



**PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT**

Theme: Sustainable Strategies to Achieving
Agenda 2063 for an Integrated,
Prosperous and Peaceful Africa

**CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS**

📍 University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

24th - 25th June, 2026



ISBN: 978-978-62959-1-6



PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

THEME: Sustainable Strategies to Achieving Agenda 2063 for an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa
DATE: Wednesday 24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026
TIME: 10:00am
VENUE: University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

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Website: www.internationalpolicybrief.org
ISBN: 978-978-62959-1-6

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DAY ONE – Wednesday 24th June, 2026

Arrival of Guest/Conferees/Delegates

DAY TWO – Thursday 25th June, 2026

OPENING SESSION/AWARD/PLENARY

Conference Registration	- 9:00am – 10:00am
Opening Prayer/Welcome Remark	- 10:00am – 10:15am
Institutional Brief/Chairman's Opening Remark	- 10:15am – 10:30am
Plenary Session	- 10:30am – 12noon
Launch Break/Group Photograph	- 12noon – 1:00pm
Plenary Session 2	- 1:00pm – 4:00pm
Policy Review Session	- 4:00pm – 5:00pm

DAY THREE – Friday 26th June, 2026

Departure of Guest/Conferee/Delegates



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University of Education, Winneba

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UEW's history is marked by the merger of seven diploma-awarding colleges, including the Advanced Teacher Training College, Specialist Training College, and National Academy of Music all in Winneba; the School of Ghana Languages in Ajumako; the College of Special Education in Akwapim-Mampong; the Advanced Technical Training College in Kumasi; and the St. Andrews Agricultural Training College in Asante-Mampong. This consolidation created a diverse and dynamic educational institution.

The enactment of the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development Act (2020), Act 1026, in 2020 marked another pivotal moment in UEW's journey, restructuring UEW for the ever-evolving educational landscape.

At the heart of our mission lies a deep commitment to the advancement of teacher education. We are proud to provide higher education and drive the systematic development of both the science and the art of teaching. We aim to nurture the next generation of educators, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and professionalism required to excel in diverse educational settings, from preschool to senior secondary school, and even in non-formal education institutions.

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Our journey is characterised by the pursuit of excellence, innovation, and a profound commitment to the future of education. The University of Education, Winneba, is not just an institution; it is a force of positive change in the world of education. We invite you to join us in this remarkable journey as we continue to shape the future of education and inspire the leaders, thinkers, and educators of tomorrow.

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BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS



PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

REVAMPING THE TEACHER EDUCATION SECTOR FOR A SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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Abstract

Teacher education is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of sustainable national development, as the effectiveness of any education system is contingent upon the quality of its teachers. This study explores the objectives, current status, and prevailing challenges of teacher education in Nigeria, with particular attention to systemic factors that hinder its optimal performance. The study adopts a descriptive survey and a qualitative research design and employs documentary analysis of relevant policy documents, scholarly publications, and official education reports to examine trends and issues within the teacher education sector. The analysis reveals that inadequate funding, poor remuneration, low professional motivation, shortages of qualified teachers, unethical practices, and increasing political interference have significantly undermined the effectiveness of teacher education in Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study proposes strategic interventions aimed at revitalizing teacher education, including enhanced funding mechanisms, improved teacher welfare and professional development, strengthened ethical standards, and the depoliticization of teacher education policies. The study concludes that sustainable national development in Nigeria is unlikely to be achieved without comprehensive reforms in teacher education, requiring coordinated efforts from government agencies, educational institutions, and other key stakeholders.

Keywords: Revamping, teacher education, sustainable National development.

Introduction

Education is the most critical instrument that unlocks the development of a person and opens the potentials for national development and change in Nigeria. Uju (2013) opined that education is the bedrock for any meaningful and sustainable development hence the need for continuous emphasis on its attainment. It is a tool through which country's socioeconomic, scientific and technological development is achieved. Education entails a systematic training and instruction designed for the purpose of imparting knowledge and development of skills, ability, character and intelligence. It remains the only instrument for empowering young people with knowledge and skills which provide them access to productive employment. Therefore, the basis of the teacher education is to train prospective teachers through a well-planned course of study to increase their capabilities, competence, knowledge and techniques in providing effective instruction (Akpan, Ntukidem, Ekpiken & Etor, 2009), so as to enhance the realization of the noble objective of education for a sustainable National development in the country.

The Nigerian Policy on Education stipulated that education is mainly concerned with the transmission of worthwhile values; skills, and knowledge suitable for developing learners' potentials for national development. The policy statement further emphasised that education is the most important instrument for change (NPE, 2013). The main vehicle for the transmission of these values, skills and attitudes for the realization of the desired change is the teacher who is professionally certified as knowledgeable and creatively skillful to effectively and efficiently transmit what he or she knows to the younger generations so as to make them globally competitive without losing the required local relevance. The teacher truly shapes the future of our children and therefore, the future of our nation. It is through the teacher that our children are imparted with values, knowledge, empathy, creativity, ethics, life skills and social responsibility. The teacher thus forms the very heart of the education process, and represent an indispensable vehicle towards a progressive, just, educated and prosperous society (Government of India, National Education Policy, 2019). Adeosun (2009), observed that the goal of teacher in Nigeria includes among others, 'the encouragement of the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers, and providing them with the intellectual and professional background that will be adequate for their assignments and also make them adaptable to changing situations' (NPE, 2013). Section 8B (item 74) of the policy noted that teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of the changes in the methods and curriculum and teachers be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession for efficient productivity.

Ekpiken and Ukpabio (2014), observed that the teacher is the brain box of educational activities and his position and activities are quite inevitable in championing the educational affairs. Lawal and Braimoh (2018) also opined that teachers are the most important factor required by societies for realizing their political, Economic, technological, moral and social developmental objectives and aspirations. Teachers are responsible for training other professional like scientists, lawyers, technocrats, military officers, engineers, medical doctors and politicians. They maintained that the continuous education of the teacher is necessary and should not be toyed. This is because if the teacher education is not given the

desired attention or toyed with, there will be nobody who would be trained to harness the human and material resources for the transformation and development of the country. Therefore, teacher education is very important and needs a thoughtful and new strategies to entice those who had thought that the teacher education was a second-hand training, as this would go a long way to making interested individuals embrace it. Another major concern is the way teacher education is being handled now makes people who have a negative thought about teacher education take teacher education as a stepping stone for future educational advancement, this attitude needs to be discarded. The teacher should be seen as a catalyst in influencing growth and development of the nation. Teachers should therefore be provided with the necessary current trainings in order for them to be functionally involve in training or imparting knowledge to others.

Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012), opined that for any nation to achieve any socio-economic, political and scientific development, there is the dire need for qualified teachers who are equipped with the desired knowledge, skills, competence and commitment, and who are empowered to perform their tasks professionally. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) has given credence to this by asserting that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Therefore, there is need to always appraise the nation's system of teacher education with the view to ensuring adequate supply of quality of teachers, in the right mix, to man the various levels of the educational system in the country. In other words, education cannot be obtained without quality teachers. The future of a nation or society depends greatly upon the quality of education it provides for its citizenry and upon inspired, satisfied and dedicated teachers. Thus, any meaningful development in the educational system is associated with well-trained and dedicated teachers who are enthusiastic to put in their best in the teaching profession. This paper is therefore concerned about revamping the teacher education sector for the purpose of enhancing sustainability in National development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

In this paper, there are certain concepts like Revamping, teacher education and sustainable development which need clarification. This is necessary to enhance proper and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter under review. Revamping simply means effecting a rebirth in a dynamic manner so that useful skills are employed to enhance the already existing ones. Such areas involve effective planning, supervision and provision of basic infrastructure for optimal productivity. It also refers to a situation or process whereby something is altered, modified, changed or refashioned for the purpose of achieving desired goals or results (Ihedioha & Ituen, 2017).

Another concept to be explained here is teacher education. Osuji (2009) sees teacher education as a professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the need of a society at any point in time. He stressed that it includes training/education occurring before commencement of service and education/training during service and should constitute a conspicuous element in the totality of organized

education, both formal and non-formal sub-systems. Similarly, Lawal and Braimoh (2018) noted that teacher education programme is geared towards the development of the proficiency and competence of teachers for the purpose of empowering them to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. This encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.

National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) also states that teacher education is concern with the encouragement of the spirit of enquiry and creativity in the teachers, providing them with the intellectual and professional background that will be adequate for their assignment and also make them adaptable to changing situations. The teacher education system takes into cognizance the changes in the methods and curriculum and exposing the teachers to innovations in their profession. Akpan et al. (2009) in recognition of the teacher education, opined that the teacher is the nut of any education system because the school cannot be better than their teachers. According to them, it is upon teachers' quality and devotion to teaching that the effectiveness of educational system can be tested. This suggests that teacher should be well prepared for their duties through appropriate teacher education programmes. Affirming this position, Fafunwa (1974) maintained that teacher education continues to be the key to educational development in Nigeria and elsewhere, for without adequately trained teaching cadre, Nigeria cannot hope to expand her educational facilities. Thus, education is nothing without quality teachers.

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) has articulated the objectives of the Teacher Education as follows:

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
2. To encourage further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. To help teachers to fit into the societal life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goal.
4. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adequate to changing situations.
5. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

It was in realisation of these objectives, that the federal Government of Nigeria recommended the structuring of the teacher education programmes to equip teachers for effective performance of their duties.

Another concept that needs explanation is sustainable national development. Lichman, 1972 and Markovitz, 1977 (as cited by Kingdom and Maekae, 2013), stress that a developed society is the one that has succeeded in providing a source of living for the majority of its inhabitants and that in such society, premium is attached to elimination of poverty, provision of food, shelter and clothing to its members. This argument agrees with the modernization paradigm which sees development as a multidimensional process which involves the sustained elevation of the entire society and social system towards a better or humane life. They identify three basic components for understanding development. These components are sustenance,

self-esteem and freedom. These represent common goals sought by all individuals and societies. The authors stressed that sustainable national development starts with the ability of a nation to satisfactorily provide the food and fiber that are needed by its people and industry. Education promotes social and group relationships. It trains individuals to relate to and interact meaningfully with others in the society and appreciate the importance of effective organization for human progress. Here, teacher education helps to foster this development.

Some Challenges facing the Teacher Education sector in Nigeria

Lawal and Braimoh (2018) remarked that the teacher education section in Nigeria has over the years witnessed series of reforms. However, in spite of these laudable reforms, the sector is still faced with multitude of challenges that has slowed the realisation of the desired objectives in the education sector. In other words, in spite of the much improvement witnessed today in the teacher education sector compared to the 1970s, much still need to be done in curbing the variables acting as challenges to the realisation of the desired goals in the teacher education sector so as to ensure that sustainable national development is achieved. some of these variables are highlighted and discussed below:

Teacher-pupil ratio/Teacher-student ratio

A major challenge to the attainment of sustainable national development in Nigeria today is lack of teachers to man the education process at different levels of the education sector. The staff or teacher ratio of 1:36 at the primary school level for instance cannot be made in almost all the states of the federation. Many teachers have retired from active service, many have died and of course others have moved to greener pastures or attrite from the teaching profession is alarming and these has not been replaced by government in most public schools today. And the few available ones on ground are overloaded with overcrowded classrooms with 100 students and without furniture too. Ekpiken and Ukpabio observed that population explosion in our institutions of learning has a threatening effect on teaching and learning. They maintained that the over population has a straining effect on the existing facilities like classrooms where students/pupil stand to receive teaching which is not the ideal as it has negative effect on teaching and learning.

It is obvious that most institutions of learning in Nigeria today are short of teachers who would adequately handle the teaching and learning activities. Where there is inadequate teaching staff and poor quality of teachers, the realisation of sustainable national development is difficult because the teachers are the hub of the educational system. Bamiro (as cited by Asiyai, 2013) shared the view that the de-intellectualization of the academia to low quality of staff is solely responsible for the underdevelopment of the education sector and the inability of the nation to attain sustainable development.

Lack of adequate Motivation for teachers

The teachers are professionally trained to provide schooling to learners and facilitate education. They train tomorrow's leaders, therefore they expect good treatment in terms of remuneration, incentives and conducive learning environment where there well equipped

and functional libraries, laboratories and well-ventilated classrooms. Obidapo-obe (as cited by Lawal & Braimoh, 2018) observed that low motivation of teachers is often reflected in teacher apathy, lack of commitment, absenteeism, and relatively high labour turnover. Therefore, teachers find it difficult to give in their best in the teaching and learning process when they are not adequately motivated. A typical example is the 22.5% increment in teachers' salary scale which has not been implemented in most states of the federation. Again, the irregular payment of teachers' salary is another discouraging factor. These and many more makes it difficult for the teacher to be committed to his/her work and the retention of top-quality teacher to function in the educational system at all levels becomes difficult.

Lack of political will to implement educational policies

Teacher education programmes has suffered in Nigeria because of the lack of political will to implement policies that relates to the educational sector. The poor implementation of the policies has a negative effect on performance. Asiyai (2013) observed that there are several factors that inhibits the smooth implementation of the educational policies which includes poor/under funding of education and injudicious utilization of available funds by the implementation agencies. This attitude has a negative effect on the teacher education sector.

Lack of ICT facilities and low level of skills by teachers.

The Nigerian government adopted ICT in all levels of education purposely to improve teaching and learning, research to enhance quality education. Unfortunately, most of our learning institutions in Nigeria lack the facilities for this purpose. The teacher education programme has not adopted or still relatively lack this unique component which is expected to prepare the pre-service teacher for post-graduation as there is insufficient knowledge, skill and use of ICT by their trainers. This development has negative effect on the teacher education as the delivery of qualitative teacher education is made difficult for teachers lack the basic skills to compete favourably with their counterparts elsewhere globally.

Lack of commitment on the part of teachers

It is observed that nowadays teachers are not committed to the teaching profession. And there seems to be more of these kinds of reluctant teachers, that is teachers who are averse to change than teachers to remember, that is the adaptors, the communicators, the risk takers, a role models and change agents in the teaching profession. According to Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012), this attitude is attributed to poor income, delay in salary payment, lack of job satisfaction. The lack of commitment is manifested in their lack of enthusiasm to work, lack of concern for core curricular and extra-curricular activities, inadequate preparation for lessons, failure to write lesson notes, careless handling of statutory records among others.

Un-professional ethics practiced by Teachers

Teaching as a profession has its ethic as stipulated in the teachers' Manual of the federal Republic of Nigeria 1998. One of the ethics says teachers shall not reveal examination questions either internal or external, to anyone and in marking examination scripts; they shall be fair to all students. However, according to Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012), teachers

often succumb to the pressure of the lazy students to engage in examination malpractice both internal and external or public examinations. They maintained that this attitude is practiced right from common entrance examinations into secondary schools. Teachers source for live questions before the examination date. This singular act of the teachers appears to drag the name of the teachers in the mud. Furthermore, the professionalization of teaching is needful to curtail the employment of persons who are not professionally trained. Some of the unethical practices in our schools are practiced by persons who do not have the call or training of teaching but found themselves in the teaching profession. Some the use these means as a source of making additional income.

Ways of Revamping the Teacher Education sector

Despite the enormous challenges facing the teacher education sector in the country as highlighted and discussed above, a lot need to be done in the teacher education sector in order to benefit from it being the key instrument to any meaningful development in any nation. The following suggestions are therefore made.

Recruitment of competent and enough teachers

It is imperative for government to employ competent and enough teachers to man the classrooms. The ratio of teacher/pupil or teacher/students at the primary and secondary sector and of course the tertiary institutions should be strictly adhered to for the actualization of sustainable National development in the country. Teachers should from time to time be trained through in-service training, workshops and seminars to ensure their productivity in the teaching profession. This will go a long way in sustaining quality education at all levels of the educational system. Complete persons will be produced, persons who are intellectually, morally, physically, emotionally and socially developed. Furthermore, the teacher recruitment policy should also be reviewed to allow for top-rated graduates in education to be hired after rigorous selection process into the profession. This would help in revamping the teaching profession in Nigeria.

Teachers needs to be adequately motivated

To achieve a sustainable national development in Nigeria, teachers should be motivated through prompt payment of their salaries and allowances and other fringe benefits. It has been observed that nations that have invested in the teaching profession achieve high learning standards. All the teaching and learning resources such as teaching aids, libraries, science laboratories, electricity and others should be made available to ensure a conducive learning environment. The absence of educational resources and facilities in our schools has led to poor teaching and learning in the country because it has discouraged teachers from doing their best in the teaching profession. Teachers need to be motivated in all facets for enhanced optimal productivity. According to Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) motivation should include better pay, improved condition of service for serving teachers as well as bursary and scholarship award to education. More so, teachers should be availed the opportunities for regular acquisition of skills and knowledge of the changing world of learning to keep them abreast with the 21st century learning tools. All uncommitted, unethical and quack teachers should be flushed out as a way of sanitizing the system.

Adequate funding of the teacher education programmes

Government should be determined to make provision for effective funding of the teacher education policies and programmes. All stakeholders in the education sector should have the political will power to implement government policies in the sectors. Government should endeavor to earmark 26% of the total budget for educational development as stipulated by the United Nations Organisation (UNESCO). There should be close supervision to ensure that the money released is prudently managed by the schools or agencies saddled with those responsibilities. Again, there should be strong political will among political leaders to ensure continuity of educational policies and doggedness in the fight against corruption in the country

ICT facilities should be provided and made accessible to teachers

Information communication technology (ICT) is necessary in the education system as a catalyst to improving teaching and learning. Schools should be provided with computers, multi-media projectors, electronic white boards and automation of classrooms to enhance teaching and learning. These new digital technologies make possible a learning revolution in education. Through the internet search, information and relevant school practices which are unknown to teachers and students and which cannot be found in textbooks, can easily be downloaded for use by both teachers and students.

Methodology

The Study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect and analyze the opinions of teachers and students on the extent to which the objectives of teacher education have been achieved and the challenges confronting teacher education for sustainable national development in Nigeria. The data collected were analyzed using mean and grand mean statistics to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for decision-making. Any questionnaire item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed, while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed.

The findings were presented in Tables.1 below, where the responses of teachers and students were analyzed separately and subsequently compared to provide a comprehensive assessment of the achievement of teacher education objectives and the challenges affecting the teacher education sector in Nigeria.

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on the Achievement of Teacher Education Objectives (N = 50)

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Decision
1	The teacher education programme produces highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers.	3.32	Agreed
2	The programme encourages teachers to develop enquiry and creativity.	3.24	Agreed
3	The programme prepares teachers to fit into community life and contribute to national development.	3.18	Agreed
4	The programme provides adequate intellectual and professional preparation for changing educational needs.	3.28	Agreed
5	The programme enhances teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.	3.38	Agreed
6	The Federal Government of Nigeria provides adequate funding for teacher education programmes.	2.08	Disagreed
7	Government funding has improved teaching facilities and instructional materials.	2.14	Disagreed
8	The government has adequately provided opportunities for teachers' professional training and development.	2.36	Disagreed
9	Teacher motivation has been a priority of the government.	2.18	Disagreed
10	Corruption in the education sector has lowered the standard of education in Nigeria.	3.61	Agreed
11	The present insecurity in Nigeria has negatively affected teachers' and students' performance.	3.58	Agreed
12	The high rate of poverty in Nigeria has negatively affected teachers' commitment and students' academic performance.	3.72	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.01	Agreed

Table 2: Students' Responses on the Achievement of Teacher Education Objectives (N = 200)

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Decision
1	The teacher education programme produces highly motivated and competent teachers.	3.24	Agreed
2	The programme encourages enquiry, innovation and creativity among teachers.	3.20	Agreed
3	The programme prepares teachers to contribute positively to society.	3.16	Agreed
4	The programme equips teachers with adequate professional knowledge and skills.	3.23	Agreed
5	The programme promotes commitment to the teaching profession.	3.26	Agreed
6	The Federal Government of Nigeria adequately funds teacher education programmes.	2.11	Disagreed
7	Government funding has improved the quality of teaching and learning facilities.	2.18	Disagreed
8	The government has adequately provided opportunities for teachers' professional training and development.	2.29	Disagreed
9	Teacher motivation has been a priority of the government.	2.15	Disagreed
10	Corruption in the education sector has lowered the standard of education in Nigeria.	3.66	Agreed
11	The present insecurity in Nigeria has negatively affected teachers' and students' academic performance.	3.62	Agreed
12	The high rate of poverty in Nigeria has negatively affected teachers' effectiveness and students' academic performance.	3.76	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.99	Agreed

Table 3: Summary of Teachers' and Students' Mean Responses

Questionnaire Item	Teachers' Mean	Students' Mean	Decision
Production of competent classroom teachers	3.32	3.24	Agreed
Encouragement of enquiry and creativity	3.24	3.20	Agreed
Preparation for national development	3.18	3.16	Agreed
Provision of professional and intellectual background	3.28	3.23	Agreed
Enhancement of commitment to the teaching profession	3.38	3.26	Agreed
Government adequately funds teacher education	2.08	2.11	Disagreed
Government funding has improved facilities	2.14	2.18	Disagreed
Government has adequately provided professional training for teachers	2.36	2.29	Disagreed
Teacher motivation has been a government priority	2.18	2.15	Disagreed
Corruption has lowered the standard of education in Nigeria	3.61	3.66	Agreed
Insecurity has negatively affected teachers' and students' performance	3.58	3.62	Agreed
The high rate of poverty has negatively affected teachers' and students' performance	3.72	3.76	Agreed

Teachers' Grand Mean = 3.01 (Agreed)

Students' Grand Mean = 2.99 (Agreed)

Recommendations

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

1. Government should increase funding for teacher education programmes. Adequate budgetary allocation should be provided to teacher education institutions to improve infrastructure, instructional materials, laboratories, libraries, and other teaching and learning resources necessary for effective teacher preparation.
2. Teacher motivation should be prioritized. Government at all levels should improve teachers' welfare through prompt payment of salaries, implementation of approved salary structures, promotion as and when due, housing schemes, health insurance, and other incentive packages that will enhance job satisfaction and commitment to the teaching profession.
3. Continuous professional development should be strengthened. Regular workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service training, and sponsorship for postgraduate studies should be organized to update teachers' pedagogical knowledge, subject mastery, digital literacy, and emerging teaching methodologies.
4. Government should ensure effective implementation of educational policies. Existing policies on teacher education should be implemented faithfully and consistently without political interference. Adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to ensure that policy objectives are achieved.
5. Modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities should be provided in teacher education institutions. Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education should be equipped with functional ICT laboratories, internet facilities, smart classrooms, and digital instructional resources to prepare teachers for 21st-century teaching and learning.
6. Government should address the broader socio-economic challenges affecting education. Deliberate policies aimed at reducing poverty, improving national

security, and creating a stable learning environment should be pursued, as these factors significantly influence teachers' commitment and students' academic performance.

7. Quality assurance agencies should strengthen the monitoring of teacher education programmes. Bodies such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should regularly evaluate teacher education institutions to ensure compliance with minimum academic standards and professional ethics.
8. Collaboration among stakeholders should be enhanced. Government, educational institutions, professional bodies, development partners, communities, and the private sector should work collaboratively in the planning, funding, implementation, and evaluation of teacher education programmes to ensure sustainable national development.

Conclusion

The teacher is the brain box for transmitting knowledge in any society, therefore proper training of the teacher is required for the good of the society. Teaching is the most vital and strategic profession for national development in Nigeria just like other countries of the world. The paper attempted to examine the challenges facing teacher education today in Nigeria and suggested some way out that would enhance qualitative teacher education for the realization of the desired objectives. Government and all the stakeholders in the teacher education sector should be alive to its responsibilities of ensuring adequate training and adequate provision of necessary facilities, resources and incentives to teachers and the removal of all bottlenecks in the actualization of the desired goals. It is by so doing that the teacher education system would be able to perform as expected. However, it does not in any way mean that there has not been any improvement in the sector in recent years, but the industry still demands for more attention in order to revamp it for optimal productivity.

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

SKILLS ACQUISITION AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTHERN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Women's economic empowerment remains central to poverty reduction, household welfare and inclusive development. Skills acquisition is increasingly recognised as an important pathway through which women can improve their employability, establish enterprises, diversify income and strengthen their economic independence. However, access to relevant training does not automatically translate into empowerment where acquired skills are poorly utilised or unsupported by finance, markets and enabling institutions. This study examines the relationship between skills acquisition and women's economic empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigates women's access to skills acquisition programmes, acquisition of vocational and entrepreneurial skills, utilisation of acquired skills and access to post-training economic opportunities. The study is anchored on Human Capital Theory and the Capability Approach. A descriptive survey design was adopted. For this PhD research-class exercise, hypothetical data were generated from 300 women selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression. The findings showed significant positive relationships between the dimensions of skills acquisition and

women's economic empowerment, with skill utilisation making the strongest independent contribution. The study concludes that skills acquisition can promote women's economic empowerment when training is relevant, accessible and linked to finance, markets and sustainable economic opportunities.

Keywords: *skills acquisition, vocational skills, women, economic empowerment, employability.*

Introduction

Women's economic empowerment has become an important concern in contemporary development policy because women's access to income, productive resources and economic opportunities has implications for poverty reduction, household welfare and inclusive development. Economic empowerment involves more than participation in income-generating activities. It includes the capacity of women to acquire productive capabilities, access economic opportunities, generate and control income, make economic decisions and improve their material wellbeing. Skills acquisition represents one of the important mechanisms through which women can strengthen their economic capabilities. Vocational, technical, entrepreneurial and digital skills can improve employability, facilitate self-employment and enable women to participate more effectively in emerging economic opportunities. However, the economic value of skills depends substantially on whether acquired competencies can be utilised in productive employment or enterprise. Training without access to start-up capital, equipment, markets and continuing support may therefore have limited empowerment outcomes. Recent empirical evidence from Nigeria demonstrates the continuing relevance of skills development. Emah, Doneys, Kusakabe and Pathak (2025), in their study of technical and vocational education and training in Nigeria, found that gender continues to shape skill acquisition and access to employment. Their findings suggest that the relationship between skills and employment is influenced not only by the competencies acquired but also by gendered occupational expectations and labour-market opportunities.

Evidence from Cross River State further demonstrates the relevance of skills acquisition to economic outcomes. A study of women in Calabar Municipality found significant relationships between skills acquisition in areas such as hairdressing and fashion design and poverty reduction among women. Similarly, Omotosho, Egidi, Odama and Andrew's 2026 study of National Directorate of Employment programmes in Cross River State reported a significant positive relationship between vocational skills and youth empowerment.

The present study focuses on Southern Cross River State, comprising the predominantly rural and urban communities of Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipal, Calabar South and Odukpani Local Government Areas. The area presents diverse opportunities for women in fashion and beauty services, food processing, agriculture, hospitality, petty trading, crafts and other small-scale enterprises. However, women may experience barriers relating to access to quality training, financial resources, productive equipment, markets and

sustainable employment opportunities. Based on these concerns, this study examines skills acquisition and women's economic empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria, with emphasis on access to skills acquisition programmes, vocational and entrepreneurial skill development, utilisation of acquired skills and access to post-training economic opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Women in Southern Cross River State participate extensively in small-scale enterprises, trading, agriculture, food processing, fashion, beauty services and other informal economic activities. Skills acquisition programmes are increasingly promoted as instruments for improving women's employability, encouraging entrepreneurship and reducing economic dependence. However, participation in a training programme does not necessarily result in sustainable economic empowerment. Some women may complete training but lack the equipment, finance, business support or market opportunities required to convert acquired skills into employment or income.

The challenge is therefore not only whether women have opportunities to acquire skills but also whether the skills are relevant to local economic opportunities and can be effectively utilised. Recent evidence from Rivers State identified poor training personnel, inadequate sponsorship, lack of start-up funds, unfavourable programme timing and location challenges among the constraints affecting women's participation and benefits from skills acquisition programmes. Similarly, evidence from Nigeria indicates that gendered occupational expectations can influence the skills women acquire and their subsequent access to employment. Although studies have examined skills acquisition, poverty reduction and youth empowerment in Cross River State, limited empirical attention has been given to the combined relationship between access to skills programmes, acquisition of relevant skills, utilisation of acquired skills, post-training economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment specifically in Southern Cross River State. This study addresses this gap.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between skills acquisition and women's economic empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the relationship between women's access to skills acquisition programmes and economic empowerment;
2. determine the relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition and women's economic empowerment;
3. examine the relationship between the utilisation of acquired skills and women's economic empowerment;
4. determine the relationship between access to post-training economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment; and

Research Questions

1. What relationship exists between access to skills acquisition programmes and women's economic empowerment?
2. What relationship exists between vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition and women's economic empowerment?
3. How does the utilisation of acquired skills relate to women's economic empowerment?
4. What relationship exists between post-training economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment?

5. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between women's access to skills acquisition programmes and economic empowerment.
2. There is no significant relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition and women's economic empowerment.
3. There is no significant relationship between the utilisation of acquired skills and women's economic empowerment.
4. There is no significant relationship between access to post-training economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment.

Conceptual Literature

Skills Acquisition

Skills acquisition refers to the systematic process through which individuals develop the knowledge, technical competence, practical abilities and entrepreneurial capacity required to perform specific productive activities. It may occur through formal education, vocational and technical training, apprenticeship, workplace learning, community-based programmes or informal learning. In the context of this study, skills acquisition encompasses the development of vocational, technical, entrepreneurial and other practical competencies that can enable women to obtain employment, establish businesses or improve existing income-generating activities.

The concept has become increasingly important in development discourse because changes in labour markets, technology and patterns of production require individuals to possess competencies that can be translated into economic opportunities. Skills acquisition is therefore not limited to obtaining a certificate after completing a training programme. It involves developing functional capabilities that can be applied to solve problems, produce goods and services, manage enterprises and generate income. The relevance of skills depends partly on their quality, practical orientation and responsiveness to existing and emerging economic opportunities. For women, skills acquisition can provide an important means of overcoming economic exclusion and dependence. Women who possess marketable competencies may be better positioned to diversify their sources of livelihood and participate in self-employment or wage employment. However, the empowerment potential of skills acquisition is influenced by access to training, the relevance of the skills acquired, the ability

to utilise those skills and the availability of economic opportunities after training. Thus, the present study conceptualises skills acquisition as a multidimensional process extending from access to training and acquisition of relevant competencies to the utilisation of those competencies and access to post-training economic opportunities.

Access to Skills Acquisition Programmes

Access to skills acquisition programmes refers to the extent to which women have the opportunity and capacity to participate in vocational, technical, entrepreneurial and other forms of productive training. Access involves more than the physical existence of a training programme. It includes awareness of available opportunities, affordability, geographical proximity, suitability of training schedules, eligibility requirements and freedom from discriminatory barriers. Women's access may be constrained by poverty, household responsibilities, transportation difficulties, cultural expectations and limited information about available programmes. Where training centres are distant or programmes require substantial financial contributions, economically disadvantaged women may be excluded. Similarly, women with childcare and domestic responsibilities may find it difficult to participate in programmes that operate at inconvenient times.

Accessible skills acquisition programmes can expand women's productive capabilities and increase their opportunities for economic participation. However, access should also be assessed in relation to the quality and relevance of training. Programmes that are available but poorly equipped, inadequately staffed or disconnected from market opportunities may have limited empowerment outcomes. Consequently, this study examines access not merely as participation in training but as meaningful access to relevant and potentially productive skills acquisition opportunities.

Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

Vocational skills refer to practical competencies developed for performing particular occupations or productive activities. These may include tailoring, fashion design, hairdressing, catering, food processing, ICT services, crafts, hospitality, agriculture-related activities and other occupations. Entrepreneurial skills, on the other hand, include competencies related to opportunity identification, business planning, financial management, marketing, customer relations, risk management and enterprise development.

The combination of vocational and entrepreneurial competencies is particularly important for women operating within informal and small-scale economic sectors. Technical skills may enable a woman to produce a product or deliver a service, while entrepreneurial skills may determine her capacity to organise resources, attract customers, manage income and sustain the enterprise. The absence of entrepreneurial competence may therefore limit the economic benefits of vocational training. For women in Southern Cross River State, relevant skills should reflect local economic conditions and emerging opportunities. Training that corresponds with demand in agriculture, food processing, hospitality, fashion, ICT, services and other productive sectors may provide greater opportunities for sustainable income

generation. The present study therefore considers vocational and entrepreneurial skills as an important dimension through which skills acquisition can contribute to women's economic empowerment.

Utilisation of Acquired Skills

Skill utilisation refers to the practical application of acquired knowledge and competencies in productive activities. Such activities may include paid employment, self-employment, enterprise development, apprenticeship, service provision or the expansion of an existing occupation. The concept is important because acquiring a skill does not automatically produce an economic outcome.

A woman may successfully complete a training programme but remain unable to apply her skills because of unemployment, inadequate equipment, lack of finance or limited access to customers and markets. In such circumstances, the acquired skill represents a potential capability rather than an actual source of economic empowerment. The transition from training to productive application is therefore a critical stage in the empowerment process. Effective skill utilisation can generate several economic benefits. It can increase income, strengthen self-confidence, improve work experience and create opportunities for enterprise development. Women who regularly utilise acquired skills may also develop professional networks and improve their capacity to adapt their services or products to changing market conditions. Accordingly, this study treats skill utilisation as a central mechanism through which skills acquisition is expected to influence women's economic empowerment.

Post-Training Economic Opportunities

Post-training economic opportunities refer to the resources, institutional support and market conditions available to women after acquiring skills. These opportunities may include employment, start-up finance, productive equipment, workspace, mentorship, business development services, cooperative membership, access to customers and market linkages. The availability of post-training support is important because many women may acquire valuable skills but lack the resources necessary to transform them into sustainable economic activities. For example, a woman trained in fashion design may require a sewing machine, workspace, materials and customers before she can establish a viable enterprise. Similarly, a woman trained in food processing may require finance, equipment, packaging materials and access to markets.

Post-training opportunities therefore provide the connection between human capability and actual economic outcomes. Skills programmes that combine training with finance, equipment, mentorship and market support are more likely to facilitate sustainable economic participation than programmes that end immediately after certification. Within this study, post-training economic opportunities are conceptualised as the enabling conditions that allow women to convert acquired skills into income, employment, enterprise development and greater economic independence.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment refers to the process through which women gain increased access to economic resources, productive opportunities and the capacity to make and act upon economic decisions. It involves both the availability of resources and women's agency in utilising those resources. Economic empowerment may therefore be reflected in increased income, employment, enterprise ownership, financial independence, ownership or control of productive assets and participation in household and business decisions. The concept differs from simple labour-force participation. A woman may participate in economic activities while still having limited control over her income or restricted influence over how economic resources are used. Economic empowerment requires the capacity to benefit from economic participation and exercise greater control over productive and financial decisions. In the present study, women's economic empowerment is measured in terms of improvements in income-generating capacity, employment or self-employment opportunities, business ownership or expansion, financial independence, savings and increased participation in economic decision-making. Skills acquisition is expected to contribute to these outcomes by strengthening women's productive capabilities and expanding the range of opportunities available to them.

Empirical Literature

Access to Skills Acquisition Programmes and Women's Economic Empowerment

Contemporary empirical literature demonstrates that access to skills acquisition programmes can influence women's economic opportunities and wellbeing. Charles and Oboqua (2024), in a study conducted in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, examined skills acquisition programmes and poverty reduction among women. The study focused on practical areas including hairdressing and fashion design and reported a significant relationship between participation in skills acquisition activities and poverty reduction. The findings suggest that access to practical and income-oriented training can improve women's capacity to generate livelihoods and reduce economic vulnerability.

The findings are particularly relevant to the present study because Calabar Municipality forms part of Southern Cross River State. The study provides local evidence that skills acquisition can contribute to improved economic outcomes among women. However, its focus was primarily on poverty reduction and selected vocational skills. The present study extends the analysis by examining women's economic empowerment more broadly and by considering access to skills acquisition as one of several interconnected dimensions. Manoah, Nwokoro and Iheanacho (2026) examined women's involvement and benefits from skills acquisition programmes in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study found that skills acquisition was associated with perceived benefits such as poverty reduction and improved living standards. However, participation and outcomes were constrained by factors including inadequate sponsorship, poor training personnel, unfavourable training locations and limited start-up support. The findings demonstrate that the existence of skills programmes does not necessarily guarantee effective access or sustainable economic outcomes.

Similarly, recent evidence from Nigeria's technical and vocational education and training sector indicates that access to training and subsequent employment opportunities can be shaped by gender. Emah, Doneys, Kusakabe and Pathak (2025) found that gender influenced both experiences of skill acquisition and access to employment among Nigerian TVET graduates. The study suggests that women's participation in skills programmes must be supported by broader institutional measures that address gendered barriers to employment and economic participation. The reviewed studies generally suggest that access to skills acquisition programmes can improve women's economic prospects. However, access alone does not guarantee empowerment. The quality, relevance and affordability of training, together with women's ability to participate meaningfully, remain important. Based on this literature, the present study examines whether access to skills acquisition programmes has a significant relationship with women's economic empowerment in Southern Cross River State.

Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition and Women's Economic Empowerment

Empirical literature has increasingly examined the relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial competencies and economic outcomes. Charles and Oboqua (2024) found that vocational skills such as fashion design and hairdressing were associated with poverty reduction among women in Calabar Municipality. These skills provided opportunities for self-employment and income generation, demonstrating the potential of practical training to support women's livelihoods.

The findings support the argument that vocational skills can be particularly valuable in environments where formal employment opportunities are limited. However, vocational competence alone may not ensure the sustainability of an enterprise. Women also require entrepreneurial knowledge relating to business planning, financial management, marketing and customer relations. The integration of vocational and entrepreneurial competencies may therefore increase the likelihood that women will transform acquired skills into viable economic activities. Emah et al. (2025) investigated skill acquisition and access to employment among TVET graduates in Nigeria from a gender perspective. Their findings revealed that gender differences continued to influence both skills acquisition and employment opportunities. The study is important because it demonstrates that the relationship between skills and economic empowerment is mediated by wider social and labour-market conditions. Women may possess relevant competencies but still experience restricted employment opportunities due to occupational segregation and other gender-related barriers.

A Cross River State study by Anam, Ironbar, Uzoh, Umukoro, Eburikure and Dede (2025) examined the impact of the N-Power Social Empowerment Programme on youth employment. The study found that programme participation and skills development contributed positively to employment outcomes, although inadequate infrastructure and other implementation challenges affected the ability of beneficiaries to derive sustained economic benefits. Although the study focused on youth rather than women specifically, it

provides important local evidence concerning the relationship between skills development and economic participation. Omotosho, Egidi, Odama and Andrew (2026), in their examination of the National Directorate of Employment skills acquisition programmes in Cross River State, also reported that vocational skills development contributed positively to empowerment outcomes. Their findings reinforce the argument that structured vocational programmes can strengthen productive capacity and create opportunities for employment and self-employment. The literature supports a positive relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition and economic outcomes. Nevertheless, relatively few studies have specifically examined the combined influence of vocational and entrepreneurial skills on women's economic empowerment across Southern Cross River State. This constitutes an important empirical gap addressed by the present study.

Utilisation of Acquired Skills and Women's Economic Empowerment

The practical utilisation of acquired skills is increasingly recognised as more important than training participation alone. Skills become economically meaningful when individuals can apply them in productive employment, enterprise development or other income-generating activities. Women who complete training but remain unable to utilise their skills may experience little improvement in their economic circumstances. Emah et al. (2025) provides contemporary evidence for this distinction. Their study of TVET graduates in Nigeria found that acquiring skills did not automatically result in equal access to employment, particularly across gender groups. The findings suggest that the translation of acquired competencies into employment depends on labour-market opportunities and broader gender relations. This supports the argument that skills acquisition and skill utilisation should be treated as related but distinct dimensions. Anam et al. (2025), in their study of the N-Power Social Empowerment Programme in Cross River State, also provide evidence relevant to skill utilisation. The study reported positive employment-related outcomes associated with skills development but identified infrastructural limitations and other environmental constraints affecting beneficiaries. The findings imply that individuals require an enabling environment to convert acquired knowledge and skills into sustained economic activity.

The findings of the study conducted by Charles and Oboqua (2024) in Calabar Municipality also suggest that the economic benefits of skills acquisition become more visible when women apply acquired competencies to productive activities such as fashion design and hairdressing. The significance of the relationship between skills acquisition and poverty reduction indicates that practical engagement with acquired skills may support improved income and wellbeing. Recent grassroots development research in Southern Cross River State has further drawn attention to women's participation in vocational activities as a strategy for improving rural wellbeing. Eteng and Itita (2026) examined women-centred grassroots development strategies and identified vocational skills acquisition as an important avenue through which women can strengthen their livelihood activities. The study reinforces the relevance of examining whether women can translate acquired skills into sustained productive activities. The empirical evidence indicates that skill utilisation represents a critical link between training and economic empowerment. However, there remains limited evidence comparing the influence of skill utilisation with other dimensions

of skills acquisition among women across Southern Cross River State. The present study addresses this gap by testing the relationship between utilisation of acquired skills and women's economic empowerment.

Post-Training Economic Opportunities and Women's Economic Empowerment

Post-training economic opportunities have received growing attention in empirical literature because skills acquisition alone may not provide the resources required for sustainable employment or entrepreneurship. Women may require access to finance, productive equipment, workspace, mentorship, business networks and markets after completing training. Anam, Unimna, Uzoh, Osaji, Unimke, Agu, Offem and Obinna (2024) examined microfinance services and the promotion of women entrepreneurs in Cross River State. The study demonstrated the relevance of financial services to women's entrepreneurial activities. Access to credit, savings and other financial services can enable women to establish or expand businesses, purchase productive equipment and manage enterprise-related expenses. The findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that productive skills may have limited economic value when women lack financial resources to utilise them.

The study by Manoah et al. (2026) similarly identified inadequate sponsorship and insufficient start-up funds as important challenges facing women participating in skills acquisition programmes. The finding suggests that the transition from training to economic empowerment may be weakened where programmes do not provide post-training support. Women may acquire the required technical competencies but remain unable to establish businesses or purchase essential equipment. Eteng and Itita (2026), in their study of women-centred grassroots development strategies in Southern Cross River State, further highlight the importance of institutional and collective support for women's economic activities. Vocational skills acquisition and cooperative participation were identified as relevant strategies for improving the wellbeing of rural women. Cooperative structures may provide savings, credit, social networks and collective economic opportunities that enable women to utilise acquired skills more effectively.

The Cross River State N-Power study by Anam et al. (2025) also supports the importance of post-training opportunities and enabling infrastructure. Although the programme supported skill development and employment, the researchers identified contextual constraints affecting the translation of programme participation into sustained economic benefits. This suggests that empowerment programmes should be assessed not only by the number of persons trained but also by the opportunities available after training. Taken together, the empirical literature demonstrates that finance, productive assets, cooperative support, market access and other post-training opportunities are important in transforming acquired skills into economic empowerment. However, limited research has examined these factors specifically as predictors of women's economic empowerment across Southern Cross River State. This study therefore examines the relationship between access to post-training economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment.

Gap in Literature

The reviewed empirical literature generally supports the proposition that skills acquisition can improve economic outcomes. Studies conducted in Calabar Municipality and other parts of Nigeria demonstrate that vocational and practical skills can contribute to poverty reduction, improved living standards, employment and empowerment. Contemporary studies involving Anam and colleagues also provide evidence that skills development, microfinance and institutional support are relevant to employment, entrepreneurship and women's economic activities in Cross River State. However, the literature reveals several limitations. First, many studies focus on skills acquisition and poverty reduction, youth empowerment, or employment, rather than women's economic empowerment as a multidimensional outcome. Second, several studies examine participation in training without adequately distinguishing between access to skills programmes and the actual utilisation of acquired skills. Third, studies on finance and entrepreneurship often examine financial access independently of skills acquisition.

The present study addresses these gaps by developing an integrated framework in which women's economic empowerment is examined in relation to four interconnected dimensions: access to skills acquisition programmes, vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition, utilisation of acquired skills, and access to post-training economic opportunities. By focusing specifically on Southern Cross River State, the study also contributes location-specific evidence to the growing literature on women's skills development and economic empowerment in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain information directly from women regarding their experiences with skills acquisition, utilisation of acquired skills, access to post-training opportunities and economic empowerment. The design also provided an appropriate basis for examining relationships among the study variables without manipulating them.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The district comprises Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipal, Calabar South and Odukpani Local Government Areas. The area contains urban, semi-urban and rural communities where women participate in agriculture, petty trading, food processing, fashion design, hairdressing, catering, crafts, small-scale businesses and other informal economic activities.

Population of the Study

The study was conducted in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria, comprising seven Local Government Areas: Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani. The district is commonly referred to as the

Greater Calabar District. Based on population projections derived from the 2006 National Population Census, the population of the district was estimated at approximately 1,590,200 persons. The population provides the demographic context for selecting the study population of women aged 18 years and above who have participated in or are engaged in skills acquisition and related economic activities. The projected population of the district was 1,590,200 persons.

Table 1: Population Distribution of the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State

S/N	Local Government Area	Projected Population (2016)	Percentage (%)
1	Akamkpa	200,100	12.58
2	Akpabuyo	363,900	22.88
3	Bakassi	42,300	2.66
4	Biase	224,700	14.13
5	Calabar Municipality	245,500	15.44
6	Calabar South	255,999	16.10
7	Odukpani	275,800	17.35
Total Southern Senatorial District		1,608,299*	101.14*

Source: National Population Commission (NPC) population projections, as reported in studies of Southern Senatorial District.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample of 300 women was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. At the first stage, selected Local Government Areas and communities were identified. At the second stage, households, training centres, cooperatives and business clusters were identified as potential sources of respondents. At the final stage, eligible women were selected from the identified locations for participation in the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Skills Acquisition and Women's Economic Empowerment Questionnaire (SAWEEQ). The questionnaire was organised into sections covering respondents' demographic characteristics and the four major explanatory dimensions of the study: access to skills acquisition programmes, vocational and entrepreneurial skills acquisition, utilisation of acquired skills, and post-training economic opportunities. The final section measured indicators of women's economic empowerment.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by specialists in sociology, development studies, entrepreneurship, adult education, economics and measurement and evaluation. The experts examined the relevance, clarity, adequacy and appropriateness of the questionnaire items in relation to the objectives and research hypotheses. Their observations and recommendations were incorporated into the final instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established through a hypothetical pilot-testing procedure involving women with characteristics similar to those of the study population but outside the selected study locations. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were hypothetically administered to the selected respondents with the assistance of trained research assistants. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and participation was voluntary. The completed questionnaires were assumed to have been retrieved, screened, coded and prepared for statistical analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to describe respondents' characteristics and responses to the questionnaire items. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the four individual hypotheses concerning the relationships between the dimensions of skills acquisition and women's economic empowerment. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the combined contribution of the four dimensions of skills acquisition to women's economic empowerment. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected where the probability value was less than 0.05 and retained where the probability value was greater than 0.05. Since the data used for this research-class exercise were hypothetical, the statistical results presented in subsequent sections are intended for academic demonstration of research analysis and interpretation rather than as evidence of actual field conditions.

Results and Hypothesis Testing

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–29 years	67	22.3
	30–39 years	103	34.3
	40–49 years	78	26.0
	50 years and above	52	17.3
Marital status	Single	71	23.7
	Married	181	60.3
	Widowed	32	10.7
	Divorced/Separated	16	5.3
Educational level	No formal education	24	8.0
	Primary	61	20.3
	Secondary	142	47.3
	Tertiary	73	24.3

The results indicate that most respondents were within economically active age categories and possessed at least basic formal education, suggesting a reasonable capacity to participate in skills acquisition and related economic activities.

Access to Skills Acquisition and Economic Empowerment

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Access to skills programmes and economic empowerment	300	0.462	<0.001	Reject H_{01}

The result indicates a significant positive relationship between access to skills acquisition programmes and women's economic empowerment ($r = 0.462$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis was rejected. Women with greater access to relevant training opportunities tended to report higher levels of economic empowerment.

Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skills and Economic Empowerment

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Vocational/entrepreneurial skills and economic empowerment	300	0.528	<0.001	Reject H_{02}

The result demonstrates a significant positive relationship between vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition and women's economic empowerment ($r = 0.528$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Utilisation of Acquired Skills and Economic Empowerment

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Skill utilisation and economic empowerment	300	0.614	<0.001	Reject H_{03}

The strongest bivariate relationship was recorded between the utilisation of acquired skills and women's economic empowerment ($r = 0.614$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

9.5 Post-Training Economic Opportunities and Economic Empowerment

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Post-training opportunities and economic empowerment	300	0.571	<0.001	Reject H_{04}

The result shows a significant positive relationship between access to post-training economic opportunities and women's economic empowerment ($r = 0.571$, $p < 0.001$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
1	0.758	0.575	0.569	99.45	<0.001

The regression result indicates that the four dimensions jointly explained 57.5% of the variation in women's economic empowerment. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 295) = 99.45$, $p < 0.001$.

Predictor	Beta (β)	t	p-value	Decision
Access to skills programmes	0.174	3.82	<0.001	Significant
Vocational/entrepreneurial skills	0.221	4.91	<0.001	Significant
Utilisation of acquired skills	0.318	7.14	<0.001	Significant
Post-training economic opportunities	0.267	5.96	<0.001	Significant

The findings show that utilisation of acquired skills was the strongest independent predictor of women's economic empowerment ($\beta = 0.318$), followed by post-training economic opportunities ($\beta = 0.267$). This indicates that acquiring a skill is important, but the capacity to apply that skill productively is even more critical to economic empowerment.

Discussion of Findings

The study found a significant positive relationship between women's access to skills acquisition programmes and economic empowerment. This suggests that accessible training opportunities can expand women's productive capabilities and increase their prospects for employment and entrepreneurship. The finding agrees with recent evidence from Rivers State, where women identified improved living standards and poverty reduction as important benefits of skills acquisition programmes. It also aligns with evidence from Calabar Municipality linking skills in fashion design and hairdressing to poverty reduction among women. Vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition also had a significant positive relationship with women's economic empowerment. This finding supports the Human Capital Theory proposition that investments in skills can increase productive capacity and economic opportunities. However, contemporary Nigerian evidence demonstrates that the benefits of training can be affected by gendered occupational structures. Emah et al. (2025) found that gender influenced both perceived skill acquisition and access to employment opportunities among TVET graduates. The implication is that women's empowerment programmes should expand opportunities beyond traditionally gendered occupations.

The strongest relationship and independent contribution came from the utilisation of acquired skills. This indicates that the economic value of skills depends heavily on whether women can apply them to productive employment or enterprise. The result supports the Capability Approach, which distinguishes between possessing resources and having the opportunity to convert them into meaningful achievements. It also agrees with Anam et al.'s (2025) Cross River study of N-Power, which found that skills development could support employment but that inadequate supporting infrastructure weakened broader economic outcomes. Access to post-training economic opportunities also significantly influenced women's economic empowerment. Women who could obtain finance, equipment, business support and market opportunities were more likely to convert acquired skills into sustainable income. This finding is supported by Anam et al. (2024), whose Cross River study examined the role of microfinance services in promoting women's entrepreneurial activities. The finding suggests that training programmes should not terminate at certification but should incorporate financial linkages, mentorship, equipment support and market access.

The combined regression result showed that the four dimensions explained 57.5% of the variation in women's economic empowerment. This demonstrates that skills acquisition should be understood as a process extending from access to training through skill development and practical utilisation to post-training economic opportunities. The findings also correspond with recent women-centred development research in Southern Cross River State, which identifies vocational skill acquisition and cooperative engagement as important strategies associated with rural wellbeing.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between skills acquisition and women's economic empowerment in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria, with particular attention to access to skills acquisition programmes, vocational and entrepreneurial skill development, utilisation of acquired skills, and access to post-training economic opportunities. The findings revealed that access to skills acquisition programmes had a significant positive relationship with women's economic empowerment, indicating that women who had greater access to relevant training opportunities were more likely to experience improved economic outcomes. Similarly, vocational and entrepreneurial skill acquisition was significantly related to women's economic empowerment, suggesting that practical and business-oriented competencies can enhance women's capacity for employment, self-employment and income generation.

The study further established that utilisation of acquired skills had a significant positive relationship with women's economic empowerment and made the strongest independent contribution to the outcome ($\beta = 0.318$). Access to post-training economic opportunities also made a substantial independent contribution ($\beta = 0.267$). These findings demonstrate that acquiring skills or participating in training programmes does not, by itself, guarantee economic empowerment; the ability to apply acquired competencies and access finance, equipment, markets, mentorship and employment opportunities is critical. The regression analysis showed that the four dimensions of skills acquisition jointly explained 57.5% of the variation in women's economic empowerment. The study therefore concludes that skills acquisition programmes in Southern Cross River State should be designed as integrated economic empowerment interventions, combining relevant training with practical skill utilisation, start-up support, finance, equipment, mentorship, market linkages and employment opportunities. Such an approach would enhance the capacity of women to convert acquired skills into sustainable livelihoods, greater economic independence and improved participation in household and community economic activities.

Recommendations

The study recommends that need to,

1. Expand access to skills programmes: Government, development agencies and private institutions should provide affordable and geographically accessible skills acquisition opportunities for women.
2. Prioritise market-relevant skills: Training programmes should be based on labour-market needs and emerging economic opportunities rather than concentrating exclusively on traditional occupations.

3. Strengthen skill utilisation: Practical apprenticeship, internships, business incubation and enterprise support should be incorporated into training programmes.
4. Provide post-training support: Women completing training should have access to start-up finance, productive equipment, mentorship and cooperative support.
5. Improve market access: Government and development institutions should create market linkages, exhibitions, cooperative networks and digital marketing opportunities for women entrepreneurs.
6. Adopt an integrated empowerment model: Skills training should be combined with financial inclusion, enterprise development and institutional support to ensure that acquired competencies translate into sustainable economic empowerment.

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

EDUCATION FOR THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MILLENNIUM

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Abstract

Education is one out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which ended in 2015. Ban Ki-Moon, the United Nations Secretary-General for 2007–2016, stated that “We do not have Plan B because there is no Planet B.” Education must be functional in outlook and practice, which African development must focus on to help in marshalling and landmarking all other goals for the realization of the African dream of development. Education is the transmission of life by the living to the living. Education is also the transmission of culture from one generation to another (Adeyinka, A.A., 1990). Education is also the inculcation of HAS-Habits, Attitudes and Skills in an individual to make him an acceptable member of society. Be that as it may, this paper examined the place of EDUCATION in its entities towards sustainable education in Africa.

Keywords: *Education, Africa, Development, African Development, Sustainable Development.*

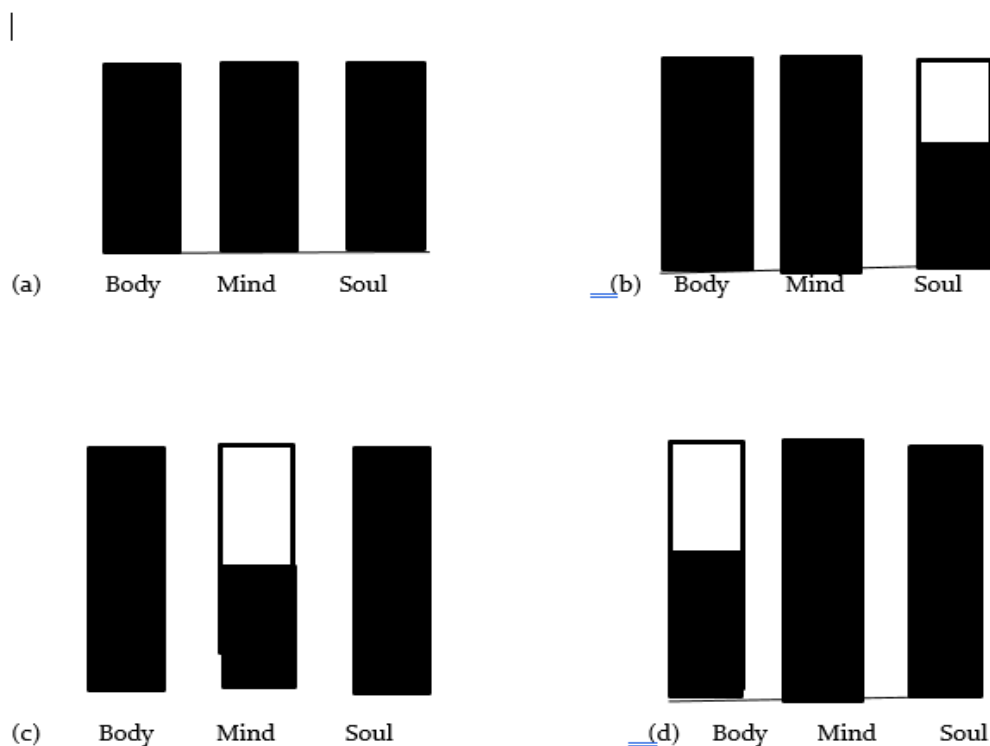
Introduction

Education for development. It is the cornerstone to the African Development in the Twenty-First Century, Millennium and beyond. Most of the African State's conditions of education and schools during the colonial period and thereafter remained in dilapidated situations. A field trip to Kaura Namoda Local Government Area, Zamfara State, Nigeria in 2023 elicited the poor condition of education in the villages visited. A visit to Togoland in 1994 and again in 2020 at the Lamakara district, most of the villages' Ecole (schools) were found in poor state of educational affairs. Learning took place under the shade of trees, not classrooms. Similarly, a visit to Ghana, in the Tolon, Daboya, Savilugu, Dimabi, Tali-village districts of Northern Ghana portrayed the poor state of the predicament of the schools and education. This situation needs to be improved upon to enhance functional education for the transformation of the continent for development in all aspects of life. More significantly, the rural divides in Africa are seriously lagging behind generally in terms of functional education. Parents in these rural divides do not have the financial wherewithal to sponsor their wards in education. Hence, these children grow up to remain rural farming folk on the part of the male, while the female remain full-future house wives. Plato and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi emphasized on free education for all as the exclusive preserve of the state. Education should include peace, democracy, development and social justice, as set forth in international and regional human rights instruments in order to achieve common understanding and awareness to strengthening universal commitment to human, Africa inclusive. This paper therefore examined the place of functional education for sustainable development in Africa's 21st century.

Conceptual Framework

Education is a prime mover motivationally toward development in any social formation. Quality education for all on equal terms will help to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in timeless time. It is the training of a learner in an-as-all-round development – physically, intellectually and psycho-emotionally, in the spirito - socio-religious aspects to the learner, an acceptable member to his society and humanity. Education is also the transmission of culture from one generation to the other. Adeyinka, A.A. (1990). According to Adewumi, Education is the imbibing of habits, attitudes and skills (HAS) in a learner to make him a useful member of the society. Education is also the transmission of life by the living to the living. This transmission of life can be found in the school curriculum and its breakdown into the syllabus and scheme of work that teachers (the living) to the learners (the living) in a functional manner, to enhance sustainable development in Africa.

Education is also the transformational training of the learner in his body (physical), mind (intellectual) and soul (spiritual) aspects to make him become useful to himself and society in a lifelong learning. The below diagram of the learners are in three facets of which no aspect of human development must be lacking.



Source: Emphasis Yusuf, A. J. (2026)

Figures A, B, C and D are four different learners. The education of the child in Figure (A) is complete. The others in Figures B, C and D are incomplete in mind, soul and body respectively. They lack one development area while in school and after school. Bloom, (1956) in his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, believes that the three domains of educational objectives — Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor domains, must be fully developed to provide the learner with quality education which enables the learner to achieve capacity building to help in achieving sustainable development, which is currently needed by Africa. This will help to meet up with best practices as found in developed social formations. Abubakar, B. S (2003) at a summit averred that:

"Education holds the key to our future both as a state and as a people. We recognize that if we must overcome the challenges of development, then special attention must be paid to education. Particularly, efforts must be made to raise the quality of our education to such a standard that would prepare our children for the challenges of life"

These challenges analyzed by Abubakar included insecurity, poverty, migration most especially among the nomadic pastoral Fulani people, resistance to accept positive changes like quality education and poor access to modern educational equipment. Africa has an area of 30,321.000 square kilometers. It is the second largest continent in the world. The distance from the northernmost point to the southernmost point is 8476 kilometers, while the distance from east to west is 7568 kilometers. It is almost bisected by the equator with the

northern most point at 37⁰.20"N then southernmost point at 34⁰.40"S. The most important Islands include Madagascar (Malagasy) form part of the African continent. Others include Zanzibar, Pemba Comoro Islands, the Cape Verde Islands, Canary Islands, Sao Tome Principe, Fernando Poo and the Madeira Islands. Adeola, I. Et'al, (2006).

On the other hand, Africa is blackman's homeland and continent and a continent among others globally. It is bounded to the north by Mediterranean Sea Western Europe; to the eastern flank by Saudi Arabia, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean; to the west by North, Central and South America and the mass of the North and South Atlantic Oceans and to the south by the South Pole and a linkage of both the south Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Africa is made up of 54 countries as recognised by the United Nations, with inter lacustrine societies and language families such as the Khoisan (Khoikhoi), Nilo-Saharan, the Afro-Asiatic, the Niger-Congo, Chadic, Kwa and Sene-Gambian family of Languages. The continent was the most enslaved and colonised one among others globally by the Western European Powers. This wave of imperialism and full colonisation led to development of underdevelopment of the continent due to 100 years of contact with the West. (Walter Rodney, 1972 Paul Baran, Samir Amin, Celso Furtado, Pelee Jalee, Andre Gunder Frank, and other underdevelopment theorists). The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade also undermined African development, the Scramble and Partition of Africa, 1884-1885 was also another landmark in the history of Africa's underdevelopment. By 1960 after the colonisation enterprise in Africa, seventeen (17) African countries achieved political independence, only to be ushered into neocolonialism as expounded by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and other scholars, this further undermined the African development saga. Development – Today we live in a world where many societies are extremely poor, while a few others are extremely rich. In many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, millions of people are living in abject poverty. Lack of development has been attributed to be responsible for this appalling condition. "If there is the first, the last cannot be seen". The first is development, the last is underdevelopment. Since the discourse of the title of this paper focused on quality education for African development, the need arises to exhaust some conceptual issues concerning development. Walt W. Rostow sees development as the progressive movement from traditional society to the stage of high mass consumption of goods and services. Ankie Hoogwelt stated that development is the process of induced economic growth, of a social change, in an internally stratified world. Walter Rodney (1972) examined development as an overall social process which is dependent upon increased capacity of members of a society to master the laws of nature (science) and apply such laws in the production of tools (technology), with which they can control their environment to meet their immediate and future needs. It cannot be seen purely as an economic affair because other segments of society are also involved. Yusuf M. M. says development is the improvement of the living conditions of the people. The question of African development signifies the progressive movement of continental Africa to achieve a headway in the positive transformation of the continent in her political, economic, socio-cultural, scientific, technological, industrial, religious, educational and Information Communication Technology (ICT) for realistic achievement with a focus on the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for our Africa. Similarly, sustainable development is one that is effected in a way that will be lifelong, ensuring continuity of development in all the endeavours of man's life in Africa. It is a

timeless timeness of a process without being dilapidated, but that of a capacity-building process of the current generation of Africans and those yet unborn that will build and rebuild Africa in a process of renaissance. That situation, even in the next Africa of a global powerhouse, will reflect Leopold Ranke's (1833) thesis of "Great Power Timberland" like the developed countries of the world today.

Methodology

During the course of the research, the qualitative research pedagogy was applied. This involved the use of journal articles, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, internet materials.

Research Objectives

The following research objectives were analysed and synthesized as follows:

1. To enhance and develop learners' scientific dexterities and technical know-how to replicate, innovate and invent tools to meet the immediate and future needs of the society in the area of sustainable development in Africa.
2. To ensure gender equality through quality education to marshal and landmark women into the threshold of progress and prosperity in order to mainstream the continental African development in all aspects of life.
3. To achieve peace, justice and strong institutions in each African social formation for sustainable African development in all aspects of life.

Research Questions

1. How can learners' scientific skills be enhanced and developed to achieve technological know-how to innovate, replicate and invent for sustainable development?
2. How can gender equality be enhanced for a progressive and prosperous society?
3. How can peace, justice and strong institutions be achieved in each African social formation for sustainable development in all aspects of life?

Literature Review

The reserved topic education for the African Development in the Twenty First Century Millennium, examined in this paper, traces sub-headings: Science and technology education, Gender equality and education, Peace, justice, strong institutions and education. Each of the three above is discussed based on associated readings.

Science, Technology and Education

Thomas K. (1970) examined evolution as those non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one. Alan, G. R. Smith (1972) posit that the significant achievements in the Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came in the fields most dominated by the ideas and methods of the Greeks – astronomy, mechanics and medicine. The cosmological view of the late Middle Ages had been built upon a synthesis of the ideas of Aristotle, Claudius Ptolemy (the greatest astronomer of antiquity, who lived in the second century A.D) and Christian. In

resulting Ptolemaic or geocentric conception, the universe was seen as a series of concentric spheres with a fixed or motionless earth as its centre. This was called the Ptolemaic system or earth-centeredness of the universe.

Rosen, E. (1984) examined the Copernican system thus:

Using elaborate astronomical and mathematical calculations, Copernicus argued that the universe consisted of eight spheres with the sun motionless at the center and the sphere of fixed stars at rest in the eighth sphere. The planets revolved around the sun in the order of Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Copernicus explained the daily rotation of the earth on its axis and the journey of the earth around the sun each year.

Copernicus posited the sun-centredness of the universe which condemned the Ptolemaic system of earth-centredness of the universe. Stillman Drake (1957–1982) wrote on these discoveries and opinions of Galileo. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) was another scientist of the Scientific Revolution. He invented the telescope to view heavenly bodies in the cosmological world. Galileo opened the gateway to astronomical sciences, the first European to use the telescope. Similarly, Johannes Kepler was another great scientist, a contemporary of Galileo. According to the records, Kessler, M. (1959) stated:

Johannes Kepler, a mathematician and astrologer, was a key figure in the rise of the new astronomy. Building upon Tycho Brahe's vast astronomical data, Kepler discovered the three laws of planetary motion that both confirmed and modified the Copernican theory. Theories eliminating the Ptolemaic and Aristotelian ideas of uniform circular motion and crystalline spheres moving in circular orbits.

It was an improvement on the Copernican system of sun-centeredness of the universe, thus confirming that Copernicus was right. It simultaneously refuted and discouraged the Aristotelian theory of the earth-centeredness of the universe. Mestfull R.S. (1993) examined the life of Isaac Newton in which he emphasized:

With a single law, that of universal gravitation, Newton was able to explain all motion in the universe. His great synthesis of the various ideas of his predecessors created a new picture of the universe one in which the universe was viewed as a great machine operating according to natural laws.

Isaac Newton was the brain behind creative energy in 1666. He invented calculus, a mathematical means of calculating rate of change. He experimented into the composition of light. His work on the law of universal gravitation is significant. This is known in the history of science and technology as the three laws of Newton. These include the first law – Law of Gravitation, followed by the second law of Motion and the third law of Impenetrability. The seventeenth century witnessed the conflict between science and religion. There came up scientific societies in London, Italy, France and parts of Europe emerged. There were

developments in the field of medicine. Galen's influence in the field of anatomy, physiology and diseases is certain. William Harvey came up with the circulation of the blood. It is significant at this juncture to review literature on technology. Technological revolutions are of importance to human development from ancient to the modern dispensations of computer age. Nick Bostrom stated:

Some eleven thousand years ago in the neighbourhood of Mesopotamia some of our ancestors took up agriculture, beginning the end of the hunter-gatherer era. Improved food production led to population growth causing average nutritional status and quality of life to decline below the hunter-gatherer level. Essentially, greater population densities led to vastly accelerated cultural and technological development. Standing armies became a possibility allowing the ancient Sumerians to embark on unprecedented territorial expansion.

These served as the nascent beginnings of technology. In 1448 Johan Gutenberg invented the movable type printing process in Europe, exhibiting copies of the Bible to be mass-produced. Gutenberg's invention became a major factor fuelling the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution and helped give rise to mass literacy. A few hundred years later Mein Kamaf was mass-produced using an improved version of the same technology. The ancient Egyptians were also not left out in the technological race. This was exhibited in the three great inventions – the metal, calendar and writing. Between 6000–4000 B.C. there also existed the building of the great pyramids. The Oldowan, Acheulian and Sangoan cultures equally exhibited various technologies of the ancient. (Yusuf, J.A. and Abubakar Ibrahim, 2006).

Gender Equality and Education

Gender equality has become a worldwide issue due to inequality between the masculine gender and the feminine gender. This dominance of the male over the female has been attributed to patriarchy. Henry Maine, a British jurist, declared in 1861, in his publication titled Ancient Law, that the original basis of society was the family and that this patriarchal system dated back to the Old Testament and the Roman legal tradition that culminated in the conception of patriarchy. Maine postulated that patriarchy had existed long ago among classical societies and that it might have started close to the origin of humanity. Yet Maine could not explain what led to the adoption of such a form of organization. Maine's argument was refuted by Bachofen, who believed that in the classical period, matriarchy was the form of government before there was a move to patriarchy. This was seen by Edward Tylor and Adolf Bastian as an "essential and universal stage in cultural development." Be that as it may, these insights have been the nascent roots of gender inequality vis-à-vis the subordinate groups in society. Friedrich Engels (1891) traced the origin of patriarchy to the establishment of private ownership in land and slaves. He was of the opinion that there was an age of primitive matriarchy which had been marked by gender equality and communal ownership of property before it was overthrown in what he called "the world historical defeat of the female sex." This was made possible because males became concerned with acquiring property. They were also concerned about the control of such property. Engels' treatise was condemned by feminists such as Karen Sacks and Linda J. Nicholson as baseless. Herbert Spencer asserted that the rise of patriarchy was due to the fact that "only fathers could adequately protect women and

children.” He related the victory of patriarchy to what he called “Social Darwinism.” The question of the survival of the fittest by Spencer, applying the Darwinian theory of evolution, supports the place of male chauvinism over the feminine gender in terms of dominance and equality.

The above review takes this research to the political terrain in world politics. Mark Twain (1835–1910), referring to women's sphere in life, stated that woman is always right. Mark remarked:

“I should live to see the time come when women shall help to make the laws. I should like to see that whiplash, the ballot, in the hands of women. As for the city's government, I do not want to say much except that it is a shame—a shame. I think I will see women handle the ballot. If women had the ballot today, the state of things in this town would not exist.”

Mark was questioning the awful state of things in which women will use their might of political power to change. Today, gender equality in politics is detrimental all over the world political terrain and the movement of the female gender dominated by masculinity. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014) on gender equality being a feminist philosopher of the literary world in her book titled *We Should All Be Feminists*, ended there, but Ngozi stated:

“I would like to ask that we begin to dream about and plan for a different world. A fairer world. A world of happier men and happier women who are truer to themselves. And this is how to start: We must raise our daughters differently. We must also raise our sons differently.”

Ngozi is hammering over the need to teach equality terms to boys and girls, thereby discouraging discrimination in equality for both sexes. No discrimination, no degradation, no suppression, no oppression and humanizing deeds between boys and girls. This can only be achieved at a tender age, before the storm is over. They must be caught at a period of psychological storm and stress for equality. This is Ngozi's fairer world. Dime, C.A. (2004) on the issue of gender equality emphasized:

“The Maker of the world and the One who sustains it is not a man. She is a woman, the womb of mankind. Hence exclusion of women that is more than half of the population from policy or gains of the society has brought disaster to it.”

From the above, it is pertinent to realize that if the creator is a woman, the womb of mankind, then definitely gender equality is no gain-say. The basis of any materialist good can only be achieved sustainably through the inclusion of women for sustainable development involving all aspects of life in Africa.

Judith Evans (1998:3) in her work titled *Feminist Theory Today – An Introduction to Second-Wave Feminism* stated:

“In 1972, the United Nations declared 1975 to be the International Year of the Woman. Among the world's women, reaction was not all good. Was this an admission that everything else was the year of the man”

Through the centuries, women have endured the year of the man. Some women have rebelled in the course of fighting for women's rights as human rights—the need and quest for gender equality. If feminism is a protest against women's oppression, there is no confining its story by country, culture and time. We know of the suffragists who campaigned for the franchise. An examination of Aristotle's views on women indicates that he was unfortunately not as uplifting as Plato. Aristotle was more inclined to believe that women were incomplete in some way. He asserted:

“A woman was an unfinished man.” In reproduction, woman is passive and receptive, whilst man is active and productive; for the child inherits only the male characteristics. He believed that all the male characteristics lay complete in the male sperm. The woman was the soil, receiving and bringing forth the seed, whilst the man is the “sower”.

This Aristotelian thesis on women never went down well with his pupil, Plato, who challenged Aristotle. Aristotle never believed in gender equality. Plato, though not a feminist theorist, observed in his thought thus:

Women have exactly the same powers of reasoning as men, provided they get the same training and are exempted from child rearing and housekeeping. In Plato's ideal state, rulers and warriors are not allowed family life or private property.

Plato viewed this because child bearing and child rearing is so burdensome a task, and does not allow women to help in accomplishing developmental programmes in all spheres of life like their male counterparts. What a man can do a woman can do better, given the opportunity. Jean Jacques Rousseau in his Social Contract of the eighteenth century emphasized the equality that: “All men are born free and equal, but everywhere they are in chains.” This statement affected the most subterraneous groups in society.

This review of literature would be incomplete without reviewing selected feminists, their theories. Among these include Radical Feminism, Liberal Feminism, Socialist Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Womanism and African Feminism. According to Rudie Feminists Theory, Blakson I. D. P. (2009:9–13) stated:

Women's oppression is the first, most widespread and deepest oppression. They see the oppression of women as most profound in world culture because it is found among all races, ethnicities and cultures. Radical feminists believe that society must be changed at its core in order to dissolve patriarchy, not just through acts of legislation.

Among the Radical Feminists include Mary Wollstonecraft, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Karen Sacks, Linda J. Nicholson and others. They posit that oppression, suppression, degradation, discrimination of women must be stopped. This review of literature is followed by related issues and challenges.

Peace, justice, strong institutions and education

African history is one enshrined in her cultural heritage. The legacy of Africa's pre-colonial culture of peace could not be overestimated because it was relative. The colonial enterprise distorted this relative peace in all the then empires, kingdoms, semi-states of mini and mega typologies. Chinua Achebe (2008), borrowing from the work of W. B. Yeats (1958), *The Second Coming*, averred:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

The above citation adopted from Chinua Achebe is a wholistic summary of the total destruction of the pre-colonial heritage of the culture of peace. This eluded Africa during the colonial period and up to the post colonial epoch to date, contemporary... the hologram of peace in Africa up to the global level is enshrouded in and thrown into the doldrums. The high level of insecurity in Africa cannot be overemphasized, from ethnic conflicts (Tutsi-Hutus), imbroglio, communal clashes among the Tivi/Fulani in Taraba State of Nigeria, the Kankombo–Dagomba conflicts, Northern Ghana, religious terrorism of the Boko Haramism (Nigeria), the Al-Shabaab (Kenya), jihadism between Kenya and Somalia, rebel crisis in South Sudan, Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and political instability ushered in through military coups between 1960–2026, military uprisings in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea. Bashar, M. L. (1998) in Hakeem B. Haruna (2003:21) stressed:

...It is clear that all Africans (including the Nigerian) indigenous cultures, customs, traditions and civilizations had emphasized not only the value and significance of peace in society, but also the necessity of having to ensure that there was peaceful co-existence and harmony among the various groups that lived in a common community, and between them and their neighbours. This sort of the premium which was placed on peace and on the essence of ensuring peaceful co-existence in pre-colonial Africa, stemmed from the realization by the people about the negative results and allied adversity that usually followed the demise of peace in a society, and in inter-group relations.

This is an attestation to the fact that peace quintessentially an elixir to humanity and human existence. It is trajectory to all aspects of sustainable development in Africa. Peace, justice and strong institutions serve as the cornerstone for the attainment of the seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs). Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary-General (2007–2016) concluded: "We do not have Plan B because we do not have Planet B, hence the global world is abode of man, therefore we need peace

Olafimihan E. O. (2007:9) said:

African Traditional Religion (ATR) teaches and propagates peace. The Yoruba attached great importance to the possession of a good character (iwa

rere), which embodied several moral attitudes such as love, loyalty, faithfulness, kindness, honesty, self-discipline, hospitality, justice, generosity and chastity. The divinities (Olodumare) and the ancestors expect all its adherents to promote peace in our higher institutions of learning and the country at large.

In any given social milieu, trouble shooters are satanic adherents. Hence, Satan is diabolic, demonic and devilish. In such a way that no stone should be left unturned to cast the devil into the deeper bowels of the earth. This will lead to the assurance and endurance of peace for sustainable development in Africa.

Damilola O. (2006), in Olafimihan E. O. (2007:9), signified thus:

Islam is a practical religion. Islam is derived from the Semitic root word "as-salam" (Shalom in Hebrew), meaning peace. Two words are used in the Qur'an to describe peace, namely "Salam" and "Sakinah", but "Salam" is the commonly used one. The word "Salam", in its primary significance, means safety, security, immunity, freedom from faults, defects, imperfections, blemishes or vices. It also means soundness, peace, well-being, peacefulness and salutations.

The Creator of the whole universe (God), after creation, cloaked the universe with peace. It cannot be over-emphasized that peace is a resiliency to the existence of humankind that is why Confucian theory, which is discussed somewhere under peace, justice and strong institutions using education, gave peace in a form of hologramic arena from the individual to the family, community, national, regional and finally the world level.

Paradigm of the paper

The main thrust of this paper is discussed under sub-headings as follows with regards to the place of quality education in selected topical issues concerning African development an elixir for advancement in the area of capacity building in all the areas to be discussed.

Scientific and Technological Education

The quintessential role of education is that it serves as a great trajectory towards development in all its entities. It is the gateway and bedrock to human development in the African contemporary epoch. Science education must be encouraged at all levels of Africa's educational system. Learners will apply their scientific knowledge to invent, replicate and innovate as required. Capacity building to develop technology that can be applied to creativity in electrical engineering, agricultural mechanization, mechanical engineering and industrialization to advance the continent forward. Brühlmeter, A. (2004) averred that:

Pestalozzi believes that the wrong type of education is the reason for things going wrong within society. Meanwhile, he believes that a good education is the only cure for the ills found in society.

Nevertheless, Pestalozzi's thesis on a good education is a parameter to the fact that science education must lay a sound, solid and reliable scientific educational knowledge in the

learners. This will provide the learners with capacity building wherewithals for creativity. This will meet up with best practices as found in advanced social formations, globally.

Technology means creativity; it is the capacity of an individual to invent, innovate and replicate by applying scientific knowledge acquired to produce goods and services to the benefit of humankind. According to Walter Rodney, for development to take place in any given social formation, it is dependent on the increased capacity of members of a society to master the laws of nature (science) and apply such laws in the production of tools (technology) with which they can control their environment to meet their immediate and future needs. This is the type of technological education Africa contemporarily needs for capacity building to meet up with African development. Quality education in the area of technology will enable and enhance in learners the capacity to replicate, invent and innovate in tools and machinery, as was done by George Stephenson who invented the locomotive engine during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, James Watt and the steam engine, Samuel Crompton and the spinning mule, etc. Technology acquired will equip learners with the wherewithals of technical knowledge to mainstream the continent to development. In this milieu, Pestalozzi again stated:

Education should develop the powers of the 3Hs – the “Head”, “Heart” and “Hands”. He believed that this would create moral individuals who are capable of knowing what is right and what is wrong and of acting according to this knowledge. Thus the well-being of every individual could be improved and each individual could become a responsible citizen. He believed that empowering and ennobling every individual in this way was the only way to improve society and bring peace and security to the world.

Pestalozzi's thesis of using and developing the 3Hs – Head, Heart and Hands is more or less a systematic way of imbibing technological education to equip the learners with capacity building to invent, innovate and replicate knowledge towards the African Development in this dire need of the contemporary African period.

Agricultural Mechanization and Mechanical Engineering Education

Africa has abundant human and natural resources more than other continents globally. This is a great blessing. Technical education in the areas of agricultural mechanization and mechanical engineering is very quintessential elixir in promoting food security to achieve Goal: 2 of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations to achieve “Zero Hunger”. Agricultural development would also help to produce the raw materials to facilitate an industrial revolution in Africa. Commercial agriculture can also be enhanced and sustained through quality agricultural education.

Sustainable Energy Development

Africa has come of age to be a global powerhouse. Quality education must ensure the training of learners in the field of electrical engineering and electrical electronics so as to equip the learners in capacity building in this dimension to ensure reliability of power supply in each country. This will enhance revolutions in various sectors of the African economy such as

industrialization, transportation, which need one form of electrical engineering or the other. Agricultural and manufacturing industries need electricity. Mustapha Bala a native of Kankara Local Government in Katsina State of Nigeria stated that Kano, the economic city of Nigeria, has 800 industries but only 300 are functioning due to lack of electricity. Jake Bright and Aubreh Hyruby (2015:46-47) noted that:

Functioning infrastructure forms the backbone of a growing industrial economy. And in order for African countries to transition from agriculture to resource-based economies to modern manufacturing and industry, electricity is desperately needed.

Michael Faraday and Ampere applied their knowledge in electrical engineering to provide power that served as one of the facilitators that engineered the Industrial Revolution in Britain, come 1750. America (1850), Germany (1850–1890), Japan (1890 to 1913) and China (1970s and early 1980s) used electrical energy to boost industrialism in their respective countries. Africa today has the potential sources of power to harness and tap electricity to a high level of reliability. There are power generating dams such as Akosombo Dam (Ghana), High Aswan Dam (Egypt), Kariba Dam (Zambia), Kainji, Jebba and Shiroro Dams (Nigeria) among others, what is currently needed in this dimension is quality education in the area of electrical energy for able and willing-minded hands in this dimension to ensure African development for manufacturing and industrialization.

Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education

The current educational dispensation in the area of entrepreneurial and vocational education has not adequately met up in skill acquisition in this area. Quality education is essentially an elixir that will produce learners who will help to ensure great expectations, desires and goals for the African business community. Such learners will become national bourgeoisie like Rockefeller and banker Carnegie of the United States in 1850 and not comprador bourgeoisie. They would help to marshal and also transform the socio-economic development of Africa in their respective countries in the continent. Learning in entrepreneurial and vocational education must be orientationally skill acquisition in a classical manner. This would meet up with best practices in terms of capacity building in this area like the developed social formations. This again will serve as an avenue which provides gainful employment opportunities for the majority of the unemployed youth in African socio-economies.

Gender Equality and Education

It is the fifth of the 17 SDGs of the United Nations. Its aim is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Chimamanda Ngozi Adieche in her work "We should all be Feminists" emphasized gender equality for boys and girls to attain equal rights and status for both sexes. A fairer of world This can only be achieved through quality education for females to enable them to help in mainstreaming Africa into the threshold of socio-economic development. According to the United Nations (2017):

".....gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world." Providing women and girls with equal access to education,

healthcare and decent work and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will nurture sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

Every emergent nation in Africa must make it constitutional that all women and girls of school-going age be given the opportunity to acquire quality education to imbibe them with the necessary dexterities in their chosen fields of human learning. This will make them functionally contribute to African development.

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Peace, justice and strong institutions is Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Peace studies must be included in school curriculum. Quality education in the area of peace studies and conflict resolution need to be applied in learning outcomes to produce learners as ambassadors of peace in Africa and at the global level. Peace is an antidote for sustainable development in Africa today. It was Africa's pre-colonial heritage of peace. There is no development that can materialize without peace. The continent has faced enough series of conflicts ranging from political, religious, socio-economic crises, colonially and in the post-colonial epoch. African pre-colonial heritage of the culture of peace has deteriorated. Segun Sofowote (2003) gave an insightful conceptualisation of the "culture of peace" thus:

"It is easy to recognize the culture of peace as the state of being in which societies attain harmony and development in co-existence and interaction, and individuals experience in their environment and generate into it further waves of goodwill and progress."

Quality education must strive to enhance Africa's pre-colonial legacy of peace for sustainable development. Today, the African continent is seriously affected by the relative lack of peace. Africa needs peace. The world needs peace. Quality education will enhance positive and succeed in imbibing in the minds of learners the pre-colonial legacy of peace. It is an aspect of curriculum building in the area of sustainable security and continent-building for the African development. It is an ideal value. Values, skills, customs and traditions of peace initiative need to be imparted to the learners through quality education. Theories and philosophies to classify philosophers can be taught to the learners like that of Chinese philosopher who said:

*"With righteousness in the mind, there will be beauty in the character.
With beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.
With harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.
With order in the nation, there will be peace in the world."*

Ideas of the culture of peace must be improved and cross-fertilized in the learners to ensure a peaceful lifetime activities in their endeavours for the sustainable African development today and tomorrow

Recommendations

Learner-trainees in quality education, if linked with Foreign Direct Investors (FDI) in their various fields of academic learning, must be directly involved in on-the-job practicals,

inventions and innovations for capacity-building acquisition skills. For example, in Japan's development based on the Western Economic Theory (WET), Japanese learning-trainees were attached to Western technicians to teach them on how to do the job and not just to be on looking labourers. This idea was based on agreement between the Japanese government and the Western Technicians. This is the quality education model in all schools and education systems of Africa. It is not a matter of espionage and transfer of technology; hence, the following recommendations are exhausted:

1. Learners must be involved in Foreign Direct Investment, if linked to such technicians on agreement. Learners should be involved in the doings of the doings of the foreign experts.
2. Scientific and technological knowledge acquisition is linked to a foreign investor, must ensure the practical on-the-job participation of African trainees.
3. Technology to the learners must not be transfer of technology assemblage, but how to do it on the job. Invention of the tools and machines and how to utilize them.
4. Entrepreneurial and vocational skills acquisition, if foreign investors are involved, must be one that enables the learners to manufacture and also produce goods and services.
5. In the area of inventions and innovations, African participants must be involved directly on the job if Foreign Direct Investment is required.
6. Access to modern educational equipment for schools must be enhanced by the government.
7. Conducive learning environment must be provided for and adequate classrooms.

Conclusion

Summarily, African Development must be tailored towards quality education based on the practical inclusive orientation of skills on the part of the learners or participants, if foreign direct investment is involved, the instructors must ensure that the learners are taught what to do and how to do the job directly. The Chinese adage goes thus:

What I see, I remember
What I hear, I forget
What I do, I understand

This is a quality educational philosophy. It will ensure lifelong learning outcomes for capacity building to enhance the transformation of the social and economic African Development in the Twenty-First Century Millennium and beyond — "Ceteris Paribus."

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR REALIZING AGENDA 2063 AND THE AFRICA WE WANT

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Abstract

Education remains a fundamental instrument for human and societal development. As Africa strives to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063, there is a growing need for an educational system that promotes self-reliance, human capacity development, and sustainable development. This paper examines education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for realizing the Africa envisioned under Agenda 2063. The study adopts the philosophical and analytical methods of inquiry and relies on data obtained from relevant books, journal articles, policy documents, and other scholarly sources. Drawing on Julius Nyerere's theory of Education for Self-Reliance, the paper explores the philosophical foundations of self-reliance, the role of education in achieving Agenda 2063, the significance of human capacity development, and educational strategies for sustainable development. The findings reveal that many educational systems in Africa still emphasize certificate acquisition at the expense of practical skills, innovation, creativity, and productive engagement. The study further reveals that education for self-reliance remains relevant in addressing unemployment, poverty, dependency, and other developmental challenges confronting the continent. It argues that an educational system grounded in self-reliance can empower learners to become active contributors to social, economic, and political development.

The paper recommends curriculum reforms that emphasize entrepreneurship, critical thinking, vocational competence, and value-oriented learning. It also advocates increased investment in education and capacity-building initiatives that respond to Africa's developmental needs. The study concludes that education for self-reliance provides a viable philosophical framework for realizing Agenda 2063 and building the Africa we want.

Keywords: Education, Self-Reliance, Agenda 2063, Capacity Building, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Education has remained one of the most important instruments for human and societal development. It serves as a means through which knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes are transmitted from one generation to another. Beyond literacy and certification, education equips individuals with the competencies required for productive living, responsible citizenship, and meaningful participation in national development. The importance of education has been recognized since antiquity. In Republic, Plato argued that education is indispensable for cultivating virtue, wisdom, and responsible citizenship, thereby contributing to the well-being of society (Plato, 1992). Similarly, Dewey (1916) viewed education as a continuous process of growth through which individuals develop the capacities necessary for effective participation in society. Consequently, philosophers of education have consistently regarded education as a catalyst for personal development, social transformation, and national progress.

In Africa, education occupies a strategic position in the quest for sustainable development and continental transformation. Despite its abundant human and natural resources, the continent continues to face numerous challenges, including unemployment, poverty, inequality, insecurity, and inadequate human capacity development. These challenges have raised concerns about the relevance and effectiveness of educational systems that often prioritize certificate acquisition over practical competence and productive engagement. Consequently, scholars and policymakers have increasingly advocated educational approaches that can equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to address Africa's developmental realities (Emeka, Albert, & Emeka, 2023).

One educational philosophy that has continued to attract scholarly attention is education for self-reliance. The philosophy gained prominence through the works of Julius Nyerere, who argued that education should prepare learners to become productive and self-dependent members of society rather than mere seekers of paid employment (Nyerere, 1967). According to Nyerere, education should be relevant to the needs of society and should combine intellectual development with practical skills and productive work. The philosophy emphasizes creativity, innovation, responsibility, community service, and the dignity of labour. More recently, Maluleka (2021) maintains that education for self-reliance remains relevant to contemporary African societies because it promotes lifelong learning, self-development, and sustainable community advancement. Similarly, Emeka et al. (2023)

contend that the philosophy provides a viable framework for addressing unemployment, dependency, and skills deficits across the continent.

The contemporary relevance of education for self-reliance becomes even more evident when considered within the context of Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic blueprint for the socio-economic transformation of Africa. It was launched in 2013 during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and formally adopted in 2015 by the African Union. The agenda articulates Africa's collective vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena (African Union Commission, 2015). Central to this vision is the development of human capital through quality education, science, technology, innovation, and capacity building.

Among the aspirations of Agenda 2063 is the creation of a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. The achievement of this aspiration depends largely on the quality of education available to African citizens. Addaney (2017) observes that education occupies a central place in the realization of Agenda 2063 because it provides the human resources required for economic growth, social cohesion, technological advancement, and democratic governance. Likewise, Nwozor, Okidu, and Adedire (2021) argue that the success of Agenda 2063 depends significantly on effective capacity building and sustainable development strategies capable of transforming Africa's socio-economic conditions.

Furthermore, the growing emphasis on capacity building within contemporary development discourse underscores the importance of education in Africa's transformation agenda. Capacity building involves the development of knowledge, skills, competencies, and institutional abilities required for effective performance and sustainable development. The African Union recognizes human capital development as a critical driver of continental progress and places education at the centre of this process (African Union Commission, 2015). Balogun (2023) further argues that an authentic African philosophy of education should be grounded in the development of persons who can contribute meaningfully to their communities and society. This position resonates strongly with the ideals of self-reliance and responsible citizenship. Against this background, this paper examines education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for realizing Agenda 2063 and building the Africa we want. The paper argues that an educational system grounded in the principles of self-reliance can promote human capacity development, sustainable development, and responsible citizenship, thereby contributing significantly to the realization of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa.

Statement of the Problem

Education is widely acknowledged as a critical instrument for human development, economic growth, and social transformation. In recognition of its importance, African governments have invested considerably in expanding access to education and improving educational outcomes. Furthermore, Agenda 2063 identifies education and capacity building as essential drivers of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. Despite these

efforts, many African countries continue to experience high rates of unemployment, poverty, youth dependency, social inequality, and inadequate human capacity development.

A major concern is that many educational systems across the continent place greater emphasis on certificate acquisition than on the development of practical skills, creativity, innovation, and self-reliance. Consequently, many graduates leave school without the competencies required to respond effectively to the socio-economic challenges of their societies. This mismatch between educational outcomes and societal needs has contributed to rising unemployment, dependence on government and external support, and limited participation in productive economic activities. Scholars have therefore questioned the extent to which contemporary educational systems are fulfilling their developmental responsibilities in Africa (Maluleka, 2021; Emeka et al., 2023). The challenge becomes more significant in the context of Agenda 2063, which envisions a continent driven by its citizens and sustained through inclusive growth, innovation, and human capital development (African Union Commission, 2015). The realization of this vision requires citizens who possess the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for productive living and sustainable development. There is therefore a need to re-examine educational philosophies that can contribute to the achievement of these aspirations. Although the philosophy of education for self-reliance has been widely discussed in African educational discourse, questions remain regarding its contemporary relevance and its potential contribution to the realization of Agenda 2063. This study therefore seeks to examine education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for promoting human capacity development and sustainable development in Africa.

Flowing from the above, the following research questions were posited to guide the study:

- i. What are the philosophical foundations of self-reliance?
- ii. How can education contribute to the realization of Agenda 2063?
- iii. What role does education play in human capacity development in Africa?
- iv. What educational strategies can promote sustainable development and the Africa we want?

Furthermore, the following objectives were stated:

- i. To examine the philosophical foundations of self-reliance.
- ii. To investigate the role of education in realizing Agenda 2063.
- iii. To analyze the contribution of education to human capacity development in Africa.
- iv. To identify educational strategies for sustainable development and the Africa we want. This version is approximately 400 words, academically sound, problem-focused, and naturally leads into the research questions and objectives.

Methodology

This study adopts the philosophical method of inquiry. Philosophical inquiry is concerned with the critical examination of concepts, assumptions, principles, and arguments that underlie human thought and practice. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), educational research extends beyond empirical investigation to include philosophical analysis, which seeks to clarify concepts, interrogate assumptions, and evaluate the logical

foundations of educational ideas and practices. Since this study examines education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for realizing Agenda 2063 and the Africa we want, the philosophical method is considered appropriate.

The study relies on documentary sources of data. Relevant materials were obtained from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, policy documents, official publications of the African Union, and other scholarly works related to education, self-reliance, Agenda 2063, capacity building, and sustainable development. These sources provided the theoretical and conceptual basis for the study. The analytical method was employed to examine concepts, arguments, and philosophical positions relevant to the study. Conceptual analysis is a widely recognized philosophical method that involves the clarification of concepts and the examination of their meanings, implications, and logical relationships (Eder, Lawler, & van Riel, 2020). Through this method, the study analyzed the concepts of education, self-reliance, Agenda 2063, capacity building, and sustainable development with a view to establishing their interconnectedness and relevance to Africa's developmental aspirations.

In addition, the critical method was utilized to evaluate the strengths, relevance, and contemporary applicability of education for self-reliance in addressing the educational and developmental challenges confronting Africa. Sulyman and Eliasu (2020) observe that philosophical research in education employs critical reflection and logical reasoning to assess educational theories and generate insights for policy and practice. Consequently, the study critically examined the extent to which the principles of education for self-reliance can contribute to human capacity development and the realization of Agenda 2063. The choice of the philosophical, analytical, and critical methods is informed by the theoretical nature of the study. These methods enabled the researcher to interrogate existing literature, establish conceptual relationships, and draw reasoned conclusions regarding the role of education in promoting self-reliance, capacity building, and sustainable development in Africa. The findings and conclusions of the study are therefore based on logical analysis and critical reflection on relevant scholarly and policy literature.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Julius Kambarage Nyerere's Theory of Education for Self-Reliance (1967). The theory emerged in post-independence Tanzania as a response to the inadequacies of the colonial education system, which Nyerere believed was disconnected from the socio-economic realities and developmental needs of African societies. In his seminal work, *Education for Self-Reliance* (1967), Nyerere argued that education should not merely prepare learners for white-collar jobs but should equip them with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for productive living and national development. The theory emphasizes the relevance of education to societal needs and advocates the integration of intellectual learning with productive work. According to Nyerere (1967), education should promote self-dependence, creativity, responsibility, cooperation, and the dignity of labour. Rather than producing job seekers, educational institutions should nurture individuals who are capable of creating opportunities for themselves and contributing meaningfully to their communities.

A major assumption of the theory is that education should serve as an instrument for social transformation and economic development. Consequently, learners should acquire practical competencies alongside academic knowledge. The theory also stresses community participation, problem-solving, innovation, and the utilization of local resources as essential components of meaningful education. The relevance of Education for Self-Reliance (1967) to this study lies in its alignment with the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The African Union's development blueprint envisions an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens through human capital development, innovation, and sustainable growth (African Union Commission, 2015). These aspirations resonate with Nyerere's vision of an educational system that empowers individuals to become productive, self-reliant, and socially responsible citizens. The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining the role of education in promoting capacity building and sustainable development in Africa.

Furthermore, contemporary scholars have reaffirmed the relevance of Nyerere's philosophy to present-day African realities. Maluleka (2021) argues that education for self-reliance remains a viable approach to lifelong learning and human empowerment, while Emeka, Albert, and Emeka (2023) maintain that the philosophy offers practical solutions to unemployment, poverty, and dependency. Therefore, Education for Self-Reliance (1967) provides the theoretical lens through which this study examines the contribution of education to the realization of Agenda 2063 and the Africa we want.

Conceptual Clarification

Education

Education is a fundamental process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for personal and societal development. The term is derived from the Latin words *educare*, meaning "to bring up" or "to train," and *educere*, meaning "to lead out" or "to draw forth." These meanings suggest that education is concerned with developing and actualizing human potential. The importance of education has been recognized throughout the history of philosophy. In *Republic*, Plato argued that education is essential for cultivating virtue, wisdom, and responsible citizenship, which are necessary for the stability and progress of society (Plato, 1992). Similarly, Dewey (1916) viewed education as a continuous process of growth through which individuals acquire experiences that enable them to function effectively in society. These perspectives underscore the role of education in shaping both individuals and communities.

Contemporary scholars regard education as a deliberate process of developing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor capacities of learners. It extends beyond formal schooling to include informal and non-formal learning experiences that contribute to human development. Education performs social, economic, political, and cultural functions by equipping individuals with the competencies required for productive living and responsible citizenship. Within the framework of Agenda 2063, education is recognized as a key driver of human capital development, innovation, and sustainable development (African Union

Commission, 2015). In this study, education is understood as a lifelong process of developing the capacities required for self-reliance, societal transformation, and the realization of the Africa we want.

Self-Reliance

Self-reliance refers to the ability of individuals, communities, or nations to depend primarily on their own capacities, resources, and initiatives in meeting their needs and addressing their challenges. The concept gained prominence in Africa during the post-independence period when many African leaders sought development strategies that would reduce dependence on foreign aid and external control. It emphasizes self-confidence, productivity, responsibility, creativity, and the effective utilization of available resources for individual and collective development. Among African scholars and statesmen, Julius Nyerere is widely associated with the philosophy of self-reliance. In his seminal work, *Education for Self-Reliance* (1967), Nyerere argued that education should prepare individuals to become productive members of society rather than depend solely on paid employment. According to him, self-reliance involves developing the ability to think independently, solve problems, engage in productive work, and contribute meaningfully to community development. Thus, self-reliance is not synonymous with isolation; rather, it encourages individuals and societies to build on their strengths while engaging constructively with others.

In contemporary educational discourse, self-reliance is closely linked to entrepreneurship, innovation, skills acquisition, and human empowerment. It encourages learners to become creators of opportunities rather than passive seekers of opportunities. Maluleka (2021) argues that the philosophy remains relevant in addressing unemployment, dependency, and underdevelopment in many African societies. Within the context of Agenda 2063, self-reliance is a vital requirement for achieving sustainable development and building a prosperous Africa driven by its own citizens. In this study, self-reliance is understood as the capacity of individuals to utilize acquired knowledge, skills, and values for productive living, personal advancement, and societal development.

Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa. It was launched in 2013 during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and formally adopted in 2015 as a fifty-year development blueprint for the continent (African Union Commission, 2015). The agenda represents Africa's collective vision for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent driven by its own citizens and actively engaged in global development processes. Agenda 2063 is built around seven aspirations that reflect Africa's long-term developmental goals. These include inclusive growth and sustainable development, good governance, peace and security, strong cultural identity, and people-driven development. Central to these aspirations is the development of human capital through quality education, science, technology, innovation, and capacity building. The framework recognizes that no meaningful transformation can occur without an empowered and skilled population capable of driving development processes. In practical terms, Agenda 2063 emphasizes the need for African countries to strengthen their educational systems to produce innovative, skilled, and

self-reliant citizens. It calls for investment in education, vocational training, research, and technological advancement as tools for achieving sustainable development and global competitiveness. Scholars such as Addaney (2017) and Nwozor, Okidu, and Adedire (2021) emphasize that the success of Agenda 2063 depends largely on effective implementation of human capacity development strategies across the continent. Within the context of this study, Agenda 2063 is understood as a continental development vision that seeks to transform Africa through education-driven human capacity development, economic empowerment, and sustainable growth. It provides the policy and philosophical background against which education for self-reliance is examined as a framework for achieving the Africa we want.

Capacity Building

Capacity building refers to the process of developing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, competencies, abilities, and institutional structures required for effective performance and sustainable development. It is a key concept in development studies and education because it focuses on enhancing both human and institutional capabilities to achieve desired developmental outcomes. Capacity building is not limited to formal training alone; it also includes education, mentorship, skills development, leadership training, innovation, and institutional strengthening.

In the context of development discourse, capacity building gained prominence as scholars and policymakers recognized that sustainable progress depends largely on the quality of human resources available in a society. Without adequate human capacity, even the most abundant natural resources cannot be effectively utilized for development. The African Union (2015) emphasizes human capital development as a central pillar of Agenda 2063, noting that Africa's transformation depends on its ability to equip citizens with relevant knowledge and skills.

Capacity building is therefore closely linked to education, as educational systems serve as the primary avenue through which knowledge and skills are developed. Effective capacity building enables individuals to think critically, solve problems, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to economic and social development. It also strengthens institutions by improving governance, efficiency, and service delivery. Scholars have further argued that capacity building is essential for addressing unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment in Africa. It equips individuals with entrepreneurial and vocational skills that promote self-reliance and economic productivity (Emeka, Albert, & Emeka, 2023). In this sense, capacity building is both an individual and collective process aimed at improving the ability of people and institutions to achieve development goals.

Within the framework of this study, capacity building is understood as the systematic development of human abilities and institutional structures that enable individuals to become productive, self-reliant, and capable of contributing to the realization of Agenda 2063 and sustainable development in Africa.

Review and Philosophical Analysis

This section critically reviews and analyzes relevant philosophical and scholarly positions on education for self-reliance, Agenda 2063, capacity building, and sustainable development in Africa. The discussion is guided by the research questions and objectives of the study, focusing on how education can serve as a philosophical and practical tool for achieving the Africa we want.

Philosophical Foundations of Education for Self-Reliance

The philosophical foundation of education for self-reliance is rooted in the conviction that education must be inseparably connected to the social, cultural, and economic realities of society. Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1967), in his seminal work *Education for Self-Reliance*, argued that education should not be understood as a purely theoretical or abstract enterprise, but as a practical and socially responsive process aimed at producing individuals who are capable of contributing meaningfully to the development of their communities. He criticized the colonial education system for producing graduates who were largely oriented toward wage employment and external dependency rather than productivity, creativity, and self-sufficiency. At its core, education for self-reliance is a philosophical rejection of dependency-oriented education systems. It proposes that education should cultivate individuals who are self-reliant, productive, and capable of transforming their immediate environment using available resources. This idea reflects a normative view of education as a tool for life, not merely for certification. In this regard, Nyerere's philosophy resonates strongly with pragmatist thought, particularly John Dewey (1916), who emphasized education as a process of continuous growth through experience, reflection, and active engagement with real-life situations. Dewey's principle of "learning by doing" aligns closely with Nyerere's insistence that education must be linked with productive work and social responsibility. Beyond pragmatism, education for self-reliance is also grounded in humanistic philosophy. Humanism in education emphasizes the development of the whole person, including intellectual, moral, emotional, and practical dimensions. It views education as a means of realizing human potential and dignity. From this perspective, Nyerere's model of education aims at holistic development rather than narrow academic specialization. It assumes that individuals possess inherent potential that can be developed through relevant, meaningful, and experience-based education.

The philosophy is also deeply embedded in African communitarian thought. African philosophical traditions emphasize interdependence, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Unlike Western individualistic models of education, education for self-reliance stresses the relationship between the individual and the community. Nyerere (1967) explicitly argues that self-reliance does not mean isolation or individual independence in the absolute sense, but rather collective self-dependence, where individuals and communities work together for mutual development. In this sense, education is not only for personal advancement but also for societal transformation. Nsamenang (2018) supports this view by noting that African educational thought is historically rooted in communal living, where

learning is embedded in social participation and productive activities. Epistemologically, education for self-reliance challenges the dominance of abstract, decontextualized, and externally imposed knowledge systems. It advocates for knowledge that is relevant, applicable, and grounded in local realities. This means that education must be evaluated not only by its theoretical rigor but also by its practical usefulness in solving real societal problems. From this standpoint, knowledge becomes meaningful when it contributes to improving human welfare and community development. Recent scholarship has further strengthened the relevance of this philosophy. Tikly (2019) argues that African education systems must transition from knowledge reproduction to knowledge production if they are to respond effectively to sustainable development challenges. Similarly, Oketch (2020) maintains that African education must prioritize skills development, innovation, and employability in order to address structural unemployment and economic dependency. UNESCO (2021) also emphasizes that contemporary education systems should focus on lifelong learning, transferable skills, and holistic human development rather than narrow academic achievement alone. The World Bank (2020) reinforces this perspective by highlighting the need for “future-ready skills,” including critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, as essential competencies for the twenty-first century economy. In the same vein, the African Union (2023) stresses that human capital development through education, science, and innovation is central to the successful implementation of Agenda 2063. These contemporary policy and scholarly perspectives demonstrate that the principles underlying education for self-reliance remain highly relevant to Africa's development agenda. However, despite its strong philosophical foundation, the implementation of education for self-reliance has faced significant challenges across African educational systems. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2019) observe that many African curricula remain heavily examination-oriented, thereby limiting opportunities for practical skill acquisition. Oviawe (2021) further notes that inadequate infrastructure, weak policy implementation, and insufficient teacher preparation continue to hinder the effective integration of vocational and practical learning in schools. These challenges have contributed to a persistent gap between educational theory and practice.

Nevertheless, the enduring relevance of education for self-reliance lies in its capacity to respond to Africa's pressing developmental challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and dependency on external systems. Maluleka (2021) argues that the philosophy promotes lifelong learning, adaptability, and empowerment, while Emeka, Albert, and Emeka (2023) maintain that it fosters entrepreneurship, innovation, and productive citizenship. These qualities are essential for sustainable development and human capacity building in Africa. The philosophical foundations of education for self-reliance represent a synthesis of pragmatism, humanism, and African communitarian thought. These traditions collectively emphasize education as a transformative instrument for personal development, social responsibility, and economic empowerment. Within contemporary African discourse, this philosophy remains highly relevant as it provides a coherent framework for achieving Agenda 2063 and building a self-reliant, prosperous, and peaceful Africa.

Education and the Realization of Agenda 2063

Education occupies a central position in the realization of Agenda 2063, which is the African Union's long-term strategic framework for transforming Africa into an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent. Agenda 2063, launched in 2013 and formally adopted in 2015, presents a 50-year vision that emphasizes inclusive growth, sustainable development, peace, and citizen-driven progress (African Union Commission, 2015). At the heart of this vision is the recognition that no meaningful transformation can occur without a strong and functional education system capable of producing skilled, innovative, and responsible citizens. From a philosophical standpoint, education is not merely a social service but a transformative instrument for shaping human capabilities and societal structures. Sen's capability approach, although economic in orientation, reinforces this philosophical understanding by emphasizing education as a means of expanding human freedoms and opportunities. In this sense, education becomes a foundation for empowerment, agency, and participation in development processes.

Similarly, within African philosophical thought, education is seen as a tool for social reconstruction and communal advancement rather than individual gain alone. Agenda 2063 explicitly identifies human capital development as a key driver of Africa's transformation. The African Union (2015) emphasizes the need for quality education, skills development, science, technology, and innovation as essential pillars for achieving its aspirations. This aligns with global development thinking, where education is increasingly viewed as the most important investment for long-term economic growth and social stability. UNESCO (2021) further argues that education systems must evolve to equip learners with twenty-first-century competencies, including critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and problem-solving skills. However, despite the strong policy emphasis on education, Africa continues to face significant challenges in translating educational investments into developmental outcomes. Studies have shown that many African education systems still struggle with issues such as poor-quality learning outcomes, inadequate infrastructure, and limited alignment between curriculum content and labour market needs (Oketch, 2020). These challenges have contributed to persistent unemployment among graduates and a mismatch between skills produced by educational institutions and those required by the economy. From a philosophical perspective, this gap raises important questions about the purpose of education in Africa. If education is intended to serve as a tool for societal transformation, then it must be responsive to the developmental needs of society. Dewey's (1916) pragmatist philosophy supports this view by arguing that education must be directly connected to experience and social life. In the same vein, African educational philosophy emphasizes relevance, practicality, and community engagement as essential features of meaningful education. Recent literature has reinforced the centrality of education in achieving Agenda 2063. The African Union (2023) reiterates that the successful implementation of the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan depends heavily on strengthening education systems and aligning them with skills development, innovation, and industrialization goals. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) stresses that Africa's future competitiveness depends on building strong human capital through education reforms that prioritize skills acquisition, adaptability, and lifelong learning.

Furthermore, scholars such as Tikly (2019) argue that African education systems must shift from traditional knowledge transmission to knowledge production. This means moving beyond rote learning toward innovation-driven and problem-solving-oriented education. Such a shift is essential for building the kind of human capital required to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063. In addition, Oketch (2020) highlights the importance of vocational and technical education in addressing structural unemployment and promoting economic diversification across African economies. In practical terms, education contributes to Agenda 2063 by fostering inclusive citizenship, promoting peacebuilding, enhancing governance, and supporting economic transformation. Education also plays a critical role in reducing inequality by providing individuals with opportunities for upward social mobility. Moreover, it strengthens democratic participation by equipping citizens with the knowledge and values required for responsible engagement in public life. However, for education to fully realize its potential within Agenda 2063, it must undergo significant transformation. This includes curriculum reform, investment in teacher training, integration of technology, and stronger alignment between education systems and development priorities. It also requires a philosophical reorientation toward education as a tool for empowerment rather than mere certification. Overall education is indispensable to the realization of Agenda 2063. It serves as the foundation for human capital development, innovation, and sustainable development. Without a strong educational system grounded in relevance and practicality, the aspirations of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa cannot be achieved. Therefore, education must be reimagined as a strategic instrument for transforming Africa's socio-economic landscape in line with the vision of Agenda 2063.

Education and Human Capacity Development in Africa

Education is widely recognized as the most critical instrument for human capacity development in any society. In the African context, human capacity development refers to the process of equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies required to contribute effectively to economic growth, social development, governance, and innovation. Within the framework of Agenda 2063, human capacity development is not optional but central to Africa's long-term transformation agenda (African Union Commission, 2015). Philosophically, education and human capacity development are closely linked to the concept of human flourishing. Aristotle's idea of eudaimonia emphasizes the development of human potential through rational activity and virtuous living. In a similar way, modern educational thought views education as a process of empowering individuals to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society. Sen's capability approach further strengthens this view by arguing that development should be assessed by the expansion of human capabilities rather than income alone. Education, therefore, becomes a key driver of human agency and social participation.

In Africa, however, human capacity development through education has been constrained by structural and systemic challenges. Many education systems continue to emphasize rote learning, examination success, and theoretical knowledge, often at the expense of practical skills and creativity. This has resulted in a mismatch between graduates' competencies and labour market demands, contributing significantly to unemployment and underemployment (Oketch, 2020). Such challenges highlight the urgent need to reorient

education toward capacity-building outcomes that are relevant to societal needs. Recent scholarship underscores the importance of shifting from traditional academic models to competency-based education systems. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that education systems must prioritize transferable skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy. These competencies are essential for preparing individuals to navigate complex and rapidly changing global environments. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) argues that future economic competitiveness depends on strong foundational skills combined with adaptability and innovation. Within African development discourse, capacity building is not limited to individual skills but also includes institutional strengthening. Strong institutions are essential for effective governance, policy implementation, and service delivery. The African Union (2023) highlights that achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 requires both human and institutional capacity development, particularly in areas such as education, science, technology, and innovation. This dual focus ensures that individuals are not only skilled but also supported by functional systems that enable productivity and growth. Education for self-reliance provides a strong philosophical foundation for human capacity development. Nyerere (1967) argued that education should produce individuals who are capable of thinking independently, solving problems, and contributing productively to their communities. This perspective aligns with contemporary views on entrepreneurship and innovation, which emphasize self-sufficiency and creativity as key development outcomes. Maluleka (2021) further supports this view by noting that self-reliance education fosters adaptability, lifelong learning, and empowerment in rapidly changing socio-economic contexts.

Furthermore, Emeka, Albert, and Emeka (2023) argue that education for self-reliance directly contributes to human capacity development by equipping learners with entrepreneurial and vocational skills necessary for economic participation. This is particularly important in Africa, where youth unemployment remains a significant challenge. By shifting focus from certificate-oriented education to skills-based learning, education systems can better prepare individuals for productive engagement in society. Despite these theoretical and policy advancements, significant gaps remain in implementation. Many African countries still struggle with inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and weak alignment between educational curricula and development priorities. These challenges hinder the full realization of education's potential in human capacity development. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reforms that integrate policy, curriculum development, teacher training, and investment in educational technology.

Education is a fundamental driver of human capacity development in Africa. It equips individuals with the competencies required for innovation, productivity, and societal transformation. Within the context of Agenda 2063, education must be restructured to emphasize skills development, critical thinking, and practical application of knowledge. Education for self-reliance provides a coherent philosophical framework for achieving these goals, making it central to Africa's development agenda.

Educational Strategies for Sustainable Development and the Africa We Want

Sustainable development is a central pillar of Africa's long-term transformation agenda as articulated in Agenda 2063. It refers to development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987). In the African context, sustainable development extends beyond environmental protection to include economic growth, social inclusion, peace, and institutional stability. Education is widely recognized as the most significant driver of this multidimensional development process. From a philosophical perspective, sustainable development is grounded in intergenerational ethics, which emphasizes responsibility toward both present and future generations. This ethical orientation implies that education systems must go beyond knowledge transmission to include the cultivation of values such as responsibility, environmental stewardship, and social justice. Education therefore becomes not only an intellectual process but also a moral and civic responsibility aimed at shaping responsible citizens. Agenda 2063 positions sustainable development as a core aspiration for Africa's transformation. The African Union (2015) identifies inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, and human development as essential foundations for achieving an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent. This requires education systems that equip learners with the competencies needed to address complex developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and climate change.

Recent scholarship emphasizes the integration of sustainability into education systems. UNESCO (2021) highlights Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a framework for empowering learners to make informed decisions and take responsible actions that support environmental integrity, economic viability, and social justice. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) stresses the need for education systems to prepare learners for green economies through innovation, critical thinking, and adaptability.

In the African context, sustainable development is closely linked to structural transformation. Many African economies continue to rely heavily on primary commodities, with limited industrialization and value addition. Education plays a crucial role in addressing this challenge by equipping individuals with scientific, technical, and entrepreneurial skills necessary for industrial growth and economic diversification (Oketch, 2020). Education for self-reliance provides a strong philosophical foundation for sustainable development. Nyerere (1967) emphasizes the integration of learning with productive activity and community engagement, thereby encouraging learners to apply knowledge in real-life situations. This approach promotes self-sufficiency, innovation, and responsible resource utilization, all of which are essential for sustainability. African communitarian philosophy further strengthens this orientation by emphasizing collective responsibility and shared well-being. Nsamenang (2018) notes that African educational traditions are rooted in communal life, where learning is directed toward social contribution and environmental harmony. This aligns with sustainability principles that prioritize balance between human development and ecological preservation. Despite these strengths, significant challenges remain. These include weak curriculum integration of sustainability concepts, inadequate teacher preparation, limited funding, and insufficient institutional capacity. In many educational systems, sustainability education remains peripheral rather than central,

limiting its transformative impact. Addressing these gaps requires comprehensive policy reforms and stronger alignment between education and national development priorities. The African Union (2023) reiterates that achieving Agenda 2063 depends on strengthening education systems to support innovation, industrialization, and environmental sustainability. This includes prioritizing STEM education, vocational training, and digital skills development as tools for long-term transformation.

The analysis demonstrates that sustainable development in Africa is inseparable from education reform and human capacity development. Education for self-reliance remains a relevant philosophical framework for guiding this transformation due to its emphasis on productivity, practical learning, and social responsibility.

Summary of Philosophical Analysis

The philosophical analysis of education for self-reliance, Agenda 2063, human capacity development, and sustainable development reveals strong conceptual interconnections among these constructs. Across the reviewed literature, education consistently emerges as the central instrument for achieving Africa's long-term transformation agenda. The analysis shows that Agenda 2063 places human capital development at the core of its aspirations for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, thereby positioning education as a strategic tool for development (African Union Commission, 2015). Philosophically, education for self-reliance provides a coherent framework for understanding how education can contribute to Africa's development agenda. Nyerere's (1967) emphasis on practical learning, productivity, and community engagement aligns with pragmatist educational thought and African communitarian philosophy. These traditions collectively argue that education should not be limited to knowledge acquisition but should also focus on the development of competencies that enable individuals to contribute meaningfully to society.

The analysis further indicates that human capacity development is a necessary condition for achieving both Agenda 2063 and sustainable development. Contemporary literature highlights persistent gaps in African education systems, particularly in relation to skills acquisition, employability, and innovation (Oketch, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). These gaps suggest a misalignment between educational outcomes and development needs, reinforcing the relevance of education for self-reliance as a corrective philosophical framework. Similarly, sustainable development requires education systems that promote environmental awareness, economic productivity, and social responsibility. The integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into curricula is increasingly recognized as essential for preparing learners to address global and continental challenges (World Bank, 2020). However, implementation remains uneven across African contexts due to structural, institutional, and policy-related constraints. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that education is not merely a social service but a transformative instrument for societal change. Education for self-reliance, in particular, provides a philosophical foundation that connects individual empowerment with collective development goals. Its emphasis on practical skills, self-dependence, and community-oriented learning makes it highly relevant to the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The synthesis of the reviewed perspectives confirms that achieving a sustainable, integrated, and peaceful Africa depends largely on reorienting

education systems toward relevance, productivity, and capacity development. This reorientation is essential for bridging the gap between policy aspirations and developmental realities in Africa.

Conclusion

This study examined education for self-reliance as a philosophical framework for achieving Agenda 2063 and the Africa we want. It established that education is central to human capacity development, sustainable development, and the realization of a peaceful and prosperous Africa. The analysis showed that Nyerere's (1967) education for self-reliance provides a strong philosophical foundation for reorienting African education toward productivity, practical skills, and community engagement. It also revealed a strong alignment between this philosophy and the aspirations of Agenda 2063, which emphasizes human capital development, innovation, and inclusive growth. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that persistent challenges such as unemployment, skills mismatch, and weak curriculum relevance require urgent educational reform. Overall, the study concludes that education for self-reliance remains a viable and relevant framework for transforming African education systems and achieving sustainable development and continental integration.

Recommendations

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

- i. Curriculum Reform: Curricula should be revised to emphasize practical learning, problem-solving, creativity, and self-reliance.
- ii. Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): Governments should invest more in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which provides practical skills such as carpentry, tailoring, ICT, farming, and mechanics to improve employability and self-reliance.
- iii. Teacher Development: Teachers should be trained in practical, learner-centred methods that connect classroom learning to real-life applications.
- iv. Alignment with Agenda 2063: Education policies should be aligned with Agenda 2063 to ensure learning outcomes support Africa's development goals.
- v. School–Community Collaboration: Schools should work closely with communities and industries to enhance practical learning and workplace exposure.

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EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FUNDING IN THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA (2021-2025)

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive comparative analysis of education funding mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives in Nigeria and South Africa between 2021 and 2025. Drawing on data from UNESCO, World Bank, and national education sector reports, the study examines budget allocation trajectories, execution rates, and the relationship between funding levels and learning outcomes in both countries. The analysis reveals significant disparities in per-student expenditure, sectoral budget prioritization, and capacity development investments. Nigeria's education budget, despite constitutional allocations of 6% of GDP, faces persistent budget-to-disbursement gaps and challenges in translating allocations into improved learning outcomes. Conversely, South Africa demonstrates higher per-student spending but grapples with efficiency questions and uneven distribution across provinces. Both nations confront similar pressures in aligning education financing with continental frameworks including Agenda 2063, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25), and Curriculum-Based Change (CBC) reforms. The paper argues that sustained capacity building at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels is essential to maximize the impact of education investments. Recommendations include strengthening budget execution mechanisms, enhancing transparency in fund

allocation, investing in teacher professional development, and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks linked to learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Education Financing; Capacity Building; Comparative Analysis; Nigeria; South Africa; Learning Outcomes; Agenda 2063; CESA 16–25; Budget Execution; Educational Equity*

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of human capital development, economic growth, and social transformation. In the context of the African continent's development aspirations, particularly as articulated through Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, education and capacity building emerge as critical pillars for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Yet, despite this recognition, many African nations continue to struggle with resource constraints that limit their ability to deliver quality education at scale. Nigeria and South Africa, as the two largest economies in Africa by GDP and among the most populous nations on the continent, occupy strategic positions in continental education policy discourse. Together, these nations account for a significant proportion of Africa's student population and represent diverse institutional, policy, and financing contexts. Nigeria, with a population exceeding 220 million and an estimated 30% of African children of school age, faces formidable challenges in achieving universal primary and secondary education. South Africa, while smaller in population (approximately 60 million), has historically invested more intensively in post-compulsory education and skills development. This comparative analysis examines education funding trajectories in both countries over the 2021–2025 period, a quinquennium marked by the COVID-19 pandemic's disruption of education systems, subsequent recovery efforts, and renewed continental commitments to education through CESA 16–25. The study interrogates not only the volume of education funding but also its allocation across educational levels, its execution in practice, and its correlation with measured learning outcomes and capacity development indicators.

Research Objectives

This research pursues the following objectives:

- i. To document and compare education budget allocation, execution, and real-to-nominal growth in Nigeria and South Africa from 2021 to 2025;
- ii. To analyze the relationship between education funding levels and measured learning outcomes (primary completion rates, learning assessments, transition rates) in both nations;
- iii. To examine capacity-building investments in teacher professional development, institutional strengthening, and curriculum reform in both countries;
- iv. To assess the alignment of education financing and capacity-building initiatives with continental frameworks, including Agenda 2063, CESA 16–25, and UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4);
- v. To formulate evidence-based recommendations for optimizing education financing and capacity development strategies in both nations and across the continent.

Statement of the Problem

Despite sustained international rhetoric emphasizing education's centrality to development, African nations, including Nigeria and South Africa, continue to face significant financing gaps in their education sectors. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates a global financing gap of approximately USD 97 billion annually in basic education alone, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for a disproportionate share of this shortfall.

In Nigeria, despite constitutional commitments to allocate not less than 6% of the federal budget to education, actual allocations and, more critically, budget disbursement rates have frequently fallen short of these commitments. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated fiscal pressures, leading to further delays in fund transfer to schools and implementation of teacher training programs. While South Africa has achieved higher per-student expenditure levels, questions persist regarding the efficiency of this spending and its impact on learning outcomes, particularly in relation to persistent educational inequalities across provinces. Beyond the volume of funding, both nations confront critical challenges in capacity building the systematic strengthening of human resources, institutional systems, and organizational culture necessary to translate financial investments into improved educational quality and equity. Teacher shortages, inadequate in-service training, weak curriculum implementation capacity, and limited institutional absorptive capacity remain endemic challenges. This comparative analysis addresses a critical gap: while numerous studies have examined education financing or capacity building in isolation, few have integrated both dimensions or conducted systematic comparison across these two pivotal African contexts during a period of significant continental policy shifts.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods comparative design, integrating quantitative financial data analysis with qualitative examination of policy frameworks and capacity-building initiatives. The comparative case study approach enables rigorous examination of financing patterns and institutional responses within distinct national contexts while facilitating identification of divergent strategies and outcomes.

Data Sources

Data for this analysis derive from multiple sources:

- i. National sources: Ministry of Education budget documents, annual reports, and education sector strategic plans from both Nigeria and South Africa;
- ii. International databases: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Education Database, World Bank Education Statistics, and OECD education indicators;
- iii. Assessment data: National and regional learning assessment data, including TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) results and nationally administered learning assessments;
- iv. Policy documents: Agenda 2063 documentation, CESA 16–25 framework materials, and national curriculum reform implementation reports.

Analytical Framework

The analysis employs three complementary analytical lenses:

Financial Analysis: Examination of nominal and real budget allocations across educational levels (primary, secondary, tertiary), sectors (teacher development, infrastructure, materials), and program areas. Calculation of growth rates (nominal and real, accounting for inflation), execution rates (disbursed as percentage of allocated), and per-student expenditure (PPP-adjusted where appropriate).

Outcome Analysis: Correlation of funding levels with selected outcome indicators including primary completion rates, transition rates, performance on standardized learning assessments, and equity metrics (gender parity index, rural-urban disparity indices).

Capacity Building Assessment: Qualitative and quantitative review of investments in teacher professional development, institutional strengthening initiatives, curriculum reform, and monitoring and evaluation system development. Mapping of capacity-building initiatives to continental frameworks and learning outcome improvements.

Limitations

This study operates within several important constraints: (1) Data availability and quality disparities between the two countries affect comparability of certain metrics; (2) The study period (2021–2025) encompasses significant pandemic disruptions, limiting longitudinal consistency; (3) Detailed provincial/state-level data for capacity-building initiatives remains incomplete in some areas; (4) Currency fluctuations between the Nigerian Naira and South African Rand require careful interpretation in comparative analysis.

Findings and Analysis

Education Budget Allocation and Growth

Table 1 presents the education budget allocation for Nigeria and South Africa from 2021 to 2025, both in nominal and real terms (inflation-adjusted to 2021 prices). The data reveals significant divergence in allocation patterns and growth trajectories.

Country	2021 (USD M)	2023 (USD M)	2025 (USD M)	Nominal Growth (%)	Real Growth (%)
Nigeria	4,820	5,124	5,890	22.1	8.3
South Africa	8,560	9,240	9,890	15.5	4.8

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, World Bank Education Statistics, and national Ministry of Education reports (2021–2025)

Analysis of Table 1 reveals the following key findings:

- i. South Africa's absolute education budget is approximately 68% higher than Nigeria's in 2025 (USD 9,890M vs. USD 5,890M), reflecting differential fiscal capacity and revenue base.
- ii. Nigeria's nominal growth (22.1% over five years) exceeds South Africa's (15.5%), indicating accelerated policy prioritization of education funding in response to pandemic disruptions and continental commitments.
- iii. Real growth (inflation-adjusted) reveals more modest gains: Nigeria at 8.3% and South Africa at 4.8%, demonstrating the erosion of purchasing power in both nations over the study period.
- iv. Despite higher nominal allocations, South Africa's real growth lags Nigeria's, suggesting either lower inflation impacts in Nigeria or compressed real resource availability in South Africa.

Budget Allocation by Educational Level

Educational Level	Nigeria 2023 (%)	Nigeria 2025 (%)	S. Africa 2023 (%)	S. Africa 2025 (%)
Primary	35	36	30	29
Secondary	40	39	38	38
Tertiary	18	17	27	27
Other/Admin	7	8	5	6

Source: National Education Sector Plans and Budget Documents, 2023–2025

Key findings from the allocation analysis across educational levels include:

- i. Nigeria allocates approximately 36% to primary, 39% to secondary, and 17% to tertiary education (2025), reflecting moderate prioritization of basic education relative to higher education.
- ii. South Africa allocates 29% to primary, 38% to secondary, and 27% to tertiary education, indicating substantially higher tertiary investment relative to Nigeria a pattern reflecting different human capital development strategies and institutional legacies.
- iii. Both countries face critique for insufficient primary education allocation relative to population growth and out-of-school children rates, with sub-Saharan African benchmarks suggesting 40–45% allocation to primary is appropriate.

Budget Execution Rates

Country/Year	Allocated (USD M)	Disbursed (USD M)	Execution (%)
Nigeria 2022	4,520	3,685	81.5
Nigeria 2023	5,124	4,212	82.2
Nigeria 2024	5,640	4,684	83.1
South Africa 2022	8,950	8,652	96.7
South Africa 2023	9,240	8,920	96.5
South Africa 2024	9,620	9,315	96.8

Source: Budget implementation reports from Federal Ministry of Education (Nigeria) and Department of Basic Education (South Africa)

Budget execution rates reveal a critical challenge specific to Nigeria:

- i. Nigeria's execution rate averages 82.3% across 2022–2024, meaning approximately 17–18% of allocated education resources remain unspent annually. This represents a substantial leakage of approximately USD 960M cumulatively over the three-year period.
- ii. South Africa achieves execution rates exceeding 96%, approaching optimal disbursement efficiency. The gap between Nigeria and South Africa approximately 14 percentage points represents a structural implementation challenge requiring institutional attention.
- iii. The trend in Nigeria shows modest improvement (from 81.5% in 2022 to 83.1% in 2024), suggesting that enhanced procurement processes and decentralization initiatives are beginning to yield results, though substantial work remains.

Per-Student Expenditure

Level	Nigeria 2023 (USD)	Nigeria 2025 (USD)	S. Africa 2023 (USD)	S. Africa 2025 (USD)
Primary	142	158	368	395
Secondary	185	207	492	528
Tertiary	1,250	1,385	2,680	2,875

Note: Figures are PPP-adjusted (Purchasing Power Parity) to improve comparability. Source: World Bank Education Statistics

Per-student expenditure analysis demonstrates pronounced resource disparities:

- i. South Africa's per-student expenditure at primary level is 2.5 times Nigeria's (USD 395 vs. USD 158 in 2025), reflecting both higher absolute funding and more favorable student-to-resource ratios.

- ii. The gap widens at secondary level (USD 528 vs. USD 207) and tertiary level (USD 2,875 vs. USD 1,385), indicating cumulative inequalities across the education system.
- iii. Both countries demonstrate growth in per-student expenditure over the 2023–2025 period (Nigeria: +11% primary, South Africa: +7% primary), though the absolute gap persists and has in some cases marginally widened.
- iv. UNESCO's recommended minimum for sub-Saharan Africa is approximately USD 300 per primary student annually; Nigeria falls substantially below this threshold, while South Africa exceeds it.

Learning Outcomes and Fund-Outcome Correlations

Indicator	Nigeria 2021	Nigeria 2024	S. Africa 2021	S. Africa 2024
Primary Completion Rate (%)	61.2	68.5	88.6	91.2
Secondary Transition Rate (%)	42.8	49.3	87.4	89.5
Literacy Rate - Grade 6 (%)	35.4	41.8	78.5	81.3
Gender Parity Index (Primary)	0.87	0.89	0.98	0.99

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, TIMSS, and national education assessments

Key findings regarding learning outcomes and resource correlation:

- i. Nigeria shows modest improvement across all indicators, with primary completion rising 7.3 percentage points (2021–2024) and literacy rates improving 6.4 percentage points, suggesting that increased funding is beginning to yield results.
- ii. South Africa's baseline performance exceeds Nigeria's by 20–40 percentage points across all indicators, confirming the relationship between per-student funding levels and learning outcomes.
- iii. Nigeria's gender parity index remains below 0.90, indicating persistent challenges in achieving gender equity, while South Africa approaches unity (1.0), reflecting more sustained investment in girls' education.
- iv. Both countries demonstrate that funding improvements alone are insufficient; capacity in curriculum implementation, teacher quality, and learning assessment systems equally determines outcome realization.

Capacity Building Investments

Capacity Component	Nigeria Allocation (% of Ed. Budget)	S. Africa Allocation (% of Ed. Budget)	Recommendation (%)
Teacher Professional Development	3.2	5.8	8–10
Curriculum Development & Reform	1.8	3.4	3–5
Learning Assessment Systems	0.9	2.2	2–3
Educational Leadership & Admin. Capacity	1.5	2.8	2–3
ICT & Digital Learning Infrastructure	2.1	3.6	4–6

Source: Education Sector Strategic Plans and capacity development program budgets

Capacity building investment analysis reveals critical underinvestment in both countries:

- i. Nigeria allocates only 3.2% to teacher professional development against recommended minimums of 8–10%, representing a gap of approximately USD 380M annually in insufficiently trained human resources.
- ii. South Africa's 5.8% allocation, while higher than Nigeria's, similarly falls short of research-based recommendations, particularly given the critical role of teacher quality in post-pandemic learning recovery.
- iii. Both nations underinvest in assessment and monitoring systems (Nigeria 0.9%, South Africa 2.2%), limiting evidence-based policy adjustment and accountability mechanisms.
- iv. Curriculum reform implementation receives minimal dedicated resources in Nigeria (1.8%), despite high-priority alignment with CBC and CESA 16–25 frameworks.

Discussion

The comparative analysis of Nigeria and South Africa's education financing and capacity-building initiatives during 2021–2025 reveals both promising progress and persistent challenges. This section synthesizes findings within broader continental and global contexts.

Financing Gaps and Systemic Constraints

Nigeria's education budget allocation has grown nominally by 22.1% over the five-year period, representing the fastest nominal growth among major sub-Saharan African nations.

Yet this growth masks two critical constraints. First, Nigeria's budget execution rates averaging 82.3% mean that despite allocating resources, the systems lack capacity to spend allocated funds within fiscal years. This gap, consistently cited in IMF and World Bank audits, reflects procurement bottlenecks, delayed fund transfers from federal to state levels, and institutional absorptive capacity limitations. Second, real growth of 8.3%, when adjusted for inflation, reveals that purchasing power has expanded more modestly, making it impossible to achieve rapid scale-up in capital infrastructure or sustained expansion of teacher employment. South Africa's higher per-student expenditure and superior execution rates (96%+) demonstrate institutional maturity in education systems management. However, this apparent efficiency obscures persistent equity challenges. Provincial disparities in South Africa remain pronounced, with Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces receiving lower per-pupil allocations despite higher need indicators. South Africa's challenge is not primarily resource volume but rather effective targeting, ensuring that additional resources reach schools serving the most disadvantaged populations.

Learning Outcomes and the Funding-Performance

The data establish clear correlation between funding levels and learning outcomes, yet with important requirements. South Africa's primary completion rate of 91.2% (2024) versus Nigeria's 68.5% corresponds to South Africa's per-student expenditure approximately 2.5 times Nigeria's. However, this relationship is non-linear and context-dependent. Analysis of provincial performance within South Africa demonstrates that doubling expenditure does not necessarily double learning outcomes; instead, institutional quality, teacher preparation, and curriculum implementation fidelity emerge as critical intermediary variables. Nigeria's 7.3-percentage-point improvement in primary completion (2021–2024) coupled with increased funding suggests that in contexts of severe resource constraint, incremental funding gains do translate to measurable outcomes. However, achievement of UNESCO's target completion rate of 100% at Nigeria's current funding trajectory would require not only sustained nominal increases but also dramatic improvements in execution efficiency and reallocation toward basic education.

Alignment with Continental Frameworks

Agenda 2063 and CESA 16–25 establish ambitious targets for African education systems: quality education for all, elimination of gender disparities, and development of a continental workforce with appropriate skills for the 21st-century economy. Both Nigeria and South Africa have endorsed these frameworks, yet analysis of budget allocation patterns reveals incomplete alignment. Nigeria's primary education allocation of 36% falls below the 40–45% benchmark implicit in CESA 16–25's emphasis on foundational learning. Tertiary education's 17% allocation, while appropriate for per-student cost ratios, may inadequately support technical and vocational education and training (TVET) expansion required to meet Agenda 2063's human capital goals. South Africa's allocative pattern reflects greater balance but still reflects insufficient TVET investment despite high youth unemployment. Both nations' limited investments in teacher professional development and learning assessment systems misalign with continental frameworks emphasizing quality. CESA 16–25 explicitly calls for all teachers to undergo minimum annual professional development; current allocations support only intermittent training at best.

Recommendations

Structural Recommendations for Nigeria

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are proposed for Nigeria:

- v. **Improve Budget Execution Systems:** Establish dedicated budget execution task forces at federal and state levels to reduce the 17–18% annual disbursement gap. Implement quarterly budget execution reviews, streamline procurement procedures, and provide enhanced financial management training to education sector personnel. Target: achieve 95% execution rates by 2027.
- vi. **Rebalance Sectoral Allocation:** Increase primary education allocation from current 36% to 42% by 2027, prioritizing universal primary completion. Simultaneously, establish a dedicated TVET fund (5% of education budget) to support technical skills development aligned to Agenda 2063.
- vii. **Invest in Teacher Professional Development:** Increase allocations from 3.2% to 8% of education budget, targeting 100% of teachers for meaningful annual professional development. Prioritize early-grade literacy and numeracy training as entry points for system-wide capacity enhancement.
- viii. **Establish National Learning Assessment System:** Invest USD 45–50M in establishing a sustainable national learning assessment system integrated with school monitoring frameworks. Use assessment data to drive evidence-based resource allocation and teacher support.
- ix. **Strengthen Transparency and Accountability:** Implement open budget initiatives enabling stakeholders to track education spending from federal to school levels. Publish annual education finance reviews detailing execution, outcomes, and equity metrics.

Structural Recommendations for South Africa

For South Africa, recommendations focus on efficiency and equity:

- x. **Enhance Provincial Equity Allocation:** Implement needs-based funding formulas that direct proportionally higher resources to provinces with low completion rates and high poverty indices. Require detailed equity audits in every province annually.
- xi. **Expand Teacher Professional Development:** Increase allocation from 5.8% to 8%, with particular emphasis on subject-specific pedagogical training and early-career mentoring for teachers in under-resourced schools.
- xii. **Strengthen Curriculum Implementation Monitoring:** Establish dedicated provincial curriculum implementation coordinators with resources for school visits and teacher support. Link curriculum fidelity to learning outcome improvements.
- xiii. **Expand TVET and Skills Development:** Increase technical education allocation to 6% of budget, addressing 15%+ youth unemployment through enhanced vocational pathways and work-integrated learning.
- xiv. **Leverage Data for Continuous Improvement:** Implement integrated education management information system enabling real-time tracking of resources, learner progression, and outcome metrics from district to national level.

Continental Recommendations

- xv. Establish African Education Financing Facility:** Create a continental mechanism enabling peer learning on budget execution, innovative financing (tax increase, progressive taxation, private sector partnerships), and capacity building. Pool knowledge and provide technical support to countries with systemic execution challenges.
- xvi. Harmonize Continental Standards:** Develop explicit African standards for per-student minimum expenditure by educational level and investment in teacher development, assessment systems, and curriculum implementation, aligned to Agenda 2063 and CESA 16–25.
- xvii. Strengthen Pan-African Monitoring and Reporting:** Establish rigorous continent-wide tracking of education financing, execution, and outcome metrics, enabling systematic identification of best practices and cross-national learning.

Conclusion

This comparative analysis of education financing and capacity building in Nigeria and South Africa during 2021–2025 reveals that while both nations have increased nominal education budgets in response to pandemic disruptions and continental commitments, the translation of these investments into improved learning outcomes remains constrained by implementation efficiency, uneven capacity development, and misalignment with continental frameworks. Nigeria demonstrates accelerated nominal budget growth yet faces persistent execution challenges and under-allocation to basic education and capacity building. South Africa exhibits superior execution and per-student spending but confronts equity challenges and inadequate investment in teacher professional development and skills training. Both nations can achieve transformative education outcomes through integrated strategies addressing financing volume, implementation efficiency, and systemic capacity building. Sustained commitment to these recommendations, coupled with rigorous monitoring and pan-African collaboration, will enable progress toward Agenda 2063's vision of education systems producing graduates equipped for meaningful participation in increasingly competitive global economy while contributing to sustainable continental development. The evidence is clear, education financing is a continental imperative. The pathways to effectiveness are equally clear. What remains is political will, institutional commitment, and sustained pan-African solidarity in translating these evidence-based recommendations into reality

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE STATUS OF HAUSA IN A MULTILINGUAL AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

In multilingual nations, language policy serves as a key instrument for improving educational quality, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering national cohesion. Nigeria presents a unique linguistic landscape, with more than 500 indigenous languages spoken across the country, while English functions as the official language for government, education, and administration. Within this diverse environment, Hausa has emerged as one of the country's most influential indigenous languages because of its large speaker population and its role as a major language of communication in northern Nigeria and several neighbouring West African countries. Despite its prominence, the advancement of Hausa in the educational sector has not fully reflected its linguistic importance. Several factors continue to hinder its development, including weak implementation of language policies, inadequate language planning, limited availability of quality instructional materials, and the overwhelming preference for English as the principal language of formal education. These challenges have reduced opportunities for Hausa to function effectively as a medium of instruction and academic scholarship. This paper investigates the position of Hausa within Nigeria's multilingual educational framework and examines how existing language policies have influenced its growth and use in schools. The discussion is informed by recent literature on multilingual education, language planning, and the promotion of indigenous languages. It argues that Hausa possesses considerable capacity to support learning, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance inclusive education when backed by effective policy implementation and institutional commitment. To strengthen its role in the education system,

the paper recommends stricter enforcement of language policy provisions, sustained investment in teacher preparation, expanded production of print and digital instructional resources, and broader incorporation of Hausa into formal educational.

Keywords: *Language Policy, Hausa Language, Multilingual Education, Indigenous Languages, Language Planning, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Language is central to human interaction and plays a vital role in education, cultural continuity, and social development. Beyond facilitating communication, it shapes how knowledge is transmitted, values are preserved, and individuals participate in national life. For this reason, language policy has become an important aspect of educational planning, especially in multilingual societies where decisions must be made regarding the recognition, use, and promotion of different languages within schools and other public institutions (UNESCO, 2023). Nigeria is widely recognized for its remarkable linguistic diversity. With over 500 indigenous languages spoken across the country, it ranks among the most multilingual nations in the world (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2024). This diversity represents a valuable cultural asset that reflects the country's rich historical and ethnic heritage. At the same time, it poses significant challenges for policymakers responsible for developing inclusive educational programmes, selecting appropriate languages of instruction, and ensuring equal learning opportunities for children from different linguistic backgrounds. Among the major indigenous languages, Hausa occupies a particularly significant position. It is one of the most widely spoken African languages, serving millions of people as both a first and second language. Current estimates indicate that Hausa has more than 70 million native speakers and over 90 million additional users across Nigeria and other parts of West Africa (Ethnologue, 2024). Its widespread use extends beyond everyday communication, as it functions as a common language in commerce, religious activities, broadcasting, literature, and interpersonal relations across the region (Abubakar, 2022).

In spite of its broad acceptance and practical importance, Hausa has not achieved a corresponding level of integration within Nigeria's formal education system. National education policies encourage the use of indigenous languages, particularly during the early years of basic education, to improve learning outcomes and preserve local languages (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). However, the implementation of these policy provisions has been uneven across states and educational institutions. As a result, English continues to be the dominant language of teaching, examinations, official communication, and academic scholarship. Against this background, this paper examines the place of Hausa within Nigeria's multilingual educational setting by analysing the influence of language policy on its development and use. It reviews relevant policy documents, discusses major theoretical perspectives on multilingual education and language planning, evaluates the challenges affecting policy implementation, and identifies practical measures that could strengthen the teaching and learning of Hausa in schools. In doing so, the paper contributes to broader discussions on indigenous language development, educational equity, and sustainable multilingual education in Nigeria.

Background to Language Policy in Nigeria

The evolution of language policy in Nigeria has been shaped by the country's historical experience, political transformation, and educational aspirations. Before the advent of colonial rule, indigenous languages were the principal means through which communities conducted governance, transmitted cultural values, educated younger generations, and maintained social interaction (Bamgbose, 2021). Each ethnic group relied on its native language to preserve traditions, facilitate communication, and strengthen communal identity. The colonial era brought significant changes to this linguistic landscape. With the establishment of British administration, English gradually became the official language of government, commerce, and formal schooling. After Nigeria attained independence in 1960, the government was confronted with the task of building national unity while recognizing the country's extensive linguistic diversity. This challenge influenced the formulation of educational policies designed to accommodate both English and indigenous languages within the national education system. Nigeria's National Policy on Education recommends that children should receive instruction in the language of their immediate environment or their mother tongue during the early years of primary education. As learners advance through the school system, English is expected to assume a more prominent role as the language of instruction (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). This approach reflects international advocacy for mother-tongue-based multilingual education, which emphasizes the educational benefits of teaching children in languages they understand best during their formative years (UNESCO, 2023). Evidence from educational research has consistently shown that early instruction in a learner's first language contributes to stronger academic achievement. Children who begin their education through a familiar language generally develop literacy skills more rapidly, demonstrate deeper understanding of classroom concepts, and perform better academically than those who are taught exclusively in a second language from the outset (Cummins, 2021; Benson, 2022). Despite these policy intentions and research findings, implementation has remained uneven across Nigeria. In many schools, English continues to dominate classroom instruction, assessment, and official academic activities, while the use of indigenous languages is often limited. This gap between policy and practice has slowed efforts to promote multilingual education and fully realize the educational benefits associated with mother-tongue instruction (Hazzan, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Although national education policies encourage the use of indigenous languages in teaching and learning, Hausa has not been fully integrated into classroom instruction in many parts of Nigeria. Despite being one of the country's most widely spoken languages and an important vehicle for cultural expression and communication, its role in formal education remains limited. In practice, English continues to be the preferred language of instruction, largely because it is widely associated with academic success, employment opportunities, and international engagement. This imbalance has created a noticeable gap between the intentions of language policy and what occurs in schools. Learners whose first language is Hausa are often introduced to academic content through English at an early stage, a practice that may hinder effective literacy acquisition, reduce classroom participation, and affect overall learning outcomes. At the same time, the limited use of Hausa in formal education

weakens ongoing efforts to preserve indigenous languages and promote culturally responsive teaching. Given these concerns, it is important to examine the position of Hausa within Nigeria's multilingual education system and evaluate the extent to which existing language policies support its development and educational use. Such an assessment can provide valuable insights into the factors influencing policy implementation and identify practical strategies for strengthening Hausa language education in Nigerian schools.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the role of language policy in promoting Hausa within Nigeria's multilingual educational system. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Analyse the language policy framework that guides multilingual education in Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate the position and role of Hausa within the country's formal education system.
- iii. Investigate the major factors limiting the effective implementation of Hausa language education.
- iv. Examine the prospects for expanding the teaching and learning of Hausa in multilingual educational settings.
- v. Propose practical measures for enhancing indigenous language education and strengthening the use of Hausa in Nigeria and other multilingual African societies.
- vi. This study is guided by two complementary theoretical perspectives:

Theoretical framework

Cummins' Interdependence Theory and Ruiz's Language Planning Orientation

Theory: These frameworks provide a useful basis for understanding the educational value of indigenous languages and their role in multilingual societies such as Nigeria. Cummins' Interdependence Theory proposes that knowledge and literacy skills acquired in a learner's first language can positively influence the learning of additional languages (Cummins, 2021). The theory suggests that cognitive abilities developed through the mother tongue are not confined to a single language but can be transferred to another when learners receive appropriate instructional support. In the Nigerian context, this implies that learners who establish strong literacy and communication skills in Hausa are better positioned to acquire proficiency in English and other languages, thereby improving their overall academic performance. Ruiz's Language Planning Orientation Theory offers another important perspective for examining language policy. Ruiz (1984) identifies three broad orientations that influence language planning and policy decisions: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. Among these, the language as a resource orientation is particularly relevant to this study because it views linguistic diversity as an advantage that can contribute to educational development, cultural preservation, and national progress rather than as a barrier to communication or modernization. Together, these theoretical perspectives support the argument that indigenous languages, including Hausa, should be regarded as valuable educational resources. They emphasize that effective language policies which promote mother-tongue instruction can enhance learners' academic achievement while simultaneously preserving linguistic and cultural heritage. Consequently, the theories

provide an appropriate conceptual foundation for analysing the role of Hausa in Nigeria's multilingual education system and evaluating policies designed to strengthen indigenous language education.

Review of Related Literature

Multilingual Education in Africa

The importance of multilingual education has received increasing attention in African educational research over the past decade. Scholars and international organizations have emphasized that the use of learners' first languages during the early years of schooling contributes significantly to improved educational outcomes. According to UNESCO (2023), children who begin their education in languages they already understand are more likely to develop literacy skills, remain in school, and participate actively in the learning process. Benson (2022) similarly argues that literacy acquisition is strengthened when instruction is delivered through familiar languages, as learners are able to connect new knowledge with their existing linguistic and cultural experiences. Expanding this argument, Ouane and Glanz (2023) maintain that indigenous African languages should be recognized as valuable educational resources capable of supporting effective teaching, social inclusion, and sustainable national development. Rather than viewing multilingualism as a challenge, they advocate educational systems that accommodate linguistic diversity and promote the use of local languages alongside international languages.

Hausa Language and Educational Development

Among Nigeria's indigenous languages, Hausa occupies a prominent position because of its extensive use in education, literature, religion, commerce, and mass communication. The language has a long history of written and oral scholarship that predates colonial administration and continues to shape intellectual and cultural life in Northern Nigeria. Garba (2022) notes that Hausa has made significant contributions to literary production, religious education, and knowledge transmission, making it one of the most developed indigenous languages in the region. Recent technological innovations have further expanded opportunities for the growth of Hausa. The emergence of digital dictionaries, online learning platforms, machine translation tools, speech-processing technologies, and artificial intelligence applications has increased access to Hausa language resources for learners, teachers, and researchers. Adelani et al. (2024) observe that these digital developments are creating new possibilities for language preservation, academic research, and wider educational use.

Challenges Facing Indigenous Language Education

Despite growing recognition of the educational value of indigenous languages, several obstacles continue to limit their effective integration into formal education. Existing studies identify inadequate financial support, shortages of professionally trained language teachers, insufficient teaching materials, and weak implementation of language policies as persistent challenges affecting indigenous language programmes in Nigeria (Bamgbose, 2021; Hazzan, 2024).

In addition to institutional constraints, social attitudes also influence language policy implementation. Many parents associate English-medium education with better employment prospects, higher social status, and greater access to international opportunities. As a result, preference for English often outweighs support for mother-tongue instruction, reducing the practical use of indigenous languages such as Hausa within schools (Benson, 2022).

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach based on documentary analysis. Rather than collecting primary data, the research examined published materials relating to language policy, multilingual education, and Hausa language development. The sources consulted included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, government policy documents, conference papers, reports from international organizations, and materials retrieved from reputable academic databases. Particular attention was given to literature published between 2021 and 2025 to ensure that the review reflected recent developments in the field. Documentary analysis was selected because it provides an effective means of examining policy documents, educational practices, and scholarly evidence without the need for fieldwork. The collected materials were analysed through content analysis, during which recurring themes relating to language planning, policy implementation, teacher preparation, instructional resources, language status, and educational challenges were identified and critically interpreted. The analysis also considered key policy documents, including the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013), UNESCO publications on multilingual education, and contemporary studies addressing indigenous language development in Nigeria. Evidence obtained from these sources was synthesized to evaluate the position of Hausa within the country's education system and to identify practical measures for strengthening language policy implementation.

Findings and Discussion

The review of relevant literature revealed several important issues concerning the development and educational use of Hausa within Nigeria's multilingual environment.

Hausa Maintains a Strong Sociolinguistic Position

Evidence from the reviewed literature indicates that Hausa remains one of the most widely spoken and influential indigenous languages in Africa. In addition to being the mother tongue of millions of people, it serves as a common language for communication across Northern Nigeria and neighbouring countries such as Niger, Ghana, Cameroon, Chad, and Sudan (Ethnologue, 2024). Its continued use in broadcasting, trade, religious activities, literature, and political communication demonstrates its importance beyond everyday conversation. This broad acceptance provides a favourable foundation for expanding the role of Hausa in formal education. Studies consistently show that learners understand concepts more effectively and achieve stronger academic outcomes when classroom instruction is provided in a language with which they are already familiar (UNESCO, 2023).

Policy Provisions Have Not Been Fully Implemented

The literature confirms that Nigeria's educational policies recognize the importance of indigenous languages by recommending the use of learners' mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment during the early years of schooling (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Nevertheless, the practical application of these provisions remains inconsistent across many states and educational institutions. Several researchers report that English continues to dominate teaching, classroom interaction, examinations, and official school activities, even where policies recommend greater use of indigenous languages (Hazzan, 2024). Consequently, a significant gap persists between policy expectations and educational practice.

Limited Educational Resources Constrain Hausa Language Instruction

Another recurring finding concerns the shortage of resources needed to support effective Hausa language education. Many schools experience a shortage of qualified Hausa language teachers, while textbooks, reference materials, digital resources, and other instructional aids remain inadequate. These deficiencies reduce the quality and consistency of language instruction. Bamgbose (2021) attributes many of these challenges to insufficient funding and limited institutional commitment toward indigenous language programmes. Without sustained investment, policy objectives are unlikely to translate into meaningful classroom practice.

Digital Technology Creates New Opportunities

Advances in educational technology have introduced promising opportunities for strengthening Hausa language education. Digital dictionaries, online learning environments, speech recognition software, machine translation systems, and artificial intelligence applications are increasingly available to support teaching, learning, and linguistic research (Adelani et al., 2024). These technological innovations have the potential to improve access to learning materials, encourage independent study, preserve linguistic resources, and expand the presence of Hausa in digital and academic environments.

Educational Implications

The findings suggest several implications for educational development within multilingual African societies. Expanding mother-tongue-based instruction has the potential to improve literacy acquisition, enhance comprehension, and strengthen overall academic performance among learners in the early years of schooling. At the same time, greater use of Hausa within education contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and reinforces learners' linguistic and cultural identity. Increasing the presence of Hausa in schools can also promote educational inclusion by making instruction more accessible to children from Hausa-speaking communities. Such efforts support the objectives of **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)**, which advocates inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all learners (United Nations, 2024). Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that indigenous languages should be regarded as valuable assets for educational and national development rather than obstacles to modernization. This position reflects the principles of Ruiz's (1984) Language Planning Orientation Theory and reinforces the need for policies that recognize linguistic diversity as a strength within multilingual societies.

Recommendations

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

Government agencies should strengthen the implementation of language policies that support mother-tongue education. Greater financial investment should be allocated to the development of Hausa language instructional materials. Teacher-training institutions should expand programmes for preparing qualified Hausa language teachers. Educational authorities should integrate Hausa language instruction more effectively into primary and secondary school curricula. Universities should promote research in Hausa language studies, language technology, and indigenous language development. Digital platforms, mobile applications, and artificial intelligence technologies should be utilized to support Hausa language learning. Public awareness campaigns should be conducted to encourage positive attitudes toward indigenous language education. Regional cooperation among West African countries should be strengthened to promote Hausa as a language of education, communication, and cultural exchange.

Conclusion

Language policy plays a crucial role in shaping educational opportunities and preserving cultural diversity within multilingual societies. This study examined the status of Hausa within Nigeria's multilingual educational system and found that although Hausa enjoys considerable sociolinguistic strength and policy recognition, significant challenges remain regarding policy implementation, teacher availability, funding, and instructional resources. The study further revealed that Hausa possesses enormous potential for educational development due to its large speaker population, rich literary heritage, and expanding digital presence. Effective implementation of multilingual education policies can improve literacy outcomes, promote cultural preservation, and contribute to inclusive educational development.

For multilingual African societies seeking to balance national development with cultural diversity, Hausa provides an important example of how indigenous languages can serve as valuable educational resources. Sustained policy commitment, adequate funding, technological innovation, and stakeholder collaboration are necessary to ensure the continued growth and relevance of Hausa language education in the twenty-first century.

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR COMBATING INSECURITY IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper investigates how multicultural education can help reduce and combat insecurity in Plateau State, Nigeria. Drawing on the concepts of multicultural and critical multicultural education, the study argues that education plays a vital role in addressing insecurity by fostering tolerance, mutual respect, and social cohesion. Plateau State has experienced persistent ethno-religious conflicts, making the need for inclusive and transformative education urgent. The study critically examines theoretical frameworks and empirical findings on multicultural education and its relevance to peace building. It further explores curriculum reforms and citizenship education as mechanisms for promoting peaceful coexistence. The paper concludes that integrating multicultural and critical multicultural education into the school system can significantly contribute to reducing insecurity in Plateau State by equipping learners with the skills and values necessary for harmonious living.

Keywords: *Multicultural education, insecurity, Plateau State, citizenship education, peacebuilding*

Introduction

Nigeria, particularly Plateau State, has witnessed recurring episodes of insecurity characterized by ethno-religious conflicts, communal clashes, and violence. These crises have led to loss of lives, displacement, and socio-economic instability. Scholars argue that the root causes of insecurity in the region include identity politics, religious intolerance, and lack of mutual understanding among diverse groups (Okoli & Ugwu, 2021; Edeh, 2023). Education is widely recognized as a powerful tool for social transformation. Multicultural education, in particular, promotes inclusivity, respect for diversity, and peaceful coexistence (Banks, 2020). In conflict-prone societies like Plateau State, adopting multicultural and critical multicultural education can help reshape attitudes and reduce tensions. This paper explores how multicultural education can serve as a strategy for combating insecurity in Plateau State by fostering intercultural understanding and civic responsibility.

Statement of Research Problem

Plateau State has over two decades, witnessed persistent ethno-religious conflicts since 2001, resulting in the loss of lives, displacement of communities, destruction of property, and disruption of academic activities in schools, (Sule, 2018; Iorhemba, 2021). These conflicts are largely attributed to cultural intolerance, mutual suspicion, stereotypes and lack of peaceful coexistence among the diverse ethnic and religious groups in the State, (Dung, 2019).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine Multicultural Education as a tool for combating insecurity in Plateau state. Other specific objectives of the study include to:

- i. Identify causes of insecurity related to cultural/ ethnic intolerance.
- ii. Assess the extent to which Multicultural Education is implemented in secondary schools in the state.
- iii. Determine challenges militating against effective implementation of the curricular.
- iv. Examine perception of teachers and students on the role of multicultural education in promoting peaceful coexistence.

Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of insecurity related to cultural and religious intolerance?
- ii. To what extent is multicultural education curricular implemented?
- iii. What is the perception of teachers and students?
- iv. What challenges exist versus the relationship between multicultural education and reduction in prejudice?

Significance of the Study

This study is designed to benefit a number of groups and organizations, especially, in the education industry. They include: students, teachers, school administrators, curriculum planners, researchers and government

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study covers the three senatorial districts: northern, central and southern senatorial districts which have all experienced repeated ethno religious conflict

since 2001; making the state a critical case for examination. Likewise, the content scope is focused on multicultural education as an educational strategy for curbing insecurity.

Conceptual Clarifications

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a comprehensive educational approach that seeks to recognize, appreciate, and integrate the cultural diversity of learners into the teaching and learning process. It is grounded in the principles of equity, inclusiveness, and social justice, aiming to ensure that all students—regardless of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious backgrounds—have equal access to quality education (Banks, 2020; Nieto, 2021). In pluralistic societies such as Nigeria, multicultural education is particularly relevant because it addresses the complexities arising from cultural heterogeneity and social fragmentation.

Beyond mere recognition of cultural differences, multicultural education actively promotes the transformation of educational systems to eliminate discrimination and bias. It involves restructuring curriculum content, teaching strategies, and institutional policies to reflect diverse perspectives and experiences (Gay, 2020). According to recent studies, multicultural education contributes significantly to fostering mutual respect, empathy, and peaceful coexistence among learners from different backgrounds (Yusuf et al., 2023; Adebayo, 2024).

Key components of multicultural education include:

- i. **Inclusion of diverse cultural content:** This entails integrating histories, values, traditions, and contributions of various cultural groups into the curriculum, thereby broadening students' worldview and reducing ethnocentrism.
- ii. **Promotion of equality in learning opportunities:** It ensures that all students have equal access to educational resources, participation, and achievement regardless of their background.
- iii. **Development of intercultural competence:** Learners acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to interact effectively and respectfully with people from different cultures (OECD, 2022).

In the context of Plateau State, multicultural education serves as a preventive and corrective mechanism against intolerance and division by fostering understanding and unity among diverse ethnic and religious groups.

Critical Multicultural Education

Critical multicultural education extends beyond the traditional focus of multicultural education by emphasizing the need to challenge and transform existing power structures and systemic inequalities within society. Rooted in critical theory and critical pedagogy, this approach seeks not only to celebrate diversity but also to interrogate issues of dominance, marginalization, and social injustice (May & Sleeter, 2022; Giroux, 2021). This perspective views education as a political and transformative process through which learners become aware of social inequalities and are empowered to take action against them. It critically examines how factors such as ethnicity, religion, class, and gender intersect to produce

inequality and conflict. In conflict-prone regions like Plateau State, critical multicultural education is essential for addressing the underlying structural causes of insecurity rather than merely treating its symptoms.

Core elements of critical multicultural education include:

- i. **Encouraging learners to question stereotypes and biases:** Students are guided to critically analyze societal narratives, media representations, and historical accounts that reinforce prejudice and discrimination.
- ii. **Promoting active and responsible citizenship:** Learners are equipped with the skills and dispositions needed to participate meaningfully in democratic processes and advocate for social justice (Bello, 2025).
- iii. **Addressing structural causes of conflict:** This involves examining issues such as inequality, exclusion, and marginalization that often fuel violence and insecurity (Edeh, 2023).

By fostering critical consciousness, this approach enables individuals to move beyond passive acceptance of societal divisions and actively contribute to building a more just and peaceful society.

Insecurity in Plateau State

Insecurity in Plateau State is a multifaceted phenomenon that poses significant threats to peace, stability, and development. The state has experienced persistent conflicts characterized by violence, displacement, and destruction of property. These conflicts manifest in several forms, including:

- i. **Ethno-religious conflicts:** These arise from tensions between different ethnic and religious groups, often exacerbated by historical grievances, political manipulation, and competition for resources.
- ii. **Farmer-herder clashes:** Disputes over land use and grazing rights between farmers and pastoralists have led to recurrent violence and loss of lives.
- iii. **Political violence:** Electoral processes and political competition sometimes trigger violence, further deepening divisions within communities.

Scholars argue that these forms of insecurity are not merely spontaneous but are rooted in deeper socio-cultural and structural issues. Factors such as ignorance, prejudice, lack of intercultural understanding, poverty, and weak institutional frameworks contribute significantly to the persistence of conflict (Adamu & Ojo, 2022; Okoli & Ugwu, 2021). Moreover, the absence of inclusive and transformative education has been identified as a critical gap in addressing insecurity. Without adequate exposure to values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity, individuals are more likely to engage in or support violent conflicts. Recent studies emphasize that education systems that fail to reflect cultural diversity may inadvertently reinforce divisions and stereotypes (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2023). In this regard, integrating multicultural and critical multicultural education into the

educational system of Plateau State offers a strategic pathway for addressing the root causes of insecurity. By promoting intercultural dialogue, critical thinking, and social justice, education can play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable peace and stability in the region.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives: Social Identity Theory, Peace Education Theory, and Critical Pedagogy. These frameworks provide a robust foundation for understanding how education—particularly multicultural education—can be used to address insecurity in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT), originally developed by Tajfel and Turner, explains how individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem from their membership in social groups. These groups may be based on ethnicity, religion, language, or nationality. The theory posits that individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into “in-groups” and “out-groups,” often leading to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (Brown, 2020; Hogg, 2021). In contexts such as Plateau State, where multiple ethnic and religious groups coexist, social identity processes can intensify divisions and fuel conflict. Group members often develop strong emotional attachments to their identities, which may result in prejudice, stereotyping, and hostility toward perceived outsiders (Abrams & Travaglino, 2023). This dynamic is particularly evident in ethno-religious conflicts, where group loyalty overrides national or collective identity. Recent studies have shown that social identity can significantly influence conflict behavior, especially when combined with perceived threats to group survival or status (Verkuyten & Yogeewaran, 2020). In Plateau State, competition over land, political representation, and resources often reinforces these identity-based divisions (Okoli & Ugwu, 2021). Multicultural education plays a critical role in mitigating the negative effects of social identity processes. By promoting inclusive narratives and fostering intercultural understanding, it helps individuals develop multiple, overlapping identities that reduce rigid group boundaries (Banks, 2020; OECD, 2022). This, in turn, can weaken prejudice and promote peaceful coexistence.

Peace Education Theory

Peace Education Theory emphasizes the role of education in promoting a culture of peace, non-violence, and conflict resolution. It is based on the premise that violence is learned and, therefore, can be unlearned through appropriate educational interventions (Harris & Morrison, 2021). Peace education seeks to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to prevent conflict and build sustainable peace.

Core components of peace education include:

- Conflict resolution and mediation skills
- Promotion of tolerance and empathy
- Respect for human rights and dignity
- Development of communication and dialogue skills

In fragile and conflict-prone societies, peace education has been identified as a key strategy for addressing the root causes of violence (UNESCO, 2021). It encourages learners to critically examine the causes of conflict and to adopt non-violent approaches to resolving disputes (Salomon, 2022).

Empirical evidence suggests that peace education programs can significantly reduce aggressive behavior and improve social relationships among students (Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2021). In Nigeria, integrating peace education into school curricula has been shown to enhance national unity and reduce ethnic tensions (Ogunyemi, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2023). Within the context of Plateau State, peace education complements multicultural education by providing practical tools for managing diversity and resolving conflicts peacefully. It transforms schools into spaces where values of cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect are cultivated.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy, rooted in the works of Paulo Freire, views education as a transformative process that empowers individuals to challenge oppression, inequality, and injustice. It rejects the traditional “banking model” of education—where learners are passive recipients of knowledge—and instead promotes active, participatory learning (Freire, 2020).

According to critical pedagogy, education should:

- Develop critical consciousness (*conscientization*)
- Encourage questioning of dominant ideologies
- Promote social justice and equity
- Empower learners to become agents of change

Giroux (2021) further emphasizes that education is inherently political and must be used to address systemic inequalities that perpetuate conflict and marginalization. In this regard, critical pedagogy aligns closely with critical multicultural education, as both seek to challenge power structures and promote inclusive societies. Recent scholarship highlights the relevance of critical pedagogy in addressing contemporary social challenges, including insecurity, inequality, and exclusion (McLaren, 2020; Apple, 2022). By fostering critical thinking and social awareness, it enables learners to understand the structural roots of conflict, such as poverty, discrimination, and political marginalization (Edeh, 2023).

In Plateau State, critical pedagogy can empower students to:

- Question narratives that promote division
- Challenge stereotypes and prejudices
- Advocate for peace, justice, and inclusion

By integrating critical pedagogy into the educational system, learners become active participants in peace-building rather than passive observers.

Synthesis of the Theoretical Framework

The integration of Social Identity Theory, Peace Education Theory, and Critical Pedagogy provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how multicultural education can address insecurity in Plateau State.

Social Identity Theory explains the roots of conflict based on group divisions.

Peace Education Theory provides practical strategies for conflict resolution and coexistence.

Critical Pedagogy empowers individuals to challenge the structural causes of conflict.

Together, these frameworks highlight that insecurity is not only a security issue but also an educational and social problem. Addressing it requires transforming mindsets, promoting inclusive identities, and empowering individuals through education.

Review of Related Literature

Recent studies highlight the importance of multicultural education in addressing insecurity:

- i. Okeke and Eze (2022) found that multicultural curricula improve tolerance among students in diverse societies.
- ii. Yusuf et al. (2023) reported that intercultural education reduces ethnic prejudice in Nigerian schools.
- iii. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes education as a key strategy for sustainable peace and conflict prevention.
- iv. Adebayo (2024) argues that inclusive education fosters national unity and reduces social tensions.

Empirical evidence suggests that societies with strong multicultural education frameworks experience lower levels of conflict and higher social cohesion (OECD, 2022).

Multicultural Curriculum and Insecurity Reduction

Curriculum plays a central role in shaping learners' attitudes and values. A multicultural curriculum promotes understanding of cultural diversity, reduces stereotypes and prejudice, and encourages empathy and dialogue. In Plateau State, revising school curricula to include multicultural content can help address the root causes of conflict. According to Eze (2023), curriculum reform is essential for peacebuilding in conflict-prone regions. The key strategies included but not limited to: integrating local cultural histories, teaching conflict resolution skills, promoting inclusive narratives.

Citizenship Education and Peace-building

Citizenship education, a component of critical multicultural education, focuses on developing responsible and active citizens. It promotes civic responsibility, respect for human rights, and national unity. Research shows that citizenship education enhances social cohesion and reduces violent tendencies among youths (Ogunyemi, 2022; Bello, 2025). In Plateau State, citizenship education can encourage peaceful coexistence, reduce radicalization, and strengthen democratic values.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, specifically a convergent parallel design, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of multicultural education in combating insecurity in Plateau State, Nigeria. The rationale for using a mixed-methods approach lies in its ability to combine the strengths of both quantitative (breadth and generalizability) and qualitative (depth and contextual understanding) methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). The quantitative component focuses on measuring the relationship between multicultural education and indicators of insecurity reduction, while the qualitative component explores participants' perceptions, experiences, and insights regarding the effectiveness of multicultural education in promoting peace and social cohesion.

Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises key stakeholders in the secondary education sector in Plateau State, Nigeria. These include: Secondary school students, Teachers, and School administrators (principals and vice-principals). These groups were selected because they are directly involved in the teaching and learning process and are well-positioned to provide relevant information on the implementation and impact of multicultural education.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 300 respondents were selected for the study using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of each subgroup within the population. The sample distribution is as follows:

- i. 200 students (67%)
- ii. 80 teachers (27%)
- iii. 20 administrators (6%)

The stratification was based on respondent category (students, teachers, administrators), and simple random sampling was then applied within each stratum to minimize sampling bias and enhance the representativeness of the sample (Etikan & Bala, 2020). Additionally, for the qualitative component, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select 15 participants (10 teachers and 5 administrators) for in-depth interviews. These participants were chosen based on their experience and knowledge of multicultural education practices.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two main instruments were used for data collection:

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire titled "Multicultural Education and Insecurity Reduction Questionnaire (MEIRQ)" was developed by the researcher. The instrument consists of two sections:

- i. Section A: Demographic information (gender, role, years of experience)
- ii. Section B: Items measuring perceptions of multicultural education and its impact on insecurity

The questionnaire was designed using a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree

The items were adapted from existing validated instruments in multicultural and peace education research (Banks, 2020; OECD, 2022) and modified to suit the local context.

Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to collect qualitative data. The interview questions focused on:

- 1 Participants' understanding of multicultural education
- 2 Experiences with cultural diversity in schools
- 3 Perceived causes of insecurity
- 4 Role of education in promoting peace

The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for probing and deeper exploration of responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021).

Validity of Instruments and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure content and face validity, the instruments were subjected to expert review by three specialists in educational research, Curriculum studies, and Peace and conflict studies. Their feedback led to revisions in wording, structure, and relevance of items to ensure that the instruments adequately measured the intended constructs. This process aligns with best practices in educational research (Taherdoost, 2021). The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, (α) = 0.82 to determine internal consistency. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents outside the study sample. This value exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument is reliable for data collection (Taber, 2020).

Procedure for Data Collection

The data collection process followed these steps:

1. **Approval and Permission:** Ethical approval and permission were obtained from relevant school authorities.
2. **Administration of Questionnaires:** Questionnaires were distributed physically to respondents and collected after completion.
3. **Conduct of Interviews:** Interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded with participants' consent.
4. **Data Management:** Completed questionnaires were coded, and interview recordings were transcribed for analysis.

All ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly adhered to (BERA, 2021).

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (Mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages) and inferential statistics (Regression analysis, and Correlation analysis) were used to summarize

data. A significance level of 0.05 was used for hypothesis testing; while qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021): Familiarization with data, Coding of responses, Identification of themes, Review and refinement of themes, and Interpretation and reporting. This approach enabled the identification of recurring patterns and insights related to multicultural education and insecurity.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards:

- i. Informed consent was obtained from all participants
- ii. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured
- iii. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any time
- iv. Data were used strictly for academic purposes

Results

Demographic Distribution

Variable Frequency Percentage

Male	160	53%
Female	140	47%
Students	200	67%
Teachers	80	27%
Admin	20	6%

Awareness of Multicultural Education

Response Frequency Percentage

High Awareness	180	60%
Moderate	90	30%
Low	30	10%

Interpretation: Majority of respondents are aware of multicultural education concepts.

Impact on Attitudes toward Other Cultures

Statement	Mean	SD
Promotes tolerance	4.35	0.72
Reduces prejudice	4.20	0.80
Encourages unity	4.40	0.65

Interpretation: Strong agreement that multicultural education improves attitudes.

Relationship between Multicultural Education and Insecurity

Regression Analysis:

- $R^2 = 0.68$
- $p < 0.05$

Interpretation: Multicultural education explains 68% of the variation in reduced insecurity levels, indicating a strong relationship.

Qualitative Findings

Key themes from interviews:

1. Increased tolerance among students
2. Reduction in ethnic bias
3. Improved conflict resolution skills
4. Need for curriculum reform

Discussion

The findings confirm that multicultural education significantly contributes to reducing insecurity. The high mean scores indicate that respondents perceive multicultural education as effective in promoting tolerance and unity. The regression result ($R^2 = 0.68$) shows a strong predictive relationship between multicultural education and reduced insecurity, supporting previous studies (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Qualitative findings further reinforce that multicultural education enhances interpersonal relationships and reduces ethnic tensions. This aligns with critical pedagogy theory, which emphasizes education as a tool for social transformation (Freire, 2020; Giroux, 2021).

The integration of multicultural and critical multicultural education into the Nigerian educational system can significantly address insecurity in Plateau State. Education can reshape mindsets, promote tolerance, and reduce conflict.

However, challenges include:

- i. Inadequate teacher training
- ii. Lack of policy implementation
- iii. Resistance to curriculum change

Addressing these challenges requires government commitment, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous educational reform (World Bank, 2023).

Suggestion for Further Research

Based on the limitations of this study, the following fields need further exploration in the future:

- I. A Comparative Study can be conducted in other conflict prone areas or states like, Benue, Kogi and Kaduna.
- ii. Again, a similar study should be conducted in Primary schools to examine the effect of multi-cultural education at an earlier stage of education.

- iii. Lastly, an experimental study using pre-test and post test design is recommended to establish cause-effect relationships.

Conclusion

Multicultural education is a viable tool for combating insecurity in Plateau State. By fostering intercultural understanding, promoting social justice, and encouraging active citizenship, education can play a transformative role in peace-building.

The study concludes that integrating multicultural and critical multicultural education into school curricula is essential for sustainable peace and development.

Recommendations

1. Government should integrate multicultural education into national curricula.
2. Teachers should be trained in multicultural and peace education.
3. Schools should promote intercultural dialogue and activities.
4. Citizenship education should be strengthened at all levels.
5. Stakeholders should collaborate to ensure effective implementation.

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

DISCRIMINATION BY LANGUAGE IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

Language in multicultural societies functions not only as a communicative tool but also as a marker of identity and a potential basis for discrimination. This study investigates linguistic discrimination (glottophobia) and its impact on social inclusion, drawing on constructivist theory and recent scholarly literature. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining survey data from 300 respondents with qualitative insights from interviews. Findings reveal that individuals who speak non-dominant languages or possess marked accents experience significant social and institutional bias. The study highlights the role of language hierarchies in perpetuating inequality and recommends inclusive language policies, educational reforms, and awareness strategies to mitigate linguistic discrimination. The study concludes that addressing language-based discrimination is essential for promoting equity and cohesion in multicultural societies.

Keywords: *linguistic discrimination, glottophobia, language diversity, social exclusion, language policy*

Introduction

Language is a fundamental component of human interaction, serving not only as a medium of communication but also as a powerful symbol of identity, culture, and social belonging. In multicultural societies, where multiple linguistic groups coexist, language becomes a critical marker through which individuals are categorized, evaluated, and positioned within social hierarchies (Albury, 2021; Piller, 2020). The way individuals speak—through their choice of language, accent, and speech patterns—often conveys information about their ethnic background, education, socioeconomic status, and geographic origin. As a result, language functions as both a unifying force and a potential source of division. In contemporary globalized societies, linguistic diversity has increased significantly due to migration, urbanization, and technological interconnectedness. While such diversity enriches cultural exchange and social interaction, it also creates conditions for inequality, particularly when certain languages or language varieties are privileged over others (Ndhlovu, 2021). Dominant languages—often linked to political power, economic opportunity, and formal education—tend to be regarded as standard or superior, while minority languages and non-standard varieties are frequently marginalized. This imbalance contributes to systemic disparities in access to education, employment, and social participation. Linguistic discrimination, also referred to as glottophobia, describes the prejudicial treatment of individuals based on their language use, accent, or perceived linguistic competence (Blanchet & Trimaille, 2020). Unlike more visible forms of discrimination, such as those based on race or gender, language-based discrimination is often normalized and overlooked, making it particularly insidious. Individuals who do not conform to dominant linguistic norms may be perceived as less intelligent, less competent, or less professional, regardless of their actual abilities (Flores & Rosa, 2022). These perceptions can have significant consequences, including reduced educational attainment, limited employment opportunities, and diminished social inclusion. Recent research has demonstrated that linguistic discrimination operates across multiple domains of society. In educational settings, students who speak non-dominant languages or dialects are often subjected to biased assessments and lower expectations, which can negatively impact their academic performance and self-esteem (Flores & Rosa, 2022). In the labor market, accent-based discrimination has been shown to influence hiring decisions, promotion opportunities, and workplace interactions, with non-standard speakers frequently disadvantaged (Kircher & Zipp, 2022). Furthermore, in digital and global communication spaces, dominant languages tend to overshadow minority languages, limiting their visibility and usage (Albury, 2021).

In many African contexts, including Nigeria, the legacy of colonialism has reinforced linguistic hierarchies that privilege European languages such as English and French over indigenous languages. While these colonial languages often serve as official means of communication and access to global opportunities, their dominance can marginalize local languages and cultures, contributing to identity loss and social exclusion (Bamgbose, 2021; Omoniyi, 2020). This situation creates a paradox in which individuals must navigate between maintaining their linguistic heritage and adapting to dominant language norms to access socio-economic opportunities. Despite growing awareness of linguistic discrimination, there remains a need for more comprehensive research that integrates theoretical

perspectives with empirical evidence to understand its causes, manifestations, and consequences. This study addresses this gap by examining language-based discrimination within a multicultural framework, drawing on constructivist theory to explore how linguistic norms and hierarchies are socially constructed and maintained.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Examine the relationship between language, identity, and social power in multicultural societies.
- ii. Investigate the prevalence and forms of linguistic discrimination in educational and social contexts.
- iii. Analyze the impact of language hierarchies on social inclusion and opportunity.
- iv. Propose practical strategies for reducing linguistic discrimination and promoting inclusivity.

By addressing these objectives, this study contributes to ongoing scholarly discussions on language, identity, and inequality. It also provides practical insights for policymakers, educators, and organizations seeking to foster more inclusive and equitable multicultural societies. Ultimately, recognizing and valuing linguistic diversity is essential for promoting social cohesion, protecting cultural heritage, and ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals.

Literature Review

Language, Identity, and Power

Language plays a central role in the construction of identity and the negotiation of social belonging within multicultural societies. It is not merely a neutral medium of communication but a symbolic resource through which individuals express cultural affiliation, social status, and group membership. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that linguistic practices are deeply embedded within systems of power, where certain languages and varieties are socially legitimized while others are marginalized (Piller, 2020; Albury, 2021).

Dominant languages—often associated with political authority, economic opportunity, and formal education—are typically perceived as more prestigious. This perception contributes to what Bourdieu conceptualizes as “linguistic capital,” where proficiency in a dominant language provides access to social mobility and institutional recognition. In contrast, speakers of minority languages or non-standard varieties frequently encounter stigmatization, which can lead to identity suppression and reduced self-esteem (Flores & Rosa, 2022).

Moreover, language serves as a marker of difference, making individuals vulnerable to stereotyping and discrimination. For example, accent, pronunciation, and lexical choices may signal regional or ethnic identity, which can trigger implicit biases in social interactions. Such dynamics reinforce social stratification and perpetuate inequalities, particularly in

contexts where linguistic diversity intersects with other forms of marginalization such as class, ethnicity, and gender (Ndhlovu, 2021).

Linguistic Discrimination in Contemporary Society

Linguistic discrimination, or glottophobia, has evolved in contemporary scholarship to encompass both interpersonal prejudice and institutionalized practices that disadvantage non-dominant language speakers. Unlike overt forms of discrimination, linguistic bias is often subtle and normalized, making it difficult to identify and challenge (Blanchet & Trimaille, 2020).

Recent studies highlight the role of educational systems in reproducing linguistic inequalities. Flores and Rosa (2022) argue that “standard language ideologies” position certain linguistic forms as inherently superior, thereby shaping perceptions of intelligence, competence, and academic ability. Students who deviate from these norms are often unfairly assessed, leading to disparities in educational outcomes. In the labor market, linguistic discrimination manifests through hiring practices and workplace interactions. Kircher and Zipp (2022) found that individuals with non-standard accents are less likely to be hired or promoted, as employers often associate accent with reduced competence or professionalism. This bias persists even when candidates possess equivalent qualifications, indicating that language-based discrimination operates independently of merit. Additionally, digital communication and globalization have introduced new dimensions of linguistic discrimination. Online platforms often privilege dominant languages, limiting the visibility and participation of minority language speakers (Albury, 2021). As a result, linguistic inequality continues to evolve alongside technological and social changes.

Multiculturalism and Language Hierarchies

Multicultural societies are characterized by linguistic diversity; however, this diversity often exists within hierarchical structures that privilege certain languages over others. In many contexts, a dominant language emerges as the standard for communication in education, governance, and commerce, creating systemic advantages for its speakers (Ndhlovu, 2021). In African societies, the legacy of colonialism has played a significant role in shaping language hierarchies. Colonial languages such as English and French continue to dominate official domains, often at the expense of indigenous languages (Bamgbose, 2021). This dominance reinforces social inequality, as proficiency in colonial languages is frequently linked to access to education, employment, and political participation. The marginalization of indigenous languages not only limits opportunities for their speakers but also contributes to cultural erosion. Language is a repository of cultural knowledge and heritage; therefore, its decline has broader implications for identity and social cohesion. Furthermore, individuals who lack proficiency in the dominant language may experience exclusion from critical societal processes, including decision-making and public discourse. These hierarchical dynamics underscore the need for policies that promote linguistic equity and recognize the value of all languages within multicultural societies.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in **constructivist theory**, which posits that social realities are not inherently given but are constructed through human interaction, communication, and shared meanings. Language plays a central role in this process, serving as both a medium and a mechanism through which individuals interpret and organize their social world (Piller, 2020). From a constructivist perspective, linguistic norms—such as what constitutes “correct” or “standard” language—are socially produced and maintained over time. These norms are often shaped by dominant groups, who possess the power to define acceptable forms of communication. As a result, linguistic discrimination emerges not as a natural phenomenon but as a socially constructed practice that reflects and reinforces existing power relations (Flores & Rosa, 2022). Constructivism also highlights the role of discourse in shaping perceptions of identity and difference. Through everyday interactions, individuals internalize societal attitudes toward language, which can influence their self-concept and behavior. For example, repeated exposure to negative stereotypes about certain accents may lead individuals to modify their speech or avoid using their native language in public settings. By applying constructivist theory, this study seeks to uncover the underlying social processes that sustain linguistic discrimination and to identify pathways for transforming these dynamics.

Strategies for Addressing Linguistic Discrimination

Addressing linguistic discrimination requires a comprehensive and multi-level approach that targets institutional structures, educational systems, and societal attitudes. The following strategies are proposed:

1. Inclusive Language Policies

Governments and institutions should develop policies that promote multilingualism and protect linguistic rights. Such policies should ensure that minority languages are recognized in official domains, including education, media, and public administration. Inclusive language planning has been shown to enhance social participation and reduce inequality (Ndhlovu, 2021).

2. Educational Reform

Educational systems play a critical role in shaping attitudes toward language. Schools should adopt inclusive pedagogical practices that value linguistic diversity and challenge standard language ideologies. Teacher training programs should emphasize cultural and linguistic sensitivity, enabling educators to create supportive learning environments for all students (Flores & Rosa, 2022).

3. Public Awareness Campaigns

Public awareness initiatives are essential for challenging stereotypes and promoting positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity. Media campaigns, community programs, and advocacy efforts can help shift societal perceptions and reduce stigma associated with non-standard language use (Albury, 2021).

4. Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Training

Organizations should implement training programs that address linguistic bias in recruitment, evaluation, and workplace interactions. Employers should focus on competence and performance rather than linguistic conformity, ensuring equal opportunities for individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

5. Promotion of Indigenous Languages

In multilingual societies, particularly in Africa, there is a need to actively promote indigenous languages through policy support, curriculum development, and media representation. Strengthening indigenous languages not only preserves cultural heritage but also enhances social inclusion (Bamgbose, 2021).

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was employed to provide both statistical and experiential insights into linguistic discrimination.

Population and Sample

The study involved 300 participants out of 200 are students, 80 teachers, and 20 administrators, selected through stratified random sampling:

Instruments for Data Collection

The instruments for data collections were structured questionnaires (5-point Likert scale) and semi-structured interviews

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and means), while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically.

Results

Quantitative Findings

Table 1: Perception of respondents on Language-Based Discrimination (N = 300)

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Accent affects how people are treated	48%	32%	10%	6%	4%
Non-dominant language speakers face discrimination	52%	28%	8%	7%	5%
Language influences employment opportunities	46%	34%	9%	6%	5%
Students are judged by their speech patterns	50%	30%	8%	7%	5%

The data indicate that 80% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) believe accent influences treatment, while 80% also agree that non-dominant language speakers face discrimination. This confirms the widespread perception of linguistic bias.

Qualitative Findings

Interview responses revealed recurring themes:

- i. **Marginalization:** Participants reported being excluded from conversations or opportunities due to their accent.
- ii. **Stereotyping:** Non-standard speakers were often perceived as less intelligent or less educated.
- iii. **Psychological impact:** Many respondents reported reduced self-confidence and anxiety in formal settings.

These findings align with recent studies highlighting the emotional and social consequences of linguistic discrimination (Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that linguistic discrimination is both widespread and systemic, table 1. The high percentage of respondents acknowledging language-based bias supports existing research that identifies language as a key factor in social inequality (Flores & Rosa, 2022). From a constructivist perspective, these patterns reflect socially constructed norms that privilege certain linguistic forms. The dominance of specific languages or accents reinforces power hierarchies, marginalizing those who do not conform. In the Nigerian context and similar multicultural environments, the dominance of English often disadvantages speakers of indigenous languages, creating barriers to education and employment (Bamgbose, 2021).

Conclusion

Linguistic discrimination remains a critical issue in multicultural societies, shaping access to opportunities and social inclusion. This study demonstrates that language-based bias is not only prevalent but also deeply embedded in social structures. Addressing this issue requires deliberate efforts to promote linguistic inclusivity and challenge dominant language ideologies. By recognizing and valuing linguistic diversity, societies can foster greater equity, cohesion, and mutual respect.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, which reveal the prevalence and impact of linguistic discrimination in multicultural societies, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Governments and educational institutions should develop and enforce inclusive language policies that recognize and protect linguistic diversity.
- ii. Educational systems should adopt pedagogical approaches that value linguistic diversity rather than stigmatize it and teachers should be trained to recognize and eliminate linguistic bias in classroom interactions, assessment, and communication.
- iii. There is a need for sustained public awareness campaigns to challenge negative stereotypes associated with non-standard accents and minority languages.

- iv. Employers should implement diversity and inclusion programs that specifically address linguistic discrimination and recruitment and promotion processes should be based on competence rather than accent or language background.
- v. In multilingual contexts such as Nigeria, there is a critical need to promote indigenous languages alongside dominant languages like English.

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24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

UNIVERSITIES' ROLE IN BRIDGING THE RESEARCH–POLICY GAP: THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The persistent disconnect between academic research and public policy continues to undermine development outcomes in Nigeria. Despite the increasing volume of research outputs from universities, their translation into policy remains limited, thereby constraining evidence-based governance. This paper critically examines the role of universities in bridging the research–policy gap, with specific reference to the University of Calabar. Drawing on recent scholarly literature and contextual analysis, the study identifies structural, institutional, and epistemological barriers that hinder research uptake in policymaking. It further advances the argument that Nigerian universities must evolve from passive knowledge producers into active policy actors through institutionalized engagement mechanisms. Anchored on Knowledge Utilization Theory and the Triple Helix Model, the paper demonstrates that weak collaboration, limited knowledge translation, and inadequate incentives for policy-relevant research constrain the research–policy interface. The study concludes by proposing actionable strategies to enhance the role of universities in promoting evidence-based policymaking in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Universities, Research-Policy gap, Epistemological Barriers.*

Introduction

Universities have long been recognized as pivotal institutions in the generation and dissemination of knowledge, serving as engines of innovation and drivers of socio-economic development. In contemporary governance systems, their role has expanded to include active engagement in public policy processes, particularly in the context of evidence-based decision-making. This expanded mandate is especially relevant in developing countries such as Nigeria, where policy failures are frequently attributed to weak empirical foundations and limited integration of research into governance frameworks (Mbachu et al., 2024). Consequently, the relationship between academic research and public policy has become a critical area of scholarly and practical concern.

The research-policy gap, which refers to the disconnect between knowledge production and its application in policymaking, remains a significant challenge in Nigeria. Although universities produce a considerable volume of research, much of it does not influence policy decisions, resulting in a mismatch between policy interventions and societal needs. This disconnect is often linked to institutional fragmentation, communication barriers, and differing priorities between researchers and policymakers (Aiyede & Muganda, 2026). As a result, policies are frequently formulated without adequate empirical support, leading to inefficiencies and suboptimal outcomes. Existing literature has emphasized the importance of evidence-based policymaking as a mechanism for improving governance and development outcomes. However, the practical implementation of this approach in Nigeria remains constrained by systemic challenges, including limited capacity among policymakers to interpret research findings and inadequate collaboration between academic institutions and government agencies (Uzochukwu et al., 2016). These challenges highlight the need for a more integrated approach to research and policy. Beyond these established explanations, this study advances the argument that the persistence of the research-policy gap in Nigeria is also rooted in the organizational structure of universities themselves. Specifically, many universities lack institutional mechanisms for engaging with policymakers, thereby limiting their ability to influence policy processes. This perspective shifts the focus from policymakers to the internal dynamics of academic institutions. The University of Calabar provides a relevant case study for examining these issues. As a federal university with a strong research orientation, it has contributed significantly to academic discourse in Nigeria. However, the extent to which its research informs policy remains limited, raising questions about the effectiveness of existing engagement mechanisms. This paper therefore seeks to critically examine the role of universities in bridging the research-policy gap, with particular emphasis on the University of Calabar. By integrating theoretical insights with contextual analysis, the study contributes to ongoing debates on evidence-based policymaking and the role of higher education institutions in national development.

Conceptual Clarifications

The Research-Policy Gap

The concept of the research-policy gap has gained significant attention in contemporary policy discourse, particularly in developing countries where the disconnect between

knowledge production and policy implementation is most pronounced. It refers to the failure of research findings to influence policymaking processes despite their potential relevance to societal challenges (Uzochukwu et al., 2016). This gap undermines the effectiveness of policies and limits the impact of academic research on development outcomes. One of the primary factors contributing to the research–policy gap is the divergence in the objectives and operational timelines of researchers and policymakers. While researchers prioritize methodological rigor and theoretical contributions, policymakers are often driven by immediate political and administrative demands (Aiyede & Muganda, 2026). This divergence creates a mismatch that hinders effective collaboration and reduces the likelihood of research uptake. Another critical dimension of the gap relates to accessibility and communication. Academic research is typically disseminated through peer-reviewed journals that are not easily accessible to policymakers. Furthermore, the technical language used in academic writing often limits its usability for non-specialist audiences, thereby reducing its policy relevance (Mbachu et al., 2024). Recent studies have highlighted the role of knowledge brokers in bridging the research–policy gap by facilitating the translation of research into policy-relevant formats. However, in Nigeria, such intermediaries are largely underdeveloped or absent, leaving a significant void in the research–policy interface (Uzochukwu et al., 2016). This study further observes that the research–policy gap is reinforced by institutional incentive structures within academia that prioritize publication over policy impact. As a result, researchers are often discouraged from engaging in policy-related activities, thereby perpetuating the disconnect. Thus, the research–policy gap is conceptualized in this study as a multi-dimensional and systemic problem, encompassing communication barriers, institutional weaknesses, and misaligned incentives within both academia and governance systems.

Evidence-Based Policymaking

Evidence-based policymaking represents a paradigm shift in governance, emphasizing the use of empirical data and research findings to inform policy decisions. It is grounded in the principle that policies should be based on credible evidence rather than intuition or political expediency (Mbachu et al., 2024). This approach has been widely adopted in developed countries but remains inconsistently implemented in Nigeria. The effectiveness of evidence-based policymaking depends on several factors, including the availability of reliable data, the capacity of policymakers to interpret research findings, and the existence of institutional mechanisms for integrating evidence into decision-making processes (Aiyede & Muganda, 2026). In Nigeria, these conditions are often not fully met, limiting the adoption of evidence-based approaches.

One major challenge is the mismatch between the timelines of research and policymaking. While policymakers often require immediate solutions to pressing issues, academic research typically involves lengthy processes that may not align with policy timelines. This temporal disconnect reduces the relevance of research for policymaking.

Furthermore, the limited capacity of policymakers to engage with research evidence poses a significant challenge. Many policymakers lack the technical skills required to interpret

complex research findings, thereby limiting their ability to utilize evidence effectively (Uzochukwu et al., 2016). This study advances the argument that evidence-based policymaking in Nigeria requires a collaborative and iterative approach, where researchers and policymakers engage throughout the research process. Such collaboration ensures that research is aligned with policy needs and enhances the likelihood of its utilization. Additionally, the use of digital platforms and knowledge translation tools can significantly improve access to research findings, thereby promoting evidence-based decision-making.

Role of Universities in Society

Universities play a critical role in societal development, functioning as centres of knowledge production, innovation, and capacity building. Traditionally, their core functions have been teaching, research, and community service. However, in the context of modern governance, their role has expanded to include active participation in policymaking processes (Aiyede & Muganda, 2026). In Nigeria, universities have contributed significantly to research in various sectors, including health, agriculture, and environmental management. Despite these contributions, their impact on policy remains limited, highlighting the need for more effective engagement mechanisms. One of the key challenges is the lack of structured interaction between universities and policymakers. Research findings are often not communicated in formats that are relevant to policy needs, thereby limiting their utilization. It has been observed that Nigerian universities, including the University of Calabar, often operate within a closed academic system, where research is primarily targeted at scholarly audiences rather than policymakers. This limits the societal impact of academic work. To address this limitation, universities must adopt a more outward-looking approach that prioritizes policy engagement and societal impact. This includes developing partnerships with government agencies and civil society organizations. Furthermore, universities have the potential to influence policy indirectly through the training of future leaders and policymakers, thereby shaping governance processes over the long term.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on the Knowledge Utilization Theory and the Triple Helix Model, both of which provide insights into the dynamics of research-policy interaction. Knowledge Utilization Theory explains how research findings are translated into practical applications. It emphasizes the importance of relevance, accessibility, and interaction between knowledge producers and users (Uzochukwu et al., 2016). According to this theory, research is more likely to influence policy when it addresses real-world problems and is communicated effectively. However, this study extends the theory by introducing the concept of “institutional readiness”, which refers to the capacity of universities to engage with policymakers. Without appropriate structures and incentives, knowledge utilization remains limited. The Triple Helix Model, on the other hand, highlights the interaction between universities, government, and industry as drivers of innovation and development. It underscores the importance of collaboration in knowledge production and application (Aiyede & Muganda, 2026). In the Nigerian context, the interaction between these actors remains weak, limiting the potential for knowledge transfer and policy innovation. This underscores the need for stronger collaboration mechanisms. This study

integrates these frameworks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the research–policy interface and to propose strategies for enhancing collaboration.

The Research–Policy Gap in Nigeria

The research–policy gap in Nigeria is shaped by a complex interplay of structural, institutional, and cultural factors. One of the most significant challenges is the weak integration of research into policymaking processes. Although there have been efforts to promote evidence-based policymaking, implementation remains inconsistent. Policymakers often lack the capacity to interpret and apply research findings effectively (Mbachu et al., 2024). Another critical issue is the lack of collaboration between researchers and policymakers. Research is often conducted without consideration of policy needs, limiting its relevance and applicability. Communication barriers also play a significant role in widening the gap. Academic research is typically presented in technical language that is not easily understood by policymakers, thereby limiting its accessibility. Funding constraints further exacerbate the problem, as limited resources affect both the production and dissemination of research. This study additionally identifies trust deficit and institutional disconnect as key factors contributing to the research–policy gap in Nigeria, highlighting the need for stronger engagement mechanisms.

The Role of the University of Calabar

The University of Calabar has played a significant role in knowledge production in Nigeria, particularly in areas such as environmental management, public health, and social sciences. Despite this, the translation of its research into policy remains limited. One major challenge is the lack of effective dissemination mechanisms. This study finds that the university lacks institutionalized frameworks for engaging policymakers, limiting the impact of its research. However, the university has demonstrated potential through interdisciplinary research initiatives and community engagement programs. Stakeholder engagement remains an underutilized strategy that could enhance the relevance of research. This study argues that the University of Calabar can play a transformative role by establishing policy research units and knowledge translation platforms.

Conclusion

The research–policy gap remains a significant challenge in Nigeria's development trajectory. Universities have a critical role to play in bridging this gap through knowledge production and policy engagement. The University of Calabar has the potential to contribute significantly to this process, but this requires institutional reforms and stronger collaboration mechanisms. This study emphasizes the need for universities to move beyond traditional roles and actively engage in policymaking processes. Bridging the research–policy gap will enhance governance outcomes and promote sustainable development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Addressing the research–policy gap in Nigeria requires deliberate, multi-level interventions involving universities, government institutions, and broader knowledge systems. However, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. First, universities, particularly the University of Calabar, should establish **institutionalized research–policy liaison units or knowledge translation centers**. These units would serve as formal interfaces between researchers and policymakers, ensuring that research outputs are synthesized into policy briefs, executive summaries, and actionable recommendations. Such structures will reduce the current fragmentation in communication and enhance the visibility and usability of academic research in governance processes.
- ii. There is a need to **reform academic incentive and promotion systems** to recognize policy impact as a key performance indicator. At present, academic advancement in Nigerian universities is largely based on journal publications, with little emphasis on societal or policy relevance. Incorporating policy engagement, advisory roles, and real-world impact into promotion criteria will motivate researchers to produce policy-relevant studies and actively engage with decision-makers.
- iii. Universities should adopt a **co-production model of research**, where policymakers are involved from the problem-definition stage through to dissemination. This collaborative approach ensures that research addresses real policy needs and increases the likelihood of uptake. In the context of the University of Calabar, partnerships with Cross River State ministries, local government authorities, and development agencies should be strengthened to facilitate this process.
- iv. **Capacity-building initiatives for policymakers** should be prioritized. Many policymakers lack the technical expertise required to interpret and apply research findings effectively. Universities can play a critical role by organizing training workshops, short courses, and executive education programs on evidence-based policymaking, data interpretation, and policy analysis.
- v. There is a need to **strengthen research dissemination strategies** through the use of accessible and policy-friendly formats. Researchers should move beyond traditional academic publishing to include policy briefs, infographics, media engagements, and digital platforms. The University of Calabar, for instance, can leverage online repositories and stakeholder forums to ensure that research findings reach relevant audiences in a timely manner.
- vi. Government at all levels should **increase funding for policy-oriented and applied research** within universities. Dedicated grants for research that directly addresses national and sub-national development challenges will encourage scholars to focus on impactful studies. In addition, funding mechanisms should support interdisciplinary and collaborative research initiatives.
- vii. Universities should promote **interdisciplinary research and collaboration**, recognizing that most policy challenges are complex and multifaceted. By bringing together experts from different fields, universities can generate holistic solutions that

are more relevant to policymaking. This approach is particularly important for addressing issues such as environmental sustainability, public health, and economic development in Cross River State.

- viii. There is a need to **integrate digital technologies into the research-policy interface**. Digital platforms can facilitate real-time access to research findings, enhance stakeholder engagement, and support data-driven decision-making. Universities should invest in digital knowledge hubs and open-access repositories to improve research accessibility.
- ix. Finally, this study recommends a broader **institutional reform within Nigerian universities**, aimed at repositioning them as active actors in governance and development. This involves embedding policy engagement within university mandates, strengthening research governance structures, and fostering a culture of societal impact. Only through such systemic transformation can universities effectively bridge the research-policy gap and contribute meaningfully to national development.

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PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

24th - Thursday 25th June, 2026 — University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

ASSESSMENT OF FRENCH READING INTEREST AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COLLEGES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed French reading interest among Senior Secondary School students in Federal Government Colleges. The study specifically looked at how often and when senior secondary school students in Federal Government Colleges, North Central Nigeria read, how much they read, how teachers' attitudes affect their reading habits and/or interest, and how to increase students' reading interest. The research was directed by four objectives and four research questions. In this study, a survey-style descriptive research design was used. All senior secondary school students at Federal Government Colleges in North Central Nigeria made up the study's population. The Reading Interest Questionnaire (RIQ), a self-structured questionnaire, was used to collect pertinent data for the study; also, Questionnaire on Students' Interest to French Reading Environment (QSIFRE) based observation checklist. The responses were compiled and analyzed using descriptive statistics. According to the findings, most students read French Texts for less than two hours each day, which means that most of them do not read very often. They only read when given homework, assignments or when a test or examination is due to be written. According to the study, parents should encourage their children to read from an early age and provide them with reading materials like picture books, story books, educational novels, and so

on. They should also ask their children to read these materials regularly or during their free time when their parents are around. Teachers should also urge their students to write with passion and read instructive materials in their classmates' presents.

Keywords: *Descriptive, Interest, Language, Library, Reading*

Introduction

The cornerstone of education, the road to becoming an expert in any field, and the means of making any meaningful academic progress are all made possible by reading. It is also an indispensable learning tool. It provides quick access to resources for academic and career advancement as well as for personal improvement. Babalola (2020) asserts that information is vital since it closes the knowledge gap. The act of identifying symbols and placing them in the appropriate context is reading. It is essential to recognize and comprehend (Palani, 2012). Reading is one of the primary methods for gaining knowledge. Epçaçan (2018) asserts that reading is an art form with the power to change people's lives as well as society. It also serves as the basis for self-education and lifetime learning. Reading serves as the cornerstone for all other academic abilities. It is an essential tool for one's own potential realization, mental development, and improvement of mental health. Reading becomes ingrained in everyone and serves as a lifelong natural teacher. According to scholarly studies, students who read regularly develop into voracious readers, students who read for pleasure five days a week or more are also more likely to be eager to engage in environmental talks and have superior social-emotional skills. Regular reading has benefits that endure a lifetime (Scholastica Parent Staff, 2024). It is crucial for kids to read every day because it gives them a foundation of information, improves their vocabulary, introduces them to new ideas and cultures, and helps them connect with characters that go through a range of emotions (Burke, 2024). Additionally, he claims that reading foster inner peace, curiosity, and focus. The key to all kinds of information is reading; it enables one to create or mend things, take pleasure in stories, discover the viewpoints of others, and develop their own concepts and beliefs. The greatest benefit of literacy may be that it allows us to learn almost as much from the experiences of others as we do from our own, allowing us to experience and absorb everything firsthand through reading. It's a sign of literacy, really. A person who struggles with reading has not acquired the skills required to contribute to society as an educated member. In the high-tech world of today, it is an essential talent. Anindhita (2021) asserts that reading helps kids comprehend the current world, widens their horizons, and broadens their perspectives. Additionally, it fosters quick learning and sparks their inventiveness. He continues by highlighting the benefits of reading for developing one's imagination, curiosity, and ability to understand challenging ideas. When a student shows an interest in reading, they set themselves apart from their peers by gaining a deeper comprehension of the material covered in class. How much a child enjoys reading at any given time will affect how likely it is that he will continue his education after high school. According to Yusuf (2015), reading is essential for kids to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom. According to Ogbonna (2014), reading is the capacity to identify, decipher, and apply words that are written, printed, or otherwise retained in the body of human knowledge. It is the capacity to comprehend

language used in texts. Students in secondary school should be motivated with the desire to excel and develop themselves both inside and outside of the classroom, according to the National Policy on Education (2014). This is addressed in Section 4, Paragraph 18. The goal is to provide the learner with the necessary tools to function well in this era of rapid technological advancement. This may help to explain why senior secondary school students are expected to have a great interest in reading. A person's reading interests determine how he or she arranges his or her reading culture into a functional literacy. Because the ability to read, understand, and critically comprehend the information is one of the most crucial components of education, students must be passionate readers (Yusuf, 2015). However, before reading is ingrained in students as a habit, they must first develop a daily reading interest and habit. According to Rintaningrum (2019), a lifelong passion in reading should be developed at an early age. For pupils to understand academic information and pass tests, structured activities and a deliberate study plan are important reading habits.

The importance of reading cannot be overstated because learning activities and circumstances cannot take place without it. However, the terrible results of secondary school students in open exams seem to be a major problem with Nigeria's educational system. This terrible performance may be related to children's lack of a positive reading interest. In the meantime, early findings from the French language study program at Federal Government Colleges' Senior Secondary Schools revealed that students' proficiency in using a variety of French sources is low. Students rarely use written materials in French for reading purposes; instead, they mostly use them to complete college assignments. This is because students typically find the information they need for their assignments online rather than in original French texts. Similarly, the findings of multiple additional studies (Sotiloye and Bodunde, 2018) similarly demonstrated a low level of reading interest. While reading interest is low, developing nations like Nigeria, with a 59.6% literacy rate, and Ethiopia, with a 49.1% literacy rate, have a strong reading culture, according to the CIA World Factbook, 2015. Benin's 38.4% is extremely low. The aforementioned reason of the poor reading interest led the researcher to decide to focus their research on children's reading interest, particularly in French written materials. "Assessment of French Reading Interest among Senior Secondary School Students in Federal Government Colleges in North Central Nigeria" is the title chosen by the researcher.

Consequently, the purpose of the study is to evaluate:

- i. How often and how long students at Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria's North Central Zone read French text;
- ii. The quantity of reading that students in senior secondary school engage in;
- iii. How students' interest in reading is impacted by teachers' attitudes toward them; and
- iv. How to improve French reading interest

Research Questions

The investigation is guided by the following research questions:

- i. How frequently do senior secondary school students in North Central Nigeria's Federal Government Colleges read written French materials?

- ii. How long does it take senior secondary school students at Federal Government Colleges in North Central Nigeria to read written materials in French?
- iii. What effect does teachers' attitude have on students' desire to read written materials in French?
- iv. What approach might be taken to increase senior secondary students at Federal Government Colleges in North Central, Nigeria's interest in reading French-written texts?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of great benefit to students by encouraging the development of positive reading habits and improving their proficiency in French. Teachers will as well gain insight into effective strategies for motivating learners to read beyond the classroom. School administrators will better understand the importance of providing adequate library resources and instructional materials. Curriculum planners and policy makers will have evidence of improving French language programs in secondary schools. Government will see the need for regular training of French teachers and instructors to learn better teaching skills. Researchers will also benefit from the study as it will contribute to existing literature on language education and reading culture in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses only on selected senior secondary school students of Federal Government colleges in North Central Nigeria offering French language. It examines students' interest in reading French text, factors influencing their reading habits, availability of instructional materials, teachers' roles, and the contribution of school libraries.

Method

Without requiring any form of manipulation, the researcher collected and analyzed data from a representative sample of the total population by employing a descriptive survey methodology. The population of the study consisted of all senior secondary school students enrolled in federal government colleges (7, 433) located in the North Central Nigeria. The sample consist of 100 students from four Federal Government Colleges located in the North Central Nigeria. Because the French subject was unique, a purposive technique was used to select the sample.

Instrumentation

The "Reading Interest Questionnaire (RIQ)," a well-crafted and self-developed questionnaire, was used to collect the necessary data from the respondents. Reading Interest Questionnaire (RIQ) was subjected to both face and content validation procedures. The reliability of the interview schedule was found using the same population and by asking different participants similar questions in order to check whether or not the participants gave reliable answers. The questionnaire had 21 items with response alternatives that asked respondents about their reading habits, including how often and when they read, how much they read, how teachers' attitude affect their interest in reading, and how to increase their interest in reading. The questionnaire has a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA),

Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Before disseminating the questionnaire to the respondents, it was first vetted by specialists in Language Education, Tests and Measurement, and Assessment to determine its face and content validity. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyse the questionnaire responses.

Results

Question One

To what extent do senior secondary school students in North Central Nigeria's Federal Government Colleges read written French materials?

Table 1: Extent to which Junior Secondary School Students in Federal Government Colleges Read French Written Materials

S/n	Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	I always read	1.92	1.11	Disagreed
2	I read often	2.40	0.85	Disagreed
3	I read for 2 hours or less every day	2.11	0.68	Disagreed
4	I read for 3 hours or more everyday	1.98	0.60	Disagreed
5	I do not read	1.71	0.41	Disagreed

Note: N = 100. Mean score less than 2.5 = Disagreed, greater than/equal to 2.5 = Agreed
The frequency and length of French literature reading among senior secondary school students enrolled in Federal Government Colleges (FGCs) are displayed in Table 1. All of the items had mean scores below the 2.5 mean benchmark, according to the analysis's findings ($M = 1.71 - 2.40$, $SD = 0.41 - 1.11$). As a result, most FGC students study French literature infrequently or never at all. The students stated that they were unable to read for two to three hours a day, indicating that they did not study French literature at all or very little of it.

Question Two

What is the level of students' interest in reading French written materials?

Table 2: Level of Students' Interest in Reading French written materials

S/n	Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	I generally lack interest in reading	2.58	0.93	Agreed
2	I read only when I am given assignments or examination	2.84	0.68	Agreed
3	I never read other books such as newspapers, novels and or magazines	2.77	1.67	Agreed
4	I love reading other texts beside my classroom work	2.83	0.68	Agreed
5	I love to play rather than read during my recreation/free time	2.40	0.85	Disagreed

Note: N = 100. Mean score less than 2.5 = Disagreed, greater than/equal to 2.5 = Agreed

Result in Table 2 presents level of students' interest in reading French literature. The results showed that, with the exception of item five (5), which had a mean score less than 2.5 ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.85$), respondents agreed with all of the items, all of which had mean scores above the mean bench mark of 2.5 ($M = 2.58 - 2.84$, $SD = 0.68 - 0.91$). This suggests that the majority of FGC students concurred that they are not normally interested in reading. They only start reading when they have homework or tests to complete. The majority of students enjoy reading materials other than those assigned in class, although they do not read novels, newspapers, or magazines. Students, on the other hand, differed when it came to saying that they would rather play than read in their spare time.

Question Three

How do teachers' attitudes toward the students affect their reading interest?

Table 3: Teachers' Attitudes toward Students' Reading Interest

S/n	Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	In our class, my teacher provides possibilities for students to read literature written in French	2.30	1.12	Disagreed
2	I don't like my teacher's approach to teaching French reading.	2.82	0.94	Agreed
3	I'm encouraged by my teacher to read books, short tales, and other French-language materials	3.37	0.46	Agreed
4	My teacher acts as a role model for me while reading French texts	2.30	1.12	Disagreed
5	The method my teacher uses to teach reading in French language is interesting	2.52	0.78	Agreed

Note: $N = 100$. Mean score less than 2.5 = Disagreed, greater than/equal to 2.5 = Agreed

Table 3 presents the results of the study on the impact of teachers' attitudes on students' reading. It is evident that items 2, 3, and 5 had mean scores higher than the mean bar of 2.5 ($M = 2.52 - 3.37$, $SD = 0.46 - 0.94$), while items 1 and 2 ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.12$) showed a disagreement regarding the teachers' ability to provide opportunities for students to read books in class and their lack of role modeling. According to the results, even if a large number of students disapprove of the way their instructor reads, they do affirm that their teacher encourages them to read books, short stories, and other materials but does not always set a good example for them. They found their teacher's approach to teaching reading to be intriguing as a result. These generally demonstrated that teachers' attitudes have a favorable or negative impact on pupils' reading interest.

Question Four

How can senior secondary school students at Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria's North Central Zone become more interested in reading?

Table 4: Ways of improving Senior Secondary Students' Interest in Reading at Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria's North Central Zone

S/n	Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	Every school needs to have a working library run by a qualified teacher librarian.	3.51	0.60	Agreed
2	Parents ought to instruct their children to start reading at a young age	3.58	0.40	Agreed
3	Reading time in the school library should be included in the school timetable	3.60	0.46	Agreed
4	Students should be encouraged to read aloud in front of others during classes	3.56	0.40	Agreed
5	Teachers should engage students in vigorous reading and writing activities	3.58	0.38	Agreed
6	French reading materials for their children should be provided by Parents	3.51	0.46	Agreed
7	Students who are proficient in French reading and writing should be motivated	3.68	0.35	Agreed

Note: N = 100. Mean score less than 2.5 = Disagreed, greater than/equal to 2.5 = Agreed

Table 3's results on ways of improving reading interest showed that every item had mean scores higher above the 2.5 cut-off point ($M = 3.51 - 3.60$, $SD = 0.38 - 0.60$). The majority of respondents agreed that the following would improve reading: having a working library staffed by a qualified teacher librarian in every school; parents teaching their students to read at a young age; scheduling time for reading in the library into the curriculum; encouraging students to read aloud in front of others during class; teachers involving students in challenging reading and writing exercises; and parents providing reading materials for their students.

Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal that majority of students read little or only when they feel like it. Moreover, the vast majority of students spend less than two hours a day reading. According to the survey, students are generally not very engaged in reading, based on how much they read. Most of them only sit down to read when given homework or during exam times; they don't read french books, newspapers, periodicals, or other literature outside of the classroom. They would prefer to play than read in their spare time. This corroborated the Yusuf's (2015) findings that majority of students only read for examination and have lost interest in reading. The finding also revealed that teachers do not give their students the opportunity to read French language books or short stories, nor do they serve as examples for them to follow. This agrees with Yusuf's (2015) findings, which indicate that most teachers have a negative attitude toward teaching reading in the classroom. He continues by saying that most teachers are not open to experimenting with different approaches to liven up their reading lessons. This is strong proof that teachers' opinions have an impact on students' interest in reading. The respondents came to the conclusion that every school should have a

functioning library staffed by a qualified teacher librarian in order to increase students' reading interests. Children's library programs are founded on the knowledge that early literacy exercises have a positive impact on language development, reading development, and academic accomplishment, as Singh (2023) accurately states. The research's conclusions suggest that parents should start teaching their children how to read at a young age and they should provide reading materials.

Encouraging and facilitating a child's love for reading is one of the most important gifts a parent or caregiver can offer them, according to Emir and Abdulhak (2022). Students should be given reading and writing projects on a regular basis by their teachers. Students should be encouraged to read in public and publicly so that others can hear them. In conclusion, the study found that giving students incentives could serve as a stimulant for the development of positive attitudes and the desired writing and reading habits.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study showed that senior secondary school students at Federal Government Colleges often have poor French reading interest, which is attributed to personal, parental, and instructional reasons. To be successful, efforts to boost reading enthusiasm need to be bolstered by other factors. From an early age, parents should cultivate in their children a love for reading and provide them with reading materials like educational novels and storybooks, as well as encourage them to read aloud to their parents. For a French teacher to fulfill his or her duties, he must also be aware of the students' reading interests in order to gauge how much they love reading in relation to their favorite spot and time, as well as the kinds of French reading materials and environments that they prefer. The teacher must also set the mood for the class with engaging activities. The learning process must be planned before the chosen teaching resources are used. Teachers employ media that is visible, inexpensive, and acceptable to their students. The academic effectiveness of students when reading written materials in French is undoubtedly determined by their choices. Good reading evaluation and an efficient reading classroom are built on a high degree of reading interest. The data analysis indicates that each student is unique and has a variety of reading interests. The media can support this endeavor to increase reading interest. Until parents and teachers provide written materials in the French language, such as novels, storybooks, and other academic learning resources, along with a supportive learning environment and a suitable learning schedule, it will be impossible to increase the goal of growing reading interest in French language.

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

- i. In order to inculcate a culture of reading, parents should encourage their children to read from an early age, by providing reading materials such as, story books, picture books and educational novels, educational technology and ask them to read these materials either on a regular basis or during their free time when the parents are around.
- ii. Federal Government Colleges should provide adequate French books, novels, magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, and digital reading resources.

- iii. Teachers should also urge their students to write enthusiastically and read instructive materials in their classmates' presence.
- iv. Teachers should engage their students in reading and writing by using engaging teaching methods when teaching reading in French.
- v. Students should be encouraged to read aloud in class for the benefit of their fellow classmates.
- vi. French teachers should organize reading clubs, debates, storytelling sessions, drama presentations, and literary competitions.
- vii. Students who excel in reading and writing should also be motivated with awards, especially through well-organized reading competitions.
- viii. Government should provide regular in-service training for French teachers on innovate reading instruction strategies.
- ix. Students should be encouraged to participate in French language clubs and reading programs.
- x. A fully functional library overseen by a certified teacher librarian should be present in every school. Language and other discipline-specific books should be available in the library, and Liberians should be able to support and mentor students in their daily reading habits. This will assist the students in forming a natural reading habit in both English and their particular fields of study.
- xi. Educational authorities should integrate extensive reading into the French curriculum and assess reading habits alongside language proficiency.

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