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EFFECTIVENESS OF MESERON THERAPY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF POSITIVE SYMPTOMS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA.

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the effects of Meseron Therapy (MT) on the management of positive symptoms of schizophrenia among in-patients with schizophrenia at Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos, with the aim of determining the effectiveness of Meseron Therapy in the management of schizophrenia. The participants comprised 84 patients with schizophrenia selected through a purposive sampling technique and divided into groups of 42 participants (one for the experimental group and the other for the control group) each. The Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale of Schizophrenia (PANSS) by (Kay, et al., 1987) was used to assess the positive and negatives symptoms of schizophrenia of the respondents while the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) by (Overall & Gorham, 1962) was used to rate client's observable schizophrenic symptoms. The result of the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that the Meseron Therapy was significantly effective in reducing schizophrenic symptoms of the experimental group $F (2, 54) = 163.59$, $p<.01$, with a reduced treatment score statistically significant at $p<.01$. The study concluded that Meseron Therapy is effective in the management and reduction of symptoms among the participants.

Key Words: Meseron Therapy, Positive Symptoms, Schizophrenia

Introduction

The need to have adequate treatment solutions for patients with serious mental illness continues to attract the interest of mental health professionals. Patients with schizophrenia are more likely than others in the population to drop-out of treatment and consequently deteriorate functionally (Hofer et al., 2017). Additionally, 10% of patients with schizophrenia commit suicide (Sher &

Kahn 2019). Clinical experiences have revealed that patients with schizophrenia experience significant impairments in social and occupational functioning. They experience a variety of debilitating symptoms that include delusions, hallucinations, and formal thought disorder. Most of them face different levels of costs consequent on lost productivity, lost earnings due to illness, and direct costs of treatment.

In people with schizophrenia, the most basic processes of perceiving and thinking are affected. They have a unique experience of the world and they typically experience significant secondary morbidity, including depression, anxiety and social/occupational dysfunction (Harrison, 2020). In a study on the economic cost of schizophrenia in Nigerian, Olapeju et al., (2019) noted that schizophrenia is an expensive disease in Nigeria, and substantial proportion of patients exhibits a moderate to severe degree of disability in the areas of social contact and occupation. 4% were homeless or of unstable abode, and men were particularly disadvantaged in establishing a marital relationship. While men evidenced impaired fecundity, women had a more impaired outcome in the domain of frequency and quality of social contact. In addition, the illness (schizophrenia) is associated with a 2 to 3-fold increase in mortality rates compared to the general population.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V), American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013), organised symptoms of schizophrenia into two primary categories, namely, positive symptoms and negative symptoms. Positive symptoms are perceptive, behavioural, cognitive distortions in which patients exhibit some level of excesses that became clinically and socially significant from normal population. The word "positive" means the presence (rather than absence) of symptoms. They can include delusion (presence of distortions in thought content), hallucination, and bizarre behaviour, while negative symptoms reflect an absence of normal functions or it may be present but very low. The DSM-V described negative symptoms to include a restricted range of emotional expressiveness (affective flattening), decreased fluency and productivity of speech (alogia), and an inability to initiate and persist in goal-directed activities (avolition). Additional symptoms include a loss of pleasure or interest (anhedonia) in otherwise pleasurable things and isolation (APA, 2013).

Although schizophrenia can occur at any age, it usually takes hold after puberty, (Pugle, 2021. The average age of onset tends to be in the late teens to the early 20s for men, and the late 20s to early 30s for women. Persons younger than 12 years or older than 40 are not commonly

diagnosed of schizophrenia (Pugle, 2021), and is characterised by fundamental distortions of perception and thinking. Indeed, a significant proportion of patients with schizophrenia continue to experience psychotic symptoms throughout their lifetime (Tandon et al., 2020) despite advances in pharmacological treatments. Many patients with schizophrenia continue to experience residual positive symptoms notwithstanding being on medication for a reasonable period. Although these symptoms may be less severe than during the acute episode, they do not appear to respond further to medication (Batinic, 2019).

Importantly also, it has been acknowledged that pharmacological treatment alone is rarely sufficient for the best treatment outcomes, and side effects are often prominent and might include a reduction in emotional expression, menstrual abnormalities, and sexual dysfunction. On this basis, the need for psychotherapy has become apparent   (Fusar-Poli, et al., 2016), necessitating the need for inclusion of psychotherapeutic intervention (Fusar-Poli, et al., 2016). Antipsychotic drugs help in reducing the acute symptoms of schizophrenia, whereas psychological interventions can help patients and their relatives cope with the consequences of having schizophrenia (Chow, 2021). Hence, today's mental health practitioners continue to identify and implement psychological treatments that can effectively complement the effects of medication and case management to capture additional sources of outcome variance. This therefore necessitated the need to apply evidence-based psychological treatments that are both effective in reducing symptoms and engaging to patients.

Essentially, a cognitive model of African beginning known as Meseron Therapy has been utilised to challenge negative thoughts (Aroyewun and Ariyo, 2014) similar to what is available among patient with schizophrenia. Ebigbo, et al., (2017) recognised that in Meseron idea, words have power and when appropriately applied, will empower the person to adjust their condition by making the person to not just withdraw themselves from the negatives of life, but in addition effectively connects with positive things. Such in this manner makes the individual to frame the propensity for dismissing the sickness as a trespasser. As such sickness is repulsed by words; the singular has a preferred shot at recuperating over one who accepts the weakness (Ebigbo et al., 2017).

Meseron is an indigenous cognitive psychotherapeutic method developed by Awaritefe (1995) in light of the language and culture of the Urhobo ethnic gathering of Nigeria. Meseron in English

articulation approximates "I reject". Be that as it may, it has more extensive suppositions. Its significant supposition depends on the African social points of view and strict conviction of dismissing the negative and tolerating the positive (Aroyewun and Ariyo, 2014). Aroyewun and Ariyo (2014) contended that this conviction started from the way that locus of control in Africa is outside. In like manner, Awaritefe (2002) affirmed that encounters of mental challenges occur because of contortion in the examination system a singular makes (maybe, resulting upon their conditions) as they endeavour. It has been seen that as individuals endeavour, they will undoubtedly decide, particularly at junction (Awaritefe, 2002; Ofovwe, 2005; Awaritefe and Aroyewun, 2009).

The conventional centre of Meseron treatment is that what individuals say of themselves in such settings is the thing that will happen to them (Aroyewun and Ariyo, 2014). The advisor carries the person to the purpose in activating his/her solidarity to deny, subsequently using socially touchy words to stir the feelings, musings and sentiments. The singular's perception is invigorated to turn out to not set in stone to beat the ailment, Ebigbo et al., (2017), but to see that the specialist assists the person with completely understanding the circumstance, and the need that they be self-propelled to battle the disease, particularly with the conviction that man is supplied with the possibility to change themselves and their current circumstance (Awaritefe and Aroyewun, 2009).

Moreover, Ofovwe (2014) expressed that scientists have endeavoured to obscure the boundary between treatments, taking into account that distinctions in culture add up to assorted types of psychotherapy. This recommends that treatments share a few credits. In the mean time, Madu (2014) is of the view that culture with regards to psychotherapy could be depicted as those lifestyles of a specific gathering of individuals, which they regularly use to communicate sentiments and feelings. Consequently, "culture-focused" psychotherapy is installed or established in the customer's way of life, with full cognisance, notwithstanding, that culture is not static however unique (Madu, 2014).

Meseron treatment proposes that words have power and when appropriately applied will empower the person to modify their condition (Ebigbo et al., 2017). Such can cause indication alleviation among patients with schizophrenia when through self-correspondence that discredits, for instance, the hear-able visualization, fancy, or undesirable circumstances, the sufficient self-

affirmation articulations can be of help in testing the misshaped evaluation supporting mental trip or dream, and pass on an effect on them to deny the directs of the mind flight or fancy. Meseron method consists of reasoning, verbal, and activity parts. Ebigbo et al., (2017) noticed that the reasoning part is the stage where patients are stirred and urged to reconsider about their circumstance after completely understanding the circumstance. These researchers shared the view that while verbal part centres around activating the assets inside the patient to cultivate the patient's difference in their circumstance, the activity part includes demonstrations of the patient that achieve manifestation help or end of undesirable condition.

There is understanding that positive manifestations of schizophrenia are results of deception pivoted under contorted musings. As prior expressed, that, by fancies being adjusted in a way like that finished with twisted considerations of customers with melancholy (Batinic, 2019), and pipedreams having the treatment coordinated at analysing the convictions about the occasions—the voices, with the possibilities that the voices may reflect genuine musings of the individual encountering the voices (Beck and Rector, 2013), it is questionable that such are cases of blunder in reasoning. Mistakes in reasoning happen when musings do not actually fit the real factors (Aroyewun and Ariyo, 2014). Meseron treatment has been demonstrated to be successful in tending to such mistakes in thinking among discouraged patients (Awarītefe, 1997b), in the administration of anorexia nervosa (Awaritefe, 2004), in the administration of youngsters' feelings of dread (Ofovwe, 2004a), in the treatment of a fixation (Awaritele and Otakpor, 2014), as a cure to pressure (Ofovwe, 2005), and in going up against negative contemplations (Aroyewun and Ariyo. 2014).

Consequently, Meseron treatment, similar to each and every other intellectual treatment, centres around testing individuals' maladaptive understandings of occasions or perspectives and supplanting them with more versatile perspectives, which the advisor seeks after by assisting the patient to recognise their nonsensical and maladaptive musings with its related effects on their feelings and practices. Aroyewun and Ariyo (2014) saw that in Meseron treatment, evolving the "occasions" is not the concentration, rather the centre is to work with client(s) to change the negative musings (flawed presumptions + broken affiliations) which will achieve a change in the maladaptive behaviour. Consequently, there is evidence indicating its use for psychotherapy process and outcome.

The debilitating effects of schizophrenia on the patients cannot be overemphasised. It exposes patients to significant impairments in social and occupational functioning (Leijala, 2021), significant secondary morbidity (Birchwood et al. 2015), poor psychosocial outcomes, degraded quality of life, and premature mortality (O'Donnell & Martin, 2016). It has a record of 2 to 3-fold increases in mortality rates compared to the general population (Moreno-Küstner et al., 2021). All these associated effects on different life domains of the patients justify that treatment provided for sufferers be holistic. Such reasons as well as the fact that psychopharmacotherapy has not been able to resolve the condition properly, led to the heightened interest of mental health experts in search of psychotherapy that best addresses the needs and symptoms of such patients.

It is for a reason as this that Madu (2014), argued strongly that psychotherapy is to be embedded or rooted in the client's culture. Meanwhile, though Meseron therapy, an indigenous cognitive model, has been found beneficial in treating different psychological disturbances (Awaritefe, 1997b; Awaritefe 2004; Awaritefe & Otakpor, 2004; Ofovwe, 2004: Ofovwe, 2005), including confronting negative thoughts (Aroyewun & Ariyo, 2014), its effect on positive symptoms of schizophrenia is yet to be known to the best knowledge of the present authors. It behoves mental health experts to, through research and practice, provide the best of psychological treatment that completes the success attained via pharmaceutical treatment. Meanwhile, taking cognisance of the importance of culture in psychotherapy effectiveness is important. Therefore, this investigation on the African originated therapy of cognitive model, on positive symptoms of schizophrenia, becomes imperative considering its potentials in bridging the identified gap in knowledge and literature, and in practical contributing to the management of patients with schizophrenia in the study setting and beyond.

Objective of Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the effects of Meseron Therapy on the management of positive symptoms of schizophrenia among patients with schizophrenic at Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos State. In line with this, the specific objective of the study is:

1 To determine the effectiveness of Meseron Therapy in management and reduction of positive symptoms of schizophrenia.

Methodology

Research Design
This study involved a two phased study

Phase One: This involved the survey of the inpatients admitted in the hospital and diagnosed with schizophrenia at the time of the present study.

Phase Two: This was the intervention phase involving a pre-test, post-test experimental design. This involved the selection of participants into two groups: (1) the experimental group (those exposed to Meseron Therapy) and (2) the control group (those not exposed to Meseron therapy)

Participants
The participants of this study were 84 patients with schizophrenic, selected using purposive sampling technique. (28 participants for each of the two groups – Meseron Therapy and control group) at Federal Neuro-psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos State, who met the inclusion criteria (those diagnosed with schizophrenia and experienced a significant level of positive symptoms of schizophrenia). Their ages ranged from 32 to 45 years, with a mean age of 38.76 and standard deviation of 4.0. Their demographic data revealed as follows: Gender: Male 44 (52.4%), and Female 40 (47.6%);

Research instrument
A paper and pencil questionnaire that elicited demographic information from the participants used in this study were positive and negative syndrome scale of schizophrenia (PANSS) and brief psychiatric rating scale (BPRS). To gather data for the study, a self-report questionnaire was employed, which included questions collecting information on respondents' bio-data as well as two scales evaluating the variables of interest. The Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale of Schizophrenia (PANSS) was developed by Kay, et al., (1987). It measures symptom severity of patients with schizophrenia. The instrument is usable for both adolescents and adults. An estimated 45 to 50minutes' duration was set for full completion of this clinician administered instrument. It has been used on the Nigerian population. While the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale

(BPRS) developed by (Overall & Gorham,1962), is an 18-item scale rated on a Likert scale from 1 (not present) – 7 (extremely severe). It is one of the most widely-used instruments enabling the clinician to quickly gather information about the possible presence and severity of various psychiatric symptoms. The scores are based on the clinician's interview with the client and observation of the client's behaviour over 2-3 days. The validity and reliability of BPRS has been obtained and has been used severally on Nigerian population.

Procedures

The researchers first provided adequate explanation about the study objectives by seeking the consent of respondents before giving the questionnaires to them and therapy process. Two stages of assessment were carried out by these assistants, the first being the baseline taken to determine who was eligible for inclusion (at the first week) and the second being after the therapy administration has been completed (at the eight week). The second assessment was carried out to know the overall effectiveness of the therapy after the eight sessions. The control group received a general health talk on hygiene twice (once in a month) for the period that the study lasted.

This study lasted for eight weeks (for each participant). The application of the therapy was scheduled one session a week for each patient (for duration of one hour per session). A given number of patients were seen individually on each working week.

The study engaged two research assistants (who were trained about the objectives and the procedure of the study) who administered the study's instruments. The research assistants employed for the study were two practicing Clinical Psychologists; a Doctorate degree holder and a Master's degree holder. The need for research assistants was to control experimental bias, administer, score and interpret this study's instrument at each stage the assessment was made. Two stages of assessment were carried out by these assistants, the first was the baseline taken to determine who was eligible for inclusion (at the first week) and the second was after the therapy administration have been completed (at the eight week). The second assessment was carried out to know the overall effectiveness of the therapy after the eight sessions. The control group received a general health talk on hygiene twice (once in a month) for the period that the study lasted.

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Module for Meseron Therapy

SESSION	CONTENT
Session one	**Rapport establishment, introduction and scheduling of time for subsequent sessions:** This session served for the development of therapeutic relationship and for the introduction. The therapist used it to explain the meaning of psychological symptoms and the reason for the therapy sessions.
Session two	**Problem identification and goal setting:** The goals of the treatment were set up by the therapist and the patient. Examples of these include: (a) Establishing collaborative treatment alliance. (b) Identification and reduction of dysfunctional thoughts feelings. (c) Setting an agenda. This included positive statements and thought word and action.
Session three	This session entailed working on an agenda; daily activity of negative thoughts/schedule was introduced in order to monitor activities of participants. Assignment was given after each session. A detailed journal was kept by each of the participants where details of the dysfunctional thoughts were recorded. Participants were informed to also observe triggers and emotional responses.
Session four	The session involved the use of techniques in dealing with problems identified and correcting irrational beliefs/thoughts. (Self-talk / affirmations). Assignment They were taught that they should be able to use the knowledge of the power (potency) of the spoken word to overcome some complaints that they have. Examples of such statements used include: 1. Mental illness is not good for me, I need to fight it 2. I am taking things easy, I won't allow stress to overcome me. They were made to relax, feel calm and stay focused. They were also made to repeat the statements aloud, three to five times and be encouraged to strive (make effort) to ensure that their day-to day actions/activities reflected what they were saying and visualising. They were taught that if a contrary thought intrudes into their consciousness, they will immediately say "I reject this," and then continue with their exercise.

Session five	Participants were encouraged to engage in enjoyable activities and also enhance problem solving skills (affirmation/ self-talk). Assignment They were taught that they should be able to use the knowledge of the power (potency) of the spoken word to overcome some complaints. They were made to relax, feel calm and stay focused. They were made to repeat the statements aloud, three to five times. They were encouraged to strive (make effort) to ensure that their day-to day actions/activities reflected what they were saying and visualizing. They were taught that if a contrary thought intrudes into their consciousness, they will immediately say "I reject this," and then continue with their exercise.
Session six	Review, more activities to enhance and correct irrational thoughts/behaviour. Assignment They were encouraged to come up with positive statements that they had used. How effective those statements were, was discussed as well as the short comings they had while using it. They were encouraged to strive (make effort) to ensure that their day-to day actions/activities reflected what they were saying and visualising. They were taught that if a contrary thought intrudes into their consciousness, they will immediately say "I reject this," and then continue with their exercise.
Session seven	This session entailed recapitulation of the previous sessions, evaluation of activities with review of participants and also participants were prepared for termination.
Session eight	Review, evaluation and termination.

Guiding Statement of Hypotheses

1   Patients with positive symptoms of schizophrenia treated with Meseron Therapy would show significant reduction of symptoms compared with control group.

Results:

Table 1: Summary Table of Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-Way ANOVA and a Bonferroni post hoc analysis among Meseron Therapy, and Control Groups

Source	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Df	Sig.	Bonferroni Correction
MESERON Group	**21.25**	**2.28**	**28**	**156.056**	**2**	**.000**	**.000**
Control Group	**32.00**	**3.21**	**28**				

P<.05

Hypothesis which stated that patients with positive symptoms of schizophrenia treated with Meseron would show significant reduction of symptoms compared with control group was tested using the One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result on table 1 above showed that mean treatment scores differed significantly between the experimental group (those exposed to Meseron Therapy) and control group (those not exposed to the experiment), F (2, 81) = 156.056, p<.01. Comparing the means showed reduction of positive symptoms between experimental group (those exposed to Meseron Therapy) and control group (those not exposed to the experiment), at 21.25 and 32.00, respectively. A post hoc pair wise comparison using Bonferroni correction further showed that this mean difference between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant at p<.05. This suggests Mesoron Therapy is effective in the management and reduction of positive symptoms of schizophrenia among the participants.

Discussion

Positive symptoms of schizophrenia remain one of the distinguishing characteristics of schizophrenia. At acute level, their presence indicate that the patient is not in touch with reality, but with drug application, combined with psychotherapy, full or nearly fully remission can be attained.

The result showed that mean treatment scores differed significantly between the experimental group Meseron Therapy and control groups. This implies that Meseron significantly reduced the positive symptoms of schizophrenia compared with the control group. Our suspicion which was that Meseron Therapy will significantly reduce the positive symptoms of schizophrenia among the participants was found to be true. This became a revealing experience considering that this finding is new in the study setting.

This cognitive-based therapy of African orientation, from Urhobo culture in Nigeria, to be precise, was employed in treating the participants. Being based on the assumption that what one says or thinks can come turn to reality, it canvases that by rejecting an experience like positive symptoms, that one is more likely to develop a positive view which will now replace the rejected experience. It was observed that patients in this group came to terms that there is no evidence to support their false belief and their exaggerated ideas. With this in mind, we suspected that this

assumption can achieve positive symptoms reduction among the participants, and our findings confirmed it so.

Meseron therapy operates with the view that what one says alters one's situation, for words are strong'. It notes that one can through words attract wellness and healing, bearing in mind that by possessing such belief, that one's thought pattern is attuned to positive. Positive symptoms, to Meseron Therapy, result from not rejecting such an unwelcoming experience. It upholds that the participants have the capacity to change their lot by outright rejection of such experience, and when they must have done so, clients will go ahead to synergise their thoughts, words and actions.

Awaritefe (2020) noted that Meseron Therapy is predicated on the belief in the power, potency and meaning of spoken words and its consequences. A view as this was applied in treating patient with positive symptoms of schizophrenia. By creating an enabling environment to challenge these highly exaggerated ideas, perceptions, or actions, Meseron's "I reject it" philosophy was used to show how the belief in the power of the spoken words of the patients elicited action and ignited their inherent potential for change. Consequently, this formed the replacement of a negative status - positive symptoms – with constructive actions following the view that man is a striving creature. Cognitive-based therapies do focus on thought processes, believing that once the thoughts are changed, the associated feelings and behaviour will change. Their preoccupation centres on the idea that negative behaviours and feelings generated by negative thoughts are unhealthy and should be replaced by healthy ones. Techniques used to achieve this change and replacement varies, but their purposes appear alike.

Conclusion

There is the need to continuously address the positive symptoms of schizophrenia, as such patients should not be left at the leniency of medication alone. Earlier expectations that the newer antipsychotics would have fewer side effects and would be more effective in treating positive symptoms and thus enhance the functional capacity of people with schizophrenia have not been realised. The combination of an indigenous psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy will bring about improvement in the management of patients with positive symptoms of schizophrenia. It had been argued that positive symptoms of schizophrenia are products of false

belief resulting from one's day-to-day experiences with the environment. When such beliefs are effectively challenged, the outcome will be that healthy thoughts will begin to produce healthy feelings and behaviour in the patients. Therefore, this study concludes that clinical psychologists should always be inclusive in the management of patients with schizophrenia so as to employ an indigenous cognitive based therapies like Meseron Therapy to address the patients faulty thoughts. Similarly, two-stage cognitive theory argued strongly that positive symptoms remain false ideas.

Recommendation

Treatment of patients with schizophrenia should not be deemed complete until such patients are exposed to Meseron Therapy. This follows that their effectiveness can be construed from the revealing findings made. Patients who are being treated for positive symptoms should be made to understand that their experiences are personal beliefs that are characterised by faulty thought processes. As such, it is recommended that Meseron Therapy should be employed in doing this, following its aptness in addressing such matters.

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EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIP AS PREDICTORS OF EXPERIMENTING SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG EMERGING ADULTS.

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ABSTRACT

Experimenting Sexual behaviour is now too common among the young adults which has adverse effect on their wellbeing and therefore calls for urgent attention. This study explored emotional stability and family relationship as predictors of experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults in higher institutions, Ibadan, Oyo State. The study adopted a cross sectional research design using purposive sampling in selecting three higher institutions which are The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Lead City University, Ibadan, and University of Ibadan, all in Oyo State. The participants for this study were selected through accidental sampling, The sample size is four hundred (400) where two hundred and fifty-nine(259) were males, and one hundred and forty one (141) were females (M= 21,SD=9.34). Four hypotheses were generated and tested in the study. Hypotheses one and two were tested using T-test for independent sample while hypothesis three was tested using multiple regression. Findings revealed that emerging adults who reported low emotional stability on experimenting sexual behaviour (X=1.39;SD=2.60) had a higher mean significant difference than emerging adults who reported high emotional stability on experimenting sexual behavior (X=1.17;SD=2.46). In the same trend, participants who scored low (X=1.68; SD-3.02) on family relationship reported significantly higher (X=.87;SD=1.92) on experimenting sexual behaviour than participants who score high on family relationship (β=-.15;t =-3.10;P<.01). However, the mean difference is significant t=3.24;df-397;P<.01. Furthermore, the result revealed that male participants reported significantly higher on experimenting sexual behaviour (X=1.64;SD=2.82) than their female counterparts who reported lower on sexual experimenting behaviour (X=55;SD=1.66). However, the mean difference is significant (t= 4.18;df=397,P<.01). The study therefore concluded that family relationship and gender are predictors of emerging adults' sexual experimenting behaviour. It was therefore suggested that parents should establish a solid platform for parent-child communication and monitoring which will enhance the relationship with their emerging adults.

*Keywords***:** Sexual Behaviour, Emotional Stability, Family Relationship, Emerging Adults

Introduction

Experimenting behaviour among students has been defined as decisions students make which creates opportunity for them to try out new experiences, test their limits or to question issues they come by (Chen & Hole, 2012). It could also be described as sensitivity to situational, contextual and interpersonal influences which facilitate shift in sexual behaviour attraction (Diamond et al, 2017). It has been found that belongingness to any of the schools of higher learning gives emerging adults a more conducive atmosphere to experiment new opportunities or ideas, for instance, trying to make new friends and emulating the behaviour of such friends. Literatures had revealed that, experimenting with sex and sexual relationships are common among adolescents changes in social mores and attitude about sex **(**Brian et al., 2016**).**

 Emerging adults nowadays live in an environment saturated with varied influences including discussion on sexual matters and other risky behaviours which is on the rise and brings about issue of concern (National Youth Risk Behaviour 2021). Young adults are recently exposed to sexual contents on regular basis from the media, internet and other sources from where they get a lot of information on sexual activities which calls for exploring and experimenting. This is why adolescents is seen as a typical period for the beginning of dating and for experimenting of different kinds of behaviour like substance use, sexual activities and impulsive behaviour (Conolly and Johnson,1996) .

Researches have shown that the changes in sexual behaviour among emerging adults that characterised the last 50 years are related to a more general process of transformation, involving transition to adulthood, union formation/dissolution, and reproductive behaviour. This started in Northern and Western Europe between the 1960s and 1970s. However, this change slowly diffused elsewhere and was defined as the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) to distinguish it from the First Demographic Transition, which was the passage from a regime of high mortality and fertility to a low mortality and fertility one (Inchley et al., 2020;Caltabiano et al.2020)

In most institutions it has been recently observed that a widely accepted sexual practice is called "hooking up" which permits sexual interaction without considering any other factor relating to courtship (Shrier et al. 2017). Most young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years are

sexually experienced, according to Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 90% of those in their early 20s have virginal intercourse which also increases yearly. This can also lead to HIV infection, unintended pregnancy or health outcomes and sexually transmitted diseases. Some experience violence. It has also been recorded that mental health and suicidal thoughts are worsened from year 2011 to 2021 among young adults with experimenting sexual behaviour (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

For instance, among the United States of America high school students surveyed in 2021, 30 % had ever had sexual intercourse while 8% had been physically forced to have sex (National Youth Risk Behaviour 2021). Also in developed western societies, adolescence is the typical periods for the beginning of dating and for experimenting with a variety of sexual behaviours. Young people primarily do explore during high school period. This stage is typified by Erikson as moratorium period - a time of transition as people seek their niche. Adolescents transit into a level of independence and have the sense of autonomy, thereby engaging in experimenting behaviours (Erikson, 1950).

Theoretical Background - The Psycho Sexual Theory
Sigmund Freud (1961) attaches great significance to the impact of sexual drives upon the psychological functioning of a person. Freud sees the onset of adolescence as a difficult time for psychological functioning of a person. Freud views the onset of adolescence as a difficult time psychologically because of the increased strength of these sexual drives. This occurs concurrently with the adolescents developing physical abilities to actually carry out sexual wishes or fantasies; at this very period, young people are known to shift their urges to the opposite sex, which may come into conflict with social and internalised taboos of the society. However, the psychosocial theory of Eric Erikson (1950) differs somewhat from the psycho sexual theory as he emphasised the potential of the environment to alter and shape the course of life adjustment over and above biological factors.

Literature Review
Different researchers have worked on experimentation of sexual behaviour among secondary school students in Nigeria, but few studies have considered tertiary institutions; this emphasises the need for this study. Due to peculiarity of adolescents' lack of personal experience on which

to base a sexual or relational identity, their behaviours within these initial dating relationships are often based on expectations and imagined experiences about the self- romantic situations. This is corroborated by Miller and Benson (2001) who reported that young people are characterised by sexual explorations. Hence, adolescents are highly subjected to external, social influences and look to others for cues regarding appropriate and desired sexual exploration (Brown, 2009). The period of secondary school is often regarded as 'momentum period'- a transition time where adolescents try to seek their societal niche (Erikson, 1959). Their major transitions accounting for adolescents' experimentation are: the transition from high school, and the transition to having a greater level of independence (Dworkin, 2005).

Akinlagbe (2010) stressed that young people have been experimenting with sex for a long time. Since 1960s, schools have become a laboratory for sexual experimentation. Also, curiosity about sex among adolescents, social conditions have changed to allow for a wider range of experimentation. For instance, in schools students are free of parental supervision and therefore have time to experiment involvement in sexual relationships (Cadwel, 2003).

Emotional stability has been found important in this study as experimenting behaviour is related to emotions. Some adolescents could be carried away with emotional fantasies and get engaged in certain behaviours. Emotional stability can be referred to as having a congruent transition of emotional states and moderate emotional resilience to environmental influences {or cues), for instance, someone who has the ability to cope with general changes in the environment without responding with an intense emotional reaction is said to be emotionally stable. It has also been considered as one of the basic dimensions in the personality which constitutes a continuous line extending between two points from the positive electrode represented by the emotional stability to the negative electrode represented by neuroticism. This is because of its fundamental impact on the longevity of individual's life, and its continuity in a way that ensures its growth for the better (Anas & Mohammed 2020).

Emerging adults who are emotionally stable are known to possess the attributes of emotional maturity, self-confidence, and stability in their plans and affections (Pavlenko, Chernyi & Goubkina, 2009). Research has revealed that a spike occurs in the development of emotional stability after the age of three years. This allows adolescents to maintain a sense of self during periods of brief separation from his or her parents. Some researchers have worked on emotional

stability and experimenting sexual behaviour among adolescents. McLeod and Knigh (2010) analysed two types of socio-emotional problems: internalised (depression and dependency) and externalised (hyperactivity and antisocial behavior). Their result however showed that externalising problems are significant predictors of early sexual initiation; both are introduced simultaneously in the analysis.

In addition, Dawson, Shih de moor & Shrier (2018) studied adolescents of 15-21 years old who retrospectively reported their reasons for engaging in sex; 12% of events were attributed to affect management reasons such as to feel good, relax, relief from depression, or being distracted from stress. In addition, affect regulation in middle childhood was found to predict number of sexual partners in adolescence as well as experimenting with sex (Hesler & Katz, 2016).

Crepaz and Mark (2014) added that teens with emotional and behavioural problems are particularly at risk of engaging in sexual activity and negative sexual outcomes such as STIs. Literature also suggests that adolescent girls who were exposed early to traumatic events have significant earlier ages of menarche than girls who were not exposed to prolonged distress, and those with early menarches tend to have early experimenting behaviour (Elis 2014; Magmusson, 2018). However, these studies were not carried out in Nigeria that could address the kind of emotions experienced by adolescents and how it influences experimenting sexual behaviour, hence, the need for this study.

The youth sexual experimentation behaviour can be linked to the family relationship. Socio-economic status of the parents was found to have significant influence of sexual behaviour of adolescents. Brent, (2002) reported that adolescents of parents with lower Socio-economic status experience faster onset of sexual intercourse than those with higher socio-economic status. Research also revealed that perceived maternal disapproval of premarital sex together with satisfaction with the mother-child relationship was significantly related to abstinence from adolescent sexual activity, less frequent sexual intercourse, and more consistent use of contraceptives among sexually active youth (Widmer, 1997).

Literature has also shown that a safe and supportive environment is part of what motivates young people to make healthy choices, safe in terms of absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence or abuse, supportive in providing a positive, close relationship with the family, other adults

(including teachers and religious leaders) and peers. Such relationships can nurture and guide adolescents in behaviour choices and could prevent engaging in negative behaviors such as experimenting sexual behaviour (Dittus & Jaccard, 2000).

However, despite the existing literatures on family relationship and adolescents emotional stability, little of them could account for how family relationship in Nigeria and emotional stability of adolescents in Nigeria could influence experimenting sexual behaviour. The situation in Nigeria shows recently that many families have been threatened due to the current economic situation that sets children apart from parents. Many parents have less time with their children in the quest for making ends meet. Therefore, this study set out to investigate emotional stability and family relationship as predictors of experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults in higher institutions in Nigeria.

Research objectives
1. To establish the relative contribution of the emotional stability on sexual experimenting behaviour in selected adolescents in Ibadan.
2. To ascertain family factors determining sexual experimenting behaviour using selected adolescents in Ibadan.
3. To determine family relationship and emotional stability that jointly predicts sexual experimenting behaviour among emerging adults.
4. To ascertain social-demographic variable (gender) that determines sexual experimentation using selected adolescents in Ibadan.

Hypotheses
1. Emotional stability significantly predicts experimenting sexual behaviour
2. Family relationship significantly predicts experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults.
3. Family relationship and emotional stability jointly predicts experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults.
4. Male reports significantly higher on sexual experimenting behaviour than their female counterparts among emerging adults in tertiary institutions.

Method

Design and participants

This study utilised a cross-sectional survey research design using ex post facto. Tertiary institutions adopted for the study were selected using purposive sampling technique. They were The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Lead City University, Ibadan, and University of Ibadan - all in Ibadan, Oyo State. Accidental sampling was used to select 400 (259 males and 141 females) students from the tertiary institutions in Ibadan.

Procedure

The researchers visited the tertiary institutions and sought permission to administer questionnaires in the schools among emerging adults. An approval was given by each of the schools management before the data was collected in each school. Informed consent was administered, and students who did not comply to the request were excluded from the study. Data collected were kept confidential to protect the privacy of participants, even though, no name or identities of participants were requested.

Measures

A structured questionnaire was developed using three standardised scales. The Peer Conformity scale extracted from sexual experimentation behaviour was designed by Basson (2000). It is a twelve-item scale. Each item is rated 0% to 100%, while 0% to 50% represents No, and 60% to 100% represents Yes. The reliability coefficient is 0.91.

Emotional Stability scale was also adopted in the study; it is a 20-item scale developed by Denis (2012) with reliability coefficient of 0.68. Each item is rated on 5-point Likert rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

This Family Relationship scale developed by Carllota, James and David (2013) is a multidimensional scale consisting of Cohesion, Expressiveness and Conflict, with reliability coefficients of .83, .65 and .80.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed based on research objectives and hypotheses. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 was used to analyse the generated data using descriptive and inferential statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviations and variance). The research hypotheses were tested using appropriate inference statistics.

Results

Table 1: Summary of T-test for Independent Samples Showing the result of Emotional Stability on Experimenting sexual Behaviour

Dependent	Emotional Stability	N	*M*	SD	t	Df	P
	High	197	1.17	2.46			
Experimenting sexual Behaviour					-1.09	396	>.05
	Low	201	1.39	2.60			

The result revealed that emerging adults who reported low emotional stability on Experimenting sexual behaviour (X=1.39;SD=2.60) had a higher *mean* significant difference than emerging adults who reported high emotional stability on Experimenting sexual behaviour (X=1.17;SD=2.46). However, the *mean* difference is not significant ;t= 1.09; df=396;P>.05. The hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Summary of T-test for Independent Samples Showing the Influence of Family relationship on Experimenting sexual Behaviour

Dependent	Family Relationship	N	*M*	SD	T	Df	P
	High	212	.87	1.92			
Experimenting sexual Behaviour					-3.24	397	<.01
	Low	187	1.68	3.02			

From the table above, participants who scored low on family relationship reported significantly higher on Experimenting sexual behaviour (=1.68;SD-3.02) than participants who scored high on

family relationship (X=.87;SD=1.92). However, the *mean* difference is significant; t=3.24;df-397;P<.01. This confirms the stated hypothesis.

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Showing the Independent and joint prediction of Family Relationship and Emotional Stability on Experimenting sexual Behaviour

Criterion	Predictors	β	t	P	R	R²	F	P
	Family Relationship	.15	-.3.10	<.01				
Experimenting sexual Behaviour					.15	.02	4.82	<.01
	Emotional Stability	.01	.09	>.05				

From the table, it is observed that Family relationship (β=-.15;t =-3.10;P<.01) had a significant independent influence on experimenting sexual behaviour, while emotional stability (β=.01;t=.09;P>.05) had no significant independent influence on Experimenting sexual behaviour. Furthermore, it is observed that family relationship and emotional stability had a significant joint influence on experimenting sexual behaviour (R=.15;R²=.02;F(2,395)=4.82;P<.001). This indicates that family relationship and emotional stability accounted for 2% of the variance of experimenting sexual behaviour. The hypothesis is thus accepted.

Table 4: T-test Summary Table Showing the Influence of Gender on Experimenting Sexual Behaviour

Dependent	Gender	N	*M*	SD	T	Df	P
	Male	258	1.64	2.82			
Experimenting sexual Behaviour					4.18	397	<.01
	Female	187	.55	1.66			

The result reveals that male participants reported significantly higher on Experimenting sexual behaviour (X=1.64;SD=2.82) than their female counterparts who reported lower on

Experimenting sexual behavior (X=55;SD=1.66). However, the *mean* difference is significant;t= 4.18;df=397,P<.0. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

This study investigated the influence of emotional stability and family relationship as predictors of experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults in higher institutions. The findings revealed that family relationship had significant influence on emerging adults' experimenting sexual behaviour; this infers that emerging adults who scored low on family relationship were found to report higher on Experimenting sexual behaviour. The result is supported by Alexandar et.al (2015) which established that significant association exists between parents' dissaproving attitudes about adolescent sexual intercourse and alcohol use. Dissaproving parental attitudes toward early sexual activity and alcohol use were significantly correlated with delayed sexual debut, and a decreased likelihood of engaging in experimenting sexual behaviour While disapproving parent communicate their disapproval of experimenting sexual behaviour among adolescents, a permissive parents acts "in a non-punitive, acceptant and affirmative manner towards the child's impulses, desires and actions. Specifically, a permissive parent allows children to regulate their activities as much as possible, they are given opportunity to engage in activities they wish to go into, avoid the exercise of control, and are not encouraged to obey externally defined standards.

This study also revealed that emerging adults who reported high on emotional stability reported lower score on experimenting sexual behaviour, and those who reported lower on experimenting sexual behaviour reported higher sexual experimenting behaviour. This is corroborated by the findings of McLeod and Knight (2010) that two types of emotional problems are associated with adolescents with low emotional stability which include, internalized (depression and dependency) and externalised (e.g hyperactivity and anti-social behaviour) which are linked to sexual risky behaviours. Potard (2018) also supported that only externalising problems and low emotional stability are significant predictors of early sexual experimentation. Adolescents are slightly at an increased level of vulnerability for different health conditions (Srahbzu & Tirfeneh, 2020).

Furthermore, it was found that male emerging adults reported higher Experimenting sexual behaviour than their female counterparts. This result however negates the findings of (Dorn & Biro, 2011) who reported that female sexual behaviours are more influenced by the parent-child relationship than their male counterparts. Their study suggested that female adolescents place much more meaning on interpersonal relationships such as parent-child relationship, and therefore maybe more affected by the ability of their parents to provide a supportive relationship. This result is however negated by research of Giuseppe et al (2020) who found negative significant relationship between males and females sexual risky behaviour among born-abroad and native university students in Italy. The result is also in consonance with Cavanagh (2014) who studied sexual debut of girls in early adolescents and found significant influence of sexual risky behaviour and race, pubertal timing and friendship group characteristics among girls.

Conclusion

The current study contributes to an existing research in investigating factors that contribute to experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults. It was reported that emerging adults who reported low emotional stability on experimenting sexual behaviour had a higher significant *mean* difference than emerging adult who reported high emotional stability on experimenting sexual behaviour. The findings of this study further concluded that family relationship and emotional stability had significant joint influence on emerging adults' experimenting sexual behaviour while only family relation had independent influence on experimenting sexual behaviour.

It also concluded that male students reported higher experimenting sexual behaviour than female students. The results of this study therefore have implication on the mental health of emerging adults in Nigeria; this could also increase the prevalence of drop outs, sexual transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies as well as mortality rate in the society. Hence, there is need for governments and schools management to initiate programmes on sensitisations on experimenting sexual behaviour, and also provide platforms to educate parents on the importance of family relationship on experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that parenting style should give avenue for young adults to open up discussions on experimenting sexual behaviour for proper guidance, and it must be timely to avoid the risky aspect and the implication of experimenting with sex. Family Relationship is key when it comes to gender in experimenting sexual behaviours. Parents should be orientated by psychologists on the need to get closer to both their male and female children as this will give avenue for express emotions and as a result encourage strong relationship. Professionals should always engage students in psycho-education on pros and cons of experimenting sexual behaviour.

Limitations of the study

Some limitations in the study were that, the study did not have wide representation of emerging adults from other parts of the country, therefore the need to extend the scope to other states in Nigeria is required to provide more representative of the study. Furthermore, qualitative research could reflect other variables that could be responsible for experimenting sexual behaviour among emerging adults. This could however be adopted in subsequent researches.

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EXPLORING BODY -MAGE DISSATISFACTION AND SELF-OBJECTIFICATION AS PREDICTORS OF RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOURS AMONG EMERGING ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

Risk-taking behaviours are common during emerging adulthood, a period of transition between adolescence and adulthood. Emerging adults are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as substance use, unprotected sexual activity, and reckless driving. This study therefore investigated body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification as predictors of risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults in Lagos State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Three hundred and seventy-five (375) participants were selected from University of Lagos using non-probalistic sampling technique. Four hypotheses were tested in the study. Hypotheses generated were tested using correlational analysis, linear and multiple regression analysis. The result revealed that Body dissatisfaction and Self-objectification has significant positive relationship with Risk-taking behaviour. Body dissatisfaction and Self-objectification jointly predicted Risk-taking behaviour, independently, Body image dissatisfaction and Self-objectification significantly predicted Risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. Demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) jointly predicted Risk-taking behaviour. Age, sex and family type were significant independent predictors of Risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults, while religion has no significant independent prediction on Risk taking behaviours among emerging adults. The study concluded that Body image dissatisfaction and Self-objectification have a substantial role in predicting Risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults in Lagos State. The study therefore recommended that the practitioners should integrate mental health support services within educational institutions to provide counselling and therapy for students struggling with body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification, and to also ensure that these services are accessible, confidential, and destigmatised.

Keyword: Body Image Dissatisfaction, Self-Objectification, Risk-Taking Behaviours, Emerging adults

Introduction

Early adulthood stage is a critical period for the development of risk-taking behaviours, as individuals may be exploring their identities, seeking new experiences, and making important life decisions. This period is also characterised by increased autonomy and decreased parental oversight, which can contribute to increased risk-taking behaviours (Arnett, 2000).

Emerging adulthood is a unique developmental period spanning from late adolescence to early adulthood, characterised by a range of social, cognitive, and emotional changes (Arnett, 2000). During this time, individuals are faced with numerous opportunities to engage in behaviours that may have both positive and negative consequences, such as substance use, sexual risk-taking, and reckless driving (Arnett, 2005). Risk-taking behaviours refer to actions that involve potential harm or negative consequences, such as substance use, unsafe sexual behaviour, and reckless driving. Emerging adulthood is a developmental period characterised by increased risk-taking behaviour, particularly in the areas of substance use and sexual behaviour (Arnett, 2005). The age of emerging adults also encompass the late adolescence period which can be described as a crucial stage of human development that is often characterised by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this period, adolescents often engage in risk-taking behaviours, which are actions that carry a potential for harm or adverse consequences. Risk-taking behaviour among adolescents has become a global concern for stakeholders due to its far-reaching impact on public health, social welfare, and economic stability.

One of the most pressing reasons for stakeholders to address risk-taking behaviour among emerging adults is its detrimental impact on health. Numerous studies have shown that adolescents who engage in risky behaviours, such as substance abuse, unprotected sexual activity, and reckless driving, are at a higher risk of acquiring infectious diseases, substance addiction, and injuries (Maslowsky et al 2019; Duell &Steinberg, 2019). These health risks not only affect the well-being of adolescents but also strain healthcare systems globally, thus necessitating intervention and prevention strategies.

Risk-taking behaviour among adolescents can have profound social implications, affecting families, communities, and societies at large. High rates of adolescent delinquency, violence, and criminal activity can result in increased societal burden, leading to strains on law enforcement,

social services, and justice systems As such, stakeholders must prioritise interventions that promote positive social outcomes and reduce the prevalence of risk-taking behaviours. The economic consequences of adolescent risk-taking behaviours are substantial, affecting both immediate and long-term productivity and economic growth. Unplanned pregnancies, substance abuse-related healthcare costs, and motor vehicle accidents result in significant financial burdens on healthcare systems and governments (Hurley et al 2023). Furthermore, the link between risk-taking behaviours in adolescence and reduced educational attainment translates to lower workforce productivity and potential earnings in adulthood (Campbell 2020). Addressing risk-taking behaviours early on can lead to more productive and economically stable societies.

Similarly, self-objectification refers to the process by which individuals view their bodies as objects to be evaluated based on their physical appearance, leading to a reduced sense of self-worth and increased levels of anxiety (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It is a common experience among both males and females, and has been associated with a range of negative psychological outcomes, including low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety (Schaumberg et al., 2019). Body dissatisfaction has been identified as a significant concern among young adults, particularly among females. A recent meta-analysis of studies conducted in Western countries found that over 60% of adolescent girls and over 30% of adolescent boys reported dissatisfaction with their bodies (Lawler & Nixon, 2011).

The media, particularly social media, has been identified as a significant contributor to body dissatisfaction among young adults. The portrayal of unrealistic and idealised body types in the media can create a distorted view of what is considered normal and desirable, leading to negative self-comparisons and increased body dissatisfaction (Perloff, 2014). In addition, social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where individuals can curate their appearance and present an idealised version of themselves, have been found to be particularly detrimental to body image (Fardouly et al., 2021). Addressing body dissatisfaction among young adults is an important public health concern, as it can have a significant impact on mental health outcomes and increase the risk of engaging in risky behaviours. Prevention and intervention efforts should focus on promoting positive body image and self-acceptance, reducing the impact of social and cultural influences on body image, and addressing individual risk factors for body dissatisfaction.

Another variable to be consider as predictor of risk-taking behaviours in this study is self-objectification, which refers to the tendency to view oneself as an object to be evaluated based on physical appearance. This includes a focus on the body as an object rather than a functional tool for movement and action. Research has shown that self-objectification is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including body shame, disordered eating, and sexual objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Moradi & Huang, 2008). Other studies have suggested that self-objectification may also be a predictor of risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults (Pacanowski & Hadden, 2018). Self-objectification has been found to be particularly prevalent among young adults, particularly females. Research suggests that the objectification of women's bodies is a common experience in our society, and that this objectification can have a range of negative consequences for women's mental health and well-being (Moradi & Huang, 2008). Self-objectification has been linked to a range of negative outcomes, including body shame, anxiety, and disordered eating behaviours, as well as decreased cognitive performance and decreased physical activity (Calogero, 2013).

The media has been identified as a significant contributor to self-objectification, as the constant exposure to idealised and unrealistic images of beauty and sexuality can create a distorted view of what is considered normal and desirable, leading to negative self-comparisons and increased self-objectification (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). Social media platforms, in particular, have been found to be a significant source of self-objectification, as individuals are encouraged to present an idealised version of themselves online and may engage in self-objectification behaviours such as posting sexualised images or seeking validation through likes and comments (Fardouly et al., 2018). Addressing self-objectification is an important public health concern, as it can have a significant impact on mental health outcomes and increase the risk of engaging in risky behaviours. Prevention and intervention efforts should focus on promoting positive body image and self-acceptance, reducing the impact of social and cultural influences on self-objectification, and addressing individual risk factors for self-objectification.

These behaviours can have serious consequences on the physical and psychological health of individuals, leading to increased rates of morbidity and mortality. There is also evidence to suggest that self-objectification may mediate the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and risk-taking behaviours. For example, a study by Impett, et al. (2012) found that self-

objectification mediated the relationship between body dissatisfaction and sexual risk-taking among young women.

Studies have continued to explore the relationship between body image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. Also, a study by Schaefer et al. (2020) developed and validated a new measure, the Body Image-Related Behaviours Scale (BIBS), which assesses behaviours that individuals engage in to improve or maintain their body image. The study found that the BIBS was positively associated with body dissatisfaction and self-objectification, and negatively associated with body appreciation and self-compassion, highlighting the importance of considering both positive and negative aspects of body image when examining risk-taking behaviours.

Body dissatisfaction and self-objectification have been identified as potential predictors of risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. Research suggests that individuals who experience high levels of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification may be more likely to engage in risky behaviours as a way of seeking validation and coping with negative emotions (Pacanowski & Hadden, 2018). Addressing body dissatisfaction and self-objectification may therefore be an important component of interventions aimed at reducing risk-taking behaviours among young adults.

Body dissatisfaction and self-objectification are two factors that have gained increasing attention in recent years due to their potential impact on psychological and physical health outcomes among emerging adults. Research suggests that body dissatisfaction and self-objectification are linked to a range of negative consequences such as depression, anxiety, and disordered eating (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014; Slater & Tiggemann, 2016). However, the relationship between body dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and risk-taking behaviours has received relatively little attention in the literature, particularly among emerging adults.

Even though body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification are two important factors that have been linked to various negative outcomes among emerging adults, including depression, anxiety, and disordered eating behaviours (Grabe, Hyde, & Lindberg, 2007; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), there is a gap in the literature when it comes to understanding the potential role of these factors in predicting risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults.

Risk-taking behaviours are common during emerging adulthood, a period of transition between adolescence and adulthood. Emerging adults are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as substance use, unprotected sexual activity, and reckless driving (Arnett, 2000). The potential link between body image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults is an important area of research that warrants further investigation.

Studies have highlighted the potential relationship between body image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. For example, one study found that young women who reported higher levels of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification were more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours (Calzo, Sonneville, Scherer, & Jackson, 2017).

Emerging adulthood is a transitional period characterised by significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this phase, emerging adults are susceptible to various challenges, including body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification, which have been identified as potential predictors of risk-taking behaviours. The problem lies in understanding the extent to which body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification contribute to engaging in risky behaviours among this vulnerable population. However, there is a need for further research in this area, particularly with regards to the potential mediating mechanisms underlying the relationship between body image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. Additionally, more research is needed to explore the potential moderating effects of gender and other individual differences on this relationship.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the potential predictive role of body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification in risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults, while examining potential mediating and moderating mechanisms. This study would contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between body image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults, and inform the development of interventions to reduce risk-taking behaviours among this population. The main objective of the study was to investigate Body-Image Dissatisfaction and Self-Objectification as predictors of Risk-Taking Behaviours among Emerging Adults

The following specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate if body dissatisfaction predicts Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults;
2. Investigate the predictive relationship between Self-Objectification and Risk-Taking Behaviours among Emerging Adults;
3. determine whether dissatisfaction and Self-Objectification jointly predicts Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults; and
4. Investigate if demographic variables (age, sex, religion and family type) predict Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults;

Understanding the various types of risk-taking behaviours is essential for comprehensive research. Substance use, including alcohol and drug abuse, is are prevalent risk-taking behaviours among adolescents and emerging adults. It has been associated with a range of negative consequences, such as impaired judgment, health problems, and academic difficulties.

Studies have consistently shown high levels of body image dissatisfaction among different populations. For instance, research conducted by Gurtala & Fardouly (2023) found that approximately 80% of adolescent girls reported body dissatisfaction, with similar findings observed among young adult women (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). Furthermore, studies have also identified an increasing prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among men (Grogan, 2017). Socio-cultural factors play a significant role in shaping body image dissatisfaction. The influence of media, particularly the portrayal of idealised and unrealistic body standards, has been extensively explored (Perloff, 2014). Additionally, low self-esteem and internalisation of societal beauty standards have been found to contribute to negative body image (Calogero et al., 2017).

Self-objectification is caused in part by the media, portraying the female solely in terms of her physical appearance (Schaefer et al., 2018). Women will view themselves from the perspective of another and regard their bodies as objects. Objectified women will not feel proper without internalising a third-person view of the self.

In the Kilpela et al. (2019) examination, the applicability of objectification theory was determined through the mediating effect of body shame in the association between eating

disorder pathology and self-objectification. They found body shame to successfully mediate the relationship between eating disorder pathology and body surveillance. Yang et al.(2020) explored the moderating effect of self-objectification between appearance comparisons and selfie-viewing behaviours on social media sites. The results established that self-objectification moderated the relationship between appearance comparisons and selfie-viewing. Yang et al.(2020) also found an increase in selfie-viewing associated with greater facial dissatisfaction.

Longitudinal studies have provided valuable insights into the temporal relationship between body image dissatisfaction and risk-taking behaviours. For instance, a study by Rezeppa et al (2021) conducted a two-year longitudinal analysis and found that body image dissatisfaction predicted an increase in risk-taking behaviours among college students over time. This supports the notion that body image dissatisfaction may serve as a precursor or risk factor for engaging in various risky behaviours during emerging adulthood.

In addition to the well-established associations with risky sexual behaviours and substance use, recent studies have also explored the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and other health risk behaviours. For example, research by van den Berg et al. (2022) demonstrated that body image dissatisfaction was related to unhealthy weight control behaviours, such as extreme dieting and purging, among emerging adults. Similarly, body image dissatisfaction has been linked to higher rates of physical inactivity and disordered eating patterns (Homan et al., 2020).

The rise of social media platforms has brought new dimensions to the study of body image dissatisfaction and its association with risk-taking behaviours. Research has shown that exposure to idealised and heavily edited images on social media platforms contributes to increased body image dissatisfaction among emerging adults (Fardouly et al., 2018). Furthermore, higher levels of social media use and engagement have been linked to greater risk-taking behaviours, including self-objectification and appearance-enhancing behaviours (Perloff et al., 2021).

Numerous scholarly inquiries have explored the correlation between self-objectification and proclivity towards engaging in risky behaviours among diverse cohorts. According to the findings of Moradi and Huang's (2008) study, there exists a positive correlation between self-objectification and participation in precarious sexual activities among female college students.

Self-objectification is a phenomenon that involves the continuous monitoring of one's own appearance, also known as body surveillance. Recent research has emphasised the significance of body surveillance in forecasting behaviours associated with risk-taking. Van den Berg and Thompson (2017) discovered that body surveillance played a mediating role in the correlation between self-objectification and participation in hazardous weight control practises among female college students. Furthermore, a study conducted by Schlatter et al. (2022) demonstrated that the act of monitoring one's own body was significantly linked to participation in hazardous driving practises among young adults of both genders.

Several psychological mediators have been suggested to elucidate the correlation between self-objectification and behaviours that entail risk-taking. The correlation between self-esteem and this phenomenon has been determined to be noteworthy. Calogero et al. (2020) conducted a study that revealed the mediating role of lower self-esteem in the association between self-objectification and participation in risk-taking behaviours among young females. Moreover, Kozee et al. (2007) have recognised body shame as an additional mediator, suggesting that those who self-objectify may encounter elevated levels of body shame, ultimately leading to their involvement in hazardous conduct.

The examination of socio-cultural factors has also been conducted with regards to the phenomena of self-objectification and risk-taking behaviours. The phenomenon of self-objectification has been linked to exposure to media ideals and societal pressures to conform to appearance standards, as suggested by Vandenbosch and Eggermont (2019). Additionally, scholarly investigations indicate that the assimilation of cultural norms regarding physical attractiveness serves as a mediator in the correlation between self-objectification and participation in hazardous actions (Moradi et al., 2019).

Another recent study by Perloff et al (2021) examined the role of social media in the development of body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification among adolescent boys. The study found that exposure to social media images depicting muscular male bodies was associated with higher levels of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification, particularly among boys who had a strong desire to be muscular. This suggests that social media may also play a role in the development of body image concerns among male adolescents.

Furthermore, a study by Carrotte and colleagues (2021) examined the relationship between body image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and sexual risk-taking behaviours among young adults. The study found that both body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification were positively associated with engagement in sexual risk-taking behaviours, highlighting the importance of addressing body image concerns as a potential risk factor for sexual health outcomes.

In terms of interventions, recent studies have explored the effectiveness of online interventions for reducing body image dissatisfaction and promoting positive body image. For example, a study by Fardouly et al (2021) found that a brief online intervention promoting self-compassion was effective in reducing body dissatisfaction and improving body appreciation among young women.

Method

This study was carried out among emerging adults in the University of Lagos. The participants in this research were undergraduate students from the University of Lagos. The researchers made use of four hundred students. Participants for this study included 400 emerging adults from year 1 to final year which were selected through convenient sampling method. The result of the descriptive statistics shows that 184(49.1%) of the participants fall between age bracket of 18-22 years, 153(40.8%) belong to age bracket of 23-27 years, and 38(10.1%) fall between the age range of 28 years and above. Base on sex of the respondents 160(42.7%) were male, while 215(57.3%) were female. In respect to the religion of the participants, majority 242(64.4%) were Christians, 125 (33.2%) were Muslims and 8(2.1%) practiced other religion. Finally, on the family type 279(74.4%) were from monogamous family setting, 96(25.6%) were from polygamous family setting.

Research Design

A Survey Cross-sectional research design was adopted in the study. A cross sectional survey research method is method of data collection used to make inference about a population of interest at a point in time. This suggests that questionnaires were used for data collection in the study without the need for a follow-up study with the research participants. This was adopted because the researchers aimed to investigate the predictive role of body image dissatisfaction and

self-objectification on risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults in Lagos. Furthermore, a survey design was also suitable for the present study because there was no manipulation of variables, as the researcher were interested in administering questionnaires to the selected sample and assess the selected sample on the independent and dependent variables.

Research Instruments

The instrument used is a standardised structured questionnaire comprising five- sections, namely sections A, B, C, and D.

Section A: *Demographic Variables*

This section measured the demographic variables of the students/respondents in terms of age, sex, religion, and family type

Section B: *Body dissatisfaction*

This section measure body image dissatisfaction by adopting body image concern inventory developed by Littletom, Axsom, and Pury (2005). This is a 19-item scale measure on 4 Likert rating scale ranging from Always to Never. The author reported a Cronbach alpha of 0.93 which indicates a high internal consistency. Higher scores indicate a higher level of body dissatisfaction.

Section C: *Self-Objectification*

Self-objectification was measured with the SOBBS developed by Lindner and Tantleff-Dunn. The SOBBS consists of a pair of subscales or factors. Factor 1 of the SOBBS is observer's perspective and factor 2 is body as self. Factor 1 measures the level a respondent takes a third-person perspective when considering his or her physical appearance. A typical factor 1 item is "I try to imagine what my body looks like to others (i.e., like I am looking at myself from the outside)." Factor 2 scores represent the emphasis a respondent places on his or her physical appearance over other qualities and attributes. A typical factor 2 item is "Looking attractive to others is more important to me than being happy with who I am inside." The mean of the scored items represents the total score. The measurement consists of a five-point Likert rating scale with a scoring range from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree."

The SOBBS is found to be a valid and reliable instrument. The internal consistency reliability of the scale is in the high range α = .91. In the current research the reliability coefficient was satisfactory at α = .912. The scale loads on two factors, where factor 1 (observer's perspective) loads on items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 14. Factor 2 (body as self) loads on items 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 13. The loading range for factor 1 is .65 − .84, and the loading range for factor 2 is .55 − .86. The test-retest reliability of the SOBBS is R = .89

Section D: *Risk taking behaviour*

This section measure risk taking behaviour developed by *De Haan et al*, (*2011*). This is an 18-item scored on 4 Likert rating scale ranging from 1= "no for sure," 2="rather not," 3="rather yes," 4="yes for sure. The scale assesses risk-taking behaviour which are limited by the fact that they are specifically designed to examine adolescents (12–18 years old) or include questions on a variety of risk-taking related daily activities. RT-18 is a valid and reliable screening tool to differentiate levels of risk-taking behaviour with the Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 which indicates high internal consistency of the items in the scale.

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered personally to the students at the various departments and hall of residents. The researchers explained to the students that the questionnaire was for research purposes. They were assured that the information would be treated confidentially. A total of 400 copies of questionnaires were distributed. The collected data were analysed statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The study utilises both descriptive and inferential statistical tools in analysing the data gathered for the study. The first, second, hypotheses were analysed using linear regression analysis, while the third and fourth hypotheses were tested using multiple regression.

Result

Table 1: Correlations between the Independent and Dependent Variables

	1	2	3
1. Risk taking behavior		.37[**]	37[**]
2. Body dissatisfaction			.08
3. Self-objectification			
Mean	37.64	16.43	19.22
SD	7.58	5.155	5.54

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, two-tailed.*

Results from table 1 shows that body dissatisfaction has significant positive relationship with Risk taking behaviour ($r = .37$, $p < .01$). The result implies that increase in body dissatisfaction significantly relates to increase in risk taking behaviour. Also, there was significant positive relationship between self-objectification ($r = .37$, $p < .01$) and risk-taking behaviour. The results demonstrate that increase in body dissatisfaction significantly relates to increase in risk taking behaviour.

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis one states that body image dissatisfaction significantly predicts Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults. This was tested using simple linear regression analysis and the results is presented in table 3

Table 2: Simple linear regression analysis showing the prediction of body dissatisfaction on Risk taking behaviour.

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	p
	β	S E	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	28.62	1.22		23.54	<.001
Body dissatisfaction	.55	.07	.37	7.78	<.001
R	0.37				
R^2	0.14				
ΔR^2	0.14				
F	60.46				
P	<.001				

Dependent Variable: *risk taking behaviour*

The results showed the coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.14$, $F_{(1, 373)} = 60.46$ p <.001. This showed that the model can be held for 12% change in the variance of risk-taking behaviour among emerging adults. The table further revealed that body dissatisfaction significantly and positively predicted risk-taking behaviour of emerging adults ($\beta = .37$, $t = 7.78$, *p*< .001). The result indicates that emerging adults with high level of body dissatisfaction significantly reported high level of risk-taking behaviours. The stated hypothesis is thus accepted.

Hypothesis two states that self-objectification significantly predicts Risk-Taking Behaviours among Emerging Adults. This was tested using simple linear regression analysis and the results is presented in table 4

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis showing the prediction of Self Objectification on Risk taking behaviour.

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	β	S E	Beta (β)	t	*p*
(Constant)	27.92	1.32		21.21	<.001
Self-objectification	.51	.07	.37	7.68	<.001
R	0.37				
R²	0.14				
Δ R²	0.13				
F	58.10				
P	<.001				

Dependent Variable: *risk taking behaviour*

The results showed the coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.14$, $F_{(1, 373)} = 60.46$ p <.001. This showed that the model can be held for 12% change in the variance of risk-taking behaviour among emerging adults. The table further revealed that self-objectification significantly and positively predicted risk-taking behaviour of emerging adults ($\beta = .37$, $t = 7.68$, *p*< .001). The result indicates that emerging adults with high level of self-objectification significantly reported high level of risk-taking behaviours. The stated hypothesis is thus accepted.

Hypothesis three states that Body dissatisfaction and Self-Objectification will jointly and independently predict Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults. This was tested using multiple regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 5

Table 4: Multiple linear regression analysis showing the prediction of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification on Risk taking behaviour.

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	p
	β	S E	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	20.294	1.574		12.893	<.001
Body dissatisfaction	.509	.066	.346	7.711	<.001
Self-objectification	.468	.061	.342	7.616	<.001
R	0.51				
R^2	0.26				
ΔR^2	0.25				
F	63.85				
P	<.001				

Dependent Variable: *risk taking behaviours*

The result revealed that Body dissatisfaction and Self-Objectification jointly predicted risk-taking behaviour R^2= 0.26, $F_{(2, 372)}$ = 63.85 p <.001. When combined, Body dissatisfaction and Self-Objectification for accounted for 26% variance of the change observed in the self-report of risk-taking behaviour. This revealed that the collective presence of Body dissatisfaction and Self-Objectification was a significant predictor of risk-taking behaviours. The result further revealed that independently, body dissatisfaction (β = .35, t=7.71 p<.001), and self-objectification (β = .34, t=7.62 p<.001) significantly predicted risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. The result demonstrates emerging adults with high level of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification significantly reported higher level of risk-taking behaviours. The hypothesis is thus accepted.

Hypothesis four states that demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) will jointly and independently predict Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults. This was tested using multiple regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 6

Table 5: Multiple linear regression analysis showing the prediction of demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) on Risk taking behaviour.

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	β	S E	Beta (β)	t	p
(Constant)	32.05	.90		35.79	<.001
Age	2.74	.75	.18	3.64	<.001
Sex	2.55	.73	.17	3.43	<.001
Religion	.99	.78	.06	1.27	.205
Family type	3.44	.81	.21	4.23	<.001
R	0.35				
R^2	0.12				
$\varDelta R^2$	0.12				
F	13.15				
P	<.001				

Dependent Variable: *risk taking behaviours*

The result revealed that demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) jointly predicted risk-taking behaviour R^2= 0.12, $F_{(4, 370)}$ = 13.15 p <.001. When combined, demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) accounted for 12% variance of the change observed in the self-report of risk-taking behaviours. This revealed that the collective presence of demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) significantly predicted risk-taking behaviours. The result further revealed that age (β = .18, t=3.64, p<.001), sex (β = .17, t=3.43 p<.001), family type (β = .21, t=4.23 p<.001) were significant independent predictors of risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults, while only religion (β = .06, t=1.27 p>.05) had no significant independent prediction on risk taking behaviours among emerging adults. The result demonstrated emerging adults with the age range of 18-22 years, male, and from monogamous family setting significantly reported high level of risk-taking behaviours compare to those with other age range, female from polygamous family setting. The hypothesis is thus accepted.

Discussion

The first hypothesis stated that Body image dissatisfaction will significantly predict Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults. The results showed that body dissatisfaction significantly and positively predicted risk-taking behaviour of emerging adults. The result indicates that emerging adults with high level of body dissatisfaction significantly reported high level of risk-taking behaviours. Some individuals may engage in risky behaviours to cope with body dissatisfaction. These behaviours could be a distraction or a means to gain control or self-worth. Emerging adults dissatisfied with their bodies might be more susceptible to peer pressure and the desire to fit in, which can lead to risky behaviours, such as substance use or extreme dieting. Body dissatisfaction can erode self-esteem and self-confidence, making individuals more prone to risks as they may perceive themselves as having less to lose. The results support the study by instance, Jones and Griffiths (2021) found that higher levels of body image dissatisfaction were associated with increased engagement in risky sexual behaviours. Similarly, a study by Smith et al. (2022) demonstrated a positive association between body image dissatisfaction and substance use among emerging adults.

Several mediating factors have been proposed to explain the relationship between body image dissatisfaction and risk-taking behaviours. Self-esteem has been identified as a potential mediator in this relationship. Research by Thompson et al. (2019) indicated that low self-esteem partially mediated the association between body image dissatisfaction and engagement in risky behaviours among emerging adult females. Additionally, self-efficacy, body appreciation, and sensation-seeking tendencies have been suggested as potential mediators, although further research is needed to clarify their roles.

The second hypothesis stated that self-objectification significantly predicts Risk-Taking Behaviours among Emerging Adults. The results showed that self-objectification significantly and positively predicted risk-taking behaviour of emerging adults. The result indicates that emerging adults with high level of self-objectification significantly reported high level of risk-taking behaviours. The result indicates that emerging adults who engage in self-objectification, which often involves an excessive focus on physical appearance, are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours. This connection can be understood through several psychological

mechanisms where individuals who self-objectify may be more likely to seek external validation, leading them to engage in risky behaviours to gain approval or attention from others.

Self-objectification may be associated with higher levels of impulsivity, leading individuals to make impulsive decisions that involve risk. Also, Self-objectification can contribute to low self-esteem and a negative body image, which may, in turn, increase the likelihood of engaging in behaviours perceived as risky. The results corroborate the study by Moradi and Huang's (2008) that there exists a positive correlation between self-objectification and participation in precarious sexual activities among female college students. Ferrer et al. (2021) conducted a study that revealed that adolescent girls who exhibited self-objectification were more likely to engage in substance use. Also, study by Schlatter et al. (2022) demonstrated that the act of monitoring one's own body was significantly linked to participation in hazardous driving practises among young adults of both genders.

The third hypothesis three stated that body dissatisfaction and self-objectification jointly and independently predict Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults. The result revealed that Body dissatisfaction and Self Objectification jointly predicted risk-taking behaviour. When combined, Body dissatisfaction and Self Objectification accounted for 26% variance of the change observed in the self-report of risk-taking behaviour. This revealed that the collective presence of Body dissatisfaction and Self Objectification were significant predictors of risk-taking behaviours. The result further revealed that independently, body dissatisfaction, and self-objectification significantly predicted risk taking behaviours among emerging adults. The result demonstrates emerging adults with high level of body dissatisfaction and self-objectification significantly reported higher level of risk-taking behaviours. This indicates that, on its own, a negative body image is a powerful predictor of engaging in risky behaviours. Individuals dissatisfied with their bodies may be more prone to risk-taking as a way to cope with their dissatisfaction or attempt to conform to societal beauty ideals. Similarly, self-objectification, when examined independently, also significantly predicts risk-taking behaviours. This implies that individuals who tend to objectify themselves, focusing excessively on their physical appearance and how others perceive them, are more likely to engage in risky behaviours. This could be due to a desire for external validation or a lack of self-worth beyond physical appearance. In line with the study, Carrotte et al (2021) examined the relationship between body

image dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and sexual risk-taking behaviours among young adults. The study found that both body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification were positively associated with engagement in sexual risk-taking behaviours, highlighting the importance of addressing body image concerns as a potential risk factor for sexual health outcomes.

The fourth hypothesis stated that demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) jointly and independently predict Risk-Taking Behaviours among emerging Adults. This was tested using multiple regression analysis. The result revealed that demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) jointly predicted risk-taking behaviour. When combined, demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) accounted for 12% variance of the change observed in the self-report of risk-taking behaviours. This revealed that the collective presence of demographic variables (age, gender, religion and family type) significantly predicted risk-taking behaviours. The result further revealed that age, sex, family type were significant independent predictors of risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults, while only religion had no significant independent prediction on risk taking behaviours among emerging adults. The result demonstrated emerging adults with the age range of 18-22 years, male, and from monogamous family setting significantly reported high level of risk-taking behaviours compare to those with other age range, female from polygamous family setting.

The result demonstrates that age, when considered independently, significantly predicts risk-taking behaviours. Specifically, emerging adults in the age range of 18-22 years were found to be more likely to engage in risky behaviours than those in other age ranges. This finding may be related to the transitional nature of emerging adulthood and the exploration of independence and identity during this period. Gender also emerged as a significant independent predictor of risk-taking behaviours. Males were more likely to report high risk-taking behaviours than females. Gender differences in risk-taking behaviours have been observed in various studies and can be influenced by factors such as socialisation, peer influence, and societal expectations. Family type, particularly being from a monogamous family setting, was identified as a significant independent predictor of high-risk behaviours. This may reflect the influence of family dynamics and support systems on risk-taking tendencies among emerging adults. Interestingly, religion did not emerge as a significant independent predictor of risk-taking behaviours in this study. This

suggests that religious affiliation, on its own, may not be a strong determinant of risky behaviours among emerging adults in the context examined.

Fardouly et al (2021) found that a brief online intervention promoting self-compassion was effective in reducing body dissatisfaction and improving body appreciation among young women. Similarly, a study by Turner et al (2021) found that an online intervention incorporating cognitive-behavioural therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy was effective in reducing body image concerns among both males and females (Lindner & Tantleff-Dunn, 2017).

Conclusion

The current study has shed light on a number of important characteristics that influence risk-taking behaviours among emerging adults. According to the findings, both body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification have a substantial role in predicting risk-taking behaviours. In addition, when considered as a whole, these different elements have a significant impact when combined. Younger age, male gender, and monogamous family arrangements were found to be associated with greater levels of risky behaviours. In addition, demographic factors such as age, gender, and family type were found to influence risk-taking behaviours. Religion, on the other hand, was not able to independently predict risk-taking behaviours within the framework of this study.

Recommendations

Development and implementing preventive programmes that promote positive body image and self-acceptance targeting emerging adults is important. These programmes can include workshops, counselling services, and educational campaigns. Tailor interventions to specific demographic groups based on the identified predictors. For instance, programmes could be designed to address the unique needs of younger individuals, males, and those from different family backgrounds. Conduct further research to explore the underlying mechanisms through which body image dissatisfaction and self-objectification lead to risk-taking behaviours. This could provide a deeper understanding of the issue and inform more targeted interventions.

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INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL TRUST ON EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT IN LAGOS METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of employees' empowerment and organisational trust on Employees' commitment. The objectives of the study were to find the relationship between Employees' empowerment and employees' commitment, and the relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment. The study was a correlational design, and 161 respondents (101 males and 60 females) drawn from different organisations in Lagos Metropolis that were selected using convenient sampling technique participated. The study was anchored on social exchange theory (SET), two hypotheses were postulated and tested using Pearson product moment correlation, and linear regression. The result revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment (r = .64, p<.01)), and that organisational trust has a significant positive relationship with employees' commitment (r =.63, p<.01)). Linear regression showed that employees' empowerment predicted employees' commitment and explains 40% of the variance in employees' commitment $R2 = .40$, $F(1, 159 = 108.5, p<.01)$), while organisational trust also predicted commitment and explains 39% of the variance in employees' commitment $R2 = .39$, $F (1, 159 = 105.1, p<.01)$). The findings demonstrated that employees' empowerment and organisational trust are important determinants of employees' commitment. Employees are committed to the success of their organisations when they are empowered to take initiatives, offer their special skills, take independent decisions, and when there is trust in the workplace. The results were discussed using extant literature. Implications of the study were also discussed and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Employee empowerment, organizational trust, employees' commitment.

Introduction

In today's global, dynamic and competitive business environment, organisations are constantly seeking innovative ways to foster a committed and motivated workforce that will help them drive their strategic options. A committed workforce is not only more likely to remain loyal to the organisation but will also likely go above and beyond what is required in their efforts to ensure its success. Employee's empowerment and organisational trust are some of the workplace factors that have received considerable attention because they are fundamental to employee's commitment, and contribute to effectiveness of managers and the achievement of the goals of organisations (Hamed, 2010).

Employees' empowerment is a concept that has the potential to enhance employees' engagement and commitment (Demitriads, 2005). It revolves around the idea of granting employees the autonomy, authority, and responsibility to make decisions and take ownership of their work. Some of the words that are usually associated with employees' empowerment include delegation of authority, self-efficacy, self-management and autonomy (Damianus et al., 2021). Employees that are empowered take decisions about how to tackle job-issues rather than continually wait for clearance from a supervisor or superiors. This encourages staff members to assume ownership of their efforts and accountability for their outcomes. Indeed, empowerment has been recognised as a strategic approach that may be used to address the demands of businesses such as employees' commitment (Demitriads, 2005 cited in Hamed 2010).

Demitriads (2005) posits that it is necessary for organisations, in this era of globalisation, to appropriately empower their workers so that they can act rapidly when faced with environmental changes in order to improve their chances of success. When employees have the trust and the liberty to decide and carry out their responsibilities in the way they deem appropriate, they tend to be more productive and effective. It is the opinion of Hamed (2010) that organisations that are dedicated to employees' empowerment are better able to inspire and keep their staff members. It has become a motivational strategy that can be beneficial to organisations as it enables them to compete successfully in an extremely competitive marketplace. Empowerment gives employees a sense of importance and belonging that leads to their consequent commitment to the exploits of the organisation (Tjosvold & Sun, 2005).

Organisational trust is the employee's overall assessment of the organisation's trustworthiness, reliability, credibility and dependability (Tan & Tan, 2000). There are two elements of organisational trust. They are trust in the organisation, and trust in the supervisor. According to Warnock-Smith et al. (2020), trust in an organisation refers to the staff members' "positive assumptions about individuals' intentions and actions based on organisational roles, interactions, and experiences," whereas trust in a supervisor refers to the employee's confidence that the executive will keep their word, act fairly, and provide honest and accurate answers. It is vital to create a trustworthy and collaborative working atmosphere in which employers trust their employees, and employees trust each other and management. According to Damianus et al. (2021), employees are demotivated to perform in a hostile and distrustful work environment. It is when there is organisational trust that employees are confident that their firm will act in a way that benefits them, or at the very worst, not harmful to them. The trust employees have in an organisation tends to strengthen their commitment to the organisation.

The definitions of organisational commitment in the literature vary widely. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment is employees' identification with the organisation's values and goals, and readiness to carry out tasks and display dedication to organisational objectives. Although some earlier researchers believe that organisational commitment is a unidimensional concept (Masud & Daud, 2019); Meyer & Allen (1991) reason otherwise. They developed a multidimensional model and offered a more methodical approach to the study of organisational commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment can be categorised into three dimensions which are: normative organisational commitment, continuance organisational commitment, and affective organisational commitment. Affective organisational commitment (AOC) is defined as a person's psychological or emotional identification, involvement, and attachment to an organisation. It also encompasses employees' emotional bond and sense of belonging. In addition to having a strong sense of belonging, they sincerely like what they do and support the organisation's goals and ideals. Their willingness to devote time and effort to the organisation, frequently going above and beyond the call of duty, stems from this emotional connection.

Continuance Commitment is determined by the anticipated expenses linked to departing from the business. High continuance commitment employees stick with the company because they have to. The knowledge of the costs they would incur by leaving, such as loss of benefits, seniority, or pension, motivates this kind of commitment. Employees' commitment to stay is frequently impacted by outside forces and responsibilities, which make workers feel obligated to stick around, even in the absence of a deep emotional bond with the company.

Normative commitment is the employees' moral conviction that remaining in an organisation is the best thing to do. High normative commitment employees stick with the company because they believe they should, which is frequently motivated by appreciation for previous chances, instruction, or assistance received from it. Employees that exhibit normative commitment stay longer with an organisation even when they are not emotionally involved anymore, or when they know that leaving would not result in any major personal consequences, because they feel a sense of duty and moral responsibility.

It should be noted, however, that these three dimensions of organisational commitment are not mutually exclusive, but they are related, mutually inclusive and used as such. The three aspects of commitment individually and jointly influence work outcomes such as engagement, satisfaction, prosocial behaviours, performance and so forth. The higher the score on each dimension, the more committed an employee is.

It has been observed that a significant number of employees continues to be disengaged and indifferent towards their employers and work despite numerous programmes and methods implemented by organisations to increase commitment levels (Kamau, 2015). This prevalence of uncommitted and disengaged workforce is worrisome to management and organisations. The workforce is an organisation's most valuable asset; hence, committed employees are considered an organisation's competitive advantage (Oparanma, 2019). Lack of employees' commitment are associated with decreased productivity and suboptimal performance. It hinders growth and competitiveness and compromises the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Lack of commitment makes employees more inclined to look for work elsewhere. As a result of regular staff turnover, talent retention becomes difficult, team dynamics, institutional knowledge, and employee morale suffer, which may lead to a vicious circle of dissatisfaction among

organisational members. Employees who do not feel committed to their work may be more stressed, irritated, and disengaged, which may also compromise their mental and emotional health.

The problems associated with poor employees' commitment speak to the need for further research studies on its influencing factors. Employees' empowerment and organisational trust are some of the individual and organisational factors that have been linked to employees' commitment. A number of studies have examined the relationship between employees' empowerment and commitment, while a few focused on the relationship between organisational trust and commitment. However, limited numbers of these studies have been done in Nigeria. This study attempted to fill the gap in knowledge in this area of study, as it relates to Nigeria experience.

The goal of this study was to determine whether employees' empowerment, organisational trust are related to employees' commitment. Therefore, the objectives of the study were: to examine the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment, and to find out the relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment

Literature Review

Employees' empowerment and employees' commitment

Being empowered means having the freedom to decide something on your own in a certain area of operations. Empowerment has the potential to make employees accountable for the work they perform, encourage leaders to learn to give up authority, motivate employees to take ownership of their work, and take independent business decisions. Empowerment occurs when employees are trusted to a degree that enables them influence their work environment, appreciate their capability, realise the purpose of their work, and accept the valued aspect of autonomy (Andika & Darmanto, 2020). Employees can be empowered by being transferred from jobs where they typically merely follow instructions to jobs where they have opportunities for greater responsibility and improved performance. The idea of psychological empowerment which emphasises authority and autonomy has been found to be one of the antecedents of organisational commitment (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1999).

Despite the observed benefits of employees' empowerment, some managers erroneously believe that it undermines their power and authority in the workplace. For instance, Humborstad and Perry (2011) reported that cultures have an impact on how people embrace empowerment, particularly in a nation with strong leaders like China. Nevertheless, their study found that Chinese workers accept empowering management approaches in order to show their commitment to their organisation.

A body of research evidence indicates that empowerment could be used as a human resource management strategy to improve employees' commitment (Zaraket et al., 2018). Kim et al. (2012) found that hotel employees who feel empowered are more committed to their organisation and think that the leadership is reliable. Similar findings were reported by Chen and Chen (2008) who revealed that various sub-dimensions of empowerment in Taiwan state-owned enterprises were positively related to employees' commitment. Empowerment was found to influence commitment in an investigation of three distinct service organisations in Singapore. The authors found that employees' empowerment has a significant impact on all three levels of organisational commitment (Rawat, 2011). A study by Kyei-Frimpong et al. (2023) that investigated employees' empowerment and organisational commitment among employees of star-rated hotels in Ghana showed that employees' empowerment significantly predicted both affective and continuance commitment.

Kariuki and Kiambati (2017) in their study on empowerment, organisational commitment, organisation citizenship behaviour and firms' performance using a manufacturing firm in Kenya, revealed that employees that reported high empowerment demonstrated significantly higher commitment than their counterparts with low level of empowerment.

Employees are found to have a sense of belonging when they are involved in decisions about new innovations and adjustments to working procedures, which in turn affects their commitment to their organisation. For instance, a study by Petra (2011) showed that managers who take part in budget decisions typically have high levels of organisational commitment.

Seibert et al. (2011) reported that internal motivation and commitment have a close relationship. According to them, psychological empowerment creates a connection between an employee's own wants and ideals and the demands of the workplace, evoking corporate dedication. They

concluded that an employee's commitment to an organisation is likely to rise if they feel empowered, competent, and influential.

Mollamohammadrafie (2019) found that psychological empowerment has a significant and positive influence on the affective commitment of workers. The argument is that whenever an organisation actively involves its staff in the formulation, development, and execution of its vision, purpose, targets, and policies, employees feel a sense of belonging to the company, which makes them feel secure, and in turn, makes them feel more accountable for the outcomes of organisational operations, and work harder than ever to achieve the objectives of the organisation.

Organizational trust and employees' commitment

Trust in the organisation is the relationship that develops between an organisation and its workforce based on messages about expectations from management and how employees view their managers. Trust encourages open communication, acceptance of criticism, and open debate to enhance work (Edmondson, 1999). Therefore, management's first objective should be to create an organisational culture based on trust.

Organisational trust and its relationship with employees' commitment and other work outcomes is becoming an area of attraction to researchers. This interest may be due to its profound impact on human existence, relationships, cooperation, and organisation (Cook, 2001; Mollering, et al., 2004). According to Baird et al. (2019), the level of organisational trust determines the makeup of the components that influence it, including organisational structure, job design, interactions, staff performance, dedication, and organisational attitudes among employees. Therefore, commitment and trust are crucial components in such settings. High organisational commitment among administrative staff enables them to remain employed by the company and allows them to collaborate to accomplish shared goals. According to Mirza and Redzuan (2012), organisational trust has a substantial positive correlation with commitment to the organisation. Schoorman, Mayer, and Davis (2007) found that organisational trust has a significant impact on emotional commitment. Sadq et al. (2020) stated that no firm can function without trust among its managers and employees, nor can it ignore the crucial role that trust plays in economic transactions.

The studies in this research area have consistently maintained that employees' empowerment, organisational trust have positive relationship with employees' commitment. However, majority of these studies are based on Euro-American data; only a few of these studies are done in African, and very little in Nigeria. It is on this basis that this research work focused on finding out the influence of employees' empowerment and organisational trust on employees' commitment using some selected organisations in Lagos, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework is based upon Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958 & Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory holds that motivated employees are more likely to deliver high levels of commitment in return because they have confidence in both their work and their own abilities. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers a useful perspective for comprehending the connections among employees' commitment, organisational trust, and empowerment in the workplace. According to SET, the foundation of social interactions—including those that take place in work environments—is mutual benefit and reciprocity. When workers are given the freedom to make their own decisions (empowerment), they see this as a good type of compensation for their abilities, commitment, and efforts. This implies that employees who feel empowered are more likely to show that they care about the organisation by showing greater commitment. They approach their work with a sense of accountability and devotion, believing it is their moral duty to return the favor (reciprocity) of empowerment and trust.

Perceived dependability and honesty of the employer are reflected in the organisation's trust. Employees are more likely to respond positively through affective commitment when they have trust in the company and its executives. Employees' commitment to the objectives and values of the company is strengthened when there is an emotional connection created by trust, which makes them feel valued and respected.

With social exchange theory therefore, employees' commitment can be seen as a reciprocal conduct that emerges from the exchange within the relationships between the employer, through empowerment and trust, and the employee through commitment, regardless of whether it is affective, normative, or continuous. By recognising the reciprocity that underlies these interactions, organisations can develop a mutually beneficial relationship between employees

and the organisation through strategic human resource policies that promote trust and empower their employees.

Research Hypotheses

H$_1$ There is a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment to their organisation

H$_2$ A significant positive relationship exists between organisational trust and employees' commitment to their organisation

Method

Participants

The study was carried out in a number of public and private organisations in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. The organisations were in various sectors (e.g. communication, financial, advertising, government ministries and agencies, energy, and manufacturing). Data were collected from 161employees using convenient sampling technique. The demographics of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Design
The study made use of correlation research design.

Instruments

The following instruments were used to collect data for the study:

1. **Bio-data.** It was developed by the researcher to obtain information on demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender, age, type of organisation and religion.
2. **Empowerment Questionnaire (**Spreitzer, 1995**).** The questionnaire is theory-based and consists of twelve items that measure psychological empowerment on a 7-point Likert rating scale that ranges from very strongly agree to very strongly disagree. The scale has reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficient) of 0.70 (Spreitzer, 1995). Dwyer (2001) found an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92
3. **Organisational Trust Inventory (**Nyhan and Marlowe, 1997**).** It consists of 12 items that measures two dimensions of organisational trust which are called trust in supervisor, and

trust in organisation. The developers reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of .79. Prasanthi, et al (2021) got Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.9, which indicates that the instrument is reliable. Umoren (2020) tested the reliability of Organizational Trust Inventory in a study that used 629 (409 men and 220 women) in Akwa Ibom state. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .84 was reported.

4. **Employee Commitment Scale** (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It assesses three types of employee commitment to an organisation based on the Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997). There are eight items for each of the three commitment scales: ACS, NCS, and CCS. In a study by Mugizi et al. (2016) to establish the validity and reliability of Allen and Meyer's (1990), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validities of the multi-item constructs of EC, (AC, CC and NC), while Cronbach alpha method was used to test their reliabilities. CFA showed that the items on each of the three constructs (AC, CC and NC) were reduced to one factor, where the respective factors had eigenvalues of 4.575, 3.188 and 2.674. These eigenvalues exceeded 1.00, as such, the corresponding factors were significant (Lance, Butts & Michels, 2006). All the respective items also loaded highly on the corresponding factor – that is, above 0.5 (Costello & Osborne, 2005), indicating that the respective items were valid measures of the corresponding construct of EC. Regarding reliability, all the three has Cronbach alphas of between 0.74 and 0.91. The scores on the three dimensions of the scale can be added to form overall employees' commitment. The higher the score, the more committed an employee is (Muda and Fook, 2020)

Data Analyses:

The data collected was analysed with Pearson-Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Linear Regression. The PPMC was used to examine the relationship between employee empowerment and employee commitment, and between organisational trust and employee commitment. Linear Regression was thereafter used to test the level of variance in employee commitment explained by employee empowerment and organisational trust.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Frequency distribution of the participants by various categories

Category		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	101	62.7
	Female	60	37.3
Age	20 – 30 years	53	32.9
	31 – 40 years	81	50.3
	41 – 50 years	22	13.7
	51years and above	5	3.1
Sector	Public	51	31.7
	Private	110	68.3
Years on the job	1 – 10yrs	142	88.2
	11 – 20yrs	13	8.1
	21 – 30yrs	4	2.5
	31yrs and above	2	1.2
Highest Educational Qualification	High School	7	4.3
	NCE	8	5.0
	OND/HND	31	19.3
	B.Sc	92	57.1
	M.Sc/MBA	20	12.4
	PhD	3	1.9

Table 1 presents the distribution of participants by different categories: Gender, age, work sector, years on the job, and highest educational qualification. Out of the 161 respondents, 101(62.7%) were male while 60(37.5%) were female. In terms of age, 53 respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30 years, 81 respondents were between the ages of 31 and 40 years, 22 respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50 years, and just few, that is 5 respondents were 51 years and above. Out of the 161 respondents, 51(31.7%) were from the public sector, while a larger portion, that is 110(68.3%) were from the private sector. Majority of the respondents had spent

between 1 to 10 years in their workplace, that is 142 respondents out of the total 161 respondents, while 2 respondents (1.2%) had spent 31 years and above in their organization. In terms of highest educational qualification, majority of the respondents were B.Sc. degree holders, that is 92(57.1%) out of the total 161 participants, while the number PhD holders were 3 out of the total 161 respondents.

Table 2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Matrix of all variables

	Employee Empowerment	Organizational Trust	Employee Commitment	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Employee Empowerment	1					
Organizational Trust	.728**	1				
Employee Commitment	.637**	.631**	1			
Affective Commitment	.443**	.506**	.759**	1		
Continuance Commitment	.465**	.454**	.747**	.280**	1	
Normative Commitment	.590**	.530**	.852**	.554**	.447**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the result of correlation matrix of all the variables tested in the study. The table reveals that there exists a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and organisational trust (r = .728, p<.01). The result further shows a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and overall employees' commitment (r = .637, p<.01) as well as between empowerment and the three dimensions of employees' commitment viz: a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and affective commitment(r = .443, p<.01); a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and continuance commitment (r = .465, p<.01); and a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and normative commitment (r = .590, p<.01).

The result in table 2 further shows that a significant positive relationship exists between organisational trust and overall employees' commitment (r = .631, p<.01). As well as between

organisational trust and the three dimensions of employees' commitment viz: There is a significant positive relationship between organisational trust and affective commitment (r = .506, p<.01), a significant positive relationship between organisation trust and continuance commitment (r = .454, p<.01), and a significant positive relationship between organisation trust and normative commitment (r = .530, p<.01).

In addition, the result in table 2 reveals that each of the dimensions of commitment is positively related to overall employees' commitment (affective commitment and employees' commitment (r = .759, p<.01); continuance commitment and employee commitment (r = .747, p<.01); and normative commitment and employee commitment (r = .852, p<.01). The three dimensions of employees' commitment are also positively inter-related (affective commitment and continuance commitment (r = .280, p<.01); affective commitment and normative commitment (r = .554, p<.01); and continuance commitment and normative commitment (r = .447, p<.01).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: Hypothesis one which states that there is a significant positive relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment was tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation result on the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment to their organisation.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2
Employees' Empowerment	161	5.40	1.39	1.00	
Employees' Commitment	161	4.39	1.10	.637[**]	1.00

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation result of the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment to their organisation. The analysis showed a statistically significant positive relation between employees' empowerment and

employees' commitment (r =.637**, p < .01). This shows that as employees' empowerment increases, employees' commitment also increases. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Since the positive relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment above is quite strong (r = .637), it is important to find out the level of variance of the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable through regression analysis. The result of the regression analysis is given below:

Table 4

Summary of Regression analysis result of the variance in employees' commitment explained by employees' empowerment.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	P
1	.63ª	.406	.402	108.543	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Empowerment
b. Dependent: Employees' Commitment

The regression analysis result table 4 shows that employees' empowerment predicted employees' commitment $R2$ = .406, F (1, 159 = 108.5, p<.01). The R Square of .406 shows that 40.6% of the variance in employees' commitment is attributable to employees' empowerment.

Hypothesis Two: Hypothesis two which states that there is a significant positive relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment was tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation.

Table 5

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation result on the relationship between organizational trust and employee commitment.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2
Organizational Trust	161	3.7417	.86398	1.00	
Employee Commitment	161	4.3922	1.10765	.631**	1.00

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation result of the relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment to their organisation. The analysis above showed a statistically significant positive relation between organisational trust and employees' commitment (r =.631, p < .01). This shows that as organisational trust increases, employees' commitment also increases. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Since the positive relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment above is quite strong (r = .631), it is important to find out the level of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable through regression analysis. The result of the regression analysis is given in Table 6

Table 6

Summary of Regression analysis result of the variance in employee commitment explained by organizational trust.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	P
1	.63[a]	.396	.394	105.109	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational trust
b. Dependent: Employees' commitment

The regression analysis result in Table 6 shows that organisational trust predicted employees' commitment $R2 = .396$, F (1, 159 = 105.1, p<.01)). The R Square of .396 shows that 39.6% of the variance in employees' commitment is explained by organisational trust.

Discussion of Findings

The objectives of the study were to investigate the relationship between employees' empowerment and employees' commitment, the relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment. The following are the findings of this study:
  i.   The results indicate that employees' empowerment and employees' commitment have a significant positive correlation (r = .63, p<.01). The regression analysis revealed that

40.2% of the variance in employees' commitment is attributed to employees' empowerment (Adjusted R square = .042, p<.05). Hypothesis I is therefore accepted.

ii. The study found that organisational trust and employees' commitment has a significant positive correlation (r = .63, p<.01). The regression analysis revealed that 39.4% of the variance in employees' commitment is attributed to organisational trust (Adjusted R square = .39, p<.05). Hypothesis II is therefore accepted.

The findings that a significant positive relationship exists between employees' empowerment and commitment, which confirmed hypothesis one is supported by Argyris (1998) and Conger and Kanungo (1988). According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), delegating authority to subordinates fosters commitment and improves both individual and organisational commitment. Argyris (1998) found that employees' empowerment and internal commitment are strongly interconnected and therefore recommended that managers who want to win over their staff's commitment must empower their staff. When employees feel their contributions are valued and that they have control over their work, they are more likely to align their personal objectives with those of the organisation, fostering commitment. Kariuki and Kiambati (2017) in their study in Kenya found that employees who are empowered are significantly more commitment to their organisation compared to their counterparts who are not empowered.

The findings of this study resonate with Mollamohammadrafie (2019) which revealed that psychological empowerment has a significant and positive influence on the affective commitment of workers. In other words, when the level of employees' empowerment is high, there will be a high level of employees' commitment to their work and the organisation. But when employees are not empowered, they may not feel motivated to give their best to the organisation.

The finding of this study is corroborated by the research work of Kyei-Frimpong et al. (2023) which found that employee empowerment causes more significant difference in normative commitment than in affective commitment, and continuance commitment. They explained that employees that are highly empowered have a higher sense of obligation or duty (normative) to remain with their organisation than just getting emotionally attached to the organisation, or staying just because of the personal cost of leaving the organisation. Meanwhile, Ali et al. (2020) posits that employees' empowerment has almost the same strong positive relationship with

normative commitment and continuance commitment, but a weak relationship with affective commitment. To them, normative commitment is more genuine and healthier for organisation than affective and continuance commitment, largely because in normative commitment, employees feel that they owe their organisation their commitment because of what the organisation has done for them. Such a sense of moral obligation or duty can result in much more selfless and lasting commitment than just emotional attachment that can fizzle with time, or the continuance commitment that only awaits a better opportunity.

A further explanation and justification for the findings of this study can be glimpsed from the reasoning of Kurniawan et al. (2020) that whenever an organisation actively incorporates the contributions of its staff in the formulation, development, and execution of its vision, purpose, targets, and policies, the employees feel a sense of belonging to the company, making them feel secure, which in turn make them feel more accountable for the outcomes of their operations, and make them work harder to achieve their organisational goals. This thinking is further supported by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) which posits that employees feel that they have a beneficial exchange relationship with their company and become more devoted when they feel that their company values their work and rewards them appropriately. Similarly, Boxall and Macky's (2009) found that motivated employees are more committed to their employers, and that empowerment is directly tied to decentralisation in decision-making, which increases the flexibility offered to employees over the control of their jobs, thereby triggering commitment from them. Employees always feel valued when involved in the decision-making process, and experience a feeling of some form of ownership (Janet, 2008).

The significant positive relationship between organisation trust and employees' commitment found in this study, which confirmed hypothesis two, is supported by the research work of Kurniawan et al (2020) which reported that organisational trust is a key factor in building employees' commitment. They noted that staff members tend to be more committed to their organisations when they are convinced that the company's policies will benefit them personally. Yilmaz (2008) found that 32% of the variance in organisational commitment, 24% in affective commitment, and 28% in continuance commitment were found to be explained by organisational trust. However, Tanner's (2007) found that organisational trust accounts for 18% of total variance in normative and 36% of affective commitment, while Lewicka (2020) showed that the

continuance commitment has the highest value of the strength of the relationship with organisational trust, followed by normative commitment and affective commitment. These findings have demonstrated that the degree of influence of organisational trust on the various types of employees' commitment differs from one person to another. To some, it will have the largest influence on their normative commitment, while to others continuance or affective commitment respectively. So, the most important thing is the presence of a high level of trust as it makes the difference in the commitment of employees.

The observed significant relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment in this study is also in consonance with Bakiev (2013) who found that police officers at the KNP who have higher levels of interpersonal trust are more committed to their organisation and job and vice versa. The findings of this study also align with the social exchange theory, which argues that trust and commitment are resources that are exchanged in relationships, including those within organisations. Accordingly, in the workplace, employees grow their trust when they feel that they receive treatment fairly and with dignity, and in exchange for this trust, they commit to the organisation and its objectives. Dursun (2015) explains that organisational support and trust are the most substantial factors affecting employees' commitment to their organisations. In other words, if the employees lack trust in their co-workers, superiors and organisation as a whole, their commitment level is most likely to be low.

Further explanation for the findings of this study regarding the significant relationship between organisational trust and commitment can be found in the transactional model of trust in which employees' impression of the organisation's dependability, integrity, and goodness determine the likelihood that they will trust the organisation and, as a result, stay committed to it (Reina & Reina, 2006). The implication of the findings is that when the level of trust the employees have for their organisation is low, their commitment to the organisation's goals and objectives will also be low, but when their level of trust is high, their commitment to their organisations will be high with the attendant improvement in performance.

The above discussion based on the findings of this study and previous findings including the theoretical postulations concludes that both employees' empowerment and organisational trust have a significant positive relationship with employees' commitment.

There are a few limitations to this study. One of such limitations is the sample size. Future studies should use a larger sample size in order to enhance external validity of its findings. There is also the challenge of common method bias, because both the independent and dependent variables are measured using similar responses and within a survey. This could affect the reliability and validity of findings. However, the study ensured that the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and they were informed that there were no correct answers or opinion in their responses to the items on the scale. But that their honest opinion represented the best answer. These efforts in this direction would have reduced the bias considerably. Despite these limitations, the study however has provided valuable insights into the relationship that exists between employees empowerment and commitment and between organisational trust and employees' commitment. The study demonstrated that employees' empowerment and organisation trust are significant factors that promote employees' commitment to their work and to their organisation.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research on employees' empowerment, organisational trust and employees' commitment should consider mediating and moderating factors that might have an impact on the relationship between employees' empowerment and organisational trust with employees' commitment. Factors such as leadership styles, communication patterns, or corporate culture could be considered.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study established that empowered employees, and those who have trust in their organisation are more likely to display a high level of commitment to their organisation. The finding that there is a positive correlation between employees empowerment and commitment emphasises how important it is to give employees the freedom, tools, and chances they require to succeed in their jobs. Empowerment increases employees' sense of ownership and responsibility while also fostering a strong commitment to the goals and missions of the organisation. People get emotionally committed to the success of a company when they are given the liberty to take initiative, offer their special skills, and make decisions.

The study found a positive relationship between organisational trust and employees' commitment. This finding demonstrated the importance of organisational trust as a motivating factor for increased employees' commitment at work. Positive relationships are built on trust. Employees will be more inclined to put in their all when they trust their organisation, its leaders, and their co-workers. Employees would feel a sense of loyalty and belonging when there is trust in the workplace, and this promotes an atmosphere of open communication, teamwork, and respect.

The research findings provide useful practical information for organisations, and human resource specialists. Human resource activities should focus on plans and policies that would encourage employees' empowerment, trust, and commitment. This can be achieved through training programmes, promotion of collaborative decision-making, and praising of staff members' accomplishments. Building trust requires open communication, justice, and consistency in organisational procedures, as well as encouraging a supportive and inclusive work environment.

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INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS AND JOB FRUSTRATION ON ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR AMONG TEACHERS FROM SELECTED SCHOOLS IN LAGOS METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of perceived organisational politics and job frustration on organisational citizenship behaviour among teachers in selected schools in Lagos state, Nigeria. A total of three hundred and eighty (380) secondary school teachers comprising one hundred and seventy seven (177) males and two hundred and three (203) females from public and private schools in Lagos state were selected, using a non-probability purposive sampling. A battery of standardised psychological tests consisting of the Perception of Politics Scale, Frustration at Work Scale and Organisational Citizenship Behavior Scale (OCBS) was administered to collect data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was utilised to carry out analysis. Regression analysis revealed that perceived organisational politics and job frustration jointly predicted 1.0% variance in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour of the participants; it was also revealed that public school teachers reported lower levels of OCB than private school teachers, female teachers reported more OCB than male teachers, while younger teachers reported more OCB than older teachers. It also revealed no statistically significant difference between the OCB displayed by either single or married teachers. It was recommended that schools should actively work towards providing a transparent fair and supportive school environment so as to promote teacher's Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB).

Keywords: Perceived organizational politics, job frustration, organizational citizenship behaviour

Introduction

Employees in an organisation have a job description which consists of list of roles they are expected to carry out on the job. There are also specific behaviour that an employee must exhibit when working for an organisation in order to uphold the laws and regulations of the organisation; these include being punctual, dressing appropriately and many more. However, some employees exhibit behaviour that are beyond the call of duty which include volunteering for additional tasks, helping colleagues complete their tasks, voluntarily taking part in organisational initiatives, volunteering for leadership positions, giving advice and comments, exhibiting enthusiasm for the organisation and its goals, and presenting proactive solutions to organisational difficulties (Organ, 1983). Katz & Kahn (1966) noted that certain employees' behaviour and gestures "lubricate the social machinery of an organisation" and are necessary for effective organisational functioning. These behaviours are termed "organisational citizenship behavior (OCB)" (Organ, 1983).

OCB is defined as "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organisation" (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). According to Hunt (2002), OCBs are the personal behaviour that increases organisational performance, and are based on individual willingness. Katz & Kahn (1966) believe employers appreciate OCB more because it is not a required behaviour, yet makes their roles in an organisation even easier. Workers should not be coerced into performing or displaying OCB (Tamper & Shanker, 2014). Organ (1997) stated that there are no formal rewards for displaying OCB, but the supervisors routinely acknowledge and commend the subordinates' OCB both directly and indirectly through preferential treatment, performance ratings, promotions, etc. It is important to note that employees engage in this extra-role behaviour with intent to foster successful and seamless operations which enhances productivity in an organisation.

Olowookere & Adejuwon (2015) defined OCB in the Nigerian setting as comprising generalised compliance and extra role behaviour (ERB) free of all types of sanctions and authorisations. This is based on the stipulation that many Nigerian employees are perceived as lazy and unambitious, and can only become good citizens, not only when they perform extra role

behaviours but also when they observe voluntary compliance with organisational rules, procedures, and standards without being monitored or coerced.

The first five dimensions of OCB as suggested by Organ (1988) are; Altruism, Courtesy, Sportsmanship, Conscientiousness, and Civic Virtue. Altruism includes voluntary behaviour in which an employee assists a colleague who is experiencing specific difficulties to perform a work under peculiar conditions (Smith, Organ, &Near, 1983). Conscientiousness includes behaviour such as regular attendance, punctuality, diligence, etc. which is individual internalisation and acceptance to obey the rules and regulations of an organisation, even when they are not being observed (organ, 1988). It demonstrates adherence to institutionalised standards   (Smith et al., 1983).

Civic virtue is characterised by positive participation in organisational work processes, such as attending meetings and talking with co-workers about organisational challenges on personal time, reading intra-office mail, voting, and speaking up (Organ, 1988). Behaviour that avoids conflicts between persons by respecting the perspectives of co-workers is referred to as Courtesy. They include giving prior notification of meetings and events, giving reminders, communicating appropriate information that aids in problem prevention and facilitates constructive use of time (Prakoso, 2021). Sportsmanship include behaviour such as enduring uncomfortable working conditions without complaining, having a positive attitude in challenging situations, and being prepared to put one's own interests aside for the sake of the group (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Olowookere & Adejuwon (2015) proposed a three-dimensional model of OCB, which includes dimensions such as interpersonal relationship, dutifulness, and organisational involvement which will serve as a valid measure of organisational citizenship behaviour in the Nigerian context, having duly emphasised generalised compliance and the extra role behaviours.

OCB among Teachers

Since teaching is one of the most common professions in the world, the issue of OCB in the context of education is significant, even if it has received little attention from researchers. School performance is fundamentally dependent on teachers who are dedicated to school goals and values (Somech & Ron, 2007).   According to Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem, & Nkama (2013),

the achievement of the teaching-learning goal is not solely the responsibility of the principal at the secondary school level; rather, teachers are required to make use of their expertise when preparing and planning lessons, dealing with their class, evaluating the students and, occasionally, dealing with some of the resulting disciplinary issues among the students.

The Nigerian education system faces several challenges, including limited resources, workload and political interference, a major challenge being the qualification and professionalism of teachers. However, research has found that performing core job duties successfully is required but insufficient for teachers to be effective, instead, teacher OCBs provide extra value for students and schools (Bogler & Somech, 2004). This is because schools are unable to foresee the whole range of behaviour required for goal achievement through explicitly stated in-role job descriptions (George & Brief, 1992). Hence, other extra-role behaviour should be considered. These behaviours include mentoring new teachers, participating in professional development opportunities, involvement in school activities, and supporting initiatives for school improvement, suggesting improvements to pedagogical issues, or praising the institution to outsiders (Penner, Midili, & Kegelmeyer, 1997).

Hence, the quality of education in Nigeria can be improved with dedicated teachers who volunteer to perform beyond normal standard expectations (Ogunleye et al., 2014). OCB among teachers has been linked to improved job performance, reduced absenteeism, and increased job satisfaction (Nagar, 2012). Teachers who display OCB in the classroom are more likely to foster a supportive learning environment and contribute to the institution's overall performance (Lei, Hwang, & Chen, 2018),

The importance of examining the influence of Perceived Organisational Politics and Job Frustration on OCB of teachers in Nigeria prompted the need to carry out this research in order to provide insights into how teachers' perceptions of politics in the school system and frustration affect their willingness to engage in OCB. This could inform organisational policies and practices aimed at improving teacher and student performance and satisfaction.

Perceived Organisational Politics

Organisational politics is a social influence process in which conduct is purposefully structured to enhance short or long term self-interest, at the expense of others' interests (Ferris, Fedor, Chachere, & Pondy, 1989). Perceived Organisational Politics (POP) refers to an individual's subjective interpretation of events in the work environment which include acting selfishly to advance personal goals, advantages, and rewards at the expense of others, and occasionally at the expense of the business as a whole (Ferris, Harrell-Cook, and Dulebohn, 2000). POP is specifically the extent to which workers think that decisions, resource allocation, and other workplace results are determined by political reasons such as personal connections, influence, or favouritism rather than objective performance standards (Arogundade, Arogundade & Gbabijo, 2016)

The subjective nature of POP makes evaluation different from one employee to another. People perceive politics in accordance with their observations or experiences within their workplace (Van, Bavel& Pereira, 2018). Employees who have been negatively impacted by POP define it as behaviour that rejects the organisation's corporate goals or the worries of workers, but is manipulative, selfish and seeks to achieve self-serving goals or the goals of a chosen few (Sultan, Kanwal & Gul, 2015). However, it is positively viewed by those whose positions have profited through organisational politics.

Kacmar and Ferris (1991) originally proposed five dimensions to measure organisational politics which were eventually reviewed into a three-factor model: Pay and promotion policies (PPP), go-along-to-get-ahead (GATGA), and general political behavior (GPB). Pay and promotion policies (PPP) implies that the reward structure of the organisation is determined by whether the increase in pay or employee promotions is based on merit or other political reasons. Go-along-to-get-ahead (GATGA) represents those employees who go with the flow, avoid controversy, and do not challenge others who try to influence them. Their 'no reaction' attitude is advantageous for those who seek to achieve self-interest in the political environment (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Thus, POP is connected to decrease in job satisfaction, job stress, job performance, and turnover intentions (Khan, Kaewsaeng-on, Zia, Ahmed and Khan, 2020). .

Workplace Frustration

Frustration occurs when an impediment interferes with or prevents the achievement of a goal (Lazar, Jones, & Shneiderman, 2006). Sigmund Freud initially defined frustration as both external limitations to goal achievement and internal constraints to fulfillment (Freud, 1921). Frustration manifests as an angry outburst, a negative emotional state that may cause an increase in psychological arousal, or result in a defensive response from the employee (Ogungbamila, 2013)

Leonard et al., (2020) listed unfavourable working conditions, a bad quality of life at work, a lack of career advancement prospects, partisanship and organisational politics as constraints that result in workplace frustration, while Spector (1978) identified these responses to organisational frustration as an emotional response of anger and increased physiological arousal, aggression, and withdrawal.

Kresh and Crutchfield (1948) discussed the adaptive and maladaptive behavioural implications of frustration. When a worker is frustrated, they frequently engage in maladaptive behaviors that are detrimental to both the individual and the organisation, such as character assassination, the spread of unfavourable rumours, acting silently and coldly toward others, prefacing of company property, wasting workplace resources, and sabotage (Foran, 200). For both the company and the employee, frustration can spiral out of control and result in low productivity, disengagement, burnout, aggressive conduct, and a high turnover rate.

This study on the influence of Perceived Organisational Politics and Job frustration on OCB of public and private school teachers in Lagos State is essential for several reasons.
Firstly, understanding the relationship between these constructs can help identify the factors that influence teacher attitudes and behaviours, which can ultimately impact student outcomes. Secondly, comparing the levels of OCB between public and private school teachers can provide insight into the differences in work conditions and how they impact employee attitudes and behaviours. It can reveal why teachers migrate from one sector to another. Also, this research will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field. Finally, the findings of this study can inform interventions aimed at

promoting positive work attitudes and behaviours among teachers in Nigeria, which can ultimately enhance the quality of education and contribute to national development.

Literature Review

Perceived organisational politics and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Asamani, Dramanu, and Ofosu-Amah (2020), found that perceive workplace politics is a key factor observed to inhibit organisational growth by increasing the likelihood of unfavourable work attitudes and behaviour. Ferris et al. (1996) found that employees who perceived high levels of POP engaged in less OCB than those who perceived low levels of POP.

Subongkod & Lalaeng (2021) explored the relationship between Organisational Politics (OP) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (organisational citizenship behaviour for organisation (OCBO) and organisational citizenship behaviour for individuals (OCB-I) by gathering data from 290 employees working in manufacturing company in Chonburi province through the use of a survey. Results revealed that OP has a negative relationship with OCB-O and OCB-I. That is, manufacturing company employees working in an environment rife with OP, but who prefer the security of manufacturing company, will respond to such an environment by displaying apathy towards their work and neglecting their jobs, which negatively impacts their behaviour (OCB-O and OCB-I). Ahmad (2010) also in a sample of 608 employees of 41 private organisations found POP as significant negative predictor of organisational commitment, job performance and OCB.

Another study by Ladebo (2006) provides an empirical assessment of the effects of job ambiguity on perceptions of organisational politics (POP) and the moderating role of an employee's felt obligation on the relationships between POP and job distress and organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB), using surveys from 229 extension personnel in two Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs) in Southwestern Nigeria. POP was negatively related to felt obligation and OCB, and positively associated with job distress. The relationship between POP and OCB was stronger when employees reported lower rather than higher levels of felt obligation toward the organisation. Atta and Khan (2016) carried out a study to examine the impact of perceived organisational politics (POP) on organisational

citizenship behaviour (OCB), affective commitment (AC), and job involvement (JI) using a convenient sample of 494 teachers public sector universities of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan in the study. It was revealed that POP and its constructs that included general political behavior (GPB), go-along-to-get-ahead (GATGA), and pay-and-promotions policies (PPP) predicted OCB negatively.

Frustration and organisational citizenship behaviour

There is limited literature on the influence of job frustration on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). However, a study by Karamchandani & Dubule (2020) investigated the relationship between frustration and employee attitude in the IT industry. They explored the interaction of the variables for both male and female employees and how frustration finds an outlet in anger which may lead to aggression, and hypothesised the influence of the same on employee attitude. Analyses of data collected from a sample of 390 respondents confirmed that frustration significantly and negatively predicted attitude towards management of the employees. Although, no significant difference was found in the attitude of the two sexes due to frustration at the workplace.

Storms & Spector (1987) examined the influence of organisational frustration and locus of control on behavioural reactions. Data was collected using a questionnaire from 160 employees from all levels in a community mental health facility, and the analysed results revealed that organisational frustration positively related to counterproductive workplace behaviour such as interpersonal aggression, sabotage and withdrawal. This suggests that frustration at work negatively influences employee OCB.

Types of Schools and OCB.

Glińska-Neweś & Szostek (2018) in a study to verify the hypothesis that employees of for-profit private organisations engage in OCBs more frequently than employees of the public sector collected the responses of 280 employees of the private sector, and 244 employees of local government units. They found that employees of the public sector organisations perform OCB more frequently than employees of the private sector.

Also, Grego-Planer (2019) aimed to identify and assess the level of correlation between individual dimensions of organisational commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviours in public and private organisations in Poland. They carried out a quantitative study using a sample of 323 employees and found that there were similar frequencies of Organisational Citizenship Behaviours in the public and private sectors. However, in public institutions, OCBs in the interpersonal dimension are more frequent, while in private institutions, they occur more commonly in the organisational dimension.

Furthermore, Garg & Rastogi (2006) carried out a study to assess the significant differences in the climate profile and organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) of teachers working in public and private schools of India. The sample consisted of 100 teachers out of which 50 teachers were from public school, and 50 teachers from private schools. The findings indicated significant differences in the climate profile of public and private schools. Also, the results indicated that teachers working in public schools exhibited higher levels of OCBs in comparison to private schools. And this is so because employees are facilitated with free working styles in public schools.

It is hypothesised that perceived organisational politics and job frustration will jointly predict variance in organisational citizenship behaviour among teachers; there will be a significant inverse relationship between perceived organisational politics and teacher's organisational citizenship behavioir; and there will be a significantly inverse relationship between job frustration and teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, public school teachers will report significantly lower levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than their private school counterparts. Male teachers are hypothesised to report significantly higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour compared to their female counterparts; while younger teachers will report significantly higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than older teachers. Teachers who are married will report significantly higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than teachers who are single.

Method

A cross-sectional research design was adopted, and a battery of psychological tests consisting of Perceived Organisational Politics Scale, Job Frustration Scale developed, and Organisational Citizenship Behaviours Scale (OCBS) was administered individually to secondary school teachers selected through non-random purposive sampling. A total of three hundred and eighty (380) teachers comprising one hundred and seventy seven (177) male and two hundred and three (203) female teachers from private and public schools in Lagos State were selected for the study. The ages of participants ranged from young (20-39) and old (40 & above) All the ethical requirements for conducting research were observed: permission was duly obtained from the head teacher of all schools; participants willingly and voluntarily participated, and they were not compelled or forced to completing the psychological tests. The tests were completed in the familiar atmosphere after telling them the purpose of the study.

Measures

Biodata - this consisted of the demographic variables (gender, age, marital status and type of school). Sex was grouped into: male or female, marital status presented two options: single or married, while the type of school consisted of private or public school. The Perceptions of Organisational Politics Scale (POPS) developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991), assesses employee perceptions of the extent to which a job setting is political in nature, including politics in the organisation, behaviour of supervisors, and actions of co-workers. Twelve items are used in the measure to describe general political behaviour, political behaviour to "get ahead," and ambiguity in pay and promotion policies and rules. The scale has a Co-efficient alpha values ranged from .87 to .91 (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Responses are obtained and scored using a 5-point Likert-type rating scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neither agree nor disagree, 4 – Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree.

Job Frustration Scale developed by Peters, O'Connor, and Rudolf (1980), uses three items to assess the extent to which employees find their job frustrating. It possesses a Coefficient alpha values ranging from .67 to .84 . Responses are obtained on a 7-point Likert-type scale where 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 -Disagree, 3-Somewhat Disagree 4- Neither Agree nor Disagree5-somewhat Agree 6- Agree 7-Strongly Agree.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviours Scale (OCBS) developed by Olowookere and Adejuwon (2015) contains thirty (30) items bordering on three dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviour: *Interpersonal Relationship* IR), *Dutifulness* (D) and *Organisational Involvement* (Ol). The Cronbach's alpha of the three dimensions range within .706 to .728.

RESULTS

The data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 27 to provide descriptive and inferential statistics. The stated hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis, Pearson Correlation and Independent T-test.

Demography Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1: Data Presentation on Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Socio-Demographic variables	F (%)
Age group	
(20-39) years	135 (35.5)
40 years and above	245 (64.5)
Sex	
Male	177 (46.6)
Female	203 (53.4)
Marital status	
Single	187(49.2)
Married	193 (50.8)
Type of school	
Public school	142 (37.4)
Private school	238 (62.6)

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of participants used for the study. Participants ages were 20 - 39 years 135 (35.5%), and 40 years and above 245 (64.5%). Sex of participants were male 177 (46.6%) and Female 203 (53.4%). Marital Status of participants were Single 187 (49.2%) and Married 193 (50.8%). Type of School of participants were Private School 238 (62.6%) and Public School 142 (37.4%).

Table 2: Multiple regression results for perceived organisational politics and job frustration on organisational citizenship behaviour,

Variable	B	T	Sig	R	R2	Fcal	Pv
Constant	72.76	19.7097	.000	.098[a]	.010	1.822	<.05
Job Frustration	-.286	-1.732	.084				
Perceptions of Organisational politics	.100	1.227	.220				

Table 2 revealed that perceived organisational politics did not independently predict organisational citizenship behaviour given the beta contribution 0f 0.1, while job frustration independently predicted organisational citizenship behaviour given the Beta -.286. Furthermore, perceived organisational politics and job frustration jointly accounted for only 1.0% variance in organisational citizenship behaviour (R square =.01). Hence, the hypothesis which stated that perceived organisational politics and job frustration will significantly predict variance in organisational citizenship behaviour among teachers was rejected.

Table 3: Pearson Correlations showing relationship between perceived organisational politics and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Variables		Mean	SD	1	2
1	Perceived Organisational Politics	43.99	8.35	1	
2	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	73.59	12.79	.041	1

Table 3 revealed that perceived organisational politics and teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour are positively related (r = .041, p<.05). Thus, the hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant negative relationship between perceived organisational politics and teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour was rejected.

Table 4: Pearson Correlations showing relationship between job frustration and teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour.

Variables		Mean	S,D	1	2
1	Job Frustration	12.46	4.11	1	
	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	73.59	12.79	-.075	1

Table 4 revealed that job frustration and teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour are negatively correlated (r = -.075, p>0.05). Thus, the hypothesis which stated that there will be a negative relationship between job frustration and teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour was accepted.

Table 5: Independent T-test showing the difference in OCB displayed by public and private school teachers.

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	Tcal	Df	pv
Private School	238	75.00	12.79	2.817	378	<.05
Public School	142	71.22	12.48			

Table 5 showed that the t-test revealed a significant difference between organisational citizenship behaviour of private school (M = 75.00, SD = 12.79) and public school (M = 71.22, SD = 12.48), t (378) = 2.817, p < .005. This implies that the hypothesis which stated that public school teachers will report significantly lower levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than their private school counterparts was accepted.

Table 6: Independent T-test showing the difference between male and female school teacher's organisational citizenship behaviour.

Sex	N	Mean	SD	Tcal	Df	Sig	pv
Male	177	70.23	11.56	4.923	378	.001	<.05
Female	203	76.52	13.12				

Table 6 shows that the t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between organisational citizenship behaviour of female (M = 76.21, s = 9.83) and male (M = 70.23, s = 11.56), t (378) = 4.923, p<05. Which implies that the hypothesis which stated that male teachers will report significantly higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than female teachers was rejected.

Table 7: Independent T-tests showing differences between young and old teacher's Organisational citizenship behaviour.

Age	N	Mean	SD	Tcal	Df	Sig	pv
Young (21-39 Years	135	77.73	9.29	4.824	378	.001	<.05
Old (40 Years and above)	245	71.31	13.86				

Table 7 shows that t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between organisational citizenship behaviour of young participants M = 77.73, s = 9.29) and old participants (M = 71.31, s = 13.86), t (378) = 4.824, p<.05. This implies that hypothesis that stated that younger teachers

will report higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than older teachers was accepted.

Table 8: Independent T-test showing the difference in teacher's OCB based on marital status..

Marital Status	N	Mean	SD	Tcal	Df	Sig	pv
Single	187	74.54	12.84	1.358	378	1.00	>.05
Married	193	72.76	12.72				

Table 8 revealed that there was no significant differences between organisational citizenship behaviour of single (M = 74.54, SD = 12.84) and married (M = 72.76, SD = 12.72), *t* (378) = 1.358, p = 1.00, a = .05. Thus, the hypothesis which stated that teachers who are married will report higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour than teachers who are single was rejected.

Discussion

This research examined the influence of perceived organisational politics and job frustration on organisational citizenship behaviour of teachers in public and private schools in Lagos State. The study revealed that perceived organisational politics and job frustration did not account for a significant variance in organisational citizenship behaviour among teachers. This is in line with a study by Saei & Liu (2023) who found that job frustration induced by perceived organisational politics leads employees to become more passive in organisational participation. Thus, employees who have experienced perceived organisational politics and job frustration are less likely to engage in discretionary behaviour (Cullinane and Donaghey, 2020).

However, perceived organisational politics revealed no significant negative relationship with organisational citizenship behaviour. This finding was not in line with the findings of previous research that had indicated that employees perception of politics in a workplace results in the decrease in extra-role behaviour (Vigoda, 2000). Atta and Khan (2016) found that perceived organisational politics negatively predicts OCB. Also, Albloush, Al-Zu'bi, & Hussein, & Almuala (2021) found that POP has a negative relationship with OCB-O and OCB-I. Khwaja and Ahmad (2013) also reported that perceived organisational politics has significant impact on organisational citizenship behaviours. Furthermore, Ladebo (2006) reported that POP negatively related to OCB in Southwestern Nigeria. This disparity may be as a result of the sample size being too small and unrepresentative of the population of teachers. Also, the complexity of the

POP scale in the context of the Nigerian school system may have posed as a difficulty to respondents.

Job frustration accounted for a weak negative relationship with organisational citizenship behaviour. This is in line with Storme and Spector (1975) who revealed a negative relationship between frustration at work and employee behaviour. They found that organisational frustration positively related to counterproductive workplace behaviour such as interpersonal aggression, sabotage and withdrawal which is the opposite of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. Moreover, Radner and Dhurup (2016) reported negative relationship between frustration with work and employee commitment, stating that employee commitment to their occupation decreases as workplace impediments and frustration increases. Shreta (2019) emphasises that organisational citizenship behaviour is a positive outcome of employee commitment. That is, decrease in organisational commitment results in decrease in OCB. Hence, increase in job frustrations results in decrease in employee OCB. This shows that job frustration negatively correlates to OCB.

Furthermore, OCB was reported to be higher among private school teachers. This is in line with the findings of Glińska-Neweś, Aldona & Szostek, Dawid (2018) who explained that the public sector employees are more likely to feel frustration that result in counter-productive work behaviours (CWBs), and by analogy, they result in decrease of OCB in the public sector. However, Grego-Planer (2019) discovered that there are similar frequencies of OCB in public and private institutions, stating that public institutions perform interpersonal organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB-I) while private institutions perform organisation-based organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB-O). Additionally, Garg & Rastogi (2006) also found that public school teachers exhibited more OCB than private school teachers. Although, in this study, disparity can be as a result of an imbalance in the population of teachers from private and public schools.

The study also examined the demographic determinants (gender, age, and marital status) of OCB. Female teachers showed higher OCB than male teachers which is not consistent with the general implication that males and female perform different types of OCB, not different

frequencies of OCB. Research on gender differences on OCB has focused on two dimensions of OCB, altruism and civic virtue. Punia & Shyam (2017) found that women display dimensions of OCB such as Conscientiousness and Altruism because of their inherent nurturing nature. Heilman & Chen (2005) pointed out that being a nurturing is central to female gender stereotype prescriptions. While dimensions such as civic virtue, courtesy and sportsmanship are displayed more by men.

It was also revealed that younger teachers will possess higher OCB levels than older teachers. This is not in line with the findings of Quoquab & Zakaria (2010) who revealed that older employees performed OCB than younger employees. Also, Gyekye & Haybatollahi (2015) found that age is a significant predictor of OCB as older workers were more active in citizenship behaviours than their younger counterparts. The difference in findings may be as a result of cultural differences. In Western Nigeria, there are strong cultural practices that emphasise respect for older ones. This may cause younger ones to show more altruism, courtesy to older ones and others while older ones do not engage as much. Finally, the findings did not support the hypothesis that teachers who are married will display higher OCB levels than teachers who are single. That is, there is no statistical difference in OCB displayed by either married or single teachers. This is in line with the findings of Uzonwanne (2014) who concluded that the Organisational Citizenship Behaviour of married oil workers is not different from that of the single oil workers. Also, Mohammad Amin et.al (2013) stated in their study that married and single employees showed the same level of OCB in their workplace. Bakhshi, Sharma & Kumar (2011) also found no significant impact of demographic variables (age, gender, job tenure, marital status and qualification) on aggregate measure of OCB. Yaghoubi et al (2010) in their research found out that there is no difference in OCB based on marital status: that marital status has no statistical difference OCB. Namazzi (2011) in a research study also stated that there is no significant difference in OCB based on marital status. Thus, one's marital status does not determine whether or not individuals sex exhibit higher or lesser Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that perceived organisational politics and job frustration do not jointly predict the levels of OCB displayed by teachers in Lagos State schools. However they remain

factors that influence employee OCB, especially, job frustration which revealed a weak negative relationship on OCB. Hence, further study should be carried out using scales that are applicable to Nigerian educational context.

Also, it is concluded that private schools display higher OCB levels than public schools, indicating that differences in their leadership system and resources may account for different levels of OCB. The understanding of the differences in OCB between private and public school teachers can assist institutions and the educational sector in proffering solutions and strategies that address the unique challenges faced by each group. This helps to bridge the gap between the OCB exhibited by teachers from both types of schools.

It was concluded that gender does not directly determine OCB levels as both genders have their strengths in different dimensions of OCB; and young teachers display higher OCB in Nigeria possibly as a result of social conditioning and culture. This information can guide school administrations to provide employment opportunities for teachers that fit the categories that perform higher levels of OCB.

Lastly, the findings contributed to the existing body of knowledge in organisational behaviour by providing empirical evidence of the relationships between perceived organisational politics, job frustration, and OCB. This advances our theoretical understanding of the factors that shape employee behaviours and shed light on the underlying mechanisms involved. The study also highlighted the need for further research in exploring additional variables and contextual factors that may influence OCB.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that schools should prioritise creating a positive work environment that minimises perceived organisational politics and job frustration. This can be achieved through transparent communication, fair policies, and a supportive school culture, and by addressing issues such as workload, communication gaps, pay raises, and lack of resources.

Future researchers should develop more scales in the Nigerian context to enable adequate validity and manage contextual ambiguity. A teacher OCB scale in the Nigerian context should be developed for accurate measurement of teacher OCB in Nigeria. There is limited research on OCB in Nigeria, especially teacher OCB. Future researchers should explore the influence of other organisational variables on teacher OCB as well as the influence of teacher OCB on academic performance and school learning environment.

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MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS OF NEGATIVE CUSTOMER REVIEWS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A CASE OF SELECTED HOTELS IN ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND

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ABSTRACT

*Negative customer reviews in the hospitality sector are never inconsequential because of the business's competitive nature and the ever-changing dynamics of client expectations and preferences. This study provided insight into the trends and dynamics of negative customer reviews about customer relations and hotel aesthetics using selected hotels as case studies. Secondary data collection procedures and qualitative methods were adopted to analyse negative hotel reviews obtained from the website of **TripadvisorInc**. According to the results of the thematic analysis, the customer relations themes that were observed to effect perceived service delivery of both hotels being researched were poor response time, impolite behavior among staff, inadequate nonverbal gestures, and poor staff training and orientation. Poor environmental hygiene, unappealing décor, poor functionality of hotel designs/furniture, and defective room equipment were among the guests' perception of hotel aesthetics that were discovered to influence perceived service delivery of both hotels researched. Managerial implications based on the study's findings included the necessity for regular training, re-training, and orientation programmes for front-line hotel employees.*

Keywords: Customer review, Service delivery, Customer relations, Hotelaesthetics

1.0 Background To The Study

Organisations operating in the hospitality sector are established with the aim of delivering excellent service quality to customers. However, they face a continuous challenge in meeting customer expectations due to customers' awareness of available options and their assessment of value for money (Olatokun & Ojo, 2016). In the hotel industry, maintaining a competitive advantage is directly linked to the quality of services provided. Researchers and practitioners in the hospitality industry have devoted significant effort to comprehending how customers

perceive service quality (Olatokun & Ojo, 2016). Nevertheless, the interplay between objective and subjective measures of service quality presents ongoing challenges that warrant sustained scholarly focus on service quality within the hotel industry. Existing literature suggests that the ideal assessment of service quality relies on customers' perceptions of whether organisations can meet or surpass their expectations. Previous studies demonstrate that globalisation and the advent of information and communication technology (ICT) have led to evolving modes of service delivery, resulting in increased customer demand for higher quality goods and services (Mensah, 2009; Johansson &Witell, 2013; Rahman et al., 2017).

The measurement of service quality has presented significant challenges due to the unique nature of its assessment. While assessing indicators such as durability is relatively easier, evaluating service quality in terms of customer perception remains crucial (Mmutle, 2017). This implies that continuously appraising customer satisfaction is essential for understanding and improving the provision of quality service. It also helps attract new customers, retain existing ones, enhance the organization's brand image, and ultimately improve profitability. In the hotel industry, similar to other public service providers, meeting and exceeding customer expectations is challenging due to factors such as intense market competition, changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, bureaucratic issues, subpar customer relations, and cultural factors (Meijerink et al., 2016).

Customer perception plays a crucial role in an organization's efforts to satisfy customer needs and maintain a competitive advantage in the market. In the hotel industry, customer perceptions of service delivery are shaped by three key factors: tangible products, human interactions, and environmental elements (Markovic &Raspor, 2010). According to Markovic and Raspor (2010), the hotel industry's service quality is measured in terms of dependability, employees' competency, accessibility, and tangibles. Therefore, these factors play a fundamental role in determining the success of a hotel's services. It is important for organisations to continuously assess and review customer satisfaction as a means of evaluating their service quality (Abebaw & Endshaw, 2018). This study focused on two specific aspects that may influence customer perception of service delivery in the hotel industry: hotel aesthetics and customer relations. By conducting a comparative case study analysis, the study examined negative customer reviews

related to service quality at Crowne Plaza Aberdeen Airport Hotel, and Courtyard by Marriott Aberdeen Airport Hotel.

2.0   Literature Review

2.1   Aesthetics and Design in Hotels

The realm of literature delving into the profound significance of design, aesthetics, and ambiance within the hotel industry is steadily expanding. This exploration is a response to the innovative strategies embraced by hotels, particularly boutique-style establishments that prioritise distinctiveness in each room, and allocate a substantial portion of their design budget to crafting captivating lobby and public areas (McNeill, 2008). The strategic deployment of design and art plays a pivotal role in positioning hotels as part of their marketing endeavours, resulting in elevated occupancy rates and higher average daily room rates (Countryman & Jang, 2006; West & Purvis, 1992). Design, as a communicative tool, plays a central role in shaping the perception of potential customers and influencing their decision-making process (West & Hughes, 1991).

Design, at its core, embodies the application of human creativity to meet people's needs by crafting products, services, and environments (Yin, Qin & Holland, 2011). To fully grasp the multifaceted role of design, it necessitates an exploration of elements such as atmospherics, aesthetics, servicescape, and the integration of art within these facets (Woelfel, Jenskrzy & Drechsel, 2013). Design serves as the defining force behind the visual identity, form, and expression of both tangible and intangible aspects. Form encapsulates aspects such as appearance, functionality, and user interface, while expression encompasses the decisions revolving around colour, texture, sound, and behaviours that mold users' perceptions (Norman, 2004). The element of functionality is indispensable in delivering joy, excitement, pleasure, fun, and beauty to people's lives (Norman, 2004).

Within service settings, atmospheric elements and interior design wield significant influence over customers' inclination to stay and their likelihood of returning (Joseph-Mathews et al., 2009). Atmospherics are meticulously crafted to evoke specific emotional responses that enhance the likelihood of a purchase (Johnson, Mayer & Champaner, 2004; Kotler, 1973). Customers assess the physical environment across various dimensions, encompassing visual, auditory,

olfactory, and tactile aspects (Kotler, 1973). Over time, these dimensions have expanded to encompass ambient conditions, spatial arrangement, layout, furnishings, lighting, style, artifacts, and colour (Kotler, 1973). Ambient conditions encompass both visible and non-visible stimuli, including colours, auditory elements, scents, and temperature (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Rosenbaum &Massiah, 2011; Spangenberg et al., 2005). The interplay of these diverse ambient dimensions and their impact on consumer behavior continues to be a fertile area for further research (Heide, Laerdal, &Gronhaug, 2009).

Space denotes the spatial relationships between objects, while layout pertains to the strategic arrangement of equipment and furnishings within a service area (Wakefield & Blodget, 1996). Furnishing extends to considerations of appearance, comfort, and the availability of furniture (Wakefield & Blodget, 1996). Lighting exerts its influence on cognitive faculties, mood, and color perception (Singh, 2006; Ching, 1996). Signs, symbols, and artifacts constitute vital physical dimensions employed to communicate with customers and convey service expectations (Bitner, 1992; Rosenbaum &Massiah, 2011). Colour, in particular, occupies a pivotal role in product differentiation, appetite stimulation, and the creation of positive or negative emotions and moods that significantly influence attitudes within physical interior settings (Batra, 2014).

2.2   Staff-Customer Relations in Hotels

Staff-customer relations encompass the interactions that occur between customers and frontline staff during service encounters (Payne et al., 2003). The quality of these interactions often hinges on the actions and behaviours of frontline staff, whose experiences, commitment levels, and attitudes can fluctuate from one interaction to the next (Lewis & McCann, 2004). Previous research has underscored that positive service encounters over time can fortify enduring relationships that clients share with organisations (Smith, 2003; Smith & Wheeler, 2002).

Several key characteristics are essential for front desk employees in hotels to showcase while interacting with customers. One crucial trait is competence, which significantly enhances the level of service provided by hotel employees to its customers (Webster, 2006; Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Competence refers to the ability to efficiently and effectively perform assigned tasks (Meijerink, Bondarouk, & Lepak, 2016). Competent hotel employees possess a clear

understanding of their responsibilities and possess the necessary skills to handle their duties and any challenges that may arise (Sundaram & Webster, 2000).

Another vital characteristic in staff-customer relations is friendliness, marked by kind, welcoming, outgoing, and pleasant behaviuor during customer interactions (Shaw Brown & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1994). Having nice personnel is critical for making a good impression on customers and demonstrating professionalism and devotion (Seijts, 2010). Friendliness is important not only in the hotel business, but in every service-oriented company (Sundaram & Webster, 2000). Front desk employees, who often serve as the initial point of contact for guests, should cultivate a welcoming atmosphere and exude friendliness even before engaging in verbal communication (Seijts, 2010).

The knowledge levels of frontline staff in the hospitality industry also wield substantial influence on staff-customer relations (Olorunniwo, Hsu & Udo, 2006). Shaw Brown and Sulzer-Azaroff (1994) define knowledge as "specific knowledge, skills, and information about the hotel and the employees' specific job roles." Customers can gauge the employee's knowledge through their handling of inquiries and emails, which can instill confidence in receiving consistent treatment (Sastry &Ramsingh, 2011). By displaying assurance in assisting customers, front desk employees can instill trust in their expertise, ultimately fostering customer loyalty (Seijts, 2010).

Service attitude encompasses the emotions and behaviours exhibited by service providers towards customers (Liu & Liu, 2008). It encompasses elements such as enthusiasm, grace, politeness, kindness, patience, conscientiousness, and empathy (Kuo, 2007; Kuo, 2009). Customers can discern a positive service attitude through the non-verbal cues and body language of employees (Seijts, 2010). Service attitude is of paramount importance, as it shapes customers' perceptions of an employee's influence, ability, knowledge, and conduct (Larsen &Bastiansen, 1991). It can also significantly impact customers' mental states and physical needs, playing a central role in shaping their perceptions of interactions and service quality (Kuo, Chen, & Lu, 2012). In summation, the competence, friendliness, knowledge, and service attitude exhibited by frontline staff are pivotal in determining the quality of staff-customer relations in the hotel industry.

3.0   Methods

3.1   Research Setting

The case study took place in Aberdeen, focusing on two hotels: Crowne Plaza Aberdeen Airport Hotel, and Courtyard by Marriott Aberdeen Airport. While physical access to the hotels was not necessary, the study collected data through reviews and ratings from hotel customers, which were documented records. Both hotels are in close proximity to each other, resulting in a competitive relationship.

The Crowne Plaza Aberdeen Airport Hotel is conveniently situated just 100 meters away from Aberdeen International Airport. This hotel boasts an array of amenities, including 10 meeting rooms, a fitness center, an offshore bar and grill, a fine dining restaurant, light meal options, and a 24-hour room service menu. Additionally, guests will find ample affordable parking spaces, a fully equipped business center offering copy, printing, and scanning services, as well as a selection of office supplies.

In contrast, the Courtyard by Marriott Aberdeen Airport Hotel is located at a distance of 2.1 kilometers from P&J Live and approximately 9.7 kilometers from Aberdeen's city center. This modern Marriott establishment offers 194 stylish and contemporary guest rooms, complete with complimentary Wi-Fi, a well-equipped fitness center, private parking facilities, a 24-hour convenience store, and a vibrant restaurant and bar area. The guest rooms at this Marriott hotel feature a brand-new design concept, featuring amenities such as a 42-inch flat-screen TV, a mobile glass work table, tea/coffee making facilities, and numerous power outlets. The en-suite bathrooms are thoughtfully designed, with frosted doors that enhance natural light and spacious walk-in showers.

### 3.2   Data Collection

This study relied on secondary data in the form of documented customer evaluations and reviews available on *Tripadvisor Inc*., an online travel platform renowned for its vast collection of traveller reviews and comments. Reviews for both the Crowne Plaza Aberdeen Airport Hotel and the Courtyard by Marriott Aberdeen Airport Hotel were sourced from the *Tripadvisor* website.

All reviews available as of the year 2020 for both hotels were included in the analysis, with a primary focus on themes related to hotel aesthetics and customer perceptions of service quality.

3.3   Data Analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, a systematic coding strategy was employed. The dataset included a total of 413 reviews for the Crowne Plaza Aberdeen Airport Hotel and 402 reviews for the Courtyard by Marriott Aberdeen Airport Hotel. Each review was rated on a five-point Likert rating scale, ranging from 'Excellent' (5) to 'Terrible' (1). Subsequently, the data were meticulously cleaned and categorised into two distinct groups: 'positive' and 'negative' reviews for further in-depth analysis.
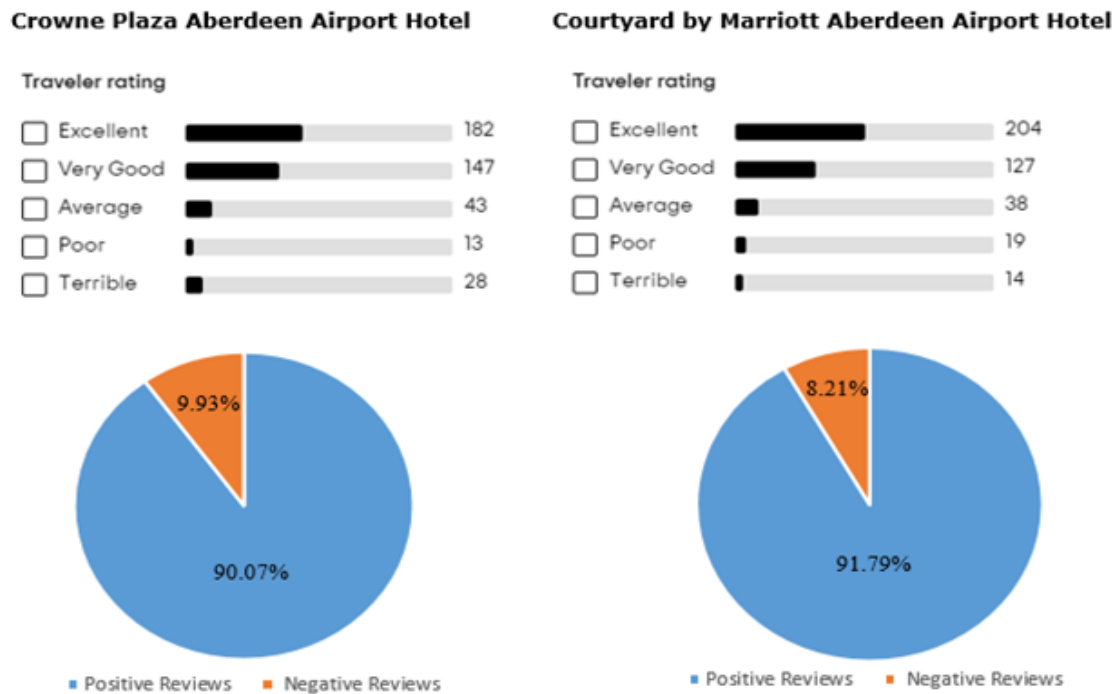
Figure 1: Percentage of positive and negative reviews

The negative evaluations were highlighted by labelling ratings of 'poor' and 'terrible' as negative, while the other three ratings were labelled as positive. The analysis concentrated on the negative evaluations. CAQDA software Nvivo 12 Pro, which are tools for organising, categorising, and

analysing data, were used to process the data. Thematic analysis was conducted to split the data into manageable units and create codes that could be grouped into themes for analysis. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The themes of interest in this study were related to customer relations and hotel aesthetics, specifically focusing on how they influence perceived service quality. It is important to note that the results of this study do not intend to criticise either hotel or represent their overall service performance. The thematic analysis focused on a comparison of negative themes obtained from a sample of customer reviews for both Crowne Plaza Aberdeen Airport Hotel (CPAAH) and Courtyard by Marriott Aberdeen Airport Hotel (CMAAH).

4.0   Results and Discussion of Emergent Themes

4.1   Perceived Customer Relations

According to the study's goals, customers' unfavourable perceptions and their impact on perceived service quality were identified. Several common themes emerged in relation to both hotels, including slow response times, staff exhibiting rude behavior, inadequate non-verbal communication, and insufficient staff training and orientation. These themes were specific to the issues identified in both establishments

4.1.1   Service Response Time

The service response time refers to the duration between a customer's request and the subsequent response. In the hospitality industry, a quick response time is crucial for delivering good customer service. Delayed responses to customer requests are indicative of subpar service. Customers desire to feel valued and appreciated for choosing a particular establishment. Consequently, if they feel ignored, if their urgent needs are not addressed promptly, or if they perceive a lack of professionalism, they are likely to seek alternative options. Consistently slow response times can lead to the loss of customers and revenue. To foster customer loyalty, it is essential to provide efficient service within the specified timeframe. Both hotels received negative reviews, with several customers expressing dissatisfaction with the slow response time to their requests, as evidenced by the following review excerpts

CPAAH reviews

The staff have been tuned to ignore and avoid all customers requiring service. If you require a drink or a meal, be prepared to wait. For food especially, you'll need to add between 1 and 2 hours for your order.

After placing our order we had to wait over 45 minutes for our meal to arrive by which time another guest had ordered, received both the main course and also finished dessert too.

CMAAH reviews

Having stayed here on several occasions the restaurant continues to disappoint with poor and or slow service.

Check-in was pretty slow as the girl at the desk had just started and English was not her first language

The negative reviews for both hotels extensively emphasised the issues and complaints regarding the slow response time of their services (Durrande Moreau & Usunier, 1999). Guest satisfaction is intimately related to service quality, and this relationship is determined by the amount of time they have to wait for the service. If the waiting time becomes prolonged, guests tend to become passively impatient and less satisfied, perceiving the service as slow (Durrande Moreau & Usunier, 1999). Even if the service quality is excellent, the lengthy wait may hinder guests from appreciating it. As a result, effectively managing waiting time necessitates a thorough grasp of the relationship between guest pleasure and service quality perception (Lee & Lambert, 2006).

Guests encounter waiting periods at various junctures during their stay, and these junctures hold significant importance in assessing their overall satisfaction with the quality of service provided. These stages are divided into three distinct phases: the pre-experience wait, the wait during the experience, and the wait after the experience. Hensley and Sulek (2007) assert that the only factor of wait satisfaction that has a substantial impact on visitors' views of service quality is the time spent waiting to obtain the service. This implies that the wait preceding the service has a more substantial impact on their impression than the waits during and after the actual service itself. The emotions that clients feel while waiting have a substantial impact on their satisfaction with the service quality. Customers' unfavorable emotional reactions worsen as the wait time lengthens. According to Lee and Lambert (2005), if guests' expectations regarding waiting times are not satisfied effectively, it might have a detrimental impact on their overall satisfaction. Moreover, Davis and Maggard (1990) concluded that waiting time and customer satisfaction are inversely related.

Delays elicit negative emotional responses such as uncertainty and rage (Taylor, 1994). Guests feel more at peace when they realise how long they will be in the waiting room (Larsen &Bastiansen, 1992). These unfavourable reactions have a direct impact on customers' overall attitude during the event, as ambiguity about the delay leads to decreased service satisfaction. Uncertainty can cause guests to become more concerned (Maister, 1985). Furthermore, during the wait, customers' moods can be negatively influenced, thus impairing their sense of great service quality (Taylor, 1994). Because of the initial condition, people in negative situations tend to interpret everything negatively. As a result, it is advised that managing visitors' anxiety during the wait is more important than focusing exclusively on service quality (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). As a result, it is critical to keep guests informed and up to date on the projected length of the wait.

4.1.2   Rude Behaviour among Staff

Rude behaviour encompasses actions that display disrespect by flouting established social norms or cultural etiquette within a specific group or society. These norms serve as crucial boundaries dictating what is considered acceptable behaviour. When an individual fails to adhere to these norms or consciously disregards them, their conduct is deemed rude according to widely accepted behavioural standards. Within the hospitality industry, rude behaviour is particularly discouraged. This is due to the fact that guests represent the primary raison d'être of the hospitality sector, and they rightfully expect to receive the highest level of courteous service. In the customer reviews scrutinised in this study, there were recurring themes of rude behaviour, notably in the form of verbal and attitudinal expressions exhibited by certain front desk staff members. These instances of rudeness significantly contributed to the negative perceptions customers held regarding the hotel. Here, we present some highlighted excerpts from these reviews.

CPAAH reviews

The second night we were sat down and left without a drink order for nearly half an hour. When calling over the waitress she responded in a curt (rude) manner. Not how I would expect after a customer complains about waiting.

The overnight stay was fine however the customer service we received from the staff was awful. They were very rude and unhelpful; this ruined the crowne plaza experience for us! We will not be returning

CMAAH reviews

I can't believe how rude the staff are here. I have never stayed anywhere with staff who completely misunderstand the value of customer service. The hotel may be nice, and handy for the airport, but the staff are simply appalling. This is the second time I have had to stay here and I was hoping it may have improved, but was sadly proven wrong

I have stayed at the Crowne plaza under my company booking for the third time now. Unfortunately each time I check in, the same very rude receptionist is on duty. I have had the worst service with *XXXX* at reception and I am very disappointed that staff can repeat the same horrible behaviour.

The strength of a chain is determined by its weakest link, which means that a single hotel staff member's poor display of customer interaction can have a major impact on the overall customer patronage of the hotel (Wang, Huang, Chen, & Lin, 2010). As a result, even seemingly tiny incidents of impolite behavior toward a consumer might have long-term consequences. In the hotel sector, Liljander (2000) stressed the critical impact of employees' behaviour during service interactions, emphasizing the value of personal ties between service providers and clients. He advised that front-line service providers, such as desk clerks, waiters, park rangers, door and bellmen, maids, and stewards, be given special consideration because they have direct contact with clients.

Furthermore, Arnette et al. (2002) observed that in the hotel industry, where employees play an important part in providing excellent service, they might become a source of competitive advantage for hotels. They also noted that hotel employees' opinions and behaviours have a substantial impact on service quality, customer happiness, and loyalty, and that outstanding service offered by staff can improve the hotel's image as well as the perceived and actual quality

of service. Similarly, Mattsson and Lemmink (2002) studied the idea that during service interactions, clients experience both pleasant and negative emotions. They discovered that contact personnel with inadequate abilities may struggle to handle emotional circumstances, which can have a significant influence on the service firm's overall image.

4.1.3 Poor Non-Verbal Gestures

Effective communication plays a crucial role in delivering high-quality service within the hospitality industry. Communication in this context extends beyond verbal communication and encompasses non-verbal aspects such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures directed towards customers. A recurring issue that surfaced in negative reviews for both hotels pertained to the display of unfavourable non-verbal cues and body language by their respective staff members. Numerous negative reviews recounted scenarios in which hotel personnel came across as unhelpful, unfriendly, unapologetic, grumpy, nonchalant, or discontented. It's worth noting that the initial impression customers glean from frontline staff frequently sets the tone for their overall perceptions and evaluations of the hotel. As a result, these negative experiences of poor non-verbal gestures contributed to the unfavorable ratings received by both hotels. Here are some highlighted excerpts from the reviews:

CPAAH reviews

Stayed in a club king room, which gives access to the club room. Reception staff were not that helpful - they didn't tell me anything about getting access to this room, they failed to even mention that it was included

This is a nice hotel with friendly staff let down by an unfriendly, inhospitable manager. He makes you feel unwelcome at every opportunity. And unfortunately he is always there. So any mealtime is marred by the feeling that the manager is unhappy that we are there

CMAAH reviews

Check in staff is useless no help what's so ever and very rude

I went back to reception and they did not seem bothered about the state of what they had provided me despite the fact I could have been electrocuted!

Asked maid about ice for ice bucket in the room and she just shrugged and walked away

We went for a meal out this week mid-week. Just horrendous! Most miserable waitress, not a single please or thank you or smile throughout the meal.

The identified themes align with the findings of several previous studies. Kim, Ju, and Johnson (2009) conducted a qualitative study in apparel, shoe, and accessories retail settings and discovered that participants associated positive emotions with sales associates who exhibited professional and appealing appearances. Another study has illuminated the impact of physical attractiveness on customers' attitudes, particularly in service domains closely linked to attractiveness, such as hairdressing services (Koernig & Page, 2002). Similarly, it has been confirmed that the physical appearance of service professionals in the hotel business influences consumer emotions and perceptions of service quality (Gountas, Ewing, &Gountas 2007).

In the realm of hospitality, it is the small, thoughtful gestures that hold the potential for significant service enhancements. Investing time and effort in moments of genuine attentiveness can profoundly elevate the overall guest experience within hotels and resorts (Nedry, 2012). Furthermore, Kueh and Pengiran-Bagul (2013) emphasise that verbal communication accounts for a mere 35% of overall communication emphasising the importance of non-verbal communication, as expressed via gestures and body language, in the restaurant and hotel sector. It is paramount for hotel staff to recognise that non-verbal communication is a continuous and involuntary process. While speech can be consciously controlled, individuals often do not consciously contemplate the messages conveyed by their body language. Therefore, it is essential for hotel staff to pay attention to non-verbal cues in order to provide quality service to customers. These unspoken cues can also offer insights into customers' emotions and provide opportunities for staff to enhance the customer experience (Lin & Lin, 2011).

4.1.4   Staff Incompetence

In today's fiercely competitive hospitality industry, organisations must have a skilled workforce to thrive and succeed. Competence among all staff and employees is crucial for effective service delivery in hotel operations. Therefore, hotel staffs are expected to possess extensive knowledge, skills, and expertise that contribute to the survival and growth of the hotel. In analysing the findings of this study, it was evident that negative customer reviews in both hotels were often a result of the incompetence displayed by certain frontline employees. This incompetence manifested in various ways, such as a lack of understanding of hotel policies, language barriers,

deficiencies in service delivery skills, and other related issues. Examples of such instances are illustrated in the following excerpts from customer reviews.

CPAAH reviews

Stayed here last week. When we arrived girl on reception said oh you have just missed the club lounge it has just closed. .... Back in hotel again this week before club lounge closed but was told we can't use it by the lady manager I take it. Please get your training sorted out as leaving a girl who doesn't know much about procedure does not help with customer satisfaction.

A fellow guest arrived at the bar and asked for a cocktail list, there wasn't one. So he asked the bar tender to make one and had to instruct her how to do this. A constant annoyance with hotel restaurants is the failure to train the staff properly. The poor girl explained that she did not normally work on the bar and was therefore clearly not informed.

CMAAH reviews

One of the front desk staff, who introduced herself as the manager .... she couldn't provide us with any information about the city. Just gave us a ticket for the bus to go to the city centre. When we asked to print out our plane tickets, we were told that the printer is broken and there is nothing she can do about it.

Check-in was pretty slow as the girl at the desk had just started and English was not her first language. Her colleague apologised and said that he had to show her the ropes.

To genuinely prioritize customer satisfaction, employees must grasp the vital role that exceptional customer service plays in both the company's culture and their individual contributions. This understanding does not happen spontaneously; it necessitates effective training. Training programmes are instrumental in boosting productivity, elevating service quality, and enhancing the professional acumen of employees (Nestoroska & Petrovska, 2014). It is imperative to acquaint staff members with the organisation's mission statement, underscoring the paramount importance of guest service (Hayes &Ninemeier, 2006). For the successful implementation of customer service training, managers must identify customer needs, evaluate employee skills, formulate and execute training initiatives, and continually assess the delivery of customer service (Richason, 2017).

In the hospitality sector, staff training holds immense significance for both existing and new employees, given the industry's fierce competition, which demands ongoing skill refinement tailored to specific job roles. Training programmes encompass a wide array of subjects aligned with industry standards, fostering professional growth and elevating the caliber of service provision. The central focus of staff training and orientation should revolve around enhancing customer service skills such as empathy, patience, consistency, adaptability, clear communication, ethical conduct, and a comprehensive understanding of the hotel business. Furthermore, the hotel's customer service philosophy should not be overly constricting, granting employees the autonomy to exceed customer expectations without the constant need for managerial approval.

4.2   Guests' Perception of Hotel Aesthetics

The study also aimed to investigate how negative perceptions of hotel aesthetics influence the perception of service quality. Common themes that emerged in both hotels included issues such as inadequate environmental hygiene, unattractive decorations, malfunctioning hotel designs and furniture, and faulty room appliances.

4.2.1   Environmental Hygiene

Hotel guestrooms cater to a constant flow of new customers on a daily basis, necessitating the maintenance of high standards of cleanliness within a short turnaround time. Ensuring a clean and hygienic environment for guests is crucial for both the reputation and growth of a hotel. A negative experience in this regard can have detrimental effects on customer loyalty, leading to a decreased likelihood of return visits. The cleanliness and hygiene of facilities, common areas, and washrooms are pivotal in elevating an ordinary stay to an exceptional one, and they significantly influence recommendations made by guests to their friends and colleagues. In the context of this study, negative reviews of both hotels highlighted issues pertaining to poor hygiene. Guests expressed concerns about unpleasant odors in certain rooms, unclean washrooms, and subpar housekeeping. Excerpts from relevant reviews for both hotels are provided below

CPAAH reviews

Only issue is the little pile of human toe nails next to my bed between the headboard and nightstand. Really revolting and when I informed the staff on reception they hoped I wasn't inconvenienced and would call housekeeping. I wasn't inconvenience by the toenails. But I was disgusted and concerned about room cleanliness after that.

Nice hotel and a Nice room but....
Shower was scummy in corners which I find disgusting.

CMAAH reviews

Stayed here for work, room XXX smells like a mouldy fish and chip shop.

I wouldn't recommend staying at this place, room smelled terribly. Appeared to be clean but stunk.

According to Lim et al. (2021), hygiene plays a crucial role in the hospitality industry, especially considering the susceptibility of the industry to the impact of pandemic diseases. As hotels accommodate guests from diverse locations worldwide, the satisfaction of customers relies heavily on the cleanliness of various aspects, including food, rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and dining areas (Darko, et al., 2015). In general, customers place a high value on hotels that prioritise vital safety measures and adhere to sanitary procedures. Numerous studies have emphasised the importance of hygiene in the hotel industry. For instance, Worsfold (2006) found that a majority of hotel guests stated that they would not return to a dining establishment if they perceived it to be unhygienic. Guests expect hotels to adhere to high standards of cleanliness. In line with this, Lim et al. (2017) suggest that room service managers and supervisors should prioritise the cleanliness of bathrooms and room furniture to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction. Darko et al. (2015) emphasise the importance of proper training for hotel staff and the need for visible hygiene practices throughout the hotel premises. Efficient and thorough room keeping and cleaning procedures should be implemented, including the execution of a rigorous hygiene protocol between each guest check-out and check-in.

4.2.2 Unappealing Decoration

Guests not only interact with hotel staff but also with the physical decorations of the hotel, as noted by Lin and Liang (2011). In this study, negative reviews from customers specifically mentioned issues related to the hotel's interior decoration, such as the choice of colours, lighting,

and worn-out decor. These criticisms highlight the importance of lighting as an important component of overall hotel design, as it can influence visitor comfort and potentially influence their decision to stay at the hotel. It was apparent that guests favoured natural lighting over dark and dim lighting, which they found unappealing. Additionally, brighter colour schemes seemed to be more preferable to some customers, as indicated in the following excerpts from the reviews.

CPAAH reviews

The room was a little tired in places but this was really only apparent if you were studying the room - the wallpaper was a little worn and the shower tray a little black.

I am not sure if this hotel would be my first choice in the future. I prefer the brighter colour scheme of the cheaper sister hotel Holiday Inn Express next door.

I entered the room to find the carpet was badly stained which was surprising as the hotel is new.

CMAAH reviews

We walk in to our room and find a nice view of the airport, but it was covered by a sheer drape that could not be pulled back, that is ridiculous.

Seen better restaurants on rigs. It is basically a canteen adjacent to the main door. Good steak but poor lighting and very limited menu make it not exactly appealing.

The club lounge is cold and dingy (gloomy and drab). I found the decor much too dark. Could hardly find anything

This suggests that the findings of this study align with previous research emphasising the value of interior décor, particularly lighting and colour, in affecting the mood of hotel visitors. A key principle is to achieve a harmonious blend of lighting and colours; although it can be challenging to find a colour palette that satisfies every individual's tastes. Hoteliers should recognise the significance of lighting and colour variables for their guests, and even though preferences may vary, they should prioritise natural colours based on the preference shown in the study. Colours are significant because of their potential to influence attitudes, emotions, and, most importantly, perceptions. According to the literature, the importance of physical decorations is widely established in a variety of industries, including retail (Lin & Liang, 2011), restaurants (Jang &Namkung, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2008), and healthcare environments (Hutchings & Luo, 2010; Kim & Perdue, 2013).

4.2.3 Functionality of Designs and Furniture

In addition to the visual appeal of hotel structures, fittings, and furniture, their functionality plays a significant role in shaping the overall impression of the hotel. Scholars typically categorise design elements into aesthetic and functional aspects, with aesthetic elements encompassing factors like colour and material, and functional elements involving architectural design (Cripps, 2013). This study's findings reflect the idea that design should include both aesthetic appeal and utility. This suggests that consumers are likely to evaluate the hotel's structural architecture, fittings, and furniture based on their practicality. While modern hotels are incorporating more visually interesting shapes, locations, and designs to enhance their aesthetic value, it is important to ensure that these innovations do not compromise the basic functionality. This emerged as a theme in negative customer reviews of both hotels. Furthermore, functionality was frequently associated with aspects of comfort and convenience.

CPAAH reviews

The position of the light switch for the toilet is in a very odd place next to the door into the room. In practically every other hotel I have stayed at they are next to the toilet. So if you wake up in the dark you have to fumble your way to the main door to find to switch toilet light on.

The windows in the bedrooms are large, but they have a net curtain covering all of it, so you can't see outside. The windows do not open, therefore no fresh air. Nor can you vent the room from the steam from the shower............ The mirror in the bedroom is nowhere near any of the tables, so if you are drying your hair, you have to keep placing your brushes on the floor.

CMAAH reviews

I had a room on the first floor and the bed was too firm so I had a poor night's sleep.

The sink in the bathroom is very odd, they've clearly gone with design over function, it's small and impractical for you to wash your face/clean teeth etc.

There is a nice glass table in the room, but the chair is on the side of the wall, so cannot be accessed easily.

Customers see hotel interior design as a whole, with specific design components gaining value through time and via usage experiences, influencing perceptions based on both functionality and aesthetic appearance (Batra, 2014; Axelson & Swan, 2010). The findings of this study reinforce the premise that in order to create a really rewarding and appealing design, hotel designers

should consider both the visual appeal that guests will appreciate and the functionality that would enhance their experience. As a result, from the standpoint of customers, hotel structure, fittings, and furniture are key aspects that are evaluated based on comfort, aesthetic appeal, and functionality. Scholars have observed that fittings and furniture, in particular, are associated with comfort and appearance, while their functionality is equally important to hotel guests, particularly in terms of providing comfortable beds that promote a good night's sleep and overall guest comfort (Brooker & Stone, 2010; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

5.0   Conclusion

5.1   Summary of Findings

According to the study findings, several themes related to customer relations and guests' perception of hotel aesthetics significantly impacted the perceived service delivery in both hotels under investigation. These themes included poor response time, rude behaviour among staff, inadequate non-verbal gestures, and insufficient staff training and orientation. The negative reviews emphasised the issue of poor service response time, particularly the extensive delays between guest requests and the actual response or delivery of services. These delays were most evident during check-ins, meal orders, and room service. Additionally, frontline staff were criticised for their rude behaviour, which manifested through inappropriate verbal responses and utterances directed towards guests. Furthermore, guests highlighted poor non-verbal gestures, such as rude shrugs, nonchalant attitudes, and impolite mannerisms displayed by the staff. These negative non-verbal cues included smug looks, grumpy expressions, unfriendly gestures, unapologetic attitudes, and overall unhappiness. Moreover, the study identified staff incompetence as a contributing factor to the perceived service delivery. This highlighted a lack of sufficient orientation and training of frontline staff, as seen by how they handled check-ins, guest complaints, and information provision.

Several themes were discovered to influence perceived service performance in terms of customers' assessment of hotel aesthetics. Poor environmental cleanliness, unattractive décor, concerns with the functionality of hotel architecture and furniture, and defective room appliances were among these themes. Environmental hygiene included comments about room cleanliness,

washing area hygiene, and unpleasant smells. Some visitors complained that rooms had not been properly cleaned after prior residents checked out, and that there were unpleasant odours and filthy bathing facilities. Negative reviews also highlighted unappealing decorations, such as unfavourable colour schemes, inadequate lighting, and worn-out decors. Furthermore, guests expressed dissatisfaction with the functionality of designs, furniture, and fittings in both hotels. Examples included uncomfortable bed and pillow textures, inconvenient positioning of chairs and tables, inconvenient mirror and switch placements, which hindered ease of use and functionality. Overall, these themes identified in the study shed light on the factors influencing perceived service delivery in both hotels, ranging from customer relations issues to concerns about hotel aesthetics and utility.

5.2   Managerial Implications

Many hotel customers who have had unfavourable encounters throughout their stay prefer not to report these instances to the hotel management. Instead, they may prefer to share their detailed experiences with friends, family, or significant others, either in person or through credible social media platforms. This means that every instance of poor service delivery has a ripple effect, which extends to losing that specific visitor. It is unusual for a hotel guest to return after experiencing bad treatment, especially in the highly competitive hotel sector where alternative options are readily available nearby. When a guest leaves a hotel due to unsatisfactory service, the hotel not only loses the financial contribution that guest would have made but also the potential positive word-of-mouth advertising they could have generated. It is crucial for management to understand that acquiring new guests requires more effort than retaining loyal ones, as the latter are already within reach while the former are unknown prospects.

Just as potential customers seek recommendations from people they know when choosing a business, they are also inclined to avoid businesses that have received firsthand accounts of poor customer service. Personal accounts from friends and acquaintances carry more credibility than impersonal sources like advertising, and negative reports tend to have a stronger impact than positive ones. As dissatisfied customers share their negative experiences with people they know and express their feelings online, the reputation of hotels can suffer. When a company is recognised for providing terrible customer service, it is difficult to restore its reputation. Other

firms may be hesitant to develop alliances or connections with a company that is experiencing falling client retention, which has far-reaching effects. If an organisation cannot be trusted to take care of its clients, establishing confidence in commercial agreements with its partners becomes much more challenging.

5.3   Recommendations

In a bid to consistently provide optimum services to hotel visitors, it is essential to implement regular training, re-training, and orientation programmes for frontline hotel staff. These training sessions should include explanations from the human resource department concerning the training's goals and the ways in which staff members will profit from it. Practical sessions that demonstrate the application of training outcomes should be incorporated into the sessions, allowing employees to engage in rehearsed procedures. Additionally, it is important for management to gather feedback from employees regarding their personal experiences on the job and any issues related to the training modules. This feedback can be valuable in improving the training programme for better outcomes.

To gain a firsthand understanding of the quality of service from the guests' perspective, it may be necessary for representatives of hotel management to experience it themselves. This can be achieved by having management representatives pose as regular guests, without the knowledge of the hotel staff. These representatives should stay for an extended period and utilise all the services available in the hotel. By immersing themselves in the guest-staff interactions, management will gain valuable insights into both minor and major problem areas including staff response time, disrespectful conduct, bad non-verbal gestures, ineptitude, environmental cleanliness, unattractive décor, faulty hotel designs/furniture, and damaged room appliances. Furthermore, personnel will be encouraged to maintain their best behaviour at all times if they are aware that any guest may be a management representative.

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OVERCOMING THE SENSITIVITY TO FACIAL STIMULI AND LANGUAGE IN EMOTION PERCEPTION TASKS FOR AUTISTIC INDIVIDUALS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using emojis as an alternative to facial stimuli and language in measuring emotion perception in autistic individuals. This pilot study sought to establish the groundwork for developing more sensitive and comprehensive emotion perception measures to enhance our understanding of the challenges faced by autistic individuals and inform the development of effective interventions. The study employed an opportunistic sample comprising 17 typically developing participants (aged 6-11 years) and 6 autistic participants (aged 8-21 years). The Emotion Perception Stimuli Pack (EPSP) was used to assess emotion perception, while Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM) measured cognitive competence. The EPSP utilized human facial emotional expressions from the IMPA-FACE3D database, focusing on four emotions: happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. Participants were tasked with matching the emotions expressed on the faces to corresponding emojis or labels. No statistically significant difference was observed between emotion perception measured using emojis and labels for either typically developing [t(16) = 0.42, p > .05] or autistic individuals [t(5) = 1.94, p > .05]. However, a trend towards better emotion perception in the emojis condition was noted for both groups. A significant difference emerged between the performance of autistic and typically developing individuals on both the emoji task [t(21) = 3.67, p = 0.001] and the label task [t(21) = 4.53, p = 0.000], indicating that autistic individuals performed significantly worse than typically developing individuals. Additionally, while emotion perception in typically developing individuals was not significantly associated with cognitive competence (r = 0.32, p = 0.211), cognitive competence measured by RPM was significantly correlated with emotion perception in autistic individuals (r = 0.96, p = 0.003). These findings suggest a potentially more prominent role of cognitive competence in emotion perception for autistic individuals compared to typically developing individuals. The study provides preliminary evidence suggesting that emojis may serve as an effective alternative to facial stimuli and language in measuring emotion perception in autistic individuals. Further research is warranted to validate these findings and explore the specific factors contributing to the observed differences in emotion perception between autistic and typically developing individuals.

Keywords: Autism, emotion perception, sensitivity to facial and language stimuli, emoji.

Background

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a pervasive neuro-developmental disorder characterized by impairments in social interaction and communication, restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour, and atypical sensitivities (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). With a global prevalence of 1 in 100 children (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023), many autistic individuals face challenges in emotion perception, a critical skill for social interaction and communication (Thaler et al., 2018). Emotion perception, defined as the detection of emotion expressions or states in oneself or others (Whittle, Simmons & Allen, 2017), involves complex cognitive processes such as attention, perception, memory, and language (Whittle, Simmons & Allen, 2017). Emotions guide thoughts and behaviours (Forgas, 1995; Clore & Huntsinger, 2007), and understanding emotions enhances social information processing skills (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001), increases the capacity for healthy social interaction (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001), and affects learning (Desautels, 2016). Improved emotion perception has also been linked to better school performance (Vassiou et al., 2016), highlighting the adaptive advantage of emotion perception (Marinetti et al., 2012). Difficulties in emotion perception experienced by autistic individuals can significantly impact their social relationships and overall well-being.

Measurement of Emotion Perception

Various methods have been employed to measure emotion perception in autistic individuals, but none is universally accepted as the standard (Kerr and Neale, 1993). Facial expression recognition tasks, which present participants with images or videos of faces displaying different emotions and ask them to identify the emotions being expressed, are among these techniques. The use of expression tasks to gauge emotion perception is more appealing because facial expressions are critical sources of information in social interaction (Todorov, 2011). Liu, Schwab, and Hess (2023) assert that facial expressions play a more prominent role among the emotive markers of emotion perception and "faces are arguably the most important biological and social objects in our environment" (Ellis, 1990, p. 114). The Brief Affect Recognition Test (BART; Ekman and Friesen, 1974), Multimodal Emotion Recognition Test (MERT; Bänziger et al., 2009), Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity (PONS; Rosenthal et al., 1979), and Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (DANVA; Nowicki and Carton, 1993) are the most frequently used measures in facial expression recognition tasks.

Vocal emotion recognition tasks, which involve presenting participants with audio recordings of voices expressing different emotions and asking them to identify the emotions being expressed, are another method of measuring emotion perception. Examples of measures used in these tasks include PONS by Rosenthal et al. (1979); DANVA 2 by Nowicki and Duke (2001); MERT by Bänziger et al. (2009); and Vocal Emotion Recognition Test (VERT; Schelinski & von Kriegstein, 2019). These measures frequently differ in the types of emotion stimulus measured, presentation time, and types of emotions, among other factors.

Despite their widespread use in emotion perception studies, these methods have limitations. The BART by Ekman and Friesen (1974) is limited by the short stimuli presentation time of 2 seconds. The emphasis of the measure is therefore more on perceptual speed than on the actual perception of the expressed emotion. A ceiling effect is observed when typical individuals are exposed to emotion stimuli for longer durations (Schräder et al., 2023). The MERT by Bänziger et al. (2009), which utilizes both static and dynamic facial stimuli to evaluate the recognition of 10 emotion expression categories, is constrained by its exclusive use of labeling as the sole method of affect naming. Additionally, the PONS by Rosenthal et al. (1979), which employs stimuli such as faces, voices, and body images and assesses emotion perception from multimodal and dynamic stimuli, is constrained because it only measures two emotions (positive and negative affect) and only uses one method of affect naming. The DANVA by Nowicki and Carton (1993), which utilizes faces of children and adults expressing one of four emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, and fear) that vary between pictures in their intensity levels that correspond to the item difficulty and its revision by Nowicki and Duke (2001), which includes visual and audio items with children encoders, are commonly used measures of emotion perception in individual difference research (e.g., Mayer et al., 2008; Bani et al., 2023; Frolova et al., 2023). The primary drawbacks of the DANVA and its revision are their reliance on a single assessment method (affect naming) and the speeded stimulus exposition.

Challenges in Measuring Emotion Perception in autistic individuals

Despite the availability of various methods, the behavioural measures used to assess emotion perception in autistic individuals may not adequately capture the qualitative differences in their processing of facial emotional information. This is particularly evident in studies showing that

autistic individuals perform better on emotion perception tasks involving cartoons than those involving human faces (Grelotti et al., 2005; Brosnan et al., 2015). Additionally, integrating human faces into cartoons enhanced emotion learning among autistic children (Golan et al., 2010). Furthermore, autistic individuals demonstrated the ability to interpret static cartoon stimuli similarly to their non-autistic peers (Lindner & Rosen, 2006; Rosset et al., 2010).

Many emotion perception measures rely on affect naming, which may be suitable for typically developing individuals but not for autistic individuals with language difficulties. Language difficulties are a diagnostic criterion for ASD, and often the first presenting symptom (Lord & Paul, 1997). For instance, some emotion perception measures require explicit verbal instructions, which may be challenging for autistic individuals with communication deficits. The DANVA, one of the most widely used measures of emotion perception in autistic individuals, involves affect naming and would inherently pose difficulties for those with language sensitivities. Language plays a crucial role in developing emotion perception ability (e.g., Lindquist & Gendron, 2013) by providing context for emotion perception (Lindquist et al., 2015; Brooks et al., 2017). It constructively contributes to emotion perception by enabling the description of highly variable instances of an emotion category in words (Lindquist & Gendron, 2013). Language is associated with conceptual knowledge about the world, derived from past experiences and recreated during perception (Barsalou, 2008). Therefore, individuals with language difficulties are likely to underperform in measures requiring this ability.

Studies on emotion perception in autistic individuals have yielded mixed results. Some studies report impaired emotion perception in autistic individuals compared to their typically developing peers, while others suggest that the ability is intact in the autistic group. For example, Lindner and Rosén (2006) found that children with ASD had more difficulty than their typically developing peers in identifying emotions through static facial expression, dynamic facial expression, and prosody. Additionally, Webb et al. (2006) found that children with ASD had slower electrical brain responses to faces and larger amplitude responses to objects compared to children without ASD. These findings suggest that the patterns of brain responses to faces and objects in autistic individuals are disordered at an early age, and they exhibit a skewed preference for objects over facial stimuli.

However, Nagy et al. (2021) observed that differences in emotion perception between autistic and non-autistic individuals only emerge when stimuli are speeded. When stimuli are not speeded, autistic individuals perform similarly to typically developing individuals on emotion perception tasks. Ozonoff et al.'s (1990) study suggests that emotion perception ability in autistic individuals remains intact when verbal ability is controlled for. Similarly, Wright et al. (2008) found that neither an ASD diagnosis nor the severity of the condition affects the ability to recognize emotions, even though autistic participants tended to be significantly worse at recognizing angry and happy facial expressions. The study also found that unlike the control group, most autistic participants mirrored the facial expression before interpreting it. This signposts the idea that autistic individuals tend to use atypical perceptual processes in extracting emotional expressions from faces (Deruelle et al., 2008; Gaigg, 2012).Autistic individuals may also have difficulty with emotion perception because they may focus on the details of a face rather than the overall expression. This can make it difficult for them to interpret the emotional state of the person they are interacting with.

According to Gaigg (2012), the inconsistencies in the outcomes of studies in emotion perception involving autistic individuals may be a product of the combination of factors such as the nature of the paradigm used, the type or number of emotions studied, or the sample characteristics such as their age and ability level, as well as the procedures used in matching the ASD and comparison group. To address the challenges of measuring emotion perception in autistic individuals, there is the need to develop measures that are sensitive to facial stimuli and language difficulties. Non-speeded measures may also be promising, as autistic individuals tend to perform similarly to controls when time pressure is eliminated.

Emojis are a promising tool to help autistic individuals overcome the challenges they face in emotion perception tasks. They provide a more accessible and less overwhelming way to learn about and identify emotions, especially for those who struggle with affect naming or labeling. This approach is supported by research showing that autistic individuals perform better when cartoons are used in emotion recognition tasks and when verbal ability is controlled for.

The aim of this pilot study was to investigate the feasibility of using emojis to measure emotion perception in autistic individuals. This would lay the groundwork for developing more sensitive and comprehensive emotion perception measures, which can help researchers better understand the challenges faced by autistic individuals and inform the development of effective interventions to improve their emotion perception abilities and social communication skills. Consistent with previous findings that performance in emotion perception improved in autistic individuals when cartoons were used, it was predicted in the current study that emojis would more effectively aid emotion perception than emotion labels in both autistic and typically developing individuals. It was also predicted that there would be a difference between autistic and typically developing individuals in their performance on an emoji-based emotion perception task or a label-based emotion perception task. It was further predicted that the performance of the autistic and typically developing individuals in emotion perception would be associated with their cognitive competences.

Method

Participants: Data was collected at a school at Okota in Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area of Lagos State. The school has a special needs unit and a primary school unit. The data collection was in line with the approved procedures by the Health Research and Ethical Committee of the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos (ref. FNPHY/HREC/2023/001/07/100/B). An opportunistic sample made up of 17 typically developing participants aged from 6 to 11 years and 6 autistic participants aged from 8 to 21 years. The typically developing group was made up of 10 males and 7 females, while the autistic group was made up of 4 males and 2 females. Previous autism diagnosis was used to select the autistic participants. Only participants who were willing and for whom written consents were obtained were used for the study.

Instruments

The instruments used in the pilot study were the Emotion Perception Stimuli Pack (EPSP) and Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM).The EPSP was used to measure emotion perception. The stimuli used for the EPSP were human facial emotional expressions adapted from the database IMPA-FACE3D (VISGRAF, 2012). The database was developed to assist in the research of facial animation and synthesis of faces and expressions. For the purpose of this study, the four

universal expressions proposed by Ekman: happiness, sadness, anger, and fear were used. The original adaptation had 16 photographs from 7 randomly selected faces of actors from the database (4 males and 3 females) aged between 20 and 50 years. They were varied into emojis and emotion labels conditions. The 16 photographs with emotion labels were randomly varied to control for practice effects due to repeated exposure to the stimuli. The photographs were 127mm x 169 mm printed on 210mm x 297mm white copy papers. The backgrounds of the stimulus photographs were black such that it made the faces the most prominent features of the photographs. Also, this minimised other cues that may be relied on for recognizing emotion in everyday life. The participants were required to identify the emotions expressed on each face on the photographs by matching them with the emojis or labels that corresponded with them. 1 point was scored for every correct response and 0 point was scored for every wrong response in each condition. The correct response scores for each participant were summed up to arrive at the emotion perception (EP) score for that participant. The lowest EP score was therefore 0 while the highest EP score was 16 for each condition (Emoji or Label). The scores on both conditions were further added together to arrive at a total score for each participant on the initial EPSP.

The RPM measured the cognitive ability necessary to complete the EPSP task. The RPM had two variants, the Coloured Progressive Matrices (CPM) for children not older than 11 years and Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) for individuals older than 11 years. The scoring of the test was to allocate 1 for a correct response and 0 for a wrong response. The total score was the sum of the correct responses. The CPM had 36 items while the SPC had 60 items.

Procedure

Permission was obtained from the school authorities to conduct the study in the school. Parents of participants were required to provide written consent for their children's participation. Autistic participants' consents were determined by their willingness to participate after parental and school consent. Only participants who were not fussy during testing were included in the study. Six research assistants from the school staff were recruited and trained for the study. They were trained for approximately 40 minutes on the study procedures. The training was conducted during their free time over two days, with the first day for special needs unit caregivers and the second day for primary school unit teachers. During the training, assistants were presented with

samples of the EPSP and RPM, along with sample answer sheets. The EPSP and RPM were each placed in a clear and transparent book folder. Instructions on administering the instruments were provided to the assistants.

The instruments were administered in a quiet room at the school. Special needs unit caregivers administered the instruments individually to participants to avoid distractions, while primary school unit teachers administered them to groups of four pupils, with each pupil responding independently in the testing room. If participants were confused about the instructions, the assistants were to clarify them before continuing. The EPSP was administered first, followed by the RPM. Autistic participants in the special needs units were assisted in entering their answer choices into the answer sheet. They only needed to point to their choice of options. The data was collected over two days. On the first day, data was collected from the special needs unit, and on the second day, data was collected from the primary school unit. This arrangement was made to accommodate the availability of participants and assistants.

The instruments were administered individually to the autistic participants, taking an average of 35 minutes to complete the tasks. Two participants in the autism group expressed distress during testing and refused to continue. Testing was discontinued, and the data already collected from these participants was discarded. Typical children in the primary school, aged between 6 and 11 years, were tested in groups of at least four. If a child expressed anxiety while participating in the study, efforts were made by the assistants to reassure them. However, if the anxiety persisted, the child was excused. Two boys were excluded from the study due to anxiety. A total of 17 typically developing pupils completed the task after 2 hours and 20 minutes from the start of testing. The average time for completion of the two tasks for the typical development children was 22 minutes. After the test, the pupils were thanked for their participation.

Results

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare emotion perception in emojis and labels conditions. The mean and standard deviations are presented in Table 1. The results indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between emotion perception in the emojis condition (M=10.24; SD=2.73) and emotion perception in labels condition (M=5.33; SD=3.08) for typically developing individuals [t (16) = 0.42, p > .05]. Similarly, the results indicate no

statistically significant difference between emotion perception in emojis condition (M=10.24; SD=2.73) and emotion perception in labels condition (M=9,88; SD=2.47) for autistic individuals [t (5) = 1.94, p > .05]. However, there was a trend towards better emotion perception in the emojis condition for both groups.

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of the emotion perception of autistic and typically developing individuals in emojis and labels conditions

Diagnostic groups	Emotion Perception	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Typically developing	Emojis	17	10.24	2.73
	Labels	17	9.88	2.47
Autistic	Emojis	6	5.33	3.08
	Labels	6	4.17	3.71

Also, an independent t- test was used to test if there was a difference between autistic and typically developing individuals in their performance on an emoji-based task or a label-based task of emotion perception. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the performance of autistic and typically developing individuals on both the emoji task [t(21) = 3.67, p = 0.001] and the label task [t(21) = 4.53, p = 0.000]. This means that autistic individuals performed significantly worse on both tasks than typically developing individuals. This suggests that autistic individuals may have difficulty processing both verbal and nonverbal information.

Further analysis to measure if the performance of the autistic and typically developing individuals in emotion perception was associated with their cognitive competences was done using the Pearson correlation. The results indicated that the performance of typically developing individuals in emotion perception was not significantly associated with their cognitive competence measured by the Raven's Progressive Matrices (r = 0.32, p = 0.211) but the performance of autistic individuals in emotion perception was significantly associated with their cognitive competence measured by the Raven's Progressive Matrices (r = 0.96, p = 0.003). These findings suggest that cognitive competence may play a more important role in emotion

perception for autistic individuals than for typically developing individuals. This could be because autistic individuals rely more on cognitive processing to interpret emotions, while typically developing individuals may rely more on intuitive or emotional processing.

The current study's outcomes are not consistent with the finding of Nagy et al. (2021) that observed that differences in emotion perception between autistic and non-autistic individuals exist only when stimuli are speeded. The stimuli in the current study were not speeded yet the groups were different in emotion perception. Also, Ozonoff et al.'s (1990) suggestion that emotion perception ability was intact in autistic individuals when verbal ability was controlled for was not confirmed in this study as, with nonverbal stimuli, autistic individuals performed worse that their typically developing peers in emotion perception. Similarly, Wright et al. (2008) finding that the ability to recognize emotions was neither affected by an ASD diagnosis nor the severity of the condition supported in the current study

However, these outcomes should be considered with caution as it is possible that the lack of a statistically significant difference between the emojis and labels conditions as well as between the autistic and typically developing individuals was due to the small sample size used in the study. More research is needed to confirm these findings. Additionally, it is important to consider the individual variability that exists within both the autistic and typically developing populations in future studies. Also, it is important to note that the study did not control for other factors that could influence the relationship between emotion perception and cognitive competence, such as age, gender, or social experience; and the study did not examine the specific mechanisms by which cognitive competence may influence emotion perception. This can be considered in future studies.

Overall, the study provided evidence that emojis can be used as alternatives to emotion labels in emotion perception tasks and this may have value for differential diagnosis of autistic individuals. Also, cognitive competence may play an important role in emotion perception for autistic individuals.

Conclusion

The study investigated emotion perception in autistic and typically developing individuals using emojis and labels as stimuli. While there was a trend towards better emotion perception in the emojis condition for both groups, no statistically significant difference was found between the emojis and labels conditions, possibly due to the small sample size. However, autistic individuals performed significantly worse than typically developing individuals on both emojis and labels tasks, suggesting difficulties processing both verbal and nonverbal emotional cues. Additionally, emotion perception in typically developing individuals was not significantly associated with cognitive competence, while in autistic individuals, a strong positive correlation was observed, suggesting that cognitive competence may play a more crucial role in emotion perception for autistic individuals compared to typically developing individuals. Further research with larger sample sizes is needed to confirm these findings and explore the specific mechanisms underlying the observed association between cognitive competence and emotion perception.

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THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND MATERIALISTIC VALUES ON FRAUDULENT INTENT AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of personality traits and materialistic value orientation on fraudulent intent among youths. The study was a descriptive survey, and two hundred and forty-three (243) youths, (Mean age = 22.00; SD = 3.19) were selected through a purposive sampling technique from Ile-Ife in Osun State, Nigeria. The respondents responded to a self-report questionnaire measuring fraudulent intent, personality traits and materialistic value orientation. Two hypotheses were tested using multiple regression and Pearson correlation analysis at p≤0.05. The result of the study found that personality traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism) independently and negatively predicted fraudulent intent among youths. The study also found that materialistic value orientation also independently and positively predicted fraudulent intent among youths. The study concluded that personality traits and materialistic value orientation are important factors in fraudulent intent. It is recommended that psychologists should pay adequate attention to the two variables in a bid to reduce intent to commit any fraudulent activities.

Keywords: Fraudulent intent, Personality traits, Materialistic value, Youths

Introduction

Fraudulent-related activities among youths in recent times have continued to be on the high side, and have continued to take different dangerous dimensions, especially in a developing country like Nigeria (Eigbadon & Adejuwon 2015; Shekwolo, et al., 2022; Afachung et al., 2023). This increase is fueled by the mentality of get-rich-quick syndrome that most youths in Nigeria place in their psychic which has continued to drive many of them to engage in different forms of fraudulent activities. Fraud according to Duffield and Grabosky (2001) refers to getting something valuable or avoiding an obligation through deception. Fraud is also considered a trickery that is used to gain an advantage over another person, usually, financially. Fraud can be committed by false representation, fraud by omission, or fraud by abuse of position (The Fraud

Act, 2006). In this study, fraudulent intent is the willingness of an individual to engage in a fraudulent act. Intention, oftentimes is a precursor to the actual behaviour that an individual exhibits, hence understanding intention in relation to fraudulent activities becomes germane in a bid to reduce this menace among youths. Studies such as Ajayi (2003), Adekanmbi & Ukpere (2020), Ametepe, et al.(2023) have all opined that fraud is rampant in almost all areas of the nation in Nigeria, including government parastatals, banking, and educational sector. In Nigeria today, numerous fraudulent activities have been exhibited among youths which include theft, automated teller machine (ATM) hacking, food and drug adulteration, smuggling, human trafficking, kidnapping, drug trafficking, money laundering, advanced fee fraud (419) and the most frequent one known as Internet fraud also called ''Yahoo Yahoo'' in Nigeria (Musa, 2016). Internet fraud is a crime committed online through the use of a computer and a vast network service like the Internet (Attrill-Smith & Wesson, 2020). It involves the use of computers and the Internet to defraud unsuspecting people. There have been many reports of many of these individuals that have defrauded innocent individuals most of whom are foreigners of millions of dollars. It is to be noted that many of the arrests made by the Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and other security agencies across the different states including Osun are mostly youths aged 18 years to 35 years. There have been reports of many of these individuals who have defrauded innocent individuals, mostly foreigners of millions of dollars. In Nigeria, fraudulent acts have destroyed many homes, destroyed many businesses, and dampened the joy of many innocent people (Mansor, 2015; Molokwu, 2022). Many Nigerian youths have also embraced fraud as a way of life, some of whom have also become wealthy along the way, while some have been caught by law enforcement agencies (Tade & Aliyu, 2011). These fraudulent activities have continued to have a serious negative effect on the international image of Nigeria as many foreigners perceive the majority of Nigerians as fraudulent citizens. Also, the society that should perceive Nigerian youths as the leaders of tomorrow has lost hope as a result of many youths' engagement in fraudulent-related activities. Therefore, it is important to explore factors that predispose youths to fraudulent intent. Empirical studies on the antecedent of fraudulent-related activities in Nigeria have largely focused on factors such as self-control, need for achievement (Afachung et al., 2023), amoral behaviour, control climate, job insecurity (Ametepe, et al., 2023), job satisfaction, and perceived managerial trustworthiness (Adekanmbi & Ukpere 2020), peer influence, materialistic value, impulsivity, self-control, age, sex and

highest educational factors (EIgbadon & Adejuwon 2015). Despite the importance of these aforementioned factors, there is little or no study that has investigated the role of materialistic value and personality traits in a single study. This gap in the literature is hoped to be filled by this present study.

The anchoring framework for the current study is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and Routine Activities Theory developed by Cohen and Felson (1979). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) states that what determines the action of a person is their private intention to carry out or not to carry out that action with the postulation that all behaviours are seen as voluntary and under control (Ajzen, 2005; Ajzen, 2006). The theory asserts that perceived behavioural control, attitude, and subjective norm are viewed as the antecedents of an individual's intention. Hence, the traits an individual has as well as the kind of attitude an individual holds toward materialistic value go a long way to determine if youths will have the intention to engage in fraudulent activities or not. The Routine Activities Theory (Cohen &Felson 1979) asserts that the intention to commit a fraudulent act is a combination of an individual's personality, materialistic values and the situation or context (Duffield & Grabosky, 2001). Therefore, this present study tests the assumptions of the two theories by incorporating personality traits and materialistic values as a motivator for youths to have the intention of engaging in fraudulent acts.

Personality, as described by Srivastava and Mishra (2016), is the pattern of thoughts, feelings, social adjustments, and behaviours that are consistently expressed through time and have a significant impact on a person's expectations, perceptions, values, and attitudes. There are five broad domains or dimensions of personality that are used to describe human personality namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness traits (Gosling et al., 2003). Extraversion refers to individuals showing a greater interest in what is happening outside of them. These people enjoy interacting with others and are typically chatty. They find other people's company fascinating and detest being by themselves. Conscientiousness is a personality attribute that represents an individual's inclination to be methodical, well-organized, diligent, and rule-abiding. This personality characteristic relates to how well-organized, disciplined, and risk-taking inclined a person may be. People who possess the conscientious personality attribute tend to act in accordance with their conscience, are

exceedingly cautious and self-disciplined in their interactions with others, methodical in their approach, and aspire to become perfectionists in whatever they do. The personality characteristic known as agreeableness describes a person's propensity to be kind, understanding, amiable, and considerate of other people. It takes into account a person's kindness, dependability, and cooperation. According to Burch and Anderson (2008), agreeable people can overlook their individual inadequacies and are always willing to lend a hand. Their adaptable mindset also makes them a valuable asset in problem-solving situations where everyone wins, (Cattell & Mead, 2008). Individuals who score highly on agreeableness scores are generally more likely to act in the interests of the group rather than their own. Neuroticism refers to an individual's tendency to be emotionally sensitive to others and to feel negative emotions such as worry, fear, sadness, frustration, anger, depression, stress, and self-blame. Openness to experience describes a person's propensity to seek out and value novel experiences, ideas, feelings, and ideals. It describes characteristics like the propensity to follow social or cultural norms, the degree to which one thinks practically or abstractly, and the degree to which one is adaptable or resistant to change. Therefore, it can be postulated that certain personality traits may predispose youths to have the intention of engaging in fraudulent activities while certain traits may not predispose youth toward having the intention of engaging in fraudulent acts.

Empirical studies on the influence of personality on fraudulent intention behaviour have been established in the literature. For instance, Ishola et al. (2021) explored personality traits as one of the variables used in their study on fraudulent intent behaviour among bank employees in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study found that only conscientiousness trait predicted negatively fraudulent intent. Yet in another study done by Fasanmi et al. (2015), they explored personality as a psychosocial factor that can influence attitudes towards Internet fraud. The study found that psychoticism, neuroticism and extraversion were not independent predictors of youths' attitudes towards Internet fraud in Benue State. Shekwolo et al. (2022) examined the relationship between personality dynamics and some other variables on criminal behaviour among undergraduate students. The study found that only agreeableness and conscientiousness have positive independent predictions on criminal behaviour among the sampled respondents. Eze (2021) found that personality traits have a significant influence on students' antisocial behaviour. Buyl et al. (2017) found that narcissism was linked with entrepreneur fraud and risky managerial

behaviour. Chirumbolo (2017) found that conscientiousness trait was associated with dysfunctional jobs and antisocial behaviour. Clower and Bothwell (2016) found that criminals were more likely to have low scores on conscientiousness and that low conscientiousness scores were significantly related to vandalism. Fuller (2017) reported significant relationships between the personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience and criminal behaviour. Based on the empirical review, it was hypothesised that:

H_1. - Personality traits significantly predict fraudulent intent among youth.

Another variable that is of importance to this study is materialistic value. According to Mukherjee (2016), materialism is the controllable desire, independent of social, spiritual, or cultural norms, to pursue or obtain wealth and other material possessions that provide physical comfort. According to Kasser (2018), materialism is a psychological construct that expresses how much a person values acquiring wealth, material belongings, prestige, and image above other life goals. According to Eigbadon and Adejuwon (2015), materialism is an attitude that places a high value on acquiring material belongings. It also suggests that having possessions is a way to achieve happiness and life satisfaction, as well as a way to gauge achievement and be used for social comparison. According to Fasanmi et al. (2015), materialism is linked to undesirable traits like greed, possessiveness, envy, a lack of generosity, and jealousy. According to Rotimi et al. (2013), materialism has permeated every aspect of Nigerian society and is practised by all age groups and social classes, including the youth. It may be said that when youths believe that it is important in life to acquire material wealth i.e. money, cars, houses etc, such individuals may have the intention of embracing fraudulent acts in a bid to achieve all this material wealth at all cost. Empirical evidence relating to materialistic value and fraudulent intent has been established in the literature. For example, Afachung et al. (2023) investigated self-control, materialism, and need for achievement as predictors of cybercrime behaviour among youths in Ibadan metropolis. The study found that materialism positively predicted cybercrime behaviour. Adekanmbi and Ukpere (2020) in their study explored some psychological factors which include materialism on attitude towards fraudulent behaviour. The study found that materialism strongly predicted attitudes towards fraudulent behaviour. In another similar study, Idom and Tormusa (2016) found that materialism was found as an antecedent of cybercrime among 384 participants. Idom and Tormusa (2016) found that

materialism was found as an antecedent of cybercrime among 384 participants. Eigbadon and Adejuwon (2015) investigated some selected psychosocial factors as predictors of internet fraud behaviour among 986 youth. The study found that materialistic value negatively and independently predicted Internet fraud behaviour among the study population. Swader (2016) found that materialistic individuals are indeed the most supportive of fraud and bribery while non-materialistic individuals did not support fraud. Lui et al. (2010) found a strong association between materialism and fraudulent behaviours. Based on the empirical evidence, we hypothesised that:

H_2. –Materialistic value significantly predicts fraudulent intent among youth.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

The study is a quantitative descriptive survey research design conducted among youth in Nigeria. Participants were purposively drawn from Ile-Ife, one of the urban cities in Osun State. The researcher enlightened the participants on the purpose of the study and emphasised the confidentiality of their respective data. Also, respondents were assured that they could withdraw from the study anytime they so wished without fear of intimidation. All participants signed the informed consent form which was attached to each questionnaire. All ethical protocols were adhered to under the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation and the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. A total number of 300 copies of questionnaires were administered, of these, 243 (Female =121; Male =122) were returned, representing 81% response rate. The returned questionnaires were coded, cleaned and used for data analysis. The mean age of the respondents was 22.00years with a standard deviation of 3.19. Their marital status distribution shows that majority 225(92.7%) were single, 17(7.0%) were married, while only 1(.4%) was a widow. Their religion affiliation shows that 168(69.1%) practiced Christianity, 71(29.2%) practiced Islam while 4(1.6%) were traditional worshipper. Their educational affiliation shows that 61(25.1%) had Primary/Secondary, 80(20.2%) had NCE/OND, 96(39.5%) had Degree/HND, 5(2.1%) had M.sc while 1(.4%) had PhD.

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part elicited the following from the respondents, namely: the demographic factors including age, gender, marital status, religious affiliation and educational qualification before completing a self-measure of fraudulent intent, materialistic value and personality traits.

Fraudulent Intent Scale

Fraudulent Intent Scale was measured using the 5-item corrupt tendencies scale developed by Harrison, et al. (2018). The instrument is designed to measure fraudulent tendencies among individuals. The scale was on a 5-point Likert rating scale ranging from 1= strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. A sample of the scale reads: "If I were the person, I would misappropriate the money". High scores indicated high fraudulent intent while low scores showed low fraudulent intent. The author reported a reliability of .83 while in this study a Cronbach alpha of .73 was reported.

Materialistic Value Scale

Materialistic value was measured using the 18-item Materialistic Value Scale developed by Richins and Dawson (2004). The scale was developed to ascertain an individual's levels of materialistic value. The scale was scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale which ranges from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. A sample of the scale reads: "Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions''. It is scored in a way that higher scores on the scale are interpreted as an individual having higher materialistic value while low scores mean having low materialistic value. The author reported a reliability of .50 while in this study a Cronbach alpha of .75 was reported.

Personality Traits Scale

Personality trait was measured using the brief 10-item Personality Trait Scale developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). The scale is a short form of the 44-item personality traits used to measure individual unique traits. The traits have five dimensions namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Items 1R and 5 measured extraversion, items 2 and 7R measured agreeableness, items 3R and 8 measured conscientiousness, items 4R and 9 measured neuroticism while 5R and 10 measured openness to experience. The scale was scored on a 5-point Likert rating scale ranging from 1= strongly agree

to 5=strongly disagree. The R means that the item was reversed scored. High score on the scale means high traits while low scores mean low traits. The Cronbach alphas for these traits in this study are .56 for extraversion, .38 for agreeableness, .51 for conscientiousness, .80 for neuroticism and .78 for openness to experience.

Data analysis

IBM® SPSS® Statistics 24 was used to analyse the data. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For the descriptive analysis, means, frequency and percentages were used to analyse respondents' demographic characteristics while inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses in the study. All analyses were carried out at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Before the main analysis, assumptions of normality and multi-collinearity were checked. The normality was checked using the skewness and kurtosis indices. The skewness between the study variables ranges between -.13 and .54, while the kurtosis was between -.10 to -1.02. These values were within the threshold of +3 and -3 as suggested by Field (2005). This indicates that the data is normally distributed. The multi-collinearity was checked using the Tolerance Value and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The tolerance value in this data set ranges from .60 to .86 while the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was 1.15 to 1.66 which were within the threshold recommended value of 10 (VIF) and .20 above (Tolerance value) given by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). This shows that there is no multi-collinearity issue in the study data.

Test of relationships among the study variables

Prior to hypothesis testing, bivariate correlations were computed to know the extent and direction of relationships between the study variables. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:Descriptive Statistics and Inter-correlations between study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Materialistic value	47.50	5.73	1						
2. Extraversion	6.34	1.23	.19**	1					
3. Agreeableness	4.78	1.24	-.31	.28**	1				
4. Conscientiousness	5.02	1.43	-.12	-03	.35**	1			
5. Neuroticism	6.09	0.94	.06	.14*	.10	.02	1		
6. Openness	4.75	1.13	-.13*	.12	.06			1	
7. Fraudulent intent	15.66	3.69	.55**	.15*	-.43**	.31**	.49**	.02	1
						-.32**	-.27**		

*p < .05. **p < .01

The results of Table 1 revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between materialistic value and fraudulent intent [r(241) = .55, p<.01]. The results indicate that youths who reported a high level of mmaterialistic value tend to engage in high fraudulent intent. The result also showed that there was a significant positive relationship between extraversion and fraudulent intent [r(241) = .15, p<.05]. This implies that when youth report high levelsof extraversion they tend to engage in high levels of fraudulent intent. Also, there was a significant negative association between agreeableness and fraudulent intent [r(241) = -.43, p<.01]. The results indicate that youths who reported high levels of agreeableness tend to experience low levels of fraudulent intent. There was also a significant negative link between conscientiousness and [r(241) = -.43, p<.01].   This implies that youths who reported high levels of conscientiousness tend to have low levels of fraudulent intent. Also, there was a significant negative relationship between neuroticism and fraudulent intent[r(241) = -.27, p<.01].   The results indicate that youths who reported high levelsof neuroticism tend to experience low levels of fraudulent intent.   Finally, openness to experience did not have any relationship with fraudulent intent among youths[r(241) = .02, p>.05].

Test of hypotheses

H1:   There is a significant independent predictive role of personality traits on fraudulent intent among youths.

H2:   There is a significant independent predictive role of materialistic value on fraudulent intent among youths.

The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. Since openness to experience trait did not have any relationship with fraudulent intent in the zero-order correlation, it was stepped down and was not entered into the regression model. Table 2 shows the multiple regression analysis showing the predicting strength of the study variables on fraudulent intent.

Table 2: Multiple regression analysisof the predictive role of materialistic value, personality traits on fraudulent intent

Predictor Variables	Standardized Coefficients			95% Confidence Interval (CI)	
	Beta (β)	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Materialistic value	.46	9.15	<.01	.23	.36
Extraversion	-.03	-.73	>.05	-.40	.88
Agreeableness	-.20	-3.77	<.05	-.93	-.29
Conscientiousness	-.18	-3.64	<.05	-.74	-.22
Neuroticism	-.21	-4.49	<.05	-1.21	-.45
R=.67, R²=46, F(5,237)=40.52					

Dependent Variable: Fraudulent intent

Table 2 shows that materialistic value significantly predicted fraudulent intent (β = .46, t = 9.15, 95% CI = [.23, .36]. Extraversion trait did not predict fraudulent intent (β =.-.03, t = -.73, 95% CI = [-.40, .88]. Agreeableness also predicted fraudulent intent (β = -.20, t = -3.77, 95% CI = [-.93, -.29]. Also, Conscientiousness predicted fraudulent intent (β = -.18, t = -3.64, 95% CI = [-.74, -.22]. Neuroticism also predicted fraudulent intent among youths (β = -.21, t = -4.49, 95% CI = [-1.21, -.45]. Furthermore, the variables (materialistic value, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism) jointly predicted fraudulent intent [F(5,237) = 40.52; R²=.46, p<0.05]. The R²=.46 shows that the variables contribute 46% of the total variance of fraudulent intent from the combination of the independent variables (materialistic value and personality traits). The stated hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussion

Results from hypothesis one revealed that personality traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism) had significant independent and negative predictions on youths' fraudulent intent. This study finding is consistent with previous studies (Fuller 2017; Ishola et al. 2021; Shekwolo et al. 2022;Eze 2021; Chirumbolo, 2017) which found that personality traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism) negatively predicted fraudulent intent. The study finding was also in accordance with Clower and Bothwell (2016) who found that criminals were more likely to have low scores on conscientiousness and that low conscientiousness scores were significantly related to vandalism. The study finding was not in accordance with Fasanmi et al. (2015) who, in their study, found that psychoticism, Neuroticism and extraversion did not independently predict youths' attitudes towards Internet fraud. The reason for the findings may be unconnected to the fact that youths who are high on agreeableness tend to be compassionate and caring to others, hence they may not see the need to have the intention of engaging in fraudulent activities toward other individuals. Also, youths with high conscientiousness always tend to feel responsible and industrious such that they are busy with worthwhile activities that will make a name for themselves rather than having the intention of engaging in fraudulent acts against someone. Youths with high neuroticism are sensitive to interpersonal relationships, hence they may channel their emotional instability to other activities rather than having the intention of engaging in fraudulent related activities.

Also, as postulated in the second hypothesis, materialistic value independently and positively predicted youths' fraudulent intent. This implies that youths who perceive high materialistic value tend to have increased fraudulent intent. These findings agreed with the results of Afachung et al.2023; Adekanmbi and Ukpere 2020; Idom and Tormusa 2016;Swader 2016 which found that materialism positively predicts fraudulent intent. The study findings align with Lui et al. (2010) who found a strong association between materialism and fraudulent behaviours. This finding is not in accordance with a study done by Eigbadon and Adejuwon (2015) who found that materialistic value negatively and independently predicted Internet fraud behaviour among the study population. The reason for this finding may be unconnected to the high value that some youths place on materialistic things such as cars, houses, money etc. Hence, they do anything to

get this material wealth which may include having the thought of engaging in fraudulent acts in a bid to get this material wealth.

Conclusion, Implications and Future Directions

The study has been able to contribute to knowledge by examining the independent impacts of personality traits and materialistic value on fraudulent intent among youths in Nigeria. The findings concluded that personality traits and materialistic values are important psychological variables that contribute to unique variance in fraudulent acts amongst youths. This implies that adequate attention must be given to these important variables in a bid to reduce fraudulent intent. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the personality profile of youth should be taken into account, traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism should be highly nurtured among youths. This may help discourage the intention to engage in any fraudulent activities. The study also recommends that psychologists should re-orientate and rebuild the value system of hard work, placing less emphasis on the acquisition of material wealth. This also in a way can help reduce the level of intention toward engaging in fraudulent acts among the youths. Theoretically, the findings lend support to, and also highlight the importance of using Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980) and Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson 1979) to explain how personality traits and materialistic value predict youths' fraudulent intent. The two theories lend support and also further build, by incorporating an individual's personality and materialistic value, as important personal and contextual factors that can explain variance in fraudulent intent among youths.

This study has some limitations. First, data was collected using self-reported measures, as it is known that self-reported measures are often riddled with bias as a result of the social desirability effect (Podsakoff et al.,2003). The second limitation is the inability to actualise causality among study variables as a result of the descriptive survey design that was utilised in the study. Lastly, only one setting (Ile-Ife) was used in the study which may limit the generalisation of results to other settings in Osun State, and Nigeria as a whole. It is recommended that future studies incorporate qualitative methods in a bid to reduce the level of bias and to improve the robustness of the study findings. Also, an experimental study may be incorporated by future studies in a bid to actualise causality among study variables. Lastly, two or more settings may be used for a study of this nature in a bid to improve the result generalisation.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHIZOPHRENIA AND QUALITY OF LIFE: THE ROLES OF PSYCHIATRIC SYMPTOMS AND SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORSIN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Although the cognitive and behavioural effects of schizophrenia are well-known, there is still less research on how it specifically affects the quality of life, especially in the distinct cultural and socio-economic setting of Nigeria. This study explored the relationship between socio-demographic variables, psychiatric symptoms, and the quality of life among individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia in Nigeria. A cross-sectional design was employed, involving 137 persons, ages 18 -45 (mean age = 31.0; SD = 1.07), living with schizophrenia from a Nigerian psychiatric hospital. Data was collected using the World Health Organisation's Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF) Questionnaire to assess quality of life purposively. Socio-demographic variables, psychiatric symptoms, and quality of life were analysed using descriptive and Pearson correlation matrix. The study revealed that over 47% of participants perceived their quality of life as poor, while 19.7% considered it good. Approximately 21.2% exhibited a high quality of life. Gender, marital status, level of education, residence type, and family history were associated with quality of life and psychiatric symptoms. Notably, gender (r = -0.26, p < .01) showed an inverse relationship with quality of life, while marital status exhibited a positive (r = 0.43, p < .01) while being inversely related to the quality of life (r = -0.17, p < .05). Religion correlated inversely with psychiatric symptoms(r = -0.34, p < .01). Level of education was negatively correlated with psychiatric symptoms (r = -0.26, p < .01) and quality of life (r = -

0.53, p < .01). Furthermore, the rural residence was associated with higher psychiatric symptoms (r = -0.47, p < .05) and quality of life (r = -0.21, p < .05), while age of onset for schizophrenia is only correlated with quality of life (r = 0.21, p < .05).Similarly, only quality of life is significantly associated with family history (r = -0.48, p < .01), average length of episode (r = -0.24, p < .01), and medical comorbid (r = 0.25, p < .01), while none of the three had significant relationship with psychiatric symptoms. Finally, psychiatric symptoms were also found to have a significant relationship with quality of life. The study concludes that socio-demographic factors and clinical variables significantly influence this population's quality of life and psychiatric symptoms. These findings emphasise the multifaceted nature of schizophrenia's impact on quality of life and highlight the need for tailored interventions to enhance the QoL of this group.

Keywords: Nigeria, Psychiatric Symptoms, Quality of Life, Schizophrenia, Socio-demographic Variables, WHOQOL-BREF.

Introduction

Schizophrenia, a chronic and severe neurological disorder, is characterised by distorted thinking, emotions, and behavioural patterns often manifesting as hallucinations, delusions, and cognitive challenges (Ezeme, 2013). Its impact reaches far beyond the confines of cognitive and behavioural symptoms, often eroding the quality of life (QoL) of those affected. Understanding the nuances of how schizophrenia interacts with the QoL is essential for any comprehensive mental health framework. Moreover, how this interaction is mediated or moderated by psychiatric symptoms and socio-demographic factors remains an area requiring deeper investigation. According to Verdugo et al. (2005), QoL is a multidimensional construct that has been defined in various ways by different authors.The World Health Organisation (WHO), defined QoLas "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns" (Ogundare et al., 2021). According to Desalegn et al. (2020), QoL is the degree to which an individual is able to satisfy their important personal needs.

Schizophrenia is a severe mental illness that affects an individual's ability to think, feel, and behave clearly. A Nigerian study by Makanjuola et al. (2005) found that during the course of their illness, people with major mental illnesses like schizophrenia exhibit notably positive

subjective QoL and social outcomes in various domains of their lives. However, it is important to recognise that the domain of social interactions—including factors like marital and professional status—appears to stray from this upward trend. A study conducted by Shehu et al. (2023) revealed a negative association between general psychopathology and negative symptoms and the overall Quality of Life. Significant negative relationships were discovered between a number of QoL variables and medication adherence in a Nigerian study (Galuppi et al., 2010).

According to Adewuya and Makanjuola (2009), 21.2% of people living with schizophrenia reported a "good" QoL, while 36.4% reported a poor quality of life in Lagos. Mapatwana et al. (2019) reported a significantly higher (>50%) percentage in South Africa. Furthermore, Afe et al. (2019) reported that QoL correlates with factors such as service offered by the facilities. Meanwhile, Mapatwana et al. (2019) suggested that certain variables, such as psychiatric symptoms, significantly predict the QoL among people living with schizophrenia.

In Nigeria, a country with a rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and socioeconomic variances, the narrative becomes even more intricate. While several studies have evaluated the association between QoL and schizophrenia, a noticeable dearth of research is contextualised to the unique Nigerian setting. Socio-demographic factors, including education, income level, and religious beliefs play pivotal roles in influencing health outcomes and the perceived QoL. In addition, the interplay of these factors with psychiatric symptoms presents a complex picture that necessitates a tailored exploration. This study sought to bridge this gap and shed light on the association between QoL and psychiatric symptoms in individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia in Nigeria. Furthermore, it attempted to understand how specific socio-demographic characteristics influence this association, providing a holistic understanding that can inform patient-centred care strategies for this population.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a significant relationship between socio-demographic variables (age, gender, religion, education, residency type) and quality of life (QoL) among people living with schizophrenia.

2. Psychiatric symptoms (age of onset, length of episode, family history, medical comorbidity), significantly influence the quality of life (QoL) of people living with schizophrenia.

Methods

This study utilised a cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between Socio-demographic variables and psychiatric symptoms on the quality of life (QoL) among individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia in Nigeria. The study was conducted among individuals who had received a diagnosis of schizophrenia in Nigeria for at least one year. A total of 173 registered patients in the study setting (Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC)) at the time of the study constituted the population size. The sample size of 137 participants is considered adequate for a study focused on socio-demographic characteristics and psychiatric symptoms on QoL among people living with schizophrenia in Nigeria. Given the total registered patient population of 173, the sample constitutes approximately 79% of the potential study population, which is a substantial proportion, enhancing the representativeness of the findings.

Sampling Procedure

The Ethics and Research Committee of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC) approved the study protocol. The sampling approach adopted here is a form of convenience sampling combined with purposive sampling. Patients diagnosed with schizophrenia were targeted (purposive), and from those available and meeting the study criteria during the study period, participants were chosen (convenience). This method ensures that the sample is specific to the study's focus while also being practical in terms of recruitment.

A total of 173 patients were found to have had prior diagnoses of schizophrenia during the research period. Thirteen of these individuals had their last hospital admission lasting less than six months, and twenty-one of them had been ill for less than a year when they were eliminated from the study. Two patients declined to participate after the purpose of the study and data confidentiality were explained to each of the other patients. As a result, 137 patients consented to participate in the research.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The study's inclusion criteria include persons who are at least 18 years old, have been diagnosed with schizophrenia, and have had the disorder for at least one year. Additionally, it is required that individuals have experienced a hospitalisation lasting a minimum of six months during their most recent episode. In contrast, the exclusion criteria specify that those who are under the age of 18, have an illness duration of less than one year, or have had a hospital admission of less than six months are not included.

Instruments

Socio-demographics

The socio-demographic information of the study sample was collected except for their identifiers. This was to ensure confidentiality and data privacy. However, details such as age, gender, marital status, religion, ethnicity, level of education, occupation, residence type (urban or rural), age of illness onset, family history (whether the illness is hereditary or not), average length of episode, psychiatric symptoms, and medical comorbid were collected.

Quality of Life

The 26-item World Health Organisation's Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF) was used to assess quality of life. It is a well-structured self-report instrument based on four domains of QoL. The scale includes items 3–26 that are divided into two categories: (i) four domains that reflect "Psychological Health" (six items), consisting of "positive feelings, spirituality/personal beliefs, 'thinking, learning, memory and concentration', bodily image and appearance, self-esteem, negative feelings". (ii) "Physical Health" (seven items) that consists of "energy, fatigue, mobility, sleep, activities of daily living, and work capacity".

The three components that make up "Social Relationships" are social support, sexual activity, and personal relationships. Freedom, security, physical safety, and the physical environment (noise, traffic, pollution, and climate) are the eight items under "Environment". Monetary resources, include opportunities to acquire new skills and information, chances to engage in leisure and entertainment, the home environment, the quality and accessibility of health and social services, and transportation. Additionally, two variables (items 1 and 2) that are related to

an individual's "Overall perception of quality of life" and "Overall perception of health" are examined separately.

Patients were asked to score many elements of their lives, including their quality of life and condition of health, during the course of the preceding two weeks. Each item's responses are provided on a Likert-type scale from '1 to 5', with '1' being the least agreement and '5' the maximum level of agreement with a specific proposition. Upon analysis, items 3, 4, and 26 were rephrased and presented in a negative manner. The calculation of the result involved utilising four areas of quality of life, as well as two specific items that served as indicators for the overall perception of health and quality of life. The domain score was computed by taking the average values associated with each item within the domain. The outcomes of each item were summed to obtain the results in each domain. A higher cumulative score within a specific domain suggested a greater quality of life. Here, the sum of the item ratings for each of the 26 items yielded the total. The overall score of the respondents served as the basis for the study's scoring system, which determined their quality of life.

The psychometric properties of the four domains, as reported by Ilić et al. (2019), were 0.896. Internal reliability for all domains was above 0.70, except for the "Social Relationships" domain (0.533). Also, Onwuekwe et al. (2015) conducted a study among adult Nigerians with epileptic seizures. They reported that the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire used in the study had been shown to have good reliability and psychometric validity, which are key properties of a quality-of-life questionnaire. The current study found a reliability coefficient of 0.90 Cronbach Alpha for the four domains; however, all 26 items were also checked for scale reliability, and the Cronbach Alpha was still statistically high (0.897), indicating that the tool was fit for use among people living with schizophrenia.

Data Analysis

Data collected in the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, figures, and tables were used to describe the participants. Inferential statistics such as zero-order correlation and hierarchical regression were used to test the hypothesis, all with a programme of IBM/SPSS 27.0.

Results

Examining the perception and prevalence of quality of life among the study sample

This objective was achieved using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. However, to further determine the prevalence of their response distribution, the mean and standard deviations were used. Results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1:

Perception of Quality of Life among Schizophrenic Patients

Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Poor	65	47.4
No significant difference	45	32.8
Good	27	19.7

Note: *sample size (N) = 137*

Results in Table 1 show that a larger proportion (47.4%) of the study population currently perceived their quality of life as poor (by reporting either very poor '1' or poor '2' in the assessment tool), while 45 (32.8%) reported that there was no significant difference in their quality of life (by reporting neither poor nor good '3'). The other 27 (19.7%) of the population reported that their quality of life had been good (by reporting good '4' or very good '5'). This indicated that only 19.7% of the population thought that their quality of life was currently good, while the larger proportion of 80.2% thought that their current quality of life was either poor or observing no difference.

Table 2:

Prevalence of quality of life among the study sample

Categories	Frequencies	Percentages	Mean	SD
Low	14	10.2		
Normal	94	68.6		
High	29	21.2		
QoL	137	100	2.03	0.63

Note: *N = 137*

The data presented in Table 2 shed light on the prevalence of QoL categories within the study cohort, consisting of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia. It is pertinent to note that the stratification of participants into "Low," "Normal," and "High" QoL groups was achieved through a meticulous statistical analysis. Specifically, calculating each participant's mean QoL score was the basis for their placement within these categories. That is, the average score for each participant was ascertained; after this, the mean score and standard deviation (SD) for all participants were computed, and the categorisation was then determined using the equation:

Mean ± SD = 2.03 ± 0.63.

Low QoL = 2.03 - 0.63 = 1.4;

High QoL = 2.03 + 0.63 = 2.66; and

Normal QoL = 1.41 to 2.65.

Individuals with an average score of ≤ 1.4 were categorised as low, while individuals with average scores ≥ 2.66 were categorised as high; all other scores fell within the normal range. See Figure 1 below for a graphical illustration.
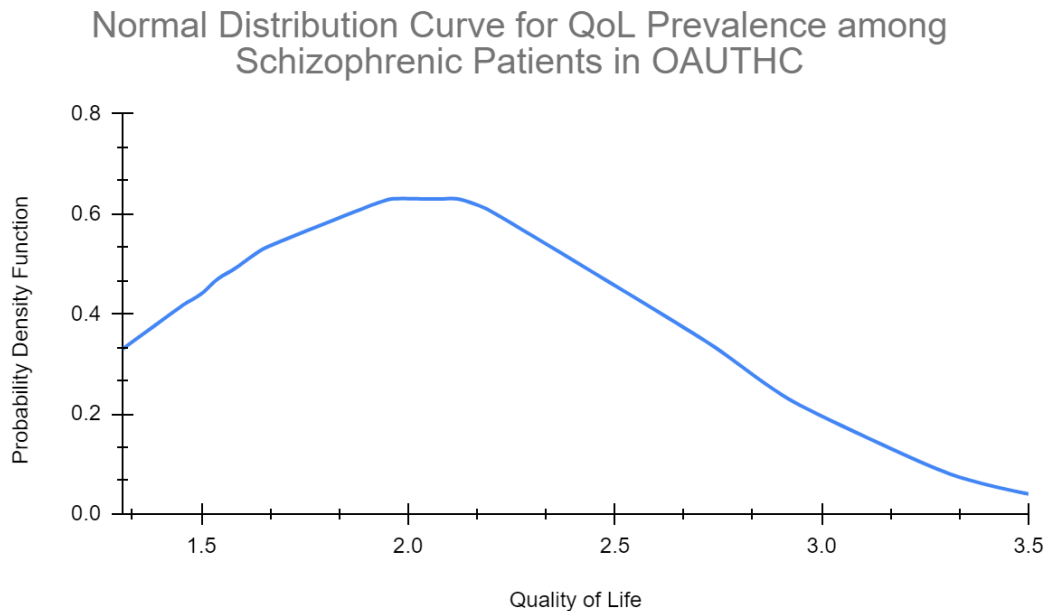
Figure 1: *Normal Distribution Curve of prevalent quality of life among study participants*.

Results show that approximately 10.2% of the study sample exhibited a discernible "Low" quality of life, while the preponderance of study participants, encompassing 68.6%, fell within the ambit of "Normal" quality of life. Finally, 21.2% of the study sample manifested a "High" quality of life. The existence of a subset reporting a "High" quality of life is especially heartening, underscoring the prospect for individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia to experience a relatively elevated level of QoL. It underscores the necessity of comprehensive care strategies and interventions that can contribute to an augmented sense of well-being.

Hypothesis Testing

The researchers aimed to investigate whether there is some form of relationship between the socio-demographic variables, the psychiatric symptoms of each participant, and QoL among the study participants. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3:

Correlation matrix showing the relationships between Socio-demographic Variables, Psychiatric Symptoms and Quality of Life among people living with schizophrenia.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Age	–											
Gender	.13	–										
Marital Status	.25**	-.09	–									
Religion	-.13	.15	-.47**	–								
Education	.18*	.32**	.31**	-.03	–							
Residency Type	-.07	.31**	.004	-.03	.29**	–						
Age of onset	-.40**	-.30**	-.35**	-.14	-.34**	.29**	–					
Length of Episode	.26**	-.20*	.09	.14	.15	.10	-.04	–				
Family History	.15	-.18*	.42**	-.07	.34**	.68**	.05	.32**	–			
Medical Comorbid	-.05	-.12	-.28**	.13	-.39**	.25**	.14	-.08	.32**	–		
Psychiatric Symptoms	.04	-.01	.43**	-.34**	-.26**	-.47**	-.16	-.17	-.004	-.06	–	
QoL	-.06	-.26**	-.17*	.50	-.53**	-.21*	.21*	-.48**	-.24**	.25**	.32**	–

** Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 3 reveal the existing relationships among the study variables.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between socio-demographic variables (age, gender, religion, education, residency type) and quality of life (QoL) among people living with schizophrenia.

The findings show that gender had a significant inverse relationship ($r = -0.26$, $p < .01$) with quality of life. Also, results revealed that marital status had a significant positive relationship ($r =$

0.43, p < .01) while being inversely related to quality of life (r = -0.17, p < .05). Furthermore, results revealed that religion had a significant inverse relationship with psychiatric symptoms (r = -0.34, p < .01), while the relationship with quality of life was positive, but not statistically significant. It was found that level of education was negatively correlated with psychiatric symptoms (r = -0.26, p < .01) and quality of life (r = -0.53, p < .01). The implication is that the higher the level of education, the lower the exhibition of psychiatric symptoms. The results further show that where the participants reside, whether a rural settlement or urban, was significantly related to psychiatric symptoms (r = -0.47, p <.05) and quality of life (r = -0.21, p < .05). Further investigation is warranted in future studies to examine the relationship between education level and quality of life. It is anticipated that a positive correlation exists, indicating that higher levels of education are connected with higher quality of life. However, the participant's current health condition may reflect their satisfaction with the quality of life they report, as it may not be satisfactory for them, thereby alternating their report in that variable. Based on the significant relationships observed between gender, marital status, education level, and residency type with QoL, Hypothesis 1 is accepted. These socio-demographic variables significantly influence the QoL among people living with schizophrenia, going in the direction predicted by the researcher.

Hypothesis 2: Psychiatric symptoms (age of onset, length of episode, family history, medical comorbidity), significantly influence the quality of life (QoL) of people living with schizophrenia.

The result reveal that age of onset for schizophrenia correlated only with quality of life (r = 0.21, p < .05). Similarly, only quality of life was significantly associated with family history (r = -0.48, p < .01), average length of episode (r = -0.24, p < .01), and medical comorbid (r = 0.25, p < .01), while none of the three had significant relationship with psychiatric symptoms. Finally, psychiatric symptoms were also found to have a significant relationship with quality of life. Given the significant relationships observed between psychiatric symptoms and QoL, particularly with the age of onset, family history, and medical comorbidity, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. These psychiatric symptoms significantly influence the QoL of individuals with schizophrenia, aligning with the researcher's predictions.

Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the association between quality of life (QoL) and psychiatric symptoms in individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia in Nigeria and to understand how specific socio-demographic characteristics influence this association. The study sought to provide a holistic understanding of the factors affecting the QoL among people living with schizophrenia, which can inform patient-centred care strategies for this population within the unique Nigerian context. The findings of the study are consistent with existing literature, shedding light on the perception and prevalence of QoL among people living with schizophrenia. This section delves into the implications of the results and their alignment with previous research.

The study revealed that approximately 21% of the participants reported having a good quality of life; on the other hand, over 47% reported their quality of life as poor. These results support the research of Adewuya and Makanjuola (2009), who found that over 21% of participants in their study had a similar opinion of their QoL. The study also sought to identify the prevailing levels of QoL within the sample, and it was found that over 21% of the participants exhibited a high quality of life. This finding aligns with the observations made by Adewuya and Makanjuola (2009) and Mapatwana et al. (2019). Nevertheless, it is important to note that Mapatwale et al. (2019) found a higher prevalence of high quality of life. This disparity may be attributed to variations in study settings, populations studied, and the types of care received, which can significantly influence numerical differences in QoL perceptions. The congruence between the study's findings and previous research underscores the consistency of perceptions regarding QoL among people living with schizophrenia. Despite potential variations in study contexts, the prevalence of individuals reporting good or high QoL is generally similar across these studies. This suggests that the subjective assessment of QoL is a robust indicator that transcends different research settings and populations.

This study's second goal was to investigate the connections between different socio-demographic variables, psychiatric symptoms, and the QoL for persons living with schizophrenia. The investigation produced a number of interesting conclusions. First, there was a notable negative correlation between gender and QoL. The present discovery is consistent with earlier research (Berthelot et al., 2020; Dong et al., 2020; Louis et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2021) that have documented variations in quality of life between genders among individuals diagnosed with

schizophrenia. These studies suggest that gender-related factors may influence the perception of well-being in this population. Secondly, marital status displayed a significant positive relationship but was inversely related to QoL. While this may seem contradictory, it resonates with the complex nature of marital status among people living with schizophrenia. Past research (Peng et al., 2021) has shown that marriage can provide emotional support and stability, positively affecting overall well-being. However, the inverse relationship with quality of life could be attributed to factors such as caregiver burden or marital conflicts (Umair et al., 2022; Masoomi et al., 2023). Further investigation is warranted to understand these dynamics.

Thirdly, religion showed a significant inverse relationship with psychiatric symptoms. This aligns with existing literature (Farouhari et al., 2019;Berthelot et al., 2020; Thomas & Barbato, 2020), highlighting the potential therapeutic role of religious beliefs and practices in managing psychiatric symptoms. However, while positive, the relationship with quality of life did not reach statistical significance. The intricate relationship between religiosity, symptoms, and well-being requires further exploration. Furthermore, level of education demonstrated a negative correlation with both psychiatric symptoms and quality of life. These findings corroborate existing research (Berthelot et al., 2020), indicating that higher education levels are associated with better symptom management.

Additionally, the participant's place of residence, whether rural or urban, exhibited significant associations. Rural settlement was significantly related to higher psychiatric symptoms and lower QoL. These findings resonate with prior research (Desalegn et al., 2020), highlighting the disparities in mental health services and living conditions between rural and urban areas. The challenges faced by people living with schizophrenia in rural settings may contribute to their lower well-being. On the other hand, age of onset for schizophrenia was only correlated with quality of life, indicating that the timing of illness onset may have implications for overall well-being. This finding aligns with studies (Farouhari et al., 2019; Berthelot et al., 2020; Desalegn et al., 2020) suggesting that earlier onset of schizophrenia may lead to poorer quality of life outcomes.

Moreover, family history, average length of episode, and medical comorbidities displayed significant associations with quality of life, while none of these variables were significantly related to psychiatric symptoms. This highlights how these elements have a distinct effect on how each person perceives their QoL. These results are consistent with earlier research (Desalegn et al., 2020), which showed the intricate relationship between QoL factors and schizophrenia. Ultimately, it was demonstrated that psychiatric symptoms and quality of life were strongly correlated. This adds credence to the large body of research (Desalegn et al., 2020; Hoertel et al., 2020) that highlights how important symptom treatment is to improve overall well-being in people living with schizophrenia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the perception and prevalence of QoL among people living with schizophrenia. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of participants perceive their quality of life as poor, echoing existing literature. Additionally, a substantial portion reported a high quality of life, albeit lower than some previous studies. This discrepancy may be attributed to varying study settings and populations. Furthermore, we identified key socio-demographic factors associated with quality of life and psychiatric symptoms, including gender, marital status, level of education, residence type, and family history. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of schizophrenia's impact on quality of life.

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THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING IN ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

There have been concerns raised about the credibility of the 2023 general election in Nigeria. Some of the issues raised include electoral violence, ethnic and religious politics, allegations of connivance by politicians with electoral officers to rig elections, disenfranchisement of voters, lack of required technology, and the manipulation of electoral results among others. Many of these issues (if true) may be due to inadequate human resource planning and certain psychological variables. To this end, the current paper reviewed literature in psychology to highlight the underlying psychological factors (of politicians) accounting for the tendencies to manipulating electoral process to achieve a predetermined outcomes in Nigeria. It also explored the role of effective human resource planning regarding the electoral process in the country. This paper concluded that effective people management and planning are pivotal to the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections, and recommended that human resource planning be prioritised in the quest for an effective electoral process in Nigeria.

*Keywords***:** Human resource planning, personality, power, election, politicians.

Introduction

The orderly transfer of power from one substantive government to another has always been difficult in many African countries, Nigeria inclusive (Huges & May,1988). Poor management of the electoral process, which is the legitimate means of the transfer, has been fingered as a major cause of this problem; this in itself is a reflection of bad leadership which has been considered to be the bane of Africa's development (Zamokuhle, 2020). Matters relating to humanity such as human capital development, environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, health and safety measures are all hinged on effective leadership (McGuirk & Burke, 2020). Although people in politics would like to be perceived as men and women of honour in public service with altruistic

motives and actions aimed at delivering public goods to the citizenry of the state (Asekun, 2023), on the contrary, people occupying political leadership positions in Africa are usually perceived by their followers as individuals who pursue personal and even selfish interests (Transparency International, 2019). In fact, in a much more frank way, Nigerian politicians have been described as very unreliable, self-centered and unconscionable (Gudaku, 2019).

Scholars in social political psychology have attempted to explain this phenomenon in which what the citizenry expect may not be what they would get from the politicians. One explanation is that politicians have consistent preferences over their own goals, which others often perceive or interpret as the pursuit of economic self-interest. Second, politicians assign a value or utility to these goals. And third, probabilities are assigned to the different ways of achieving such goals, and the means to attaining the goals do not necessarily conform to socially acceptable standards or laws. (Borgida et al., 2009). Further, Chong (2012) submitted that individuals in politics choose the course of action that maximises their expected utility. If utilities, or goals, are equated with economic self-interest, as this is usually the case, it is predicted that a politician would be motivated to act in ways that are most likely to help him have maximum gain. This manifests even in ways and manners politicians seek to contest and win elections, such as instigating of violence during election, vote buying, manipulating of outcomes through bribery of electoral officials, etc. This paper deployed psychological models and theories to examine this phenomenon.

Personalities and Power

Many scholars in social and political psychology have re-echoed the concern of Herbert (1986) that power attracts pathological personalities. That power do not really corrupt as people think but rather it attracts people of corrupt tendencies, that is, the corruptible. When such people come to seek for power through elections, they are not likely to play by the rules; moreover, when they eventually get to position of influence, they become intoxicated with power. Thus, rather than saying "absolute power corrupts absolutely", Herbert suggests a common metaphysical denominator: corruptibility, that fundamentally connects all those with political power. However, this view appears rather simplistic and raises further questions of whether everyone who gets into power is indeed corrupted by it.

In a recent report, data revealed that only 52 countries have a low corruption index, with Finland and Norway leading in the report; all other 144 countries are reported to have issues of corrupt practices (the Global Corruption Index , 2021). Scholars have continued to engage in discourse on whether it is the environment or nature that constitutes the basis for corrupt tendencies. In an attempt to validate this view, Zimbardo (1971) conducted an experiment in which an imbalance power relations was created between guards and prisoners in a simulated experimental situation, Because the guards were placed in a position of power, they began to behave in ways they would not usually act in their everyday lives or other situations. The prisoners who were placed in a situation they had no real control became subservient to the guards and were depressed. According to Zimbardo and his colleagues, this Stanford Prison Experiment demonstrated the role that certain situations can play in human behaviour, that is, when people find themselves in positions of power, they are likely to be preoccupied with political expediency rather than do what is in the best interest of the people they were elected to serve.

For Carnahan and McFarland, power is a phenomenon that is monopolised by the agency of an individual. Power only amplifies and exposes cognitive and behavioural predispositions that already exist within an individual. It merely reveals ones innate tendencies, but it does not corrupt. Hayek (1943) makes a similar argument like Herbert when he averred that those who rise to the top in government are those who want to wield power, and those who are most ruthless in using power. In the recent times, psychologists have re-investigated this phenomenon and theorised that rather than being a corrupting influence, power amplifies leaders' innate tendencies.

Politicians and the psychology of voting

Voters' behaviours: Voting is the action of formally indicating one's choice of candidate.
Although, the study of voting and elections is at a very early stage in understanding the mediating and moderating psychological factors and, more generally, in understanding electoral choices in terms of psychological processes rather than the outcomes (American (National Election Studies, ND), a few existing studies have provided some insights into how politicians tend to manipulate the electoral process to achieve their goals of wining an election without

getting the majority required votes. Voting behaviour has been defined as an act of aggregating individual preferences into collective decision in an election (Linberg & Morrison, 2007; Banski, Kowalski and Mazur, 2012). Studies have shown, however, how Nigerian politicians, rather than allowing the will of the majority to prevail, scuttle electoral processes and emerged as winners of elections. Some of the personal factors pointed out in literature includes: bullying, intimidations, identity politics, ethnicisation, weponisation of poverty, cyber stalking, among many others. Anytime they use any of the aforementioned psychological tactics, the aim is to influence two major keys: cognitive domain, that is, judgment and decision-making. Studies have shown that when the cognitive domain is targeted in some ways, voter are able to do what they may not ordinarily do; people can be bullied into not voting if they were known to be supporters of an opposition candidate. Also, instigating a violence can make the result of an election where the candidate is not popular to be cancelled, thereby enhancing his chances in areas where the candidate has more supporters and election was peaceful. Further, fear and threats to personal safety can make an electoral officer to declare the wrong candidate as a winner. All these are some underlying issues that make management of electoral processes a big challenge to the electoral empire. In Nigeria, the body charged by law with this responsibility is known as Independent National Election (INEC).

INEC and Elections in Nigeria

Ekundayo (2022) observed that INEC in its current state is still struggling with effective management of the electoral process. Israel-Ayide (2023) evaluated the performance of INEC in the recently concluded general elections and highlighted its shortcomings as follows: failure to provide the needed infrastructure and logistics, failure to deploy necessary technology, election violence, and delay in elections result upload as captured by the bimodal voter accreditation system (BVAS) devices and the iRev results verification portal. These inefficiencies on the part of the electoral bodies date back to post-independence Nigeria. In corroboration, Ekundayo (2022) observed that post-independence elections in Nigeria have been monumental failures due to the inability of electoral bodies to conduct credible elections and learn from past mistakes. Similarly, Osinakachukwu and Jawan (2011) noted that elections in Nigeria have been marked by violence, threats, and intimidation from inception. Likewise, Uhunmwuangho and Aibieyi

(2012) suggested that elections in post-independence Nigeria were characterized by electoral fraud and poor election management.

Thus, over the years, the electoral bodies have proven to lack the capacity to conduct credible elections in Nigeria. While some new technologies might have been deployed such as the BVAS, the human resource component has not received the required attention. For instance, INEC has retained the same workforce hired since 1987 under the defunct National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2022). This is a serious problem because human resource is the major driver of performance in any organisation. In the words of Pfeiffer (1998), human resource is the most important resource of an organisation because of their ability to control the functioning and outcome of the other resources. The effectiveness of INEC depends on the availability of the right number of proactive, resourceful, competent, and committed workforce to properly coordinate and execute all electoral activities. Therefore, INEC requires human resource planning, a process that involves assessing its strategic objectives and carefully seeking out the right number and caliber of workforce needed to achieve these objectives. In congruence, Phutela (2016) asserted that human resource planning refers to the analysis of organisational goals and matching same with the required number and kind of manpower to achieve them. In the light of this, this paper explored the role of human resource planning in ensuring an effective electoral system in Nigeria. Specifically, this paper discussed the history and problems of electoral processes in Nigeria, and the meaning and role of human resource planning in ensuring an effective electoral system in Nigeria.

Electoral management may be described as the administration of the electoral process within an organisation, group, or nation-state. INEC is the electoral body charged with the responsibility of managing electoral activities in Nigeria. These activities include the design and drafting of legislation, the recruitment, and training of electoral staff, electoral planning, voter registration, the registration of political parties, the nomination of parties and candidates, the electoral campaign, polling, counting, the tabulation of results, the declaration of results, the resolution of electoral disputes, reporting, auditing and archiving (ACE project, 2023).

The electoral process is a complex administrative operation and one of the largest activities (Al-Musbeh, 2011) that are performed in phases. As one election process ends, the preparation for the next one begins and the cycle continues. The phases of an electoral cycle are depicted in

Figure 1 as follows: legal framework, planning and implementation, training and education, electoral campaign, voting operations and election day, verification of results, and post-election.
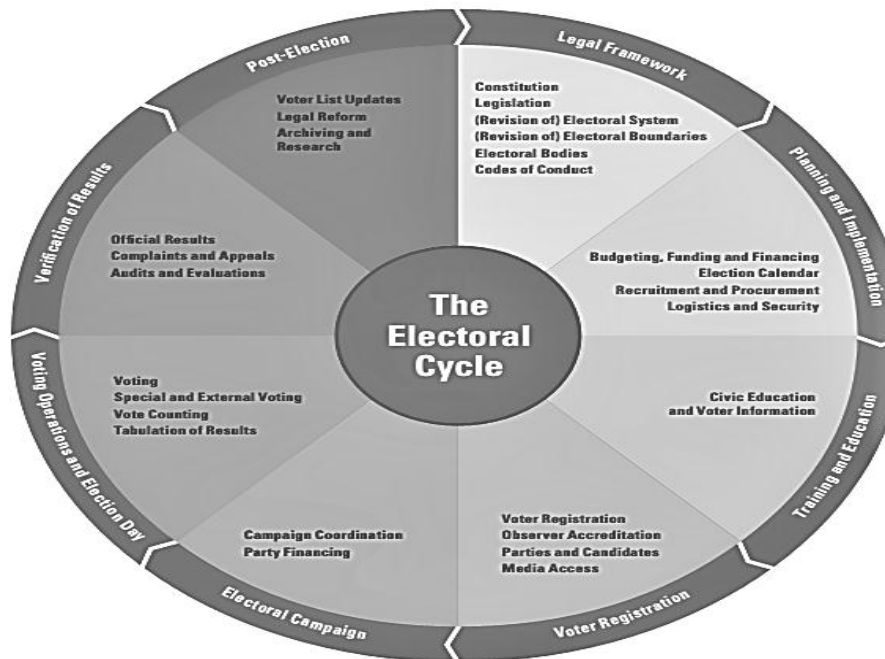

Figure 1: **The electoral cycle (source: https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/em/ema/ema01)**

The Concept of Human Resource Planning (HRP)

Successful organisations establish the strategic objectives of their businesses and determine the required manpower to achieve such objectives in the present and the future (Samwel, 2018). They consider human resource planning as a fundamental step towards organisational effectiveness. Human resource planning is a process through which organisations identify the immediate and future human resource requirements for the achievement of their strategic objectives and make provisions for attracting and retaining these individuals in the organisations (George, 2017). It is the process through which organisations determine and ensure that they have the required number of qualified workers at the right time and place overseeing the activities of the organisations.

According to Phutela (2016), the process of human resource planning includes well-defined objectives, determining human resource needs, consulting manpower inventory, determining labour demand and supply, and creating a conducive work environment for talent retention. The

starting point is an in-depth understanding of the objectives of the business and breaking them down into specific tasks. The next step is to examine the manpower inventory to determine the current and future labour demand and supply, and finally, monitor to ensure that the work context and culture are favourable to existing and potential employees. The steps in human resource planning are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: **Steps in human resource planning (Source: https://brainly.in/question/3159186)**

A critical aspect of human resource planning is the forecasting of labour demand and supply. Labour demand forecasting is the process of projecting the number and kind of employees required for the achievement of organisational needs in the future. On the other hand, forecasting labour supply entails estimating the availability of required manpower in the organisation based on the analysis of the current supply and estimated future sources of labour within and outside the organisation. Human resource planning has been considered the foremost function of human resource management because of the attached benefits.

Human resource planning helps organisations to achieve their strategic objectives by breaking them down into measurable tasks and ensuring that qualified individuals are assigned to do these tasks at the right time and in the right place. It also ensures accountability on the part of the personnel as they are held responsible for the outcome of their assigned duties. Human resource planning helps to curb mediocrity and promotes goal-driven behaviours among the workforce. Lastly, all other functions of human resource management, such as compensation management,

recruitment and selection, employee health and safety, performance appraisal, and training and development are linked with human resource planning. The knowledge of the human resource requirements of the organisation will enhance the proper coordination and management of the workforce.

Theoretical Perspectives on People Management

McGregor (1960) proposed Theory X as reflecting managers' assumptions about their workers. They believed that workers are naturally selfish, lazy, avoid responsibilities, and are only driven by money. This perspective sees the average worker as having an aversion to work and requiring strict control to get them to exert the necessary efforts towards the achievement of organisational goals. These negative assumptions about workers cause managers to relate with them through the use of force. Self-fulfilling prophesy occurs when managers working under these assumptions employ autocratic controls that spark corresponding reactions from the workforce.

Political office holders were elected into government offices as civil servants, and are bound by employment laws and work ethics. However, most of them match Theory X description of an average worker, and have been alleged to be corrupt and self-centered. All they care about is how to secure their interest and personal gains, even to the detriment of the national wellbeing. Many of these political office holders are barely meeting specified work targets without any attempt to go the extra mile to achieve national development.

McGregor (1960) proposed Theory Y in reaction to the Theory X assumptions and asserted that a worker is not lazy, selfish, unambitious, and irresponsible, but only seeks the right conditions to unleash the best in them. Theory Y posits that an average worker is hardworking, ambitious, creative, and self-motivated. They love work as much as they love to play and only seek the right environment to express their talents and inner motives. Contrary to the general perception of Nigerian politicians being corrupt and self-centered, some individuals have everything it takes to do right as political office holders and contribute to nation-building when given the needed opportunities. Therefore, as there are Theory X politicians, there are also Theory Y politicians. In Nigeria, Theory Y politicians seem to be very few in positions of authority but they are very much needed if the nation is to experience any form of development.

Best of all, Nigeria needs Theory Z leaders or political office holders that will take the affairs of the nation with every sense of commitment and loyalty. Ouchi (1981) proposed Theory Z as a description of the Japanese management style which is founded on collectivism, loyalty, mutuality, and teamwork. This may be the best approach to people management in Nigeria. Beyond religion and ethnic bigotry, Nigeria requires cohesiveness in its pursuit of national development and sustainability. From the perspective of Theory Z, political office holders see themselves as stakeholders, and the nation as a family of which they are members. They prioritise the welfare of every citizen and commit themselves to national development. One Nigeria can only be achieved through a people management style founded on the principles of Theory Z.

Psychologists acknowledge the complexity of human behaviours and attempt to understand, organise, direct, predict, and modify human behaviours towards the advancement of humanity across cultures and societies. A fundamental law of psychology is the law of individual differences, a belief in the uniqueness of individuals. This principle may be extended to people management; while Theory X principles may be best for a set of individuals, Theory Y or Theory Z may be best for others.

A blend of Theory X, Theory Y, and Theory Z is required in people management practices in Nigeria. These include the use of performance monitoring systems, participative decision-making, mutual responsibilities, mutual benefits, contingent rewards for outstanding performers, and sanctions to correct erring officers.

Role of Human Resource Planning in Ensuring an Effective Electoral System in Nigeria

The principles used in the effective running of an organisation can be successfully applied to managing people in the larger context. Human resource planning may be the solution to the election issues in Nigeria. It will involve an assessment of all the aspects of electoral activities which includes legal framework, planning and implementation, training and education, voter registration, electoral campaign, voting operations and election day, verification of results, and post-election. There are specific activities to be efficiently carried out in each of these aspects, and so the right number of persons with the required competencies must be recruited and placed

in the right positions. When these placements are effectively done, officials can be better monitored and held accountable for assigned duties.

Nearly all the factors associated with failures of the electoral process hinged on the human factor. For instance, Sule, Sani, and Mat, (2018) noted that the problems with the electoral process include compromise of the standard of electoral conduct, the violation of electoral rules and regulations, and poor preparation for the election. Likewise, the alleged malpractices, manipulation, violence, intimidation, and delay in result uploads are all perpetrated or allowed by electoral officers. Therefore, having the right persons in this position would solve the problem halfway. Also, through human resource planning, the workforce can be better monitored, remunerated, trained, protected, and adequately motivated to commit to the effectiveness of INEC. The INEC officials need to be assured of their safety during the exercise and be adequately remunerated to avoid the temptation of requesting or receiving bribes.

Security is a major challenge during elections. Law enforcement agents are seriously needed at the time of election but they were scarcely seen at polling booths during this period. The few that were available were unarmed and powerless. Good human resource planning will help in forecasting the demand and supply of labour (security agents) at this time and in the future. Also, the need for greater empowerment in terms of law enforcement will be made evident through the human resource planning process.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Human resource planning is a critical part of any formal group requiring the coordination of human efforts. It is the framework for order, accountability, and coordination of efforts. Human resource planning has proven to be very effective in ensuring organisational success. Human resource planning is ensuring the right number and caliber of people in the right positions, it is a much-needed call in the civil service. Nigeria requires Theory Y and Theory Z workers in public offices for national development and wellbeing.

There has been evidence that the electoral bodies have failed to deliver on their promises of credible elections in Nigeria right from inception. The missing link is not state-of-the-art technologies but carefully planned and coordinated human resources. Theory X, Theory Y, and Theory Z principles can be combined in people management in Nigeria. The sourcing and

coordination of talents in public offices should be premised on the principles of these theories. The principles of accountability, mutuality, responsibility, and collectivism should be enshrined in Nigeria's public service and people management.

A successful electoral process requires the effective execution of the different aspects of electoral activities like voter registration, electoral campaign, legal framework, training and education, planning and implementation, verification of results, voting operations and election day, and post-election. This paper concludes that the catalyst to successful electoral processes is human resource planning based on a blend of Theory X, Theory Y, and Theory Z. It was therefore recommended that INEC should carefully conduct human resource planning; and forecast labour demand and supply for all aspects of the electoral process, especially in the aspect of security during and after the election. Also, INEC must bridge the gap between the demand and supply of labour in the security agencies throughout the election period to curb corruption and other electoral malpractices. Furthermore, the current study recommends that empirical research be conducted to validate the impact of human resource planning on election success.

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