

Evidential Issues in Criminal and Civil Proceedings: A Comparative Analysis on the Impact of Criminological and Jurisprudential Perspectives

Daniel Leku Ishaya

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi*

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Abstract

This study examines a comparative analysis of evidence in judicial proceedings whether criminal or civil proceedings which require a sufficiency burden and standard of proof of facts. Without evidence the hand of the court is tied as the act of unsubstantiated claims, unverified or speculation involve untruths about misinformation and the criminal justice system must have concrete evidence before arrest and detention are made. It is wrong to arrest and file charges against suspect before looking for evidence. Evidence as something including, testimony, documents and tangible objects that tends to prove or disprove the existence of an alleged fact. Findings revealed significant differences of approaches and methodology in inquiry into treatment of evidence both criminal and civil cases in decision making, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of evidential rules and procedures safeguard tremendous influence and practice. The study integrates importance of legal and criminological paradigm to ensure that proceedings are fair, effective, and providing a comprehensive framework for evidence-based practice in justice system delivering.

Keywords: *Evidence, Criminal & Civil, Proceedings, Criminological, Jurisprudential*

Corresponding Author: Daniel Leku Ishaya

Background to the Study

A comparative analysis on evidential issues in Judicial proceedings seek to address issues in Criminological and Jurisprudential perspective. Criminology is a science of crime and criminal behaviour. Criminology is the interdisciplinary scientific study of crime, criminal behavior, and the criminal justice system, focusing on understanding the causes, patterns, and societal responses to crime. It draws from sociology, psychology, law, and criminal justice to analyze factors influencing criminal activity such as socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and individual psychology and evaluates the effectiveness of policies, prevention strategies, and rehabilitation efforts. By employing qualitative and quantitative research methods, criminologists aim to develop theories that explain crime dynamics, inform evidence-based interventions, and reduce harm to individuals and communities.

Similarly, it is a scientific study of the nature of criminology that provides the basic for the objective observation of evidence in a criminal proceeding. The elements of crime facilitate the proof of evidence in a criminal proceeding, for instance, in a criminal trial where a gun is presented as exhibit (evidence), as well as how the elements of crime be linked to this evidence to secure the conviction of the suspects whereby the burden of proof of criminal evidence rest on the plaintiff (state) rather than on the defendant (suspect)? Crime is an injury against the state. Since the state initiates the process of criminal proceedings, it has to provide the proof of evidence. Evidence is a crucial part or component of the legal process in the administration of justice system, serving as the foundation for proving or disproving facts in a case. Evidence in criminal and civil proceedings is key ingredients in the burden and standard of proof or fact findings (Wortley, 2025).

Evidence plays a pivotal role in both criminal and civil proceedings, serving as the foundation for determining facts and achieving justice. In Nigeria, the law of evidence is primarily governed by the Evidence Act, 2011, which codifies the rules and principles guiding the admissibility, relevance, and weight of evidence in legal proceedings. However, evidential issues vary significantly between criminal and civil cases, reflecting the distinct objectives and stakes involved in each. In criminal proceedings, the standard of proof "beyond a reasonable doubt" aims to protect the accused from wrongful conviction, given the severe consequences of criminal sanctions, such as imprisonment or the death penalty. Conversely, civil proceedings adopt the "preponderance of evidence" or "balance of probabilities" standard, reflecting the need for equitable resolution of private disputes without the necessity for absolute certainty.

This research critically examines evidential issues in criminal and civil proceedings, with reference to Nigerian laws. It explores these issues from both criminological and jurisprudential perspectives, highlighting the philosophical underpinnings and practical challenges inherent in Nigeria's dual legal system, which incorporates common law, customary law, and, in some regions, Sharia law. Additionally, the study analyzes the impact of these evidentiary standards on the administration of justice in Nigeria, drawing insights from case law, statutes, and doctrinal interpretations. The research underscores the importance of understanding these evidential distinctions to ensure fair outcomes in both

criminal and civil cases. It also highlights the need for reforms, particularly in the face of modern challenges, such as the admissibility of digital evidence and the interplay between statutory and customary rules. By providing a critical analysis, this paper aims to contribute to the development of a more robust and effective evidentiary framework in Nigeria's legal system.

A comprehensive examination of evidential issues in criminal and civil proceedings requires a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating insights from criminology, law, and social sciences. Legal evidence in criminal and civil proceedings refers to the facts, documents, or testimony presented in court to prove or disprove a crime (Federal Rules of Evidence, 2024). The purpose of evidence is to establish the guilt or innocence of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt. The law of evidence forms the very basis upon which facts are proved or disproved in any judicial proceedings (Diva, 2024). It is the wheel upon which judicial proceedings ride in our courts system. Hence, cases are won or lost in judicial proceedings on the sufficiency of evidence or lack of it in proof of facts in issues or fact relevant to the facts as issues generally (Chris, 2016).

In a legal parlance unlike criminological context, evidence may be given of facts in issue and relevant facts. "Evidence may be given in any suit of proceedings of the existence or non-existence of every fact in issues and such other facts as are hereafter declared to be relevant, and of no other provided that the court may exclude evidence of facts which though relevant or deemed to be relevant to the issue, appears to it to be too remote to be material in all circumstances of the cases". This affirmed section (1) of the Evidence Act is to the effect that evidence may be given of the facts in issue and relevant fact. Proviso (b) thereto is categorical that the section shall not enable person to give evidence of fact which he is disentitled to prove by any provision of the law for the time being in force. See *Kekong v State* (2017) LPELR-42343(SC). Per Eko, J.S.C (Pp 9-10, Paras. E.A).

In *tukur v UBA & Ors* (2002) LPELR-9337 (SC). the appeal court in its expository erudition defines evidence equities elaborately thus ... the demonstration of a fact it signifies that which demonstrate, makes clear, ascertains the truth of the very fact, or point in issue, either on the one side or on the other. This collaborates that in the legal acceptance the term "evidence includes all the means by which an alleged matter of fact, the truth of which is submitted to investigation, is established or disproved decision are to be based on truth founded on evidence, a primary duty of courts is to conduct proper proceedings (Seprebofa, 2021). Suffice is to say that criminology and jurisprudential stand points in evidential issues in criminal proceedings anchored on the body of knowledge regarding the social problem of crime and criminal behaviour in the society. It includes information regarding the nature and extent of crime and policies used in dealing with crime and criminals. This means that the criminology sometimes dwells merely on the information regarding the characteristics of criminal as evidence for the fact in the criminal and civil proceedings; the policies are then called penology (Devendra, 2019). The intent of criminological examination in criminal or civil issues or proceedings is to establish the burden of proof and fact in understanding the study of crime and criminal behaviour hence, criminology is the scientific study of crime and

criminal behaviour, investigating the nature and extent of crime the possible explanation to criminal behaviour including juvenile delinquency, functions of the criminal law, rehabilitations of the victim and the strategies for prevention of crime (Mahipal,2022).

Conceptual Framework

Evidence in criminal and civil proceedings anchored on the presentation of fact and burden of proof of evidence which is germane in the court of law. The burden of proof lies on the accused person. Criminal and civil proceeding were relatively connected to the facts finding and proves of evidence beyond the reasonable doubt whereby criminology hold degree in variety measure (National Academy of Science,2024). In criminal law and proceedings, when the accused person has been arraigned and he pleads not guilty, the accused is deemed to have put himself upon his trial (Chris,2016). The prosecution has a duty to satisfy the court beyond the reasonable doubt, that the accused person indeed committed the offence; this is done by way of evidence (Diva,2024).

Upon the satisfaction of this general burden placed upon the prosecution, it behoves on the defence to show the court why the accused should not be convicted of the offence charged. From the arraignment of the accused person down to the point of conviction or acquittal, the court consider certain evidential issues placed before it by the prosecution and defence (Seprebofa,2021). Some of the primary evidential issues which the court considers are the burden of proof and standard of proof. Section 216(4) of the criminal procedure law and section 212 of the administration of criminal justice law. The burden of proof sometimes referred to as onus probandi simply means the responsibility placed on a person who alleges the existence of a fact or situation to establish that those facts exist. Section 216(4) A previous conviction may be proved in the manner set out in part II of the Evidence Act or otherwise to the satisfaction of the court. Therefore, in criminal cases, the burden of proof is on the prosecution, he has a responsibility to prove the charge against the accused by adducing sufficient evidence capable of establishing the guilt of the accused person beyond every responsible doubt.

The position of the law is that whenever a party wishes to succeed in his claim by relying on certain facts, the burden of proof rests on him to prove that those facts exist as captured by the legal Maxim *ei incumbit probatio quid dicit, non qui negat* (the burden of proof rests on the person who affirms not the one who denies). The burden of proof in any suit or proceedings lies on that person who would fail if no evidence at all was given on either side (Chris, 2016). Evidence may be given in any suit or proceedings of the existence or non-existence of very fact in issue and of such other facts as are hereafter declared to be relevant, and of no others.

Literature Review

A comparative analysis of evidential issues in judicial proceedings reveals a nuanced intersection between criminological insights and jurisprudential theory. From the criminological perspective, extensive literature has documented the inherent limitations of certain types of evidence—most notably, eyewitness testimony and forensic methodologies. Scholars such as Saks and Koehler (2005) have underscored the susceptibility of forensic

techniques to cognitive biases and procedural errors, emphasizing that even scientifically grounded evidence can carry significant error margins if not continually validated. This body of work argues that empirical studies and technological advancements must constantly inform procedural reforms to enhance evidential reliability. Concurrently, jurisprudential analysis, informed by authorities like H.L.A. Hart and Ronald Dworkin, centers on the normative dimensions of evidentiary rules, insisting that the admissibility of evidence is as much a matter of legal philosophy as it is of empirical soundness. These scholars advocate for a legal framework that not only scrutinizes the probative value of evidence but also safeguards procedural fairness and due process. Further, contributions by Robyn (2010) and Kreß (2004) illustrate how judicial discretion plays a critical role in interpreting and applying evidentiary standards, thereby bridging the gap between abstract legal principles and the practical exigencies of courtroom decision-making. Ultimately, the literature suggests that resolving evidential challenges in judicial proceedings requires an interdisciplinary approach—one that harmonizes the empirical critiques of forensic science with the doctrinal imperatives of legal theory, ensuring that the pursuit of justice remains both scientifically informed and philosophically sound.

The literature on evidentiary issues in judicial proceedings reveals a multifaceted debate that intertwines criminological insights with jurisprudential principles. Comparative studies have long noted that the procedural model—whether adversarial or inquisitorial—profoundly affects evidentiary thresholds and exclusionary practices. For instance, Damaska's seminal work (1973) argued that evidentiary barriers to conviction are inherently linked to the underlying judicial model, a view that has been reinforced by subsequent research emphasizing how the adversarial system (typified by U.S. practices) relies on exclusionary rules to deter police misconduct and safeguard constitutional rights (e.g., *Mapp v. Ohio*, 1961), whereas many civil law systems prioritize a truth-finding mechanism, albeit with fewer procedural protections. Jurisprudential scholars like Doron Menashe have advanced the concept that evidentiary rules must strike a balance between the epistemic goal of discovering the truth and the normative imperative of protecting the innocent, thereby advocating for an unequal allocation of error risk in criminal trials. This perspective, which underscores the importance of minimizing wrongful convictions, is supported by empirical research on judicial decision-making by Konečni and Ebbesen, who demonstrated that effective evidence integration is central to fair adjudication. Moreover, emerging frameworks such as the European Investigation Order illustrate how contemporary cross-border cooperation is reshaping evidentiary practices by harmonizing diverse national standards under mutual recognition principles. Overall, the comparative analysis in this literature not only highlights divergent approaches to evidentiary admissibility across legal systems but also calls for a nuanced, context-sensitive reform that reconciles the demands of accuracy with the protection of fundamental rights.

Scholars in comparative criminal law have long emphasized that evidentiary obstacles are not mere technicalities but crucial determinants of judicial outcomes. For instance, Mirjan Damaska's seminal work, "Evidentiary Barriers to Conviction and Two Models of Criminal Procedure," argues that differences in evidentiary thresholds can influence both the rate of

wrongful convictions and the overall efficiency of the criminal justice process. Damaska demonstrates that, in common law systems, stringent evidentiary rules may serve as a safeguard against convicting the innocent, yet they may also inadvertently allow guilty individuals to evade prosecution. Similarly, Luis E. Chiesa's analysis in "Comparative Criminal Law in The Oxford Handbook of Criminal Law" underlines that the evolution of evidentiary standards reflects broader socio-legal values and the divergent priorities of criminal justice systems across jurisdictions.

From a criminological standpoint, evidentiary issues are central to the function of the criminal justice system. Empirical studies have shown that higher evidentiary thresholds tend to reduce wrongful convictions—a core criminological objective—by ensuring that only reliable and corroborated evidence leads to a conviction. However, these same barriers can also impede the prosecution of dangerous offenders, thus challenging the system's ability to deter crime effectively. Researchers have pointed out that an overemphasis on procedural protections may sometimes compromise the fact-finding mission of the judiciary, thereby creating a tension between protecting individual rights and ensuring public safety. This balance is especially pertinent in cases where forensic science and digital evidence play an increasingly prominent role, necessitating continuous adjustments in evidentiary protocols to accommodate technological advancements while preserving constitutional safeguards.

In contrast, the jurisprudential perspective scrutinizes the normative frameworks that underpin evidentiary rules. Jurisprudential analysis often centers on issues such as the admissibility of hearsay, the application of the exclusionary rule, and the conceptualization of "evidentiary reliability." For example, cases like *R v Horncastle* in the United Kingdom have illustrated how courts grapple with the "sole or decisive" rule when considering hearsay evidence. The decision in *Horncastle* underscores a key jurisprudential debate: whether domestic legal systems should strictly adhere to European human rights standards or adapt these norms in light of longstanding common law traditions. Jurists argue that while European jurisprudence tends to impose strict limits on the use of untested evidence, common law systems have developed a more flexible, albeit sometimes inconsistent, approach to safeguarding the rights of the accused.

Moreover, the comparative analysis extends to a discussion of the theoretical justifications for different evidentiary rules. Traditional doctrines, such as Blackstone's ratio—which posits that it is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent be punished—highlight the moral and legal imperatives that inform evidentiary standards. This principle, deeply rooted in both historical and modern legal thought, continues to influence debates over the burden of proof and the acceptable margins for error in judicial determinations. Contemporary scholars, including Daniel Epps and Laura Appleman, have revisited this principle to argue for a more nuanced, perhaps quantitatively informed, articulation of "beyond a reasonable doubt" that aligns with both criminological objectives and jurisprudential fairness.

When the two perspectives are compared, it becomes clear that evidential issues in judicial proceedings are at the nexus of practical crime control and theoretical legal analysis. The criminological perspective prioritizes outcomes—minimizing wrongful convictions and maximizing public safety—while the jurisprudential approach is concerned with the integrity of legal processes and the protection of constitutional rights. This divergence is evident in the varied approaches adopted by common law and civil law jurisdictions. In common law systems, for example, the adversarial process places significant weight on cross-examination and the adversarial presentation of evidence, whereas in civil law systems, the inquisitorial model allows judges a more active role in evidence evaluation. Such differences not only affect case outcomes but also reflect broader societal values regarding justice and fairness.

The literature on evidential issues in judicial proceedings demonstrates that a comparative analysis must account for both the criminological consequences and the jurisprudential rationales of evidentiary rules. While rigorous evidentiary standards are essential to prevent the wrongful conviction of innocent individuals, they must be balanced against the need to ensure that dangerous offenders are effectively prosecuted. The dynamic tension between these objectives continues to shape reforms and debates in legal systems around the world. Future research would benefit from integrating empirical findings with normative analysis, thereby offering a more comprehensive framework for understanding how evidentiary issues impact both the legitimacy and effectiveness of judicial proceedings.

Methodology of the Research Study

Analytical Research Method

Analytical research aims primarily of exploring the exiting law whereby a researcher a researcher who has decided to undertake analytical research to ensure that they use on the available facts or information and analyses them in order to make critical evaluation. So many areas could be subjects of analytical research which may embark on research on subjects such as the 1999 constitution, administration of criminal justice Act, landmark judgments of Courts, law of evidence (electric evidence), contract, criminal law, criminal procedure and civil law amongst others.

A researcher undertakes this type of study because the study will avail the society with the knowledge of the evidential issues in judicial proceedings whereby the entire framework of the laws of the society. This will help him to not only analyse well but also to arrive at acceptance conclusions. On a general note, an analytical has to hunt for the relevant statutory laws (primary sources) and the secondary sources for the purpose of analysis, reasoning, draining conclusions and making useful suggestions to contribute to knowledge and to help the society. In analytical research, analysis is done on aspect of law, to determine what the present position is on a particular given subject matter. This involves painstaking reading of books; pieces of legislation or law repots. The issue at stake could be the present position of ultra vires acts of companies under Nigeria law, multinational or transnational corporations and opinions of certain issues.

Secondary Sources

The secondary sources are sources of legal frameworks describing interpreting and creating law. Secondary sources are part carrying out a doctrinal legal source do. Secondary sources are opinions of legal scholars, commentators, philosophers or jurists on what the law is saying. Basically, secondary sources could be classified into the following groups. Textbooks, treatises, journals, commentaries, periodicals, magazines, Newspaper, dictionaries, encyclopedias, Hansard and parliamentary bulletins, unpublished works such as thesis and dissertations, monographs, lecture notes, seminar paper, government reports such as white paper and internal material.

Secondary source of data collection was used for the purpose of the research under investigation. Secondary data may be raw data, collected and stored by organization, court, library whereby a researcher employed to serve the same purpose in data extracted from documentary evidence, public records, textbooks, journals, internet, WhatsApp, newspaper, magazine articles, non-written documents include videotapes, CD-ROMS, pictures, drawing, films, recorded television, documentaries, oral evidence, report. Survey based qualitative methods were originally collected through In-depth interviews and observations to gain insight into offender motivations and behaviors. Such data could cover a variety of subjects, but they are usually available as simple data, tables as a computer readable matrix of data source. This implies that evidence in secondary source were standardized, qualitative and fact findings of proof of evidence which are usually based on documentary data, survey based secondary source or amalgamation from these two sources usually combine different data set to form another data set in the burden of proof of evidence in proceedings.

Classification of Evidence

Oral Evidence

Oral evidence is otherwise called Parol evidence. It is the viva-voce testimony of a witness offered in judicial proceedings. Similarly, there is hardly a trial where oral evidence is not employed during judicial proceedings. Witnesses are expected to be sworn or affirmed before they give evidence, hence a witness before giving evidence in court must be sworn or affirmed. In *Mbele vs The State* (Supra), the supreme court explained the steps to be taken by the trial court to test the competence of a child to give evidence under the old E.A 2004. The evidence Act 2011 specifies 14 years as the age upon which a witness acquires the capacity to give sworn evidence and, in that instance, no corroboration is needed (Diva, 2024).

Direct Evidence

Evidence being direct simply means that a person given such evidence must be personal knowledge of it. It must flow from the person who saw the fact, heard the fact, perceived the fact, or holds the opinion on the grounds being contended. According to the Supreme Court in *Ahmed v State* PER AYoola JSC observed thus as it relates to direct evidence. direct evidence is evidence of a fact in issue. When it is testimonial evidence, it is evidence of the witness who claims personal knowledge of the fact he testifies about ... See section 126 of the Evidence Act.

Hearsay Evidence

The Evidence Act Cap E14LFN 2004 did not define what hearsay evidence is, however by section 37 of the Evidence Act 2011 hearsay evidence has been defined. The section states. Hearsay evidence means a statement of oral or written made otherwise than by a witness in a proceeding. Contained or recorded in a book, document, or any record whatever, proof of which is not admissible under any provisions of this Act, which is tendered in evidence for the purpose of proving the truth of the matter stated in it (Chris,2011). Section 38 of the Act provides for the hearsay evidence rule. Thus, it has been held in *Osho vs State* that for a statement to be hearsay evidence its source, origin or author must be a person other than the witness saying or repeating it in court and the purpose of tendering it must be prove that the facts asserted in the previous statement.

Original Evidence

A piece of evidence may be hearsay or original. Evidence which may otherwise take the form of hearsay evidence may not be hearsay after all. The Osbon Concise Law Dictionary defines original evidence as evidence which has independent probative force of its own. The Supreme Court in *Udedibia & Ors v State PER MADARIKAN JSC* put it... whereas in the instance case direct testimony of eyewitness is not available, the court is permitted to infer from the facts proved the existence of the guilt of an accused person from circumstantial evidence must always be narrowly examined, if only because this type of evidence may be fabricated to cast suspicion on innocent.

Real Evidence

The Osborn Concise Law Dictionary defines real evidence as that supplied material objects produced for the inspection of the court. Simply put, real evidence refers to any material or physical or tangible object, which could be given in proof of a fact in issue. Real evidence is otherwise known as objective or demonstrative evidence the area in which real evidence May therefore be required includes where the objects are moveable and can be presented before the court and where they are immovable and must be inspected out of court. The mode of tendering such object may be taken this form. Thus (a)counsel, (b). witness.

Facts and Facts in Issue

Perhaps a brief explanation should be given to what fact are and its cognate terms before we go forward. Facts has been defined by section 258(1) a of evidence Act to include (a) Anything or relation of things capable of being perceived by the sense. (b) Any mental condition of which any persons are conscious. Black's Law Dictionary defined fact is something that exist and aspect of reality. In the word of *AYOOLA JSC in Keyano v L.S.H.A & Ors...*” No reasonable court will grant a relief predicated on the existence of facts without having the facts put before it. Facts in issue Section 258(1) of the Evidence Act defines 'Fact in issue to include any fact from which either by itself or in connection with other facts the existence, non-existence or extent of any right, liability or disability asserted or denied in any suit or proceeding necessarily follows.

Relevancy and Admissibility of Evidence

The obvious conclusion that arises from our consideration of facts in issues above is that evidence of fact that is relevant becomes admissible. Thus, relevancy is the basis of admissibility and what is admissible is a question of law. While, what is relevant is a question of fact declared by the evidence Act to be relevant. The Court of Appeal PER UMOREN JCA in *Avong v K.R.P.C Ltd* puts it thus, on admissibility. It is my humble view that admissibility is a matter of law. The entire evidence is primarily dependent on the rules governing admissibility and inadmissibility of evidence. Whether a piece of evidence is admissible or not is dependent on whether the fact is established by the evidence is relevant to the fact in issue. Relevance is judged by the provisions of the evidence Act and not by any rule of logic. Generally, it is only facts which are relevant to the fact in issue that can serve as the foundation for the admissibility of piece of evidence. For a fact or piece of evidence to be admissible in evidence, it must be relevant.

Weight of Evidence

The weight of evidence referred to here, simply means the probative values a court ascribe or attaches to a piece of evidence produced before it. A court before whom evidence is produced has the power to ascribe or attach evidential value to such evidence considering or consideration to the circumstances of the case. Section 34(1) of the Evidence Act empowers the court to do so. Suffice is to say that the law of evidence requires facts which are the burden of proof and standard of proof. It is the responsibility of the accused to place on the person who alleges the existence of a fact or situation to establish that facts exist. While standard of proof refers to the quantity and quality of evidence that need be adduced in respect of facts or proof of facts for the court to take same as established (Dambazau, 2012).

The burden of proof in criminal case always rests on the prosecution to prove the charge against the accused person and in civil cases the burden of proof is usually but always on the claimant or plaintiff to prove his case against the defendant. See the proviso to Section 36(5) of the Nigeria 1999 Constitution as amended. Every person who is charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed to be innocent until he proved guilty; Provided that nothing in this section shall invalidate any law by reason only that the law imposes upon any such person the burden of proving particular facts.

Criminal Justice Administration

Criminal Justice involves the agencies responsible for enforcing criminal laws, including police, prosecution, courts, and corrections. According to Ashok (2012) Criminal justice administration referred to someone who has committed crime(s) and found guilty of certain circumstance of the offence in criminal justice process involving the police, the court and correctional institution leading to conviction and rehabilitation of the law breakers in the society. Criminal is any person who commits anti-social act whether he/she is convicted of committing a crime in the society.

According to Adamu (2016); Abasi (2017), justice is a utopian concept. He noted that the property of being fair or equitable or fairness, impartiality, equality, reality corresponds to the

state of nature in the traditional theory of social contract in the state of being just or fair in society. Justice signifies outstanding quality of equality or fairness of justice in the sense of moral virtue which is determined by the authoritative rule or rules of human conduct (Smah,2014). The fact of being equal or having the same value is the very essence of justice irrespective of social or cultural differences in the society. The rule of law should be adherent to all members without any bias, whether a person is rich or poor, ruler or ruled, master or servant.

Arrest

Arrest depends on the relevance or usefulness of the information or evidence and investigation obtained by the police investigating officer. Law enforcement agency show obsolete discretion power to arrest or not to arrest a suspect.

Investigation

Investigation is the first step and the process of search in investigation techniques used at any time before or after an arrest of a suspect. It is conducted for the purpose of obtaining material evidence to be used in the criminal court during trial (Hameed, 2017). The police officer has the right to search any person he takes into custody through a lawful arrest. However, this procedure follows a process whereby police investigating officers arrest someone who commits a crime or that which follows when the police observe a crime scene, these are investigated by the police and may be in form of interviewing witnesses or scanning of the crime scene for possible clues such as fingerprints and blood stains which may lead to an arrest. Similarly, during investigation, the police may detain briefly and search and seizure suspecting persons of incriminating objects such as weapon, a master key, a face mask, or relevant crime investigation (Ashok, 2012).

Booking

This refers to the act of recording legal documents issued to apprehend the law breakers as well as entering the suspects record and the nature of offence charged, the place where the offence was committed, time and period of offence should be clearly stated, the officer in charge will also identify the reason for an arrest usually done at a police station by the arresting officer. The suspect may be fingerprinted, photographed, and released after booking.

Initial Appearance

This is the process through which there is provision for initial appearance which means a defendant's first appearance before a magistrate. The suspect of statutory must be brought before a magistrate soon after arrest, and the magistrate as a neutral party explains to the suspect the later rights and the charge brought against him.

Preliminary Hearing

Preliminary hearing is the act of beginning of the proceeding of the court before determination of the judge; there are causes to believe that the defendant committed a crime and should be held responsible for trial. The defendant may waive the preliminary or initial in

which the evidence against the accused is seriously looked. If the hearing is not waived, the government's evidence is examined. In view of this, it is a prerogative of the magistrate may either dismiss the charges. It is also the discretion of the magistrate to grant bail or may refuse bail or use other forms to discharge (Zems, 2013).

Arraignment

The process of outlining the charges concerned the suspect must appear before a court for an arraignment. A criticism of the wrongdoing countable charges against the defendant may enter a plea. If the plea is not guilty, a trial date is set and if the defendant has a choice of a trial by a judge, that a choice or judgment is made at this stage upon which show performances. Certain pre-trial motions to amend are now open for the discussion which may be made, such as a motion or application made to a court orally in open court to change the venue of the trial or to admit facts presented in support of an assertion in the court to prove or disprove.

Reduction of Charge

There are reasons for the reduction of accusation show against the defendant scope of someone responsibility. The defendant may agree to plead guilty to lesser charges rather than stand trial on the original charge. In criminal justice administration, it is a common fact that the prosecutor may drop charge which may require the consent of judge or some in authority to dismiss charges.

Trial

In the situation whereby, the defendant does not plead guilty, the case is set for trial. The finding process in court is the act which all finding in a case is given to the offender that is guilty of the offence or not of the criminal charges.

Judgment and Sentencing

In the entry of guilt by a defendant, the arrangement or the conclusion of a court trial, the Judge returns a decision as to show the dishonest act whereby the defendant is innocent or not innocent. When that is done or the Judge pronounces a judgment of guilt, thus convicting the accused, the judge may proceed to set aside a date for sentencing; Followed by judgment which is the penalty assigned to a convicted person. During the time set aside pre-sentence investigation and recommendation are made.

Appeals and Remedies

This is a contract between the complaint sued and called upon the mistake made to complained of additional person may have a legal ground to call upon another to decide to vindicate ones which apply for the removal of a convictions to an appeal of decision by the court. They may challenge their confinement through various post-conviction remedies such as habeas corpus, which challenge the constitutional grounds to lawfulness. Act of being confined illegally because of the conditions of confinement which contravene the constitutional right (Ashok, 2012).

Incarceration

Incarceration is the act through which an offender has been convicted by a court. The first hearing or an appellate court convicted persons may allowed going back to the place and adequately monitored or placed on probation. Others are incarcerated in jail, prisons, work camps, boot camps, or other correctional institution.

Final Release from Criminal Justice System

The situation whereby a sentence is completed, inmates must be let go to regain his freedom. This is because some were let go under consideration in judgment after the end of the sentence through the parole process. The parole may likely let go to prison in order to serve the remainder of their term of contravene certain parole conditions. In contemporary correctional institutions, the administration of criminal justice is adequately followed as spelled out in the constitutional provision determined by law in criminal investigation.

Criminal Procedure Investigation

Criminal procedure investigation refers to the process of gathering evidence and building a case against a suspect. Steps in the investigation process (Mahipal,2022).

1. Initial Response: Police respond to a crime scene and secure evidence.
2. Preliminary Investigation: Police conduct initial interviews and gather evidence.
3. Follow-up Investigation: Police conduct further interviews and gather additional evidence.
4. Case Preparation: Police prepare the case for prosecution.

Evidential Issues in Criminal and Civil Proceeding

1. Admissibility of Evidence: Rules governing what evidence can be presented in court (Federal Rules of Evidence, 2022). Determining what evidence is admissible in court, considering factors like relevance, reliability, and prejudicial impact.
2. Forensic Evidence: Evaluating the reliability and limitations of forensic science, including DNA analysis, fingerprints, and other forms of physical evidence. Forensic evidence: Reliability and limitations of forensic science techniques (National Academy of Sciences, 2022).
3. Eyewitness Testimony: Assessing the credibility and reliability of eyewitness accounts, considering factors like perception, memory, and suggestion. Eyewitness testimony. Fallibility of eyewitness accounts and impact of suggestive questioning (Wells & Olson, 2023).
4. Confessions and Statements: Examining the validity and reliability of confessions and statements, including issues like coercion, duress, and Miranda rights. Confessions and false confessions: Role of coercive interrogation techniques and mental health issues (Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2024).
5. Direct Evidence: Testimony or physical evidence that directly links the accused to the crime.
6. Circumstantial Evidence: Indirect evidence that implies the accused's guilt through inference or deduction. Suffice is to say that the Witness credibility: The assessment of witness credibility and reliability in civil cases (Wells & Olson, 2003).

7. **Physical Evidence:** Tangible objects, such as DNA, fingerprints, or weapons, that are relevant to the case.
8. **Documentary Evidence:** Written records, such as contracts, emails, or police reports, that support or contradict the accused's claims. The use of documents, such as contracts and emails, to establish facts (Federal Rules of Evidence, 2022).
9. **Testimonial Evidence:** Expert testimony: The role of expert witnesses in providing opinion evidence on complex issues (National Academy of Sciences, 2009)
Statements made by witnesses, experts, or the accused themselves.

Evidential Standards in Nigerian Law

Admissibility of Evidence under Nigerian Law. The admissibility of evidence in Nigeria is a critical aspect of legal proceedings, determining whether a piece of evidence can be presented in court to prove or disprove a fact in issue. The principles guiding admissibility are primarily codified in the Evidence Act, 2011. However, the Nigerian legal system also considers common law principles, customary law, and in some cases, Sharia law. This section provides an exhaustive analysis of the rules, principles, and practical challenges surrounding the admissibility of evidence in Nigeria.

General Principles of Admissibility

For evidence to be admissible in Nigerian courts, it must meet the following criteria:

1. Relevance

Evidence must be relevant to the facts in issue. The test of relevance is whether the evidence has any probative value in proving or disproving a fact.

Section 1 of the Evidence Act, 2011 states that evidence is admissible only if it is relevant.

Case Law

In *Akinbisade v. State* [2006] 17 NWLR (Pt. 1007) 184, the court held that relevance is the primary consideration for admissibility.

2. Admissibility under the Law

Even if evidence is relevant, it must also comply with statutory and procedural rules governing its admissibility.

For instance, Sections 37–42 of the Evidence Act outline rules on hearsay evidence, and Sections 84–90 address documentary evidence, particularly electronic evidence.

3. Competence

The person or object producing the evidence must be competent. For example, a witness must be competent and sworn in accordance with Sections 175–182 of the Evidence Act.

Types of Evidence and Their Admissibility

Oral Evidence

Oral evidence refers to statements made by witnesses during trial.

Sections 125–127 of the Evidence Act provide that oral evidence must be direct. For example:

If it relates to a fact, the person testifying must have perceived it themselves.
Hearsay evidence is generally inadmissible unless it falls under specific exceptions (Section 37).

Documentary Evidence

Documentary evidence includes written documents, electronic records, and any tangible records presented in court.

Sections 83–84 of the Evidence Act govern the admissibility of documentary evidence, particularly electronic documents. These must satisfy specific conditions, including:

Proof of authenticity (Section 84(2)).

Identification of the device used to produce the document (Section 84(4)).

Case Law

In *Kubor v. Dickson* [2012] 4 NWLR (Pt. 1296) 42, the Supreme Court emphasized the need for proper certification of electronic evidence.

Real Evidence

Real evidence refers to physical objects presented in court, such as weapons or forensic evidence.

Real evidence must be directly linked to the case and properly identified during trial.

Hearsay Evidence

Hearsay evidence is generally inadmissible in Nigerian courts (Section 37 of the Evidence Act), but there are exceptions, such as:

Statements made in the course of duty (Section 38).

Dying declarations (Section 40).

Opinion Evidence

Expert opinion is admissible where the court needs technical or specialized knowledge (Section 68 of the Evidence Act). For instance:

Forensic Evidence Provided by Pathologists

Financial analysis by auditors.

Confessional Statements

Confessions made by an accused person are admissible if they are voluntary and satisfy the conditions outlined in Section 29 of the Evidence Act.

Courts have excluded confessional statements obtained through duress or torture

Case Law

In *Nwachukwu v. State* [2007] 17 NWLR (Pt. 1062) 31, the Supreme Court held that a confession must be free and voluntary to be admissible.

Electronic and Digital Evidence

With the rise of technology, the admissibility of electronic and digital evidence has become increasingly significant.

Legal Framework

Section 84 of the Evidence Act:

This section governs the admissibility of electronic records, requiring:

1. Proof that the document was produced by a reliable device.
2. Evidence that the device was operating properly at the time.

Case Law

In *Dickson v. Sylva* [2016] 8 NWLR (Pt. 1570) 167, the court emphasized the need for proper certification of electronic evidence.

Practical Challenges

Lack of technical expertise among judges and lawyers to properly assess digital evidence.
Issues surrounding the certification of electronic documents under Section 84(4).

Customary Law Evidence

Customary law evidence is admissible under certain conditions, particularly in cases involving marriage, inheritance, or land disputes.

Legal Framework

Section 16 of the Evidence Act: Customary law must be proven as a fact unless it is judicially noticed or codified.

Challenges

Difficulties in proving unwritten customary laws. Conflicts between customary law and statutory law, particularly regarding admissibility.

Exclusionary Rules

Not all relevant evidence is admissible. Nigerian law excludes evidence in the following instances:

Illegally Obtained Evidence

Nigerian courts have held that illegally obtained evidence may still be admissible if it is relevant.

In *Kuna v. State* [2013] 10 NWLR (Pt. 1362) 175, the court admitted illegally obtained evidence based on relevance.

Privileged Communications

Evidence that falls under privilege is inadmissible (Sections 192–201 of the Evidence Act), including: Communications between spouses.

Public Policy

Evidence that violates public policy or constitutional rights, such as evidence obtained through torture, is inadmissible.

Challenges in the Admissibility of Evidence in Nigeria

1. Judicial Discretion:

Judges often have wide discretion in determining admissibility, leading to inconsistent rulings.

2. Procedural Complexities:

Strict procedural requirements, particularly for electronic evidence, can hinder justice.

3. Corruption and Bias:

Corruption within the judiciary can influence decisions on admissibility.

4. Lack of Infrastructure:

Courts often lack the technological infrastructure needed to properly assess digital and forensic evidence.

Burden of Proof in Nigerian Law

The burden of proof is a critical concept in Nigerian law, determining which party in a legal dispute must prove their case and the standard of evidence required to meet this obligation. It serves as the framework for justice, ensuring that allegations are substantiated with credible evidence before a court of law can decide a case. The burden of proof is codified primarily in the Evidence Act, 2011, with supplementary principles from case law and judicial precedent.

Meaning and Legal Basis

The burden of proof refers to the obligation placed on a party in a case to establish the facts necessary to support their claim or defense. It is categorized into:

1. **Legal (or Persuasive) Burden:** This remains constant and refers to the duty to prove the elements of a case to the standard required by law.
2. **Evidential Burden:** This shifts during the trial, requiring a party to produce evidence to refute or support a particular point in contention.

Legal Framework

Section 131(1) of the Evidence Act, 2011: "Whoever desires any court to give judgment as to any legal right or liability dependent on the existence of facts which he asserts must prove that those facts exist."

Section 132: The burden of proof lies on the party who would fail if no evidence were provided on either side.

Case Law

In *FBN Plc v. Ndoma-Egba* [2006] 8 NWLR (Pt. 964) 228, the Supreme Court reiterated that the plaintiff bears the initial burden of proving their case.

Burden of Proof in Criminal Cases

The burden of proof in criminal cases is anchored in the principle of presumption of innocence, as guaranteed by Section 36(5) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended). This means that the prosecution bears the responsibility of proving the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt.

Standard of Proof Section 135(1) of the Evidence Act: The prosecution must prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt. The standard ensures that no individual is convicted unless there is a high level of certainty about their guilt.

Case Law

In *Woolmington v. DPP* [1935] AC 462 (a persuasive English authority adopted in Nigeria), it was held that the prosecution must prove the case, while the defense may only cast reasonable doubt.

In *Alabi v. State* [1993] 7 NWLR (Pt. 307) 511, the court emphasized that any doubt must be resolved in favor of the accused.

Shifting of Burden

While the prosecution retains the primary burden, the burden may shift to the defendant in limited circumstances, such as:

1. **Affirmative Defenses:** Where the accused raises a defense like alibi, insanity, or provocation (Section 140 of the Evidence Act).
2. **Statutory Exceptions:** Certain statutes place a rebuttable burden on the defendant. For instance, under the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, the burden may shift to the accused to explain how they came by their wealth.

Practical Challenges

High prevalence of delays in criminal trials, leading to prolonged detention without resolution. Weak investigative frameworks can lead to insufficient evidence to meet the burden of proof.

Burden of Proof in Civil Cases

In civil cases, the burden of proof lies on the party asserting the existence of a fact. Unlike in criminal cases, the standard is less stringent, requiring proof on a balance of probabilities or preponderance of evidence.

Standard of Proof

Section 134 of the Evidence Act: The court decides in favor of the party whose evidence is more convincing and carries greater weight.

Proof on a balance of probabilities means that a fact is more likely to be true than not.

Shifting of Burden

Once the plaintiff has established a *prima facie* case, the burden shifts to the defendant to refute the claim or provide a stronger counterclaim.

The burden may also shift where the defendant raises a counterclaim or affirmative defense.

Case Law

In *Elias v. Disu* [1962] 1 SCNLR 361, the court held that the plaintiff must first establish a prima facie case before the burden shifts to the defendant.

Specific Applications in Nigerian Law

Family Law

In divorce proceedings, the burden of proof lies on the petitioner to establish grounds for divorce, such as adultery or cruelty, as required by the Matrimonial Causes Act.

Land Disputes

In land cases, the plaintiff must prove title to land through one of the recognized methods, such as production of title documents or evidence of long possession.

Idundun v. Okumagba [1976] 9-10 SC 227 is a landmark case on the burden of proof in land disputes.

Election Petitions

In election disputes, the petitioner bears the burden of proving irregularities or malpractices substantial enough to affect the outcome of the election.

Buhari v. Obasanjo [2005] All FWLR (Pt. 273) 1 underscores the heavy burden on petitioners.

Exceptions and Rebuttable Presumptions

Certain circumstances create exceptions or rebuttable presumptions in the burden of proof:

1. **Res Ipsa Loquitur (The Thing Speaks for Itself):** In negligence cases, the burden may shift to the defendant to explain how the harm occurred without their fault.
2. **Estoppel:** Where a party is precluded from denying certain facts, the burden shifts to them to disprove those facts.
3. **Presumptions Under Statute:** Statutory presumptions (e.g., presumption of death after seven years of disappearance under Section 164 of the Evidence Act) may shift the burden.

Challenges in the Application of Burden of Proof

1. Corruption and Judicial Discretion:

Discretionary powers of judges sometimes lead to inconsistent application of the rules.

2. Inadequate Investigation:

Poor investigation by law enforcement often leaves the prosecution unable to meet the required burden in criminal cases.

3. Complexity of Cases:

In civil matters like land disputes or election petitions, proving ownership or irregularities can be complex and resource intensive.

4. Societal Issues:

Social and cultural factors, such as the influence of customary law, sometimes conflict with statutory principles.

Criminological Perspectives in Nigeria

Criminology, the scientific study of crime, its causes, effects, and prevention, provides vital insights into the social, economic, and cultural contexts of crime in Nigeria. Criminological perspectives are essential for understanding the prevalence of crime, its underlying causes, and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in addressing these challenges. In Nigeria, these perspectives are informed by a unique blend of colonial legacies, socio-economic disparities, cultural practices, and the challenges of law enforcement.

The evidential standards in Nigerian law are designed to ensure justice by establishing a framework for determining the reliability and sufficiency of evidence presented in legal proceedings. These standards differ significantly between criminal and civil cases due to the varying objectives of the two types of proceedings. The law of evidence in Nigeria, primarily governed by the Evidence Act, 2011, outlines the standards of proof required in both contexts.

Criminal Proceedings

In criminal cases, the standard of proof is "beyond a reasonable doubt." This is the highest evidentiary standard in Nigerian law and reflects the gravity of criminal sanctions, which often involve imprisonment or even the death penalty. This standard ensures that no innocent person is wrongfully convicted.

Legal Framework

Section 135(1) of the Evidence Act, 2011: This section explicitly states that in criminal cases, the burden of proof lies on the prosecution, and the standard is proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

Section 135(3): If the prosecution fails to meet this standard, the accused must be acquitted.

Judicial Interpretation

The Nigerian courts have consistently upheld the strict application of this standard. For instance:

In *Onubogu v. The State* [1974] N.S.C.C. 358, the Supreme Court emphasized that every element of the offense must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. In *Ebhomien v. The State* [1999] 8 NWLR (Pt. 613) 404, the court held that even if there is suspicion, it cannot replace proof beyond reasonable doubt.

Rationale

The high standard is rooted in the presumption of innocence, as enshrined in Section 36(5) of the Nigerian Constitution (1999, as amended). This principle ensures that the rights of the accused are protected, and the state bears the burden of proving guilt.

Practical Implications

The need for credible, reliable, and admissible evidence places a significant burden on the prosecution. Circumstantial evidence must be strong enough to exclude every reasonable hypothesis except the guilt of the accused (Adepetu v. State [1998] 9 NWLR (Pt. 565) 185). Civil Proceedings.

In civil cases, the standard of proof is "on the balance of probabilities" or "preponderance of evidence." This is a lower standard than in criminal cases and reflects the objective of resolving disputes equitably rather than punishing wrongdoing.

Legal Framework

Section 134 of the Evidence Act, 2011: This section provides that the standard of proof in civil cases is on the balance of probabilities.

Judicial Interpretation

Nigerian courts have clarified that the balance of probabilities requires the court to weigh the evidence of both parties and decide in favor of the party whose evidence is more probable or credible. In Mogaji v. Odofin [1978] 4 SC 91, the Supreme Court explained the process of weighing evidence in civil cases. In Iroagbara v. Ufomadu [2009] 10 NWLR (Pt. 1149) 452, the court held that a party must establish their case through evidence that is more convincing than that of the opposing party.

Rationale

The lower threshold in civil cases is justified by the fact that the stakes are usually financial or personal rather than penal. The goal is to ensure that justice is done in private disputes without the necessity for absolute certainty.

Practical Implications

The plaintiff must prove their case by presenting a preponderance of evidence, but the defendant can rebut it with equally or more convincing evidence. This standard allows the court to resolve disputes fairly, even when some uncertainties remain.

Jurisprudence Issues in Proceedings

Jurisprudence issue is concern with the study of the nature, scope, function, relevance, purpose, efficacy, and reform of the law. It refers also to the study of legal concept, doctrines norms and various institutional legal system. Suffice to say that jurisprudence deals with the study of subjects like morality, justice, and Islam by relating law with them and examining with critical analysis their nature of freestanding or inter-relationship (Chris,2011). Jurisprudence is primarily about for instance, to Oliver Wendell Holmes law is what the judges in Massachusetts say in the court room and nothing more pretentious in what law is. But to John Austine law is a command which is made by a superior being for an inferior being which must be backed by sanction (Chris,2016).

There are several exponent and school of thought that advocate for legal framework in different assumption of the jurisprudence as social existence in relations to the burden of proof in civil and criminal law evidence. Thus:

1. **Presumption of Innocence:** Ensuring that defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.
2. **Burden of Proof:** Allocating the burden of proof between the prosecution and defense and evaluating the standard of proof required. Burden of proof: Prosecution's responsibility to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt (*In re Winship*, 397 U.S. 358, 1970).
3. **Right to a Fair Trial:** Protecting defendants' rights to a fair trial, including the right to counsel, an impartial judge, and a fair jury. **Right to confrontation:** Defendant's right to confront their accusers and challenge witness credibility (*Crawford v. Washington*, 541 U.S. 36, 2004).
4. **Sentencing and Punishment:** Examining the principles and policies guiding sentencing and punishment, including issues like proportionality, rehabilitation, and deterrence.
 - a. **Jurisprudence of legal evidence** refers to the body of law and principles that govern the admissibility, relevance, and weight of evidence in court.
5. **Preponderance of evidence:** The standard of proof in civil cases, requiring the plaintiff to prove their case by a preponderance of the evidence (Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, 2022).
6. **Admissibility of evidence:** The rules governing what evidence can be presented in court, including relevance, reliability, and authenticity (Federal Rules of Evidence, 2022).
7. **Discovery and disclosure:** The process of exchanging information and evidence between parties before trial (Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, 2022).

Application to Law and Order

The jurisprudence of legal evidence plays a critical role in ensuring that justice is served in criminal proceedings. By applying these principles, courts can:

1. **Prevent wrongful convictions:** By excluding unreliable or irrelevant evidence.
2. **Ensure fair trials:** By allowing only admissible evidence to be presented.
3. **Uphold the integrity of the justice system:** By maintaining the integrity of evidence and the trial process.

Impact on Criminology Perspectives

1. **Crime Causation:** Understanding Crime Causation Legal issues in criminal proceedings can inform criminological theories of crime causation, such as the role of social learning and strain theory (Akers & Sellers, 2013). Understanding the underlying causes of crime, including social, economic, and psychological factors.
2. **Criminal Behavior:** Examining the dynamics of criminal behavior, including decision-making, motivation, and opportunity (Dambazau, 2012).

3. **Victimology:** Studying the experiences and impacts of crime on victims, including issues like trauma, recovery, and support.
4. **Crime Prevention:** Evaluating strategies for preventing crime, including situational crime prevention, community-based initiatives, and social programs.
5. **Crime Prevention Strategies:** Analyzing legal issues can inform crime prevention strategies, such as the use of surveillance cameras and community policing (Braga & Weisburd, 2010).
6. **Offender Rehabilitation:** Understanding legal issues can inform offender rehabilitation programs, such as counseling and job training (Lipsey et al., 2010).
4. **Justice System Reform:** Analyzing legal issues can inform justice system reform efforts, such as improving police-community relations and reducing recidivism (Minton, 2012).

Legal Perspectives

1. **Substantive Law:** Examining the content and application of substantive criminal law, including issues like mens rea, actus reus, and defenses.
 2. **Procedural Law:** Evaluating the rules and procedures governing criminal proceedings, including issues like arrest, search and seizure, and trial procedure.
 3. **Constitutional Law:** Analyzing the constitutional implications of criminal proceedings, including issues like due process, equal protection, and the right to counsel.
 4. **International Law:** Examining the international dimensions of criminal law, including issues like extradition, human rights, and transnational crime (Chris, 2016).
- Jurisprudential Perspectives with Nigerian Examples

Theoretical Framework

Jurisprudence, the philosophy, and theory of law, examines the principles and reasoning underlying legal systems. In the Nigerian context, jurisprudence provides insight into how laws are interpreted, applied, and developed, often influenced by historical, cultural, and societal factors. The interaction of multiple legal systems—common law, customary law, and Islamic law—creates a unique framework for understanding jurisprudential perspectives in Nigeria.

Natural Law Theory

Natural law theory posits that laws derive their validity from universal moral principles. This theory aligns closely with Nigeria's cultural and religious values. Example: The Nigerian Constitution recognizes the fundamental rights of citizens, such as the right to life, dignity, and equality (Chapter IV, 1999 Constitution). These rights echo the natural law principle of inherent human dignity.

Legal Positivism

Legal positivism views law as a set of rules created by legitimate authority, independent of morality. In Nigeria, the positivist approach is evident in the codification of laws and the supremacy of the Constitution. Example: Section 1(1) of the 1999 Constitution establishes the supremacy of the Constitution, emphasizing the rule of law over subjective moral interpretations.

Sociological Jurisprudence

Sociological jurisprudence focuses on the relationship between law and society, emphasizing that laws should reflect societal needs and values. Example: The Child Rights Act, 2003 was enacted to address the societal need for better child protection, incorporating international standards while considering Nigerian realities.

Feminist Jurisprudence

Feminist jurisprudence critiques legal systems for perpetuating gender inequality and advocates for reforms to promote gender justice. Example: Advocacy for laws against domestic violence led to the enactment of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015.

Integrated Criminological and Jurisprudence Theory

An integrated criminological and jurisprudence theory was adopted as a theoretical paradigm because the theory is an interdisciplinary framework that seeks to combine insights from empirical studies of criminal behavior with normative legal analysis. Rather than viewing crime solely as the outcome of individual pathology or purely social dysfunction, this approach considers crime as a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by biological, psychological, social, economic, and legal forces. In doing so, it not only examines the causes and patterns of criminal conduct but also critically addresses how the legal system defines, regulates, and punishes such behavior. This melding of criminology with jurisprudence offers a more comprehensive understanding that informs both scholarly debates and policy.

At its core, integrated theory in criminology emerged as a response to earlier, more reductionist approaches that isolated one explanatory factor over others. Scholars like Clarence Ray Jeffery, for example, argued in his 1959 work for a synthesis of psychological, sociological, and legal perspectives to explain criminal behavior—a view that laid the groundwork for more contemporary integrative models. Such efforts underscore that an offender's actions are not only a product of personal deficits or social disadvantage but also reflect the way legal definitions and norms construct the very notion of crime.

The jurisprudential dimension of this integrated approach emphasizes that law is not a static set of rules imposed from above but is dynamically interwoven with societal values and moral judgments. Legal philosophers and penal theorists, including Andrew von Hirsch, have stressed the importance of principles such as proportionality, fairness, and retributive justice within the broader criminological landscape. By linking empirical findings on criminal behavior with normative legal concepts, integrated theory facilitates a critical evaluation of

current sentencing practices and criminal policies, highlighting the need for justice systems that are both effective in crime control and consistent with ethical standards.

Furthermore, authorities like Messner and his colleagues have demonstrated that theoretical integration can bridge the gap between micro-level analyses of individual decision making and macro-level considerations of social structure and state power. This comprehensive perspective not only enriches academic discourse but also guides policymakers in designing reforms that are sensitive to the complexities of crime causation and legal enforcement. In essence, an integrated criminological and jurisprudence theory advocates for a holistic view—one that treats crime as a socially constructed, yet empirically observable, phenomenon, thereby fostering a criminal justice system that is as just as it is effective.

Jurisprudence and Judicial Decision-Making in Nigeria

Statutory Interpretation

Nigerian courts often rely on jurisprudential principles to interpret ambiguous statutes.

Example: In *Lakanmi v. Attorney-General (West)* (1971) 1 UILR 201, the Supreme Court invalidated the military government's expropriation of property, emphasizing the rule of law and the sanctity of the Constitution.

Judicial Activism

Judges in Nigeria occasionally adopt a progressive approach to decision-making, shaping the law to address societal needs. Example: In *Uzoukwu v. Ezeonu II* (1991) 6 NWLR (Pt. 200) 708, the Court of Appeal expanded the interpretation of fundamental rights under the Constitution.

Judicial Restraint

Conversely, judicial restraint emphasizes adherence to the literal interpretation of laws and deference to legislative authority. Example: In *Attorney-General of Lagos State v. Attorney-General of the Federation* (2003), the Supreme Court deferred to the National Assembly's authority on matters of concurrent legislative powers.

Challenges to Jurisprudence in Nigeria

- i. Allegations of judicial corruption undermine the application of evidentiary standards, particularly in politically sensitive cases.
- ii. Complexity of Evidence: Emerging types of evidence, such as digital and forensic evidence, pose challenges for compliance with the standards of proof.
- iii. Overburdened Courts: Delays in adjudication affect the ability of courts to thoroughly evaluate evidence, particularly in criminal cases.
- iv. Public Misunderstanding:

The public often struggles to understand why some cases are dismissed due to a lack of evidence meeting the required standard, leading to mistrust in the justice system.

- i. Balancing Individual Rights and Public Safety: Ensuring that individual rights are protected while maintaining public safety and preventing crime.

- ii. Addressing Systemic Injustices: Recognizing and addressing systemic injustices, such as racial disparities and police brutality.
- iii. Incorporating New Technologies: Leveraging new technologies, like forensic science and digital evidence, to improve criminal investigations and proceedings.
- iv. Fostering Collaboration and Innovation: Encouraging collaboration between stakeholders, including law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and defense attorneys, to drive innovation and improvement in the criminal justice system.
- v. False Confessions: The phenomenon of false confessions and their impact on investigations.

Comparative Analysis

The contrast between the standards in criminal and civil cases reflects the differing purposes of the proceedings:

1. Criminal Proceedings: Protect the accused from wrongful conviction due to the severe consequences of criminal penalties.
Require a higher level of certainty to satisfy the court of the accused's guilt.
2. Civil Proceedings: Focus on fairness and equitable resolution of disputes between private parties.
Permit decisions based on the probability of truth rather than absolute certainty.
3. Similarities: Both criminal and civil proceedings rely on evidence to establish facts and determine outcomes.
4. Differences: The standard of proof, burden of proof, and rules of evidence differ significantly between criminal and civil proceedings.
5. Criminological and jurisprudential perspectives: Both perspectives are essential in understanding evidential issues, with criminology focusing on the social and behavioral aspects of evidence and jurisprudence examining the legal framework and rules governing evidence.
6. Evidence Limitations: The limitations and potential biases of forensic science techniques.

Findings/Arguments

The comparative analysis of evidential issues in judicial proceedings reveals a complex interplay between criminological imperatives and jurisprudential principles. On one hand, criminology focuses on the empirical consequences of how evidence is collected, evaluated, and presented. Research indicates that the reliability and quantity of evidence play a decisive role in both deterring wrongful convictions and ensuring that the guilty are held accountable. For example, studies on evidentiary barriers suggest that higher thresholds may decrease the risk of convicting innocent persons while potentially allowing some guilty individuals to escape punishment. This balance is central to evaluating a system's effectiveness from a criminological perspective.

From a jurisprudential viewpoint, judicial proceedings must adhere to principles of due process and fairness, which in turn inform evidentiary rules. In common law systems, the adversarial model requires that each party independently presents its evidence before a

neutral judge or jury. In contrast, civil law systems typically employ an inquisitorial model where the judge plays a proactive role in gathering and evaluating evidence. Authorities in comparative law, such as those discussed by Zweigert and Kötz, note that these structural differences have significant implications for the administration of justice, influencing both the accessibility of evidence and the safeguards built into the trial process.

Criminologically, the effectiveness of a criminal justice system is often measured by its capacity to achieve factually accurate outcomes. Empirical research in legal psychology, including studies by Konečni and his colleagues, underscores the importance of how evidence is integrated into judicial decision-making. Their work shows that biases in evidence presentation or interpretation can skew verdicts, thus affecting both the conviction rate and public confidence in the system. Such findings highlight the necessity for rigorous standards that protect the integrity of the evidentiary process without unduly burdening prosecution efforts. Jurisprudentially, the debate often centers on the balance between protecting individual rights and ensuring public safety. Landmark cases in various jurisdictions have underscored that evidentiary rules are not merely technicalities; they embody fundamental values such as the right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence. For instance, decisions that refine the admissibility of expert testimony and the application of hearsay evidence directly impact the scope of judicial review and error correction.

In synthesis, the comparative analysis shows that both criminological and jurisprudential perspectives converge on the need for evidentiary standards that are both effective and fair. The adversarial system's emphasis on party presentation and the inquisitorial system's reliance on judicial inquiry each have their own advantages and drawbacks. By examining these differences through a comparative lens, policymakers and legal scholars can better understand how adjustments in evidentiary rules might improve the precision and fairness of judicial outcomes. Such an approach not only informs theoretical debates but also has practical implications for reform in diverse legal systems.

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of evidential issues in judicial proceedings requires examining both the criminological and jurisprudential dimensions of evidence handling in the justice system. From a criminological perspective, evidentiary issues are not only technical matters of admissibility but also play a critical role in determining whether criminal justice outcomes are just and effective. Criminologists focus on how evidence is gathered, the potential for cognitive biases during investigations, and the systemic risks of wrongful convictions. For instance, research by experts like Doron Menashe highlights how the allocation of risk of error is central to ensuring that the wrongful conviction of the innocent is minimized while still allowing efficient law enforcement. This analytical framework underscores the importance of using reliable, scientifically validated evidence and of scrutinizing forensic methods to reduce errors in criminal proceedings.

Jurisprudentially, the analysis centers on the doctrinal underpinnings and legal principles that govern the admissibility, relevance, and weight of evidence. Comparative jurisprudence

examines differences between legal systems—most notably, the adversarial model found in common law jurisdictions versus the inquisitorial model common in civil law systems. In adversarial systems, evidence is primarily presented by competing parties under strict procedural rules (such as those governing hearsay and similar-fact evidence), with cases like *R v Horncastle* serving as a leading authority on how hearsay evidence may be admitted while respecting an accused's right to a fair trial. In contrast, inquisitorial systems place a greater emphasis on the judge's active role in investigating and assessing the truth, which can lead to a broader, less formalized approach to evidence but also raises questions about consistency and fairness.

The criminological and jurisprudential perspectives intersect when considering the broader social and policy implications of evidential decisions. Criminologically, flawed evidence procedures—whether through improper forensic techniques, confirmation bias, or coerced confessions—can lead to wrongful convictions that have profound consequences for individuals and society. Jurisprudential analysis, on the other hand, debates how legal standards should balance the need for truth-finding against the imperative to protect the rights of the accused, as embodied in constitutional protections such as the right to cross-examine adverse witnesses under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This balance is essential for maintaining public confidence in the judicial process and ensuring that evidentiary rules do not inadvertently contribute to miscarriages of justice.

Comparative studies also reveal that while some jurisdictions have evolved toward stricter evidentiary rules to prevent wrongful convictions, others have introduced reforms aimed at increasing efficiency without sacrificing fairness. For example, in common law jurisdictions the exclusionary rules—designed to bar evidence obtained through illegal means—contrast sharply with the more flexible approaches in some civil law systems, where judges may consider a wider array of evidence even if its initial admissibility is in question. Such differences highlight the importance of contextual and historical factors in shaping evidentiary doctrine, as well as the need for continuous dialogue between criminological research and legal theory to inform reform. A comparative analysis of evidential issues in judicial proceedings reveals that both criminological insights and jurisprudential debates are vital for understanding how evidence functions in the legal process. By comparing different legal traditions and considering empirical research on evidence collection and interpretation, legal scholars and policymakers can work toward a system that not only enforces criminal law effectively but also upholds fairness, accuracy, and respect for individual rights.

Evidence is a complex and multifaceted aspect of the criminal and civil proceedings and a comprehensive analysis of criminological and jurisprudence legal perspectives highlight various issues that can impact the reliability, admissibility, and interpretation of evidence in criminal proceedings. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring that justice is served and that the rights of all parties involved are protected. The study concludes that an integrated approach is germane to ensure effective evidential issues would be adequately addressed. Furthermore, there is need for effective synergy among the practitioners to ensure that criminal proceedings produce qualitative standard of evidence in administration of justice

system and criminological parlance. The evidential standards in Nigerian law reflect a balance between protecting individual rights and ensuring justice. While the high threshold in criminal cases safeguards the presumption of innocence, the lower standard in civil cases ensures fairness in resolving private disputes. However, addressing the practical challenges in applying these standards is essential for maintaining public trust and upholding the integrity of the Nigerian legal system.

The rules governing the admissibility of evidence in Nigerian law are well-established but face significant challenges in application. The legal framework aims to balance relevance, legality, and fairness to ensure justice. However, with the advent of digital evidence and the complexities of Nigeria's plural legal system, reforms are needed to enhance clarity and consistency in the admissibility of evidence. The burden of proof in Nigerian law is a cornerstone of justice, ensuring fairness and equity in legal proceedings. While the framework is robust, practical challenges like judicial inefficiencies, corruption, and lack of resources often undermine its effectiveness. Reforms, particularly in the areas of criminal investigation and judicial training, are necessary to strengthen the application of the burden of proof and enhance the overall efficiency of the justice system.

Recommendations

1. **Evidence-Based Practice:** Promoting evidence-based practice in criminal investigations and proceedings. Encourage the use of empirical evidence to inform investigative techniques and strategies.
2. **Continuing Education and Training:** Providing ongoing education and training for stakeholders on evidential and jurisprudence issues.
3. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Fostering collaboration between criminologists, legal scholars, and practitioners to drive innovation and improvement.
4. **Policy Reform:** Advocating for policy reforms that address systemic injustices and promote fairness, justice, and public safety. By examining evidential and jurisprudence issues through the lenses of criminology and legal perspectives, we can work towards creating a more just, fair, and effective criminal justice system.
5. **Forensic Science Reform:** Implement reforms to improve the reliability and validity of forensic science techniques.
6. **Diversity and Inclusion:** Promote diversity and inclusion within law enforcement agencies to reduce the risk of racial profiling and improve community relationships.

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