can also be used as symbolic tools. Indeed, the formulaic pattern of some plots may serve

useful symbolic purposes; and in certain stories involving supernatural elements, the setting of the folktale can be as symbolically important as the characters. But we have dwelt on symbolic characters in this essay because of the central place of the folktale's characters in initiating and resolving action. One can tell a story without a theme, plot or setting, although it is not likely to be interesting, but it is impossible to tell a story which does not feature at least one or two characters. A folktale is primarily about the characters. This is one of the reasons we opted to use characters in classifying the tales presented in this anthology.

Folktale Classification Systems

Of the best-known folktale classification systems, none can claim to be adequate enough to be applied universally. These systems are the Aarne/Thompson index (AT index), Aarne/Thompson/Uther index (ATU index), Stith Thompson's Motif Index of Folk Literature and Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale. Indeed, none of these has captured in its system all the vital aspects of the folktale.

While the first three systems listed above concentrate on theme and motif, the third concerns itself with the morphology or structure of the tale. An examination, for instance, of the classification classes adopted by the AT and ATU systems would indicate their limitations and the inadequacy of applying them on a global level. We have tabulated the main AT and ATU classes below.

Main Thematic Classes of the AT and ATU Index

Aarne/Thompson	Aarne/Thompson/Uther
1. Animal tales	1. Animal tales
2. Regular folktales	2. Tales of Magic
3. Humorous tales	3. Religious tales
	4. Realistic tales
	5. Tales of the stupid ogre
	6. Anecdotes and jokes
	7. Formula tales

The ATU classification, in spite of its greater thematic space, is inadequate outside the Western world where it has gained some regard as an

international taxonomical system. An attempt to fit the 18 classes of the collection, *A Selection of Nigerian Folktales: Themes and Settings* (edited by Usman) will display obvious inadequacies in certain areas. For instance, in which class would one place enfant-terrible tales? And what about those animal tales that make sense only within the interplay of human and animal characters, in which of the above tabulated classes will they be placed?

If the AT and ATU analytical systems were not positioned as global taxonomies, posing the above questions would have been unnecessary. Within the context of their originating Western tradition, these systems (especially the ATU model) are probably adequate for classifying most traditional tales from the Western and, to some extent, Asian worlds. Elsewhere, particularly in Nigeria where we have extensive research to rely on, the ATU index is inadequate, and this is not surprising since tales from Africa were not part of the data used in deriving its classes.

And recently, two Malaysian scholars (Harun and Jamaludin) attempted to develop a largely academic “conceptual model that envisions the connections of the three classification systems (Thompson’s Motif-Index of Folk Literature, the ATU index and Propp’s Morphology of the Folktale), which displays their cohesive nature to operate as one classification system.” (*Brackets mine*) While the sort of micro classification proposed by them is not our objective here, it is important to observe that in their parameters these systems are not broad enough to cover tales from every country of the world.

Folktale Classification by Character-Types

In classifying the 1000 tales studied by this researcher, a character-type classification deemed culturally appropriate for these tales collected from Nigeria was devised. Since Claude Bremond’s 1966 three-type classification model, further efforts have been made to classify tales by character-type. One of such efforts is the home-grown four character-type model used by Sekoni to classify Yoruba folktales in 1983. Sekoni’s four

categories are heroic, non-heroic, anti-heroic and a-heroic character-types (Sesan).

A character-type classification was used in grouping the 1000 tales analysed by this researcher. One of the reasons for using this type of classification was the need to celebrate the elements that make folktales vibrate in our memories long after they were told – the characters in the stories!

The character-type classification system deployed by the study broadly classifies the 1000 tales into eight groups based on the kind of characters or combination of characters featured in them. The eight categories are as follows:

1. **Human tales:** these are tales featuring only human characters. By “human,” we mean all human beings, including malformed ones.
2. **Animal tales:** these are tales featuring only animal characters. By “animal,” we include all living things apart from human beings and plants.
3. **Human-animal tales:** these are tales featuring only human and animal characters.
4. **Human-spirit tales:** these are tales featuring only human beings and spirits as characters. By “spirits” we include ghosts, fairies, elves, mermaids, and other supernatural “beings.” Living human beings are not included in this definition of “spirit.”
5. **Human-object tales:** these are tales featuring only human beings and objects as characters. By “objects,” we mean tangible non-living things (e.g, an isolated bone, a rock or the moon) personified to play such roles as speaking or moving from one point to another. “Objects” may also include non-human, non-animal living things (such as a tree) when they are personified to act like human beings.
6. **Animal-spirit tales:** these are tales featuring only animal and spirit characters.
7. **Animal-object tales:** these are tales featuring only animal and personified-object characters (“object” here is as defined above).

8. **Multiple-character tales:** these are tales featuring characters derived from three or more character-types as classified above.

It should be noted that each of the above tales classification, in being anchored on character-types, represents some basic unifying characteristics of the character drawn from the tales in each category. For instance, all animal tales are unified by the mere fact of being animals, as defined above. Also note that the emphasis here is on a *set* of characters (e.g, animals) rather than a specific character (e.g, tortoise). This classification, however, allows anyone who so wishes to explore the character traits of single actors (as we did, in this essay, in our earlier discussion on the deployment of the hyena and the tortoise as symbolic characters).

Tales Distribution by Character-Types

A total of the 1000 folktales collected from different parts of Nigeria, categorized according to their character-types, are distributed into the eight sections of *People, Animals, Spirits and Objects: 1000 Folk Stories of Nigeria*, as indicated in this Table.

Character-Type	Range of Tales	No. of Tales	% of the Entire Tales
1. Human Tales	1 - 233	233	23.3%
2. Animal Tales	234 - 563	330	33%
3. Human-Animal Tales	564 - 756	193	19.3%
4. Human-Spirit Tales	757 - 867	111	11.1%
5. Human-Object Tales	868 - 909	42	4.2%
6. Animal-Spirit Tales	910 - 938	29	2.9%
7. Animal-Object Tales	939 - 953	15	1.5%
8. Multiple Character Tales	954 - 1000	47	4.7%
	Total =	1000 Stories	100%

From the above table, one gets the impression that human beings like using animals to portray human behaviour, especially the foibles of individuals and the inequities in the society. Perhaps, this could explain why 33% of the tales (the highest for any singular character type) are animal tales. However, the bulk of the 1000 tales (62.6%) are stories featuring human beings in interaction with human and non-human characters.

Conclusion

As we have analysed, familiarization with the symbolic value of the characters heightens the reader's appreciation of the tale and its import. Characters play a central role in generating and developing conflicts in folktales, and conflicts are what make folk stories interesting to the audience. In whichever way conflicts are resolved, happily or unhappily, they ultimately teach some morals. These morals, no matter the cultural root of the tale, are usually universal truths. Understanding the social values represented by the characters enhances the reader's enjoyment of the story and the kind of moral truths drawn from it.

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