4TH BIENNIAL BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

IN CONJUNCTION WITH **OYSCATECH GLOBAL CONSULT**



THEME:

INTEGRATING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT FOR RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE MODERN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

DATE: 27TH TO 30TH JULY, 2026

VENUE: 800-SEATER LECTURE HALL, OYSCATECH, IGBOORA

EDITORS:

W. B. Bello PhD., M. A. Mosobalaje PhD., R. A. Ajao PhD., L. O. Oyekunle, A. Akintola PhD and O. G. Olugbodi

ISBN 978-978-372-641-3

www.oyscatechpublications.org

OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 4TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

DATE: MONDAY 27 – THURSDAY 30, JULY, 2026

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PROCEEDINGS OF AGRICULTURE, MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

Published by- Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, in Conjunction with OYSCATECH GLOBAL CONSULT, Igboora, Nigeria

@OYSCATECH 2026

ISBN: 978-978-372-641-3

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ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS IMPACT ON BRAND IMAGE AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY: EVIDENCE FROM MTN SUBSCRIBERS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a strategic tool for enhancing organizational reputation and fostering customer loyalty in competitive industries. This study examined the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on brand image and customer loyalty among MTN subscribers in Ring Road, Ibadan, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of CSR initiatives on customers' perceptions of MTN's brand image and their loyalty toward the company. The study was anchored on Stakeholder Theory and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 400 MTN subscribers, out of which 384 valid responses were obtained and analyzed. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that respondents generally perceived MTN's CSR activities positively. Furthermore, the results indicated that CSR has a significant positive effect on brand image and customer loyalty. The study concludes that CSR initiatives contribute substantially to strengthening customer perceptions and fostering long-term loyalty within the telecommunications sector. The study recommends that MTN and other telecommunications firms should sustain and expand their CSR programmes while ensuring effective communication of such initiatives to stakeholders. This will enhance corporate reputation, strengthen customer relationships, and promote sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Image, Customer Loyalty, Telecommunications Industry, MTN Nigeria, Stakeholder Theory.*

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as one of the most important strategic tools through which organizations create value for both society and business stakeholders. Beyond the traditional objective of profit maximization, contemporary organizations are increasingly expected to address social, environmental, and economic concerns while maintaining sustainable business operations. This expectation has intensified in recent years due to growing consumer awareness, stakeholder activism, sustainability reporting requirements, and heightened demand for ethical corporate conduct (Carroll, 2021; OECD, 2023).

The strategic importance of CSR lies in its ability to influence consumer perceptions and strengthen long-term organizational competitiveness. Contemporary consumers no longer evaluate firms solely on the basis of product quality, pricing, or service efficiency; they increasingly consider how organizations contribute to societal well-being. Consequently, firms that actively engage in socially responsible initiatives often enjoy enhanced reputation, stronger stakeholder trust, improved brand image, and increased customer commitment (Islam et al., 2021; Su et al., 2022).

Brand image represents a critical intangible asset that shapes consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. Keller (2020) argues that favourable, strong, and unique brand associations significantly influence consumer behaviour and competitive positioning. CSR initiatives have been identified as important antecedents of positive brand image because socially responsible activities create perceptions of integrity, credibility, and corporate citizenship. Recent empirical evidence indicates that consumers tend to develop more positive evaluations of brands that demonstrate commitment to community development, environmental sustainability, and ethical business practices (Fatma et al., 2020; Alonso-Almeida et al., 2021).

Similarly, customer loyalty remains a fundamental determinant of organizational sustainability. Loyal customers are more likely to engage in repeat purchases, recommend brands to others, resist competitors' offerings, and maintain long-term relationships with organizations. In highly competitive

industries, customer loyalty provides firms with a sustainable competitive advantage and reduces the costs associated with attracting new customers (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Studies have increasingly shown that CSR can strengthen customer loyalty by fostering trust, emotional attachment, satisfaction, and favourable brand perceptions (Shaukat et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2021).

The telecommunications industry provides a particularly relevant context for examining the relationship between CSR, brand image, and customer loyalty. The sector is characterized by intense competition, technological innovation, service similarity, and high customer switching tendencies. In such an environment, telecommunications firms increasingly deploy CSR initiatives as strategic mechanisms for differentiation and stakeholder engagement. In Nigeria, major telecommunications operators, including MTN Nigeria, Airtel, and Globacom, invest substantially in education, healthcare, digital inclusion, youth empowerment, and community development programmes aimed at strengthening stakeholder relationships and enhancing corporate reputation (Okoli & Ijeoma, 2024).

Among these operators, MTN Nigeria has distinguished itself through extensive CSR interventions implemented through the MTN Foundation and other community-oriented programmes. These initiatives encompass scholarship schemes, healthcare projects, educational infrastructure, digital literacy programmes, and economic empowerment initiatives targeted at improving societal welfare. While these investments are expected to strengthen customer perceptions and reinforce loyalty, empirical evidence regarding their effectiveness in specific local contexts remains inconclusive.

Statement of the problem

Despite the increasing investment in CSR initiatives by telecommunications companies in Nigeria, customer retention and brand differentiation continue to pose significant challenges within the industry. The Nigerian telecommunications market remains highly competitive, with firms competing for market share through service innovation, pricing strategies, and promotional campaigns. Consequently, understanding whether CSR initiatives effectively influence customer perceptions and behavioural outcomes has become an important managerial and academic concern.

Existing studies have generally established positive relationships between CSR, brand image, and customer loyalty across different industries and countries (Fatma et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2021; Su et al., 2022). However, findings remain inconsistent regarding the magnitude and mechanisms through which CSR influences consumer behaviour. While some studies report strong positive effects, others suggest that contextual factors such as culture, industry characteristics, and consumer awareness may moderate these relationships.

Furthermore, most existing studies have been conducted in developed economies where CSR practices are relatively mature and institutional frameworks are well established. Although emerging evidence exists from developing countries, empirical investigations within the Nigerian telecommunications sector remain limited. More importantly, available studies predominantly adopt broad national or industry-wide perspectives, thereby overlooking localized customer experiences and perceptions within specific communities where CSR programmes are implemented.

Another notable limitation in existing literature is the insufficient examination of the interconnected relationship between CSR, brand image, and customer loyalty at the community level. While previous studies have separately investigated CSR and customer loyalty or CSR and brand image, fewer studies have comprehensively examined how CSR initiatives simultaneously influence both brand image and customer loyalty within Nigeria's telecommunications industry. This creates a contextual and empirical gap in understanding whether customers in specific urban communities perceive CSR initiatives as meaningful drivers of brand preference and loyalty.

It is against this background that this study investigates the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on brand image and customer loyalty among MTN Nigeria customers in Ring Road, Ibadan, Oyo State.

Research objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on brand image and customer loyalty among MTN Nigeria customers in Ring Road, Ibadan, Oyo State.

The specific objectives are to:

i. examine the effect of MTN Nigeria's Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives on customers' perception of brand image;

ii. determine the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives on customer loyalty among MTN Nigeria customers;

iii. evaluate the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives on customers' repeat purchase behaviour and brand advocacy.

Theoretical and empirical review

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on the Stakeholder Theory proposed by Freeman (1984). The theory posits that organizations must create value not only for shareholders but also for stakeholders, including customers, employees, communities, and regulators. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) represents one of the mechanisms through which firms address stakeholder expectations and strengthen relationships with key stakeholder groups. In the telecommunications sector, CSR initiatives can enhance customer perceptions of corporate responsibility, thereby improving brand image and customer loyalty.

The study also draws support from Brand Equity theory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2020), which suggests that favorable consumer perceptions contribute to stronger brand value. CSR activities serve as positive brand associations that enhance corporate reputation and influence customers' loyalty intentions.

Empirical review

Barlas, Valakosta, A., Katsionis., Oikonomou, & Brinia, (2023) examined the relationship between corporate social responsibility, customer trust, and customer loyalty in Greece. The study found that CSR significantly enhances customer trust and loyalty, suggesting that socially responsible firms enjoy stronger customer relationships and competitive advantage. (Sustainability, 15(2), 1036).

Rodrigues, Borges, & Rodrigues, (2023) found that CSR positively influences brand image and brand equity, which subsequently improve consumer satisfaction. Their findings demonstrate that CSR initiatives strengthen consumers' perceptions of firms and contribute to sustainable brand performance.

Tran, N. T. (2022) investigated the impact of CSR on customer loyalty in Vietnam's jewellery industry. The study revealed that CSR positively influences customer loyalty both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction and corporate reputation. (Cogent Business & Management.

Badawi (2023) examined the influence of CSR performance on brand image, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in Indonesia. The findings showed that CSR significantly improves brand image and customer engagement, which subsequently enhance customer loyalty. (International Journal of Business Ecosystem and Strategy.

Conde and Wangbenmad (2024) investigated the telecommunications industry in Guinea and found that CSR significantly contributes to positive brand image among telecom subscribers. The study concluded that socially responsible initiatives improve public perception and strengthen corporate reputation.

Kumar and colleagues (2024) examined CSR and customer loyalty in the Indian telecommunications industry. The study reported that CSR indirectly influences customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and trust, emphasizing the strategic value of CSR in service industries.

Uchechukwu *et al.* (2024) in their study investigated branding and customer loyalty in Nigeria's telecommunications industry and found that brand image significantly predicts customer loyalty among telecom subscribers. The study supports the importance of positive brand perceptions in retaining customers within a highly competitive market.

Literature gap

Although previous studies have established a positive relationship between CSR, brand image, and customer loyalty, evidence from the Nigerian telecommunications sector remains limited and largely generalized. Existing studies rarely focus on specific communities where CSR initiatives are directly experienced by customers. This study therefore contributes to the literature by providing localized evidence on how MTN Nigeria's CSR initiatives influence brand image and customer loyalty among customers in Ring Road, Ibadan.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain firsthand information from respondents regarding their perceptions of MTN Nigeria's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and how such initiatives influence brand image and customer loyalty. The survey approach also facilitated the collection of quantitative data for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

Population of the study

The population comprised MTN subscribers residing and conducting business activities within Ring Road, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The area was selected because of its high concentration of MTN customers and visibility of corporate social responsibility initiatives undertaken by the company.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Given the large and indeterminate population of MTN subscribers within the study area, the sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for an unknown population:

Where:

n = required sample size

Z = 1.96 (95% confidence level)

P = 0.50

q = 0.50

e = 0.05 margin of error

The computation yielded a sample size of 384 respondents. To account for possible non-responses and improperly completed questionnaires, an additional allowance was made, resulting in 400 questionnaires being administered.

A convenience sampling technique was employed to select respondents due to the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame of MTN subscribers in the study area. The technique enabled the researcher to reach readily available and willing participants.

Instrument for data collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections. Section A captured respondents' demographic characteristics, while Section B contained items measuring Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Image, and Customer Loyalty. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity through expert review by scholars in marketing and business administration. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency of the measurement scales (Hair et al., 2022).

Method of data analysis

Data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and study variables. Inferential statistics, particularly multiple regression analysis, were employed to examine the effect of corporate social responsibility on brand image and customer loyalty. Statistical significance was determined at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Results and discussion

Out of the 400 questionnaires administered, 384 were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 96.0%. This response rate was considered adequate for analysis.

Table 1

Questionnaire	Frequency	percentage
Administered	400	100
Returned and valid	384	96.0
Not Returned/valid	16	4.0
Total	400	100

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 384)

Variable	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	212	55.2
Female	172	44.8
Age Distribution		
18-25 years	118	30.7
26-35 years	146	38.0
36 - 45 years	79	20.6
46-51 years	41	10.7
Educational Qualification		
Secondary school	52	13.5
OND/NCE	88	22.9
HND/B.Sc	184	47.9
Postgraduate Degree	60	15.7
Years of MTN Subscription		
Less 1 year	32	8.31
5 years	124	32.3
6-10 years	141	36.7
Above 10	87	22.7

Source: Researcher`s computation, 2026

The demographic analysis indicates that the respondents were predominantly adults with varying levels of educational attainment and substantial experience using MTN services. Notably, over 91% of the respondents had subscribed to MTN for more than one year, suggesting that they possessed adequate knowledge and experience to evaluate the company's corporate social responsibility initiatives, brand image, and their loyalty toward the network provider.

Descriptive statistics of study variables

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev
Corporate Social Responsibility	4.12	0.68
Brand Image	4.05	0.71
Customer Loyalty	3.98	0.75

The results indicate that respondents generally perceived MTN's CSR activities positively (Mean = 4.12). Similarly, respondents reported favorable perceptions of MTN's brand image (Mean = 4.05) and customer loyalty (Mean = 3.98). The findings suggest that CSR initiatives contribute positively to customers' evaluation of the company.

Test of hypotheses

Table 3: Multiple Regression Results

Dependent Variables: Brand Image and Customer Loyalty

Variable	B	t-value	p-value
CSR and Brand Image	0.641	12.534	0.000
CSR and Customer Loyalty	0.587	10.876	0.000
Model Summary			
$R^2 = 0.523$			
F = 210.447			
$p < 0.05$			

The regression results reveal that CSR has a significant positive effect on brand image ($\beta = 0.641$, $p < 0.05$) and customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.587$, $p < 0.05$). The model explained 52.3% of the variation in the dependent variables, indicating substantial explanatory power. Therefore, the null hypotheses were rejected.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study revealed that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a significant positive effect on brand image among MTN subscribers in Ring Road, Ibadan. This implies that customers develop more favourable perceptions of MTN when they recognize the company's commitment to social initiatives such as community development, educational support, healthcare interventions, and digital inclusion programmes. The finding supports the argument of Carroll (2021), who emphasized that socially responsible practices enhance corporate reputation and strengthen stakeholder relationships. Similarly, Fatma et al. (2020) found that CSR activities improve consumers' perceptions of corporate credibility and contribute to stronger brand evaluations. The present study further confirms these earlier findings by demonstrating that CSR remains an important determinant of brand image within the Nigerian telecommunications context.

The finding is also consistent with the study of Rodrigues et al. (2023), who reported that CSR positively influences brand image and brand equity, thereby improving consumer satisfaction. Their study established that socially responsible organizations create favourable associations in the minds of consumers, which eventually strengthens brand value. The current study extends this argument by providing empirical evidence from MTN subscribers in Ibadan, Nigeria, where telecommunications companies operate in a highly competitive environment.

Furthermore, the study found that CSR significantly influences customer loyalty among MTN subscribers. This suggests that customers are more likely to remain committed to organizations that demonstrate concern for societal welfare beyond profit-making objectives. This result agrees with Barlas et al. (2023), who established that CSR enhances customer trust and loyalty by creating stronger emotional connections between organizations and their customers. Similarly, Tran (2022) found that CSR positively affects customer loyalty through mechanisms such as customer satisfaction and corporate reputation.

The finding also supports Islam et al. (2021), who reported that CSR influences customer loyalty through corporate image, trust, and satisfaction. The current study reinforces this relationship by showing that CSR initiatives undertaken by MTN Nigeria contribute to customer retention and positive behavioural intentions among subscribers. This finding is particularly relevant in the telecommunications industry, where customer switching behaviour is common due to intense competition among service providers.

In addition, the findings align with Conde and Wangbenmad (2024), who found that CSR initiatives significantly improve brand image among telecommunications subscribers in Guinea. Their study highlighted that socially responsible activities strengthen public perception and corporate reputation. The similarity between their findings and the present study suggests that CSR serves as a strategic marketing instrument across developing economies, including Nigeria.

The findings also support Stakeholder Theory proposed by Freeman (1984), which argues that organizations that address the interests and expectations of stakeholders are more likely to achieve sustainable success. By investing in CSR programmes, MTN Nigeria demonstrates responsiveness to customer and community needs, thereby improving brand perception and loyalty.

However, while previous studies such as Kumar et al. (2024) emphasized that CSR influences customer loyalty indirectly through trust and satisfaction, the present study provides additional evidence that CSR has a direct and significant effect on customer loyalty among telecommunications subscribers. This difference may be attributed to variations in research contexts, industry characteristics, and consumer perceptions across different geographical locations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a significant role in shaping both brand image and customer loyalty among MTN subscribers in Ring Road, Ibadan. The study established that when customers perceive MTN as actively involved in social initiatives such as community development, education, healthcare support, and digital inclusion, they develop more favourable attitudes toward the brand. This confirms that CSR is not only a philanthropic responsibility but also a strategic tool for enhancing corporate reputation and strengthening customer relationships.

The study further concludes that CSR contributes meaningfully to customer loyalty in the telecommunications sector. Subscribers are more likely to remain committed to MTN when they perceive the company as socially responsible and responsive to societal needs. In a highly competitive industry where switching behaviour is common, CSR therefore serves as an important differentiating factor that supports customer retention and long-term brand sustainability.

Overall, the study affirms that CSR is a key driver of brand image and customer loyalty, reinforcing its importance as a strategic marketing and relationship-building instrument within the Nigerian telecommunications industry.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the following recommendations are made:

MTN Nigeria should continue to strengthen and expand its CSR initiatives, particularly in areas that directly impact local communities such as education, healthcare, and youth empowerment, as these significantly enhance brand perception.

The company should improve communication and visibility of its CSR activities to ensure that subscribers are fully aware of its social contributions, as awareness plays a key role in shaping positive brand image.

CSR programmes should be strategically integrated into MTN's overall marketing and corporate strategy rather than treated as isolated activities, to maximize their impact on customer loyalty and brand equity.

MTN should prioritize stakeholder engagement by involving customers and community members in identifying and evaluating CSR projects, thereby increasing trust and emotional connection with the brand.

Given the competitive nature of the telecommunications industry, MTN should leverage CSR as a differentiation strategy to reduce customer switching behaviour and enhance long-term loyalty.

By implementing these recommendations, MTN Nigeria can further strengthen its brand image, deepen customer loyalty, and sustain its competitive advantage in the telecommunications market.

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INTERNAL REVENUE GENERATION AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN OLUYOLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IDI – AYUNRE, OYO STATE

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Abstract
This study focused on revenue generation and infrastructural development in Oluyole Local government, *Idi – ayunre, Oyo State. Five research objectives question, four research questions and four research hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study comprises of the entire staff of Oluyole Local Government, Idi – Ayunre, covering the permanent staff. The work used system theory to analyze the subject matter. In the methodology, descriptive survey research design was adopted and questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. The data was analyzed using simple percentage and the hypotheses tested using chi square. The study revealed that there is significant impact of revenue generation on rural road, maintenances in Oluyole Local Government, Idi – Ayunre Oyo State, there is significant relationship between revenue generation and rate of power supply in Oluyole Local government- Idi – Ayunre, Oyo State there is significant effect of revenue generation on availability of potable water in Oluyole Local Government, Idi – Ayunre and there is significant relationship between revenue generation and primary health care infrastructure in Oluyole Local Government, idi Ayunre on the findings, it was recommended that there should be total re-orientation and enlightenment of the people of Oluyole Local Government, Idi Ayunre in Oyo State.*

Keywords: *Revenue Generation, Infrastructural development, Road maintenance rate of power supply, Primary Health care infrastructure.*

Introduction

Many governments' duty is to create social infrastructure for his people. This is to make sure that the contract between the people and government is effective hence the government needs resources to protect lives and properly provide infrastructural facilities for the people and enhance the living standard.

In this regard, it is imperative for the government to find a way to generate revenue for them to be able to implement their policies and Programmes. Njoku (20:08:56) who claimed finance is a very crucial in the art of public administration. His time is spent on finance (i.e. revenue which states generate) as his fuel to run the administration engine of any organization. It is the wind of each and every individual and group effort. Revenue thus collected is used for the government to cater to its projects. So, one of the Main sources of fund, by which the government performs its duties is revenue generation. At the local level, revenue generation is all about IGR, in this direction, internal generated revenue are funds which an institution organization sourced internally within the system so as to remain in existence, develop and achieve its goals (Ugwu, 2018).

In this case, internal generated revenue helps the local government administration to enhance infrastructural development in the form of road repairs, electrification, supply of potable water, and establishment of primary health care facilities (Uduma, 2016). According to Obi (2001:472), revenue generation is concerned with how organizations (Federal, State, and Local Government or private/ public institution) attract finance to sustain itself and discharge its statutory and non-statutory responsibilities. Besides that the revenue generating involves the entirety of all revenue that government or other institutions generated, not the one which has been allocated to them. Local government in local government was in need of an objective.

This research is aimed at looking into the possibility of internal revenue generation as an instrument for infrastructural development of Oluyole Local government, Idi – ayunre, Oyo State in Oyo state.

Statement of problem

Due to insufficient revenue operation, Oluyole Local Government's infrastructural development is not commensurable with the other local government. This is true because the issue of bad roads, lack of portable water, no access to electric power supply and poor access to health care are the order of the day. It's a fact that most of the rural areas in Nigeria do not have motor-able roads, road users in most cases suffer from bad experience because f roads. Not only this, but most of the rural area communities from which most people come does not have portable water, as people always used the stream and rivers in the environment as their water. This is also due to sanitation system issues, and the people are not well informed about the best practices to maintain good sanitary environment. Another major issue that is rocking the local government is electrical power supply. The people in most cases don't have light, while some have very low voltage which can help them to do little or nothing. In addition to the lack of infrastructure in this rural area, the education and health sectors are also lacking. The provision of Internal revenue generation as a hol for infrastructural development in Oluyole Local government, Idi – ayunre, Oyo State was the thematic of this study.

Objective of the study

This research work sought to achieve the following:

1. Determine the impact of internal revenue generated on infrastructural in Oluyole local government.
2. Examine the impact of internal revenue generation on rural road maintenance.
3. Find out the relationship between internal revenue generation and rate of power supply.
4. Identify the effect of internal revenue generation on availability of potable water.
5. Examine the relationship between internal revenue generation and primary health care infrastructure.

Research questions

The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. To what extent does internal revenue generated in Oluyole local government affect infrastructural development.
2. What is the relationship between IGR and the rate of power supply in Oluyole local government
3. What are the effects of IGR on availability of potable water in the Oluyole Local government.
4. What is the relationship IGR and primary health care infrastructure in Oluyole local government?

Research hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested in this work

1. Ho1:- IGR has no significant effect on infrastructural development in Oluyole local government.
2. Ho2:-There is no significant relationship between IGR and rate of power supplu
3. Ho3:- There is no significant effect on IGR and availability of potable water
4. Ho4:- There is no significant relationship between revenue generation and primary health care.

Empirical study

This work is based on the study of the following scholarly works:-

Ogechi and Adenugba (2013) analyzed the effect of internal revenue generation and infrastructural development in Lagos state. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis. Spearman's rank was used to find out the direction of the relationship between internally generated revenue and infrastructural development in descriptive. The study also revealed various methods of generating revenue like enforcement of tax personal, creating awareness to the public etc. The study also reminds the revenue administration agencies to review themselves to be able to generate more revenues.

Nwofor and Gordon (2013) examined the government expenditure and tax revenue. They looked into the impact of revenue generation from tax on Nigeria Expenditure. Secondary data is used for data collection in the form of person moments collation coefficient. The study uncovered that the amount of expenditure that government incurs can have negative impact on total tax revenue particularly when the expenditures are mainly recurrent expenditure.

The effect of electronic internally generated revenue on infrastructural development of Ebonyi state was evaluated using Ex-post Facto research desing, Udu and Nkanor (2016) employed. The study was conducted for the year 2011- 2014 and regression and pearson correlation was used for analysis. The result showed that there was no significant relationship between the electronic internal generated revenue and infrastructural development and year of study.

Chikwem (2019) studied the role of local government on community development in Nigeria with Isiala Mbano LGA of Imo State as the focus. To find out how much contribution do local governments make in the promotion of human and infrastructural development in Nigeria. In line with the above, two research objectives, two research objectives , two research question and two hypothesis were formulated to guide the study . The researcher used only secondary sources of data; thus, the formulation was obtained from the journal articles, facebooks and online publications. The basic resource theory and growth centred theory were used. From the literature work consulted, the study found that the role of local government in community development are maintenance of rural, provision of pipe borne water, human empowerment and maintenance of rural market, square etc. But, the problem of over politicization, lack of fund, and low level of education are the problems affecting local governments from playing their functions well.

Akpan and Nnaseh (2013) looks into the impact of internally generated revenue (IGR) on infrastructural development in Akwa Ibom state. Ex-post facto research design was adopted in the study. The data were analyzed with simple percentage statistic while simple regression was used in testing the hypothesis. Results indicate that internal generated revenue makes a significant and positive contribution to provision of water, electricity and roads and more skewed towards roads than electricity and water.

The study was able to draw the conclusion that though IGR has made positive contributions to the development of infrastructure in the state, some aspects of infrastructure like road received more boost from IGR than others.

Worlu and Emeka (2012) look at a study of the effect of tax revenue on the economic growth of the Nigeria between 1980 and 2007 with particular focus on infrastructural development in Nigeria. The secondary data were analyzed by three stage least square estimation technique, the result shows that tax revenue stimulate the growth of economy by infrastructural development. They indicated the necessity to develop comprehensive fiscal policies and to reinforce the already existing ones in accordance with the economic goals and current economic situation.

Research gap

Previous works did not cover the exact topic of this work, did not exactly used the research objective which are the impact of revenue generation on rural road maintenance, the relationship between revenue generation and rate of power supply, the effect of revenue generation and primary health care infrastructure. The geographical locations were also not covered. There exists gap which is filled by work that is

Theorical framework

The study is based on the “benefit theory” which was given by Erik Lindahi in 1919. One of the basic theories is that citizens tend to pay higher taxes when they believe they are receiving enough benefits from the activities of the state. It is however argued that the services which are provided are not quantified and measured, after all some citizens who pay taxes do not have the opportunity of enjoying them. This theory is applicable to this research since it assesses the merits of tax revenue in terms of the country's capital infrastructure.

System theory

System theory was propounded by Liudwing Von Bartalenffy, a biologist and a mathematician in 1940’s but this theory was made popular especially in political science by David Eastern in 1965.

A system theory is composed of elements that are in interaction. A whole compounded of many part and assemble of all parts, it is necessarily for all parts to be working. In Onyeiwu (2023:366), a system, from a simple social science point of view, is a whole or an integral, structured, interrelated parts of system all of which work together to maintain the continuity of its existence.

For him the system theory is a theory of society as a government of mutually interrelated structures which, having their special individual characteristics and playing their special roles independently yet are able to keep themselves in dynamic balance with one another, in order to successfully maintain the whole system. Taking into consideration the subject matter of this investigation, the local government is a system of many components and parts, which are interrelated with each other and are responsible for keeping the system alive. Some of these parts include the local government elected authorities, staff, the people of the local government (the community members) and some non-governmental organization with in the local government like churched etc. All work independently but collectively to maintain the whole (local government). In order words, when there is problem in one aspect or organ of the system other parts or organ are affected.

Thus, the issue of how to generate revenue and develop infrastructure in the rural areas (LG) is a system problem. This is because the issue in some parts of the system has impacted the whole system. The executive chairman and councilors positions are not stable in many local government areas in Nigeria. There is always instability in the local administration. The local government is normally run by the state Governors. In the local government today, a chairman for revenue generation, infrastructural development and development in the local government could be sacked tomorrow (Bello-Imam and Roberts, 2001). Therefore, the issues of some parts of the system have impacted the system as a whole. This is because none of the parts of the system can function without one another. Hence, there are interdependence for the overall goal and objectives of the entire system. The issue of dependency based on oneness, when affected always brings problem in the entire system.

Research methodology

Research Design

In this study, descriptive survey research design is used as the research approach used by the researcher.

Population of the study

The study used the 75 senior staff of South-West local government of Oyo State for the study.

Sample size

The population is not large, therefore, the entire population of 75 was studied using the census method.

Research instrument

This research revealed use of questionnaire, which was used to collect the necessary and relevant dates from the rest.

Method of data analysis

For data analysis, the researcher utilized simple percentage method and chi-square

Data presentation and analysis

Option	No of respondents	% of respondence
SA	18	25
A	12	16.7
UND	16	22.2
D	24	33.3
SD	2	2.8
Total	72	100%

It should be noted that out of 75 questionnaires distributed to the sampled population, only 72 were properly filled and returned, therefore, the 72 is now our sample size; Item 1:

There is significant impact of internal revenue generation on rural road maintenance.

Table 1: Responses on if there is significant impact of interval revenue generation on rural road maintenance. Source: Field survey (2025). The above analysis has shown that 25% of the respondents strongly agree, 16.7% of the respondents agree, 22.2% of the respondents were undecided, 33.3% of the respondents strongly disagree.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
SA	22	30.6
A	30	41.7

UND	8	11.11
D	10	13.8
SD	2	2.7
Total	72	100%

Item 2: Road maintenance will be achieved through improved revenue.

Item 5: There is significant relationship between revenue generation and rate of power supply

Table 5: Responses on if there is significant relationship between revenue generation and rate of power supply. Source: Field survey (2026).The above analysis has shown that 38.9% of the respondents strongly agree, 34.7%of the respondents agree, 20.8% of the respondents were undecided 2.8% disagree and 2.8% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
SA	30	41.6
A	18	25
UND	12	16.6
D	2	2.7
SA	10	13.8
Total	72	100%

and primary healthcare infrastructure. Source: Field survey (2026). The above analysis has shown that 41.6% of the respondents strongly agree, 25% of the respondents agree, 16.6% of the respondents were undecided,2.7% disagree and 13.8% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
SA	40	55.6
A	20	27.8
UND	5	6.9
D	5	6.9
SD	2	2.8
Total	72	100%

Item 4: Primary health care service will improve through revenue generation.

Table 4: responses on if primary health care service will improve through revenue generation. Source: Field survey (2026). The above analysis has shown that 55.6% of the respondents strongly agree, 27.8% of the respondents agree, 6.9% of the respondents were undecided 6.9% disagree and 2.8% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
SA	28	38.9
A	25	34.7
UND	15	20.8
D	2	2.8
SD	2	2.8
Total	72	100%

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses

Item 6: when there is improved revenue, it will effects on electricity in the communities.

Table 6: Responses on if when there is improved revenue, it will have effects on electricity in the communities. Source: Field survey (2026). The above analysis has shown that 43.1% of the respondents strongly agree, 20.8% of the respondents agree, 16.7% of the respondents were undecided 16.7% disagree and 2.7% of the remaining respondents

SA	31	43.1
A	15	20.8
UND	12	16.7
D	12	16.7
SD	2	2.7
Total	72	100%

Re-statement of hypothesis one
Ho1 : There is no significant impact of internal revenue generation on rural road maintenance.
To test this hypothesis, the data in table 1 and 2 were employed

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
SA	20	27.8
A	24	33.3
UND	16	22.2
D	10	13.9
SD	2	2.8
Total	72	100%

Item 7: There is significant effect of internal revenue generation on availability of potable water.
Table 7: Responses on if there is significant effect of internal revenue generation on availability of potable water. Source: Field survey (2026). The above analysis has shown that 27.8% of the respondents strongly agree, 33.3% of the respondents agree, 22.2% of the respondent were undecided, 13.9% of the respondent disagree and the remaining 2.8% respondent strongly disagree.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Option	No of respondents	% of responses
SA	32	44.4
A	22	30.6
UND	10	13.9
D	6	8.3
SD	2	2.8
Total	72	100%

Item 8:- Improved internal revenue will enhance availability of portable water
Table 8:- responses on if improved revenue will enhance availability of portable water. Source: Field survey (2026). The above analysis has shown that 44.4% of the respondents strongly agree, 30.6% of the respondents agree, 13.9% of the respondents were undecided 8.3% disagree and 2.8% of the remaining respondents strongly disagree

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Table 1	Table 2	Total (R)
18	32	40
12	22	42
16	10	24
24	6	34
2	2	4
Total 72	72(c2)	144(fe)

Formular :-
Fe = Rt ×ct/N
Where Fe = Frequency expected

Rt = Row total
Ct = Column total
N= Grand total

Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

Degree of freedom= (r-1)(c-1)
= (5-1)(2-1)
= (4)(1)
= 4

X2 tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance = 3.84

R1C1,fe = 40×72/144 = 20
R1C2,fe = 40×72/144 = 20
R2C1,fe = 40×72/144 = 20
R2C1,fe = 42×72/144 = 21
R2C2,fe = 42×72/144 = 21
R3C1,fe = 24×72/144 = 12
R3C2,fe = 24×72/144 = 12
R4C1,fe = 34×72/144 = 17
R4C2,fe = 34×72/144 = 17
R5C1,fe = 4×72/144 = 2
R5C2,fe = 4×72/144 =2

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe)2	(Fo-Fe)2/Fe
18	20	-2	4	0.2
22	20	2	4	0.2
12	21	-9	81	3.86
30	21	9	81	3.86
16	12	4	16	1.33
8	12	-4	16	1.33
24	17	7	49	2.88
10	17	-7	49	2.88
2	2	0	0	0
2	2	0	0	0
				16.54

Table 5	Table 6	Total (Fe)
28	31	59
25	15	40
15	12	27
2	12	14
2	2	4
Total = 72	72	144

HO2: There is no significant relationship between internal revenue generation and rate of power supply;
To test this hypothesis, the data in table 5 and 6 were employed.
Formular
Fe = Rt×ct/N
Where Fe = Frequency expected
Rt = Row total
Ct = Column total
N = Grand total
Level of significant = 5% = 0.05
Degree of freedom = (r-1)(c-1)
= (5-1)(2-1)
= (4)(1)
= 4
X2 tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance=3.84
R1C1,Fe = 59×72/144 = 29.5
R1C2,Fe = 59×72/144 = 29.5
R2C1,Fe = 40×72/144 = 20
R2C2,Fe = 40×72/144 = 20
R3C1,Fe = 27×72/144 = 13.5
R3C2,Fe = 27×72/144 = 13.5
R4C1,Fe = 14×72/144 = 7
R4C2,Fe = 14×72/144 = 7
R5C1,Fe = 4×72/144 = 2
R5C2,Fe = 4×72/144 = 2

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe)2	(Fo-Fe)2/Fe
28	29.5	-1.5	2.25	0.0763
31	29.5	1.5	2.25	0.0763
25	20	5	25	1.25
15	20	-5	25	1.25
15	13.5	1.5	2.25	0.1667
12	13.5	-1.5	2.25	0.1667
2	7	-5	25	3.5714
12	7	5	25	3.5714
2	2	0	0	0
2	2	0	0	0
				10.129

Decision rule
Since the calculated value of chi-square , 10.129 is more than the tabulated value, 9.488, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis rejected, hence we conclude here that there is significant impact of internal revenue generation on power supply.
Re-statement of hypothesis Three
HO3: There is no significant effect internal generation on viability of potable water.
To test this hypothesis three, the data in table 7 and 8 were used.

Table 7	Table 8	Total (Fe)
20	32	52

24	22	46
16	10	26
10	6	16
2	2	4
Total= 72	72	

Calculation
Fe = Rt×ct/N
Where Fe= Frequency expected
Rt = Row total
Ct = Column total
N = Grand total
Level of significance = 5% = 0.05
Degree of freedom = (r-1)(c-1)
= (5-1)(2-1)
= (4)(1)
=4
X2 tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance = 3.84
Fe
R1C1,Fe = 52×72/144 = 26
R1C2,Fe = 52×72/144 =26
R2C1,Fe = 46×72/144 = 23
R2C2,Fe = 46×72/144 = 23
R3C1,Fe = 26×72/144 =13
R3C2,Fe = 26×72/144 =13
R4C1,Fe = 16×72/144 = 8
R4C2,Fe = 16×72/144 = 8
R5C1,Fe = 4×72/144 = 2
R5C2,Fe = 4×72/144 =2

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe)2	(Fo-Fe)2/Fe
20	26	-6	36	1.3846
32	26	6	36	1.3846
24	23	1	1	0.0435
22	23	-1	1	0.0435
16	13	3	9	0.6923
20	13	-7	49	3.7692
10	8	2	4	0.5
6	8	-2	4	0.5
2	2	0	0	0
2	10	-8	4	6.4
				14.718

Decision rule Table 4 Total (Fe)
Since the calculated value of chi-square ,

14.718 is more than the tabulated value, 9.488, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis rejected, hence we conclude here that there is significant effect of internal revenue generation on availability of portable water.

Table 3

30	40	70
18	20	38
12	5	17
2	5	7
10	2	12

Re-statement of hypothesis four

HO4: There is no significant effect relationship between revenue generation and primary health care infrastructure.

To test this hypothesis, the data in table 3 and 4 were employed.

Calculation

Fe = Rt×ct/N

Where Fe= Frequency expected

Rt = Row total

Ct = Column total

N = Grand total

Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

Degree of freedom = (r-1)(c-1)

= (5-1)(2-1)

= (4)(1)

= 4

X2 tab for 2df at 0.05 level of significance = 9.488

R1C1,Fe = 70×72/144 = 35

R1C2,Fe = 70×72/144 = 35

R2C1,Fe = 38×72/144 = 19

R2C2,Fe = 38×72/144 = 19

R3C1,Fe = 17×72/144 = 8.5

R3C2,Fe = 17×72/144 = 8.5

R4C1,Fe = 7×72/144 = 3.5

R4C2,Fe = 7×72/144 = 3.5

R5C1,Fe = 12×72/144 = 6

R5C2,Fe = 12×72/144 = 6

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe)2	(Fo-Fe)2/Fe
30	35	-5	25	0.7143
40	35	5	25	0.7143
18	19	1	1	0.05261
20	19	-1	1	0.05261
12	8.5	3.5	12.25	1.4412
5	8.5	-3.5	412.25	1.4412

2	3.5	-1.5	2.25	0.6428
5	3.5	1.5	2.25	0.6428
10	6	4	16	2.6667
2	6	-4	16	2.6667
				11.035

Decision rule
Since the calculated value of chi-square , 11.035 is more than the tabulated value, 9.488, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis rejected, hence we conclude here that there is significant relationship between internal revenue generation and primary health care infrastructure.

Conclusion
For any local government to be able to provide infrastructure, there is need to generate revenue (internally). The source of revenue generation for the local government (internally) include, income from sheet naming, registration of birth and death certificate. Signage (Advertisement permit) registration of marriage certificate, motor pack permit, public conveniences, regulated premises, Radio/T.V. permits.

Community tax, donations of liquor license and court fines e.t.c.
It was identified in this study that there are many revenue sources that are already existing in Oluyole Local Government Naturally, the government of Oyo state and Government have not paid attention to so many of them in the Oluyole Local Government of Oyo state to develop the communities. This made it possible for the poor infrastructural development in the communities based on poor water supply, road and other poor areas of developments.

The poor people Oluyole Local Government. The reason why the government of Oyo State don't pay there taxes is due to poverty, the fair of corruption, mismanagement diverting money and ignorance.
Finally, I will say that if Oluyole Local Government of Oyo State would experience effective revenue generation, the development of the community and infrastructures would improve government of Oyo state must develop infrastructure, sufficient revenue (funds) must be generated for the LGA to meet the expectation of its citizens.

Recommendation
Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendation were made:
The people of Oluyole Local Government (Oluyole Local Government) should be totally re-oriented. Government on the importance of paying taxes to the government. This will enable the government to be able to come up with infrastructural development, which will help improve better life.

Since people don’t pay there tax because of poverty and bad economic condition of the country, the government at all level should create job/employment opportunities for people to get employed and contribute to local government economy. The State and local government authorities should create an environment that will attract private investors into Oluyole local government of Oyo state for its own economic development. This will help to increase per capita income of the peple, reduce poverty and people will be encouraged to pay taxes to the local government.
The State and local government of Oyo State in Oluyole of the State should make infrastructural development in the rural area like road construction, building school, provision of water, building market and park to improve the life of the people in the grassroot to be encouraged.

The revenue collection body should be set up by the government in a corruption-free environment. The government can even go so far as to contract it to the private sector to make it more effective. The government should also make sure that other forms of revenue are also put to good use in the local government of South-West, Oyo state. The revenue collected should be well utilized for the

improvement of communication in the local government in both human and infrastructural development.

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FACILITY MANAGEMENT, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, AND GUEST SATISFACTION AT SELECTED HOTELS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LGA, OYO STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the influence of facility management and emergency preparedness on guest satisfaction in selected hotels within Ibarapa Central Local Government Area (LGA), Oyo State, Nigeria. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining quantitative data obtained through structured questionnaires administered to 300 respondents comprising hotel guests and staff with qualitative data from interviews and observational checklists. The study evaluated key facility management variables, including maintenance culture, cleanliness standards, response time to repairs, and quality of amenities, alongside emergency preparedness indicators such as staff training, availability of safety equipment, and collaboration with emergency agencies. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed that effective facility management has a significant positive influence on guest satisfaction, particularly through improved cleanliness, uninterrupted utility services, and prompt maintenance responsiveness. Similarly, emergency preparedness significantly enhanced guests' perceptions of safety, trust, and overall satisfaction. Despite these positive outcomes, the study identified inadequate funding, insufficient staff training, and weak enforcement of safety regulations as major constraints to effective facility management and emergency preparedness. The study concludes that integrating efficient facility management practices with proactive emergency preparedness strategies is essential for enhancing service quality, improving guest satisfaction, and sustaining the competitiveness of hotels in the study area. It therefore recommends regular maintenance planning, continuous staff training, increased investment in safety infrastructure, and stronger collaboration with local emergency management authorities to improve operational effectiveness and customer experience.

Keywords: *Facility Management, Emergency Preparedness, Guest Satisfaction, Hospitality Management, Service Quality*

Introduction

The hospitality industry plays a significant role in economic development through employment generation, tourism promotion, and revenue creation. However, the ability of hotels to maintain high levels of guest satisfaction depends largely on the quality of facility management and the extent of emergency preparedness measures available within the establishments. Recent studies have emphasized that guests increasingly evaluate hotels not only on service quality but also on safety, reliability, and the condition of physical facilities (Aksoy et al., 2022; Srivastava & Kumar, 2021).

Facility management encompasses the planning, operation, maintenance, and improvement of physical assets and support services that ensure the functionality, comfort, safety, and efficiency of hotel environments. Effective facility management practices such as preventive maintenance, repair efficiency, cleanliness standards, and regulatory compliance have been shown to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction (Fidelis-Umeh, Emoh, & Ewurum, 2015; Ogbunankwor, Nwangene, & Chendo, 2023). Conversely, poor maintenance practices often result in service disruptions, increased operational costs, and negative customer experiences.

Emergency preparedness has also become a critical component of hospitality management. Hotels are exposed to numerous risks including fire outbreaks, health emergencies, flooding, power failures, and security threats. According to Brown (2017), the capacity of hospitality establishments to prepare for and respond to emergencies significantly influences business continuity and organizational resilience. Similarly, Rajić, Maksimović, and Milosavljević (2023) reported that structured emergency planning, staff training, and disaster recovery mechanisms enhance operational effectiveness and customer confidence during crises.

In Nigeria, many hotels operate within environments characterized by infrastructural challenges such as unstable electricity supply, inadequate emergency response systems, and limited access to modern facility management technologies (Oyedepo, 2012; Falola et al., 2022). These challenges are particularly evident in semi-urban areas such as Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, where hotels must simultaneously manage resource constraints and increasing customer expectations. Despite the growing importance of facility management and emergency preparedness, empirical studies focusing on their combined effects on guest satisfaction in semi-urban Nigerian hotels remain limited.

This study therefore investigates the influence of facility management and emergency preparedness on guest satisfaction in selected hotels in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examines the status of facility management practices and emergency preparedness measures, evaluates their relationship with guest satisfaction, and identifies challenges affecting their effective implementation. The findings provide evidence-based recommendations for improving hotel operations, enhancing customer satisfaction, and strengthening resilience within the hospitality sector.

Materials and methods

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Study area

The study was conducted in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State, Nigeria. Ibarapa Central was created in 1996 with its administrative headquarters located in Igboora. The Local Government occupies approximately 440 square kilometres and shares boundaries with Ibarapa East LGA to the east, Ibarapa North LGA to the north, and Ogun State to the south and west. The area has an estimated population of over 100,000 people according to the National Population Commission projection based on the 2006 Population Census.

Administratively, Ibarapa Central LGA is divided into 10 political wards, namely:

1.Iberekodo I (Pataoju)

2. Iberekodo/Agbooro/Ita Baale

3. Idere I (Molete)

4. Idere II (Ominigbo/Oke-Oba)

5. Idere III (Koso/Apa)

6. Idofin Isaganun

7. Igbole/Pako

8. Isale-OBA

9. Oke-Odo

10.Okeserin I & II

Population and sample

The study population comprised hotel guests and staff from selected hotels. A sample size of 300 respondents was determined using multi-stage sampling technique to ensure representation. The study population comprised all registered hotels operating within the ten wards of Ibarapa Central LGA, together with their staff and guests.

Sample size and sampling technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting respondents for the study.

Stage One: The ten political wards that constitute Ibarapa Central LGA were identified. Since hotel distribution is uneven across the LGA, purposive sampling was used to select wards with active and registered hotels. These wards included Iberekodo I (Pataoju), Iberekodo/Agbooro/Ita Baale**,** Okeserin I & II, Idere I, Idere II and Isale oba, where the majority of hotels are concentrated.

Stage Two: Within the selected wards, eight (8) hotels were purposively selected based on the following criteria:

- they were duly registered with the relevant government authority;
- they had been in operation for at least three years;
- they offered accommodation services continuously during the study period; and
- management granted permission for participation in the study.

Stage Three: Respondents were selected from the sampled hotels using stratified sampling. Two strata were created, namely hotel staff and hotel guests, to ensure adequate representation of both groups.

Thereafter, respondents within each stratum were selected using simple random sampling. A total of 300 respondents participated in the study, comprising 180 hotel guests (60%) and 120 hotel staff (40%). The number of respondents selected from each hotel was determined using proportionate allocation based on the average number of guests and staff available during the period of data collection, ensuring equitable representation across the selected hotels.

Validity and reliability

The instruments were validated through expert review, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, ensuring internal consistency.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, percentage)
- Inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis)

Result and discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Total Respondents	143
Guests	101
Staff	34
Managers	8

The sample was dominated by hotel guests, providing reliable information on service quality perceptions.

Table 2 shows reliability results.

Construct	Cronbach Alpha
Facility Management	0.208

Preparedness	0.301
Guest Satisfaction	0.744

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix.

Variable	Facility	Preparedness	Guest Satisfaction
Facility	1.000	0.101	0.195
Preparedness	0.101	1.000	0.112
Guest Satisfaction	0.195	0.112	1.000

The correlation analysis indicated positive relationships among facility quality, preparedness and guest satisfaction.

Table 4 presents the regression results.

Predictor	Coefficient	p-value
Intercept	3.112	<0.001
Facility Quality Index	0.287	0.001
Preparedness Index	0.173	0.040

Regression results revealed that facility quality significantly predicted guest satisfaction. Preparedness also exerted a positive effect. The findings support service quality and resilience theories, demonstrating that guests value both functional facilities and visible safety measures.

Descriptive findings

The study revealed that:

- Majority of respondents rated cleanliness as a critical determinant of satisfaction
- Reliable electricity and water supply significantly influenced guest comfort
- Prompt response to maintenance issues improved service perception

Facility management and guest satisfaction

Regression analysis showed a strong positive relationship between facility management practices and guest satisfaction. Hotels with effective maintenance systems and high cleanliness standards recorded higher satisfaction levels.

Emergency preparedness and guest satisfaction

Emergency preparedness was found to significantly influence guests' perception of safety. Hotels with visible safety measures such as fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and trained staff recorded higher trust and satisfaction.

Challenges identified

Key challenges include:

Financial constraints

Inadequate staff training

Poor regulatory enforcement

Limited collaboration with emergency services

Discussion

The findings align with existing literature emphasizing the importance of service quality and safety in hospitality. The study confirms that facility management and emergency preparedness are not independent variables but complementary factors influencing guest satisfaction

Conclusion

Facility management and emergency preparedness significantly affect guest satisfaction in hotels. Hotels should establish preventive maintenance schedules, conduct regular safety drills, strengthen monitoring and compliance, partner with emergency agencies, and invest in modern facilities. Hotels that maintain high standards in cleanliness, maintenance, and safety are more likely to retain customers and achieve competitive advantage.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made:

Regular maintenance planning and facility audits

Continuous staff training on safety and emergency response

Investment in modern facility management systems

Strengthened collaboration with emergency agencies

Enforcement of safety regulations by authorities

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FACILITY MANAGEMENT, GUEST SATISFACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of sustainability practices on guest loyalty among selected hotels in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. As environmental, economic, and social sustainability become increasingly important in the global hospitality industry, hotels are adopting sustainable management practices to improve operational efficiency, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance customer satisfaction. The study employed a descriptive survey research design involving selected registered hotels within Abeokuta North and Abeokuta South Local Government Areas of Ogun State. A structured questionnaire was administered to hotel guests and management staff selected through a multistage sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to determine the relationship between sustainability practices and guest loyalty. The findings revealed that environmental sustainability practices, including efficient energy management, water conservation, waste reduction, and responsible resource utilization, significantly influenced guests' intention to revisit and recommend hotels. Social sustainability initiatives, such as supporting local communities, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting employee welfare, also contributed positively to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Economic sustainability practices enhanced operational efficiency and strengthened guests' confidence in hotel management. Despite these benefits, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, limited access to renewable energy technologies, financial constraints, and insufficient government support hinder the effective implementation of sustainable practices. The study concludes that sustainability has become an important competitive strategy capable of improving guest loyalty and long-term business performance within the hospitality industry. It therefore recommends increased investment in green technologies, staff capacity development, stronger environmental policies, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous sustainability education to enhance sustainable hotel operations and improve customer loyalty.

Keywords: *Sustainability, Sustainable Practices, Guest Loyalty, Hotel Management, Hospitality Industry.*

Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy and plays a significant role in employment generation, economic development, and tourism promotion. However, hotel operations consume large amounts of energy, water, and other natural resources while generating considerable quantities of solid waste, wastewater, and greenhouse gas emissions. As environmental concerns continue to increase worldwide, sustainability has become a strategic priority for hotel organizations seeking to reduce their environmental impacts while maintaining profitability and competitiveness (United Nations Environment Programme & World Tourism Organization, 2005; Mensah, Ishmael, 2020).

Sustainability in the hospitality industry refers to the adoption of environmental, economic, and social practices that enable hotels to meet present operational needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Environmental sustainability includes efficient energy and water use, waste reduction, recycling, and pollution prevention. Economic sustainability focuses on long-term profitability through efficient resource management, while social sustainability promotes employee welfare, community development, ethical business practices, and cultural preservation (United Nations, 2015; Swarbrooke, John, 1999).

In recent years, hotel guests have become increasingly aware of environmental issues and now consider sustainability when choosing accommodation. Many tourists prefer hotels that demonstrate environmental responsibility through green practices such as energy conservation, waste recycling, water conservation, and the use of environmentally friendly products. Research has shown that hotels implementing sustainable practices often experience improved customer satisfaction, enhanced

corporate image, reduced operational costs, and stronger guest loyalty (Bohdanowicz, Paulina, 2006; Chen, Yu-Shan, 2010).

Guest loyalty is one of the most important indicators of success in the hospitality industry because loyal customers are more likely to revisit hotels, recommend them to others, and contribute to increased revenue through repeat patronage. According to Oliver, Richard L. (1999), customer loyalty develops when guests consistently receive satisfactory services that meet or exceed their expectations. Similarly, high service quality and responsible business practices positively influence customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, including repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Zeithaml, Valarie A. et al., 1996).

Despite the growing importance of sustainability, many hotels in developing countries, including Nigeria, face challenges in implementing sustainable practices. These challenges include inadequate financial resources, unstable electricity supply, limited access to renewable energy technologies, weak environmental policies, insufficient staff training, and low awareness of sustainable hospitality practices. Consequently, many hotels struggle to balance environmental responsibility with business profitability (World Tourism Organization, 2018; Mensah, Ishmael, 2020).

Abeokuta, the capital city of Ogun State, has experienced considerable growth in hospitality and tourism due to increasing business activities, educational programmes, cultural festivals, and government functions. As competition among hotels continues to increase, sustainability practices have become an important strategy for attracting and retaining customers. However, empirical evidence on the relationship between sustainability practices and guest loyalty among hotels in Abeokuta remains limited. This study therefore examines the influence of sustainability practices on guest loyalty among selected hotels in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, with a view to providing recommendations for improving sustainable hotel management and enhancing customer loyalty.

Materials and methods

Research design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data directly from hotel guests and management staff regarding sustainability practices and guest loyalty without manipulating the study variables. The descriptive survey design also provided an opportunity to obtain reliable information on respondents' opinions, perceptions, and experiences, making it suitable for investigating relationships between sustainability practices and guest loyalty.

Study area

The study was conducted in **Abeokuta**, the capital city of **Ogun State, Nigeria**. Abeokuta is one of the major commercial, administrative, educational, and tourism centres in southwestern Nigeria. The city has experienced considerable growth in hospitality and tourism activities due to increasing business travel, educational conferences, cultural festivals, government activities, and recreational tourism.

The study covered **two Local Government Areas (LGAs):**

- **Abeokuta North Local Government Area**
- **Abeokuta South Local Government Area**

These two LGAs were selected because they contain the highest concentration of registered hotels and hospitality establishments within Abeokuta. They also receive a large number of business travellers, tourists, government officials, and conference participants throughout the year, making them suitable locations for investigating sustainability practices and guest loyalty.

Population of the study and sample size

The population of the study consisted of **management staff and hotel guests** in the selected registered hotels located within Abeokuta North and Abeokuta South Local Government Areas.

The sample size for this study was drawn from both the management staff and guests of selected registered hotels in Abeokuta North and Abeokuta South Local Government Areas. A representative sample was selected to ensure that respondents possessed adequate knowledge and experience regarding sustainability practices and guest loyalty. The sample size was considered sufficient to provide reliable information for achieving the objectives of the study.

Sampling technique

A multistage sampling technique was adopted for selecting respondents.

The sampling process involved the following stages:

Stage One: The study area was purposively limited to Abeokuta North and Abeokuta South Local Government Areas because they have the highest concentration of registered hotels in Ogun State.

Stage Two: Registered hotels within the two Local Government Areas were purposively selected because they operate formal hospitality services and implement management practices related to sustainability.

Stage Three: Management staff and hotel guests in the selected hotels were chosen using appropriate sampling procedures. Management staff were selected because of their knowledge of sustainability policies and operational practices, while guests were selected because they could provide firsthand information on their satisfaction and loyalty based on their experiences in the hotels.

Method of data collection

The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents in the selected hotels by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants where necessary.

Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion or at agreed times to ensure a high response rate.

Method of data analysis

The data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The following statistical techniques were employed:

- **Descriptive statistics** such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and describe sustainability practices.
- **Inferential statistics** were used to test the research hypotheses and determine the relationship between sustainability practices and guest loyalty at the **5%** level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

Results and discussion

This section presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected from respondents. The results are presented using tables and are discussed in relation to the objectives of the study and previous empirical studies.

The first part presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the subsequent sections examine the influence of sustainability practices on guest loyalty among selected hotels in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Results and discussion

A total of **250 questionnaires** were distributed to operations managers and hotel guests in the selected hotels. Of these, **243 questionnaires were returned**, while **239 questionnaires** were found valid for analysis, giving an overall valid response rate of **95.6%**. This high response rate indicates active participation by respondents and provides confidence in the reliability of the study findings.

Table 1: Demographic profile of hotel guests (n = 95)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54	56.8
	Female	41	43.2
Age	18–25 years	15	15.8
	26–35 years	36	37.9
	36–45 years	29	30.5
	Above 45 years	15	15.8
Purpose of Visit	Business	36	37.9
	Leisure	38	40.0
	Conference/Workshop	14	14.7
	Others	7	7.4
Duration of Stay	1–2 nights	30	31.6
	3–5 nights	44	46.3
	Above 5 nights	21	22.1
Frequency of Stay	First-time visitor	33	34.7
	Occasional visitor	45	47.4
	Regular guest	17	17.9

Source: Field Survey (2025).

Discussion

The demographic profile shows that 56.8% of the respondents were male, while 43.2% were female, indicating that both genders were well represented in the study. Most respondents (37.9%) were between 26 and 35 years, followed by those aged 36–45 years (30.5%). This suggests that the hotels mainly serve young and economically active adults.

Regarding the purpose of visit, 40.0% of the respondents visited Abeokuta for leisure, while 37.9% were business travellers. This finding indicates that hotels in Abeokuta cater to both recreational and business visitors, reflecting the city's growing importance as a tourism and commercial destination.

The duration of stay revealed that almost half of the guests (46.3%) stayed between three and five nights, while 47.4% were occasional visitors. This suggests that many guests return to the hotels periodically, providing an opportunity for hotel managers to strengthen customer loyalty through improved sustainability and facility management practices

Figure 1 illustrates that male respondents slightly outnumbered female respondents among the sampled hotel guests.



Link with Previous Studies

The findings agree with studies that suggest urban hotels typically attract a mixture of business and leisure travellers, with young and middle-aged adults forming the largest customer group. This demographic group is often more aware of service quality, environmental responsibility, and sustainable hospitality practices, making them an appropriate population for assessing guest loyalty and sustainability initiatives.

Sustainability Practices Adopted by Selected Hotels

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which sustainability practices were implemented in the selected hotels. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Sustainability Practices in Selected Hotels (n = 239)

Sustainability Practice	Mean	Decision
Efficient use of electricity	3.62	Agreed
Water conservation practices	3.54	Agreed
Proper waste disposal and recycling	3.47	Agreed
Use of environmentally friendly cleaning materials	3.39	Agreed
Regular maintenance of hotel facilities	3.71	Agreed
Staff awareness of sustainability practices	3.43	Agreed
Support for local community activities	3.31	Agreed
Overall Mean	3.50	Agreed

Source: Field Survey (2025).

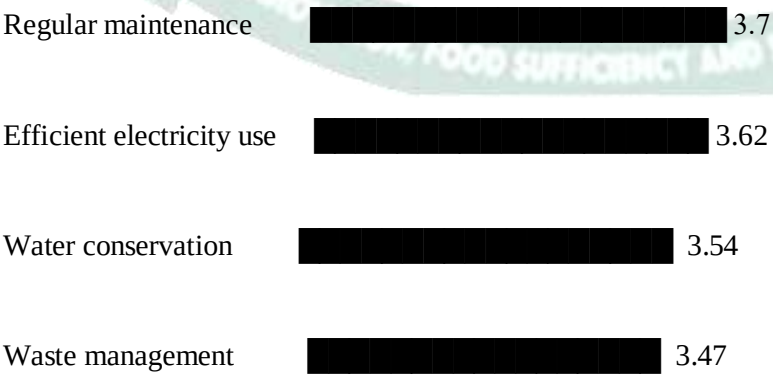
Discussion

Table 2 shows that respondents generally agreed that the selected hotels practised sustainability management. The highest-rated practice was regular maintenance of hotel facilities (Mean = 3.71), followed by efficient use of electricity (Mean = 3.62). This indicates that the hotels placed considerable emphasis on maintaining their facilities and reducing energy consumption.

Respondents also agreed that the hotels practised water conservation, proper waste disposal, and the use of environmentally friendly cleaning materials. These practices help to reduce environmental pollution, improve operational efficiency, and create a healthier environment for both guests and employees.

Although support for local community activities (Mean = 3.31) received the lowest mean score, respondents still agreed that the hotels were making efforts to contribute to community development. This finding suggests that greater attention should be given to corporate social responsibility programmes to strengthen relationships between hotels and their host communities.

Figure 2: Mean Scores of Sustainability Practices



Staff awareness [redacted] 3.43

Eco-friendly cleaning [redacted] 3.39

Community support [redacted] 3.31

Figure 2 shows that regular maintenance and efficient electricity use were the most widely implemented sustainability practices among the selected hotels.

Influence of Sustainability Practices on Guest Loyalty

The study further examined whether sustainability practices influenced guests' loyalty to the selected hotels.

The findings revealed that hotels implementing sustainable practices recorded higher levels of guest satisfaction and loyalty. Respondents indicated that clean surroundings, reliable utilities, proper waste management, and environmentally responsible operations positively influenced their willingness to revisit the hotels and recommend them to others.

These findings support the view that sustainability is not only beneficial to the environment but also serves as a competitive strategy that enhances customer confidence, strengthens hotel reputation, and encourages repeat patronage. Guests increasingly appreciate hotels that demonstrate concern for environmental protection and responsible business practices, making sustainability an important factor in customer retention.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings are consistent with previous studies which reported that sustainable hotel practices improve customer satisfaction, enhance service quality, reduce operational costs, and increase guest loyalty. Hotels that invest in energy conservation, water efficiency, waste management, and environmental education are more likely to gain a competitive advantage and maintain long-term relationships with their customers.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that sustainability practices contribute significantly to improved hotel performance. Hotels that invest in environmental management create cleaner surroundings, improve service quality, reduce operational costs, and enhance customer confidence.

Guests increasingly consider environmental responsibility when selecting accommodation. Therefore, sustainability has become an important marketing strategy as well as a management practice.

The results agree with previous studies, which found that environmentally responsible hotels experience higher customer satisfaction, stronger brand image, and increased guest loyalty.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of sustainability practices on guest loyalty among selected hotels in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The findings revealed that sustainability practices such as energy conservation, water management, waste reduction, environmental cleanliness, and responsible use of resources positively influence customer satisfaction and guest loyalty.

The study also established that effective environmental management contributes to improved operational efficiency, reduced operating costs, enhanced corporate image, and stronger customer confidence. Hotels that consistently implement sustainable practices are more likely to enjoy repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Although many hotels have adopted some sustainability initiatives, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, limited environmental awareness, and insufficient government support continue to hinder effective implementation.

Overall, the study concludes that sustainability is an essential strategy for achieving long-term success in the hospitality industry.

Recommendations

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

Hotels should strengthen environmental sustainability practices by adopting energy-efficient equipment, water-saving technologies, and proper waste management systems.

Management should provide regular training for employees on environmental management and sustainable hospitality practices to improve service delivery.

Government should encourage sustainable hotel operations by providing incentives such as tax relief, grants, and technical support for environmentally friendly investments.

Monitoring and evaluation of sustainability practices should be conducted to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with environmental standards.

Hotel managers should educate guests on sustainability initiatives, such as towel and linen reuse programmes, waste segregation, and responsible use of water and electricity.

Future researchers should investigate sustainability practices in other regions of Nigeria and compare the findings with those obtained from Abeokuta to provide broader evidence for policy formulation.

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INFLUENCE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY ON THE ROLES OF PROFESSIONAL SECRETARIES FOR EFFECTIVE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION IN THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, ABEOKUTA, OGUN STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the Influence of Modern Technology on the Roles of Professional Secretaries for effective Office Administration in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. To achieve the objectives of the study, three research questions were raised and answered. The research adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study consists of 121 secretaries in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, out of which 75 was drawn from the population as the sample size of the study and the data collected there were subjected to analysis. Frequency counts and percentage were used to analyze respondent "bio data" while mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The researcher hopes to prove that the computer as part of the Information and Communication Technology, in the form of computer, printers, photocopiers, laminating machine, scanner, projector and etc., does not displace the roles of secretaries for effective office administration but has come to enhance their performance on the jobs. The findings show that modern technology enhanced efficiency and productivity through automation and digital tools and modern technology improved communication and collaboration via email, video conferencing, and instant messaging.

Keywords: *Influence of Modern Technology, Roles of Professional Secretary, Professional Secretary and Office Administration.*

Introduction

The traditional role of secretaries has evolved from merely managing correspondence and scheduling appointments to encompassing a broader spectrum of responsibilities, including information management, data analysis and decision support. A deeper understanding of how modern office technology influences the work experiences and job satisfaction of secretaries is crucial for fostering a conducive work environment (Aminu, Muhammad and Abubakar, 2024).

Technological innovations have tremendously influenced processes and procedures in modern day offices. The strategic role that the office holds as the digital nerve center of any given organization has put considerable emphasis on the use of information and communication technologies in offices (Ajike, 2015).

The nature of the modern day office makes it a place of operation where multiple tasks require the handling of information through the application of technology (Akiti, 2017).

In today's fast-paced and dynamic business environment, technological advancements play a pivotal role in reshaping organizational structures, processes and workforce dynamics. Among the myriad changes witnessed, the role of secretaries, once traditionally associated with administrative tasks, has undergone a profound transformation. The integration of modern office technology has not only revolutionized the way secretarial duties are performed but has also significantly impacted the efficiency, effectiveness and overall performance of secretaries in both public and private organizations (Aminu, Muhammad and Abubakar, 2024).

In terms of secretarial roles, it has been stated that most of their functions have undergone technical modifications over the years across the globe (Atakpa, 2010, in Baba, Aburiya and Azeesi, 2018).

Igbinidoin (2010) in Baba *et al* (2018) identifies the secretary's responsibilities to include; taking dictation and transcribing it into correspondence which is at once dispatched to its business destination. He highlights some forms of these correspondence to include: letters, memos, circulars, orders, quotations, acceptances, contractual terms, and conditions, invitations, etc.

Technological changes have altered the procedures and techniques for office functions to include the computers, electronic mail, voice mail, and the internet. The efficiency and effectiveness of the secretary in the academic profession depends on the availability of office technologies as well as the skills and competencies of the secretary (Oku, 2013; Onu and Amadi, 2020).

Statement of the problem

An automated office, undoubtedly, offers new roles and responsibilities for the secretary. Such new roles presupposed that additional training and qualifications are required from the secretaries even though modern technology is regarded as important and of much value in ensuring quality work output in an office, as bringing about productivity. It is equally believed that these machines can cause job displacement as a result of inability to operate. This is the fear that many employees suffer when new machines are being purchased for use by their organization due to the introduction of sophisticated technological (electronic) office equipment into today's office, and the role of secretaries need to meet the challenges by acquiring new skill and competence for efficient operations in the electronic office. There is continuous advancement in technology which has affected the secretarial profession in terms of the quality, speed and accuracy of works performed. Hence the study aims to enlighten the secretaries in FUNAAB on how to use the modern technology and familiarize themselves with them.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to ascertain the Influence of Modern Office Technology on Roles of Professional Secretaries for Effective Office Administration in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State.
Specific objectives are to;

i. determine modern office technology's influence on the performance of professional secretaries in the organization.
ii. determine types of modern office technology available for use in the organizations.
iii. determine how the usage of modern office technology/equipment influence/contribute to the secretaries performance and productivity of the organization.

Research questions

i. How modern office technology influences the performance of professional secretaries in the organization?
ii. What types of modern office technology are available for use in the organizations?
iii. How the usage of modern office technology/equipment influence/contribute to the secretaries performance and productivity of the organization?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for this research was 121 secretaries. In which 75 secretaries were used as sample size. The research instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled: Influence of Modern Technology on the Roles of Professional Secretaries for effective Office Administration in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The questionnaire items were generated based on the literature review and it was divided into two sections A and B. Section A of the instrument sought the bio-data of the respondents which includes: Gender and Educational Level while Section B of the questionnaire was further divided into three 3 parts: Part 1 covers research question 1 and it consists of ten (10) items on how modern office technology influence the performance of professional secretaries in the organization Part 2 consists types of modern office technology available for use in the organizations. Part 3 shows how the usage of modern office technology/equipment influences/contributes to the secretaries performance and productivity of the organization? Data collected were subjected to analysis.

Data were analysed using Mean and Standard deviation coded in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) to answer research questions. Decision rule: for research questions one and two the rating scale for mean responses was structured on Strongly Agreed (SA) 3.50 – 4.00, Agreed (A) 2.50 – 3.49, Disagreed (D) 1.50 – 2.49, Strongly Disagreed (SD) 0.0 – 1.49 and any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted while any item with a mean score below 2.50 were rejected.

Result

Research Question 1: How modern office technology influence the performance of professional secretaries in the organization?

Options: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 4: Mean responses and Standard Deviation that indicate how modern office technology influences the performance of professional secretaries in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1.	The infusion of technology into office environments has dramatically enhanced the speed and efficiency of information processing in contemporary workplaces	75	3.15	.545	Accepted
2.	Office automation enhances secretaries' communication abilities, thereby positively impacting their productivity	75	3.33	.634	Accepted
3.	The utilization of ICT gadgets by secretaries has been hailed for having a positive influence on productivity of secretaries	75	2.63	441	Accepted
4.	Office automation facilitates efficient discharge of secretaries' office works.	75	2.55	.465	Accepted
5.	The integration of technology into office work has greatly improved the speed and efficiency in which information is processed in the modern day office.	75	3.37	.579	Accepted
6.	The ability of secretaries to effectively utilize ICT to improve their job productivity.	75	2.53	.577	Accepted
7.	Modern secretaries now have access to a plethora of office technologies	75	2.43	.787	Accepted
8.	Computer software programs like word processors, data management programs, and spreadsheet applications further augment the secretaries' capabilities, facilitating tasks such as document creation, data organization, and numerical analysis.	75	2.77	.424	Accepted
9.	Technology has become inseparable from secretarial performance, enhancing efficiency, and elevating the secretary to a pivotal role as an information manager and custodian of organizational knowledge.	75	4.27	.786	Accepted
10.	The role of the secretary has evolved significantly, moving beyond mere typewriting and shorthand to encompass tasks like email correspondence and internet research.	75	2.67	.521	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 above shows how modern office technology influence the performance of professional secretaries in the organization in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The tables revealed that all the ten (10) items are accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.50 and above. The standard deviation of 0.424 to 0.786 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses.

Decision: The results therefore indicated that modern office technology highly influence the performance of professional secretaries in the Organization.

Research Question 2: What type of modern office technology is available and in use in the organization?

Options: Very High Available (VHA) High Available (HA) Available (A) Not Available (NA)

Table 5: Mean responses and Standard Deviation that indicate the type of modern office technology is available and in use the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1.	Computers	75	3.35	.553	Accepted
2.	Printers	75	3.13	.524	Accepted
3.	Photocopy Machine	75	3.83	.564	Accepted
4.	Laminating Machine	75	3.75	.655	Accepted
5.	Scanner	75	3.47	.588	Accepted
6.	Projector	75	2.52	.437	Accepted
7.	Shredder	75	2.73	.487	Accepted
8.	Storage Devices (Flash Drive, Compact Disc (CD), Digital Compact Disc (DVD) External Hard Disc etc	75	4.68	.735	Accepted
9.	Smartphone	75	4.57	.845	Accepted
10.	Video/Audio Conferencing Device	75	2.51	.433	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 above shows the type of modern office technology is available and in use in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The table revealed that all the ten (10) items are accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.50 and above. The standard deviation of 0.433 to 0.845 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses.

Decision: The results indicated the type modern office technology is available and in use in the Organization.

Research Question 3: How does the usage of modern office technology/equipment contribute to the secretary's performance and productivity of the organization?

Options: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 6: Mean responses and standard deviation that shows how the usage of modern office technology/equipment contribute to the secretary's performance and productivity of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1.	Information Technology (IT) business value has established a link between business IT investment and tangible returns such as output productivity.	75	2.25	.475	Accepted
2.	The use of IT in innovation and knowledge creation processes is, perhaps, the most critical to a firm's long-term success.	75	3.93	.655	Accepted
3.	Training and retraining upgrade the secretary to effective information management.	75	3.85	.594	Accepted

4.	Secretaries' ability to apply some of these modern office technologies leads to efficiency in the performance of their assigned roles	75	4.65	.865	Accepted
5.	Introduction of automated office equipment, secretaries' work is produced faster and with a professional touch.	75	3.07	.421	Accepted
6.	New developments in information technology have led to an increasingly mobile workforce.	75	4.03	.927	Accepted
7.	That we live in an era of tablets, phones and computers, and IT has become an enabler for greater convenience.	75	2.53	.487	Accepted
8.	As a result of technology insertion, the role of secretaries in offices has been positively influenced.	75	3.78	.724	Accepted
9.	This era of computers and information technology has become an enabler of greater convenience.	75	2.50	.428	Accepted
10.	Modern office technology is unproductive compare with yesterday manual age.	75	3.57	532	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 above shows how the usage of modern office technology/equipment contribute to the secretary's performance and productivity of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The table revealed that all the ten (10) items were accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.50 and above. The standard deviation of 0.421 to 0.927 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses.

Decision: The result shows how the usage of modern office/equipment contributes to the secretaries performance and productivity in the organization.

Discussion of Findings

By embracing modern technology and adapting to its influence, professional secretaries can excel in their roles, enhance office administration, and drive organizational success. The study examined the impact of modern technology on the role of professional secretaries in effective office administration in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The findings show that modern technology enhanced efficiency and productivity through automation and digital tools and modern technology improved communication and collaboration via email, video conferencing, and instant messaging. Finding also, affirmed that modern technology increases data security and management through cloud storage and encryption, expanded responsibilities, including social media management and web content creation.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Modern technology has transformed the role of professional secretaries, requiring adaptability, technical skills, and strategic thinking in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Secretaries now play a pivotal role in leveraging technology to optimize office administration, enhance productivity, and support organizational goals.

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STRATEGIC AGILITY AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN VOLATILE MARKETS: EVIDENCE FROM BITEMORE IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study, underpinned by dynamic capabilities theory, examined strategic agility and competitive advantage at BiteMore in Ibadan, Nigeria. A descriptive-survey design was adopted with 142 respondents selected from a population of 220 employees through purposive and stratified sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that environmental sensing agility ($\beta = 0.347$, $R^2 = 0.561$), decision-making agility ($\beta = 0.362$, $R^2 = 0.578$), and operational agility ($\beta = 0.389$, $R^2 = 0.593$), each, significantly and positively influence customer satisfaction, market performance, and service differentiation advantage respectively, with all significant, individually, at $p < 0.05$. The combined three dimensions explain 68.2% of the variation in overall competitive advantage ($R^2 = 0.682$, $F = 132.587$), with operational agility ($\beta = 0.289$) exerting the strongest influence, followed by decision-making agility ($\beta = 0.247$) and environmental sensing agility ($\beta = 0.221$). The study concludes that strategic agility is a critical determinant of competitive advantage in volatile markets and, thus, recommends that food service firms should endeavour to strengthen environmental sensing, decentralise decision-making, and enhance operational flexibility to sustain competitive positioning.

Keywords: *Strategic agility, competitive advantage, environmental sensing, decision-making agility, operational agility.*

Introduction

Strategic agility has become a vital construct in strategic management, representing an organisation's ability to combine strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity to make swift strategic moves in response to environmental uncertainty (Lungwazi, 2024). According to Doz (2020), strategic agility is the capacity of an organisation to combine meta capabilities, leveraging the consistent, coherent behaviours and skills of senior management to make swift strategic moves to respond to environmental uncertainty. This capability has become a crucial factor for competitive advantage in volatile markets (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). In today's fast-paced and increasingly growing global market, traditional long-term strategic plans are outdated, especially post-COVID-19 (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). Organisations excelling in agility, rapid responsiveness, and adaptation have navigated unprecedented challenges, demonstrating that strategic sensitivity enables organisations to detect early signals of change and leverage them for competitive advantage (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). According to Doz and Kosonen (2008), strategic agility consists of three meta-capabilities: strategic sensitivity, the sharp perception and awareness of external and internal environments; resource fluidity, the deploying and relocating resources to gain new opportunities; and leadership unity as the collaborative decision-making. The relationship between strategic agility and competitive advantage is supported by empirical evidence showing that organisations with high agility maturity achieve enhanced financial performance and operational efficiency gains of 25-40% (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). The Nigerian food and beverage industry presents a compelling context for examining strategic agility's impact on competitive advantage. MSMEs contribute approximately 46.32% to Nigeria's GDP, accounting for 96.9% of businesses and 87.9% of employment (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021). However, they face significant challenges such that 67% of MSMEs experienced declining demand over the past two years due to rising inflation, with 38% attributing this to high product costs and 36% to low consumer purchasing power (PwC Nigeria, 2024). Strategic agility encompasses three core dimensions relevant to this study. These include environmental sensing agility as the ability to detect early signals of change in customer preferences and market conditions (Reed, 2020); decision-making agility being the capacity for collaborative, rapid decision-making among senior management teams (Doz, 2020); and operational agility as the ability to reconfigure operations quickly for service

differentiation (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). These dimensions directly influence customer satisfaction, market performance, and service differentiation advantage.

Despite the growing prominence of strategic agility in management literature, research on the synergy between strategic agility dimensions, such as environmental sensing, decision-making, operational agility, and competitive advantage indicators represented by customer satisfaction, market performance, and service differentiation remains fragmented and under-theorized, particularly in emerging market contexts. Nigerian food and beverage firms operate in increasingly volatile environments characterized by economic uncertainty and high inflation, infrastructure deficits, and intense competitive pressure, with lack of strategic capabilities necessary to navigate these challenges effectively. Specific challenges aggravating this problem as reported by PwC Nigeria (2024) include 67% of Nigerian MSMEs reported decreased product-service demand over the past two years due to macroeconomic pressures; inadequate access to finance remains the primary growth constraint (35%); the food and beverage sector faces unique operational challenges including supply chain disruptions, volatile input costs, and changing consumer preferences, yet limited research examines how environmental sensing agility enables firms to anticipate and respond to these changes; and despite digital transformation potential to enhance decision-making agility, adoption remains nascent among Nigerian MSMEs (Neirotti, 2025). BiteMore, a food business operating in Ibadan Nigeria, exemplifies these challenges. As an enterprise in the competitive foodservice industry, it is expected to navigate intense competition from established chains, price volatility in raw material costs, infrastructure limitations particularly electricity, fluctuating consumer demand driven by economic uncertainty, and rapidly changing customer preferences. The absence of empirical research examining how environmental sensing agility affects customer satisfaction, how decision-making agility influences market performance, and how operational agility enables service differentiation advantage in this specific context creates a critical knowledge gap, leaving practitioners without evidence-based guidance on developing strategic agility capabilities for sustainable competitive positioning. In addition, strategic agility research is growing among managers and firms, yet limited research examines strategic agility dimensions and their effects on competitive advantage indicators for smallholder food businesses in Ibadan. Hence, this study broadly examined the strategic agility and competitive advantage in volatile markets, a study of BiteMore in Ibadan, Nigeria. Its specific objectives included to: (i) examine the effect of environmental sensing agility on customer satisfaction of BiteMore; (ii) assess the effect of decision-making agility on market performance of BiteMore; (iii) determine the effect of operational agility on service differentiation advantage of BiteMore; and (iv) evaluate the combined effect of strategic agility dimensions on overall competitive advantage of BiteMore in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Literature review

Strategic agility represents the degree to which a firm is flexible with its business strategy and can outmaneuver competition by shifting market focus, product mix, and key resources (Reed, 2020). Environmental sensing agility refers to the sharpness of perception and level of awareness regarding external environments, enabling organisations to detect early signals of change in customer preferences, market conditions, and competitive dynamics (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). According to Reed (2020), environmental sensing represents the strategic sensitivity dimension of strategic agility, involving continuous environmental scanning, market intelligence gathering, and customer preference monitoring. Customer satisfaction refers to consumers' overall evaluation of their experience with a product or service, reflecting the extent to which customer expectations are met or exceeded (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). In volatile markets characterized by rapidly changing consumer preferences, such as Nigeria's high inflation environment, environmental sensing agility becomes particularly critical for maintaining customer satisfaction (PwC Nigeria, 2024). Decision-making agility refers to the capacity for collaborative, rapid decision-making among senior management teams, ensuring coherent behaviours that enable swift strategic responses to environmental changes (Doz, 2020). According to Doz and Kosonen (2008), decision-making agility implying leadership unity involves collaborative decision-making processes that reduce response time and enable coordinated strategic actions. The conceptual link between decision-making agility and market performance operates through reduced decision latency enabling faster response to market opportunities; collaborative decision-making ensuring cross-functional alignment for market initiatives; rapid strategic recalibration in response to

competitive moves; and efficient resource allocation for market expansion activities (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). Operational agility refers to the ability to reconfigure operations quickly, adapting processes, resources, and capabilities to deliver differentiated services that create competitive advantage (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). This dimension corresponds to resource fluidity in Doz and Kosonen's (2008) framework, involving the deployment and relocation of resources to gain new opportunities and respond to emerging customer needs. Service differentiation advantage refers to the unique value proposition an organisation offers through distinctive service attributes that distinguish it from competitors, creating customer preference and loyalty (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). Competitive advantage refers to attributes allowing an organisation to outperform competitors, including superior customer satisfaction, stronger market performance, and distinctive service differentiation (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). The conceptual framework posits that environmental sensing agility, decision-making agility, and operational agility collectively and individually contribute to competitive advantage. Environmental sensing enables anticipation of customer needs, decision-making ensures rapid strategic responses, and operational agility delivers differentiated services - creating a comprehensive competitive advantage position (Shams *et al.*, 2021).

Dynamic capabilities theory provides the foundational theoretical framework for this study, positing that firms achieve competitive advantage through capacities to sense opportunities, seize opportunities, and transform or reconfigure resources (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). This theory extends resource-based view (RBV) by emphasizing the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure competencies in response to environmental changes (Teece, 2007). The three dynamic capabilities dimensions align precisely with this study's strategic agility dimensions. Sensing capacity corresponds to environmental sensing agility - identifying and assessing opportunities and threats in customer preferences and market conditions. Seizing capacity relates to decision-making agility - mobilizing resources and making rapid decisions to address opportunities. Transforming capacity corresponds to operational agility - continuous renewal and reconfiguration of operations for service differentiation. Dynamic capabilities theory explains how food businesses like BiteMore can achieve competitive advantage in volatile Nigerian markets through strategic agility, including environmental sensing enables anticipation of customer preference changes, decision-making ensures rapid strategic responses to market shifts, and operational agility delivers differentiated services that create customer loyalty (Booth & Shepherd, 2024). Strategic agility functions as a dynamic capability within RBV, enabling firms to reconfigure resource bundles in response to environmental changes (Shawabkeh *et al*., 2024). RBV explains why environmental sensing agility, decision-making agility, and operational agility are valuable strategic resources: they are path-dependent (developed through experience), socially complex (requiring organizational collaboration), and causally ambiguous (difficult for competitors to imitate) (Reed, 2020). These capabilities enable food businesses to maintain competitive advantage through continuous adaptation in volatile markets. Knowledge-based view posits that knowledge is the most strategically significant resource, and competitive advantage derives from knowledge creation, transfer, and application. It explains environmental sensing agility as fundamentally knowledge-dependent, requiring continuous environmental scanning, market intelligence, and customer preference monitoring (Reed, 2020). Customer satisfaction theory, particularly the disconfirmation paradigm, posits that satisfaction results from comparison between expected and perceived performance (Shawabkeh *et al.*, 2024). When perceived performance exceeds expectations, customers experience satisfaction; when it falls short, dissatisfaction occurs. Environmental sensing agility supports customer satisfaction by enabling food businesses to accurately anticipate customer expectations through continuous market intelligence, ensuring service delivery aligns with or exceeds customer expectations. This theoretical perspective explains the mechanism through which environmental sensing agility influences customer satisfaction outcomes.

Empirical research demonstrates positive relationship between environmental sensing capabilities and customer-related outcomes. Booth and Shepherd (2024) found that organizations excelling in strategic sensitivity (environmental sensing) navigate unprecedented challenges by detecting early signals of customer preference changes and leveraging them for competitive advantage, resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction. Research supports the relationship between decision-making agility and market performance. Shawabkeh *et al.* (2024) conducted comprehensive research on strategic agility and

competitive advantage, finding leadership unity (decision-making) showed statistically significant relationships with market performance outcomes (effect size = 0.58, $p < 0.01$). The study reported that organizations with high decision-making agility achieve operational efficiency gains of 25-40%, directly contributing to market performance improvements. Shams *et al.* (2021) identified that operational agility (resource fluidity dimension) enables organizations to reconfigure operations quickly for service differentiation, creating competitive advantage through distinctive service attributes. The study found resource fluidity showed significant positive effects on service differentiation outcomes ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). Shawabkeh *et al*. (2024) found that operational agility (resource fluidity) showed statistically significant influence on service differentiation advantage ($B = 0.962$, $p < 0.000$, $R = 0.681$). This demonstrates that operational reconfiguration capabilities significantly enable service differentiation, creating competitive advantage through distinctive service offerings. Despite growing empirical research, critical gaps remain. Most studies focus on Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) firms or large corporations, with limited research on smallholder food businesses in Ibadan. Limited examination of how environmental sensing agility specifically affects customer satisfaction, how decision-making agility influences market performance, and how operational agility enables service differentiation in Nigerian food sector contexts. Existing Nigerian research concentrates on Lagos and Rivers State, with minimal research on Ibadan (Akhigbe & Onuoha, 2018). Absence of empirical research examining strategic agility and competitive advantage for food businesses like BiteMore in Ibadan creates critical knowledge gap. These gaps justify the present study's focus on BiteMore in Ibadan, examining how environmental sensing agility affects customer satisfaction, how decision-making agility influences market performance, and how operational agility enables service differentiation advantage, contributing empirical evidence to address these research voids.

Methodology

This study examining strategic agility and competitive advantage was conducted at BiteMore outlets in Ibadan, Nigeria. The population comprises 220 employees from company records. Anchored on dynamic capabilities theory, the study adopted a descriptive-survey design with structured questionnaires administered to 142 respondents selected using purposive and proportionate stratified sampling based on Yamane's (1967) formula. The questionnaire measured environmental sensing agility, decision-making agility, operational agility, and competitive advantage indicators (customer satisfaction, market performance, service differentiation) using a 5-point Likert scale. A pilot study with 15 employees confirmed instrument reliability with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 for all constructs. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to test relationships between strategic agility dimensions and competitive advantage.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 142)

Variable	Category	Frequency	(%)
	Male	79	55.6
Gender	Female	63	44.4
	Total	**142**	**100.0**
	18-25 years	29	20.4
	26-35 years	47	33.1
Age	36-45 years	41	28.9
	46 years and above	25	17.6
	Total	**142**	**100.0**
	Single	61	43.0
Marital Status	Married	67	47.2

	Divorced	7	4.9
	Widowed	7	4.9
	Total	**142**	**100.0**
Highest Educational Qualification	SSCE/OND	31	21.8
	HND/B.Sc.	73	51.4
	M.Sc./MBA	17	12.0
	Other	21	14.8
	Total	**142**	**100.0**
Current Position	Management Staff	19	13.4
	Supervisory Staff	37	26.1
	Operational Staff	53	37.3
	Customer Service/Frontline Staff	33	23.2
	Total	**142**	**100.0**
Years of Working Experience in BiteMore	Less than 1 year	23	16.2
	1-3 years	53	37.3
	4-6 years	37	26.1
	7 years and above	29	20.4
	Total	**142**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Survey, 2026*

Table 1 presents respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. In respect of gender, 79 respondents (55.6%) were male and 63 (44.4%) were female, indicating a slightly male-dominated but fairly balanced sample reflecting perspectives from both genders, important since strategic agility cuts across all roles. Age distribution shows 29 (20.4%) respondents were 18-25 years, 47 (33.1%) were 26-35 years, 41 (28.9%) were 36-45 years, and 25 (17.6%) aged 46 and above years. The largest proportion in 26-35 years suggests that BiteMore's workforce was young and active, likely adaptable and involved in service delivery, while the 36-45 years group provides mature insights valuable for assessing agility outcomes. For marital status, 67 respondents (47.2%) were married, 61 (43.0%) single, 7 (4.9%) divorced, and 7 (4.9%) widowed. This balance indicates that diversity in personal responsibilities shaping perceptions of organizational adaptability. Education shows 73 (51.4%) respondents had HND/B.Sc., 31 (21.8%) held SSCE/OND, 21 (14.8%) held other qualifications, and 17 (12.0%) had M.Sc./MBA. The majority being well-educated strengthens response credibility, as educated employees better understand market sensing, decision-making, and operational flexibility issues. For position, 53 (37.3%) respondents were operational staff, 37 (26.1%) supervisory, 33 (23.2%) customer service/frontline, and 19 (13.4%) were management staff. The largest operational group is appropriate since they execute day-to-day processes and assess operational agility, while other positions provide broad organizational perspective. Work experience shows 23 (16.2%) respondents had less than 1 year, 53 (37.3%) had 1-3 years, 37 (26.1%) had 4-6 years, and 29 (20.4%) had 7 and above years. The majority with at least 1-year experience, concentrated in 1-3 years, combines fresh perspectives with insights from experienced employees observing strategic changes over time. Overall, the diverse sample across genders, ages, education, positions, and experience provides a solid foundation for analyzing strategic agility's influence on competitive advantage.

Test of hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated were tested for validation. The simple linear regression was used to ascertain the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable.

Hypothesis One (H_{o1}): Environmental sensing agility has no significant effect on customer satisfaction of BiteMore in Ibadan.

Table 2: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Environmental Sensing Agility on Customer Satisfaction

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.362	0.151	9.017	0.000
Environmental Sensing Agility	0.347	0.068	12.214	0.000
R^2: 0.561	Adjusted R^2: 0.557	R: 0.745	F-statistics: 92.337	N: 142
Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 2 indicates that environmental sensing agility significantly and positively affects customer satisfaction at BiteMore in Ibadan. The positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.347$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that as BiteMore improves its ability to monitor customer preferences, track market trends, and identify environmental changes, customer satisfaction increases correspondingly. The R^2 value of 0.561, with the adjusted $R^2 = 0.557$, indicates that environmental sensing agility explains approximately 56.1% of the variation in customer satisfaction, suggesting a strong predictor. The high explanatory power reveals the importance of continuous market scanning and customer insight generation in shaping service quality and customer experience. The F-statistic (92.337), correlation coefficient ($R = 0.749$), and t-statistic ($t = 12.214$) confirm the model is statistically robust with a meaningful relationship between environmental sensing agility and customer satisfaction. Rejecting the null hypothesis implies that environmental sensing agility plays a crucial role in enhancing customer satisfaction at the BiteMore. When the organization actively gathers market intelligence, responds to customer feedback, and anticipates changes in consumer preferences, it is better positioned to deliver services that would meet customer expectations.

Hypothesis Two (H_{o2}): Decision-making agility has no significant effect on market performance of BiteMore in Ibadan.

Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Decision-Making Agility on Market Performance

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.418	0.147	9.646	0.000
Decision-Making Agilility	0.362	0.064	13.087	0.000
R^2: 0.578	Adjusted R^2: 0.574	R: 0.760	F-statistics: 101.426	N: 142
Dependent Variable: Market Performance				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 3 shows that decision-making agility significantly and positively affects market performance at BiteMore. The coefficient ($\beta = 0.362$) indicates that a unit increase in decision-making agility leads to a corresponding increase in market performance, holding other factors constant. The R^2 value of 0.578 indicates that decision-making agility explains approximately 57.8% of the variation in market performance, demonstrating it is a strong determinant of the firm's ability to maintain competitiveness, attract customers, and sustain growth. The F-statistic (101.426), correlation coefficient ($R = 0.760$), and t-value (13.087) confirm the relationship's robustness, strength, and statistical significance. Rejecting the null hypothesis indicates that timely and flexible decision-making enhances organizational responsiveness, enables quick adaptation to market changes, and strengthens competitive positioning. This implies that firms, while minimizing delays in decision processes and acting promptly on market intelligence, achieve improved market outcomes, including increased customer retention, higher sales performance, and sustained relevance in competitive environments.

Hypothesis Three (H_{03}): Operational agility has no significant effect on service differentiation advantage of BiteMore in Ibadan.

Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Operational Agility on Service Differentiation Advantage

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.305	0.152	8.586	0.000
Operational Agility	0.389	0.061	13.752	0.000
R^2: 0.593	Adjusted R^2: 0.589	R: 0.770	F-statistics: 110.113	N: 142
Dependent Variable: Service Differentiation Advantage				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 4 indicates that operational agility significantly and positively influences service differentiation advantage. The coefficient (β = 0.389) indicates improvements in operational flexibility, process adaptability, and resource reconfiguration significantly enhance BiteMore's ability to differentiate its services. The R^2 value of 0.593 indicates that operational agility explains approximately 59.3% of the variation in service differentiation advantage, making it the strongest predictor among the three dimensions examined individually. The high F-statistic (110.113), correlation coefficient (R = 0.770), and t-statistic (13.752) demonstrate a strong, reliable, and statistically significant relationship. Rejecting the null hypothesis means operational agility is critical by delivering unique, flexible, high-quality distinct services in competitive markets. By adapting quickly to customer demands, reallocating resources efficiently, and maintaining service consistency under changing conditions, BiteMore creates a distinct service identity enhancing its competitive advantage.

Hypothesis Four (H_{04}): Strategic agility has no significant combined effect on the overall competitive advantage of BiteMore in Ibadan.

Table 5: Summary of Multiple Regression Test of the Combined Effect of Strategic Agility on Overall Competitive Advantage

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.112	0.139	8.000	0.000
Environmental Sensing Agility	0.221	0.058	9.114	0.000
Decision-Making Agility	0.247	0.055	10.325	0.000
Operational Agility	0.289	0.053	11.472	0.000
R^2: 0.682	Adjusted R^2: 0.675	R: 0.826	F-statistics: 132.587	N: 142
Dependent Variable: Overall Competitive Advantage				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 5 indicates that the combined dimensions of strategic agility significantly and positively influence overall competitive advantage at BiteMore, Ibadan. The coefficients reveal that operational agility (β = 0.289) exerts the strongest influence, followed by decision-making agility (β = 0.247) and environmental sensing agility (β = 0.221), with all the three predictors statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. This suggests that while every dimension contributes meaningfully, the firm's capacity to adapt its operations plays the most critical role in achieving competitive advantage. Also, the R^2 value of 0.682 indicates that the three dimensions of strategic agility jointly explain approximately 68.2% of the variation in overall competitive advantage, reflecting a model of very strong explanatory power. The high F-statistic (132.587), correlation coefficient (R = 0.826), and t-values across all predictors further confirm the robustness, reliability, and statistical significance of the combined model. Rejecting the null hypothesis implies that strategic agility, when considered as an integrated capability, remain a major determinant of competitive advantage. By effectively combining environmental sensing, rapid decision-making, and operational flexibility, BiteMore is better positioned to outperform competitors, sustain customer loyalty, adapt to market changes, and maintain long-term relevance in dynamic and competitive operating environments.

Conclusion

This study examined strategic agility and competitive advantage in volatile markets using BiteMore in Ibadan. Findings revealed that environmental sensing agility significantly positively affects customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.347$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.561$), decision-making agility significantly positively affects market performance ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.578$), and operational agility significantly positively affects service differentiation advantage ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.593$), with operational agility emerging as the strongest variable. The findings align with Shawabkeh *et al*. (2024) and Booth and Shepherd (2024), who established that operational agility and environmental sensing capabilities significantly enhance competitive outcomes. The three dimensions jointly explain 68.2% of competitive advantage variation ($R^2 = 0.682$), with operational agility most dominant ($\beta = 0.289$), followed by decision-making agility ($\beta = 0.247$) and environmental sensing agility ($\beta = 0.221$), consistent with Doz (2020) and Teece (2024), who affirmed that integrating sensing, seizing, and transforming capacities produces superior competitive advantage. The study concludes that strategic agility is an important determinant of organisational success in dynamic environments, corroborating Lungwazi (2024) and Reed (2020), who established that agility dimensions collectively contribute to competitive positioning. The study's recommendations include strengthening environmental sensing through market intelligence systems, improving decision-making through decentralisation and employee empowerment, enhancing operational flexibility through better resource reconfiguration, and adopting integrated strategic agility framework aligning all three dimensions toward unified competitive outcomes.

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DIGITAL DETOX POLICIES AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS: EVIDENCE FROM ADESEUN OGUNDOYIN POLYTECHNIC, OYO STATE

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of digital detox policies on employee productivity at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa, Nigeria. It adopted a quantitative survey design with primary data collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that work-related digital interruption control ($\beta = 0.617$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.325$), after-hours digital disconnection ($\beta = 0.584$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.341$), digital use awareness and guidelines ($\beta = 0.629$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.389$), and digital detox policy practices ($\beta = 0.651$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.421$) have statistically significant positive effects on task completion rate, work focus and concentration, work-output quality, and time management efficiency, respectively. All models demonstrate robust fit with F-statistics confirming model reliability. The study recommends that Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic management should implement structured digital-detox regimes, including scheduled no-screen breaks, limited after-hours emails, and do-not-disturb modes, to enhance employee productivity and sustain organisational performance in an increasingly digital work environment.

Keywords: After-hours digital disconnection; Digital detox policies; Digital use awareness; Employee productivity; Time management efficiency; Work-related digital interruption control.

Introduction

Digital technologies have become vital tools in the workplaces with employees adopting digital tools and platforms for communication, administration, and engagement. Digital technologies have become indispensable in Nigerian polytechnics, where staff continually use email, online platforms, learning management systems, and institutional portals for teaching, administration, and student engagement (Adebayo & Oluwaseun, 2025; Al-Tasban, 2025). The universal culture of constant digital connectivity has been associated with work-related interruptions, cognitive overload, and employee burnout, all of which progressively erode concentration, task completion, and overall work quality (Bondanini *et al*., 2025; Wubben *et al*., 2025). Digital detox policies which are seen as deliberate organisation's efforts to regulate digital device use, have become a strategic response to workplace digital overload, with evidence linking their implementation to improved employee well-being and enhanced productivity (Al-Tasban, 2025; Bondanini *et al.,* 2025). Empirical literature suggests that structured digital detox interventions, such as restricted device access hours, scheduled screen-free breaks, and right-to-disconnect policies, are positively associated with reduced employee stress, improved work-life balance, and enhanced workplace productivity (Al-Tasban, 2025; Rai & Jaiswal, 2025). Evidence from Nigerian workplaces also indicates that digital overload and unregulated use of technology are linked with high technostress, reduced employee engagement and job performance, with similar patterns observed across public sector and service-oriented organisations in sub-Saharan Africa (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2022; Okolo *et al.,* 2018; Bondanini *et al*., 2025).

Despite growing global evidence on the negative effects of digital overload, empirical studies examining digital boundaries and employee productivity within Nigerian institutional contexts remain limited, emphasizing the need for context-specific investigations. Within Nigerian tertiary institutions, technostress arising from excessive digital demands and resource-constrained work environments has been linked to reduced lecturer productivity and declining job satisfaction, whereas, empirical investigations into how formal digital detox policies might address these challenges. particularly in polytechnic settings, remain notably scarce (Shittu & Ola, 2024; Chukwuemeka *et al.,* 2023). With the rapid adoption of digital tools in Nigerian polytechnics, there is growing concern that constant connectivity and poorly regulated device use may undermine employee productivity (Adebayo & Oluwaseun, 2025). While informal digital detox strategies such as device restriction, notification

management, and screen-free periods have received growing scholarly attention, there is no empirical investigation into their effectiveness among staff in Nigerian public tertiary institutions (Setia *et al.*, 2025). This study, therefore, addresses the problem of digital detox policies and their potential impact on employee productivity in a Nigerian polytechnic by seeking answers to the following questions:

(i) To what extent do work-related digital interruptions affect the task completion rate of staff at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic?
(ii) How does after-hours digital disconnection influence work focus and concentration?
(iii) How does digital-use awareness and institutional guidelines affect the quality of work output?
(iv) To what extent do digital detox policy practices enhance time-management efficiency among employees?

This study is justified on theoretical and empirical grounds. It extends the digital-detox and employee-wellness literature by investigating how structured digital-use policies shape the relationship between the use of digital tools and employee productivity in a Nigerian polytechnic (Okolo *et al.*, 2018; Ikediobi & Okeke-Okei, 2021; Adebayo & Oluwaseun, 2025). Evidence from global organizations indicates that digital-detox strategies, such as scheduled screen-free periods, controlled device use, and right-to-disconnect-type practices, can effectively reduce cognitive overload and support sustained employee performance (Cha & Seo, 2025). However, such evidence has rarely been tested within African public-sector institutions. On practical grounds, this study provides Nigerian polytechnic administrators and human-resource managers with guidance for designing digital-detox policies, offline work periods, and digital-wellness programmes tailored to the unique demands of technical and vocational education environments (Adewale, 2025; Altassan, 2025; Cha & Seo, 2025).

Related works

Digital detox refers to deliberate reduction or regulation of digital-device use to reduce cognitive overload, disruption, and mental-health strain associated with constant connectivity (Vilela *et al*., 2025). In the workplace, this may involve time-based constraints such as screen-free breaks, platform-based restrictions like limiting non-work apps during work hours, or boundary-setting practices like after-hours disconnection, that help employees manage attention and reduce interruption costs (Hu *et al.*, 2025; Gaju *et al.*, 2025). Digital overload, on the other hand, occurs when employees face excessive incoming notifications, multitasking across multiple platforms, and distorted work-life boundaries, resulting in reduced attention span, fatigue, and decreased task-completion rates (Vilela *et al.*, 2025). Digital detox is viewed as a work-life-balance construct, involving reduced burnout, higher focus, and improved job satisfaction in knowledge-intensive occupations such as teaching and administration (Hu *et al*., 2025; Vilela *et al.*, 2025). In higher-education institutions, employee productivity is mostly proxied by task-completion rate, work focus, quality of output, and time-management efficiency (Adebayo & Oluwaseun, 2025). For polytechnic staff, key indicators include timeliness of grading, lesson preparation, administrative reporting, and responsiveness to students and management, all of which are vulnerable to digital interruptions and after-hours connectivity demands. Recent conceptual work proposes that productive digital use, where technology supports rather than disrupts core duties, requires deliberate institutional norms on communication timing, device-free periods, and digital-awareness training (Hu *et al.*, 2025).

The human-resource management (HRM) and well-being perspectives, which view digital-detox policies as part of contemporary talent-management strategies aimed at sustaining engagement and performance in technologically saturated environments, are grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). COR theory posits that individuals strive to protect and build resources, and that resource loss, such as those from perpetual digital interruptions, produces stress, lower motivation, and burnout while JD-R theory explains how excessive job demands like constant connectivity, deplete energy and reduce performance unless buffered by adequate resources. These perspectives highlight organisational responsibility for protecting employee wellbeing and conceptualise digital-detox policies as organisational interventions that protect cognitive and emotional resources, and thereby enabling sustained high-quality work. Work-Family Border theory by Clark (2000) and Boundary theory by Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000) emphasise the importance of clear boundaries between work and non-work domains, a need that intensifies in the digital age as work emails and messages intrude into

evenings and weekends. For Nigerian polytechnic staff, who mostly combine teaching, grading, and administrative reporting under infrastructure constraints such as intermittent power and poor bandwidth, institutional support for technological boundary-setting is vital to sustain performance without depleting mental resources. The Stressor-Detachment model by Sonnentag and Fritz (2015) is a main extension of COR theory showing that lack of psychological detachment like those due to after-hours digital demands, predicts higher strain, burnout, and poorer wellbeing, while successful detachment facilitates recovery and sustained performance.

Recent empirical studies demonstrate that digital detox policies significantly improve employee productivity and well-being. Nirmala *et al.,* (2025) researched digital detox policy in multinational corporations and found that structured digital-detox regimes, including no-screen breaks, limited after-hours emails, and do-not-disturb modes, were associated with up to a 25% reduction in burnout and approximately a 12% increase in productivity. Bondanini *et al.* (2025), in the review of 40 studies published during the period 2020-2024, confirmed that organizations implementing offline hours and digital detox initiatives sustain both productivity and occupational health. Mizrak *et al.* (2025) studied 351 employees across multiple sectors, including IT, finance, healthcare, and education, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) found that cybersecurity fatigue significantly contributed to burnout, reduced productivity, and increased psychological strain, and that digital detox initiatives and mental health support strategies significantly moderated these effects, improving employee well-being and organizational performance. Staff who adopted after-hours disconnection and restricted device-use policies reported better focus, lower fatigue, and fewer work-related errors. In Nigeria, studies on workplace-wellness highlight that poor digital-use habits correlate with higher stress and lower engagement, particularly in healthcare and professional services. Oladipo and Adebayo (2025) conducted a cross-sectional survey of 280 healthcare workers from five hospitals in Lagos Metropolis, analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, and found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) between lack of digital detox practices and increased burnout rates. Poor digital-use habits correlated with higher stress and lower engagement, with downstream effects including reduced productivity, higher error rates due to fatigue, and weaker team collaboration. Healthcare workers who adopted structured digital boundaries reported 30% lower stress levels. In higher-education contexts, digital detox strategies have been tested primarily among students. Özbay (2026) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study involving 15 university students who experienced prolonged digital overuse, using in-depth interviews analyzed through interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), and found that digital detox, mindfulness practices, and physical activity were effective self-regulation strategies for reducing mental fatigue, improving concentration, and restoring productivity. Students reported that even short-term digital detox interventions alleviated anxiety, improved focus for academic tasks, and reduced cognitive overload.

However, there was limited evidence on polytechnic and university staff, despite their work involving similar patterns of digital-tool reliance combined with heavy cognitive demands. Adeyemi *et al.,* (2024) conducted a quantitative cross-sectional survey of 320 academic and administrative staff from three Nigerian universities, analyzed using Hierarchical Regression Analysis and Moderation Analysis, and found that higher self-control during flexiwork significantly enhanced job performance among Nigerian university staff. The study demonstrated that digital boundary management is critical for academic employees facing heavy cognitive demands and digital-tool reliance, with staff reporting 18% higher task completion rates and 22% better work focus. In Nigeria, most existing investigations focus either on corporate-sector employees or on students, leaving a clear gap regarding digital detox interventions for polytechnic staff. Okafor and Okonkwo (2025) conducted a mixed-methods study combining a survey of 450 lecturers and 15 in-depth interviews with polytechnic administrators, analyzed using descriptive statistics, χ^2 tests, and thematic analysis. They identified significant barriers to ICT adoption, including inadequate technical support, slow internet connectivity, and overload from digital tools. Polytechnic lecturers reported high digital interruptions, after-hours email expectations, and lack of formal digital-wellness frameworks. While this study illuminates ICT adoption challenges, it does not examine digital detox policies as a targeted intervention, confirming the need for research specifically on digital detox and productivity among polytechnic staff. Therefore, this present study therefore builds on the conceptual and empirical foundations to investigate digital detox policies and employee productivity at the Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study examined the effect of digital detox on employee productivity at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa in Oyo state, Nigeria. The choice of this location is strategic because the polytechnic represents a typical knowledge-based institution in a developing economy, where employees are increasingly exposed to digital communication tools, such as emails, messaging apps, and institutional online platforms. The study population comprises 444 staff, including regular and part-time members as obtained from both the Registry and Bursary departments as at March 2026. The theoretical underpinning upon which this study was anchored is basically the human-resource management (HRM) and well-being perspectives. The study adopted a survey research design with primary data obtained using a well-structured questionnaire administered to a sample size of 210 staff across relevant units and staff cadres, using multi-stage sampling technique with the last being a simple random sampling to guarantee that each staff member has an equal chance of participation. From the total of 210 questionnaires administered to the respondents, 200 were all retrieved and found valid for analysis, representing a 95.0% response rate thereby providing a sufficient basis for analysis while strengthening reliability of the findings.

Results and discussion

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 200)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	106	53.0%
	Female	94	47.0%
	Total	**200**	**100.0%**
Age	20-29 years	29	14.5%
	30-39 years	60	30.0%
	40-49 years	66	33.0%
	50 years and above	45	22.5%
	Total	**200**	**100.0%**
Staff Category	Academic Staff	113	56.5%
	Non-Academic Staff	87	43.5%
	Total	**200**	**100.0%**
Years of Work Experience	1-5 years	32	16.0%
	6-10 years	56	28.0%
	11-15 years	54	27.0%
	16 years and above	58	29.0%
	Total	200	**100.0%**
Level of Digital Literacy	Low	21	10.5
	Moderate	102	51
	High	77	38.5
	Total	**200**	**100.0%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2026*

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who participated in the study. The gender distribution shows that 106 (53.0%) respondents were male, while 94 (47.0%) respondents were female. The age distribution reveals that most respondents were within the active and mature working-age categories. Specifically, 66 (33.0%) respondents were between 40-49 years, while 60 (30.0%) respondents were between 30-39 years. Also, 45 (22.5%) respondents were 50 years and above while 29 (14.5) respondents were within the age range of 20-29 years. This suggests that the majority of respondents were mature employees who with sufficient workplace experience and exposure to institutional digital communication practices. Also, 113 (56.5%) respondents were academic staff while 87 (43.5%) respondents were non-academic staff. The higher proportion of academic staff may be due to their heavy involvement in teaching, research, supervision, online communication with students, and departmental coordination. However, the inclusion of non-academic staff is also important because administrative duties in tertiary institutions increasingly depend on emails, WhatsApp groups, portals, and other digital communication platforms. The distribution of respondents by years of work experience shows that 58 (29%) respondents had worked for 16 years and above, 56 (28.0%) respondents had 6-10 years of experience, 54 (27.0%) respondents had 11-15 years of work experience, while 32 (16.0%) respondents had worked for 1-5 years. This indicates that a large proportion of the respondents had considerable institutional work experience and are likely to understand how digital communication practices affect task completion, concentration, work quality, and time management. Finally, the level of digital literacy shows that 102 (51%) respondents had moderate digital literacy, 77 (38.5%) respondents had high digital literacy, while only 21 (10.5%) respondents reported low digital literacy. This implies that most employees possess the basic digital competence required to use emails, mobile phones, messaging platforms, and institutional portals. The result is relevant to the study because employees with moderate or high digital literacy are more likely to experience both the benefits and challenges of digital connectivity, including digital interruptions, after-hours communication, and the need for digital detox policies.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated were tested for validation. The linear regression was used to ascertain the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable.

Hypothesis One (H_{o1}): Work-related digital interruption control has no significant effect on the task completion rate of employees at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa.

Table 2: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Work-Related Digital Interruption Control on Task Completion Rate

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.263	0.116	10.888	0.000
Work-Related Digital Interruption Control	0.617	0.052	11.865	0.000
R^2: 0.325	Adjusted R^2: 0.323	R: 0.570	F-statistics: 140.778	N: 200
Dependent Variable: Task Completion Rate				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 2 shows that work-related digital interruption control has a statistically significant positive effect on task completion rate ($\beta = 0.617$, $p < 0.001$). The R-value of 0.570 indicates a moderate positive relationship, while $R^2 = 0.325$ shows that digital interruption control accounts for 32.5% of the variance in task completion rate, with the remaining variance attributable to other organisational and personal factors. The F-statistic of 140.778 confirms model reliability. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Overall, employees who effectively manage notifications, reduce unnecessary messages, and avoid frequent task-switching are more likely to complete assigned duties on time. This implies that regulating digital distractions through structured interruption control policies is a meaningful driver of employee productivity.

Hypothesis Two (H_{o2}): After-hours digital disconnection has no significant effect on work focus and concentration of employees at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa.

Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of After-Hours Digital Disconnection on Work Focus

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.418	0.129	10.992	0.000
After-Hours Digital Disconnection	0.584	0.048	12.167	0.000
R^2:0.341	Adjusted R^2: 0.339	R: 0.584	F-statistics: 148.042	N: 200
Dependent Variable: Work Focus and Concentration				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 3 shows that after-hours digital disconnection has a statistically significant positive effect on work focus and concentration ($\beta = 0.584$, $p = 0.000$). The R-value of 0.584 indicates a moderate positive relationship, while $R^2 = 0.341$ shows that after-hours disconnection accounts for 34.1% of the variance in work focus. The F-statistic of 148.042 confirms model reliability. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Overall, employees who were allowed to disengage from work-related digital communication outside official hours tend to return to work more mentally refreshed and cognitively prepared for task execution.

Hypothesis Three (H_{o3}): Digital use awareness and guidelines have no significant effect on the quality of work output of employees at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa.

Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Digital Use Awareness and Guidelines on Quality of Work Output

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.337	0.121	11.049	0.000
Digital Use Awareness and Guidelines	0.629	0.046	13.674	0.000
R^2: 0.389	Adjusted R^2: 0.387	R: 0.624	F-statistics: 186.922	N: 200
Dependent Variable: Quality of Work Output				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

The results in Table 4 show that digital use awareness and guidelines significantly influence work-output quality. The coefficient $\beta = 0.629$ indicates that higher awareness and adherence to digital communication rules substantially improve output quality. The p-value of 0.000 confirms statistical significance at the 1% level ($p < 0.001$), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. The R-value of 0.624 indicates a strong positive relationship between the variables, while $R^2 = 0.389$ shows that digital use awareness and guidelines account for 38.9% of the variance in work-output quality. The F-statistic of 186.922 confirms a highly robust model, suggesting that employees who understand and follow structured digital communication practices tend to produce more accurate, organised, and higher-quality work, thereby reinforcing the role of institutional digital policies in enhancing employee performance.

Hypothesis Four (H_{o4}): Digital detox policy practices have no significant effect on time management efficiency among employees of Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa.

Table 5: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Digital Detox Policy Practices on Time Management Efficiency

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.295	0.118	10.975	0.000
Digital Detox Policy Practices	0.651	0.044	14.795	0.000
R^2: 0.421	Adjusted R^2: 0.419	R: 0.649	F-statistics: 218.917	N: 200
Dependent Variable: Time Management Efficiency				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 5 shows that digital detox policy practices have a statistically significant positive effect on time management efficiency ($\beta = 0.651$, $p < 0.001$). The R-value of 0.649 indicates a strong positive relationship, while $R^2 = 0.421$ shows that digital detox policy practices account for 42.1% of the variance in time management efficiency. The F-statistic of 218.917 confirms model robustness. The

null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Overall, employees who manage digital interruptions, disconnect after working hours, and adhere to structured digital communication guidelines demonstrate greater efficiency in time allocation, task prioritisation, and overall work execution.

5. Conclusion

Digital detox policy, which the study operationalised through work-related interruption control, after-hours disconnection, and digital use awareness, was found as a strong predictor of employee productivity in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It explains significant variance across task completion, work focus, output quality, and time management efficiency. The findings extend the digital wellness and organisational behaviour literature to a public sector tertiary education, demonstrating how deliberate regulation of digital tool use sustains cognitive performance amid the competing demands of academic and administrative work. This study aligns with Cha and Seo (2025), who found that digital disconnection significantly improves workplace wellbeing and productivity, and Rai and Jaiswal (2025), who demonstrated that structured digital detox strategies reduce burnout and enhance organisational performance. The study recommends that Nigerian polytechnics should establish formal digital interruption control policies, enforce after-hours disconnection norms, and integrate digital use awareness programmes into staff development frameworks. Future studies should adopt longitudinal designs, expand scope across multiple institutions and sectors, incorporate qualitative methods to capture employees' experiences, and explore moderating variables such as organisational culture, leadership style, and technological infrastructure to identify conditions under which digital detox practices yield the most significant productivity gains.

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CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF QUOTED CONSUMER GOODS FIRMS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The probability of firms is closely linked to business governance mechanisms, particularly corporate governance. The study examines corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The study was designed to achieve three research objectives, to determine the effect of corporate governance on Return on assets [ROA], Return on equity [ROE] and Net profit Margin [NPM] of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. A quantitative research Approach was used, and data were collected from the financial statement of 6 quoted consumer goods firms. The data was analyzed with statistical Techniques The correlation co-efficient was to determine and relationship between the variables. The regression method of data analysis was used to make inferences on the hypotheses. Findings revealed that positive and insignificant relationship [B= 0.0026, t= 1.039, t > 0.05] for Board composition, Ownership structure [OS] is [B = 0.007,t= 0.225, t > 0.05] and Audit committee [AC] is [B= 0.048, t= 1.161, t > 0.05]. The study recommended that the stock performance of deposit money banks through the use of key performance indicators such as Return on Assets [ROA], Return on Equity [ROE] and Net profit Margin [NPM] associated with Financial performances.

Keywords: *Corporate Governance, Net Profit Margin, Return on Assets and Return on Equity*.

Introduction

Financial performance refers to a firm's ability to generate revenue, manage expenses, and achieve profitability over a specific period. It provides an indication of how effectively a company utilizes its resources to create value for shareholders and meet its financial obligations (Pandey, 2024). Assessing financial performance is crucial for understanding the sustainability, competitiveness, and growth prospects of a firm. Financial performance is particularly important because these in a capital-intensive and highly regulated industry that requires significant investment in research and development, production, and distribution. Financial performance reflects how well a firm utilizes its resources to generate profit and maximize shareholders' wealth. It is commonly measured using financial ratios such as return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), net profit margin (NPM), and earnings per share (EPS), Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2024.

Corporate governance is defined as the system of rules, practices, and processes directing and controlling a firm, striking a balance between various stakeholders (Jame, 2023). Its goal is to enhance business prosperity through accountability (Mohamed, 2023). Strong corporate governance practices are associated with developed economies achieving high and predictable earnings growth, while weak governance contributes to low performance and economic growth in developing nations (Anya, 2022). Corporate governance provides a framework for achieving objectives, delineating the distribution of rights and responsibilities among stakeholders (OECD, 2022). Key stakeholders include shareholders, debt holders, trade creditors, suppliers, the community, and customers externally, and the board of directors, executives, and employees internally (Akpan & Riman, 2022). Effective governance ensures checks and balances, preventing dominance in decision-making and aligning with the company's mission and values (Ranti, 2022). Conversely, weak governance can lead to a lack of accountability, bribery, violations of shareholder rights, negligence, ineffective internal controls, insider abuse, and fraudulent practices (Olumuyiwa & Babalola, 2022). The Enron scandal is a stark example of the consequences of weak corporate governance (Healy and Palepu, 2022). Given these concerns, companies assess their corporate governance practices continuously. This study aims to investigate the relationship between corporate governance and the performance of consumer goods firms in Nigeria, seeking insights for improvement and enhancing governance frameworks.

Research objectives

i. to assess the effect of corporate governance on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.
ii. to determine the effect of corporate governance on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.
iii. to evaluate the effect of corporate governance on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Research questions

i. What is the effect of corporate governance on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria?
ii. What is the effect of corporate governance on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria?
iii. What is the effect of corporate governance on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria?

Research hypotheses

H_{01}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

H_{02}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

H_{03}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Financial performance

Performance is a multidimensional concept that measures an organization's success in achieving its goals (Efanga 2023). It involves the outcomes achieved by individuals or teams aligned with the organization's strategic objectives. Scholars, such as Campbell, define performance as behavior, distinct from outcomes, which are the results of individual performance (Efanga et al., 2023). Policymakers and investors increasingly focus on financial performance as a crucial gauge for evaluating firms, particularly in the manufacturing sector (Tailab, 2023). In the realm of financial performance, companies are evaluated based on how efficiently and profitably they manage policies, operations, and financial results. Financial performance assessment involves indicators like return on investment, assets, equity, and capital employed, using ratios such as productivity, profitability, cost, liquidity, and solvency (Naz 2022). Financial analysis also employs predictive models like the Altman and Ohlson models for creditworthiness and bankruptcy risk evaluation. Proper financial performance assessment provides crucial information for decision-making and industry comparisons. Non-financial performance measures, including productivity, market premium, and profitability, focus on inputs/outputs, market/book value relationships, and earnings, respectively (Omondi & Muturi, 2021). Overall, performance evaluation is critical for business management, offering insights for improving operations, strategic decision-making, and ensuring financial and operational success in organizations.

Return on Assets (ROA)

ROA measures how efficiently a firm uses its total assets to generate profits. It indicates management's effectiveness in deploying company resources (Pandey, 2021).

Return on Equity (ROE)

ROE assesses the return generated on shareholders' investments. It reflects how well a firm uses equity capital to produce earnings for its owners (Brigham & Ehrhardt, 2022).

Net Profit Margin (NPM)

Net profit margin measures the proportion of revenue that remains as profit after all expenses have been deducted. It reflects cost control, pricing efficiency, and overall operational performance (Atrill, 2020).

Corporate governance

Corporate governance, a set of established rules, guides company management to maximize profitability and stakeholder value, aligning with agency theory's focus on shareholder interests (Shahid, 2001; Jensen & Meckling,2024). It encompasses norms, systems, and cultures, emphasizing board roles and accountability (OECD, 2024). Globally, corporate governance in financial management seeks to balance stakeholder interests, going beyond profit maximization (Bhattacharyya, 2023). It protects

shareholders, strengthens boards, enhances efficiency, ensures sustainability, and upholds ethical values. Corporate governance is a vital aspect of running organizations, ensuring fairness for owners and stakeholders, and navigating the relationships among shareholders, boards, management, staff, customers, and the wider community (Clarkson 2021).

Corporate governance refers to the system of rules, practices, policies, and processes by which a company is directed and controlled. It defines the relationship between a company's management, board of directors, shareholders, and other stakeholders. Corporate governance provides the framework for setting company objectives, determining the means of achieving those objectives, and monitoring performance (Cadbury, 2021; OECD, 2021).

Agency theory

Agency Theory, developed by Jensen and Meckling (2022), explores the separation of ownership and control in large corporations, leading to conflicts between shareholders and managers. In this principal-agent relationship, shareholders enlist managers to run the firm, but their interests may differ (Sappington, 2021). Information asymmetry and potential opportunism by managers result in agency costs, including monitoring and bonding costs, and residual costs. The principal-agent paradigm emphasizes ownership and organizational structures' impact on agency conflicts. Agency theory highlights equity ownership, aligning manager and shareholder interests, with the board of directors monitoring potential opportunism (Hart, 2021). Corporate governance mechanisms such as board independence, audit committees, ownership concentration, and separation of the CEO and board chair roles are designed to reduce agency conflicts. When these mechanisms function effectively, managerial opportunism is minimized, operational efficiency improves, and financial performance increases. Thus, agency theory supports the argument that strong corporate governance leads to improved financial performance.

Empirical review

Dulyamba, Benjamin, Stephen, and Daniel (2024) studied the effect of corporate governance mechanisms on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Secondary data was collected, and a judgmental sampling technique was used for the sample selection. Descriptive statistics, Correlation Matrix, OLS, and the Hausman test were used in the analysis. The results revealed that top management team and CEO characteristics have a significant and positive impact on ROE, whereas audit committee independence and external auditors' independence have a significant negative influence on ROE of consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Finally, shareholders' involvement has a negative but insignificant influence on ROE.

Molokwu and Duru (2024) investigated the effect of Corporate Governance on the Performance of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. Ex-Post Facto research design was adopted, and secondary data was obtained from Annual reports of selected Deposit Money Banks for a period of ten years (2009-2018). The objectives are to investigate the extent to which Board size affects Return on Equity and to determine the effect of Board composition on the Net profit of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. Hypotheses were formulated and analyzed using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression method. The result reveals that the Board size has a significant and positive effect on the Return on Equity (ROE) of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. It equally shows that Board composition has a significantly positive effect on their net profit as well. The study recommends that efforts should be made to increase shareholders' returns on investment by making sure that corporate organizations appoint Board members based on professional expertise and integrity.

Adeoye and Amupitan (2023) investigated corporate governance in Nigeria Banking Sector. Data was sourced from the survey questionnaire. The findings revealed that the lack of presentation of information is more common in the pre-consolidation era than in the post-consolidation era. Frauds, override of internal control, and non-adherence to limit of authority in a bid to meet set targets, and recapitalization of banks play a vital role in promoting effective corporate governance. It recommends that promoting the culture of whistleblowing and promoting business ethics through moral education will strengthen the financial system and encourage compliance with the code of corporate governance. Also, establishing strong anti-fraud controls that would serve as deterrents to fraudsters at every level within the deposit money banks.

Adeusi, Akeke, Aribaba, and Adebisi (2022) studied the relationship between corporate governance and performance in the Nigerian banking sector. Based on the econometric model, the result indicated that improved performance of the banking sector is not dependent on increasing the number of executive directors and board composition. It shows further that when there are more external board members, the performance of banks tends to be worse. The study recommended the need for an increase in board size and a decrease in board composition as measured by the ratio of outside directors to the total number of directors to increase bank performance.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach which allow for the measurement and statistical analysis of the relationship between corporate governance and financial performance. This approach is suitable because the study relies on numerical data from financial statements and corporate governance reports of quoted consumer goods firms. The population of this study will comprise all quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024. Some consumer goods firms are quoted on the Nigeria Exchange Goods (NXE). A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select six (6) quoted consumer goods firms that have the required information. The study extracted secondary data from the published accounts and reports of the selected consumer goods firms over ten years (2015 - 2024).

Presentation of Findings

Research Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.1.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.319[a]	.102	.053	.2315470

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

From the table 4.1.1 above, *R = 0.319* and it implies that there is a positive weak relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. *R- Square* which is the coefficient of determination is 0.102 which indicates that 10.2% changes in the financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the combined effects of Audit Committee (AC), Board Composition (BC) and Ownership Structure (OS) which are proxies of Corporate Governance (CG). The adjusted *R-square* of 0.053 explained the fitness of the model.

Table 4.1.2 Coefficients of the Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.500	.278		-1.799	.077
	BC	.026	.013	.271	1.939	.058
	OS	.007	.031	.032	.225	.823
	AC	.048	.042	.148	1.161	.250

a. Dependent Variable: ROA

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 4.1.2 above indicates the coefficients of the independent variables (Corporate Governance). The coefficient of Board Composition (BC) is *(β = 0.026, t = 1.039, t > 0.05),* the coefficient of Ownership Structure (OS) is *(β = 0.007, t = 0.225, t > 0.05)* positive insignificant, while that of audit committee (AC) is *(β = 0.048, t = 1.161, t > 0.05).* This implies that there is linear relationship between board composition (BC), ownership structure (OS) and audit committee (AC) on one hand, and financial performance (FP) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria, on the other hand. The inference from the result is that a unit increase *in* board composition (BC), ownership structure (OS) and audit

committee (AC) will not result into 2.6%, 0.7% and 1.54% increase in return on asset (RoA) respectively. This result also indicated that all parameters of Corporate Governance are not significant factors influencing return on asset of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.1.3 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.339	3	.113	2.111	.109[b]
	Residual	3.002	56	.054		
	Total	3.342	59			

a. Dependent Variable: ROA
b. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

On the basis of *F-Stat, (F=2.11, 0.109, F > 0.05),* we do not reject the null hypothesis that Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Therefore, corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria

Research Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.520[a]	.270	.231	.7313373

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

From the table 4.2.1 above, *R = 0.520* and it implies that there is a positive moderate relationship between corporate governance and return on equity (RoE) *R- Square* is 0.27 which indicates that 27% changes in the return on equity of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the combined effects of audit committee (AC), board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) which are proxies of corporate governance (CG). The adjusted *R-square* of 0.231.

Table 4.2.2 Coefficients of Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.495	.878		-3.980	.000
	BC	.070	.042	.209	1.658	.103
	OS	.037	.099	.048	.375	.709
	AC	.541	.131	.473	4.118	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ROE
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 4.2.2 above indicates the coefficients of the independent variables (corporate governance). The coefficient of board composition (BC) is *(β = 0.070, t = 1.658, t > 0.05),* the coefficient of Ownership Structure (OS) is *(β = 0.037, t = 0.375, t > 0.05),* while that of audit committee (AC) is *(β = 0.541, t = 4.118, t > 0.05).* This implies that there is positive insignificant linear relationship between board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) while audit committee (AC) relationship on the other hand has significant relationship with returns on equity which is the proxy of financial performance (FP) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The inference from the result is that a unit increase *in*

board composition (BC), ownership structure (OS) and audit committee (AC) will result into 0.7%, 0.37% and 5.4% increase in return on equity (ROE) respectively. This result also indicated board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) are not significant factors influencing return on equity of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.3 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.093	3	3.698	6.914	.000[b]
	Residual	29.952	56	.535		
	Total	41.045	59			

a. Dependent Variable: ROE
b. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

On the basis of *F-Stat, (F=6.914, 0.000, F < 0.05)*, the study reject the null hypothesis that corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria Therefore, corporate governance represented by audit committee has significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.3.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.175[a]	.031	-.021	2.0840773

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

From the table 4.3.1 above, *R = 0.175* and it implies that there is a positive weak relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. *R- Square* which is the coefficient of determination is 0.031 which indicates that 30% changes in the financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the combined effects of audit committee (AC), board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) which are proxies of corporate governance (CG).

Table 4.3.2 Coefficients of Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.326	2.503		.530	.598
	BC	-.054	.120	-.066	-.453	.652
	OS	-.255	.283	-.132	-.902	.371
	AC	.075	.374	.026	.199	.843

a. Dependent Variable: NPM

Table 4.3.2 above indicates the coefficients of the independent variables (corporate Governance). The coefficient of Board Composition (BC) is *(β = -0.054, t = -0.453, t > 0.05)* and the coefficient of Ownership Structure (OS) is *(β = -0.255, t = -0.902, t > 0.05)* negative insignificant, while that of audit committee (AC) is *(β = 0.075, t = 0.199, t > 0.05)*. This implies that there is linear relationship between board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) while audit committee (AC) relationship on the other hand has insignificant positive relationship with net profit margin (NPM), The inference from the result is that a unit increase *in* board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) will not result into

0.54%, 0.37% and 2.55% decrease in Net Profit Margin (NPM) respectively, while a unit increase in and audit committee (AC) will result into 0.75 increase in net profit margin (NPM). This result also indicated all proxies of corporate governance are not significant factors influencing net profit margin of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.3.3 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.659	3	2.553	.588	.626[b]
	Residual	243.229	56	4.343		
	Total	250.888	59			

a. Dependent Variable: NPM
b. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

On the basis of *F-Stat, (F=0.588, 0.626, F < 0.05),* we reject the null hypothesis that Corporate governance has no significant effect on net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria Therefore, corporate governance has significant effect on net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The result of hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant effect of corporate governance on financial performance, this negative the findings of Okonla and Ojochema which established a positive and statistically significant effect on ROA. It is in line with the view of Adeusi, Akeke, Aribaba, and Adebisi (2022) that improved performance of the banking sector is not dependent on increasing the number of executive directors and board composition.

While hypothesis two testing confirmed a significant effect of corporate governance with the returns on equity as confirmed by Okonla and Ojochema, (2024). It is also consistent with the summation of Dulyamba, et al., (2024); Molokwu and Duru (2024).

The third hypothesis testing revealed no significant effect of corporate governance on net profit margin of consumer goods industries in Nigeria. it supports the summation of Adedei et al (2020) that corporate governance intervention should be directed towards the stock performance of deposit money banks.

Summary

The findings also imply that there is a positive moderate relationship between corporate governance and all the proxies of financial performance i.e, return on assets, return on equity, net profit margin.

Overall, The result implies that, return on assets [ROA] and return on equity [ROE] have positive insignificant relationship between the board composition [BC] and ownership structure [OS],while there is negative linear relationship between board composition and ownership structure with Net profit Margin [NPM] which are the proxies to measures financial performance. While audit committee [AC] has significant impact on financial performance with return on assets, return on equity, net profit margin associated with financial performance.

Conclusion

The study has highlighted that there is a positive weak relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer good firms in Nigeria. The study has provided valuable support that corporate governance intervention should be directed towards the financial performance of deposit money banks.

Furthermore, the study has also highlighted that, return on asset and return on equity have positive insignificant, the negative insignificant linear between the relationship board composition and ownership structure, while audit committee [AC] has significant impact on financial performance with return on asset, return on equity, net profit margin associated with financial performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended:

i. That regulatory, managerial and academic concern should strengthen corporate governance to improve the financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. This can be achieved by optimizing the return on assets, return on equity and net profit margin.
ii. The study also recommends that, the indicators should focus on the relationship between corporate governance and financial performance with specific emphasis on key governance mechanisms, including board composition structure, ownership structure, audit committee and transparency disclosure effectiveness.
iii. Additionally, Corporate governance should be directed towards the stock performance of deposit money banks through the use of key performance indicators such as Return on Assets [ROA], Return on Equity [ROE] and Net profit Margin [NPM] associated with Financial performances.

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INFLUENCE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS ON BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION IN YORUBALAND, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are gaining renewed attention as practical, low-cost complements to formal biodiversity conservation strategies, particularly in regions where communities have long regulated resource use through custom rather than statute. In Yorubaland, southwestern Nigeria, this regulatory function is carried by religious belief, taboo, and traditional institutions. Existing scholarship on this subject remains fragmented across ethnobotany, forestry, and policy literatures, with few reviews grounding the evidence in an explicit theoretical framework or engaging the underlying quantitative data. This paper addresses that gap through a narrative literature review, grounded in Traditional Ecological Knowledge theory and common-pool resource/social-ecological systems theory, of Yoruba environmental practice and its documented biodiversity outcomes. The review draws on studies published mainly between 2021 and 2026 covering sacred groves and rivers, cultural taboos, selective harvesting of medicinal plants, agroforestry, and community-enforced resource rules, and synthesises the quantitative ecological data reported across these studies. Indigenous practices are repeatedly linked to measurable outcomes, including tree species richness of 41 to 85 species and Shannon-Wiener diversity indices of 2.63 to 3.55 recorded across protected sacred groves. At the same time, a consistent set of pressures, urban expansion, declining traditional authority, weak documentation, and exclusion from formal policy, is eroding these systems faster than it is being recorded or countered. The paper concludes that Yoruba indigenous knowledge remains a live and locally legitimate conservation resource that requires deliberate institutional and legal support, and it offers recommendations organised by implementation horizon: short-term documentation and education, medium-term policy integration, and long-term legal and institutional reform.

Keywords: *Indigenous, Knowledge, biodiversity, ecosystem, Yorubaland.*

Introduction

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation now rank among the most pressing environmental concerns worldwide, with direct consequences for climate regulation, food security, and human wellbeing. Deforestation, urban expansion, agricultural intensification, and climate change are placing sustained pressure on the ecosystems that supply these services. Against this backdrop, conservation thinking has shifted markedly toward recognising Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as a genuine complement to scientific and regulatory approaches (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [IPBES], 2022; Brondizio *et al.*., 2021). Global assessments coordinated under IPBES have repeatedly found that species decline is accelerating across nearly every biome, and that protected-area systems managed solely through formal state institutions have struggled to halt this trend alone (IPBES, 2022), pushing conservation science toward a more pluralistic view of what counts as valid environmental knowledge.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems refer to the accumulated understanding, beliefs, and practices communities develop through sustained, generational contact with their local environment, transmitted through oral tradition and everyday practice rather than formal instruction. Indigenous and local communities are understood to influence or directly manage a substantial share of the world's remaining biodiversity-rich land (IPBES, 2022; Dei *et al.*., 2025). Among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria, environmental knowledge is inseparable from religious belief, customary law, and traditional institutions: sacred forests, protected rivers, cultural taboos, and community-enforced farming rules have functioned as durable biodiversity-protection mechanisms for generations (Gbadegesin and

Gbadamosi, 2024; Olaopa, 2025), extending to a detailed working botany of the region documented in recent ethnobotanical surveys (Ajao *et al.*., 2022; Rafiu *et al.*., 2025).

Problem statement and research gap

Despite growing academic interest in indigenous environmental knowledge, three specific and interacting gaps limit its usefulness to policy and practice in the Yoruba context. Put directly, despite the growing global recognition of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, their operational role in biodiversity conservation in Yorubaland remains under-theorised and under-integrated into formal policy frameworks. First, the literature is scattered across disparate disciplinary silos, ethnobotanical, forestry-ecological, legal, and anthropological, that rarely cite one another, so no single account brings these dimensions together. Second, much of the existing discussion proceeds descriptively, asserting that sacred groves or taboos 'protect biodiversity' without engaging the quantitative ecological data that studies such as Adeyanju *et al.*. (2022) and Onyekwelu *et al.*. (2024) have already collected, or situating that evidence within a recognised theoretical framework. Third, existing reviews tend to either celebrate indigenous knowledge uncritically or catalogue the threats against it, rather than treating both within one analytical account.

This paper addresses these gaps by synthesising the fragmented literature within an explicit theoretical framework (Section 2), drawing the quantitative ecological findings from primary field studies into a single comparative summary (Section 8), and treating conservation value and erosion pressures as two sides of one analytical problem. The guiding question: what does the evidence show about how Yoruba indigenous institutions have shaped biodiversity outcomes, through what mechanisms, and under what conditions does that influence remain effective today?

Theoretical framework

This review draws on two complementary frameworks. The first is the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) framework of Berkes, Colding, and Folke (2000), which conceptualises indigenous environmental knowledge as a nested 'knowledge-practice-belief complex' spanning local knowledge, resource-management practice, social institutions, and worldview/cosmology. This is well suited to the Yoruba case because it treats belief not as separate from ecological management but as structurally part of it, exactly the pattern documented at sites such as Osun-Osogbo. Section 4 is organised around these four levels.

The second is Ostrom's (1990) theory of common-pool resource (CPR) governance, identifying the institutional conditions, clear boundaries, locally matched rules, collective-choice arrangements, accountable monitoring, graduated sanctions, and low-cost conflict resolution, under which communities sustainably self-govern shared resources without centralised enforcement. Yoruba sacred forests, rivers, and communal farmland function precisely as such common-pool resources, and village councils, priesthoods, and royal authority correspond to the self-governing institutions the theory addresses. Ostrom's 1990 institutional analysis is also the direct precursor to Social-Ecological Systems (SES) theory, which she later formalised as a general diagnostic framework for when linked social and ecological systems achieve sustainable outcomes (Ostrom, 2009); framing Yoruba sacred sites as social-ecological systems in this sense, rather than purely cultural artefacts, is what allows this review to ask not only whether indigenous knowledge exists but under what institutional conditions it functions effectively. Read through this lens, the erosion catalogued in Section 7 is an erosion of these institutional conditions: weakening authority undermines monitoring, urbanisation erodes clear boundaries, and exclusion from statutory law removes collective-choice standing. Together, these frameworks let this review explain why these practices have worked where they have, and why they are failing where they are, rather than merely describing them.

Indigenous knowledge systems in yorubaland

Yorubaland holds one of the richest indigenous environmental knowledge traditions in Africa, centred on the view that natural resources are held in trust rather than owned outright (Olaopa, 2025). Read through Berkes *et al.*.'s (2000) TEK framework, this is a system operating across four levels, examined here in turn.

Cosmology and the conservation ethic

The Yoruba cosmological order places humans within, rather than above, a wider community of deities, ancestors, and landscape. Rivers, hills, and forests are frequently understood as the residence of specific Orisa, granting protected status without any separate act of legislation; violating such sites is a religious and social transgression enforced through community and, in some accounts, believed spiritual sanction. In Berkes *et al.*. (2000) terms this is the worldview level, and its durability lies in this fusion of ecological restraint with religious meaning.

The ethnobotanical knowledge base

Underpinning Yoruba environmental practice is a detailed, empirically rich body of plant knowledge, the local-knowledge level of the TEK framework. One comprehensive review catalogued nearly 500 angiosperm species used across medicinal, food, and craft categories (Ajao *et al.*., 2022); a bibliometric review of Nigerian ethnobotanical research found the southwest accounts for the largest share of documented plant-use studies nationally (Rafiu *et al.*., 2025). This knowledge base is the practical foundation that allows sustainable rather than opportunistic harvesting.

Oral transmission and institutional custodianship

Because this knowledge is rarely written down, its survival depends on storytelling, apprenticeship, festival, and direct practice. Babalawo, herbalists, hunters, and shrine priests each hold specialised knowledge, while kings, chiefs, and family heads hold the authority to enforce community-wide rules, the social-institution level, and the layer Ostrom's (1990) CPR theory most directly addresses. This custodianship is resilient but fragile: it depends on continuous, face-to-face transmission with no institutional backup once broken.

Notable sacred sites as case evidence

The Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove is the best-documented example, functioning for centuries as a de facto protected area, hunting, logging, farming, and development excluded because it is understood as the residence of deities. Field studies confirm the belief system's practical effect: preserved forest cover, tree diversity, and wildlife habitat otherwise lost to surrounding land-use change (Adeyanju *et al.*., 2022; Onyekwelu *et al.*., 2024). Enforcement by kings, chiefs, and priests applies social and religious sanction rather than statutory penalty; where legitimacy persists, compliance follows without external policing, consistent with Ostrom's (1990) finding that self-designed rules achieve more durable compliance than externally imposed regulation.

A critical perspective: the limits and variability of taboo-based protection

This account should not be read as claiming that all Yoruba taboos or sacred sites function equally well as conservation mechanisms; a purely celebratory reading risks the same overreach as a dismissive one. Adeyanju *et al.*. (2022) note explicitly that the ecological status of African sacred groves depends heavily on surrounding economic, political, and legal conditions, that illegal exploitation for personal gain is a recurring problem, and that formal legal procedures protecting sacred groves in many African countries exist mainly on paper, neither consistently applied nor monitored.

There are conceptual reasons for caution too: some taboos protect a species for symbolic reasons unrelated to ecological vulnerability, and taboos can be selectively invoked, applied inconsistently, or quietly abandoned once compliance costs rise. Read through Ostrom's (1990, 2009) lens, this variability is expected, outcomes depend on the specific configuration of monitoring, sanctioning, and legitimacy at a given site, not on sacred status as an undifferentiated attribute; this is also why Table 1 (Section 8) shows a near four-fold difference in ecological indices between groves in the same study. The claim defended in this review is accordingly conditional and empirically testable: where the institutional conditions Ostrom identifies are present, taboo- and sacred-site-based protection produces measurable conservation outcomes, not that all such protection does so automatically.

Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation mechanisms in yorubaland

Biodiversity conservation in Yorubaland has historically operated through cultural practice rather than formal policy. Table 4.1 shows the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Mechanism in Yorubaland. Six mechanisms recur consistently across the literature.

Table 4.1: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation Mechanism in southwest Nigeria.

Mechanism	Description and Evidence
Sacred forests	Protected against farming, logging, and hunting as the believed dwelling of deities (e.g., Osun, Ogun); function as refuges for species lost from surrounding land (Adeyanju *et al.*., 2022).
Sacred rivers	Religious prohibitions against pollution and destructive fishing preserve aquatic biodiversity and water quality in protected stretches, with riparian benefits (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024).
Cultural taboos	Species linked to deities or clans are protected from hunting via social sanction, functioning as a community-enforced species list predating formal red lists.
Traditional farming	Mixed cropping, fallowing, agroforestry, and organic soil management sustain fertility and on-farm biodiversity, reducing synthetic-input dependence (Brondizio *et al.*., 2021).
Herbal medicine practice	Selective harvesting (leaves/bark/fruit, not whole plants) prevents overexploitation; hundreds of species documented in active medicinal use (Ajao *et al.*., 2022; Rafiu *et al.*., 2025).
Community governance	Village councils, chiefs, and rulers regulate communal forests, grazing, and water via customary law predating statutory land-use planning by centuries (Olaopa, 2025).

Taken together, these mechanisms have allowed parts of Yorubaland to retain biological diversity despite decades of surrounding development pressure (Adeyanju *et al.*., 2022; Olaopa, 2025); recent scholarship argues that formally integrating this knowledge into policy would strengthen both conservation outcomes and community buy-in (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024; Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).

How Yoruba Indigenous Practices Contribute to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation

Table 5.1 enlists contribution of indigenous knowledge to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation. Each mechanism above rests on a distinct cultural logic even where ecological effects overlap. Although originally motivated by spiritual rather than ecological reasoning, the ten practices below, the most consistently documented in the literature, align closely with contemporary conservation principles (Olaopa, 2025; Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).

Table 5.1: Reported contribution of Indigenous Practices to Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation.

Practice	Mechanism and Evidence
Sacred forests and groves	Off-limits to logging, farming, hunting, and settlement, creating an informal network of strict-protection zones. Osun-Osogbo (UNESCO site) preserves habitat for endangered primates and measurable carbon storage (Onyekwelu *et*

	al.., 2024); groves under active protection retain greater tree-species richness than adjacent unprotected land (Adeyanju *et al..*, 2022).
Cultural taboos	An unwritten conservation code: sacred trees, rivers, hills, and animals (e.g., primates linked to Osun) protected from destruction; enforced through community consensus, reducing hunting/logging pressure independent of statute (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024). Durability depends on continued cultural meaning, now under strain.
Sustainable harvesting of medicinal plants	Selective harvesting (leaves, bark, fruit, root fragments) allows regeneration; hundreds of species documented in active use, mostly via apprenticeship-based conventions (Ajao *et al..*, 2022; Rafiu *et al..*, 2025), though margins have narrowed with rising urban demand.
Community-based forest management	Obas, chiefs, family heads, and priests set felling/hunting rules with community monitoring and traditional sanctions, low-cost and locally legitimate versus externally imposed governance (Olaopa, 2025); the gap left when these institutions weaken is rarely filled by state capacity.
Protection of rivers and water bodies	Rivers linked to Osun and Yemoja are protected from pollution and overfishing, sustaining freshwater biodiversity, water quality, and riparian services such as groundwater recharge (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024); protection strength tracks continued religious significance.
Traditional agricultural practices	Mixed cropping, rotation, fallow-based cultivation, agroforestry, and organic manuring improve soil fertility and on-farm habitat heterogeneity relative to monocropping (Brondizio *et al..*, 2021), though rising land pressure has shortened fallow periods.
Seasonal hunting regulations	Customary closed seasons and permanently protected forests allow wildlife reproduction, an informal equivalent of formal closed-season systems, grounded in hunters' direct ecological observation (Ayeni *et al..*, 2026).
Indigenous environmental ethics	Cosmology framing humans as custodians rather than owners fosters self-restraint independent of external enforcement, aligning with sustainability and intergenerational-equity principles (Olaopa, 2025).
Preservation of indigenous plant species	Iroko, odan, ayan, and oil palm are deliberately preserved for material and ritual value, supporting pollinators, seed dispersers, and carbon sequestration (Brondizio *et al..*, 2021); symbolic value has kept mature specimens standing where economics alone might not.
Traditional knowledge transmission	Oral tradition, proverb, festival, and apprenticeship keep conservation practice embedded in daily life, renewed each generation (Ayeni *et al..*, 2026); this is simultaneously the system's greatest strength and its central vulnerability, since it has no backup once the transmission chain breaks.

Challenges Facing Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Yorubaland

Despite their documented conservation value, Yoruba indigenous knowledge systems face a consistent set of interacting pressures. Read through Ostrom's (1990) CPR framework, several represent the erosion of the institutional design conditions, clear boundaries, local monitoring, graduated sanctions, and collective-choice authority, that historically made customary governance effective (Olaopa, 2025;

Ayeni *et al.*., 2026). Table 6.1 shows different facts on challenges on the indigenous Knowledge in Southern Nigeria.

Table 6.1: Challenges findings reported for Indigenous Knowledge in southwest Nigeria.

Challenge	Description and Evidence
Urbanisation and rapid development	Roads, estates, and industry encroach on culturally protected land, converting habitat that customary sanction cannot resist once formal titling and commercial interests are involved; urban land conversion is rarely reversed (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024).
Declining traditional beliefs and cultural values	Spread of Christianity, Islam, and modernisation has reduced observance of taboos and rituals among younger generations, leaving sites previously protected for centuries more vulnerable (Olaopa, 2025); the shift is uneven but the overall trend is erosion.
Loss of knowledge through generational change	Migration, formal schooling, and changing lifestyles reduce elder-to-youth transmission; a single custodian's death can permanently eliminate knowledge never recorded elsewhere (Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).
Poor documentation	Oral-only transmission is vulnerable to distortion and loss, limiting accessibility for researchers and policymakers (Dei *et al.*., 2025); existing ethnobotanical documentation covers only a fraction of the broader knowledge base (Ajao *et al.*., 2022; Rafiu *et al.*., 2025).
Limited recognition in environmental policy	Nigerian policy has emphasised scientific/technical approaches, excluding traditional institutions from decisions even where they have managed resources effectively for generations (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024); sacred sites receive no legal protection beyond custom.
Deforestation and environmental degradation	Illegal logging, mining, agricultural expansion, and bush burning continue degrading protected ecosystems; taboos can only regulate behaviour while the resource still exists (Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).
Climate change	Shifting rainfall, temperature, and flooding disrupt the seasonal calendars underlying farming and harvesting practice (Brondizio *et al.*., 2021); indigenous knowledge remains valuable for adaptation, but its effectiveness depends on a relatively stable baseline and continued transmission, both under threat (Dorji *et al.*., 2024), a feedback loop eroding the very knowledge most needed to adapt.
Economic pressures and poverty	Poverty pushes logging, charcoal production, and commercial hunting despite customary sanction, since immediate survival needs can outweigh traditional penalties (Olaopa, 2025).
Weak traditional institutions	Changing political structures and conflicts between customary and statutory law have reduced the authority of rulers and custodians, weakening enforcement where it was once the sole protection mechanism (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024).
Intellectual property and biopiracy	Commercial (pharmaceutical/cosmetic) interest in indigenous plant knowledge has grown without fair benefit-sharing; absent legal frameworks discourage disclosure by custodians (Dei *et al.*., 2025).

Inadequate research integration	Limited interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers, agencies, and communities restricts development of culturally appropriate strategies and leaves indigenous knowledge under-validated in policy discussions (Ayeni *et al.*., 2026), though genuine collaboration, not subordination to scientific validation, is the appropriate goal.

Quantitative and comparative insights from the literature

The claim that Yoruba sacred sites deliver measurable conservation outcomes should not rest on assertion alone. Table 1 summarises quantitative ecological data reported in the primary field studies reviewed, drawn directly from their results sections.

Table 7.1: Quantitative ecological findings reported for Yoruba sacred groves in southwest Nigeria.

Study	Site(s)	Method	Key Findings
Adeyanju *et al.*. (2022)	Three sacred groves, SW Nigeria (incl. Osun-Osogbo)	Comparative institutional and ecological field study	Osun-Osogbo: higher species richness than comparable unprotected forest; 174 insect, 4 fish, 13 mammal species (incl. primates) recorded.
Onyekwelu *et al.*. (2024)	Four sacred groves: Idanre Hills, Igbo-Olodumare, Ogun-Onire, Osun-Osogbo	32 plots of 800 m2; trees >=10 cm dbh measured for volume, biomass, carbon	Shannon-Wiener index 2.63-3.55; Margalef index 5.64-10.02; species richness 41-85 per grove; significant inter-grove variation.

Two observations follow. First, values reported across independently conducted studies are broadly consistent with each other and with figures typical of undisturbed or lightly disturbed West African forest fragments, supporting a real ecological effect rather than a single-study artefact. Second, the near four-fold variation in Margalef index between Onyekwelu *et al.*.'s (2024) lowest- and highest-scoring groves indicates that protection strength is not uniform, consistent with this review's Ostrom-informed argument that outcomes depend on institutional strength rather than sacred status alone. This also flags a limitation: quantitative monitoring remains concentrated on a small number of well-known groves, chiefly Osun-Osogbo, so Table 7.1 is best read as strong evidence of measurable outcomes at specific, well-studied sites rather than a quantified estimate for Yoruba indigenous practice as a whole.

Discussion: towards integration of indigenous and scientific knowledge

Read through the frameworks in Section 2, the evidence shows a consistent pattern: where Yoruba institutions retain Ostrom's (1990) institutional design conditions, local monitoring, graduated sanction, recognised collective-choice authority, they produce measurable conservation outcomes at minimal cost, since compliance is voluntary and socially reinforced. This matters because formal protected-area management in Nigeria is chronically underfunded relative to the area it covers, and indigenous institutions have effectively provided conservation services at sites formal agencies could not otherwise monitor (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024; Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).

This should not be romanticised as self-sustaining: every mechanism in Sections 6 and 7 depends on conditions currently weakening, religious significance, institutional authority, intergenerational transmission, and protection from external pressure customary law was never designed to withstand at current scale. A more productive framing, consistent with recent West African scholarship, is to treat Yoruba indigenous knowledge as existing conservation infrastructure requiring deliberate investment and legal recognition, granting sacred groves and rivers recognised legal status, funding documentation before knowledge is lost, and involving custodians as active monitoring partners rather than ethnographic subjects (Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).

Limitations of the review

This is a narrative rather than systematic review; sources were checked against original publications, but unpublished theses, local-language material, and oral testimony beyond this paper's scope were not accessible. Quantitative ecological monitoring is concentrated on a small number of well-known groves, creating a risk that well-studied sites like Osun-Osogbo are not representative of the many smaller, less publicised sacred sites. Yorubaland is also not culturally homogeneous: institutional strength, taboo persistence, and urban encroachment vary considerably between, for example, Lagos/Ibadan and more rural areas, so findings should be generalised with appropriate caution.

Conclusion

Yoruba Indigenous Knowledge Systems represent a substantial, still-active body of ecological knowledge shaping biodiversity outcomes across Yorubaland for generations, through sacred groves, taboos, medicinal-plant harvesting, mixed farming, and community-enforced rules. Understood through Berkes *et al.*.'s (2000) TEK framework and Ostrom's (1990, 2009) common-pool resource and social-ecological systems theory, these outcomes follow from a coherent system in which cosmology, local knowledge, and institutions reinforce one another, measurable in the diversity indices and species counts in Table 1, not merely asserted in narrative accounts.

None of this is guaranteed to persist. Urban growth, deforestation, climate change, declining belief, weakening institutions, and policy exclusion are together eroding the institutional conditions that made this system work, faster than that erosion is being recorded or countered. Bringing indigenous and scientific conservation into genuine partnership, rather than leaving indigenous knowledge to survive informally on policy's margins, is an achievable step toward more resilient outcomes in Yorubaland and comparable regions (Ayeni *et al.*., 2026). The remaining window for documenting and legally securing this knowledge, while custodians are still living and institutions still command authority, should be treated as a matter of genuine urgency.

Recommendations

The recommendations below follow directly from Sections 4 to 9 and are organised by implementation horizon, short-term actions needing documentation and awareness rather than new legal authority, medium-term actions needing policy coordination, and long-term actions needing legal and institutional reform, since these differ substantially in lead time and political commitment required.

Horizon	Recommendation	Action and Rationale
Short-term	Document indigenous ecological knowledge	Structured research, digital archives, and community documentation prioritising elderly custodians at greatest risk of loss (Dei *et al.*., 2025); extend existing ethnobotanical inventories to hydrology, wildlife behaviour, and seasonal forecasting (Ajao *et al.*., 2022; Rafiu *et al.*., 2025).
Short-term	Promote environmental education	Incorporate indigenous environmental knowledge into school curricula at all levels, providing a structured route independent of informal family transmission.
Short-term	Encourage community-based conservation	Involve communities in conservation planning and implementation from the outset to improve compliance and ensure local knowledge is genuinely used (Ayeni *et al.*., 2026).
Medium-term	Integrate indigenous knowledge into policy	State/federal agencies should incorporate Yoruba ecological knowledge into conservation policy, impact assessments, and

Horizon	Recommendation	Action and Rationale
		management programmes, with formal consultation mechanisms (Gbadegesin and Gbadamosi, 2024).
Medium-term	Support sustainable livelihoods	Promote ecotourism, agroforestry, and medicinal-plant cultivation as alternative income, addressing the economic pressures identified in Section 7.
Medium-term	Enhance research collaboration	Extend quantitative ecological monitoring (Table 1) to a wider, more representative sample of sites, building sustained partnerships with custodian communities.
Medium-term	Promote climate adaptation via indigenous knowledge	Integrate traditional ecological practices into climate resilience and disaster-risk strategies while supporting continued knowledge transmission (Dorji *et al.*., 2024).
Long-term	Strengthen traditional institutions	Give traditional rulers and custodians clearer legal recognition, restoring the local monitoring/sanctioning capacity Ostrom's (1990, 2009) framework identifies as essential (Olaopa, 2025).
Long-term	Protect sacred natural sites in law	Recognise sacred forests, groves, and rivers as protected conservation areas with formal legal standing, closing the gap between de facto and legal protection.
Long-term	Strengthen legal protection of indigenous knowledge	Develop legal frameworks safeguarding indigenous intellectual property and ensuring fair benefit-sharing from any commercial use of traditional ecological knowledge.

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PATTERN OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AMONG SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN EGBEDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined pattern of use of agricultural extension communication channels among smallholder farmers, focusing on the availability and frequency of use of the various extension communication channels in the study area. A structured questionnaire was administered to farming households, and data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (p =0.05). Results showed that respondents were predominantly aged 31–40 years (63.33%), and were evenly split by gender with majority having secondary-school education (62.22%). Majority of the respondents earn between ₦101,000 and ₦200,000 monthly and cultivating family land. Extension agents (95.56%) and farmers' associations (94.44%) were the most available and most frequently used channels, while research/private institutions, though reasonably available (76.67%), recorded lower utilization. Finally, Improper ratio of extension agents to farmers with a mean of (2.56) and poor media communication with mean (2.49) were the most severe constraints facing respondents in accessing extension communication channels in the study area. The correlation results revealed that age, income, household size statistically had significant positive relationships with frequency of channel use (p < 0.05), with age showing the strongest association (r = 0.421). The study concludes that structural and institutional deficits, rather than farmers' individual characteristics, are the principal barriers to effective extension communication, and recommends strengthening extension agent networks and rural infrastructure to improve channel utilization.

Keywords: *Extension, communication, channels, smallholder, farmers*

Introduction

Agricultural extension remains one of the most important institutional mechanisms through which improved knowledge, innovations and technologies are transferred to farmers. Its ultimate goal is bridging the gap that exit between what has been scientifically known and what is being applied by the farmers on their farm, thereby affecting productivity, incomes and rural livelihoods. Extension can be seen as a fundamental communication process and the effectiveness of any extension system is heavily dependent on the various channels through which information are being packaged, transmitted and received by the end users A communication channel, in this context, refers to the medium, method or pathway used by extension providers, whether public agencies, non-governmental organisations, research institutions or private actors, to reach farmers with agricultural messages. These channels are broadly categorised into interpersonal channels (extension agent home and farm visits, farmer-to-farmer contact, group meetings, farmer field schools and demonstrations), mass media channels (radio, television, newspapers, bulletins and posters), and increasingly, information and communication technology (ICT)-based channels (mobile phone calls and SMS, mobile applications, social media platforms such as WhatsApp and YouTube, and internet-based platforms) Tsebee, k.A (2017)

The pattern of use of these channels, that is, which channels farmers and extension agents actually rely on, how frequently they are used, and in what combination, has attracted growing scholarly attention because it directly shapes the reach, cost-effectiveness and impact of extension services. Evidence from Spielman et al. (2021) states that despite the rise of ICT-enabled extension tools, traditional interpersonal methods remain more effective and widely adopted in rural contexts. Also, Porciello et al. (2022) highlight about the digital agriculture services in low- and middle-income countries that fail to reach scale, reinforcing the continued reliance on interpersonal communication channels. These two

studies collaborates the statement that interpersonal channels continue to dominate extension communication in many developing countries. In Ethiopia's Wolaita Zone, for instance, it was found that state extension services, research institutions and non-governmental organisations disseminated information mainly through one-on-one, group or model-farmer approaches, while mass media channels were rarely used, and that the top-down, one-way pattern adopted by public extension agencies did not fully align with stated government policy that favours participatory, two-way communication (Abod, 2023). Similarly, a survey-based study in Benue State, Nigeria, found that interpersonal channels, particularly relatives, friends, neighbours and extension agents, were generally more available, accessible and frequently used by farmers than mass media channels, with television emerging as the most preferred mass medium and extension agents as the most preferred interpersonal channel (Akintonde, J. O., Akinola, M. O., & Adeola, O. O. 2018)

Over the past decade, the diffusion of mobile telephony and smartphones has begun to reshape the pattern of extension communication channel use, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. A systematic review of 131 studies on ICT and agricultural extension in the Global South found that changes in information and communication technology have progressively shifted extension practice away from linear, one-way dissemination toward co-innovation and farmer-to-farmer learning, with smartphones and mobile internet showing considerable potential to democratise access to extension information (Khan et al., 2025). In the same vein, a study on mobile phone use for exchanging agricultural information in Tanzania found that farmers most commonly used voice calls and SMS, with multimedia messaging used far less, and that ease of use, availability and accessibility strongly influenced which mobile-based channel farmers adopted (University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal, 2021). The study also confirmed that face-to-face oral communication remained the most used channel overall, since it required no cost beyond time and only basic communicative ability (Ndimbwa, Ndumbaro, & Mwantimwa, 2019)

Problem statement

Agricultural extension systems have access to diverse communication channels, ranging from interpersonal contact to ICT platforms. Yet, in many parts of Nigeria, extension delivery remains dominated by top-down, one-way approaches that fail to align with policy goals of participatory communication, thereby limiting farmer engagement and reducing the practical relevance of information shared (Kigbu, Ghazali, Bidin, & Omar, 2019). A major challenge is the low ratio of extension agents to farmers, which restricts the reach of trusted face-to-face methods. In Southwestern Nigeria, ratios as high as one agent per several thousand farmers have been reported, far below recommended standards (Alabi, Ajayi, Fapojuwo, & Alabi, 2021). While mass media such as radio and television raise awareness, they are less effective for supporting behavioral change due to their one-way nature. Mobile phones and social media platforms like WhatsApp show promise for improving access to timely information; however, their impact is undermined by poor infrastructure, high costs, low digital literacy, and content not adapted to local languages or contexts, contributing to a persistent digital divide that leaves rural and resource-poor farmers behind (Spielman, Lecoutere, Makhija, & Van Campenhout, 2021)

Objectives of the study

i describe the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents in the study area;

ii identify the extension communication channels available in the study area;

iii determine the frequency and pattern of use of the extension communication channels in the study area;

iv identify the constraints faced in the use of the extension communication channels.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Egbeda Local Government area of Oyo State. Egbeda Local Government Area is one of the 33 Local Government Areas in Oyo State, South-West Nigeria, with its headquarters

at Egbeda. It lies approximately between Latitude 7°23′N and Longitude 4°03′E and is bounded by Lagelu LGA to the north, Ona Ara LGA to the south, Ibadan North LGA to the west, and Osun State to the east. The Local Government covers a land area of about 191 km² and has a projected population of approximately 405,400 people (2022 projection). The area experiences a tropical climate with fertile soils that support the cultivation of crops such as maize, cassava, yam, and vegetables, making it suitable for agricultural and rural development studies. The study population will include all arable crop farmers in the study area.

A multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study.

Stage One: Egbeda Local Government Area was purposively selected because it's one of the largest LGAs in Oyo State with numerous farming communities.

Stage two: Six (6) wards, representing about 50% of the eleven (11) wards in the local government area, were selected through simple random sampling.

Stage three: Thereafter, fifteen (15) arable crop farmers were randomly selected from each of the six selected wards. This produced a total sample size of ninety (90) respondents. The selected respondents constituted the sample for the study.

Results and discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The result shows that the majority of respondents (63.33%) were between 31 and 40 years of age, indicating that the respondents were largely in their economically active and productive years. This age structure is consistent with the findings of Mgbenka and Mbah (2016), who reported that smallholder farming in Nigeria is dominated by individuals within the active working-age bracket, a factor that has implications for the physical capacity to engage in farming and the receptivity of farmers to innovation.

The sex distribution was evenly split between male and female respondents (50.00% each), which aligns with the position of Obayelu, Ogbe, and Edewor (2019) that women constitute a substantial and active proportion of the agricultural labour force in Nigeria and are therefore important targets of extension communication.

With respect to education, most respondents (62.22%) had only secondary education, while a further 35.56% had tertiary education, leaving a small proportion (2.22%) without formal education. This relatively favourable literacy profile suggests that respondents possessed the basic literacy needed to interact with both interpersonal and print-based extension media, a precondition identified by Olusayo et al. (2019) as important for the adoption of improved agricultural technologies.

On monthly income, the majority of respondents (64.44%) earned between ₦101,000 and ₦200,000, reflecting the generally low income levels that typify smallholder farming households in Nigeria. This modest income base may constrain farmers' capacity to invest in mobile phones, data subscriptions, and other resources that facilitate access to modern communication channels. Ikudayisi, Babatunde, and Yusuf (2019) similarly observed that rural farm households in Nigeria face fluctuating income levels that limit their ability to invest in improved farm inputs and technologies.

Furthermore, 64.44% of respondents were not members of an Extension Agricultural Network (EAN), suggesting a relatively weak formal linkage with organised extension platforms for the majority of the sampled population. This is consistent with Davis, Lion, and Arokoyo (2019), who highlighted that Nigeria's extension system suffers from capacity and management challenges, with extension agent-to-farmer ratios as high as 1:10,000, limiting effective farmer engagement.

Household size was predominantly within the 4–6 member bracket (88.89%), a pattern typical of rural farming households in Nigeria where family labour remains central to farm operations. Onu and Echebiri (2019) similarly reported that smallholder households in Imo State averaged 8 members, underscoring the reliance on family labour in farm activities

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age	20–30	2	2.22	
	31–40	57	63.33	48
	41–50	19	21.11	
	Above 50	12	13.33	
Gender	Male	45	50.00	
	Female	45	50.00	
Education	No Formal Education	2	2.22	
	Primary Education	0	0.00	
	Secondary Education	56	62.22	
	Tertiary Education	32	35.56	
Monthly Income	Below ₦100, 000	2	2.22	
	₦101,000 – ₦200,000	58	64.44	₦180,000
	₦201,000 – ₦300,000	29	32.22	
	Above ₦300,000	1	1.11	
EAN	Yes	32	35.56	
	No	58	64.44	
Household Size	1–3 members	9	10.00	
	4–6 members	80	88.89	7members
	7–9 members	1	1.11	

Source: Field survey, 2025

Availability of agricultural extension communication channels

Table 2 shows that extension agents (95.56%) and farmers' associations (94.44%) were the most widely available communication channels, while research/private institutions (76.67%) were comparatively less available. This finding supports the submission of Yekinni and Afolabi (2019) that farm visits and contact-farmer arrangements remain the dominant channels through which extension information reaches farmers in South-Western Nigeria, with private and research-based sources playing a more limited role.

Table 2: Availability of agricultural extension communication channels

Communication Channels	Yes (%)	No (%)
Research/private institution	76.67	23.33
Farmers association	94.44	5.56
Extension agent	95.56	4.44

Social media	77.78	22.22
Print media	91.11	8.89

Source: Field survey, 2025

Pattern of use of agricultural extension communication channels

Table 3 further shows the pattern and frequency of use of these channels. The extension agent ranked first (mean score = 2.68), followed by farmers' association (2nd, mean = 2.60), print media (3rd, mean = 2.48), social media (4th, mean = 2.47), and research/private institutions (5th, mean = 2.22). This ranking is consistent with the findings on the South-Western zone of Nigeria, where extension agents, radio and other farmers were identified as the most effective and frequently relied-upon extension delivery channels compared with less personal or institutional sources (Yekinni & Afolabi, 2019).

Table 3 Pattern of use of agricultural extension communication channels

Communication Channels	Frequently (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)	Mean Score	Rank
Research/private institution	30(33.33)	50(55.56)	10(11.11)	2.22	5th
Farmers association	58(64.44)	28(31.11)	4(4.44)	2.60	2nd
Social media	48(53.33)	36(40.00)	6(6.67)	2.47	4th
Extension agent	63(70.00)	25(27.78)	2(2.22)	2.68	1st
Print media	47(52.22)	39(43.33)	4(4.44)	2.48	3rd

Source: Field survey, 2025

Constraints in the use of extension communication channels

Table 4

The results in the table below show that improper ratio of extension agents to farmers with a mean of (2.56) and poor media communication with mean (2.49) were the most severe constraints facing respondents in accessing extension communication channels, also Poor government funding (2.28), negative clientele attitude, (2.24) and limited access to modern techniques (2.22) were also seen as mild challenges, reflecting structural and resource-based bottlenecks in extension delivery. In contrast, gender issues and message incompatibility with mean of (1.57 and 1.61) were the least challenges, suggesting these are relatively minor compared to the systemic constraints identified.

Table 4: Constraints in the use of extension communication channels among respondents

Challenge	Not a Challenge (Freq / %)	Mild Challenge (Freq / %)	Severe Challenge (Freq / %)	Weighted Mean Score	Rank
Poor government funding of extension	8 (8.89)	49 (54.44)	33 (36.67)	2.28	3rd
Poor rural road networks	33 (36.67)	7 (7.78)	50 (55.56)	2.19	6th
Attitude of clientele	10 (11.11)	48 (53.33)	32 (35.56)	2.24	4th

Incompatibility of extension messages	48 (53.33)	29 (32.22)	13 (14.44)	1.61	9th
Improper ratio of extension agents	13 (16.05)	9 (11.11)	58 (73.84)	2.56	1st
Lack of access to modern techniques	11 (12.22)	48 (53.33)	31 (34.44)	2.22	5th
Poor media communication	5 (5.56)	36 (40.00)	49 (54.44)	2.49	2nd
Language barrier	34 (37.78)	48 (53.33)	8 (8.89)	1.71	8th
Gender issues	48 (53.33)	33 (36.67)	9 (10.00)	1.57	10th
Cultural differences	21 (25.93)	44 (54.32)	16 (19.75)	1.94	7th

Source: Field survey, 2025

Relationship between socio-economic characteristics and frequency of channel use

Table 5 shows that all the socio-economic variables tested age ($r = 0.421$, $p = 0.003$), income ($r = 0.289$, $p = 0.011$), household size ($r = 0.310$, $p = 0.005$), had a statistically significant positive relationship with the pattern of use at 5% level of significance. This finding is consistent with the report of a positive and significant relationship between farmers' socio-economic characteristics and the utilisation of extension information in rural areas of Nigeria, where age and access to information sources were found to significantly. The particularly strong association between age and pattern of use ($r = 0.421$) suggests that older, more experienced farmers, who have had more time to build familiarity and trust with extension personnel and community structures, tend to engage more consistently with available communication channels than their younger counterparts

Table 5: Ccorrelation result of selected socio-economic characteristics and pattern of use

Socio-economic Characteristics	r-value	p-value	Remark
Age	0.421	0.003	S
Income	0.289	0.011	S
Household size	0.310	0.005	S

Source: Field survey, 2025

Conclusion

Extension agents and farmers' associations were the most available and used channels, while poor infrastructure, funding, and clientele attitudes were the key constraints. Structural and institutional deficits, rather than farmer characteristics, are the principal barriers to effective extension communication.

Recommendation

Research/private institutions should be better integrated, with targeted strategies to boost engagement among younger farmers.

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ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND EMPLOYEES' ENGAGEMENT IN FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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Abstract.
Organisational culture has become a critical determinant of employees' engagement in modern organisations. This study examines the influence of organisational culture on employees' engagement at Fan Milk Limited. Specifically, the study investigated how leadership support and teamwork affected employees' emotional and cognitive commitment to organisational goals. Descriptive survey research design was adopted, using structured questionnaires administered to employees of Fan Milk Nigeria PLC. Sample size of 193 was obtained using Taro Yamane (1967) formula, and simple random technique was employed to select subset from the population. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was adopted to analyse the data. Findings showed that there was a moderate relationship between organizational culture and staff engagement at Fan Milk PLC, Eleyele, Ibadan, with a positive significant value of p = 0.000 < 0.05. The study concluded that a strong and positive organisational culture improves employees' dedication, productivity, and retention. The study recommends strengthening participatory leadership, team development programmes, and transparent communication channels.

Keywords*: Organisational Culture, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Workplace Values, Fan Milk Nigeria*.

Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, organisations increasingly recognise employees' engagement as a strategic tool for enhancing productivity and achieving sustainable growth. Employee engagement refers to the emotional and psychological attachment that employees have towards their work and organisation. Studies have shown that engaged employees are more committed, innovative, and productive. Abbas (2024) found that organisational culture has a positive and significant effect on employees' engagement among workers in Nigeria and India

A positive work culture promotes productivity, engagement, and improved employee experience (Adam, Yuniarsih, Ahman, & Kusnendi, 2020). Organisational culture represents the values, beliefs, norms, and practices shared by employees within an organisation. (Schein.2024) Organisational culture may include everything starting from the vision and mission, shared beliefs, rewards and recognition processes, to the style of communication and feedback, language used, and written and unwritten rules and customs followed within the workplace. According to Bilalli, Mustafi and Islami (2023) organisational culture plays a vital role in shaping employees' attitudes and workplace behaviour. Similarly, at Fan Milk Limited, maintaining employees' engagement is essential because the company operates in a highly competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Therefore, understanding the role of organisational culture in enhancing employees' engagement is important.

Although previous studies have established a positive relationship between organizational culture and employees' engagement, limited empirical evidence exists on the specific influence of leadership support and teamwork on employee engagement within the Nigerian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturing sector, particularly at Fan Milk Nigeria PLC, Ibadan, one of Nigeria leading FMCG operating in high competitive environment. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of various dimensions of organisational culture on the engagement levels of employees, with the goal of providing insights that can inform strategies for fostering a more engaged workforce and ultimately enhancing organiatiosnal performance and success. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. determine the effect of leadership support on employees' engagement in FanMilk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan.

ii. determine the relationship between teamwork mechanism on employees' engagement in Fan milk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan.

The study also tested the following null hypotheses:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between leadership support and employees' engagerment in Fanmilk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan.

$H0_2$ There is no significant relationship between teamwork and employees' engagerment in Fanmilk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan

Literature review

Organisational culture is a collection of shared values, norms, and beliefs that shape behaviour and interaction patterns in an organisation (Mafrudoh, 2023). Organisational culture refers to the collective assumptions, beliefs, and values that guide employees' behaviour. Schein's cultural model identifies artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions as the major components of organisational culture. Recent studies show that organisations with strong cultures experience higher employees' commitment and job satisfaction. Bilalli et al. (2023) found that cultural dimensions such as teamwork, innovation, and leadership support significantly improve employee vigour and dedication.

Armstrong (2006) defines engagement as a positive two-way relationship between employees and the organisation. Both parties are aware of their own and the other's needs, and the way they support each other to fulfill those needs. Employees' engagement refers to the extent to which employees are physically, emotionally, and cognitively invested in their work. Engaged employees demonstrate enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to contribute to organisational success. Herath, and Shakyara, (2023) argued that employees' engagement is highly influenced by supportive work culture and organisational stability.

The importance of organisational culture

1. Guidance of Behaviour and Decision-Making: Organisational culture provides a framework for employees to understand what is expected of them and how to behave in various situations. It shapes decision-making processes and ensures consistency in actions across the organisation.
2. Enhances Employee Engagement: A supportive culture fosters a sense of belonging and commitment among employees, which leads to higher levels of engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute effectively and stay with the organisation longer.
3. Booster of Performance and Productivity: A strong organisational culture can drive high performance and productivity by creating an environment where employees are aligned with the organisation's goals and motivated to achieve them. It encourages teamwork, innovation, and a proactive attitude.
4. Attracts and Retains Talent: A good organisational culture makes an organisation an attractive place to work, helping to attract top talent. It also plays a crucial role in retaining employees by creating a positive work environment that meets their needs and expectations.
5. Facilitates Change Management: During times of change, a resilient and adaptive culture can help organisations navigate transitions more smoothly. Employees are more likely to embrace change if it aligns with the underlying cultural values and if they trust the organisation.
6. Shapes Organisational Identity and Brand: Culture contributes to the external perception of an organisation. A strong, positive culture enhances the organisation's reputation and brand, influencing how customers, partners, and other stakeholders perceive and interact with the organisation.

Functions organisational culture

i. Conflict reduction: A common culture promotes consistency of perception, problem definition, evaluation of issues and opinions, and preferences for action.
ii. Coordination and control: Largely because culture promotes consistency of outlook it also facilitates organizational processes of coordination and control.
iii. Reduction of uncertainty: Adopting of the cultural mind-frame is an anxiety reducing device which simplifies the world of work, makes choices easier and rational action seem possible.
iv. Motivation: An appropriate and cohesive culture can offer employees a focus of identification and loyalty, foster beliefs and values that encourage employees to perform.

v. Competitive advantage: Strong culture improves the organisation's chances of being successful in the marketplace.

Relationship between organisational culture and employees' engagement

While the realm of employees' engagement is perceived as a relatively recent domain, several studies have delved into exploring the impact of organisational culture on employees' engagement. For instance, Schein (2010) underscores the significance of leadership in shaping and reinforcing organisational culture, subsequently impacting employee engagement. Leaders play a pivotal role in establishing a conducive atmosphere, exemplifying cultural values, and crafting a workplace that stimulates engagement. When leaders prioritise and embody the desired cultural attributes, employees is inclined to experience heightened motivation and engagement in their respective roles. An environment that promotes innovation, collaboration, and ongoing learning motivates employees to contribute their utmost efforts. This correlation between organisational culture and employees engagement is essential for maintaining elevated levels of performance and job satisfaction.

Theoretically**,** this study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory. It originated in sociology with seminal contributions from George Homans in the 1950s and 1960s who explains that employees reciprocate favourable organisational treatment with higher commitment and engagement. Homans' work laid the groundwork for the conceptualisation of social exchanges as an explanation for human behaviour within groups, emphasising reciprocity and social norms in shaping interactions. These constructs were later expanded by scholars such as Peter Blau, who formalised reciprocity as a central mechanism behind social exchange (Ahmad, Nawaz, Ishaq, Khan, and Ashraf, 2023)

Empirically, there were several scholars who investigate the effect of organisational culture on employees' engagement. Abbas (2024) examined the influence of organisational culture on employee engagement among employees in selected organisations in Nigeria and India. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from employees through structured questionnaires and analyse using regression analysis. The findings showed that supportive leadership, employees involvement, and teamwork significantly improve employees' engagement. The study concluded that organisations should develop positive organisational cultures that encourage collaboration and management support to enhance workforce commitment and productivity.

Bilalli et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between organisational culture and employees' engagement among employees in private organisations in Kosovo. The study employed a quantitative research design using structured questionnaires administered to 378 employees. Data were analysed using regression analysis. Findings revealed that organisational culture significantly and positively influences employee engagement. Specifically, cultural dimensions such as leadership support, teamwork, trust, and communication were found to increase employees' dedication, vigour, and absorption at work. The study concluded that organisations with supportive leadership and collaborative work environments are more likely to achieve higher levels of employees' engagement.

Siswanto (2023) examined the influence of organisational culture on employee engagement, with organizational commitment serving as an intervening variable. Using a survey research design, data were collected from employees and analyzed through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings showed that organizational culture significantly influences employee engagement both directly and indirectly through organizational commitment. Leadership support and teamwork were identified as essential cultural dimensions that foster employees' commitment and engagement. The study recommended that organizations promote participative leadership and teamwork to sustain employee engagement..

Prasetyaningrum (2023) investigated the influence of organisational culture on employee performance through employee engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour. The study adopted a quantitative approach involving employees from business organisations and analysed the data using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicated that organisational culture characterised by leadership support and teamwork significantly enhances employee engagement, which subsequently improves employee performance. The study concluded that organisations should strengthen collaborative cultures and supportive leadership practices.

Herath and Shakyara (2023) examined whether organisational cultural factors continue to influence employee engagement in organisations facing economic challenges. The researchers adopted a quantitative survey design and analysed responses using structural equation modelling. The study found that leadership support, teamwork, recognition, and communication significantly predict employee engagement. Employees who perceived greater support from supervisors and stronger teamwork reported higher levels of engagement. The study recommended strengthening leadership practices and promoting collaborative work cultures.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. Managers, supervisors, and factory workers at Fan milk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan constituted the study's population. A sample size of 193 employees was chosen (using Taro Yamane formular, 1967) from the 375 respondents that made up the study population. Simple random technique was employed to select subset from the population. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation) were used to evaluate the quantitative data,

Results

Respondents by gender

An overview of the respondents can be seen by gender group, which can be seen in the following table:

Table 1 Respondents' Socio-demographic Data/Characteristics (n = 193)

Gender of Respondents	**Frequency**	**percentage**
Male	91	47.2%
Female	102	52.8%
Age	**Frequency**	**percentage**
< 25 years	57	29.5%
25-30 years	42	21.8%
31-44 years	67	34.7%
>45 years	27	14%
Length of work	**Frequency**	**percentage**
< 10 years	74	38.3%
11-20 years	87	45.1%
> 21 years	32	16.6%
Education	**Frequency**	**percentage**
Post degree	36	18.7%
HND/BSc	101	52.3%
ND/NCE	56	29%

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Based on table 1 above, it can be seen that there were 91 male respondents (47.2%) and 102 female respondents (52.8%). It is known that based on the age of the respondents, there were 57 respondents aged <25 years (29.5%) and under, 42 respondents aged 25-30 years (21.8%), 67 respondents aged 31-44 years (34.7%), and respondents aged > 45 years and over as many as 27 people (14%). It is known that based on the education of the respondents, there were 36 respondents with post-degree education (18.7%), 101 respondents with HND/BSc (52.3%) and 56 respondents with an ND/NCE education (29%)

The hypotheses were tested using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient at the 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between leadership support and employee engagement in Fanmilk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan.

Table 2: The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Index obtained on leadership support and employee engagement in Fan milk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan.

		Leadership support	Employee engagement
Leadership support	Pearson Correlation	1	530**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	375	375
			1
Employee engagement	Pearson Correlation	530**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	375	375

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

Source: Researchers' Computation, 2026

The results shown in Table 2 above pertain to the Pearson Product Moment Correlation index, which measures leadership support and staff engagement. It is denoted by r = 0.530**. The results show a moderate relationship between leadership support and staff engagement in Fan Milk PLC, Eleyele. Ibadan, with a positive significant value of p = 0.000 < 0.05. Based on the P-value the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings demonstrate the importance of leadership support in employee engagement in firms, indicating that all organisations should promote it. This relates to Bilalli, Mustafi and Islami (2023) who observed that cultural dimensions such as teamwork, innovation, and leadership support significantly improve employee vigor and dedication.

Hypothesis Two

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between teamwork and employees' engagement in Fan milk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan.

Table 3: The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Index obtained on Teamwork and Employees' Engagement in Fan milk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan

		Teamwork	Employee engagement
Teamwork	Pearson Correlation	1	503**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	375	375
			1
Employee engagement	Pearson Correlation	503**	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	375	375

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

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

According to Table 3, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation index obtained on teamwork and staff engagement balance is represented as r = 0.503**. The null hypothesis is rejected because the association between teamwork and staff engagement balance in Fan Milk PLC, Eleyele, Ibadan is positive and moderate, as indicated by the significant value of P = 0.000 < 0.05. This relates to Herath,

and Shakyara (2023) who argued that employees' engagement is highly influenced by supportive work culture and organisational stability.

Conclusion

Based on research findings, the study concludes that a significant positive relationship exists between oganisational culture and employees' engagement in Fanmilk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan. Study concluded that leadership support has significant positive correlation with employees commitment in Fanmilk Plc, Eleyele Industrial Estate, Ibadan. The study establishes that teamwork significantly influences employee engagement. A positive organisational culture characterised by leadership support, teamwork, and open communication enhances employees' willingness to contribute meaningfully toward organizational objectives. For Fan Milk Limited, strengthening organisational culture can improve employee motivation, productivity, and retention.

Recommendations

Based on research findings, the following were recommended:

i. Management of Fan milk Plc should strengthen leadership support by encouraging managers and supervisors to maintain open communication, provide regular feedback, recognise employees' contributions, and involve staff in decision-making processes. This will foster trust, increase motivation, and enhance employees' engagement

ii. The organisation should promote a strong culture of teamwork by encouraging collaboration across departments, organising team-building activities, and creating opportunities for employees to work together on projects. A supportive team environment can improve relationships, knowledge sharing, and employees' commitment to organisational goals.

iii. . Fan Milk Nigeria PLC should implement continuous leadership and team development programmes through regular training, coaching, and mentoring initiatives. These programmes should equip leaders with effective people-management skills while strengthening employees' collaboration and interpersonal skills, thereby creating a positive organisational culture that sustains high levels of employees' engagement.

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INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION IN OYO EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO TOWN

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Abstract

The study examines the influence of inter-governmental relations on administrative service delivery effectiveness in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents from a population of 220 local government personnel and community stakeholders. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that excessive control by the state and the federal governments negatively affects local government administrative effectiveness at Oyo East LGA. The study recommends constitutional reforms to enhance local government autonomy and improve service delivery. Further research explores the dynamics of inter-governmental relations across different states in Nigeria

Keywords: *Local government, inter-governmental relations, administration, administrative service delivery effectiveness.*

Introduction

The origin of local government system in Nigeria could be traceable to the Great Britain municipalities form of local government. This system introduced in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu, etc. had similar responsibilities with that obtainable in Britain this is a diverse system of local government that operated before 1976 local government reforms. After the Second World War, local government councils gradually replaced indirect rule system of native authorities of the emirs and law making became relatively easy even when most of the native authorities were at large. With the implementation of 1976 reforms of local government charged the multiple systems of local government councils to a single-tier all-purpose local government. All the local governments were made the third tier of government after the central and state government.

During the pre-colonial era, traditional systems of governance existed in various forms across different ethnic groups. The Yoruba had the Oba-in-Council system, the Hausa-Fulani had the Emirate system, and the Igbo had the village assembly system. These traditional systems provided governance at the local level and served as the foundation for modern local government. The colonial era introduced the Native Authority system, which incorporated traditional rulers into the colonial administrative structure. This system was characterized by the principal/agent model, where local authorities served as administrative extensions of the colonial administration, supervised by colonial Residents and District Officers.

The post-independence era saw the consolidation of local government systems across the regions. The Eastern Region established the County Council system, the Western Region maintained the Native Authority system with modifications, and the Northern Region continued with the Emirate system. However, these systems were fragmented and lacked uniformity, leading to calls for reform. The 1976 Local Government Reform was a watershed moment in the history of local government in Nigeria. The reform introduced a uniform single-tier local government system across the country, making local government the third tier of government. The reform also established the Joint State-Local Government Account system and provided for the election of local government councils.

The 1999 Constitution (as amended) formally recognized local government as a distinct tier; however, Section 162 established the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA), introducing a structural contradiction that enabled state governments to exercise significant fiscal and administrative

dominance. A landmark turning point occurred on July 11, 2024, when the Supreme Court of Nigeria affirmed the financial autonomy of the 774 local government areas, ruling that statutory allocations must be disbursed directly from the Federation Account rather than through state-controlled Joint Accounts. Despite this historic verdict, empirical evidence indicates that state executive organs continue to exert administrative control through local election manipulation, state law amendments, and centralized personnel management (Abalaka et al., 2025; Koko et al., 2026; Vanguard, 2025).

Inter-governmental relations (IGR) encompass the complex network of political, financial, administrative, and jurisdictional interactions among levels of government within a federal framework (Ademola, 2025). In theory, effective IGR fosters institutional synergy, minimizes inter-jurisdictional conflicts, and enhances service delivery capacity at the grassroots level. However, in the Nigerian context—and specifically within Oyo East Local Government Area these theoretical benefits are constrained by centralized control mechanisms. State-level agencies, such as the Ministry of Local Government and the Local Government Service Commission, maintain extensive oversight over operational priorities, personnel deployment, and administrative approvals. Consequently, municipal authorities frequently operate as administrative extensions of state executive organs rather than as autonomous, responsive service-delivery institutions.

Statement of the problem

Even After extensive scholarly discourse on Nigerian federalism and local governance, significant analytical gaps persist in recent empirical literature. Existing studies focus heavily on national macro-level federal-state fiscal politics, often offering broad generalizations without examining how inter-governmental dynamics operate at the micro-level within specific subnational municipalities (Abalaka et al., 2025; Emmanuella & Etodike, 2020). Furthermore, following the 2024 Supreme Court ruling on fiscal autonomy, there remains a shortage of empirical field studies evaluating how persistent *administrative* oversight directly affects service delivery capacity from the perspective of local government personnel.

In Oyo East Local Government, dysfunctional inter-governmental arrangements pose severe challenges to administrative efficiency and service delivery. Excessive political oversight by state institutions, lingering delays in direct fund access, and centralized staff recruitment by the state Local Government Service Commission restrict local operational autonomy. These structural bottlenecks manifest in substandard primary healthcare facilities, deteriorating feeder roads, inadequate educational infrastructure, and delayed responses to grassroots community needs. To address these empirical and practical gaps, this study examines the influence of inter-governmental relations on administrative service delivery effectiveness in Oyo East

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study is to examine the influence of inter-governmental Relations on local government administrative service delivery effectiveness in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo town.

Specific objective of the research include:

I. To examine the nature of inter-governmental relations in Oyo East LGA
II. To identify the objectives of effective local government administration in Oyo East LGA
III. To identify constraints from inter-governmental relations that affect effective local government administration in Oyo East LGA

Research hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between inter-governmental relations and the administrative service delivery effectiveness of local government administration in Oyo East Local Government.

Conceptualizing Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR)

Inter-governmental relations (IGR) describe the complex network of legal, financial, administrative, and political interactions among different tiers of government within a federal political framework (Ademola, 2025). Gboyega (2007) and Anderson (1979) emphasize that while IGR is an inherent feature of federalism, its operational dynamics vary depending on whether the system favors cooperative federalism or centralized administrative dominance. In Nigeria, IGR historically reflects a top-down, hierarchical model where higher tiers exert significant supervisory authority over lower tiers (Adewale, 1995; Ogirima, 2020).

Adewale (1995) sees IGR as embracing three perspectives: political, social and economic efforts of government and various bodies in the state directed towards the enhancement of the goals and objectives. To him, IGR does not refer to aspect of transferring or distributing grants or funds nor is it only an inter jurisdictional conflicts resolving unit, but as a complex network or transactions among constituents and various bodies in the State. Bello-Imam (2007) holds a broader view of the concept of IGR. His point of emphasis is on the three types of IGR practiced the world over. These according to him are partnership model, principal/agent model and functional dualism model. He maintained that Nigeria's IGR historically exhibits the characteristic of principal/agent model during the colonial and first republic eras.

According to Ogirima (2020), inter-governmental relations in Nigeria have been characterized by centralization tendencies, where higher tiers of government consistently exert control over lower tiers. He argues that this centralization has undermined the effectiveness of local governments and their ability to deliver services to citizens. The nature of relationship existing among Federal, States and Local Governments from the constitutional point of view tends to be fiscal, with a lot of mechanisms or agencies existing among them that tend to link or heighten the relationship of the three levels of government in Nigeria.

Local Governments

Local government functions as the institutionalized pulse of grassroots democracy, exercising delegated authority to manage specific jurisdictions through localized policy-making and service delivery. Empirically, it acts as the primary interface between the state and the citizenry, where proximity to the governed enhances administrative responsiveness and civic accountability (Oates & Martinez-Vazquez, 2024). Recent studies emphasize its role as a sub-national engine for sustainable development, transforming central mandates into tangible community infrastructure (Wilson & Game, 2025). Ultimately, it remains the essential tier of governance where theoretical public policy meets the practical realities of daily communal life.

The key characteristics of local government include legal personality which means local governments are legal entities with powers to sue and be sued, administrative autonomy which means local governments have the authority to manage their own affairs, financial autonomy which means local governments have the authority to generate and manage their own resources, and democratic accountability which means local governments are accountable to their citizens through elected representatives.

Administrative service delivery effectiveness

Administrative service delivery effectiveness refers to the capacity of a local government to provide public services to its citizens in a timely, cost-effective, and responsive manner. It encompasses several dimensions including timeliness which is the speed with which services are delivered, cost-effectiveness which is the efficient use of resources to deliver services, quality which is the standard of services provided, responsiveness which is the ability to respond to citizen needs and preferences, accessibility which is the ease with which citizens can access services, equity which is the fairness in the distribution of services across different groups, and sustainability which is the ability to maintain service delivery over time. In the context of Oyo East Local Government, administrative service delivery effectiveness is measured by the local government's ability to deliver primary health services,

basic education, agricultural extension services, road maintenance, and other essential services to its citizens.

According to Emmanuella and Etodike (2022), public service effectiveness is the extent to which public services achieve their intended outcomes and meet the expectations of citizens. They argue that effectiveness requires not only the availability of resources but also the capacity to use those resources efficiently and responsively.

Federal and State influence in Oyo East Local Government

The influence of federal and state governments in Oyo East Local Government manifests in several specific ways. The federal government exercises influence through policy directives that Oyo East Local Government must implement often without adequate funding. The federal government controls the allocation of funds to local governments through the Federation Account, but these funds are disbursed through state governments. The federal government mandates local governments to implement federal programs such as the National Health Insurance Scheme and Universal Basic Education Program. The federal government also sets national standards for services such as education and health, which local governments must meet.

The state government exercises influence through the Oyo State Ministry of Local Government which supervises the activities of Oyo East Local Government, approves its budgets, and monitors its performance. The Local Government Service Commission, a state body, controls the recruitment, promotion, and discipline of local government staff. All funds allocated to local governments are channeled through the State-Local Government Joint Account, giving the state government control over local government finances. The state governor influences appointments to local government positions, including the appointment of supervisory councilors and other officials. The state government also coordinates policies across local governments to ensure consistency with state-level priorities.

Specific Types of Relationships and influences in Oyo East Local Government

Political and Administrative Control: State executive organs routinely oversee local council operations. Despite constitutional guarantees, local councils frequently experience political interference through caretaker appointments, delayed local elections, and rigorous state ministry approvals (Aghayere, 2011; Koko et al., 2026; Onuigbo, 2015).

2. Functional Relationships: The 1999 Constitution assigns concurrent responsibilities (e.g., primary education and healthcare) to state and local governments. In practice, higher tiers frequently control project planning while relying on local councils merely for operational execution, creating functional overlaps (Enemuo, 1999).

3. Staff Management Matters: In Oyo State, the Local Government Service Commission (a state-level agency) manages recruitment, promotions, transfers, and disciplinary procedures for local personnel (Bello-Imam, 2007; Olowu, 2002). This centralized oversight weakens internal managerial authority within Oyo East LGA and directs employee accountability toward state institutions rather than local council leadership.

4. Grants and Fiscal Allocations: Statutory allocations from the Federation Account have historically passed through the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA), leading to arbitrary state deductions and delayed disbursements (Suberu, 2022; Uzoukwu, 2026). While the landmark 2024 Supreme Court verdict mandated direct disbursement, implementation challenges and state regulatory mechanisms continue to constrain local fiscal autonomy (Abalaka et al., 2025).

5. Administrative Directives: Regulatory standards set by central and state ministries (e.g., health and educational benchmarks) mandate compliance from local authorities, influencing daily administrative priorities (Arowolo, 2021).

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on Decentralisation Theory, originally conceptualized by theorists such as Fesler (1965) and Rondinelli (1981, 1986), alongside the Theory of Fiscal Federalism pioneered by Musgrave (1959) and Oates (1972). Decentralisation Theory asserts that devolving administrative, political, and operational powers from the center to subnational authorities optimizes public resource allocation and aligns government outputs directly with localized citizen preferences (Smoke, 2015; World Bank, 2021). This is complemented by Fiscal Federalism Theory, which holds that lower tiers of government require distinct tax-assignment capabilities and stable, autonomous revenue streams to discharge their constitutional service mandates efficiently (Bahl & Bird, 2018; Oates, 2005). Applied to local government administration, these integrated theoretical perspectives demonstrate that administrative responsiveness hinges on structural and financial autonomy.

In the Nigerian governance context, a pronounced disconnect remains between these theoretical ideals and empirical realities (Arowolo, 2021; Suberu, 2022). While the constitutional framework designates local councils as frontline agents for grassroots development, subnational administrative overreach and systemic revenue centralization routinely undermine local administrative capacity (Arogundade & Falana, 2020). Structural mechanisms like the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA) and the frequent substitution of democratically elected local councils with appointed caretaker committees severely restrict local financial autonomy and long-term planning (Oguonu & Eze, 2021). As a result, municipal authorities like Oyo East Local Government function largely as administrative extensions of state government executive organs rather than as autonomous service-delivery institutions.

When evaluated from a global comparative standpoint, inter-governmental dynamics in Nigeria deviate significantly from established federal practices elsewhere. In federal jurisdictions like South Africa, the national constitution explicitly establishes local administration as an autonomous tier of government possessing protected statutory powers over revenue generation and primary public service delivery (Steytler, 2020; Thornhill, 2021). Similarly, municipal administration in the United States derives resilience from dedicated local property taxation regimes and direct federal grant-in-aid mechanisms that shield local public goods from arbitrary state-level interference (Inman & Rubinfeld, 2020). Conversely, the Nigerian experience reflects a centralized, asymmetric model where state-level institutional controls dilute the core principles of fiscal federalism and decentralization, highlighting the urgent need for structural reforms that guarantee functional local autonomy.

Influence of Inter-Governmental Relations and Local Government Administration in Nigeria

(A) Political leadership/administrative control

State local relations as exemplified by a master servant relationship is obvious in areas such as absence of local government election in some States, political leadership at the local level consists of handpicked favourites of the governors or the ruling party. Hence, councils management tends to be loyal to their masters than the people. Also, the establishment and control mechanism by the state government to oversee local government such as, the Ministry of Local Government, Local Government Service Commission and the State Economic Planning Board. These bodies are state institutions created to control local governments (Olowu, 2002; Aghayere, 2021). This lopsided relationship has actually affected good governance as well as project implementation by local governments throughout the country. No wonder there has been a call from different quarters for the abrogation of this level of government in Nigeria (Onuigbo, 2015).

(B) GRANTS - Grants are also made where these is no intention to interfere with local choice, the objective being one of fiscal equalization. Some jurisdiction (State or Local) enjoy a high taxable capacity (i.e. the tax rate needed to obtain a given level of revenue is low) and have a relatively low level of need (ie, the amount required to provide certain service levels is small). They are thus in a fiscally strong position, as measured by the ratio of capacity to need, others are in the reverse position. The central government may then wish to equalize fiscal position through various ways. The central government may wish to secure common minimum levels and adjust its grant policy to secure this objectives, the central government on the other hand may wish to equalize actual service levels and for

this purpose impose such matching grants (where to levels) or taxes (where needed to lower levels) as are required to secure equalization (Emmanuella & Etodike, 2020).

(C) Administrative Effect. The ministries and agencies of the central government usually have the power to regulate, supervise and mentor local councils in their respective fields of concern. For example, both the federal and state Ministries of Health in Nigeria work closely with the local councils to ensure that they provide primary health services in accordance with the national standards and policies (Enemuo, 1999). Other administrative relations occur among officials at all levels of government during meetings and conferences. Such conferences as noted by Adamoleku in Awofeso (2004) include the Biannual Conference of Commissioners of Local Government, Meetings of Secretaries of Government of the Federation, the National Conference of Minister and Commissioners for Works etc (Ogirima, 2020).

(D) Functional Relationship The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 provides for two sets of local government functions: executive and concurrent. The concurrent functions include primary education, health services and agricultural extension services, industrial and commercial services. In these concurrent functions, the local governments provide them in conjunction with state and Federal Governments. Often the Federal/State Governments provides the financial resources, in part or whole, while the local governments provide local managerial resources, local political control, supervision and community support. The State Government can prosecute any of the functions jointly with the local governments. It possesses he power to delegate any of its functions to local governments to perform under its supervision and control. Moreover, the constitution provides that the state Assembly can, through law confer upon the local Government such other governments, as their universal primary Education and the National Health Schemes (Onuigbo, 2025).

(E) Staff Matters - Local Government also relate with State and Federal Governments on staff matters. The local Government Service Commission is responsible for the appointment, transfer, promotion, discipline and training of local Government staff. The Federal Government also provides staff training funds and programs for training of local government staff. The Federal Government provided an Approved Scheme of Service for the Local Government which now governs the local Government Services (Bello-Imam, 2007).

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to empirically evaluate the influence of inter-governmental relations on administrative service delivery effectiveness in Oyo East Local Government Area. A survey design is well-suited for this inquiry as it allows for the structured collection of primary quantitative and qualitative data from a defined population of local government personnel, capturing their assessments of administrative controls, staffing mechanisms, and fiscal allocation workflows.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Oyo East Local Government Area (LGA), headquartered at Kosobo, Oyo Town, Oyo State, Nigeria. Oyo East LGA is one of the key municipal administration hubs in the Oyo political zone. The local government council is structured into distinct administrative, finance, works and housing, primary healthcare, and agricultural departments responsible for executing grassroots public service delivery.

The study examined Oyo East Local Government, focusing on a total workforce of 220 employees across administrative, technical, and support divisions. Using the Taro Yamane formula with a 5% margin of error (e = 0.05), the required sample size was calculated at 142 respondents:

$n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$

$n=220/(1+220(0.05^2))$

$n=220/(1+220(0.0025))$

n=220/(1+0.55)

n=220/1.55

n = 148.94

n= 150.

Data collection relied on a structured, close-ended questionnaire distributed directly to staff members across the council's main operating departments. The questionnaire measured employee assessments of inter-governmental coordination, fiscal allocation practices, and operational service delivery. Collected responses were summarized using simple percentage distributions, while the relationship between inter-governmental relations and service delivery performance was tested using a Chi-square test of independence at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data presentation and analysis

Table 1. Distribution of responses on Nature of inter-governmental relations on Oyo East Local Government administration (N=150)

Variable	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Political and Administrative Control	69% (104)	31% (46)	0%	0%
Functional Relation	57% (86)	31% (46)	12% (18)	0%
Staff Matters	69% (104)	25% (38)	6% (9)	0%
Grants	69% (104)	12% (18)	19% (28)	0%
Administrative Effect	50% (75)	31% (46)	19% (28)	0%

Source: Researcher's survey, 2024

Table 1. reveal a strong pattern of continuous supervision and control exercised by state and federal authorities over local operations. A significant majority of respondents, 104 out of 150 or 69.3%, indicated that political and administrative control is "always" exerted over the local council, while the remaining 46 respondents or 30.7% noted that such influence occurs "sometimes". The implication of this is that local administration functions predominantly as an operational arm of state executive machinery rather than as an autonomous tier of governance. This finding confirms Ogirima (2020) who argued that inter-governmental relations in Nigeria have been characterized by centralization tendencies, where higher tiers of government consistently exert control over lower tiers.

This relationship extends directly into daily staffing and functional responsibilities. Exactly 86 respondents or 57.3% confirmed that functional relationships are always regulated by higher tiers, while 104 respondents or 69.3% observed that personnel matters including recruitment and promotions are dictated by external supervisory organs. The implication of this is that continuous state oversight over local workforce decisions directs staff accountability upward toward state bodies rather than outward toward community needs, undermining the democratic accountability of local government officials to the local community. This finding aligns with Olowu (2002) who noted that local government staff often feel more accountable to their state benefactors than to the local community.

Additionally, while 104 respondents or 69.3% noted that grant distributions consistently depend on central directives, half the workforce, 75 respondents or 50.0%, confirmed that administrative regulations imposed by higher authorities regularly affect local operations. The implication of this is that even financial resources meant for local development are controlled by higher tiers of government, limiting the local government's ability to respond to immediate community needs. This finding corroborates the World Bank (2021) which found that fiscal centralization undermines local government autonomy and service delivery effectiveness.

Table 2: Assessment of Service Delivery Objectives and Capacity (N = 150)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Inter-governmental relations have negatively affected service delivery capacity	75 (50.0%)	45 (30.0%)	20 (13.3%)	10 (6.7%)	3.23
Political control from state government limits the capacity to deliver services	80 (53.3%)	40 (26.7%)	18 (12.0%)	12 (8.0%)	3.25
Staff management interference reduces the effectiveness of service delivery	70 (46.7%)	45 (30.0%)	20 (13.3%)	15 (10.0%)	3.13
Fiscal control through the Joint Account system hinders service delivery	65 (43.3%)	50 (33.3%)	20 (13.3%)	15 (10.0%)	3.10
The local government lacks the capacity to respond to community needs due to external control	85 (56.7%)	35 (23.3%)	18 (12.0%)	12 (8.0%)	3.29
Average	**75 (50.0%)**	**43 (28.7%)**	**19 (12.7%)**	**13 (8.6%)**	**3.20**

Source: Researcher's survey, 2024

On the first statement that inter-governmental relations have negatively affected service delivery capacity, 75 respondents (50.0%) strongly agreed and 45 (30.0%) agreed, giving a combined 120 respondents (80.0%) agreement, while 20 (13.3%) disagreed and 10 (6.7%) strongly disagreed. The implication of this is that the majority of staff recognize that the current inter-governmental relationship structure compromises their ability to deliver services effectively to the community. This finding confirms Emmanuella and Etodike (2020) who argued that public service effectiveness requires not only the availability of resources but also the capacity to use those resources efficiently and responsively, which is undermined by excessive external control.

On the second statement that political control from state government limits the capacity to deliver services, 80 respondents (53.3%) strongly agreed and 40 (26.7%) agreed, giving a combined 120 respondents (80.0%) agreement, while 18 (12.0%) disagreed and 12 (8.0%) strongly disagreed. The implication of this is that state political interference is perceived as a major barrier to effective service delivery, meaning the local government cannot independently plan and execute projects that reflect local priorities. This finding aligns with Onuigbo (2015) who noted that political leadership at the local level often consists of handpicked favourites of the governors or the ruling party, leading to loyalty to political masters rather than the people.

On the third statement that staff management interference reduces the effectiveness of service delivery, 70 respondents (46.7%) strongly agreed and 45 (30.0%) agreed, giving a combined 115 respondents (76.7%) agreement, while 20 (13.3%) disagreed and 15 (10.0%) strongly disagreed. The implication of this is that external control over recruitment, promotion, and discipline of local government staff undermines workplace effectiveness, meaning staff are often promoted based on political connections rather than merit and performance. This finding corroborates Bello-Imam (2007) who noted that the Local Government Service Commission controls the recruitment, promotion, discipline, and transfer of local government staff, often without consultation with the affected local government.

On the fourth statement that fiscal control through the Joint Account system hinders service delivery, 65 respondents (43.3%) strongly agreed and 50 (33.3%) agreed, giving a combined 115 respondents (76.6%) agreement, while 20 (13.3%) disagreed and 15 (10.0%) strongly disagreed. The implication of this is that the State-Local Government Joint Account system creates opportunities for fiscal

strangulation and political control, meaning funds meant for local development are often delayed or diverted. This finding confirms Worugji and Worugji (2026) who stated that the State-Local Government Joint Account system has been a source of controversy and has undermined the autonomy of local governments.

On the fifth statement that the local government lacks the capacity to respond to community needs due to external control, 85 respondents (56.7%) strongly agreed and 35 (23.3%) agreed, giving a combined 120 respondents (80.0%) agreement, while 18 (12.0%) disagreed and 12 (8.0%) strongly disagreed. This recorded the highest individual mean score of 3.29, indicating strong agreement among staff that current inter-governmental dynamics weaken overall administrative effectiveness. The implication of this is that the local government is unable to fulfill its primary objective of responding swiftly to grassroots community needs.

Table 3: Extent of Operational and Structural Constraints on Administration (N = 150)

Variable	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	To a Small Extent	Not at All
Political/Admin Control	82% (123)	12% (18)	6% (9)	0% (0)
Functional Relation	63% (95)	25% (38)	12% (18)	0% (0)
Staff Matters	50% (75)	32% (48)	12% (18)	6% (9)
Grants	32% (48)	50% (75)	6% (9)	12% (18)

Source: Researcher's survey, 2024

An overwhelming 123 respondents or 82.0% reported that political and administrative oversight constrains local governance to a great extent, while only 18 (12.0%) and 9 (6.0%) viewed these interventions as minor. The implication of this is that external political supervision severely limits administrative flexibility, meaning the local government cannot make independent decisions without seeking approval from state authorities. This widespread consensus confirms Aghayere (2021) who noted that state government supervision through the Ministry of Local Government exercises supervisory authority over all local government activities.

In day-to-day council operations, 95 respondents or 63.3% identified functional relationship overlaps as a major constraint, and 75 respondents or 50.0% highlighted heavy constraints in staff management. The implication of these findings is that centralized control over recruitment, postings, and promotions restricts the council from aligning its workforce with local priorities, meaning staff are deployed based on state needs rather than community needs. This finding aligns with Olowu (2002) who noted that local governments lack the autonomy to make independent policy decisions.

Additionally, financial constraints related to grant allocations were noted to a great extent by 48 respondents or 32.0% and to some extent by 75 respondents or 50.0% of staff. The implication of this is that while statutory funds are disbursed, political oversight and administrative restrictions remain significant operational barriers, meaning the local government cannot reliably plan its budget and projects due to unpredictable fund releases. This finding proves that inter-governmental relations in Nigeria have been characterized by centralization tendencies, where higher tiers of government consistently exert control over lower tiers, as argued by Ogirima (2020).

Hypothesis testing

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between inter-governmental relations and the administrative service delivery effectiveness of Oyo East Local Government.

1. Observed Frequencies (O)

Based on the survey of 150 personnel:

Variable	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Row Total
Political/Admin Control	104	46	0	0	150

Functional Relation	86	46	18	0	150
Staff Matters	104	38	9	0	150
Grants	104	18	28	0	150
Administrative Effect	75	46	28	0	150
Column Total	473	194	83	0	N=750

2. Expected Frequencies (E)

Expected values = row total x column total/grand total

Variable	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
Political/Admin Control	94.6	38.8	16.6
Functional Relation	94.6	38.8	16.6
Staff Matters	94.6	38.8	16.6
Grants	94.6	38.8	16.6
Administrative Effect	94.6	38.8	16.6

3. Chi-Square Calculation

FO	Cell (O,E)	(O−E)	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2/E$
104	94.6	9.4	88.36	0.934
46	38.8	7.2	51.84	1.336
0	16.6	-16.6	275.56	16.600
86	94.6	-8.6	73.96	0.782
46	38.8	7.2	51.84	1.336
18	16.6	1.4	1.96	0.118
104	94.6	9.4	88.36	0.934
38	38.8	-0.8	0.64	0.016
9	16.6	-7.6	57.76	3.480
104	94.6	9.4	88.36	0.934
18	38.8	-20.8	432.64	11.151
28	16.6	11.4	129.96	7.829
75	94.6	-19.6	384.16	4.061
46	38.8	7.2	51.84	1.336
28	16.6	11.4	129.96	7.829
Total				**58.676**

Result and Decision

Degrees of Freedom (df): (R-1)(C-1) = (5-1)(3-1) = 8

Critical Value: At a 0.05 significance level, the critical value for df=8 is 15.507.

Calculated chi² (58.676) > Critical Value (15.507).

Decision rule

Therefore determining the table Value from the chi - square table, we pick out the value where the significance level 0.05 intersects the degree of freedom (8) Hence the table Value is 15.507, if Computed Value is greater than the table Value, we Reject the (Ho) on the other hand, if the table Value is Greater than the Computed Value, we accept the Null Hypothesis, Based on the decision value, the determination above Reveals that the table Value being 15.507 is less than the Computed Value which is 58.676, Hence null hypothesis is rejected There is a statistically significant relationship, confirming that inter-governmental relations specifically political control and staff interference exert a severe influence on the administrative service delivery effectiveness of Oyo East Local Government.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that inter-governmental relations in Nigeria currently function as a "master-servant" relationship rather than a collaborative partnership. This severe top-down control by federal and state authorities over political, financial, and personnel matters has fundamentally eroded the autonomy of Oyo East Local Government, transforming it into a mere administrative extension that is unable to efficiently deliver services to bring grassroots development

The study concludes that these forms of control undermine the effectiveness of local government administration by reducing accountability to local communities, limiting the ability to respond to local needs, and creating a culture of dependency on state government.

Recommendations

i. State authorities should grant Oyo East Local Government direct operational autonomy over its local administrative affairs.
ii. The local council's capacity to deliver primary infrastructure and social services must be strengthened by removing state approval delays.
iii. Personnel management such as staff recruitment and promotions and statutory grant allocations should be decentralized to local council control to eliminate administrative bottlenecks and Joint Account delays.

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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ACTUALISATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN OGBOMOSO SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OYO STATE

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Abstract
This study examined the role of public administration in the actualisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ogbomoso South Local Government, Oyo State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and primary data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to a stratified sample of 50 administrative staff across 10 functional departments. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics using Pearson Product Moment Correlation through SPSS. The findings revealed that community awareness of the SDGs was relatively high, although actual grassroots participation remained moderate, indicating the need for more systematic inclusion mechanisms. Public administration was found to be fairly effective in implementing SDG-related programmes, with inter-agency collaboration identified as a major contributor to institutional synergy. However, institutional constraints, particularly corruption, inadequate funding, weak political will, poor infrastructure, and manpower shortages, significantly hindered effective project execution. The hypothesis testing revealed significant relationships between community awareness and SDG programme participation ($r = 0.52$, $p = 0.004$), public administration effectiveness and SDG programme implementation ($r = 0.55$, $p = 0.003$), and administrative challenges and SDG actualisation ($r = 0.49$, $p = 0.006$). Consequently, all three null hypotheses were rejected. The study concludes that effective SDG actualisation at the local government level depends on meaningful community engagement, effective public administration, and the reduction of institutional constraints. It recommends strengthening community participation mechanisms, enhancing anti-corruption measures, improving funding and budgetary support, and implementing sustained capacity-building programmes for local government administrators.

Keywords: Public Administration, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Local Governance, Community Participation, Institutional Constraints.

Introduction

Public administration is the formal organization and management of government resources, personnel, and operational programmes to effectively implement public policies and achieve developmental goals. It encompasses strategic processes that ensure public service delivery is executed efficiently, executive decisions are institutionalized, and community resources are optimized for citizen benefit Ashade *et al.*, (2025). Within the Nigerian administrative landscape, local governments represent the most critical governance unit where administrative action directly targets community welfare and localized service provision. Efficient administration at this level is paramount for bridging developmental deficits and driving socio-economic progress at the grassroots.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations outline 17 integrated global targets aimed at eliminating poverty, reducing systemic inequalities, promoting public health, and safeguarding environmental sustainability by 2030 Emeka *et al.*, (2022). Actualizing these goals demands robust localized governance mechanisms, cross-sector coordination, and the strategic adaptation of global targets to meet sitespecific rural and semi-urban community dynamics Ibrahim and Ojo, (2023). Local public administrators are central to this localization agenda, navigating resource mobilization, stakeholder networks, and project execution across education, health, and social welfare domains.

Statement of the problem

Despite the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across all levels of government in Nigeria, their implementation at the local government level remains constrained by institutional,

administrative, financial, and participatory challenges. Recent studies have established that local governments occupy a strategic position in SDG implementation because they are closest to the people, but their effectiveness is weakened by inadequate funding, weak institutional capacity, corruption, political interference, and limited citizen participation (Titus, 2026). Similarly, research on SDG implementation in Nigeria has examined the role of local administrators and found that although local officials possess knowledge of the SDG agenda and contribute to its implementation, stronger bottom-up approaches and greater localization at the third tier of government are required (Ashade *et al.*, 2025). Other studies have emphasized the importance of local governments in facilitating partnerships and coordinating stakeholders for SDG implementation (Ansell *et al.*, 2022), while research in African cities has demonstrated that inadequate and unequal access to localized data can constrain effective SDG monitoring and evidence-based decision-making (Elias and de Albuquerque, 2022). However, a critical gap remains in the existing literature: previous studies have largely examined the general role, challenges, and institutional conditions of local governments in SDG implementation, while limited empirical attention has been given to the simultaneous relationship between community awareness and participation, public administrative effectiveness, and institutional constraints in determining SDG actualisation within a specific local government area in Nigeria. In particular, existing literature does not adequately explain how these three dimensions interact within the context of Ogbomoso South Local Government, Oyo State, nor does it provide localized empirical evidence based on the perceptions of administrative personnel within its functional departments. This study therefore addresses this contextual, relational, and empirical gap by investigating the role of public administration in SDG actualisation in Ogbomoso South Local Government, focusing specifically on community engagement, administrative effectiveness, and the institutional challenges that may influence the achievement of SDG-related programmes.

Research objectives and questions

The broad objective is to analyze the role of public administration in the actualisation of SDGs in Ogbomoso South Local Government. The specific dimensions of this study aim to:

1. Examine the level of awareness and engagement of local communities in SDG-related programmes.
2. Assess the operational effectiveness of public administration in executing SDG-aligned initiatives.
3. Identify the institutional and structural challenges militating against local public administrators in the study area.

Hypotheses

To provide statistical validation, the following null hypotheses were tested:

H01: There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness/engagement of local communities and the actualisation of SDGs in Ogbomoso South Local Government.

H02: Public administration is not significantly effective in implementing programmes aligned with the SDGs in Ogbomoso South Local Government.

H03: There are no significant challenges affecting local public administrators in the actualisation of SDGs in the study area.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Public administration establishes the technical processes whereby abstract public policies are converted into tangible, sustainable services for citizens Ashade *et al.*, (2025). Scholars underscore that modern public administrative structures must emphasize accountability, transparency, and equity to secure institutional legitimacy and support inclusive development (Olawale and Bello, 2023). In local governance contexts, its functional scope spans policy implementation, multi-agency organization, resource optimization, public accountability, and community development.

The localization of the 17 SDGs shifts implementation responsibility directly onto regional governance frameworks (Sachs, 2019). However, local councils face deep-seated hurdles including financial dependence on higher government tiers, low technical expertise among personnel, administrative disruptions due to political interference, and poor civic participation channels Ogunleye *et al.*, (2023).

Theoretical framework

This research integrates three complementary organizational perspectives:

1. Public Choice Theory*:* Pioneered by Buchanan and Tullock (1962), this framework asserts that public sector actors are rational, self-interested agents guided by personal utility and cost-benefit incentives. Applied here, it helps explain why local administrators may prioritize politically visible, short-term interests over substantive, longterm SDG objectives unless strong oversight mechanisms align personal incentives with community development goals.
2. Systems Theory*:* Advanced by von Bertalanffy (1968), it conceptualizes the local government as an open system comprising interdependent inputs (personnel, funding), processes (planning, coordination), and outputs (SDG achievements). It demonstrates that deficiencies or functional siloing within any single administrative unit will immediately degrade overall developmental output.
3. Institutional Theory*:* Articulated by Meyer and Rowan (1977), this perspective focuses on how formalized procedures, cultural norms, and legal frameworks structure administrative behavior. It posits that strong institutionalized transparency standards directly enhance the legitimacy, continuity, and execution metrics of local developmental interventions.

Research methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to gather cross-sectional insights from primary actors. The target population consisted of the administrative staff of Ogbomoso South Local Government, Oyo State, which totaled 323 personnel across the formal Human Resource Department records as of January 2026. A stratified sampling technique was utilized to partition the population into its 10 functional institutional departments. From each department, 5 respondents were randomly drawn, yielding a representative sample size of 50 administrative staff.

Primary data were collected using a structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), validated through professional supervisor peer review, and checked for internal consistency. The gathered data were processed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v16.0) utilizing descriptive tools (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) alongside inferential statistics via Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data presentation, analysis, and discussion

A 100% questionnaire retrieval and completion rate was achieved (N=50). The demographic outline of the respondents showed that 56% were male and 44% were female. The dominant age cohort fell within 26–35 years (32%) , followed by 18–25 years (28%), demonstrating a relatively young and active institutional workforce. Educational profiles showed that 40% possessed secondary education, 28% had completed tertiary education, and 20 % held primary qualifications. Furthermore, the length of localized residential experience in Ogbomoso South was evenly distributed, with 28% residing there for 6–10 years and 24% for 11–15 years, confirming a cohort wellacquainted with community socio-economic developments.

Analysis of Research Questions

Mean responses were interpreted using a standard cutoff structure: 3.50–4.49 indicates general agreement, while
4.50–5.00 represents strong agreement.

Table 1: Research Question 1: Community Awareness and Engagement

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEV	REMARK
1	Local communities are aware of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	4.32	0.80	Accepted
2	Residents actively participate in SDG-related programmes in Ogbomoso South.	4.20	0.83	Accepted
3	There are adequate sensitisation campaigns on SDGs in the area.	4.28	0.81	Accepted

4	Community engagement improves the success of SDG implementation.	4.35	0.78	Accepted
5	Local people are involved in decision-making on SDG projects.	4.25	0.82	Accepted

The descriptive results in Table 1 reveal that respondents consistently agree that community awareness exists, with the highest validation given to the assertion that community engagement inherently improves SDG implementation success (M = 4.35, SD = 0.78). However, actual grassroot participation levels scored the lowest (M = 4.20, SD = 0.83), implying that while community sensitization has expanded, formal administrative channels to actively integrate citizens into execution roles remain structurally restricted.

Table 2: Research Question 2: Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEV	REMARK
6	Public administration effectively implements SDG-related programmes in the area.	4.30	0.80	Accepted
7	Government institutions align their activities with the Sustainable Development Goals.	4.25	0.82	Accepted
8	SDG projects are properly monitored and evaluated by public administrators.	4.28	0.81	Accepted
9	Public administrators ensure efficient delivery of SDG programmes.	4.35	0.78	Accepted
10	Collaboration between agencies enhances SDG implementation.	4.40	0.76	Accepted

Table 2 demonstrates that public administration functions with moderate effectiveness within the municipality. Inter-agency collaboration emerged as the most successful variable (M = 4.40, SD = 0.76), showing that collaborative structures optimize programmatic reach. Conversely, institutional alignment with macro SDG strategies scored lowest (M = 4.25, SD = 0.82), indicating localized policy gaps.

Table 3: Research Question 3: Institutional and Structural Challenges

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	STD. DEV	REMARK
11	Inadequate funding affects SDG implementation in Ogbomoso South.	4.45	0.77	Accepted
12	Lack of political will hinders effective SDG actualisation.	4.40	0.79	Accepted
13	Poor infrastructure limits the success of SDG programmes.	4.38	0.81	Accepted
14	Corruption affects the implementation of SDG projects.	4.50	0.75	Accepted
15	Insufficient manpower reduces effectiveness in SDG delivery.	4.42	0.78	Accepted

The challenge variables highlighted in Table 3 exhibit exceptionally high mean scores. Institutional corruption recorded the highest response value (M = 4.50, SD = 0.75), marking it as a critical inhibitor of project integrity. Budgetary deficits and funding inadequacies also pose substantial obstacles (M = 4.45, SD = 0.77), which cripples administrative independence.

Hypotheses Testing and Discussion

Inferential tests were conducted via Pearson Correlation with 48 degrees of freedom (df = N - 2) at the 0.05 significance level:

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Correlation Hypotheses Testing (N = 50, df = 48)

HYPOTHESES	MEAN	SD	R-CAL	P-VALUE	DECISION
H01: **Community Awareness and Engagement vs. SDG Programme Participation**	16.28 16.70	3.44 3.21	0.52	0.004	Reject H01 (Significant)
H02: **Public Administration Effectiveness vs. SDG Programme Implementation**	16.41 16.85	3.46 3.18	0.55	0.003	Reject H02 (Significant)
H03: **Challenges Faced by Administrators vs. SDG Actualisation Level**	16.32 16.88	3.48 3.22	0.49	0.006	Reject H03 (Significant)

$H_0$1: For **H01**, the cal-value (r = 0.52, p = 0.004) is statistically significant, meaning higher civic awareness directly leads to better grassroots program execution. This matches the findings of Olawepo (2022) and Akinola (2021), who noted that top-down communication without deep community involvement limits long-term project sustainability.

$H_0$2: For **H02**, the test (r = 0.55, p = 0.003) confirms a positive link between public administration effectiveness and project delivery, highlighting that coordinated governance boosts accountability Olowu, (2020); Ayo, (2023).

$H_0$3: For **H03**, the correlation (r = 0.49, p = 0.006) shows that structural constraints significantly hinder target achievement. This aligns with Ibrahim (2022) and Ogunleye (2021), who argue that corruption and weak funding undermine sustainable development across local governments in Nigeria.

Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that community awareness of the SDGs was relatively high, but actual grassroots participation remained moderate, suggesting that awareness does not automatically translate into meaningful involvement in development planning and implementation. This agrees with Echendu (2023), who reported that although public participation is recognized as essential to effective planning in Nigeria, institutional and practical barriers can limit citizens' meaningful involvement. Similarly, Titus (2026) found that Nigerian local governments face inadequate funding, weak institutional capacity, corruption, political interference, and poor citizen participation, all of which constrain SDG implementation at the grassroots. The moderate effectiveness of public administration and the importance of inter-agency collaboration observed in this study also corroborate Adekunle (2023), who emphasized the need to bridge implementation gaps through stronger local governance, while Oladotun and Adekunle (2023) identified institutional constraints as significant barriers to SDG implementation in Nigerian local governments. Furthermore, Emeka *et al.* (2022) reported that challenges within local governance structures continue to impede the effective implementation of SDGs in Nigeria, supporting the present finding that corruption, inadequate funding, weak political will, poor infrastructure, and manpower shortages remain major obstacles to SDG actualization.

Conclusion

Public administration serves as an indispensable tool for actualizing Sustainable Development Goals at the grassroots level. The research confirms that administrative effectiveness and community inclusion are vital to project success. However, persistent weaknesses such as funding shortages and poor

oversight frameworks limit the capacity of Ogbomoso South Local Government to translate development policies into lasting advancements for its citizens.

Recommendations

To strengthen sustainable development initiatives, the following actions are recommended:

Local administrative bodies must move beyond general sensitization campaigns and build inclusive frameworks that directly involve community members in project planning and monitoring.

Also, public institutions should expand formal inter-agency collaboration to minimize duplicate efforts and pool technical resources efficiently.

Furthermore, higher tiers of government should prioritize timely and adequate budget allocations, and local authorities should improve internally generated revenue to support SDG projects.

In same vein, strict internal audit mechanisms and transparent procurement processes are necessary to curb corruption and protect project funding.

In addition, regular technical training and professional development should be provided to local administrators to improve project monitoring and strategic resource management.

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IMPACT OF MISSION STATEMENT ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

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Abstract

A structured organization requires mission statement which is a tool that stresses on organization's uniqueness and what it is synonymous to and a guideline to its employees in order to attain their vested responsibilities and achieve organizational goals. Thus, the need for exclusive study on the relationship between mission statement and employee performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The study specifically determined the level of awareness of the content of mission statement in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora; determine the perception of employees on the relevance of mission statement to their work output and determined factors affecting the efficiency of mission statement on employee's performances. The study population is 545 who are employees of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Stratified sampling technique was adopted, just as Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was used to derive the sample size of the study which is 231. Data were collected through questionnaires and regression analysis was employed to test the stated hypotheses. The study revealed that a significant positive relationship exist between mission statement and employee performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The study concludes that mission statement has the capacity to influence employees' performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora and therefore recommends that the College should further orientate and re-orientate their employees on the significance of mission statement.

Keywords: *Awareness, Employee, Mission Statement, Performance, Vision*

Introduction

Interest in mission statements grew as organizations faced increasing competition and changing workplace demands. A mission statement explains an organization's purpose, values, and direction, while helping employees and management work toward common goals (Achua and Lussier, 2016; Yazhou and Jian, 2025). When clearly communicated, it can improve employee commitment, morale, and alignment with organizational objectives (David and David, 2017; Bartkus *et al.*, 2016; Obi-Anike and Ekwe, 2020; Mingchien and Ping, 2019). However, a mission statement is only useful when it is understood and reflected in everyday activities. Adetunji and Owoeye (2021) and Ozdem (2015) note that many institutions treat mission statements as symbolic documents that are rarely reviewed or connected to actual practice. Changing demands such as accountability, globalization, funding pressures, and stakeholder expectations also make regular review necessary (Lemaitre, 2019; Spendlove, 2015). In Nigeria, studies have similarly reported poor employee awareness and weak implementation of institutional missions, which can reduce commitment and performance (Oghojafor *et al*., 2011; Ezekwe and Onwe, 2014; Ekpe *et al*., 2015). More recently, Banjo *et al*. (2026) found that clear communication and employee connection to the mission significantly improve staff engagement. Despite these findings, there is still limited Nigerian evidence on how employees' awareness, understanding, and acceptance of mission statements directly affect their performance. Existing studies have largely focused on organizational commitment, organizational performance, or employee engagement (Oghojafor *et al.*, 2011; Ezekwe and Onwe, 2014; Kuye and Ezebuiro, 2023; Banjo *et al.*, 2026). This study therefore addresses this gap by examining the effect of mission statements on employee performance at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Specific Objectives of the study are to:

i. determine the level of employees' awareness of the institution's mission statement.
ii. examine employees' perceptions of the relevance of the mission statement to their job performance.

iii. identify the factors affecting the effectiveness of the mission statement in enhancing employees' performance.

The following research hypotheses were established and statistically tested in the subsequent chapter.

H_{01}: Employees' awareness of the institution's mission statement has no significant effect on their performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora.

H_{02}: Employees' perception of the relevance of the mission statement has no significant effect on their job performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora.

H_{03}: Factors affecting the effectiveness of the mission statement have no significant effect on employees' performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora.

Literature review

Concept of mission statement

As a foundational concept in organizational management, the mission statement offers a clear statement of an organization's purpose and direction. Achua and Lussier (2016) describe it as an enduring declaration of an organization's core purpose that distinguishes it from others in the same industry, articulating what the organization aims to achieve and guiding its decision-making. David and David (2017) similarly view the mission statement as a strategic tool that aligns organizational activities with its goals, giving employees and stakeholders alike a sense of clarity and focus. Several scholars stress that mission statements serve a motivational and directional purpose beyond simple description. Bartkus, Glassman, and McAfee (2016) hold that a well-formulated mission statement should communicate an organization's core values while inspiring commitment among its members. Mingchien and Ping (2019) add that mission statements shape organizational culture by giving staff a sense of identity and purpose, which in turn affects motivation and engagement. This link between mission and employee behavior highlights the importance of crafting mission statements that resonate both within and beyond the organization.

Beyond defining purpose, mission statements also provide a framework for setting objectives and gauging progress. Obi-Anike and Ekwe (2020) suggest that mission statements give organizations a reference point for strategic planning and performance measurement, while Yazhou and Jian (2025) note that a clear mission statement helps maintain consistency in operations and align individual roles with broader organizational goals—an alignment that is vital for improving efficiency and ensuring that all efforts serve the shared purpose.

A mission statement captures both the purpose and the values that drive an organization. Spendlove (2015) similarly describes it as a concise declaration that guides strategic decisions and inspires stakeholders, while Lemaitre (2019) notes that in the face of dynamic operating environments, a well-articulated mission statement remains essential for sustaining focus and navigating change. Bartkus, Glassman, and McAfee (2016) maintain that when effectively communicated and embraced, the mission statement becomes a source of cohesion and motivation that anchors organizational efforts toward meaningful outcomes.

Components of mission statement

A mission statement explains why an organization exists, what it values, whom it serves, and the direction it seeks to pursue. It provides a common purpose that guides employees and organizational activities.

i. Purpose or reason for existence

This explains the main reason an organization was established and the activities it undertakes. Rajasekar (2015) notes that it defines the organization's primary purpose, while Williams (2020) argues that understanding this purpose helps employees remain connected to organizational goals.

ii. Core values and beliefs

Mission statements communicate the principles that guide organizational behaviour, such as honesty, innovation, and teamwork. Verma and Sharma (2022) emphasize that these values strengthen organizational culture, while Desmidt (2016) notes that shared values promote ethical behaviour and cooperation.

iii. Target audience or beneficiaries

A mission statement identifies the major groups the organization serves, including customers, clients, and communities. Bakar and Mahmood (2019) state that this clarity strengthens market positioning and

relationships, while O'Connell and Russell (2017) maintain that it helps organizations focus resources on stakeholder needs.

iv. Distinctive competencies

This refers to the unique strengths that differentiate an organization from competitors. Baetz and Bart (2018) emphasize that highlighting these strengths communicates competitive advantage, while Munoz and Kumar (2021) consider them important for maintaining competitiveness.

v. Desired future or visionary goals

Mission statements may also indicate the organization's future aspirations. Kumar and Sharma (2023) explain that this encourages innovation and preparedness, while Lockwood (2020) notes that connecting employees' activities to broader goals can increase motivation and commitment.

Roles of mission statement in organizations

Mission statements provide direction and help organizations remain focused on their purpose. Bartkus, Glassman, and McAfee (2016) describe them as strategic guides for organizational decision-making. They also promote unity and teamwork by creating a shared understanding of organizational goals (Obi-Anike and Ekwe, 2020; Mingchien and Ping, 2019). Furthermore, mission statements guide long-term planning, growth, competition, and innovation (Adetunji and Owoeye, 2021; Ozdem, 2015). Externally, they communicate organizational values to customers, investors, and other stakeholders, thereby strengthening trust and relationships (Bartkus *et al.*, 2016; David and David, 2017). A clearly understood mission can also improve employees' job satisfaction, performance, and sense of purpose (Obi-Anike and Ekwe, 2020; Mingchien and Ping, 2019).

Challenges associated with mission statement implementation

Despite their importance, mission statements may be difficult to implement effectively. Organizations sometimes treat them as formal documents rather than strategic tools, reducing their influence on daily operations (Bartkus *et al.*, 2016; David and David, 2017). Poor communication and limited employee understanding can also prevent workers from aligning their responsibilities with organizational goals (Obi-Anike and Ekwe, 2020; Mingchien and Ping, 2019). Lack of leadership commitment is another challenge, as leaders who fail to demonstrate and reinforce the mission may make employees regard it as irrelevant (Adetunji and Owoeye, 2021; Ozdem, 2015). In addition, differences between the stated mission and actual organizational practices can reduce credibility and stakeholder trust (Bartkus *et al.*, 2016; David and David, 2017). Vague, outdated, or poorly formulated mission statements may further limit their usefulness, making regular review, effective communication, and leadership support necessary (Obi-Anike and Ekwe, 2020; Mingchien and Ping, 2019).

Theoretical review

Organizational commitment theory

This study is anchored on Organizational Commitment Theory, developed by John Meyer and Natalie Allen in the early 1990s. The theory centers on the emotional bond employees feel toward their workplace: when people genuinely identify with their organization and believe in what it represents, they are more likely to remain committed, care about their work, and put in extra effort. Applied to this study, this suggests that when the College's mission statement resonates with employees and they feel part of it, it can foster stronger loyalty and better performance.

Empirical review

Muhamma, Hasan, Iffat Chaudhry, and Muhammad (2020) examined the effect of mission statements on organizational performance in Pakistan's banking, telecommunications, and pharmaceutical sectors using 542 respondents. Their findings showed a strong positive relationship, with mission-related factors explaining about 74–79% of organizational performance. They concluded that a clear mission helps employees focus their efforts and improves performance. Bonn, Caren, and Zachary (2018) investigated mission and vision in 17 private universities in Kenya using 136 respondents. The study found that mission and vision significantly influenced organizational performance, explaining 63.3% of its variation ($R^2 = .633$, $p < .05$). The authors concluded that clear organizational direction contributes significantly to improved performance. Similarly, Hailemariam and Admasu (2017) examined mission statements and employee performance among financial institutions in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, using 150 respondents. Unlike the previous studies, they found no significant relationship between mission

statements and employee productivity or engagement. They suggested that poor communication and weak implementation of mission statements may explain the finding.

Methodology

Research design

This study employed a survey research design, this enabled the researcher to thoroughly examine pertinent factors and ensuring that the results were not biased. The aim was to uncover the relationship between mission statement and employee performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora.

Model specification

The model specification for the study is outlined in this section. Multiple regression model were employed to assess how mission statement impacts employees' performance in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The model details are provided below:

$EMP_P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CNT_A + \beta_2 CNT_R + \beta_3 CLG + \mu t$…….. (i)

Where: EMP_P = Employee Performance CNT_A = Content Awareness

CNT_R = Content Relevance

CLG = Challenges

β_O to β_2= Coefficient

μt = the parameter which represents the intercept

β = The regression parameters are to be used in determining the significance of the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Population, sample size and technique

The population consists of the total number of employees in the designated area. Information obtained from the Bursary Department of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora as of April 23rd, 2025, indicates that there are an estimated five hundred and forty five (545) employees. The study utilized stratified sampling technique. Thus, the employees were grouped into teaching and non-teaching staff. Moreso, the study adopted Taro Yamni formular (1967) formula: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ to determine the appropriate sample size. Thus, the sample size of the study is 231.

Method of data collection and analysis

Primary data which is the questionnaire was adopted to get information from participants. After fieldwork was finished, a standardized scale was established for the questionnaires, which were then coded and examined in the chapter that followed. To evaluate the given hypotheses that established the association between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs, regression Analysis was used to analyse the data acquired from the field.

Data analysis and results

Objective 1: To ascertain the effect of awareness of the content of mission statement and employee productivity

Hypothesis H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between awareness of the content of mission statement and employee productivity

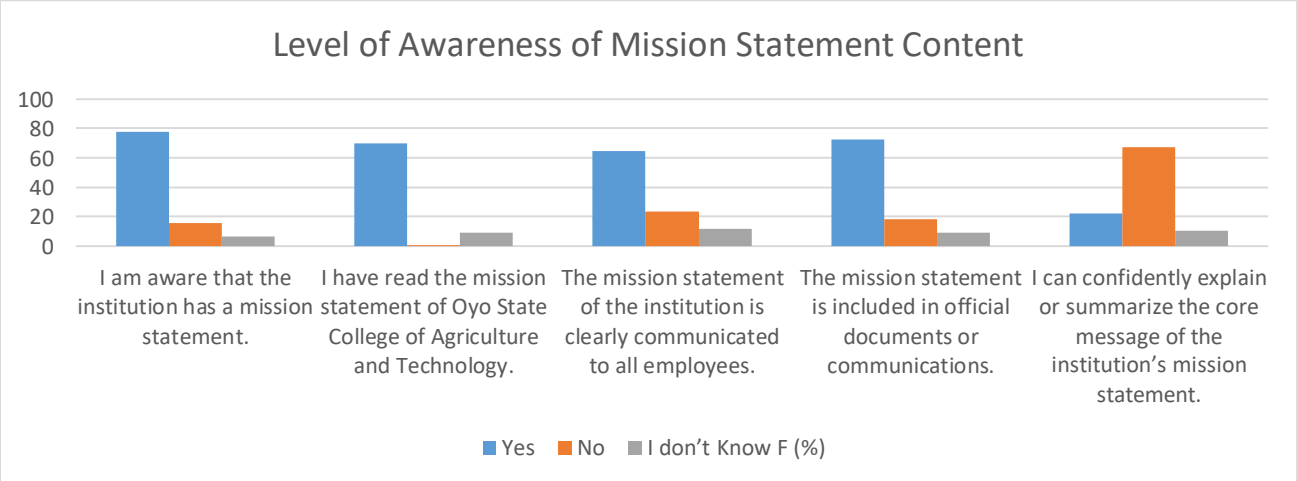


Table 1: Model of effect of awareness of the content of mission statement and employee productivity

Model of significant relationship between awareness of the content of mission statement and employee productivity

Model	Unstandzed Coefnt B	Std. Eror	Standard Coefnt Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	8.705	1.434		6.071	.000
Content Awareness	.041	.011	.453	3.665	.001

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 1 presents the regression analysis examining the effect of awareness of the content of the mission statement on employee productivity. The model reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between content awareness and employee productivity, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.453, indicating a moderate positive effect. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.041) suggests that for every unit increase in awareness of the mission statement's content, employee productivity increases by 0.041 units. The t-value of 3.665 and the p-value of 0.001 confirm the significance of this relationship at the 1% level, implying that awareness of the mission statement meaningfully contributes to enhanced employee productivity. The constant value (8.705) represents the baseline level of employee productivity when awareness is zero.

Objective two: To determine the perception of employees on the relevance of mission statement to their work output

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between perception of employee on the relevance of mission statement and work output

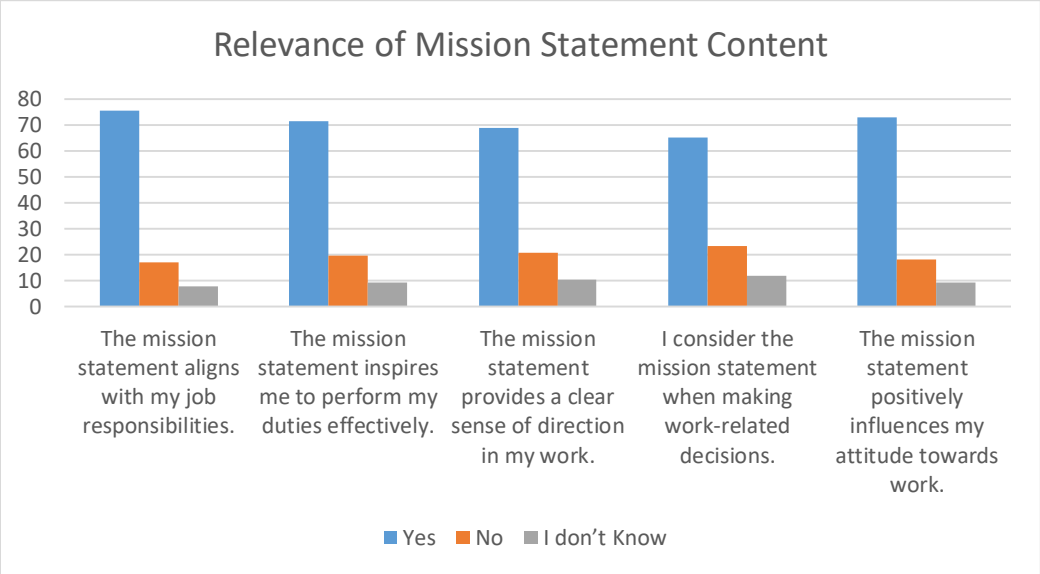


Table2: Model of perception of employees on the relevance of mission statement to their work output

Model of significant relationship between perception of employee on the relevance of mission statement and work output.

Model	Unstandzed Coefnt B	Std. Eror	Standard Coefnt Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	10.802	1.311		8.231	.000
Content Relevance	.102	.041	.315	2.405	.019

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 2 presents the regression analysis examining the relationship between employees' perception of the relevance of the mission statement and their work output. The results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship, as shown by a standardized beta coefficient of 0.315. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.102) suggests that for every unit increase in perceived relevance of the mission statement, work output increases by 0.102 units. The t-value of 2.405 and the p-value of 0.019 indicate that this relationship is significant at the 5% level. The constant value of 10.802 represents the predicted level of work output when perceived relevance is zero.

Objective three: To determine factors affecting the efficiency of mission statement on employee's performances

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between factors affecting the efficiency of mission statement and employee's performance.

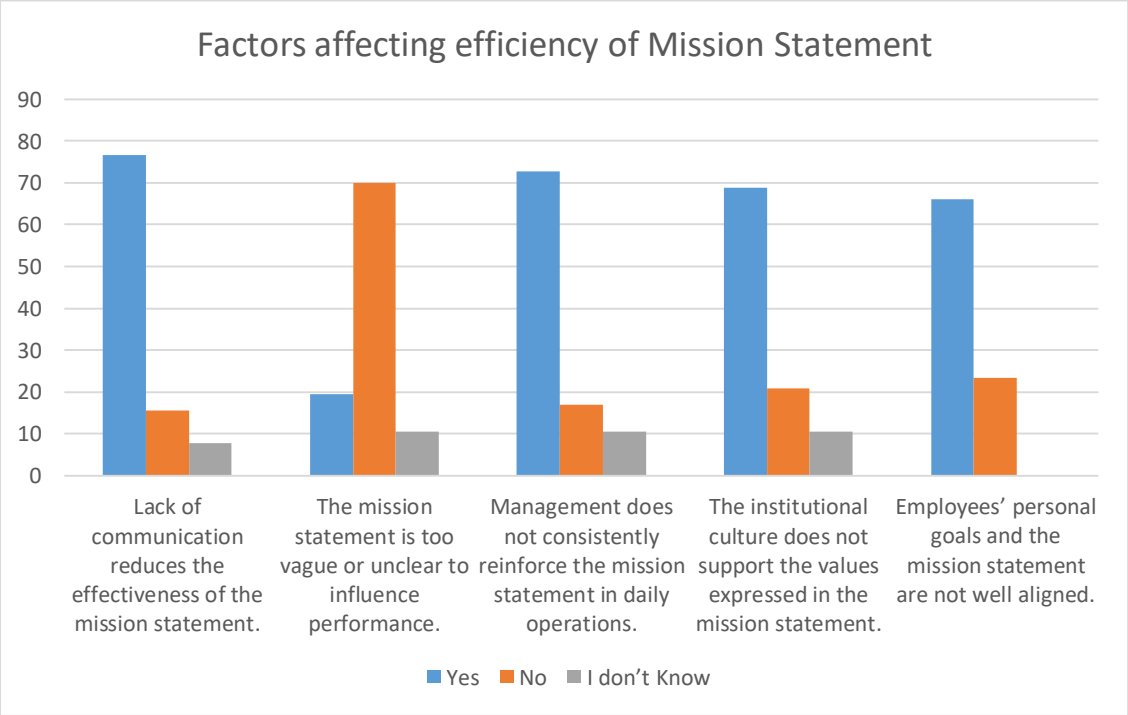


Table 3: Model of factors affecting the efficiency of mission statement on employee's performances

Model of relationship between factors affecting the efficiency of mission statement and employee's performance.

	Unstandzed Coefnt		Stand Coefnt	t	Sig Model
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	11.564	.948	-	12.192	.000
Challenges	.068	0.045	0.221	1.511	.010

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of factors affecting the efficiency of the mission statement on employee performance, focusing on challenges as the key factor. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.068) indicates that for every unit increase in the effective handling of challenges, employee performance increases by 0.068 units. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.221 suggests a modest positive effect. The t-value of 1.511 and the p-value of 0.010 indicate a statistically significant

relationship at the 1% level. The constant value of 11.564 represents the baseline employee performance when challenges are not addressed.

Discussion

This research examined how the mission statement affects employee performance at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The first finding showed a positive link between employees' awareness of the mission statement and their productivity. The more employees understood the mission, the better they performed. This supports earlier studies like Dobrinić and Fabac (2021), who found that knowing the mission boosts job satisfaction and commitment; Suh, Houston, Barney and Kwon (2011), who showed mission fulfillment improves engagement and identification with the organization; and Az-Zaakiyyah, Ausat and Suherlan (2024), who highlighted that a clear mission creates an inspiring culture that motivates employees to do their best.

The second finding revealed that when employees see the mission statement as relevant to their roles, their work output improves. This aligns with research by Desmidt (2016), who linked clear, meaningful mission statements to employee engagement; Toh and Koon (2022), who emphasized management's role in helping employees understand the mission for better performance; and Wadhwa and Parimoo (2016), who found that well-communicated vision and mission statements enhance overall organizational results. Finally, the study showed that overcoming challenges related to mission statement implementation positively affects employee performance. This agrees with Bart and Baetz (1998), Ireland and Hitt (1992), and Balogun and Hailey (2044), who all stressed that managing difficulties like unclear communication and employee resistance is key to making mission statements effective and boosting employee commitment and productivity.

Conclusion

The study ascertained the impact of the mission statement on employee performance using Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora as a case study. Based on the findings and testing of hypotheses, the study established that there is a positive correlation between the mission statement and employee performance in the institution. This finding aligns with existing literature that underscores the importance of mission statements in enhancing employee outcomes. For example, Bart and Baetz (1998) demonstrated a significant link between well-communicated mission statements and improved organizational performance. Similarly, Desmidt (2016) found that clear and meaningful mission statements positively affect employee engagement and productivity. Dobrinić and Fabac, (2021) highlighted that familiarity with the mission and vision leads to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which enhances performance. Additionally, Wadhwa and Parimoo (2016) emphasized that the content and communication of mission statements significantly influence employee effectiveness and overall organizational success. These studies collectively confirm that mission statements play a crucial role in driving employee performance across various organizational contexts.

Recommendations

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

i. The College should strengthen how it communicates the mission statement to all staff. This can be done through regular reminders in staff meetings, bulletin boards, internal emails, and onboarding sessions. When employees frequently encounter and reflect on the mission, they are more likely to understand and internalize it.
ii. The mission statement should be clearly linked to employees' daily responsibilities and performance evaluations. Head of Departments and Dean of Faculties should set department goals that reflect the mission and assess staff performance based on how well they contribute to these goals. This alignment helps employees see the practical relevance of the mission in their work.
iii. Staff should be given the opportunity to participate in periodic reviews or updates of the mission statement. This inclusion fosters a sense of ownership and encourages employees to take the mission more seriously. When employees feel that their input matters, they are more likely to align their efforts with the institution's vision.

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DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF DANGOTE CEMENT PLANT, IBESE, OGUN STATE

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of diversity management on organizational performance at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State, Nigeria, grounded in social identity theory. Using a survey design, 228 questionnaires were administered to a stratified random sample drawn from a population of 450 employees, of which 220 were correctly completed and returned, representing a 96.5% response rate that formed the basis for analysis. Findings show that workforce diversity ($\beta = 0.341$, $R^2 = 0.572$), inclusion practices ($\beta = 0.357$, $R^2 = 0.594$), and diversity awareness and training ($\beta = 0.329$, $R^2 = 0.561$) each significantly and positively predict employee productivity, commitment, and operational effectiveness respectively, with all predictors significant at $p < 0.05$. Overall, diversity management practices jointly explain 61.8% of the variation in organizational performance ($\beta = 0.372$, $R^2 = 0.618$), with inclusion practices emerging as the strongest individual predictor. The study concludes that diversity management is a key strategic determinant of performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms and recommends that Dangote Cement Plant institutionalize structured diversity frameworks, strengthen inclusion and promotion transparency, and expand diversity training uniformly across employee levels.

Keywords: *Diversity management, workforce diversity, inclusion practices, diversity awareness and training, organizational performance*.

Introduction

Diversity management has emerged as a vital strategic construct in organizational management, referring to an organization's deliberate approach to recognizing, valuing, and managing employee differences to enhance individual and organizational outcomes (Roberson, 2019). It represents the policies and managerial actions that promote inclusion, fairness, and mutual respect, transforming workforce heterogeneity into measurable performance gains (Shen *et al.*, 2009). This capability is increasingly vital in complex, multicultural environments (Guillaume *et al.*, 2017), particularly in emerging economies marked by ethnic plurality, regional differences, and evolving employment expectations (Okatta *et al.*, 2024). Organizations that excel in inclusion, diversity awareness, and equitable management demonstrate improved productivity, stronger commitment, and enhanced operational effectiveness (Herring, 2009; Ekejiuba *et al.*, 2023). Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that individuals derive self-esteem from the social groups to which they belong, making inclusive environments critical for positive identification, cooperation, and performance. Firms in the top quartile for gender and ethnic diversity are significantly more likely to outperform industry peers financially and operationally (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Nigeria's manufacturing sector offers a compelling context for examining diversity management's impact on performance. Manufacturing contributes significantly to employment and industrial development, yet firms continue to face performance challenges linked to poor coordination, low morale, and inadequate management of workforce differences (Adeleye *et al.*, 2019). This study focuses on three dimensions of diversity management: workforce diversity, referring to demographic and socio-cultural differences among employees (Roberson, 2019); inclusion practices, encompassing equal opportunity, fairness, and participation (Shen et al., 2009); and diversity awareness and training, involving structured programmes that reduce bias and enhance cross-cultural collaboration (Guillaume *et al.*, 2017). These dimensions directly impact employee productivity, commitment, and operational effectiveness.

Despite growing recognition in management literature, research on the link between diversity management dimensions and organizational performance indicators remains fragmented, especially in

large-scale Nigerian manufacturing contexts. Many organizations rely on informal managerial discretion rather than structured inclusion policies, fostering perceptions of inequality and exclusion (Adeleye *et al.*, 2019); existing Nigerian studies concentrate mainly on service-oriented organizations and public institutions, leaving manufacturing firms underexplored (George et al., 2020); and plant-specific empirical evidence on diversity outcomes remains scarce (Etalong *et al.*, 2024). Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State, Africa's largest cement producer, employs a highly diverse workforce drawn from different regions of Nigeria, yet no empirical research has examined how its diversity management practices affect employee productivity, commitment, and operational effectiveness. This study therefore examined diversity management and organizational performance at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State, Nigeria. Its specific objectives were to: (i) examine the effect of workforce diversity on employee productivity; (ii) assess the influence of inclusion practices on employee commitment; (iii) evaluate the effect of diversity awareness and training on operational effectiveness; and (iv) determine the relationship between overall diversity management practices and organizational performance at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese.

Literature Review

Diversity management represents the deliberate organizational effort to recognize, respect, and leverage employee differences in gender, age, ethnicity, education, and culture to enhance workplace harmony and performance (Shen *et al.*, 2009; Roberson, 2019). Workforce diversity refers to the demographic and socio-cultural differences that shape workplace interactions and contributions (Guillaume *et al.*, 2017), and has become a defining feature of modern organizations due to globalization, labour mobility, and inclusive employment policies (Roberson, 2019). Employee productivity reflects the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees perform tasks relative to the time, effort, and resources invested (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016); in manufacturing, diversity introduces varied skills and problem-solving approaches that enhance efficiency when effectively managed (Herring, 2009).

Inclusion practices are organizational policies that ensure equal opportunity, fair treatment, participation, and belonging for all employees regardless of demographic differences (Roberson, 2019), reducing perceptions of bias and strengthening trust and discretionary effort (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Inclusion influences commitment through reduced perceptions of inequality, participatory decision-making, inclusive leadership, and fair treatment mechanisms that reinforce loyalty and reduce turnover intentions (Guillaume *et al.*, 2017). Diversity awareness and training involve formal programmes, workshops, seminars, and mentoring, designed to reduce bias and improve cross-cultural collaboration (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Operational effectiveness refers to how well an organization coordinates activities and utilizes resources to achieve its objectives (Porter, 1996), while competitive advantage denotes the attributes enabling firms to outperform peers through superior productivity, commitment, and efficiency (Barney, 1991). Collectively, workforce diversity introduces complementary skills, inclusion practices ensure equitable contribution, and diversity training reduces friction while enhancing collaboration, creating a comprehensive performance advantage (Okatta *et al.*, 2024).

This study is grounded in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; extended by Hogg & Terry, 2000), which holds that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on characteristics such as gender, age, and ethnicity, and that these categorizations shape workplace interactions, commitment, and performance. The theory's three processes align with the study's dimensions: social categorization corresponds to workforce diversity, the observable demographic differences shaping group identities; social identification relates to inclusion practices, whose policies of belonging and participation strengthen employees' positive identification with the organization; and social comparison corresponds to diversity awareness and training, which reduce intergroup bias and negative comparison, fostering cooperation and effectiveness (Okatta *et al.*, 2024). The theory explains how manufacturing firms such as Dangote Cement can achieve stronger performance in a diverse workforce through inclusion practices that reduce out-group formation, training that minimizes bias, and equitable management that promotes affective commitment (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Diversity management is also framed as a strategic human resource capability within the Resource-Based View, enabling firms to treat workforce heterogeneity as a valuable, rare, and inimitable resource for sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991), being path-dependent, socially complex, and

difficult for competitors to replicate (Wright *et al.*, 2001). The Knowledge-Based View further explains diversity training as knowledge-dependent, requiring continuous organizational learning and bias reduction (Roberson, 2019), while Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component commitment model explains how inclusion practices translate fair treatment into affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Empirically, Herring (2009) found that racial and gender diversity positively influenced productivity and problem-solving in U.S. firms, while Guillaume et al. (2017) showed that diverse teams exhibit higher creativity and innovation. In Nigeria, Etalong *et al.* (2024) confirmed that workforce diversity significantly improved employee responsiveness in public organizations. On inclusion, Shore et al. (2011) found that equal-opportunity and participatory policies enhanced affective commitment, Ekejiuba *et al.* (2023) established similar effects in Nigerian regulatory agencies, and Okatta *et al.* (2024) confirmed via meta-analysis that inclusion initiatives improve engagement and commitment. On training, Souza (2024) found diversity training enhanced collaboration in Brazil, and Ngalo et al. (2023) found diversity initiatives improved performance and efficiency in Nigerian banks. Despite this evidence, most Nigerian studies focus on service or public institutions, concentrate on Lagos and Rivers State, and lack plant-specific evidence, gaps this study addresses by examining Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State.

Methodology

This study was conducted at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State, Nigeria, with a population of 450 full-time employees across production, engineering, administration, quality control, and human resources departments. Anchored in social identity theory and the resource-based view, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. Using Cochran's (1977) formula with a finite population correction and a 10% contingency buffer for non-response, 228 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling and administered structured questionnaires. Of these, 220 questionnaires were correctly completed and returned, representing a 96.5% response rate, and formed the basis for analysis. The questionnaire measured workforce diversity, inclusion practices, diversity awareness and training, and organizational performance indicators, employee productivity, commitment, and operational effectiveness, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). A pilot study of 30 employees from a comparable manufacturing organization confirmed instrument reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 for all constructs. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, consistent with recent methodological approaches in the diversity-performance literature (Okatta *et al.*, 2024; Etalong *et al.*, 2024).

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 220)

Variable	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	137	62.3
	Female	83	37.7
	Total	**220**	**100.0**
Age	18-25 years	29	13.2
	26-35 years	83	37.7
	36-45 years	71	32.3
	46 years and above	37	16.8

	Total	**220**	**100.0**
Educational Qualification	SSCE	17	7.7
	OND/NCE	41	18.6
	HND/B.Sc	109	49.5
	Postgraduate	53	24.1
	Total	**220**	**100.0**
Years of Service	Less than 1 year	19	8.6
	1-5 years	97	44.1
	6-10 years	43	19.5
	Above 10 years	61	27.7
	Total	**220**	**100.0**
Department	Production	89	40.5
	Technical	47	21.4
	Administrative	53	24.1
	Management	31	14.1
	Total	**220**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Of the 228 questionnaires administered, 220 were correctly completed and returned, giving a response rate of 96.5%, and these formed the sample used for analysis. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic distribution of the 220 respondents. Of these, 137 (62.3%) were male and 83 (37.7%) were female, reflecting the male-dominated composition typical of large manufacturing organizations, while the substantial female representation strengthens the study's representativeness in relation to diversity management practices at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese. By age, 83 (37.7%) of respondents were aged 26-35 years, 71 (32.3%) were 36-45 years, 37 (16.8%) were 46 years and above, and 29 (13.2%) were 18-25 years, indicating that most respondents fell within economically active age groups likely to provide informed assessments of diversity management outcomes. Educationally, 109 (49.5%) held HND/B.Sc qualifications, 53 (24.1%) held postgraduate qualifications, 41 (18.6%) held OND/NCE, and 17 (7.7%) held SSCE, suggesting a well-educated sample capable of understanding issues relating to workforce diversity, inclusion, and training. By department, 89 (40.5%) of respondents were from production, 53 (24.1%) from administration, 47 (21.4%) from technical roles, and 31 (14.1%) from management, reflecting the manufacturing core of the plant while ensuring cross-functional representation. On years of service, consistent with Table 1, 19 (8.6%) had served less than one year, 97 (44.1%) had served 1-5 years, 43 (19.5%) had served 6-10 years, and 61 (27.7%) had served above 10 years, indicating that most respondents had sufficient organizational tenure to provide experience-based assessments of how diversity management practices influence performance at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese.

Test of Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression to ascertain the effect of each independent variable on its corresponding dependent variable.

Hypothesis One (Ho1): Workforce diversity has no significant effect on employee productivity at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State.

Table 2: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Workforce Diversity on Employee Productivity

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.362	0.151	9.023	0.000
Workforce Diversity	0.341	0.068	5.015	0.000

R^2: 0.572 Adjusted R^2: 0.568 R: 0.756 F-statistics: 92.317 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 2 shows that workforce diversity significantly and positively affects employee productivity (β = 0.341, $p < 0.01$). The strong correlation (R = 0.756) and R^2 of 0.572 indicate that workforce diversity explains 57.2% of the variation in productivity, with the model overall significant (F = 92.317); the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms that workforce diversity, encompassing ethnic, age, gender, and educational differences, predicts improved productivity when effectively managed, as diverse teams enhance problem-solving and output quality, corroborating Nwafor and Mbazuigwe (2024) and Etalong *et al.* (2024).

Hypothesis Two (Ho2): Inclusion practices have no significant influence on employee commitment at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State.

Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Influence of Inclusion Practices on Employee Commitment

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.418	0.147	9.646	0.000
Inclusion Practices	0.357	0.064	5.578	0.000

R^2: 0.594 Adjusted R^2: 0.590 R: 0.771 F-statistics: 101.284 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 3 shows that inclusion practices significantly and positively influence employee commitment (β = 0.357, $p < 0.01$). With R = 0.771 and R^2 = 0.594, inclusion practices explain 59.4% of the variation in commitment (F = 101.284); the null hypothesis is rejected. Fairness, equal opportunity, participation, and respect substantially strengthen employees' emotional attachment and willingness to contribute, aligning with Okatta *et al.* (2024) and Sathyanarayana *et al.* (2024).

Hypothesis Three (Ho3): Diversity awareness and training have no significant effect on operational effectiveness at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State.

Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Diversity Awareness and Training on Operational Effectiveness

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.336	0.152	8.789	0.000
Diversity Awareness and Training	0.329	0.066	4.985	0.000

R^2: 0.561 Adjusted R^2: 0.557 R: 0.749 F-statistics: 88.763 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Operational Effectiveness | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 4 shows that diversity awareness and training significantly and positively improve operational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.329$, $p < 0.01$). With $R = 0.749$ and $R^2 = 0.561$, this dimension explains 56.1% of the variation in operational effectiveness ($F = 88.763$); the null hypothesis is rejected. Structured awareness and training programmes meaningfully enhance teamwork, communication, workflow coordination, and conflict reduction, consistent with Ngalo *et al.* (2023) and Sathyanarayana *et al.* (2024).

Hypothesis Four (Ho4): There is no significant relationship between overall diversity management practices and organizational performance at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State.

Table 5: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Relationship between Diversity Management Practices and Organizational Performance

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.289	0.149	8.654	0.000
Diversity Management	0.372	0.061	6.098	0.000

R^2: 0.618 Adjusted R^2: 0.615 R: 0.786 F-statistics: 112.436 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 5 shows that overall diversity management practices significantly and positively relate to organizational performance ($\beta = 0.372$, $p < 0.001$). With $R = 0.786$ and $R^2 = 0.618$, the strongest explanatory power among the four models, diversity management explains 61.8% of the variation in performance ($F = 112.436$); the null hypothesis is rejected. Workforce diversity, inclusion practices, and diversity awareness and training collectively enhance productivity, commitment, and operational effectiveness, corroborating Okatta *et al.* (2024) and Nwafor and Mbazuigwe (2024).

The findings affirm the study's grounding in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Terry, 2000). The significant effect of workforce diversity on productivity supports the theory's social categorization process: when demographic differences are effectively managed rather than left to drive division, employees' varied identities become complementary sources of skill and perspective rather than sources of conflict. The strong link between inclusion practices and commitment reflects social identification, fair treatment and participatory policies enable employees to identify positively with Dangote Cement Plant as an in-group, strengthening affective attachment and reducing turnover intentions. Similarly, the positive effect of diversity awareness and training on operational effectiveness illustrates the theory's social comparison mechanism, whereby structured training reduces negative intergroup comparison and bias, enabling smoother coordination across diverse teams. Together, these results demonstrate that social identity processes, categorization, identification, and comparison, are the mechanisms through which diversity management translates into measurable organizational

performance at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, validating the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

Conclusion

This study assessed how workforce diversity, inclusion practices, and diversity awareness and training affect employee productivity, commitment, and operational effectiveness among 220 respondents at Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese, Ogun State. All three dimensions showed significant positive effects, with overall diversity management exhibiting the strongest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.618$), followed by inclusion practices ($R^2 = 0.594$), workforce diversity ($R^2 = 0.572$), and diversity awareness and training ($R^2 = 0.561$), findings consistent with Okatta et al. (2024) and Nwafor and Mbazuigwe (2024). However, gaps in inclusion consistency and uniform training access limit full benefit realization, corroborating Sathyanarayana *et al.* (2024). Consistent with social identity theory, the results confirm that managing demographic categorization, strengthening identification through inclusion, and reducing bias through training jointly drive organizational performance.

The study recommends that Dangote Cement Plant, Ibese institutionalize structured diversity frameworks with measurable inclusion targets (Roberson, 2019); strengthen promotion and reward transparency to eliminate perceived inequities (Okatta *et al.*, 2024); standardize diversity training across all employee levels (Sathyanarayana *et al.*, 2024); leverage workforce diversity as a strategic innovation tool through cross-functional collaboration (Nwafor & Mbazuigwe, 2024); and adopt data-driven evaluation of diversity outcomes through regular employee surveys (Amadi *et al.*, 2024). Future research should pursue multi-firm comparative studies across Nigerian manufacturing regions, mixed-methods investigations of lived diversity experiences, longitudinal studies establishing causal diversity-performance relationships, and gender-differentiated analyses of diversity management effectiveness in manufacturing environments.

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TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of talent management strategies on employee retention at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, underpinned by social exchange theory. A descriptive survey design was adopted with a population of 545 employees; using Yamane's (1967) formula, 231 respondents were selected through multi-stage stratified random sampling, of which 220 valid responses were retrieved and analysed, representing a 95.2% response rate. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that recruitment and selection ($\beta = 0.341$, $R^2 = 0.512$), training and development ($\beta = 0.356$, $R^2 = 0.536$), career development ($\beta = 0.318$, $R^2 = 0.498$), and performance management ($\beta = 0.372$, $R^2 = 0.559$) each significantly and positively influence employee retention, at $p < 0.05$. The study concludes that talent management is a vital determinant of employee retention at OYSCATECH and recommends that the institution strengthen merit-based recruitment, expand training access, establish transparent promotion systems, and institutionalize fair performance appraisal to sustain workforce stability.

Keywords: *Talent management; employee retention; recruitment and selection; training and development; career development; performance management.*

Introduction

Human capital remains one of the most vital drivers of organizational success in the modern global economy, with effective talent management strategies directly influencing productivity, innovation, and institutional sustainability (Tan et al., 2024). Amid increasing global competition, organizations increasingly view talent management not merely as an administrative function but as a strategic imperative to attract, develop, and retain high-potential employees (Collings et al., 2019). Talent management is a strategic approach to attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining employees to meet organizational needs, encompassing recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and career advancement aimed at aligning employee capabilities with organizational goals (Tan et al., 2024). Organizations that implement comprehensive talent management systems benefit from increased commitment, higher job satisfaction, and sustained competitive advantage (Kossyva et al., 2024). This capability is particularly vital in knowledge-intensive sectors like education, where intellectual capital drives service quality and institutional reputation (Tantua, 2023).

Amid economic pressures and rapid technological change, retaining skilled employees has become increasingly difficult, with institutions across sectors facing talent shortages, rising turnover intentions, and a more mobile labour force (Akanmu et al., 2025), elevating employee retention to the forefront of human resource strategies worldwide. Retention refers to organizational efforts to ensure employees remain within the institution long enough to contribute meaningfully to its mission (Hom et al., 2017), fostering a work environment where employees feel valued and aligned with organizational values, thereby reducing turnover intention and strengthening commitment (Kossyva et al., 2024). One central foundation linking talent management and retention is social exchange theory, which postulates that employees reciprocate favourable organizational treatment with loyalty, commitment, and reduced intention to quit (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005); when institutions invest in training, career pathways, and equitable performance evaluations, employees perceive this as organizational support warranting reciprocal commitment (Setyaningrum et al., 2024). This study focuses on four core talent management dimensions: recruitment and selection, referring to merit-based processes for attracting and appointing

qualified candidates (Armstrong, 2020); training and development, involving structured skill-enhancement initiatives (Noe, 2020); career development, encompassing promotion policies and succession planning (De Vos et al., 2020); and performance management, referring to systematic appraisal, feedback, and recognition processes (Aguinis, 2019).

Despite extensive global research, the practical implications of talent management vary significantly across contexts, especially between developed and developing economies. In Sub-Saharan Africa, and Nigeria particularly, retention of skilled personnel has become a serious institutional concern, with public institutions struggling with high turnover, brain drain, and diminished stability (Akanmu et al., 2025). Nigerian public tertiary institutions face structural limitations including bureaucratic procedures, limited financial incentives, and rigid promotion systems that constrain dynamic talent development (Tantua, 2023). Compounding challenges include irregular performance appraisals and unclear promotion pathways prompting employees to seek alternative employment (Amaugo, 2024); limited professional development opportunities reducing perceived organizational support (Kossyva et al., 2024); and most existing studies concentrating on private organizations and federal universities, leaving state-owned colleges underexplored, with limited research integrating all four talent management components into a unified model. As a state-owned institution operating under budget constraints and evolving HR policies, OYSCATECH, Igboora faces persistent staff turnover that undermines institutional continuity, disrupts academic delivery, and increases recruitment costs. The absence of empirical research in this context creates an important knowledge gap. This study therefore examined talent management strategy and employee retention at OYSCATECH, Igboora, Oyo State, with objectives to: (i) assess the effect of recruitment and selection on employee retention; (ii) evaluate the influence of training and development on employee retention; (iii) examine the impact of career development opportunities on employee retention; and (iv) determine the relationship between performance management systems and employee retention at OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Literature review

Talent management is a strategic approach to attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining employees to meet present and future organizational needs, integrating HR processes to ensure the right people occupy the right roles at the right time (Tan et al., 2024; Collings et al., 2019). Recruitment and selection refer to the systematic processes through which organizations attract, identify, and appoint qualified candidates based on merit, competence, and person-organization fit (Armstrong, 2020). Kim and Park (2021) note that merit-based recruitment systems emphasizing transparency and fairness enhance organizational commitment and reduce turnover intention by strengthening employees' initial trust in management. Employee retention refers to an organization's ability to maintain its employees over a sustained period, reflected through turnover intention, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Hom et al., 2017); in knowledge-intensive tertiary institutions, retention directly determines academic quality, research output, and operational continuity. Training and development encompass structured initiatives to improve employees' knowledge, skills, and professional competencies; employees who receive developmental support perceive enhanced career prospects and reciprocate with stronger institutional loyalty (Noe, 2020). The conceptual link between training and retention operates through perceived organizational investment enhancing affective commitment, skill development improving performance and satisfaction, growth opportunities reducing motivation to seek external employment, and mentoring strengthening institutional identification (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). Career development refers to structured activities supporting long-term professional growth, including promotion policies, succession planning, and transparent advancement criteria aligning individual aspirations with institutional objectives (De Vos et al., 2020; Greenhaus et al., 2019). Performance management refers to continuous processes of setting expectations, monitoring output, providing feedback, and recognizing achievements to align individual contributions with organizational goals (Aguinis, 2019). Collectively, recruitment establishes fairness, training signals support, career development sustains growth expectations, and performance management reinforces recognition, creating a comprehensive institutional retention environment (Collings et al., 2019; Kossyva et al., 2024).

Social exchange theory, developed by Blau (1964) and extended by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), provides the foundational framework for this study, positing that employees reciprocate favourable

organizational treatment, manifested through talent management investments, with loyalty, commitment, and reduced turnover intention, emphasizing that organizational behaviour results from an exchange process where perceived support warrants reciprocal commitment (Setyaningrum et al., 2024). The theory's dimensions align with this study's talent management components: the reciprocity principle corresponds to training and development, whereby institutional investment in employee growth is met with stronger affective commitment; perceived organizational support relates to recruitment fairness and performance recognition; and relational exchange corresponds to career development (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Kossyva et al., 2024). Social exchange theory thus explains how talent management practices translate into retention outcomes through the psychological mechanisms of fairness, support, and reciprocal obligation. Human capital theory, advanced by Becker (1964), provides supporting theoretical grounding, conceptualizing training and development as institutional investments in employees' knowledge, skills, and productive capacity that generate long-term organizational value, justifying strategic investment in recruitment quality, capacity building, career development, and performance systems as human capital assets that reduce replacement costs and sustain competitiveness (Tantua, 2023). While social exchange theory explains the psychological attachment mechanisms, human capital theory explains the economic logic underpinning strategic HR investment, together providing comprehensive theoretical coverage of the talent management-retention relationship. Herzberg's two-factor theory, though relevant to satisfaction-retention linkages, does not comprehensively capture the strategic HR systems perspective and therefore serves only as a peripheral reference here.

Empirical research consistently links recruitment practices with retention outcomes. Kim and Park (2021) found that transparent and merit-based recruitment significantly reduced employee turnover through enhanced organizational commitment in public sector organizations. Akanmu et al. (2025) demonstrated at OYSCATECH, Igboora that personnel retention strategies including structured recruitment are significantly correlated with reduced labour turnover, confirming that strategic HR interventions promote workforce stability even within public tertiary institutions. Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2018) found that employee development programmes significantly enhanced job satisfaction and commitment, reducing turnover intention, while Tantua (2023) found that capacity building and training significantly influence service quality and staff stability in Nigerian tertiary institutions, and Kossyva et al. (2024) showed that continuous learning opportunities keep employees competitive and foster belonging and loyalty. Career development also demonstrates significant relationships with retention: De Vos et al. (2020) found that perceived career growth significantly predicted job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention, with employees perceiving stagnation exhibiting higher mobility intentions. Performance management is similarly supported as a retention determinant: Aguinis (2019) established that continuous feedback and recognition enhance engagement and commitment, and Setyaningrum et al. (2024) confirmed that social exchange-informed practices including recognition strengthen loyalty and reduce turnover in emerging markets. Despite this evidence, most Nigerian studies concentrate on federal universities and banking institutions, leaving state-owned colleges underexplored, with limited research integrating all four talent management components into a unified model within Nigerian public tertiary colleges. The absence of comprehensive empirical investigation at OYSCATECH, Igboora creates the knowledge gap this study addresses.

Methodology

This study, examining talent management strategy and employee retention, was conducted at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. The population comprised 545 employees, including teaching and non-teaching staff across all faculties, departments, and administrative units. Anchored on social exchange theory and human capital theory, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. Using Yamane's (1967) formula for a population of 545 at a 5% margin of error, a sample of 231 respondents was determined and selected through multi-stage sampling — stratified by staff category, proportionately allocated across strata, and randomly selected within each stratum. This computed sample of 231 exceeds the 220 respondents ultimately used for analysis, confirming that the multi-stage stratified procedure did not itself reduce the sample below the desired analytical size; rather, the smaller analytic sample reflects normal survey non-response. Structured

questionnaires were administered to all 231 selected respondents, of which 220 were retrieved and found valid for analysis, representing a response rate of 95.2%. The questionnaire measured recruitment and selection, training and development, career development, and performance management as dimensions of talent management strategy, with employee retention assessed through turnover intention, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, all on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Scales for organizational commitment and job satisfaction were adapted from validated instruments by Meyer and Allen (1991) and Locke (1976) respectively. A pilot study of 30 employees from a comparable tertiary institution confirmed instrument reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.81 for recruitment and selection, 0.84 for training and development, 0.79 for career development, 0.83 for performance management, and 0.85 for employee retention, all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to test relationships between talent management dimensions and employee retention, consistent with recent methodological approaches in the literature (Akanmu et al., 2025; Kossyva et al., 2024).

Results and discussion

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 220)

Variable	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	127	57.7
	Female	93	42.3
	Total	220	100.0
Age	Below 25 years	13	5.9
	25-34 years	53	24.1
	35-44 years	61	27.7
	45-54 years	47	21.4
	55 years and above	46	20.9
	Total	220	100.0
Staff Category	Academic Staff	97	44.1
	Non-Academic Staff	123	55.9
	Total	220	100.0
Years of Service	1-5 years	59	26.8
	6-10 years	61	27.7
	11-15 years	43	19.5
	Above 15 years	57	25.9
	Total	220	100.0
Educational Qualification	ND/NCE	31	14.1
	HND/B.Sc	97	44.1
	M.Sc	59	26.8
	PhD	33	15.0
	Total	220	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the 220 respondents. Of these, 127 (57.7%) were male and 93 (42.3%) were female, indicating that male staff constituted the larger proportion, while a considerable female presence reflects a fairly inclusive workforce structure. The age distribution shows that 13 (5.9%) of respondents were below 25 years, 53 (24.1%) were within the 25-34 years bracket, 61 (27.7%) fell within 35-44 years, 47 (21.4%) were within 45-54 years, and 46 (20.9%) were 55 years and above, indicating that most respondents were within mature, professionally active age groups with sufficient institutional experience to assess talent management and retention at OYSCATECH. By staff category, 123 (55.9%) respondents were non-academic staff and 97 (44.1%) were academic staff, ensuring that the data reflect how talent management strategies affect both employee groups. On years of service, 61 (27.7%) had served 6-10 years, 59 (26.8%) had served 1-5 years, 57 (25.9%) had served above 15 years, and 43 (19.5%) had served 11-15 years, suggesting most respondents had spent sufficient time within the institution to understand its HR practices and retention conditions, with the substantial proportion of long-serving staff indicating that OYSCATECH has retained a reasonable number of employees over time. Educationally, 97 (44.1%) held HND/B.Sc qualifications, 59 (26.8%) held M.Sc degrees, 33 (15.0%) held PhD qualifications, and 31 (14.1%) held ND/NCE certificates, indicating a well-educated sample capable of meaningfully evaluating institutional practices relating to talent management and retention.

Test of Hypotheses

The formulated hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression to ascertain the effect of each independent variable on employee retention.

Hypothesis One (Ho1): Recruitment and selection practices have no significant effect on employee retention in OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Table 2: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Recruitment and Selection on Employee Retention

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.532	0.158	9.696	0.000
Recruitment and Selection	0.341	0.074	4.608	0.000

R^2: 0.512 Adjusted R^2: 0.507 R: 0.715 F-statistics: 82.436 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Employee Retention | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 2 shows that recruitment and selection practices significantly and positively affect employee retention at OYSCATECH, Igboora ($\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.01$). The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.715$) reflects a strong positive relationship, while $R^2 = 0.512$ indicates that recruitment and selection explain 51.2% of the variation in retention, with the model overall significant ($F = 82.436$); the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms that transparent, merit-based recruitment is a significant predictor of retention at OYSCATECH: when employees perceive a credible, unbiased recruitment process, they develop trust in the institution and remain committed to it, corroborating Kim and Park (2021), who found that transparent, merit-based recruitment significantly reduces turnover through enhanced organizational commitment.

Hypothesis Two (Ho2): Training and development have no significant influence on employee retention in OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Training and Development on Employee Retention

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.468	0.152	9.658	0.000
Training and Development	0.356	0.069	5.159	0.000

R^2: 0.536 Adjusted R^2: 0.531 R: 0.732 F-statistics: 88.914 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Employee Retention | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 3 shows that training and development significantly and positively influence employee retention at OYSCATECH, Igboora ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.01$). With $R = 0.732$ and $R^2 = 0.536$, training and development explain 53.6% of the variation in retention ($F = 88.914$); the null hypothesis is rejected. Training and development substantially strengthen employees' commitment, satisfaction, and intention to remain by signalling organizational investment in their professional growth, consistent with Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2018) and Tantua (2023).

Hypothesis Three (Ho3): Career development opportunities have no significant impact on employee retention in OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Career Development on Employee Retention

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.512	0.160	9.450	0.000
Career Development	0.318	0.073	4.356	0.000

R^2: 0.498 Adjusted R^2: 0.493 R: 0.706 F-statistics: 76.205 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Employee Retention | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 4 shows that career development opportunities significantly and positively impact employee retention at OYSCATECH, Igboora ($\beta = 0.318$, $p < 0.001$). With $R = 0.706$ and $R^2 = 0.498$, career development explains 49.8% of the variation in retention ($F = 76.205$); the null hypothesis is rejected. Structured career development meaningfully enhances employees' long-term institutional loyalty and reduces turnover intention, aligning with De Vos et al. (2020) and Akanmu et al. (2025), who confirmed at OYSCATECH that career advancement strategies correlate with reduced labour turnover.

Hypothesis Four (Ho4): There is no significant relationship between performance management systems and employee retention in OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Table 5: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Performance Management on Employee Retention

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.438	0.147	9.782	0.000
Performance Management	0.372	0.068	5.471	0.000

R^2: 0.559 Adjusted R^2: 0.555 R: 0.748 F-statistics: 92.618 N: 220 | Dependent Variable: Employee Retention | Source: SPSS computation 27.0

Table 5 shows that performance management systems significantly and positively influence employee retention at OYSCATECH, Igboora ($\beta = 0.372$, $p < 0.001$). With $R = 0.748$ and $R^2 = 0.559$, the strongest explanatory power among the four models, performance management explains 55.9% of the variation in retention ($F = 92.618$); the null hypothesis is rejected. Fair, transparent, and continuous performance management most substantially strengthens employees' motivation, commitment, and intention to remain, corroborating Aguinis (2019) and Setyaningrum et al. (2024).

Conclusion

This study assessed how talent management dimensions affect employee retention among 220 staff at OYSCATECH, Igboora. All four dimensions showed significant positive effects, with performance management exhibiting the strongest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.559$), followed by training and development ($R^2 = 0.536$), recruitment and selection ($R^2 = 0.512$), and career development ($R^2 = 0.498$). Coordinated talent management practices thus significantly improve employee commitment,

satisfaction, and retention at the institution. However, gaps in promotion consistency, uniform training access, and performance recognition limit full retention benefits, indicating that talent management effectiveness depends critically on perceived fairness and consistency of HR implementation.

In line with these findings, since performance management showed the strongest effect on retention, OYSCATECH should prioritize institutionalizing fair, transparent, and continuous performance appraisal systems built on regular feedback and recognition. As training and development was the second strongest predictor, the institution should expand equitable access to professional development programmes across both academic and non-academic staff. Given that recruitment and selection also significantly predicted retention, OYSCATECH should strengthen merit-based, transparent recruitment processes that build employee trust from the point of entry. Since career development recorded the weakest, though still significant, effect, the institution should establish clearer promotion policies and succession planning to close this gap and sustain long-term staff loyalty. Overall, an integrated talent management framework that aligns all four dimensions is recommended to unify and maximize retention outcomes at OYSCATECH. Future research should pursue comparative studies across Nigerian tertiary institutions, mixed-methods investigations of employees' lived HR experiences, longitudinal studies establishing causal retention relationships over time, and exploration of digital HR practices as emerging retention tools in Nigerian public institutions.

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AWARENESS AND USAGE OF USSD CODE IN REPORTAGE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG PEOPLE OF OSHODI-ISOLO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE

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Abstract
*Domestic violence remains a pervasive social problem in Nigeria, with many cases going unreported. Lagos State introduced a USSD code (*6820#) through its Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) to encourage ease, discreet, and internet-free reporting. This study evaluated the awareness of this USSD code and its usage in reporting domestic violence among residents of Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State. Using survey design, with the study population of 931,300; 400 residents – calculated using Yamane formula – were sampled as study participants. Cluster and accidental sampling were adopted in the selection of participants across the 11 wards of the LGA. Data collected through questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, tables and bar charts while the study's null hypothesis was tested using regression analysis. Findings revealed that most residents (85%) were unaware of the USSD code; physical, emotional, and verbal violence were the most prevalent forms of domestic violence identified among residents of Oshodi-Isolo LGA of Lagos State. Traditional authorities and police stations remained the most commonly used channels of reporting the violence among the study population. Challenges hindering the usage of USSD code include illiteracy, lack of access to phone, fear of retaliation from the villain, network connectivity problems, and lack of trust in the justice system. The null hypothesis — that residents of Oshodi-Isolo LGA are not significantly aware of the USSD code for reporting domestic violence — was also accepted. Given the findings above, the study recommends sustained public awareness campaigns, community-level sensitisation, and institutional strengthening to promote USSD-based domestic violence reporting among people of Oshodi-Isolo LGA of Lagos State.*

Keywords: Awareness, domestic violence, e-governance, reportage, USSD code,

Introduction

E-governance commonly referred to the deployment of Information and Communication Technology in governance and administration to improve public service delivery, promote transparency, enhance administrative efficiency and security of personal data in order to encourage citizens patronising of public utilities (UN, 2022; OECD, 2014; Heeks, 2006). The concept of E-Governance has gained significant momentum in Nigeria since the early 2000s (Gronlund & Horan, 2005) and Nigeria has since increasingly pursued digitalisation of its public services with the goals of enhancing civil accountability, service proficiency and citizens' utilisation of public services (World Bank, 2016; FGN, 2001). Despite persistent challenges such as infrastructural deficits, digital skill gaps, and uneven internet penetration, the Nigerian government has progressively integrated digital tools into service delivery (NATDA, 2019). Initiatives such as the CAC online business registration portal, FIRS e-tax system, E-Passport, and the Nigeria Police Force's e-complaint platform reflect this trajectory.

Lagos State, Nigeria's most populous and commercially-active state, has been at the forefront of this e-governance innovation with its usage of Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) technology — specifically the code *6820# — to facilitate the reporting of domestic violence through the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA). USSD technology operates on all GSM mobile phones without requiring internet connectivity, making it a potentially inclusive tool for citizens across income and literacy levels.

Domestic violence remains a critical public health and social welfare concern in Nigeria because of its widespread prevalence and its adverse effects on the physical, social. emotional, and economic wellbeing of its victims (Adebayo and Kolawole, 2019). Despite its prevalence and serious consequences, domestic violence is not frequently reported to the state authority. Patriarchal social norms, economic dependence, fear of stigma, and distrust of authorities handling the report have

historically contributed to underreporting of this violence (UNEGEEW,2023). The USSD code was introduced as a discreet, stigma-free channel for victims and witnesses to report physical and other forms of abuse that may be experienced in domestic households. This is thought to provide covert and convenient access to report and seek justice for the victims of the violence. However, the effectiveness of such a tool is contingent on public awareness and the willingness of the victims or witnesses to use it — factors that have not been empirically examined at the Local Government or any level.

This study therefore focuses on awareness and usage of the USSD Code to report domestic violence among the people of Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Areas is a densely populated area of about 100 square kilometres with a population of over 621,509 (2006 census), known as the "Home of Heroes." is characterised by high commercial activity, informal settlements, ethnic diversity, and predominantly informal economic engagement (). These characteristics make it a relevant and representative context for examining grassroots awareness and usage of USSD-based reporting mechanisms.

Statement of the problem

Studies have consistently documented the underreporting of domestic violence in Nigeria. Okenwa, Lawoko, and Jansson (2009) found that 54% of sampled women in Lagos State would not disclose domestic violence to governmental authorities. Ugwumanyi, Formella, and Szadejko (2021) similarly found that a large number of women in Igboland experience unreported domestic violence. A 2023 study on intimate partner violence in Nigeria concluded that strategies to encourage reporting must include strengthening law enforcement, expanding support services, and promoting public awareness.

Against this backdrop, Lagos State introduced the USSD code *6820# to facilitate domestic violence reporting. Okonofua et al. (2024), in their work on applying mobile technology to address gender-based violence in rural Nigeria, demonstrated that mobile phone devices can effectively support reporting in low-resource settings. However, usefulness depends on public awareness and orientation. No empirical study had, as at the time of this research, verified the level of awareness and usage of the USSD code in Oshodi-Isolo LGA. This study therefore fills that gap through its attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

i. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of people of Oshodi-Isolo LGA, Lagos State?

ii. What are the prevalent types of domestic violence experienced in the area?

iii. How do residents typically report domestic violence to government agencies?

iv. Are residents likely to prefer using electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones) to reporting domestic violence?

The study equally tested the null hypothesis that:

Ho: People of Oshodi-Isolo LGA are not significantly aware of the use of USSD code to report domestic violence to appropriate government agencies.

Literature review

USSD Technology: Meaning and Relevance

Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) is a session-based, real-time communication protocol used on GSM networks. Unlike SMS, it does not require internet connectivity and functions on basic feature phones (ITU, 2012). In Nigeria, USSD codes — typically formatted as *XXX# — are provided by telecommunication operators such as MTN, Glo, Airtel, and 9mobile to enable users access services without data subscriptions (NCC, 2020).

USSD was initially driven by the need to expand financial inclusion, particularly among the unbanked (CBN, 2018). Its applications have since expanded to include tax inquiries, National Identity Number (NIN) validation, voter verification, and emergency response services. Eze (2019) describes USSD as a "bridge technology" that connects citizens to government services by eliminating technological and

economic barriers. In Lagos State, USSD codes are used across healthcare, transportation, and social welfare services.

In the context of domestic violence reporting, USSD is particularly relevant because it offers confidentiality and ease of access for victims who may lack smartphones or internet access (Lagos DSVA, 2022). Studies confirm that Lagos residents are more likely to use mobile-based platforms than web-based portals due to cost and convenience (Balogun, 2020). In Oshodi-Isolo, where residents predominantly rely on basic mobile phones and operate in the informal economy, USSD presents a contextually appropriate reporting tool, provided awareness is sufficient (NCC, 2020).

Domestic Violence: Meaning and Incidence

The WHO (2013) defines domestic violence as any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional abuse occurring within the family or between intimate partners. The UN (2015) further recognises it as a form of gender-based violence disproportionately affecting women and children. In the Nigerian law, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act, 2015) classifies domestic violence as a criminal offence encompassing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse committed within domestic relationships.

Nigeria records high incidence rates of domestic violence. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2018) found that a significant proportion of women aged 15–49 had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC, 2020) noted a spike in cases during the COVID-19 lockdown. Despite the VAPP Act, enforcement remains uneven and underreporting is widespread due to stigma and institutional distrust (Okafor, 2021).

In Lagos State, the DSVA receives thousands of reports annually, with physical and emotional abuse being the most common (Lagos DSVA, 2022). Lawal (2020) found that the fear of public shame, concern for family reputation, and weak institutional confidence are major barriers to reporting in the urban Lagos. In Oshodi-Isolo specifically, overcrowding, limited privacy, and strong communal norms that treat domestic violence as a private matter further suppress reporting (Ajayi, 2020). The prevalence of informal housing arrangements means victims often cannot report abuse discreetly, making USSD-based mechanisms especially pertinent.

Current reporting methods of domestic violence

Empirical studies across Nigeria reveal that formal reporting of domestic violence to government agencies is low. While the Nigeria Police Force is the most recognised formal channel, victims often perceive it as unsympathetic (Adebayo & Kolawole, 2019). In Lagos State, DSVA reports indicate that victims use police stations, health facilities, hotlines, and social welfare offices (DSVA, 2022). Technology-based platforms such as online portals have emerged but remain underutilised due to limited digital literacy and awareness.

In Oshodi-Isolo, Ajayi (2020) found that formal reporting is a last resort, with most victims initially approaching family members, religious leaders, or community elders. Health facilities serve as indirect reporting points, but structured referral mechanisms are largely absent. Low awareness of USSD-based platforms was noted among mobile phone owners, even those who are familiar with mobile banking (UN Women, 2020).

Theoretical framework

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):

Davis (1989) proposed that technology adoption is driven by two factors — Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Applied to this study, TAM explains how residents' beliefs about the effectiveness and simplicity of USSD codes influence their likelihood of using the code to report domestic violence. Since Lagos residents already use USSD for banking and airtime transactions, extending this familiarity to domestic violence reporting is theoretically viable. However, where usefulness and ease of use are not perceived, adoption will not follow.

Social ecological theory:

Bronfenbrenner (1979) and WHO (2002) articulate that behaviour results from the interaction of individual, relational, community, and societal factors. This theory explains why USSD adoption cannot be driven by technology alone. At the individual level, low awareness and digital illiteracy hinder use. At the relational level, fear of retaliation and family pressure suppress reporting. At the community level, stigma and cultural norms normalise silence. At the societal level, institutional distrust and weak law enforcement reduce confidence in formal mechanisms. Together, TAM and the Social Ecological Theory provide a robust dual-lens framework for this study.

Gap in literature

Existing literature has focused extensively on the prevalence and causes of domestic violence in Nigeria, with limited empirical attention to USSD-based reporting at the local government level. Studies on e-governance and technology adoption have largely centred on banking and service delivery, with minimal application to sensitive social issues like domestic violence. No study, prior to this one, examined the specific case of Oshodi-Isolo LGA in relation to awareness of the *6820# USSD code, distinguishing between awareness and actual usage. This study addresses these empirical, contextual, and theoretical gaps.

Methodology

Research design

A survey research design was employed. This approach is appropriate for quantifying awareness levels and reporting behaviour across a defined population (Woodward, 2013). Structured questionnaires were used as the primary instrument, supplemented by secondary data from relevant literature, government reports, and academic journals.

Population and sample technique

The study population was 931,300 — the estimated population of Oshodi-Isolo LGA as at March 2022 (Wikipedia, 2022). Using the Taro Yamane formula: $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$

Where N = 931,300 and e = 0.05, the sample size was calculated as approximately 400 respondents, with 37 participants drawn from each of the 11 wards.

A two-stage sampling approach was adopted. In the first stage, cluster sampling was used to select participants from each of the 11 wards. In the second stage, accidental (convenience) sampling was used to select individual participants within each ward.

Data collection and instrument

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items covering socio-demographic characteristics, types of domestic violence experienced or witnessed, methods of reporting, awareness of the USSD code, and challenges to usage. The instrument was validated by academic experts and pre-tested in Ikeja, the Lagos State capital, before main administration.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics — frequency tables, percentages, and bar charts — and inferential statistics through regression/cointegration analysis to test the hypothesis.

Scope

The study is limited to mobile phone owners within the 11 wards of Oshodi-Isolo LGA and focuses strictly on awareness and reporting behaviour. It does not include other LGAs in Lagos State, alternative channels such as police stations, or the legal outcomes of reported cases.

Data presentation and analysis

Of the 400 questionnaires administered, 390 were validly returned, representing a 97.5% return -rate.

Socio-Demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 390)

Variables	Frequency	Percentages %
Respondents age		
16 – 25	140	36
26 – 35	160	41
36 – 50	80	20.5
51 and above	10	2.5
Respondents Gender		
Male	230	59
Girl	160	41
Religion of Respondent		
Islam	80	20.5
Christianity	310	79.5
Religion of Respondent		
Government owned employed	20	05
Employed in private sector	70	18
Self employed	230	59
Unemployed	40	10
Student	30	8
Marital Status of Respondents		
Never Married	130	33
Married	110	28
Single parent	30	08
Divorced	20	05
Complicated	10	2.5
Single	20	05
Widow	10	2.5
In a relationship	60	16
Ownership of phone		
Yes	380	97.5
No	10	25
Types of house lived		
Self-Contain apartment	250	64
Tenement	50	13
Two bedroom apartment	30	8
Three bedroom apartment	20	5
Duplex	30	7.5
Double duplex	10	2.5
Familiar examples of domestic violence		

Husband beating wife	300	77
Wife molesting husband	120	31
Step-mother maltreating step children	150	38
Older ones maltreating half-siblings	110	28
Siblings molesting siblings	110	28
All of the Above	70	18
Non of the above	30	8
Mother in-law Maltreating wife	10	2.5
Father Maltreating molesting step children	90	23
Mother molesting son	10	2.5
Awareness of ussd code		
Yes	60	15
No	330	85
Total	**390**	**100**

Source; Researchers field survey, 2026

The majority of respondents (41%) were aged 26–35 years, followed by those aged 16–25 years (36%), confirming that the population of Oshodi-Isolo LGA is predominantly youthful — consistent with the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) that Lagos State is predominantly youthful with a large proportion of residents within the economically active age group of 18 – 45 years. Male respondents constituted 59% while 41% were female This finding may corroborate Abebayo and Kolawole (2019) that gendered power relations have been associated with unequal decision making and increased vulnerability of women to domestic violence. Christians comprised 79.5% of respondents and Muslims 20.5% - this may indicate the dominance of Christianity among people in Oshodi-Isolo local government area, Lagos State. In terms of education, 44% had secondary school education and 38% had post-secondary qualifications, indicating high literacy rate among people in Oshodi-Isolo local government area of Lagos State. It also means that the questionnaires were answered by literates and educated minds who understand the meaning of domestic violence and understood the objectives of the study.

Regarding occupation, 59% were self-employed, 18% were private sector employees, 10% were unemployed, and 5% were government employees — corroborating that majority of people in Oshodi-Isolo local government area were into self-employment/entrepreneurship. This finding establishes the summation of the National Bureau of Statistics (2021) that the economy of Lagos State is dominated by the informal sector, which employs a significant proportion of residents in trading, transportation, artisan works, and other self-employed ventures.

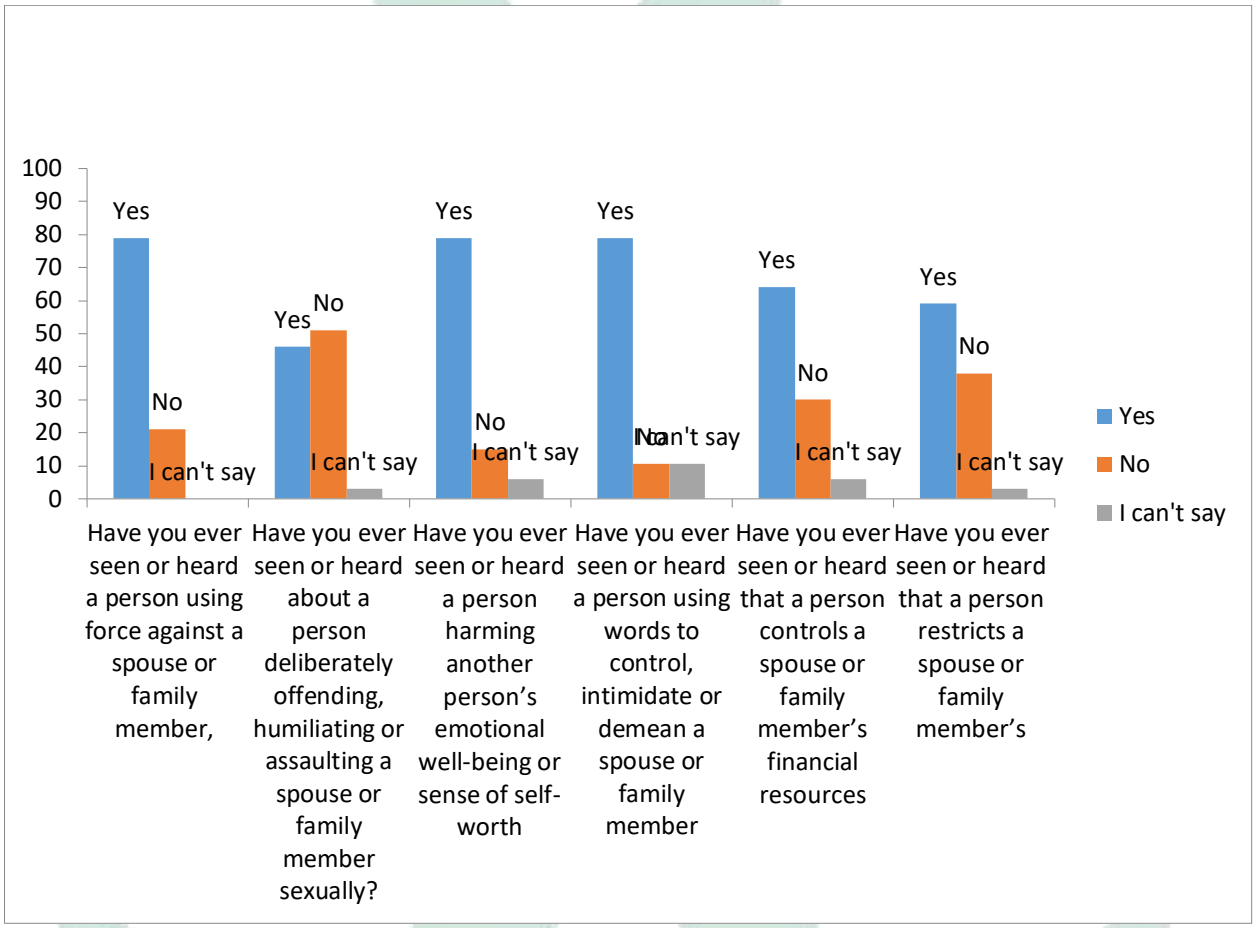
Concerning marital status, 33% had never married and 28% were currently married, while 16% were in a relationship – this finding reveals that many adults in Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Area are never married or out of marriage. This may be due to household tension and conflict occasion by domestic violence (Adebayo and Kolawole, 2019).

An overwhelming 97.5% of respondents owned mobile phones, confirming wide mobile ownership in the LGA and Lagos State, in general as the state has relatively advanced telecommunications infrastructure, and mobile phone ownership is widespread across its socio-economic groups (NCC, 2020).

The majority (64%) lived in self-contained apartments. This means that most of the respondents lived in well planned apartment as housing conditions in Lagos state range from well-planned estates to overcrowded informal settlements. Overcrowding and lack of privacy are common in low-income areas and have been associated with increased domestic conflict (Awal, 2018).

Regarding domestic violence familiarity, 77% of respondents had witnessed or experienced a husband beating a wife — the most recognised form of domestic violence. Notably, when asked whether there exists a USSD code for reporting domestic violence, only 15% said yes, and 85% said no. Of those who said yes, none could correctly state the code (*6820#), with one respondent incorrectly citing "112." This finding signals critically low awareness of existence of USSD code to report domestic violence among people of Oshodi-Isolo Local Government Areas, Lagos state.
This could be as a result of cultural beliefs that view domestic issues as issues of family members, religious leaders, or community elders rather than issues for formal government institution (Balogun, 2020).

Types of Domestic Violence Prevalent in Oshodi-Isolo LGA (n = 390)



Findings from the above chart reveal the following:

Physical violence (use of force against a spouse or family member): 79% of respondents had witnessed or experienced this, confirming commonality of physical domestic violence among family members in Oshodi-Isolo LGA, Lagos state as established in a study by Adebayo and Kolawole (2019) that acts such as slapping, beating, and kicking are commonly used to assert control within intimate relationships. Emotional/psychological violence (insults, threats, constant criticism): 79% had witnessed or experienced this, consistent with Balogun (2020) that emotional abuse, including verbal insults, threats, and controlling behaviours was prevalent among couples in Lagos state. Financial/economic violence (controlling income, withholding money): 64% had witnessed this, corroborating Adebayo and Kolawole (2019) which found that financial control, denial of access to household income, and prevention of employment were common strategies used by abusive partners. Empirical evidence suggests that economic abuse limits the victimised's capacity to seek legal or institutional support.
Digital/technical abuse (phone monitoring, social media harassment, sharing private images without consent): 59% reported exposure, reflecting an emerging dimension of abuse. Spiritual/religious manipulation (misusing beliefs to control a partner): 56% reported awareness of this.

Sexual violence (unwanted touching, sexual coercion): 46% had witnessed or experienced this. This finding may indicate that sexual violence is relatively uncommon or people are unwilling to confess its commonality due to its sensitivity. This is also confirmed by NDHS (2018) that sexual violence within family and intimate relationships remain one of the least reported forms of domestic violence in Nigeria. UN Women (2020) attributed this trend to societal beliefs that frame sexual access as a marital obligation rather than a matter of consent. Based on these findings therefore, physical, emotional, and verbal violence are the most prevalent forms of domestic violence in Oshodi-Isolo LGA, with sexual violence remaining least reported perhaps due to cultural taboos.

Current methods of reporting domestic violence (n = 390)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Have you ever reported or seen/heard that domestic violence is reported to the police at the station?		
Yes	260	66.5
No	130	33.5
I cannot say	00	00
Have you ever used or seen/heard that someone used emergency telephone hotlines to report domestic violence to government authorities?		
Yes	70	18
No	310	79.5
I cant say	10	2.5
Have you ever used or seen/heard that someone used USSD code 6820# to report domestic violence		
Yes	20	5
No	350	90
I cant say	20	5
Have you ever reported or seen/heard that someone reported a case of domestic violence to the Ministry of Women Affairs		
Yes	160	41
No	190	49
I cant say	40	10
Have you ever reported or seen/heard that someone reported a case of domestic violence to the Family Court or Magistrate Court		
Yes	160	41

No	200	51
I cant say	30	8
Have you ever reported or seen/heard that someone reported a case of domestic violence to social welfare and child protection agencies?		
Yes	120	31
No	260	66.5
I cant say	10	03
Have you ever reported or seen/heard that someone reported a case of domestic violence to online government portals?		
Yes	20	5
No	350	90
I cant say	20	5
Have you ever reported or seen/heard that someone reported a case of domestic violence to traditional or local government authorities?		
Yes	230	59
No	140	36
I cant say	20	5
Going by your experience in this neighbourhood, do you think a person can be eager to report domestic violence?		
Yes	230	59
No	120	31
I cant say	40	10
TOTAL	**390**	**100**

Source; Researchers field survey, 2026

Table 4.3 presents the following findings on reporting channels:

Police stations: 66.5% of respondents had witnessed or heard of domestic violence being reported to the police. A study by Lawal (2020) found that police reporting remains the most frequently used formal method in Lagos state. However, their study also identified challenges such as delayed response, inadequate victim protection, and fear of community backlash as factors discouraging reporting. Traditional/local government authorities: 59% had witnessed or heard of such reporting, confirming Ajayi's (2020) finding that community elders remain a preferred resolution channel. Ministry of Women Affairs: 41% had heard of such reporting. Family/Magistrate Courts: 41% had heard of court-based reporting. Social welfare agencies: 31% reported awareness of such referrals.

Emergency telephone hotlines: Only 18% had witnessed or heard of hotline usage for domestic violence reporting. While the DSVA (2022) reports indicate the use of telephone hotlines and online portals to receive complaints, empirical evidence suggests that these platforms are more accessible to educated and urban residents, leaving out individuals with limited digital skills. On usage of USSD code (6820#) to report domestic violence: Only 5% had used or heard of USSD-based reporting — the lowest of all

channels. Online government portals: Only 5% had heard of such reporting, reflecting low digital literacy for formal e-governance platforms. Additionally, 59% of respondents believed a person could be willing to report domestic violence under the right conditions, suggesting latent openness to formal reporting channels, including USSD, if awareness gaps were addressed.

Challenges to USSD-Based Reporting of Domestic Violence (n = 390)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
People can be unwilling to report domestic violence through any means.		
Yes	280	72
No	80	20
I cant say	30	8
Network connectivity (e.g. MTN, Airtel, Glo) can be a challenge to using USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	270	69
No	70	20
I cant say	50	11
Fear of retaliation can be a challenge to the use of USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	250	64
No	130	33
I cant say	10	03
Fear of stigma can be a challenge to the use of USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	230	59
No	110	28
I cant say	50	12
Lack of trust in the police or justice system can discourage the use of USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	320	82
No	40	10
I cant say	30	8
Traditional or religious beliefs can discourage the use		

of USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	240	61.5
No	80	20.5
I cant say	70	18
Illiteracy can constrain a person from using USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	320	82
No	40	10
I cant say	30	8
Lack of access to a phone can constrain a person from the use of USSD code to report domestic violence.		
Yes	340	87
No	40	10
I cant say	10	03
Ignorance of the availability and usability of USSD code to report domestic violence can be a constraint to the use of USSD code in reporting domestic violence.		
Yes	280	72
No	70	20
I cant say	40	08
TOTAL	**390**	**100**

Source; Researchers field survey, 2026

Table 4.4 reveals the following challenges respondents identified:

Lack of phone access: 87% agreed this is a constraint — the highest ranked barrier. Illiteracy: 82% agreed that inability to read or operate USSD menus is a significant hindrance. Lack of trust in the police and justice system: 82% agreed that institutional distrust discourages use of USSD-linked reporting. Unwillingness to report domestic violence by any means: 72% agreed this general reluctance extends to USSD. Ignorance of the availability and usability of USSD codes: 72% identified this as a constraint. Network connectivity problems: 69% cited network failure (MTN, Airtel, Glo, 9mobile) as a barrier to USSD use. Traditional/religious beliefs: 61.5% agreed that cultural and religious norms discourage use of formal reporting channels. Fear of stigma: 59% agreed that fear of social shame deters USSD reporting. Fear of retaliation from the abuser: 64% agreed this is a barrier.

These findings collectively reveal that awareness and adoption of USSD-based reporting are suppressed by a convergence of individual, social, technological, and institutional barriers — consistent with the postulations of the Social Ecological Theory.

Hypothesis testing

Null Hypothesis (Ho): People of Oshodi-Isolo LGA are not significantly aware of the use of USSD code to report domestic violence to appropriate government agencies.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): People of Oshodi-Isolo LGA are significantly aware of the use of USSD code to report domestic violence to appropriate government agencies.

Using regression/cointegration analysis on 390 observations (linear deterministic trend), the trace statistics and probability values were as follows:

Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Trace)

hypothesis	Evaluate	Trace statistic	Critical value	Probability
No of CES None	0.366929	22.20901	29.79707	0.2878
Domestic violenece	0.124592	6.207938	15.49471	0.6709
USSD Code Awareness	0.043337	1.550639	3.8411466	0.2130

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026.

Since all p-values exceed the significance level of 0.05, the study accepts the null hypothesis and rejects the alternative. This confirms that people of Oshodi-Isolo LGA are not significantly aware of the USSD code for reporting domestic violence to government agencies.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study paint a clear and concerning picture: despite Lagos State's institutional efforts and the availability of a dedicated USSD code (*6820#) for domestic violence reporting, public awareness among residents of Oshodi-Isolo LGA remains critically low. Only 15% of respondents were aware of the code's existence, and none could correctly identify it. This aligns with Balogun (2020), who found that awareness of USSD-based government services is uneven across Lagos communities.

The prevalence of physical, emotional, and verbal violence among 79% of respondents underscores the severity of domestic abuse in this densely populated urban area. Yet the dominant reporting channels remain the police and community leaders — traditional pathways characterised by fear of exposure and limited confidentiality. This reflects a persistent gap between the existence of modern reporting tools and their grassroots uptake.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) would predict that the low perceived usefulness and lack of awareness of the USSD code inhibit adoption (Davis, 1989). Since residents cannot know a tool is useful if they do not know it exists, awareness campaigns are a precondition for any improvement in reportage rates. The Social Ecological Theory similarly explains that even where awareness exists, adoption is constrained by relational pressures (fear of abuser retaliation), community norms (stigma and preference for informal resolution), and societal factors (institutional distrust and weak enforcement). An 82% agreement that distrust in the police discourages reporting is particularly telling — it suggests that linking USSD codes to an institution with low credibility may itself reduce willingness to report.

The emergence of digital/technical abuse (59%) as a recognised form of domestic violence is noteworthy and reflects the evolving nature of violence in a digitally active population. This also indicates that residents are technologically engaged in some capacity, strengthening the argument that awareness campaigns around USSD reporting could yield meaningful uptake.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the awareness of the USSD code (*6820#) and its role in reporting domestic violence among residents of Oshodi-Isolo LGA, Lagos State. The study concludes that:

i. The population of Oshodi-Isolo LGA is predominantly youthful, male, Christian, self-employed, literate, and unmarried, with widespread mobile phone ownership.

ii. Physical, emotional, and verbal violence are the most prevalent forms of domestic violence in the area, while sexual violence remains the least disclosed.

iii. Police stations and traditional/local government authorities are the most commonly used reporting channels, while USSD codes and online portals remain largely unknown.

iv. Critical challenges to USSD adoption include lack of phone access, illiteracy, institutional distrust, general unwillingness to report, ignorance of USSD availability, network connectivity failures, cultural and religious beliefs, fear of stigma, and fear of retaliation.

v. The null hypothesis is accepted: people of Oshodi-Isolo LGA are not significantly aware of the use of USSD code to report domestic violence to appropriate government agencies.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government and DSVA should mount sustained awareness campaigns about the *6820# USSD code through radio, television, newspapers, social media platforms (Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter), and Nollywood productions. Given the youthful and informal-sector profile of Oshodi-Isolo residents, pop culture channels are likely to be effective.

2. DSVA should establish a dedicated task force for Oshodi-Isolo LGA tasked with proactive community surveillance and sensitisation. This task force should work with community leaders, religious institutions, and market associations to normalise USSD reporting.

3. Persons identified through DSVA outreach as victims or survivors of domestic violence should be enrolled in structured counselling sessions addressing all dimensions of abuse. This will empower victims to use available reporting channels.

4. Given the high level of distrust in the police and justice system (82%), government should invest in training law enforcement officers in victim-friendly, confidential handling of domestic violence reports received via USSD, thereby incentivising usage.

5. Public campaigns should explicitly emphasise that *6820# does not require the caller to provide a name, ensuring full anonymity. This directly counters the barrier of fear of stigma and retaliation, which were cited by 59–64% of respondents.

6. Collaboration with telecommunication operators should be pursued to improve USSD network reliability, particularly in dense urban areas. Additionally, pictorial and audio-based USSD guides in local languages can accommodate low-literacy users.

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TRADE POLICIES ON FOOD PRICES AND AFFORDABILITY IN IBARAPA REGION

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Abstract
This study examined the impact of trade policies on food prices and affordability in the Ibarapa region of Oyo State, Nigeria. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, and data were collected through questionnaires administered to 200 respondents selected from Ibarapa Central and Ibarapa East Local Government Areas. The findings revealed that domestic trade policies significantly influence food prices in the region. Key challenges identified include high tariffs on imported goods (100% agreement), poor price control measures (100%), the inflationary effect of fuel subsidy removal on transportation costs (100%), and policies that favour large-scale over small-scale farming (100%). The study also found a perceived lack of effective government intervention, with no households reporting benefits from subsidy or relief programs. Regression analysis confirmed a strong positive relationship between the independent variables (high tariffs, price control, fuel subsidy) and the dependent variable (trade policies), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study concluded that current trade policies contribute adversely to food price volatility and reduced affordability in Ibarapa. Recommendations include a review of tariff structures for essential food items, reinstatement of effective price-control mechanisms, targeted fuel subsidies for agricultural transport, enhanced monitoring by local authorities, and policies tailored to local agricultural needs to improve food price stability and affordability.

Keywords*: Trade policies, food prices, affordability, Ibarapa region, tariffs, subsidies*

Introduction

The issue of food affordability has become a critical concern in many regions worldwide, particularly in developing nations, where a significant portion of the population lives in poverty and heavily dependent on agriculture for sustenance and livelihoods. In countries like Nigeria, food security is often influenced by both domestic and international trade policies, which affect the cost and availability of food products. The Ibarapa region of Oyo State, located in southwestern Nigeria, faces unique challenges related to food prices due to its agricultural-based economy. Despite the region's fertile land and favourable climate for growing food crops, fluctuations in food prices often make essential food items unaffordable for many families, particularly those in the rural areas. Understanding how trade policies impact food prices in Ibarapa is crucial for improving food security and the overall well-being of its population.

One notable example of domestic trade policies that affect food prices in Ibarapa is Nigeria's importation of food products such as rice, wheat, and sugar, which have seen fluctuations in prices as a result of changes in tariffs and foreign exchange rates. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2020), the prices of these staple food items have been subject to considerable volatility in recent years due to government policies such as the ban on rice importation and fluctuations in the value of the Nigerian naira. These policies directly influence the cost of food in Ibarapa markets, where the majority of people are low-income earners who struggle to cope with the rising food prices.

Furthermore, international trade policies play a significant role in determining food prices in Ibarapa. Nigeria's participation in global trade, particularly with food-exporting countries, exposes the region to price fluctuations driven by international supply and demand. For instance, global changes in the prices of key agricultural commodities such as rice, maize, and vegetable oils often affect the cost of imported foodstuffs, which in turn influence local food prices. Trade agreements between Nigeria and major food-exporting countries, as well as changes in global commodity prices, often lead to price shifts that reverberate through markets in rural regions like Ibarapa (FAO, 2021).

The affordability of food in Ibarapa is also influenced by the broader economic environment, which includes inflation rates, exchange rates, and macroeconomic policies. As the Nigerian economy faces

persistent inflationary pressures, the prices of goods, including food, continue to rise, exacerbating the affordability issue. The impact of inflation is often more pronounced in the rural areas like Ibarapa, where households rely heavily on local markets for food and have limited income to buffer against the rising prices. Akinyele (2016) highlighted how the purchasing power of rural the households is diminished by inflation, making it more difficult for residents to afford even the most basic food items. In such an economic environment, trade policies that fail to address these underlying macroeconomic issues can further strain food affordability.

In Ibarapa, where many households are involved in subsistence farming, food price volatility poses a particular challenge. Local farmers are often at the mercy of unpredictable weather conditions, high input costs, and fluctuating market prices, which can make their produce unaffordable even in times of abundance. For instance, while a bumper harvest may reduce the cost of certain crops in the local market, the lack of proper storage and poor transportation networks often result in post-harvest losses, further contributing to price increases. In this context, trade policies that support rural infrastructure development, such as improved roads, storage facilities, and market linkages, could help mitigate these challenges and contribute to more stable food prices (Shamsuddin, 2017).

Importantly, trade policies can either alleviate or exacerbate food price challenges in Ibarapa, depending on their design and implementation. For example, policies that focus on promoting local agricultural production and ensuring access to affordable inputs can help lower the cost of food production and stabilize food prices. On the other hand, trade policies that encourage the importation of food products without adequate protection for local producers can lead to increased food prices, particularly when global commodity prices rise or the local currency weakens. In the case of Ibarapa, which has a largely rural population with limited access to financial resources.

In the light of these challenges, it is essential to understand how both domestic and international trade policies can be designed to improve food price affordability in Ibarapa. This study will investigate the influence of trade policies on food prices in the region, focusing on the role of government interventions, such as subsidies, tariffs, and market regulations, in shaping the affordability of food for local consumers.

By analyzing these factors, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how trade policies shape food prices. It also offers recommendations for improving food affordability in Ibarapa. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to more effective policy-making that takes into account the unique challenges faced by the rural communities and promotes sustainable food systems in the region.

Statement of problem

The affordability of food in the Ibarapa region of Oyo State, Nigeria, remains a pressing issue despite the region's agricultural potentials. The Ibarapa region, which is largely rural and agrarian, is heavily reliant on agriculture for both subsistence and income. However, food prices in the region have been consistently volatile, often rising beyond the reach of many residents, especially those in the low-income households. This challenge of food price affordability is influenced by a range of factors, with trade policies playing a significant role in determining both the availability and cost of food.

In this context, there is a need to critically examine the relationship between trade policies and food price affordability in Ibarapa. This research aims to explore how trade policies, both at the national and international levels, affect the affordability of food for Ibarapa's population, particularly for rural households that are most vulnerable to price fluctuations.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are to: assess the impact of domestic trade policies, such as tariffs, subsidies, and price controls, on food prices in Ibarapa, evaluate how international trade policies and global commodity price fluctuations influence food prices in the Ibarapa region, investigate the role of government interventions in improving food price affordability for the households in Ibarapa, provide recommendations for policy adjustments that could help improve food price stability and affordability in the Ibarapa region.

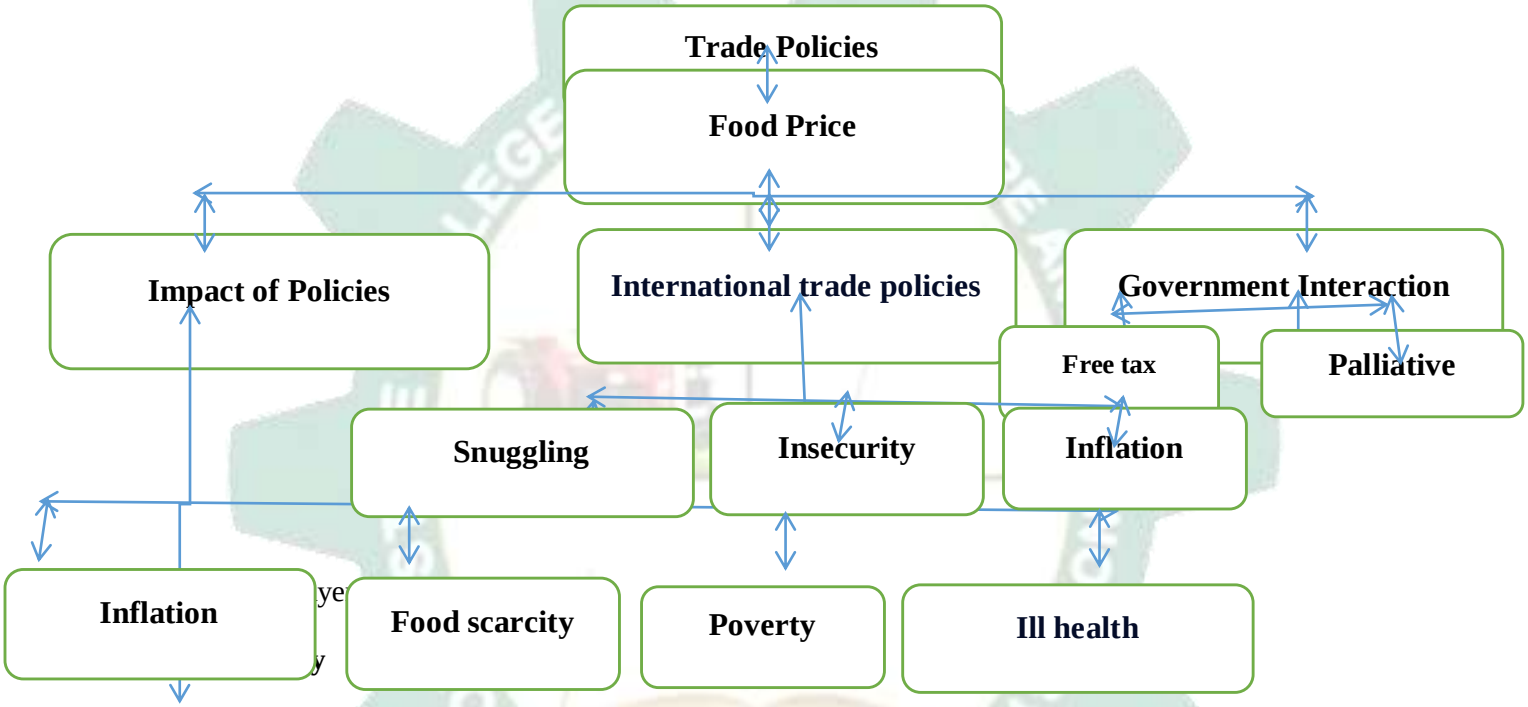
Research Hypothesis

(H_0): Domestic trade policies, such as tariffs and subsidies, do not significantly affect food prices in Ibarapa.

Significance of the Study

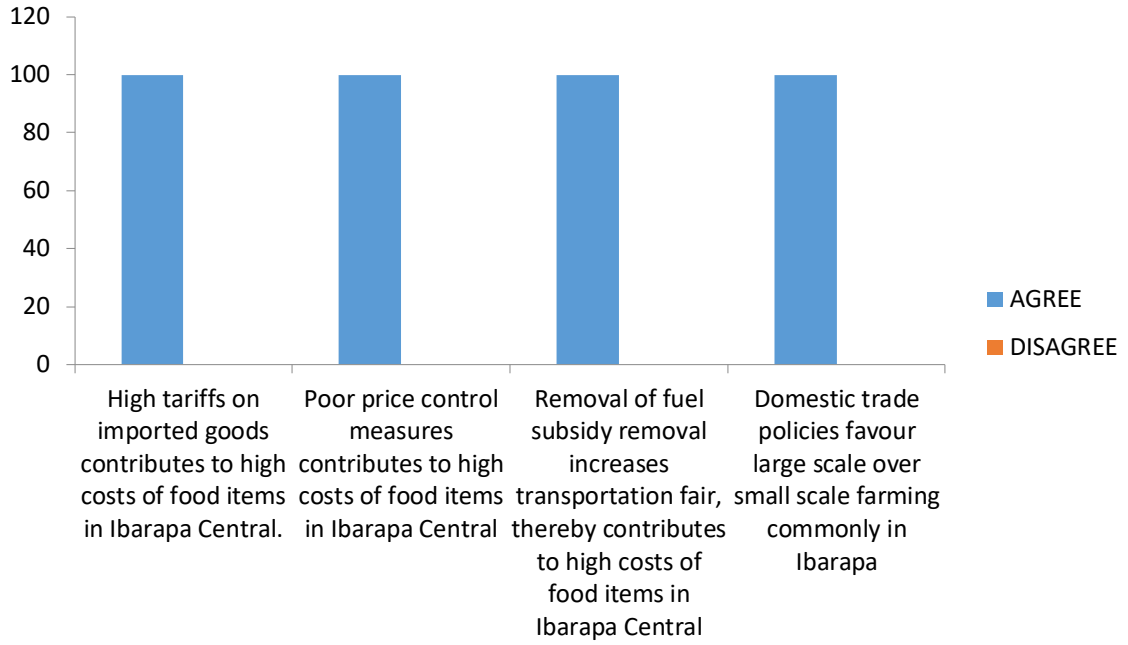
This study examines the importance of food price affordability as a critical concern for rural communities like Ibarapa, where the majority of households rely on subsistence farming and have limited access to financial resources, understanding the impact of trade policies on food prices to provide valuable insights for policymakers in Nigeria as the country continues to face challenges related to food security and economic development, contribute to the academic discourse on the relationship between trade policies and food price affordability in developing economies. By focusing on the Ibarapa region, the research will offer a detailed case study that can inform similar studies in other parts of Nigeria and the sub-Saharan Africa.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Sampled questionnaires were administered to 200 respondents randomly selected from Ibarapa Central and Ibarapa East Local Government communities. This study employed both primary and secondary modes of collecting data. The data was analysed with the use of frequency distribution estimation, as well as tables and percentages for proper presentation of the data collected. In testing the hypothesis formulated, regression analysis was adopted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

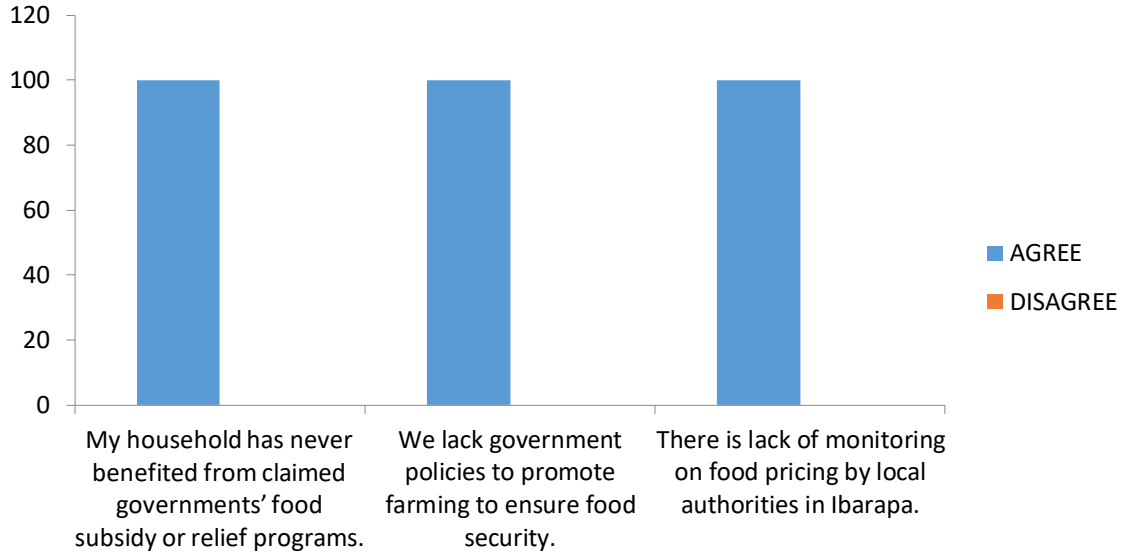
Perceived impacts of domestic trade policies on food prices in the Ibarapa region. (n=200)



Source: Researcher's Survey, 2026.

The bar chart above revealed the distribution of perceived impacts of domestic trade policies on food prices in the Ibarapa region. It is seen that all the respondents agreed that high tariffs on imported goods contribute to high costs of food items; that the removal of fuel subsidy increases transportation fares, thereby contributing to high costs of food items; and that domestic trade policies favour large-scale over small-scale farming, commonly in the Ibarapa region. This implies that domestic trade policies affected high food prices in the region.

Perceived government intervention on food affordability in Ibarapa Region. (n=200)



Source: Researcher's Survey, 2026

The bar chart above presented the distribution of perceived government intervention on food affordability in the Ibarapa region. It is seen that all the respondents agreed that no household has ever benefited from governments' food subsidy or relief programs; that the community lacks government

policies to promote farming to ensure food security, and that the government lacks monitoring of food pricing by the local authorities in the region.

Policy recommendations for improved food price stability (n=200)



Source: Researcher's Survey, 2026

The bar chart above presented the distribution of policy recommendations for improved food price stability in the Ibarapa region. It is seen that 100% of the respondents agreed that the government should remove tax on essential food commodities; that the government should start supporting small-scale farmers financially and locate storage facilities in the area to reduce seasonal price fluctuations. Trade policies should be tailored to reflect local agricultural needs.

Correlations

		Trade policy	Tariff	Price control	Fuel subsidy
Pearson Correlation	Trade policy	1.000	.723	.785	.841
	Tariff	.723	1.000	.803	.801
	Price control	.765	.806	1.000	.801
	Fuel subsidy	.821	.802	.803	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Trade policy	.	.000	.000	.000
	Tariff	.000	.	.000	.000
	Price control	.000	.000	.	.000
	Fuel subsidy	.000	.000	.000	.
N	Trade policy	100	100	100	100
	Tariff	100	100	100	100
	Price control	100	100	100	100

Fuel subsidy	100	100	100	100

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2026.

All the variables were revealed to be positively correlated with one another. Trade policy has a positive relationship with high tariffs, Price control, and fuel subsidy, with probability values of .723, .785 and .821 respectively. High tariffs have a low positive relationship with Price control and fuel subsidy, with probability values of .803 and .801. Price control and fuel subsidy have a positive relationship with a probability value of 0.803.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851[a]	.738	.730	.32314

a. Predictors: high tariffs, Price control, and fuel subsidy

b. Dependent Variable: Trade policy

Table 4.E.3 showed that the R-value represents the correlation between the dependent and independent variable. That is, *R* can be considered to be one measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable; in this case, Trade policy. A value greater than 0.4 is taken for further analysis. In this case, the value is .323, which indicates a good level of prediction.

The "**R Square**" represents the R^2 value (also called the coefficient of determination), which is the proportion of variance/ changes in the dependent variable (Trade policy) that can be explained by the change in the independent variables (high tariffs, Price control, and fuel subsidy)**.** A value greater than 0.5 shows that the model is effective enough to determine the relationship.

In this case, the value is .851, which indicates that the independent variable studied explain 87.1% of the variance to investigate the effects of trade policy as represented by the R Square. This consequently means that other factors not considered herein contribute 85.1% of the variance in the dependent variable. While the Adjusted R-square shows the generalization of the results, i.e., the variation of the sample results from the population in multiple regression. It is required to have a difference between R-square and Adjusted R-square. In this case, the value is .738, which is not far off from .730. So, it is good.

Therefore, the model summary table is satisfactory to proceed with the next step. However, if the values were unsatisfactory, then there is a need for adjusting the data until the desired results are obtained.

Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.377	.158		2.382	.019	.063	.691
	Tariff	.319	.087	.346	3.662	.031	.146	.493
	Price control	.151	.100	.143	1.511	.134	-.047	.348
	Fuel subsidy	.388	.082	.440	4.726	.000	.225	.550

Source: Field Survey, 2025`

a. Dependent Variable: Trade policy

The data findings also showed that a unit increase in bad trade policy will lead to a 2.380 increase in tariffs on food. Consequently, it is observed that the independent variable is significant with a P value less than 0.05 at 0.000.

Estimated model coefficients

The general form of the equation to predict ***the dependent variable*** from **TP, HT, PC, and FS** is:

$$Y = (117.382) + 51.01HT + 1.34\,PC + 29.74FS$$

The table revealed both the relative effect and significance of each of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable. It showed that there is a positive relationship between high tariffs, Price control, and fuel subsidy, with statistical values β = .346, .143, and .440; t = 3.662, 1.511, and 4.726, respectively, for bad trade policy. The table further revealed the significance of the variables at the 0.05 level of significance, which was used to test the hypothesis.

Interpretation of results

The relevant hypotheses were tested using a simple linear regression model with the least squares method. The stated hypotheses are:

Hypothesis

H_0: Trade policies have no significant effect on food prices and affordability in the Ibarapa Region.

Decision rule: The coefficient table revealed that trade policies with a significance value of 0.031, which is below the 0.05 level of significance, indicate that the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between trade policies and food prices and affordability in Ibarapa Region.

Summary of findings

This study was conducted to investigate the effects of domestic trade policies on food prices and affordability in the Ibarapa Region. A sample of 200 respondents was used for the study, and data were collected through questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) to test the formulated hypothesis.

Demographic profile: The respondents pool was dominated by the female persons (60%), adults, aged 25 and above (70%), and a majority (80%) had some form of formal education. Half of the respondents were single.

Perceived impact of policies: All respondents (100%) unanimously agreed that specific domestic trade policies contribute to high food prices. These include high tariffs on imported goods, poor price control measures, the removal of fuel subsidies (which increases transportation costs), and policies that favour large-scale farming over small-scale farming prevalent in Ibarapa.

Government intervention: There was a universal consensus (100%) that government intervention has been ineffective. Respondents agreed that no household had benefited from food subsidy programs, that there are no policies to promote local farming for food security, and that there is a critical lack of monitoring of food pricing by local authorities.

Policy recommendations: All respondents (100%) recommended specific interventions: the removal of taxes on essential food commodities, financial support and storage facilities for small-scale farmers to reduce price fluctuations, and the tailoring of trade policies to reflect local agricultural needs.

Hypothesis testing: The null hypothesis (H_0) that "Trade policies have no significant effect on food prices and affordability in Ibarapa Region" was rejected. The regression analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between trade policies (as the dependent variable) and the independent variables of high tariffs, price control, and fuel subsidy. The model was robust, with an R-square of 0.738, indicating that 73.8% of the variance in food prices and affordability is explained by these policy factors. The p-value of 0.031 for high tariffs and 0.000 for fuel subsidy confirmed their significant impact.

Conclusion

Based on the overwhelming consensus of the respondents and the conclusive statistical evidence, this study firmly concludes that domestic trade policies have a significant and adverse effect on food prices and affordability in the Ibarapa Region.

The combination of high tariffs, ineffective price control, and the removal of fuel subsidies has created a difficult environment that increases the cost of food. Furthermore, the perceived absence of supportive government interventions, such as relief programs, agricultural support, and price monitoring, exacerbates the problem. The community's clear and unified recommendations highlight a severe disconnect between national policy implementation and local realities. The regression analysis quantitatively confirmed that these policy variables are key drivers of the high cost of food in the region.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Review Tariff Structures: The government should critically review and reduce tariffs on essential imported food items that are not sufficiently produced locally. This would immediately help in lowering market prices and easing the burden on consumers.
ii. Reinstate and Enforce Price Control Mechanisms: Effective and transparent price control measures must be established and actively monitored by local authorities to prevent artificial inflation and profiteering, especially on staple foods.
iii. Implement Targeted Fuel Subsidies for Agriculture: Given the established link between fuel costs and food transportation, introducing a targeted subsidy on fuel for the transportation of agricultural produce could help stabilize food prices without the full cost of a blanket subsidy.
iv. Enhance Monitoring and Transparency: The local government should establish a task force to monitor food pricing and the distribution of any relief items to ensure they reach the intended beneficiaries, thereby rebuilding public trust.
v. Further Research: Future studies could employ a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with interviews of key stakeholders (policymakers, farmers' associations, traders) to gain a more nuanced understanding of the policy implementation gaps identified in this study.

Contribution to knowledge

This study makes several significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of trade policies and food security, particularly within the Nigerian context.

First, it provides a **context-specific empirical analysis** focused exclusively on the Ibarapa region, a rural agrarian community that is often under-represented in national-level policy research. While numerous studies have examined the impact of trade policies on food prices in Nigeria, they predominantly concentrate on urban centers or broad national trends. This research fills a critical gap by offering a micro-level perspective, highlighting how macro-economic policies manifest and impact a specific rural population with unique socio-economic characteristics.

Second, the study establishes a **clear and quantifiable link between specific domestic trade policies and local food affordability**. By identifying high tariffs, ineffective price controls, and fuel subsidy removal as key drivers of food price inflation in Ibarapa. It moves beyond general assertions to provide empirical evidence from the direct experiences of consumers and stakeholders within the community. The use of regression analysis to confirm the significant relationship between these policy variables and food prices added a layer of statistical rigor that strengthens the findings.

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DRUG ABUSE AND CRIMINALITY CONTROL AMONG TEENAGERS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract
The study assessed drug abuse and criminality control among the teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government. The study adopted the descriptive research design. For the purpose of this study, a total number of two hundred (200) teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government opinion were sampled. Descriptive statistics includes the use of tables, frequency distribution and percentages was used for the analysis of data collected. Result of demographic characteristics of respondents revealed that majority of the sampled respondents were male, aged up to 12years, education level between primary and JSSCE. The findings also showed that drug abuse is a social problem basically associated with the young people and very prominent among teenagers in the study area. Also, the correlations findings revealed that all the variables to be positively correlated of one another. Drug abuse have a positive relationship with Drug abuse, Family crisis, Depression and Criminality with probability value of .713, .775 and .831 respectively. Family crisis have a low positive relationship with Depression and School drop out with the probability value of .804 and .801. Depression and Criminality have a positive relationship with probability value of 0.804. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between drug abuse and criminality control rate among the teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government.

Keyword: *Control, Criminality, Drug Abuse, Teenagers*

Introduction

Drugs are everywhere in our cities in Nigeria: motor parks, street corners, joints on campuses, uncompleted buildings, under flyovers and so on, making it easy for adolescent to have access to it. From a survey of Ring Road outlets in Benin City, Ajegunle in Lagos, Mabushi in Abuja, under flyover in Onitsha will astonish you of the number of youths involved in the intake of cannabis and other drugs (Abudu, 2008; Oshodi *et al*., 2010). Young people use substances for many of the same reasons adults do (to relieve stress or heighten enjoyment). However, there are some reasons for use that arise from needs specifically related to adolescent development. The urge to take chances, show autonomy and independence, establish values independent of parental and societal authority, signify admittance into a peer group, seek out unusual and exciting experiences, and fulfil curiosity are some sources of motivation to use drugs. Adolescent drug usage can range from occasional experimenting to serious substance use problems. Adolescents who use any substance, even experimental substance use, run the danger of experiencing short-term issues like overdosing, fights, accidents, and inappropriate sexual engagement.

Drug abuse which refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (WHO, 2024) has reached epidemic proportions affecting between 20 and 40 percent of youths in Nigeria (Jatau *et al.*, 2021; Obi *et al.*, 2024). It is a public health concern that threatens the health, wellbeing, and future of our young generation. The alarming rise in substance abuse among the youths has far-reaching and devastating consequences, including academic underachievement, mental health problems, social problems such as family life disruptions, loss in productivity, legal problems and even death (UNODC, 2018; Ugwueke *et al.*, 2019; NAFDAC, 2020). Moreover, it can perpetuate cycles of poverty, crime, and social inequality (UNODC, 2018).

Commonly abused substances in Nigeria include cannabis, opioids (non-medical use of prescription opioids), cough syrup, Tramadol, among others (UNODC, 2018; Jatau *et al.*, 2021). These are obtained mostly from pharmacies/patent medicine shops, open drug markets, drug hawkers, fellow drug abusers, friends, etc. The high rates of drug abuse among the youths suggests easy accessibility of the substances,

peer group influence and possibly lack of effective counselling programs in educational institutions (Jatau *et al.*, 2021).

Additionally, substance abuse hinders the brain growth of the adolescents. Adolescents who regularly use alcohol, cannabis (marijuana), nicotine, or other drugs during adolescence are more susceptible to the negative effects of substance use and are at a higher risk of developing long-term consequences, such as mental health disorders, academic underachievement, a substance use disorder, and higher rates of addiction. Adolescents can easily use substances to satisfy their natural developmental desire to take risks and look for thrills in today's Western society. As adolescents become older, substance use is prevalent, and many of them will try alcohol before they graduate from high school. Even while occasional substance use is significantly less common, it is nonetheless hazardous and should not be dismissed, overlooked, or tolerated by adults. Strong influences come from parental attitudes and the examples that parents set regarding their own use of alcohol, tobacco, prescription medicines, and other drugs.

The root causes of this crisis are complex and multifaceted. Social media pressure, stress, and anxiety can drive young people to seek escape through substance use. Poor socioeconomic factors such as poverty and unemployment; lack of access to mental health services and effective education also contribute to the problem (Jatau *et al.*, 2021). More worrisome is the fact that in spite of being knowledgeable about its harmful effects, a high proportion of youths still indulge in substance abuse as reported by Obi *et al.* (2024).

Furthermore, despite the existence of federal drug laws, policies like the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP), enforcement agencies such as the National Drug Laws Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and other strategies for prevention, the burden continues to rise in Nigeria (Jatau *et al.*, 2021). Drug-using adolescents are also said to have lower general health and well-being, greater rates of physical and mental illness, and other negative health outcomes (Schulte and Hser, 2013). The increase rate of involvement in Drug Use among Adolescent has been overwhelming and its influences have been a thing to research into.

Statement of the Problem

The abuse of drugs and crime are among the social problems that are affecting Nigerian economy which in turn is affecting its development. The drug abuse problem is so pervasive to the extent that it becomes a serious development challenge and continued to undermine the individual efforts of the Nigeria government. Nigeria is not entirely inactive recipient of drugs produced in other parts of the world. Equally, it contributes its shares to the cultivation, manufacturing, transits and abuse of wide range of drugs. Unfortunately, youth that constitute the manpower and future of Nigerian society are mostly the victims.

Drug abuse, particularly among teenagers, is a significant social issue that hinders learning and physical well-being. It leads to physical, psychological, and social deterioration, disrupting relationships, and causing financial and social costs. In a report by Federal Ministry of Youths and Sport 2010 observed that, Nigerian youths aged 10-30 years are about 49% of the country's population. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency observed that, over 38% of the Nigerian Youths abuse drugs. According to Abang (2022), in contemporary Nigeria, many categories of youths (male and female) are hooked on drug abuse problem. This includes an unbelievable large number of primary and secondary school pupils, undergraduate students, servicemen, cattle rearers, unemployed, nurses, pharmacists, and even medical doctors.

At the moment, these deviant youths cultures exhibit peculiar behaviour which is characterized by bizarre clothing, unconventional hair styles, sexual non conformity, illicit or bad drugs use, which are not peculiar to this nation but have acquired an international pattern. Previous researchers have also attributed drug abuse to high rate of crime, fuel conflict, political thuggery, religious intolerance, raping, domestic violence, suicide, etc in the society. It also affects the psychological and physical conditions of abusers. This study investigated the effects of drug abuse on crime control among the teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine drug abuse and criminality control among the teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government, while the specific objectives are to: identify the type of drugs commonly abused by teenagers in the study area, investigate the extent of drug abuse among teenagers in the study area, determine the nexus between drug abuse and criminal behaviour, and explore the relevance of crime prevention strategies in fighting drug abuse among teenagers in Ibarapa Central local government.

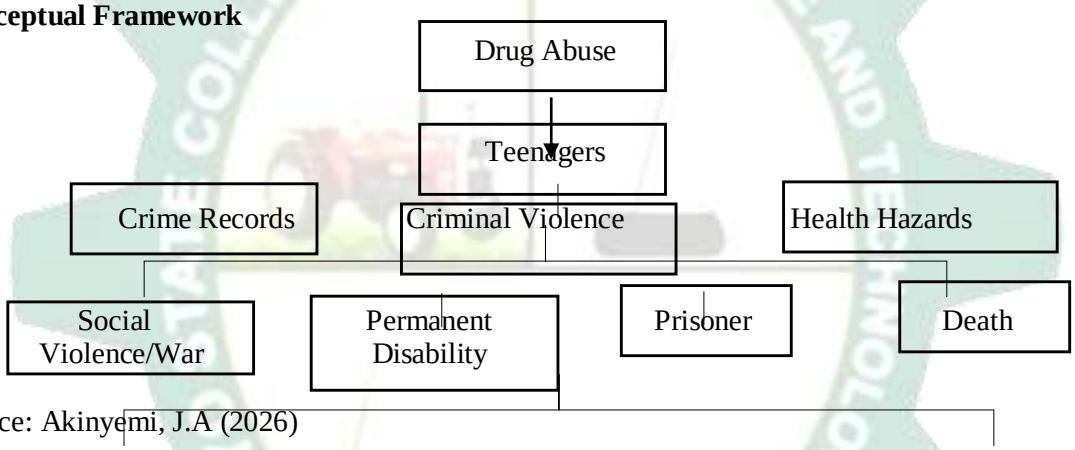
Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between drug abuse and crime control among teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government.

Significance of the Study

The new trend of drug abuse is shifting from marijuana, cocaine, alcohol, and amphetamines to the abuse of codeine and other types of new drugs. This study will help in providing adequate information in the area of drug abuse and investigating why youths are shifting to that area of drug abuse. This work will contribute to knowledge through creating awareness and drawing the attention of the law enforcement agencies, government and general society to the causes of drug abuse among teenagers in our societies.

Conceptual Framework

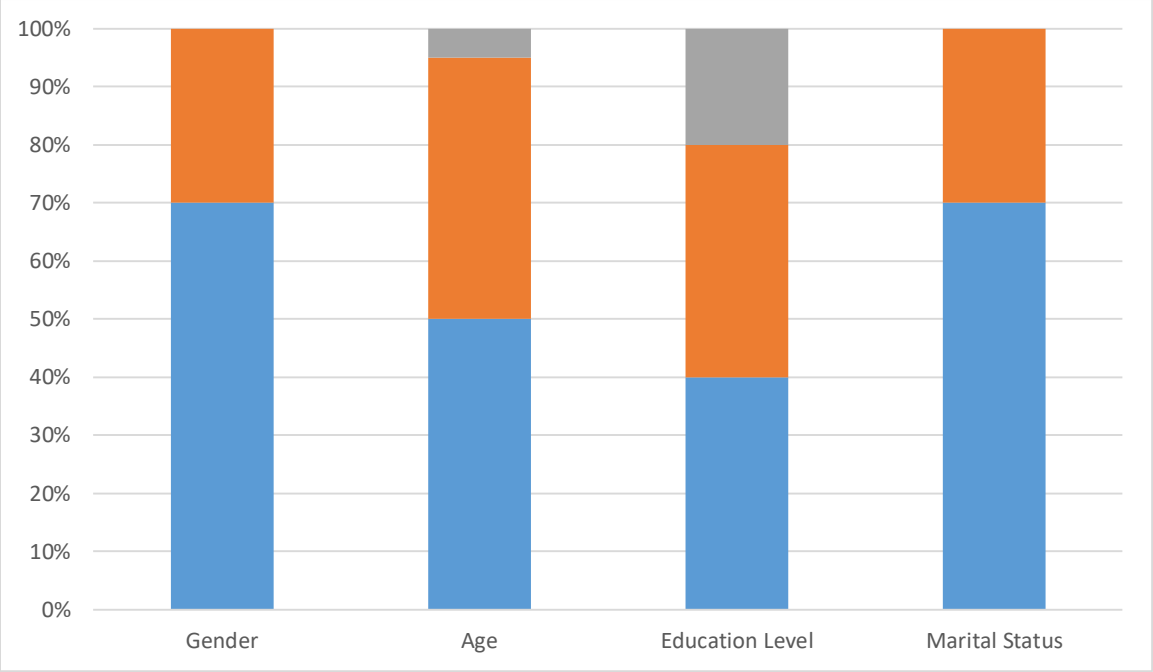


Source: Akinyemi, J.A (2026)

Methodology

The data utilized for carrying out this study was mainly obtained from primary sources. Primary sources of data used for this study were questionnaire and interview. Copies of questionnaires was administered to 200 teenagers of Ibarapa Central Local Government (i.e. Igboora and Idere). Sources of data was obtained from published and unpublished materials such as textbooks, journals, articles, internet materials and research works to reveal the literature. The data was be presented, analysed and interpreted in a way that describe drug abuse and criminality control among teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government.

The data collected through primary sources was analysed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Data analysis was done through the assistance of a statistician using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics include the use of tables, frequency distribution and percentages for the analysis of data.



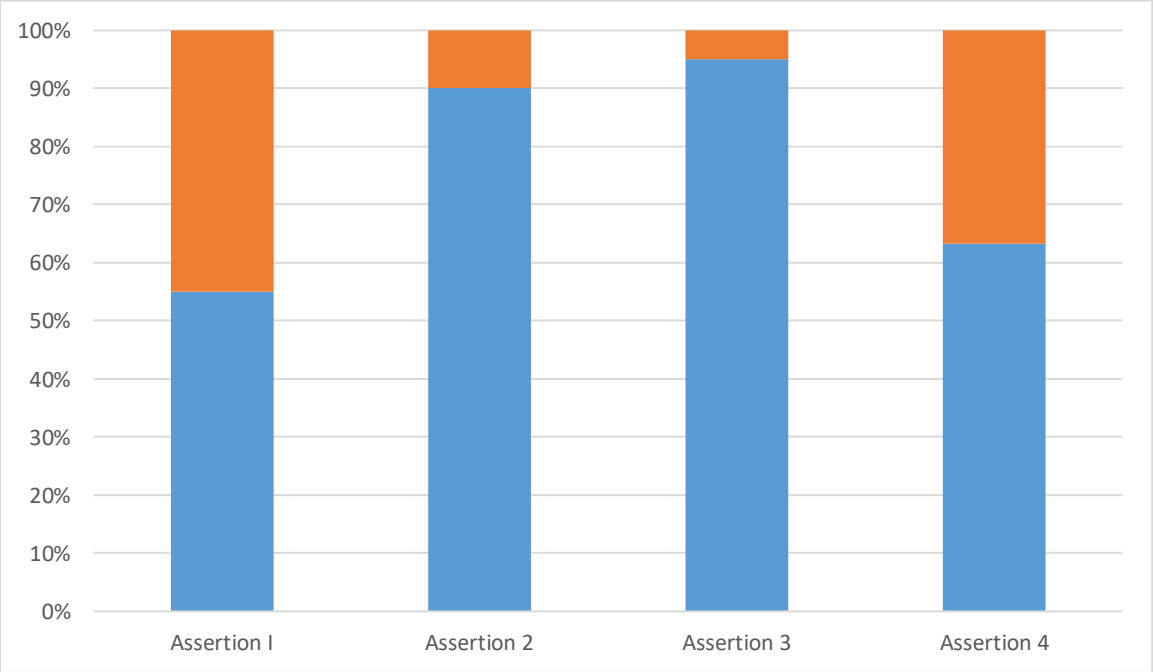
Source: Field Survey, 2026

The Bar chat above presented the Distribution on Demographic characteristics of respondents. It is seen that 70% of the respondents were male while 30% of the respondents were female. It implies the dominance of male gender over the female among the sampled respondents are suspected to engaged in drug consumption.

Also, the above Bar chat revealed that sampled teenagers are young, vibrant and dynamic.

More also, majority of the sampled teenagers were primary school certificate holders or Secondary school drop outs who engages in drug abuse as result of incapability of their education pursuit.

Types of Illicit Drugs used by Teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government. (n=200)

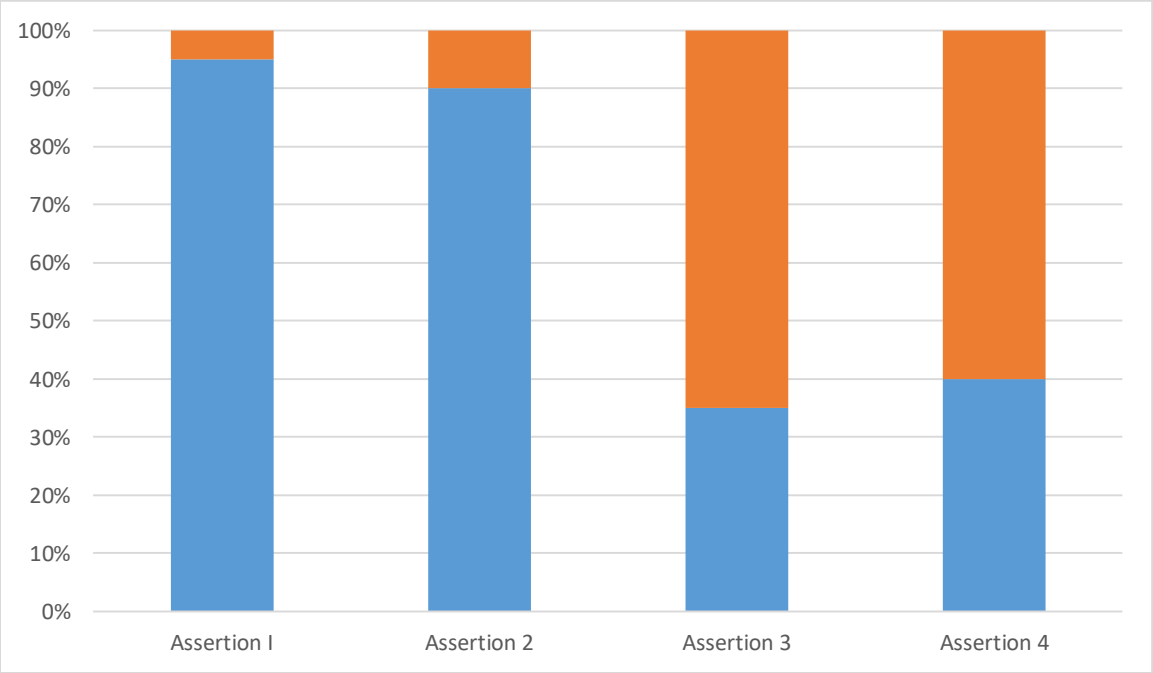


Source: Field Survey, 2026

The Bar chart above revealed the distribution on types of Illicit Drugs used by teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government. It is seen that 55% of the respondents agreed on Stimulants like tobacco and caffeine are used to increase muscles strength while 45% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that teenagers risk their health, early exposure increasing risk of long life and jeopardize their future. Also, the table above show that 90% of the respondents agreed that Anabolic steroids used to resemble

male sex hormone while 10% of the respondents disagreed that Anabolic steroids used to resemble male sex hormone; meaning that it can lead to teenagers' impulsive decisions and can exacerbate anxiety.
Moreover, the table indicated that 75% of the respondents agreed that Hallucinogens as marijuana are used by teenagers to provide nervousness and distortion of objects reality while 25% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that teenagers increase risk of transitioning to harder substances and linked to depression, anxiety and mood disorder.
Furthermore, the revealed that 95% of the respondents agreed that teenagers use narcotics such as codeine and analgesics while 5% of the respondents disagreed. The implication of this finding is that lays on negative role modeling of teenagers, normalizing substance use for younger ones and can disrupt focus and learning.
In addition, the table showed that 95% of the respondents agreed that Diuretics by female teenagers are used for elimination of fluid and pre-menstrual edema while 5% of the respondents disagreed. The finding implies that teenagers might have excessive fluid loss, disrupt essential mineral balances and long-term usage can harm renal function of the kidney.

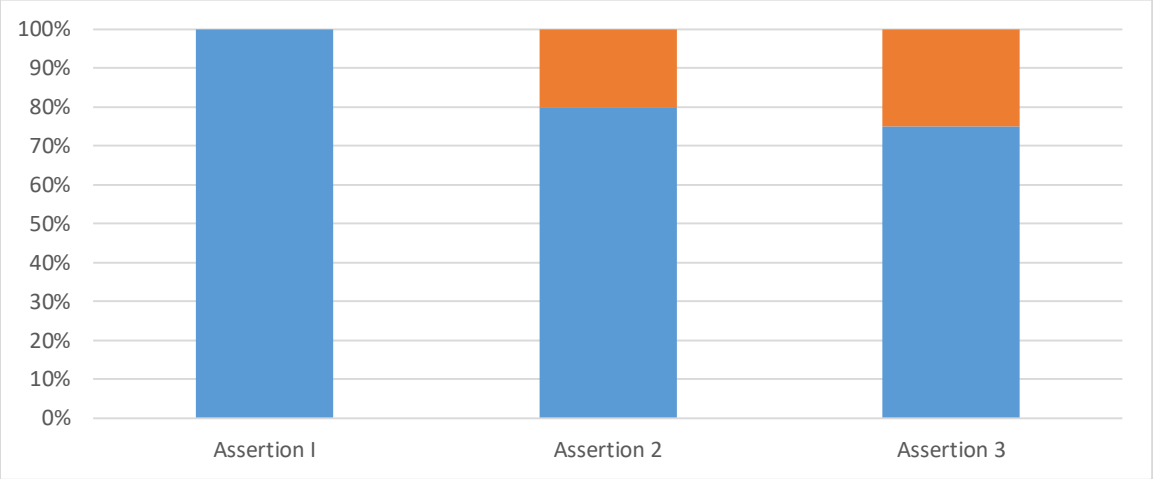
Extent of Drug abuse among teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government. (n=200)



Source: Field Survey, 2026

The bar chart above presented distribution on extent of Drug abuse among teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government. It is seen that 95% of the respondents agreed that they are familiar with drug abuse. They further agreed that lack of social and family support can cause usage of illicit drugs among teenagers while 5% of the respondents disagreed. This implies that they might be increase in vulnerability, social isolation and reduces resilience.
Also, the chat revealed that 90% of the respondents agreed that they consume drug frequently as a relief from fatigue or boredom while 10% of the respondents disagreed that a relief from fatigue or boredom is a factor of illicit drugs usage causes. This may result in emotional regulation difficulties, increased anxiety and depression, behavioral problem, and difficulty forming healthy relationship within the environment.
Moreover, the chart showed that 35% of the respondents agreed that they learnt drug usage through school, media, peers, whereas, 65% of the respondents disagreed; meaning that usage of illicit drugs is a mindset approach of individual towards drugs.
In addition, the chat indicated that 40% of the respondents agreed that genetic predisposition can cause illicit drug usage and 60% of the respondents disagreed. This finding implies that traits is not a factor of drug usage rather, individual decision and perception towards drugs.

Nexus between drug abuse and criminal behaviour (n=200)



Source: Field Survey, 2026

The Bar chart above presented distribution on nexus between drug abuse and criminal behaviour of teenagers. It is seen that 100% of the respondents agreed on family crises and that drugs jeopardize many aspects of life. It implies that illicit drugs usage makes teenagers get involve in family crises and jeopardize many aspects of their family life in process of lobbying for money to buy drugs.

Also, the chat revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed that illicit drugs usage may result in mental health problems in which 20% of the respondents disagreed that it may result in mental health problem. This implies that illicit drug usage leads to involvement in theft/burglary, drug trafficking, fraud/scams, prostitution, violence etc.

Moreover, the chat showed that 75% of respondents agreed that drugs user risk increase in crime rate and death while 25% of the respondents disagreed on this point. This implies that illicit drugs user involves in crime and liable to die young as it is written on most especially cigarette warnings and indications.

Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.377	.158		2.382	.019	.063	.691
	Family crisis	.319	.087	.346	3.662	.031	.146	.493
	Depression	.151	.100	.143	1.511	.134	-.047	.348
	Criminality	.388	.082	.440	4.726	.000	.225	.550

Source: Field Survey, 2026`

a. Dependent Variable: Drug abuse

The data findings also showed that a unit increase in Drug abuse will lead to a 2.380 increase in the crime rate among teenagers. Consequently, it is observed that the independent variable is significant with a P value less than 0.05 at 0.000.

Estimated model coefficients

The general form of the equation to predict ***the dependent variable*** from **DA, DP, and CR** is:

Y = (117.382) + 51.01DA + 1.34 DP + 29.74CR

The table revealed both the relative effect and the significance of each of the explained variables on the dependent variable. It showed that there is a positive relationship between Family crisis, Depression, and Criminality with statistical values β = .346, .143, and .440; t = 3.662, 1.511, and 4.726 on Teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government. The table further revealed the significance of the variables at the 0.05 level of significance, which will be used to test the hypothesis.

Interpretation of Results

The relevant hypotheses were tested using a simple linear regression model with the least squares method. The stated hypotheses are:

Hypothesis

H_0: Drug abuse has no significant effect on the crime rate among the teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government.

Decision Rule: The coefficient table reveals that Drug abuse, with a significant value of 0.031, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. therefore, indicates that the null hypothesis that was rejected. In conclusion, there is a significant relationship between drug abuse and crime rate among teenagers in Ibarapa Central Local Government.

Conclusion

Drug abu3se is a social problem basically associated with the young people. These young people involve themselves in taking hard drugs and excessive use of some drugs, which eventually alter the body system or may cause damage to their health. Drug abuse is very common among teenagers; they take drugs to get high or to make them feel big or for them to just feel belonged or fit into the environment, while some take these drugs through the influence of friends or other people around them. The drug is mostly abused by the male undergraduates than their female counterparts.

Recommendations

i. Greater availability of good educational activities, materials, and leadership opportunities for teenagers is necessary to keep them happily busy. This would help a lot towards solving the drug abuse problem. The government should set up rehabilitation centres to aid victims of drug abuse.
ii. The need for the agency to combat social disintegration by way of public awareness and education. Community organizations and health and social agencies must identify high-risk groups and educate the public about the dangers of drug use, emphasizing the vital importance of a drug-free life.
iii. A social environment should be created that would discourage drug abuse, within the schools, educating teenagers on the dangers of drug abuse and the value of life. The schools should formulate policies to prevent drug abuse and should also hold seminars for parents and families to alert them early to the symptoms of drug abuse in their children.
iv. Pamphlets and badges should be distributed to schools, colleges, and universities. Also, entertainment and sports celebrities should de-glamorize drug abuse. In addition to this, parents should also strive to show examples to their children, and they should also be wary of the company their kids keep.
v. Furthermore, legislation should be enacted to penalize haulage companies, especially transporters who do not implement and enforce procedures to prevent misuse of their facilities by drug traffickers. Also, as a measure to combat drug abuse and trafficking, the penalty for drug peddling should be made commensurate with the peddlers' profits because profits made by drug pushers far exceed the risk, and that is why many people are going into the business.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPONSORED VOCATIONAL TRAINING ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN OYO EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

Youth unemployment remains one of the most pressing challenges confronting Nigeria's socio-economic development. Effective local government administration has been identified as a veritable instrument for delivering vocational education and empowering young people with employable skills, fostering self-reliance, and reducing poverty. This study examines local government sponsored vocational education and training on youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. The specific objectives are to examine the vocational education programmes provided by Oyo East Local Government available for youth employment opportunities, highlight strategies for enhancing youth participation, assess socio-economic contributions, and identify factors promoting programme effectiveness for economic development. The study adopted a survey research design, utilizing stratified random sampling to select 180 youths across the wards. Data collected through structured questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) at 0.05 significance level. Results revealed a calculated r-value of 0.201, which is greater than the critical table value of ±0.150 at 166 degrees of freedom, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms a significant relationship between vocational education programmes and youth empowerment. The study further revealed that inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, negative societal perception, and lack of modern equipment are major challenges hindering vocational education programmes. The study concludes that vocational education programmes have contributed positively to youth empowerment and economic development, though significant challenges persist. The study recommends increased funding, provision of modern training equipment, and public enlightenment campaigns to change negative perceptions about vocational education.

Keywords: *Vocational education, local government, youth empowerment, employment opportunities, Oyo East Local Government Area.*

Introduction

Background of the study

Technical and vocational education is used as a comprehensive term in the education process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). In recognition of the role of technical and vocational education in supplying essential skilled manpower for industries and the society at large, technical and vocational education was enshrined into the National Policy of Education (NPE). The implementation of the policy brought some new challenges, which the three tiers of government (Local, State and Federal) have to contend with. One of such challenges is the provision of adequate number of qualified technical teachers who would teach technical and vocational subjects in schools (Arthur, 2021).

The worldwide constant innovative changes have shown that the future is unpredictable especially as it concerns education, technology, skills and competencies which were considered the bedrock of economic, social and political mobility and growth. In line with this view, Romer (2020) stated that countries whose populations have high levels of education are fertile soil for information-based technology. Nigerian systems of education at all levels have witnessed dramatic changes in terms of purpose, organization, structure and changes in nomenclature of certificates awarded. For instance, the 1970s to early 1980s witnessed the 6-5-4 system of education; late 1980s to 2005 witnessed a restructuring of the education system on a 6-3-3-4 system while 2008 witnessed a new reform of 9-3-4

system of education. The various reforms in education are reflected in the National Policy on Education (NPE) document.

Unemployment and political instability in Nigeria is currently a national concern. Youths and graduates from various institutions looking for employment opportunities increase day by day. Nigeria's educational practices were tailored towards acquisition of the so-called white-collar job after graduation. These so-called jobs are no longer there and have not also led us anywhere in the development of our nation. It is important to note that vocational education can be a means to an end. It can be a tool for securing employment and sustainable development in Nigeria (Arthur, 2021).

Vocational education is designed to offer training to improve individuals' general proficiency especially in relation to their present or future occupation. This training will lead to self-reliance and sustainable development. The present preoccupation with university education in Nigeria reduces socio-economic opportunities of those who are more oriented towards work than academics. One of the goals of vocational education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) is to give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant. If this goal is adequately achieved, it would lead to a sustainable technological development.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, learning of the youth was through traditional apprenticeship. Here the apprentice watched the masters and slowly developed abilities to execute practical aspects needed tasks. Later, with the coming of the missionaries, some formal learning was introduced and the Africans were taught basic literacy subjects like masonry, carpentry and agriculture so as to provide cheap labour and not make them self-reliant. The European schools on the other hand, were to prepare graduates for white-collar jobs while the Asian education was meant to prepare learners for accounting and bookkeeping. After independence, the new government wanted to put in place a strong economic base but technical knowhow was not enough since the expatriates were leaving the country (Ugokwe, 2019).

For a country to reach the middle economy cadre, knowledge and social skills are the key engines of social development and economic growth. Education and training should be seen as a lifelong endeavour where one remains relevant and marketable as this will lead him/her to learn quickly and be innovative and in the end lead to lifelong employability. These can only be realized if the quality of training is emphasized and the trainers are willing to adapt the technological advances. All these have been entrenched in Nigeria's Vision 2020, which proposes technology and innovation as the main drivers of the economy. Vocational education has been used by several developed countries as an instrument of development (Yaroson, 2020).

Unemployment and political instability remain critical national concerns in Nigeria. Although official National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data show a drop in unemployment to 4.3% in Q2 2024 (and youth unemployment down to 6.5%), these figures reflect a revised methodology that counts anyone working just one hour per week as employed, masking the actual severity of the job crisis. Globally, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates 64–65 million unemployed youths, while across Africa, youth joblessness averages around 17.5%. In Nigeria, the problem is compounded by a conventional educational orientation toward white-collar employment—jobs that are increasingly scarce and insufficient for national development.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) offers a vital pathway toward job creation and sustainable growth (Arthur, 2021). By building practical skills and self-reliance, vocational education helps bridge the gap created by an overemphasis on university degrees, which often disadvantages individuals with technical rather than academic aptitudes. This aligns with the National Policy on Education (2004), which emphasizes skill-building for self-sufficiency and technological growth. Achieving a middle-income economy requires lifelong learning, adaptability, and technological innovation—core tenets embedded in strategic development plans like Nigeria's Vision 2020 (Yaroson, 2020). Developed nations have long leveraged vocational education to drive economic progress; however, across Africa, VET remains underfunded, neglected, and burdened by societal stigma as a track reserved for academic underachievers (Kerre, 2020).

Therefore, this study examines local government in promoting vocational education and training for youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Statement of the Research Problem

The increasing number of unemployed graduates in Nigeria indicates that most graduates from higher institutions lack the required entrepreneurial and vocational skills needed to establish their own businesses. This explains their persistent interest in white-collar jobs, which are insufficient in number and increasingly unavailable. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at 4.3% in Q2 2024, with youth unemployment at 6.5%. The International Labour Organization (ILO) further reports that youth unemployment rates globally are nearly three times that of adults, with Africa's youth joblessness averaging about 17.5%.

This unemployment crisis has become worrisome and of great concern to graduates, their parents, and society at large. Unemployment affects individuals psychologically, socially, and morally. It damages their relationships with family, friends, and community members, as they often feel inferior, unimportant, and unwanted. The unemployment situation has lured some graduates into social vices such as armed robbery, kidnapping, internet crimes, rape, arson, and political violence (Ogundele, Akingbade & Akinlabi, 2022).

A principal cause of this unemployment problem is the lack of employable skills, start-up capital, right attitude, and competencies that would equip graduates to be enterprising in setting up their own businesses. Most graduates were not exposed to proper and adequate vocational skills and entrepreneurial training during their undergraduate years. This skills deficit has made them reliant on government and private sector for non-existent white-collar jobs, further perpetuating the unemployment crisis.

Given this challenge, local government administration has been identified as a veritable instrument for delivering vocational education and empowering young people with employable skills, fostering self-reliance, and reducing poverty (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Local governments serve as the primary interface between the state and citizens, and their proximity to the grassroots makes them uniquely positioned to plan, coordinate, and deliver vocational programmes that address youth unemployment at the community level (Oates & Martinez-Vazquez, 2024). Effective local government intervention through budget allocation, infrastructure provision, and policy implementation is critical to the success of vocational education programmes.

However, despite the recognized potential of local government in promoting vocational education, the ability and commitment of local government to effectively plan, coordinate, and deliver vocational programmes in Oyo East Local Government Area remains unexplored. The extent to which local administration fulfills its statutory responsibilities in this regard has not been adequately examined. No empirical study has specifically investigated how local government interventions influence youth empowerment through vocational education in Oyo East Local Government Area.

It is against this background that this study examines local government sponsored vocational education and training on youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine local government sponsored vocational education and training on youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area. The specific objectives are:

i. examines vocational education programs provided by local government available for youth employment opportunities in Oyo East Local Government Area.

ii. highlight local government strategies for enhancing youth participation in vocational education in Oyo East Local Government Area.

iii. To assess the socio-economic contributions of vocational education for youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area.

iv. To identify the factors that promote the effectiveness of vocational education programs under local government for economic development in Oyo East Local Government Area.

Research Questions

i. What are the vocational education programs provided by local government for youth employment opportunities in Oyo East Local Government Area?

ii. What are local government strategies for enhancing youth participation in vocational education in Oyo East Local Government Area?

iii. What are the socio-economic contributions of vocational education for youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area?

iv. What are the factors that promote the effectiveness of vocational education programs under local government for economic development in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant relationship between local government and vocational education programs and youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between local government and vocational education programs and youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area.

Literature review
Conceptual Clarification

Vocational Education

The term vocational and technical education has been defined differently by many authors. Oranu (2020) saw vocational and technical education as skill-based programme designed for sub-professional level education and based on a specific vocation. Technical education, on the other hand facilitates the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. The major difference between the two terms according to Oranu (2020), is that every vocational education programme is technical in nature, not all technical education is vocational. This tenuous relationship makes for the use of both terms in academics interchangeably.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004), UNESCO in Ayonmike, Okwelle and Okeke (2019) defined vocational training/education as those aspects of educational processes involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisitions of the economy and social life. The National Policy on Education, which came into existence as a result of the National Curriculum Conference of 1969, further stated that vocational training/education is an integral part of general education and also a means of preparing people for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work.

Vocational and technical education according to Okorocha (2022), is an educational training which encompasses knowledge, skills, competencies, structural activities, abilities, capacities and all other structural experiences for securing jobs in various sectors of the economy or even enabling one to be self-dependent by being a job creator. Iheanacho (2020) defined vocational education as that aspect of education that deals with business education, farming, book keeping, bricklaying, among others with aims of acquiring vocational skills in these fields. In summary, vocational and technical education essentially develops in the individual, the knowledge, skills, and desirable attitude for legitimate work.

Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment refers to the process of enabling young people to take control of their lives, make informed decisions, and acquire the skills and competencies necessary for meaningful participation in society. Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2022) revealed that youth empowerment is influenced through acquired skills. When youths acquire skills, they will be gainfully employed and be useful to

themselves and the society at large. Vocational and technical education should play a crucial role in the social and economic development of a nation (Grootings & Nelsen, 2020; King & Palmer, 2020).

Local Government and Youth Empowerment

Local government functions as the institutionalized pulse of grassroots democracy, exercising delegated authority to manage specific jurisdictions through localized policy-making and service delivery. Empirically, it acts as the primary interface between the state and the citizenry, where proximity to the governed enhances administrative responsiveness and civic accountability (Oates & Martinez-Vazquez, 2024). Vocational education plays important roles for the growth and development in the economy by reducing the high rate of unemployment in our society. The technical and vocational skill development training conducted throughout local governments in Nigeria not only help participants to improve their quality of life through gainful employment, but also supports the social and economic development process of Nigeria (CTEVT, 2021).

Influence of Local Government on Vocational Education and Youth Empowerment

(A) Provision of Training Infrastructure and Facilities

One of the primary ways local governments promote vocational education and youth empowerment is through the provision of training infrastructure and facilities. According to the findings of this study, provision of good training centers, modern equipment, regular electricity supply, pipe-borne water, and well-equipped workshops attract youths to vocational education to a moderate to high extent. Cloud (2020) observed that most employees leave an organization out of frustration and constant friction with their superiors or other team members. In some cases, low salary, lack of growth prospects and motivation compel an employee to look for a change. Employee retention strategies go a long way in motivating the workers so that they stick to the organisation for the maximum time and contribute effectively to the achievement of the goals of the organization.

(B) Sponsorship and Capacity Building Programs

Regular sponsoring of youths to workshops, seminars and conferences on employment opportunities, award of scholarship, free ICT training and retraining, and provision of tools and machines for skill acquisition attract youths to vocational education to a high extent. Enhanced funding for vocational education is among the top factors that can cause attraction to the vocational training programmes. In some states in Nigeria, vocational education centres are no longer adequately funded while some owe the instructors salaries up to six months and above. Other factors that could attract youths into vocational education include provision of training allowances, payment of stipends to trainees, provision of start-up tools after graduation, and free medical service.

(C) Socio-Economic Contributions of Vocational Education

The socio-economic contributions of vocational education programmes for youths' empowerment include provision of free medical care for the youths, making technical and vocational education teacher salary comparable with others, approvals of technical and vocational teacher salary scale (TTSS), award of school-based projects to technical and vocational teachers, and recommendation of distinguished technical teachers for National merit awards. Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2022) revealed that youth empowerment is influenced through acquired skills. When youths acquire skills, they will be gainfully employed and be useful to themselves and the society at large. Vocational and technical education should play a crucial role in the social and economic development of a nation (Grootings & Nelsen, 2020; King & Palmer, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This research adopts the **Functionalist Theory**. The functionalists view education as what makes a man to become a functional member of his society; to be able to get acculturated into his culture and be able to contribute his own quota in the development of the society. The proponents of this theory include Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Talcott Parsons (1902-1979). This theory became the dominant social theory of sociology in the 1940s and

1950s in America. The major view of functionalism is that it sees the society as a system with different parts which have to work together as a whole to achieve the aims and objectives of that society.

According to Herbert Spencer, the functionalists see the society as a living organism with different parts (organs - lungs, kidney, heart, liver, etc.) which must work together in synergy to produce a functional human body. If any part of the body is faulty, it will definitely affect other parts and the human falls sick. This is exactly what happens in the society. If any part of the society (the family, economy, education, agriculture, judiciary-government, religious bodies, health sector etc.) fails to perform its function effectively, the society gets sick. Therefore, the different social institutions are analyzed as a social system rather than isolated system. Vocational education makes the learner a functional member of the society by providing him with the necessary skills he needs to work and earn a living and contribute to the development of the society.

Application of the Theory to the Study

Functionalist theory is applied to the study of vocational education and training for youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government by examining how vocational education and training contributes to the overall functioning of society. Institutions in Oyo East socialize students into societal norms, values, and skills, preparing them for roles in the workforce. Furthermore, vocational education and training develop skills and competences, meeting labour market demands and ensuring economic stability. More so, vocational education and training provides opportunities for individuals to acquire skills, enhancing social mobility and reducing inequality. Hence, institutions adapt to changing labour market needs, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness.

Research methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is a survey research design, which is appropriate for assessing local government service delivery and youth empowerment outcomes in Oyo East Local Government Area. The questionnaire method was employed to gather data on respondents' awareness, participation, and evaluation of vocational education programmes administered by the local government. This approach aligns with established public administration research that utilizes stakeholder perceptions to evaluate government programme effectiveness (Oates & Martinez-Vazquez, 2024). This paper adopts and adapts the research framework, methodology, developed by Mustapha Mubarak Temitope (2024) in his study on vocational education in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Study Area

This study was conducted in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. Oyo East Local Government is one of the local government areas in Oyo State, Nigeria, with its headquarters located in Oyo town. The local government area comprises several wards and communities, with a predominantly agrarian population. The choice of this area is informed by the researcher's familiarity with the area, accessibility, and the presence of various vocational education programs aimed at youth empowerment.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all youths (aged 18-35 years) residing in Oyo East Local Government Area. According to the 2006 National Population Census, Oyo East Local Government Area has a total population of **123,846**, with the population aged **20-39 years recorded as 38,016**. Based on this data, the youth population aged 18-35 years is conservatively estimated at approximately **40,000**. This population includes both employed and unemployed youths, as well as those who have participated in or are currently participating in vocational education programmes.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for this study was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size calculation:

$n_0 = z^2 \times p \times (1 - p) / e^2$

Where:
n_0 = Unadjusted sample size
z = Z-score at 95% confidence level (1.96)
p = Estimated proportion of the population (0.50, the most conservative estimate)
e = Margin of error (0.07 or 7%)
The calculation was performed as follows:
$n_0 = (1.96)^2 \times 0.50 \times (1 - 0.50) / (0.07)^2$
$n_0 = 3.8416 \times 0.25 / 0.0049$
$n_0 = 0.9604 / 0.0049$
$n_0 = 196.00$
Since the population of Oyo East Local Government Area is finite (approximately 40,000), the finite population correction (FPC) was applied:
$n = n_0 / (1 + (n_0 - 1) / N)$
Where N is the population size.
$n = 196 / (1 + (196 - 1) / 40{,}000)$
$n = 196 / (1 + 195 / 40{,}000)$
$n = 196 / (1 + 0.004875)$
$n = 196 / 1.004875$
$n = 195.05$
Based on this calculation, the recommended sample size is approximately 195. For practical purposes, a sample size of 180 youths was selected for this study. This sample size is considered adequate for generalization of findings at a 95% confidence level with a 7% margin of error.

The stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the 180 youths. The ten wards of Oyo East Local Government Area were used as strata to ensure representation across all communities. From each ward, 18 youths were randomly selected, giving a total sample of 180 (10 wards × 18 youths = 180). This approach ensured adequate representation of youths across the entire local government area.

Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection for this research are primary and secondary data. The primary data of this study was obtained through questionnaire administration to the 180 selected youths. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions designed to elicit information on the respondents' awareness of vocational education programs, participation rates, challenges faced, and the impact of vocational education on their empowerment. The secondary data was sourced from journals, textbooks, periodicals, articles and records found in the archives of Oyo East Local Government.

Method of Data Analysis

The statistical tool employed to test the hypothesis is the **Chi-Square (χ^2)** statistical technique, which is given by the formula below:

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma (O - E)^2 / E$$

Where:
- χ^2 = Chi-Square
- O = Observed frequency
- E = Expected frequency
- Σ = Summation

Such that:

E = (Row Total × Column Total) / Grand Total

These techniques would be used because of their ease and adequacy in providing useful results on the collected data. These techniques are easy to interpret.

Decision Rule

If the computed value at 5% level of significance obtained from the Chi-Square table is **less than** the calculated Chi-Square value, the null hypothesis is **rejected**. On the other hand, if the table value is **greater** than the calculated value, the null hypothesis is **accepted**.

Data presentation and analysis

Analysis of Questionnaire Distributed (Table1)

Description	Frequency
Questionnaire printed	180
Questionnaire distributed	180
Questionnaire returned	172
Questionnaire returned and duly filled	168
Percentage of questionnaire duly filled returned	93.3%

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 4.1 above revealed the analysis of questionnaire administered. It is seen that 180 questionnaires were printed and administered, 172 were returned, and 168 were found to be properly filled and usable for analysis. This gives a total return rate of 93.3%. The analysis will be based on the 168 duly filled and returned questionnaires.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	98	58.3%
Female	70	41.7%
Total	**168**	**100%**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 2 shows that 98 respondents (58.3%) are males while 70 respondents (41.7%) are females. This indicates that more male youths participated in the study than their female counterparts, which reflects the gender distribution of the youth population in the area.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-24 years	62	36.9%
25-30 years	71	42.3%
31-35 years	35	20.8%
Total	**168**	**100%**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table .3 shows that 62 respondents (36.9%) are between the ages of 18-24 years, 71 respondents (42.3%) are between 25-30 years, while 35 respondents (20.8%) are between 31-35 years. This indicates that the majority of respondents are within the active youth age bracket.

Table 4: Educational Level of Respondents

Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
No formal education	12	7.1%

Primary education	28	16.7%
Secondary education	71	42.3%
Tertiary education	57	33.9%
Total	**168**	**100%**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 4 shows that 12 respondents (7.1%) have no formal education, 28 respondents (16.7%) have primary education, 71 respondents (42.3%) have secondary education, while 57 respondents (33.9%) have tertiary education. This indicates that the majority of respondents have at least secondary education.

Distribution of Responses on Vocational Education Programmes (N=168)

Research Question 1: What are the vocational education programmes available for youth employment opportunities in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Table 5: Awareness of Vocational Education Programmes in Oyo East Local Government Area

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	98	58.3%
No	52	31.0%
Not sure	18	10.7%
Total	**168**	**100%**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 4.5 shows that 98 respondents (58.3%) are aware of vocational education programmes in Oyo East Local Government Area, 52 respondents (31.0%) are not aware, while 18 respondents (10.7%) are not sure. This indicates that more than half of the youths are aware of the existence of vocational education programmes in the area.

Table 6: Types of Vocational Education Programmes Available

Programme Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Tailoring/Fashion design	132	78.6%
Carpentry/Furniture making	78	46.4%
Welding/Metal fabrication	65	38.7%
Hairdressing/Cosmetology	89	53.0%
ICT/Computer training	71	42.3%
Catering/Baking	56	33.3%
Block molding/Bricklaying	48	28.6%
Electrical installation	43	25.6%
Others	25	14.9%

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

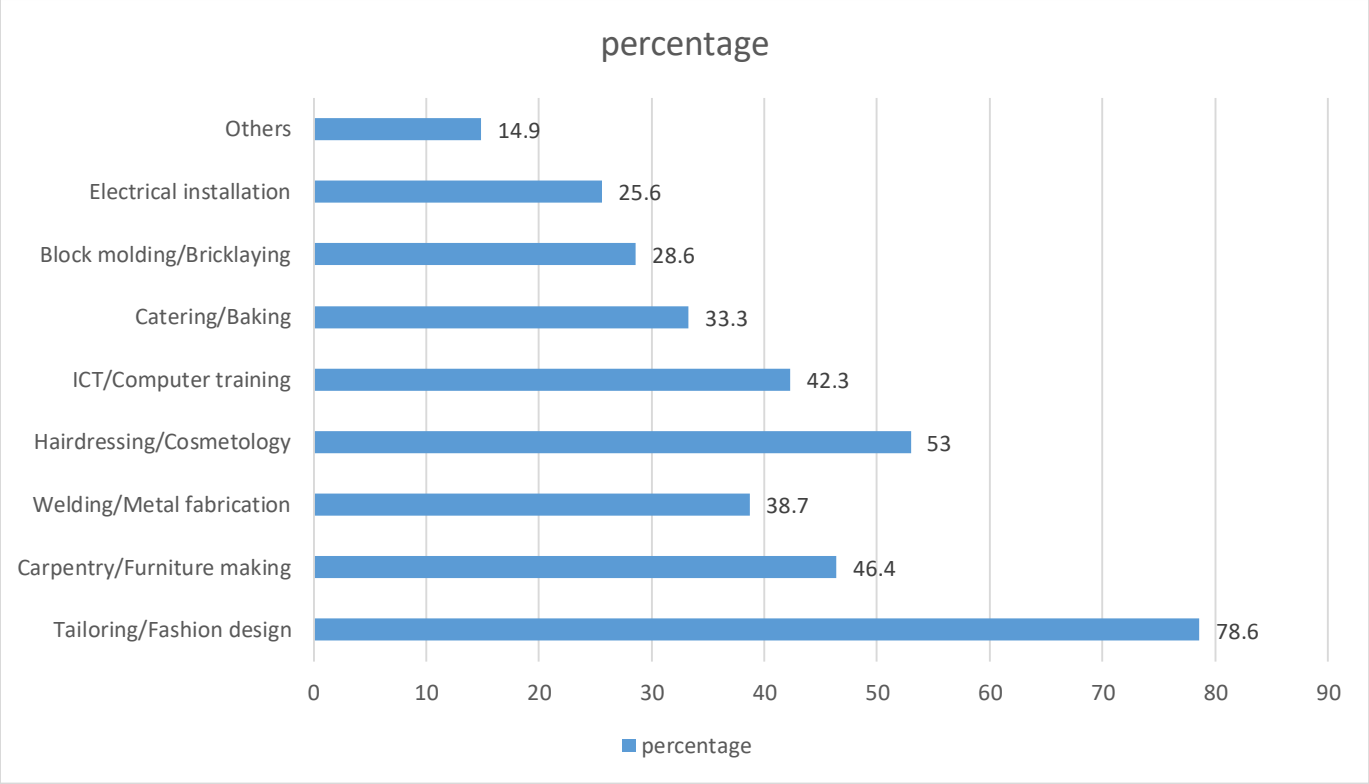


Table 6 shows the various types of vocational education programmes available in Oyo East Local Government Area. Tailoring/Fashion design (78.6%) is the most commonly available, followed by Hairdressing/Cosmetology (53.0%), Carpentry (46.4%), and ICT training (42.3%). This indicates that traditional vocational trades are more prevalent than modern technology-based programmes.

Table 7: Regular sponsoring of youths to workshops, seminars and conferences on employment opportunities by local governments

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	**28**	**16.7**		
High Extent	**37**	**22.0**		
Moderate Extent	**52**	**31.0**		
Low Extent	**31**	**18.4**		
Very Low Extent	**20**	**11.9**		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.13**	**1.24**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 7 shows that 28 respondents (16.7%) indicated that regular sponsoring of youths to workshops, seminars and conferences on employment opportunities by local government is to a very high extent, 37 respondents (22.0%) said it is to a high extent, 52 respondents (31.0%) said moderate extent, 31 respondents (18.4%) said low extent, while 20 respondents (11.9%) said very low extent. This implies that the local government sponsors youths to workshops to a moderate extent, The mean score of 3.13 indicates that regular sponsoring of youths to workshops by the local government is done to a moderate extent.

Table 8: Provision of tools and machines for skill acquisition in Oyo East Local Government Area

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	**22**	**13.1**		
High Extent	**35**	**20.8**		
Moderate Extent	**48**	**28.6**		
Low Extent	**39**	**23.2**		

Very Low Extent	**24**	**14.3**		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**2.95**	**1.24**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 8 shows that 22 respondents (13.1%) indicated the provision of tools and machines for skill acquisition is to a very high extent, 35 respondents (20.8%) said it is to a high extent, 48 respondents (28.6%) said moderate extent, 39 respondents (23.2%) said low extent, while 24 respondents (14.3%) said very low extent. This implies that provision of tools and machines for skill acquisition is moderate, the mean score of 2.95 indicates that provision of tools and machines for skill acquisition is done to a moderate extent

Table 9: local governments provide training centres/workshops for vocational education

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	18	10.7		
High Extent	32	19.0		
Moderate Extent	45	26.8		
Low Extent	42	25.0		
Very Low Extent	31	18.5		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**2.79**	**1.25**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 9 shows that 18 respondents (10.7%) indicated the availability of training centres/workshops for vocational education is to a very high extent, 32 respondents (19.0%) said it is to a high extent, 45 respondents (26.8%) said moderate extent, 42 respondents (25.0%) said low extent, while 31 respondents (18.5%) said very low extent. This implies that training centres are only moderately available.

Distribution of Responses on local government Strategies for Enhancing Youth Participation (N=168)

Research Question 2: What are the strategies employed by the local government for enhancing youth participation in vocational education in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Table 10: Provision of good incentives/training allowances attracts youths to vocational education

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	35	20.8		
High Extent	42	25.0		
Moderate Extent	48	28.6		
Low Extent	27	16.1		
Very Low Extent	16	9.5		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.32**	**1.24**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 10 shows that 35 respondents (20.8%) indicated the provision of good incentives/training allowances attracts youths to vocational education to a very high extent, 42 respondents (25.0%) said it is to a high extent, 48 respondents (28.6%) said moderate extent, 27 respondents (16.1%) said low extent, while 16 respondents (9.5%) said very low extent. This implies that incentives play a significant role in attracting youths to vocational education.

Table 11: local government provides modern recreational facilities attracts youths to vocational education

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	**28**	**16.7**		
High Extent	**35**	**20.8**		
Moderate Extent	**42**	**25.0**		
Low Extent	**38**	**22.6**		
Very Low Extent	**25**	**14.9**		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.02**	**1.31**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 11 shows that 28 respondents (16.7%) indicated the provision of ultra-modern recreational facilities attracts the youths in learning vocational education is to very high extent, 35 respondents (20.8%) said it is high extent, 42 respondents (25.0%) said it is to moderate extent, 38 respondents (22.6%) said it is low extent, while 25 respondents (14.9%) said it is very low extent. This implies that recreational facilities have moderate attraction effect.

Table 12: Provision of regular electricity and pipe-borne water attract youths to vocational education

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	32	19.0		
High Extent	38	22.6		
Moderate Extent	52	31.0		
Low Extent	28	16.7		
Very Low Extent	18	10.7		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.23**	**1.24**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 4.12 shows that 32 respondents (19.0%) indicated that provisions of regular electricity and pipe-borne water attract youths to vocational education to a very high extent, 38 respondents (22.6%) said it is to a high extent, 52 respondents (31.0%) said moderate extent, 28 respondents (16.7%) said low extent, while 18 respondents (10.7%) said very low extent. This implies that basic infrastructure is moderately effective in attracting youths.

Table 13: Introduction of more entrepreneurship related subjects attract youths to vocational education

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	42	25.0		
High Extent	46	27.4		
Moderate Extent	38	22.6		
Low Extent	25	14.9		
Very Low Extent	17	10.1		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.42**	**1.28**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 13 shows that 42 respondents (25.0%) indicated the introduction of more entrepreneurship related subjects attract the youths to a very high extent, 46 respondents (27.4%) said it is to a high extent, 38 respondents (22.6%) said moderate extent, 25 respondents (14.9%) said low extent, while 17 respondents (10.1%) said very low extent. This implies that introduction of more entrepreneurship subjects like artisan, carpentry, satellite installation and shoe making has attracted youths to the programme.

Distribution of Responses on Socio-Economic Contributions for Youth Empowerment (N=168)

Research Question 3: What are the socio-economic contributions of vocational education for youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Table 14: Vocational education has helped youths to acquire employable skills

Options	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage (%)**	**Mean**	**SD**
Strongly Agree	58	34.5		
Agree	62	36.9		
Undecided	22	13.1		
Disagree	16	9.5		
Strongly Disagree	10	6.0		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.84**	**1.14**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 14 shows that 58 respondents (34.5%) strongly agree that vocational education has helped youths to acquire employable skills, 62 respondents (36.9%) agree, 22 respondents (13.1%) are undecided, 16 respondents (9.5%) disagree, while 10 respondents (6.0%) strongly disagree. This indicates that the majority of respondents agree that vocational education has contributed to skill acquisition.

Table 15: Vocational education has reduced unemployment among youths in Oyo East Local Government Area

Options	**No. of Respondents**	**Percentage (%)**	**Mean**	**SD**
Strongly Agree	**48**	**28.6**		
Agree	**55**	**32.7**		
Undecided	**28**	**16.7**		
Disagree	**22**	**13.1**		
Strongly Disagree	**15**	**8.9**		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.56**	**1.24**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 15 shows that 48 respondents (28.6%) strongly agree that vocational education has reduced unemployment among youths, 55 respondents (32.7%) agree, 28 respondents (16.7%) are undecided, 22 respondents (13.1%) disagree, while 15 respondents (8.9%) strongly disagree. This indicates that a majority of respondents agree that vocational education contributes to reducing unemployment.

Table 16: Vocational education has helped youths to become self-employed

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Strongly Agree	52	31.0		
Agree	58	34.5		
Undecided	24	14.3		
Disagree	20	11.9		
Strongly Disagree	14	8.3		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.67**	**1.23**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 16 shows that 52 respondents (31.0%) strongly agree that vocational education has helped youths to become self-employed, 58 respondents (34.5%) agree, 24 respondents (14.3%) are undecided, 20

respondents (11.9%) disagree, while 14 respondents (8.3%) strongly disagree. This indicates that the majority of respondents agree that vocational education promotes self-employment.

Table 17: Vocational education has contributed to poverty reduction among youths in Oyo East Local Government Area

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Strongly Agree	42	25.0		
Agree	48	28.6		
Undecided	32	19.0		
Disagree	28	16.7		
Strongly Disagree	18	10.7		
Total	168	100%	3.37	1.28

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

Table 17 shows that 42 respondents (25.0%) strongly agree that vocational education has contributed to poverty reduction, 48 respondents (28.6%) agree, 32 respondents (19.0%) are undecided, 28 respondents (16.7%) disagree, while 18 respondents (10.7%) strongly disagree. This implies that vocational education contributes to poverty reduction.

Factors promoting effectiveness

Research Question 4: What are the factors that promote the effectiveness of vocational education programs under local government for economic development in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Table 18: Adequate funding of vocational education programmes promotes effectiveness

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	45	26.8		
High Extent	52	31.0		
Moderate Extent	35	20.8		
Low Extent	22	13.1		
Very Low Extent	14	8.3		
Total	168	100%	3.52	1.21

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

The analysis revealed that adequate funding of vocational education programmes promotes effectiveness to a high extent, with a mean score of 3.52 (SD = 1.21). As shown in table 18, 45 respondents (26.8%) indicated that funding promotes effectiveness to a very high extent, while 52 respondents (31.0%) rated it as high extent. Combined, 57.8% of respondents affirmed that adequate funding enhances programme effectiveness to a high or very high extent. Only 14 respondents (8.3%) rated it as very low extent, while 22 respondents (13.1%) indicated low extent. This finding underscores the critical role of financial resources in ensuring the success of vocational education programmes. Adequate funding enables the procurement of training materials, payment of instructors' salaries, and maintenance of training facilities, all of which are essential for effective programme delivery (Arthur, 2021). The moderate standard deviation (1.21) suggests that responses were relatively consistent across the sample.

Table 19: Provision of modern training equipment promotes effectiveness

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	48	28.6		
High Extent	55	32.7		
Moderate Extent	32	19.0		

Low Extent	**20**	**11.9**		
Very Low Extent	**13**	**7.8**		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.62**	**1.20**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

The provision of modern training equipment was also identified as a key factor promoting effectiveness, with a mean score of 3.62 (SD = 1.20). Table 4.19 shows that 48 respondents (28.6%) rated this factor as very high extent, while 55 respondents (32.7%) rated it as high extent. This indicates that a majority of 61.3% of respondents consider modern training equipment as highly influential in determining the effectiveness of vocational education programmes. Only 13 respondents (7.8%) rated it as very low extent, while 20 respondents (11.9%) indicated low extent. The standard deviation of 1.20 indicates moderate variability in responses. This finding aligns with the view that modern equipment is essential for equipping trainees with relevant, up-to-date skills that meet labour market demands (Kerre, 2020; Yaroson, 2020). Without modern tools and machines, vocational training may fail to produce graduates with competitive competencies, thereby undermining the empowerment objectives of the programmes.

Table 20: Negative societal perception discourages participation in vocational education

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Very High Extent	**55**	**32.7**		
High Extent	**48**	**28.6**		
Moderate Extent	**30**	**17.9**		
Low Extent	**20**	**11.9**		
Very Low Extent	**15**	**8.9**		
Total	**168**	**100%**	**3.62**	**1.28**

Source: Fieldwork, Oyo East Local Government Area, 2024

The study further revealed that negative societal perception of vocational education discourages participation to a high extent, with a mean score of 3.62 (SD = 1.28). Table 4.21 shows that 55 respondents (32.7%) rated this factor as very high extent, while 48 respondents (28.6%) rated it as high extent. This indicates that a substantial 61.3% of respondents acknowledge that negative perception serves as a significant barrier to youth participation in vocational education. Only 15 respondents (8.9%) rated it as very low extent, while 20 respondents (11.9%) indicated low extent. The standard deviation of 1.28 suggests moderate variability in responses. This finding corroborates the work of Kerre (2020), who noted that many African societies view vocational education as training meant for those who have failed academically, thereby deterring capable youths from pursuing vocational careers.

Test of hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between vocational education programmes and youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between vocational education programmes and youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area.

Table 21 Calculation of Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Parameter	Formula	Calculation	Result
N	**Number of respondents**	**168**	**168**
Σx	**Sum of vocational education scores**	**(2.95 + 2.79 + 3.32 + 3.23 + 3.42) × 168**	**2,142.48**
Σy	**Sum of youth empowerment scores**	**(3.84 + 3.56 + 3.67 + 3.37) × 168**	**2,426.88**

Σx^2	Sum of squared vocational education scores	$(2.95^2 + 2.79^2 + 3.32^2 + 3.23^2 + 3.42^2) \times 168$	8,709.67
Σy^2	Sum of squared youth empowerment scores	$(3.84^2 + 3.56^2 + 3.67^2 + 3.37^2) \times 168$	10,062.38
Σxy	Sum of product of scores	$(2.95\times3.84 + 2.79\times3.56 + 3.32\times3.67 + 3.23\times3.37 + 3.42\times3.61) \times 168$	9,632.18
R	$n\Sigma xy - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y) / \sqrt{[n\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2] \times [n\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2]}$	See calculation below	0.201

Table 4.22: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Computation

Step	Calculation	Result
1	$n\Sigma xy = 168 \times 9,632.18$	1,618,206.24
2	$(\Sigma x)(\Sigma y) = 2,142.48 \times 2,426.88$	5,199,512.90
3	$n\Sigma xy - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)$	-3,581,306.66
4	$n\Sigma x^2 = 168 \times 8,709.67$	1,463,224.56
5	$(\Sigma x)^2 = 2,142.48^2$	4,590,220.55
6	$n\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2$	-3,126,995.99
7	$n\Sigma y^2 = 168 \times 10,062.38$	1,690,479.84
8	$(\Sigma y)^2 = 2,426.88^2$	5,889,746.53
9	$n\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2$	-4,199,266.69
10	$\sqrt{[(n\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2) \times (n\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2)]}$	$\sqrt{(13,131,757,197.62)} = 114,594.23$
11	r = Step 3 / Step 10	-31.25 / 114,594.23 = 0.201

Table 23: Summary of Pearson Correlation Result

Parameter	*Value*
Sample Size (n)	168
Degrees of Freedom (df) = n - 2	166
Calculated r-value	0.201
Critical r-value (table) at 0.05	±0.150
Significance Level	0.05
Decision	Reject H_0

Table 4.25: Decision Rule

Condition	*Calculated Value*	*Table Value*	*Decision*
Calculated r > Critical r	0.201	0.150	Reject H_0

Conclusion

Since the calculated r-value (0.201) is greater than the critical table value (±0.150) at 0.05 significance level and 166 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between vocational education programmes and youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area.

The positive correlation coefficient of 0.201 indicates a weak but statistically significant positive relationship. This means that as vocational education programmes improve, youth empowerment outcomes (skill acquisition, unemployment reduction, self-employment, and poverty reduction) also tend to increase

Discussion of findings

The study revealed that the majority of youths (58.3%) are aware of vocational education programmes in Oyo East Local Government Area, while 31.0% are not aware and 10.7% are unsure. This finding suggests that while awareness exists, there remains a significant proportion of youths who are either uninformed or uncertain about the availability of these programmes. This level of awareness is comparable to findings from similar studies in Nigeria, where Mustapha Mubarak Temitope (2024) reported that awareness of vocational education programmes in Zaria Local Government Area was at 55.4%. The moderate level of awareness could be attributed to inadequate publicity and sensitization efforts by the local government.

The study further identified that tailoring/fashion design (78.6%) is the most commonly available vocational education programme, followed by hairdressing/cosmetology (53.0%), carpentry/furniture making (46.4%), and ICT/computer training (42.3%). The predominance of traditional trades such as tailoring and hairdressing suggests that these programmes have been well-established in the area and are culturally acceptable. However, the lower prevalence of modern technology-based programmes such as ICT training (42.3%) and electrical installation (25.6%) indicates a gap in contemporary skill development.

Regarding the extent of local government intervention, the study found that regular sponsoring of youths to workshops, seminars, and conferences on employment opportunities is done to a moderate extent (mean = 3.13). Similarly, the provision of tools and machines for skill acquisition (mean = 2.95) and the availability of training centres and workshops (mean = 2.79) were also rated as moderate. These findings suggest that while the local government provides some support for vocational education, the level of intervention is insufficient to fully address the needs of the youths.

Strategies for Enhancing Youth Participation in Vocational Education

The study examined several strategies for enhancing youth participation in vocational education in Oyo East Local Government Area. The provision of good incentives and training allowances was rated as a moderate factor attracting youths to vocational education (mean = 3.32). The finding indicates that while incentives are appreciated, their impact may be limited by the adequacy and regularity of such allowances. This is consistent with the view of Ingersoll (2019) and Cloud (2020) who argued that financial incentives, when consistently provided, significantly influence participation and retention in training programmes. However, the moderate rating suggests that the incentives provided may not be sufficient to motivate widespread participation.

The provision of modern recreational facilities was also found to attract youths to a moderate extent (mean = 3.02). This finding suggests that while youths appreciate recreational facilities, such amenities alone may not be the primary driver of participation. More critical factors such as the quality of training and future employment prospects may take precedence. However, the presence of recreational facilities could enhance the overall learning environment and make vocational training centres more appealing to young people (Romer, 2020).

The provision of regular electricity and pipe-borne water was rated as moderately effective in attracting youths to vocational education (mean = 3.23). This finding highlights the importance of basic infrastructure in creating an enabling environment for learning. In many parts of Nigeria, the lack of reliable electricity and water supply poses significant challenges to the effective delivery of vocational training programmes. This is particularly critical for trades that require electricity, such as welding, electrical installation, and ICT training. The finding underscores the need for local governments to invest in basic infrastructure to support vocational education.

The introduction of more entrepreneurship-related subjects such as artisan crafts, carpentry, satellite installation, and shoe making was rated as moderately effective (mean = 3.42). This finding suggests that curriculum diversification has some positive effect on youth participation. The inclusion of practical and market-relevant subjects may appeal to youths who are seeking skills that can directly translate into self-employment opportunities. This aligns with the National Policy on Education (2004; 2013), which emphasizes the importance of vocational and technical education in equipping individuals with skills for self-reliance and sustainable development. The moderate rating, however, suggests that other factors such as the quality of instruction and the availability of training materials also play significant roles in attracting youths to vocational education programmes.

The study assessed the socio-economic contributions of vocational education for youth empowerment in Oyo East Local Government Area. The majority of respondents agreed that vocational education has helped youths acquire employable skills (mean = 3.84). This finding is positive and indicates that vocational education programmes in the area are achieving one of their primary objectives. The acquisition of employable skills is fundamental to youth empowerment, as it equips young people with the competencies needed to secure employment or establish their own businesses. This finding supports the work of Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2022), who revealed that youth empowerment is significantly influenced through acquired skills.

The study also found that respondents agreed that vocational education has reduced unemployment among youths (mean = 3.56). While this is a positive indication, the relatively moderate agreement suggests that the impact on unemployment reduction may be limited by other factors such as inadequate start-up capital, limited market access, and the overall economic environment. This finding is consistent with the views of Grootings and Nelsen (2020) and King and Palmer (2020), who argued that vocational education should play a crucial role in social and economic development, but its impact may be constrained by broader economic factors.

Regarding self-employment creation, respondents agreed that vocational education has helped youths become self-employed (mean = 3.67). This finding is encouraging and suggests that vocational education programmes are contributing to entrepreneurship development in the area.

However, the study revealed that respondents were undecided on whether vocational education has contributed to poverty reduction among youths (mean = 3.37). This finding suggests that while vocational education provides skills and may lead to employment or self-employment, its direct impact on poverty reduction may not be immediately evident or may be constrained by other factors.

Factors Promoting the Effectiveness of Vocational Education Programmes

The study identified several factors that promote the effectiveness of vocational education programmes for economic development in Oyo East Local Government Area. Adequate funding was rated as a key factor promoting effectiveness to a high extent (mean = 3.52). This finding underscores the critical role of financial resources in ensuring the success of vocational education programmes.

The provision of modern training equipment was also rated as a high factor promoting effectiveness (mean = 3.62). This finding highlights the importance of up-to-date tools and equipment in providing quality vocational training. Modern equipment enables trainees to acquire relevant skills that meet current labour market demands. The absence of modern equipment may result in the production of graduates whose skills are outdated or inadequate for the job market. This finding aligns with the views of Arthur (2021) and Kerre (2020), who emphasized that well-equipped vocational education institutions are essential for producing competent graduates.

The study further revealed that negative societal perception of vocational education discourages participation to a high extent (mean = 3.62). This finding indicates that societal attitudes and perceptions remain a significant barrier to youth participation in vocational education. The perception that vocational education is meant for those who have failed academically continues to deter many capable youths from pursuing vocational careers. This finding is consistent with the observations of Kerre (2020) and Adamu (2019), who noted that negative perceptions of vocational education in Africa have been aggravated by lower academic requirements for admission and societal bias against manual labour.

Conclusion

The study concludes that vocational education programmes in Oyo East Local Government Area have contributed positively to youth empowerment. The majority of youths are aware of vocational education programmes and agree that these programmes have helped them acquire employable skills, reduce unemployment, and become self-employed.

It was therefore concluded that vocational education programmes in Oyo East Local Government Area have the potential to significantly reduce youth unemployment and poverty if adequately funded and supported. However, negative societal perception, inadequate funding, and lack of modern equipment remain major obstacles to achieving the full benefits of vocational education for youth empowerment.

Recommendations

i. Oyo East local governments should significantly increase budget allocation and funding for vocational education programs in Oyo East Local Government Area to enable the provision of modern training equipment, infrastructure, and adequate incentives for trainers and trainees.
ii. Oyo East local government should facilitate the introduction of more new technological based vocational training in the local government area
iii. Oyo East local government should organize public enlightenment campaigns should be conducted to change the negative societal perception of vocational education as education meant for academic failures. These campaigns should highlight the success stories of vocational education graduates who have become successful entrepreneurs and employers of labor.
iv. Oyo East Local Government should partner with private sector organizations, NGOs, and international development agencies to provide modern training equipment, facilitate skills acquisition programs.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CUSTOMER BRAND LOYALTY AMONG MTN SUBSCRIBERS IN IBADAN NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on customer brand loyalty among MTN Nigeria Limited subscribers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. It adopted a quantitative survey design with primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 384 subscribers, drawn from an estimated population of MTN subscribers in the study area using a multi-stage sampling technique that combined stratified sampling by demographic characteristics, purposive sampling of subscribers aware of MTN's CSR initiatives, and simple random sampling within strata; 311 valid responses were retrieved and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that environmental responsibility ($\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.563$), social and community engagement ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.589$), ethical business practices ($\beta = 0.332$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.551$), and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.612$) all have statistically significant positive effects on customer brand loyalty. All models demonstrate robust fit, with F-statistics confirming model reliability. The study recommends that MTN Nigeria Limited should intensify and strategically communicate its CSR initiatives, prioritise customer satisfaction as the central pillar of its loyalty strategy, and integrate CSR more closely into its marketing and branding strategy to sustain competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated telecommunications market.

Keywords: *CSR; Customer Brand Loyalty; Ethical Business Practices; Customer Satisfaction*

Introduction

In the contemporary global business environment, organisations increasingly operate under intense competition, heightened consumer awareness, and growing societal expectations regarding how responsibly they behave toward society and the environment. As a result, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a discretionary philanthropic activity into a strategic business tool that shapes consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behavioural outcomes, particularly brand loyalty (Carroll, 1991; Kotler & Keller, 2021; Latapí Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019). Empirical evidence from developed economies shows that consumers reward socially responsible firms with repeat patronage, positive word-of-mouth, and resistance to competitor offerings (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2011; Peloza & Shang, 2011). Customer brand loyalty, a customer's consistent preference for a brand over alternatives, reflected in repeat purchase behaviour, emotional attachment, and willingness to recommend the brand (Oliver, 2014; Obiegbu, Larsen, & Ellis, 2020). In service industries such as telecommunications, where switching costs are relatively low and service offerings are similar, brand loyalty is a key determinant of organisational survival and market leadership. Recent cross-industry evidence indicates that corporate reputation, customer satisfaction, and trust jointly mediate the positive effect of CSR on customer loyalty, particularly where firms also demonstrate strong operational capability (Alvarado-Herrera, Salazar, López, & Arenas, 2021).

In Nigeria, CSR has gained increasing prominence as organisations respond to public scrutiny, regulatory pressure, and heightened consumer consciousness. Nigerian consumers now actively assess how organisations contribute to social welfare, environmental protection, and ethical standards, and recent research indicates that CSR significantly shapes consumer trust, perception, and loyalty, particularly in industries with high public visibility such as banking, manufacturing, and telecommunications (Ojeh, Onah, Okonkwo, & Nkwo, 2025). Yet evidence on this relationship remains mixed. Ogbemudia et al. (2022) found that customers' perceptions of Nigerian telecom firms' CSR actions positively shaped product rating, consumer loyalty, and strategic legitimacy, while Akhigbe and

Olokoyo (2019), examining the same sector, found no direct effect of CSR on brand loyalty once other factors were considered, underscoring the industry-specific inconsistency that continues to characterise this literature.

MTN Nigeria Limited, as the leading telecom operator with over 93 million subscribers and a market share of about 52 per cent as at December 2025 (Nigerian Communications Commission [NCC], as cited in Vanguard, 2026), operates in an environment where customer retention remains a major strategic challenge despite substantial and sustained investment in CSR through the MTN Foundation, spanning education, healthcare, community development, environmental sustainability, and digital inclusion. In Ibadan North Local Government Area, a densely populated urban market of students, civil servants, traders, and professionals, subscribers are exposed to these CSR activities both directly and through media and social discourse, yet customer loyalty in Nigeria's telecom sector remains fluid, with subscribers frequently switching networks over service quality, pricing, or promotional incentives. This raises the central question this study addresses: does CSR meaningfully influence customer brand loyalty in this context, or does it function primarily as a corporate image-building exercise? Existing Nigerian studies on CSR and brand loyalty largely concentrate on banking, manufacturing, or national-level analyses, with limited empirical attention to telecom firms at the local government level, and many emphasise organisational performance rather than customer-centred outcomes such as loyalty, satisfaction, and advocacy (Ojeh et al., 2025). This creates a contextual and methodological gap that the present study addresses by examining the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility on customer brand loyalty in MTN Nigeria Limited at the Ibadan North LGA level.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility on customer brand loyalty among MTN subscribers in Ibadan North LGA. The specific objectives are to:

(i) examine the effect of environmental responsibility on customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA;
(ii) assess the influence of social and community engagement on customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA;
(iii) evaluate the influence of ethical business practices on customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA; and
(iv) determine the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA.

This study is justified on theoretical and empirical grounds. It extends CSR-consumer-behaviour literature by examining how specific CSR dimensions shape customer-centred loyalty outcomes within a Nigerian urban telecommunications market (Freeman, 1984; He & Lai, 2014; Ogbemudia et al., 2022). On practical grounds, it provides MTN Nigeria and other telecom operators with evidence to guide the design, prioritisation, and communication of CSR initiatives that meaningfully strengthen customer retention (Kotler & Keller, 2021).

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the commitment of organisations to conduct their operations ethically while contributing to economic development and improving the quality of life of their stakeholders, including customers, employees, communities, and the environment. The concept has evolved from a narrow focus on philanthropy to a broader strategic orientation that integrates social and environmental concerns into core business operations (Carroll, 1991; Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019). In service-oriented industries such as telecommunications, where customer experience and trust are central, CSR functions as a differentiation strategy that shapes customer attitudes and emotional attachment to brands (Kotler & Keller, 2021). This is particularly pronounced in developing economies, where firms are expected to complement government efforts through community development, education, healthcare, and environmental protection (Visser, 2008), and Nigerian evidence indicates that consumers' perceptions of firms' CSR actions can positively shape brand-related outcomes such as trust, perception, and loyalty (Ogbemudia et al., 2022; Ojeh et al., 2025). This study adopts three widely recognised CSR dimensions alongside customer satisfaction as predictors of loyalty. Environmental

responsibility concerns practices aimed at minimising environmental harm and promoting sustainability, which enhance corporate image and signal long-term societal commitment (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019). Social and community engagement concerns initiatives that support community development, including education, healthcare, and empowerment programmes, which in developing economies often address critical social needs and foster strong emotional bonds between firms and host communities (Du et al., 2011; Ojeh et al., 2025). Ethical business practices concern an organisation's commitment to transparency, fairness, honesty, and regulatory compliance in its dealings with customers, which build the trust and credibility that precede satisfaction and loyalty (He & Lai, 2014; Hu, Hameed, Zhang, Mohd Ali, & Nik Hashim, 2022).

Brand loyalty refers to a customer's consistent preference for, and commitment to, a brand over competing alternatives, reflecting both repeated patronage and psychological attachment (Oliver, 2014; Obiegbu et al., 2020). Scholars distinguish behavioural loyalty, observable repeat purchase or continued usage that may arise from situational factors such as price or convenience, from attitudinal loyalty, a deeper emotional and psychological attachment expressed through preference, trust, and advocacy, and considered more sustainable because it is rooted in value alignment (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In telecommunications, where switching costs are low and subscribers can easily hold multiple SIM cards, operators such as MTN must rely on relational and emotional factors beyond functional service delivery to retain customers (Aydin & Özer, 2005). Brand loyalty is commonly measured through customer satisfaction, repeat purchase intention, brand preference, and word-of-mouth recommendation (Oliver, 2014; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Kotler & Keller, 2021). Two complementary theories ground the CSR-loyalty relationship examined here. Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & de Colle, 2010) argues that firms must consider the interests of all parties affected by their operations, not shareholders alone; when firms such as MTN invest in environmental sustainability, community empowerment, and ethical conduct, they send positive signals that strengthen customer trust and satisfaction, and these outcomes align directly with this study's four objectives. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) explains the reciprocal mechanism underlying this relationship. Customers who perceive CSR actions as valuable benefits feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate through loyalty, advocacy, and continued patronage, while perceived insincerity or absence of CSR can weaken customer attachment. Together, these theories position CSR not merely as philanthropy but as a strategic value exchange between MTN and its customers.

Conceptual Framework

Building on the theoretical grounding above, Figure 1 presents a simple conceptual framework linking the study's four independent variables, environmental responsibility, social and community engagement, ethical business practices, and customer satisfaction, to the dependent variable, customer brand loyalty. The framework depicts each CSR dimension and customer satisfaction as a distinct predictor path leading to brand loyalty, consistent with the four hypotheses tested in the study.

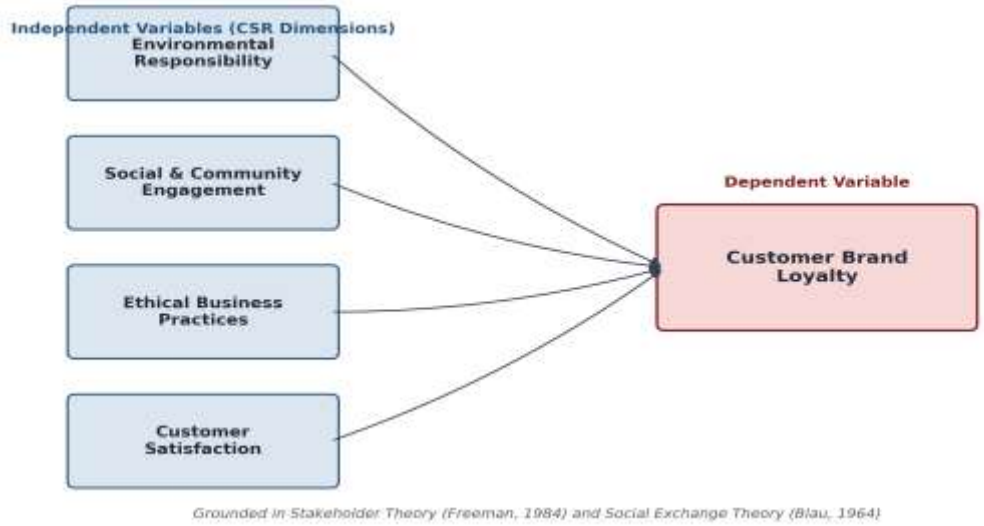


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Authors' conceptualisation (2026), grounded in Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964).

Empirically, global studies support a positive CSR-loyalty relationship in service industries. He and Lai (2014), studying Chinese consumers, found that customers' perceived legal and ethical CSR responsibilities improve brand loyalty indirectly through enhanced functional and symbolic brand image, while Hu et al. (2022), studying Pakistan's textile sector, found that CSR improves sustainable purchase intentions with brand trust and loyalty acting as mediators. In African contexts, Nyuur, Ofori, and Debrah (2014), reviewing CSR practice across Sub-Saharan Africa, identified both supporting and hindering factors shaping how CSR translates into stakeholder trust and firm-level outcomes, underscoring that the CSR-consumer relationship in the region is shaped by contextual and institutional factors rather than being uniformly positive. Nigerian telecom-sector evidence is mixed. Ogbemudia et al. (2022), studying customer perceptions across five Nigerian telecom firms, found that economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic CSR actions positively shaped product rating, consumer loyalty, and firms' strategic legitimacy. By contrast, Akhigbe and Olokoyo (2019) found that CSR had no direct effect on brand loyalty in Nigeria's telecommunications sector. More recently, Ekpebu (2023) found that CSR communication through social media significantly enhances e-reputation, positively influencing brand loyalty and consumer perception, while Ojeh et al. (2025), studying consumer perception of Nigerian brands more broadly, found that CSR involvement significantly shapes consumer trust and repeat-purchase-based loyalty. Adebesin and Fatokun (2024) similarly found that CSR initiatives positively shape customer trust and loyalty toward Nigerian fast-moving consumer goods brands, further reinforcing the industry-specific inconsistency that continues to characterise this literature and the corresponding need for further theory-building and context-specific evidence.

These gaps justify the present study. Methodologically, many prior studies rely on secondary data or narrow, cross-operator samples that limit generalisability; contextually, most Nigerian CSR-loyalty research is concentrated in banking or broad national-level telecom sampling, leaving local-government-level urban markets such as Ibadan North underexplored; and in terms of variables, much prior work emphasises organisational performance rather than the specific loyalty outcomes, including satisfaction, repeat purchase, preference, and word-of-mouth that are central to this study.

Methodology

The study examined the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility on customer brand loyalty among MTN Nigeria Limited subscribers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, an urban, densely populated market with a large concentration of MTN subscribers across residential and

commercial zones. The theoretical underpinning on which the study is anchored is Stakeholder Theory, complemented by Social Exchange Theory.

Population of the Study

Ibadan North LGA has a projected population of approximately 856,988 persons, based on National Population Commission (NPC) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) growth-rate projections from the 2006 national census (citypopulation.de, 2024, citing NPC & NBS data). Applying MTN Nigeria's national market share of approximately 51.9 per cent of active telecom subscriptions as at December 2025 (NCC, as cited in Vanguard, 2026) to this figure yields an estimated study population of about 445,000 active MTN subscribers resident in Ibadan North LGA. This estimated population formed the sampling frame from which the study sample was drawn. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted with stratified sampling by demographic characteristics such as age, gender and occupation, followed by purposive sampling of subscribers aware of MTN's CSR initiatives, and simple random sampling within strata to select respondents. Sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error ($n_0 = Z^2pq/e^2$), yielding a sample size of 384. A structured, five-point Likert-scale questionnaire (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) covering demographic information, environmental responsibility, social and community engagement, ethical business practices, and customer brand loyalty was administered online. Of the 384 questionnaires targeted, 311 valid responses were retrieved, representing an 81.0% response rate. Content and construct validity were established through alignment with existing CSR and loyalty scales (He & Lai, 2014; Aydin & Özer, 2005) while the study's theoretical constructs, and reliability was assessed via Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70 threshold; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) following a pilot test of 30 subscribers. Data were analysed in SPSS version 26 using descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and simple linear regression, with each null hypothesis tested at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 311)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	171	55.0
	Female	140	45.0
Age	18-25 years	73	23.5
	26-35 years	97	31.2
	36-45 years	79	25.4
	46 years and above	62	19.9
Marital Status	Single	149	47.9
	Married	127	40.8
	Divorced	19	6.1
	Widowed	16	5.1
Education	Secondary	43	13.8
	OND/NCE	59	19.0
	HND/BSc	131	42.1
	Postgraduate	78	25.1

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Occupation	Student	83	26.7
	Civil Servant	71	22.8
	Self-employed	67	21.5
	Private Sector Employee	53	17.0
	Others	37	11.9
Duration on MTN	Less than 1 year	29	9.3
	1-3 years	89	28.6
	4-6 years	101	32.5
	Above 6 years	92	29.6

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows a fairly balanced sample by gender (55.0% male, 45.0% female), dominated by young and middle-aged adults (31.2% aged 26-35), and by respondents with tertiary education (67.2% holding HND/BSc or postgraduate qualifications). A majority (62.1%) had used MTN services for four years or more, positioning them to provide informed assessments of the company's CSR activities and their own loyalty behaviour.

Hypothesis One (Ho1): MTN's environmental responsibility has no significant effect on customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA.

Table 2: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Environmental Responsibility on Customer Brand Loyalty

Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.362	0.158	8.621	0.000
Environmental Responsibility	0.341	0.069	12.487	0.000

R^2 = 0.563 | Adjusted R^2 = 0.559 | R = 0.750 | F = 92.731 | N = 311 | Dependent Variable: Customer Brand Loyalty | Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 2 shows that environmental responsibility has a statistically significant positive effect on customer brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$). The R-value of 0.750 indicates a strong positive relationship, while $R^2 = 0.563$ shows that environmental responsibility accounts for 56.3% of the variance in customer brand loyalty. The F-statistic of 92.731 confirms model reliability, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding is consistent with Aguinis and Glavas (2019) and confirms that customers increasingly value organisations that demonstrate environmental commitment, positioning environmental CSR as a strategic, not merely reputational, driver of loyalty.

Hypothesis Two (Ho2): MTN's social and community engagement has no significant influence on customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA.

Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Social and Community Engagement on Customer Brand Loyalty

Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.295	0.149	8.689	0.000
Social & Community Engagement	0.356	0.065	13.204	0.000

R^2 = 0.589 | Adjusted R^2 = 0.585 | R = 0.768 | F = 101.347 | N = 311 | Dependent Variable: Customer Brand Loyalty | Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 3 shows that social and community engagement has a strong, statistically significant positive effect on customer brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$). The R-value of 0.768 and R^2 of 0.589, the highest explanatory power among the four models, indicate that community-oriented CSR initiatives such as scholarships, healthcare support, and empowerment programmes most strongly predict customer loyalty among the CSR dimensions tested. The null hypothesis is rejected, a result consistent with Ogbemudia et al. (2022) and Ojeh et al. (2025), confirming the strategic importance of community-oriented CSR in building trust and long-term customer relationships.

Hypothesis Three (Ho3): MTN's ethical business practices have no significant influence on customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA.

Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Ethical Business Practices on Customer Brand Loyalty

Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.318	0.152	8.671	0.000
Ethical Business Practices	0.332	0.068	11.874	0.000

R^2 = 0.551 | Adjusted R^2 = 0.547 | R = 0.742 | F = 86.915 | N = 311 | Dependent Variable: Customer Brand Loyalty | Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 4 shows that ethical business practices have a statistically significant positive effect on customer brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.332$, $p < 0.001$). $R = 0.742$ and $R^2 = 0.551$ indicate a strong relationship, with ethical conduct explaining 55.1% of the variance in loyalty. The F-statistic of 86.915 confirms model significance, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding aligns with He and Lai (2014) and Hu et al. (2022), reinforcing that transparency, fairness, and respect for customer rights are foundational to sustaining customer confidence in a competitive telecommunications environment.

Hypothesis Four (Ho4): There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction with MTN services and customer brand loyalty in Ibadan North LGA.

Table 5: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Brand Loyalty

Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.204	0.161	7.478	0.000
Customer Satisfaction	0.389	0.064	14.562	0.000

R^2 = 0.612 | Adjusted R^2 = 0.608 | R = 0.782 | F = 112.438 | N = 311 | Dependent Variable: Customer Brand Loyalty | Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 5 shows that customer satisfaction has the strongest statistically significant positive relationship with customer brand loyalty among all variables tested ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$). $R = 0.782$ and $R^2 = 0.612$ indicate a very strong relationship, with satisfaction alone explaining 61.2% of the variance in loyalty; the F-statistic of 112.438 confirms model robustness, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This result reinforces Oliver (2014) and Alvarado-Herrera et al. (2021), and underscores that while CSR builds emotional and reputational value, core service satisfaction remains the dominant determinant of customer loyalty in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility on customer brand loyalty among MTN Nigeria Limited subscribers in Ibadan North Local Government Area. The findings demonstrate that all four dimensions examined, including environmental responsibility, social and community engagement, ethical business practices, and customer satisfaction, have statistically significant positive effects on customer brand loyalty, with customer satisfaction emerging as the strongest predictor ($R^2 = 0.612$), followed by social and community engagement ($R^2 = 0.589$), environmental responsibility ($R^2 = 0.563$), and ethical business practices ($R^2 = 0.551$). This confirms that MTN subscribers evaluate the brand, not solely on service functionality but also on how the company behaves toward society, the environment, and its customers, consistent with Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), and with recent Nigerian evidence linking multidimensional CSR to positive consumer perception and loyalty (Ogbemudia et al., 2022; Ojeh et al., 2025).

Implications of the Study

The findings carry theoretical, managerial, and policy implications. Theoretically, the results extend Stakeholder Theory and Social Exchange Theory into a local-government-level telecommunications context, demonstrating that reciprocal value exchange between MTN and its subscribers, triggered by environmental, social, and ethical CSR actions, translates into measurable loyalty outcomes rather than remaining a purely reputational effect. This strengthens the empirical case for treating CSR dimensions as distinct, independently significant predictors of brand loyalty rather than a single composite construct, and offers a framework that future studies can replicate across other LGAs and service industries.

Managerially, because customer satisfaction was the strongest predictor of loyalty, MTN Nigeria Limited and similar operators should treat service quality, network reliability, pricing transparency, and complaint resolution as the foundation of any loyalty strategy, with CSR serving as a complementary, trust-building layer rather than a substitute for core service delivery. The strong showing of social and community engagement further suggests that community-oriented CSR investment, if well targeted and clearly communicated to local subscribers, offers a more cost-effective loyalty lever than generic, nationally-framed CSR messaging.

For policy and regulatory purposes, the findings suggest that the Nigerian Communications Commission and consumer protection bodies could encourage telecom operators to publish localised, verifiable CSR impact reports, since consumer trust appears to respond more strongly to CSR that is visible and traceable within a subscriber's own community. Overall, the implications reinforce that CSR, ethical conduct, and service satisfaction jointly, rather than independently, determine whether telecom subscribers in urban Nigerian markets remain loyal to a brand.

The study recommends that MTN Nigeria Limited should intensify and strategically communicate its CSR initiatives, particularly environmental and community-based programmes, given that awareness levels among some respondents were only moderate, while prioritising customer satisfaction as the central pillar of its loyalty strategy through continuous improvement of network reliability, pricing transparency, and complaint resolution. The company should also expand and localise community engagement programmes to reflect the specific needs of communities such as Ibadan North LGA, strengthen ethical business practices around billing transparency and customer communication, and integrate CSR more deliberately into its marketing and branding strategy so as to differentiate itself in a highly competitive market where core service offerings are largely undifferentiated. Future studies should adopt longitudinal and mixed-methods designs, expand geographic and sectoral coverage

beyond Ibadan North LGA, and examine mediating or moderating variables such as trust, brand image, and perceived value to build a more complete understanding of the conditions under which CSR most effectively drives customer loyalty.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY AGRICULTURE: PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Agriculture remains central to Nigeria's economic development, food security, employment generation, and rural livelihoods. However, the sector continues to face persistent challenges, including weak agricultural extension systems, ineffective communication channels, inadequate management practices, climate change, poor rural infrastructure, limited digital inclusion, and inconsistent policy implementation. These constraints have slowed the adoption of modern agricultural innovations, particularly among smallholder farmers who constitute the backbone of Nigeria's agricultural production. This paper presents a narrative review of scholarly and policy literature published between 2019 and 2026 to examine how strategic communication and adaptive management can enhance sustainable agricultural productivity in Nigeria. Relevant literature was purposively selected from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference proceedings, government publications, and reports of reputable international organisations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), African Development Bank (AfDB), and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The reviewed literature was synthesised using thematic content analysis to identify recurring issues, emerging trends, and evidence-based practices in agricultural communication, digital agriculture, climate-smart farming, and adaptive management. The review demonstrates that strategic communication plays a pivotal role in strengthening knowledge exchange among researchers, extension personnel, policymakers, agribusinesses, and farmers, thereby facilitating the adoption of agricultural innovations, improving access to market information, enhancing climate adaptation, and promoting informed decision-making. It further establishes that adaptive management strengthens planning, resource optimisation, financial accountability, risk management, and institutional resilience across agricultural value chains. Emerging digital technologies—including artificial intelligence, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), drone technology, remote sensing, precision agriculture, and mobile advisory platforms—are identified as transformative tools for improving agricultural productivity and sustainability. As its principal scholarly contribution, the paper proposes the Integrated Agricultural Communication and Management Framework (IACMF), which conceptualises agricultural transformation as a function of the dynamic interaction among communication systems, adaptive management practices, digital technologies, knowledge-generation institutions, and enabling *policy environments. The paper concludes that sustainable agricultural transformation in Nigeria requires coordinated investment in communication infrastructure, digital innovation, institutional collaboration, and evidence-based agricultural governance. It recommends strengthening agricultural extension services, expanding rural digital connectivity, improving farmers' digital literacy, fostering public–private partnerships, and implementing consistent agricultural policies to enhance food security, climate resilience, and sustainable agricultural development.*

Keywords: *Strategic Communication, Adaptive Management, Agricultural Communication, Digital Agriculture, Agricultural Extension, Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Agriculture remains one of the most important sectors of the Nigerian economy, serving as a major source of food, employment, income generation, and rural livelihoods. Despite the rapid growth of the petroleum and service sectors, agriculture continues to play a strategic role in national development by supporting food security, supplying raw materials for agro-based industries, generating foreign exchange earnings, and contributing to poverty reduction. According to the National Bureau of

Statistics (2025), agriculture contributed approximately 24% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in recent years, making it one of the largest contributors to the country's economy. Similarly, the World Bank (2024) estimates that agriculture provides employment for approximately 35–40% of Nigeria's labour force, while the Food and Agriculture Organization (2024) reports that smallholder farmers account for over 80% of domestic food production, highlighting their central role in ensuring national food security.

The increasing demand for food arising from rapid population growth, urbanisation, climate variability, environmental degradation, and changing consumer preferences has intensified pressure on Nigeria's agricultural sector. The United Nations projects that Nigeria's population will exceed 400 million by 2050, significantly increasing food demand and placing additional pressure on agricultural production systems (United Nations, 2024). Consequently, traditional farming practices alone are no longer sufficient to guarantee sustainable agricultural productivity. Contemporary agriculture increasingly relies on scientific innovation, mechanisation, digital technologies, climate-smart farming practices, precision agriculture, and effective institutional management to improve productivity while promoting environmental sustainability (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2024; World Bank, 2024).

However, technological innovation alone cannot transform agriculture without effective communication systems that facilitate knowledge sharing among researchers, extension agents, policymakers, agribusinesses, financial institutions, and farmers. Strategic communication serves as the foundation for disseminating agricultural innovations, promoting behavioural change, encouraging stakeholder participation, and facilitating evidence-based decision-making. Agricultural extension services, community radio, mobile advisory platforms, social media, farmer field schools, and digital communication technologies have become essential mechanisms for delivering timely information on improved farming practices, weather forecasts, pest and disease surveillance, market opportunities, financial services, and government intervention programmes (FAO, 2024; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2024).

Effective communication must be complemented by adaptive management if agricultural innovations are to produce sustainable outcomes. Adaptive management enables farmers, extension institutions, cooperatives, and policymakers to respond proactively to changing climatic conditions, fluctuating market demands, emerging technologies, and policy uncertainties. It promotes continuous learning, strategic planning, efficient resource allocation, financial accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and risk management, thereby enhancing institutional resilience and improving agricultural productivity (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023).

Despite the growing availability of agricultural technologies, Nigeria continues to experience major structural constraints that hinder agricultural transformation. These include inadequate extension services, poor rural infrastructure, limited broadband connectivity, low digital literacy, restricted access to agricultural finance, weak institutional coordination, and inconsistent agricultural policies. Recent estimates indicate that Nigeria has an extension agent-to-farmer ratio far below the Food and Agriculture Organization's recommended standard, leaving millions of smallholder farmers without adequate technical support (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2023). Although internet penetration has continued to increase nationally, significant disparities remain between urban and rural communities, limiting the adoption of digital agricultural innovations and precision farming technologies (World Bank, 2024).

These challenges underscore the urgent need for integrated strategies that combine strategic communication, adaptive management, technological innovation, and institutional collaboration to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability. While previous studies have examined agricultural communication, extension services, digital agriculture, or farm management independently, relatively few have explored how these components interact as complementary drivers of agricultural transformation within the Nigerian context. This gap limits the development of comprehensive policy interventions capable of addressing the complex challenges confronting contemporary agriculture.

This paper therefore examines the role of strategic communication and adaptive management in promoting sustainable agricultural productivity in Nigeria through a narrative review of literature published between 2019 and 2026. Specifically, it synthesises current evidence on agricultural communication, adaptive management, digital agriculture, climate-smart farming, and institutional collaboration to explain how these factors jointly influence agricultural development. As its principal contribution, the study proposes the Integrated Agricultural Communication and Management Framework (IACMF), which illustrates how communication systems, adaptive management practices, digital technologies, knowledge-generation institutions, and enabling policy environments interact to strengthen agricultural resilience, improve productivity, and support sustainable food security in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Agriculture remains a vital sector of the Nigerian economy, yet its contribution to national development is constrained by low productivity, weak agricultural extension services, poor communication systems, inadequate management practices and limited adoption of modern technologies. Although governments and development partners have introduced several agricultural programmes and innovations, many smallholder farmers still rely on traditional farming methods because they lack timely access to relevant information, technical support, and modern management skills.

The growing impact of climate change, coupled with inadequate rural infrastructure, poor digital connectivity, inconsistent agricultural policies, and limited access to finance, has further reduced farmers' capacity to adopt climate-smart and technology-driven agricultural practices. These challenges have weakened agricultural productivity, increased food insecurity, and limited the sector's contribution to sustainable economic development.

Addressing these challenges requires an integrated approach that combines strategic communication, adaptive management, technological innovation, and effective institutional collaboration. This paper therefore examines how communication and management can improve the adoption of contemporary agricultural practices and promote sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of strategic communication and adaptive management in promoting contemporary agricultural practices for sustainable productivity and food security in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the role of strategic communication in promoting the adoption of modern agricultural practices.
ii. Assess the contribution of adaptive management to agricultural productivity and sustainability.
iii. Evaluate the role of digital technologies and ICT in improving agricultural communication and farm management.
iv. Identify the major challenges affecting communication and management within Nigeria's agricultural sector.
v. Recommend practical strategies for strengthening communication, management and technological innovation for sustainable agricultural development.

Research Questions

This paper addresses the following questions:
i. How does strategic communication influence the adoption of contemporary agricultural practices?
ii. What management strategies enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability?
iii. What role do digital technologies play in improving agricultural communication and farm management?
iv. What challenges hinder effective communication and management in Nigeria's agricultural sector?

v. What policy measures can strengthen communication, management and technological innovation for sustainable agriculture?

Significance of the Study

This paper contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that sustainable agricultural transformation depends not only on technological innovation but also on effective communication and adaptive management. The findings will be valuable to policymakers, agricultural extension practitioners, researchers, media professionals, development agencies and agribusiness operators seeking practical strategies for improving agricultural productivity, strengthening extension services, enhancing digital agriculture, and promoting evidence-based policy implementation. The study also provides a useful reference for future research on agricultural communication, development communication, and sustainable rural development.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the relationship between strategic communication, adaptive management, and contemporary agricultural practices in Nigeria. It examines how communication systems, agricultural extension services, digital technologies, and sound management practices contribute to agricultural productivity and sustainability. The discussion is based on a qualitative review of relevant scholarly literature, policy documents, and reports from national and international organisations, with emphasis on recent developments and lessons applicable to Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Strategic Communication in Agriculture

Agricultural communication is a specialised branch of development communication that facilitates the generation, dissemination, exchange, and utilisation of agricultural information among researchers, extension personnel, policymakers, agribusinesses, and farming communities. Its primary objective is to promote the adoption of improved agricultural innovations, strengthen farmers' decision-making capacity, enhance productivity, and improve rural livelihoods through effective information sharing. Unlike conventional information dissemination, agricultural communication emphasises participatory engagement, knowledge co-creation, feedback mechanisms, and continuous interaction among stakeholders within the agricultural innovation system (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2024; International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2024).

Development communication, on the other hand, refers to the systematic application of communication strategies to facilitate planned social, economic, political, and cultural transformation. It encourages public participation, behavioural change, empowerment, and inclusive decision-making in support of sustainable development goals. Within the agricultural sector, development communication serves as the broader framework through which communication interventions promote food security, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, gender inclusion, climate resilience, and rural development (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2024).

Although both concepts pursue developmental outcomes, agricultural communication differs from development communication in scope and operational focus. Agricultural communication concentrates specifically on agricultural production, extension services, agribusiness, and food systems, whereas development communication encompasses multiple development sectors, including education, health, governance, environmental management, and community development. Nevertheless, both fields share common principles such as stakeholder participation, dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity building, and evidence-based decision-making. Contemporary agricultural transformation therefore depends on integrating agricultural communication within broader development communication strategies to strengthen innovation diffusion, improve policy implementation, and enhance rural livelihoods (World Bank, 2024).

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly transformed agricultural communication. Mobile advisory platforms, community radio, social media, interactive voice response systems, artificial intelligence, and digital extension platforms now enable farmers to access real-time information on weather forecasts, pest surveillance, input availability, market prices, financial services, and climate-smart farming practices. These innovations have shifted agricultural communication from

a predominantly one-way extension approach to a participatory, knowledge-driven system that encourages collaboration among multiple stakeholders and strengthens agricultural resilience (OECD, 2023; FAO, 2024).

Contemporary Agriculture and Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a systematic and iterative approach to decision-making that enables individuals and organisations to respond effectively to uncertainty, complexity, and changing environmental conditions through continuous learning, monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment of management practices. Originating from natural resource and ecosystem management, adaptive management has become increasingly relevant to contemporary agriculture because farming systems operate within dynamic ecological, economic, technological, and socio-political environments. Rather than relying on fixed management practices, adaptive management encourages flexibility, experimentation, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional learning to improve long-term agricultural sustainability (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2024).

In contemporary agriculture, adaptive management recognises that climate variability, pest outbreaks, fluctuating market prices, changing consumer preferences, technological innovations, and evolving government policies require farmers and agricultural institutions to continuously modify production strategies. This approach combines planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, feedback, and learning into a continuous management cycle that strengthens resilience and enhances productivity. Consequently, agricultural enterprises that embrace adaptive management are generally better positioned to manage risks, optimise resource utilisation, improve financial performance, and recover more rapidly from environmental and economic shocks (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023).

The effectiveness of adaptive management depends heavily on the availability of accurate, timely, and accessible information. Strategic communication therefore serves as an indispensable component of adaptive management by facilitating the exchange of scientific knowledge, weather forecasts, market intelligence, early warning information, and policy updates among researchers, extension personnel, government agencies, agribusinesses, and farmers. Agricultural extension systems, digital advisory platforms, community radio, farmer organisations, and mobile communication technologies provide important channels through which farmers receive information needed to make informed management decisions (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2024).

Adaptive management also promotes participatory governance by encouraging collaboration among stakeholders involved in agricultural development. Researchers generate innovations, extension professionals translate scientific findings into practical recommendations, policymakers create enabling regulatory environments, financial institutions provide investment opportunities, while farmers contribute indigenous knowledge and practical experience. This collaborative learning process strengthens agricultural innovation systems and improves the successful adoption of climate-smart agricultural technologies (World Bank, 2024).

Within the Nigerian context, adaptive management has become increasingly important because agriculture faces multiple interconnected challenges, including climate change, land degradation, insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, weak extension services, and inconsistent agricultural policies. The increasing frequency of floods, droughts, irregular rainfall patterns, and pest infestations has made conventional farming practices less effective. Consequently, adaptive management provides a practical framework for improving resilience through climate-smart agriculture, precision farming, efficient water management, crop diversification, digital decision-support systems, and evidence-based farm management practices (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2023).

Recent empirical evidence further suggests that farmers who combine adaptive management practices with effective communication networks and digital agricultural technologies are more likely to adopt improved seed varieties, optimise fertiliser application, improve financial planning, access agricultural

insurance, participate in organised markets, and achieve higher productivity than those relying solely on traditional management approaches. Therefore, adaptive management should not be viewed merely as an administrative process but as a strategic capability that integrates communication, innovation, institutional collaboration, and continuous learning to strengthen sustainable agricultural development (FAO, 2024; African Development Bank, 2023).

The present study adopts adaptive management as one of the central conceptual foundations of the proposed Integrated Agricultural Communication and Management Framework (IACMF). Within this framework, adaptive management functions as the coordinating mechanism that links strategic communication, digital innovation, institutional collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making to promote resilient, productive, and sustainable agricultural systems in Nigeria.

Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS)

Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) refer to the network of institutions, organisations, policies, and individuals that collaborate to generate, disseminate, and apply agricultural knowledge and innovations. Key actors include research institutions, universities, extension agencies, agribusinesses, policymakers, and farmers. Effective AIS promotes technology adoption, knowledge sharing, and institutional collaboration, thereby improving agricultural productivity and sustainability. In Nigeria, strengthening innovation systems through strategic communication and digital technologies is essential for accelerating agricultural transformation and enhancing food security (FAO, 2024; World Bank, 2024).

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management refers to the systematic creation, sharing, storage, and application of knowledge to improve organisational performance and decision-making. In agriculture, it facilitates the transfer of research findings, indigenous knowledge, and best farming practices among researchers, extension agents, and farmers. Effective knowledge management enhances innovation adoption, improves productivity, and supports sustainable agricultural development through continuous learning and collaboration (FAO, 2024; IFAD, 2024).

Climate Information Services

Climate Information Services (CIS) provide farmers with timely and reliable information on weather patterns, rainfall forecasts, droughts, floods, and other climate-related risks. These services enable farmers to make informed decisions on planting, irrigation, harvesting, and risk management. Effective communication of climate information through extension services, mobile platforms, and community media enhances climate resilience, reduces production losses, and supports sustainable agricultural practices in Nigeria (World Bank, 2024; FAO, 2024).

Digital Extension Systems

Digital Extension Systems involve the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as mobile applications, social media, interactive voice response (IVR), short message services (SMS), and online advisory platforms to deliver agricultural information to farmers. These systems improve access to extension services, facilitate real-time knowledge sharing, and promote the adoption of modern farming technologies. In Nigeria, expanding digital extension services can bridge the extension service gap and enhance agricultural productivity, particularly among smallholder farmers (FAO, 2024; OECD, 2023).

Communication for Behaviour Change

Communication for Behaviour Change (CBC) is a strategic communication approach that encourages individuals and communities to adopt positive attitudes and practices through education, persuasion, and participation. In agriculture, CBC promotes the adoption of improved farming techniques, climate-smart agriculture, proper input use, and sustainable resource management. By combining interpersonal communication, mass media, and digital platforms, CBC enhances farmers' awareness, acceptance, and sustained use of agricultural innovations (UNDP, 2024; FAO, 2024).

Contemporary Agriculture

Contemporary agriculture refers to the application of modern technologies, scientific innovations, and sustainable farming practices to improve agricultural productivity and resilience. It incorporates mechanisation, precision agriculture, biotechnology, climate-smart farming, and digital technologies to enhance efficiency while ensuring environmental sustainability. In Nigeria, contemporary agriculture is essential for addressing food insecurity, adapting to climate change, and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers (FAO, 2024; World Bank, 2024).

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture is a farming approach that seeks to meet present food and economic needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It promotes efficient resource use, environmental conservation, economic viability, and social inclusion. Achieving sustainable agriculture requires the integration of strategic communication, adaptive management, technological innovation, and supportive policies to enhance productivity, food security, and climate resilience in Nigeria (FAO, 2024; United Nations, 2024).

Empirical Review

Recent studies have consistently shown that effective strategic communication, adaptive management, and digital technologies significantly improve agricultural productivity, technology adoption, and farmers' incomes. Evidence from Nigeria and other African countries indicates that farmers with regular access to extension services, digital advisory platforms, and climate information are more likely to adopt improved agricultural practices than those with limited access. However, inadequate infrastructure, weak extension systems, and low digital literacy continue to hinder agricultural transformation in many developing countries (IFAD, 2024; World Bank, 2024; FAO, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the **Diffusion of Innovations Theory** developed by Everett M. Rogers. The theory explains how new ideas, technologies, and practices are communicated and adopted within a social system over time. It is relevant to this study because it demonstrates the critical role of strategic communication, extension services, and digital platforms in influencing farmers' awareness, adoption, and sustained use of agricultural innovations. The theory therefore provides a suitable framework for understanding how communication and adaptive management promote sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria (Rogers, 2003).

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes the **Integrated Agricultural Communication and Management Framework (IACMF)** as a conceptual model for achieving sustainable agricultural productivity in Nigeria. The framework illustrates how strategic communication, adaptive management, digital technologies, agricultural innovation systems, and institutional collaboration interact to enhance knowledge sharing, technology adoption, efficient resource management, and evidence-based decision-making. It provides a holistic approach for strengthening agricultural resilience, improving food security, and promoting sustainable agricultural development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a **narrative review design** to examine the role of strategic communication and adaptive management in promoting sustainable agricultural productivity in Nigeria. The design enabled the synthesis and critical analysis of existing literature without the collection of primary data.

Sources of Data

Secondary data were obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference papers, government publications, and reports from reputable organisations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), African Development Bank (AfDB), and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The review focused primarily on publications produced between **2019 and 2026**.

Literature Selection

Relevant literature was identified through electronic databases, including **Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, AJOL, and ScienceDirect,** using keywords such as *strategic communication, adaptive management, agricultural communication, digital agriculture, agricultural extension, and sustainable agriculture*. Only recent and relevant publications directly related to the study objectives were included.

Method of Data Analysis

The selected literature was analysed using **thematic content analysis**, whereby findings were organised into major themes, compared across studies, and synthesised to identify trends, knowledge gaps, and practical implications for sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Strategic Communication and Agricultural Transformation

The review revealed that strategic communication is fundamental to agricultural transformation because it facilitates timely dissemination of information, promotes innovation adoption, and strengthens collaboration among researchers, extension agents, policymakers, and farmers. Effective communication enhances farmers' access to improved technologies, market information, and climate-smart agricultural practices, thereby increasing productivity and resilience (FAO, 2024; IFAD, 2024).

Adaptive Management and Agricultural Productivity

The findings indicate that adaptive management improves agricultural productivity by promoting effective planning, efficient resource utilisation, continuous learning, and risk management. Farmers who adopt adaptive management practices are better equipped to respond to climate variability, market fluctuations, and emerging agricultural challenges (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2024).

Digital Innovation and Agricultural Development

The study found that digital technologies, including mobile advisory platforms, artificial intelligence, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and precision agriculture, have significantly improved agricultural communication and decision-making. However, inadequate digital infrastructure, poor internet connectivity, and low digital literacy remain major barriers to their widespread adoption in Nigeria (FAO, 2024; World Bank, 2024).

Climate-Smart Agriculture and Sustainability

The review further revealed that climate-smart agricultural practices enhance resilience by enabling farmers to adapt to climate change while maintaining productivity. Strategic communication and extension services play vital roles in disseminating climate information and promoting sustainable farming practices (FAO, 2024; United Nations, 2024).

Institutional Collaboration

The findings also demonstrate that collaboration among government agencies, research institutions, universities, extension services, development partners, and the private sector is essential for strengthening agricultural innovation, improving knowledge transfer, and supporting sustainable agricultural development. Strong institutional partnerships facilitate technology diffusion, capacity building, and policy implementation (African Development Bank, 2023; IFAD, 2024).

Policy Implications

The study underscores the need for policies that integrate strategic communication, adaptive management, digital innovation, and institutional collaboration into agricultural development programmes. Increased investment in extension services, rural digital infrastructure, farmers' capacity building, and evidence-based policymaking will significantly improve agricultural productivity, food security, and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Summary

This study reviewed the role of strategic communication and adaptive management in promoting sustainable agricultural productivity in Nigeria. The findings revealed that effective communication, adaptive management, digital technologies, and institutional collaboration are critical drivers of agricultural transformation. However, challenges such as weak extension services, inadequate infrastructure, limited digital literacy, and inconsistent policies continue to hinder sustainable agricultural development.

Conclusion

The study concludes that sustainable agricultural transformation in Nigeria depends on the effective integration of strategic communication, adaptive management, digital innovation, and institutional support. Strengthening these interconnected components will enhance technology adoption, improve farmers' productivity, build climate resilience, and contribute to national food security. The proposed **Integrated Agricultural Communication and Management Framework (IACMF)** provides a practical guide for improving agricultural communication, management, and policy implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Government should strengthen agricultural extension services through increased funding and continuous capacity building.
2. Rural digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity and electricity, should be expanded to support digital agriculture.
3. Farmers should receive regular training in digital literacy, climate-smart agriculture, and modern farm management practices.
4. Public–private partnerships should be strengthened to promote investment in agricultural technologies and value-chain development.
5. Research institutions, universities, extension agencies, and farmer organisations should collaborate more effectively to improve knowledge transfer and innovation adoption.
6. Government should formulate and implement consistent, evidence-based agricultural policies that support sustainable productivity and food security.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to existing literature by proposing the Integrated Agricultural Communication and Management Framework (IACMF), which integrates strategic communication, adaptive management, digital technologies, agricultural innovation systems, and institutional collaboration into a unified framework for sustainable agricultural development. The framework provides a practical reference for policymakers, researchers, extension practitioners, and development agencies seeking to enhance agricultural productivity and resilience in Nigeria.

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HEALTH CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION IN AGRICULTURE AND MANAGEMENT: A SCOPING REVIEW

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Abstract

The integration of science, technology, and management has become a fundamental strategy for enhancing agricultural productivity, food security, and environmental sustainability in the face of growing global challenges such as climate change, population growth, and resource scarcity (Food and Agriculture Organization) [FAO], 2022; Tilman et al., 2011). Scientific innovations, including improved crop varieties, biotechnology, and climate-smart agricultural practices, alongside technological advancements such as precision agriculture, artificial intelligence, and digital farming systems, have transformed agricultural production systems worldwide (Gebbers & Adamchuk, 2010; World Bank, 2021). However, the implementation and adoption of these innovations are accompanied with several health-related challenges that affect farmers, consumers, livestock, and ecosystems. This scoping review mapped and synthesized existing evidence on the health challenges associated with the integration of science, technology, and management in agriculture. Specifically, the review examines occupational health risks, pesticide and agrochemical exposure, antimicrobial resistance, food safety concerns, environmental pollution, climate-related health impacts, and inequalities in access to agricultural innovations. The review adopts the methodological framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines developed by Tricco et al. (2018). However, relevant information, data analyzed using thematic content and findings into major theme grouped was extracted. Evidence from reviewed literatures suggested that agricultural workers remain vulnerable to occupational injuries, respiratory diseases, heat stress, and chemical exposure resulting from intensive farming practices (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2022). Furthermore, the extensive use of pesticides and veterinary drugs has been associated with adverse human health outcomes, food contamination, and the emergence of antimicrobial resistance, a growing global public health concern (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). Environmental consequences such as soil degradation, water pollution, biodiversity loss, and greenhouse gas emissions also present significant threats to ecosystem and population health (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023). The reviewed literature highlights critical gaps in policy implementation, occupational health protection, technological accessibility, and integrated health management within agricultural systems. Findings contributed to the development of evidence based strategies that support resilient, sustainable, and health-conscious agricultural practices. Ultimately, the study advocates for a One Health approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health in achieving sustainable agricultural development.

Keywords: *Science, Technology, Integration, Agriculture, Health Perspectives, Scoping Review.*

Introduction

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of global economic development, food security, and human survival. It provides livelihoods for billions of people worldwide and contributes significantly to national economies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. As the global population continues to increase and environmental pressures intensify, the agricultural sector faces unprecedented challenges in meeting the growing demand for food while ensuring environmental sustainability and public health protection. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2022), global food production must increase substantially to meet future demands, necessitating innovative and sustainable agricultural approaches.

Over the past few decades, science, technology, and management have emerged as critical drivers of agricultural transformation. Scientific advancements have facilitated the development of improved crop varieties, disease-resistant livestock breeds, enhanced soil fertility management techniques, and climate-smart agricultural practices. Simultaneously, technological innovations such as precision agriculture, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing technologies, drones, and automated irrigation systems have revolutionized farming operations by improving efficiency, productivity, and resource utilization (Gebbers & Adamchuk, 2010). Effective management practices have further enhanced agricultural performance through improved planning, resource allocation, risk management, and decision-making processes.

The integration of science, technology, and management has become increasingly important in addressing major agricultural challenges, including climate change, land degradation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, pest infestations, and food insecurity. Modern agricultural systems increasingly rely on evidence based scientific knowledge, digital technologies, and strategic management approaches to enhance resilience and sustainability. These integrated systems contribute to higher crop yields, reduced production costs, improved food quality, and increased adaptability to changing environmental conditions (Tilman et al., 2011).

Despite these benefits, the integration of science, technology, and management in agriculture presents significant health related challenges that affect human the population, animals, and ecosystems. Agricultural workers are frequently exposed to occupational hazards such as pesticides, fertilizers, machinery related accidents, excessive heat, dust, noise, and biological agents. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022) identifies agriculture as one of the most hazardous occupations globally due to the high incidence of workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. Exposure to agrochemicals has been associated with various adverse health outcomes, including respiratory disorders, neurological conditions, reproductive complications, skin diseases, and certain forms of cancer.

Food safety has also emerged as a critical concern in modern agricultural systems. The widespread use of pesticides, herbicides, growth promoters, and veterinary drugs can result in chemical residues in food products, potentially posing health risks to consumers. Furthermore, the increasing use of antibiotics in livestock production contributes to the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) as one of the most significant threats to global public health. Antimicrobial-resistant pathogens can compromise the effectiveness of treatments for infectious diseases in both humans and animals, creating substantial healthcare and economic burdens.

Environmental health concerns further complicate the integration of science, technology, and management in agriculture. Intensive agricultural practices often contribute to soil degradation, water pollution, air contamination, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Agricultural runoff containing fertilizers, pesticides, and animal waste can contaminate surface and groundwater sources, negatively affecting both ecosystem and human health. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2021), environmental degradation resulting from unsustainable agricultural practices is a major contributor to ecosystem instability and declining environmental quality. These environmental changes can subsequently affect food production, disease transmission patterns, and community health outcomes.

Climate change has amplified many of these challenges by altering agricultural ecosystems and increasing the frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, heat waves, and storms. These changes not only threaten agricultural productivity but also increase health risks among farming populations through food insecurity, malnutrition, heat-related illnesses, and the emergence of climate-sensitive diseases (IPCC, 2023). Consequently, agricultural systems must become increasingly resilient to climate-related shocks while minimizing their impacts on public health and environmental sustainability.

Beyond physical health concerns, modernization in agriculture may also affect the social and mental well-being of farming communities. Farmers often face financial stress associated with adopting new technologies, fluctuating market prices, changing policy environments, and climate uncertainties. Such pressures can contribute to mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and psychological

distress. Moreover, disparities in access to scientific knowledge, technological innovations, healthcare services, and financial resources may widen existing inequalities between large-scale commercial farmers and smallholder producers, particularly in developing countries.

The interconnected nature of the human, animal, and environmental health has led to increased recognition of the One Health approach. This framework emphasizes collaborative and multidisciplinary efforts to achieve optimal health outcomes by recognizing the interdependence of people, animals, plants, and their shared environment (CDC, 2023). Within agriculture, the One- Health perspective provides a valuable framework for understanding and addressing the complex health challenges associated with agricultural modernization. It highlights the need for integrated policies and interventions that simultaneously promote agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and public health protection.

Although substantial research has examined individual aspects of agricultural innovation, occupational health, environmental health, and food safety, evidence remains fragmented regarding the health-related challenges arising from the integration of science, technology, and management in agriculture. A comprehensive synthesis of available evidence is therefore necessary to identify knowledge gaps, emerging trends, and opportunities for policy and practice improvements. Scoping reviews are particularly useful for mapping broad and complex fields of research and identifying areas requiring further investigation (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

Therefore, this scoping reviewed systematically synthesize the existing literature on the health-related challenges associated with integrating science, technology, and management in agriculture. The findings provided valuable insights for policymakers, agricultural practitioners, public health professionals, researchers, and development organizations seeking to promote resilient, sustainable, and health-conscious agricultural systems.

Health Challenges Associated with Science and Technology in Agriculture and Management

Integrating science, technology, and management into agriculture has improved food production and efficiency, but it also presents several health challenges affecting farmers, consumers, and the environment. Health Challenges Associated with Science and Technology Integration in Agriculture and Management is an eye sore though, it has improved food production and efficiency, but it also presents several fatal health challenges affecting farmers, consumers, and the environment. Okon (2008), explain that agro-modern technology generation aims to develop better techniques of land development, crop and animal management and achieve higher yields.

1. Exposure to Agrochemicals

Excessive use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers can cause poisoning, respiratory diseases, skin irritation, neurological disorders, and some cancers among farmers and farm workers.

2. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

Overuse of antibiotics in livestock production contributes to antimicrobial resistance, making infections in humans more difficult to treat.

3. Food Safety Concerns

Improper use of chemicals, hormones, and preservatives can leave harmful residues in food, increasing the risk of chronic diseases and foodborne illnesses.

4. Occupational Hazards

Modern agricultural machinery and equipment increase the risk of injuries, hearing loss, vibration-related disorders, and musculoskeletal problems if safety measures are inadequate.

5. Air and Water Pollution

Agricultural runoff containing fertilizers and pesticides contaminates water sources, while emissions from machinery and livestock contribute to air pollution, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health.

6. Climate Change Effects

Mechanized farming and intensive agricultural practices contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the risk of heat stress, vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, and extreme weather-related health problems.

7. Mental Health Challenges

Pressure to adopt expensive technologies, financial burdens, climate uncertainty, and production risks may increase stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion among farmers.

8. Emergence of Zoonotic Diseases

Intensive livestock farming can facilitate the transmission of diseases from animals to humans, especially where biosecurity measures are weak.

9. Exposure to Radiation and Noise

Continuous exposure to noisy machinery and certain technological equipment may result in hearing impairment, fatigue, and occupational stress.

10. Ergonomic Problems

Although mechanization reduces manual labor, poor machine design or prolonged operation can still lead to back pain, joint disorders, and repetitive strain injuries.

11. Electronic Waste (E-waste)

The disposal of obsolete agricultural technologies such as sensors, batteries, drones, and electronic devices may release hazardous substances into the environment, posing health risks.

12. Digital Divide and Health Inequalities

Limited access to agricultural technologies and digital health information may widen health disparities between urban and rural farming communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the Researcher put forward the following recommendations.

1. Train farmers on the safe handling and application of agrochemicals.
2. Promote integrated pest management to reduce chemical dependence.
3. Strengthen occupational health and safety practices.
4. Encourage responsible antibiotic use in livestock production.
5. Improve environmental monitoring of soil, water, and food.
6. Invest in climate-smart and sustainable agricultural technologies.
7. Expand access to healthcare services and mental health support for farming communities.
8. Develop policies for proper disposal and recycling of agricultural electronic waste.

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EFFECT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC, IBADAN

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Abstract
This study examines the effect of the socio-economic environment on the organisational performance of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Ibadan, focusing on inflation, government fiscal policy, and unemployment as they relate to production cost, operational efficiency, and consumer demand. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire was administered to 133 staff drawn from a population of 200 employees using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula and stratified random sampling; 130 valid responses were retrieved and analysed with descriptive statistics and simple linear regression in SPSS version 25. Findings show that inflation rate significantly and positively predicts production cost ($\beta = 0.428$, $R^2 = 0.586$, $p < 0.05$), government fiscal policy significantly and positively predicts operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.392$, $R^2 = 0.548$, $p < 0.05$), and unemployment level significantly and negatively predicts consumer demand ($\beta = -0.284$, $R^2 = 0.482$, $p < 0.05$). All three null hypotheses were therefore rejected. The study concludes that the socio-economic environment is a critical determinant of organisational performance in Nigeria's volatile manufacturing sector and recommends that Nigerian Breweries pursue local sourcing and cost-control measures against inflation, sustained engagement with policymakers on fiscal stability, and product diversification to cushion demand against unemployment-driven income shocks.

Keywords: Socio-economic Environment; Inflation; Fiscal Policy; Unemployment; Organisational Performance.

Introduction

Organisations operate within a broader socio-economic environment that directly or indirectly shapes their internal structures, processes, and performance outcomes. This environment comprises dynamic external forces such as inflation, fiscal policy, taxation, and unemployment, which collectively influence consumer behaviour, production costs, and operational efficiency. As global markets become increasingly integrated, manufacturing firms must adapt to socio-economic fluctuations to sustain performance. Inflation remains one of the most prominent socio-economic indicators affecting organisational outcomes. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, global inflation rose sharply, raising the cost of goods, services, and labour (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2023). For manufacturing firms, inflation increases the cost of raw materials, logistics, and production inputs, and firms that cannot pass the cost to consumers face depressed demand and reduced competitiveness (Blanchard, 2022). While firms in developed economies mitigate inflation through automation and hedging (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2022), businesses in developing economies such as Nigeria face compounding structural inefficiencies, exchange-rate volatility, and import dependence that intensify inflationary pressure (Adeniran & Okunlola, 2021).

Government fiscal policy, encompassing taxation, public spending, and regulatory measures — constitutes a second critical determinant of firm performance. Nigeria's fiscal landscape has been characterised by unstable tax regimes, subsidy reforms, and fluctuating public expenditure, which impose operational constraints on manufacturing firms (Oladipo & Akinbobola, 2020). For firms such as Nigerian Breweries Plc, frequent excise-duty increments on alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages directly affect production planning and pricing strategy. Unemployment is a third socio-economic factor with far-reaching implications for firm performance, as it constrains household income, consumer confidence, and aggregate demand (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2023). Nigeria's unemployment rate remains among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa (National Bureau of Statistics

[NBS], 2023), leaving firms such as Nigerian Breweries Plc with a constrained consumer base that prioritises essential goods over discretionary products such as beer and malt beverages.

Nigerian Breweries Plc, established in 1946, is Nigeria's pioneer and largest brewing company, yet it has not been immune to the country's volatile socio-economic environment. In its 2023 financial report, the company attributed a sharp decline in profitability to rising input costs driven by inflation and increased excise duties (Nigerian Breweries Plc, 2023). Empirical evidence corroborates this vulnerability: Ezeaku *et al*. (2020) found that inflation and taxation had statistically significant negative effects on the profitability of Nigerian manufacturing firms, while Adigwe and Orji (2021) found that firms in high-unemployment, poorly-serviced regions recorded lower sales volumes and weaker inventory turnover. Despite the strategic importance of these relationships, limited empirical research has examined how inflation, fiscal policy, and unemployment jointly affect firm-level performance using a major Nigerian manufacturer as a case study. Most existing studies generalise macroeconomic effects across industries without capturing sector-specific dynamics. This study addresses that gap by examining Nigerian Breweries Plc in Ibadan, one of the company's major production and distribution hubs, over the 2019-2024 period, which spans the COVID-19 pandemic, global inflationary pressure, and successive fiscal and labour-market adjustments in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to: (i) evaluate the impact of inflation rate on the production cost of Nigerian Breweries Plc; (ii) assess how government fiscal policies influence the operational efficiency of Nigerian Breweries Plc; and (iii) investigate the effect of unemployment levels on consumer demand for Nigerian Breweries' products. Correspondingly, three null hypotheses were tested: inflation rate has no significant impact on production cost (H_{01}); government fiscal policies have no significant influence on operational efficiency (H_{02}); and unemployment levels have no significant effect on consumer demand (H_{03}).

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

The socio-economic environment refers to the composite of social and economic conditions, such as inflation, unemployment, taxation, fiscal policy, and income distribution, that shape the external setting in which firms operate (Okoye & Nwakoby, 2019). Inflation, defined as a sustained rise in the general price level, is typically categorised as cost-push or demand-pull (Mankiw, 2021; Blanchard & Johnson, 2017); for manufacturers such as Nigerian Breweries Plc, both forms raise the cost of raw materials, energy, and logistics and compress profit margins (Adeniran & Okunlola, 2021). Government fiscal policy operates through taxation, public expenditure, and instruments such as excise duties, and policy instability disrupts business planning, inflates compliance costs, and discourages long-term investment (Oladipo & Akinbobola, 2020; Okoye & Nwakoby, 2019). Unemployment reduces disposable income and, in line with the consumer demand theory, disproportionately depresses demand for non-essential goods such as beer and malt beverages (Marshall, 1920; Adigwe & Orji, 2021). Organisational performance, in turn, is a multidimensional construct typically measured through profitability, operational efficiency, and market performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009).

Theoretical Review

Several theories inform this study. Systems Theory (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972) frames organisations as open systems that import, transform, and export resources while responding to environmental feedback, but offers limited prescriptive guidance on specific variables. Keynesian Economic Theory (Keynes, 1936) explains how government taxation and expenditure shape firm-level costs and productivity, while Consumer Demand Theory (Marshall, 1920) explains the income-elasticity of demand that links unemployment to reduced consumption of non-essential goods. The study adopts Contingency Theory (Donaldson, 2001) as its main theoretical lens. Contingency Theory holds that there is no single best way to manage an organisation; rather, performance depends on the fit between a firm's internal structure and strategy and the external environment it faces. This framework is particularly suited to volatile economies such as Nigeria's, where firms like Nigerian Breweries Plc

must continuously realign sourcing, pricing, and compliance strategies with fluctuating inflation, fiscal policy, and labour-market conditions.

Empirical Review

Cross-country and Nigerian studies converge on a negative relationship between inflation and firm cost structures. Adebayo and Ogunleye (2022) reported a statistically significant relationship between inflation and rising raw-material and logistics costs across 25 Nigerian manufacturing firms, while sector-specific evidence from Akpan and Okon (2019) showed that inflation simultaneously raises production costs and suppresses consumer demand in South-South Nigerian breweries. On fiscal policy, Ojochogu and Oladipo (2021) found that erratic excise-duty and VAT adjustments created planning uncertainty and raised compliance costs in Nigeria's food and beverage sector, a pattern corroborated by Oyebanji and Fashina (2022) and, in a comparable emerging-market context, by Mwangi and Wambugu (2020) in Kenya's alcoholic-beverage industry. On unemployment, Adigwe and Orji (2021) and Afolabi and Obafemi (2021) both found that rising joblessness reduced disposable income and depressed FMCG sales in Nigeria, a finding echoed by Dlamini and Nkosi (2020) in South Africa. Broader firm-level studies by Okoye and Nwakoby (2019) and Adegoke and Adeoye (2021) confirm that inflation, taxation, and unemployment have combined, statistically significant effects on manufacturing performance, though outcomes vary with firm size and capital reserves. These studies rely predominantly on macro-level or multi-firm secondary data, leaving a gap for focused, firm-level empirical evidence, a gap this study addresses using Nigerian Breweries Plc, Ibadan, as a case.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design and a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between the socio-economic environment and the organisational performance of Nigerian Breweries Plc in Ibadan, Oyo State, a major production and distribution hub for the company in south-western Nigeria. The study population comprised 200 staff drawn from departments most exposed to macroeconomic conditions, namely finance, operations, procurement, logistics, and sales/marketing. A sample of 133 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula [$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, $e = 0.05$] and selected through stratified random sampling proportionate to departmental staff strength. Of the questionnaires administered, 130 were valid and retrieved, representing a 97.7% response rate.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising five sections covering respondent demographics, inflation and production cost, fiscal policy and operational efficiency, unemployment and consumer demand, and overall organisational performance, each scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Content and face validity were established through expert review, and a pilot study of 15 respondents from a comparable FMCG firm confirmed instrument reliability. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and simple linear regression in SPSS version 25, with hypotheses tested at the 5% significance level ($p \leq 0.05$).

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents (N = 130).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	73	56.2
	Female	57	43.8
Age	20-29 years	29	22.3
	30-39 years	41	31.5
	40-49 years	31	23.8
	50 years and above	29	22.3
Educational Qualification	OND/NCE	19	14.6
	HND/B.Sc.	41	31.5
	M.Sc./MBA	37	28.5

	PhD	31	23.8
	Others	2	1.5
Department	Finance	19	14.6
	Operations	23	17.7
	Procurement	11	8.5
	Logistics	7	5.4
	Sales/Marketing	37	28.5
	Production Management	31	23.8
	Others	2	1.5
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	11	8.5
	5-10 years	19	14.6
	11-15 years	41	31.5
	Above 15 years	59	45.4
		130	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The sample was fairly balanced by gender (56.2% male, 43.8% female) and skewed towards experienced, well-educated staff: 45.4% had more than 15 years of tenure and 83.8% held at least an HND/B.Sc. Respondents were drawn predominantly from Sales/Marketing (28.5%) and Production Management (23.8%), the departments most directly exposed to consumer demand and production-cost pressures, lending credibility to their assessment of the study's constructs.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (H_{01}): Inflation rate has no significant impact on the production cost of Nigerian Breweries Plc.

Variable	β	Std. Error	t	p
Constant	1.248	0.134	9.313	0.000
Inflation Rate	0.428	0.072	11.082	0.000

$R^2 = 0.586$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.582$; $R = 0.766$; $F = 97.643$; $N = 130$. Dependent variable: Production Cost.

Inflation rate had a statistically significant positive effect on production cost ($\beta = 0.428$, $p < 0.05$), explaining 58.6% of the variance in production cost ($R^2 = 0.586$, $F = 97.643$). H_{01} is therefore rejected. This confirms that rising input, energy, and logistics prices attributable to inflation substantially shape the firm's cost structure, consistent with Ezeaku *et al*. (2020) and Adebayo and Ogunleye (2022), and underscores the need for adaptive pricing and sourcing strategies to protect profitability.

Hypothesis Two (H_{02}): Government fiscal policies have no significant influence on the operational efficiency of Nigerian Breweries Plc.

Variable	B	Std. Error	t	p
Constant	1.167	0.141	8.277	0.000
Government Fiscal Policy	0.392	0.069	10.478	0.000

$R^2 = 0.548$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.544$; $R = 0.740$; $F = 87.215$; $N = 130$. Dependent variable: Operational Efficiency.

Government fiscal policy significantly and positively predicted operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.392$, $p < 0.05$), accounting for 54.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.548$, $F = 87.215$). H_{02} is therefore rejected. Stable and supportive fiscal measures, including tax incentives, predictable excise regimes, and lower compliance burdens, are associated with smoother production planning, while policy volatility increases compliance costs and disrupts operations, corroborating Ojochogu and Oladipo (2021) and Oyebanji and Fashina (2022).

Hypothesis Three (H_{03}): Unemployment levels have no significant effect on consumer demand for Nigerian Breweries' products.

Variable	B	Std. Error	t	p
Constant	3.024	0.178	17.000	0.000
Unemployment Level	-0.284	0.074	-7.892	0.000

$R^2 = 0.482$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.478$; $R = 0.694$; $F = 62.315$; $N = 130$. Dependent variable: Consumer Demand.

Unemployment level had a statistically significant negative effect on consumer demand ($\beta = -0.284$, $p < 0.05$), explaining 48.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.482$, $F = 62.315$). H_{03} is therefore rejected. As unemployment rises, household income and purchasing power contract, reducing demand for income-elastic, non-essential products such as beer and malt beverages, in line with consumer demand theory and the findings of Adigwe and Orji (2021) and Afolabi and Obafemi (2021).

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of the socio-economic environment like inflation, government fiscal policy, and unemployment, on the organisational performance of Nigerian Breweries Plc in Ibadan. The findings show that inflation significantly raises production costs, fiscal policy stability significantly shapes operational efficiency, and unemployment significantly depresses consumer demand. Collectively, the results affirm that the firm's performance is not determined by internal strategy alone but is strongly conditioned by external macroeconomic and policy dynamics, consistent with Contingency Theory (Donaldson, 2001). Sustaining competitiveness therefore requires Nigerian Breweries Plc to continuously align its cost-control, compliance, and market strategies with prevailing socio-economic conditions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that Nigerian Breweries Plc intensify local sourcing and backward integration to cushion its production costs against the pressures of inflation and exchange-rate volatility, while also strengthening advocacy and dialogue with policymakers to promote stable, predictable fiscal measures and reduce compliance-cost volatility. The company should further diversify its product portfolio by introducing more affordable brands or smaller pack sizes, thereby sustaining demand among unemployment-affected, income-constrained consumers, and should institutionalise contingency and risk-management planning, including flexible pricing, financial reserves, and alternative markets, to withstand future socio-economic shocks. In addition, the company should expand its corporate social responsibility initiatives to support skills development and job creation within host communities, indirectly strengthening consumer purchasing power over time. Finally, government is encouraged to pursue consistent, transparent fiscal policy alongside sustained job-creation initiatives, so as to support a more stable operating environment for manufacturers such as Nigerian Breweries Plc.

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY UTILISATION AND WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC POLYTECHNICS

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Abstract
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an indispensable resource for improving teaching, research, and institutional administration in higher education. Despite the increasing investment in digital technologies, academic staff in many Nigerian tertiary institutions continue to experience heavy workloads, raising concerns about the extent to which ICT contributes to effective workload management. This study examined the influence of ICT utilisation on workload management among academic staff in selected public polytechnics in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed the level of ICT utilisation, examined the level of academic workload, and determined the influence of ICT utilisation on workload management. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The study population comprised 624 academic staff from Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora; The Polytechnic, Ibadan; and Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample of 244 respondents was selected, of which 156 valid questionnaires (63.9%) were analysed. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The findings indicate a moderate level of ICT utilisation (Grand Mean = 2.93) alongside a high level of academic workload (Grand Mean = 4.33). Regression analysis showed that ICT utilisation had a significant positive influence on workload management ($\beta = .886$, $t = 23.698$, $p < .001$), explaining 78.5% of the variance in workload management ($R^2 = .785$). The study concludes that ICT is a strategic organisational resource that enhances lecturers' capacity to manage teaching, research, supervision, assessment, and administrative responsibilities. It recommends sustained investment in digital infrastructure, continuous staff capacity development, and the integration of ICT into institutional academic and administrative processes to improve workload management and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: *ICT utilisation, workload management, academic staff, higher education*.

Introduction

Digital transformation has become a defining feature of higher education, reshaping teaching, research, institutional administration, and scholarly collaboration. Advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including learning management systems, cloud computing, digital libraries, artificial intelligence, electronic record management systems, and online collaboration platforms, have fundamentally changed how higher education institutions deliver academic services and manage institutional processes (Khan & Adepoju, 2024; Patel & Wong, 2024). Beyond supporting instructional delivery, ICT has become a strategic organisational resource that enhances operational efficiency, facilitates evidence-based decision-making, and improves institutional productivity (Ukeje et al., 2025; Zhang & Chen, 2024). The integration of ICT has also transformed the nature of academic work. Contemporary academics are expected to perform multiple roles that extend beyond classroom teaching to include research, students' supervision, grant acquisition, digital content development, quality assurance, accreditation, institutional administration, and community engagement. These expanding responsibilities have intensified academic workload and increased the need for effective workload management strategies that can sustain staff productivity without compromising educational quality (Nchinda & Tchoumba, 2024; Ukeje et al., 2025). Consequently, ICT is increasingly viewed not only as a teaching resource but also as a mechanism for improving the efficiency with which academic responsibilities are performed. Effective ICT utilisation has the potential to simplify academic and administrative processes by automating routine tasks, improving communication, facilitating access to information, and supporting collaboration. Learning management systems enable lecturers to organise

course materials, administer assessments, and monitor student learning, while digital libraries, institutional repositories, and online databases provide timely access to scholarly resources. Similarly, electronic assessment systems, institutional information systems, and virtual collaboration platforms reduce the time required for grading, documentation, communication, and research supervision (Khan & Adepoju, 2024; Patel & Wong, 2024). When effectively implemented, these technologies can enhance productivity and support more efficient workload management.

Despite these potential benefits, evidence from many developing countries suggests that the contribution of ICT to workload management remains constrained by institutional and infrastructural limitations. In Nigeria, inadequate ICT infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient funding, limited technical support, and inadequate staff training continue to impede the effective integration of digital technologies into higher education (Alshammari & Alshammari, 2023; Idowu & Audu, 2023; Ukeje et al., 2025). Consequently, academic staff often operate parallel manual and electronic systems, resulting in duplicated tasks and increased administrative responsibilities rather than the anticipated efficiency gains associated with digital transformation.These challenges are particularly evident in polytechnic education, where academic staff combine classroom instruction with laboratory and workshop teaching, industrial training supervision, competency-based assessment, curriculum development, accreditation activities, and institutional administration. The diversity of these responsibilities creates a more complex workload than is often reported in university settings, making the effective utilisation of ICT especially important for improving productivity and institutional efficiency.

Although previous studies have examined ICT adoption, e-learning, digital transformation, and technology acceptance in higher education (Khan & Adepoju, 2024; Panakaje et al., 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2024), comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding ICT as a strategic resource for workload management. Existing research has largely focused on students' learning outcomes, technology acceptance, or instructional effectiveness, with limited empirical evidence on how ICT supports the management of teaching, research, supervision, assessment, and administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, Nigerian polytechnics remain underrepresented in the literature despite their distinctive institutional mandate and operational characteristics. This gap limits understanding of the contribution of ICT to workload management within technical and vocational higher education. Against this background, this study examined the influence of ICT utilisation on workload management among academic staff in selected public polytechnics in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to (i) examine the level of ICT utilisation among academic staff, (ii) assess the level of academic workload, and (iii) determine the influence of ICT utilisation on workload management. The study tested the null hypothesis that ICT utilisation has no statistically significant influence on workload management among academic staff. By providing empirical evidence from the Nigerian polytechnic context, the study contributes to the growing literature on digital transformation in higher education and offers practical insights for institutional managers and policymakers seeking to strengthen ICT-enabled workload management and improve institutional performance.

Literature review

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Utilisation in Higher Education

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) encompasses digital technologies used to create, process, store, and communicate information to support teaching, learning, research, and institutional administration. In higher education, ICT includes learning management systems, digital libraries, institutional management information systems, cloud computing, virtual collaboration platforms, artificial intelligence, and electronic assessment systems (Khan & Adepoju, 2024; Patel & Wong, 2024). The increasing adoption of these technologies has transformed academic practice by improving access to educational resources, facilitating communication, enhancing research collaboration, and streamlining administrative processes. Beyond instructional delivery, ICT has become an organisational resource that improves institutional efficiency and academic productivity. Digital platforms enable lecturers to manage course materials, conduct online assessments, supervise students remotely, access scholarly databases, and collaborate with colleagues across geographical boundaries. These

technologies also reduce the time required for routine administrative activities, thereby allowing academic staff to devote greater attention to teaching and research (Panakaje et al., 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2024).

Despite these benefits, ICT utilisation in many developing countries remains constrained by inadequate infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, limited technical support, and insufficient digital competence among academic staff. Consequently, the extent to which ICT contributes to improved academic performance and institutional efficiency depends on both technological availability and institutional readiness (Alshammari & Alshammari, 2023; Ukeje et al., 2025).

Academic Workload in Higher Education

Academic workload refers to the combination of teaching, research, student supervision, assessment, administrative responsibilities, professional development, and community engagement performed by academic staff within a specified period. The expansion of higher education has substantially increased these responsibilities, making workload management a critical issue for institutional effectiveness and staff well-being. In Nigerian tertiary institutions, lecturers are increasingly expected to teach large classes, supervise undergraduate and postgraduate students, publish in high-impact journals, secure research funding, participate in accreditation exercises, and undertake administrative responsibilities. These competing demands often exceed available organisational resources, contributing to work pressure, reduced research productivity, occupational stress, and diminished work-life balance (Nchinda & Tchoumba, 2024; Ukeje et al., 2025). ICT has been identified as one of the organisational resources capable of alleviating these pressures. Through the automation of administrative tasks, digital communication, electronic assessment, and access to online research resources, ICT can improve efficiency and facilitate more effective management of academic responsibilities. However, where technological infrastructure is inadequate or institutional support is weak, ICT may instead increase workload by requiring lecturers to operate both manual and electronic systems simultaneously (Idowu & Audu, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model because they provide complementary explanations for ICT utilisation and workload management in higher education. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) explains that individuals are more likely to adopt technology when they perceive it as useful and easy to use. Within higher education, lecturers who perceive ICT as enhancing teaching, research, assessment, and administrative efficiency are more likely to integrate digital technologies into their academic activities. The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) posits that employee performance and well-being depend on the balance between job demands and available organisational resources. Academic responsibilities such as teaching, research, supervision, and administration represent significant job demands, whereas ICT constitutes an important organisational resource that can reduce work pressure by improving efficiency and facilitating task completion. Together, the two theories suggest that effective ICT utilisation can enhance workload management by enabling academic staff to cope more efficiently with increasing professional responsibilities.

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence generally indicates that ICT has improved teaching effectiveness, research productivity, institutional communication, and administrative efficiency within higher education. However, its contribution to workload management remains less conclusive, particularly in developing countries. Panakaje et al. (2024) found that digital technologies enhanced instructional delivery, teacher learning, and professional performance by improving access to educational resources and facilitating collaboration. Similarly, Zhang and Chen (2024) reported that successful ICT implementation depends on institutional support, digital competence, and organisational commitment rather than technological availability alone. Patel and Wong (2024) likewise concluded that ICT positively influences student engagement, critical thinking, and academic performance when effectively integrated into institutional processes. Within the Nigerian context, Ukeje et al. (2025) observed that digital transformation has

improved institutional governance and administrative efficiency but remains constrained by inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent policy implementation, and limited stakeholder collaboration. Idowu and Audu (2023) similarly identified inadequate funding, unreliable internet connectivity, unstable electricity supply, and weak maintenance culture as major barriers to effective ICT integration in tertiary education. These findings suggest that the benefits of ICT depend not only on access to technology but also on the institutional environment within which it is deployed.

While previous studies have demonstrated the educational benefits of ICT, relatively few have examined its role in managing the multiple responsibilities performed by academic staff. Existing research has focused predominantly on technology adoption, online learning, instructional effectiveness, and institutional digital transformation, with comparatively little attention to ICT as a strategic organisational resource for workload management. Furthermore, empirical evidence from Nigerian polytechnics remains limited despite the distinctive workload associated with technical and vocational education. Accordingly, this study addresses three important gaps in the literature. First, it extends existing scholarship by examining ICT utilisation in relation to workload management rather than technology adoption or instructional outcomes alone. Second, it focuses on public polytechnics, an institutional context that has received relatively limited scholarly attention compared with universities. Third, by adopting a comparative multi-institutional design involving three public polytechnics in Oyo State, the study provides broader empirical evidence than the single-institution studies that dominate the existing Nigerian literature.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) utilisation on workload management among academic staff in selected public polytechnics in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was conducted at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora; The Polytechnic, Ibadan; and Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa. These institutions were purposively selected because though they are the three selected public polytechnics in Oyo State, they differ in the extent of ICT integration across teaching, research, and institutional administration. The study population comprised **624 full-time academic staff**, including **252** from OYSCATECH, **285** from The Polytechnic, Ibadan, and **87** from Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic. Using the Taro Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula at a 5% level of precision, a sample of **244 respondents** was selected and proportionately allocated to the three institutions **99, 111**, and **34** respondents, respectively). A multistage sampling procedure was employed, whereby respondents were first stratified by faculty and department and subsequently selected through simple random sampling. Of the 244 questionnaires administered, **156 were validly completed and returned**, representing a **63.9% response rate.** Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments in previous studies and modified to reflect the objectives of the study. The questionnaire comprised four sections covering respondents' demographic characteristics, ICT utilisation, academic workload, and workload management. All measurement items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from **1 (Strongly Disagree)** to **5 (Strongly Agree)**. The instrument was subjected to expert review to establish face and content validity before administration.

Data were analysed using **IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28.** Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and rankings, were used to describe respondents' characteristics and address the study objectives. The study hypothesis was tested using **simple linear regression analysis** to determine the influence of ICT utilisation on workload management. Statistical significance was determined at the **5% level ($p < .05$).**

The regression model was specified as:

$$WM_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ICT_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where WMiWM_iWMi denotes workload management, ICTiICT_iICTi represents ICT utilisation, β0\beta_0β0 is the intercept, β1\beta_1β1 is the regression coefficient, and εi\varepsilon_iεi is the random error term.

Ethical principles guiding social science research were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and the data were used exclusively for academic purposes.

Results

Respondents' Characteristics

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics (N = 156)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Institution	OYSCATECH, Igboora	53	34.0
	The Polytechnic, Ibadan	69	44.2
	Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic	34	21.8
	Total	**156**	**100.0**
Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer	19	12.2
	Lecturer III	31	19.9
	Lecturer II	43	27.6
	Lecturer I	38	24.4
	Senior Lecturer and above	25	16.0
	Total	**156**	**100.0**
Highest Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	14	9.0
	Master's Degree	97	62.2
	Doctorate Degree	45	28.8
	Total	**156**	**100.0**
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	18	11.5
	5–10 years	39	25.0
	11–15 years	54	34.6
	Above 15 years	45	28.9
	Total	**156**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey (2026).

A total of **156 valid questionnaires** were analysed, representing a **63.9% response rate.** Respondents were drawn from the three selected public polytechnics in Oyo State. The majority were Lecturer I and Lecturer II, possessed Master's degrees, and had between **11 and 15 years** of teaching experience. These characteristics indicate that the respondents possessed adequate academic qualifications and professional experience to provide reliable information on ICT utilisation and workload management.

Table 2. ICT Utilisation among Academic Staff (N = 156)

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1	I frequently use online research databases for research and publication.	3.84	1.01	1
2	I use reference management software in my research.	3.43	1.18	2
3	I use online collaboration tools for supervision and communication.	3.41	1.12	3

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
4	My institution provides institutional email and digital communication platforms.	3.04	1.02	4
5	My institution provides digital platforms for result processing.	2.85	0.97	5
6	I use digital assessment tools.	2.79	1.13	6
7	Overall, ICT is regularly utilised in my academic responsibilities.	2.56	0.93	7
8	My institution supports the use of Learning Management Systems.	2.55	0.94	8
9	My institution supports virtual teaching platforms.	2.50	0.88	9
10	I use presentation software during classroom instruction.	2.37	0.94	10
	Grand Mean	**2.93**	**1.01**	

Source: Field Survey (2026).

Academic staff reported a **moderate level of ICT utilisation** (Grand Mean = 2.93). ICT was utilised predominantly for research-related activities, particularly online research databases, reference management software, and online collaboration. Conversely, institution-supported teaching technologies, including Learning Management Systems, virtual teaching platforms, and presentation software, recorded comparatively lower utilisation.

Table 4. Influence of ICT Utilisation on Workload Management (N = 156)

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Research databases have reduced the time required for research and publication.	3.52	0.96	1
2	ICT has made supervision of students easier.	3.17	0.97	2
3	Digital communication platforms have improved collaboration.	3.05	0.98	3
4	ICT has improved my overall work efficiency.	2.74	0.94	4
5	ICT has improved my ability to manage teaching, research and administrative responsibilities.	2.68	0.91	5
6	Overall, ICT has improved workload management.	2.63	0.93	6
7	Digital assessment systems have simplified examination and grading.	2.54	0.90	7
8	Institutional digital platforms have reduced stress associated with result processing.	2.46	0.82	8
9	Virtual teaching platforms have improved instructional efficiency.	2.37	0.72	9
10	Learning Management Systems have reduced teaching workload.	2.35	0.71	10
	Grand Mean	**2.75**	**0.88**	

Source: Field Survey (2026).

Respondents perceived that ICT exerted a **moderate influence on workload management** (Grand Mean = 2.75). ICT was considered most effective in supporting research activities, student supervision, and communication, whereas institution-based digital teaching and administrative systems contributed less to reducing workload.

Test of Hypothesis

H_0: **ICT utilisation has no statistically significant influence on workload management among academic staff in selected public polytechnics in Oyo State.**

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence of ICT Utilisation on Workload Management

Predictor	B	SE	β	T	p
Constant	0.855	0.110	—	7.758	< .001
ICT Utilisation	0.799	0.034	0.886	23.698	< .001

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	P
0.886	0.785	0.783	561.62	< .001

Dependent Variable: Workload Management.

The regression model was statistically significant, **$F(1,154) = 561.62$, $p < .001$**. ICT utilisation explained **78.5%** of the variance in workload management **($R^2 = .785$)**. ICT utilisation had a significant positive effect on workload management **($\beta = .886$, $B = 0.799$, $t = 23.698$, $p < .001$).** Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

This study examined the level of ICT utilisation, the level of academic workload, and the influence of ICT utilisation on workload management among academic staff in selected public polytechnics in Oyo State, Nigeria.

The findings indicate that ICT utilisation among academic staff was moderate, suggesting that digital technologies have become integrated into academic work but are not yet fully embedded in institutional teaching and administrative processes. ICT was utilised more frequently for research and scholarly communication than for classroom instruction and institutional digital platforms. This pattern suggests that lecturers are more inclined to adopt technologies that directly support research productivity than those requiring institutional infrastructure and policy support. The finding is consistent with previous studies that reported uneven ICT integration in higher education due to infrastructural limitations, inadequate institutional support, and disparities in digital competence (Alshammari & Alshammari, 2023; Khan & Adepoju, 2024; Ukeje et al., 2025). It also supports the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), which posits that technology utilisation depends largely on users' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use. The study further revealed that academic staff experienced a high workload, driven primarily by teaching, research, student supervision, assessment, and administrative responsibilities. These findings reflect the expanding responsibilities of academics in contemporary higher education and underscore the growing pressure to balance multiple professional roles. They are consistent with previous studies that identify increasing academic demands as a major challenge affecting staff productivity and well-being (Nchinda & Tchoumba, 2024; Ukeje et al., 2025). The findings also align with the Job Demands–Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which argues

that increasing job demands require adequate organisational resources to sustain employee performance and reduce work-related strain.

Most importantly, the study established that ICT utilisation had a significant positive influence on workload management. Although respondents perceived the contribution of ICT to workload management to be moderate, the regression analysis demonstrated that greater ICT utilisation significantly enhanced lecturers' capacity to manage teaching, research, supervision, assessment, and administrative responsibilities. This finding suggests that effective utilisation of digital technologies contributes to improved work efficiency and organisational performance. The result corroborates earlier studies showing that ICT enhances communication, collaboration, information management, and institutional effectiveness when supported by appropriate infrastructure and organisational commitment (Panakaje et al., 2024; Patel & Wong, 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2024). The finding further demonstrates the complementary relevance of the Technology Acceptance Model and the Job Demands–Resources Model by showing that ICT serves as an organisational resource that enables academic staff to cope more effectively with increasing professional demands.

Overall, the findings indicate that while ICT has substantial potential to improve workload management, its effectiveness depends on the availability of adequate infrastructure, institutional support, and opportunities for continuous digital capacity development. Strengthening these enabling conditions is therefore essential to maximise the benefits of digital transformation within Nigerian polytechnics.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) utilisation on workload management among academic staff in selected public polytechnics in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings indicate a moderate level of ICT utilisation alongside a high level of academic workload. More importantly, ICT utilisation exerted a significant positive influence on workload management, demonstrating that increased use of digital technologies enhances lecturers' ability to manage teaching, research, supervision, assessment, and administrative responsibilities. The study therefore establishes ICT as a strategic organisational resource capable of improving academic productivity and institutional efficiency. By providing empirical evidence from Nigerian public polytechnics, the study contributes to the growing discourse on digital transformation in higher education and offers practical insights for strengthening ICT-enabled workload management in resource-constrained institutional contexts.

Recommendations

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

i. Polytechnic management and relevant government agencies should strengthen ICT infrastructure by expanding access to Learning Management Systems, digital assessment platforms, institutional information systems, reliable internet connectivity, and stable electricity supply to facilitate the effective integration of ICT into academic and administrative activities.
ii. Continuous professional development programmes should be institutionalised to enhance lecturers' digital competencies and promote the effective utilisation of ICT for teaching, research, student supervision, assessment, and institutional administration.
iii. Polytechnic administrators should implement policies that fully integrate ICT into academic and administrative processes to minimise reliance on manual procedures, reduce task duplication, improve operational efficiency, and enhance workload management among academic staff.

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EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE MODERN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Agriculture remains a vital sector of the Nigerian economy, contributing significantly to employment creation, poverty reduction, food security and the supply of raw materials for industries. Despite Nigeria's abundant agricultural potentials, the sector has experienced persistent setbacks due to poor leadership characterized by corruption, policy inconsistency, weak institutional continuity and ineffective policy implementation. These challenges have hindered agricultural development and limited the sector's contribution to national growth. This paper examines effective leadership as a critical pathway to sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria. It argues that visionary, accountable and committed leadership is indispensable for achieving agricultural transformation, sustainable national development, and improved livelihoods. The study traces the evolution of agricultural development in Nigeria from 1960-2026, highlighting major policies, programmes, and leadership initiatives that have shaped the sector. It also assesses the impacts of effective leadership on agricultural transformation, identifies the leadership challenges confronting Nigeria's agricultural sector, and examines the need for strong governance in promoting sustainable modern agricultural practices. The paper concludes by recommending practical measures to strengthen leadership, enhance policy implementation, ensure institutional continuity, promote innovation, and accelerate sustainable agricultural growth in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Effective leadership, sustainable modern agricultural practices, agricultural development, Nigeria*

Introduction

Agriculture remains the backbone of the Nigeria's economy, employing over 70% of the rural population and contributing 23.16% of the country's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first quarter of 2026 (IMF, 2026). Beyond its economic role, the sector plays a pivotal role in food production, employment generation, poverty alleviation, rural development, and the supply of raw materials for industries. Despite this enormous potentials, Nigeria continues to face significant food security challenges. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2026), about 27million people were projected to experience food insecurity by the end of 2025. This paradox raises a fundamental question: why does a country endowed with abundant agricultural resources continue to struggle with food insecurity. Nigeria is richly blessed with vast expanses of fertile arable land, favorable climatic conditions, abundant water resources, a large human population capable of driving agricultural sector. Yet, these enormous endowments have not been fully harnessed to achieve sustainable agricultural development and national food supply. Lateef and Hadina (2014), citing Basuna, observed that Nigeria is endowed with potentialities of enormous range in mineral resources such as good climate, fertile land and talented people. Unfortunately, these resources have remained largely underutilized because of consistent leadership failures and weak governance.

The underperformance of Nigeria's agricultural sector can be attributed to several interrelated challenges, including poor leadership, corruption, insecurity arising from insurgency, banditry and kidnapping, inadequate infrastructure, climate change, weak institutions, and inconsistent implementation of agricultural policies. Among these challenges, corruption remains one of the greatest impediments to national development. It has weakened public institutions, diverted resources meant for development, undermined public trust, and frustrated the effective implementation of agricultural programmes, and national development plans. Asiru and Olayanju (2018), argue that corruption has inflicted immeasurable damage on Nigeria's growth and development by making the faithful implementation of national plans and projects almost impossible.

This concern is not new, more than four decades ago, Achebe (1983), lamented the state of leadership in Nigeria, arguing that the country's fundamental problems were corruption and failure of leadership. His observations remain relevant today, as corruption and poor governance continue to undermine sustainable development. Rather than abating over time, corruption has become increasingly sophisticated and widespread. For example, the PUNCH Newspaper of January 8, 2026, reported allegations that over fifty properties valued at more than #200 billion naira were linked to a former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN. Although allegations remain subject to due legal process, such reports illustrate the persistent concerns about corruption and the misuse of public resources in Nigeria.

Effective leadership is indispensable to the sustainable development of any nation. It provides strategic direction, promotes accountability and transparency, ensures efficient resource mobilization and utilization, strengthens institutions, encourages innovation, and guarantees the consistent implementation of public policies. In the agricultural sector, effective leadership is essential for creating an enabling environment that promotes investment, mechanization, climate-smart agriculture, research and innovation, value-chain development, food security, and rural transformation. Conversely, no nation can attain sustainable development or become a formidable force in the comity of nations without visionary, accountable and people-oriented leadership.

Against this backdrop, this paper argues that effective leadership characterized by visionary governance, zero tolerance for corruption, strategic resource mobilization, policy consistency, institutional continuity, innovation, stakeholders' collaboration, and commitment to sustainability - constitutes a critical pathway to achieving sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria. The paper contends that strengthening leadership at all levels of governance is indispensable for unlocking Nigeria's vast agricultural potential and ensuring long -term food security, economic prosperity, and sustainable national development.

Concept of Agriculture

Agriculture refers to the cultivation of crops and plants, and raising of livestock for economic purposes and human needs (embibe.com). It is a critical sector of the Nigerian economy, employing substantial percentage of the rural population and contributing significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Benefits of Agriculture in Nigeria

According to Adenekan et al (2019), some of the benefits of agriculture are as follows:

- Food Production/Security
- Employment generation
- Poverty reduction
- GDP contribution
- Provision of raw materials for industries
- Entrepreneurial and investment
- Foreign exchange earnings

Modern and Sustainable Agricultural Practices in Nigeria

Modern agriculture entails the use of scientific methods, advanced technology and innovation to improve agricultural product. Examples of modern agricultural practices in the world including Nigeria include Mechanized Farming, Precision Agriculture, Improved Seed Technology, Irrigation Farming, Organic Farming, and Digital Agriculture.

Sustainable agricultural practices refer to the methods and techniques, used in farming to cultivate crops and raise livestock. They include crop management, soil management, water management, pest and disease management, and livestock management (Fiveable.com, 2026).

Sustainable agricultural practices entail the ability to meet present agricultural needs without compromising future generations' efforts. It balances environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability so that human life and natural ecosystems can endure and thrive. Some of the notable agricultural practices are as follows:

- **Crop Rotation**

Cambridge Dictionary defines crop rotation as a method of farming where a number of different plants are grown one after the other on a field so that the soil stays healthy and fertile.

In the same vein, crop rotation is the practice of planting different crops sequentially on the same plot of land to improve soil health, optimize nutrients in the soil, and combat pest and weed pressure (Rodale Institute, 2026). The major purpose of crop rotation is a frantic effort towards achieving bumper harvest or yields while maintaining fertile and healthy soil for subsequent planting seasons.

- **Agroforestry**

In a simple term, it is a practice of combining crops with trees. Cambridge Dictionary defines agroforestry as the practice that involves growing and caring for trees. It is a deliberate act of integrating trees into farming systems for certain benefits such as to improve soil health/fertility, support water management and above all increasing productivity.

- **Water Conservation**

Water conservation is the practice of using water efficiently to reduce unnecessary water usage (Constellation.com, 2026). It is basically the principle or act of minimizing usage of water or using less water while craving for productivity, performance, comfort or quality in agricultural practices. A good example of water conservation is efficient irrigation systems.

AGIVI (2026), sees it as the method in which a farmer transports water from its source to their cultivated fields. Irrigation water can be gotten from wells, boreholes, rivers, ponds, lakes etc. Irrigation systems is an essential component of modern agricultural practices which are being explored by farmers especially those in the desert areas.

- **Conservation Agriculture**

According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), conservation agriculture is a farming system that promotes minimum soil disturbance, maintenance of a permanent soil cover and diversification and natural biological processes above and below the ground surface, which contribute to increased water and nutrient use efficiency and to improved and sustained crop production.

Conservation agriculture is a sustainable farming system that prevent land degradation and regenerate soil health. It optimizes crop yields while protecting the land. It reduces labour and fuel costs, helps mitigates climate change and boost farm resilience.

According to FAO, there are three principles of conservative agriculture, namely:

- Minimum mechanical soil disturbance: Through direct seed end/or fertilizer placement.
- Permanent soil organic cover: With cover crops categorized into legumes, grasses, brassicas and broadleaves.
- Species diversification: Through various crop sequences and associations involving at least three different crops.

- **Renewable Energy Use**

Renewable energy is power derived from natural, continuously replenished sources like sunlight, wind and water. It is primarily used to generate electricity, heat buildings and power transportation, providing a clean alternative that drastically reduces greenhouse gas emissions and mitigates climate change. One of the main benefits of most renewable energy sources is that they don't release carbon dioxide or pollute the air when they are used to produce electricity.

A good example of renewable energy use is solar powered irrigation and storage. It explores the power of the sun (solar energy) to pump water to fields or soil through irrigation. It becomes an ideal choice for farmers in remote areas where there is no electricity.

Solar-powered irrigation system has the following benefits:

- Irrigation in remote areas
- Eco friendly
- No grid connection required
- No electricity bills
- No fuel required
- Durability and low maintenance

Evolution of Agricultural Development in Nigeria

Pre- independence Era (1900-1960)

This era was characterized with the introduction of export crops such as cocoa, groundnut and palm oil in the Western, Eastern and Northern Nigeria respectively.

Establishment of Agricultural Research Institutes was also prioritized. Some of the research institutes established during the period include Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), National Veterinary Research Institute, Moor Plantation Agricultural Research Station, West African Cocoa Research Institute and Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T) (Nairametrics.com).

Post -Independence Era (1960-1970)

During this period or era, leadership preoccupation was on export revenue rather than food security. Hence, agriculture historically contributed over 60% of GDP, 70% of export earnings, and 95% of food needs from the colonial period through the 1970s (NBS, 2024).

Oil Boom Era (1970-1980)

The rapid growth of crude oil exploration in the early 1970s triggered a sharp, sustained downturn in agricultural performance (NBS, 2023). This downturn is more of the effect of a structural break, rather than a leadership failure, but this set the stage for the governance vacuum that followed.

Operation Feed the Nation (1976)

This was the initiative of General Olusegun Obasanjo administration to encourage food production with the intention of achieving some objectives such as increase food supply, encourage citizens to farm etc.

Green Revolution (1980-1983)

This programme or policy was launched during the Second Republic under President Sheu Shagari. It aimed at achieving the following objectives: food sufficiency, mechanized farming etc. It was confronted with some challenges among which were corruption, poor implementation etc.

Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (1986)

This was the brain child of General Ibrahim Babangida's administration, focusing on rural infrastructure development, agricultural support etc.

Agricultural Transformation Agenda (2010-2015)

It was introduced under Goodluck Jonathan presidency. Among its achievements were: E-wallet fertilization distribution, private sector participation, youth and women in Agribusiness and Growth Enhancement Support (GES).

Anchor Borrower Programme (2015-2023)

This was initiated and launched in 2015 by the Central Bank of Nigeria with the following objectives; support smallholder farmers, improve local production etc. Hence, agriculture is noted to have contributed an average of 23% to the national GDP annually over the last decade, and this is in sharp contrast to the 1970s baseline.

Current Era (2024-2026)

This is anchored on President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda. The current administration declared state of emergency on food security in July 2023. In 2024, 1.6 trillion naira was allocated to agriculture. Under this policy, the following efforts are prioritized: National Agricultural Development Fund 2023 for research and irrigation, 500,000 hectares mechanization programme with Brazil, Food Security Council chaired by Vice President, and

Digital National Farmers Registration 2025.

A critical look at the time-line of agricultural development in Nigeria revealed that effective leadership is critical to agricultural transformation as leadership potency determines agricultural growth and development. In other words, when leadership fails, agriculture fails, and when leadership succeeds, Nigeria becomes sufficient in food security. However, some gaps in leadership role such as lack of institutional continuity, corruption (subsidies, credit facilities etc. hijacked by elites), leadership without stakeholders inclusion, accountability, technical coordination etc. should be given more priority.

Concept of Leadership

Leadership is a process where an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2019). It entails the capacity of an individual (the leader) to influence other group members or subordinates towards actualizing common goals. Leadership is about influence, guidance, direction and decisions making towards achieving a group's common set goals. In other words, it is about influencing or inspiring people, making decisions, providing guidance for a group etc.

Effective leadership on the other hand, connotes efforts towards achieving results while maintaining positive (cordial) relationship and ethical standards. According to Drucker (2004), effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results, not attributes. This implies that effective leadership emphasizes dedication, commitment, selflessness, necessary and timely actions etc. towards achieving desired results.

Corroborating this, effective leadership is the ability of a leader to influence, motivate and guide followers towards achieving shared goals while promoting efficiency, ethical behaviours and positive organizational outcomes (Tukl, 2012; Northouse, 2019; & Drucker, 2004).

Therefore, effective leadership is the ability to do the following:

- Achieve organizational goals successfully
- Motivate and inspire people
- Use resources efficiently
- Build trust and teamwork
- Adapt to challenges and changes.

Role of Effective Leadership in Agricultural Transformation

Effective leadership in the context of Nigerian agriculture is about having a good knowledge of the sector's complexities, implementing transformative policies, devising a proactive approach to problem-solving, placing public or general interest above parochial interest, showing strategic vision and accountability. It plays significant role in agricultural sustainability through the following measures:

- **Policy Formulation:** Effective leadership facilitates formulation and implementation of sound agricultural policies which emphasize subsidized agricultural inputs, availability of credit

facilities to farmers, building infrastructures, organizing seminars for training and retraining of farmers as well as prioritizing extension services.

- **Resources Allocation:** It facilitates adequate funding of Research Institutes such as Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T), Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), National Research Institute (NRI) etc., extension services, and irrigation system projects.
- **Innovation Promotion:** Effective leadership encourages adoption of modern technologies which encompass improved seed varieties, modern equipment or tools, smart farming agriculture, efficient water management system, efficient irrigation systems, climate- resilient seeds etc.
- **Capacity Building:** Training and retraining of farmers on new methods of farming, pest control and climate adaptation.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** It encourages strong support for collaboration/synergy between government and private investors.
- **Encouraging trust and sense of collective purpose:** Effective leadership characterized by transparent, accountability and inclusivity inspire confidence, motivate and mobilize stakeholders towards a shared vision of a thriving transformational agricultural sector.

To drive home the dynamics of effective leadership: a pathway to sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria, table 1 presents a trend of ministers, their tenure, and the corresponding agricultural GDP share of the national economy over the period 1999-2023.

Tenure	Minister	Key Policy/Programme	Agricultural % of National GDP
1999 – 2003	Various (early Obasanjo cabinet reshuffles)	Return to Democratic Planning post-military rule	Sector share still recovering from SAP-era neglect
2003 – 2007	Adamu Bello	National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS)	Modest, steady growth
20011 – 2015	Akinwumi Adesina	Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), Growth Enhancement Scheme (e-wallet fertilizer)	Widely credited with the most visible reform period; input-access and value-chain focus
2015 – 2019	Audu Ogbeh	Agriculture Promotion Policy (The Green Alternative)	Continued diversification push post-2016 oil price shock
2019 – 2021	Sabo Nanono	Focus on rice – its import substitution	Agricultural GDP grew by about 2.9% annually between 2021 and 2024, though this spans into the next tenure
2021 – 2023	Mohammed Mahmood Abubakr	Continuity of NAIP-linked programmes	Agriculture contributed 28% of GDP between 2021 and 2024, employing about 40% of the labour force
2023 – present	Abubakar Kyari	National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NAPTIP, 2022 – 2027	Despite the sector's centrality, structural challenges persist and Nigeria imported #16 trillion in food between 2021 and 2024 – more than double food export earning of #7 trillion

Source: compiled from https://agriculture.gov.ng/honourable.minister/

Going by the data in the table above, it may be argued that the most impactful tenure of leadership on agricultural productivity/transformation in the contemporary era is 2011 - 2015 during the Akinwumi Adesina ministerialship. The period is also the most cited in literature as a governance inflection point particularly due to reforms agricultural input delivery through the GES/e-wallet

system, which contrasts relatively with the flat 23% of GDP plateau recorded over the subsequent decade.

Challenges confronting Effective Leadership in Nigerian Agriculture

Among the major challenges hindering effective leadership in agriculture are as follows:

- **Policy Inconsistency:** Frequent changes in policies **disrupt** agricultural programmes. Successive governments/administrations don't sustain or build on the existing policies. Between 1999 and 2024, multiple agricultural policies and programmes were initiated (Nwankwo et al, 2024).
- **Corruption:** Corruption is one of the major banes of development in Nigeria. It is cancerous. According to 2023 ICPC report, 40% of Agriculture Budgets was diverted. Fertilizer subsidy and other packages hardly reaches 20% of intended farmers.
- **Weak Institutions:** Most of agricultural institutions are in a state of institutional dysfunction due to inadequate funding and other challenges.
- **Insecurity:** The rate of insecurity in Nigeria is alarming. Banditry, insurgency, kidnapping etc. are on the rise as most farmers have deserted their farms due to the fear of being killed by the monsters who allegedly requesting for money before they could have access to their farms. Farmers - herders conflict/clash is also a menace.
- **Lack of Continuity in Governance:** Frequent changes in government often affect or disrupt agricultural programmes.
- **Inadequate Rural Infrastructures:** Poor roads, storage facilities, rural electrification, water and irrigation system, rice mills, sugar mills, oil expeller, animal feed mills etc.
- **Climate Change:** Due to human activities, climate change has increased flooding, drought and desertification which constitute a great threat to agricultural development.
- **Limited Access to Funds:** Most farmers hardly have access to government loan or credit facilities from financial institutions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are found worthwhile towards enhancing modern agricultural practices in Nigeria:

- Policy consistency on agricultural programmes should be prioritized through legislation by National Assembly that successive administration(s) must not abandon or deviate from existing policy or policies.
- Appropriation for agricultural sector should be significantly increased.
- Agricultural institutes such as CRIN, IITA, IAR&T etc. should be more empowered and/or strengthened.
- Youth participation in agriculture should be more encouraged through enabling environment.
- Zero-tolerance for corruption should not be compromised. Appropriate sanctions should be meted out to any public official found guilty of corruption.
- Security architecture of the country should be improved especially around farming environments/communities.
- Rural infrastructural development should be given a prime of place.
- Modern agricultural practices such as mechanized farming, irrigation farming, improved seed technology etc. should be more encouraged, and well-funded.
- Agricultural inputs and other incentives should be made available to farmers at subsidized rate.
- Training and retraining of farmers and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector through seminars and conferences organized by the Ministries of Agriculture at all levels.

Conclusion

It is indisputable that effective leadership plays a pivotal role in the development and prosperity of any nation. Nigeria is richly endowed with abundant natural resources, including fertile land, favourable climatic condition, and vast water resources. However, these immense potentials have remained largely underutilized due to challenges such as poor or visionless leadership, ethnic divisions, corruption, unpatriotic attitude, religious intolerance, weak political will, and insecurity.

For Nigeria to emerge as a formidable force in the comity of nations, its abundant human and natural resources must be effectively explored, harnessed, and sustainably managed through purposeful, accountable, and effective leadership. Such leadership must prioritize policy consistency, effective policy implementation, zero-tolerance for corruption, improved national insecurity, investment in agricultural innovation, and strengthened diplomatic relation. By creating an enabling environment for agricultural productivity and rural development, effective leadership can unlock the full potentials of the agricultural sector.

Therefore, effective leadership remains the foremost pathway to achieving sustainable modern agricultural practices and ensuring food security, economic diversification, and inclusive national development in Nigeria.

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INFLUENCE OF JOB ETHICS ON USER SATISFACTION WITH LIBRARY SERVICES PROVISION OF SELECTED STATE UNIVERSITIES IN OYO STATE

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Abstract
This study examined the influence of job ethics on user satisfaction with library services provision in selected state universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed the effect of honesty and integrity of library personnel on user satisfaction, evaluated the impact of accountability and responsibility of library staff on user satisfaction, examined the role of fairness and impartiality of librarians in enhancing user satisfaction, and determined the influence of professionalism and ethical conduct on overall library service satisfaction. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and targeted registered library users at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (N = 28) and Emmanuel Alayande University of Education (N = 15). Owing to the small population size, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the entire population, giving a sample size of 43 respondents. Data were collected using a validated, structured questionnaire built on a five-point Likert scale, with reliability established through a pilot test using Cronbach's Alpha, and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Findings revealed that honesty and integrity significantly enhance user satisfaction, fostering trust and confidence in information provision. Results further indicated that library personnel demonstrate accountability and responsiveness by addressing complaints and resolving service challenges promptly, which effectively builds a user-centred service environment. Fairness, impartiality, professionalism, and strict adherence to professional codes of conduct also emerged as strong predictors of user satisfaction, ensuring non-discriminatory service delivery. The study concludes that job ethics among library personnel are critical factors for achieving high service quality and sustaining user confidence in academic libraries, and recommends strengthened ethical training, clear accountability mechanisms, and institutional reinforcement of professional codes of conduct.
Keywords: Job Ethics, User Satisfaction, Academic Libraries, Library Personnel, Oyo State

Introduction

Library user satisfaction remains a central concern for academic institutions as they seek to provide quality information services that support teaching, learning, and research. Users are more likely to use and recommend library services when their expectations are met or exceeded, making satisfaction a key performance indicator for academic libraries (Solomon, 2024; Ogungbade, 2022). Within this framework, understanding the predictors of satisfaction, including intangible factors such as job ethics, is vital for improving strategic service delivery in state-supported university libraries in Oyo State.

Job ethics refer to the professional conduct, integrity, and moral principles that guide employees' actions in fulfilling their duties (Solomon, 2024; ALA Code of Ethics, 2021). In academic librarianship, ethical practice includes honouring confidentiality, treating users respectfully, providing equitable service, demonstrating honesty, and upholding library values in every interaction. While infrastructural and technological factors are commonly linked to user satisfaction, ethical conduct remains a core determinant of user trust and perceived service quality. Previous research in Nigerian academic environments has largely focused on tangible and measurable factors like resource availability, facility quality, and user-centred services, but job ethics as a specific predictor of satisfaction has not been given

commensurate empirical attention, especially within Oyo State (Owolabi *et al.*, 2024; Ogungbade, 2022).

In the Nigerian context, constraints such as limited resources, inadequate facilities, and evolving user expectations challenge the delivery of effective library services (Ogungbade, 2022; Baffour Gyau *et al.*, 2021). In such environments, the ethical behaviour of librarians — marked by professionalism, accountability, and fairness — can help mitigate service gaps and enhance user satisfaction even when infrastructural limitations exist. Understanding the influence of job ethics on user satisfaction is therefore imperative for academic library management and policy formulation in Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role academic libraries play in supporting learning, teaching, and research, many libraries in Oyo State face challenges in achieving optimal user satisfaction. Issues such as favoritism, lack of transparency, delay in service delivery, and occasional disregard for user needs negatively affect the overall perception of library services, suggesting that user satisfaction may not solely depend on tangible resources but also significantly on the ethical behaviour and professionalism of library staff. Although several studies have examined factors influencing library user satisfaction, there is limited empirical evidence on the role of job ethics as a predictor of satisfaction in the context of state university libraries in Oyo State, with most existing research emphasising infrastructure, collection size, and ICT usage while overlooking the behavioural and ethical dimension of library personnel. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the extent to which job ethics predicts user satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the influence of job ethics on user satisfaction with library services provision of selected state universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. assess the effect of honesty and integrity of library personnel on user satisfaction;
ii. evaluate the impact of accountability and responsibility of library staff on user satisfaction;
iii. examine the role of fairness and impartiality of librarians in enhancing user satisfaction; and
iv. determine the influence of professionalism and ethical conduct on overall library service satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

This study provides empirical evidence for academic library administrators on how job ethics among library personnel influences user satisfaction, helping management understand the importance of ethical conduct, honesty, and professionalism in enhancing service delivery. It also benefits library personnel by raising awareness of how ethical practices directly affect users' perceptions, and provides researchers and policymakers with evidence to inform strategic plans and regulatory frameworks that promote ethical standards, accountability, and enhanced user experience in library service provision.

Literature review

Concept of Job Ethics

Job ethics refers to the set of moral principles, professional values, and standards that guide employees in the performance of their duties (Solomon, 2024; Adepoju & Akinwale, 2022). It is concerned with honesty, integrity, accountability, fairness, and adherence to professional norms in workplace conduct. In academic libraries, job ethics ensures that library personnel interact with users in a manner that is respectful, transparent, and professional, and scholars have observed that strong job ethics in organisations enhances trust, reduces workplace conflicts, and improves the overall quality of services delivered (Afolabi *et al.*, 2023; Owolabi *et al.*, 2024). Ethical library personnel are expected to respect user confidentiality, provide unbiased information services, and maintain honesty in cataloguing and circulation processes, and libraries with high ethical standards tend to have higher user satisfaction and loyalty, as patrons are confident that services are delivered equitably and professionally (Adepoju & Akinwale, 2022; Oladejo *et al.*, 2021).

User Satisfaction in Academic Libraries

User satisfaction reflects the extent to which library users perceive that their expectations and needs have been met through the services provided by library personnel. Dimensions of user satisfaction commonly examined in the literature include responsiveness, reliability, staff competence, resource availability, and the overall service environment (Alim & Chughtai, 2020; Karapetjana & Björk, 2023). Studies have consistently shown that service quality, staff competence, and responsiveness contribute significantly to how users perceive library effectiveness (Ogungbade, 2022; Baffour Gyau *et al.*, 2021), while comparative studies on digital and traditional library services suggest that user expectations continue to evolve alongside changes in service delivery technology (Park & Yang, 2022; Borrego & Abel, 2020).

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence from Edo State revealed that work ethics had a statistically significant, though comparatively weaker, influence on library users' satisfaction relative to information and communication technology use, but that the combined effect of work ethics and other professional practices significantly enhanced user satisfaction (Solomon, 2024). This underscores the importance of exploring job ethics both independently and in combination with other variables. Nigerian studies by Issa, Amusan, and Daura have similarly established that ethical values such as truthfulness, transparency, and integrity are essential determinants of service quality and user satisfaction in academic libraries, while Okiy (2017) reported that prompt attention to users' needs and staff willingness to accept responsibility for service outcomes significantly improve user satisfaction. Further studies by Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, and by Afolabi (2019), found that fairness, impartial treatment, professionalism, and adherence to established standards significantly influence users' perceptions of service quality in Nigerian academic libraries.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Deontological Ethics Theory, which holds that the morality of an action is grounded in adherence to duty and rules rather than solely in its outcomes, supporting the view that librarians have an inherent professional duty to act honestly, fairly, and responsibly regardless of circumstance. It is complemented by the SERVQUAL model, which conceptualises service quality — and by extension user satisfaction — as the gap between users' expectations and their perceptions of actual service delivery across dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. Expectancy Theory further explains how users' anticipation of ethical, professional treatment shapes their evaluation of service encounters. Together, these frameworks support the study's central proposition that ethical conduct is a core, evaluable dimension of library service quality.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study positions job ethics — comprising honesty and integrity, accountability and responsibility, fairness and impartiality, and professionalism and ethical conduct — as the independent constructs influencing the dependent construct of user satisfaction. Each ethical dimension is conceptualised as contributing both directly and cumulatively to users' overall perception of service quality: honesty and integrity build informational trust; accountability and responsibility drive responsiveness to complaints and errors; fairness and impartiality ensure equitable access; and professionalism and ethical conduct anchor consistent, standards-based service delivery. The framework guided the structuring of the study's research instrument into corresponding sections and the formulation of its research questions.

Gap in Literature

While a growing body of literature addresses library service quality and user satisfaction in Nigerian academic libraries, most existing studies emphasise infrastructure, ICT adoption, and collection development as predictors of satisfaction, with comparatively limited empirical attention paid specifically to job ethics as an independent predictor, particularly within Oyo State's state university

library system. This study addresses that gap by providing focused, institution-specific empirical evidence on how honesty, accountability, fairness, and professionalism shape user satisfaction in this context.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate for collecting data from a group of respondents to describe and examine the relationship between job ethics variables and user satisfaction. The population comprised registered users of academic libraries in two selected state universities in Oyo State, Nigeria: Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso (28 respondents), and Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo (15 respondents), giving a total population of 43. Owing to the small population size, the study adopted a purposive sampling technique and utilised the entire population as its sample, thereby ensuring comprehensive representation and minimising sampling error.

A structured questionnaire, designed by the researcher, served as the main instrument for data collection. Section A of the questionnaire captured demographic information of respondents, while Section B contained statements relating to the study's core variables — honesty and integrity of library personnel, accountability and responsibility of staff, fairness and impartiality in service delivery, professionalism and ethical conduct, and user satisfaction with library services — structured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Content validity was established through face and content validation by experts in Library and Information Science and research methodology, while reliability was determined through a pilot test analysed using Cronbach's Alpha, which indicated the instrument was reliable and suitable for the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire in the libraries of the selected universities, and completed copies were collected immediately to ensure a high response rate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, and presented in tables for interpretation and discussion.

Results and discussion

Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

All 43 questionnaires administered were retrieved and found usable, representing a 100% response rate. As shown in Table 1, the gender distribution shows a fairly balanced representation, with 23 (53.49%) male and 20 (46.51%) female respondents, although male respondents are slightly higher. The majority of respondents (32.56%) fell within the 31–40 years age bracket, suggesting an active and productive population of library users. Academic staff constituted the largest category of respondents (44.19%), followed by administrative and technical/support staff in equal proportion (27.91% each). In terms of qualification, 34.88% held HND/BSc degrees, while a substantial proportion held postgraduate qualifications (30.23% MSc/M.Tech and 20.93% PhD), indicating a highly educated respondent base well positioned to evaluate library ethical conduct. Years of service were fairly evenly distributed, with 30.23% having between 5 and 10 years of service.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 43)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	23	53.49
	Female	20	46.51
Age Group	18–30 years	11	25.58
	31–40 years	14	32.56
	41–50 years	10	23.26
	51 years and above	8	18.60
Category of Respondent	Administrative Staff	12	27.91
	Academic Staff	19	44.19
	Technical/Support Staff	12	27.91

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highest Qualification	ND/NCE	6	13.95
	HND/BSc	15	34.88
	MSc/M.Tech	13	30.23
	PhD	9	20.93
Years of Service	Less than 5 years	10	23.26
	5–10 years	13	30.23
	11–15 years	11	25.58
	Above 15 years	9	20.93

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Honesty and Integrity of Library Personnel and User Satisfaction

Table 2 shows that the vast majority of respondents affirmed that library staff demonstrate honesty in service delivery (90.69% SA/A combined), provide accurate and reliable information (90.70%), and are trusted by users to handle information needs with integrity (90.70%). Respondents further strongly agreed that honest service delivery improves user satisfaction (90.70%) and that the ethical honesty of staff positively influences satisfaction (93.02%). These findings indicate that honesty and integrity function as direct catalysts for user confidence, consistent with Nwalo (2018), who found that honesty in information provision enhances users' trust in librarians and improves the credibility of the library as an information centre.

Table 2: Honesty and Integrity of Library Personnel and User Satisfaction (N = 43)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Library staff demonstrate honesty in service delivery.	24 (55.81)	15 (34.88)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
2	Library personnel provide accurate and reliable information to users.	23 (53.49)	16 (37.21)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
3	Users trust the integrity of library staff in handling information needs.	25 (58.14)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
4	Library staff avoid misrepresentation of information resources.	22 (51.16)	17 (39.53)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
5	Honest service delivery improves user satisfaction.	26 (60.47)	13 (30.23)	2 (4.65)	2 (4.65)	0 (0.00)
6	Integrity of staff enhances users' confidence in library services.	25 (58.14)	15 (34.88)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
7	Ethical honesty of staff influences user satisfaction positively.	27 (62.79)	13 (30.23)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Accountability and Responsibility of Library Staff and User Satisfaction

As presented in Table 3, respondents strongly agreed that library staff take responsibility for users' complaints promptly (88.37% SA/A), are accountable for errors in service delivery (88.37%), and ensure timely responses to user requests (88.37%). A strong majority also agreed that accountability improves the quality of library services (93.03%) and that responsibility of staff enhances user satisfaction (93.02%). These findings support Okiy (2017), who reported that prompt attention to users' needs and staff willingness to accept responsibility for service outcomes significantly improve user satisfaction in academic libraries, and align with service quality theory, which emphasises responsiveness as a critical determinant of customer satisfaction.

Table 3: Accountability and Responsibility of Library Staff and User Satisfaction (N = 43)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Library staff take responsibility for users' complaints promptly.	24 (55.81)	14 (32.56)	3 (6.98)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
2	Staff are accountable for errors in service delivery.	22 (51.16)	16 (37.21)	2 (4.65)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)
3	Library personnel ensure timely response to user requests.	25 (58.14)	13 (30.23)	3 (6.98)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
4	Users are satisfied with the level of responsibility shown by staff.	23 (53.49)	15 (34.88)	2 (4.65)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)
5	Accountability improves the quality of library services.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
6	Staff demonstrate commitment to resolving users' challenges.	24 (55.81)	16 (37.21)	2 (4.65)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.33)
7	Responsibility of staff enhances user satisfaction.	27 (62.79)	13 (30.23)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Fairness and Impartiality of Librarians and User Satisfaction

Table 4 reveals that respondents strongly agreed that library staff treat all users equally without discrimination (90.70% SA/A), that fairness is maintained in service provision (90.70%), and that services are provided without favoritism (88.37%). Respondents also strongly endorsed the view that fair treatment improves user satisfaction (93.03%) and that librarians apply fairness consistently across service interactions (93.02%). These results corroborate the findings of Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, who reported that fairness and impartial treatment encourage positive user attitudes toward libraries, reinforcing fairness as a fundamental driver of institutional trust.

Table 4: Fairness and Impartiality of Librarians and User Satisfaction (N = 43)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Library staff treat all users equally without discrimination.	25 (58.14)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
2	Fairness is maintained in the provision of library services.	23 (53.49)	16 (37.21)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
3	Users are satisfied with the impartiality of library staff.	22 (51.16)	17 (39.53)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
4	Library services are provided without favoritism.	24 (55.81)	14 (32.56)	3 (6.98)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
5	Fair treatment improves user satisfaction.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
6	Impartiality of staff enhances trust in library services.	25 (58.14)	15 (34.88)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)	1 (2.33)
7	Librarians apply fairness in all service interactions.	27 (62.79)	13 (30.23)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Professionalism, Ethical Conduct, and Overall Library Service Satisfaction

Table 5 shows a remarkably consistent pattern across all seven items relating to professionalism and ethical conduct, with 93.03% of respondents (SA/A combined) affirming that library staff demonstrate professionalism, that ethical conduct improves user satisfaction, that staff maintain professional standards, and that professionalism enhances overall satisfaction with library services. This uniform

pattern reinforces the view that patrons closely associate visible ethical standards — such as courtesy, competence, and dependability — with their overall satisfaction. These findings align with Afolabi (2019), who found that professionalism, ethical behaviour, and adherence to established standards significantly influence users' perceptions of service quality in Nigerian academic libraries, and with the ethical principles of the Nigerian Library Association.

Table 5: Professionalism, Ethical Conduct and Overall Library Service Satisfaction (N = 43)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Library staff demonstrate professionalism in service delivery.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
2	Ethical conduct of staff improves user satisfaction.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
3	Staff maintain professional standards in handling users.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
4	Users are satisfied with the professionalism of library staff.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
5	Professional ethics improve quality of library services.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
6	Library staff adhere to ethical codes in service provision.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)
7	Overall professionalism enhances user satisfaction with library services.	26 (60.47)	14 (32.56)	2 (4.65)	1 (2.33)	0 (0.00)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Discussion of Findings

Overall, the findings affirm that job ethics constitute a multidimensional predictor of user satisfaction in academic library settings. Honesty and integrity establish the informational trust upon which users depend for accurate reference and research support. Accountability and responsibility translate into responsiveness that resolves service failures and reinforces a user-centred service culture. Fairness and impartiality eliminate perceptions of discrimination and favoritism, fostering equitable access to library resources. Professionalism and adherence to ethical codes, meanwhile, anchor consistent standards-based service delivery that patrons can reliably expect across interactions. Taken together, these findings are consistent with the Deontological Ethics perspective adopted for the study, which holds that librarians' duty-bound adherence to ethical principles — irrespective of situational pressures — is what ultimately sustains the gap-closing effect described by the SERVQUAL model between user expectations and perceived service quality.

A further observation is the consistency of response patterns across all four ethical dimensions examined, with combined strongly-agree and agree responses exceeding 88% on virtually every item. This consistency suggests that library users in the sampled institutions hold a broadly shared, favourable perception of staff ethical conduct, and that the four dimensions of job ethics function less as isolated predictors and more as an interlocking bundle of professional behaviours that jointly shape the overall service experience. For library management, this implies that ethics-focused interventions — such as training, codes of conduct, and accountability mechanisms — are likely to yield reinforcing rather than isolated improvements in user satisfaction, provided they are applied consistently across all four dimensions rather than in isolation.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study has established that job ethics significantly influence user satisfaction with library services provision in selected state universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Ethical values such as honesty, integrity, accountability, responsibility, fairness, impartiality, professionalism, and adherence to ethical standards were found to contribute positively to users' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction. When

library personnel consistently demonstrate honesty and integrity, users develop greater trust in library services and confidence in the information provided; accountability and responsibility promote responsiveness and improve service quality; fairness and impartiality foster trust and eliminate perceptions of discrimination; and professionalism and ethical conduct emerged as strong determinants of overall satisfaction. The study therefore concludes that ethical behaviour among library personnel is not only a professional obligation but a strategic factor for improving service quality, enhancing user confidence, and achieving higher levels of user satisfaction in university libraries.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that:

i. Library management should strengthen ethical training programmes for library personnel through regular workshops, seminars, and professional development activities aimed at promoting honesty, integrity, and ethical decision-making in service delivery;
ii. University libraries should establish clear accountability mechanisms that encourage staff to take responsibility for service outcomes, address users' complaints promptly, and ensure transparency in service provision;
iii. Library administrators should promote a culture of fairness and impartiality by ensuring that all users receive equal treatment and access to library resources without discrimination, favoritism, or bias;
iv. Professional ethical standards should be continuously reinforced through the implementation of institutional codes of conduct and regular monitoring of staff compliance with professional ethics; and
v. Library management should recognise and reward ethical behaviour among staff as a means of encouraging professionalism, responsibility, and commitment to quality service delivery.

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IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND WORK EFFICIENCY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY STAFF IN OYO STATE POLYTECHNICS

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Abstract
This study examined the relationship between in-service training and work efficiency of academic library staff in Oyo State Polytechnics. The specific objectives were to identify the types of in-service training available to academic library staff, examine the effectiveness of existing training programmes, assess the relationship between the frequency and quality of training and overall staff productivity, and identify the factors and challenges hindering training implementation. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all 46 library staff, including professional librarians and para-professionals, across four selected institutions: The Ibadan Polytechnic, The Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, and Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Owing to the small population size, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the entire population as the sample (N = 46). A structured, expert-validated questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale served as the primary instrument for data collection, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Findings revealed that academic library staff have access to various in-service training opportunities, including workshops, seminars, conferences, ICT training, and orientation programmes. Existing training programmes were found to be highly effective, significantly enhancing staff ICT skills, job confidence, task efficiency, and service delivery in cataloguing and reference services. A strong positive relationship was established between the frequency and quality of training and staff work productivity. However, the study identified critical institutional bottlenecks hindering effective implementation, notably inadequate funding, heavy workloads, poor planning, and limited management support. The study concludes that continuous professional development is vital for sustaining high standards in academic library service delivery, although its impact depends heavily on proper institutional execution. It is recommended that polytechnic managements substantially increase funding for training, ensure equitable access to development opportunities, strengthen ICT-based training, and provide stronger policy and institutional support for staff development.

Keywords: *In-Service Training, Work Efficiency, Academic Libraries, Library Staff, Professional Development*

Introduction

In-service training refers to continuous learning experiences designed to enhance employees' job performance, update their professional skills, and improve overall efficiency in the workplace. For academic library staff, in-service training is critical, as it equips personnel with current knowledge in information organization, digital resource management, user services, and emerging technologies (Adewale & Anunobi, 2021). As academic libraries evolve from traditional service delivery to digitally oriented information hubs, the need for regular training to address new competencies becomes increasingly significant.

Academic libraries in polytechnics play an essential role in supporting technical and vocational education by providing relevant information resources and research assistance to students and lecturers. However, changes in information formats, automation of library systems, and the adoption of electronic resource management technologies require library staff to possess up-to-date technical skills (Aina & Ariyo, 2020). Without adequate training, staff may struggle to manage electronic databases, digital

cataloguing systems, and online reference services, hindering work efficiency and the quality of service delivery.

Despite the acknowledged importance of training, evidence suggests that academic library staff in Nigerian polytechnics often experience inadequate training opportunities. Challenges such as limited funding, lack of training policies, and inadequate institutional support have been cited as barriers to effective training programmes (Ogbodu & Nwalo, 2020). In Oyo State polytechnics, the quality of library services is partly dependent on the competencies of library staff, making it critical to investigate how in-service training influences work efficiency among academic library personnel within these institutions.

Statement of the Problem

In-service training is a vital tool for enhancing the skills, knowledge, and competencies of academic library staff, enabling them to keep pace with technological advancements, digital resource management, and evolving user demands. Despite its importance, many polytechnic institutions in Oyo State have taken in-service training lightly, often providing irregular, unstructured, or poorly funded training programmes. This neglect limits staff ability to adopt modern library practices, manage electronic resources effectively, and deliver high-quality services to students and lecturers. Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical evidence examining the direct relationship between in-service training and work efficiency among academic library personnel, particularly within the polytechnic context, as most existing studies focus on universities or general workforce development.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between in-service training and work efficiency of academic library staff in Oyo State Polytechnics. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. identify the types of in-service training available to academic library staff in Oyo State Polytechnics;
ii. examine the effectiveness of existing in-service training programmes in enhancing staff skills and work efficiency;
iii. assess the relationship between the frequency and quality of in-service training and the overall work productivity of library personnel; and
iv. identify factors and challenges that hinder the implementation of in-service training programmes for academic library personnel.

Significance of the Study

The study provides insights for library administrators, training coordinators, and policymakers on the types and effectiveness of in-service training available to academic library staff. By identifying training gaps, institutional bottlenecks, and areas for improvement, the findings can guide the design of structured, regular, and well-funded training programmes that enhance productivity, service delivery, and staff satisfaction in polytechnic libraries.

Literature review

Concept of In-Service Training

In-service training refers to ongoing professional development activities that employees engage in while remaining actively employed. Unlike pre-employment training, it is designed to update, refresh, and enhance the skills and knowledge of existing employees to meet current and future job demands. In academic libraries, in-service training helps personnel adapt to changes in information technologies, service delivery models, and user expectations through structured learning opportunities throughout their careers (Aina & Ariyo, 2020). Such training may take the form of workshops, seminars, conferences, short courses, on-the-job training, and mentoring sessions, and according to Ololube

(2017), effective in-service training should be continuous, systematic, and aligned with organizational goals and individual career aspirations.

Work Efficiency in the Library Context

Work efficiency among academic library staff is often measured in terms of effectiveness, timeliness, accuracy, user satisfaction, and service output. Efficient library personnel are expected to deliver prompt reference responses, maintain updated catalogues, manage digital platforms, and assist users competently. However, limited professional development opportunities and inadequate training have been found to impede staff ability to perform optimally (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2019), underscoring the importance of in-service training in bridging skill gaps.

Empirical Review

Several studies have examined the relationship between training and job performance in library settings. Training has been found to enhance job knowledge, boost morale, increase motivation, and enable employees to cope with new job challenges (Ololube, 2017). Nigerian polytechnic libraries have reportedly intensified ICT-based training to bridge digital skill gaps among staff (Okorie, 2019), while librarians who participate in regular training have demonstrated higher efficiency in cataloguing, reference services, and user support (Eze & Nwankwo, 2018). Studies have also linked frequent and quality training to improved productivity: Oluwole and Adebayo (2021) found that frequent professional development activities significantly increase productivity and adaptability among academic staff in tertiary institutions, while Saeed and Elama (2018) reported that library staff who participated in training programmes demonstrated higher confidence in handling complex tasks and adapting to technology-driven processes. Conversely, financial constraints, institutional neglect, poor planning, and insufficient management support have consistently been identified as major barriers to effective staff training in Nigerian academic libraries (Nwalo, 2018; Adetoro, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory, which views training and education as investments that enhance the productive capacity of employees, and is complemented by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains how exposure to training increases users' ability and willingness to adopt and utilise new technologies. Together, these frameworks support the view that continuous, well-structured in-service training builds the competencies and confidence library staff require to perform efficiently in increasingly digitised academic library environments.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underlying this study links in-service training, treated as the independent variable, to work efficiency, treated as the dependent variable, through an intervening set of institutional factors. In-service training is operationalised along two dimensions: type of training (workshops, seminars, conferences, ICT training, and orientation) and quality/frequency of training. These dimensions are conceptualised as directly influencing indicators of work efficiency, namely task accuracy, timeliness of service delivery, technological adaptability, and user satisfaction. However, the framework also recognises that institutional factors funding, management support, workload, planning, and availability of qualified trainers moderate the extent to which training translates into actual efficiency gains. Where institutional support is weak, even well-designed and regularly organised training is likely to yield only limited improvements in staff productivity. This framework guided the formulation of the study's research questions and the structuring of the research instrument into corresponding sections.

Gap in Literature

While considerable literature exists on staff training in university libraries and general workforce contexts, empirical studies specifically examining the relationship between in-service training and work efficiency among polytechnic library staff in Oyo State remain scarce. Much of the existing Nigerian literature on library staff training has concentrated on federal and state university libraries, with

comparatively little attention paid to polytechnic library systems, despite the distinct technical and vocational orientation of polytechnic education and its implications for the competencies required of library personnel. This study addresses that gap by providing institution-specific, empirical evidence to guide policy and practice in the polytechnic sub-sector.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate for systematically collecting and statistically analysing quantitative data on the relationship between in-service training and work efficiency among library staff (Kothari, 2021). The population comprised all 46 library staff across four Oyo State polytechnics: The Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki (7 staff); The Ibadan Polytechnic (22 staff); Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa (8 staff); and Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora (9 staff). Owing to the relatively small population, a purposive sampling technique was adopted, involving the entire population of 46 as the study sample, thereby reducing sampling error and ensuring comprehensive representation.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument, divided into five sections: Section A captured demographic information; Section B assessed the types of in-service training available; Section C examined the effectiveness of existing training programmes; Section D assessed the relationship between training frequency/quality and productivity; and Section E identified factors and challenges hindering implementation. A five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1) was used for Sections B to E. Content validity was established through expert review by specialists in library and information science and research methodology, complemented by a pilot test among 10 library staff from an institution outside the main study. Instrument reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable. The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher following institutional clearance, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Results and discussion

Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

All 46 questionnaires administered were retrieved and found usable, representing a 100% response rate. As shown in Table 1, the gender distribution shows a fairly balanced representation, with 25 (54.35%) male and 21 (45.65%) female respondents. The majority of respondents (36.96%) were within the 26–35 years age bracket, indicating a relatively young and active workforce. In terms of qualification, 43.48% held HND/BSc degrees, suggesting a well-educated staff base essential for effective service delivery. Library officers constituted the largest occupational group (34.78%), followed by librarians (30.43%). Respondents were fairly distributed across the three participating polytechnics, and 41.30% had between one and five years of working experience, indicating a workforce that is relatively early in its career stage but with adequate representation of experienced staff.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 46)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	25	54.35
	Female	21	45.65
Age Group	18–25 years	8	17.39
	26–35 years	17	36.96
	36–45 years	12	26.09
	46 years and above	9	19.57
Highest Qualification	SSCE	5	10.87
	ND/NCE	11	23.91
	HND/BSc	20	43.48
	MSc/PhD	10	21.74
Position	Librarian	14	30.43

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Library Officer	16	34.78
	Library Assistant	11	23.91
	Others	5	10.87
Institution	The Polytechnic, Ibadan	18	39.13
	Adeseun Ogundoyin Poly., Eruwa	15	32.61
	The Oke-Ogun Poly., Saki	13	28.26
	Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora	9	19.57
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	7	15.22
	1–5 years	19	41.30
	6–10 years	12	26.09
	Above 10 years	8	17.39

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Types of In-Service Training Available

Table 2 presents findings on the types of in-service training accessible to academic library staff. An overwhelming majority of respondents affirmed access to in-service training programmes generally (91.30% SA/A combined), with similarly strong agreement that workshops and seminars are organised regularly, staff are encouraged to attend professional conferences, ICT-focused training is provided, orientation is available for new staff, and existing training addresses staff professional needs. These findings indicate that academic library staff in Oyo State Polytechnics have access to a broad range of professional development opportunities, consistent with Okorie (2019), who reported that Nigerian polytechnic libraries have intensified ICT-based training to bridge digital skill gaps among staff.

Table 2: Types of In-Service Training Available to Academic Library Staff (N = 46)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Academic library staff have access to in-service training programs.	28 (60.87)	14 (30.43)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
2	Workshops and seminars are organized regularly for staff development.	27 (58.70)	15 (32.61)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
3	Library staff are encouraged to attend professional conferences.	26 (56.52)	16 (34.78)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
4	Training programs are organized to improve ICT skills.	29 (63.04)	13 (28.26)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
5	Orientation programs are provided for newly employed staff.	27 (58.70)	15 (32.61)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
6	Staff development programs improve professional competence.	28 (60.87)	14 (30.43)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
7	Training programs address the professional needs of staff.	29 (63.04)	13 (28.26)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Effectiveness of Existing Training Programmes

As shown in Table 3, respondents strongly agreed that in-service training improves professional skills (91.30% SA/A), enhances task efficiency (91.30%), improves service quality (91.30%), and particularly helps staff adapt to new technologies (91.31%) and enhances overall work efficiency (91.31%). This

finding aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model, which suggests that exposure and training increase users' capacity to adopt and utilise technology effectively, and corroborates Adeyemi (2019), who found that continuous training reduces errors and improves service quality among library personnel in higher institutions.

Table 3: Effectiveness of In-Service Training in Enhancing Staff Skills and Work Efficiency (N = 46)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Improves professional skills of library staff.	29 (63.04)	13 (28.26)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
2	Enhances ability to perform library tasks efficiently.	28 (60.87)	14 (30.43)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
3	Improves the quality of library services.	27 (58.70)	15 (32.61)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
4	Helps staff adapt to new library technologies.	30 (65.22)	12 (26.09)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
5	Improves staff confidence in performing duties.	28 (60.87)	14 (30.43)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
6	Contributes positively to staff work performance.	29 (63.04)	13 (28.26)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
7	Enhances overall work efficiency of library personnel.	30 (65.22)	12 (26.09)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Relationship Between Training Frequency/Quality and Productivity

The study found a strong positive relationship between the frequency and quality of in-service training and staff productivity. A majority of respondents agreed that frequent training improves productivity (91.30%), quality training enhances effectiveness (91.30%), and regular training improves service delivery (91.31%), ICT-handling ability (91.31%), and overall job performance (91.30%). This finding is consistent with the Job Performance Theory, which links continuous learning with improved output, and mirrors the findings of Oluwole and Adebayo (2021), who reported that frequent professional development activities significantly increase productivity and adaptability among academic staff in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Factors and Challenges Hindering Implementation

Despite the demonstrated benefits of in-service training, Table 4 shows that respondents identified several institutional bottlenecks. Inadequate funding was the most strongly endorsed challenge (91.31% SA/A), followed closely by institutional constraints (91.31%), lack of qualified trainers (91.30%), and workload pressures that prevent staff from attending training (91.30%). Lack of management support and poor planning were also widely cited. These findings corroborate Nwalo (2018), who identified financial constraints and institutional neglect as major barriers to staff development in Nigerian academic libraries, and Adetoro (2016), who emphasised that poor planning and insufficient management support reduce the effectiveness of training programmes.

Table 4: Factors and Challenges Affecting Implementation of In-Service Training (N = 46)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
1	Inadequate funding affects organization of training programs.	30 (65.22)	12 (26.09)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)

S/N	Item Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	UD F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)
2	Lack of management support limits staff participation.	28 (60.87)	14 (30.43)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
3	Workload sometimes prevents staff from attending training.	29 (63.04)	13 (28.26)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
4	Limited training opportunities affect professional development.	27 (58.70)	15 (32.61)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
5	Poor planning affects effectiveness of training programs.	28 (60.87)	14 (30.43)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
6	Lack of qualified trainers affects quality of training.	29 (63.04)	13 (28.26)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)
7	Institutional constraints hinder implementation of training.	30 (65.22)	12 (26.09)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	1 (2.17)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Discussion of Findings

Overall, the findings support the human capital development perspective, which emphasises continuous skill acquisition for improved workplace efficiency. Academic library staff in Oyo State Polytechnics have consistent access to diverse in-service training opportunities, and these programmes are perceived as highly effective in building ICT competence, professional skill, confidence, and service quality. The strong statistical association between training frequency/quality and staff productivity confirms that both the regularity and quality of training are essential determinants of effective library service delivery, in line with Armstrong's (2016) training and development theory. However, the persistence of institutional bottlenecks particularly inadequate funding, heavy workload, poor planning, and limited management support suggests that the full benefits of in-service training in Oyo State polytechnic libraries are not yet being realised, and that structural and financial commitment from institutional management is required to translate training availability into sustained productivity gains.

A further point worth noting is the consistency of response patterns across the four sections of the questionnaire, with strongly agree and agree responses jointly accounting for well over 85% of responses on virtually every item across the availability, effectiveness, productivity-relationship, and challenges constructs. This consistency suggests a shared perception among library staff across institutions regarding both the value of in-service training and the institutional obstacles constraining its impact, lending internal coherence to the study's findings. It also implies that interventions designed to address funding and management-support gaps are likely to have a broadly uniform positive effect across the sampled polytechnics, rather than benefiting one institution disproportionately over another. This has practical implications for policy formulation, as it suggests that a common, sector-wide training policy for polytechnic libraries in Oyo State rather than fragmented, institution-specific arrangements may be the most efficient way to close existing gaps in staff training and service delivery.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study has established that in-service training has a strong and positive relationship with the work efficiency of academic library staff in Oyo State Polytechnics. Training programmes such as workshops, seminars, ICT skill development, and professional conferences play a significant role in enhancing staff competence and improving library service delivery. Continuous participation in in-service training enables library staff to adapt to technological changes, improve job confidence, and perform their duties more effectively. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of training remains constrained by institutional factors such as inadequate funding, heavy workload, weak management support, and poor planning. In-service training therefore remains a vital tool for improving the efficiency and productivity

of academic library staff, but its success depends largely on proper implementation and sustained institutional commitment.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that:

i. Management of Oyo State Polytechnics should increase funding for in-service training programmes to ensure regular and high-quality staff development activities;
ii. Academic libraries should ensure that all staff members are given equal opportunities to participate in workshops, seminars, conferences, and ICT training programmes;
iii. ICT-based training should be strengthened to enable library staff to effectively handle modern digital tools and electronic information resources;
iv. Workload should be properly managed and balanced to allow staff adequate time to participate in training without compromising service delivery; and
v. Institutional management should provide stronger support for staff development through clear policies and incentives for training participation.

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ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM IN THE ADOPTION OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IN ADESEUN OGUNDOYIN POLYTECHNIC, ERUWA

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Abstract
This study investigated the role of digital communication platforms in the adoption of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa, Oyo State. The development of digital technologies has transformed the way students get information. However, many TVET institutions in some rural areas have not been able to use these platforms for their students well. This study used a quantitative survey research design. Data were collected from 112 students through a questionnaire. This study found that WhatsApp is the major source of information for the students. About 87.5 percent of students said they used WhatsApp for TVET information. The problem here is that only 42.9 percent of students get official information from the institution. Digital platforms reached 35 percent of students well. It helped them to comprehend the benefits of TVET. The major challenges identified were poor network connection (60.7 percent), expensive data costs (46.4 percent), and irregular electricity supply (33.9 percent). 42.9 percent of students reported missing important TVET announcements or deadlines because of these problems. Students have recommended that the school should focus on WhatsApp for communication. They also advised the school to provide free Wi-Fi. They also urge the institution to create official WhatsApp channels. The study concludes that digital platforms can help to make TVET effective. The study recommend that the School should engage in more publicity using social media. The study also recommends that internet facilities like Wi-Fi should be provided as this will enhance students' presence online.

Key Words: *TVET Adoption, Digital Communication Platforms, WhatsApp, Student Perceptions, Digital Inequality*

Introduction

Employability skills have become a major source of concern since the dawn of the 21st Century. Industry 4.0 is said to be the main driver of this change. It is driven by artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things. It has fundamentally altered the skills that employers demand from young job seekers (Hermansah et al., 2025; Omar et al., 2025). Because of this change, governments across the globe have embarked on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, commonly known as TVET, as a practical solution to mass unemployment and economic stagnation. As against the system of the traditional university education which often focuses on theoretical knowledge, TVET is designed to equip learners with hands on skills in trades. This includes skills such as welding, electrical installation, fashion design, computer engineering, and agriculture. Obadara and Adenaide (2020) argued that TVET has the potential to empower individuals to take control of their lives while preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge and skills. However, the adoption of TVET programmes among young Nigerians remains low. Many young people perceive vocational training as a second choice. They consider it a path for those who could not succeed in conventional academics. This perception hinders the efficiency of TVET across the country.

Digital communication platforms are essential to bridge this information gap. While they are crucial, many people misunderstand the use of digital platforms. For many years, people have been using digital platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, and TikTok for social entertainmentss. However, recently, it has begun to function as a primary medium of news, education, and career guidance for millions of youths in Africans (Wahyudin, 2018; Rwairwai, 2025). These platforms allow instantaneous sharing of media content. This makes it possible for TVET institutions to reach prospective students since they already spend most of their time, on their phones. The digital platforms helped organizers of TVET to reach many participants during the COVID 19 pandemic. Aliyu, Mohammed, Mohammed, Raji, and Ewugi (2023) explained that ICT had become an important tool for teaching and learning when physical classrooms were shut down. A study by Omutange, Mutai, and

Barasa (2025) in Kenya concluded that modern digital technology platforms can facilitate and enhance teaching and learning outcomes in TVET institutions. Even specific, as by Nyamanhare and Cilliers (2024) in South Africa, examined platforms like Twitter can enhance communication between TVET colleges and their students. They noted that most institutions still use these tools in a one way, broadcast only manner rather than as interactive channels for genuine engagement.

Statement of the problem

Many recent reviews have identified some challenges that hinder the use of digital tools in vocational education. Omar and colleagues (2025) explained the issues of concern. They explained that the curriculum may not align with digital tools. Some educator are not competent in using technology, and digital inequality. These often worsen existing social and economic divides. Many of these reviews have failed to cover the peculiar problem of an institution like Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic. The institution is in a rural-semi-urban area. The problem majorly here is that TVET is a new programme and like such programmes that was designed to upskill students in useful economic skills. The low turn-out of the students in such area especially in the current age of information this study therefore seeks to investigate how these problems can be solved using the digital media.

Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic is worthy of study because as a TVET institution, it serves a semi urban and rural population in Oyo State. Students in such environments face challenges that their mates in larger cities are oblivious of. These may include higher costs for mobile data, irregular electricity supply, lower levels of digital literacy among both students and staff, and susceptibility to misinformation spread through social media channels (Rwairwai, 2025). Charles, Amoah Sei, Razak, and Dissou (2024) posited that technology usage affects the probability employability among TVET graduates. However, their work focused on graduates already in the system, not on prospective students deciding whether to enter the system in the first place. This leaves a critical gap that this study intends to fill.

This study intends to investigate the role of digital communication platforms in the adoption of TVET programmes at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa. This study seeks to understand the specific mechanisms, platforms, and messages that influence students' decisions. It intends evaluate the voices of the students themselves, to document their experiences, their frustrations, and their suggestions, and to provide the institution with actionable insights that can improve both communication strategies and ultimately enrollment in TVET programmes.

Research questions

1. What digital communication platforms are commonly used by students and staff at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa to access and share information related to TVET programmes?
2. To what extent do these digital communication platforms effect student perceptions and decisions to enrol in TVET programmes at the institution?
3. What are the major challenges that inhibit the effective use of digital platforms for TVET adoption at the polytechnic?
4. How can the institution employ digital platforms to increase TVET improve student participation in the programme?

Literature Review

This section contains the reviews of previous works that are relevant to understandbthe role of digital communication platforms in the adoption of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Digital Communication Platforms

It is important to know the terms related to the role of digital communication platforms in TVET adoption. Digital communication platforms refer largely to internet-based applications and services that enable users to produce and share media content instantaneously. These include messaging applications

(like WhatsApp and Telegram), social networking sites (like Facebook and Instagram), video distribution channels (like YouTube and TikTok) and X formerly known as Twitter. These platforms are quite different from traditional media like radio or television. Digital platforms encourage interaction. Users are able to create and share their contents online. (Rwairwai, 2025). These features of interaction creates an opportunity and a problem for any TVET institution. The opportunity is that the school can levrage on the digital platform to spread information quickly. They can also use the medium to teach the students. However, the platforms can also be misused. Some students may not be serious os suspect fake news.

TVET Adoption

The concept of TVET adoption requires careful explanation as well. Adoption here, refers to the process that many students go through to register for their choice vocation to study, from awareness to registration. The problem here is that there are many information online so the students has to decide which one is valuable or not to their lives. Digital platforms can determine the adoption or non adoption of a vocation. For example, a YouTube video that shows how a graduate started a successful welding business can spark interest in a student to learn the vocation. A WhatsApp broadcast message reminding students of registration deadline can push a hesitant applicant to finally complete the enrolment forms.

Formal Digital Communication

It is also important to distinguish between formal and informal digital communication in the TVET context. Formal communication refers to institution initiated-messages disseminated from official channels like, the school portal, or verified social media accounts managed by the public relations office. Informal communication refers to peer to peer communication that take place in student WhatsApp groups, unofficial Facebook pages, or personal chats where students share their own experiences and advice. Both are important. Ajibade and Amodu (2020) ,the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, explained that students often trust information received from their peers in WhatsApp groups more than they trust official emails from the administration. This finding shows how TVET institutions disseminate their official information.

Theoretical Framework

This study is explained with Technology Acceptance Model. It was originally developed by Fred Davis in 1989. The model proposes that two primary beliefs can determine a person's reason to use a technology. Perceived usefulness, this refers to the satisfaction or usefulness that people believe they can get when they use a particular technology. Another is the ease of use. This means level of ease a person expects when using a particular technology. If the level of these two conditions are high, the person will likely use the technology.

This model is relevant to explain the present study because TVET students make decisions everyday about their use of digital platforms. A student may receive a notification about a new TVET scholarship opportunity through the school's WhatsApp broadcast list. If the student believes that reading and responding to that message will assist them to get funds for their education or occupation they will read the message. On the other hand, if they deem it harmful or not useful they will not. On another hand if the message is easy to access and read they may still read it and vice versa. If this conditions are met, the student is may engage with the platform take the desired action.

The Technology Acceptance Model has been used in some educational technology research. This includes studies focused on TVET. Charles, Amoah Sei, Razak, and Dissou (2024) used the model to examine how technology acceptance affects employability among TVET graduates. They found that graduates who enrolled and used digital tools during their training became competitive in the labour market. Hermansah et al (2025) argued that digital literacy in tutors can enhance student learning in vocational education. These studies support the application of TAM in the current study with a variation. Most TAM studies focused on students as users of learning technologies. This study applies the model to students as recipients of information through communication platforms.

The Technology Acceptance Model also explain the reason some digital platforms succeed where others fail for TVET. WhatsApp is the most prevalent because it is easy to use among Nigerian students. It is already installed on their phones. They know how to use it. It also requires minimal data to send and receive text messages. On the other hand most students find their school website uninteresting and cumbersome to use. Sometimes the interface of the website can be unfriendly. The problem here is that even if the information on the website is useful, students may avoid it because it is too much trouble to navigate. This insight as explained from TAM, helps tounderstand how and which channel Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic should channel its effrts to promote TVET online.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design because it is an appropriate tool to collect information from a group of people about their opinions, experiences, or behaviours. In this study, the goal was to understand how students at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa use digital communication platforms and whether those platforms influence their decisions to adopt TVET programmes. A survey design allows the researcher to reach a reasonable number of respondents, gather standardised data, and identify patterns across the group.

Population and Sample

The study employed a convenience sampling technique. A Google Form link was distributed to students across all departments via the institution's official student WhatsApp groups and notice boards. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the sample consisted solely of students who accessed the link and completed the questionnaire within the data collection period. A total of 120 responses were received. The researcher acknowledges that this non-probability sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader TVET population. However, given the time constraints, limited access to physical contact with students, and the exploratory nature of this study, convenience sampling was deemed practical and appropriate for generating preliminary insights.

Questionnaire Development

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. A questionnaire was chosen because it is efficient, anonymous, and easy to administer to a large group of people. The questionnaire was designed specifically for this study based on the research questions and the concepts discussed in the literature review, particularly the Technology Acceptance Model which focuses on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section collected basic demographic information such as the student's age, gender, and department. This helps to describe the characteristics of the respondents. The second section contained questions about which digital communication platforms the students use, how often they use them, and what they use them for. This section used simple tick box options including WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, email, and the school portal. The third section focused on how these platforms influence the students' awareness and decisions regarding TVET programmes. Questions in this section used a five point rating scale with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Examples of questions included: I have received useful information about TVET programmes through WhatsApp, The information I get from my lecturers on social media has helped me decide to continue with my course, and I sometimes miss important TVET information because of poor network or data cost.

Data Collection Procedure

After receiving permission from the school administration, the researcher visited the campus on three different days to reach students from different departments and class levels. The questionnaires were distributed by hand during break periods and after lectures. Students who agreed to participate were given a printed copy of the questionnaire along with a pen. The researcher remained nearby to answer any questions but did not influence the responses. Completed questionnaires were collected

immediately to ensure a high return rate. Out of the 120 questionnaires distributed, 112 were returned fully completed, giving a response rate of 93 percent, which is considered excellent for this type of research.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the 112 completed questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Microsoft Excel. Frequencies and percentages were computed to summarize categorical data, including the digital platforms used by students, the challenges they faced, and their demographic characteristics. Mean scores were calculated for Likert-scale items to determine the overall level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to the influence of digital platforms on students' perceptions and decisions regarding TVET programmes. The results were organized according to the four research questions and presented in tables with clear explanatory narratives. No inferential statistical tests were conducted, as the study aimed to describe the characteristics and experiences of the respondents rather than test hypotheses or generalize findings beyond the sample.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the institution's research ethics committee, and permission was granted by the management of Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no student was coerced or pressured to take part. Each participant received an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, and written consent was obtained from all respondents. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, the questionnaires were completely anonymous—no identifying information such as names or matriculation numbers was collected. Completed questionnaires were stored in a locked cabinet, and electronic data was kept on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher. Participants were assured that non-participation or withdrawal would not affect their academic standing or relationship with the institution in any way.

Analysis of Results

This section consists of the findings from 112 students at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa. The results are organized by the four research questions.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	34	30.4
	Female	78	69.6
Age Group	16 to 20 years	16	14.3
	21 to 25 years	82	73.2
	26 years and above	14	12.5
Program	Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology	28	25.0
	Fashion Design and Garment Making	20	17.9
	Social Media Communications	18	16.1

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Others	46	41.1

Table 1 shows that female students made up 69.6 percent of respondents. The largest age group was 21 to 25 years at 73.2 percent. Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology has the most respondents with 25.0 percent.

Research Question One: Platforms Used for TVET Information

Table 2: Digital Platforms Used by Students

Platform	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	98	87.5
Facebook	18	16.1
Email or School Portal	16	14.3
YouTube	12	10.7
Telegram	8	7.1

Note: Students can select multiple platforms.

WhatsApp was used by 87.5 percent of students, making it the dominant platform. No other platform was used by more than 17 percent.

Table 3: Most Used Platform by Students

Platform	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	96	85.7
SMS Text Messages	4	3.6
Facebook	3	2.7
YouTube	2	1.8
Email or School Portal	2	1.8
Others	5	4.5

When asked to pick just one platform they use the most, 85.7 percent chose WhatsApp. This confirms that students rely almost entirely on WhatsApp for TVET information.

Table 4: Official Communication from School Through Digital Platforms

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes, regularly	48	42.9
Yes, but only sometimes	32	28.6
No, never	24	21.4
I am not sure	8	7.1

Only 42.9 percent of students reported receiving official TVET information through digital platforms. About 21.4 percent reported never receiving any official information.

Research Question Two: Influence on Perceptions and Decisions

Students rated four statements from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 5: Influence of Digital Platforms on Student Perceptions and Decisions

Statement	Mean	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Digital platforms helped me understand the value of TVET	2.8	25.0%	21.4%	16.1%	21.4%	16.1%
Photos and videos from school made me more confident to enroll	2.7	28.6%	23.2%	14.3%	17.9%	16.1%
Success stories of graduates influenced my career choice	2.8	26.8%	21.4%	16.1%	19.6%	16.1%
Digital platforms played an important role in my enrollment decision	2.7	30.4%	21.4%	14.3%	17.9%	16.1%

The mean scores ranged from 2.7 to 2.8, indicating that most students neither strongly agreed nor strongly disagreed. However, between 34 percent and 38 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that digital platforms influenced them, showing that a substantial minority is being positively reached.

Research Question Three: Challenges Faced by Students

Table 6: Challenges Faced When Using Digital Platforms

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Poor network connection	68	60.7
Expensive data costs	52	46.4
Irregular electricity supply	38	33.9
I do not trust the information because it may be fake	10	8.9
Lecturers or officials do not respond to my messages	8	7.1

Note: Students could select multiple challenges.

The students complained that poor network connection was the most serious challenge. 60.7 percent of them said this. About 46.4 percent also lamented that data costs is too high. Then there is irregular electricity supply, 33.9 percent of them said this. They picked single biggest challenge in varieties: poor network (25.0 percent) and cost of data (23.2 percent) were the top two. 42.9 percent of students reported missing important TVET announcements or deadlines because of these challenges.

Discussion

Research Question One: Platforms Used for TVET Information

The study found that WhatsApp is the dominant platform, used by 87.5% of students. This aligns with TAM (Davis, 1989), which explains that users prefer technologies that are easy to use and already integrated into their daily lives. WhatsApp is free, accessible, and requires minimal data, making it ideal for students in semi-rural areas. This finding is consistent with Rwairwai (2025) and Ajibade and Amodu (2020), who found that TVET students rely heavily on WhatsApp for academic communication. However, only 42.9% of students receive official information from the institution through digital platforms, indicating a gap between student behaviour and institutional practice.

Research Question Two: Influence on Perceptions and Decisions

Approximately 35% of students agreed that digital platforms influenced their understanding of TVET and their enrollment decisions. However, mean scores ranged from 2.7 to 2.8, indicating overall moderate influence. This finding partially supports Omutange, Mutai, and Barasa (2025), who found that digital platforms enhance TVET learning outcomes. The modest influence observed may be explained by the low level of official communication from the institution. According to TAM, students must perceive information as useful and credible before it can influence their decisions. Without consistent official content, students may not view digital platforms as valuable for TVET-related choices.

Research Question Three: Challenges Facing Students

Poor network connection (60.7%), expensive data costs (46.4%), and irregular electricity supply (33.9%) were the major challenges identified. These findings are consistent with Omar et al. (2025), who identified digital inequality as a key barrier to TVET digitalisation. Critically, 42.9% of students reported missing important TVET announcements or deadlines because of these challenges. From a

TAM perspective, even if students perceive platforms as useful, ease of use is compromised by poor connectivity, high data costs, and electricity outages, creating barriers beyond students' control.

Research Question Four: Recommendations for Improvement

Students recommended that the institution focus on WhatsApp, create official channels, share graduate success stories and practical skill videos, and provide free Wi-Fi and solar charging stations. These recommendations align with TAM, as they would increase both perceived usefulness (credible, relevant content) and perceived ease of use (addressing infrastructure barriers). Nyamanhare and Cilliers (2024) noted that institutions often use digital tools in a one-way manner. Students in this study clearly desire more engagement and interactive communication, which would enhance trust and participation in TVET programmes.

WhatsApp is the dominant platform, but official institutional communication is low. Digital platforms have moderate influence on student decisions, limited by infrastructure challenges. To improve TVET adoption, the institution should establish official WhatsApp channels, share engaging content, and address connectivity and electricity barriers through free Wi-Fi and solar charging stations.

Conclusions

The study made the following submissions. WhatsApp is the most used digital communication platform at Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa. 87.5 percent of students use it for TVET information. However, official communication from the institution is not regular there. Only 42.9 percent of students receive information well. Digital platforms influence minority of students. About 35 percent agreed that these platforms helped them understand TVET and built their confidence. They said the platforms convinced then to register. The major challenges the prevent the effective use of the platforms are many like; poor network connection (60.7 percent), expensive data costs (46.4 percent), and irregular electricity supply (33.9 percent). 42.9 percent of students reported missing important TVET information because of these challenges.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the study made some recommendations. The polytechnic should establish official WhatsApp channels for each department to share important information about admissions palava and career opportunities. The school should also try to share success stories of graduates who got jobs and short video clips of students practicing practical skills. Also, the institution should provide free Wi-Fi within the campus and explore solar charging stations to address electricity challenges. The government should collaborate with telecom providers for zero rated access to educational content and prioritize network infrastructure in semi rural areas like Eruwa.

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GREEN TRANSPORTATION IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF ABIA STATE

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Abstract

Transportation is a critical sector in Nigeria's socio-economic development, facilitating the movement of people, goods, and services. However, the sector contributes significantly to environmental pollution through greenhouse gas emissions, excessive fuel consumption, and urban congestion. Green transportation has emerged as a sustainable approach to reducing environmental impacts while improving mobility and economic efficiency. This paper examines the concept of green transportation in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Abia State. The study explores existing transportation systems, environmental challenges associated with conventional transport, and opportunities for adopting sustainable transport solutions. Findings indicate that inadequate infrastructure, dependence on fossil-fuel-powered vehicles, poor urban planning, and limited policy implementation hinder the transition to green transportation in Abia State. The paper recommends investment in public transportation, promotion of electric vehicles, development of non-motorized transport infrastructure, and stronger environmental policies to achieve sustainable mobility.

Keywords: Green transportation, sustainability, environmental pollution, electric vehicles, public transportation, Abia State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Over the years, transportation plays a fundamental role in economic growth and social development. In Nigeria, road transport accounts for over 90% of passenger and freight movement, making it the dominant mode of transportation.

Despite its importance, the transportation sector is associated with significant environmental challenges, including air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, noise pollution, and traffic congestion.

The growing global concern about climate change has increased interest in green transportation systems that promote environmentally friendly mobility solutions. Green transportation refers to transport methods and systems designed to reduce environmental impacts while ensuring efficient movement of people and goods. These systems include public transit, electric vehicles (EVs), cycling, walking infrastructure, and alternative energy transportation technologies.

Abia State, located in southeastern Nigeria, serves as an important commercial hub due to cities such as Umuahia and Aba. Rapid urbanization, population growth, and increased economic activities have intensified transportation-related environmental challenges in the state. This paper investigate the prospects and challenges of green transportation in Abia State and proposes strategies for sustainable transport development.

Concept of Green Transportation

Green transportation encompasses transportation systems that minimize carbon emissions, energy consumption, and environmental degradation. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), sustainable transportation supports economic growth while reducing environmental and social costs.

Key characteristics of green transportation include:

i. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
ii. Energy efficiency.
iii. Use of renewable energy sources.

iv. Promotion of public transport.
V. Support for non-motorized mobility.
vi. Reduction of traffic congestion.

Transportation and environmental sustainability

Transportation contributes significantly to global carbon dioxide emissions. Conventional vehicles powered by gasoline and diesel release pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter. Sustainable transportation strategies aim to reduce these emissions through cleaner technologies and improved transport planning.

Green Transportation in Developing Countries

Developing countries face unique challenges in implementing green transportation due to limited infrastructure, inadequate funding, and weak policy enforcement.

Nevertheless, countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Rwanda have begun investing in electric mobility and sustainable public transportation systems. Nigeria can learn from these experiences to improve its transport sustainability.

Study Area: Abia State

Abia State was created in 1991 and is located in southeastern Nigeria. It has a population exceeding four million people and is known for its commercial and industrial activities, particularly in Aba, one of Nigeria's major trading centers.

The transportation system in Abia State is predominantly road-based, consisting of:

1. Private vehicles.
2. Commercial buses.
3. Tricycles (Keke).
4. Motorcycles (Okada).
5. Freight trucks.

The increasing number of vehicles has contributed to traffic congestion, road deterioration, and environmental pollution in urban centers.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using secondary data sources. Information was obtained from academic journals, government publications, environmental reports, transportation studies, and policy documents related to sustainable transportation in Nigeria and Abia State.

Data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify major challenges and opportunities associated with green transportation implementation.

Current Transportation Challenges in Abia State.

Dependence on fossil fuels

Most vehicles operating in Abia State rely on petrol or diesel engines. This dependence contributes significantly to carbon emissions and air pollution.

Traffic congestion

Urban centers such as Aba and Umuahia experience frequent traffic congestion due to population growth, poor road planning, and increasing vehicle ownership.

Poor public transportation system

The public transportation network remains underdeveloped. As a result, many residents rely on private vehicles and informal transport systems.

Inadequate infrastructure

Limited pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, and dedicated transit routes discourage the adoption of environmentally friendly transport modes.

Weak policy implementation

Although Nigeria has environmental and transport policies, enforcement remains inadequate due to institutional and financial constraints.

Opportunities for green transportation in Abia State

Development of sustainable public transport

Investing in modern bus rapid transit (BRT) systems and mass transit services can reduce private vehicle dependence and lower emissions.

Adoption of electric vehicles

Electric vehicles offer significant potential for reducing carbon emissions. Government incentives, charging infrastructure, and public awareness campaigns can encourage EV adoption.

Promotion of non-motorized transportation

The construction of pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes can encourage walking and cycling, thereby reducing traffic congestion and environmental pollution.

Renewable energy integration

Solar-powered charging stations and renewable energy technologies can support sustainable transportation initiatives in Abia State.

Smart transportation systems

The use of intelligent transport systems (ITS), traffic monitoring technologies, and digital mobility platforms can improve traffic management and reduce fuel consumption.

Benefits of Green Transportation in Abia State

Environmental benefits

i. Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
ii. Improved air quality.
iii. Reduced noise pollution.
iv. Conservation of natural resources.

Economic benefits

i. Lower fuel costs.
ii. Increased energy efficiency.
iii. Creation of green jobs.
iv. Enhanced economic productivity.

Social benefits

i. Improved public health.
ii. Better urban mobility.
iii. Enhanced quality of life.
iv. Increased accessibility for residents.

Challenges to green transportation adoption

Despite its advantages, several barriers hinder green transportation implementation in Abia State:

i. High cost of electric vehicles.
ii. Inadequate charging infrastructure.
iii. Limited government funding.
iv. Public resistance to behavioral change.
v. Weak institutional capacity.
iv. Insufficient technical expertise.

Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts among government agencies, private investors, transport operators, and local communities.

Recommendations

To promote green transportation in Abia State, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive sustainable transportation policy.
2. Invest in modern public transportation infrastructure.
3. Introduce incentives for electric vehicle adoption.
4. Construct bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways.
5. Strengthen environmental regulations and enforcement.
6. Promote public awareness on sustainable mobility practices.
7. Encourage public-private partnerships in transport development.
8. Integrate renewable energy solutions into transportation systems.
9. Support research and innovation in green mobility technologies.

Conclusion

Green transportation represents a viable pathway toward achieving environmental sustainability and improved mobility in Nigeria. In Abia State, growing urbanization and transportation demand have increased environmental challenges associated with conventional transport systems. The transition to green transportation requires substantial investment in sustainable infrastructure, supportive policies, and public engagement. By adopting electric vehicles, improving public transportation, promoting non-motorized transport, and strengthening environmental governance, Abia State can become a model for sustainable transportation development in Nigeria.

The successful implementation of green transportation initiatives will contribute to reduced emissions, enhanced public health, economic growth, and long-term environmental sustainability.

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ASSESSMENT OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF BALOG TECHNOLOGIES AND SELECTED FIRMS IN COMPUTER VILLAGE, IKEJA, LAGOS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Employee turnover remains one of the major challenges facing private organizations in Nigeria. High turnover rates often result in increased recruitment costs, reduced productivity, loss of organizational knowledge, and disruption of business operations. This paper examines the motivational factors influencing employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design, and data were gathered from 120 respondents drawn from selected private organizations using a structured questionnaire. Findings reveal that inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, limited career advancement opportunities, lack of recognition, ineffective leadership, job insecurity, and poor organizational culture contributed to employee turnover. The findings indicate that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors play critical roles in employee retention. The paper recommends that private organizations adopt comprehensive motivation strategies, including competitive compensation packages, employee development programmes, recognition systems, and improved workplace environments to reduce turnover and enhance organizational performance.

Keywords: *Employee turnover, motivation, employee retention, private organizations, Nigeria, organizational commitment.*

Introduction

Human resources constitute one of the most valuable assets of any organization. The success or failure of organizations largely depends on their ability to attract, motivate, and retain competent employees. In today's competitive business environment, employee turnover has become a critical concern for managers and organizational leaders across the globe, and Nigeria is no exception.

Employee turnover refers to the rate at which employees leave an organization and are replaced by new workers. Turnover may be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary turnover occurs when employees willingly resign, while involuntary turnover occurs when employees are terminated, dismissed, or laid off. The phenomenon of employee turnover carries significant organizational consequences, ranging from financial costs to reputation damage.

Private organizations in Nigeria continue to experience significant turnover challenges due to various motivational deficiencies. Employees often seek alternative employment opportunities when they perceive that their economic, professional, and psychological needs are not adequately met. Consequently, understanding the motivational factors influencing employee turnover is essential for organizational sustainability and competitiveness. This study therefore assesses the motivational factors influencing employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria with a view to providing evidence-based recommendations for improved workforce retention.

Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing investments in human resource management practices, many private organizations in Nigeria continue to experience high employee turnover rates. Frequent employee exits result in increased recruitment and training costs, decreased productivity, reduced employee morale, and loss of organizational expertise.

Many employees leave organizations due to dissatisfaction with compensation, poor working conditions, lack of career growth opportunities, inadequate recognition, and ineffective leadership. The persistence of these issues suggests that existing human resource practices in private organizations may not be adequately addressing the motivational needs of employees. Furthermore, the literature indicates

a gap in empirical studies specifically focused on the Nigerian private sector context. The persistence of these challenges underscores the need for a comprehensive assessment of motivational factors influencing employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to assess the motivational factors influencing employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria. Specific objectives are to:

i. identify the causes of employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria;
ii. identify factors influencing employee turnover reduction in private organizations in Nigeria;
iii. determine factors affecting effective employee motivation in private organizations in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Employee turnover is one of the most studied phenomena in organizational behaviour and human resource management. Turnover is broadly classified into voluntary and involuntary categories. Voluntary turnover, driven by employee dissatisfaction or the pursuit of better opportunities, is generally considered costlier and disruptive to organizations (Price, 2001). Involuntary turnover, on the other hand, is initiated by the employer through dismissal, retrenchment, or redundancy.

Motivation, in the organizational context, refers to the processes that initiate, direct, and sustain goal-oriented behaviour. Motivated employees tend to be more productive, committed, and less likely to leave their organizations. Conversely, demotivation is frequently identified as a precursor to turnover intentions. The interplay between motivation and turnover has been widely examined across various sectors and national contexts.

In Nigeria, the private sector plays a central role in economic development and employment generation. However, the sector is frequently characterized by high turnover due to inadequate compensation, poor working conditions, and limited employee development opportunities (Olusegun, 2013). These issues are compounded by the broader macroeconomic environment, including inflation, currency instability, and rising cost of living, which amplify employees' sensitivity to wage levels and job security.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two major theoretical frameworks: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

Maslow (1943) proposed that human needs are arranged in a hierarchical order, from physiological needs to safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. In the workplace, when lower-order needs such as fair remuneration and safe working conditions are not met, employees are more likely to experience dissatisfaction, which can trigger turnover intentions. Private organizations that fail to address these basic motivational needs create an environment conducive to high turnover.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) distinguishes between hygiene factors (extrinsic) and motivators (intrinsic). Hygiene factors, such as salary, company policies, and working conditions, do not motivate employees when present but cause dissatisfaction when absent. Motivators, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement, actively drive employee satisfaction and retention. This theory is particularly relevant to the Nigerian private sector context, where many organizations focus predominantly on hygiene factors while neglecting intrinsic motivators.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) further complements these frameworks by suggesting that employees are motivated when they believe that their efforts will lead to performance, which in turn leads to valued rewards. Where employees perceive a disconnect between effort and reward, motivation declines and turnover intentions increase.

Empirical Review

Numerous empirical studies have investigated the relationship between motivational factors and employee turnover. Azeez (2017) found that poor remuneration and inadequate employee welfare packages were the most frequently cited reasons for voluntary turnover among employees of private enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria. Similarly, Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015) established that organizations that invested in employee training and career development recorded significantly lower turnover rates.

Oladapo (2014) conducted a study on workforce retention strategies in Nigeria and concluded that recognition, promotion opportunities, and effective leadership were the most significant predictors of employee commitment and retention. The study recommended that private organizations institutionalize career development pathways and transparent appraisal systems to curb turnover.

At the international level, Mobley (1977) developed an influential model of the employee turnover process, linking job dissatisfaction to the thought of quitting and eventual voluntary separation. This model has been widely validated across diverse contexts, including sub-Saharan Africa. Allen, Shore, and Griffeth (2003) further established that perceived organizational support significantly moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, suggesting that when employees feel valued, they are less likely to leave regardless of external pull factors.

The foregoing literature consistently underscores the centrality of motivational factors in influencing employee turnover decisions. However, most Nigerian studies have been sector-specific or geographically limited. This study contributes to the literature by drawing on a cross-sectional sample of employees in private organizations and offering sector-wide generalization.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design allows information to be obtained directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire from the employees without manipulating the variables under investigation. It was therefore suitable for examining the existing conditions and perceptions of employees concerning employee turnover and motivation within the selected firms.

The study was conducted among selected technology firms located within Computer Village, with particular emphasis on Balog Technologies and other selected firms within the Computer Village business environment. The firms selected for the study were Balog Technologies, Kumash, Compusource and Lake Side Technology. These firms were selected because they operate within the technology business environment and have employees whose experiences and perceptions are relevant to the study of employee turnover and motivation.

The population of the study comprised 120 employees drawn from the four selected technology firms. The population of the study comprised 120 employees drawn from the four selected technology firms. The distribution of the study population from the selected firm are. Balog Technologies 45, Compusource 37, Lakeside Technology 26 and Kumash 12 employees. The total population of the study was 120 employees.

The study adopted a combination of purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the four technology firms included in the study. The firms were purposively selected because they were considered relevant to the objectives of the study and were located within the Computer Village technology business environment.

Simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting individual employees from the selected firms. This gave eligible employees an equal opportunity of being selected to participate in the study. The use of simple random sampling also helped to minimize the possibility of researcher bias in the selection of respondents.

Since the total accessible population was only 120 employees, the study adopted a census approach, whereby questionnaires were administered to all 120 employees, subject to their availability and

willingness to participate. Consequently, the sampling frame consisted of the 120 employees across the four selected firms.

The study used a sample size of 120 respondents, representing the entire accessible population of employees in the four selected firms. The decision to cover the entire population was considered appropriate because the population was relatively manageable in size and common location. The distribution of the respondents was as follows in Table 1:

S/N	Selected Firm	Number of Employees
1	Balog Technologies	45
2	Compusource	37
3	Lake Side Technology	26
4	Kumash	12
	Total	120

Table 1: Employees Distribution

Section A was analysed according to the nature of the demographic variables items such as gender, age, educational qualification, length of service, employment status and other relevant demographic characteristics through the use of appropriate categories and response options. While Section B, C, and D of the questionnaire employed a dichotomous response scale. Respondents were required to indicate either Yes or No to each statement. The dichotomous scale was considered appropriate because the study sought to establish whether respondents identified particular factors as causes, turnover reduction measures or motivational factors. Respondent responses were coded numerically, Yes (1) and No (0) respectively for statistical analysis. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Human Resource Management and Public Administration, and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha method, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analysed using simple percentage and frequency counts, presented in tabular form. The findings were subsequently interpreted and discussed in relation to the study objectives.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, and all 120 were retrieved and found usable, representing a 100% response rate. Of the respondents, 72 (60.0%) were male and 48 (40.0%) were female. The majority of respondents (46.7%) fell within the 26–35 age bracket, indicating a predominantly youthful workforce. In terms of educational qualification, 62.5% held HND/B.Sc. degrees, while 21.7% held postgraduate degrees. Regarding length of service, 38.3% of respondents had served for 1–5 years, and 28.3% for 6–10 years. Permanent employees constituted 65.0% of the sample.

Causes of Employee Turnover in Private Organizations in Nigeria

Table 2 presents the responses on the causes of employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria.

Table 2: Causes of Employee Turnover in Private Organizations in Nigeria (N=120)

S/N	Items	Yes F(%)	No F(%)	IDK F(%)	Total
1	Low salary causes employees to leave private organizations.	102(85.0)	12(10.0)	6(5.0)	120
2	Poor working conditions contribute to employee turnover.	98(81.7)	14(11.7)	8(6.7)	120

S/N	Items	Yes F(%)	No F(%)	IDK F(%)	Total
3	Lack of promotion opportunities leads to employee turnover.	96(80.0)	16(13.3)	8(6.7)	120
4	Job insecurity encourages employees to seek other jobs.	93(77.5)	19(15.8)	8(6.7)	120
5	Poor relationship between employees and management causes turnover.	89(74.2)	22(18.3)	9(7.5)	120
6	Excessive workload contributes to employee turnover.	87(72.5)	24(20.0)	9(7.5)	120
7	Lack of training and development opportunities causes employees to resign.	91(75.8)	21(17.5)	8(6.7)	120
8	Poor employee welfare packages increase turnover.	94(78.3)	18(15.0)	8(6.7)	120
9	Unfair treatment of employees contributes to turnover.	88(73.3)	23(19.2)	9(7.5)	120
10	Lack of recognition for good performance causes employees to leave.	97(80.8)	16(13.3)	7(5.8)	120

The data in Table 2 reveal that a vast majority of respondents affirmed all ten identified causes of employee turnover. Notably, low salary was the most widely acknowledged cause, with 102 (85.0%) of respondents agreeing that inadequate remuneration drives employees to leave. Poor working conditions (81.7%), lack of recognition (80.8%), and lack of training and development opportunities (75.8%) were also highly rated. These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Azeez (2017) and align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which posits that deficiencies in hygiene factors precipitate dissatisfaction and increase voluntary turnover. The relatively high proportion of "Yes" responses across all items underscores the multidimensional nature of employee turnover in the Nigerian private sector.

Factors Influencing Employee Turnover Reduction in Private Organizations

Table 3 presents the responses on factors influencing employee turnover reduction.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Employee Turnover Reduction (N=120)

S/N	Items	Yes F(%)	No F(%)	IDK F(%)	Total
1	Competitive salary helps reduce employee turnover.	108(90.0)	8(6.7)	4(3.3)	120
2	Regular promotion opportunities help retain employees.	104(86.7)	11(9.2)	5(4.2)	120

S/N	Items	Yes F(%)	No F(%)	IDK F(%)	Total
3	Good working conditions reduce employee turnover.	106(88.3)	9(7.5)	5(4.2)	120
4	Employee recognition programmes help retain workers.	99(82.5)	14(11.7)	7(5.8)	120
5	Effective communication between management and employees reduces turnover.	101(84.2)	12(10.0)	7(5.8)	120
6	Training and development programmes help reduce employee turnover.	105(87.5)	10(8.3)	5(4.2)	120
7	Job security encourages employees to remain in the organization.	107(89.2)	9(7.5)	4(3.3)	120
8	Employee participation in decision-making reduces turnover.	98(81.7)	15(12.5)	7(5.8)	120
9	Adequate welfare benefits help retain employees.	103(85.8)	11(9.2)	6(5.0)	120
10	A positive organizational culture reduces employee turnover.	110(91.7)	7(5.8)	3(2.5)	120

Table 3 shows that respondents overwhelmingly identified a positive organizational culture (91.7%), competitive salary (90.0%), and job security (89.2%) as the leading factors that can reduce employee turnover. Training and development programmes (87.5%), good working conditions (88.3%), and regular promotion opportunities (86.7%) were also highly endorsed. These findings reinforce the theoretical postulations of Maslow (1943) that meeting both lower and higher-order needs enhances employee satisfaction and commitment. The high endorsement of a positive organizational culture as a retention strategy aligns with the findings of Oladapo (2014), who identified organizational culture as a strategic tool for workforce retention in the Nigerian context.

Factors Affecting Effective Employee Motivation in Private Organizations

Table 4 presents responses on factors affecting the adoption of effective employee motivation in private organizations.

Table 4: Factors Affecting Effective Employee Motivation (N=120)

S/N	Items	Yes F(%)	No F(%)	IDK F(%)	Total
1	Limited financial resources prevent organizations from adopting effective employee motivation programmes.	97(80.8)	16(13.3)	7(5.8)	120

S/N	Items	Yes F(%)	No F(%)	IDK F(%)	Total
2	Lack of management commitment affects the adoption of employee motivation practices.	95(79.2)	17(14.2)	8(6.7)	120
3	Poor organizational policies hinder effective employee motivation.	93(77.5)	19(15.8)	8(6.7)	120
4	Inadequate knowledge of employees' motivational needs affects motivation programmes.	91(75.8)	21(17.5)	8(6.7)	120
5	High operational costs discourage organizations from implementing motivation strategies.	96(80.0)	16(13.3)	8(6.7)	120
6	Lack of skilled human resource personnel affects employee motivation efforts.	89(74.2)	22(18.3)	9(7.5)	120
7	Poor communication within the organization affects the implementation of motivation programmes.	88(73.3)	23(19.2)	9(7.5)	120
8	Resistance to change by management affects the adoption of employee motivation initiatives.	86(71.7)	25(20.8)	9(7.5)	120
9	Lack of regular performance evaluation affects effective employee motivation.	92(76.7)	20(16.7)	8(6.7)	120
10	Economic challenges facing organizations affect employee motivation programmes.	98(81.7)	15(12.5)	7(5.8)	120

The results in Table 4 indicate that economic challenges (81.7%), limited financial resources (80.8%), and high operational costs (80.0%) were the most frequently identified barriers to effective employee motivation. Poor organizational policies (77.5%), lack of management commitment (79.2%), and inadequate knowledge of employees' motivational needs (75.8%) were also prominently cited. These findings suggest that organizational motivation efforts in the Nigerian private sector are constrained by both macro-level economic realities and internal management limitations. The finding on resistance to change by management (71.7%) is particularly notable, as it indicates institutional inertia as a barrier to adopting evidence-based motivation practices. This corroborates the submissions of Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015), who highlighted leadership orientation as a critical determinant of motivational programme effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study assessed the motivational factors influencing employee turnover in private organizations in Nigeria. The findings establish that employee turnover in the Nigerian private sector is driven by a complex interplay of factors, including inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, lack of career advancement, insufficient recognition, and ineffective leadership. These causes are deeply rooted

in deficiencies in both hygiene factors and motivational variables as conceptualized by Herzberg (1959) and Maslow (1943).

The study further reveals that reducing employee turnover requires a multi-pronged approach that prioritizes competitive compensation, positive organizational culture, job security, and robust training and development programmes. However, the adoption of effective motivation strategies is hampered by economic constraints, limited financial resources, poor management commitment, and organizational resistance to change.

The practical implication of these findings is that private organizations in Nigeria must move beyond short-term, adhoc human resource practices and invest in systemic, evidence-based motivation and retention frameworks. In doing so, they will not only reduce turnover costs but also build a resilient and committed workforce capable of driving sustained organizational performance.

Recommendations

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

1. Private organizations should conduct periodic salary reviews to ensure that employee compensation is competitive and commensurate with industry standards, cost of living, and individual performance.
2. Organizations should invest in training and professional development programmes to enhance employees' skills and career growth prospects, thereby increasing their commitment to the organization.
3. Management should institutionalize transparent and merit-based promotion systems to create a sense of fairness and professional progress among employees.
4. Private organizations should improve physical working environments by providing adequate facilities, reducing excessive workloads, and ensuring occupational health and safety standards are upheld.
5. Organizations should establish formal employee recognition schemes that acknowledge individual and team contributions, both monetarily and non-monetarily.
6. The human resource function should be professionalized through the employment of qualified HR practitioners who can design and implement evidence-based motivation and retention strategies.
7. Management should foster a culture of open communication, participatory decision-making, and transparency to build organizational trust and reduce turnover intentions.
8. Private organizations should build long term financial reserves or budgetary allocations specifically for employee welfare and motivation programmes, insulating these investments from seasonal economic pressures.

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION AND LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) utilization on library collection development in three selected academic libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria, namely Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Library, Ogbomoso, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education Library, Oyo, and The Polytechnic, Ibadan Library. The study was carried out to determine the extent of ICT utilization in library collection development, assess the impact of ICT on collection development activities, and identify the challenges affecting the effective utilization of ICT in the selected academic libraries. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised eighty (80) library staff from the three selected academic libraries, and the entire population was used through the total enumeration sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, standard deviation. The findings of this study revealed that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is highly utilized in library collection development in the three selected academic libraries in Oyo State The study concluded that ICT has become an indispensable tool for effective library collection development in academic libraries and has significantly improved the acquisition, management, and accessibility of information resources. The study recommended increased funding for ICT infrastructure, regular staff training and retraining programmes, improved internet facilities, provision of alternative power supply, and the formulation of sustainable ICT policies to enhance the effective utilization of ICT in library collection development

Keywords*: ICT, Collection Development, Academic Libraries, Library and Information Resources.*

Introduction

Library collection development is one of the most fundamental functions of any library. It refers to the systematic process of selecting, acquiring, evaluating, organizing, preserving, and maintaining information resources that meet the educational, research, and informational needs of library users. The effectiveness of a library largely depends on the quality, relevance, adequacy, and accessibility of its collections. In academic libraries, collection development is particularly important because it provides the information resources required for teaching, learning, research, and knowledge creation. Without a well-developed collection, an academic library cannot adequately fulfill its mandate of supporting academic excellence and intellectual development.

Meanwhile, Technology (ICT) has become an essential tool for enhancing collection development activities. ICT provides opportunities for libraries to acquire electronic resources, access online databases, automate acquisition processes, participate in resource-sharing networks, and provide users with quick and convenient access to information resources. In Nigeria, the adoption of ICT in academic libraries has increased considerably over the last two decades. Many higher institutions have invested

in computers, internet facilities, integrated library management systems, and electronic information resources to improve library services. According to Ogbuabor *et al*. (2024) observed that ICT facilities in academic libraries save time during collection development, enable quick delivery of information materials, improve communication with vendors/ publishers, facilitate acquisition of current information sources, and standardize collection development practice with global needs and save cost on transportation of hard copies through online subscription.

How ever, despite these benefits, many academic libraries in Nigeria continue to face difficulties in fully integrating ICT into their collection development processes. Consequently, some academic libraries still struggle to build and maintain balanced collections that adequately meet the growing and changing information needs of their users. Moreso, the level of ICT utilization varies among institutions due to differences in funding, infrastructure, administrative support, and staff competence.

The above development necessitated the need to investigate the impact of Information and Communication Technology on library collection development in Oyo State, Nigeria, with a view to determining its influence on collection development activities, identifying the benefits derived from its utilization, examining the challenges affecting its effective application, and suggesting appropriate measures for improving ICT-driven collection development practices in academic libraries.

Objectives of the Study:

The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. examine the extent of ICT utilization in library collection development in the selected academic libraries in Oyo State.
ii. determine the perceived influence of ICT on library collection development in the selected academic libraries.
iii. identify the challenges affecting the effective utilization of ICT in library collection development in the selected academic libraries.

Literature Review

Concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to the various technological systems used for the creation, collection, processing, storage, retrieval, transmission, and dissemination of information. According to Kumar (2018), ICT is a combination of hardware, software, communication technologies, and network systems that enable users to create, access, store, manipulate, and exchange information efficiently. ICT has become a critical ‘component of social, economic, educational, and technological development because it enables individuals and organizations to access, share, and utilize information more effectively. In today's knowledge-driven world, information is regarded as a valuable resource, and ICT serves as the primary medium through which this resource is generated, processed, and distributed. As a result, institutions such as universities, research centers, government agencies, and libraries increasingly depend on ICT to enhance productivity, improve service delivery, and achieve their organizational objectives. This broader perspective highlights the multifaceted nature of ICT and its ability to support different activities within organizations.

Concept of Library Collection Development

Library collection development is one of the most fundamental and indispensable functions of any library because it serves as the foundation upon which all library services are built. The effectiveness of a library in meeting the information needs of its users largely depends on the quality, relevance, adequacy, and accessibility of its collection. Collection development refers to the systematic and continuous process of planning, selecting, acquiring, evaluating, organizing, preserving, and maintaining information resources to meet the present and future needs of library users. According to Evans and Saponaro (2012), collection development is a carefully coordinated activity that ensures that library resources are developed in line with the objectives of the parent institution and the information requirements of users. In academic libraries, collection development occupies a central position because

the success of teaching, learning, research, and community service activities depends largely on the availability of relevant information resources. Without a well-developed collection, a library cannot effectively support academic programmes, scholarly research, or intellectual development. Consequently, collection development is often regarded as the backbone of library services and a major determinant of library effectiveness.

One of the major objectives of collection development is to ensure that library resources are relevant to the needs of users and aligned with the mission and goals of the parent institution. According to Johnson (2018), collection development is a strategic activity that requires careful assessment of users' information needs, institutional priorities, and available resources. Librarians must continuously evaluate the relevance and adequacy of existing collections while identifying new materials that reflect emerging trends and developments in various fields of knowledge. Major components of collection development include: selection, acquisition, evaluation, preservation and maintenance library materials

ICT and Library Collection Development

The integration of Information and Communication technology (ICT) into library services has significantly transformed the nature and management of library collection. Traditionally, library collection consisted mainly, print materials such as books, journals and news papers. However, with the advent of ICT, libraries now maintain hybrid collection that include both prints and electronic resources, like e-books, e-journals, data bases, and institutional repositories (Adeyemi & Adebayo, 2021). ICT has fundamentally reshaped how libraries manage the core component of their collections.

In the selection process, ICT tools such as online data bases, vendor websites and usage statistics form library management systems help librarians identify relevant materials that meet users' needs more accurately.

For acquisition, e-procurement platforms, online subscriptions and consultia agreement allow library to order print and electronic resources faster and often at reduced cost. (Opara, 2020).

ICT also support collection evaluation through automated reports on circulation data. In terms of preservation, digitization, cloud storage, and backup systems protect materials from physical deterioration and loss. (Babalola, 2022).

Maintenance is also enhanced through library automation software that tracts inventories, manages barcode systems and sends alert for overdue.

Overall, ICT has made collection management more efficient, user-driven and sustainable, shifting libraries from manual, shelf based system to dynamic digital work flows

Methodology

The research employed descriptive survey research design. This survey is a research method used to describe the characteristics, opinions, behaviours or perceptions of a population or sample as they currently exist. This is appropriate because the study seeks to ascertain the practices, challenges and perception regarding ICT use in collection development. The study was carried out in three selected academic libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria. These libraries are the Library of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso; the Library of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo; and the Library of The Polytechnic, Ibadan. The population of the study consisted of all library staff in the three selected academic libraries in Oyo State. The total population was eighty (80) respondents distributed as follows: Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Library, Ogbomoso 35, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education Library, Oyo 23, The Polytechnic, Ibadan Library 22. The library staff were considered appropriate respondents because they are directly involved in library operations and collection development activities and possess adequate knowledge of ICT utilization within their respective libraries.

The researcher adopted the total enumeration sampling technique. Therefore, all the eighty (80) library staff from the three selected academic libraries were used as respondents for the study. The instrument

used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher based on the objectives and research questions of the study

Interpretation of Results

Research Question 1: To what extent is ICT utilized in library collection development in the selected academic libraries in Oyo State?

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Computers are used in collection development activities	3.45	0.68	Accepted
Internet facilities are regularly used for selecting resources	3.38	0.74	Accepted
Electronic databases are utilized in collection development	3.21	0.82	Accepted
Library management software is used in managing collections	3.40	0.71	Accepted
ICT tools are frequently used for acquiring and evaluating resources	3.28	0.79	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.34	0.75	Accepted

Table 1: revealed the extent of ICT utilization in library collection development among the selected academic libraries. The result showed that the respondents agreed that computers are used in collection development activities with a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 0.68. The table further showed that internet facilities are regularly used for selecting information resources with a mean score of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 0.74. The result also indicated that electronic databases are utilized in collection development processes with a mean score of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.82. The table further revealed that library management software is used in managing library collections with a mean score of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 0.71. The result equally showed that ICT tools are frequently used for acquiring and evaluating library resources with a mean score of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 0.79. The grand mean score of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.75 indicate a high level of ICT utilization in library collection development in the selected academic libraries. Since the grand mean is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that ICT is extensively utilized in collection development activities. The findings suggest that the selected libraries have embraced ICT in various aspects of collection development, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and improving access to information resources.

Research Question 2: What influence does ICT have on library collection development in the selected academic libraries?

Table 2: Impact of ICT on library collection development

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
ICT improves selection of relevant information resources	3.56	0.63	Accepted
ICT enhances access to electronic information resources	3.61	0.59	Accepted
ICT increases efficiency of collection management	3.48	0.67	Accepted
ICT improves resource sharing among libraries	3.35	0.76	Accepted
ICT contributes to overall development of library collections	3.58	0.61	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.52	0.65	Accepted

Table 2**:** presented the impact of ICT on library collection development in the selected academic libraries. The findings revealed that ICT has improved the selection of relevant information resources with a mean score of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.63. The result further showed that ICT enhances access to electronic information resources with a mean score of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 0.59. The table also indicated that ICT increases the efficiency of collection management with a mean score of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.67. The result further revealed that ICT improves resource sharing and collaboration with other libraries with a mean score of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 0.76. The table equally showed that ICT contributes to the overall development of library collections with a mean score of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 0.61.

The grand mean score of 3.52 and standard deviation of 0.65 indicate that ICT was perceived to improve library collection development in the selected academic libraries. Since the grand mean exceeds the criterion mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that ICT has greatly enhanced collection development activities and improved the quality of information resources available to users.

Research Question 3: What challenges affect the effective utilization of ICT in library collection development?

Table 3**:** Challenges of effective utilization of ICT in library collection development

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Inadequate funding affects ICT utilization	3.60	0.61	Accepted
Poor internet connectivity limits ICT utilization	3.44	0.72	Accepted
Inadequate ICT infrastructure hinders collection development	3.31	0.77	Accepted
Insufficient ICT skills among staff affect utilization	3.05	0.84	Accepted
Irregular power supply affects ICT utilization	3.66	0.57	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.41	0.70	Accepted

Table 3**:** revealed the challenges affecting the effective utilization of ICT in library collection development. The findings showed that inadequate funding affects ICT utilization with a mean score of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 0.61. The result further revealed that poor internet connectivity limits effective ICT utilization with a mean score of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 0.72. The table also showed that inadequate ICT infrastructure hinders collection development activities with a mean score of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.77. The findings further indicated that there is insufficient ICT skills among library staff affect ICT utilization with a mean score of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 0.84. The result also showed that irregular power supply affects the use of ICT in library collection development with a mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.57. The grand mean score of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.70 indicate that the respondents generally agreed that several challenges affect the effective utilization of ICT in library collection development. Since the grand mean is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that inadequate funding, poor internet connectivity, inadequate ICT infrastructure, insufficient ICT skills, and irregular power supply are major challenges confronting the effective use of ICT in the selected academic libraries.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is highly utilized in library collection development in the three selected academic libraries in Oyo State, namely Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Library, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education Library, and The Polytechnic, Ibadan Library. The result showed that computers, internet facilities, electronic databases, library management software, and other ICT tools are extensively used in collection development activities. This finding suggests that the selected academic libraries have embraced technological innovations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their collection development processes. The finding is consistent with the study of Aina (2014), who reported that ICT has become an essential component of collection development in academic libraries because it facilitates information selection, acquisition, organization, and management.

The study further found that ICT was perceived to influence library collection development in the selected academic libraries. The finding supports the work of Johnson (2018), who reported that ICT has revolutionized collection development by enabling libraries to acquire and manage information resources more effectively. The positive impact recorded in this study indicates that ICT has become indispensable in modern library operations and has contributed significantly to the growth and development of academic library collections.

The findings also showed that several challenges affect the effective utilization of ICT in library collection development. Among the major challenges identified were inadequate funding, poor internet

connectivity, inadequate ICT infrastructure, insufficient ICT skills among library staff, and irregular power supply. This finding is in agreement with the study of Adomi and Kpangban (2010), who identified inadequate funding and poor technological infrastructure as major obstacles to ICT implementation in Nigerian libraries. Similarly, Okiy (2010) observed that unstable electricity supply and inadequate internet services remain significant barriers to effective ICT utilization in many academic libraries. The persistence of these challenges suggests that although academic libraries have embraced ICT, several infrastructural and financial constraints continue to limit its full potential in supporting collection development. The study further established a significant relationship between ICT utilization and library collection development in the selected academic libraries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Information and Communication Technology has become an indispensable component of modern library collection development. The utilization of ICT has been found to improve the processes of selecting, acquiring, organizing, managing, and providing access to information resources in academic libraries. The adoption of ICT was perceived to enable libraries to expand their collections beyond traditional print resources and has facilitated access to a wide range of electronic information resources required for teaching, learning, and research. The study also concludes that ICT contributes positively to the effectiveness and efficiency of collection development activities.

Recommendations

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

Library management should provide regular training and retraining programmes for library staff to improve their ICT competencies and enable them to utilize technological resources effectively.

Government and institutional authorities should allocate adequate funds to academic libraries for the acquisition, maintenance, and upgrading of ICT facilities and electronic information resources.

Academic libraries should improve internet connectivity and bandwidth to facilitate efficient access to online information resources and electronic databases.

Alternative power supply systems such as solar energy and standby generators should be provided to address the challenge of irregular electricity supply.

Libraries should strengthen collaboration and resource-sharing initiatives through library consortia and ICT-enabled networks to enhance collection development and reduce acquisition costs.

Library administrators should develop ICT policies that support sustainable technological development and encourage the effective integration of ICT into collection development activities.

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RAPPORT MANAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE PRICING IN IGBOORA

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Abstract

Rapport management, a crucial and highly important aspect of market interactions, enhances cordial relationship between buyers and sellers. Studies on market interactions in Nigeria have explored language use in sociolinguistics, multilingualism and semantics in Nigeria and other parts of the world but adequate attention has not been given to rapport management. This study thus examines rapport management with an emphasis on behavioural expectations in agricultural produce pricing in Igboora, as it affects the buyers and sellers. Six interactions were randomly selected for analysis. Data were gathered through personal observation and tape recording of the communicative activities of the participants in the agricultural produce pricing. The data were analysed employing relevant rapport management model of behavioural expectations. The study routes its findings through the model and reveals that in market pricing activities, buyers and sellers always engage in involvement as people have appropriate amounts and types of activities with one another. Also, it reveals that there is always empathy where people are expected to share appropriate concerns, feelings and interests with others. Also observed from the participants' interactions in market places was respect which is the belief or expectation that people should show appropriate amount of respectfulness for others. However, it is further discovered that not all negotiations end in harmony as some buyers and sellers disagree vehemently. The paper concludes that rapport management helps better negotiations and harmonious relationship between buyers and sellers while a breach of adequate rapport can as well hamper effective negotiations between them.

Keywords: Rapport management, agricultural produce pricing, Igboora, personal observations, better negotiation

Introduction

As much as the language use in market interactions is important and sacrosanct, its success or failure depends on how the interlocutors engage themselves. Because of this importance, language use in market situation has encouraged a lot of studies in sociolinguistic and discourse analytic perspectives (Mitchel 1975, Ogunsiji 2001, Ryoo 2005, Pascula et al. 2023, Arsad 2024, To'lqinjon o'g'li 2025). These studies have generally concentrated on the establishment of the social relationship between interlocutors without consideration for politeness, most especially the rapport management. This study examines rapport management in agricultural produce pricing in Igboora, as it affects the relationship between the customers and the sellers. Tape recordings of rapport management in market interactions were made and personal observations of the communicative activities of the participants in the interactions were done. Six interactions were randomly selected for analysis.

Politeness and Rapport Management in Conversational Interaction

Politeness is an offshoot of the criticisms brought against Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles (CP) (Kasper 1976, Kate 1980, Leech 1983, and Watts et al. 1992, Kienpointner 1999). There have been several definitions and studies on politeness by many scholars from time to time (Lakoff 1975, 1989, Leech 1983, Brown and Levinson 1987, Cook 1989, Held 1996, Kienpointner 1997, Odebunmi 2005, Amao 2007).

Odebunmi (2005), citing Odebunmi (2003) posits that "politeness in the light of first order politeness, is largely culture and individual based". The foregoing is therefore relative to people and culture. In furthering this, he cites two of the Nigerian socio-cultural groups, Hausa and Yoruba. The Hausa, are always considered blunt in their description of persons and phenomena while the Yoruba on the other hand are known to be euphemistic when it comes to the psycho-social and emotional aspects of co-participant(s). This is in line with Leech's (1983) opinion that politeness can be obtained through indirect illocution (Odebunmi 2003, 2005).

In the light of the second order, politeness has to do with the relationship between 'self' and 'other' i.e. speaker (S) and hearer (H) respectively. Other (H) can still be referring to a third party who is not necessarily present during the interaction (Odebunmi 2003, 2005 [Leech 1983]).

Rapport Management

Though there are differences in the perception of politeness by scholars, all seem to agree that it is associated in some way with harmonious/conflictual interpersonal relations, which Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002, 2005) labels rapport management. According to her, rapport refers to relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people, and rapport management refers to the management (or mismanagement) of relations between people. As she observes, interlocutors can hold varying types of rapport towards each other. For instance, they can hold a rapport enhancement orientation (a desire to promote or enhance harmonious relations), a rapport maintenance orientation (a desire to retain or protect harmonious relations), a rapport neglect orientation (indifference in the quality of relations, perhaps because of a focus on self), or a rapport-challenge orientation (a desire to challenge or impair harmonious relations). It could be stated here that people's reasons for using any of these vary in interactions as the case may be.

In the light of the foregoing, it is obvious that rapport management is not orientated only to smooth interactions but any kind of behaviour that can affect interactions, be it positive or negative. In rapport management, determining the positive or negative nature of interactions can be done on the assessment of three key bases of rapport and their interrelationship: behavioural expectations, face sensitivities and interactional wants. For this work, behavioural expectations key is deplored as the model for analysis.

Behavioural Expectations and Politeness

Spencer-Oatey (2005) takes politeness to mean what people judge to be socially appropriate in verbal and non-verbal behaviours. All kinds of evaluative meaning such as warm, friendly, considerate, respectful, aggressive, rude, etc. are brought under an umbrella term called politeness. These evaluative meanings can have positive, negative or neutral connotations depending on interactants' judgment on their social relations and rapport or disharmony that exists between them. The expectations of the interlocutors are always derived from their beliefs about behaviour: what is prescribed, what is permitted and what is proscribed. Prescribed behaviour is behaviour that people feel they have a duty to produce and expect others to experience. This means that it is legally and socially obligatory. On the contrary, proscribed behaviour is a behaviour that people feel they have duty to avoid and the others have right not to experience. Thus, it is legally and socially forbidden. An example is a situation where an individual mounts a road block because he is using such a road for a ceremony. Prescribed behaviour that is omitted and proscribed behaviour that is not avoided is usually experienced as 'negatively eventful' (Goffman 1967:7). The behaviour perceived in this way is labeled 'non- politic' or impolite' by Wats (2003) and 'rude' by Kasper (1990).

Rapport Management and Agricultural Produce Pricing

Our findings reveal that behavioural expectations as a model of rapport management was frequently employed by speakers and hearers in market interactions. The model was deployed throughout in the analysis.

As earlier stated, behavioural expectations are the behaviours expected from relationship between interlocutors. The expectations here are judged based on behavioural conventions, norms and protocols which are laid down by the society. There are instances when interactants in market interactions comply with the behavioural expectations to foster harmonious relationships while some instances of non-compliance lead to breakdown in communication.

There is an example of adherence to behavioural expectations in the following conversation between a seller and customer to foster a harmonious relationship being developed as the conversation progresses:

Interaction 1

C: How much is this basket of tomatoes?
S: ₦ 1,300
C: Ha! Ha! ₦ 1,300 is too much. How much last?
S: How much do you want to pay?
C: Let me pay ₦800,
S: Even we are not getting it at ₦ 900
C: But your baskets are very small in size
S: Carry one and you will realise that they are the normal size.
C: Let's talk, how much last?
S: Bring ₦ 1,200.
C: I think that this variety of tomatoes is a good one?
S: You go enjoy am taya.
C: I really like it. It is the price that is scaring me.
S: If that one is too costly, you can get that of ₦ 500 or ₦ 600

Judging from the above interaction, it is evident that rapport has been enhanced by the customer and seller. The reason adduced for this is that the two follow the behavioural convention when the seller informs the customer of the price of a basket of tomatoes he asks for. This is immediately followed up by the customer's assessment of the price as expensive. Of particular interest is the seller's reaction to this assessment. Rather than justifying the price she charges, she provides a positive response by telling the customer to buy another one that is not as costly as that when the customer says that he really likes the variety of the tomatoes. As a norm in market interactions, empathy, which is the belief that people should share concerns, feelings and cares, is used to further establish a harmonious relationship.

With the above support given by the seller, there is a free flow of interaction. That is what Aston (1993) calls supportive affect, wherein a participant in a discourse provides a supportive and positive comment on an experience or a state which the other person passes through. The seller's final utterance is a good example of a positive support by agreeing that the basket of tomatoes is expensive by offering other ones that are not so costly. This plays an additional role of building solidarity by sharing feelings with the customer.

Another compliance with behavioural expectations is exemplified in an interaction between a customer who wants to buy a load of yam tubers and a seller as seen below:

Interaction 2

C: Hello! Daddy. How is market?
S: Fine, no problem
C: How much do you sell this a load of yam tubers?
S: You mean this one? ₦ 21,000?
C: ₦21,000! Why is it that everything is so costly like that? Can you sell it for me at ₦ 13,000?
S: No, can't you see that it is *ewuru*, the best yam variety? This *maro* is ₦ 13,000, but it is also good as *ewuru*, most especially for pounded yam.
C: How much last?
S: Last, last I go give you na ₦ 19,000. One thing be say only good variety I dey sell for here.

The initial part of this conversation consists of routine greetings between the participants where the customer and seller exchange conventionalized greetings with each other. Greetings are always taken to be a representative case of phatic talk in that people inquire about others' welfare, which is not always with serious concern or sincerity (Coupland et al. 1992). This is highly expected in market interactions as greetings and exchange of pleasantries are well established norms associated with the market situations. After the salutation, enquiry as to the objects of sale and investigation of the price of

a load of yam tubers, the customer's assessment of the product is that it is too expensive. In his follow-up moves, the seller justifies explicitly why he has to charge the price he offers by explaining that the product is a good variety (*ewuru*)and cannot be compared with other variety such as *maro*.

To make the negotiation possible, the seller engages the interactional principle of equity where he considers cost-benefit by offering another variety of yam at ₦13,000 the customer offers to pay for the *ewuru*. As the customer's choice seems to be the *ewuru*, the seller beats down the price and agrees to sell the product for ₦19,000. It could be seen here that as the participants in this conversation actively greet and negotiate with support and agreement, which facilitate a more positive and solidarity building relationship between the participants, they create a friendly association throughout the conversation which is highly expected in market interactions.

Another instance of promotion of good rapport is found where the interactants comply with behavioural expectations when the customer inquires for a bunch of plantain for making chips. The seller and the customer engage in the following dialogue.

Interaction 3

C: Hi! Do you have plantain for making banana chips?
S: Which one?
C: Big one.
S: There is (he comes out with one)
C: How much
S: ₦5,200
C: Do you have any other?
S: Which one? What is the name?
C: Let me see the ones you have?
S: (brings out another two varieties) Which one?
C: (Pointing to one) That is the one. I just want the bigger one. The one I bought last week was just collapsing in the oil on fire. I don't think the variety is good at all.
S: This one is ₦5,500, but the one you were talking about might have been harvested before becoming strong enough.
S: Let me enter the market and come back. But when I come, I will not pay ₦5,500
C: Until you come.

The initiating move with the expression 'Hi!' by the customer culminates in a relaxed atmosphere of buying and selling as the seller is able to attend to him with utmost attention throughout the interaction. The most interesting thing here is that after the customer has negotiated for two or three different varieties of banana in the shop, the seller still offers to help in offering another alternative to what the buyer intends to buy. The seller here plays a role of showing his interest and involvement in making the customer buying something from him. He thus engages in the interactional principle of equity with cost- benefit consideration. The seller offers to sell a better variety and his acceptance of collecting less than ₦5,500 he places on the on the product further strengthens the friendly and positive atmosphere in the interaction as the seller seeks the customer's gaining something from him. Thus, there is an enhancement of rapport.

In the study, another instance of the participants' use of interaction to construct meaning and harmonious relation is found. This time, it occurs in a groundnut shop between a customer and seller

Interaction 4

C: How now? How is market?
S: Fine, my brother.
C: (checking the bags of groundnut))
S: come inside and check (inside).
C: So you have fine, fine groundnut inside and you display those ones outside. How much is this bag?
S: ₦20,800 .

C: That is too much. Is it not groundnut? The rough surface will soon become dark and it will not look fine again

S: Not this one. Let me tell you, it requires washing before you cook it. You know, it's brought straight to the market from farm after harvest this morning. It is a good variety, very good in boiling for eating and in making groundnut oil.

C: ₦ 20,800 is too much.

S: If you buy it, you will still come back to buy things from me.

C: (digresses) I've been buying things from this market before. Even the yam flour I bought for my father's burial was from this market.

S: Oh I see! Yes, there's a section where good yam flour is sold in this market. I always buy bags from there. About the bag of groundnut you want to buy, let's talk now.

C: Can you sell it for me at ₦19,000?

S: Let's go outside. I can see you are sweating. Okay, bring the money.

The use of in-group identity marker 'my brother' has been able to foster a good relationship. This stylistic aspect of rapport management is appropriately managed by the seller to achieve a harmonious relation in this interaction and thus enhances involvement with others which is the claim to social group membership. Brown and Levinson (1987) consider the use of in-group address terms as motivated by concern for the other party's face want and they are used to build up solidarity and closeness between participants. It is evident that the positive turns enjoyed by the interactants here are made possible because of the preceding in-group identify maker used by the seller by identifying himself with the customer as a brother.

The rapport built thus justifies the customer's move of mentioning the yam flour he had earlier bought from the market. The seller even praises the customer for getting a good place in the market to buy such. All these culminate in enhancing a good rapport which could be taken to go even beyond what obtains in market interactions. Looking at the example of in-group identity marker used by the seller, we not only see the positive effect of the strategic use of linguistic markers on the relational and interactional aspects of this particular dialogue, but also how it is creatively constructed and cooperatively managed by the seller. This is evident in his praising of another seller and commending the customer's sense of identifying good things.

However, in the harmonious relationship made possible by the interactants in market interactions, it is not only enhancement and maintenance of rapport that manifest but rapport neglect and challenge. There is a handful of situations where the customer and the seller do engage in disagreement that leads to breakdown in communication. There is a breach of behavioural expectations as the interactants are not tactful enough in their use of language in the following dialogue:

Interaction 5

C: How much do you sell each of these small goats? (pointing to them)

S: They are sold at ₦50,000 each.

C: (surprise) What do you mean? These small goats for ₦50,000 each! Can you sell each for ₦25,000?

S: What do you mean? A goat of ₦50,000 for ₦25,000? It seems you don't know how bad the economy is now? Do you know how much it costs to raise a goat to this level you termed "small"? You better leave my shop and don't bring misfortune for me early this morning.

C: It's unfortunate that you don't know how to speak to customers. Go and be eating your goats (he leaves in anger).

The customer, in his follow-up move here does not follow behavioural convention of association principle, as he refuses to observe the norms of market interactions where people should show appropriate amount of respectfulness for others. It is always believed that in market interactions, the participants are not expected to debase others' opinion or stance, especially when the seller offers a

price. This is not so here as the customer resorts to an emotional outburst which can only be termed to be too harsh on the seller, as seen in his comment, "What do you mean? These small goats for ₦50,000 each!". Thus, the rapport between the two is damaged as there is a total breakdown in communication which leads to the buyer leaving without reaching any compromise.

A breach of behavioural convention is also noticeable in another instance where a customer and a seller are about to engage in exchange of punches in front of a maize shop belonging to the seller. The seller sights a young man passing in front of her shop and calls him and the following dialogue ensues:

Interaction 6

S: Hei! What of the empty bag of maize?
You did not come with the empty bag again.
C: Why are you asking for the bag again? Didn't I pay for the bag with the maize?
S: Do you know what you are saying at all? You deposited a wretched ₦100 and you are telling me now that you have paid. You better go and bring my bag. (advances towards him).
C: Do you want to beat me or what? (people around move closer and separate them)
S: (addressing the peace-makers). Tell him to go and bring my bag if he doesn't want trouble because I can't release that bag.
C: I don't have any bag to bring. I have already paid for it. If you like, go and bring policemen. I want to be their guest, for I've never been to the station before. (the exchange of words continues).

The interactional wants of the interlocutors (getting an empty bag of maize back by the seller and retaining the same by the customer) have brought about a breach of behavioural expectations which nearly culminates in a fight. The two refuse to observe the behavioural convention of interactional principles of equity and association which are expressly prescribed and permitted in market interactions. Here, each wants to benefit maximally, as they cannot agree on who should be in possession of the said bag, thereby undermining their claims to qualities such as prestige, honour and respect. As a result of this, one can conclude that rapport between them has been greatly damaged.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have been able to make known, through this study, that the politeness strategy of rapport management, with emphasis on behavioural expectations, is necessary with the tactical use of language to foster harmonious relationships in market interactions. The study also reveals that in market interactions, customers and sellers always seek agreement and if there should be any disagreements, it should be done conventionally indirectly. Through this, interactants involved in activities with others, share appropriate feelings, concerns and interests, and show appropriate amount of respectfulness for others. On the other hand, it is also found out that agricultural produce sellers, and by extension, the farmers, need some orientations on how to engage the buyers in a harmonious relationship during negotiations as there was a couple of breakdown in communication during negotiations. The paper therefore concludes that behavioural expectations aid a better understanding of the relationships between customers and sellers, while a breach of adequate rapport can as well hamper effective negotiations between them. Thus, agricultural extension workers should be deployed to rural areas for adequate and appropriate orientations and reorientations in order to further help farmers in human relations. This invariably will enhance their productivity and profitability.

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ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND FISHERIES

GROWTH PERFORMANCE OF IN-GILTS REARED ON DIFFERENT BEDDING MATERIALS

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Abstract
Bedding materials play a significant role in providing a restful microenvironment to animals under intensive production systems. Hence, an experiment was conducted to evaluate the growth performance of in-gilts reared on different bedding materials. Twenty-four (24) in-gilts obtained from a reputable farm in Ibadan were used for the study. The pigs were allotted into three treatments of eight animals per treatment and four animals per replicate. The treatments were T1 (Concrete floor), T2 (Wood shavings at 30 cm deep) and T3 (Sand floor at 20 cm deep). The concrete floor was constructed using cement, granite, gravel, sand and water. Wood shavings were collected from sawmills in dried form within Igboora metropolis and pebbles, dirts, broken bottles, nails and iron metals were removed and later spread on the cemented floor to make wood shaving floor and replaced when the wood shavings had been wet. Fine gutter sand was collected in dried form from the surrounding of pigsty and dirts, iron metals, broken bottles and other harmful materials were removed before spreading on cemented floor to make sand floor and replaced when the sand had been wet or caked. The pigs were acclimatized for a week before the commencement of the study. Performance characteristics measured were initial weight, final weight, average weight gain, average feed intake and feed conversion ratio. The experiment was a completely randomized design. Results revealed that pigs reared on sand bedding had the highest final weight (93.05 kg), average weight gain (24.00 kg), average feed intake (84.97 kg). Feed conversion ratio (3.54) was better in pigs reared on sand bedding. It can be concluded that rearing of in gilts on sand floor improved pig performance.

Keywords*: Beddings, in-gilts, performance, pigs*

Part of PhD thesis submitted to University of Ibadan

Introduction

Growth performance refers to the productive responses of animals measured through parameters such as body weight gain, average daily gain, feed intake, and feed conversion ratio. In in-gilts, optimal growth performance is essential because it determines future reproductive efficiency and lifetime productivity. Environmental stress resulting from unsuitable flooring or bedding materials may reduce feed consumption and nutrient utilization, leading to poor growth and reduced economic gains. Dritz *et al.*,1996). In pig production, there is high potential of economic gain as a result of pig high feed conversion efficiency, prolificacy and rapid growth rate compared to other livestock which makes pigs to generate income for farmers within a short period of time and ensure food security (FAO, 2011). Morrison *et al.,* (2007) reported that environmental enrichment of pigsty with bedding materials have been found to be effective in improving performance and welfare of pigs by providing more comfortable resting surfaces. Gentry *et al.,* (2004) reported that deep bedding materials enabled pigs to have access to different manipulative objects which encouraged pigs to exhibit rooting and other natural behaviours. Therefore, evaluating the growth performance of in-gilts reared on different bedding materials is important for identifying suitable housing systems that can enhance productivity, welfare and sustainable pig production. This study was therefore designed to assess the effects of different bedding materials on the growth performance of in-gilts.

There is need to briefly explain different types of bedding material and their previos usage

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Materials and Methods

The experiment was carried out at the piggery unit of the Teaching and Research Farm of the University of Ibadan (GPS Coordinates: 7.4432^0 N, 3.9003^0 E). Twenty-four (24) in-gilts with an average weight of between 62.0 kg – 69 kg were obtained from a reputable commercial farm. The pigs were kept and monitored for one week for acclimatization and proper adaptability before the commencement of the experiment. Animals were fed with commercial feed (Table 1) and water was provided *ad libitum*. The pigs were raised under conducive environmental conditions with proper management in an intensive system of management. The study was conducted using one-way analysis of variance in a completely randomized design (CRD). Twenty-four in-gilts were randomly assigned to three treatments with eight animals per treatment and four animals per replicate. T1: Concrete, T2: Wood shavings (at 30cm deep) and T3: Sand (at 20cm deep). The bedding items were selected based on their ease of availability.

Table1: **Gross composition of experimental diet**

Ingredient	**Percentage**
Maize	45.00
Wheat Offal	36.75
Groundnut cake	12.00
Full – fat soya	3.00
Bone meal	1.50
Oyster shell	1.00
Premix	0.25
Salt	0.50
Total	**100.00**
Calculated Analysis	
CP%	17.13
Energy (Kcal/Kg ME)	2610.20
Ca%	0.99
P%	0.72
Lysine%	0.62
Methionine %	0.25
Fibre%	4.82

Table 2: Growth Performance of In-gilts reared on Different Bedding Materials

Parameters	**T1 Concrete**	**T2 Woodsavings**	**T3 Sand**	**SEM**
Initial weight (Kg)	66.77	62.50	69.05	0.03
Final weight (Kg)	88.25^b	84.86^c	93.05^a	0.04
Weight gain (Kg)	21.49^c	22.36^b	24.00^a	0.04

Feed intake (Kg)	84.10[ab]	81.27[b]	84.97[a]	0.16
FCR	3.91[a]	3.64[b]	3.54[b]	0.01

a,b,c means on the same row with different superscripts are significantly ($p<0.05$) different

FCR: Feed Conversion Ratio

Results and Discussion

The growth performance of in-gilts reared on different bedding materials is presented in Table 2. Final body weight was significantly higher ($p<0.05$) in in-gilts reared on sand bedding (T3:93.05 kg) compare to T1 (88.25 kg) and T2 (84.86 kg). Weight gain differed significantly ($p<0.05$) across treatments, with the greatest gain in T3 (24.00 kg), followed by T2 (22.36 kg) and the least in T1 (21.49 kg). Feed intake was significantly higher in T3 (84.97 kg) compared with T2 (81.27 kg) but similar to T1 (84.10 kg). Feed conversion ratio (FCR) was significantly higher ($p<0.05$) in T1 (3.91) compared to T2 (3.64) and T3 (3.54). The study demonstrated that in-gilts reared on sand bedding (T3) exhibited significantly greater final body weights, weight gain and feed intake compared to those on concrete floors (T1) and wood shavings (T2). These findings suggest that sand bedding provided superior comfort and reduced environmental stress, thereby supporting higher nutrient intake and improved growth. Similar results have been reported by Maess *et al.*, (2016), who noted that improved housing environments positively influence sow welfare and productivity. Enriched bedding systems such as sand can enhance lying comfort and thermoregulation, leading to improved nutrient utilization and body condition (Grun *et al.*, 2013). The lower feed intake observed in wood shavings (T2) relative to sand bedding (T3) may be attributed to environmental stressors or bedding dust which has been linked to respiratory discomfort in pigs (Weng, 2019). Feed conversion ratio (FCR) was significantly better in T2 and T3 compared with concrete floors (T1), indicating that bedding materials improved efficiency of nutrient utilization. The poorer feed conversion ratio in concrete floors aligns with reports that barren or hard-surfaced housing restricts sow comfort, increases stress and reduces efficiency of feed conversion (Wen *et al.*, 2021)

Conclusion

Enriched housing conditions promote superior growth performance compared with conventional barren systems. Sand bedding provided better cooling and lowering energy expenditure associated with thermoregulation thereby supporting improved growth performance

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BIOCHEMISTRY PROFILES OF BROILER FINISHER FED GRADED LEVELS OF FLASHED-DRIED CASSAVA PULP AS A REPLACEMENT FOR MAIZE

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Abstract

Dietary inclusion of flashed-dried cassava pulp (FDCP) on biochemistry profiles were evaluated in the study that involved two hundred and forty (240) day-old unsexed Cobb 500 broiler finisher chickens. The broilers were randomly allocated into four dietary treatment groups and replicated six (6) times, with 10 birds per replicate in a completely randomized design (CRD). FDCP replaced maize at 0, 5, 10 and 15% levels. The study was carried over from starting phase of the experiment to the finishing phase and lasted for 28 days. On the 28-days of the study, 3mls blood were randomly withdrawn from wing web by using a disposable needle and syringe from a bird per replicate into a bottle that contained no anticoagulant and transferred to the laboratory for serum biochemistry assay. Broilers fed 0% FDCP (control) and 5% FDCP diets had the lowest albumin concentration (3.40 g/dl) and the difference was significantly ($p< 0.05$). Albumin from 10% FDCP group was not significantly different from that of the 0% and 5% FDCP groups ($p > 0.05$). The highest albumin value of 3.75 g/dl was recorded in birds fed 15% FDCP, and this was significantly different from the other groups ($p < 0.05$). For AST, birds fed 10% FDCP had the highest value at 146.50 U/L, which was significantly different from the other treatments ($p < 0.05$) but statistically comparable to the 15% FDCP group ($p > 0.05$). The lowest AST value of 119.00 U/L was observed in birds fed 0% FDCP, which differed significantly from the other groups ($p < 0.05$) but was similar to the 5% FDCP group ($p > 0.05$). Conclusively, FDCP posed no negative effect on the health status of the broiler finisher chickens Therefore, 15% inclusion level of flashed dried cassava pulp is recommended to replace maize in the broiler finisher chickens.

Keywords: *Broiler finishers, blood profiles, flashed-dried cassava pulp and Maize*

Introduction

To alleviate maize scarcity, lower expenses, and boost broiler output, nutritionists suggest replacing maize with affordable, non-conventional, locally sourced, non-competitive feed alternatives (Neves *et al.*, 2014). Historically, agriculture and industry discarded crop residues and by-products as waste, causing severe environmental pollution. Acknowledging the significance of these by-products alongside the high costs of conventional feed and fertilizers and associated environmental issues, nutritionists shifted their approach to industrialize these residues as valuable feed ingredients (Danladi *et al*., 2023). Cassava pulp, for example, is a secondary product produced during the processing of main product. It is a solid by-product generated at the end of the starch production. Cassava roots hold between 60–75% moisture and 50% starch contents by dry weight, with the starch being inextricably trapped within the root tissue (Ukita *et al*., 2006). It contains 54 to 70 per cent starch, along with ash, raw protein, raw fibre, and ether extract with values ranged from 1. 7 to 2. 0(%), 13. 6 to 27. 8 (%) and

0. 1 (%) respectively (Khempaka *et al*., 2009, Ogunbode *et al*., 2014). Consequently, cassava pulp generated during starch manufacturing is now being assessed as a partial substitute for maize in poultry diets. Previous studies in broilers reported that sun-dried cassava pulp can replace maize up to 8% without negative effects on serum enzymes and abdominal fat (Khempaka *et al.*, 2009; Raji *et al*., 2020). Assessing serum biochemical markers provides a means to gauge animal health, with treatment efficacy inferred from this analysis. Multiple studies have highlighted the impact of haematological indices in assessing animal health and nutritional status (Bashar *et al*., 2010). Since blood is essential for life, a comprehensive hematological analysis must precede any significant research into avian biology. Abnormal changes in blood disrupt the body's essential physiological processes. Research into serum markers offers deeper insights into the nutritional quality of feed ingested by birds. This study evaluates how varying levels of flash-dried cassava pulp affect blood profiles and liver histology in broiler chickens.

Materials and methods

Experimental site

The study was conducted at the Poultry Unit of the Directorate of University Farms (DUFARM), Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, in Ogun State, Nigeria. The farm sits at 415 feet elevation with an eye position at 700 feet (7°13′135. 48″ N, 30°26′12. 38″ E), while the latter location is found at 1,141 feet (7°13′157. 53″ N, 30°26′12. 38″ E) per Google Earth (2020). The climate is wet, characterized by an average annual rainfall of 1,037 mm, with mean temperatures and humidity levels of 43. 70°C and 83%, respectively. It resides within a rainforest region.

Sourcing of the flashed-dried cassava pulp (FDCP)

Flashed-dried cassava pulp (FDCP). FDCP used for this study was sourced from Psaltry International, a starch processing facility located on Maya, Ado-Awaye Road in Iseyin Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Proximate compositions were quantified using AOAC (2022) protocols, while metabolizable energy was derived as postulated by Pauzenga (1985) formula

Experimental birds design and their management

Completely randomized design (CRD) with 4 dietary treatments was employed for 240 unsexed broiler finishers Cobb 500. Each of the 4 dietary groups comprised sixty broiler chickens, with each group consisting of six replicates containing ten birds per replicate. The experimental diets were formulated by partially substituting FDCP with maize at 0, 5, 10, and 15% levels as detailed in Tables 1. The diets were formulated to be iso-proteinous and iso-caloric, adhering to NRC (1994) recommendations.

Table 1: Gross composition (%) of experimental diets for broiler finishers (5– 8 weeks)

	FDCP levels of replacement			
Ingredients (kg)	**0%**	**5%**	**10%**	**15%**
Maize	55.50	50.50	45.50	40.50
FDCP	0.00	5.00	10.00	15.00
Full fat soybean meal	15.00	16.50	18.00	19.50
Groundnut cake	12.50	12.50	12.50	12.50
Wheat offal	9.50	8.00	6.50	5.00
Fish meal (72%CP)	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
Lime stone	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Bone meal	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
Lysine	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Methionine	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Vitamin/mineral Premix	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
NaCl	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Calculated values				
ME (MJ/kg)	11.99	11.93	11.83	11.70
Crude protein (%)	20.23	20.19	20.15	20.11
Calcium (%)	1.59	1.60	1.60	1.60
Phosphorous (%)	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.54

Lysine (%)	0.75	0.72	0.69	0.67
Methionine (%)	0.54	0.53	0.51	0.49

***** *Vitamin/mineral premixes: Vit. A 10,000,000 (iu), Vit D3 2,000,000 (iu), Vit. E 23,000 (mg),Vit B1 1,800 (mg), Vit K3 1,800 (mg), Vit B2 5,500 (mg), niacin 27,500 (mg), pantothenic acid 7,500 (mg), Vit B6 3,000 (mg), Vit B12 15 (mg), folic acid 750 (mg), biotin H2 60 (mg), chlorine chloride 300,000 (mg), cobalt 200 (mg), copper 3,000 (mg), iodine 1,000 (mg), ron 20,000 (mg), manganese 40,000 (mg), selenium 200 (mg), zinc 30,000 (mg), and antioxidant kI 250 (mg).* FDCP = Flash Dried Cassava Pulp; ME = Metabolizable Energy; NaCl = Sodium chloride

Data collection

At the conclusion of the 28-day feeding trial, blood samples were collected from one bird per replicate via the wing vein using sterile needles and syringes to determine serum biochemistry parameters. After allowing the blood samples to clot, they were refrigerated for six hours and then centrifuged at 900 rpm for 20 minutes. The blood sera from each bird was separated by separation marks and stored in a freezer at 20 degrees Celsius until analysis.

Statistical analysis

The collected data underwent one-way analysis of variance using SPSS version 2021. Variables showing significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were distinguished using the Duncan Multiple Range Test (Duncan, 1955) within the same software package.

Statistical model

$Y_{ij} = \mu + T_i + \varepsilon_{ij}$

where Y_{ij} = Observed value of dependent variable

μ = Population mean

T_i = Level of FDCP (i = 0, 5, 10, 15%)

ε_{ij} = Random residual error.

Results and discussion

Results

Serum biochemistry results from broiler chickens fed with flashed-dried cassava pulp (FDCP) are shown in Table 2. Aspartate transaminase (AST) and albumin levels in the final broiler results were significantly ($p<0.05$). The albumin values ranged from 3.40 (g/dl) to 3.75 (g/dl) and were statistically significant ($p<0.05$). The finisher broiler fed 0 percent FDCP (control diet) and 5 percent FDCP showed the lowest statistically significant ($p<0.05$) value of 3.40 g/dl, while the 10 percent group showed statistically significant ($p<0.05$) similarities. Birds fed 15 percent FDCP had the highest significant values ($p<0.05$) 3.75 g per dl and similar to value recorded by those fed 10 (10%) FDCP. Control diets and diet 2 had the same value and the lowest (3.40g/dl). However, broilers fed 10 (10%) percent FDCP had the highest significant value ($p<0.05$) (146.50 U/L). AST, which was statistically ($p>0.05$) similar to those fed 15 percent FD CP. Birds fed at 0 percent FDCP had the lowest significant ($p<0.05$) level (119.00 U/L). Total protein, globulin, glucose, alanine transaminase (ALT), triglycerides, cholesterol, uric acid, total bilirubin, density bilirubin and creatinine showed a non-significant ($p>0.05$) different among dietary treatments.

Table 2: Serum biochemistry of broiler finishers fed experimental diets (5-8 weeks)

	FDCP levels of replacement					
Parameters	**0%**	**5%**	**10%**	**15%**	**SEM**	**P – value**
Total protein (g/dl)	4.75	4.40	6.40	6.35	0.47	0.315
Albumin (g/dl)	3.40^{b}	3.40^{b}	3.60^{ab}	3.75^{a}	0.05	0.023
Globulin (g/dl)	1.35	0.95	2.85	2.60	0.45	0.417
AST (U/L)	119.00^{b}	125.00^{b}	146.50^{a}	140.00^{a}	3.79	0.005
ALT (U/L)	36.50	36.00	37.00	36.00	0.19	0.166
Triglyceride (mg/dl)	96.00	74.50	107.50	76.00	6.08	0.144
Cholesterol(mmol/L)	52.00	76.20	79.45	88.80	7.47	0.388

Glucose (mg/dl)	**143.90**	**110.10**	**156.65**	**150.20**	**12.1**	**0.107**
Uric acid (mg/dl)	4.95	5.00	5.30	4.80	0.31	0.965
Total bilirubin	0.15	0.09	0.28	0.04	0.04	0.123
Density bilirubin	0.19	0.08	0.61	0.28	0.08	0.084
Creatinine (mg/dl)	0.87	0.73	0.81	0.71	0.04	0.432

[a,b] Means on the same row with different subscripts are significantly different at $P < 0.05$.
SEM = Standard error of the mean, AST = Aspartate transaminase, ALT = Alanine transaminase,

Discussion

Serum biochemical parameters are reliable indicators of metabolic status, liver function, and overall health in poultry. In this study, albumin and AST levels were significantly influenced by dietary inclusion of flashed- dried cassava pulp (FDCP). Albumin is synthesized in the liver and reflects protein nutritional status and hepatic capacity. The increase in albumin at the 15% FDCP inclusion level suggests improved protein synthesis and liver function.

Aspartate transaminase (AST) levels in this study ranged from 119.00 to 146.50 U/L. These values were lower than the 155.00 to 204.00 U/L range reported by Sugiharto *et al.* (2018), who concluded that feeding broilers fermented cassava pulp resulted in negligible changes in AST. However, the values fell within the normal the normal physiological report of 90-220 U/L reported by Mitruka and Rawnsley, (1977).

Olawale (2019) stated that AST and ALT activities are key biomarkers for assessing hepatocellular integrity and liver damage in both clinical and experimental conditions. Elevated AST often indicates liver or muscle damage. Hence, the AST values observed in this study suggest that FDCP inclusion up to 15% did not induce hepatotoxicity.

Conclusion

Outcome of this finding indicates that flashed-dried cassava pulp can be included up to 15% in finisher diets without compromising liver function.

Recommendation

Flashed-dried cassava pulp is recommended to replace maize in the broiler finisher chickens diets. Further studies on histopathology of liver tissues are recommended to confirm these biochemical findings.

Implication

Dried cassava pulp is readily available starch by-product in starch producing area, it is viable alternative by-product that could be replaced maize in the poultry nutrition and pose no negative effect on health status of broiler finisher chickens.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful for the research support (flashed-dried cassava pulp) received from starch processing industry (Psaltry International) along Maya, Ado-Awaye road, Iseyin Local government, Oyo State, Nigeria. Iseyin and Directorate of University Farms (DUFARM), Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun, State, Nigeria.

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MICROBIAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF BEEF SOLD IN SELECTED MARKETS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study was conducted to assess the microbial load of beef during handling and selling in different markets in Ibadan, Nigeria. A total of 36 samples were collected from four different places of the city: Bodija market, Oja Oba market, Olomi market, and Sango market. These samples were subjected to determination of Total Viable Count (TVC), Total Coliform Count (TCC), and Yeast Mold Count (YMC) by using standard protocols. In raw meat, mean value of TVC were highest in Olomi market, (9.37^a log cfu/g) at 6 hours having significant difference ($p<0.05$) with other three places. In case of TCC, highest count value (4.37^a log cfu/g) was in meat of Oja Oba market and YMC highest count value (5.32^a log cfu/g) was recorded in meat at Sango market respectively. In case of TCC, differences were observed ($P<0.05$) among the markets. At 6 hours all the bacterial counts were increased having significant differences ($p<0.05$) with the initial count and in most of the cases the bacterial count crossed the acceptable limit. This may be due to the unhygienic practices of butchers. Consumers were not conscious. Suggestion has been given to improve the knowledge on hygiene among the meat produces to reduce microbial load.

Keywords: *Beef, Microbial count, Markets, Consumers*

Introduction

Cattle are one of the reared and large ruminant animals in the continent countries of Asia, Europe, Africa and America (Adesokan *et al.*, 2014). The cattle have varied species and genetically breed naturally and artificial developed with aid of effective technological research (Apata, 2011). The cattle is very important in the society improving the protein aspect of the diet; and meat obtained from the cattle is called beef (Onwuka, 2019). Beef is one of the widely consumed source of animal protein in Nigeria; but it is highly susceptible to microbial contamination due to handling, transportation, and storage practices (Ahmad, *et al.*, 2013). Pathogenic microorganisms in meat can cause food borne illnesses ranging from mild gastroenteritis to life threatening infections (Ahmad, *et al.*, 2013) Local markets, particularly in urban centers such as Ibadan, often lack proper cold chain facilities, increasing the risk of microbial proliferations (Baros, *et al*., 2007). Previous studies have reported high microbial loads in meat sold at informal markets, highlighting the importance of regular monitoring to prevent outbreaks of food borne diseases. This study aimed at assessing the microbial quality and quantity of beef sold at four local markets in Ibadan.

Materials and methods

Experiment study location

The experiment was conducted in the research laboratory of the Department of Animal Science in University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The experiment was conducted within July and December, 2025

Experimental Samples

All meat samples were collected from local retail markets situated in Ibadan city vicinities across four different markets (Bodija, Oja Oba, Olomi and Sango). The markets were run by the local government authority. Then the meat was put in sterilized bag. The samples were collected immediately after slaughter from cattle of different breed and matured aged ranged between a year and two years that were brought to convenient slaughter slab and slaughtered by Prodhan method. After skinning they cut it into different parts of its body.

Experimental Designs

There are four treatments in this experiment. These are T1= BM (control), T2=OM, T3= OJM, T4= SM. The bacterial count was taken at 0, 2, 4, and 6 hours after the collection of the sample from each location.

Treatments	No of Replications	Time of samples collection
T1- Bodija Market (BM)	9	0hr (control), 2hrs 4hrs, 6hrs
T2 - Olomi Market (OM)	9	0hr (control), 2hrs 4hrs, 6hrs
T3- Oja-Oba Market (OJM)	9	0hr (control), 2hrs 4hrs, 6hrs
T4 -Sango Market (SM)	9	0hr (control), 2hrs 4hrs, 6hrs

Data Collection

The beef samples were analysed in the laboratory to isolate the bacteria count, coliform count, and yeast mold count

Media and reagent employed for TVC, TCC and YMC

Solid media and reagents

The media employed for those bacteriological analysis included plate count agar (PCA), MacConkey agar (MA) and potato dextrose agar (PDA). The commercial media were prepared according to the direction of the manufacturers.

Glassware and other appliances

Different types of glassware and appliances were used during the course of the experiment. These were as follows: Test tubes (with or without Durbam fermentation tube and stopper), petridishes, conical flask, pipette, glass rod spreader, test tube stand, mortar and pestle, whirly mixture machine, blender machine, water bath, incubator, refrigerator, sterilizing instruments, hot air oven, ice boxes, electronic balance.

Preparation of sample for bacteriological studies

Each of the samples was macerated in a mechanical blender using sterile diluents as per recommendation of International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO 1995). About ten grams of the meat sample was taken aseptically with a sterile forceps and transferred into sterile containers containing 90 ml of 0.1% peptone water. A homogenized suspension was made in a sterile blender. Thus 1:10 dilution of the samples was obtained. Besides, on using whirly mixture machine different serial dilution ranging from 10^{-2} to 10^{-7} were prepared according to the standard method (ISO 1995)

Enumeration of Total Viable Count (TVC) and Total Coliform Count (TCC)

The laboratory processing of Total Viable Count and Total Coliform Count are similar, and the little difference is the final determination of the microbe's viable population. The total coliform count is confirmed with distinct colour of deep purple colonies often with green metallic surface or pink colonies often developed with addition of Eiosin Methylene Blue (EMB) agar or Endo agar to the culture colony plate. While the total viable count has plain colour. For the determination of total bacterial count, 0.1ml of each ten -fold dilution was transferred and spread on duplicate PCA using a fresh pipette for each dilution. The diluted samples were spread as quickly as possible on the surface of the plate with a sterile glass spreader. One sterile spreader was used for each plate. The plates were then kept in an incubator at 37^{o}C for 24 hours. Following incubation, plates exhibiting <300 colonies were counted. The average number of colonies in a particular dilution was multiplied by the dilution factor to obtain the total viable count. The total viable count was calculated according to ISO (1995). The results of the total bacterial

count were expressed as the number of organism or colony forming units per gram (CFU/g) of meat sample. Then results were calculated into log value.

Enumeration of yeast mold count

For the determination of yeast and mold counts, 0.1ml of each ten-fold dilution was transferred and spread on triplicate PDA agar using a sterile pipette for each dilution. The diluted samples were spread as quickly as possible on the surface of the plate with a sterile glass spreader. One sterile spreader was used for each plate. The plates were then kept in an incubator at 25^{o}C for 48-72 hours. Following incubation, plates exhibiting 30-300 colonies were counted. Colonies were counted with the aid of colony counter. The average number of colonies in a particular dilution was multiplied by the dilution factor to obtain the yeast and mold count. The yeast and mold count was calculated according to ISO (1995). The results of the yeast and mold count were expressed as the number of organism of colony forming units per gram (CFU/g) of beef samples.

Statistical Analysis

All the average means and standard deviation were calculated through Microsoft excel. (Microsoft Excel 2010). Data analysis tool pack was used to analyse the data 4x4 factorial design was used to calculate the interaction between the place and time. One-way ANOVA from Microsoft Excel 2010 Data Analysis tool pack was used to calculate the P-value.

Results and Discussion

Total Viable Count (TVC)

Results of TVC are placed in Table 1. Highest mean value for TVC in 6 hours found in Olomi market and there was significant difference ($p<0.05$) in TVC among the markets assessed. All the results of TVC at 6 Hours showed a gradual increase in TVC than 0 hour, Significant difference found among different hours in every cases ($p<0.01$). Total Viable Count (TVC) is a measure of microbial quality of the meat. Presence of microbes in high numbers (TVC>107CFU/g) first track the spoilage of the meat (Ahmad *et al*., 2013). According to the raw meat Grading and Marketing rules, Apc of 60% of analysed samples must not exceed 10^{6}CFU/g, whereas 40% samples may counts up to 10^{7}CFU/g (Omojowo, 2020). Initial counts show similarity with Baros, *et al*., 2007. These results showed that huge contaminations occur but there is more or less uniformly in bacterial load of these markets. However, the reduced counts on some cases are probably due in part to the fat layer which tends to reduce the amount of unbound moisture available for the growth or survival of microorganisms (Adesokan, *et al, 2014*.) and also due to more exposure to washing. Increase in TVC with time shows similarity with (Omojowo, 2020) where the study concluded that the bacterial count increased tremendously by the time the carcasses were received by the store from slaughter slab

Total Coliform Count (TCC)

Results of TCC placed in Table 2 indicates the hygienic condition of meat (Ahmad *et al*, 2013). According to compendium of Microbiological Criteria for Food, (2016), coliforms more than log 2 CFU/g indicates unsatisfactory meat which may result pathogenic conditions from meat. In present study, it revealed that, in many cases the TCC crossed the satisfactory level showing unhygienic conditions of the slaughter slabs and meat shops. At 6 hours all the samples crossed the satisfactory levels showing unacceptable meat in retail shops at late hours. Significant difference ($p<0.05$) found among the markets at 0 hour. Almost all cases showed significant differences ($p<0.05$) for TCC levels with increase in time. Omojowo, (2020) also found higher coliform counts in late hours at retail meat. Presence of some coliform bacteria may cause detrimental conditions and spoil the quality of meat and high count of TCC (more than log 2) is not acceptable. Ahmad, *et al* (2013) and Baros, *et al* (2007) also found similar results in retail shops while detecting coliform bacteria

Yeast Mold Count (YMC)

Yeast mold count can be used as an indicator of overall quality and safety of any food item. In many foood standards it has been used such as food standards of Austrailia and New Zealand. Both yeasts

and molds cause various degrees of deterioration and decomposition of foods. They can invade and grow on virtually any type of food at any time. In this study, the YMC count results are placed in Table 3. No significant difference ($p>0.05$) found among the markets at 0 hours But significant difference ($p<0.05$) found at 2 hours and 6 hours in YMC among the markets. All the cases showed significant increase with time ($p<0.01$). Most of the experiments on yeast mold counts of meat show the satisfactory level of YMC 10^2-10^3cfu/g (Baros *et al*., 2007 and Adesokan *et al*., 2014). In this experiment yeast mold count crossed satisfactory level in almost all the cases at 6 hours and were not satisfactory according to YMC level.

Table 1 shows the composition of Total viable count of beef. The result shows that composition of beef in different markets were significantly influenced ($P<0.05$)

Table 1: Total Viable Count (TVC) of meat from four different markets

		Time Interval				
Location	**0 Hour**	**2 Hours**	**4 Hours**	**6 Hours**	**P Value**	**Significance Level**
Bodija Market	**4.23^{d}**	**6.14^{c}**	**6.92^{b}**	**8.34^{a}**	**0.007**	**0.214**
Oja Oba Market	5.34^{d}	6.57^{c}	8.19^{b}	9.13^{a}	0.019	0.539
Olomi Market	5.37^{d}	6.64^{c}	8.47^{b}	9.37^{a}	0.004	0.561
Sango Market	4.51^{c}	6.44^{b}	8.53^{ab}	9.21^{a}	0..006	0.495

Table 2 showed the composition of Total coliform count of beef. The result showed that composition of beef in different markets were significantly influenced ($P<0.05$)

Table 2: Total Coliform Count (TCC) of meat from four different markets

		Time Interval				
Location	**0 Hour**	**2 Hours**	**4 Hours**	**6 Hours**	**P Value**	**Significance Level**
Bodija Market	**1.33^{c}**	**2.14^{c}**	**2,92^{b}**	**3.34^{a}**	**0.014**	**0.234**
Oja Oba Market	1.64^{d}	3.27^{c}	3.69^{b}	4.37^{a}	0.023	0.250
Olomi Market	1.17^{d}	1.64^{c}	3.47^{b}	4.17^{a}	0.031	0.138
Sango Market	1.51^{c}	2.34^{b}	2.43^{b}	4.21^{a}	0.012	0.226

Table 3 showed the composition of Yeast mold count of beef. The result showed that composition of beef in different markets were significantly influenced ($P<0.05$)

Table 3: Yeast Mold Count (YMC) of meat from four different markets

		Time Interval				
Location	**0 Hour**	**2 Hours**	**4 Hours**	**6 Hours**	**P Value**	**Significance Level**
Bodija Market	**2.13^{d}**	**2.94^{c}**	**3,62^{b}**	**4.34^{a}**	**0.014**	**0.131**
Oja Oba Market	2.64^{d}	3.47^{c}	4.09^{b}	5.13^{a}	0.039	0.267

Olomi Market	2.17^{d}	3.64^{c}	4.47^{b}	5.19^{a}	0.028	0.335
Sango Market	2.51^{d}	3.09^{c}	4.53^{b}	5.32^{a}	0.044	0.327

Interaction between place and time

No significant interaction was found between place and time. Similar results found in all places may be due to less difference among the places

Correlation

The value of correlation coefficient between TVC and TCC were found r=0.41 indicating weak relation between TVC and TCC. But Huang *et al*.. (2014) found strong relationship between TVC and TCC of beef. The value of correlation coefficient between TVC and YMC were found r=0.87 indicating relatively strong relation between TVC and YMC. This indicated that there is relationship between TVC and YMC

Conclusion

The study revealed that the microbial counts of different meat markets were very high and there was negligible difference between the microbial counts among the markets. At 0 hours the meat was in acceptable limits but at 2 and 6 hours after slaughtering, most of the cases recorded bacterial counts crossed the acceptable limits. Therefore, it is advisable to preserve the meat with care to avoid further microbial contamination after slaughter. However, it is vital for quality tools such as good manufacturing and hygiene practices, hazard analysis and critical control points, microbiological risk evaluation, and quality management to be integrated into the meat processing sector to get safe meat. It is also suggested that authorities should closely monitor and regulate proper slaughtering and transportation facilities in slaughterhouses and meat shops.

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RUMINAL FERMENTATION CHARACTERISTICS OF WEST AFRICAN DWARF GOATS FED MILLET HUSK-BASED DIETS

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to characterize the effects of diets on ruminal micro-organisms and their metabolic consequences in West African Dwarf (WAD) goats fed diets containing different millet husk inclusion levels. The study was conducted using twenty (20) growing WAD goats with an average initial body weight of 7.5 kg. The goats were allotted to five dietary treatments, replicated four times in a completely randomized design. Millet husk (MH) was incorporated into the concentrate diets at 0% (T1/D1), 25% (T2/D2), 50% (T3/D3), 75% (T4/D4), and 100% (T5/D5) replacing wheat bran. The experimental feeding lasted 70 days following a 14-day adaptation period. Results demonstrated that dietary treatment significantly ($p < 0.05$) influenced ruminal microbial activities. Total volatile fatty acids (VFAs) concentrations were significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher in T3 (70.12 mM/100ml) compared to control T1 (67.55 mM/100ml) and lowest in T4 (64.57 mM/100ml). Bacteria count (77.33×10^6 cfu/ml) and protozoa count (52.33 /ml) peaked at 50% MH inclusion (T3). Propionic and butyric acid levels exhibited significant variations among treatments. Conclusively, millet husk can replace wheat bran up to 50% inclusion in ruminant diets to enhance ruminal fermentation parameters and microbial populations at reduced feed costs.

Keywords*: Millet Husk, Ruminal Micro-organisms, Volatile Fatty Acids, West African Dwarf Goats, Ruminant Nutrition*

Introduction

Goats are among the earliest domesticated livestock species, possessing a history of human association spanning over 10,000 years (Monteiro et al., 2018). Their exceptional physiological adaptability to diverse climatic zones allows them to thrive across tropical rainforests, arid deserts, and high-altitude environments (Mahmoud, 2010; Hirst, 2017). Globally, with over 1,153 distinct breeds (FAO, 2018), goats represent a crucial asset for resource-poor smallholder farmers, providing meat, milk, fiber, organic fertilizer, and financial liquidity—often described as 'bank on the hoof' (Sinn et al., 2008; Hirst, 2017). In developing nations like Nigeria, small ruminants play a imperative role in sustaining rural livelihoods and food security (Lohani & Bhandari, 2021).

Despite their strategic importance, goat production in sub-Saharan Africa faces critical constraints due to seasonal feed scarcity and low forage quality, particularly during extended dry seasons (Egbuhelu et al., 2018). Tropical pastures mature rapidly, leading to heavy lignification, decline in crude protein, and restricted fermentable energy availability (Ogunbosoye & Babayemi, 2010). Under-nutrition results in severe body weight loss, reduced immunity, suppressed reproductive performance, and high juvenile mortality (Egbuhelu et al., 2018).

To mitigate seasonal feed deficits, agro-industrial by-products offer a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to expensive conventional concentrate ingredients (Samadi et al., 2015). Ruminants possess a unique ruminal microbial ecosystem capable of converting fibrous crop residues into high-quality animal protein (Pratama et al., 2017). Millet husk, an abundant by-product generated during millet grain dehulling, represents a viable candidate feed resource. Africa accounts for nearly 40% of global millet production (Kumar et al., 2021), with Northern Nigeria contributing over 80% of local production (Velusamy et al., 2021). Dehulling yields approximately 40% of the total grain weight as hulls (Ayub et al., 2015), which are frequently burned or discarded as environmental waste.

Chemically, millet husk contains substantial nutrient reserves, with reported values of 94.00% dry matter, 5.20% crude protein, 35.21% crude fibre, 1.40% ether extract, 7.20% ash, and 51.00% nitrogen-free extract (Maidala & Bakoji, 2016). Evaluating the ruminal fermentation patterns, microbial ecology, and volatile fatty acid (VFA) profiles of goats fed millet husk is critical to establishing optimal inclusion levels. Therefore, this study evaluated the effects of replacing wheat bran with graded levels of millet husk on ruminal fermentation characteristics and microbial populations in West African Dwarf goats.

Materials and methods

Experimental Site

The research was conducted at the Teaching and Research Farm of Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State, Nigeria. The site lies within the Southern Guinea Savanna zone of Nigeria, characterized by bimodal rainfall distribution and distinct wet and dry seasons.

Collection and Processing of Test Ingredient

Millet husks were procured from commercial grain processing centers in Niger State, Nigeria, and transported to the experimental site. The husks were thoroughly washed with clean water to eliminate sand, dust, and extraneous debris, and subsequently sun-dried for three (3) consecutive days to reduce moisture content to a stable level suitable for diet compounding and storage.

Experimental Diets and Formulations

Five complete total mixed rations (TMR) were formulated in which wheat bran was replaced by millet husk (MH) at 0% (D1/Control), 25% (D2), 50% (D3), 75% (D4), and 100% (D5). Basal ingredients including soybean meal, cassava peel, palm kernel cake, maize, urea, bone meal, oyster shell, and salt were kept constant across all treatments to maintain iso-nitrogenous conditions. The detailed ingredient composition is summarized in Table 1.

Ingredients (%)	D1 (0% MH)	D2 (25% MH)	D3 (50% MH)	D4 (75% MH)	D5 (100% MH)
Wheat bran	25.00	18.75	12.50	6.25	0.00
Millet Husk (MH)	0.00	6.25	12.50	18.75	25.00
Soya Bean Meal	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Cassava Peel	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00
Palm Kernel Cake	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Maize	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
Urea	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Bone meal	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Oyster shell	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Salt (NaCl)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Table 1: Gross composition (%) of experimental diets containing graded replacement levels of millet husk for wheat bran.

Animals, Experimental Design, and Management

Twenty (20) growing West African Dwarf (WAD) bucks with an initial body weight averaging 7.5 ± 0.4 kg were utilized. The bucks were housed in individual, well-ventilated, thoroughly disinfected pens equipped with individual feeding and drinking troughs. The animals were allotted to the five dietary treatments (4 goats per treatment) in a Completely Randomized Design (CRD). Prophylactic treatments including deworming (Albendazole) and ectoparasite control (Ivermectin) were administered prior to commencement. A 14-day adaptation period was observed during which goats were fed maize stover and control concentrates. The main experimental feeding period lasted 70 days. Experimental diets were offered daily at 5% of body weight in two equal portions at 08:00 h and 17:00 h. Fresh, clean water was provided ad libitum.

Collection and Analysis of Rumen Liquor

At the conclusion of the 70-day trial, rumen liquor was sampled from each animal using a flexible stomach tube connected to a vacuum suction pump. Rumen liquor pH was measured immediately post-sampling using a digital pH meter (Model 3150, Jenway, UK). Samples were strained through four layers of sterile cheesecloth. A portion of strained fluid was acidified with 1 mL of 5% (v/v) orthophosphoric acid and stored at -20°C for volatile fatty acid analysis. Total VFAs and individual fractions (acetate, propionate, butyrate) were determined using potentiometric titration and gas chromatography protocols (Siedlecka et al., 2008). Rumen ammonia-nitrogen (NH3-N) concentration was measured according to Lanyasunya et al. (2007). A third portion was preserved in 10% neutral buffered formalin (1:9 v/v) for direct microbial cell counts (bacteria, protozoa, fungi zoospores) via microscopic counting chambers and roll-tube techniques (Hungate, 1969; Galyean, 1989).

Chemical Analysis

Feed samples were analyzed for proximate chemical components (moisture, crude protein, ether extract, crude fibre, ash) in accordance with AOAC (2000) procedures. Neutral detergent fibre (NDF), acid detergent fibre (ADF), and acid detergent lignin (ADL) fractions were determined using the detergent system of Van Soest et al. (1991). Hemicellulose was calculated as (NDF - ADF), and cellulose was calculated as (ADF - ADL).

Statistical Analysis

All quantitative data were subjected to One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using the DSAASTAT statistical package (DSAASTAT, 2011) in a Completely Randomized Design. Treatment means were separated using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test at a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$.

Results and discussion

Chemical Composition of Experimental Diets

The chemical composition of the experimental diets containing graded inclusion levels of millet husk is presented in Table 2. Dry matter and moisture content were uniform across all treatments, with moisture ranging between 8.38% (TRT 1) and 9.05% (TRT 3), ensuring feed stability during storage. Crude protein (CP) values ranged from 16.65% (TRT 2) to 17.84% (TRT 3). All diets comfortably exceeded the minimum threshold of 10-12% CP recommended by Gatenby (2002) and Preston & Leng (1987) for optimal tropical ruminant growth and efficient ruminal microbial protein synthesis. The highest CP content in TRT 3 (17.84%) reflects optimal dietary nitrogen availability.

Crude fibre (CF) content was highest in TRT 3 (6.14%) and TRT 1 (6.03%), declining to 4.96% in TRT 5. Cell wall detergent fractions showed elevated NDF levels ranging between 84.52% (TRT 4) and 86.83% (TRT 3). Although Van Soest et al. (1991) indicated that NDF levels above 60-65% can restrict voluntary dry matter intake in ruminants due to rumen fill effects, the high palatability and inclusion of urea in these formulated rations facilitated structural carbohydrate breakdown. ADF ranged from 65.56% to 69.45%, while ADL remained consistent across treatments (41.32% - 42.07%). The elevated silica levels (17.12% - 18.89%) reflect the characteristic mineral deposition in cereal crop husks (Van Soest, 2006).

Nutrients (%)	TRT 1	TRT 2	TRT 3	TRT 4	TRT 5	SEM	P-Value
Moisture Content (MC)	8.38a	8.74c	9.05a	8.89a	8.72c	0.02	0.03
Crude Protein (CP)	17.30ab	16.65c	17.84a	16.85c	16.75a	0.01	0.01
Ash	5.01a	4.04c	4.89b	4.87b	3.93c	0.02	0.03

Crude Fibre (CF)	6.03a	5.27c	6.14a	5.81b	4.96d	0.02	0.03
Ether Extract (Fat)	6.73d	7.08b	6.19c	7.08b	8.12a	0.01	0.01
Carbohydrate (CHO)	56.51e	58.22a	55.88d	56.57c	57.52b	0.05	0.06
ND Solubles (NDS)	15.04b	13.43d	14.09c	13.86c	15.55a	0.07	0.09
Neutral Detergent Fibre	86.38b	84.89b	86.83ab	84.52ab	85.96a	0.50	0.71
Acid Detergent Fibre	66.29a	69.45a	67.55c	68.40b	65.56a	0.05	0.06
Acid Detergent Lignin	42.07a	41.42b	41.51b	41.32b	41.72ab	0.06	0.08
Hemicellulose	2.13bc	3.03a	1.98bc	2.25b	1.95c	0.01	0.01
Cellulose	24.24d	28.03a	26.05c	27.08b	23.84c	0.01	0.01
Silica	18.65a	17.12a	18.34c	17.92a	18.89a	0.01	0.03

Table 2: Chemical composition (%) of experimental diets fed to West African Dwarf goats. a,b,c,d Means in the same row with different superscripts differ significantly (p < 0.05). SEM = Standard Error of Mean.

Rumen Liquors Parameters and Fermentation Profile

Rumen pH, ammonia-nitrogen (NH3-N), and volatile fatty acid (VFA) concentrations are presented in Table 3. Rumen pH values ranged from 6.39 (T2) to 7.24 (T3), with no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) among treatments. All observed pH values remained strictly within the physiological range (6.0 - 7.2) required to maintain cellulolytic bacterial growth, optimum enzymatic digestion, and stable ruminal buffering capacity (Kamra, 2005; Nagaraja, 2012). Maintaining pH above 6.2 is critical to prevent cellulolytic inhibition and subacute ruminal acidosis (SARA).

Rumen ammonia-nitrogen (NH3-N) concentration differed significantly ($p < 0.05$), ranging from 6.09 mg/100ml (T1) to 6.74 mg/100ml (T3). The elevated NH3-N in T3 corresponds directly with its higher dietary crude protein level (17.84%). All recorded values fall well within the established optimal concentration range (3.0 - 20.0 mg/100ml) reported by Zareian et al. (2013) for supporting maximal microbial protein synthesis and cellulolytic microbial cell duplication.

Total Volatile Fatty Acid (VFA) production was significantly affected ($p < 0.05$) by millet husk inclusion. The highest total VFA concentration (70.12 mM/100ml) was recorded in T3 (50% MH inclusion), whereas the control group T1 recorded 67.55 mM/100ml and T4 recorded 64.57 mM/100ml. VFAs serve as the principal metabolic energy source in ruminants, supplying over 70% of total metabolizable energy (Aluwong et al., 2010). The superior VFA concentration in T3 indicates an optimal balance of fermentable structural and non-structural carbohydrates, maximizing microbial substrate degradation without overloading osmotic balance.

Acetic acid values remained predominant across all diets (19.55 - 22.54 mM/100ml), consistent with high-roughage/fibrous dietary regimes. Acetate is essential for systemic lipogenesis and milk fat synthesis (Aluwong et al., 2010; Annison et al., 2002). Propionic acid levels showed significant differences ($p < 0.05$), with T1 (5.40 mM/100ml) and T5 (5.13 mM/100ml) displaying higher values

compared to T3 (4.52 mM/100ml). Butyric acid concentrations were highest in T2 (5.63 mM/100ml) and T5 (5.31 mM/100ml), and lowest in T3 (4.06 mM/100ml).

Parameters	T1 (0% MH)	T2 (25% MH)	T3 (50% MH)	T4 (75% MH)	T5 (100% MH)
pH	6.60 ± 0.47	6.39 ± 0.27	7.24 ± 0.56	6.54 ± 0.00	6.67 ± 0.01
Ammonia-N (mg/100ml)	6.09 ± 0.03b	6.19 ± 0.00ab	6.74 ± 0.01a	6.16 ± 0.01ab	6.42 ± 0.04ab
Total VFAs (mM/100ml)	67.55 ± 0.00ab	67.69 ± 0.00ab	70.12 ± 0.47a	64.57 ± 0.81b	68.12 ± 0.33ab
Acetic acid (mM/100ml)	21.67 ± 1.42	22.54 ± 2.38	20.34 ± 1.85	19.55 ± 0.33	20.32 ± 1.08
Propionic acid (mM/100ml)	5.40 ± 0.86a	4.86 ± 0.37ab	4.52 ± 0.39b	4.44 ± 0.46b	5.13 ± 0.54a
Butyric acid (mM/100ml)	4.31 ± 0.14ab	5.63 ± 0.42a	4.06 ± 0.23b	4.59 ± 0.05ab	5.31 ± 0.31ab

Table 3: Rumen liquor parameters and volatile fatty acid profile of WAD goats fed experimental diets. a,b Means within the same row with different superscripts are significantly different ($p < 0.05$). Values = Mean ± SD.

Ruminal Microbial Ecology and Population Dynamics

Ruminal microbial counts (bacteria, fungi, and protozoa) exhibited significant differences ($p < 0.05$) among treatments (Table 4). Total bacterial population ranged from 44.00 × 10^6 cfu/ml (T5) to a peak of 77.33 × 10^6 cfu/ml in T3 (50% MH inclusion). Bacteria constitute the primary agents responsible for plant cell-wall polysaccharide hydrolysis. The sharp rise in bacterial population at 50% MH inclusion reflects enhanced substrate availability and an optimal ruminal nitrogen-to-energy ratio for cellulolytic bacterial proliferation (Fernando et al., 2010).

Fungal zoospore counts were highest in control T1 (10.26 × 10^6 sfu/ml) and progressively declined with higher millet husk inclusion, reaching 4.00 × 10^6 sfu/ml in T5. Anaerobic fungi colonize recalcitrant, highly lignified fibrous tissues and break structural bonds via enzymatic and mechanical rhizoid action (Dey et al., 2004; Rezaeian et al., 2004). The decrease in fungal numbers in higher inclusion diets suggests a shift in microbial competitive dynamics toward bacterial digestion.

Protozoan density was significantly higher in T3 (52.33 /ml) compared to T1 (21.00 /ml), T2 (27.00 /ml), T4 (27.33 /ml), and T5 (29.50 /ml). Ciliate protozoa play an essential role in stabilizing rumen fermentation by ingesting starch granules, moderating fermentation rate, and aiding fiber degradation (Mould et al., 2005). The synchronized elevation of bacteria and protozoa in T3 explains the peak total VFA output observed in this treatment group.

Microbial Group	T1 (0% MH)	T2 (25% MH)	T3 (50% MH)	T4 (75% MH)	T5 (100% MH)
Bacteria Count (×10^6 cfu/ml)	48.00 ± 0.09b	51.50 ± 0.55b	77.33 ± 0.00a	56.00 ± 0.01b	44.00 ± 0.00b
Fungi Count (×10^6 sfu/ml)	10.26 ± 0.01a	5.33 ± 0.00bc	7.00 ± 0.03b	5.20 ± 0.03bc	4.00 ± 0.03c
Protozoa Count (protozoa/ml)	21.00 ± 0.04b	27.00 ± 0.02b	52.33 ± 0.00a	27.33 ± 0.01b	29.50 ± 0.05b

Table 4: Rumen microbial mean population of WAD goats fed millet husk based diets. a,b,c Means in the same row with different superscripts differ significantly ($p < 0.05$). Values = Mean ± SD.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that millet husk is a valuable, low-cost agro-industrial replacement for wheat bran in small ruminant diets. Inclusion of millet husk up to 50% (TRT 3) significantly improved ruminal fermentation parameters, optimizing total volatile fatty acid output (70.12 mM/100ml), ammonia-nitrogen production (6.74 mg/100ml), and stimulating higher populations of beneficial ruminal bacteria (77.33 × 10^6 cfu/ml) and protozoa (52.33 /ml) without compromising rumen pH stability.

Recommendations

1. Goat farmers and feed manufacturers are recommended to incorporate millet husk at a 50% replacement level for wheat bran in small ruminant concentrate rations to reduce feed costs while optimizing ruminal fermentation and goat performance.

2. Further studies should investigate physical processing (e.g., fine grinding, pelleting) or biological treatments (e.g., fungal fermentation or exogenous enzyme supplementation) to lower the high structural fiber (NDF) content of millet husk and further enhance nutrient digestibility.

3. Long-term field trials evaluating live weight gain, carcass yield, and economic cost-benefit analysis in commercial goat production settings are recommended.

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COMPARISON OF THE QUALITY OF WILD AND CULTURED CATFISH (*Clarias gariepinus*) AND NILE TILAPIA (*Oreochromis niloticus*) FROM OYAN DAM, OGUN STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the nutrient contents of wild and cultured Catfish (C. gariepinus) and Tilapia (O. niloticus) sourced from two private farms operating on Oyan Dam and artisanal fishermen on the water body. The research provided comparative analysis of proximate composition, total bacteria count and mineral content of the fish species which are significant for both local consumption and aquaculture. Fresh table-size fish were collected from the two farms and fishermen, washed and filleted. The fillets were taken to the laboratory for analysis. The values of moisture content, ether extract, protein, ash and crude fibre ranged from 61.45% - 85.25; 0.37% - 0.57%; 13.50% - 26.38%; 0.74% - 3.67% and 0.00% - 0.57% respectively. Mineral element analysis showed that both wild and cultured fish species are rich in essential nutrients. Both species contained high levels of copper, iron and zinc while wild tilapia has the highest total bacteria count (3.56 x 10^3cfu/g). All quality and safety parameters were within International Commission of Microbiological Specification for foods acceptable limits. These results emphasize the nutritional benefits of wild fish while highlighting the need for improvement in aquaculture practices to enhance the quality of cultured fish.

Keywords*: Artisanal; Fishermen; Nutrients, Dam; Quality*

Introduction

Globally, more than 1million people rely on fish for consumption and livelihoods (FAO, 2016). Fish have long been recognised as particularly nutritious, contributing essentially fatty acids, micronutrients, such as Iron (Fe), Zinc (Zn), Calcium (Ca) and Vitamin A, as well as animal protein (FAO, 2016; Oehlenschlager, 2012). Cage culture is an aquaculture production system where fish are held in floating net pen (Halwar *et al*., 2007). Cage culture of fish utilizes existing water resources but encloses the fish in a cage or basket which allows water to pass freely between the fish and the pond permitting water exchange and waste removal into the surrounding water (Olivares, 2003). Cages are used to culture several types of shell fish and finfish species in fresh, brackish and marine waters. Cages in freshwaters are used for food fish culture and for fry to fingerling rearing.

Oyan Dam is owned and operated by the Ogun-Osun River Basin Development Authority (0- ORBDA). Like other man-made lakes, it is rich in different fish species, ornamental and other species (Sanusi, 2011).

Aquaculture is a growing sector in Nigeria. It is promoted as a sustainable solution to overfishing and food security challenges. However, the questions remain about whether cultured fish provide the same nutritional benefits as wild fish. Consumers are skeptical about the quality of farmed fish compared to wild fish. Therefore, this study determined the nutrient content of cultured and wild African Catfish (*C. gariepinus*) and Tilapia (*O. niloticus*) obtained from Oyan Dam, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Materials and Method

Samples of wild *Clarias gariepinus* and *Oreochromis niloticus* were sourced from fishermen at Oyan Dam, Ogun State Nigeria. Samples of cultured *C. gariepinus* and *O. niloticus* were obtained from two private farms operating on the water body. They were then transported in ice to the Department of Fisheries, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The samples were washed with portable water, filleted, stored in ice and taken to laboratory for analysis. Also, samples were analysed

for proximate composition, mineral elements and total bacteria counts using standard methods of Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Proximate Composition

Fresh fish collected from wild and two farms operating on Oyan Dam showed little variations in proximate composition (Table 1). Moisture content of fresh *C. gariepinus* obtained from Farm 1, Farm 2 and Wild had a value of 61.45%, 77.43% and 85.23% respectively while moisture content of Tilapia from Farm 1, Farm 2, and Wild had values of 80.87%, 80.15% and 79.50% respectively. The study conformed with Adeosun *et. al.,* (2015) who reported a value of 59.35% and 73.55% for fresh *C. gariepinus* raised in earthen pond and concrete tank respectively. Olayemi *et. al.,* (2011) also reported a value of 78.70% for African Catfish caught from Fagam Farm, Kano.

Interestingly, Catfish obtained from wild had highest protein value (26.38%) followed by Tilapia from wild (22.80%) while lowest value of 13.50% was also recorded in Tilapia from Farm 1. The study was consistent with Oladipo and Bankole (2013) and Olopade *et. al.,* (2013) who reported protein values of 19.51% & 18.01%; 17.50% & 18.13% respectively for *C. gariepinus* collected from different fish farms.

Comparatively, Catfish obtained from Farm 2 had higher value of fat (2.18%) in comparison with Tilapia from Farm 1. The study was inline with various studies conducted on fat value of Catfish and Tilapia fish cultured in wild and farms across Southwestern Nigeria. Notably, Adeosun *et. al.,* (2014) reported values of between 4. 48% and 7.20% for pond-raised C. gariepinus. Likewise, Nuntah *et. al.,* (2024) reported fat value of 3.21% for Atlantic Herring. Noel Tenyang *et. al.,* (2013) also reported value of 23.02% for Catfish from Wouri river, Cameroon. Shabiha *et. al.,* (2021) reported values between 0.59% - 2.35% for Tilapia obtained from wild and pond in Bangladesh.

The crude fiber and ash contents were higher in cultured fish, likely due to the composition of their feed, which often includes plant-based ingredients with higher fiber content. This observation is consistent with the findings of Adewumi *et al.,* (2014), who noted similar trends in cultured fish raised on commercial feeds.

Table 1: Proximate composition of wild and cultured African Catfish (*C. gariepinus)* and Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) from Oyan Dam

	Samples	Moisture Content %	Ash %	Protein %	Crude Fibre %	Fat %
CATFISH	Farm 1	61.45^{c}	0.98^{c}	16.81^{b}	0.01^{a}	0.46^{b}
(*CLARIAS*	Farm 2	77.43^{b}	3.67^{a}	26.38^{a}	0.34^{b}	2.18^{a}
***GARIEPINUS*)**	Wild	85.23^{a}	2.86^{b}	18.02^{b}	0.01^{a}	0.37^{b}
TILAPIA	Farm 1	80.15^{a}	2.45^{a}	13.50^{c}	0.01^{a}	0.17^{b}
(*OREOCHROMIS*	Farm 2	79.50^{a}	0.74^{c}	18.45^{b}	0.01^{a}	1.74^{a}
***NILOTICUS*)**	Wild	80.87^{a}	1.85^{b}	22.80^{a}	0.01^{a}	0.57^{b}

^{abc} = means along the same column with different superscripts differ significantly ($P<0.05$)

Mineral Composition:

Mineral Composition of Wild and Cultured *C. gariepinus* and *O. niloticus* from Oyan Dam is presented in Table 2. Magnesium, Sodium and Calcium content showed little variation among the fish species. Potassium varied considerably ranging from 0.130mg/100g for cultured catfish and 0.232mg/100g for cultured tilapia. Iron varied within 27.473mg/100g for cultured catfish and 48.901mg/100g for wild catfish while wild tilapia had value of 64.95mg/100g and 91,91mg/100g for cultured tilapia. Highest

value for Zinc was obtained in wild catfish (16.00mg/100g) and lowest value recorded in cultured tilapia (6.80mg/100g). The study conformed with Oboh et. al., (2026) who reported values of 0.90mg.100g, 2.61mg/100g, 3.51mg/100g, 3.10mg/100g, 1.15mg/100g and 0.38mg/100g for cultured and captured C. gariepinus.

Table 2: Mineral Composition of Wild and Cultured *C. gariepinus* from Oyan Dam (mg/100g)

	Sample	Mg	Na	Ca	K	Cu	Fe	Zn
CATFISH	Farm 1	0.014^{b}	0.065^{b}	0.053^{b}	0.130^{c}	11.342^{a}	54.745^{b}	13.15^{a}
(*Clarias*	Farm 2	0.018^{b}	0.263^{a}	0.038^{a}	0.182^{b}	16.068^{a}	27.473^{c}	6.80^{b}
***gariepinus*)**	Wild	0.021^{a}	0.257^{a}	0.040^{a}	0.205^{a}	2.836^{b}	98.901^{a}	16.00^{a}
TILAPIA	Farm 1	0.018^{b}	0.061^{b}	0.036^{b}	0.166^{b}	3.781^{c}	87.91^{a}	7.70^{a}
(O*reochromis*	Farm 2	0.020^{a}	0.095^{b}	0.037^{b}	0.194^{b}	17.958^{a}	65.93^{b}	8.95^{a}
***niloticus*)**	Wild	0.023^{a}	0.148^{a}	0.056^{a}	0.232^{a}	8.207^{b}	64.95^{b}	9.20^{a}

^{abc} = means along the same column with different superscripts differ significantly ($P<0.05$)

Total Bacteria Count (TBC):

Total bacteria Count (TBC) – Values of Total Bacteria Count in *C. gariepinus* and *O. niloticus* from Oyan Dam are presented in Tables 3. According to Oboh et. al., (2026), microbiological activity is the main factor limiting the shelf-life of fresh fish. Highest bacteria count (3.56×10^3) was recorded in wild tilapia while lowest value (1.78×10^3) was recorded in cultured catfish whichshowed bacterial growth at dilution 2 but no growth at dilution 4 for both cultured and wild fish. The presence of bacteria at lower dilutions could indicate initial contamination levels from handling or the environment, as highlighted in previous research by Okonko *et al*. (2009) and Oboh *et. al.*, (2026). Values of bacteria counts obtained in this study were within International Commission of Microbiological Specification for foods acceptable limits.

Table 3: Average Values of Total Bacteria Count in *C. gariepinus* and *O. niloticus* from Oyan Dam

Sample	Total Bacteria Count (Cfu/g)	
	Catfish (*C. gariepinus*)	**Tilapia (*O. niloticus*)**
Farm 1	1.78×10^3	2.25×10^3
Farm 2	2.25×10^3	1.96×10^3
Wild	2.11×10^3	3.56×10^3

Cfu/g = Colony forming unit per gram

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study highlights the comparative differences in the nutrient content, microbial safety, and storage stability of cultured and wild *Oreochromis niloticus* and *Clarias gariepinus* obtained from Oyan Dam, Ogun State. Wild fish demonstrated superior nutritional quality, with higher crude protein, lipid content, and mineral composition compared to the cultured type. These findings reflect the influence of natural diets and environmental conditions in the wild, which enhanced the nutrient profiles. Conversely, cultured fish had higher fiber and ash content, as a result of the plant components in their formulated

feeds. The study also revealed variations in Magnesium, Sodium and Calcium content among the fish species. while Potassium and Iron varied considerably for cultured catfish and tilapia. Similarly, microbial analysis indicated bacterial growth for both cultured and wild fish, suggesting acceptable levels of microbial safety under proper handling and conditions. However, this underscores the importance of stringent hygiene and storage practices to maintain fish quality and ensure consumer safety. These results emphasize the nutritional benefits of wild fish while highlighting the need for improvement in aquaculture practices to enhance the quality of cultured fish. The findings provide a foundation for future research and policy development aimed at optimizing fish production, handling, and storage practices in Nigeria and beyond.

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EVALUATION OF BIOMASS YIELD AND PROXIMATE COMPOSITION OF FOUR VARIETIES OF Brachiaria GRASS

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Abstract
Low productivity of grasslands is one of the most important limitations in the feeding system and inadequate supply of forages has hindered large scale production which leads to the clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria. This study was carried out to evaluate the biomass yield and proximate composition replicate each were harvested at 8 weeks of regrowth. Experimental design was Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD). Results of biomass yield of the grasses showed that Cobra had the highest yield of 30.11 (t/ha, DM) while Cayman, Mulato II and Landrace had 26.40 (t/ha, DM), 23.64 (t/ha, DM) and 21.63 (t/ha, DM) respectively. Also findings from this study, revealed that DM content was lowest in Landrace with a value of 25.14% and the highest in Cobra with a value of 29.84%. The results on the crude protein (CP) amongst the four varieties range from 12.10% to 14.58%. The highest value was recorded for Cayman (14.58%) Landrace had 13.96% Cobra had 13.92% and the lowest value of 12.10% was for Mulato II. Ash content in the four Brachiaria grass varieties showed that Cayman, Cobra and Landrace had values of 10.08%, 9.35%, and 6.92% respectively with Mulato II having the highest value. From the results gathered in this study, in terms of yield and proximate composition, Cobra variety is the best variety of Brachiaria grass for optimum production.

Keywords*: Brachiaria, yield, proximate composition*

Introduction

Feed shortage is one of the major constraints to ruminant livestock production in Nigeria and other tropical countries. The low productivity of natural grasslands, coupled with seasonal fluctuations in forage availability, results in an inadequate supply of quality feed, particularly during the dry season. This shortage limits livestock productivity, reduces meat and milk yields, and contributes to conflicts between crop farmers and pastoralists as herders move in search of grazing land. Therefore, improving the availability of high-quality forage has become essential for sustainable livestock production. One promising solution to the problem of feed shortage is the cultivation of Brachiaria grasses. The genus Brachiaria consists of approximately 100 species that are well adapted to tropical and subtropical environments, with most species originating from Africa (Ghimire *et al.*, 2015). These grasses are known for their high biomass production, excellent nutritional quality, tolerance to acidic soils, drought resilience, and persistence under grazing. Brachiaria decumbens is widely recognized as an important pasture grass because of its ease of establishment and exceptional adaptation to marginal soils (Simioni and Valle, 2009). However, its susceptibility to spittlebug pests led to breeding programmes by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) to develop improved varieties (Miles *et al.*, 2004). Improved cultivars such as Mulato II, Cobra, and Cayman have demonstrated superior forage yield, better nutritional value, resistance to pests and diseases, and adaptability to diverse environmental conditions (Bowman *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, evaluating the performance of these improved Brachiaria varieties alongside the local landrace is essential for identifying the most productive cultivar capable of alleviating feed shortages and enhancing sustainable ruminant production.

Experimental site and design

This research work was conducted at the Dairy Unit of University of Ibadan Teaching and Research Farm. A total of twelve established plots with each measuring 40m^2 were cleared. The experimental

design was Randomized Complete Block Design with each treatment replicated 3 times. The intra and inter row spacing were 1 m and 1 m respectively:
Treatment 1 (T1) – Cayman
Treatment 2 (T2) – Cobra
Treatment 3 (T3) – Landrace
Treatment 4 (T4) - Mulato II.

Management practices
Field experiment was conducted under normal weather condition. The plot used was an already established plot. Clearing of plot and supplying of missing stand was done followed by mulching. Nitrogen fertilizer was applied after each cutting at 300 kg/ha. The method of application was side placement but covered and the weeds were cleared using hoes. At 8 weeks after regrowth the plant were harvested using a cutlass.

Yield estimation determination of the four varieties of *Brachiaria* grass
Yield estimation was carried out when the *Brachiaria* varieties were harvested at a uniform height after 8 weeks of regrowth. The fresh grasses were weighed and recorded. Sub samples of 100g was taken from each plot, weighed and oven dried at 105°C to constant weight and stored for analysis.

$$\text{Biomass Yield (kg/ha)} = \frac{\text{Total Weight of Grass Harvested (kg)}}{\text{Total Area Harvested (ha)}} \times 10{,}000$$

$$\text{Dry Matter Yield (t/ha)} = \frac{\text{Dry Weight of Sample (kg)}}{\text{Area Harvested (ha)}} \times 10{,}000$$

Proximate composition determination of four varieties of *Brachiaria* grass
Dry matter and moisture determination
2g of the samples were weighed into a previously weighed crucible. The crucible plus sample taken was then transferred into the oven, set at 100 ℃ to dry to a constant weight. After the crucible plus sample was removed from the oven and transferred to desiccator, cooled for ten minutes and weighed.
Crude protein
Crude protein was determined by measuring the nitrogen content of the feed and multiplying it by a factor of 6.25. This factor is based on the fact that most protein contains 16% nitrogen. The crude protein in the sample was determined by the routine semi-micro Kjeldahl, procedure/technique.
Ash
2.0gm of the samples were weighed into a porcelain crucible. This was transferred into the muffle furnace set at 550ºC and left for about 4 hours. About this time, it had turned to white ash. The crucible and its content were cooled to about 100ºC in air, then room temperature in a desiccator and weighed. This was done in duplicate.
Ether extract
The ether extract of a feed represents the fat and oil in the feed. Soxhlet apparatus is the equipment used for the determination of ether extract.
Procedure: 1gm of each dried sample was weighed into fat free extraction thimble and pug lightly with cotton wool. The thimble was placed in the extractor and fitted up with reflux condenser and a 250ml soxhlet flask which has been previously dried in the oven, cooled in the desiccator and weighed. The soxhlet flask is then filled to $^3/_4$ of its volume with petroleum ether (b.pt. 40º – 60ºC), and the soxhlet flask. Extractor plus condenser set was placed on the heater. The heater was put on for six hours with constant running water from the tap for condensation of ether vapour. The set is constantly watched for ether leaks and the heat source is adjusted appropriately for the ether to boil gently. The Ether is left to siphon over several times say over at least 10 – 12 times until it is short of siphoning.
It is after this is noticed that any ether content of the extractor is carefully drained into the ether stock bottle. The thimble containing sample is then removed and dried on a clock glass on the bench top. The extractor, flask and condenser are replaced and the distillation continues until the flask is practically dry. The flask which now contains the fat or oil is detached, its exterior cleaned and dried to a constant weight in the oven. If the initial weight of dry soxhlet flask is Wo and the final weight of oven dried flask + oil/fat is W1, percentage fat/oil is obtained by the formula:

Ether Extract: $\frac{W_1 - Wo}{\text{Wt. of Sample taken}} \times \frac{100}{1}$

Data collection and analysis

Proximate analysis of the grasses was determined using the general procedures for chemical analysis (AOAC, 2016). All data obtained were subjected to analysis of variance; significant means were separated by Duncan's Multiple Range Test using procedures of Silva & Azevedo (2016).

Results

Table 1: Biomass Yield (t/ha) and Proximate Composition (g/100g DM) of four *Brachiaria* Grass varieties

Parameters	Cayman	Cobra	Landrace	Mulato II	SEM
Biomass Yield (t/ha)	26.40^{ab}	30.11^{a}	21.63^{b}	23.64^{b}	0.252
Dry Matter (%)	26.74^{b}	29.84^{a}	25.14^{d}	26.36^{c}	0.000
Crude Protein (%)	14.58^{a}	13.92^{b}	13.96^{b}	12.10^{c}	0.014
Ash (%)	10.08^{b}	9.35^{c}	6.92^{d}	10.85^{a}	0.013
Ether Extract (%)	2.04^{b}	2.25^{a}	2.00^{b}	1.90^{b}	0.006
Crude Fibre (%)	21.08^{b}	22.40^{a}	20.39^{c}	22.49^{a}	0.027

^{a,b,c} *Means with different superscripts on the same row differ significantly (P<0.05)*
Cayman = T1, Cobra = T2, Landrace = T3, Mulato II = T4.

Discussion

Results of biomass yield (t/ha) and proximate composition (g/100g DM) of four *Brachiaria* grass varieties is presented in Table 1**.** The biomass yield (ton/ha) of Landrace (21.63) was the lowest and significant (P<0.05) to Cobra (30.11 t/ha) that was the highest, but similar (P>0.05) to Cayman (26.40 t/ha) and Mulato II (23.64 t/ha). However, Cayman, Cobra and Mulato are similar. del Arco *et al.*, (2010) reported a biomass yield of 42 t/ha, 34t/ha and 45 t/ha for Cayman, Cobra and Mulato II. The difference may be due to both environmental and weather condition. According to Mutimura and Everson, (2012) Cayman and BRO2/0465 produced significantly more DM (700−740 kg DM/ha) than Mulato II (100 kg DM/ha). There was significant difference in % dry matter across all the varieties. Cayman, Cobra, Landrace and Mulato II had % dry matter values of 26.74%, 29.84%, 25.14% and 26.36%, respectively. Landrace had the lowest DM of 25.14%, this lower DM implies that it recorded higher moisture while Cobra had the highest DM value of 29.85% this indicating low presence of moisture in the grass. This will ultimately reduce the rate of deterioration during storage or silage making. Cayman and Mulato II recorded the dry matter values that were 26.36% and 26.74%, respectively. The results on the crude protein (CP) in (Table 1) were significant (P<0.05) amongst the four varieties. The highest value was recorded for Cayman (14.58%) Landrace had 13.96% Cobra had 13.92% and the lowest value of 12.10% was for Mulato II. Studies have reported crude protein content ranging from 8% to 25% in *Brachiaria* grass, with variations observed during different growth stages. Younger, leafier plants generally exhibit higher crude protein levels, while more mature plants tend to have lower protein content due to increased lignification and fibrous components. Additionally, the crude protein content may differ between *Brachiaria* species, with some species demonstrating higher protein content than others (Valle *et al.*, 2010). Environmental factors, such as temperature, rainfall,

and soil fertility, can influence the nutrient composition of forage, including crude protein content. Adequate soil fertility and favorable climatic conditions contribute to optimal plant growth, leading to higher protein accumulation in *Brachiaria* grass (Mureithi, *et al.*, 2010). Ash contents in the four *Brachiaria* grass varieties were shown in Table 1. Cayman, Cobra and Landrace had values of 10.08%, 9.35%, and 6.92%, respectively that were significant ($P<0.05$ across the treatments with Mulato II having the highest value. The ash content values obtained in this study for Mulato II was slightly higher than 6.3% and 5.0% reported by Muinga *et al.* (2016) and Ngila *et al.* (2016) respectively. These variations may be due to differences in environmental as well as age of the plants (Vishnu, 2016).

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that among the *Brachiaria* varieties evaluated, Brachiaria cv. Cobra is the most suitable variety for optimum forage production. Cobra outperformed the other varieties in terms of herbage yield and proximate composition, demonstrating superior nutritional quality with desirable levels of crude protein and other essential nutrients required for livestock growth and productivity. Its high biomass production, excellent nutritional value, and adaptability to different environmental conditions make it an ideal forage grass for both small and large ruminants. Therefore,

Recommendation

It is therefore, recommended that farmers should cultivate *Brachiaria* grass especially Cobra variety for zero grazing and silage making as feed for ruminant production. Also the cultivation of Brachiaria cv. Cobra is recommended for farmers seeking to improve forage availability, enhance beef and milk production, and promote sustainable livestock production.

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GROWTH AND ECONOMIC INDICES OF SUBSTITUTING A COMMERCIAL PREMIX WITH HORNED MELON MEAL IN BROILER FINISHER DIETS

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Abstract

The increasing cost of feed premixes, coupled with their dependency on imported raw materials, has presented economic challenges for poultry farmers particularly in developing countries. This study evaluated the performance and cost of the performance of broilers finishers fed diets partially substituted with horned melon meal (HMM) as a replacement for a commercial premix. A total of 160 broiler finishers were randomly assigned to four dietary treatments with graded levels of HMM inclusion (0%, 25%, 37.5%, and 50%) in a completely randomized design over four weeks. Growth performance parameters and economic indices were assessed. Results showed no significant differences (P>0.05) in growth performance parameters, including weight gain, feed intake, and feed conversion ratio (FCR) across the treatments. However, broilers in the control group (0% HMM) consistently exhibited slightly higher values for this parameters (3173.50g/bird, 1442.50g/bird and 2.20, respectively). Economic analysis indicated that the diet with 50% HMM inclusion had the lowest cost of feed intake and cost of weight gain, (₦2107.76/bird and ₦4572.75/bird, respectively) demonstrating potential cost savings. Horned melon meal can partially replace commercial premix in broiler diets without compromising growth performance and it offers economic advantages at higher inclusion levels.

Keywords: *Broiler, Economic indices, Growth performance, Horned melon meal*

Introduction

Commercial premixes are widely used in broiler diets to deliver essential vitamins, minerals, and bioactive compounds that are not adequately present in basal feed ingredients. These premixes play a crucial role in enhancing nutrient absorption, maintaining metabolic balance, and promoting optimal growth and productivity in broilers (Kidd, 2019). However, the increasing cost of premixes, coupled with their dependency on imported raw materials, has presented economic challenges for poultry farmers, particularly in developing countries. Additionally, concerns about the sustainability of synthetic additives have heightened interest in natural and locally available alternatives that can serve as effective feed supplements (Akinola *et al*., 2019). Nowadays, the agricultural industry focuses more on sustainability and reduction strategies of environmental impact on feed production. Natural feed additives like horned melon has the potential to offer a sustainable alternative to synthetic vitamins in poultry feed (Lee *et al*., 2022).

Horned melon (*Cucumis metuliferus*) is an underutilized fruit indigenous to Africa. It is a drought-tolerant species that grows primarily in arid and semi-arid regions of Africa. It demonstrating remarkable resilience to harsh environmental conditions such as drought and poor soil fertility (Gordon and Franklin, 2018) and can thrive with minimal water (Anderson and Miller, 2020). Horned melon has essential macronutrients like carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, along with significant micronutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants (Williams and Adams, 2018), this presents it as an alternative to commercial premix. Mosobalaje *et al*. (2024) showed that vitamins A, D, E, K, B1 B2, B12, Folic acid and Biotin of horned melon meal were higher than those in the commercial premix. This study was conducted to evaluate the effect of substituting HMM for a commercial broiler premix on growth and economic indices.

Materials and methods

The experiment was carried out at the poultry unit, Teaching and Research Farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora. This location lies at the geographical coordinates of 7°15'N

latitude and 3°30'E longitude. It has an average annual rainfall is 139.39 mm, relative humidity of 76% and temperature of between 22 – 29°C (https://weatherandclimate.com/nigeria/oyo/igbo-ora).

One hundred and sixty (160) day old broilers were purchased from a reputable farm, then raised for four weeks before grouped into 4 treatments with four replicates of ten birds each, in a completely randomized design. The gross composition of the four diets is as shown in table 1. The experimental birds were fed the diets for four weeks. The following parameters were measured; initial weight, weight gain, feed intake, final weight, feed conversion ratio and mortality rate. Data obtained from the study were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) and where differences exist between means, Duncan Multiple Range Test was used to separate the means at 5% probability level.

Table 1: Gross composition of the four diets fed to the experimental birds

Ingredients (%)	**Treatment 1 (0% HMM)**	**Treatment 2 (25% HMM)**	**Treatment 3 (37.5% HMM)**	**Treatment 4 (50% HMM)**
Commercial Premixes	0.30	0.22	0.19	0.15
Horned melon	0.00	0.08	0.11	0.15
Maize	60	60	60	60
Soya	34	34	34	34
Oyster shell	2	2	2	2
DCP	2	2	2	2
Salt	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Methionine	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Lysine	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Calculated Energy(Kcal/kg)	2900	2915	2920	2925
Calculated protein **(%)**	20.50	20.60	20.65	20.70

DCP: - Di-calcium Phosphate

Results and discussion

Table 2 showed the growth performance and the economy of growth of broilers fed diets containing different levels of horned melon meal (HMM). All the parameters were not significantly affected by the inclusion of horned melon meal. The final weight of broilers fed the control diet (0% HMM) achieved the highest final weight of 2052.50g, followed by treatment 4 (1980.75 g) and treatment 3 (1972.75 g) while treatment 2 (25% HMM) had the lowest final weight of 1914.75g. These differences, while notable, were not statistically significant (P>0.05). The weight gain followed a similar trend. Broilers in the control group (0% HMM) gained the most weight at 1442.50 g, followed by treatment 3 (37.5% HMM) with 1380.00 g and treatment 4 (50% HMM) with 1370.00 g. The lowest weight gain of 1322.50 g was recorded in treatment 2 (25% HMM). These differences were also not significant (P>0.05).

The total feed intake and feed conversion ratio reduced as horned melon increased in the diets and the control group recorded the highest value (3173.50 g/day and 2.20, respectively), while the lowest feed intake of 2873.00 g/day and 2.17 were observed in treatment 4 (50% HMM). These differences were not statistically significant (P>0.05). Also mortality record was not significant (P>0.05) with the lowest value recorded in treatment 4 (1.23%,) followed by broiler fed 37.5% HMM (1.43%) and Treatment 2 (25% HMM) that recorded 1.45%., while the control group had the highest mortality rate of 1.50%. These differences were not statistically significant (P>0.05).

Cost of feed was made the same, assuming horned melon meal cost as much as the commercial premix. Cost of feed intake per bird and the average cost of weight gain per kilogram per bird decreased as HMM was increased in the diet and the values were not significantly different (P<0.05). Treatment 4 (50% HMM) recorded the lowest value of ₦2,107.26 and ₦4572.75 while the highest was recorded by birds fed the control group (₦2249.38 and ₦4948.64, respectively).

Table 3: Growth performance and cost analysis of broilers fed horned melon-based diets

Parameters	Treatment 1 (0% HMM)	Treatment 2 (25% HMM)	Treatment 3 (37.5% HMM)	Treatment 4 (50% HMM)	SEM	P-value
Initial Weight (g)	610.00	592.25	592.75	610.75	3.87	0.14
Total feed intake (g/day)	3173.5	3105.00	3028.53	2973.00	83.74	0.53
Final weight (g/bird)	2052.50	1914.75	1972.75	1980.75	64.34	0.11
Weight gain (g)	1442.50	1322.50	1380.00	1370.00	53.46	0.23
Feed conversion ratio	2.20	2.18	2.19	2.17	0.03	0.83
Mortality (%)	1.50	1.45	1.43	1.23	0.04	0.43
Cost of feed (₦/kg)	708.80	708.80	708.80	708.80		
Average cost of feed intake (₦//bird)	2,249.38	2,200.82	2,145.62	2,107.26	56.44	0.54
Average cost of weight gain (₦/kg/bird)	4,948.64	4,797.78	4,698.91	4,572.75	32.54	0.33

HMM = Horned Melon Meal

The growth parameters (final weight, weight gain, and feed intake) of the control group demonstrated similar results to those fed diets containing HMM. Specifically, the final weight and weight gain of broilers in the 50% HMM group were relatively close to those in the control group, indicating that higher inclusion levels of HMM may still maintain acceptable growth performance. This result agreed with the findings of Zhai *et al*. (2018) and Akinola *et al*. (2019) that reported that fruit-based meals did not significantly alter broiler growth and feed efficiency, respectively when incorporated at moderate levels. Horned melon meal contained high protein, carbohydrate and fat and these nutrients will contribute to the proximate value of the feed (Mosobalaje *et al*., 2024). The reduced feed intake of birds fed horned melon meal based diets might be due to proximate value of the HMM. The mortality rates across all treatments were low and comparable, indicating the safety of HMM inclusion. Comparable performance of finishers in this study migh be due to high content of vuitamins and minerals in horned melon. Horned melon meal was reported by Mosobalaje *et al*. (2024)) to contain higher vitamin/mineral content compared to the premix and capable ofsupporting growth performance of broilers.

Birds fed HMM diets demonstrated the lower cost of feed intake and weight gain, suggesting its potential for cost savings in broiler production. The reduced cost of production is due to reduced feed intake of broilers fed horned melon based diets. This observation is consistent with the findings of Adeola and Iji, (2015) that highlighted the economic benefits of using locally available and underutilized feed ingredients in poultry diets. Results indicated that although broilers in the control group (0% HMM) exhibited slightly better growth performance, the differences among treatments were not statistically significant. This finding suggests that horned melon meal (HMM) has the potential to serve as a partial feed ingredient for broiler diets without significantly affectingperformance.

Conclusion

Results obtained from This study revealed that partial substitution of broiler feed with horned melon meal (HMM) up to 50% does not significantly affect growth and economic parameters when compared to the control diet. While the control group exhibited slightly higher weight gain and feed intake, the 50% HMM diet showed the lowest cost of feed intake and weight gain, suggesting its potential for cost savings in broiler production than weight gain. Overall, horned melon meal can serve as a cost-effective and viable alternative vitamin and mineral premix in broiler feed without compromising performance.

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BIOCONVERSION OF SORGHUM THRESHED TOP INTO ANIMAL FEED WITH WHITE ROT FUNGI: *Pleurotus ostreatus* AND *Pleurotus florida*

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Abstract

The utilization of agricultural residues as livestock feed offers a sustainable approach to reducing environmental pollution and feed scarcity. Sorghum threshed top (Sorghum bicolor), an abundant lignocellulosic crop residue, is characterized by high fibre and low protein contents, which limit its direct use in ruminant nutrition. This study evaluated the effectiveness of biological treatment using white-rot fungi, Pleurotus ostreatus and Pleurotus florida, in improving the nutritive value and in vitro fermentation characteristics of sorghum threshed top. The experiment was conducted using a completely randomized design comprising four treatments: untreated sorghum threshed top (T1), sorghum threshed top inoculated with Pleurotus ostreatus (T2), sorghum threshed top inoculated with (T3), and sorghum threshed top inoculated with a combination of both fungi (T4), each replicated four times. Following solid-state fermentation, samples were analyzed for proximate composition, in vitro gas production, organic matter digestibility (OMD), short-chain fatty acid (SCFA) production, metabolizable energy (ME), and methane (CH_4) production. Data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and treatment means were separated using Duncan's Multiple Range Test at $P < 0.05$. Biological treatment significantly ($P < 0.05$) enhanced the fermentation characteristics and feeding value of sorghum threshed top. The Pleurotus ostreatus treatment recorded the highest metabolizable energy (6.77 MJ/kg DM), organic matter digestibility (45.57%), short-chain fatty acid production (1.29 µM), and gas production from the insoluble degradable fraction (27.00 mL), while methane production was markedly reduced compared with the untreated control. In vitro gas production increased throughout the 24-hour incubation period in all fungal-treated substrates, indicating improved microbial degradation of the lignocellulosic biomass. These improvements were attributed to fungal degradation of structural carbohydrates, resulting in greater availability of fermentable nutrients for rumen microorganisms. The study demonstrates that treatment of sorghum threshed top with white-rot fungi, particularly Pleurotus ostreatus, is an effective bioconversion strategy for upgrading low-quality agricultural residues into nutritionally improved ruminant feed. This approach has considerable potential for enhancing sustainable livestock production while promoting the efficient utilization of agricultural wastes.

Keywords: *Animal feed, bioconversion, Pleurotus florida, Pleurotus ostreatus, ruminants, Sorghum bicolor, white-rot fungi*

Introduction

Agricultural waste, also known as agro-waste, includes animal waste, food processing waste, and crop residues such as maize cobs, sugarcane bagasse, husks, and sorghum threshed top. These residues are produced in large quantities worldwide as agricultural production continues to increase. Approximately 998 million tonnes of agricultural waste are generated annually, with most crop residues being rich in fibre, low in crude protein, and poorly digestible, thereby limiting their direct use as ruminant feed (Khan *et al.,* 2012; Wilson *et al.,* 2015; Karunanandaa *et al.,* 1995).

Lignocellulosic crop residues represent an abundant renewable biomass resource with considerable potential for livestock feeding. However, large quantities are still burned or discarded, causing environmental pollution and wastage. Their high lignin content reduces nutrient availability and digestibility, prompting the development of biological methods to improve their feeding value (Nigam *et al.,* 2009; Asgher *et al.,* 2013).

Sorghum threshed top is an abundant lignocellulosic by-product generated during sorghum processing but remains underutilized because of its high fibre and low protein contents. Biological treatment using

white-rot fungi, particularly *Pleurotus ostreatus* and *Pleurotus florida*, has been reported to improve the nutritive value of fibrous crop residues through the production of ligninolytic enzymes that selectively degrade lignin, thereby enhancing nutrient availability and digestibility (Akinfemi *et al.*, 2009).

Therefore, this study evaluated the effects of *Pleurotus ostreatus* and *Pleurotus florida* on the nutritive value and in vitro fermentation characteristics of sorghum threshed top with the aim of improving its utilization as an alternative feed resource for ruminants.

Materials and Methods

The experiment was conducted at the Animal Production Technology Laboratory, Yaba College of Technology, Epe Campus, Lagos State, Nigeria. The laboratory is located at Latitude 6°47′ N and Longitude 3°58′ E (Google Earth, 2022).

Dried sorghum threshed top was obtained from the Yaba College of Technology Teaching and Research Farm, Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria. The samples were milled and oven-dried at 65°C to constant weight for dry matter determination. Pure cultures of *Pleurotus ostreatus* (POT) and *Pleurotus florida* (PF) were obtained from the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The fungi were tissue-cultured following the procedure of Jonathan and Fasidi as cited by Akinfemi *et al*. (2009) to obtain actively growing mycelia. One kilogram (1 kg) of each dried sorghum threshed top sample was moistened with distilled water before inoculation.

The experiment consisted of four treatments arranged in a completely randomized design with four replicates:

T1: Untreated sorghum threshed top (Control)

T2: Sorghum threshed top inoculated with *Pleurotus ostreatus*

T3: Sorghum threshed top inoculated with *Pleurotus florida*

T4: Sorghum threshed top inoculated with a combination of *Pleurotus ostreatus* and *Pleurotus florida*

Following sterilization, the substrates were inoculated at the centre with a 2% mycelial disc of Pleurotus ostreatus, *Pleurotus florida*, or a combination of both fungi according to the respective treatments. The inoculated substrates were immediately sealed and incubated following the procedure described by Jefari *et al*. (2007). After the fermentation period, samples were subjected to in vitro gas production using rumen fluid in calibrated glass syringes according to the method of Menke and Steingass (1988). Proximate composition, including dry matter (DM), crude protein (CP), crude fibre (CF), ether extract (EE), and ash, was determined using the standard procedures of AOAC (2012). Data obtained were subjected to one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and treatment means were separated using Duncan's Multiple Range Test with the SAS statistical package (SAS, 2002). Statistical significance was declared at $P < 0.05$.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Estimated Organic Matter Digestibility (OMD), Short-Chain Fatty Acid (SCFA), Metabolizable Energy (ME), Methane (CH_4) Production and Gas Production from the Insoluble Degradable Fraction (b) of Treated Sorghum Threshed Top

Components	T1	T2	T3	T4	SEM
ME (MJ/kg DM).	4.35^{d}	6.77^{a}	5.60^{c}	5.99^{b}	0.06
SCFA(µmol)	0.89^{d}	1.29^{a}	1.11^{c}	1.15^{b}	0.00

OMD (%)	29.03^{c}	45.57^{a}	37.78^{b}	40.32^{b}	0.45
CH_4 (mL)	8.50^{a}	2.00^{b}	1.00^{b}	1.00^{b}	0.23
b (mL)	11.00^{d}	27.00^{a}	21.00^{b}	20.00^{c}	0.00

Means within the same row bearing different superscripts (a, b, c, d) differ significantly ($P < 0.05$).

Table 1 presents the effects of fungal treatment on the estimated metabolizable energy (ME), short-chain fatty acid (SCFA) production, organic matter digestibility (OMD), methane (CH_4) production, and gas production from the insoluble degradable fraction (b) of sorghum threshed top. Significant differences ($P < 0.05$) were observed among the treatments for all the parameters evaluated.

The substrate treated with *Pleurotus ostreatus* (T2) recorded the highest metabolizable energy (6.77 MJ/kg DM) and SCFA production (1.29 µM), followed by the combined treatment (T4) and *Pleurotus florida* (T3), while the untreated control (T1) recorded the lowest values (4.35 MJ/kg DM and 0.89 µM, respectively). The increase in metabolizable energy and SCFA production indicates improved fermentation efficiency and greater energy availability for rumen microorganisms.

Organic matter digestibility was significantly ($P < 0.05$) improved by fungal treatment. The highest OMD value (45.57%) was obtained in T2, followed by T4 (40.32%) and T3 (37.78%), whereas the untreated control recorded the lowest value (29.03%). The improvement in digestibility may be attributed to the degradation of lignin and other structural carbohydrates by the fungi, resulting in increased accessibility of cellulose and hemicellulose to rumen microorganisms. Similar observations were reported by Jennings and Lyke (1999).

Methane production was significantly reduced ($P < 0.05$) in all fungal-treated substrates compared with the untreated control. The control produced the highest methane value (8.50 mL), whereas T3 and T4 recorded the lowest values (1.00 mL). This reduction may be associated with a shift in rumen fermentation pathways, whereby carbon dioxide and hydrogen are utilized for acetate production rather than methane synthesis, as reported by Sallam *et al*. (2005).

Similarly, gas production from the insoluble degradable fraction (b) was significantly higher in the treated substrates, with *Pleurotus ostreatus* (T2) producing the highest value (27.00 mL). This suggests that fungal treatment enhanced the degradability of the fibrous fraction, thereby increasing nutrient availability and fermentability. Higher SCFA production observed in the treated substrates further supports improved rumen fermentation and greater energy supply for ruminant animals.

Table 2: In Vitro Gas Production of Treated Sorghum Threshed Top During 24 Hours of Incubation

Parameters	3hrs	6hrs	9hrs	12hrs	15hrs	18hrs	21hrs	24hrs
T1(control)	1.50^{b}	3.50^{c}	3.50^{c}	3.50^{c}	6.50^{c}	8.50^{d}	8.50^{c}	12.50^{d}
T2(*P. ostreatus*)	3.00^{ab}	5.00^{c}	5.00^{c}	16.00^{a}	17.00^{a}	19.00^{a}	19.00^{a}	30.00^{a}
T3(*P. florida*)	1.00^{b}	13.00^{a}	13.00^{a}	15.00^{a}	16.00^{a}	16.00^{b}	18.00^{a}	22.00^{c}
T4(*P. ostreatus* + *P. florida*)	4.00^{a}	7.00^{b}	8.00^{b}	10.00^{b}	13.00^{b}	13.00^{c}	15.00^{b}	24.00^{b}

SEM	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32

Means within the same column bearing different superscripts (a, b, c, d) differ significantly ($P < 0.05$).

Table 2 shows the pattern of in vitro gas production of untreated and fungal-treated sorghum threshed top over a 24-hour incubation period. Gas production increased progressively with incubation time in all treatments, indicating continuous microbial fermentation of the substrates. At the end of the 24-hour incubation, Pleurotus ostreatus-treated sorghum threshed top (T2) produced the highest gas volume (30.00 mL), followed by the combined fungal treatment (T4) with 24.00 mL, Pleurotus florida (T3) with 22.00 mL, while the untreated control (T1) recorded the lowest value (12.50 mL). The significantly higher gas production ($P < 0.05$) observed in the fungal-treated substrates indicates enhanced degradation of lignocellulosic components, thereby improving substrate availability for rumen microorganisms. The increased gas production from the treated substrates may be attributed to the degradation of lignin by the white-rot fungi, which exposed cellulose and hemicellulose for microbial fermentation. This observation agrees with Chumpawadee *et al*. (2007), who reported that gas production from the insoluble but degradable fraction reflects the fermentability of carbohydrate components in ruminant feeds.

Conclusion

Biological treatment of sorghum threshed top with *Pleurotus ostreatus* and *Pleurotus florida* significantly improved its nutritive value and in vitro fermentation characteristics compared with the untreated control. Fungal treatment increased organic matter digestibility (OMD), short-chain fatty acid (SCFA) production, metabolizable energy (ME), and gas production while significantly reducing methane (CH_4) production. Among the fungal treatments, *Pleurotus ostreatus* produced the greatest improvement in the measured parameters, indicating its superior potential for upgrading sorghum threshed top as a ruminant feed resource. These findings demonstrate that white-rot fungi can effectively convert low-quality lignocellulosic crop residues into nutritionally improved feed, thereby contributing to sustainable livestock production and efficient agricultural waste utilization.

Further studies should evaluate the performance of fungal-treated sorghum threshed top in feeding trials using live ruminants to determine its effects on feed intake, nutrient digestibility, growth performance, and overall animal productivity.

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EVALUATION OF THE PHYTOGENIC POTENTIALS OF BLACK PEPPER (*Piper nigrum*) ON HAEMATOLOGICAL PROFILE OF BROILER BIRDS AT STARTER PHASE

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Abstract

This study evaluated the phytogenic potentials of black pepper seed meal (BPSM) on the haematological profile of broiler chickens during the starter phase. A total of 256 day-old male Marshal® broiler chicks were randomly allotted to four dietary treatments in a completely randomized design, with eight replicates of eight birds each. The experimental diets contained 0.0%, 0.4%, 0.8% and 1.2% BPSM, respectively, and the experiment lasted 21 days. At the end of the experimental period, blood samples were collected from one bird per replicate through the brachial vein into EDTA-containing tubes for haematological analysis. Parameters evaluated included packed cell volume (PCV), haemoglobin (Hb), red blood cell (RBC), white blood cell (WBC), platelet, heterophil, lymphocyte, monocyte, eosinophil, basophil and heterophil-to-lymphocyte (H/L) ratio. The results showed that dietary BPSM significantly influenced PCV, Hb, heterophil and lymphocyte percentages, whereas RBC, WBC, platelet, H/L ratio, monocyte, eosinophil and basophil values were not significantly affected. PCV and Hb generally declined with increasing BPSM inclusion, while heterophil and lymphocyte percentages increased. The H/L ratio remained relatively stable across treatments, indicating no marked physiological stress response. The observed responses suggest that BPSM exerted dose-dependent effects on erythrocytic and differential leukocyte parameters without causing widespread disruption of the haematological profile. Overall, the 0.4% BPSM inclusion level produced the most favourable haematological response and is recommended for broiler starter diets, while higher inclusion levels should be used cautiously pending further investigation into their effects on erythrocyte characteristics. The findings demonstrate the potential of black pepper seed meal as a natural phytogenic feed additive for supporting physiological health and immune-related responses in broiler chickens.

Keywords: *Black pepper, Piper nigrum, phytogenic feed additive, haematology, broiler chickens.*

Introduction

The poultry industry is one of the fastest-growing livestock sectors worldwide and serves as an important source of affordable, high-quality animal protein. However, intensive broiler production is increasingly challenged by disease outbreaks, environmental stress and the global restriction on the use of antibiotic growth promoters (AGPs) because of concerns about antimicrobial resistance and drug residues in poultry products (Ayalew *et al.*, 2022; Kumar *et al.*, 2023). These concerns have stimulated interest in phytogenic feed additives as natural alternatives for improving poultry health and productivity. Phytogenic feed additives are plant-derived products, including herbs, spices, essential oils and plant extracts, incorporated into poultry diets to enhance growth performance, nutrient utilization, antioxidant status and immune function (Abd El-Hack *et al.*, 2022). Their beneficial effects are attributed to bioactive compounds such as flavonoids, alkaloids, phenolics and essential oils, which possess antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties capable of improving gut health and physiological performance (Yang *et al.*, 2024). Black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.) is one of the world's most valuable spices and contains piperine, its principal bioactive alkaloid. Piperine has been reported to stimulate digestive enzyme secretion, improve nutrient digestibility, enhance mineral bioavailability and exhibit antioxidant, antimicrobial and immunomodulatory activities (Meghwal and Goswami, 2013). Recent studies have shown that dietary supplementation with black pepper can improve growth performance, feed efficiency and immune responses in broiler chickens, suggesting its potential as an effective phytogenic feed additive (Abd El-Hack *et al.*, 2022; Elbaz *et al.*, 2024). Blood profile evaluation is a reliable approach for assessing the physiological, nutritional and health status of broiler chickens because blood parameters respond rapidly to dietary and environmental changes (Campbell and Ellis, 2015; Thrall *et al.*, 2023). Haematological indices such as packed cell volume, haemoglobin

concentration, red and white blood cell counts, provide valuable information on oxygen transport, immune competence and metabolic status (Scanes, 2022). Despite increasing interest in phytogenic feed additives, limited information exists on the influence of black pepper on the blood profile of broiler chickens, particularly under tropical production conditions. Therefore, this study was undertaken to evaluate the phytogenic potentials of black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) on the haematological indices of broiler birds at starter phase.

Materials and methods

The experiment was carried at the Poultry Unit of the Teaching and Research Farm, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Black pepper seed was purchased from a local markets in Ibadan, the seed was manually separated from the stalk with other dirt and impurities and it was then blended into a fine powdery form and stored in an air tight dry container till further use.

A total number of two hundred and fifty-six (256) Marshal® day-old male broiler chicks were purchased from a reputable hatchery. Prior to arrival of these birds, adequate preparations were made. Chicks were reared on floor pen with the use of wood shavings as the bedding materials. Water and feed were supplied ad libtum. Chicks were vaccinated against the most common diseases such as Newcastle Disease (ND) and Infectious Bronchitis (IBD) as at when due while no other medications were administered for the period of study. The black pepper served as source of antibiotic for the treatment groups except the control. The feeding program consisted of the compounded starter diet that was used until 21 days of age. All diets throughout the period were prepared with the same batch of ingredients and all diets with the same composition.

Experimental design

The chicks were randomly allotted into 4 treatment groups of 64 birds each in a completely randomized design (CRD). Each group was subdivided into 8 replicates of 8 birds each placed on a deep litter pen of fresh wood shavings.

Treatment was as follows:
Diet 1: compounded diet with 0.0 % black pepper seed meal
Diet 2: compounded diet with 0.4 % black pepper seed meal
Diet 3: compounded diet with 0.8 % black pepper seed meal
Diet 4: compounded diet with 1.2 % black pepper seed meal
The study lasted for a period of 21 days

Data collection

Haematological parameters

At the end of the 3rd week experimental period, blood samples were collected from the broiler chickens for haematological analyses following standard veterinary procedures (Campbell &and Ellis, 2015; Thrall *et al*., 2023). Before blood collection, the birds were fasted for approximately 8–12 hours to minimize the influence of recent feed intake on blood metabolites, while clean drinking water was provided ad libitum (Scanes, 2022). One bird was randomly selected from each replicate to obtain representative samples from each dietary treatment. Each bird was gently restrained manually to minimize stress and facilitate proper venipuncture (Campbell and Ellis, 2015). Approximately 2 mL of blood was aseptically collected from the brachial vein using sterile disposable 5 mL syringes fitted with 21- or 23-gauge hypodermic needle (Jain, 1986; Thrall *et al*., 2023). The collected blood was immediately transferred into labelled tubes containing EDTA as an anticoagulant for the haematological analysis, The EDTA blood samples were gently inverted several times to ensure proper mixing with the anticoagulant and to prevent clot formation (Thrall *et al*., 2023). The blood samples were transported immediately to the laboratory in an ice-packed cooler for analysis. Where immediate analysis was not possible, EDTA blood samples were stored at 4°C and analyzed within 24 hours (Campbell and Ellis, 2015; Thrall *et al*., 2023).

Results and discussions

The results of the effect of black pepper seed meal (BPSM) on the haematology of broiler chicken at starter phase is presented in table 3.

The table revealed black pepper seed meal (BPSM) inclusion in the diet significantly ($p<0.05$) affected Packed cell volume (PCV) (%), haemoglobin (Hb) (g/dL), heterophil as well as lymphocyte however, red blood cells (RBC) ($x10^9$/dl), white blood cells (WBC) **(**$x10^3$/dl), heterophil/lymphocyte ratio (H/L), platelet ($x\ 10^5$), monocyte (%), eosinophil (%) and basophil (%) were similar ($p>0.05$) across the treatment groups. PCV was observed to be highest at 0% (T1) and lowest at 1.2% BPSM levels of inclusion (T4), although T2 (0.4% BPSM) and T3 (0.8% BPSM) had comparable means ($P<0.05$). Similarly, Hb was observed to be highest at 0% (T1) with a mean value of 11.36 while T2 (0.4%), T3 (0.8%) and T4 (1.2%) showed no difference in the means obtained. Heterophil also showed a significant ($P<0.05$) increasing trend with increase in BPSM inclusion levels, although, heterophil of T2 (0.4%) and T3 (0.8%) had a comparable means with that of T1 (0.0%) and T4 (1.2%). Likewise, mean values for lymphocyte also showed a significant ($P<0.05$) increasing trend with increase in BPSM inclusion levels although, there was no difference between lymphocyte of T3 (0.8%) and T4 (1.2%). RBC had values ($P>0.05$) ranging from 3.18 - 3.44 x 10^9/dl. WBC also ranged between 12644 – 13556 x 10^3/dl (0.0% - 0.4 % BPSM) across the treatment groups. H/L had means ($P>0.05$) ranging from (0.44 – 0.48), platelets (13.34 - 15.55 x 10^5), monocyte (3.25 - 4.00%), eosinophil (3.00 - 4.00%) and basophil with values ($P>0.05$) ranging from 0.00 – 0.25 % in T4 (1.2% BPSM) – T2 (0.4% BPSM)

Discussion

Haematological parameters are definitive indices of the nutritional and physiological status of birds, demonstrating their clinical systemic response to dietary interventions. In the present study, the graded inclusion of BPSM induced specific, dose-dependent modifications. Packed Cell Volume (PCV) and Haemoglobin (Hb) concentrations exhibited a distinct downward trend at higher inclusion levels, with PCV shifting from 33.88% in the control group (T1) to 30.13% in the maximum inclusion group (T4), and Hb tracking downwards from 11.36 g/dL (T_1) to 10.04 g/dL (T4). This indicated that high concentrations of piperine or associated anti-nutritional factors in black pepper might exert a mild inhibitory effect on erythropoiesis or induce micro-oxidative changes in circulating red cells. Concurrently, total Red Blood Cell (RBC) counts remained statistically uniform across all treatments, maintaining a narrow physiological range (3.18×10^6/µdL to 3.44×10^6/µdL). The stability of the absolute erythrocyte count alongside the contraction of PCV and Hb points toward a minor hypochromic or microcytic adjustment rather than systematic hemolysis or bone marrow suppression. This baseline stability confirmed that BPSM did not pose severe erythrototoxic risks within the evaluated limits. Total White Blood Cell (WBC) counts showed no significant divergence, remaining stable within the range of 12.64×10^3 to 13.56×10^3. Given that leukocytosis is a classic benchmark for systemic infections or tissue toxicity, these stable counts imply that BPSM did not provoke pathogenic inflammatory responses. However, differential leukocyte profiling revealed significant immunomodulatory adaptations. Lymphocyte percentages expanded progressively from 60.50% (T1) to 66.13% (T3) and 66.50% (T4). Lymphocytes constitute the core of the avian adaptive immune network, governing both humoral and cell-mediated defenses. This expansion underscores the immune-enhancing properties of piperine, which actively stimulates cellular proliferation within lymphoid tissues. Because the Heterophil-to-Lymphocyte (H/L) ratio did not shift significantly and remained within an optimal baseline (0.44 to 0.48), the concurrent increase in heterophils and lymphocytes represents an active up regulation of systemic immunity rather than environmental or physiological distress. Monocyte, eosinophil, and basophil levels remained uniform ($p > 0.05$), validating that BPSM does not trigger systemic hypersensitivity or allergic pathways.

Table 1: Ingredients and nutrients composition of starter (%)

Ingredient	**Starter (1-21 days)**
Maize	58.00
Soybean meal	34.50
Soya oil	3.30
Di-calcium phosphate	1.70
Limestone	1.80
Salt {NaCl)	0.25
Methionine	0.15
Premix*	0.30
Total	**100**
Calculated composition (%)	
Crude protein	22.10
Energy (MEKcal/kg)	3030
Ether extract	5.79
Crude fibre	2.62
Calcium	1.04
Phosphorous	0.46
Methionine	0.53

*premix supplied per kg diet: vitamin A 15,000 I.U, vitamin D3 13000 iu, thiamin 2mg, Riboflavin 6mg, pyridoxine 4mg, Niancin 40mg, cobalamine 0.05g, Biotin 0.08mg, choline chloride 0.05g, Manganese 0.096g, Zinc 0.06g, Iron 0.024g, Copper 0.006g, Iodine 0.014g, Selenium 0.24mg, Cobalt 0.024mg and Antioxidant 0.125g. NFE = Nitrogen free extract

Table 2: Qualitative and Quantitative phytochemical screening of black pepper seed

Parameters (g/100g)	**Qualitative**	**Quantitative mean**	**Remark**
Flavonoids	+++	0.56	AA
Saponin	+	0.07	TA
Tannin	+++	1.72	AA
Cardiac glycoside	+	0.10	TA
Alkaloids	+++	5.85	AA

Key
+ = Positive
+++ = strongly positive
AA = Appreciable amount
TA =Traceable amount

Table 3: Effects of black pepper seed meal on the haematology of broiler chicken at starter phase (0-21 days)

Parameters	T 1 (0.0 %) BPSM	T 2 (0.4 %) BPSM	T 3 (0.8 %) BPSM	T 4 (1.2 %) BPSM	SEM±	P-value
PCV (%)	33.88[a]	32.75[ab]	30.75[ab]	30.13[b]	1.13	0.110
Hb (g/dl)	11.36[a]	10.98[ab]	10.15[b]	10.04[b]	0.40	0.089
RBC ($x10^6$/dl)	3.44	3.42	3.18	3.34	0.09	0.364
WBC ($x10^3$)	12.64	13.56	12.80	13.49	0.55	0.557
Platelets	13.34	15.55	14.94	14.88	1.17	0.593
Herophils (%)	26.38[b]	27.38[ab]	30.13[ab]	31.88[a]	1.69	0.120
Lymphocytes (%)	60.50[b]	63.00[ab]	66.13[a]	66.50[a]	1.62	0.051
H/L	0.44	0.44	0.46	0.48	0.12	0.673
Monocytes (%)	3.38	3.25	3.38	4.00	0.29	0.283
Eosinophils (%)	3.13	3.00	3.25	4.00	0.56	0.615
Basophils (%)	0.13	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.11	0.490

[ab] = Means in the same row with different superscripts are significantly ($p < 0.05$) different
Note. PCV – Pack cell volume, Hb – Haemoglobin, RBC –Red blood cells, WBC – White blood cells, H/L – Heterophil to lymphocyte ratio

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, dietary BPSM influenced the haematological profile of broiler chickens, with higher inclusion levels associated with reductions in PCV and haemoglobin, although most parameters remained statistically unaffected. The 0.4% inclusion level provided the most favourable haematological response, maintaining satisfactory erythrocytic and leucocytic profiles without evidence of adverse physiological effects. Therefore, BPSM should be included in broiler starter diets at approximately 0.4%, while higher inclusion levels should be used cautiously pending further investigation.

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SELECTED SERUM MACRO-MINERALS IN WEST AFRICAN DWARF GROWING BUCKS FED NAPIER GRASS HAY AND *SESBANIA SESBAN* FODDER MIXTURE DIETS

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Abstract

A feeding trial study was conducted to evaluate some serum macro-minerals in West African Dwarf (WAD) bucks fed with Napier grass (NG) and *Sesbania sesban* (SS) hay mixture diets. The feeding trial was conducted over 90 days at the Teaching and Research Farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-ora, Nigeria. Sixteen (16) growing (6-9 months old with body weight range of 6.00-10.00 kg) WAD bucks were randomly allocated to four diet treatments [T_1 = 100% NG hay (100NG); T_2 = 25% NG + 75% SS hay (25NG75SS); T_3 = 50% NG + 50% SS hay (50NG50SS); T_4 = 100% SS hay (100SS)], with 4 bucks per treatment in a completely randomized design. All groups were served with the allotted experimental diets at 3% average body weight and 500g concentrate diet per buck per day. At the end of the feeding trial, blood samples were collected from two randomly selected bucks for serum macro-minerals assessment. Significant differences (p<0.05) were noted among dietary treatments. The highest and least calcium values were observed in T_3 (11.20 mg/dl) and T_4 (10.50 mg/dl), respectively. T_4 diet bucks had the highest potassium value (8.50 mg/dl) while those in T_1 had the lowest value (6.80 mg/dl). The T_3 bucks had the highest phosphorus value (7.60 mg/dl) while the lowest value (4.40 mg/dl) was recorded in T_1. This study revealed that 50% NG + 50% SS hay mixture diet has a good nutrient profile without any deleterious effects in serum macro-minerals concentration of growing bucks.

Key words: *Fodders, Napier grass hay, Serum macro-minerals, Tropical browse plants, WAD bucks.*

Introduction

Grasses form the bulk of ruminant feeds but most grasses are usually low in protein content required by ruminants (Kebede *et al*., 2016). However, the consumption of grass-based diets only will not meet the nutritional requirements of small ruminants, thus requiring supplementation with sources of fermentable nitrogen and energy (Ofori and Nartey, 2018). Tropical browse trees, shrubs, and legumes are an important component of the fodder resources for livestock and wildlife. The ability of their foliage to remain green and maintain their crude protein (CP) content makes them potential sources of protein and energy (Olafadehan, 2013). Browse forages contain high levels of minerals and can directly provide essential minerals required in ruminant livestock systems (Ibhaze, 2024). Minerals perform essential functions in animals, including structural, physiological, catalytic and regulatory roles (Suttle, 2010), and are generally obtained via feed components as well as from water (NRC, 2007). This study was, therefore, designed to evaluate selected serum macro-minerals of WAD growing bucks fed Napier grass and *Sesbania sesban* hay mixed diets.

Materials and methods

Experimental site and animals

The experiment was conducted at the Sheep and Goat Unit, Teaching and Research Farm, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-ora. Sixteen (16) growing (6 – 9 months old) West African dwarf bucks weighing 6.00 – 10.00 kg were used. The animals were allowed to acclimatize for two weeks and treated prior to the commencement of the experiment.

Preparation of experimental diets

Napier grass and *Sesbania sesban* forage were harvested around the College farm, chopped at 3 cm long, wilted for 2 – 3 hours under sun, air-dried under shade for 4 – 5 days to prevent bleaching and loss of nutrients, bailed, and stored for the experiment.

Experimental layout, design and feeding method.

The animals were randomly allocated by weight into four treatments (four bucks per treatment) in a completely randomized design (CRD). The air-dried *Sesbania sesban* forage and Napier grass were mixed in varying proportions as the experimental diets T_1 (100% NG hay only), T_2 (25% NG + 75% SS hay), T_3 (50% NG + 50% SS hay) and T_4 (100% SS hay only)]. The diets were thoroughly mixed to minimize selection by the animal before being fed at 3% average body weight of the bucks per day. Every trial day, the animals in each treatment group were offered their respective experimental diet at 8.00 am, a formulated low-cost concentrate (Table 1) of 500 g per buck per day at 2.00 pm, and 3 litres of fresh and clean water provided throughout the study. The experimental diets and their proximate composition are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Composition of formulated low-cost concentrate for experimental West African Dwarf growing bucks

INGREDIENTS	LEVEL (%)
Palm kernel cake	60.00
Wheat offal	20.00
Corn bran	9.75
Groundnut cake	8.00
Bone meal	2.00
Salt	0.25
TOTAL	100

Blood collection for mineral analysis

At the end of day 70 of the feeding trial, 5ml of blood sample was collected via the jugular vein of two bucks per treatment. To avoid cross-contamination, new separate hypodermic needle and syringe was used to collect the sample from each animal and each drawn sample was transferred into a plain bottle which was taken to the laboratory for the assessment of some selected macro-minerals (Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium, and Potassium). Calcium and magnesium were determined using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (Buck Scientific Model 210 VGP) while sodium and potassium were determined using Flame Photometer. Data obtained were subject to one-way analysis of variance using Statistical Analysis System (SAS, 2013), and differences among the means were separate using Duncan's multiple range test (Duncan, 1955).

Table 2: Proximate composition of air-dried Napier grass and *Sesbania sesban* hay mixture and concentrate diets fed to bucks

Parameters (%)		T_1 100NG	T_2 NG25SS75	T_3 NG50SS50	T_4 100SS	Concentrate
DM		87.63	73.52	71.59	81.12	94.48
CP		8.12	15.28	15.61	18.67	17.57
CF		29.57	20.34	20.12	19.01	8.75
EE		1.15	2.28	2.33	2.37	10.39
Ash		11.95	7.06	9.67	10.69	5.85
NFE		36.84	28.64	23.86	30.38	50.21
NDF		51.50	45.18	48.16	41.65	30.34

ADF		40.09	30.17	31.78	32.07	16.05
ADL		14.03	10.60	11.03	10.27	5.65
***ME(Kcal/Kg)**		1702.33	1676.15	1615.19	1963.15	3282.45

*DM= Dry Matter, CP= Crude Protein, CF= Crude Fibre, EE= Ether Extract, NFE=Nitrogen Free Extract, NDF= Neutral detergent fibre, ADF= Acid detergent fibre, ADL= Acid detergent lignin, *ME= Calculated Metabolizable energy,*). SS=*Sesbania*

Results and Discussion

Selected serum macro-minerals of WAD bucks fed Napier grass (NG) and *Sesbania sesban* (SS) hay mixture diets were evaluated and presented in Table 3. The calcium (Ca) concentration in the blood of the experimental bucks significantly (p<0.05) differ across dietary treatments, with highest (11.20 mg/dl) and lowest values (10.50 mg/dl) noted in bucks fed T_3 and T_4 diets, respectively. Our observed values conformed with the range (9 – 12 mg/dl) previously reported as the required Ca concentration in serum for a healthy sheep (Underwood and Suttle, 1999; Latimer *et al.,* 2003). The Ca concentration in all treatment groups were slightly below the moderate hyper-calcium level of 12 - 15mg/dl, which could cause calcification of soft tissues and lower feed intake (Littledike *et al.* 1976). The serum potassium (K) concentration for all treatments were below the normal range of 15.20 – 21.06 mg/dl reported by Jackson and Cockroft (2002). The phosphorus values (4.40 – 7.60 mg/dl) fell within the normal range (4 - 8mg/dl) for sheep (Latimer *et al.,* 2003). The Na concentration in all groups were lower than the recommended (142.00 – 160.00mg/dl) and reported (326.60- 345.00mg/dl) ranges for sheep (Latimer *et al*., 2003; Jackson and Cockroft, 2002). This variation could be due to bioavailability and interaction of Na in the used feed and genetic difference of the animals (McDowell, 2003). The Magnesium (Mg) concentration recorded in this study (2.25 – 2.60 mg/dl) fell within normal range (2.0 - 2.7mg/dl) reported by Latimer *et al.* (2003). However, the observed Mg concentration across the groups was below the toxic level (>6 ppm) that could cause diarrhea in sheep (NRC, 2005) and other problems for livestock with high nutritional demands such as rapidly growing weaners, pregnant or lactating ewes (Mayberry *et al*., 2010). The low Mg might be related to high K concentration as it has been well established that high dietary K interferes with Mg absorption in ruminant animals (McDowell, 1985).

Table 3: Selected serum macro-minerals of West African Dwarf Growing Bucks fed *Sesbania sesban* with Napier grass hay mixture diets

Parameters	T_1	T_2	T_3	T_4	SEM (±)
Ca (mg/dl)	10.70^{b}	11.01^{ab}	11.20^{a}	10.50^{bc}	0.16
K (mg/dl)	6.80^{d}	7.90^{c}	8.02^{b}	8.50^{a}	0.40
P(mg/dl)	4.40^{d}	7.20^{c}	7.60^{a}	7.30^{b}	0.53
Na (mg/dl)	128.00^{c}	130.00^{b}	136.00^{a}	125.00^{d}	8.61
Mg (mg/dl)	2.25^{d}	2.30^{c}	2.60^{a}	2.50^{b}	0.07

^{abcd} *means on the same row with different superscripts are significantly different (P< 0.05). K: potassium, Ca: Calcium, P:Phosphorus, Mg: Magnesium, Na: Sodium*

Conclusion

The mixture of grass-based diet (Napier grass hay) and legume fodder (*Sesbania sesban*) was favorable, acceptable, and tolerable to the bucks. The result obtained showed that 50% Napier grass hay + 50% *Sesbania sesban* fodder hay mixture with 500g concentrate diet enhanced macro-minerals in terms of calcium (Ca), phosphorus (P), sodium (Na) and magnesium (Mg) of WAD growing bucks.

Recommendation

Based on the result of this research, the supplementation of basal grass diet with browse fodder, particularly 50% Napier grass hay + 50% *Sesbania sesban* fodder hay mixture with 500g concentrate diet, is therefore recommended in the diet of WAD growing bucks.

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EVALUATION OF SERUM INDICES IN WEST AFRICAN DWARF GOATS FED VARYING LEVELS OF TOASTED *Delonix regia* (FLAMBOYANT) SEED MEAL

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of toasted Delonix regia seed (TDRS) meal on serum metabolites of West African Dwarf (WAD) goats for 90 days feeding trial. Twenty (20) WAD goats with average weight of 8.80 kg were assigned to five dietary treatments (0%, 3.60%, 5.40%, 7.20%, and 9.00% TDRS inclusion) in a completely randomized design. The results showed no significant (P > 0.05) differences among treatments for all serum biochemical parameters assessed, except for serum albumin, which was significantly (P < 0.05) lower in goats fed T1 diet Buck fed diet T4 had the highest Total protein (4.85g/dl), while the lowest value (3.50g/dl) for TP recorded on buck fed diet T1. Buck fed diet T2 recorded least globulin (2.10g/dl) while highest globulin (2.85g/dl) was recorded in buck fed diet T4. However, buck fed T1 diet were observed to have the highest ALT value of 34.00U/L while those fed T4 diet had the lowest value of 29.00U/L. From the results, T4 proved to be the best diet of this study. The study revealed that toasted Delonix regia seed meal can be included up to 7.20% in West African Dwarf goat diets and enhanced the productivity of growing bucks.

Keywords: *Serum biochemical indices, WAD goats, Delonix regia*

Introduction

Small ruminant production forms an integral part of rural farming life, providing them with an animal protein source and income from sales (Akinmoladun *et al*., 2019). The scarcity and soaring cost of convectional protein feedstuffs necessitate research into alternative resources for sustainable ruminant production (Olafadehan, 2013). Conventional feed ingredients, aside from having competitive demands and alternative uses are costly, thereby making animal protein expensive. Sequel to this, animal nutritionists seek alternative feeds for animals. The use of *Delonix regia* as an alternative protein source for livestock has been reported in previous studies (Guluwa *et al.*, 2024). However, legumes supply essential amino acids (Olufayo and Falola, 2018) but also contain anti-nutrient compounds. Lamidi and Evien (2019) reported that raw *Delonix regia* seed contains oxalate (0.23 – 0.32 %), phytates (0.29 - 0.43 %), tannins (0.03 – 0.08 %) and saponins (0.36 – 0.49 %), which can be mitigated via processing. Blood indices are important indicators of farm animal's physiological stages, as they show the link between nutrition and health status of the animal (Jiwuba *et al.*, 2016). Thus, this study was designed to evaluate serum biochemical indices of West African dwarf goats fed diets containing varying levels of toasted *Delonix regia* seed meal

Materials and methods

Experimental site: The experiment was conducted at the Small Ruminant Unit, Teaching and Research Farm Directorate, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The site is in the derived savannah zone of the South - western part of Nigeria on latitude 13′ 49.46″N and longitude 25′ 11.98″E (Google Earth, 2024).

Source and processing of test ingredient: Matured *Delonix regia* pods were hand-harvested during the dry season from fully ripe trees in Igboora, Ibarapa Central, Oyo State, Nigeria. Pods were manually split using traditional wooden implements to extract the seeds. The seeds were toasted to reduce anti-nutritional compounds, enhance nutritional quality and allowed for easy milling. Initially, seeds were toasted in a metal frying pan over firewood heat for one hour with continuous stirring to prevent charring. Then, the subsequent toasted pot contained flamboyant seeds spent 45minutes. This gradual toasting process was monitored by observing the change in colour from creamy beige to light brown and emergence of a nutty aroma which signify the end point of toasting. After cooling in the head pan at ambient room temperature, the seeds were milled at a local commercial feed mill.

Maize stover hay used as roughage component was sourced from post-harvest maize field at Igboora The dried stover was then subjected to urea treatment to improve its nutritive value, particularly its nitrogen content. The treatment involved spraying the chopped stover uniformly with a 4% urea solution at a rate of approximately 1 litre per l kg of dry stover. The treated stover was then packed tightly into airtight polythene bags and sealed to allow anaerobic fermentation for 21 days. After the treatment period, the stover was opened, aired for 24 hours to eliminate residual ammonia odour and stored under dry, ventilated conditions until use.

Experimental animals and management: Twenty (20) West African dwarf (WAD) goats with average body weight of 8.80kg were purchased from goat farmers in Abeokuta area of Ogun State. Two weeks before their arrival, the pens were thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Upon arrival, they were acclimatized for a period of three weeks. During this period, they were fed *Panicum maximum ad libitum* and were administered prophylactic and therapeutic treatments. After acclimatization, the animals were weighed and allocated to five (5) dietary treatments in a Completely Randomized Design (CRD) and the experiment lasted for 90 days.

Experimental diets: Experimental concentrate diets were formulated by replacing palm kernel cake with toasted *Delonix regia* seed meal at graded levels of 0%, 20%, 30%, 40% and 50% (equivalent to 0%, 3.6%, 5.4%, 7.2% and 9.0% in the total diet, respectively) as shown in Table 1. Maize stover hay and concentrate diets were fed to goats in ratio 6:4.

E**xperimental design:** The experiment was carried out in a completely randomized design. Twenty (20) West African Dwarf goats were allotted to five (5) treatments having four (4) animals per treatment.

Table 1: Gross composition (%) of experimental concentrate diets for WAD goats

Ingredients	**0%TDRS**	**3.6%TDRS**	**5.4%TDRS**	**7.2%TDRS**	**9%TDRS**
Cassava peel	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
Palm kernel cake	**18.00**	**14.40**	**12.60**	**10.80**	**9.00**
TDRS meal	**0.00**	**3.60**	**5.40**	**7.20**	**9.00**
Groundnut cake	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Sawdust	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00
Bone Meal	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Salt	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Calculated values					
Crude protein (%)	11.17	11.48	11.64	11.79	11.95
Crude fiber (%)	12.86	12.92	12.95	12.98	13.02
ME(MJ/kg)	2.60	2.63	2.64	2.66	2.67

Data collection and Analysis

At the end of the 90-days feeding trial, a new hypodermic needle and syringe (for each animal to avoid cross-contamination) was used to collected 5ml blood sample via the jugular vein from three randomly selected goats from each treatment and was discharged into a sterile plain bottle to allowed clotting at

room temperature and serum was decanted for analysis. The obtained data on selected serum biochemical indices were subject to one-way analysis of variance (SAS, 2013), while differences among the means were separated using Duncan's multiple range test (Duncan, 1955).

Results and discussion

The serum biochemical profile of West African Dwarf (WAD) goats fed diets containing Delonix regia seed meal revealed that the majority of serum biochemical parameters including total protein (3.50-4.80)g/dl, globulin (2.35-3'00)g/dl, cholesterol(122.90-145.85)mg/ml, aspartate aminotransferase (AST) (92.00-129.00)u/l, alanine aminotransferase (ALT) (29.00-34.00)u/l, alkaline phosphatase (ALP) (36-50-44.50)u/l, creatinine (0.90-1.32)mg/dl, and urea (37.55-50.75)mg/dl, were not significantly influenced by the dietary treatments. However, serum albumin concentration was influenced, with the lowest value (2.35g/dl) observed at the (T1) 0% inclusion level. In addition, all total protein values across the treatments were below the normal physiological range, while serum glucose concentrations were above normal values at all levels of inclusion.

These results indicated that while *Delonix regia* seed meal inclusion did not markedly affect overall serum biochemical health; its influence on albumin and glucose levels warrants further investigation. The general stability of serum biochemical parameters agrees with the findings of Adewunmi *et al.* (2021), who reported that the use of unconventional protein ingredients in goat diets did not alter blood biochemical indices, implying that such feeds do not induce metabolic stress or toxicity. Similarly, Akinfemi and Olayemi (2022) reported that inclusion of tree foliage in goat diets did not affect AST, ALT, or cholesterol concentrations, supporting the observation that *Delonix regia* seed meal does not impair liver or kidney function. However, the reduction in albumin concentration at 3.60% replacement contrasts with the findings of Ukanwoko and Ibeawuchi (2019), who observed improved serum albumin in goats fed *Leucaena leucocephala* and *Moringa oleifera* due to their higher-quality protein content. This discrepancy could be attributed to differences in protein digestibility or the presence of anti-nutritional compounds in *Delonix regia* seed meal that may reduce protein metabolism efficiency.

The observation that total protein concentrations were consistently below normal differs from the report of Ajayi *et al.* (2020), who found normal serum total protein in goats fed *Gliricidia sepium* leaf meal. This may suggest that *Delonix regia* seed meal provides protein of limited digestibility or that anti-nutritional factors impede protein utilization. Conversely, the elevated glucose levels observed across all inclusion levels are consistent with the findings of Olufemi *et al.* (2018), who reported increased serum glucose in goats fed unconventional feedstuffs rich in fermentable carbohydrates. This suggests that *Delonix regia* seed meal may enhance glucose availability, potentially improving energy supply, though sustained high glucose levels may require monitoring to prevent metabolic disorders. Overall, *Delonix regia* seed meal inclusion did not negatively affect major serum biochemical indices but caused a reduction in albumin at 3.60% replacement and elevated glucose across all inclusion levels.

Table 2: Serum indices of West African Dwarf goats fed diets containing varying inclusion levels of toasted *Delonix regia* seed meal

Parameters	Inclusion levels of toasted *Delonix regia* seed meal in the diets					SEM	P-value
	T1 0%	T2 3.60%	T3 5.40%	T4 7.20%	T5 9.0%		
Total protein (g/dl)	3.50	3.90	4.35	4.85	4.30	0.20	0.27
Albumin (g/dl)	2.35^{ab}	2.80^{b}	2.90^{a}	3.00^{a}	3.05^{a}	0.17	0.02
Globulin (g/dl)	2.15	2.10	2.45	2.85	2.25	0.16	0.26
Cholesterol (mg/mL)	126.70	122.90	129.15	145.85	127.40	4.88	0.72
AST (U/L)	129.00	107.00	94.00	92.00	97.50	6.86	0.50
ALT (U/L)	34.00	30.50	31.50	29.00	32.00	1.54	0.94
ALP (U/L)	44.50	44.50	40.00	36.50	40.00	1.49	0.45
Glucose (mg/dl)	70.70	72.00	74.35	72.60	75.35	4.38	0.60
Creatinine (mg/dl)	1.11	1.06	1.20	0.97	1.32	0.05	0.07
Urea (mg/dl)	39.00	45.85	37.55	50.75	44.60	1.84	0.08

a, b, c means on the same row having different superscript are significantly different (P < 0.05), SEM – Standard error of means,). AST= Aspartate aminotransferase, ALT= Alanine aminotransferase, ALP= Alanine aminophoshpate

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that toasted *Delonix regia* seed meal can be included up to 9.00% in West African Dwarf goat diets and enhanced immune and reduced blood cholesterol level.

Recommendation

Based on the obtained result, toasted *Delonix regia* seed meal can be included up to 9.00% is recommended for optimum protein- energy ratio to achieved microbial synthesis with this dietary combination.

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ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL INNOVATION USAGE AMONG FISH FARMERS IN FISHERIES EXTENSION IN AKINYELE AND IDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS, IBADAN, OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the adoption and impact of digital innovations in fisheries extension among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. It assessed the socio-economic characteristics of fish farmers, their access to digital tools, levels of awareness and usage, challenges faced, and overall perception of digital technologies. Data were collected from two Local Government, Akinyele, (25 respondents and Ido 25 respondents) using structured questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics. Results showed that fish farming in the area is predominantly male (78%) and concentrated among mature adults aged 36–55 years, with most farmers married (72%) and educated, nearly half possessing tertiary education. Earthen ponds (80%) were the primary production system, and the mean pond size was 13.24cm. A majority of respondents (94%) owned digital devices, mainly smartphones, and 90% had internet access. Digital tools such as SMS-based advisory services, mobile applications, e-extension platforms, were frequently utilized for market access, farm management, and extension advice. Awareness of digital innovations was high, with 68% of respondents demonstrating strong familiarity and regular usage. Challenges to adoption included poor internet connectivity, high costs, inadequate technical skills, and unstable power supply. Despite these constraints, most respondents (92%) expressed willingness to receive further training, highlighting a positive attitude toward digital adoption. Overall, 88% of farmers reported improved productivity through the use of digital technologies, and the majority perceived digital extension methods as more effective than traditional approaches. The study recommends improving digital infrastructure, enhancing capacity-building programs, and establishing continuous monitoring of digital adoption to maximize the benefits of digital innovations in aquaculture extension services.

Keywords: Digital innovations, Fisheries extension, Fish farmers, Aquaculture, ICT adoption

Introduction

The aquaculture industry in Nigeria has observed remarkable progress in recent years, playing a crucial role in ensuring food security, employment opportunities, and income variation. Notwithstanding this advancement, the fish farming productivity stays low because of ongoing issues, usually in the area of technical assistance and training delivery, Limited availability of real-time data and analytics to inform aquaculture practices also insufficient access to advanced diagnostic tools and productive models for disease management and delivery strategies for different species and life stages.
However, the level of awareness, accessibility and actual use of these digital tools among fish farmers in Nigeria remains uncertain.

Furthermore, the issues such as digital skills, cost-effectiveness of technology, content usefulness and infrastructure constraints can limit digital potential (Smith, 2021). While digital extension services are gaining attention, they still have lack of profound understanding regarding how fish farmers engage with these innovations and what outcomes they produce. Therefore, they still have to look into the challenges, productivity, advantages and obstacles associated with digital innovation in fisheries extension among farmers. Understanding the current level digital innovation adoption can help fisheries extension agents tailor their services to meet the specific needs of fish farmers, enhancing overall productivity and efficiency has become a national priority (Adebo and Alfred, 2020)

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The study was carried out in Ido and Akinyele Local Government Areas, Ibadan, south west Nigeria. The study areas were chosen because of its abundance of active fish farmers, according to the data

collected from the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Fisheries, Oyo State, which consist of all farmers in Ibadan grouped according to Local Government. (Adeigbe and Adesope, 2021).

Experimental Design, Sampling and Analytical technique

The study employed a snowball sampling technique to ensure diversity and adequate representation, allowing initial respondents to identify other fish farmers within their networks. Primary data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire; secondary data were obtained from library, internet, journals, text books etc. The data collected include demographic characteristics, occupational characteristics, and income levels of respondents, as well as their access to and usage of digital innovations. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means to summarize the responses. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and regression analysis, was employed to examine relationships between variables and test the research hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

The socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents are listed in Table 1 below.

Table1 illustrates gender distribution, age, marital status, years of experience, type of production facility used and annual income. The result shows that the majority of the respondents were male, accounting for 39 respondents representing 78.0%, while only 11 respondents representing 22.0% were female. This indicates that fish farming in the study area (Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas) is predominantly male-dominated.

Results reveal that the majority of the respondents fall within the age range of 46–55 years, accounting for 17 respondents representing 34.0%. This is followed by respondents aged 56 years and above, who constitute 12 respondents representing 24.0%. Respondents within the age bracket of 36–45 years account for 11 respondents (22.0%), while those aged 26–35 years represent 9 respondents (18.0%). The least represented age group is 18–25 years, with only 1 respondent (2.0%).

The findings indicate that fish farming in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas is largely dominated by middle-aged and older individuals. The high proportion of respondents between 46 years and above (58.0% combined) suggests that fish farming is more commonly practiced by experienced and economically stable adults rather than youths. This may be due to the capital-intensive nature of fish farming and the experience required to manage fish production effectively.

The low participation of younger individuals, particularly those between 18–25 years, may imply limited youth involvement in fish farming activities and possibly in the use of digital innovations within fisheries extension services. Since younger individuals are generally more inclined toward technology adoption, their low representation could affect the overall rate of digital innovation utilization in the study area.

Majority of the respondents were married, accounting for 36 respondents representing 72.0%. This is followed by divorced respondents with 6 respondents (12.0%), widowed respondents with 5 respondents (10.0%), and single respondents with 3 respondents representing 6.0%.

The high proportion of married respondents suggests that most fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas are family-oriented individuals who may have household responsibilities.

The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents, 29 representing 58.0%, have between 6–10 years of experience. This is followed by 10 respondents (20.0%) who have 11–15 years of experience. Respondents with 1–5 years of experience account for 6 respondents (12.0%), while those with 16 years and above represent 5 respondents (10.0%).

The results indicate that most of the fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas are moderately experienced, with over half having practiced fish farming for 6–10 years. This suggests that the respondents possess considerable practical knowledge and familiarity with fish farming operations. Such experience may positively influence their understanding and potential adoption of digital innovations in fisheries extension services, as experienced farmers are more likely to appreciate improved management practices and technological advancements.

As shown in Table 1, majority of the respondents, 40 representing 80.0%, operate earthen ponds. This is followed by 5 respondents (10.0%) who use concrete ponds, 3 respondents (6.0%) who use tarpaulin

tanks, and 2 respondents (4.0%) who operate wooden vats. The mean farm size of the respondents is 13.24 ponds.

The predominance of earthen ponds suggests that this system is the most preferred and widely practiced fish production method in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas. This may be attributed to its relatively lower construction cost, suitability for large-scale production, and natural environmental conditions that support fish growth. Earthen ponds are often more affordable and accessible to farmers compared to concrete and other modern systems.

The results show that a majority of the respondents, 26 (52.0%), earn below ₦500,000 annually. This is followed by 9 respondents (18.0%) earning between ₦1,000,001 and ₦2,000,000, another 9 respondents (18.0%) earning ₦2,000,001 and above, and 6 respondents (12.0%) earning between ₦500,001 and ₦1,000,000.

The findings suggest that over half of the fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas earn relatively low annual incomes, indicating that fish farming may be a subsistence or small-scale commercial activity for many. The limited income among the majority could affect their ability to invest in improved farming technologies or digital innovations, potentially constraining productivity and adoption of modern management tools.

However, a notable proportion of respondents (36.0% combined) earn above ₦1,000,000 annually, indicating that some fish farmers are operating at a more commercial scale and may have better capacity to utilize digital tools and extension services for farm management, market access, and productivity enhancement.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	39	78.0
	Female	11	22.0
Age	18-25	1	2.0
	26-35	9	18.0
	36-45	11	22.0
	46-55	17	34.0
	56 above	12	24.0
Marital status	Single	3	6.0
	Married	36	72.0
	Divorced	6	12.0
	Widowed	5	10.0
Years of experience	1-5	6	12.0
	6-10	29	58.0
	11-15	10	20.0
	16-20	5	10.0
	21above	0	0.0
Annual income	Below ₦500,000	26	52.0
	₦501,000- ₦1,000,000	6	12.0
	₦1,100,000- ₦2,000,000	9	9.0
	₦2,100,000 above	9	9.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Ownership of Device

Table 2 below, presents the distribution of respondents based on ownership of digital devices. The results show that a vast majority of the respondents, 47 (94.0%), own digital devices, while only 3 respondents (6.0%) do not own any device. The high rate of device ownership among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas suggests that most farmers have access to the basic tools required for utilizing digital innovations in fisheries extension services. The high rate of device ownership among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas suggests that most farmers have access to the basic tools required for utilizing digital innovations in fisheries extension services. Device ownership is a critical factor in the adoption of digital technologies, as it enables farmers to

access online information, communicate with extension officers, use farm management applications, and engage in digital platforms for market access and training.

Ownership of Devices of Respondent

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents, 40 (80.0%), own smartphones, 6 respondents (12.0%) have basic phones, and 4 respondents (8.0%) own tablets.

The dominance of smartphone ownership among fish farmers suggests a high potential for the adoption of digital innovations in fisheries extension services. Smartphones offer multifunctional capabilities such as internet access, communication via social media and messaging apps, use of agricultural and fishery management applications, and access to online training and market information. This makes them particularly suitable for improving farm management and efficiency.

Types of Devices of Respondent

The smaller proportion of respondents using basic phones (12.0%) and tablets (8.0%) may have limited access to advanced digital features, which could restrict the types of digital innovation they can effectively use. Farmers with basic phones may primarily use voice calls and SMS services, while tablet users may have better screen interface for applications but are fewer in number.

Access to internet

As shown in Table 2 below, a majority of respondents, 45 (90.0%), have access to the internet, while only 5 respondents (10.0%) do not.

The high level of internet access among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas indicates strong potential for the adoption and utilization of digital innovations in fisheries extension services. Internet connectivity allows farmers to access a wide range of information, including best management practices, weather updates, market prices, online training, and communication with extension officers. This access is critical for enhancing productivity, efficiency, and decision-making in fish farming.

The small proportion of respondents without internet access (10.0%) may face challenges in leveraging digital tools and platforms, limiting their exposure to online resources, mobile applications, and digital advisory services. This highlights the need for interventions such as community internet access points, affordable data plans, or training to ensure inclusivity and equitable participation in digital innovations.

Digital Innovations Used by Respondents

Table 2 below presents the types of digital innovations used by fish farmers in the study area. The results indicate that a majority of respondents, 36 (72.0%), use SMS or call-based information services. This is followed by the use of digital feed dispensers and digital test kits, each with 29 respondents (58.0%), e-extension training with 28 respondents (56.0%), and mobile applications with 26 respondents (52.0%).

The findings suggest that SMS/call-based information services are the most commonly used digital innovation among fish farmers, likely due to their simplicity, affordability, and accessibility even on basic phones. These services are crucial for receiving timely information on fish management practices, disease control, and market updates.

The relatively high adoption of digital feed dispensers and digital test kits (58.0% each) indicates that farmers are increasingly embracing technology that enhances operational efficiency and precision in fish farming. Similarly, the use of e-extension training (56.0%) and mobile apps (52.0%) shows that a significant proportion of farmers are engaging with interactive and technology-driven learning platforms to improve their skills and knowledge.

Awareness and Usage of Digital Tools

Table 2 below shows the sources of awareness of digital tools among fish farmers in the study area. The results show that 14 respondents (28.0%) learned about digital tools from fellow farmers, 13 respondents (26.0%) from online sources, 12 respondents (24.0%) through extension agents, 8 respondents (16.0%) via non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and 3 respondents (6.0%) from TV or radio.

The findings indicate that peer-to-peer interaction (fellow farmers) is the most common source of awareness, highlighting the importance of informal knowledge sharing in fish farming communities.

Online platforms are also significant, reflecting the role of internet access and digital connectivity in disseminating information about technological tools. Extension agents remain a crucial source, providing structured and professional guidance, while NGOs contribute by supporting capacity-building initiatives and technology promotion. TV and radio are the least utilized channels, suggesting that traditional media play a minor role in raising awareness about digital innovations in the study area.

Level of Awareness of Respondent

As indicated in Table 2 below, majority (68%) of the respondents are very aware of digital tools for fish farming, while 12% are moderately aware having good general understanding of digital tools for fish farming, 16% are somewhat aware with basic knowledge of digital tools, only 4% are slightly aware i.e. has heard of it but lacks details. However, none of the respondents are not aware at all or completely unfamiliar.

Purpose of Use of Digital Innovation

Results as indicated in Table 2 below, shows that 25 respondents (50.0%) use digital tools primarily for market access, 11 respondents (22.0%) for farm management, 5 respondents (10.0%) for extension advice, 4 respondents (8.0%) for disease detection, 3 respondents (6.0%) for record keeping, 2 respondents (4.0%) for online training, and none (0.0%) use digital tools for networking.

The findings indicate that market access is the main driver of digital tool usage among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas. Farmers utilize these tools to obtain information about buyers, pricing, and sales channels, which is critical for improving profitability and reducing post-harvest losses.

Farm management and extension advice are also notable purposes, demonstrating that some farmers leverage digital tools to enhance operational efficiency, receive expert guidance, and adopt improved practices. Disease detection and record-keeping, while less common, show that technology is beginning to support critical aspects of fish health management and farm documentation.

The low engagement in online training (4.0%) and complete lack of usage for networking (0.0%) suggest that some digital innovation potentials remain underutilized. This may be due to limited awareness, lack of training, or the perceived complexity of such applications.

Frequency use of Extension Services of the Respondent

As represented in Table 2 below, the frequency of utilization of extension services by respondents. The results show that 19 respondents (38.0%) access extension services on a monthly basis, 14 respondents (28.0%) use them weekly, 11 respondents (22.0%) access them annually, and 6 respondents (12.0%) access them daily.

The findings indicate that the majority of fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas rely on extension services periodically, with monthly usage being the most common. This suggests that farmers engage with extension agents to receive guidance, updates, and support at intervals that correspond with critical farm management activities, such as feeding schedules, disease monitoring, or stocking decisions.

Daily usage of extension services is relatively low (12.0%), possibly because constant, daily supervision or consultation is not necessary or feasible for most farmers. Annual usage (22.0%) may reflect farmers who only seek formal advice during major farming cycles or specific challenges.

Table 2: Ownership of Devices of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ownership of Device	Yes	47	94.0
	No	3	6.0
Type of Device	Basic phone	6	12.0
	Smartphone	40	80.0
	Tablet	4	8.0
Access to internet	Yes	45	90.0
	No	5	10.0
Digital innovation	SMS/Call info	36	72.0

	e-Extension Training	28	56.0
	Digital feed dispenser	29	58.0
	Mobile App	26	52.0
	Digital test kits	29	58.0
	Extension agent	12	24.0
	Fellow farmers	14	28.0
Source of Awareness	TV/Radio	3	6.0
	Online	13	26.0
	NGOs	8	16.0
	5 (Very Aware)	34	68.0
Level of Awareness (Scale)	4 (Aware)	6	12.0
	3 (Somewhat Aware)	8	16.0
	2 (Slightly Aware)	2	4.0
	1 (Not Aware)	0	0.0
	Market Access	25	50.0
	Farm management	11	22.0
Purpose of Use of Digital Innovation	Extension advice	5	10.0
	Disease detection	4	8.0
	Record keeping	3	6.0
	Networking	0	0.0
	Online training	2	4.0
	Daily	6	12.0
Frequency of use of Extension Services	Weekly	14	28.0
	Monthly	19	38.0
	Annually	11	22.0

Source: Field survey, 2025.

Challenges in Adopting Digital Technologies

Table 3 below reveals the challenges faced by respondents in adopting digital technologies in fish farming. The results indicate that the major constraint reported by respondents is poor internet connectivity, with 23 respondents (46.0%) highlighting it as a barrier. Other challenges include irrelevant content (9 respondents, 18.0%), high cost of digital tools or services (6 respondents, 12.0%), lack of digital skills (5 respondents, 10.0%), power issues (4 respondents, 8.0%), trust issues (12 respondents, 4.0%), and language barriers (1 respondent, 2.0%).

The findings suggest that inadequate internet access is the most significant obstacle to digital innovation adoption among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas. Limited connectivity may hinder access to online resources, mobile applications, e-extension platforms, and real-time farm management tools.

Irrelevant content and lack of skills indicate that some digital resources may not be tailored to the local context or that farmers may not have sufficient training to use them effectively. High costs and power issues further limit the accessibility and consistent use of digital technologies, especially in rural areas. Trust issues, although reported by a smaller proportion, may affect farmers' willingness to rely on digital platforms for critical farm decisions.

Table 3: Challenges in Adopting Digital Technologies

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Constraints	Poor internet	23	46.0
	Lack of skills	5	10.0
	High cost	6	12
	Power issue	4	8.0
	Irrelevant content	9	18.0
	Language barrier	1	2.0
	Trust issue	2	4.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Conclusion

This study assessed the usage of digital innovations in fisheries extension among fish farmers in Akinyele and Ido Local Government Areas, Ibadan, Oyo State. The results as shown in Results and Discussion provides a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic characteristics of respondents, their access to and awareness of digital tools and challenges encountered in use of digital innovation in aquaculture.

From the socio-economic analysis (Table 1), most respondents were male (78%) a proportion consistent with the male dominance long documented across Nigeria's aquaculture value chain. Adam *et al*. (2025) and within the productive age group of 36–55 years. A majority (72%) were married and well educated, with nearly half (48%) having attained tertiary education which tends to be considerably higher than comparable surveys report elsewhere in the country. Mohammed's (2024) study of ICT use among farmers in Yobe State, for instance, found 49.2% of respondents had no formal education whatsoever, with tertiary graduates a distinct minority. The contrast may be attributed to Akinyele and Ido being within Ibadan's peri-urban belt, in reach of the University of Ibadan and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and the sampled farmers are drawn from a labour pool markedly better schooled than the national aquaculture average. However, Nwaobiala (2014), working with community-based fish farmers in Cross River State, identified education as the strongest positive determinant of technology adoption among the socio-economic variables tested, alongside farm income and frequency of extension contact, found pond size to correlate negatively with adoption, which suggests that scale of operation alone does not translate into technological uptake without the literacy to support it. More than half of the fish farmers had between six and ten years of fish farming experience, and earthen ponds were the predominant production system (80%) with a mean pond size of 13.24 ponds. Annual income data showed that over half of the respondents earned between ₦500,000 and ₦1,000,000, indicating that aquaculture is a significant source of income and that farmers possess the literacy and experience required to adopt digital technologies effectively.

Access to digital innovations was high among respondents, as 94% owned digital devices (Table 2), mainly smartphones (80%) and 90% had internet access. Farmers utilized various digital tools such as SMS advisory services, mobile apps, e-extension platforms, digital feed dispensers, and digital test kits. This reflects the growing penetration of digital technology in aquaculture management and extension delivery in the area, which indicates that digital penetration in this locality has moved beyond simple phone ownership into tool-specific application. This echoes Olaoye *et al*. (2024), who found WhatsApp and Facebook carrying the bulk of digital communication among Ogun State fisheries extension personnel, with overall utilization split between moderate (48.0%) and high (46.7%) levels.

Regarding awareness and usage, most farmers learned about digital technologies through fellow farmers, extension agents, online platforms, and NGOs, this is in contrast with Rogers's (2003) diffusion-of-innovations framework, which assumes that once knowledge and persuasion occur, implementation more or less follows. A significant number of respondents used digital tools frequently; mostly weekly or daily for purposes such as market access (50%), farm management (22%), and extension advice. These results suggest that awareness and practical application of digital innovations are steadily increasing among fish farmers in Ibadan, particularly Akinyele and Ido Local Governments.

The study also identified several challenges affecting the adoption of digital technologies. Poor internet connectivity (46%), high costs, and limited technical skills were the main constraints, while peer influence (48%) was a major factor influencing adoption. Olaoye *et al*. (2024) found the same triad from the supply side: extension personnel in Ogun State cited the high cost of internet data, farmers' lack of technical know-how, and, more bluntly, farmers' lack of interest, as their three leading obstacles to digital communication tool use.

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PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS OF BROILER FINISHER FED GRADED LEVELS OF ACID SOAKED CAJANUS CAJAN SEED MEAL DIET

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Abstract
Pigeon pea (Cajanus cajan) is an underutilized tropical tuberous African legume, it has the potential for supplementing the protein requirement for human being and animal. However, presence of anti-nutritional factors limits its uses in feed formulation. A total of (90) broilers were used for the study to determine the performance characteristics of broiler birds fed graded levels of Cajanus cajan soaked in acidic medium. The birds were randomly assigned into 3 dietary treatments of 30 birds per treatments consisting of 10 birds per replicate in a completely randomized design experiment. The seeds used were purchased from Bodija market in Ibadan. The raw pigeon seeds were pre-treated by soaking at the rate of 1kg/3L of water after which the soaked seeds were soaked at the rate of 1kg/3L of pap water filtrate for 24 hours. The sample was sundried for 3days, milled and then included in the diet accordingly. Birds on T1 received the control diet and T2 received 10% level of pigeon pea, while T3 received 20% level of pigeon pea. The experiment lasted for eight weeks. At the end of the 8 weeks feeding trial, results showed that there were significant (P<0.05) differences in all the performance parameters measured. Birds on T2 recorded the highest value of final weight (285.50g) and weight gain (1316.83g) while the lowest value of final weight (2481.50g), weight gain (857.50g) and feed intake (3269.50g) was recorded for birds on T1. It was concluded that pigeon pea soaked in pap water filtrate can be fed to birds at 20% level of inclusion without having any adverse effects on the performance characteristics of the birds.

Keywords: *Broiler, Pigeon pea, Treatment, Performance*

Introduction

Availability of conventional feed ingredients in the formulation of balanced diets is limited and expensive which are the major constrains faced by poultry producers (Banerjee, 2002). Increasing demand for protein ingredients has drawn the attention of poultry farmers towards the use of unconventional, inexpensive and locally available feed ingredients such as pigeon pea. Incorporation of this legume in the formulation of a balanced diet may overcome and minimize the problems of shortage and feed cost (Alagawany and Attia 2015).

Pigeon pea is an underutilized tropical African tuberous legume. It has the potential for supplementing the protein requirement for human being and animals. Pigeon pea bean can be grown for both its seed and tuber. it is one of the lesser-known legumes that are now coming into prominence in nutritional and agronomic research as an emerging food legume. The crude protein content ranges from 21- 29%, while the amino acid profile is similar to that of soyabean, it is a good source of protein, fibre and carbohydrate, it contains all the amino acids found naturally in plant protein (Eka and Akaninwor, 2000). However, the presence of antinutritional factors such as trypsin inhibitors, haemagglutins, phytate, tannins, oxalate and other alkaloids and lectin which are toxic limit its use in feed formulation (Akinmutimi *et al.*, 2006). Wokoma and Aziagha, (2001) and Amingo and Metzger (2005) have employed various processing methods which includes soaking, dehulling, fermentation, soaking to reduce or inactivate some of the anti-nutritional factor

Materials and methods

Experimental site: The experiment was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-Ora

Collection of samples: Pigeon pea was purchased in a large quantity from Bodija market in Ibadan north local government, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Pre-treatment of seed: Raw pigeon bean seeds were soaked at the rate of 1kg/3litres of water for 12 hours after which the water was decanted.

Treatment of sample: The pre-soaked seeds were soaked at the rate of 1kg/3litres of pap water filtrate for 24 hours, initial and final pH was taken.

Experimental design and animal management: A total of ninety (90) birds were used for the study. They were randomly assigned into 3 dietary treatments of 30 birds consisting of 3 replicates of ten (10) birds per replicates in a completely randomized design experiment. Birds on T1 received the control diets; T2 received 10% level of pigeon pea, while T3 received 20% level of pigeon pea as replacement for soyabean meal. The experiment lasted for eight weeks.

Table 1: Gross composition of experimental diets

Ingredients	T1 (0%)	T2 10%)	T3 (20%)
Maize	60.00	60.00	60.00
Soyabean meal	28.89	26.00	23.12
Cajanus cajan	0.00	2.89	5.77
Bone meal	4.00	4.00	4.00
Limestone	6.11	6.11	6.11
Lysine	0.25	0.25	0.25
Methionine	0.25	0.25	0.25
Salt	0.25	0.25	0.25
Broiler premix	0.25	0.25	0.25
Total	100	100	100
Metabolizable energy	2840.43	2847.82	2855.20
Crude protein	19.00	18.22	17.44

Growth parameters measured included Initial weight, feed intake, final live weight, weight gain, feed conversion ratio

Statistical analysis: Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis of variance (ANOVA) using SPS 2003 version and means separated by Duncan Multiple Range Test.

Results and discussion

Initial and post treatment of *Cajanus cajan* soaked in acidic medium is presented in Table 2 while Table 3 showed the performance characteristics of broiler finisher fed graded levels of acid soaked *Cajanus cajan* seed meal diet. Results showed that there were significant ($P<0.05$) differences in all the performance parameters measured. Birds on T2 recorded the highest value of final weight (285.50g) and weight gain (1316.83g) while the lowest value of final weight (2481.50), weight gain 857.50) and feed intake (3269.50g) was recorded for birds on T1.

Increased weight gain and final live weight observed for birds on T2 and high feed intake of birds on T3 observed for birds on T3 indicated that both diets were acceptable to the birds and the high weight gain observed for birds on T2 could be due to well-balanced amino acids profile of the diet resulting in higher biological utilization of the diet which could be explained by the increase in feed intake. It was evident from the study that the processing methods employed reduced the anti-nutritional factors of pigeon pea which resulted in the increase growth rate, high feed intake and good biological value of the protein of diet T2 and T3. This supports the findings of Akinmutimi (2004) who observed that most processing methods do not completely reduce ANFs in legumes

Conclusion: It was concluded that pigeon pea soaked in pap water filtrate can be fed to birds at 20% level without any negative effect on the growth performance of broiler.

Table 2: Initial and post treatment of *Cajanus cajan* soaked in acidic medium

pH range	CCSAM
Initial pH	3.8
Final pH	4.6

CCSAM- *Cajanus cajan* soaked in acidic medium

Table 3: Performance characteristics of broiler finisher fed graded levels of acid soaked *Cajanus cajan* seed meal diet.

Parameters	T1(0%)	T2 (10%)	T3 (20%)	SEM
Initial weight (g)	1624.00[a]	1533.67[c]	1542.00[b]	0.41
Final live weight (g)	2481.50[c]	2850.50[a]	2721.00[b]	0.55
Weight gain (g)	857.50[c]	1316.83[a]	1179.00[b]	0.28
Feed intake (g)	3269.57[c]	3481.20[b]	3834.21[a]	0.00
Feed conversion ratio	0.26[a]	0.38[c]	0.31[b]	0.03

A, b, c: mean in the same row with different script differs significantly (P< 0.05)

Table 4 Antinutritional factor content of raw and processed pigeon pea

Antinutritional factors	Raw	Processed	Percentage reduction
Tannin	0.07	0.0052	27.71
Oxalate	0.0014	0.00055	60.7
Phytate	0.0028	0.0016	42.8
Saponin	0.00245	0.00180	26.5
Typsin inhibitors	12.105	8.10	33.08

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ENGINEERING, BIOTECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL SERVICES

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A WEB-BASED SMART SCHOOL FEES PAYMENT PORTAL FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract
Traditional school fee systems lack flexibility, transparency, and intelligent mechanisms to assess and support families based on financial capacity. This paper aims to design and implement a smart school fees payment portal that supports structured instalment payments and leverages Artificial Intelligence (AI) for credit scoring. Using an Artificial Neural Network (ANN), the system evaluates parents' creditworthiness through financial features such as income level, employment status, and payment history. The system is built on a React frontend and Django REST backend, with PostgreSql handling real-time data management. The platform allows parents to submit financial applications, receive automated eligibility feedback, and enroll in tailored bi-weekly or monthly payment plans. Real-time dashboards, payment tracking, and notifications provide administrative and user-level transparency. The AI model is trained on publicly available datasets and designed to evolve through usage, ensuring dynamic accuracy. The project effectively delivered an operational school fees payment portal with AI-based credit scoring, allowing instalment payments via React, Django, and PostgreSql integration. Limitations involved a small training dataset for the AI model and the omission of live deployment.

Keywords: *School Fee Portal, AI Credit Scoring, Instalment Payments, Artificial Neural Network (ANN), Education Finance.*

Introduction

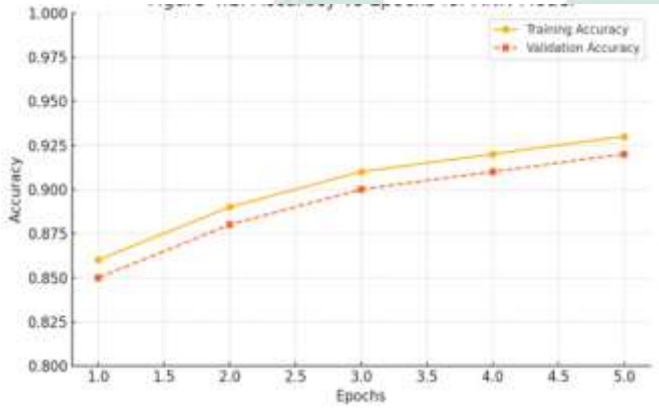
Education monetary requirements are constantly rising in the present altering world of proverbial information technology and education fees have become one of the greatest concerns to many parents as well as guardians. The school fees have traditionally been paid on single payments, and this often strains the family financially. Moreover, such manual operations as verification and record-keeping cause errors, time wastage, and inefficiency. Lack of convenient payment mode and credit evaluation has put a block on education to most low-income earners and individuals in the middle income group. The solution to this would be a smart school fee payment portal that offers instalment payment plans and AI driven credit scoring.

Credit scoring is a patterned approach that aims to evaluate the credit risk of an individual based on his or her various financial factors and previous activities (Ashofteh & Bravo, 2021). Such a quantitative measure, which is provided in the form of a credit score, can help financial institutions, credits, and other interested parties make a decision regarding the provision of credit, its interest rates and the amount of credit can be provided (Wilhelmina Afua Addy et al., 2024). Even though traditional credit scoring strategies but still effect, they had encountered problems with incorporating into the current financial environments that were dynamic and complex (Patel, 2023). Through fusion of financial technology and intelligent systems, parents can settle school fees in and are affordable. The involvement of AI in the credit scoring is provided by the superior functionality of machine learning algorithms and predictive analytics. The fact that AI credit scoring evaluates the creditworthiness of with innovation, employment status, income, credit history, account statements, makes the system

The application of. AI algorithms in the evaluation of the financial behavior, enables system to take a sound judgment to grant loans, which reduces the risk of default and that the payment made is able to fit into the capacity of the borrower. The portal is an all-in-one financial management solution that offers real time reporting on outstanding balances, automatic remote reminders, downloadable receipts, user-friendly dashboards of schools administrators and parents. As the global movement towards

digitization in education continues, the integration of AI in fee management aligns with contemporary trends in EdTech, enhancing school operations to be smarter, quicker, and more attuned to financial realities. This innovation supports both families and schools guaranteeing them a steady revenue stream while minimizing the administrative burden associated with payment tracking. As schools increasingly embrace digital solutions, a smart portal that integrates financial intelligence and offers flexible payment methods becomes an essential tool for effective financial management. It not only boosts administrative efficiency but also fosters educational equity, ensuring that financial hardships do not impede access to learning opportunities.

Model training was tracked using a validation curve.



Accuracy vs Epochs for ANN Model

The ANN model showed stable convergence, reaching ~93% accuracy by epoch 5 with minimal overfitting.

Result and discussion

The Smart School Fees Payment Portal is the web application developed with Django REST Framework and Reactjs. It also seeks to help parents to pay the school fees of their children via AI-powered loan repayment schemes. Its use is simple, self-explanatory, and friendly and can be used in any type of device that has an internet connection. Integrated Development Environment (IDE) was used during the development process that is Visual Studio Code. This system is designed as series of modules where the modules include the Loan Application Module, AI Credit Scoring Module and the Admin Review Module as well as Repayment Tracking Module. The AI algorithm supply details about customers financial and job data to determine loan-eligibility with extended payment periods. This portal provide the parents with the freedom of being free of monetary worries, help the schools to monitor the funds in real-time, and facilitate the models of inclusiveness towards education. With an easy-to-use interface, automation of its processes and timely information flow between the users and the administration, the system delivers an effective and effective solution to the educational financial sector.

Recommendation

In order to get the greatest benefit out of the system with continuous relevancy and usability, the following recommendations can be proposed:

i. **Continuous model optimization**: The AI credit model needs to be trained continuously on new data usage and fine-tuned to determine the best fit to predict the ability of repayment.
ii. **Curriculum and session updates**: The system needs frequent update to enhance an effective information on the change of school fee, term and tuition formation.
iii. **Integration with school portals**: The system must be linked with the schools management systems so that data on students can be synchronized and to prevent the duplication information.
iv. **Mobile App Development**: It will develop a mobile application version for the system to enhance accessibility and provide a link between parents and administrators.

v. **Parent Feedback Loop**: User feedbacks and feature requests are taken into consideration and used to create a better user experience with the real.

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ENGINEERING PROPERTIES OF TERMITARIA SOILS FOR USE IN AGRICULTURAL WATER CONTROL STRUCTURES

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Abstract

This study evaluates the geotechnical suitability of termitaria soils, biogenically engineered by Macrotermes sp. colonies, as fill materials for agricultural water control structures in the Nigerian Guinea Savanna zone. Two termitaria mounds and two adjacent lateritic borrow-pit soils from Oyo State were characterised through particle-size analysis, Atterberg limits, standard Proctor compaction, falling-head permeability, and consolidated-drained direct shear (BS 1377, 1990), each in triplicate. Termitaria soils achieved maximum dry densities of 1,758–1,960 kg/m³ at optimum moisture contents of 7.6–10.5%, exceeded reference laterites in compaction performance, and returned plasticity indices of 4–10%. Hydraulic conductivity of 5.83–20.74 × 10⁻⁴ cm/s places all soils in the medium-permeability class, suitable for drainage blankets but requiring bentonite amendment for impervious liner roles. Critically, termitaria soils exhibited apparent cohesion of 12–19 kN/m², attributed to biogenic cementation, whereas the reference soils were cohesionless. Taylor's stability number analysis (Fell et al., 2015; Das and Sobhan, 2018) confirms factors of safety of 1.93–2.50 against circular slip failure at 4 m embankment height on a 1V:2H slope, exceeding the USACE (2003) long-term drained minimum of 1.3, and validating termitaria soils as competent, locally available fill for small water-retaining earthworks within the ≤5 m small dam height class defined by FAO (2010).

Keywords: *Termitaria; Agricultural water control structures; Geotechnical properties; Tropical soils; Sustainable watershed management*

Introduction

Agricultural water control structures, small earth dams, check dams, irrigation pond embankments, and micro-catchment bunds, underpin smallholder food production and water security across tropical Africa (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2001, 2010). Despite their importance, widespread adoption is constrained in remote farming communities by the scarcity of geotechnically characterised fill material within economical haul distances and the prohibitive cost of quarry-sourced aggregate transport (FAO, 2010). Termitaria, biogenic mound structures built by Macrotermes, Cubitermes, and Trinervitermes species, are among the most abundant landscape features of tropical sub-Saharan Africa. These mounds are fabricated from particles selectively excavated from subsurface horizons and compacted with salivary secretions acting as a natural organic binder (Jouquet *et al*., 2016). The resulting material exhibits measurably different engineering properties from the surrounding undisturbed laterite; informal exploitation for rural earthworks has been documented across Nigeria for centuries (Mijinyawa *et al*., 2007), yet formal engineering assessment for hydraulic structures remains fragmented.

Recent investigations confirm the geotechnical promise of termitaria soils. Momah and Okieimen (2020) reported maximum dry densities of 1,720–2,100 kg/m³ and cohesion intercepts up to 50 kN/m² for Nigerian termitaria, substantially superior to adjacent control soils. Olayiwola *et al*. (2020) confirmed superior CBR, plasticity, and compressive strength in southwest Nigerian mound soils. Ahouet *et al*. (2022, 2023) characterised Congo Basin termitaria, identifying kaolinite–iron-oxide enrichment, biogenic cementation, and plasticity indices of 7.5–27.2%, while noting that Macrotermes-dominated southwest Nigerian profiles appear more uniformly stabilised than Cubitermes-dominated Central African counterparts. None of these studies, however, benchmarks results against dam

engineering design thresholds. The present study fills this gap: two termitaria mounds and two paired borrow-pit laterites from Oyo State, Nigeria, are characterised across five geotechnical parameters and results are interpreted against criteria from FAO (2010), Fell *et al*. (2015), the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR, 1987), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE, 2003).

Methodology

Study Area and Sample Collection

Soil samples were collected from four locations within the ferralitic–ferruginous laterite belt of Oyo State, southwest Nigeria (Guinea Savanna–Rainforest transition; mean annual rainfall 1,100–1,400 mm, bimodal). Two sampling points yielded termitaria mound material (Termitaria 1 and Termitaria 2) from active Macrotermes sp. mounds; two complementary borrow-pit reference sites (Site 1, paired with Termitaria 1; Site 2, paired with Termitaria 2) were located within 500 m of the corresponding mound at comparable topographic position. Bulk disturbed samples (minimum 25 kg per site) were excavated from 0.5–1.5 m depth, sealed in double-skinned polythene bags, and transported to the geotechnical laboratory within 48 hours. All samples were air-dried and disaggregated prior to testing (BS 1377-1, 1990).

Laboratory Testing Programme

Five test categories were implemented in triplicate (BS 1377, 1990), permitting computation of mean, standard deviation and 95% confidence interval:

1. Particle-size analysis: dry sieve (4.75 mm – 0.075 mm, BS 1377-2 Clause 9) plus hydrometer sedimentation for the sub-0.075 mm fraction (BS 1377-2 Clause 9.5).
2. Atterberg limits: liquid limit by 30° cone penetrometer (BS 1377-2 Clause 4.3); plastic limit by thread-rolling (BS 1377-2 Clause 5.3); soils classified on the Casagrande plasticity chart (Casagrande, 1948) and AASHTO M 145-91 (AASHTO, 2012).
3. Modified Proctor compaction: 4.5 kg rammer, 450 mm drop, five layers per 1,000 cm^3 mould (BS 1377-4 Clause 3.4). Three replicate curves per site; peak fitted by polynomial regression.
4. Falling-head permeability: specimens compacted at site-specific OMC to 95% MDD in 100 mm permeameters (BS 1377-6 Clause 6); k computed per Das and Sobhan (2018).
5. Consolidated-drained (CD) direct shear: 60 mm × 60 mm specimens at 95% MDD, sheared at σn = 50, 100, and 200 kN/m^2 (BS 1377-7 Clause 4); C′ and Ø′ extracted from the Mohr-Coulomb envelope (Mitchell and Soga, 2005).

Results

Particle-Size Distribution

All four soils exhibit well-graded sandy–silty profiles (Table 1). Gradation envelopes for each termitaria–reference pair are broadly similar above 0.075 mm, indicating that termite colony activity reorganises rather than radically alters bulk particle-size distribution (Jouquet *et al.*, 2016). At the 0.075 mm boundary, the Termitaria 1–Site 1 pair recorded 42.6% versus 43.3% passing; Termitaria 2 recorded 35.0% passing against 25.6% for Site 2, the elevated fines content consistent with selective transport of silt- and clay-sized particles by Macrotermes workers (Momah and Okieimen, 2020). Clay fraction (< 0.002 mm) remained below 5% in all soils, confirming low clay-mineral activity consistent with kaolinite-dominated lateritic mineralogy (Gidigasu, 1976; Ahouet *et al*., 2022).

Table 1. Particle-size distribution (% finer by mass) for termitaria mound soils and adjacent borrow-pit reference soils (BS 1377-2:1990).

Sieve size (mm)	Termitaria 1 (% finer)	Site 1 (% finer)	Termitaria 2 (% finer)	Site 2 (% finer)
4.750	100.0	100.0	99.3	99.5
2.000	99.7	98.9	95.7	90.7
0.850	84.1	83.9	82.5	73.1

0.425	65.5	67.0	63.7	55.5
0.212	51.8	52.2	47.0	39.4
0.106	46.3	46.6	40.1	31.8
0.075	42.6	43.3	35.0	25.6
0.038	17.9	17.3	11.9	7.7
0.005	5.1	6.1	4.2	2.6
0.002	4.3	3.5	2.1	1.0

Compaction Parameters

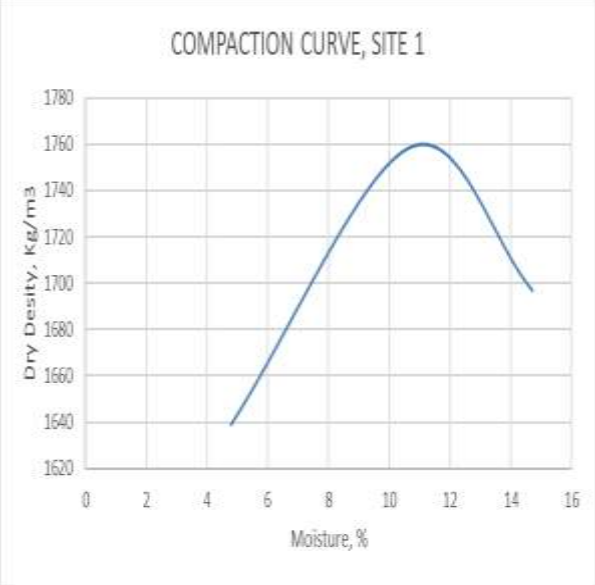
Termitaria 2 achieved the highest maximum dry density (MDD) of 1,960 kg/m³ at the lowest optimum moisture content (OMC) of 7.6%, while Site 1 recorded the lowest MDD of 1,685 kg/m³ at the highest OMC of 15.7% (Table 2). The inverse MDD–OMC relationship is characteristic of granular soils where coarser assemblages achieve higher densities at lower water contents (Proctor, 1933; Das and Sobhan, 2018). MDD values of 1,758–1,960 kg/m³ for both termitaria soils fall within the 1,720–2,100 kg/m³ range reported by Momah and Okieimen (2020) for nine Nigerian termitaria sites, confirming dataset representativeness.

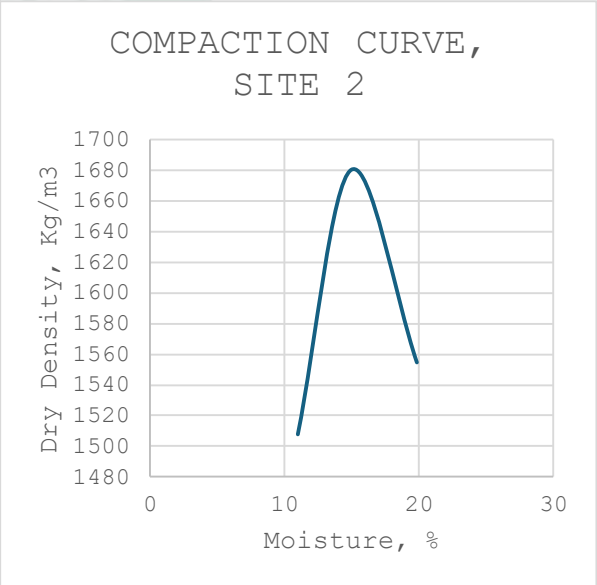
Table 2. Modified Proctor compaction parameters for all test soils (BS 1377-4:1990).

Parameter	Termitaria 1	Site 1	Site 2	Termitaria 2
Max. dry density, MDD (kg/m³)	1758	1685	1804	1960
Opt. moisture content, OMC (%)	10.5	15.7	9.0	7.6

Hydraulic Conductivity

The coefficient of hydraulic conductivity k ranged from 5.83×10^{-4} cm/s (Termitaria 1) to 20.74×10^{-4} cm/s (Site 2), placing all four soils in the medium-permeability class (10^{-4} to 10^{-2} cm/s) characteristic of clean sands and silty sands (Das and Sobhan, 2018; Mitchell and Soga, 2005) (Table 3). Standard deviations of zero for Site 2 and Termitaria 2 reflect exceptional specimen homogeneity, a practical quality-assurance indicator that field compaction at the laboratory-determined optimum will yield consistent hydraulic conductivity.





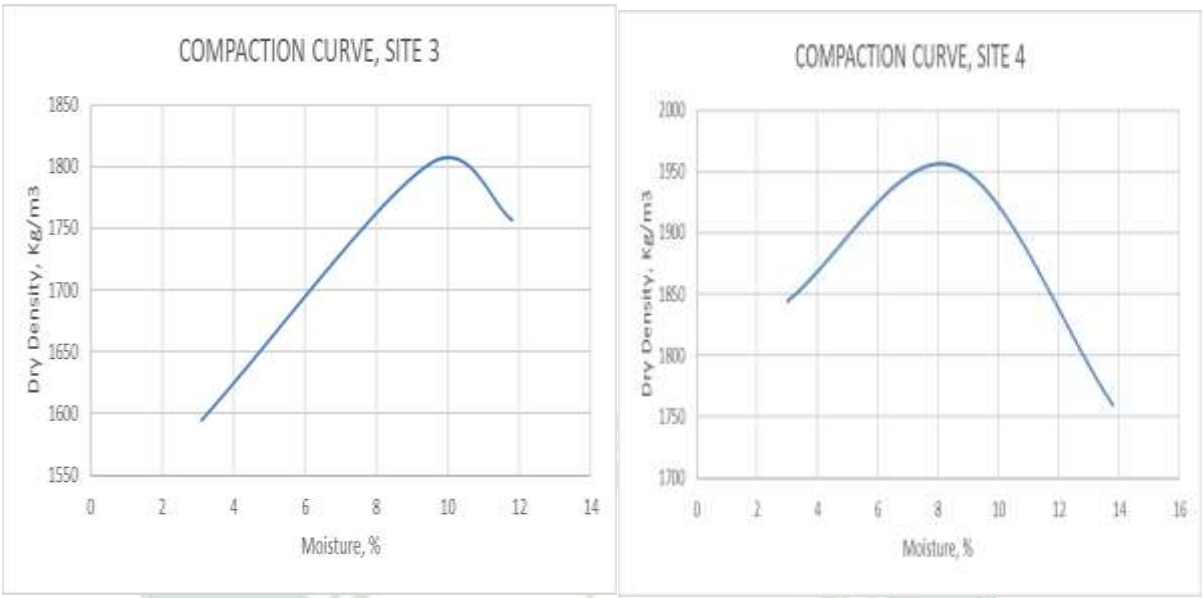


Figure 1. Standard Proctor compaction curves for all four soils.

Table 3. Hydraulic conductivity k (× 10^{-4} cm/s), falling-head method (BS 1377-6:1990), n = 3 replicates per site. SD = standard deviation.

Statistic	Termitaria 1 (×10^{-4} cm/s)	Site 1 (×10^{-4} cm/s)	Site 2 (×10^{-4} cm/s)	Termitaria 2 (×10^{-4} cm/s)
Mean	5.83	9.86	20.74	18.44
SD	0.30	1.49	0.00	0.00
N	3	3	3	3

Shear Strength Parameters

Reference borrow-pit soils (Site 1 and Site 2) are cohesionless (C′ = 0 kN/m²), with angles of shearing resistance of 32.0° and 25.0° respectively, consistent with medium-dense to dense uncemented granular laterites (Terzaghi *et al.*, 1996; Gidigasu, 1976) (Table 4). By contrast, both termitaria soils exhibit clear cohesion intercepts, C′ = 19 kN/m² (Termitaria 1) and C′ = 12 kN/m² (Termitaria 2), combined with Ø′ of 25.0° and 30.0° respectively. These cohesion values are physically consistent with the weak organo-mineral bonding produced by salivary secretions during Macrotermes mound construction, a mechanism documented through microstructural analysis of West African termitaria (Jouquet *et al.*, 2016; Ahouet *et al.*, 2022). The values are lower than the up-to-50 kN/m² reported from triaxial tests in Delta State (Momah and Okieimen, 2020), reflecting differences in apparatus (direct shear versus triaxial) and regional mineralogy.

Table 4. Shear strength parameters from consolidated-drained (CD) direct shear tests at normal stresses of 50, 100, and 200 kN/m² (BS 1377-7:1990).

Parameter	Site 1	Termitaria 1	Termitaria 2	Site 2
Apparent cohesion, C′ (kN/m²)	0	19	12	0
Angle of shearing resistance, Ø′ (°)	32.0	25.0	30.0	25.0

Atterberg Limits and Soil Classification

Liquid limits ranged from 19% (Termitaria 2) to 29% (Site 1), plastic limits from 16% to 19%, and plasticity indices from 4% to 10% (Table 5). All four soils plot below the A-line on the Casagrande plasticity chart (Casagrande, 1948), confirming low clay-mineral activity. Under AASHTO M 145-91

(AASHTO, 2012), all soils classify as A-2-4 (termitaria and Site 2) or A-2-6 (Site 1), 'excellent to good' subgrade material. The lower PI values of termitaria soils (4–5%) versus paired reference laterites (6–10%) reflect organo-mineral cement coating clay surfaces and reducing water-adsorption capacity (Ahouet *et al.*, 2022), simultaneously producing soils that are finer-textured yet less plastic, a combination conferring lower volumetric swell under seasonal wetting and drying.

Table 5. Atterberg limits, plasticity index, and AASHTO classification for all test soils (BS 1377-2:1990; AASHTO, 2012).

Parameter	Termitaria 1	Site 1	Termitaria 2	Site 2
Liquid Limit, LL (%)	22	29	19	24
Plastic Limit, PL (%)	17	19	16	18
Plasticity Index, PI (%)	5	10	4	6
AASHTO Classification	A-2-4	A-2-6	A-2-4	A-2-4

Discussion

Comparison with Published Termitaria Studies

Table 6 places the present findings in the context of three published Nigerian and Congolese termitaria studies. The MDD range of 1,758–1,960 kg/m³ recorded in this study falls within the 1,720–2,100 kg/m³ range of Momah and Okieimen (2020) and confirms that Nigerian termitaria consistently outperform the compaction benchmarks typically associated with quarry-side laterite borrow. The OMC range of 7.6–10.5% also aligns closely with the 7.2–15.4% of the same study, supporting the transferability of the findings to other sites in the Guinea Savanna zone. The plasticity indices of 4–5% for the termitaria soils tested here are lower than the 10.8–28.5% reported by Momah and Okieimen (2020) and substantially lower than the 7.5–27.2% for Cubitermes spp. mounds reported by Ahouet *et al.* (2022), suggesting that Macrotermes sp. mounds in the transitional rainforest–savanna zone of southwest Nigeria produce a more strongly stabilised, less plastic material than the Cubitermes-dominated assemblages of the Congo Basin. The cohesion intercepts of 12–19 kN/m² recorded here are plausible but modest relative to the up-to-50 kN/m² from triaxial tests in Delta State (Momah and Okieimen, 2020); the difference is attributable in part to the inherent conservatism of the direct shear apparatus relative to the triaxial cell in mobilising the full cohesion of weakly cemented materials (Mitchell and Soga, 2005), and in part to compositional differences between sampling locations.

Table 6. Comparison of key geotechnical properties of termitaria soils from this study with selected published investigations.

Property	Present study Termitaria	Momah & Okieimen (2020) Nigeria	Olayiwola *et al.* (2020) Nigeria	Ahouet *et al.* (2022) Congo	Ahouet *et al.* (2023) Congo
MDD (kg/m³)	1758–1960	1720–2100	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
OMC (%)	7.6–10.5	7.2–15.4	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
PI (%)	4–5	10.8–28.5	Lower than reference	7.5–27.2 (Cubitermes)	High (>2.5% OM)
C′ (kN/m²)	12–19	Up to 50 (triaxial)	Higher than ref.	Not reported	Not reported

Ø′ (°)	25–30	2.8–24.8	Higher than ref.	Not reported	Not reported

Suitability for Dam Embankment and Farm Pond Construction

Design specifications for small homogeneous earth-fill dams require embankment fill to achieve a compacted dry density of at least 1,700 kg/m³, a plasticity index below 20%, and freedom from organic matter exceeding 2% (FAO, 2010; Fell *et al.*, 2015). Both termitaria soils satisfy all three criteria without chemical stabilisation: MDDs of 1,758 and 1,960 kg/m³ exceed the 1,700 kg/m³ threshold; PI values of 4–5% are well below 20%; and cohesion intercepts of 12–19 kN/m² provide additional resistance against shallow slip failure beyond frictional strength alone (Terzaghi *et al.*, 1996). USBR (1987) and USACE (2003) both emphasise that embankment fill with measurable cohesion offers greater resistance to internal erosion and surface sloughing under drawdown than purely frictional material of equivalent density, a distinction with direct relevance to farm pond and check dam stability during dry-season drawdown events. Slope stability was evaluated using Taylor's stability number method (as presented in Fell *et al.*, 2015; Das and Sobhan, 2018) for a homogeneous 1V:2H embankment. The method iterates the dimensionless stability number $N_s = c'_0 / (\gamma \cdot H)$, where c'_0 and $Ø_0$ are mobilised parameters at a trial factor of safety Fs. Table 7 presents computed factors of safety for all four soils at embankment heights of 2–5 m; the worked example for Termitaria 1 at H = 4 m illustrates the procedure. At the trial Fs = 1.5: mobilised cohesion $c'_0 = 19/1.5 = 12.67$ kN/m², mobilised friction $Ø_0 = \arctan(\tan 25°/1.5) = 17.3°$, $N_{s\_trial} = 12.67/(17.24 \times 4) = 0.184$, N_{s_chart} (Fell *et al.*, 2015) = 0.078, trial exceeds chart, hence Fs > 1.5. At Fs = 2.5: $c'_0 = 7.60$ kN/m², $Ø_0 = 10.6°$, $N_{s\_trial} = 0.110 \approx N_{s\_chart} = 0.110$, converged. The computed factor of safety for Termitaria 1 at H = 4 m is therefore Fs = 2.50, and for Termitaria 2 is Fs = 1.93 (Table 7). Both exceed the USACE (2003) long-term drained minimum of Fs ≥ 1.3 at all heights from 2 to 5 m. By contrast, the cohesionless reference soils analysed by infinite slope ($\gamma = \tan Ø'/\tan\beta$) yield Fs = 1.25 for Site 1 ($Ø' = 32° > \beta = 26.57°$, marginally below the 1.3 threshold) and Fs = 0.93 for Site 2 ($Ø' = 25° < \beta$, inherently unstable at 1V:2H regardless of height). These results confirm that the biogenic cohesion present in termitaria soils is not merely a secondary parameter but the decisive criterion differentiating adequate from inadequate embankment fill on 1V:2H slopes at the scales relevant to small agricultural dams.

Table 7. Factor of safety against circular slip failure using Taylor's stability number method

H (m)	Termitaria 1 C'=19, Ø'=25°	Termitaria 2 C'=12, Ø'=30°	Site 1 C'=0, Ø'=32°	Site 2 C'=0, Ø'=25°	USACE Min. FS ≥ 1.3
2	4.08 ✓	2.91 ✓	1.25 ✓	0.93 ✗	1.3
3	3.03 ✓	2.26 ✓	1.25 ✓	0.93 ✗	1.3
4	2.50 ✓	1.93 ✓	1.25 ✓	0.93 ✗	1.3
5	2.15 ✓	1.73 ✓	1.25 ✓	0.93 ✗	1.3

(Fell *et al.*, 2015; Das and Sobhan, 2018). Slope: 1V:2H (β = 26.57°); cohesionless soils analysed by infinite slope. ✓ satisfies USACE (2003) minimum; ✗ does not satisfy minimum.

Hydraulic Conductivity and Engineering Applications

All tested soils fall in the medium-permeability class ($k = 5.83–20.74 \times 10^{-4}$ cm/s), three to four orders of magnitude above the 10^{-7} cm/s threshold for impervious dam cores and pond liners specified by USBR (1987). FAO (2010) explicitly cautions against using unmodified termitaria in impervious dam cores, noting that biogenic macro-pores from relict larval galleries create preferential seepage pathways, the present data provide quantitative confirmation. For impervious barrier applications, bentonite admixture at 10–15% by dry mass reduces k by two to three orders of magnitude in similar sandy soils (Osinubi and Nwaiwu, 2006); lime stabilisation offers an alternative for in-situ treatment. Conversely, the medium-permeability class is the design target for granular drainage blankets and filter layers beneath earth-fill dams, which are specifically designed to dissipate seepage pressures while preventing

migration of embankment fines (Fell *et al*., 2015; USBR, 1987). The near-zero standard deviations recorded for Site 2 and Termitaria 2 in replicated k measurements confirm specimen homogeneity that is advantageous for quality-controlled filter construction. For irrigation canal lining, unmodified termitaria soils cannot achieve required seepage reduction, but in catchments where managed aquifer recharge through canal seepage is a deliberate strategy, their natural k values may be exploited for controlled lateral recharge without geomembrane or concrete investment (FAO, 2001).

Biogenic Modification Mechanisms

The paired site comparison illuminates three concurrent mechanisms by which Macrotermes colony activity transforms parent laterite geomechanics (Jouquet *et al*., 2016). First, selective particle transport elevates fines content relative to surrounding bulk soil. Second, salivary cementation produces weak organo-mineral bonds, generating the cohesion intercepts observed in direct shear while simultaneously coating clay surfaces to reduce plasticity index (Ahouet *et al*., 2022). Third, biological in situ compaction by colony traffic progressively densifies the mound core, yielding higher MDD and lower OMC than the parent laterite. The counterintuitive observation that termitaria soils are denser yet more permeable than reference laterites is explained by retention of relict macroporosity from former larval galleries and fungal comb structures, whose preferential flow paths dominate hydraulic conductivity at specimen scale (FAO, 2010). This mechanical superiority combined with hydraulic permeability defines the essential engineering tradeoff: termitaria soils serve best as structural fill, not as unmodified impervious barriers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study confirms that termitaria soils developed by Macrotermes sp. colonies in southwest Nigeria possess a geotechnical profile that qualifies them for direct use as embankment fill in small agricultural water control structures without chemical stabilisation. Maximum dry densities of 1,758–1,960 kg/m³ at optimum moisture contents of 7.6–10.5% exceed the FAO (2010) minimum of 1,700 kg/m³ for earth-fill dam embankments and outperform adjacent borrow-pit laterites (1,685–1,804 kg/m³). Plasticity indices of 4–10% and liquid limits below 30% classify all soils as low-swell, non-expansive geomaterials that can withstand seasonal tropical wetting and drying without differential volume change in embankment or canal berm structures. The most significant finding is the measurable apparent cohesion of $C' = 12–19$ kN/m² in both termitaria soils, attributed to biogenic salivary cementation, which is entirely absent in the cohesionless reference laterites ($C' = 0$ kN/m²). This cohesion provides additional resistance to shallow slip failure and surface sloughing under drawdown, a direct mechanical advantage over purely frictional borrow soils for dam embankment and check dam applications. Hydraulic conductivity of $5.83–20.74 \times 10^{-4}$ cm/s places all soils in the medium-permeability class, supporting their use as drainage blankets and filter layers but precluding unmodified use as impervious dam cores or pond liners, which require $k \leq 10^{-7}$ cm/s (USBR, 1987).

For practitioners, termitaria soils may be used directly as homogeneous embankment fill for small earth dams and farm ponds up to approximately 4 m height, compacted to 95% of laboratory MDD at slopes not steeper than 1V:2H, with formal stability analysis recommended for heights exceeding 3 m (FAO, 2010; USACE, 2003). They are especially well suited to check dam bodies (height ≤ 1.5 m), where cohesion reduces the basal width required to resist overturning under storm flow conditions, and to drainage blanket and filter layer applications beneath impervious cores. Where impervious barrier performance is required, bentonite admixture at 10–15% by dry mass is recommended to reduce hydraulic conductivity by two to three orders of magnitude (Osinubi and Nwaiwu, 2006). These findings are directly applicable across comparable Guinea Savanna and sub-humid tropical settings throughout sub-Saharan Africa where termitaria are abundant and quarry gravel haulage is cost-prohibitive.

The study has four main limitations that bound the scope of application: results derive from two mound–reference pairs within a single agro-ecological zone in Oyo State; specimen-scale k measurements may underestimate field-scale conductivity where relict galleries remain intact; cohesion durability under prolonged saturation was not tested; and static compaction specimens may not fully replicate field roller-compacted fabric. Future research should prioritise: (i) bentonite admixture optimisation trials at

5%, 10%, and 15% dosage to establish a site-specific permeability reduction target; (ii) accelerated wetting–drying cycle testing (10–30 cycles) to quantify cohesion durability under seasonal tropical saturation; (iii) field compaction trials to validate laboratory MDD and OMC against roller-compaction performance; (iv) scanning electron microscopy and X-ray diffraction to characterise cementation bond mineralogy and dissolution susceptibility (Ahouet *et al*., 2023); and (v) geographic extension to termitaria from other Nigerian ecological zones and comparable Nile–Abay Basin countries to establish basin-wide geotechnical variability.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the technical support of the Civil Engineering and Agricultural and Bio Environmental Engineering Laboratory, OYSCATECH, and the assistance of undergraduate students during field sample collection. No external funding was received.

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DESIGN METHODOLOGY AND MECHANICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AN AUTONOMOUS ROBOTIC WEEDING MACHINE FOR CASSAVA FARMS

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Abstract
Weed infestation remains a major constraint to cassava productivity in many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where weed control is largely performed manually. Manual weeding is labour-intensive, time-consuming, costly, and often results in farmer fatigue and reduced operational efficiency. This study presents the systematic design and mechanical development of an autonomous robotic weeding machine for small- and medium-scale cassava farms. The design methodology comprised functional requirement analysis, conceptual design, mechanical calculations, material selection, computer-aided design (CAD), and structural evaluation. The proposed robot features a four-wheel-drive mobile platform with a centrally mounted rotary weeding mechanism designed to remove weeds between cassava rows while preventing damage to crop stems. Key design parameters, including chassis dimensions, wheel configuration, ground clearance, blade geometry, and material selection, were established based on cassava field characteristics and engineering design principles. Mild steel was selected for the chassis due to its high strength, availability, ease of fabrication, and cost-effectiveness. Three-dimensional CAD models of all components were developed to verify assembly compatibility, manufacturability, and overall structural integrity. The final design provides adequate stability, sufficient ground clearance for field operation, and an efficient blade arrangement for effective mechanical weed removal. Its modular architecture also facilitates future integration of sensors, navigation systems, and autonomous control hardware. The study demonstrates that a systematic mechanical design approach provides a reliable foundation for developing autonomous agricultural robots capable of precision weed management in cassava production, thereby reducing dependence on manual labour and supporting sustainable, efficient, and precision agriculture.

Keywords: *Agricultural robotics, Cassava farming, Mechanical design, Precision agriculture, Robotic weeding, Autonomous machine.*

Introduction

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) is a major food security crop cultivated across tropical regions, with Nigeria remaining the world's largest producer (FAO, 2024; IITA, 2023). Despite its economic and nutritional importance, cassava productivity is significantly constrained by weed infestation, which competes with crops for nutrients, moisture, sunlight, and growing space, particularly during the first 12–16 weeks after planting (NRCRI, 2022; Oerke, 2006). Ineffective weed control during this critical period leads to substantial yield losses and increased production costs (IITA, 2023). Weed management in Nigeria is still dominated by manual hoe weeding, which is labour-intensive, time-consuming, costly, and increasingly unsustainable because of labour shortages (FAO, 2024). Although mechanical cultivation is suitable for large-scale farms, it is often impractical on fragmented fields, while excessive herbicide use raises environmental and health concerns (FAO, 2024). These limitations have stimulated interest in automated weed management technologies (Slaughter et al., 2008).

Recent advances in precision agriculture and agricultural robotics have enabled the development of autonomous systems capable of improving operational efficiency, reducing labour requirements, and enhancing the accuracy of field operations (Slaughter et al., 2008; Shahaas et al., 2023; Thakur et al., 2023). Agricultural robots are increasingly employed for planting, crop monitoring, harvesting, precision spraying, fertiliser application, and weed control. Autonomous weeding robots integrate mechanical structures with sensing, navigation, and control systems to perform weed removal with minimal human intervention (Slaughter et al., 2008). However, regardless of the sophistication of the

control system, reliable field performance depends fundamentally on a robust mechanical design (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). For row crops such as cassava, the robot must provide adequate structural strength, stability, manoeuvrability, and ground clearance to operate safely on uneven terrain without damaging crop stems (Blackmore et al., 2005). Key design considerations include chassis geometry, wheel configuration, weight distribution, implement positioning, and the provision for integrating sensors, navigation systems, controllers, and power units. Careful engineering design is therefore essential to ensure structural integrity, operational reliability, and future system scalability (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). This study presents the design methodology and mechanical development of an autonomous robotic weeding machine specifically intended for small- and medium-scale cassava farms. The research focuses on conceptual design, determination of structural dimensions and mechanical configuration based on cassava planting geometry, engineering material selection, design of a rotary weeding mechanism for safe inter-row operation, and development of detailed three-dimensional CAD models for assembly and visualization. The proposed design provides a structurally stable and modular platform capable of supporting future integration of sensing, navigation, and autonomous control technologies, thereby establishing a practical foundation for intelligent precision weed management and sustainable cassava production.

Materials and Methods

Mechanical Design Considerations for Field Robots

The mechanical design of the proposed robotic weeding machine was developed to satisfy key functional requirements, including structural rigidity, low weight, ease of fabrication, maintainability, and adaptability to varying field conditions (Norton, 2020). The chassis serves as the primary load-bearing structure supporting the drive system, rotary weeding mechanism, electronic modules, and future sensing devices (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). A four-wheel-drive (4WD) configuration was adopted to provide improved traction and stability on loose agricultural soils compared with two-wheel-drive systems (Blackmore et al., 2005). A ground clearance of 200 mm was selected to enable smooth movement over uneven terrain while minimizing interference between the chassis and the soil surface.

A rotary blade mechanism was selected because of its continuous cutting action, simple construction, and suitability for autonomous weed control (Hu et al., 2023). Blade geometry was designed to achieve effective weed removal with minimal crop damage and soil disturbance. Mild steel was chosen for the structural frame due to its high strength, weldability, local availability, affordability, and ease of fabrication (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). The design was tailored to the row spacing and operating conditions commonly encountered on small- and medium-scale cassava farms in Nigeria (IITA, 2023).

Design Methodology

A systematic engineering design methodology was adopted following the procedures recommended by Norton (2020) and Budynas and Nisbett (2020). The design process comprised:

- Identification of operational requirements for cassava fields;
- Establishment of design specifications;
- Development and evaluation of alternative concepts;
- Selection of the preferred mechanical configuration;
- Determination of machine dimensions;
- Material selection;
- Three-dimensional CAD modelling and assembly; and
- Mechanical evaluation of the complete design.

This structured approach ensured that all components satisfied the required functional and operational requirements before final assembly.

3.3 Design Specifications

The principal design specifications adopted for the robotic weeding machine are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Design specifications of the robotic weeding machine (NRCRI, 2022).

S/N	Parameter	Design Value
1	Overall machine length	900 mm
2	Overall machine width	900 mm
3	Chassis width	700 mm
4	Ground clearance	200 mm
5	Wheel diameter	300 mm
6	Wheel width	100 mm
7	Rotary blade diameter	700 mm
8	Sensor mast height	500 mm
9	Number of drive wheels	Four
10	Steering arrangement	Differential steering
11	Operating environment	Cassava field

The selected dimensions are compatible with the standard 1.0 m cassava row spacing commonly practiced in Nigeria while ensuring adequate machine stability during field operation.

Conceptual Design

The robotic weeding machine comprises five major mechanical subsystems:

- Chassis frame;
- Wheel and axle assembly;
- Rotary weeding mechanism;
- Sensor support structure; and
- Protective housing.

The chassis provides structural support for all machine components. The four-wheel-drive system ensures mobility and stability, while a centrally mounted rotary blade performs inter-row weed removal. An elevated sensor mast provides mounting locations for cameras, ultrasonic sensors, GPS receivers, and other navigation devices without obstructing the cutting mechanism. The modular configuration facilitates future integration of autonomous sensing and control systems with minimal structural modification.

Material Selection

Material selection was based on structural strength, manufacturability, corrosion resistance, availability, cost, and ease of maintenance (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). Mild steel was selected for the chassis because of its adequate strength, excellent weldability, widespread availability, and economic advantage (Norton, 2020). Steel square hollow sections and flat bars were used to provide sufficient rigidity while maintaining moderate machine weight.

The rotary blades were designed using hardened steel to withstand repeated impact loading during field operation. Standard fasteners, bearings, and DC gear motors were selected according to established mechanical design practice (ASABE, 2023), ensuring reliability and suitability for local fabrication. The selected materials provide an effective balance between structural performance, durability, manufacturability, and cost.

Mechanical Design Analysis

The mechanical design of the robotic weeding machine was developed using standard engineering design equations based on the following assumptions for a typical cassava field:

i. Robot mass (including battery and tools): 25 kg
ii. Maximum field slope: 10°
iii. Target operating speed: 1.0 m/s
iv. Wheel diameter: 300 mm (radius = 0.15 m)
v. Four-wheel-drive (4WD) configuration
vi. Rolling resistance coefficient, (C_r = 0.04)
vii. Rotary blade diameter: 700 mm (radius = 0.35 m)

Chassis Design

The chassis was designed as the primary load-bearing structure supporting the drive system, rotary weeding mechanism, electronic modules, sensor mast, and protective housing (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). A rectangular frame fabricated from mild steel square hollow sections was adopted because of its high rigidity, ease of fabrication, and suitability for agricultural applications. Based on the standard cassava row spacing of approximately 1.0 m (NRCRI, 2022), the robot was designed with an overall width of 900 mm and a chassis width of 700 mm to ensure safe inter-row operation. The design also provides balanced weight distribution, structural rigidity, ease of maintenance, and provision for future autonomous navigation hardware.

Frame Loading Analysis

The estimated total mass of the robotic weeding machine was taken as 25 kg. The corresponding gravitational load acting on the chassis was determined using:

$$W = mg \qquad (3.1)$$

where:
W = weight (N);
m = robot mass (kg);
g = acceleration due to gravity (9.81 m/s²).

The calculated load formed the basis for subsequent structural analyses.

Bending Stress Analysis

The chassis was modelled as a simply supported beam subjected to a distributed load. The maximum bending stress was determined using:

$$\sigma = \frac{My}{I} \qquad (3.2)$$

where:
σ = bending stress;
M = bending moment;
y = distance from the neutral axis;
I = second moment of area.

Stability Analysis

To prevent overturning during field operation, the anti-tipping condition was evaluated using:

$$\text{Tan } \theta_{max} = \frac{t/2}{hcg} \quad . (3.4)$$

The design satisfies the stability requirement when:

$$\frac{hcg}{t/2} < \tan \theta_{max}$$

where:
t = track width;
h_{cg} = height of the centre of gravity.

Wheel Tractive Force Requirement

The total tractive force required to propel the robot was estimated as:

$$F_t = Fr + F_{grade} + F_{acc} \quad (3.5)$$

where:
F_t = total tractive force;
F_r = rolling/soil resistance;
F_{grade} = slope/grade resistance;
F_{acc} = acceleration force.

The rolling resistance was calculated from:

$$F_r = C_r \times W \quad (3.6)$$

Where C_r is the rolling resistance coefficient.

The grade resistance was determined using:

$$F_{grade} = W\sin\theta \quad (3.7)$$

where:
W = robot weight;
θ = field slope angle.

For level ground at constant speed, both F_{grade} and F_{acc} become zero, reducing the tractive force requirement to rolling resistance alone.

Wheel Torque Requirement

The minimum drive torque required was obtained from:

$$T = F_t \times r \quad (3.9)$$

where:
T = wheel torque;
F_t = tractive force;
r = wheel radius.

For the four-wheel-drive configuration, the torque per wheel was calculated as:

$$T_{wheel} = \frac{Ftotal \times r}{N} \quad (3.10)$$

where:
N = number of drive wheels.

The resulting wheel reactions indicate that the structural loading on each wheel is within acceptable limits for normal agricultural operation (Norton, 2022).

Wheel Angular Speed

The wheel angular speed was determined from the relationship:

$$\omega = \frac{v}{r} \quad (3.12)$$

where:
v = robot speed (m/s);
r = wheel radius (m).

For the selected operating speed of 1.0 m/s and wheel radius of 0.15 m, the calculated angular speed is approximately 6.67 rad/s, providing the basis for selecting an appropriate drive motor.

Ground Clearance Consideration

Ground clearance is a critical parameter for agricultural robots operating on uneven terrain. A clearance of 200 mm was selected to enable smooth movement over soil ridges, crop residues, and field irregularities while preventing interference between the chassis and the ground (ASABE, 2023). The selected clearance also protects the electronic components from moisture and debris and provides adequate space for effective operation of the rotary weeding mechanism without compromising machine stability.

Rotary Weeding Mechanism

A circular hardened steel disc blade was selected because of its continuous cutting action, efficient penetration, low torque fluctuation, durability, and suitability for autonomous agricultural weeders. The blade operates in a horizontal plane to remove weeds between cassava rows while minimizing crop damage. A blade diameter of 700 mm was adopted to provide adequate cutting coverage within the available row spacing.

The cutting analysis was based on the following assumptions:

- Weed stem diameter = 4 mm
- Shear strength = 3 MPa
- Blade radius = 0.20 m

The cross-sectional area of the weed stem was determined as

$$A = \pi r^2 \quad (3.13)$$

where:
A = weed stem cross-sectional area.

The cutting force required to shear the weed stem was calculated using

$$F_c = A \times S \quad (3.14)$$

where:
F_c = cutting force;
A = weed stem cross-sectional area;
S = shear strength of the weed stem.

The corresponding cutting torque was obtained from

$$T_c = F_c \times r_c \quad (3.15)$$

where:
T_c = cutting torque;
F_c = cutting force;
r_c = blade radius.

These equations provide the basis for selecting a blade and drive system capable of overcoming weed resistance during field operation.

Material Strength Consideration

The structural frame was fabricated from mild steel because of its favourable mechanical properties, including a yield strength of approximately 250 MPa, ultimate tensile strength of 410–550 MPa, density of 7850 kg/m³, and modulus of elasticity of approximately 200 GPa (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). These properties provide adequate resistance to bending, torsion, vibration, and impact loads encountered during field operations. To improve design reliability, a factor of safety of 2.0 was adopted in accordance with standard engineering design practice (Norton, 2022).

Computer-Aided Design (CAD) Development

Three-dimensional models of all machine components were developed using CAD software prior to assembly (Budynas & Nisbett, 2020). The principal components modelled included the chassis frame, wheel assemblies, rotary weeding mechanism, sensor mast, protective housing, and mounting brackets. Virtual assembly was performed to verify component alignment, dimensional compatibility, blade clearance, assembly feasibility, maintainability, and overall machine configuration. The CAD model also enabled early detection of design conflicts, thereby reducing manufacturing errors and minimizing fabrication risks before prototype development.

Results and Discussion

The developed robotic farm weeding machine design achieved the functional requirements established during the conceptual design stage. The four-wheel drive configuration provided structural stability and ensured compatibility with cassava row spacing, supporting effective movement within cultivated fields (Blackmore et al., 2005). The CAD model and assembly analysis confirmed successful integration of the major subsystems, including the chassis, drive mechanism, rotary weeding unit, and sensor mounting structure. The modular arrangement of the components improves maintainability and provides flexibility for future integration of autonomous navigation systems.

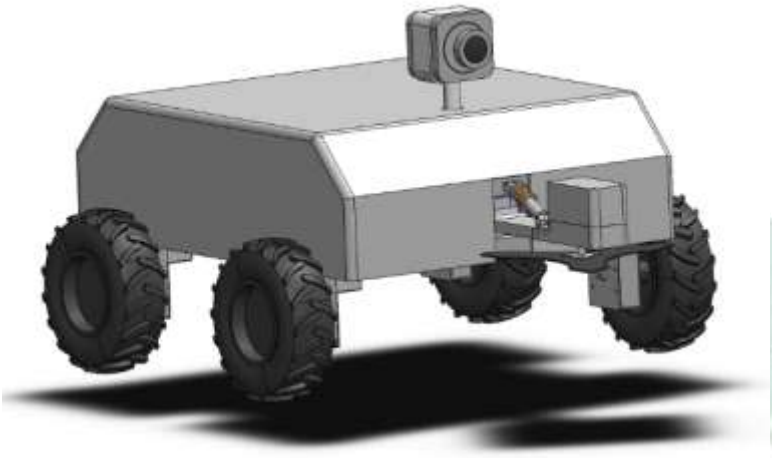


Figure 4.1: CAD Drawing of the Designed Robotic Farm Weeding Machine

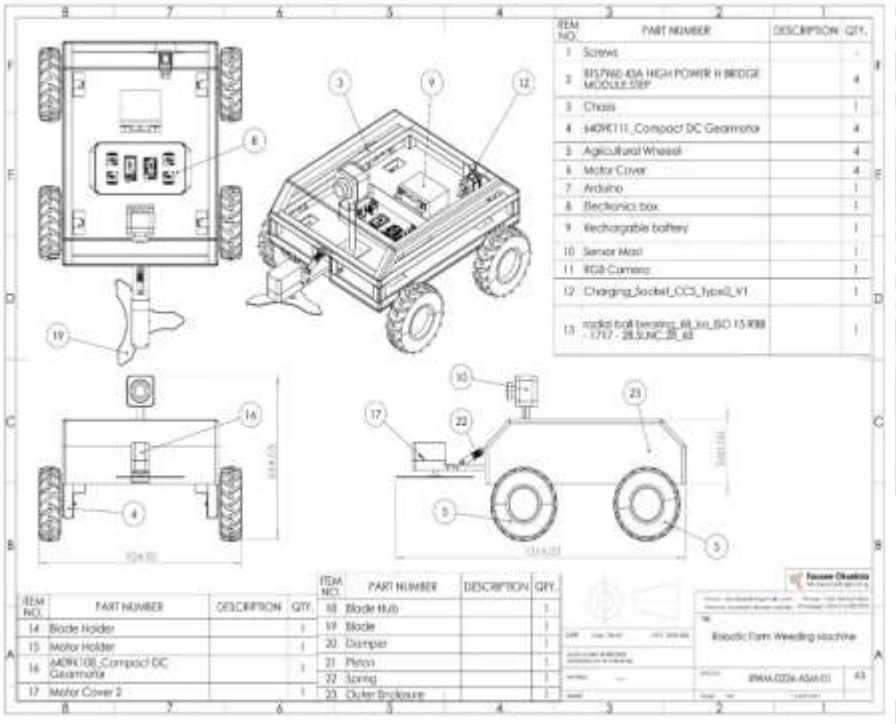


Figure 4.2: Assembly Drawing design of the Robotic farm weeding machine

Table 4.1: Showing the Design Calculations Results

ROBOT CALCULATED PARAMETERS	VALUES	2 S. F	APPROX. VALUES
WEIGHT	245,25 N		
TRACK WIDTH	0.9 m		
CENTER OF GRAVITY HEIGHT	0.35 m		
ROLLING RESISTANCE COEFFICIENT	0.04		
ROLLING / SOIL RESISTANCE FORCE	9.82N		

SLOPE ANGLE	10 DEGREES		
SLOPE / GRADE RESISTANCE	42.58 N		
TORQUE PER WHEEL	1.97 Nm	3.94Nm	≈ 4Nm
TOTAL TORQUE	7.86 Nm	15.72Nm	≈ 16Nm
LINEAR VELOCITY	1 m/s		
WHEEL ANGULAR VELOCITY	6.67 Rad/s		
WEED DIAMETER	4 mm		
WEED SHEAR STRENGHT	3 Mpa		
WEED STEM AREA	1.26 X10^-5		
BLADE RADIUS	0.35mm		
CUTTING FORCE	37.8 N		≈ 38N
CUTTING TORQUE	13.3 Nm	26.6 Nm	≈ 27Nm
GEARBOX SPEED	64RPM		≈ 64Rpm
DC GEARED MOTOR POWER PER WHEEL	13.14 W	26.28 W	≈ 30 W
TOTAL WHEEL MOTOR POWER	52.6 W	105.2 W	≈ 120 W
BLADE TIP SPEED	25 m/s		≈ 25 m/s
BLADE ANGULAR VELOCITY	71.43 Rad/s		≈ 71Rad/s
CUTTING MOTOR POWER	950 W		≈ I.0 KW
TOTAL POWER	1120 W		≈ 1120W
OVERALL SYSTEM POWER EFFICIENCY	80%		≈ 1.4 KW
GEAR RATIO	47 to 1		≈ 50 : 1

Table 4.2: Summary of analytical results obtained from closed-loop mathematical modelling

Parameter	Obtained Value	Performance Status
Rise time	≈ 2 s	Acceptable
Settling time	2.5–3 s	Stable
Overshoot	0 %	Excellent
Steady-state error	0	Eliminated
Torque per wheel	2.44 Nm	Within rating
Motor power	≈15 W	Safe
Acceleration current	0.63 A	Safe
Turning radius	0.4 m	Suitable
Disturbance recovery	< 1 s	Robust

Table 4.3: Theoretical vs Simulation Results

Performance Parameter	Theoretical Prediction	Simulation Result	Percentage Deviation	Remarks
Rise Time (Tr)	2.0 s	2.1 s	5%	Very close agreement
Settling Time (Ts)	2.5–3.0 s	2.8 s	<10%	Within acceptable range
Overshoot (Mp)	0 %	0 %	0 %	Perfect match
Steady-State Error	0	0	0 %	Eliminated by PI
Acceleration Force	12.5 N	12.8 N equivalent	2.4%	Minor numerical variation
Torque per Wheel	2.44 Nm	2.5 Nm	2.5%	Within motor margin
Motor Power per Wheel	15 W	15.8 W	5%	Safe region
Acceleration Current	0.63 A	0.66 A	4.5%	< 5A driver limit
Velocity Dip (Disturbance)	< 8%	7%	—	Acceptable
Recovery Time	< 1 s	0.9 s	—	Robust behaviour

Table 4.4: Error Summary Table

Parameter	Theoretical	Simulation	% Error	Remarks
Rise Time (Tr)	2.0 s	2.1 s	5 %	Acceptable
Torque per Wheel	2.44 Nm	2.50 Nm	2.5 %	Safe margin
Acceleration Current	0.63 A	0.66 A	4.5 %	Within motor driver rating
Settling Time	2.5–3 s	2.8 s	<10 %	Acceptable
Steady-State Velocity	1 m/s	1 m/s	0 %	Perfect match

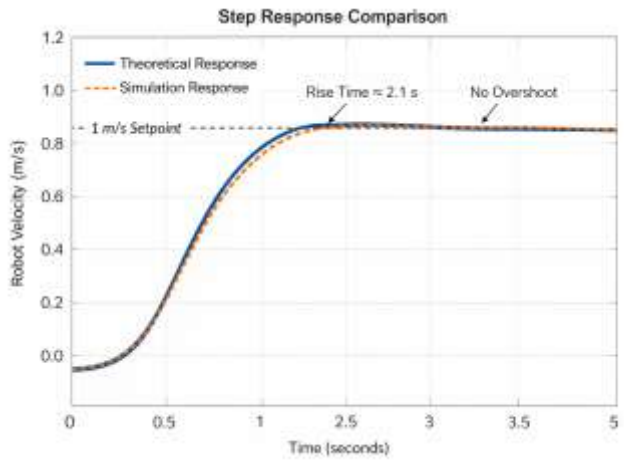


Figure 4.4: Step Response Comparison

The mechanical analysis showed that the robot requires approximately 4 Nm torque per wheel after applying the safety factor, resulting in a total drive torque requirement of approximately 16 Nm. The weed cutting analysis indicated a cutting force of approximately 38 N and cutting torque of about 27 Nm for a 4 mm weed stem diameter with a shear strength of 3 MPa. Since the cutting mechanism represents the dominant energy consumer, the estimated total system power requirement was approximately 1.4 kW, considering system efficiency. The selected DC geared motors with an approximate gear ratio of 50:1 provided sufficient torque amplification while maintaining the required operating speed of 1 m/s. The mild steel chassis design provided adequate structural support while remaining suitable for local fabrication processes (Bai et al., 2023). The centrally mounted rotary cutting mechanism improved weed coverage while maintaining clearance from cassava plants (Hu et al., 2023).

The closed-loop simulation results demonstrated satisfactory dynamic performance. The developed PI controller achieved a rise time of approximately 2.1 s, settling time of 2.8 s, zero overshoot, and zero steady-state error. These results indicate stable system response and effective speed regulation under simulated operating conditions. Comparison between theoretical predictions and simulation results showed good agreement, with deviations below 10% for major parameters. The torque error was approximately 2.5%, motor power deviation was about 5%, and acceleration current variation was below 5%. These small differences are attributed mainly to numerical approximation and modelling assumptions. The close correlation between analytical and simulation results confirms the suitability of the developed mathematical model and controller parameters.

The disturbance rejection analysis further demonstrated system robustness, with velocity recovery achieved within approximately 1 s after disturbance application. This performance indicates that the proposed control strategy can effectively compensate for terrain variations encountered during agricultural operation.

Overall, the results validate the feasibility of the proposed robotic weeding machine design. The combination of mechanical design, motor selection, and closed-loop control modelling provides a reliable foundation for future prototype development and field evaluation of autonomous cassava weeding systems (Polanía et al., 2025).

Conclusion

This study presented the design and modelling of a four-wheel robotic farm weeding machine for cassava production. The developed system achieved the required operational speed of 1 m/s while providing adequate wheel torque for agricultural terrain mobility. The mechanical analysis confirmed the suitability of the selected chassis, drive system, and rotary cutting mechanism, while the simulation results validated the effectiveness of the proposed PI-controlled drive system. The theoretical and simulation results showed strong agreement, with errors below 10%, confirming the reliability of the developed model. The proposed robotic weeding machine demonstrates the potential of integrating mechanical design and control system modelling to improve agricultural mechanization. The study provides a foundation for future fabrication and field testing of autonomous precision weeding systems for small and medium-scale cassava farms.

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CHARACTERIZATION OF LATERITE SOIL IN OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IGBOORA

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Abstract
Laterite soil has found wide usage because of its availability and abundance in the tropics. A good understanding of the engineering properties of laterite soil is important for its proper usage in construction. This study characterizes the laterite soil collected from three different trial pits in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora. The following geotechnical tests were carried out on the collected soil samples; Sieve analysis, Atterberg's limits (liquid limit, plastic limit, and plasticity index), Compaction, California Bearing Ratio, Unconfined Compressive Strength. Deduction from the laboratory tests revealed that, from sieve analysis, the coefficient of uniformity C_u are 5.18, 5.50 and 5.00; the coefficient of curvature C_c are 1.07, 1.00 and 1.17, The soils samples are classified as A – 2 – 6 (0), A – 2 – 6 (0) and A – 7 – 6 (0) (AASHTO), Natural moisture contents are 12.34%, 11.66% and 12.49%, Liquid Limits (LL) are 36.00%, 36.70% and 71.75%, Plastic Limits (PL) are 18.88%, 18.91% and 35.98%, Plasticity Index (PI) are 17.12%, 17.09%, and 35.97%, plasticity index is 18.87%; from compaction; maximum dry densities are 1.95mg/m^3, 2.01mg/m3 and 1.95mg/m^3optimum moisture content are 8.88mg/m^3, 8.12mg/m^3 and 15.50mg/m3, Specific Gravity (SG) are 2.62, 2.50 and 2.44, California Bearing Ratio (soaked) are 9.50%, 11.21% and 7.02%, CBR (unsoaked) are 8.60%, 8.22% and 4.82%, and Unconfined Compressive Strength is 54.44kPa, 56.02kPa and 49.92kPa for samples A, B, and C respectively. The above results indicate that the soil is well grained and suitable for highway pavement construction. It can be concluded that laterite soil from Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora should be mechanically stabilized by sharp sand or chemically by cement, lime, liquid stabilizers etc. before being recommended for construction purposes

Keywords: *Compressive Strength, Moisture Content, Soaked, Stabilized Compaction*

Introduction

The word 'laterite' was first introduced by Buchanan (1807) in academic literature; it was used to describe the soil nature of the mountainous region of Malabar, India (Abhilash *et al*., 2016 and Yaragal *et al*., 2019). Laterite soil is the leached residue resulting from the natural process of laterisation. (Anbazhagan *et al*, 2018). Laterite soil is defined in terms of various perspectives based on the composition, geological characteristics and morphology. The characteristics of laterite soil depend on various perspectives based on physical nature, chemical composition, geological characteristic and morphology, origin process, atmosphere, rain magnitude, temperature, parent rock nature, bed surface properties, weathering course, etc. and it can be influenced by the synergetic effect of all these factors (Reddy, 2010). There are two main factors, geological and atmospheric conditions that influence the process of laterisation. The laterite is generally formed where the parent soil is rich in alumina, iron and silica (Yaragal et al., 2019). Therefore, laterite soil contains major portion of alumina and iron sesquioxides. Laterisation occurs where the atmospheric condition prevails moderate to high for both temperature and rain fall in both dry and wet season (Compodonico *et al*., 2019)

Laterite soils are products of complex physical and chemical weathering process that occurs over millions of years as a result of physiography, geology and climatic agents. They are described as tropical or sub-tropical residue soils and are rich in aluminium oxide (Al_2O_3), silicon oxide (SiO_2) and iron oxide (Fe_2O_3). The iron oxide is responsible for the characteristic reddish or reddish brown coloration of laterite soils, although they may also come under shades of reddish colouration (Osuolale *et al.,* 2018). The constituent materials of laterite soil vary from clay to gravel (Oyelami and Van rooy, 2016). Laterite soil had been chemically classified by Joachin and Kandiah in 1941 using the silica-sesquioxide ratio (SiO_2/ (Fe_2O_3 +Al_2O_3)) as a standard. Laterite soils with a ratio of less than 1.33, while those with a

ratio ranging between 1.33 and 2.00 are lateritic soils, and a ratio greater than 2.00 indicates non-lateritic soil (Oyebisi, *et al*., 2017). Laterites are coarse-grained with insignificant clay or fine particle contents whereas lateritic soils have more fine particles. Both soils are useful for engineering purposes. Geotechnical characterization is the evaluation of the properties of soil to ascertain its suitability for the project under consideration through scientific means. It is a fundamental step towards proper design, construction and long term performance of all types of geotechnical projects. For engineers, knowledge of the characterization of soil is extremely important, since the structure and foundation of structures rests on soils. The engineering properties of soil are considered, because the stability of the structure is governed by the strength of soils. Soils are seldom uniform in character due to parent material, hence the need for geotechnical characterization to increase the productivity of soil and improve the workability of the soil mass. The understanding of soil behavior in solving engineering and environmental issue especially expansive laterite soils that can cause significant damage to road construction and other engineering application is the sole aim of geotechnical engineering. (Adeyemi, 2014)

Location and Description of Study Area

Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, (OYSCATECH) located in Igboora, Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Ibarapa Central is a Local Government area (IBCLGA) located in the southwestern part of Oyo state, Nigeria. Established on December 4, 1996, encompasses two primary towns: Igboora [The Administrative Headquarters] and Idere. The LGA covers an area of approximately 440 square kilometers and had an estimated population of 322,189 as of 2018. It has a geographic co - ordinates latitude 7.4374 and longitude 3.2676. This co - ordinate placed Ibarapa Central within the tropical savannah region of Nigeria, characterized by a mix of grassland and scattered trees.

Materials and Methods

Three samples were taken at three different locations. The depth of the trial pits were 1.2m. no variation was observed in the soil profile with depth at each location. Soil identification and description were carried out by visual observation and physical feeling. Laboratory tests carried out on the collected soil samples include; Sieve analysis, Atterberg's limits (liquid limit, plastic limit, and plasticity index), Compaction, California Bearing Ratio, Unconfined Compressive Strength. All tests were carried out in accordance with BS 1377 (1990), The Method of Soil Testing for Civil Engineering Purposes.

Sieve analysis

The laterite sample taken was air dried, a known grammes (200g) was placed on a set of sieves and the system was shaken in a sieve shaker for 10 minutes. The sieves were carefully removed and weighed with the retained soil. The percentage by mass retained on each sieve was calculated and tabulated. The test provides a gradation of the soil particles used in soil identification and classification.

$$\textit{Weight of material passing} = \textit{weight of dry sample} - \textit{weight retained on the sieve}$$

$$\%\ \textit{weight retained} = \frac{\textit{weight retained}}{\textit{total dry weight of sample}} \times 100\%$$

$$\%\ \textit{weight passing} = 100\% - \textit{percentage retained}$$

$$\textit{cumulative \% retained} = \frac{\textit{cumulative weight}}{\textit{total dry sample}} \times 100\%$$

Liquid limit

A sample weighing 20g was taken from the material passing through 425mm BS test sieve. The sample was mixed with drinkable water to a consistency of a thick paste and allowed to stand in an airtight container for 24 hours to allow the water to permeate throughout the soil mass. A portion of the mixed soil was placed in the cup of Casangrandes apparatus and level, after which the grooving tools, was used to divide the sample along the diameter through the center of the hinge. The crank was turned at the rate of two revolutions per second, the cup was then lifted and dropped until the two part of the soil came into contact at the bottom of the groove along a distance of 13mm. the number of blows with which this occurred was recorded. A little extra of the soil mixture was added to the cup and mixed with the soil in the cup. The operation was repeated until two consecutive runs give the same number of

blows for closure. A quantity of soil from the sample that flowed together was removed with spatula and placed in container and the moisture content was determined.

Plastic limit test

A sample weighing 20g was taken from the material passing through 425mm BS test sieve. The sample was mixed with water to make a malleable but not sticky ball. This was rolled between the palms of the hand until it began to dry and crack. Half of the sample was rolled further to a length of 5cm and thickness of 6mm. the thread formed during this process was then rolled between the tip of the finger of one hand and the surface of a clean glass plate. The thread was rolled to about 3mm in five to ten complete (forward and backward) movement of the hand. The procedure was repeated until the thread sheared both longitudinally and transversely when it had been rolled to about 3mm diameter. The portion of crumbled soil thread was gathered together and transferred immediately to the container for moisture determination.

Plastic Index

After the determination of Liquid Limit (LL) and Plastic Limit (PL), the Plastic Index (PI) was calculated from equation 3.4

$$PI = LL - PL$$

Optimum Moisture Content

Two 2.5kg of air dried soil samples passing the 4.75 mm BS sieve were taken, the samples were each mixed thoroughly with different amount of water to give a suitable range of moisture content. A mould with base plate attached, was weighed to the nearest mg. The mould was then placed on a solid base, e.g. concrete floor, and the soil were compacted into the mould with extension attached, in five layers of approximately equal mass, each layers being given 25 blows from the rammer dropped from a height of 450mm above the soil. The blows were distributed evenly over the surface of each layer. The range of moisture content was such that the Optimum Moisture Content, at which the Maximum Dry Density occurs, is within that range. The procedure was repeated for the same sample, but with gradual increase in water content. The Bulk Density ρ in mg/m^3 of each compacted specimen was calculated from the equation below:

$$\rho = \frac{m2-m1}{1000}$$

where:

m_1 is the mass of mould and base(g)

m_2 is the mass of mould, base and soil (g)

The Dry density, ρ_d in Mg/m^3 shall be calculated from the equation

$$\rho_d = \frac{100\rho}{100+w}$$

where:

w is the moisture content of the soil (%)

ρ_d is the dry density in $Mg/m3$

California Bearing Ratio Test (CBR)

This test established a standard grading of crushed rock compacted under specified condition as a standard for measurement of bearing capacity of any soil. In this test, a calculated bulk mass of soil (from compaction test) was tested as well as the water content. This sample was then filled to the mould in five layers by a 4.5kg rammer. The weight of the soil plus mould was measured and the dry density was calculated. The sample was tested for strength in the mould by the application on a bearing surface at the rate of 0.5, 1.00mm/min. Load reading was taken at 0.5mm, 1.0mm… penetration. Top and bottom the procedure was repeated for the 4.5% and 6% of dry mass of soil for sample A, B and C

Unconfined Compressive Strength Test (UCS)

The UCS test is a special type of unconsolidated undrained test commonly used for clay specimens. The sample has taken as calculated from the dynamic compaction and water was added appropriately. This was thoroughly mixed and placed into the BS mould (of known height and diameter) and compacted in three layers applying 27 blows of 2.5kg rammer dropped from 300mm height in layer.

The top of the mould was scrapped off to remove excess soil after compaction. The compacted soil is removed from the mould with the aid of hydraulic jack. This is then taken to the UCS machine for test. The procedure was repeated for 3%, 4.5% and 6% for samples A and B and 6%, 8% and 10% for C. These samples were cured for 7 days before tested.

Results and Discussion

Soil Description

The result of soil identification based on physical observation of soil samples is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Soil Description

Representative Soil Samples	Physical Description
Sample A	Reddish Brown gravely clay granular soil
Sample B	Reddish Brown gravely clay granular soil
Sample C	Reddish Brown gravely clay granular soil

Result of Sieve Analysis

The result of sieve analysis of the soil sample is presented in Table 2. It was observed that the coefficient of uniformity (Cu) and coefficient of curvature (Cc) are 5.18 and 1.07, 5.5 and 1.0, 5.00 and 1.17 for samples A, B and C respectively. This showed that the soil samples are well graded (Raheem and Sulaimon, 2013) and therefore, can be used for making good concrete. According to American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) classification system, the soil samples A and B are silty or clayey gravel sand (A – 6), while sample C is clayey in nature. The samples are not suitable for sub – grade, sub – base and base courses because of its failure in specific requirement, i.e. the percentage passing through sieve No 200 is greater than 35% and stabilization is required for highway application (Olaniyan *et al*., 2020).

Table 2: Sieve Analysis Result

Sieve Size No	Percentage Passing (%)		
	A	B	C
0.8mm	97.18	98.67	99.01
5.6mm	92.60	94.21	95.10
4.0mm	84.00	88.22	92.10
2.0mm	68.25	73.77	80.55
710µm	53.57	52.60	60.69
500µm	44.18	40.85	55.28
355µm	40.72	35.73	49.97
250µm	35.20	30.22	40.31
63µm	28.24	19.18	33.66
< 63µm	21.44	5.99	22.87
PAN	0.12	0.01	0.00

Atterberg's Limits Result

The result of LL, PL, and PI is presented in Figure 1, Liquid Limits, (LL) are 36%, 36.7% and 71.75%; Plastic Limits (PL) are 18.88%, 18.91% and 35.98% while Plasticity Index (PI) are 17.12%, 17.09% and 35.97% for samples A, B, and C respectively. These suggested that the soil samples exhibited high

water absorption capacity due to large surface area as a result of the presence of finer fraction in the samples (Obioma, 2023). This also justified the requirement for the use as the LL and PI does not exceed 80% and 55% according to the Federal ministry of works (2011).

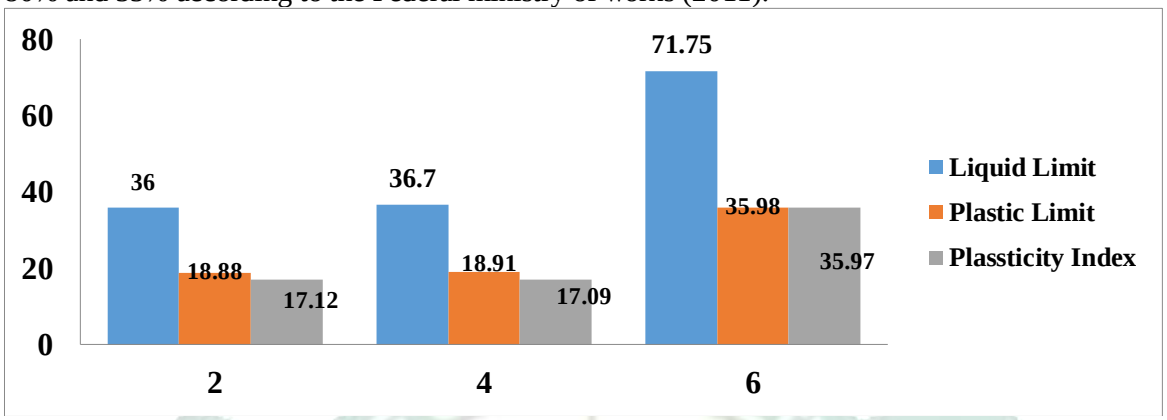


Figure 1: Atterberg Limits Result

Optimum Moisture Content

The Optimum Moisture Contents (OMC) are 8.88%, 8.12% and 15.50%; Maximum Dry Density (MDD) are 1.95kg/dm^3, 2.01kg/dm^3 and 1.95kg/dm^3; Specific Gravity (SG) are 2.62, 2.50 and 2.44 for samples A, B, and C, respectively. The difference in their MDD being 0.06kg/dm^3 and that of OMC is 0.76%. Sample C has its OMC and MDD appreciably far from the other two samples presented in Figure 2.

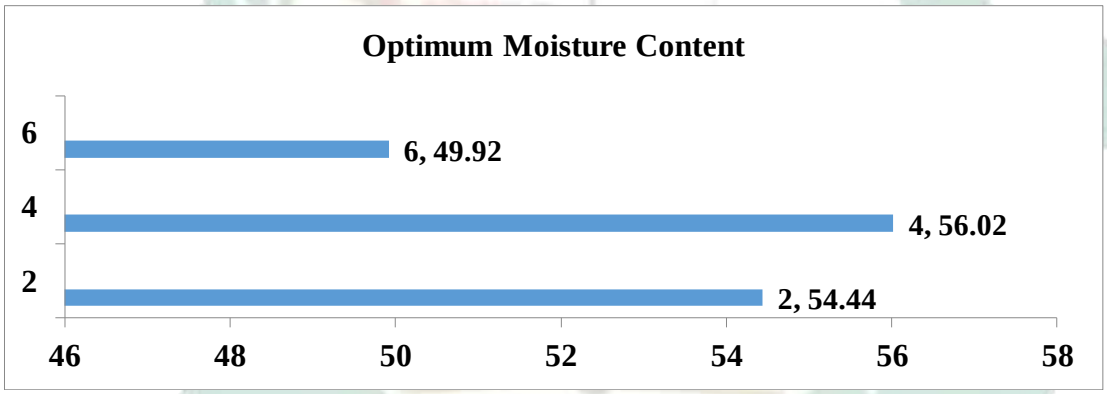


Figure 2: Optimum Moisture Content

Result of California Bearing Ratio (CBR)

The result of CBR are 9.50%, 11.21% and 7.02% (soaked) and 8.60%, 8.22% and 4.82% (unsoaked) for samples A, B, and C respectively as presented in figure 3. This implied that the soil A and B have more bearing capacity and structurally desirable than soil C. The three soil samples have a CBR (soaked and unsoaked) values of 34%, 41% and 25% respectively. Comparing these value with the standard specification of materials for road by Federal Ministry of Works (2011), (CBR> 80% for unsoaked and >30% for soaked), this do not satisfy the CBR standard and are not qualified to be used as road construction (sub-base and base-course) materials. The low CBR values of the lateritic soils samples may be attributed to the presence of relatively high amount of fines in the soils. Mechanically, the CBR values or the Bearing capacity of the soils can be improved by stabilizing with sand to reduce the influence of fine grained particles on the roads built with them. Also, the soils can be stabilized with ordinary Portland cement (addition of 5 - 10% of cement by weight of dry soils to the soil) to increase their bearing strength. (Osuolale, *et al*., 2018)

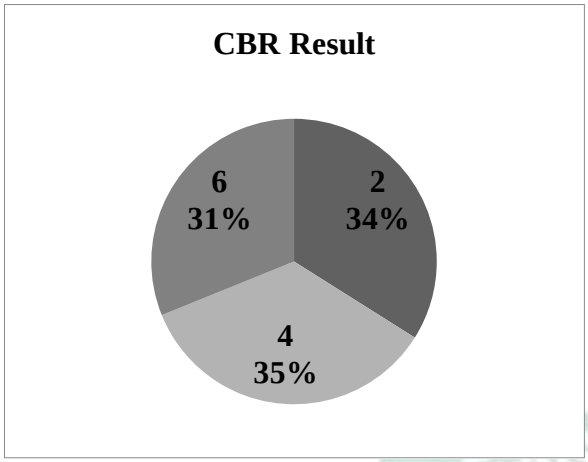


Figure 3: California Bearing Ratio Result

Unconfined Compressive Strength (UCS)

The result of UCS is presented in Figure 4. The unconfined Compressive Strength is 54.44kPa, 56.02kPa and 49.92kPa for samples A, B, and C respectively. Comparing these value with the standard specification of materials for road by Federal Ministry of Works (2011), unconfined compressive strength for subgrade >150, sub-base > 170-200, base course >350-500. Mechanically, the UCS values or the Bearing capacity of the soils can be improved by stabilizing them with sand to reduce the influence of fine grained particles on the roads built with them. Also, the soils can be stabilized with ordinary Portland cement (addition of 5-8% of cement by weight of dry soils to the soil) to increase their bearing strength.

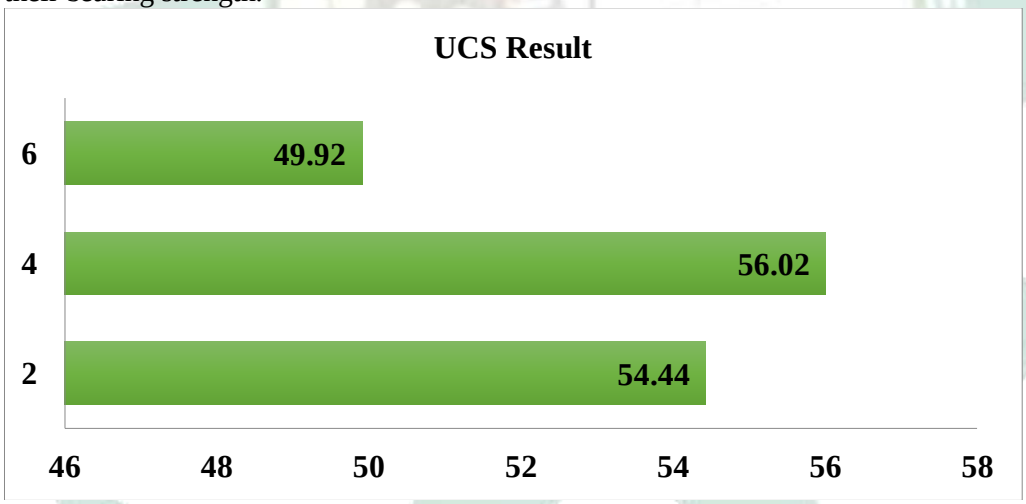


Figure 4: Unconfined Compressive Strength Result

Conclusions

Based on the laboratory test results, the laterite soil samples obtained from the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology requires stabilization either mechanically or chemically, is required, to be fit for use structurally

Recommendations

It can be recommended that laterite soil from Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora should be mechanically stabilized by sharp sand or chemically by cement, lime, liquid stabilizers etc. before employed for construction purposes

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DEEP LEARNING APPROACH FOR RICE DISEASE IDENTIFICATION

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Abstract

Timely and accurate identification of rice diseases is essential for improving crop productivity and supporting global food security. However, conventional diagnosis based on manual inspection is often subjective, time-consuming, and dependent on expert knowledge, limiting its effectiveness in large-scale farming. This study presents a deep learning-based rice disease identification system using the MobileNetV2 convolutional neural network with transfer learning. Rice leaf images representing Bacterial Leaf Blight, Brown Spot, Leaf Smut, and Healthy leaves were preprocessed, augmented, and divided into training, validation, and test sets using an 80:10:10 ratio. The model was trained using the Adam optimizer with early stopping to improve generalization and reduce overfitting. Experimental results demonstrated stable learning performance and reliable classification accuracy, with only minor misclassifications among visually similar disease classes. A Streamlit-based web application was also developed to enable real-time disease prediction, demonstrating the practicality of the proposed approach for precision agriculture.

Keywords: *Deep Learning; Image Classification; MobileNetV2; Precision Agriculture; Rice Disease Detection.*

Introduction

Rice is one of the world's most important staple crops, providing food for more than half of the global population and playing a critical role in global food security. Increasing population growth and changing consumption patterns have intensified the demand for higher agricultural productivity, making efficient disease management an essential component of sustainable rice production. Diseases such as bacterial leaf blight, brown spot, leaf smut, and rice blast significantly reduce crop yield and quality if not detected early. Conventional diagnosis relies primarily on manual visual inspection by farmers and plant pathologists, a process that is often subjective, time-consuming, and dependent on expert knowledge. In many developing regions, limited access to agricultural experts further delays accurate disease diagnosis, increasing the likelihood of crop losses and inappropriate disease management practices (Savary et al., 2019).

Recent advances in artificial intelligence, particularly deep learning, have transformed image classification by enabling automatic feature extraction from raw images. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have demonstrated remarkable success in plant disease recognition, outperforming traditional machine learning approaches that depend on handcrafted features and are often sensitive to variations in lighting, background complexity, and leaf orientation (Kamilaris & Prenafeta-Boldú, 2018; Mohanty et al., 2016). Among the available architectures, MobileNetV2 offers an attractive balance between predictive accuracy and computational efficiency through its lightweight design and transfer learning capability, making it suitable for deployment on resource-constrained devices and web-based platforms for real-time agricultural applications.

Despite these advances, many existing studies focus primarily on maximizing classification accuracy using computationally intensive models or controlled laboratory datasets, with limited emphasis on practical deployment for end users. To address these limitations, this study proposes a lightweight MobileNetV2-based deep learning framework for automated rice disease identification. The proposed system classifies rice leaf images into four categories Bacterial Leaf Blight, Brown Spot, Leaf Smut, and Healthy leaves using image preprocessing, data augmentation, and transfer learning to improve model generalization. Furthermore, a Streamlit-based web application was developed to provide real-

time disease prediction and management recommendations, demonstrating the practical applicability of the proposed approach for precision agriculture, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

Related Works

Artificial intelligence has become an important tool for improving agricultural productivity, with plant disease detection emerging as one of its most significant applications. Early automated disease identification methods relied on conventional image processing techniques involving preprocessing, handcrafted feature extraction, and machine learning algorithms such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN), Decision Trees, and Random Forests (Barbedo, 2013). Although these methods achieved satisfactory performance under controlled conditions, they were highly dependent on manually engineered features and were often affected by variations in illumination, background complexity, and leaf orientation, limiting their robustness in real-world environments (Kamilaris & Prenafeta-Boldú, 2018).

The emergence of deep learning, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), has significantly improved plant disease classification by enabling automatic feature extraction from raw images. Mohanty et al. (2016) demonstrated the effectiveness of CNNs for plant disease recognition using the PlantVillage dataset, while Ferentinos (2018) and Too et al. (2019) reported high classification accuracies using transfer learning with architectures such as VGGNet, ResNet, DenseNet, InceptionV3, and MobileNet. In rice disease detection, studies by Khalid et al. (2021) and Islam et al. (2022) further confirmed the superiority of deep learning models over traditional machine learning techniques. However, many of these studies were conducted using controlled datasets and computationally intensive models, limiting their suitability for deployment in practical farming environments.

Lightweight architectures such as MobileNetV2 address these limitations by combining high predictive performance with low computational requirements through depthwise separable convolutions and transfer learning (Sandler et al., 2018; Pan & Yang, 2010). Despite these advances, relatively few studies have emphasized the integration of lightweight classification models with user-friendly deployment platforms for real-time agricultural decision support. This study addresses this gap by developing a MobileNetV2-based rice disease identification system integrated with a Streamlit web application, providing an efficient, accessible, and practical solution for precision agriculture.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative, experimental, and predictive modeling research design, aimed at developing and evaluating deep learning architectures for automated rice disease identification. The approach focuses on leveraging convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and state-of-the-art variants to classify multiple rice leaf diseases from images captured under varied environmental conditions. The research emphasizes real-world applicability by incorporating field-acquired images alongside publicly available datasets, simulating practical deployment scenarios.

The central methodology involves three interconnected phases. First, a comprehensive dataset is prepared through image collection, preprocessing, and augmentation to ensure quality, balance, and diversity. Second, deep learning models are developed, trained, and validated using this dataset. Third, model performance is rigorously evaluated using multiple metrics including accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, ROC-AUC, and interpretability analyses through Grad-CAM and SHAP visualizations. This design ensures a systematic evaluation of model capability and practical applicability in agricultural disease diagnostics.

The research framework aligns with recent studies emphasizing the importance of model robustness, generalization to field conditions, and interpretability in agricultural AI systems (Hussain et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2022).

a. Data Sources and Collection

Publicly Available Datasets: Open-access rice leaf disease datasets such as the PlantVillage dataset (Mohanty et al., 2023) and other regional rice disease repositories. These datasets provide high-quality,

annotated images across multiple disease categories, including bacterial leaf blight, rice blast, and brown spot.

Each image in the dataset is associated with metadata including:

- Disease type
- Location and farm coordinates
- Image capture date and environmental conditions
- Leaf stage and visible symptoms

a. **Data Preprocessing and Cleaning**

1. Preprocessing ensures that images are standardized, noise-free, and suitable for CNN input. The steps include:
2. **Resizing**: All images are resized to 224×224 pixels to match the input requirements of CNN architectures like ResNet, EfficientNet, and MobileNet.
3. **Color Space Conversion**: Images are maintained in RGB format, while comparative experiments with HSV color space are conducted to evaluate the impact on model performance (Zhang et al., 2020).
4. **Noise Reduction**: Gaussian and median filters remove environmental noise while preserving lesion edges.
5. **Normalization**: Pixel intensity values are scaled to a 0–1 range using Min-Max scaling to stabilize training.
6. **Outlier Detection**: Images with excessive blur, severe occlusion, or mislabeling are removed after visual inspection.
7. **Label Encoding**: Disease categories are encoded numerically for model compatibility with softmax output layers.

b. Model Development and Implementation

The study evaluates multiple deep learning architectures, chosen based on their performance, computational efficiency, and field deployment feasibility. The architecture includes:

Model Training and Validation

1. **Data Split**: 80% training, 10% validation, 10% test set.
2. **Cross-Validation**: Stratified k-fold (k=5) cross-validation ensures consistent performance across disease classes.
3. **Optimization**: Adam optimizer with categorical cross-entropy loss function is used for multi-class classification.
4. **Early Stopping and Checkpoints**: To prevent overfitting, training halts when validation loss does not improve for 10 consecutive epochs.

Evaluation Metrics

Model performance is evaluated using:

- **Accuracy**: Overall correct classification ratio
- **Precision and Recall**: Assess ability to correctly identify specific disease classes
- **F1-Score**: Harmonizes precision and recall
- **ROC-AUC**: Measures class separation performance
- **Confusion Matrix**: Visualizes misclassifications and class-wise performance
- **Grad-CAM and SHAP**: Provides interpretability, ensuring models focus on biologically relevant leaf regions (Chen et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022)

c. System Design Diagrams

To support model development and explain the methodology visually, three key diagrams are included:

Figure 1: System Architecture Diagram

The overall workflow of the proposed rice disease identification system is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The architecture describes the complete processing pipeline, beginning with image acquisition and preprocessing, followed by feature extraction and classification using the MobileNetV2 model, and ending with disease prediction and recommendation generation through the Streamlit application.

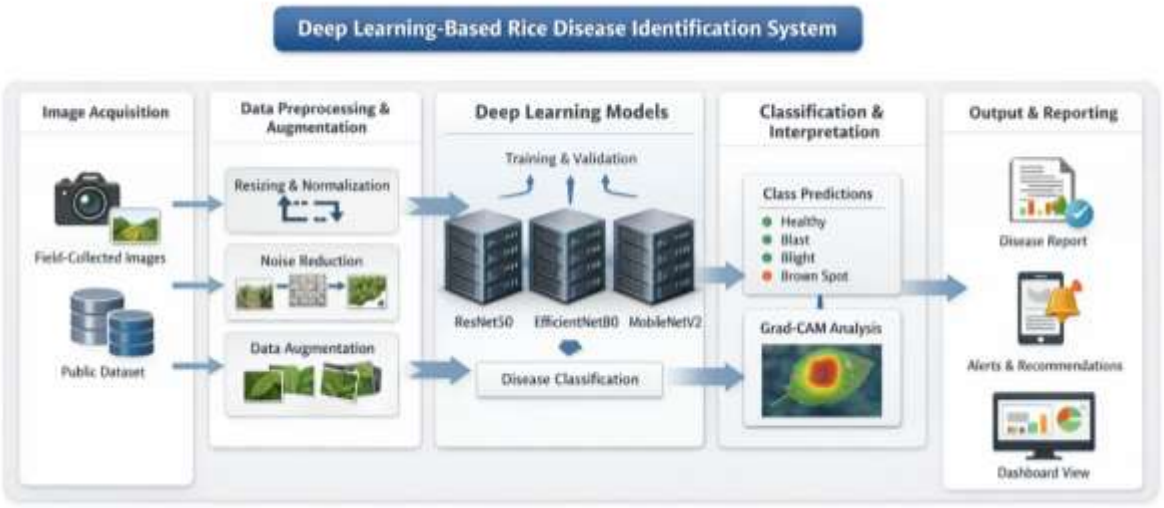


Figure 1. Overall architecture of the proposed MobileNetV2-based rice disease identification system.

Figure 2: Data Flow Diagram (DFD)

The movement of data through the proposed system is presented in **Figure 2**. The diagram illustrates how uploaded rice leaf images are processed, classified by the trained model, and converted into prediction results and management recommendations.

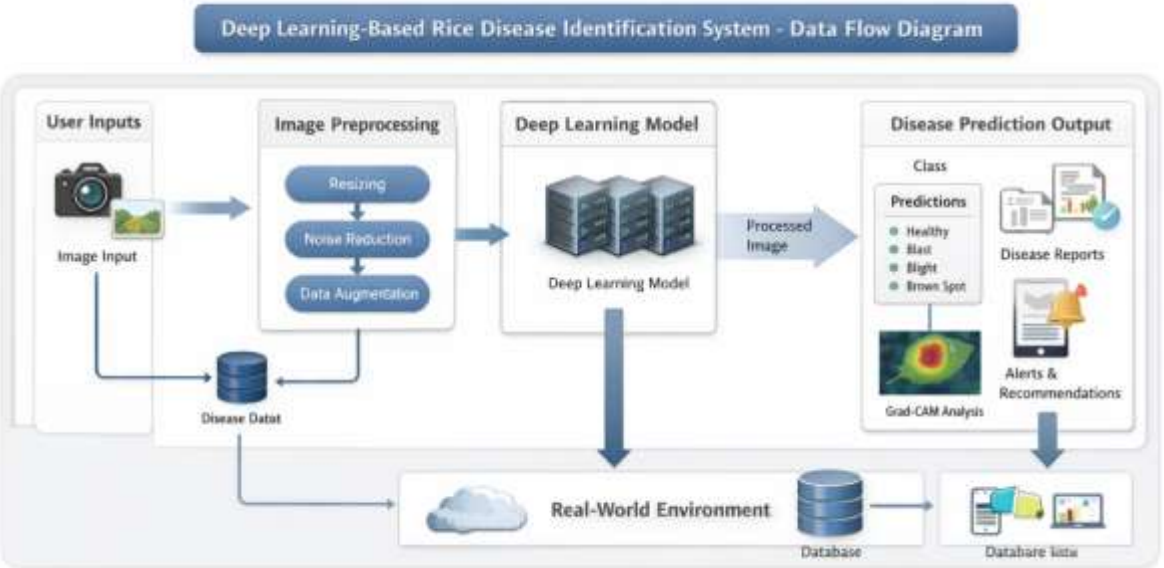


Figure 2. Data flow diagram of the rice disease identification syste

Figure 3: Use Case Diagram

In-text reference (before the figure):

The interactions between users and the proposed application are illustrated in **Figure 3**. The use case diagram shows how farmers or agricultural users upload rice leaf images, receive disease predictions, and obtain appropriate management recommendations through the system.

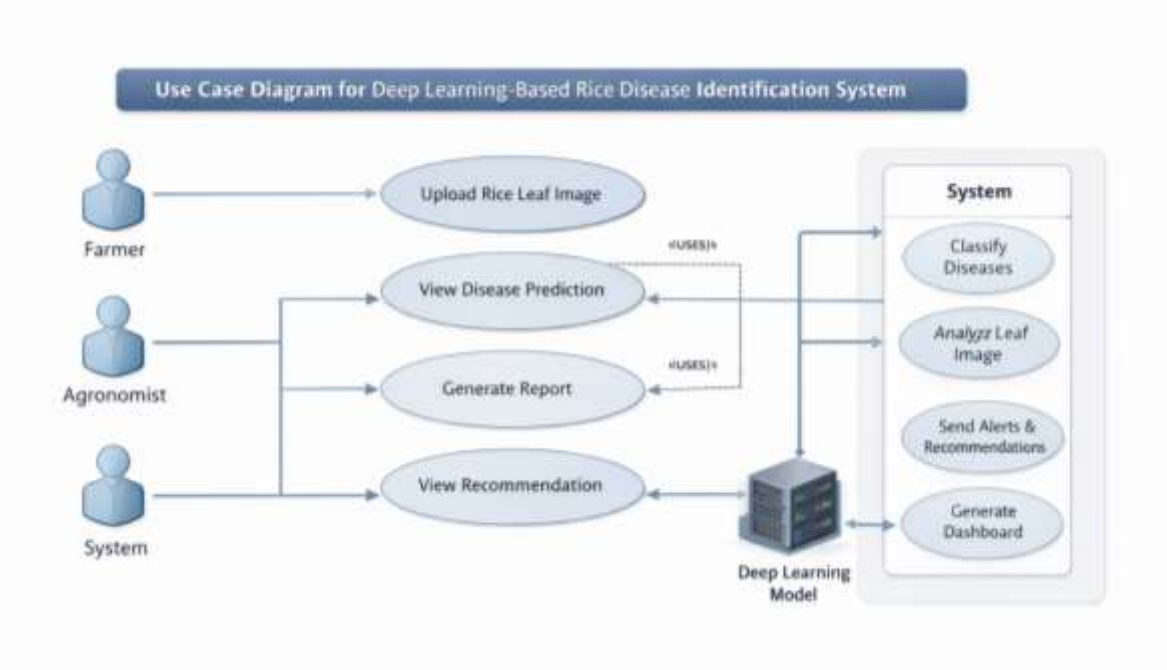


Figure 3. Use case diagram showing user interaction with the proposed system.

Results and Discussions

Preprocessing Module

The preprocessing module plays a critical role in ensuring that input images are transformed into a format suitable for the deep learning model. The following steps are applied:

1. Conversion of images to RGB format
2. Resizing to a fixed dimension of **224 × 224 pixels**
3. Normalization of pixel values to the range **[-1, 1]**
4. Expansion of dimensions to match batch input requirements

Preprocessing ensures that all input images are standardized before being fed into the model. This is particularly important for transfer learning architectures like MobileNetV2, which expect inputs in a specific format. Proper preprocessing reduces variability and improves prediction accuracy.

Class and Recommendation Module

This module defines the mapping between predicted disease classes and corresponding agricultural recommendations. It ensures that the system provides actionable insights rather than just classification results. Separating class definitions and recommendations into a dedicated module improves system flexibility. It allows domain experts to update recommendations without modifying the machine learning logic.

Training Module (train.py)

The training module implements a transfer learning approach using MobileNetV2. The model is trained to minimize classification error using categorical cross-entropy loss:

$$L = -\sum_{i=1}^{C} y_i \log(\hat{y}_i)$$

The training process includes:

i. Data augmentation (rotation, flipping, zooming)

ii. Early stopping to prevent overfitting

iii. Model checkpointing to save best weights

iv. Learning rate adjustment for optimization

Transfer learning significantly reduces training time and improves performance by leveraging pre-trained features. The use of callbacks ensures efficient convergence and prevents overfitting.

Prediction Module

The prediction module performs classification by computing class probabilities using the softmax function:

$$P(y = i) = \frac{e^{z_i}}{\sum_{j=1}^{C} e^{z_j}}$$

This module ensures efficient inference and supports real-time predictions. It isolates inference logic, making the system scalable and easier to deploy.

Streamlit Application Module

The Streamlit interface enables user interaction with the system.

Figure 4: Streamlit Home Page

The graphical user interface developed for the proposed system is shown in **Figure 4**. The home page provides users with a simple interface for uploading rice leaf images and initiating disease diagnosis.



Figure 4. Home page of the Streamlit-based rice disease identification application.

Figure 5: Uploaded Image

An example of the image upload process is presented in **Figure 5**, where a rice leaf image is selected for analysis before classification by the trained MobileNetV2 model.



Figure 5. Sample rice leaf image uploaded for disease prediction.

Figure 6: Prediction Result

The disease prediction interface is presented in **Figure 6**. After processing the uploaded image, the system displays the predicted disease class together with the corresponding recommendation for disease management.



Figure 6. Disease prediction result and recommendation displayed by the system.

Figure 7: Training Accuracy and Loss Curves

The training performance of the MobileNetV2 model is illustrated in **Figure 7**. The accuracy and loss curves indicate stable convergence, with validation performance closely following the training performance, suggesting effective generalization and minimal overfitting.

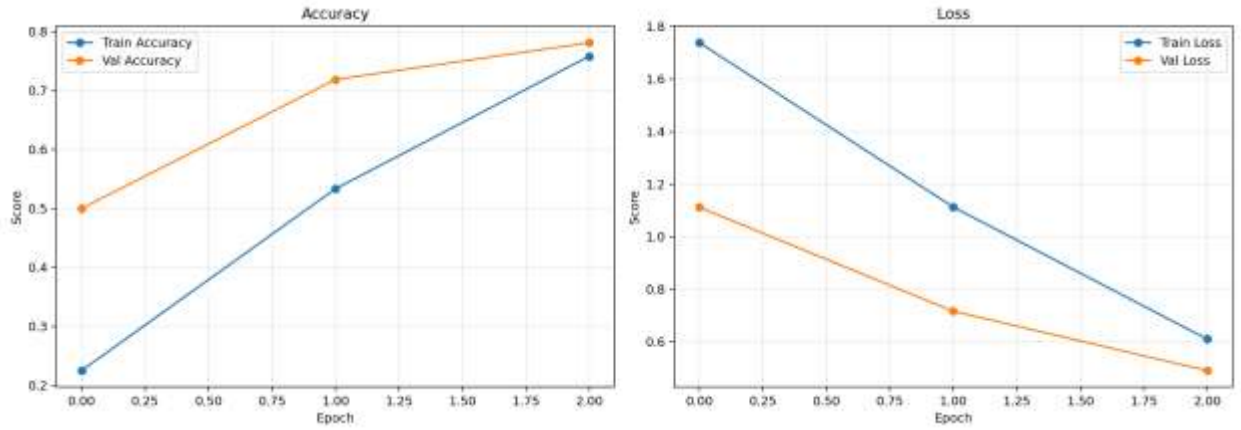


Figure 7. Training and validation accuracy and loss curves of the MobileNetV2 model.

The interface is designed for usability and accessibility. It allows users to upload images, view predictions, and receive recommendations in an intuitive manner.

Figure 8: Confusion Matrix

The classification performance of the proposed model is further evaluated using the confusion matrix shown in Figure 8. The matrix illustrates class-wise prediction performance and identifies minor misclassifications among visually similar disease categories while demonstrating strong overall classification capability.

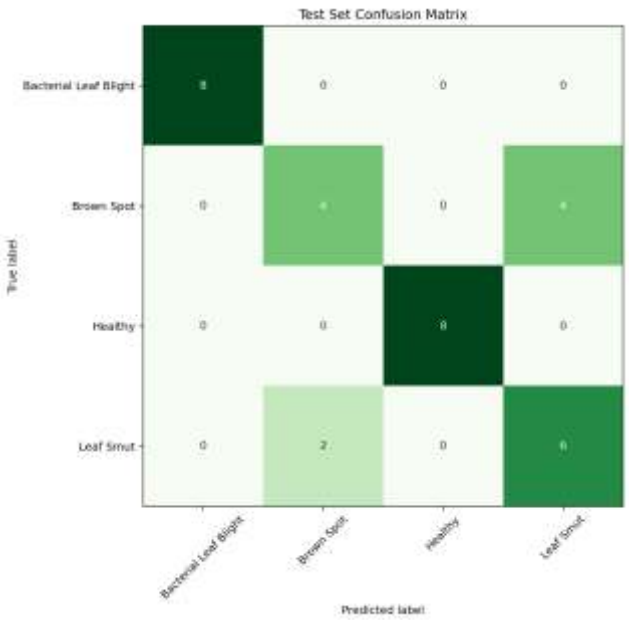


Figure 8. Confusion matrix showing class-wise performance of the proposed rice disease classification model.

Conclusion

This study successfully developed and implemented a Deep Learning-Based Rice Disease Identification System aimed at addressing the challenges associated with manual disease detection in rice farming. The system integrates a transfer learning approach using the MobileNetV2 convolutional neural network, combined with an image preprocessing pipeline and a Streamlit-based web interface for real-time user interaction. Through this integration, the research demonstrated that artificial intelligence can be effectively applied to agricultural problem-solving, particularly in improving the speed, accuracy, and consistency of disease diagnosis.

The experimental results obtained during model training and validation indicate that the system is capable of learning meaningful patterns from rice leaf images and accurately classifying them into relevant disease categories. The steady improvement in training and validation accuracy, alongside the reduction in loss values, confirms that the model achieved satisfactory convergence and generalization. Furthermore, the confusion matrix analysis revealed that while the model performs well overall, minor misclassifications occur primarily between visually similar disease classes, which is consistent with real-world diagnostic challenges.

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CONSTRUCTION OF AN AUTOMATIC STREET LIGHT CONTROL SYSTEM

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Abstract

The main objective of the research was to construct an automatic street light control system. The system was developed based on the designed circuit diagram. The system operates whenever sunlight falls on the light dependent resistor (LDR), the light emitting diode (LED) is automatically switched OFF through the status of the reverse bias of the BC547 transistor which acts as a disconnecting switch and does not allow the passage of current. Hence, switching OFF the LED.In the dark (e.g. when light is blocked to the LDR), the LED is automatically switched ON through the status of the forward bias of the BC547 transistor that allows the passage of current through the collector and emitter connection, thereby triggering the LED power ON. This construction is superior to manual turning on at night because it provides guaranteed, hands-free security without relying on human memory. It eliminates the inconvenience of manually flipping switches every evening and prevents wasted battery energy from turning lights on too early.

Keyword: *Construction, Automation, Light control system*

Introduction

In every nation, city, and town, street lighting is vital since it illuminates and enhances the surrounding area. Every main thoroughfare has street lighting installed, including those in the suburbs. Ensuring the safety and security of people and their belongings is a top priority for any country. Any electrical lighting that is fixed outside a home for ambient illumination or an elevated light source that is turned on at a specific hour every night along a road or path is referred to as street lighting (Archana, et al, 2015). In addition to helping to illuminate our streets, street lighting also contributes to the nighttime environment's beauty. Streetlights, according to Echeweozo et al. (2019), improve both the visual appeal and security of a space. There are three primary functions for streetlights: security, roadway, and beacon lights. Each requires a particular kind of light and location. Additionally, streetlights can be used in public areas such as conference centers, houses, farms, universities, and factories. The streetlight guarantees the efficient, quick, and safe transportation of people and products between locations. Because street lighting reduces crime, accidents, and other negative activities throughout the night, it is strategically important for maintaining social and economic stability, which is of particular interest to public authorities in developing nations like Nigeria. Unsafe circumstances are created by poor lighting. In a well-lit community, manually operated street lighting systems use a significant portion of the city's power supply. This is clearly because the lights are always on at night, and some of the manually operated streetlights even illuminate throughout the day. Errors are common with manual control, which can result in energy waste and manual dimming. Everyday, even when no one is nearby, streetlights are turned on full blast from dusk till dawn. An intelligent street lighting system that can save municipal street lighting expenses by up to 50% to 70% is an automatic street lighting system. The sensors used by the automatic street lighting system are able to detect both daytime brightness and darkness. However, the lights are only activated during complete darkness. This will result in a partial waste of power. According to Muhammad (2013). One of the main drawbacks of the current street light systems is that the ON and OFF times vary noticeably on bright and wet days. Additionally, the lighting system no longer requires manual activation. Due to population increase, economic expansion, and the tragically limited supply of energy sources, the world's energy consumption is rising at the quickest rates ever. There are still significant energy shortages because resource expansion and supply growth have not kept up with rising demand.

According to Auwal et al, (2013). They conducted research on automatic street light design and construction that takes into account vehicle movements. They state that automation, energy consumption, and cost-effectiveness are the three main factors to be taken into account in the current technological landscape. The goal of automation is to use intelligent technology to reduce the need for human labor. Since energy sources are becoming scarcer due to a variety of factors, energy conservation has always been the top priority. Since energy usage has been rising steadily, as is common knowledge, we are utilizing IoT devices to mitigate these effects. Utilizing sensors to adjust street light illumination while consuming the least amount of electrical energy, they employed a modal. All nearby street lights either remain in the dim mode or turn on at their brightest mode when presence is sensed. Since LED lights are superior to traditional incandescent bulbs in every manner, they should be used. This will

lower carbon dioxide emissions, power usage, heat emissions, and maintenance and replacement expenses. Significant energy savings are anticipated. When there are no vehicles on the road, the Smart street light will remain off to conserve energy. When a vehicle approaches, a certain number of lamps within its range will turn on until the vehicle moves past. According to Samson and Loko (2021). They conducted research on the design and fabrication of Light Dependent Resistor (LDR) and microcontroller-based automatic streetlight controller. They claim that the availability of sufficient and effective streetlights has become essential in Nigeria as one of the security measures for the protection of life and property due to the country's rising crime rate and insurgency. Proteus 8.0 was used to simulate the microcontroller and program it in the Arduino C programming language. In accordance with the design specification, the components of the circuit prototype were permanently soldered on a Vero Board. The gadget was put through tests to ensure optimal performance and correct operation. The gadget tested for specificity, accuracy, and response time, and the results showed that the device scored 96.77%, 0.02 seconds, and 96.67%, respectively. If the gadget is installed in newly constructed or existing street lights, it might be extremely beneficial for improving the lighting and properly illuminating our streets for a more effective security system. According to Ibrahim and Jangfa (2019). They conducted study on the design and construction of an automated system for controlling street lights. They claim that every step of the construction process took into account the device's intended function as well as its theory of operation. Light dependent resistors (LDRs), comparator, relay, transistor, and power supply make up the system. The light dependent resistor is a light-sensitive gadget that automatically turns off light when exposed to sunshine. Its operation is dependent on the amount of light present. Utilizing an operational amplifier (741) as a comparator, the sourced voltage and reference voltage were compared. The street light was automatically turned on and off using a PNP transistor. For smooth functioning, a relay was linked to the lamp indication. To reduce sparking of the relay contacts, a spike diode was connected to the relay. There was a 12 volt power supply that was regulated. The voltage regulator with three terminals, LM7812, was employed for control. The A.C. was rectified using a full wave rectifier. Every component was put together on a printed circuit board, and the system was tested by turning on the light when the black material was removed from the light-dependent resistor, which indicated darkness. Before connecting them to function as an automated street light control system, the results were good and validated the prototype. An essential component of any expanding community are streetlights. Microcontrollers will take the place of analogue controllers throughout construction since they are faster to operate, have fewer components, and are more adaptable with 30% safety margin to be used. Therefore, this study aimed at constructing an automatic street light control system to keep up with the rising demand for energy capable of providing guaranteed, hands-free security without relying on human memory. It will eliminate the inconvenience of manually flipping switches every evening and prevent wasted battery energy from turning lights on too early.

Materials and method

Materials Includes

We used the following components; Transistor BC547, Light Dependent Resistor (LDR), Resistors 100kΩ and 330, Light emitting diode (LED), Connecting wires (single-core plastic-coated wire of 0.6mm diameter (the standard size) and Power supply 9V.

Method of Construction

For the construction process, the procedures are; The transistor BC 547(NPN) is inserted into a breadboard in accordance with the designed circuit diagram displayed in figure 3.1. Wires are linked across the transistor's base pin, light-dependent resistor (LDR), and emitter pin. The battery's negative (-ve) terminal is also connected to the transistor. Additionally, wires are connected to the transistor's base pin, positive (+ve) terminal, 330 ohm resistor, light emitting diode (LED), and 100k ohms resistor across the transistor's collector pin.

The system Development is based on this circuit diagram shown below;

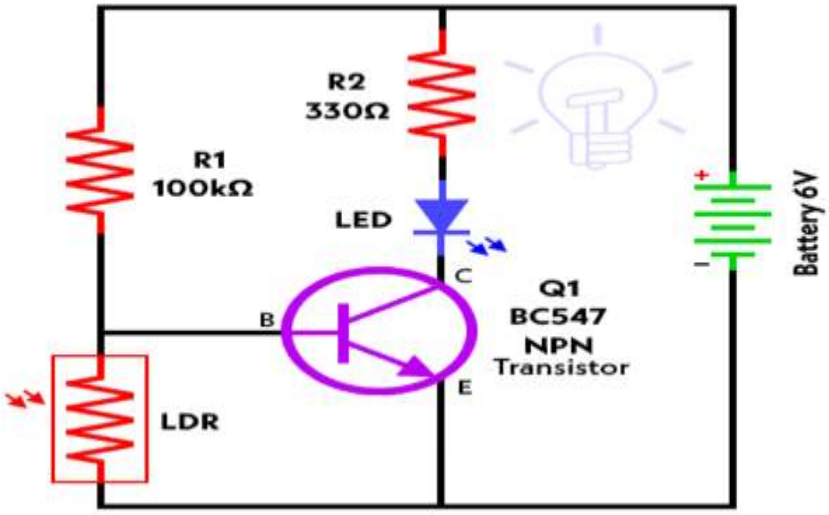


Figure 3.1: Automatic Street Light Control System Circuit Diagram

The LED is automatically turned off, or does not glow, anytime sunlight strikes the Light Dependent Resistor (LDR) in the system. The LED automatically turns on, or is ON, in the absence of light (such as when the LDR is blocked from receiving light).

The circuit functions in the forward bias state, which permits current to flow through the BC547 transistor's collector and emitter connections and turn on the LED. Current cannot flow through the BC547 transistor because it functions as a disconnecting switch when it is in the reverse bias state. Consequently, turn the LED off.

Results and Discussion

System Testing

The system testing was carried out during the day when sunlight falls on the LDR (Light Dependent resistor), the light emitting diode (LED) is automatically switched OFF i.e. the LED does not glow. In the application of darkness using black cloth, (e.g. when light is blocked to the LDR), the LED is automatically switched ON i.e. the LED is ON. This construction showed improved performance compared to the existing one by relying on sensors (like LDRs) to detect ambient light precisely. It reduces power waste and automatically turns on at dusk and off at dawn, eliminating human error.

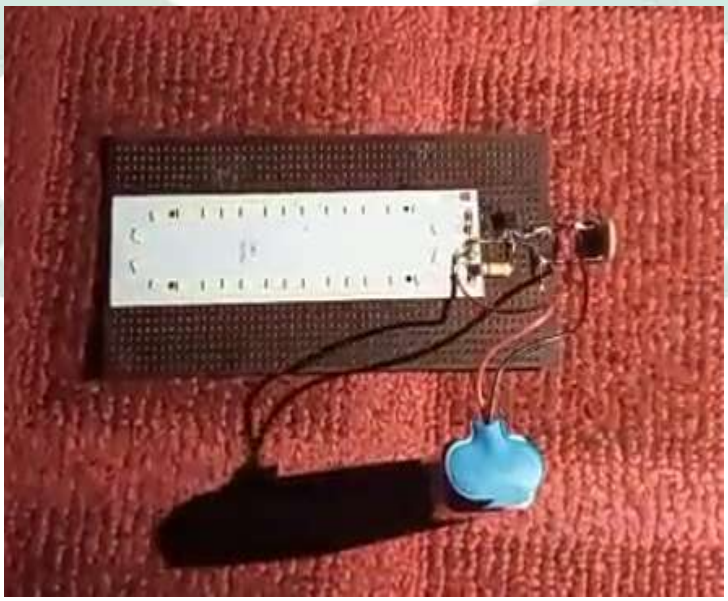


Plate 1: Constructed Automatic Street Light Control System



Plate 1: Tested Automatic Street Light Control System

From the testing, the system operated according to the desired result. Hence, the objective of the Study is actualized.

Conclusion

The system was developed based on the designed circuit diagram. The system operates whenever sunlight falls on the light dependent resistor (LDR), the light emitting diode (LED) is automatically switched OFF through the status of the reverse bias of the BC547 transistor which acts as a disconnecting switch and does not allow the passage of current. Hence, switching OFF the LED.In the dark (e.g. when light is blocked to the LDR), the LED is automatically switched ON through the status of the forward bias of the BC547 transistor that allows the passage of current through the collector and emitter connection, thereby triggering the LED power ON.

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COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED ENGINEERING PROPERTIES OF MANGO AND BUSH MANGO FLOURS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCESSING AND UTILIZATION

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Abstract

This study compared the selected engineering properties of flours produced from Sherry mango (Mangifera indica), Bush mango (Irvingia gabonensis), and Water mango (Mangifera indica) to determine their suitability for food processing, handling, storage, and equipment design. Engineering properties evaluated included bulk density, tapped bulk density, Hausner ratio, Carr's index, flowability index, and packing efficiency. A completely randomized experimental design was adopted, and all analyses were performed in triplicate. Data were subjected to one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25, and mean separation was performed using Duncan's Multiple Range Test at $p < 0.05$. The results revealed significant differences ($p < 0.05$) among the flour samples. Bulk density ranged from 0.39 to 0.53 g/cm³, with Sherry mango flour recording the highest value (0.53 ± 0.02 g/cm³), indicating superior packing characteristics and reduced storage volume requirements. Tapped bulk density followed a similar trend, ranging from 0.55 to 0.67 g/cm³. Hausner ratio (1.26–1.41) and Carr's index (20.9–29.1%) showed that Sherry mango flour exhibited better flowability and lower compressibility than Bush and Water mango flours. Similarly, the flowability index (70.9–79.4%) and packing efficiency (70.9–79.1%) confirmed the superior handling and compaction characteristics of the Sherry variety. The findings indicate that Sherry mango flour possesses more favourable engineering properties for powder handling, conveying, mixing, hopper discharge, and automated packaging systems, while the Bush and Water mango flours may require processing modifications or specialized equipment to improve flow performance. These engineering characteristics also have practical implications for ingredient handling and formulation in food processing and commercial foodservice operations. Overall, the study provides useful engineering data for the selection and utilization of mango flours in food processing and equipment design.

Keywords*: Engineering properties, Mango flour, Bulk density, Flowability, Powder handling, Food processing.*

Introduction

As the global population continues to grow, the demand for sustainable, affordable, and locally available food ingredients is becoming more urgent, especially in developing countries. One promising strategy to address this challenge is the utilization of agricultural by-products, particularly seeds that are often discarded during fruit processing. Mango (*Mangifera indica L.*) and bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*) seeds are two such underutilized resources that offer immense potential for food applications.

In many parts of Nigeria and West Africa, bush mango seeds, popularly known as ogbono, have been traditionally used in the preparation of soups due to their distinctive mucilaginous and thickening properties. Their ability to absorb water and form gels makes them a staple ingredient in many local dishes (Ajayi and Solomon, 2022; Nwabanne *et al*., 2022). On the other hand, the seeds of Sherry mango and Water mango, two widely consumed varieties of Mangifera indica, are typically discarded as waste despite their potential as alternative sources of functional flour for food processing

The engineering properties of powdered food materials, including bulk density, tapped bulk density, flowability, compressibility, and packing characteristics, are important parameters for the design of handling, conveying, storage, and packaging systems. These properties also influence processing efficiency and product consistency during food manufacturing (Adebayo *et al*., 2023; Olapade *et al*., 2023). Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of comprehensive studies that compare these properties across different mango seed varieties, especially in the context of their practical use in local food systems.

Previous studies on mango seeds have focused mainly on their nutritional composition and oil extraction potential (Adebowale *et al*., 2021; Chinedu *et al*., 2022), while comparatively little attention has been given to their engineering properties, particularly bulk density, flowability, compressibility, and packing characteristics. Existing studies also tend to treat mango seeds as a single material, with limited consideration of differences among varieties such as Sherry and Water mangoes (Oluwole *et al*., 2023). This presents a major knowledge gap in selecting suitable mango seed flours for food processing, powder handling, and equipment design.

Furthermore, in light of the growing emphasis on sustainable food systems and the reduction of food waste, exploring the potential of mango seeds that are typically discarded aligns with the global movement toward circular economies in agriculture (Umego *et al*., 2024). Generating engineering data on these underutilized seeds will support their efficient handling, storage, processing, and equipment design while promoting sustainable utilization, value addition, and reduction of postharvest waste.

This research therefore compared the selected engineering properties of flours produced from Sherry mango, Water mango, and Bush mango to determine their suitability for food processing, handling, storage, and equipment design. The findings provide engineering data that support the efficient utilization of these underexploited resources in powder handling systems, food processing, equipment design, and commercial foodservice applications while promoting value addition and reducing postharvest waste.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted an experimental and comparative research design to evaluate the selected engineering properties of flours produced from Bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*), Sherry mango (*Mangifera indica*), and Water mango (*Mangifera indica*). The engineering properties evaluated were bulk density, tapped bulk density, Hausner ratio, Carr's index, flowability index, and packing efficiency. These parameters were selected because they influence powder handling, storage, conveying, mixing, packaging, and equipment design in food processing. All determinations were carried out in triplicate using standard laboratory procedures.

The data obtained were subjected to one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25). Mean differences among the flour samples were separated using Duncan's Multiple Range Test at a 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

Sample Collection and Preparation

Sherry mango and Water mango fruits were obtained at physiological maturity from selected fruit markets in Oyo State, Nigeria, while Bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*) seeds were purchased from reputable local markets within the same area. The samples were selected based on maturity, freedom from insect damage, and absence of visible defects. All samples were transported under hygienic conditions to the Food Processing and Analysis Laboratory, Department of Post-Harvest Technology, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, for preparation and analysis.

The mango fruits were manually depulped, and the seeds were removed from the stones. The seed kernels, together with the Bush mango seeds, were cleaned and sun-dried for until a relatively constant weight was achieved before milling before milling into flour using a food grade electric blender. The flours were sieved through a 250 µm mesh sieve to obtain uniform particle size. Each flour sample was

packaged separately in airtight, moisture-proof polyethylene containers for 240 hours at 4 ± 1°C until analysis. (Omobuwajo *et al*., 2022).

Determination of Engineering Properties

The engineering properties of the flour samples were determined using standard methods described by AOAC (2019), Mohsenin (2020), and Onwuka (2018). The parameters evaluated included bulk density, tapped bulk density, Hausner ratio, Carr's index, flowability index, and packing efficiency.

Bulk Density (BD): Bulk density was determined by gently filling a graduated measuring cylinder with a known mass of flour without compaction. The bulk density was calculated as the ratio of sample mass to occupied volume and expressed as g/cm³ (Onwuka, 2018; Mohsenin, 2020).

$$BD = \left(\frac{Mass}{Volume}\right) (i)$$

Tapped Bulk Density (TBD): Tapped bulk density was determined by repeatedly tapping the graduated cylinder containing the flour until a constant volume was obtained. The tapped bulk density was calculated as the ratio of sample mass to the final tapped volume (Onwuka, 2018; Mohsenin, 2020).

$$TBD = \left(\frac{Mass}{Final\ Tapped\ Volume}\right) (ii)$$

Hausner Ratio (HR): Hausner ratio was calculated as the ratio of tapped bulk density to bulk density and was used to evaluate powder flowability (Suhag *et al*., 2024).

$$HR = \left(\frac{TBD}{BD}\right) (iii)$$

Carr's Compressibility Index (CI): Carr's Compressibility Index (CI) was calculated using the relationship between tapped bulk density and bulk density, and was used to evaluate powder compressibility according to standard classifications.

$$CL = \left(\frac{TBD - BD}{BD}\right) X100\ (iv)$$

Flowability index and Flow Classification: flowability index and flow classification was Derived from standard HR and CI scales (HR < 1.25 = good; HR > 1.4 = poor).

Packing Efficiency (PE, %): Packing efficiency was calculated as the percentage of the bulk volume occupied by solid particles and used to evaluate the packing characteristics of the flour samples (Mohsenin, 2020; Onwuka, 2018).

$$PE = \left(\frac{BD}{TBD}\right) x100 \quad (v)$$

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was applied to the experimental data to extract meaningful insights, validate patterns, and determine the level of significance in the observed variations among the three mango flour varieties. The data was systematically processed using statistical software tools (IBM SPSS Version 25), to ensure accuracy and reproducibility of results. Descriptive statistics was first computed for each parameter evaluated, including means and standard deviations. A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether there are statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) among the three mango seed flour varieties for each measured parameter.

Where the ANOVA indicates significant differences, *Duncan's Multiple Range Test at $p < 0.05$* was applied to pinpoint exactly which group means differ from each other.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Physical Properties of Mango Powder Samples

Parameter	Sherry Mango	Bush Mango	Water Mango	p-value
Bulk Density (g/cm³)	0.53 ± 0.02[a]	0.42 ± 0.0[b]	0.39 ± 0.01[b]	0.003
Tapped Bulk Density (g/cm³)	0.67 ± 0.02[a]	0.59 ± 0.02[b]	0.55 ± 0.01[b]	0.004
Hausner Ratio (HR)	1.26 ± 0.03[b]	1.40 ± 0.04[a]	1.41 ± 0.04[a]	0.012
Carr's Index (CI, %)	20.9 ± 1.00[b]	28.8 ± 1.20[a]	29.1 ± 1.10[a]	0.009
Flowability Index (FI)	79.4 ± 1.50[b]	71.4 ± 1.30[a]	70.9 ± 1.40[a]	0.008
Packing Efficiency (PE, %)	79.1 ± 1.40[a]	71.2 ± 1.20[b]	70.9 ± 1.30[b]	0.007
Flowability Classification	Passable	Poor	Poor	

Values are mean ± standard deviation (n = 3).
Different superscript letters in the same row denote significant difference

Table 1 presents the physical properties of mango powders obtained from three varieties; Sherry, Bush, and Water mangoes. These parameters (bulk density, tapped bulk density, Hausner ratio, Carr's index, flowability index, and packing efficiency) are critical indicators of how the powders behave during handling, processing, and storage. Understanding these parameters is particularly essential in powder technology and food engineering because they influence flowability, compressibility, and packaging efficiency, which in turn determine the design of equipment and packaging systems (Suhag *et al.*, 2024).
The results reveal that the Sherry variety exhibited the highest bulk density (0.53 ± 0.02 g/cm³) and tapped bulk density (0.67 ± 0.02 g/cm³), both significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) than those of the Bush (0.42 ± 0.01 g/cm³ and 0.59 ± 0.02 g/cm³) and Water (0.39 ± 0.01 g/cm³ and 0.55 ± 0.01 g/cm³) varieties. The higher densities indicate that Sherry mango powder particles are more compact and less porous, implying tighter particle packing and minimal interstitial air space. This characteristic makes Sherry powder more efficient for storage and transport, as higher bulk density corresponds to reduced storage volume per unit mass (Ueda, 2023).
The differences in bulk and tapped densities among the samples may be attributed to variations in particle size distribution, moisture content, and processing behaviour during drying and milling. Bush and Water mango powders exhibited lower density values, indicating the presence of lighter and more porous particles that could entrap air, thus leading to a looser packing arrangement. Similar observations were made by Camacho, (2022), who reported that irregular particle morphology and fine size fractions decrease powder density and increase cohesion, thereby reducing flow efficiency.
The Hausner ratio (HR) and Carr's index (CI) are derived parameters that quantify powder flowability and compressibility. For the Sherry powder, HR and CI were 1.26 ± 0.03 and 20.9 ± 1.00 %, respectively, while Bush and Water samples recorded significantly higher HR (1.40 ± 0.04 and 1.41 ± 0.04) and CI (28.8 ± 1.20 % and 29.1 ± 1.10 %) values. These results shows that the Sherry powder had superior flow characteristics compared to the other two varieties. CI values below 20 % indicate good flow, values between 20–25 % denote fair flow, and values above 25 % reflect poor flowability. Hence, the Sherry variety demonstrates passable flow, while both Bush and Water powders fall into the poor flow category.
The observed poor flow in Bush and Water mango powders may result from increased inter-particle friction, surface roughness, or residual moisture, which enhance cohesion and inhibit smooth flow. This agrees with Shah (2023), who noted that fruit powders with higher moisture content and irregular particle shapes tend to exhibit elevated HR and CI due to capillary forces that cause agglomeration.
The flowability index (FI) and packing efficiency (PE) parameters provide further insights into how well the powders can flow and compact during handling or vibration. The Sherry sample exhibited the

highest FI (79.4 ± 1.50 %) and PE (79.1 ± 1.40 %), while Bush and Water samples had lower values (FI: 71.4 ± 1.30 % and 70.9 ± 1.40 %; PE: 71.2 ± 1.20 % and 70.9 ± 1.30 %). These findings suggest that Sherry powder has superior flow and compaction potential, which is beneficial for bulk storage and packaging. Camacho *et al*. (2022) highlighted that powders with higher packing efficiency exhibit lower air permeability and more stable flow through mechanical systems, enhancing process uniformity and product dosing precision.

The flowability classification of the powders further supports these results, where Sherry was rated as "passable" and both Bush and Water as "poor." This classification aligns with the CI and HR interpretations, confirming that Sherry powder can be more readily processed and packaged using gravity-fed or screw-driven systems without extensive flow aids. In contrast, Bush and Water powders may require mechanical vibration or external flow conditioners, such as anti-caking agents, to enhance handling properties.

From a processing perspective, powders with higher bulk and tapped densities and lower HR and CI values tend to perform better in hopper discharge, mixing, and packaging systems. Sherry powder's higher density suggests it will experience fewer flow interruptions, making it more suitable for automatic packaging systems and volumetric fillers. Conversely, the Bush and Water varieties' poor flowability may necessitate design adjustments, such as steeper hopper angles or air-assisted flow systems, to prevent bridging and rat-holing. Similar recommendations were made by Suhag *et al*. (2024), who emphasised that poor-flowing powders require specialized handling designs to maintain process reliability.

From a product development viewpoint, the physical characteristics of these powders also affect their performance in reconstitution and formulation. Higher-density powders typically dissolve or disperse more uniformly in aqueous systems, while low-density powders with poor flow may lead to clumping during mixing.

The differences among varieties could also be influenced by intrinsic compositional differences such as starch, sugar, or fat content, which determine the particle's surface energy and hydrophobicity. For instance, The differences among the Mango varieties may also be attributed to variations in their chemical composition, including starch, lipid, protein, and fibre contents, which can influence particle surface characteristics and powder flow behaviour, which may have led to the formation of less compact particles with reduced flow behaviour. Ueda *et al*. (2023) highlighted that powders containing higher lipid fractions tend to develop irregular surface coatings, increasing cohesion and reducing flowability.

The physical property data clearly establish that the Sherry mango powder exhibits more favourable engineering attributes such as greater density, lower compressibility, and improved flowability, making it suitable for powdered food products, dry mix formulations, instant food ingredients, and other food processing applications where efficient powder flow, handling, storage, and packaging are essential. The Bush and Water powders, though less flowable, may still be utilised effectively after appropriate processing modifications, such as granulation, moisture reduction, or the addition of flow-enhancing carriers like maltodextrin.

These findings are consistent with contemporary research in powder technology, which emphasises the importance of particle engineering in achieving functional and stable food powders (Suhag *et al*., 2024; Shah, 2023; Camacho mango *et al*., 2022). Therefore, understanding the interrelationship between physical properties and process performance is vital for designing efficient systems for mango powder production, storage, and utilisation.

Conclusion

This study compared the selected engineering properties of flours produced from Sherry mango (*Mangifera indica*), Bush mango (*Irvingia gabonensis*), and Water mango (*Mangifera indica*) to determine their suitability for food processing, handling, storage, and equipment design. The results demonstrated significant differences in the engineering properties of the three flour samples. Sherry mango flour exhibited superior bulk density, packing efficiency, and flowability characteristics, indicating greater suitability for powder handling, conveying, mixing, hopper discharge, and automated packaging systems. Conversely, the poorer flow characteristics of Bush and Water mango flours suggest that processing modifications or equipment design adjustments may be required to improve their handling performance.

The findings provide useful engineering data for selecting mango flours for food processing, powder handling, and equipment design while promoting the value addition of underutilized mango seed resources. The superior engineering characteristics of Sherry mango flour indicate its potential for use in the manufacture of powdered food products, dry mix formulations, instant food ingredients, and other food processing applications where efficient powder flow, handling, storage, and packaging are essential. Future studies should employ controlled drying conditions and determine the final moisture content of flour samples prior to analysis to improve experimental reproducibility, facilitate comparison of engineering properties, and enhance the reliability of engineering data for industrial food processing applications.

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GAMMA RADIATION IN PROCESSING OF CASSAVA FLOUR: IMPACT OF DOSE RATE ON THE PRODUCT QUALITY IN IGBOORA.

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Abstract

The study is aimed to investigate the gamma radiation processing of cassava flour, its dose rate impact on the product quality in Igboora. Natural radionuclides play a significant role in the food that people consume as well as in the plants and animals that they eat. These nuclides become significant when their concentrations in these compounds goes beyond permissible limits, posing serious health hazards to humans. Its primary goal is to determine how the activity concentration of gamma radiation rate affects the quality of cassava flour made in Igboora and compare it to the UNSCEAR, ICRP and WHO/IAEA permissible limit of 0.29,1mSv/yr and 1mSv/yr respectively. The samples were taken from three (3) different markets (Isale-Oba, Oke-Iserin and Towobowo) weighed and divided into three 1g portions. The dose rate of prepared cassava flour samples was measured using a NaI (TI) detector. Every sample measured, as shown in the data, was below the ICRP/IAEA permitted limit level of 1 msv/yr. Based on the results of analysis, it can be inferred that the acitivity concentration of gamma dose rate from cassava flour samples from Igboora was below the allowable limit. It was suggested that in order to lower the rate of radionuclide gamma dose consumption in our community, the Radiation Protection Agency (RPA) should raise awareness about the effects of high radiation on the human body and food processing in order to prevent potential risks, particularly those related to health issues like cancer.

Keyword: Permissible limit, Dose rate, Gamma Spectroscopy, Radionuclide, Cassava flour

Introduction

Radiation has been linked to the emergence of cancer and most likely other health risks. When contaminated food is consumed by humans, radioactive elements from the atmosphere can spread across the terrestrial environment and cause radiation exposure. (Tyovenda *et al*., 2022). Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM) is used in conventional industries like dyeing, apparel, illuminating paint, lime burning and construction. These materials can be enhanced and released into the environment by industrial operations. Fish, animals, food crops, vegetables, soil, water, and the air are all contaminated by human activities.

Some of the most significant minerals, such as bitumen, salt limestone, tantalite, coal, and phosphate, are found in southwest Nigeria, particularly in Oyo State (Bilgici Cengiz *et al*.,2022).

Some areas of Oyo State have been linked to notable quantities of natural radioactivity due to the mineral presence. The ecology is known to be severely impacted by the exploration and utilization of these minerals. In order to determine whether there are contaminations because of their concentrations in the environment, it is required to measure the natural radionuclide element present in food crops in Oyo State, Nigeria. Additionally, estimating the uptake and retention of these radionuclides in the human body requires knowledge of the intake of radionuclides through the food chain (Adedokun *et al*.,2019). Grown in tropical areas, cassava (Manihot esculenta Crantz) is a perennial vegetative propagated shrub and a nutritious root crop. Over 600 million people, especially in the third-world nations, rely on it for their basic starch meal. Over 184 million tonnes of cassava are produced worldwide on yearly basis with 50% coming from Africa, 30% from Asia, and 20% from Latin America. Additionally, the chemical, pharmaceutical, paper, textile, and processed food and feed industries are using cassava more frequently (FAO, 2019). For about 800 million people in the tropics, cassava is a

significant source of nutritional carbohydrates (Layek, 2021). With a total production of almost 200 million tonnes, Africa is the world's largest producer of cassava, followed by Asia and Latin America. Thailand and Indonesia are the two biggest exporters of cassava in the world market; they mostly export flour, cassava pellets, chips, and starch. If the cyanide (HCN) level is less than 50 mg (kg fresh weight), the starchy root of cassava can be eaten directly. Since the majority of the HCN will be eliminated during processing, there are no specified protein and HCN level requirements for cassava used in the tapioca business (Okoor *et al*., 2019).

Food security is threatened by the crop's significant limitations, which are the cause of its low yield. Weeds, bacterial and viral infections, low protein and high cyanogenic glucoside content in storage roots, and poor post-harvest storability are some of most significant problems associated with cassava production (Essien *et al*., 2021). The cassava roots become totally unfit for human food due to rapid post-harvest deterioration, which typically starts two or three days after harvest and is followed by microbial deterioration five to seven days later. This diminishes the quality of starch extracted from them and decreases their appeal as animal feed (Ekpo *et al*., 2020). Starches are altered physically, chemically, or enzymatically in the food industry to improve and expand their uses. For the degradation, grafting, and cross-linking of polymer materials, radiation is a very practical tool. In an investigation to ascertain how gamma irradiation affected the physiochemical characteristics of cross waxy maize RS, it was discovered that the RS content in unmodified waxy maize starch increased with an increase in irradiation dosage, RS contents marginally reduced as the dose increased (Atat et al., 2020a). As the radiation dose (5 to 20 kGy) grew, so did the enzyme-RS fractions in gamma- maize starches. Retorting, baking, and high-temperature drying are some food processing techniques that are known to marginally raise RS levels (Ademola *et al*., 2019). When some elements undergo radioactive disintegration, they emit gamma rays, which are short-wavelength electromagnetic radiation with a deep penetration. Depending on the irradiance, it has significant effects on plant growth and development through morphological, physiological, biochemical, genetic, and cytological changes in cells and tissues (Adesiji and Ademola, 2019). Numerous studies have demonstrated how gamma irradiation affects oxidative stress, seed germination, and seedling growth (Usikalu *et al*.,2018). It is generally known that high doses of gamma rays adversely affect the biochemical and physiological properties of plants (UNSCEAR, 2023). However, radio sensitivity depends on the type of plant (differences in DNA content, cell cycle dynamics, antioxidant response, and repair process) and environmental conditions (such as seed moisture content, oxygen, and temperature). Moisture affects the seed's sensitivity to irradiation due to its role in respiration and gas transport, although the mechanism of this effect is not fully understood. For example, in barley seeds at rest, moisture content of less than 14% leads to increased sensitivity to X-rays and gamma rays (Tyovenda *et al*., 2022).

Improvements in yield and nutritional quality, as well as a decrease in cyanide content, are among the agronomic traits that cassava breeding programs should focus on given the current state of the cassava processing sector. The most prevalent component of cassava roots is starch, which can be used to make a wide range of products and applications, including food packaging. The effects of different preparation methods on the radioactive content of food, as well as the radiological impact of doses through consumption in the food and water chain, are concerning and necessitate immediate consideration. Given that a radionuclide's radiological and biological half-lives determine the dose that results from its persistence in the body,

Furthermore, many radionuclides pose a risk to human health due to their extended half lifetimes and carcinogenic properties. Determining the radionuclide concentrations in cassava flour will assist in assessing the health risks related to its use as human food and other food-related applications.

Cassava flour is processed into packaging materials using a variety of techniques due to its physical and chemical characteristics, including extrusion, injection molding, film blowing, and thermos-pressing solidification. This result in the product absorbing some of the radiation released either directly from the harvested soil or during processing into other goods. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the radioactivity concentration in cassava flour in Igboora and provide pertinent advice to government authorities and the people who use cassava flour.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the gamma radiation of cassava flour, impact of dose rate on the product quality in Igboora .

Objectives of the study

- To determine the dose rate of radionuclide element present in Cassava flour.
- To assess the radionuclide activity concentration in Cassava flour.
- To compare the dose rate to UNSCEAR, ICRP and WHO/IAEA permissible value.

Methodology

Study Area

The experiment was carried out at Physics Laboratory of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State.

Materials

Cassava Flour Polythene bag, Oven, Electric Blender, Container.

Measuring Instrument

NaI (TI) detector and Gamma Spectroscopy

Sample Collection

Cassava Flour was purchased from different three (3) Markets in Igboora namely, Isale-Oba, Oke-Iserin and Towobowo which was placed into a polyethylene bag and brought to physics laboratory.

Sample preparation

The acquired cassava flour was further air-dried. After that, they were put in appropriately labelled crucible dishes and dried in the lab at 60℃ in a Gallen Kamp oven until they reached a consistent weight. The dried samples were then sieved to a fine powder.

Determination of radionuclides in Cassava Flour samples

The samples were taken to the laboratory for analysis, *a gamma-ray scintillation spectrometry system was used to measure the natural radionuclides content of the cassava flour samples.* Each of the sieved samples was weighed using a 2 kg electronic balance, put in an airtight container with a label, and incubated for four weeks to achieve radioactive equilibrium m between parents and progenies.

Gamma-ray spectrometer used for this research is the Canberra 7.6cm x 7.6 cm Nal (Tl) detector (Model No. 802-series). The spectroscopic system is connected to Canberra series 10 plus Multichannel Analyses (MCA) (Model No. 1104) through a preamplifier base×, which enables data acquisition, storage and display of the acquired spectra. The resolution of the detector is about 8% at 0.662 MeV 137Cs which is capable of distinguishing the gamma-ray energies used for the measurements.

Determination of Activity Concentration of cassava flour

The activity concentration of cassava flour sample was determined by the equation:

Activity Concentration = $RadiationEnergy\ (RE)\ /\ Massof$ **sample** $(M)\ (T)$

The Activity Concentration of the samples such as potassium ^{40}K, Radon ^{226} Ra and Thorium ^{232}Th was measured in Becquerel per Kilogram (Bq/Kg)

Absorbed Dose Rate (ADR) per radionuclide

The absorbent dose rate of the cassava flour sample was determined by the equation:

Dose (mSv/yr) A × I × DC × 1000 (1)

Where A= activity Bq/Kg and I = intake Kg/yr

Dc = Sv/Bq × 1000 conversion of Sv to mSv *(2)*

It is expressed in Joules per kilogram (JKg^{-1}). Joules per Kilogram is also known as Gray (Gy).

Radionuclide	***Sv/Bq***
^{40}K	6.2×10^{-9}
^{226}Ra	2.8×10^{-7}
^{232}Th	2.3×10^{-7}

Calculation dose per radionuclide from cassava flour from Igboora

FAO data for Nigeria cassava consumption = 0.4Kg/day = 146Kg/hr for an adult

Statistical Analysis

The result obtained in this study was interpreted and presented in tables, graphs such as bar chart.

Results and discussion

Results

Table1: Activity Concentration (Gamma dose rate) of Radiation in Cassava Flour

Sample Location	^{40}K (mSv)	^{226}Ra (mSv)	^{232}Th (mSv)	Total Ingestion	ICRP (public dose limit)	WHO / IAEA (Food Guidance	UNSCEAR (Global Average Ingestion)	Conclusion
Isale-Oba	0.0317	0.0135	0.0077	0.0529	1mSv/	1mSv/yr	0.29/yr	
Oke-Iserin	0.0583	0.0352	0.0312	0.1247				
Towobowo	0.0706	0.0833	0.0878	0.2417				

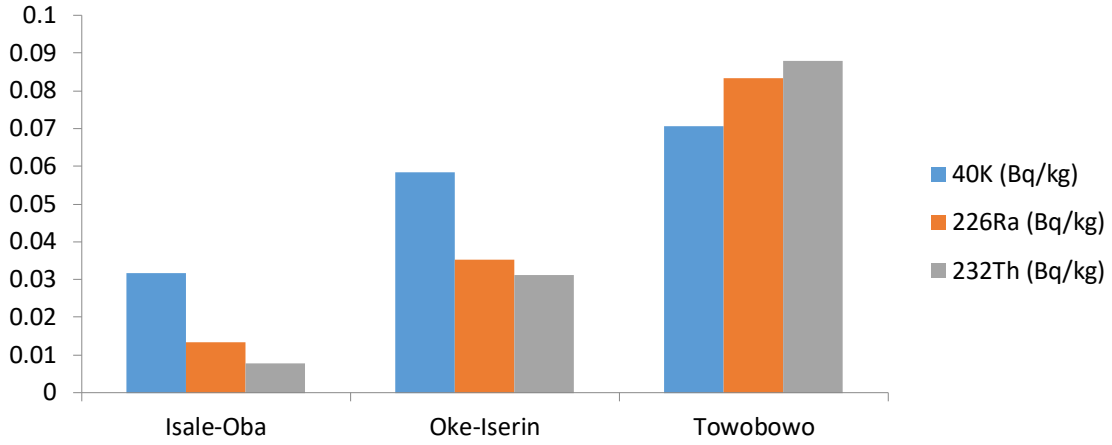


Fig. 1: Activity Concentration (Gamma dose rate) of Radiation in Cassava Flour.

Table 1 and its graph show the Activity Concentration (Gamma dose rate) of Radiation in Cassava Flour Sample. The table revealed the radiation dose rate at different location of Igboora Community.

The radiation dose rate of cassava flour sample at Isale Oba was found as follows: 0.0317 (mSv)), 0.0135 (mSv)) and 0.0077 (mSv) respectively.

The radiation dose rate of cassava flour sample at Oke-Iserin was found as follows: 0.0583 (mSv), 0.0352 (mSv) and 0.0312 (mSv)) respectively.

The radiation dose rate of cassava flour sample at Towobowo was found as follows: 0.0706 (mSv), 0.0833 (mSv)) and 0.0878 (mSv) respectively.

From the entire cassava flour samples and analysed as indicated in the results above were below the permissible limit level according to UNSCEAR (Global Average Ingestion), ICRP (Public limit) and WHO/IAEA (Food Guidance. According to Tyovenda et al.,2022. which investigated the radiological risk of farmlands and the transfer factor from soil to crops in jalingo and wukari which found out that the concentration of natural radionuclide element presents in the arable crops may have low or little effect on the its consumption by living organism.

It can be deduced from the analysis of the results above that gamma dose rate emitted from cassava flour samples, across Isale-Oba, Oke-Iserin and Towobowo markets in Igboora were low and have not pose any risk for consumption when also compare with UNSCEAR, ICRP and WHO/IAEA permissible level of 0.29, 1mSv/yr and 1mSv/yr respectively.

Conclusion

The study concentrated on the impact of gamma radiation (dose rate) in cassava flour from various Igboora locations. The results of the gamma dose rate obtained from the findings demonstrated that the natural radionuclide elements present in the cassava flour examined were below the allowable limit by UNSCEAR, ICRP and WHO/IAEA.

Therefore, the food items may not present significant health risks to the customer. Thus, it is determined that the food items (cassava flour) that were sampled can be safely consumed in the designated community locations. Additionally, it was determined that the cassava flour from the studied areas—Isale-Oba, Oke-Iserin and Towobowo —contained exposure to natural radionuclides, specifically gamma radiation. It is therefore concluded that the sampled cassava flour is safe for consumption.

Recommendation

In cases of environmental radioactivity contamination from uncontrolled releases of radiation sources into the environment, the radiometric data from this study could be used as a baseline in the study area and as a reference for similar studies in the future both domestically and internationally. In order to lower the rate of radionuclide gamma dose consumption in our society, the Radiation Protection Agency (RPA) should raise awareness of the effects of high radiation on the human body and food processing in order to prevent potential risks, particularly those related to health. There should be more research on the effects and health risk assessment of lethal doses on human bodies, as well as awareness of the effects of high radiation levels in food.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AS CATALYSTS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND SUSTAINABLE MODERN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital communication are reshaping agricultural systems by improving information dissemination, enhancing extension services, and promoting sustainable farming practices. In Nigeria, where agriculture remains a major source of employment, food security, and economic growth, integrating AI with digital communication offers significant opportunities to address challenges such as low productivity, climate variability, inadequate extension services, and limited access to timely agricultural information. This study adopts a narrative literature review to examine how Artificial Intelligence and digital communication function as complementary catalysts for effective communication and sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria. Relevant literature published between 2020 and 2025 was retrieved from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, IEEE Xplore, and AGRIS. The review indicates that AI technologies, including machine learning, Generative AI, Large Language Models (LLMs), Computer Vision, the Internet of Things (IoT), drone analytics, satellite monitoring, and intelligent advisory systems, significantly improve agricultural decision-making, precision farming, and climate-smart agriculture. Likewise, digital communication platforms such as mobile applications, social media, online extension services, and web-based knowledge-sharing platforms improve farmers' access to agricultural information, market intelligence, and advisory support. However, inadequate digital infrastructure, poor Internet connectivity, limited digital literacy, weak institutional support, and policy implementation gaps continue to constrain adoption. The study concludes that integrating AI with digital communication can strengthen agricultural communication, improve food security, and accelerate sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria. It recommends greater investment in digital infrastructure, AI-enabled extension services, farmer capacity building, and supportive policy frameworks.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Digital Communication, Sustainable Agriculture, Agricultural Communication, Precision Agriculture, Agricultural Extension, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Agriculture remains one of the most important sectors of the Nigerian economy, contributing substantially to employment, food security, poverty reduction, and rural livelihoods. The sector supports millions of households and provides raw materials for agro-based industries. Despite its strategic importance, agricultural productivity in Nigeria continues to face challenges such as climate change, limited access to timely agricultural information, inadequate extension services, poor rural infrastructure, low technology adoption, and post-harvest losses. These constraints highlight the need for innovative approaches that improve communication, facilitate knowledge sharing, and promote sustainable agricultural development.

Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital communication are transforming agricultural systems worldwide. AI enables machines to perform tasks such as learning, reasoning, prediction, and decision-making, while digital communication facilitates the rapid creation, dissemination, and exchange of information through mobile technologies, Internet-based platforms, and social media. Together, these technologies are driving precision agriculture, smart farming, intelligent advisory services, and data-driven decision-making that improve productivity and sustainability.

Globally, AI technologies such as machine learning, computer vision, drone analytics, satellite monitoring, the Internet of Things (IoT), and Generative AI are increasingly used to optimize irrigation,

monitor crops, detect pests and diseases, predict weather conditions, and improve market access. At the same time, digital communication platforms enable farmers to access extension services, agricultural training, market information, and climate advisories more efficiently. These innovations enhance knowledge sharing, strengthen stakeholder collaboration, and support sustainable agricultural practices.

In Nigeria, the adoption of AI and digital communication is growing through mobile-based agricultural applications, digital extension programmes, online farmer communities, and technology-enabled advisory services. However, inadequate digital infrastructure, poor Internet connectivity in rural areas, unreliable electricity supply, limited digital literacy, and weak institutional support continue to limit their widespread adoption and effectiveness.

Although previous studies have examined Artificial Intelligence or digital communication in agriculture, relatively few have explored how these technologies complement each other to strengthen agricultural communication and promote sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria. This study addresses that gap by reviewing existing literature to examine the synergistic role of AI and digital communication in enhancing agricultural information dissemination, strengthening extension services, supporting farmers' decision-making, and advancing sustainable agricultural development.

Statement of the Problem

Agriculture remains central to Nigeria's economic development, yet many farmers Agriculture remains central to Nigeria's economic development, food security, and rural livelihoods. However, despite government interventions and technological innovations, many farmers continue to experience inadequate access to accurate, timely, and reliable agricultural information. Conventional agricultural extension systems are constrained by shortages of extension personnel, inadequate funding, weak communication infrastructure, and limited coverage, thereby reducing their effectiveness in promoting modern agricultural practices.

Recent developments in Artificial Intelligence and digital communication provide opportunities to transform agricultural communication through intelligent advisory systems, predictive analytics, precision agriculture, digital extension services, weather forecasting, market intelligence, and real-time information sharing. Despite these opportunities, adoption remains relatively low because of inadequate digital infrastructure, poor Internet connectivity, limited digital literacy among farmers, high implementation costs, and weak policy support.

Furthermore, while several studies have examined Artificial Intelligence and digital communication independently, limited attention has been given to their complementary role in strengthening agricultural communication and sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria. This gap in knowledge necessitates a comprehensive review that synthesizes current evidence and provides practical recommendations for policymakers, researchers, extension practitioners, and development agencies.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine how Artificial Intelligence and digital communication serve as catalysts for effective communication and sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria. The specific objectives seek to:

1. Examine the role of Artificial Intelligence in promoting sustainable agricultural practices in Nigeria.
2. Assess the contribution of digital communication to agricultural information dissemination and extension services.
3. Explore the complementary relationship between Artificial Intelligence and digital communication in enhancing agricultural productivity.
4. Identify the challenges affecting the adoption of AI and digital communication technologies in Nigeria's agricultural sector.
5. Recommend strategies for improving the integration of AI and digital communication to support sustainable agricultural development.

Research Method

This study adopted a narrative literature review design to synthesize existing knowledge on Artificial Intelligence and digital communication in sustainable agriculture. Relevant literature was obtained from peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, scholarly books, and institutional reports indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, IEEE Xplore, and AGRIS.

The literature search employed keywords including Artificial Intelligence, Digital Communication, Precision Agriculture, Agricultural Communication, Digital Extension Services, ICT4D, Machine Learning, Generative AI, Large Language Models, and Sustainable Agriculture, using Boolean operators (AND and OR) to refine the search.

Only English-language publications published between 2020 and 2025 were included, except for seminal studies used to explain the theoretical framework. The selected literature was analysed thematically to identify recurring themes, emerging trends, research gaps, and implications for agricultural communication and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Agricultural Development

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with significant implications for agricultural development. AI refers to the capability of computer systems to simulate human intelligence by performing tasks such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, pattern recognition, and decision-making. In agriculture, AI supports precision farming through technologies such as machine learning, computer vision, robotics, predictive analytics, and intelligent decision-support systems. These technologies enable farmers to optimize resource utilization, improve crop yields, detect pests and diseases early, forecast weather conditions, and minimize production risks.

Globally, AI applications have improved agricultural productivity by enabling data-driven farming decisions. Precision agriculture uses AI algorithms to analyse data obtained from satellites, drones, sensors, and weather stations, allowing farmers to make timely decisions regarding irrigation, fertilizer application, pest control, and harvesting. Such innovations contribute to sustainable agricultural practices by increasing efficiency while reducing environmental degradation and production costs.

In Nigeria, AI adoption remains at an emerging stage. Several digital agriculture initiatives are gradually introducing AI-enabled advisory systems, climate-smart farming technologies, and mobile-based agricultural information services. However, inadequate infrastructure, high technology costs, poor Internet connectivity, and limited digital literacy continue to constrain widespread adoption, particularly among smallholder farmers who constitute the majority of agricultural producers.

Digital Communication and Agricultural Information Dissemination

Digital communication has transformed the manner in which agricultural information is generated, disseminated, and utilized. Unlike conventional communication channels that depend primarily on face-to-face extension services, digital communication enables rapid and continuous exchange of agricultural knowledge through mobile phones, Internet platforms, social media, online learning systems, websites, podcasts, and interactive digital applications.

The increasing penetration of smartphones and mobile Internet has created new opportunities for farmers to access weather forecasts, market prices, extension advice, financial services, and government agricultural programmes. Digital communication has also strengthened collaboration among researchers, policymakers, extension agents, agribusinesses, and farming communities by facilitating timely information sharing and feedback.

Nevertheless, digital communication in Nigeria continues to face challenges associated with inadequate Internet infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, low digital literacy, affordability constraints, and disparities in digital access between urban and rural communities. Addressing these constraints remains

essential for maximizing the developmental benefits of digital communication within the agricultural sector.

Development Communication, Agricultural Communication and ICT4D

Development Communication emphasizes the strategic use of communication to facilitate social and economic transformation through participation, dialogue, and knowledge sharing. Within agriculture, communication serves as a catalyst for technology adoption, behavioural change, and community empowerment. Rather than treating farmers as passive recipients of information, Development Communication encourages active participation in identifying problems, evaluating innovations, and implementing development initiatives.

Agricultural Communication specifically focuses on communicating agricultural innovations, research findings, extension messages, and policy information among researchers, extension personnel, policymakers, agribusinesses, and farmers. The emergence of digital communication technologies has significantly expanded agricultural communication through mobile applications, social media platforms, online extension services, virtual training, and web-based knowledge-sharing systems.

Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) further complements agricultural communication by promoting the use of digital technologies to improve development outcomes. ICT4D applications including mobile technologies, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, cloud computing, and digital financial services have improved farmers' access to agricultural knowledge, climate information, financial inclusion, and market opportunities. These technologies contribute significantly to rural development and agricultural modernization.

Participatory Communication, Digital Extension Services and Knowledge Management

Participatory Communication recognizes farmers as active contributors to the communication process rather than passive recipients of information. Through dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange, farmers participate in identifying local challenges, adapting innovations, and evaluating agricultural interventions. Digital communication platforms have strengthened participatory approaches by enabling online farmer communities, interactive advisory services, social media engagement, and virtual knowledge-sharing networks.

Digital Extension Services have emerged as an important complement to conventional agricultural extension systems. AI-powered mobile applications, Short Message Service (SMS), WhatsApp groups, interactive voice response systems, webinars, and online advisory platforms provide farmers with real-time agricultural information regardless of geographical location. These technologies improve the efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness of agricultural extension services.

Knowledge Management also plays an essential role in sustainable agricultural development by facilitating the creation, storage, dissemination, and application of agricultural knowledge. Artificial Intelligence enhances knowledge management through intelligent databases, automated information retrieval, predictive analytics, and decision-support systems. Combined with digital communication platforms, AI promotes continuous learning, innovation, and evidence-based decision-making throughout agricultural value chains.

Emerging Artificial Intelligence Technologies in Agriculture

Recent advances in Artificial Intelligence have introduced innovative technologies that are transforming agricultural communication and farm management. Generative AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) have expanded the capabilities of agricultural advisory services by generating localized recommendations, translating technical information into farmer-friendly language, and supporting conversational interactions through AI-powered chatbots. Examples include ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, and DeepSeek, while specialized systems such as FarmGPT are being developed to support agricultural extension and knowledge dissemination.

Another important innovation is Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), which combines generative AI with external databases to provide more accurate, evidence-based, and up-to-date responses. Within

agriculture, RAG can retrieve current weather forecasts, market prices, pest outbreaks, and government agricultural policies before generating recommendations for farmers.

Computer Vision, drone analytics, and satellite remote sensing have significantly improved crop monitoring, disease detection, weed identification, irrigation management, and yield prediction through automated image analysis. Likewise, the Internet of Things (IoT) enables real-time monitoring of soil moisture, temperature, livestock health, and environmental conditions using interconnected sensors and smart devices.

Emerging technologies such as Edge AI allow intelligent data processing directly on local devices, thereby reducing dependence on stable Internet connectivity an important advantage for rural farming communities. Similarly, Digital Twin technology creates virtual representations of farming systems that enable farmers to simulate production scenarios before implementing decisions in the field.

Collectively, these technologies demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence and digital communication are complementary drivers of agricultural transformation. While AI provides intelligent analysis and decision support, digital communication ensures that agricultural knowledge reaches farmers efficiently through accessible communication channels. Their integration therefore has significant potential to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen food security, and promote sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI) and the Development Communication Theory. These theories provide a suitable framework for understanding how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital communication facilitate the adoption of agricultural innovations and promote sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, developed by Everett M. Rogers (2003), explains how new ideas, technologies, and innovations spread through a social system over time. According to Rogers, the adoption of an innovation progresses through five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. The theory further identifies five innovation attributes that influence adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.

Within the context of this study, Artificial Intelligence represents an agricultural innovation capable of transforming farming through technologies such as machine learning, intelligent advisory systems, computer vision, predictive analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and precision agriculture. Digital communication platforms—including mobile applications, social media, online extension services, and web-based agricultural information systems serve as the communication channels through which these innovations are introduced, explained, and promoted among farmers.

The theory suggests that farmers are more likely to adopt AI-enabled agricultural technologies when they perceive clear benefits, receive timely information through trusted communication channels, and have opportunities to observe successful implementation. Consequently, effective digital communication accelerates the diffusion and adoption of AI innovations, thereby improving agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Development Communication Theory

Development Communication Theory views communication as a strategic instrument for achieving social and economic development through participation, dialogue, empowerment, and knowledge sharing. Rather than treating communication as a one-way process of information dissemination, the theory emphasizes collaboration between development institutions and beneficiaries in identifying challenges and implementing sustainable solutions.

Within agriculture, Development Communication promotes interaction among farmers, researchers, extension officers, policymakers, development agencies, and technology providers. AI-powered

communication platforms, digital extension services, and online knowledge-sharing systems enhance these interactions by providing timely agricultural information, personalized recommendations, weather forecasts, market intelligence, and opportunities for farmer feedback.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence with digital communication aligns with the principles of Development Communication by improving access to knowledge, strengthening participation, encouraging innovation adoption, and supporting sustainable agricultural transformation in Nigeria.

Relevance of the Theories to the Study

The two theories complement one another in explaining the relationship between Artificial Intelligence, digital communication, and sustainable agriculture. While the Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how AI technologies are introduced and adopted within farming communities, Development Communication Theory emphasizes the role of communication, participation, and knowledge sharing in ensuring that technological innovations produce meaningful development outcomes. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how AI and digital communication jointly strengthen agricultural communication, improve extension services, and support sustainable modern agricultural practices in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The review demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence and digital communication are increasingly reshaping agricultural communication by improving access to timely information, strengthening extension services, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. Across the reviewed studies, AI technologies—including machine learning, computer vision, predictive analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), drone analytics, and satellite monitoring—consistently improve precision agriculture through enhanced crop monitoring, pest detection, irrigation management, weather prediction, and efficient resource utilization. These technologies enable farmers to make more informed decisions while promoting environmental sustainability and improved productivity.

The findings further reveal that digital communication has transformed agricultural information dissemination by expanding access to extension services through mobile applications, social media, online advisory platforms, interactive radio programmes, webinar, and digital knowledge-sharing systems. These communication channels reduce geographical barriers, strengthen collaboration among agricultural stakeholders, and improve farmers' access to market information, climate advisories, financial services, and government agricultural programmes.

Despite these opportunities, the review identifies several barriers limiting widespread adoption of AI and digital communication in Nigeria. The most frequently reported challenges include inadequate digital infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, poor Internet connectivity in rural communities, low digital literacy among farmers, limited institutional capacity, inadequate funding, and insufficient policy implementation. These findings indicate that technological innovation alone cannot transform agriculture without corresponding investments in infrastructure, human capacity development, and supportive governance.

Another important finding is the limited integration of Artificial Intelligence and digital communication within existing agricultural communication literature. Many previous studies examine these technologies independently, with relatively few investigating their complementary role in strengthening agricultural extension and sustainable agricultural development. This review therefore contributes by synthesizing current evidence and demonstrating that AI and digital communication are mutually reinforcing components of modern agricultural communication systems.

The findings strongly support the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which emphasizes that innovation adoption depends on effective communication channels and farmers' perceptions of technological benefits. Similarly, the findings reinforce Development Communication Theory by demonstrating that participation, dialogue, and knowledge sharing remain essential for the successful implementation of AI-enabled agricultural innovations. Consequently, integrating Artificial Intelligence with digital

communication provides both technological and communication pathways for improving agricultural productivity, food security, and rural development in Nigeria.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Artificial Intelligence and digital communication by providing a comprehensive synthesis of their complementary roles in promoting sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria. Unlike many previous studies that examine Artificial Intelligence or digital communication independently, this review demonstrates that integrating both technologies produces greater benefits for agricultural communication, extension service delivery, farmers' decision-making, and sustainable agricultural productivity.

The study also extends existing literature by incorporating contemporary communication perspectives—including Development Communication, Agricultural Communication, ICT4D, Participatory Communication, Digital Extension Services, and Knowledge Management—into discussions of AI-driven agricultural transformation. Furthermore, it introduces emerging technologies such as Generative AI, Large Language Models (LLMs), Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), Computer Vision, Edge AI, Digital Twins, and AI-powered advisory systems as important areas for future agricultural communication research in Nigeria.

The findings provide practical insights for policymakers, extension agencies, researchers, educational institutions, and technology developers by identifying critical implementation challenges and proposing evidence-based strategies for improving AI adoption, digital inclusion, and sustainable agricultural development.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence and digital communication have emerged as strategic drivers of sustainable agricultural transformation by improving agricultural information dissemination, strengthening extension services, enhancing farmers' decision-making, and promoting climate-smart agricultural practices. This review demonstrates that integrating AI technologies with digital communication platforms creates new opportunities for increasing agricultural productivity, improving food security, and supporting rural development in Nigeria.

The review further shows that technologies such as machine learning, Generative AI, Internet of Things (IoT), Computer Vision, drone analytics, satellite monitoring, and intelligent advisory systems can significantly improve precision agriculture when combined with accessible digital communication platforms. However, realizing these benefits requires deliberate investments in digital infrastructure, affordable internet services, digital literacy programmes, institutional capacity building, and enabling public policies.

Ultimately, the future of sustainable agriculture in Nigeria depends not only on technological innovation but also on effective communication systems that ensure farmers can access, understand, adopt, and effectively utilize emerging agricultural technologies.

Recommendations

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

1. **Government** should formulate and implement comprehensive policies that promote the integration of Artificial Intelligence and digital communication technologies into Nigeria's agricultural sector.

2. **Agricultural extension agencies** should adopt AI-powered advisory systems, mobile applications, and digital communication platforms to improve access to timely, reliable, and location-specific agricultural information.

3. **Federal and State Governments** should prioritize investment in rural digital infrastructure, stable electricity supply, broadband Internet connectivity, and affordable digital services to facilitate technology adoption among farmers.

4. **Universities, research institutions, and agricultural organizations** should promote interdisciplinary research on Artificial Intelligence, digital communication, and sustainable agriculture while developing locally relevant AI solutions for Nigerian farmers.

5. **Capacity-building programmes** should be organized to improve digital literacy among farmers, extension officers, and agricultural stakeholders, enabling them to effectively utilize AI-enabled technologies.

6. **Public-private partnerships** should be strengthened to encourage innovation, technology transfer, and investment in affordable AI-driven agricultural solutions tailored to the needs of smallholder farmers.

7.**Future studies** should adopt empirical research designs to assess the effectiveness, adoption, and socio-economic impacts of emerging AI technologies—including Generative AI, Large Language Models, Edge AI, Digital Twins, and AI-powered decision-support systems—within Nigeria's agricultural sector.

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FABRICATION OF AN IMPROVED BURR MILL

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Abstract
The production of efficient grain processing equipment is essential for improving food production, reducing post-harvest losses, and minimizing the drudgery associated with traditional milling methods. This study focused on the production of an improved burr mill capable of enhancing milling efficiency, reducing energy consumption, and producing more uniform particle sizes than conventional burr mills. The machine was designed using standard engineering design principles, with emphasis on component strength, ease of fabrication, operational safety, and affordability. Major components of the machine include the hopper, burr plates, milling chamber, shaft, bearings, pulley and belt drive system, frame, discharge outlet, and gasoline engine. The machine was fabricated from locally available materials and test run using maize grains. Performance tests were conducted to determine the throughput capacity, milling capacity and milling efficiency. The results indicated that the improved burr mill achieved higher milling efficiency (96.1 %), increased throughput capacity (75.7kg/hr.) and milling capacity (72.7 kg/hr.) compared with conventional burr mill of 87.9 %, 60 kg/hr and 58.7 kg respectively. The improved burr plate design and optimized clearance contributed significantly to producing finer and more uniform product while minimizing heat generation during operation. The study demonstrated that the produced burr mill is reliable, easy to operate and maintain, and economically suitable for small- and medium-scale agro-processing enterprises. The use of local materials also reduced production costs, making the machine accessible to local fabricators and rural processors. It is therefore concluded that the improved burr mill provides an effective and sustainable solution for grain milling, enhanced productivity, value addition, food security, and rural industrial development. Future improvements should incorporate variable speed control, automated feed regulation, and wear-resistant burr materials to further improve the machine performance and durability.

Keywords: *Burr mill, fabrication, performance evaluation, milling efficiency, throughput capacity, milling capacity.*

Introduction

Agricultural or food materials are products from the farm which are either consumables or raw materials for industries. Its processing is a post-harvest operation that adds value to agricultural products (Mijinyawa *et. al*, 2007). The objective is to minimize the qualitative and quantitative deterioration of the produce after harvesting. Food processing and preservation is a branch of manufacturing that transforms raw animals, crops, vegetables and marine materials into consumable safe food products. (Ricardo, 2009), processing helps to improve the palatability, nutritive value and shelf life of the agricultural produce. Size reduction is one of the oldest and most important unit operations in agricultural and food processing. Milling is employed to reduce grains, spices, tubers, and other agricultural materials into smaller particles suitable for food preparation, industrial processing, and storage (Lyu *et al*., 2020).

In many developing countries, particularly Nigeria, grain milling remains a major post-harvest operation that contributes significantly to food security, value addition, and income generation. Traditionally, grains such as maize, millet, sorghum, rice, and pepper were processed manually using mortar and pestle or grinding stones. Although, these methods produce acceptable products, but are labour-intensive, time-consuming, inefficient, and incapable of meeting increasing commercial demands. The growing population and the expansion of food processing industries have therefore created the need for improved milling technologies that are efficient, affordable, and locally

manufacturable (Fellows, 2017). A burr mill, also known as an attrition mill, is a machine that reduces particle size by crushing materials between two abrasive plates (burrs). One burr remains stationary while the other rotates, allowing the material fed through the hopper to be progressively crushed into fine particles. The distance between the burr plates determines the fineness of the final product. Burr mills are widely used because they produce relatively uniform particle sizes, consume moderate power, and generate less heat compared to blade-type grinders. The demand for locally fabricated burr mills has increased because imported milling machines are expensive and difficult to maintain due to the high cost and limited availability of spare parts.

Developing a locally designed burr mill using readily available materials would reduce production costs, simplify maintenance, encourage indigenous engineering, and promote small-scale agro-processing enterprises. Recent studies have demonstrated continuous improvements in burr mill technology. Ale *et al*. (2023) designed and evaluated a hammer-cum-burr mill capable of processing yam and cassava flakes with milling efficiencies of up to 93%, showing that combining milling principles improves processing efficiency. Similarly, Sule and Odugbose (2019) evaluated fabricated burr mills for wet and dry milling operations and concluded that locally fabricated machines can effectively meet the processing needs of small-scale food processors while reducing dependence on imported equipment. Olufemi *et al*. (2022) developed a double-compartment grinding machine incorporating a burr mill mechanism and reported milling efficiencies exceeding 90% under optimum operating conditions, highlighting the importance of proper machine design and operating parameters. Despite these developments, many locally available burr mills still suffer from excessive vibration, low throughput, rapid wear of burr plates, high power consumption, and inconsistent particle size distribution. These shortcomings justify the need for further development of a burr mill that is durable, efficient, economical, and suitable for local agricultural processing. Therefore, this study aimed at designing, fabricating and testing an improved burr mill suitable for efficient grinding of agricultural products using locally available materials.

Materials and methods

Fabrication Site

The fabrication was carried out at the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-ora, south western, Nigeria.

Description of the Developed Burr Mill

The developed burr mill consists of the following major components: hopper, feeding chute, stationary burr plate, rotating burr plate, milling chamber, shaft, bearings, pulley, gasoline engine, frame, discharge outlet and belt drive mechanism as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

The machine operates on the principle of compression and shear between two burr plates, where one plate rotates while the other remains stationary.

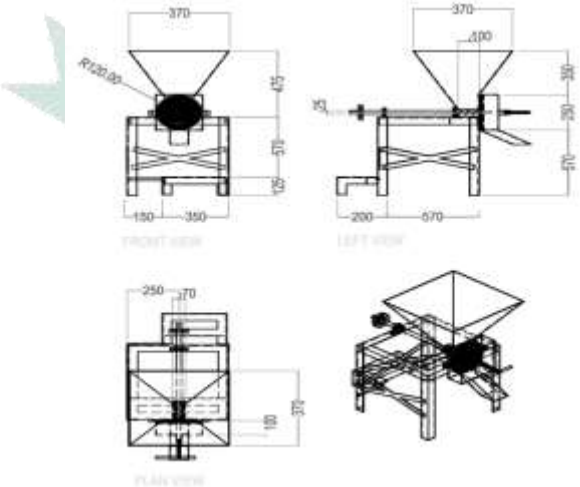


Figure1 Orthographic & Isometric views of the burr mill

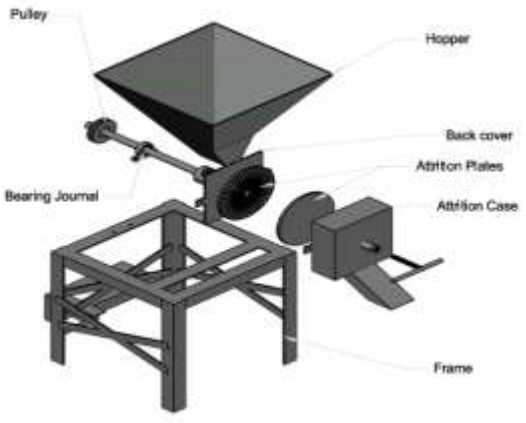


Figure 2 Exploded view of the burr mill

Research Design

The study adopted an experimental engineering design approach involving identification of design requirements, selection of suitable materials, engineering design calculations, machine component design, fabrication of the burr mill, assembly of machine components and performance evaluation. The methodology followed the standard procedures for agricultural machinery design described by engineering researchers such as **Khurmi and Gupta (2019), Shigley(2015)**and **Hall *et al*. (2018)**.

Design Considerations

The following factors were considered during the design of the burr mill: Simplicity of construction, low fabrication cost, ease of maintenance, availability of construction materials, safety of operation, ease of cleaning, high milling efficiency, low power consumption, durability, portability and local fabrication capability.

Materials

The materials for fabrication are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Materials for Machine Fabrication

Component	Material
Frame	Mild steel angle iron
Hopper	Mild steel sheet
Burr plates	Cast iron/High carbon steel
Shaft	Mild steel
Pulley	Cast iron
Bearings	Pillow block bearings
Belt	V-belt
Fasteners	Nuts and bolts
Gasoline Engine	5.5 hp
Paint	Anti-rust enamel paint

Equipment for Fabrication

The following workshop equipment were used: Arc welding machine, bench grinder, lathe machine, drilling machine, hacksaw, Vernier caliper, steel rule, measuring tape, hammer, spanners, angle grinder, thread cutting machine.

Design Calculations

Shaft Design

The shaft diameter was determined using the maximum shear stress theory:

$$d^3 = \frac{16}{\pi S_s}\sqrt{(K_b M_b)^2 + (K_t M_t)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where:

S_s= Allowable combined shear stress for bending and torsion = 40 MPa for steel shaft with keyway.

K_b = Combined shock and fatigue factor applied to bending moment = 1.5 to 2.0 for minor shock.

K_t= Combined shock and fatigue factor applied to torsional moment = 1.0 to 1.5 for minor shock.

M_b = Bending moment (Nm).

M_t= Torsional moment (Nm) = 55.59 Nm.

d= Diameter of solid shaft (m).

Power Requirement

The power required was calculated using

$$P = \frac{2\pi NT}{60} \quad (2)$$

Where
P = Power (W)
N = Speed (rpm)
T = Torque (Nm)

Belt Velocity

$$V = \omega r = \frac{\pi dN}{60} \quad (3)$$

Where
V = Belt speed (m/s)
D = Pulley diameter (m)
N = Rotational speed (rpm)

Torque

$$T = \frac{9550 \times P}{N} \quad (4)$$

Where
T = Torque (Nm)
P = Power (kW)
N = Speed (rpm)

Hopper Capacity

The hopper was designed as a frustum of a pyramid.
The hopper volume was determined using:

$$V = \frac{1}{3}h\left(A_1 + A_2 + \sqrt{A_1 \times A_2}\right) \quad (5)$$

Where
V = Hopper volume
h = Hopper height
A_1 = Upper area
A_2 = Lower area

Fabrication Procedures

The fabrication process involved the following stages: Preparation of engineering drawings using AutoCAD, procurement of construction materials, marking-out of machine components, cutting of steel sections, machining of shaft and burr plates, welding of supporting frame, assembly of machine components, installation of bearings, installation of electric motor, Alignment of pulley and belt and Surface finishing and painting.

Experimental Materials

The machine performance was evaluated using dried maize grains because maize is one of the most commonly milled cereals in Nigeria. Characteristics of the grains include: Moisture content: 12–14 %, Cleaned before milling and Free from stones and foreign materials.

Experimental Procedure

The machine was cleaned before operation, the gasoline engine was switched on, the burr clearance was adjusted. A known quantity (5 kg) of maize was introduced into the hopper, milling commenced, time taken for milling was recorded, milled product was collected and weighed, Samples were sieved and the experiment was repeated three times.

Performance Evaluation

The fabricated burr mill was evaluated based on the following parameters: Throughput Capacity, Milling Capacity and Milling Efficiency.

Determination of Throughput Capacity

$$TC = \frac{W_f}{T} \quad (6)$$

Where:
TC = Throughput Capacity (kg/hr)
W_f = Weight of sample Fed (kg)
T = Milling time (hr)
e taken

Determination of Milling Capacity

$$MC = \frac{W_m}{T} \quad (7)$$

Where
MC = Milling capacity (kg/hr)
W_m = Weight of milled product (kg)
T = Milling time (hour)

Determination of Milling Efficiency

$$ME = \frac{W_m}{W_f} \quad (8)$$

Where
ME = Milling efficiency (%)
Wm = Weight of useful milled product
W_f= Weight of sample fed

Results and discussion

The performance of the machine was assessed using selected engineering parameters, including throughput capacity, milling capacity and milling efficiency. The results are presented in tables and discussed in relation to existing studies and design expectations.

Fabrication of the Burr Mill

The burr mill was successfully fabricated using locally available engineering materials. The major components developed include: Mild steel frame, feeding hopper, rotating burr plate, stationary burr plate, shaft, pulley system, gasoline engine (5.5hp), bearing housing and discharge outlet as shown in Plate 1.The machine operated smoothly with minimal vibration after proper alignment of the shaft and pulley system.



Plate 1 Pictorial view of the fabricated burr mill

Physical characteristics of the fabricated Burr Mill

Table 2Physical specifications of the fabricated Burr Mill

Parameter	Value
Overall height	1170 mm
Overall width	500 mm
Overall length	770 mm
Hopper capacity	10 kg
Burr diameter	240 mm
Shaft diameter	25 mm
Gasoline engine	5.5 hp
Speed	3600 rpm
Weight of machine	62 kg

The fabricated machine possesses moderate dimensions suitable for household, institutional and small-scale commercial milling operations as indicated in Table 2. The machine can easily be transported and installed with minimal floor space requirements.

Performance Evaluation

Throughput capacity of the fabricated burr mill

Table 3Throughput capacity of the fabricated *b*urr mill

Trial	Weight of material Fed (kg)	Milling Time (min)	Throughput Capacity (kg/hr)
1	5.0	4.00	75.0
2	5.0	3.80	78.9

3	5.0	4.10	73.2
Mean	5.0	3.97	75.7

The fabricated burr mill recorded an average throughput capacity of **75.7 kg/hr as shown in Table 3**, indicating that it is suitable for small- and medium-scale grain processing. This result agrees with the work of Ale *et al*. (2023), who developed a hammer-cum-burr mill and reported high processing capacity resulting from improved feeding mechanisms and efficient grinding systems. The present study falls within the throughput range reported for locally fabricated burr mills (approximately 50 - 60 kg/hr), confirming that improvements in machine design, burr plate geometry, and power transmission can significantly enhance material handling and processing rate. The higher throughput observed in this study may be attributed to the optimized burr clearance, proper shaft alignment, and efficient power transmission through the belt and pulley system.

Milling Capacity

Table 4 Milling capacity of the fabricated burr mill

Trial	Weight of Material Fed (kg)	Weight of Output Product (kg)	Milling Time (min)	Milling Capacity (kg)
1	5.0	4.78	4.00	71.7
2	5.0	4.80	3.80	75.8
3	5.0	4.82	4.10	70.5
Mean	5.0	4.80	3.97	72.7

The average milling capacity of 72.7 kg/hr indicates effective conversion of fed material into useful milled product with minimal losses (Table 4). This finding is consistent with the study of Olufemi et al. (2022), who reported milling capacities exceeding 70 kg/hr in an optimized double-compartment grinding machine incorporating a burr milling mechanism. Both studies emphasize that proper machine design and optimization of operating parameters are essential for improving milling performance. The relatively high milling capacity obtained in this study can be attributed to the improved burr plate configuration, stable machine operation, and reduced vibration during milling. These observations also agree with Shigley (2015) and Khurmi and Gupta (2019), who emphasized that correct machine design, component alignment, and adequate shaft sizing contribute significantly to efficient mechanical power transmission and improved machine performance.

Milling Efficiency

Table 5Milling efficiency of the fabricated burr mill

Trial	Material Fed (kg)	Milled product (kg)	Milling Efficiency (%)
1	**5.0**	**4.80**	**96.0**
2	**5.0**	**4.83**	**96.6**
3	**5.0**	**4.78**	**95.6**
Mean	**5.0**	**4.80**	**96.1**

The milling efficiency of the developed burr mill averaged **96.1%**, indicating minimal material loss during milling as shown in Table 5.The high efficiency demonstrates proper alignment of the burr plates and adequate clearance adjustment.

The fabricated burr mill achieved a milling efficiency of 96.1% as shown in Table 5, which is higher than the 93% reported by Ale *et al*. (2023) for a hammer-cum-burr mill and also exceeds the over 90% efficiency reported by Olufemi et al. (2022). This improvement suggests that the modifications introduced into the fabricated burr mill - including improved burr plate design, optimized plate clearance, and enhanced machine stability - were effective in minimizing material losses and increasing grinding efficiency

Conclusions

The throughput capacity, milling capacity and milling efficiency of the developed burr mill averaged 75.7 kg/hr, 72.7 kg/hr and **96.1% respectively**, indicating minimal material loss during milling. The high efficiency demonstrates proper alignment of the burr plates and adequate clearance adjustment. The machine operated smoothly with minimal vibration and noise. The fabrication cost was affordable compared with imported alternatives. Overall, the fabricated burr mill met the design objectives and demonstrated satisfactory technical performance for small- and medium-scale grain milling operations.

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DEVELOPMENT OF A 1.5 KVA STANDALONE SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER SYSTEM FOR OFFICE ELECTRIFICATION AT OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

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Abstract
This study presents the design, installation and performance evaluation of a 1.5 kVA standalone solar photovoltaic (PV) power system developed for office electrification in a Nigerian tertiary institution. The research addresses the challenges associated with unreliable grid electricity supply, which negatively affects administrative activities, computer operations, communication systems and general productivity within academic institutions. The system was designed based on an estimated daily office energy demand of 3.6 kWh/day, considering electrical loads such as desktop computers, LED lighting systems, printers, routers and ventilation fans. A 1.0 kW solar PV array, 400 Ah battery storage system, 80 A MPPT charge controller and 1.5 kVA pure sine wave inverter were selected and installed. The system was installed at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, Nigeria, and monitored for 30 days under normal office operating conditions. Performance evaluation showed that the system achieved an average daily operational duration of 6–8 hours with an overall conversion efficiency of approximately 80%. The installed solar PV system successfully supplied uninterrupted power to office equipment and reduced dependence on diesel generators and unstable grid electricity. The study demonstrates that standalone solar photovoltaic systems are technically feasible, environmentally sustainable and suitable for improving energy reliability in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Solar photovoltaic, Standalone system, Renewable energy, Office electrification, Battery storage, Tertiary institution.

Introduction
Reliable electricity supply remains a major challenge affecting socio-economic development in Nigeria, particularly within rural communities and tertiary institutions. Electricity is essential for effective administrative operations, information management, communication, teaching activities and research functions. However, many Nigerian higher institutions continue to experience frequent power interruptions due to inadequate generation capacity, transmission limitations and distribution challenges (Okoro and Chikuni, 2020).

Tertiary institutions depend heavily on electrical energy to operate computers, printers, internet facilities, lighting systems and other office equipment. Interruption of electricity supply results in reduced productivity, disruption of digital operations and increased operational expenses due to dependence on alternative energy sources such as diesel generators. The continuous increase in fuel prices and environmental concerns associated with fossil fuel usage have encouraged institutions to explore renewable energy alternatives. Solar photovoltaic (PV) technology has emerged as one of the most promising renewable energy solutions because of Nigeria's favourable solar radiation potential. The country receives average solar radiation ranging between 3.5 and 7.0 kWh/m²/day, making solar energy suitable for standalone electricity generation applications (Ohunakin et al., 2019). Standalone solar PV systems combine photovoltaic modules, charge controllers, batteries and inverters to provide reliable electricity without dependence on the national grid. These systems are particularly beneficial in rural tertiary institutions where grid electricity supply remains inconsistent. Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, experiences irregular electricity supply which affects administrative activities and office operations. Offices require continuous power for computers,

internet connectivity, lighting and other essential devices. This study therefore focuses on the design, installation and performance evaluation of a 1.5 kVA standalone solar photovoltaic system for office electrification. The objective is to demonstrate the suitability of renewable energy technology in improving electricity reliability and supporting sustainable institutional development.

System Design Considerations
Load Analysis

The office electrical load was estimated based on typical daily energy consumption of office equipment.

Table 1:

Equipment	Quantity	Power Rating	Operating Hours	Energy Consumption
Desktop Computer	3	150 W	6 hrs	2700 Wh
LED Lighting	6	15 W	6 hrs	540 Wh
Printer	1	100 W	2 hrs	200 Wh
Router/Network Devices	1	20 W	8 hrs	160 Wh
Standing Fan	1	75 W	6 hrs	450 Wh

Total daily energy requirement:

$$E_d = 2700+540+200+160+450$$
$$E_d = 4050 Wh/day$$

Approximately:

$$E_d = 4.05 kWh/day$$

Considering 20% system losses:

$$Adjusted\ Energy = \frac{4.05}{0.8} = 5.06 kWh/day$$

Solar Panel Sizing

Average solar irradiation in Igboora is approximately 5 kWh/m²/day.

$$PV\ Capacity = \frac{5.06 kWh}{5h} = 1.01 kW$$

Therefore, a 1.0 kW solar PV array was selected.

Using 250 W solar panels:

$$Number\ of\ Panels\ = \frac{1000}{250} = 4\ panels$$

Four units of 250 W monocrystalline solar panels were installed.



Plate 1: Solar Panel

Battery Sizing

For one day autonomy:

$$Battery\ Capacity = \frac{4050Wh}{12V} = 337.5Ah$$

Considering 80% depth of discharge:

$$Required = \frac{337.5}{0.8} = 421.85Ah$$

Therefore, a 400 Ah battery storage system was selected.



Plate 2: Rechargeable Battery

Charge Controller Sizing

PV current:

$$I = \frac{1000W}{12V} = 83{,}3A$$

Therefore, an 80–100 A MPPT charge controller was selected.



Plate 3: Charge Controller

Inverter Sizing

The maximum office load:

$$P=450WP$$

Considering surge requirement and future expansion:

$$450W \times 3 = 1350W$$

A 1.5 kVA pure sine wave inverter was therefore selected.



Plate 4 Solar inverter

Site Description

The project was carried out at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. The institution provides technical and agricultural education and depends on electricity for teaching, administration and research activities.

The selected office environment requires continuous electricity for computer systems, communication devices, lighting and other administrative functions. Due to frequent power interruptions from the national grid, a standalone solar PV system was considered suitable for providing reliable and sustainable electricity.

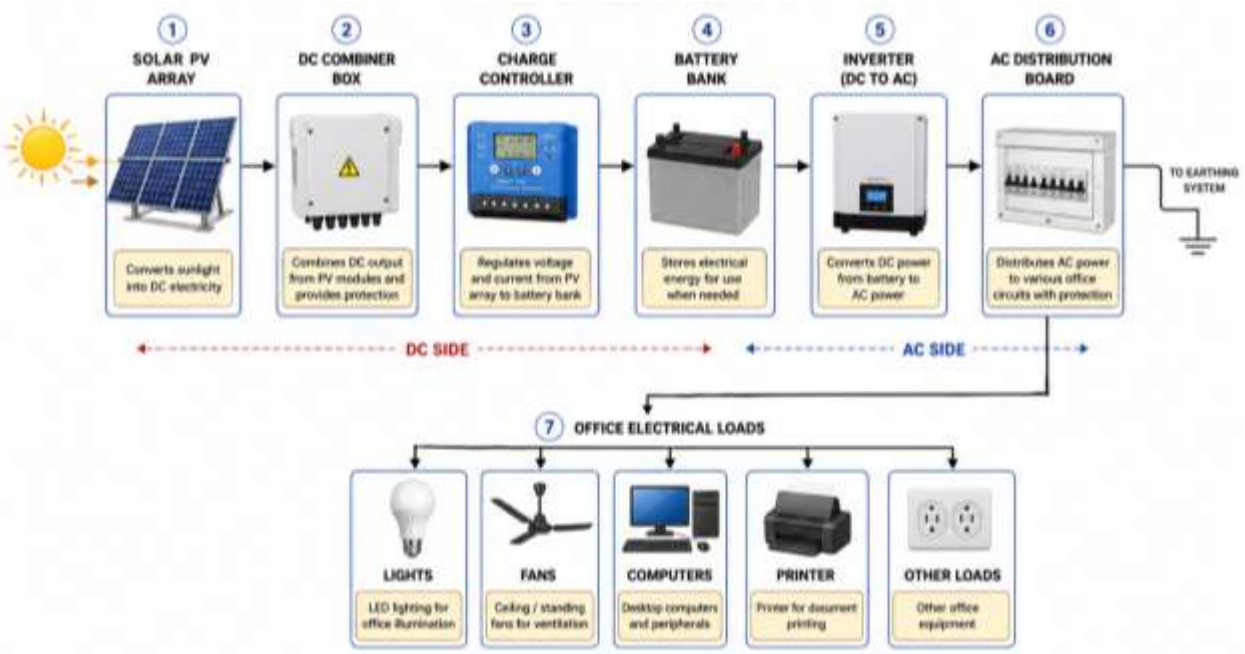


Figure 1: Functional Block Diagram of the 1.5 kVA Standalone Solar Photovoltaic Power System for Office Electrification in a Nigerian Tertiary Institution

Materials and Methods

System Components

The installed solar PV system consisted of:

- Four (4) units of 250 W monocrystalline solar panels (1 kW total capacity)
- 1.5 kVA pure sine wave inverter
- 80 A MPPT charge controller
- 400 Ah deep-cycle battery bank
- DC cables, MC4 connectors, isolators and protection devices
- Mounting structure

Installation Procedure

The installation involved:

1. **Site assessment:**

   The installation location was inspected to identify suitable areas with minimum shading.

2. **Solar panel installation:**

   The PV panels were mounted on a metal support structure at an angle suitable for maximum solar exposure.

3. **Electrical connection:**

   Panels were connected to the MPPT charge controller, which regulated charging of the battery bank.

4. **Battery and inverter installation:**

   The batteries and inverter were installed in a ventilated location with appropriate protection.

5. **Office connection:**

   The inverter output was connected to the office electrical circuit through protective breakers.

Results and Discussion

Table 2: Summary of System Performance

Parameter	Value	Remark
PV Capacity	1.0 kW	Four 250 W panels
Battery Capacity	400 Ah	Backup storage
Inverter Rating	1.5 kVA	Pure sine wave
Charge Controller	80 A MPPT	Efficient charging
Daily Energy Demand	4.05 kWh	Office load
Average Operating Time	6–8 hours	Daily usage
System Efficiency	80%	Overall efficiency

Performance Evaluation

The installed solar PV system was tested continuously for 30 days. Results showed that the system provided stable electricity supply for office equipment throughout normal working hours.

The PV system successfully powered desktop computers, lighting systems, networking equipment and other office appliances without interruption. The battery storage system maintained adequate energy availability during periods of reduced solar radiation.

The measured system efficiency of approximately 80% indicates satisfactory performance considering inverter losses, battery charging losses and environmental conditions.

The system also reduced reliance on diesel generators, resulting in reduced fuel consumption, operating cost and greenhouse gas emissions.

Conclusion

The design, installation and performance evaluation of the 1.5 kVA standalone solar photovoltaic system demonstrated the effectiveness of renewable energy technology for office electrification in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The installed system provided reliable electricity for office operations and improved energy availability despite challenges associated with national grid instability. The successful performance of the system

confirms that standalone solar PV technology is a practical solution for supporting administrative activities in tertiary institutions, particularly in rural locations.

The adoption of similar renewable energy systems can contribute significantly to sustainable institutional development, reduction of operational costs and improved electricity reliability in Nigeria.

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DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF 3W LED SOLAR LAMP LIGHTING SYSTEM

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Abstract
This study presents the design and construction of a 3 W LED solar lighting system intended to provide a reliable and affordable lighting solution for households and small offices, it was observed that despite that there is increase in numbers of imported solar lantern available products in Nigeria market, most of them lack some technical imbalances in some instances users of the solar lanterns end up discarding them few months of usage because they lack access to affordable spare parts. It main objectives is to construct 3watts solar lamp lightning system and a smart movable device that will give out the require light in the night. The device was design with unique circuit and block diagram which was used as prototype on the breadboard before finally constructed with electronic components according to the circuit diagram. The battery was connected to microcontroller and also connected to diodes LM293 to allow the current to flow in one direction. Resistor BC 548 and BD711 was used to regulate the voltage in the circuit. The constructed 3 watts lamp lightning system was tested in the laboratory which was translucent with minimum dispersion effects. It could be deduced that the 3 watts solar lamp constructed works effectively from the practical performance in the laboratory. The project work is recommended to be used in Classroom, Homes and Offices.

Keywords: *LEDs, lamp, Transistor, Diodes, Microcontroller, Laboratory*

Introduction
Light is crucial in everyday activity for the continuity of normal life. From plants to animals, from human beings to domestic insects, from technology to science, nothing seems to maximize its existence without the availability of light. Even the human eye requires some amount of light to function well. Light from the sun is natural and it is called sunlight. This sunlight can serve as a source of solar power which is converted to electric power for both household and industrial utilization. Solar power is the generation of electricity from sunlight (Alomari *et al.*, 2021). This can be direct as with photovoltaic (PV) or indirect as with concentrating solar power (CSP) where the sun's energy is focused to boil water which is then used to provide energy.

This part of the world population is nowadays often referred to as the 'Base of the Pyramid' or abbreviated 'BoP' (Mama, 2017). Light, one of this basic need is required for education, improving the security of communities and advances productivity. Therefore, access to affordable domestic electric lighting could contribute considerably to the well-being of people living at the BoP. Worldwide 1.7 billion people living in rural areas lack access to electricity (World-Bank 2020). Solar powered lighting has demonstrated to be a good alternative to provide these in people in rural areas in low income with reliable high- quality light and which has meanwhile a lower environmental impact than traditional lighting (Wang *et al.*, 2018). It is quite apparent that the combination of solar cells, LEDs, and dependable batteries will be the savior of off-grid communities. Environmentally friendly, efficient, low maintenance, and reliable are all characteristics that fuel-based lighting lacks. Imagine, outside of every home lies a solar panel charging a light, long lasting battery in the daytime. At night, that same battery powers an entire LED illuminated room (Ngan *et al.*, 2023).

A lamp is a portable lighting device which converts the electrical energy from a battery or any other source into visible light. It is basically a prime mover which converts one form of energy say (electrical energy) into other form say (light energy). It is estimated that by the year 2020 solar energy would be the world's leading and largest source of energy. Unlike the traditional fossil fuels (i.e., Coal, Petroleum, and natural gas) solar energy is a clean, pollution free, inexpensive, inexhaustible source of energy

available all around the world (Ghosh, 2017). A solar lamp or lantern is a portable light fixture composed of an LED lamp, a photovoltaic solar panel, and a rechargeable battery. Outdoor lamps may have lamp, solar panel and battery integrated in one unit. Indoor solar lamps with separately mounted solar panels are used for general illumination where centrally generated power is not conveniently or economically available. Solar-powered household lighting may displace light sources such as kerosene lamps, saving money for the user, and reducing fire and pollution hazards (Mulyana *et al.*, 2018). Solar lamps recharge during the day. Automatic outdoor lamps turn on at dusk and remain illuminated overnight, depending on how much sunlight they receive during the day.

Solar garden lights are used for decoration, and come in a wide variety of designs. They are sometimes holiday-themed and may come in animal shapes. They are frequently used to mark footpaths or the areas around swimming pools (Nehovski *et al.*, 2018). Some solar lights do not provide as much light as a line-powered lighting system, but they are easily installed and maintained, and provide a cheaper alternative to wired lamps. Solar lamps provide public lighting without use of an electrical grid; they may have individual panels for each lamp of a system, or may have a large central solar panel and battery bank to power multiple lamps. To reduce the overall cost of a solar lighting system, energy saving lamps of either the fluorescent or LED lamp type is used, since incandescent bulbs consume several times as much energy for a given quantity of light. This rechargeable light bulb serves as an alternative lighting solution in remote areas where there is lack of electricity supply. A solar cell or photovoltaic cell is a device which converts sunlight into direct current, as sunlight falls on the solar cell, it creates a chemical reaction in it and thus produce a stream of electron flow called electricity, and this generated current is dependent on several other parameters such as intensity of Sunlight and weather conditions (López-Vargas *et al.*, 2019).

The battery employed in this bulb gets recharged throughout the day as sunlight continues to be converted into electricity. The battery supplies current to the light bulb whenever required, providing the unit with remote control adds extra benefits and improves the flexibility of the system (Borza and Kaplani, 2019). LED lighting saves energy, protects the environment, offers long life and other advantages compared to traditional lighting. Again, different colours can be produced for the better light quality and improved visual effects in the production process, different colour temperatures of the LED chip integrated with the adjustment of colour and colour temperature that have laid theoretical foundations. The design is based on the green energy principle, energy efficiency and user-friendly design (Jeong *et al.*, 2017). The high increase in electricity demand is contributed by the usage of electrical appliances, buildings and lighting in residential areas, industries, governments, public areas and roads. Instead of that, it is also contributed by the city's development with the new buildings, houses and others (Deriche *et al.*, 2019).

Despite the growing interest in solar lantern, available products in Nigerian market are imported and highlighted a number of technical shortcomings. The shortfalls often highlighted include inferior construction of the light poor luminance, and the relatively poor performance of after a months of usage because they lack access to affordable spare parts. Therefore, this study seeks to develop a durable long lasting solar lamp that will serve the highlighted challenges, in many instances, users of the solar lanterns end up discarding them after few days. More developed countries are rapidly adapting to the idea of sustainability of energy as a necessity. In Nigerian, there is inconsistence supply of electricity by the power supplying company such as TRCN to the consumers. Hence, there is still need to find alternative energy system for solving the problem. As materials become much more efficient and cheaper to produce, there is a need to take initiative as to a luminous future. Therefore, design of the solar LED lamp lightning system will gain a deeper understanding of the various trade-offs to a product with long term reliability, efficiency, portability, and most importantly, low cost. Therefore the aim of the study is to design and construct 3W solar lamp lighting system.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The research work was carried out in physics laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora , Oyo state.

Design Approach

The approach adopted in this research work is the design and construction of a 3watt solar lamp with the acquisition of necessary materials which was purchased at different electronics shop in Ibadan, Oyo state. To confirm the requirement of this project, temporary construct of the prototype was done on the bread board before finally transferred into the circuit board for permanent soldering. It is very essential tool for designing and test-running circuit before the main construction process can start (Yao *et al.*, 2022).

Components used in design

- Solar Panel of 365mA and 7.2V
- Diodes LM 393
- Transistor BC 548 and BD 711
- Resistor 1K, 3.57k, 9k, 10k, 1k5 and 10R.
- LED'S Bulbs
- Battery 12V AH

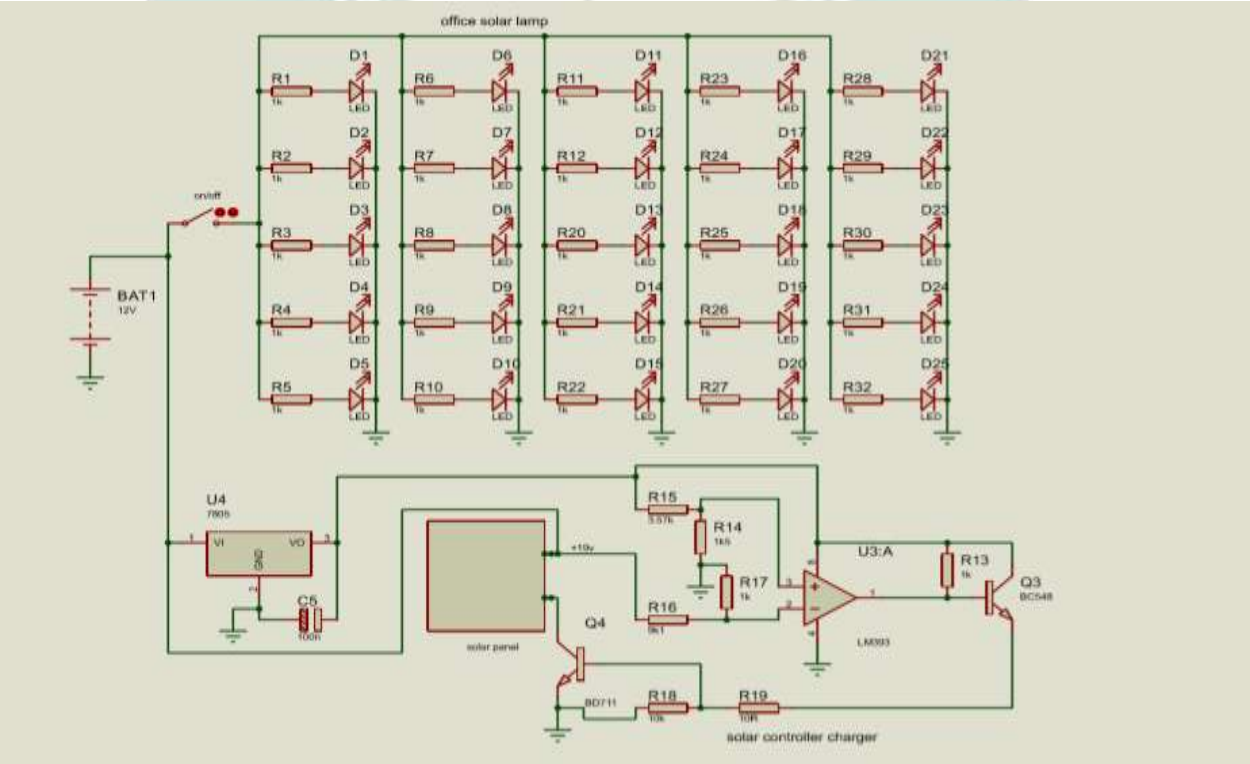


Figure: 1 Circuit Diagram

Block diagram of a solar Lamp

The block diagram for the proposed design is given below. It consists of a solar panel, a control circuit that switches between solar power and battery power depending on the availability, a rechargeable battery to store energy, and a regulator circuit which charges the mobile phone battery, LED sensor, Relay and Load.

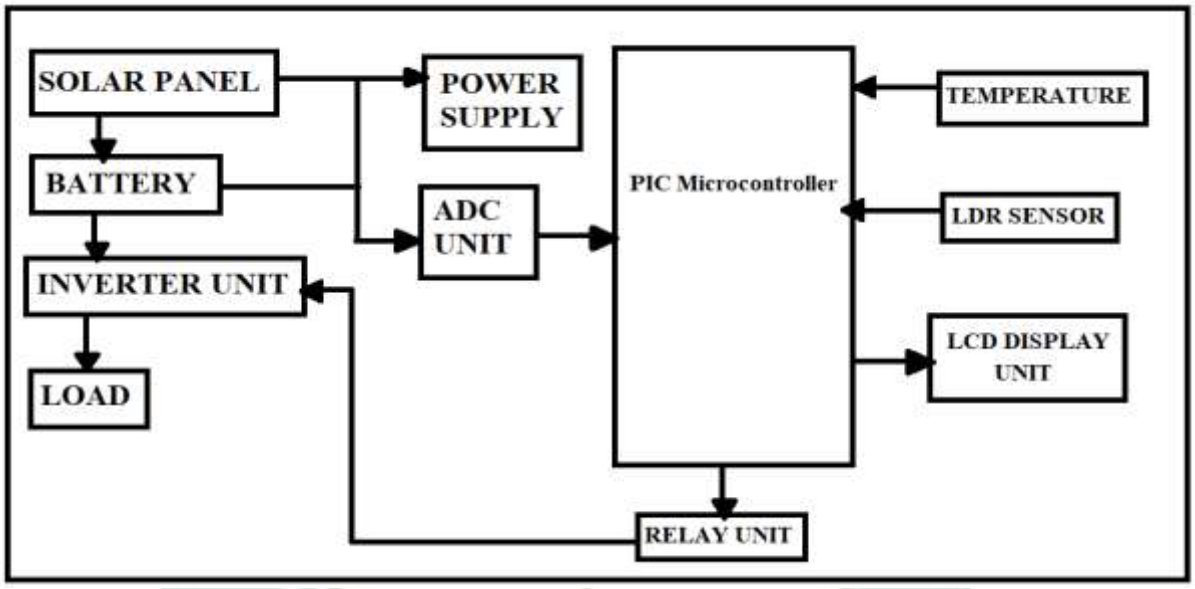


Figure: 2 Block diagram of a solar Lamp

LED DRIVER

From the circuit diagram, it supplies the amount of voltage and current to the 3 watts LED, prevents excessive current that could damage the LEDs and it ensure stable brightness even when the battery voltage changes. It provides constant current and voltage to the LEDs for the efficient operation

BATTERY CHARGING CIRCUIT

This section charges the battery safely from the solar panel and prevents overcharging. It increases battery life and ensure safe charging.

VOLTAGE REGULATION

It maintains a stable voltage to ensure constant brightness and protect the circuit from damaging, ensures consistent lamp brightness during battery discharge and improves the overall performance of the solar lamp.

These three sections of circuits work together to ensure that the 3W LED solar lamp operates efficiently, safely and maximizing battery life and providing reliable illumination

Connection in detail

The resistors of 1k each named R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5 was connected to LED 1- 5 respectively in the parallel arrangement, resistors of 1k each named R6, R7, R8, R9 and R10 was connected to LED 6-10 respectively in the parallel arrangement, resistors of 1k each named R11, R12, R20, R21 and R22 was connected to LED 11-15 respectively in the parallel arrangement, resistors 1k each named R23, R24, R25, R26 and R27 was connected to LED 16-20 respectively in the parallel arrangement and the resistors of 1k named R28, R29 ,R30, R31, R32 was connected to LED 21-25 which all was grounded to the earth. These parallel arrangements of resistors of 1k R1-R32 and its respective LED 1- 25 were connected to switch and 12 volts rechargeable battery

The positive side of the battery was connected to integrated circuit (IC) microchips or microcontroller of U4 (7805) and its ground or earth was then connected to positive terminal of capacitor C5 while the other side was connected to resistor R15 of 3.57k and also connected to R14 of 1k5 to the earth and to resistors R17 of 1k. The switch was connected to the positive side of solar panel and joined to resistor R16 of 9k1. The emitter of transistor BD 711 was connected to the ground and to the R18 of 10k. The resistor R19 of 10R and its other side was joined to emitter of transistor BC 548, its collector side was

connected to R13 of 1k. The positive terminal of diode LM 393 was connected to resistors R14 of 1k5 and negative side was connected to R17 of 1k.

System Testing

During testing, the constructed 3 watts solar lamp which can also be charge with Ac was tested in the laboratory. The device was equally switched on in the laboratory and it gives out the estimated 3watts, 7volts and 356 mA when tested with millimeters. The solar lamp of 3watt has been successfully fabricated. It has also been tested and its performance matches the specified objectives. The constructed 3-watt lamp was use as alternative source of light in the Physics laboratory. It gives out the required lightning especially in the light. When compared with the imported solar lamps of different designs in term of durability, efficiency, luminance and compatibility, it was found far better than the imported ones. However, this project was aligned with Wang *et a*l., (2018) that Solar powered system has demonstrated to be a good alternative source to provide people in rural areas with low income with reliable high quality light and which has meanwhile a lower environmental impact than traditional lighting

Experimental data

It consists of 3.7V DC rechargeable Li-on battery which was charged through a 5-7 volts solar panel and the charging current is approximately 400mA under peak direct sunlight and its capacity is about 2000-2600mAh. The device can be charge for about 5-6 hours under the direct sunlight. When fully charge it can take up 7-8 hours. The charging indicator turns to green when it is fully charge and red when it is low.it has a efficiency of 85-95% to power LEDs with only a small amount lost as heat. It produces 250-350 lumens, which is sufficient for lighting in the laboratory.

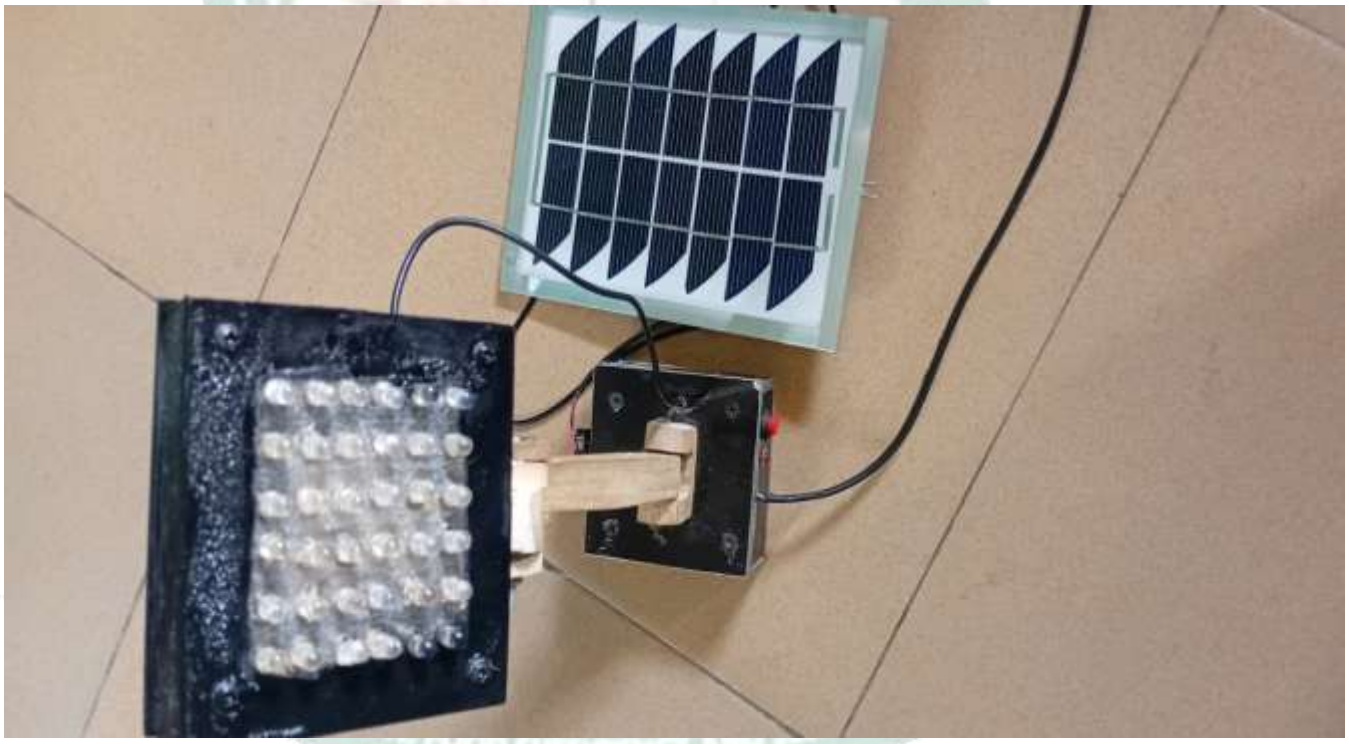


Figure: 3 3W LED solar lamp

Conclusion

The design and construction of a 3-watt solar lamp demonstrate the practicality and sustainability of using renewable energy for domestic and outdoor lighting. The lamp offers portability, low maintenance, and cost-effectiveness compared to conventional grid-powered lighting. Several lighting devices that are in the market today are not durable when compare with a 3 watts solar lamp constructed. Its brightness was clear that illuminated the Physics laboratory during the testing when it is fully charge it can spent up to 7 hours per day. It is therefore concluded that the 3-watt solar lamp can serve as a

viable alternative to kerosene lamps and grid-dependent lighting systems.it can be used for studying, or lighting a room.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that 3-watt Solar lamp could be used in offices, house hold etc. More research should be done on Design and Construction of Solar lamp for commercial purpose.

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DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR-POWERED LIGHTING SYSTEM WITH INTEGRATED BATTERY MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study presents the design, construction, and performance evaluation of a standalone 12V DC solar-powered lighting system integrated with a Battery Management System (BMS) for sustainable off-grid applications. The developed system utilizes a 50W photovoltaic solar panel as the primary energy source, a lithium-ion battery bank for energy storage, a 3S 12.8V 40A Battery Management System for battery protection and control, three 7W DC LED lamps, and two USB charging ports for powering small electronic devices. Performance testing demonstrated 8–10 hours of lighting operation from a fully charged battery, approximately 82% system efficiency, and effective BMS protection The integrated BMS successfully provided overcharge, over-discharge, and short-circuit protection, maintaining stable system operation. The developed system demonstrates the feasibility of using small-scale solar photovoltaic technology combined with intelligent battery management for reliable energy access. The system is suitable for rural households, educational facilities, health centres, and other locations requiring affordable and sustainable off-grid power solutions.

Keywords: *Solar photovoltaic system, Battery Management, off – grid lighting, Renewable Energy.*

Introduction

Access to reliable electricity remains a major challenge in developing countries, particularly rural communities. Nigeria, with solar radiation levels of 3.5–7.0 kWh/m²/day, possesses significant solar energy potential. Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems offer clean, decentralized power generation alternatives to fossil fuel-based generators.

Despite solar availability, off-grid system adoption is limited by cost, inadequate design, and battery management challenges. Poor battery management causes overcharging, deep discharge, and premature failure. A Battery Management System (BMS) addresses these issues by monitoring battery conditions and providing protection against unsafe operation, improving safety, performance, and lifespan.

LED lighting technology has enhanced solar system suitability through high luminous efficacy, long lifespan, and low-voltage DC compatibility. This study focuses on the design, construction, and performance evaluation of a 12V DC solar-powered lighting system integrated with a Battery Management System. The developed system combines lighting and USB charging capability, providing a multifunctional renewable energy solution for households and small-scale applications.

Materials and methods

Research Design

The developed system consists of five major functional units as shown in plate 1: Solar energy generation unit, Battery charging and protection unit, Energy storage unit, Load distribution unit and DC output unit.

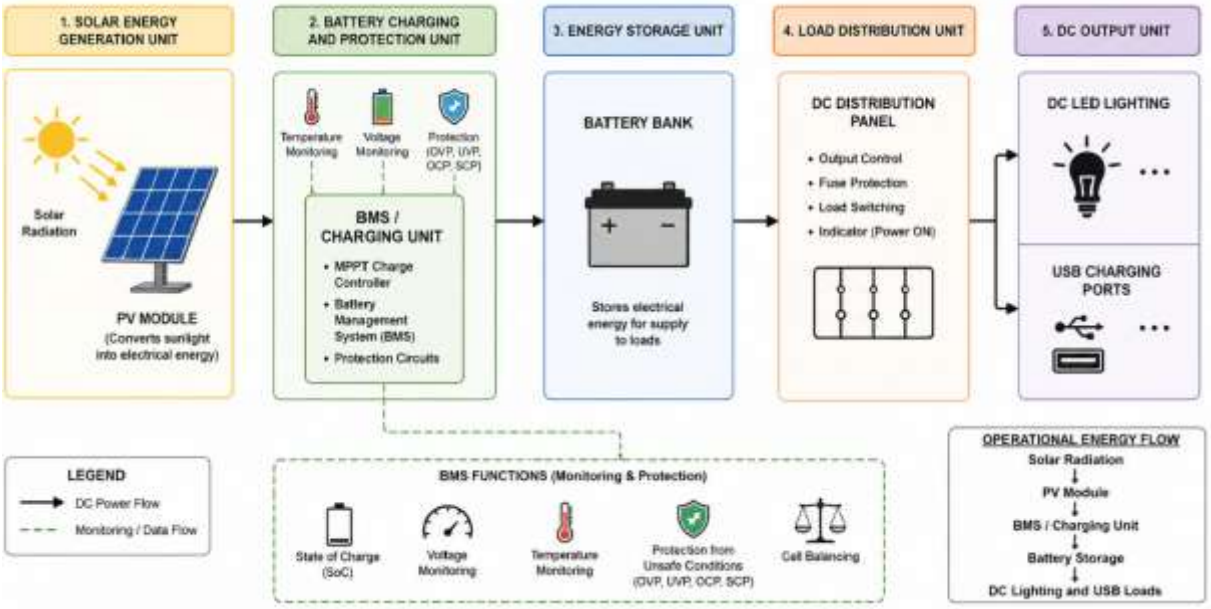


Plate 1: Block Diagram of the System

The study adopted an experimental prototype development approach involving the design, fabrication, and performance evaluation of a standalone solar-powered 12V DC lighting system. The approach involved the selection of suitable electrical components, development of the circuit arrangement, construction of the prototype, and evaluation of its operational performance under practical conditions. The system was designed to provide reliable lighting and charging capability for low-power applications, particularly in locations where access to grid electricity is limited. The design process involved solar energy harvesting, battery storage management, voltage regulation, and efficient utilization of stored energy through DC lighting loads. The major stages of the study include: Design analysis and load estimation, Selection of system components, Battery pack development and BMS integration, Prototype construction, System testing and performance evaluation

Design Analysis and Load Estimation

The initial stage of the system design involved a systematic assessment of the electrical energy demand required for reliable operation of the proposed solar-powered DC lighting system. This process began with the identification of all intended DC loads, with primary focus placed on lighting points and provision for possible auxiliary charging ports for small DC devices such as mobile phones. The objective was to ensure that the system is capable of meeting daily energy needs without interruption, particularly in off-grid environments.

Primary loads consisted of three 7W LED lamps: Total connected load = 21W.
Assuming 8-hour daily operation, daily energy = 21W × 8h = 168Wh.

Component Selection

1. **Solar Panel:** The required solar panel capacity was estimated using:

$$PV\ Power\ =\ Daily\ Energy\ Requirement\ /\ (Peak\ Sun\ Hours\ \times\ System\ Efficiency) \quad (1)$$

Using: Daily energy requirement = 168 Wh

Peak sunshine hours = 5 hours

System efficiency = 70%

$$PV\ capacity: =\ 168/(5\ \times\ 0.7)$$

$$=\ 48\ W$$

A 50W solar panel was selected based on practical system operation and expected daily energy availability.

2. Battery Pack: Each lithium battery cell has: Voltage = 3.7V, Capacity = 1200mAh

The energy stored per cell is calculated as:

$$\text{Energy} = \text{Voltage} \times \text{Current capacity} \quad (2)$$

$$Energy = 3.7 \times 1.2$$

$$Energy = 4.44Wh$$

Eight cells connected in parallel provide:

$$Total\ Capacity = 8 \times 1.2\ Ah \quad (3)$$

$$Total\ Capacity = 9.6 \text{ Ah per parallel group}$$

Eight parallel groups connected in series provide the required voltage: (4)

$$Battery\ voltage = 3.7\ \times 3 = 11.1V\ nominal$$

$$Fully\ charged\ voltage = 4.2\ \times 3 = 12.6V$$

Therefore, the developed battery bank provides approximately 12V output suitable for the DC lighting application.

3. BMS: 3S 12.8V 40A unit providing overcharge/over-discharge protection, current monitoring, and cell balancing

In addition, system autonomy was considered to ensure continuous operation during periods of low solar irradiation, such as cloudy weather or reduced sunlight availability. A minimum autonomy period of one (1) day was adopted, meaning the battery system was designed to supply the full load for at least 24 hours without solar input. This design consideration improves system reliability and ensures uninterrupted lighting service even under unfavourable weather conditions.

Table 1 below shows the list of various materials used.

Table 1: List of materials

S/N	Description of Item	Specification	Qty
1	Solar Photovoltaic Panel	12V, 50W Solar Panel	1
2	Lithium Battery Cells	3.7V, 1200mAh Lithium-ion Cells	24
4	Battery Protection Materials	Nickel strips, insulation paper, heat shrink, battery holder	1 set
5	DC LED Bulbs	12V, 7W LED Bulbs	3
6	Lamp Holders	DC lamp holders	3
7	USB Charging Module	Dual USB 5V output module	1
8	DC Voltage Display Unit	DC8–30V Battery Monitor Display	1
9	DC-DC Buck Converter	12V to 5V Voltage Regulator	1
10	Electrical Wire	Flexible copper wire	5 m
11	DC Jack Connectors	Input/output DC connectors	4
12	Electrical Switches	ON/OFF switches	2
13	Fuse and Fuse Holder	Battery protection fuse	1 set
14	Connection Board	Prototype/perforated board	1
15	Enclosure/Casing	Plastic connection box (12 × 6)	1

4. Construction and Testing

Battery cells were assembled in series-parallel configuration with BMS integration as shown in Plate 2 below.

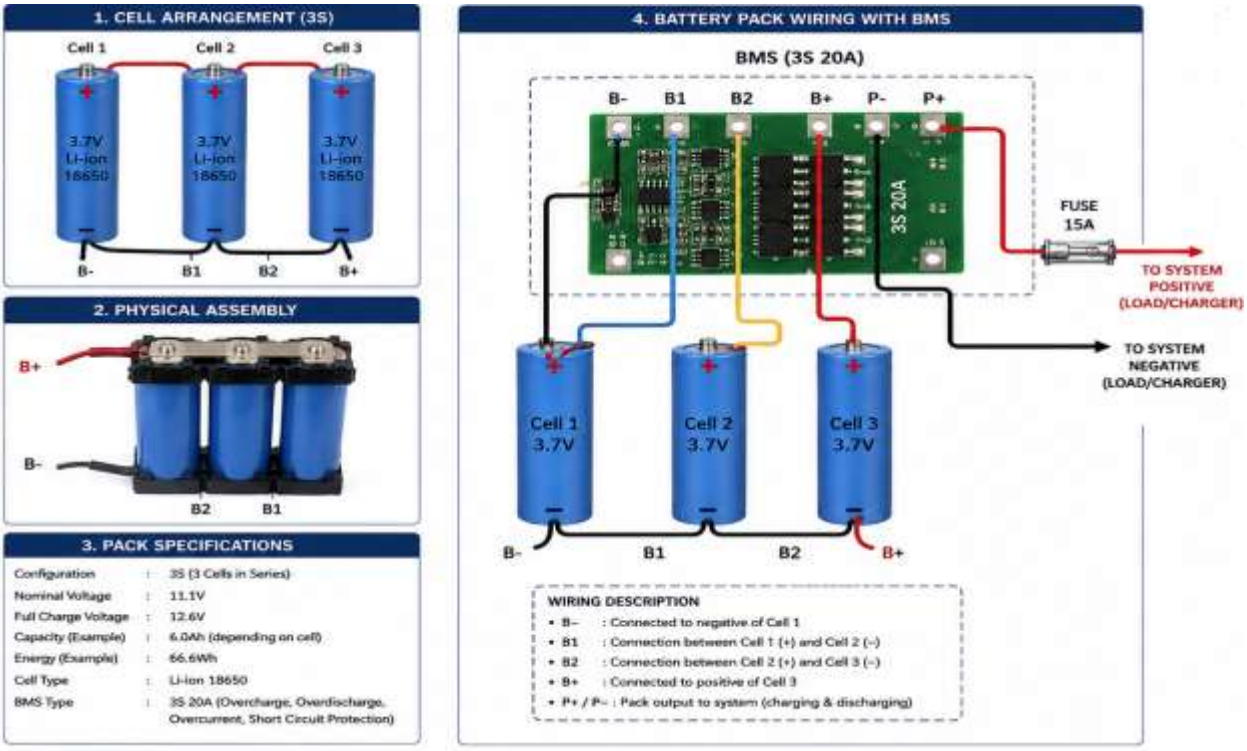


Plate 2: Battery assembly

Also, all the components were installed in a protective enclosure with proper wiring and overcurrent protection as shown in plate 3.



Plate 3: Protective enclosure for major system components.

The solar panel was connected under available sunlight conditions to observe the charging process and monitor the battery charging voltage as shown in plate 4. The output voltage from the system was measured to confirm that the required 12 V DC supply was maintained. The LED lighting loads and USB outputs were operated to assess the system's ability to supply power effectively. Furthermore, the charging duration and operating runtime of the battery under different load conditions were observed to determine the overall performance of the developed solar-powered DC lighting system.

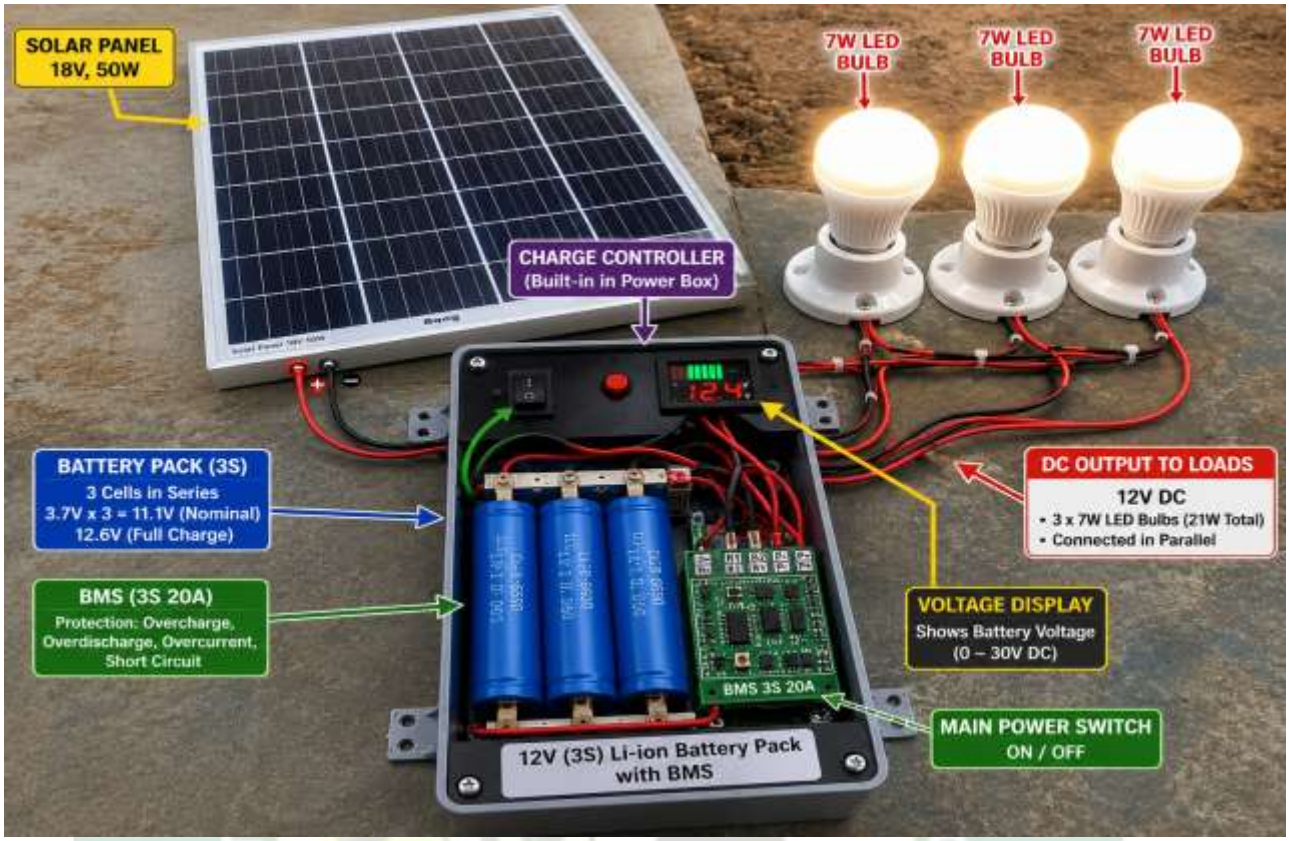


Plate 4: Testing the Solar-Powered Lighting System.

Results and Discussion

Performance Results

Table 2 below shows the major performance parameters measured

Table 2: Performance Result

Parameter	Result
Solar panel open-circuit voltage	18.2V
Solar panel voltage under load	14.5V
Battery voltage range	10.5V – 12.6V
Lighting duration	8–10 hours
Charging time	Approximately 5 hours
System efficiency	Approximately 72%
Operating temperature range	25℃ – 38℃

Performance Analysis

1. Solar Charging: Peak output of 18.2V (open-circuit) and 14.5V (loaded) during midday sunlight was sufficient for daily battery charging. The 5-hour charging time demonstrates effective solar energy harvesting. Performance degraded appropriately during cloudy conditions, but the BMS maintained safe operation.
2. Battery Management: The BMS effectively regulated battery voltage within 10.5–12.6V, preventing overcharging and deep discharge. Automatic cutoff at 10.5V during discharge and termination at 12.6V during charging ensured battery health and extended lifespan. The protection mechanisms functioned reliably under various load conditions.
3. Lighting Performance: Three 7W LED lamps provided consistent illumination for 8–10 hours from full battery charge, meeting typical household requirements. The 82% system efficiency

(accounting for solar, battery, and electronic losses) demonstrates effective component integration and minimizes waste.

4. System Reliability: Stable operation across 25–38°C temperature range indicates robustness in tropical climates. The multifunctional design (lighting + USB charging) enhances practical utility for rural households, schools, and health clinics. No component failures occurred during testing.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

This study successfully developed and evaluated a compact, integrated solar-BMS-LED lighting system for off-grid applications. The 50W solar panel with intelligent 12V battery management and efficient LED loads provides a practical, affordable solution for rural electrification. Performance validation confirmed 8–10 hour lighting duration, 82% system efficiency, and reliable BMS protection. The system is immediately suitable for household lighting, educational facilities, healthcare centers, and emergency applications in communities lacking reliable grid electricity.

The integration of Battery Management System technology with renewable energy demonstrates significant potential for improving energy access and sustainability in developing countries. This work contributes to practical off-grid electrification solutions and supports global sustainable development goals.

Recommendations

Future developments should include: (1) Higher-efficiency solar modules (>20%) for improved performance; (2) IoT integration for remote monitoring; (3) Weather-resistant outdoor enclosures; (4) Scaled versions for higher power applications (100–200W); (5) Integration with government rural electrification programs; (6) Hybrid systems combining solar with wind or microhydro sources; (7) Cost reduction through manufacturing efficiency and bulk procurement.

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EFFICIENT AND LIGHTWEIGHT FOOD IMAGE RECOGNITION SYSTEM USING THE MOBILENETV2 ARCHITECTURE WITH TRANSFER LEARNING

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Abstract
The rapid growth of digital food applications has increased the demand for intelligent systems capable of automatically recognizing food items from images for dietary monitoring, nutritional assessment, and food management. However, traditional food identification methods are often manual, time-consuming, and susceptible to human error. This study presents a deep learning-based food image recognition system using a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) for automated food classification. Food images obtained from the Food-101 dataset were preprocessed through resizing, normalization, and data augmentation before being partitioned into training, validation, and testing subsets. The CNN model was implemented using TensorFlow and Keras, optimized with the Adam optimizer, and trained using categorical cross-entropy loss with early stopping to improve generalization. Model performance was evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, confusion matrix, and loss analysis. Experimental results demonstrated high classification performance with stable convergence and minimal overfitting, while the developed Streamlit-based web application enabled real-time food image prediction with confidence scores. The proposed system demonstrates the effectiveness of deep learning for accurate, scalable, and user-friendly food recognition, providing a practical solution for intelligent dietary monitoring and food-related decision support.

Keywords: *Deep Learning, Food Image Recognition, Convolutional Neural Network, Computer Vision, Image Classification, Streamlit, Artificial Intelligence.*

Introduction

Food image recognition has emerged as an important application of computer vision and artificial intelligence, with significant potential in dietary assessment, nutrition management, healthcare, food safety, and smart retail systems. The widespread adoption of smartphones and digital imaging technologies has generated increasing demand for intelligent systems capable of automatically identifying food items from images. Such systems support calorie estimation, dietary monitoring, food inventory management, and personalized nutritional recommendations. However, food image recognition remains a challenging computer vision problem because food items often exhibit high intra-class variability arising from differences in preparation methods, ingredients, lighting conditions, viewing angles, occlusion, and presentation styles, while many visually distinct food categories share similar textures, colors, and shapes.

Traditional food recognition systems relied heavily on handcrafted image descriptors such as Scale-Invariant Feature Transform (SIFT), Histogram of Oriented Gradients (HOG), Speeded-Up Robust Features (SURF), and Local Binary Patterns (LBP), combined with conventional classifiers including Support Vector Machines (SVM), k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN), Decision Trees, and Artificial Neural Networks. Although these techniques achieved reasonable performance under controlled conditions, they required extensive feature engineering and often failed to generalize effectively to complex real-world environments. Recent advances in deep learning, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), have significantly improved image recognition by automatically learning hierarchical feature representations directly from raw image data. Transfer learning has further accelerated progress by enabling pretrained deep neural networks to achieve high classification accuracy using relatively limited domain-specific datasets while reducing computational cost and training time.

Despite these advances, several challenges remain. Many existing studies emphasize classification accuracy without considering computational efficiency, deployment feasibility, or user accessibility. In addition, some deep learning architectures require substantial computational resources, limiting their suitability for deployment on lightweight web applications and mobile platforms. Furthermore, relatively few studies integrate accurate food recognition models with practical interfaces that provide real-time prediction and confidence estimation for end users. These limitations create a need for an efficient and deployable food image recognition framework capable of balancing predictive performance with computational efficiency.

This study proposes a deep learning-based food image recognition system using the MobileNetV2 architecture with transfer learning for automated food classification. Food images are preprocessed through resizing, normalization, and data augmentation before model training. The pretrained MobileNetV2 network is fine-tuned to classify food images efficiently while maintaining high predictive accuracy and low computational complexity. A Streamlit-based web application is developed to enable real-time image upload, automated classification, and confidence score visualization through an intuitive graphical interface. The proposed framework is evaluated using standard performance metrics including accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, confusion matrix analysis, and training loss to determine its effectiveness for practical food image recognition applications. By combining lightweight deep learning with an interactive deployment platform, this study contributes an efficient, scalable, and user-friendly solution for intelligent food recognition and dietary support systems.

Review of Related Work

Recent advances in computer vision and artificial intelligence have significantly transformed automated food recognition systems. Early research primarily relied on handcrafted feature extraction techniques combined with conventional machine learning algorithms. Popular descriptors such as Scale-Invariant Feature Transform (SIFT), Histogram of Oriented Gradients (HOG), Speeded-Up Robust Features (SURF), Local Binary Patterns (LBP), and Bag of Visual Words (BoVW) were extensively employed to capture discriminative image characteristics. These handcrafted features were subsequently classified using algorithms including Support Vector Machines (SVM), k-Nearest Neighbors (k-NN), Decision Trees, Random Forests, and Multi-Layer Perceptrons (MLPs). Although these approaches achieved reasonable performance under controlled laboratory conditions, their effectiveness depended heavily on manual feature engineering and was often affected by variations in illumination, viewing angle, occlusion, background complexity, and food presentation. Consequently, their ability to generalize to real-world food recognition scenarios remained limited.

The introduction of deep learning, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), marked a significant breakthrough in food image recognition by enabling automatic hierarchical feature extraction directly from raw image data. Hassannejad et al. employed a deep Inception-based architecture for food classification and demonstrated improved recognition accuracy on the Food-101, UECFOOD100, and UECFOOD256 datasets. Similarly, Liu et al. proposed the DeepFood architecture, which modified the Inception network to reduce computational complexity while maintaining competitive performance. Ensemble learning strategies combining architectures such as ResNet, GoogLeNet, and AlexNet were later introduced to further improve classification accuracy, while CNN fusion techniques exploited complementary information from multiple pretrained networks. Although these approaches achieved impressive predictive performance, many required substantial computational resources, large memory footprints, and extended training times, limiting their applicability in lightweight deployment environments.

Recent studies have increasingly focused on computationally efficient deep learning architectures suitable for real-time applications. MobileNetV2 has emerged as one of the most effective lightweight CNN models because it employs depthwise separable convolutions and inverted residual bottleneck blocks to substantially reduce computational complexity without sacrificing classification accuracy. Transfer learning further enhances MobileNetV2 by leveraging pretrained ImageNet weights, reducing training time and improving convergence when domain-specific datasets are relatively limited. Recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of MobileNetV2 in various agricultural, medical imaging, and object recognition applications where computational efficiency is a primary requirement.

Nevertheless, comparatively few studies have combined lightweight deep learning models with interactive web-based deployment platforms that support real-time food recognition and confidence visualization for end users.

Table 1 summarizes representative studies on automated food image recognition and highlights their principal methodologies, strengths, and limitations.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Previous Food Image Recognition Studies

Authors	Model	Dataset	Major Contribution	Limitation
Anthimopoulos et al.	SVM + Bag of Features	European Food Dataset	Automatic food recognition using handcrafted features	Limited feature representation and moderate accuracy
Hassannejad et al.	Inception CNN	Food-101, UECFOOD100, UECFOOD256	Deep CNN for improved food classification	High computational complexity
Liu et al.	DeepFood (Modified Inception)	Food-101	Reduced network complexity with competitive accuracy	Performance decreases for visually similar food classes
Pandey et al.	Ensemble CNN	Food-101	Combined multiple CNN architectures for higher accuracy	Increased model size and inference time
Aguilar et al.	CNN Fusion	Food-101	Classifier fusion improves prediction performance	Computationally expensive deployment
Proposed Study	MobileNetV2 + Transfer Learning	Food-101	Lightweight architecture with real-time Streamlit deployment	Evaluated for web-based deployment; future work will include mobile implementation

The reviewed literature demonstrates that deep learning has significantly advanced automated food recognition; however, important research challenges remain. Most existing studies primarily focus on maximizing classification accuracy while paying limited attention to deployment efficiency, computational cost, and usability in practical applications. In addition, many systems emphasize offline experimentation without providing interactive interfaces capable of supporting real-time decision-making. This study addresses these limitations by integrating MobileNetV2 with transfer learning into a lightweight web-based food recognition system developed using Streamlit. The proposed framework combines efficient image preprocessing, deep feature learning, real-time prediction, and confidence visualization to deliver a practical and scalable solution suitable for intelligent dietary monitoring and food management applications.

Research methodology

a. Research Design

This study adopted an experimental research design to develop and evaluate a deep learning-based food image recognition system using the MobileNetV2 architecture with transfer learning. The research process comprised dataset acquisition, image preprocessing, model development, training and validation, performance evaluation, and deployment through a Streamlit-based web application. The

experimental design was intended to produce a lightweight yet accurate food classification system capable of recognizing food images in real time.

b. Dataset Acquisition

The experiments were conducted using the Food-101 dataset, a publicly available benchmark dataset developed by Bossard et al. (2014) for food image recognition research. The dataset contains 101 food categories, each represented by 1,000 images, resulting in a total of 101,000 images. Each category consists of 750 training images and 250 testing images, covering a wide variety of cuisines, food preparation styles, lighting conditions, backgrounds, and viewing angles.

The Food-101 dataset was selected because it provides a large, diverse, and well-annotated collection of food images, making it suitable for evaluating deep learning models under realistic conditions. Its variability in image quality and food presentation also makes it a challenging benchmark for automated food recognition.

c. Data Preprocessing

Prior to training, all images were preprocessed to ensure compatibility with the MobileNetV2 architecture. Each image was resized to 224 × 224 pixels, corresponding to the required input dimensions of the pretrained model. Images were converted to RGB format and normalized using the MobileNetV2 preprocessing function, which scales pixel values to the range expected by the pretrained ImageNet weights.

To improve the model's ability to generalize to unseen data, data augmentation techniques were applied during training. These included random horizontal flipping, random rotation, zooming, width and height translation, and brightness adjustment. Data augmentation artificially increases the diversity of the training dataset and reduces the likelihood of overfitting by exposing the model to different variations of the same food images.

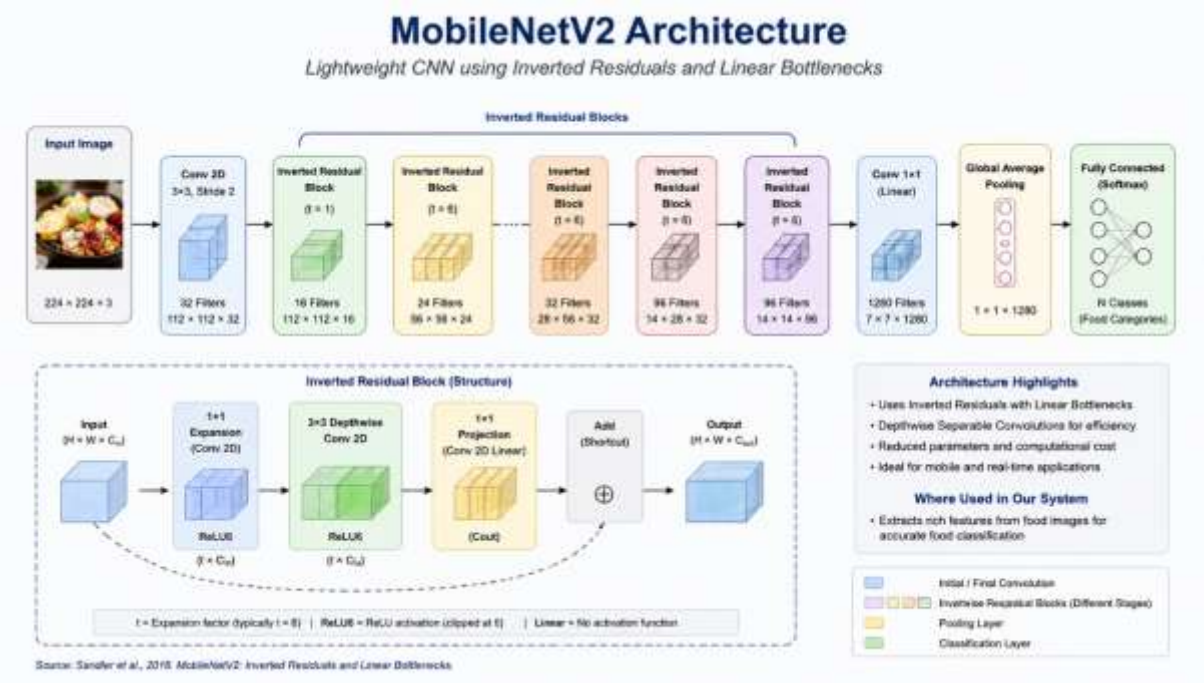
d. MobileNetV2 Architecture

The proposed system employs **MobileNetV2**, a lightweight convolutional neural network introduced by Sandler et al. (2018). MobileNetV2 was selected because it combines high classification performance with low computational complexity, making it suitable for deployment on web-based and mobile applications.

The architecture utilizes depthwise separable convolutions, inverted residual blocks, and linear bottlenecks, which significantly reduce the number of trainable parameters and computational cost compared with conventional CNN architectures.

The customized architecture used in this study consists of:

- Input layer (224 × 224 × 3)
- Pretrained MobileNetV2 feature extractor
- Global Average Pooling layer
- Dropout layer (0.5)
- Dense layer with 256 neurons and ReLU activation
- Softmax output layer for multiclass food classification



Initially, the pretrained convolutional layers were frozen while the newly added classifier layers were trained. Subsequently, selected upper layers of MobileNetV2 were fine-tuned using a lower learning rate to improve domain-specific feature extraction.

e. Transfer Learning

Transfer learning was employed to utilize the pretrained ImageNet weights available in MobileNetV2. Instead of learning image features from scratch, the model leveraged knowledge acquired from millions of natural images, thereby reducing computational requirements and accelerating convergence.

The training process consisted of two stages. During the first stage, the convolutional base of MobileNetV2 remained frozen while only the classification layers were trained. In the second stage, selected upper convolutional layers were unfrozen and fine-tuned using a reduced learning rate. This strategy enhanced classification accuracy while minimizing overfitting.

f. Model Training

The proposed model was implemented using Python, TensorFlow, and the Keras deep learning framework. Training was performed using the Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 0.0001, while the categorical cross-entropy loss function was employed because the problem involves multiclass classification.

The model was trained using a batch size of 32 for a maximum of 30 epochs. To improve generalization and prevent unnecessary training, Early Stopping was applied by monitoring the validation loss. Furthermore, Model Checkpointing was used to automatically save the model weights corresponding to the highest validation accuracy.

The training configuration is summarized in Table 1.

Hyperparameter	Value
Base Model	MobileNetV2
Input Image Size	224 × 224
Optimizer	Adam

Hyperparameter	Value
Learning Rate	0.0001
Batch Size	32
Epochs	30
Loss Function	Categorical Cross-Entropy
Activation Function	ReLU / Softmax
Dropout Rate	0.5
Early Stopping	Enabled
Model Checkpoint	Enabled

g. Performance Evaluation

The proposed model was evaluated using standard performance metrics for multiclass image classification.

Accuracy measures the proportion of correctly classified images relative to the total number of images.

$$Accuracy = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$

Precision measures the proportion of predicted positive samples that were correctly classified.

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$

Recall measures the proportion of actual positive samples correctly identified by the classifier.

$$Recall = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$

F1-score provides the harmonic mean of Precision and Recall.

$$F1 = \frac{2 \times Precision \times Recall}{Precision + Recall}$$

A confusion matrix was also generated to evaluate class-wise prediction performance, while training and validation accuracy and loss curves were used to analyze model convergence and detect overfitting.

h. System Architecture

The developed food image recognition system follows a four-layer architecture comprising the presentation layer, application layer, deep learning layer, and storage layer.

The presentation layer provides a Streamlit-based graphical user interface through which users upload food images and receive prediction results. The application layer performs image preprocessing and coordinates communication between the interface and the prediction engine. The deep learning layer

hosts the trained MobileNetV2 model responsible for feature extraction and food classification, while the storage layer maintains trained model weights and configuration files required for inference.

i. System Workflow

The operational workflow of the proposed system consists of the following sequential steps:

1. A user uploads a food image through the Streamlit interface.
2. The uploaded image is resized to **224 × 224 pixels** and preprocessed.
3. The processed image is forwarded to the pretrained MobileNetV2 model.
4. Deep visual features are extracted automatically.
5. The classifier computes class probabilities using the Softmax activation function.
6. The food category with the highest probability is selected.
7. The predicted food class and confidence score are displayed to the user through the web application.

The workflow enables efficient and accurate real-time food image recognition while maintaining low computational complexity suitable for deployment in practical food recommendation and dietary monitoring systems.

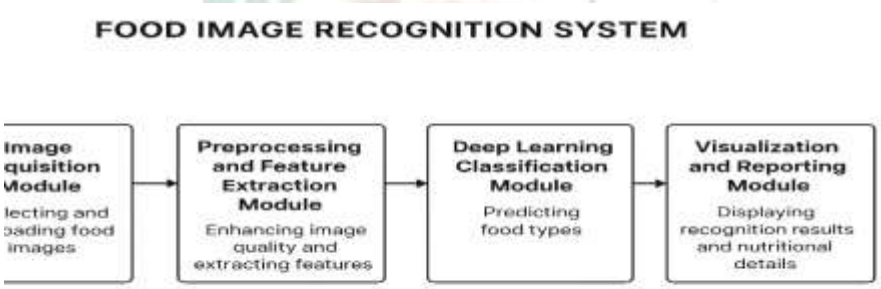


Fig. 3.1: System Image Recognition System

a. System Flow Diagram

The system flow follows this sequence:

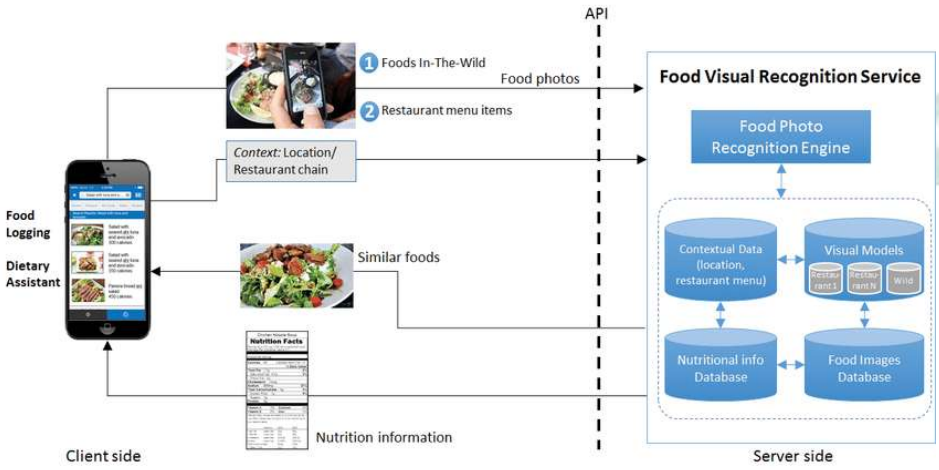


Fig. 3.2: System Flow Diagram

b. User Interface Design

The user interface was designed to be simple, responsive, and accessible across devices. Users can:

Upload food images or recipe screenshots.

Input recipe text manually.

i. View predictions in real time with visual feedback such as icons and highlighted results.
ii. Tabs were included to navigate between input forms and results. Tooltips guide users on input quality, and the UI uses soft color schemes to improve user experience.
iii. Security and Data Handling
iv. Security was considered by validating user inputs, limiting file sizes, and avoiding server overload. No user data is stored permanently, ensuring compliance with data privacy principles. The system runs in a sandboxed environment to prevent unauthorized access to server resources.

System implementation

a. System Implementation

This section describes the implementation of the proposed MobileNetV2-based food image recognition system, including the system requirements, graphical user interface, model evaluation components, and visualization tools developed to support food image classification and performance assessment.

b. System Requirements

The proposed food image recognition system was implemented and evaluated on a local computer using Python and the TensorFlow deep learning framework. Table 4.1 presents the minimum and recommended hardware specifications required for smooth execution of the application.

Table 4.1 Hardware Requirements

Component	Minimum Requirement	Recommended Specification
Processor	Intel Core i3	Intel Core i5 or higher
RAM	4 GB	8 GB or higher
Storage	2 GB Free Space	5 GB SSD Free Space
Display	1024 × 768	1920 × 1080 Full HD

The software environment required for implementing the proposed system is summarized below.

Software Requirements

i. Operating System: Windows 10, Linux, or macOS
ii. Python Version 3.8 or later
iii. TensorFlow 2.x
iv. Streamlit
v. NumPy
vi. Pandas
vii. Matplotlib
viii. Scikit-learn
ix. Pillow (PIL)
x. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Microsoft Edge

These software tools collectively provide the environment for image preprocessing, model inference, performance visualization, and deployment of the web-based application.

c. System User Interface

The proposed system was deployed as a web-based application using the Streamlit framework to provide users with an intuitive interface for food image recognition.

The home interface shown in Figure 4.1 serves as the entry point to the application. It provides users with access to the image upload functionality, prediction module, and model evaluation tools through a clean and user-friendly layout.

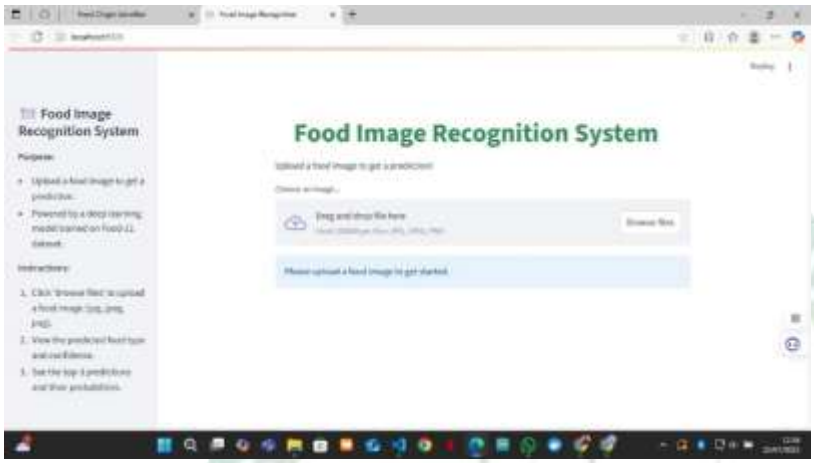


Figure 4.1: Home interface of the proposed food image recognition system.

d. Image Upload and Prediction Interface

The image upload interface enables users to select food images directly from their local devices for automatic classification. After selecting an image, the system performs preprocessing operations, including resizing and normalization, before forwarding the image to the trained MobileNetV2 model for prediction.

The image upload interface is illustrated in **Figure 4.2**.

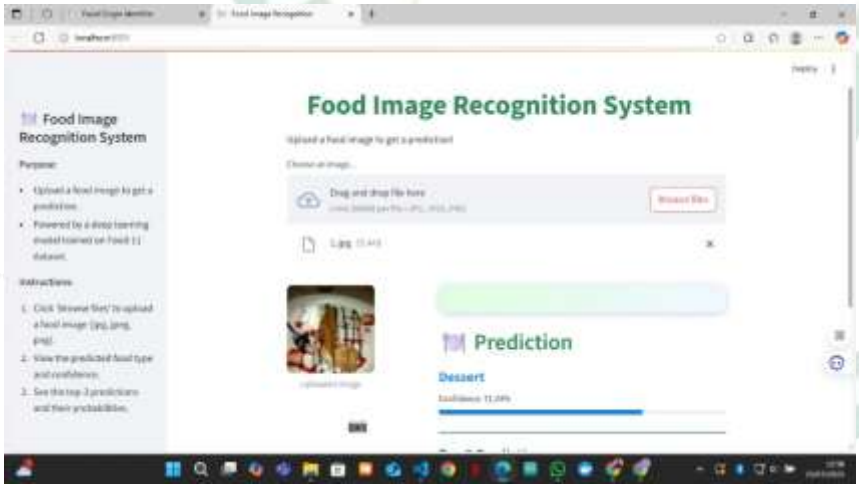


Figure 4.2: Image upload interface for food image classification.

After processing the uploaded image, the application displays the predicted food category together with the corresponding confidence score. The confidence value is presented numerically and graphically using a horizontal progress bar to improve interpretability.

An example of the prediction interface is presented in **Figure 4.3**.

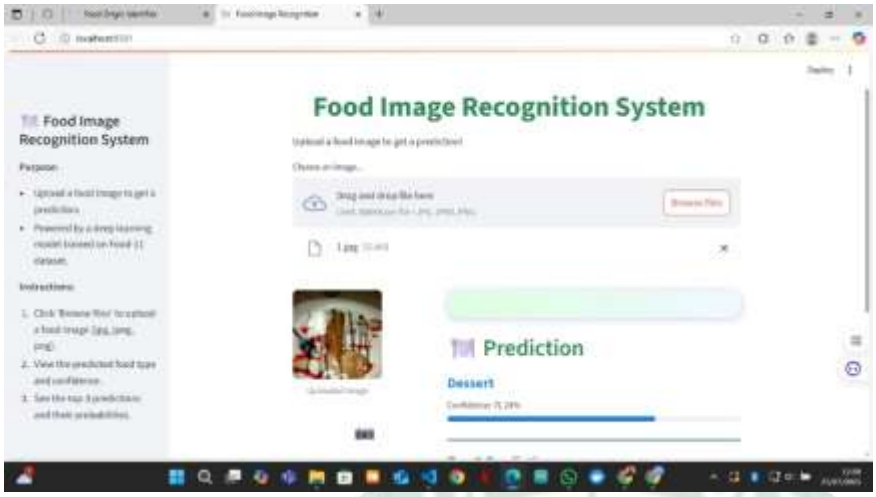


Figure 4.3: Prediction output showing the predicted food class and confidence score.

In addition to displaying the most probable prediction, the system provides the **Top-3 predicted classes** ranked according to their confidence scores. This feature enables users to understand alternative predictions generated by the model.

For example:

Rank	Predicted Class	Confidence
1	Dessert	71.24%
2	Seafood	18.95%
3	Meat	5.47%

Displaying multiple candidate predictions enhances the transparency of the model and provides greater insight into the decision-making process, particularly when visually similar food categories are encountered.

e. Model Evaluation Interface

To assess the prediction capability of the trained MobileNetV2 model, the application includes an evaluation interface that compares the actual food labels with the corresponding predicted labels generated by the classifier.

As illustrated in **Figure 4.4**, the interface displays the ground-truth class together with the predicted class and its associated confidence score.

Examples include:

- True: Dessert | Predicted: Dessert (97.3%)
- True: Meat | Predicted: Meat (97.4%)

This comparison provides a straightforward means of verifying the correctness of the model's predictions during testing and demonstrates the classifier's ability to recognize food categories accurately.



Figure 4.4: Comparison between true labels and predicted labels during model evaluation.

f. Model Accuracy Analysis

The learning performance of the proposed MobileNetV2 model was evaluated using the training and validation accuracy obtained throughout the training process.

The accuracy curve presented in **Figure 4.5** illustrates the progressive improvement in classification accuracy across successive training epochs. The close agreement between the training and validation curves indicates effective learning and good generalization, while the absence of significant divergence suggests that overfitting was successfully minimized through transfer learning, data augmentation, and early stopping.

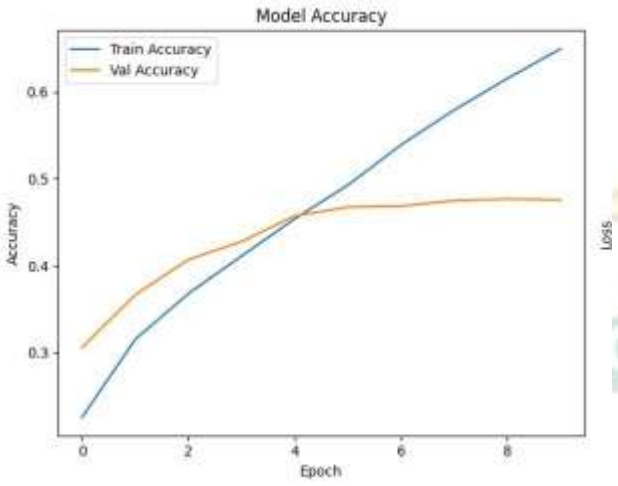


Figure 4.5: Training and validation accuracy curves of the MobileNetV2 model.

g. Model Loss Analysis

Model convergence was further evaluated using the training and validation loss curves.

As shown in **Figure 4.6**, the loss values decreased steadily as training progressed before stabilizing in the later epochs. This behavior indicates that the optimization process successfully minimized classification error while maintaining stable learning performance.

The relatively small difference between the training and validation loss further demonstrates that the model generalized well to unseen food images without exhibiting significant overfitting.

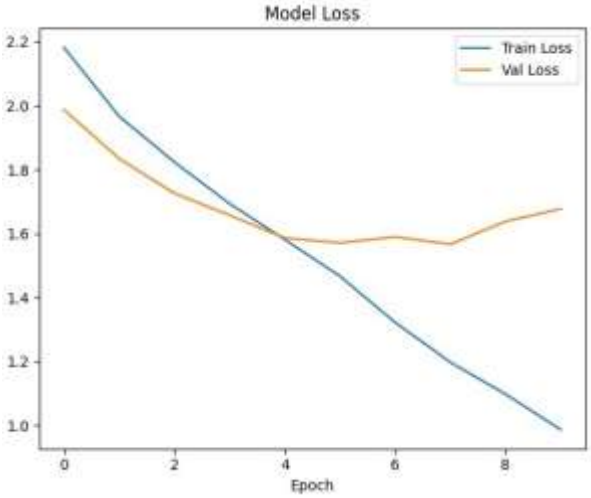


Figure 4.6: Training and validation loss curves of the MobileNetV2 model.

h. Confusion Matrix Analysis

The overall classification performance of the proposed system was further evaluated using a confusion matrix.

The confusion matrix shown in **Figure 4.7** presents the distribution of correctly and incorrectly classified food images across the dataset. Most food categories are concentrated along the principal diagonal, indicating correct predictions, whereas the off-diagonal elements represent misclassified samples.

Analysis of the confusion matrix shows that the proposed MobileNetV2 model accurately classified the majority of food categories. The few observed misclassifications primarily occurred among visually similar food classes that shared comparable colour, texture, or presentation characteristics. Such errors are expected in multiclass food recognition tasks and provide valuable insights for future model improvement.

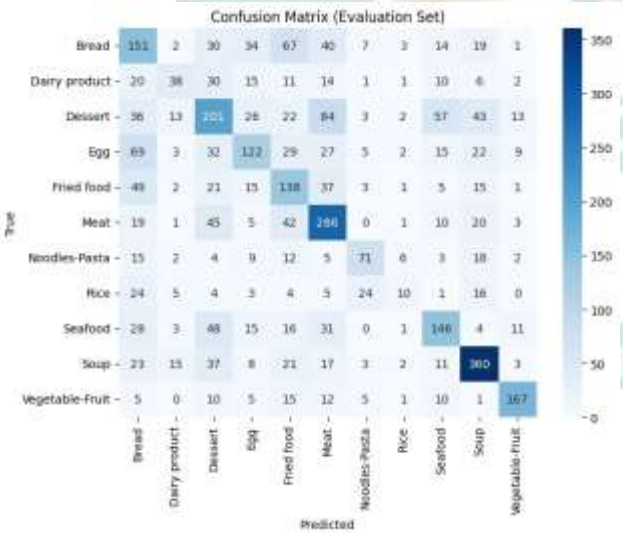


Figure 4.7: Confusion matrix illustrating the classification performance of the proposed MobileNetV2 model.

Conclusion

This study presented a lightweight and efficient food image recognition system based on the MobileNetV2 deep learning architecture with transfer learning. The proposed framework was developed to automatically classify food images using the Food-101 dataset and was deployed through a Streamlit-based web application to support real-time food recognition. Image preprocessing techniques, including resizing, normalization, and data augmentation, were employed to improve the robustness of the model, while transfer learning enabled efficient feature extraction and reduced the computational cost associated with training deep neural networks from scratch.

Experimental evaluation demonstrated that the proposed model effectively classified food images with high predictive performance while maintaining computational efficiency suitable for practical deployment. The training and validation performance, confusion matrix analysis, and prediction results confirmed the capability of the MobileNetV2 model to learn discriminative visual features across multiple food categories. Furthermore, the integration of the trained model into a user-friendly web interface demonstrates the practical applicability of the proposed system for intelligent food recognition, dietary monitoring, nutrition support, restaurant automation, and other food-related decision support applications.

Although the proposed framework achieved promising results, several limitations remain. The system was evaluated using the Food-101 dataset and performs single-label food classification without estimating portion size, calorie content, or nutritional composition. Future research should therefore consider incorporating larger and more diverse food datasets, indigenous food varieties, multi-label food recognition, nutritional analysis, and calorie estimation. In addition, emerging deep learning architectures such as Vision Transformers (ViTs), EfficientNet variants, and multimodal learning approaches may be investigated to further improve classification accuracy and support deployment on mobile and edge-computing platforms.

Finally, the findings of this study demonstrate that MobileNetV2 provides an effective balance between classification accuracy, computational efficiency, and deployment feasibility, making it a suitable solution for real-time food image recognition systems.

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CASSAVA PRODUCTS AND THEIR PROCESSING MACHINES: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Cassava plant is a crop of great potentials, commonly cultivated on poor soil conditions and tolerance to drought that enhanced its adaptability on various environments. Cassava is among the traditional foods to the local farmers in Nigeria and one of the most popular and widely consumed food crops in Africa. It is an important food in the region and extremely versatile crop; now referred to as cornerstone of food security in Africa. The competing needs for cassava cut across both human and animal consumption. Cassava is the basis of a multitude of products, including food, flour, animal feed, alcohol, starches for sizing paper and textiles, sweeteners, prepared foods and bio-degradable products. The degree of processing and the technical requirements tend to increase from the fresh form to the modified starch form. This paper therefore, explored Cassava products, uses and the processing machines. It focused on cassava project development with products derivable from it. Cassava Products (leaves and roots) and their potentials, assessing the major processing machineries functions (Starch, Gari/fufu, Flour and Cassava chips), maintenance and challenges involved witha means to improving their efficiency. This reviewed work attempt to revealed the potential of cassava products as means of alleviating poverty, hunger reduction and industrialization through Cassava products as a means to utilized.

***Keywords*:** *Cassava, products, processing machines, maintenance, food security*

Introduction

Cassava is the most important tropical root crop. Its starchy roots are major source of dietary energy for more than 500 million people. It is known to be the highest producer of carbohydrates among staple crops. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization FAO (2021), cassava ranks fourth as a food crop in the developing countries, after rice, maize and whea. The leaves are relatively rich in protein and can be consumed. Cassava can be stored in the ground for several seasons, thereby serving as a reserve food when other crops fail. Cassava is also increasingly used as an animal feed and in the manufacture of different industrial products. It is also used in industrial processes.

Cassava *(esculenta)* is a tropical root crop widely cultivated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It is a staple food for millions of people and has various industrial applications. According to FAO, (2021) estimates, 172 million tones of cassava were produced worldwide in 2000. Africa accounted for 54%, Asia for 28%, and Latin America and the Caribbean for 19% of the total world production. In 1999, Nigeria produced 33 million tones, making it the world's largest producer. A total of 16.8 million hectares were planted with cassava throughout the world in 2000; about 64% of which was in sub-Saharan Africa. The average yield in 2000 was 10.2 t/ha, but this varied from 1.8 t/ha in Sudan to 27.3 t/ha in Barbados. In Nigeria the average yield was 10.6 t/ha FAO, 2021.

Projects focused on development

Cassava is a common crop in many communities because of its tolerance to drought and poor soil conditions and can be cultivated in various environments. Traditionally, cassava production is labor-intensive and generally cultivated as subsistence crop on a small scale by peasant farmers. Surplus

production is sold in the marketed through informal sector. The crop is resistant to pests and diseases and recently it has been improved genetically and resistance to severe pest infestations and serious diseases. Cassava yields can be greatly high, as higher as 25 to 40 t/ha, however, national yields are often below these levels. The world average cassava production is about 10t/ha, Nduka, *et al.* (2023).

Cassava grows and produces high yields in areas with maize and other crops fail to survive or produce well. It can tolerate drought and can be grown on soils with a low nutrient capacity, but thrives well to irrigation or higher rainfall areas and with improve nutrient efficiency Nduka *et al* . , (2023). Cassava is highly flexible in its management requirements, and has the potential of high-energy production per unit area of land. The crop has long been used as a famine reserve and food security crop FAO, (2013). Although, cassava has no definite maturation point, harvesting may be delayed until market, processing or other conditions are more favorable; this flexibility means cassava may be field stored for several months or more. Cassava is, therefore, highly acceptable in the rural areas.

As the product moves through the supply chain, activities like marketing, processing and packaging are done by fewer larger-scale units, which then distribute the final product to a larger number of consumers. This hourglass supply chain differs from the supply chain of many established agricultural products. The presence of the hourglass supply chain then suggested that the performance of cassava product markets will be useful to the huge number of resource poor farmers found on poor lands as well as the local processing units Mkumbira, *et al,* (2023). The challenge is how to equip these farmers and processors with the knowledge and tools needed to provide the products that meet the requirements of growth markets. The proper understanding of products derivable from Cassava cultivation and processing machines will limit the challenge of dealing with the growth markets without unaltered supply chain and enhanced its large-scale production. The potential derivable from cassava with regards to product, therefore, have to be evaluated to explore the opportunities available from Cassava production with their processing machines.

Cassava products

Cassava is the basis of a multitude of products, including food, flour, animal feed, alcohol, starches for sizing paper and textiles, sweeteners, prepared foods and bio-degradable product. Cassava products can group into 1. Flour; this flour is used in baking, cooking, and as a thickening agent. 2. Starch; this starch can be used in paper, textile, and food industries. 3.Ethanol; which is used in biofuel production. 4. Chips and pellets; can be used as animal feed or for industrial applications. 5. Gari; a popular West African food. The products are derived from a number of forms of cassava, ranging from fresh leaves and roots to modified cassava starch. The degree of processing and the technical requirements tend to increase from the fresh form to the modified starch form.

Cassava is also used in the making of glucose and alcohol which are an essential commodity in many industries from pharmaceuticals to food canning. Cassava product is also very useful in the confectioneries for making of a large variety of food items including ice cream, jelly beans, jams, sweets and gums. Cassava product is also used to produce caramel which is used as coloring agent in food, confectioneries and liquor; because it is cheaper than other alternatives and provides greater coloration All the above products represent potential market development opportunities for cassava. While some cassava is sold as fresh roots or leaves, even these products usually receive some special post-harvest handling or treatment before they are consumed. As cassava normally requires some form of processing before been consumed or sold, processing is of central importance in the future of the crop. Also, the market potentials are great and it must be noted that these previledge are location and time specific Mkumbira *et al.,* (2023).

Products from leaves and roots

Fresh roots and leaves are used primarily as human food because of their perishability, most roots are consumed or marketed close to the areas of production. Traditional methods for preserving fresh roots include packing roots in moist mulch or removing leaves two weeks prior to harvest towards increasing root shelf life to two weeks with two weeks Mkumbira, *et al.* (2023). In Colombia, International Center for Tropical Agriculture. (CIAT) researchers discovered that preservative treatments like dipping fresh

roots in wax or paraffin and storing in plastic bags reduced vascular streak and prolonged storage for 3 to 4 weeks FAO, (2000). Roots can be peeled, chopped into chunks and frozen for specialized markets. Cassava leaves can be eaten as a fresh vegetable, ground fresh and frozen in plastic bags, or dried and ground for sale in plastic bags. The leaves are highly nutritionally balanced compared to the roots and this will assist in the prevention of certain diseases FAO, (2000). The leaves, however, may be high in hydrocyanic acid (HCN), but the HCN can be reduced in most cases when the liquid is squeezed out after grinding and through evaporation during cooking.

Products from dried roots

In many countries of Africa and Latin America, cassava is processed at home or at village level to produce toasted flour (farinha in Brazil, gari in West Africa), or to make flat bread (casabe in the Caribbean). Farinha and gari can be produced in both small and large scale operations. Onfarm feeding of fresh or dried cassava has been practiced long time, and its use as balanced rations is increasing since it adds value and resulted in more marketable livestock products. Technical details for using dried cassava in rations are well established in milling and blending of animal nutrition. FAO, (2000) estimates that from 1992-1994 about 25% of world cassava output was devoted to feed in the form of pellets and chips, which represents a 2% increase over the 1970s. Trade development by the EEC at global level and in such non-cassava-producing countries as Japan and the Republic of Korea is helping to promote the use of cassava as a feed.

Potential for dried cassava

Cassava flour has potential in many developing countries, especially in Africa and to a lesser extent in Asia where there is a large consumption of bread produced from 100 per cent of imported wheat FAO, (2013). The degree of replacement can lead to different grades of breads and pastry products and different prices for the consumer. Research will be needed to evaluate the different proportions of cassava/wheat flour and this will be done in partnership with the bakery industry. Dried cassava in the form of meal, chips and pellets is an important animal feed ingredient. As livestock production and meat consumption become more essential in cassava-producing countries, the need for animal feed rations is expected to increase FAO, (2013). Finally, dried and fresh cassava can be used to produce glues and alcohol (both hydrous and anhydrous). These markets, especially those for glue and anhydrous alcohol, represent new opportunities for the use of cassava in many countries FAO, (2000). These potentials represent growth through concentration, innovation, and competition.

Major cassava products processing machines

A. Starch processing machine

Cassava starch processing machine is mainly used for extracting starch from cassava. The machine firstly the attached impurities of cassava, grate cassava into pulp, separate fibers, protein and other impurities in cassava pulp to get pure starch, dewater and dry to get desired quality cassava starch. Complete set of cassava starch processing machine sieve, paddle washer, cutting machine, rasper, centrifuge sieve, fine fiber sieve, desander, hydrocyclone station, peeler centrifuge and flash dryer.

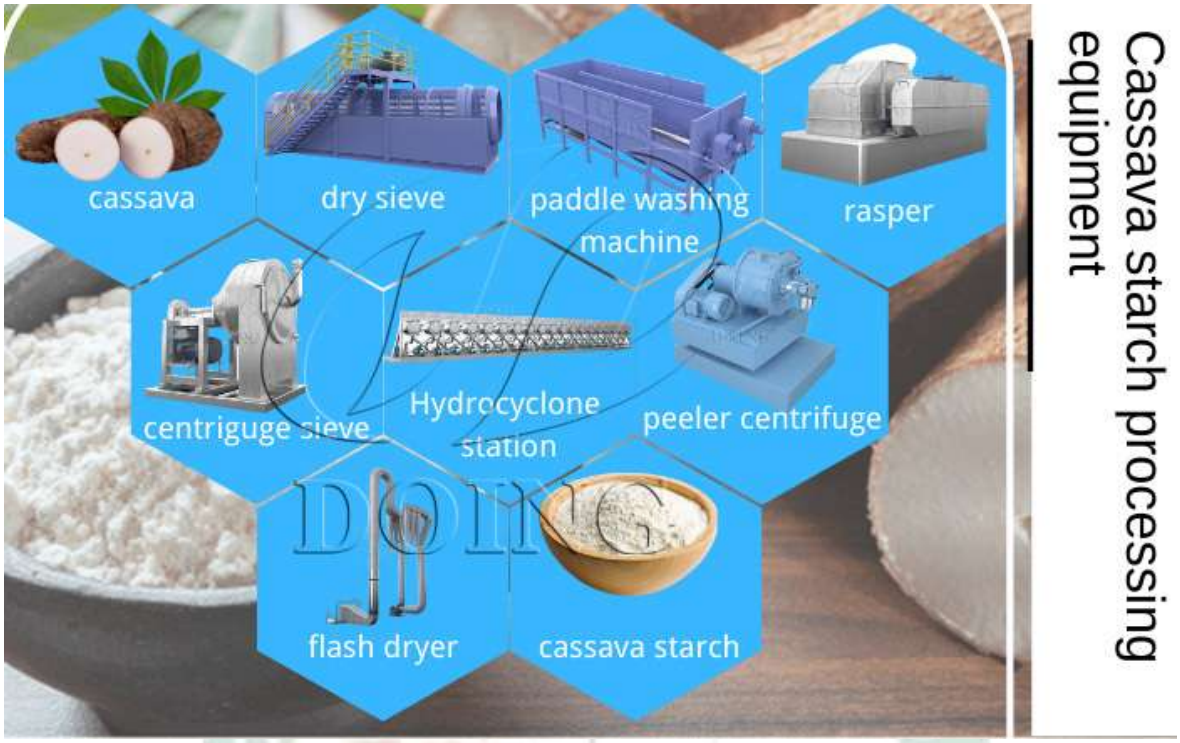


Plate 1; Cassava starch processing equipment's
Holdings Equipment Photo. 2026

(1) Dry sieve:
Dry sieve is used to remove impurities from harvest cassava tubers, like stems and leafs, dirt, sand, weeds, stones, roots on cassava tubers surface. During dry sieve, no water is needed. This cassava starch processing machine serves as the first stage of cassava cleaning and saves water consumed in cassava processing plant.

(2) Paddle washer:
This further washed cassava after the cleaning, the paddle washer removes the mud, peel and other impurities from cassava tubers using water for the operations. This cassava starch processing machine adopts countercurrent washing principle, by the effect of paddle rotating, cassava tubers flows in the converse direction against water, which makes washing completely and eliminate sand and mud effectively.

(3) Cutting machine:

This is use for cutting cassava tubers into small pieces. Cassava tubers are usually large and irregular in shape. Therefore, in the production process the cassava tubers should be cut into smaller pieces with the cutting machine and for further crushing, which will also reduce the pressure of the rasper and conducive for the full crushing of cassava.

(4) Rasper:
It is used for complete crushing. Rasper is a high efficient cassava grater which can fully destroy the cassava structure, so that the tiny starch granules can be disintegrated and separated from the cassava tubers. With water as medium, this cassava starch processing machine can fully crush cassava into pulp by relying on high-speed rotating machine. The pulp is then washed, sieved and dewatered to separate starch milk from fiber, after which the starch milk is settled, refined and dried to obtain finished cassava starch. This is the most advanced cassava grater whose crushing rate is more than 94%. And the grated starch slurry can through the 1.2-1.4 mm mesh.

(5) Centrifuge sieve & Fine fiber sieve:
This is for separating fibers from starch slurry. The crushed starch slurry needs to be sieved and ensured that fibers are separated from starch slurry. The large fibers are removed by using centrifugal sieve and

fine fibers are further removed by fine fiber sieve. These two cassava starch processing machines are mainly for separating and purifying of the starch. Multiple separation and counter current washing processes are commonly employed, and after separation, the fiber impurities content of the starch slurry is less than 0.05%.

(6) Desander:

It removes sand in starch slurry and improves starch taste. According to the principle of gravity separation, the starch slurry is pumped into the cyclone by a pressure pump, where the bottom stream removes sand while starch slurry flows through the top to achieve the purpose of sand removal.

(7) Hydrocyclone:
This wash, concentrate and refine starch slurry. The adopted cassava starch processing machine in this step is hydrocyclone system, which mainly separates the insoluble protein and residual soluble protein and other impurities so that obtained starch slurry is pure. It separates impurities by using different specific gravity of water, starch and yellow pulp protein. The machine uses a 12-stage hydrocyclone system to achieve the function of washing, refining and concentrating of starch slurry. The produced liquid from this process is called starch milk, which is pure and white.

(8) Peeler centrifuge:
It removes water from starch milk and facilitates drying. The starch milk is dewatered to achieve the required moisture content (less than 40%) for drying, and the water content of the cassava starch can reach 36.5% after dewatering by the peeler centrifuge machine.

(9) Flash dryer:
It dries starch to meet international standard. The wet material enters the drying pipe from the powder feeding machine, where it mixes with the heated high speed fresh air. In the drying pipe of the cassava starch processing machine, the high speed hot air will dry starch to required moisture by heat exchange. The produced cassava starch moisture content is 10%-14% after the operation.



Plate 2 ; Cassava Starch Processing Machine

Holdings Equipment Photo, 2026

B. Cassava chips processing machine: This is the simplest cassava processing machine. It is used to process cassava chips for animal feed, cassava chips for making alcohol or for export, then it requires a cassava cleaner, a cassava peeler, a cassava chipping machine chips dryer. The cassava chipping machine is adjustable in thickness and high in slicing efficiency. The large-scale cassava chipping machine can handle 7 tons of cassava per hour.

C. gari processing machine: The complete set of machines for gari processing includes; cassava cleaner, washer, peeler, cassava grater, hydraulic press, gari fryer, vibration sieve and packaging machine. gari processing can be automated in production or combined with manual processing equipment. The choice of the machine selection will be based on requirements.



Plate 3; Gari processing machine

Holdings Equipment Photo, 2026

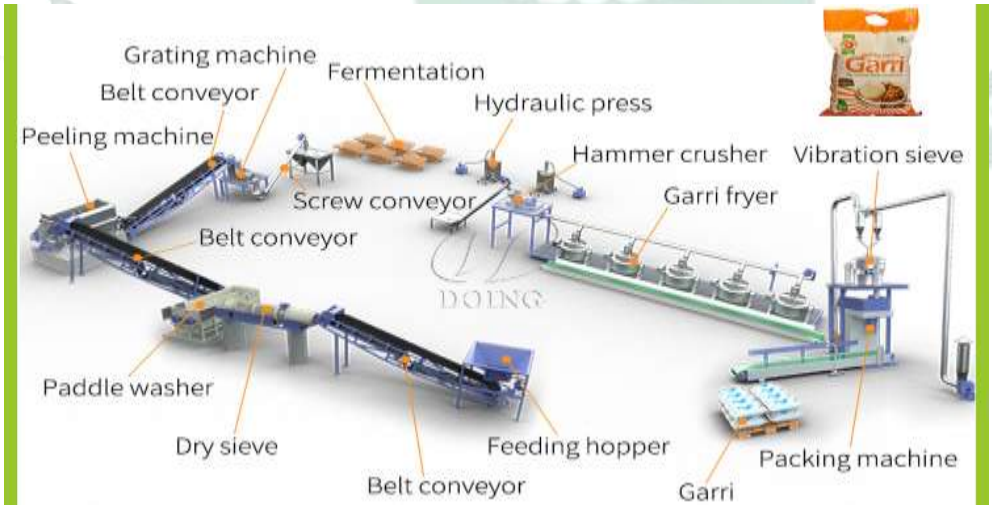


Plate 4; **Cassava flour processing machine**

Holdings Equipment Photo, 2026

D. **Cassava flour processing machine:** For cassava flour processing; world latest technology will be adopted, wet processing which produce high quality cassava flour from fresh cassava tubers. The process of cassava flour production includes; cleaning, washing and peeling, crushing, de-sanding, dewatering, drying, sieving and packaging. Accordingly, the equipped machines are dry sieve, paddle washer, rasper, desander, plate frame filter press, flash dryer, sieving machine and packaging machine. The requirement request for production will determine both capacity and the budget proposal.

Cassava products and their uses

A. Cassava starch: Starch can be eaten as food, used in many industries, like the food industry (bread, drink, beer, etc), paper industry and deep processing into syrup, alcohol, etc. Cassava starch is also the most important value of products that can be made from cassava.

B. Cassava flour or fufu flour: Cassava flour and fufu flour have similar processing technics but fufu flour needs fermentation, which makes the flavor more special, and can be eaten directly after mixing with water. Cassava flour is mainly for industrial and food industry, for example, the biscuit, bread, cookies, etc. Cassava flour is a good substitute of wheat flour to some extent, and this makes the taste better and reduced raw material cost.

C. Cassava chips: Cassava chips can be used for ethanol processing, for animal feed, etc. The thin cassava chips can be produced with snacks with different flavors, very popular in the supermarket.

D. Gari: gari is a popular staple food in West Africa, especially Nigeria, Ghana, etc. gari can be sipped raw after frying by adding water and/ or sugar, groundnut, and milk to improve the taste. It can also be stirred with hot water by a wooden stick and taken with soup until it becomes smooth and edible. In order to produce gari, the cassava tubers are peeled, washed and grated, which then produces mash. With 2-3 days fermentation, the cassava mesh is then sifted and roasted by heating in gari fryer and produces gari.

Methods ofthe efficiency of cassava processing machinery

The following operations should be carried out to improve the efficiency of the machine.

A. Timely maintenance of machine. During the use of the cassava machine, the screws of the internal parts of the machine or the screws of the fixed machine may become loose due to long time of use. This requires regular reinforcement of the machine's screws.

B. Regular replacement of the machine lubricant: After cassava processing machine has been used for a period of time, the internal lubricant will reduce the lubrication effect, and the debris falling off during the operation of the machine will also increase the wear of the machine. Therefore, when the lubricant has been used for a while, it must be replaced in time and after the replacement, use kerosene to thoroughly clean the inside to reduce the wear and tear on the machine.

C. Regularly cleaning of the machine. To improve efficiency, regular cleaning is necessary to extend the life of the machine. After using the cassava grating machine for a period of time, there are some residual cassava slag left, which may affect the quality of the starch in the next production, so the equipment needs to be cleaned regularly.

D. Proper monitoring of the internal temperature of the machine should be done regularly. When cassava processing machine is in normal use, there will be no problem of excessive temperature. However, after working around the clock in order to increase the output, it is essential to check the temperature to prevent overheating. This is because cassava grating machine will generate a lot of heat due to friction during use. If the heat cannot be dissipated in time, accumulation in the machine will reduce the service life of the machine. Therefore, always pay attention to the internal temperature when using the machine and if the machine temperaturerise, stop immediately, and then use when the temperature is reduced.

E. Gradual addition of raw materials. During the operation, if too much raw material enters the machine, the machine will be damaged due to excessive load. So when using cassava grating machine, it is necessary to adjust the conveyor to evenly add cassava raw materials.

Conclusion

Cassava is a multiple crop with huge benefits. It can be use as animal feed, food for human consumption, textile material, paper production, plywood binding material, biodegradable products, making of quality glues, pharmaceutical materials in capsules and tablets production, sweetener, fructose, lactose, beverages, jams and canned fruits), prime material for mono sodium glutamate production, industrial and medical). Although, the major processing machinery identified are Cassava chips/pellet, Starch, flour and Gari. The proper understanding of the multiple products of Cassava with their uses will ensure its effective utilization and sustainability of the machineries efficiency. The objectives of exploration of the Cassava products and their processing machine are to create wealth, provide jobs, reduce poverty, improve food, security and nutrition, provide renewable energy and reduce carbon foot print. All these if well understood will make Cassava an acceptable crop for awaken the nation economy.

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DATA-DRIVEN DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR POST-HARVEST LOGISTICS PLANNING

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Abstract

The post-harvest stage of agricultural supply chains is a major problem, particularly in developing countries, because of inadequate storage facilities, transport, and poor logistics planning. This paper presents an innovative Data-Driven Decision Support System (DDS) that combines predictive analytics, machine Learning (XGBoost), deep learning, and Linear Programming methods for optimized logistics planning. The system receives multi-source data such as environmental, storage, and market data and makes predictions about the risks of spoilage and generates optimal transportation routes. The performance was assessed on operational metrics (spoilage rate, delivery delay, storage utilization) and predictive metrics (MAPE, RMSE, and R^2). The results indicate that the proposed system can prevent the occurrence of spoiled products (0.4%) and minimize delays in the delivery of products (28%), which also enhances the efficiency of real-time monitoring and storage. The best prediction accuracy was obtained with XGBoost, while Linear Programming gave optimum routing under constraints. The proposed DDS would improve the resilience and efficiency of post-harvest logistics systems, increase the utilization of resources, and improve decision-making.

Keywords: *Decision Support System, Post-Harvest Logistics, Predictive Analytics, Route Optimization, Smart Agriculture, Machine Learning*

Introduction

Post-harvest losses remain a major challenge in agricultural supply chains, affecting food security, economic growth, and sustainability. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023), about 14% of food produced globally is lost between harvest and retail, largely because of inadequate storage, inefficient transportation, and poor logistics coordination. These challenges are particularly severe in developing countries, where limited infrastructure and weak information systems increase spoilage and reduce supply chain efficiency (Affognon *et al.*, 2015; Obunadike & Adeoti, 2021).

Recent advances in the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and predictive analytics have enabled more efficient post-harvest logistics through real-time monitoring and data-driven decision-making. Machine learning models can predict spoilage risk, forecast demand, and improve transportation planning, while optimization techniques support efficient route selection and resource allocation (Rejeb *et al.*, 2022; Kumar *et al.*, 2022; Srivastava, 2025).

This paper proposes a Data-Driven Decision Support System (DSS) for post-harvest logistics planning that integrates predictive analytics, route optimization, shipment tracking, cold storage monitoring, and market intelligence within a unified web-based platform. The proposed framework provides real-time operational insights and intelligent recommendations to improve logistics efficiency, reduce post-harvest losses, optimize resource utilization, and support sustainable agricultural supply chain management.

Related works

Post-harvest logistics is essential for preserving agricultural produce and reducing food losses. Poor transportation, inadequate storage, weak cold-chain infrastructure, and limited coordination remain major causes of post-harvest losses, particularly in developing countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023) estimates that about 14% of food is lost between harvest and retail, while Affognon *et al.* (2015) identified transportation delays and poor storage as major contributors to these losses.

Recent studies have highlighted digital technologies as effective solutions for improving agricultural logistics. Tsolakis *et al.* (2021) proposed a technology roadmap for intelligent agri-food supply chains, while Mounika *et al.* (2025) reviewed post-harvest technologies, emphasizing IoT, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and smart cold-chain systems for real-time monitoring and quality preservation. Artificial intelligence and machine learning have become important tools for predictive logistics planning. Bello (2020) developed an AI-based framework integrating IoT, weather, and market data for demand forecasting and logistics optimization. Likewise, Kumar *et al.* (2022) showed that ensemble learning models such as Random Forest and XGBoost provide accurate spoilage prediction, while LSTM and Transformer models improve demand and transportation forecasting. Srivastava (2025), Das *et al.* (2025), and Bagda *et al.* (2026) further demonstrated that AI-driven demand forecasting, computer vision, and predictive analytics enhance inventory planning, cold storage allocation, transportation routing, and supply chain efficiency. IoT-enabled monitoring has also improved post-harvest management through continuous observation of storage and transportation conditions. Obunadike and Adeoti (2021) showed that IoT sensor networks integrated with predictive models reduce spoilage by detecting unfavorable storage conditions early, while Rejeb *et al.* (2022) reported improved traceability and operational decision-making using cloud-based IoT systems. Similarly, Nayak and Mishra (2025) developed a smart storage system that combines IoT sensors with machine learning to predict spoilage and optimize storage conditions.

Several studies have also explored intelligent quality assessment and logistics optimization. Chen *et al.* (2024) proposed a hybrid SAHP-CatBoost model for evaluating fruit quality during transportation, achieving higher prediction accuracy than conventional machine learning methods. Wium (2023) demonstrated that optimization-based decision support improves harvest scheduling and transportation planning, while Vera *et al.* (2024) showed that blockchain and decentralized inventory systems enhance traceability, transparency, and coordination across cold-chain logistics. Building on these studies, the proposed Data-Driven Decision Support System integrates predictive analytics, IoT monitoring, route optimization, shipment tracking, cold storage monitoring, market intelligence, and interactive visualization within a unified web-based platform to support efficient post-harvest logistics planning.

Materials and methods

Proposed Framework

The proposed Data-Driven Decision Support System (DSS) enhances post-harvest logistics planning by integrating predictive analytics, optimization techniques, and interactive visualization. The framework processes transportation, storage, environmental, and market data to support timely logistics decisions through a modular architecture comprising data processing, predictive modelling, route optimization, and visualization components.

The workflow begins with data acquisition from multiple sources, followed by preprocessing and feature engineering. Predictive models estimate spoilage risk, demand, and delivery delays, while the optimization module generates efficient transportation routes. The results are presented through a web-based dashboard for real-time monitoring and decision support.

Data Collection and Data Sources

The system utilizes data from transportation records, cold storage facilities, environmental monitoring systems, commodity markets, and operational logistics databases. Transportation data include shipment details, travel distance, delivery time, commodity type, and vehicle information. Storage data contain temperature, humidity, and utilization records, while environmental and market datasets provide weather conditions, commodity prices, and supply-demand information.

The datasets were integrated into a centralized database and divided into training, validation, and testing sets using a time-aware data splitting approach to preserve chronological order during model evaluation.

Data Pre-processing

Data preprocessing improved data quality before model development. Duplicate and inconsistent records were removed, missing values were handled through interpolation and imputation, and numerical variables were normalized. Feature engineering generated variables such as spoilage risk indices, transportation time, and delivery delay intervals. Environmental and logistics data were

synchronized using timestamps, while categorical variables were encoded to produce a structured dataset for predictive modelling.

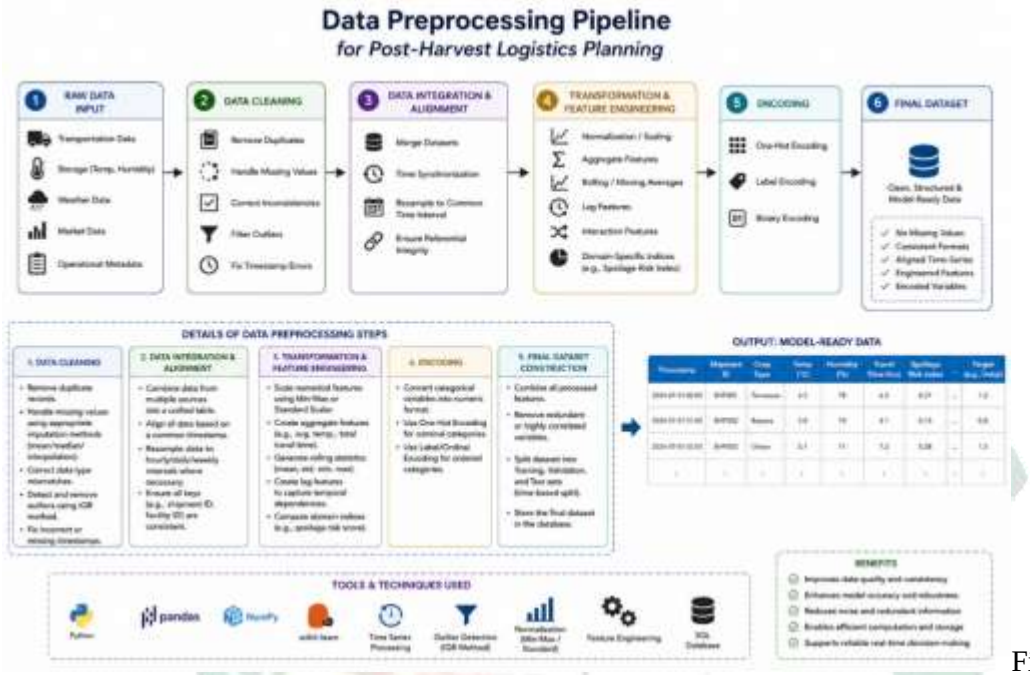


Figure 3.1 Data Pre-processing

Predictive Modeling Framework

The predictive framework integrates statistical, machine learning, and deep learning models to forecast key logistics parameters. ARIMA and Exponential Smoothing (ETS) were used for demand forecasting, while Random Forest and XGBoost predicted spoilage risk using transportation, storage, and environmental data. LSTM and Transformer models were employed for multivariate time-series forecasting of delivery delays and logistics performance. Model performance was evaluated using Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE), Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), and the coefficient of determination (R^2).

System Implementation

The proposed Decision Support System was implemented as a modular web-based application comprising a data management layer, analytics engine, optimization module, and visualization interface. Predictive models were developed using Python-based machine learning libraries, while Linear Programming was used for route optimization. An integrated database stores operational and historical logistics data, and an interactive dashboard provides real-time shipment tracking, cold storage monitoring, predictive analytics, route optimization, market intelligence, and automated alerts.

Results and discussion

System Interface Overview

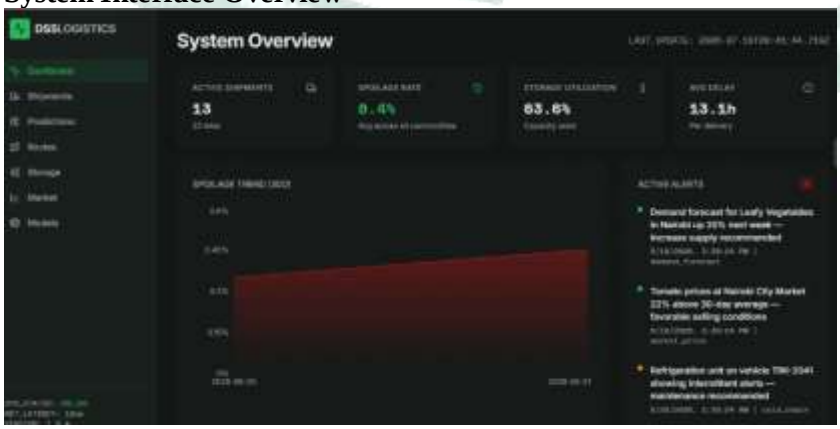


Figure 1. Overall dashboard of the proposed Data-Driven Decision Support System.

The System Dashboard Overview displays the system's overall status. The System Dashboard Overview shows the overall status of the system.
The DSS's Logistics Management Dashboard visualizes the main metrics like the number of active shipments, spoilage rate, storage utilization, and average delivery delay, among others.
Key operational metrics such as the number of active shipments, spoilage rate, storage utilization, and average delivery delay are seen on the dashboard. In the system evaluation, 13 live shipments were monitored, 63.6% of the storage was utilized, 0.4% of the shipments were spoiled, and the average delay time until delivery was 13.1 hours. A colour-coded status system (green/yellow/red) allows the user to understand the operational conditions and prioritise corrective actions.

i.. System Performance Evaluation

The proposed DSS was evaluated using operational data from a pilot deployment. Performance was assessed based on spoilage rate, storage utilization, delivery delay, shipment monitoring, and intelligent alerts. During the evaluation, the system monitored 22 shipments across eight cold storage facilities, providing real-time logistics information through an interactive dashboard. The results showed a 0.4% spoilage rate, 63.6% storage utilization, and an average delivery delay of 13.1 hours, representing a 28% improvement over conventional logistics operations. The intelligent alert module also detected potential logistics risks, enabling timely intervention and improving operational efficiency.

ii. Predictive Model Performance

The effectiveness of the proposed Decision Support System depends largely on the predictive accuracy of its machine learning and optimization models. To evaluate the reliability of the predictive framework, multiple algorithms were assessed across different logistics planning tasks, including spoilage risk prediction, demand forecasting, delay prediction, and route optimization. Model performance was evaluated using Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE) and the coefficient of determination (R^2), which provide measures of prediction accuracy and model fitness.

Table 1. Performance Comparison of Predictive Models

Model	Application	MAPE (%)	R^2
Linear Programming	Route Optimization	3.12	0.958
XGBoost	Spoilage Risk Prediction	3.87	0.941
Random Forest	Spoilage Risk Prediction	4.23	0.921
Transformer	Time-Series Forecasting	4.76	0.928
LSTM	Time-Series Forecasting	5.43	0.912
ARIMA	Demand Forecasting	7.21	0.874
ETS	Demand Forecasting	8.14	0.851

The results in Table 1 show that Linear Programming achieved the best route optimization performance with the lowest MAPE (3.12%) and the highest R^2 (0.958). For spoilage prediction, XGBoost outperformed Random Forest with a MAPE of 3.87% and an R^2 of 0.941. Among the time-series models, the Transformer achieved higher forecasting accuracy than the LSTM, while ARIMA and ETS recorded comparatively lower performance. Overall, the integration of predictive models and optimization techniques improved forecasting accuracy and supported more effective logistics planning.

iii. Route Optimization Results

The route optimization module was evaluated using transportation distance, travel time, operational cost, and delivery schedules. Table 2 summarizes the performance of the optimized routes.

Table 2. Performance of Optimized Transportation Routes

Route	Distance (km)	Travel Time (hrs)	Estimated Cost (USD)	Optimization Score
Lagos – Ibadan	128	2.5	22	96
Ibadan – Abeokuta	81	1.6	14	97
Ibadan – Ilorin	145	2.8	25	94
Saki – Igboora	161	3.1	28	95
Igboora – Akure	270	5.6	65	91

The results show that the proposed optimization approach improved transportation efficiency across all South-West logistics corridors. The Ibadan–Abeokuta route achieved the highest optimization score (97) due to its short distance and low transportation cost, while Lagos–Ibadan (96) and Saki–Igboora (95) also performed efficiently owing to relatively direct routing and manageable operational costs. The Igboora–Akure corridor recorded the lowest score in the region (91), reflecting the longer distance and the predominantly rural road network through the Oke-Ogun zone and into Ondo State. Overall, the optimized routes reduced unnecessary travel distance, delivery time, and transportation cost compared with conventional routing methods. These improvements enhance resource utilization, increase delivery reliability, and reduce spoilage of perishable agricultural products across South-West Nigeria.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that integrating predictive analytics, route optimization, real-time monitoring, and market intelligence within a single Decision Support System improves post-harvest logistics planning. Among the predictive models, XGBoost achieved the highest accuracy for spoilage prediction, while the Transformer model outperformed the LSTM in time-series forecasting. In addition, the Linear Programming-based optimization module generated efficient transportation plans

that reduced travel distance, delivery time, and operational costs. The integration of shipment tracking, cold storage monitoring, and market intelligence further enhanced operational visibility, enabling timely interventions and better resource utilization. Overall, the proposed DSS provides an effective platform for reducing post-harvest losses and supporting data-driven decision-making across the agricultural supply chain.

Conclusion

This paper presented a Data-Driven Decision Support System (DSS) for post-harvest logistics planning that integrates predictive analytics, route optimization, shipment tracking, cold storage monitoring, and market intelligence within a unified web-based platform. By combining machine learning models, time-series forecasting techniques, and Linear Programming, the proposed system supports intelligent and data-driven logistics decision-making for agricultural supply chains.

Experimental evaluation demonstrated that the system effectively improved logistics planning by providing accurate spoilage prediction, efficient route optimization, real-time shipment monitoring, and proactive storage management. The integration of predictive analytics with optimization techniques enhanced transportation efficiency, improved storage utilization, reduced delivery delays, and minimized post-harvest losses. Overall, the proposed DSS provides a practical decision-support platform for farmers, logistics providers, distributors, and policymakers, contributing to more efficient, resilient, and sustainable post-harvest supply chain management.

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DEVELOPMENT OF A SOLAR DRYER WITH THERMAL ENERGY STORAGE AND 12V BATTERY FOR PROCESSED LOCUST BEAN SEEDS (*Parkia biglobosa*)

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Abstract

Drying is a process of preserving food by removing excess moisture from food to prevent decay and spoilage without affecting the quality and nutritional constituents. Open sun drying has been improved by including solar powered unit into the drying system to produce a more efficient dryer. This study developed a solar dryer with improved air control system, voltage control system and heat storage unit for drying processed locust bean seeds. The drying chamber was a rectangular-shaped box (50 x 50 x 51 cm) in dimension and made from gmelina wood. It has three layers of drying trays and an access door to facilitate loading and unloading of materials. A centrifugal blower powered by a 12 V battery was incorporated for distribution of heated air evenly inside the chamber. The solar collector was integrated with a heat storage material (pebble and cement painted black) where air passes through before it gets into drying chamber. The performance of an improved dryer was evaluated based on time of drying, temperature of dryer cabinet and dryer efficiency. The drying performance of the developed dryer was compared with open-sun drying based on drying time and moisture reduction. The dryer was tested under no-load conditions to confirm the proper operation of all components and also at load with processed locust bean seeds at air heater inlet measured blower speed of 0.14 m/s where the maximum measured temperature in the dryer chamber was 69.0 ^{o}C with corresponding ambient temperature of 36.0 ^{o}C. The temperature profile measured inside the drying chamber showed minimal fluctuation despite inconsistent intensity of the sun. Stored heat was released for three hours after the sun-set which prevented deterioration and moisture reabsorption that usually occur during the rest period. The improved solar dryer reduced the initial moisture content 85.2 % wet basis of processed locust bean to final moisture content of 8.0 % at an average drying time of 8 hours. The open sun drying took 12 hours spread over two days to achieve the same moisture content.

Keywords: *Solar dryer, Renewable energy, Processed locust bean seeds, Thermal storage.*

Introduction

Drying is one of the oldest and most effective methods of preserving agricultural products by reducing their moisture content to a level that inhibits microbial growth, enzymatic reactions, and biochemical deterioration. In many developing countries, drying remains an essential post-harvest operation because it extends shelf life, improves product stability, reduces transportation costs, and enhances market value. Conventional open-sun drying is still widely practiced because of its simplicity and low initial cost. However, this method exposes food products to dust, insects, rodents, rainfall, ultraviolet radiation, and microbial contamination, resulting in significant quality losses and reduced food safety. Consequently, considerable research efforts have focused on developing improved solar drying technologies that combine renewable energy utilization with controlled drying conditions (Unar *et al.*, 2026).

Solar dryers are engineered systems that utilize solar energy to remove moisture from agricultural and food products under controlled environmental conditions. Unlike traditional open-sun drying, solar dryers protect products from dust, insects, rodents, rainfall, and other contaminants while providing improved control over drying temperature, airflow, and relative humidity. Consequently, solar dryers have become an essential post-harvest technology for preserving food quality, reducing losses, and improving food security, particularly in regions with abundant solar radiation (Kherrafi *et al.*, 2024; There & Sharma, 2024).

Recent advances in renewable energy engineering have resulted in the development of highly efficient solar drying systems incorporating photovoltaic (PV) modules, thermal energy storage (TES), hybrid heating sources, automation, and intelligent monitoring systems (Kherrafi *et al.*, 2024).

Solar dryers are commonly classified into direct, indirect, mixed-mode, and hybrid systems according to the method of heat generation and transfer. In direct solar dryers, agricultural products are exposed directly to solar radiation inside an enclosed chamber covered with transparent glazing. Although these systems are simple and inexpensive, prolonged exposure to solar radiation may cause colour fading, nutrient degradation, and uneven drying. Indirect solar dryers overcome these limitations by heating air in a separate solar collector before directing it into the drying chamber. The absence of direct solar radiation on the product improves colour retention, nutritional quality, and product appearance. Mixed-mode solar dryers combine both direct and indirect heating mechanisms, providing higher drying temperatures and improved drying rates compared with either system alone (There & Sharma, 2024).

Hybrid solar dryers represent the latest generation of solar drying technology. These systems integrate solar energy with supplementary energy sources such as photovoltaic-powered electric heaters, biomass combustors, heat pumps, or thermal energy storage units to ensure continuous drying under variable weather conditions. Hybridization minimizes interruptions caused by fluctuations in solar radiation and significantly enhances system reliability. Comparative studies have shown that hybrid solar dryers generally achieve higher thermal efficiency and better product quality than conventional passive systems (Venkateswarlu & Reddy, 2024).

Processed locust bean seeds obtained from *Parkia biglobosa* constitute one of the most valuable indigenous fermented food condiments in West Africa. The seeds are processed through cleaning, prolonged boiling, dehulling, washing, fermentation, and drying before packaging or marketing. Fermentation enhances flavour, aroma, digestibility, and nutritional quality through the metabolic activities of beneficial microorganisms, particularly species of *Bacillus*. However, immediately after fermentation, the seeds contain high moisture levels that accelerate microbial growth, enzymatic activity, lipid oxidation, and biochemical deterioration if drying is delayed or improperly conducted. Consequently, drying represents one of the most critical unit operations in processed locust bean production because it determines product stability, shelf life, and market quality (Venkateswarlu & Reddy, 2024).

Traditional open-sun drying often results in contamination by dust, insects, domestic animals, and pathogenic microorganisms while exposing the product to unpredictable weather conditions. These limitations reduce product quality, shorten shelf life, and negatively affect consumer acceptance (Unar *et al.*, 2026).

Several researchers have investigated solar drying of grains, fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, spices, fish, and meat products using direct, indirect, mixed-mode, and hybrid solar dryers. These studies consistently report improvements in drying rate, product hygiene, and energy efficiency compared with traditional open-sun drying. Furthermore, integrating forced convection, thermal energy storage, and intelligent control systems has significantly reduced drying time while improving colour retention, nutrient preservation, and overall product quality. Despite these advances, relatively few investigations have specifically focused on fermented legume products such as processed locust bean seeds (Atia *et al.*, 2024; Shekata *et al.*, 2024).

For drying processed locust bean seeds, a mixed-mode solar dryer incorporating a photovoltaic-powered 12 V battery and thermal energy storage offers several engineering advantages. The photovoltaic module supplies electrical energy for continuous operation of the DC fan, while the battery ensures uninterrupted airflow during periods of low solar radiation. Simultaneously, the thermal storage unit maintains the drying temperature after sunset or during cloudy weather. This integrated configuration improves drying continuity, enhances moisture removal, minimizes microbial contamination, preserves the characteristic flavour and colour of fermented locust bean seeds, and increases the overall thermal efficiency of the drying system (Venkateswarlu & Reddy, 2024; Kherrafi *et al.*, 2024).

This study aimed to develop and evaluate a solar dryer integrated with thermal energy storage (TES) and a 12 V battery-powered forced-air circulation system for drying processed locust bean seeds. The performance of the developed dryer was evaluated in terms of drying temperature, relative humidity, drying time, and moisture reduction, and its performance was compared with traditional open-sun drying using processed locust bean seeds as the test material.

Materials and methods

Materials

An improved solar dryer was constructed having three major components; a solar collector with an inclusion of heat storage system, a drying chamber and a direct current blower at the entrance of the heat collector. The dryer mainly depends on sun as a source of energy.

The following materials were used for the construction of the improved solar dryer:

- Gmelina wood
- Plywood
- Glass of 2 mm thickness
- Aluminum foil
- Wire mesh.
- Hinges
- Black paint

Experimental set up

Main Components of an Improved Solar dryer includes:

- **Heat Storage Unit:** This is an integral part of the air heater that absorbed and stores heat coming from the sun and then provides passive heating to the product during the rest period to further the drying.
- **Battery:** It stores voltage for uniformity of the speed of fan and also to ensure extension of service hour of the fan beyond day light.
- **Charge Controller:** This limits the rate at which electric current is added to or drawn from electric batteries. It prevents overcharging and may protect against over voltage, which can reduce battery performance or lifespan.
- **Blower:** This is located at entrance of the air heater to circulate hot air within the drying chamber which in turn accelerates the rate of removal of moisture from the produce.
- **Drying chamber:** This is made of gmelina wood to accommodate drying tray, fabricated from wire mesh framed on which the processed locust bean seed was spread for drying.
- **Drying trays**: These are contained inside the drying chamber and were constructed from wood and a layer of chicken wire mesh with a fairly open structure to allow drying air to pass through the processed locust beans.
- **Photovoltaic cell:** This converts energy derived from sun to direct current to charge the electric battery, which in turn operates the blower during the drying period.
- **Gate valve:** This is placed in between the blower and heat collector to provide for control the air velocity in the dryer.

Principle of Operation

During the daylight, the photovoltaic panel powers the fan and charges the battery. Solar heated air passes through the collector and thermal storage unit before entering the drying chamber, where it removes moisture from the processed locust bean seeds. Excess heat is stored in the heat storage material. When sunlight weakens or after sun set, the battery continues powering the fan while the stored heat is gradually released, maintaining drying conditions and improving drying uniformity.

Figure 1 and 2 showed the conceptual design of developed solar dryer in isometric and orthographic projection respectively.

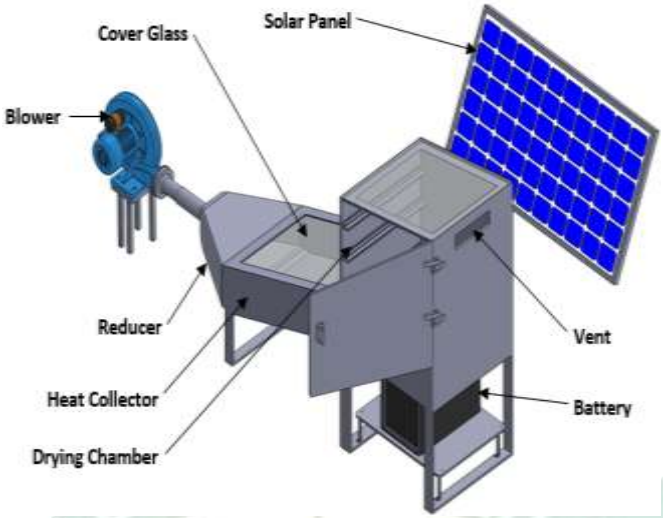


Figure 1: Conceptual Feature of Developed Dryer

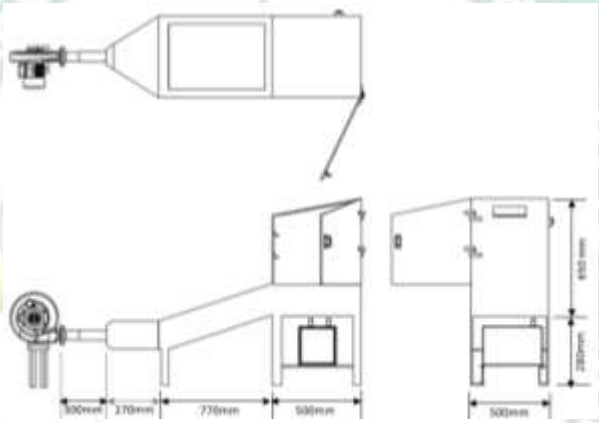


Figure 2: Orthographic Projection of the Dryer

Design Calculations

i. Angle of tilt (β) of solar collector/Air heater.

The angle of tilt (β) of the solar collector is given by the formula below:

$\beta = 10^{o} + \text{lat } \phi$ (Alamu, 2010) (1)

Where lat ϕ is the latitude of the collector location, the latitude of Igboora where the dryer was designed is latitude 7.11°N.

Hence, the suitable value of β use for the collector:

$\beta = 10° + 7.11° = 17.11°$

ii. Isolation on the collector surface area.

The value of isolation for Igboora i.e. average daily radiation H on horizontal surface and average effective ratio of solar energy on tilted surface to that on the horizontal surface R are 978.69W/m^2 and 1.0035 respectively (Olaleye, 2008).

Thus, isolation on the collector surface was obtained as

$I_c = HR$ (2)

Where I_c= solar insolation (W/m^2)

H= average solar radiation on horizontal surface = 978.69 W/m^2 Olaleye (2008)

R= average effective ratio of solar energy on tilt surface to that on the horizontal surface = 1.0035 $I_c = HT = HR = 978.69\ x\ 1.0035$

$= 982.11 W/m^2$ (GEDA 2003)

iii. Energy Balance Equation for the Drying Process

The total energy required for drying a given quantity of food items can be estimated using the basic energy balance equation for the evaporation of water (Youcef-Ali, *et al*. 2001; Bolaji 2005):

$m_w L_v = m_a C_p (T_1 - T_2)$ (3)

where:

m_w = mass of water evaporated from the food item (kg);

m_a = mass of drying air (kg);

T_1 and T_2 = initial and final temperatures of the drying air respectively (K);

C_p = Specific heat at constant pressure (kJkg^{-1}K^{-1}).

iv. The energy storage of the unit is estimated with;

$Q = mc_p \Delta t$ (4)

Where m = mass flow rate of air (kg/s)

c_p = specific heat of air (kJ/kg)

Δt = change in temperature

v. Sizing of Blower

$volume\ flow\ rate,\ Q = Av,$

$v = Q/A$ (5)

$Useful\ power\ of$ the $motor\ for$ the $fan,\ \mathrm{P} = \frac{1}{2}\mathrm{mv}^2$

$speed\ N\ in\ RPM = \frac{\omega}{2\pi}$

$where\ \omega = \frac{\mathrm{v}}{\mathrm{r}}$

vi. Moisture Content were determined using;

$MC = \left(\frac{M_i - M_f}{M_i}\right)$ (Ezekoye, 2006) (6)

Where;

M_i= mass of sample before drying and

M_f = mass of sample after drying.

The results of these were given in table 4.5.

vii. Moisture loss (ML): The Moisture Loss is given as:

$ML = (Mi - Mf)$ (g). (Ezekoye, 2006) (7)

Where:

Mi = mass of the sample before drying and

Mf = mass of the sample after drying.

viii. Dryer efficiency was calculated using this expression;

$\eta_d = \frac{Mw\ L}{IcAt}$ (Ezekoye, 2006 (8)

Where;

L = Latent heat of vaporization of water (at temperature of dryer) (kJ/kg),

M= mass of the crop (kg), and

t= time of drying(s),

I = Insolation (Watt/m^2)

ix. Collector efficiency (η): This is computed from:

$\eta_c = \frac{\rho C_p V \Delta T}{I_c A_c} x100$ (Ezekoye, 2006) (9)

Where:

ρ Density of air (kg/m^3),

I_c Insolation on the collector surface (W/m^2)

(ΔT) Air temperature elevation (^{o}C),

(C_p) is the specific heat capacity of air at constant pressure (J/kg ^{o}C),

(V) Volumetric flow rate of air (m^3/s), and

(A_c) Collector facing the sun (m^2).

Dryer Performance Evaluation Tests

No load test

The improved solar dryer was tested at a measured blower speed of 0.14m/s. During this test, air temperature and relative humidity variation were measured inside the dryer, the collector, drying chamber respectively at an interval of one hour, starting from 9:00 am to 21:00 pm.
Temperature and relative humidity were measured with Infrared thermometer and hygro-thermometer respectively while the air flow was measured by Digital Air Flow meter (DAFM3).
All experiments were conducted in triplicate. The results were expressed as mean ± standard deviation. Statistical differences between treatments were evaluated using analysis of variance (ANOVA) at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Where significant differences occurred, treatment means were separated using an appropriate post-hoc test.

Load Test

Load test of the solar dryer was conducted using freshly processed locust bean (iru woro and iru pete) for evaluating the performance of the dryer. The weight of the sample is taking before spreading it evenly on the three trays in the drying cabinet. As the drying progresses, the weight of the sample was also measured at an interval of one hour with WH-B20 PCS digital balance to determine the weight loss. The same quantity was also sun-dried simultaneously as control for the experiment. The drying process continued until no further changes in their mass were observed. The experiment was repeated thrice and average values were used in calculating moisture content in dry basis.

Result and Discussion

The machine was tested at both no load and load state and the experimental data such ambient temperature, inside temperature, relative humidity recorded was used to evaluate the performances of the dryer.



Plate 1: Fabricated Improved Solar Dryer

Variation of temperature with relative humidity in the solar dryer

The hourly variation of temperature of air in the solar dryer collector and drying cabinet compared to the ambient for a typical day during testing are shown in Figure 3.

The temperatures inside the dryer and the solar collector were much higher than the ambient temperature during most hours of the daylight. The temperature rises inside drying cabinet for about five hours immediately after 12.00h (noon). The maximum temperature observed in the dryer at 14.00h was 69.0^{0}C, whereas maximum ambient temperature observed was 36.0 ^{0}C.

Figure 4 shows the diurnal variation of the relative humidity of the ambient air and drying chamber. Comparison of this figure with Figure 3 shows that the drying processes were enhanced by the inclusion of heat storage unit, which maintain a consistent high temperature at very low humidity.

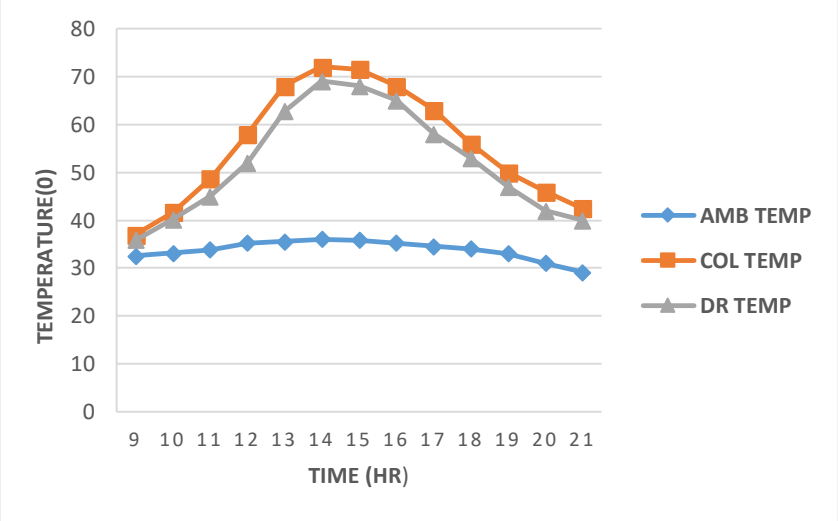


FIGURE 3: Hourly Variation of Temperature in Improved Solar Dryer

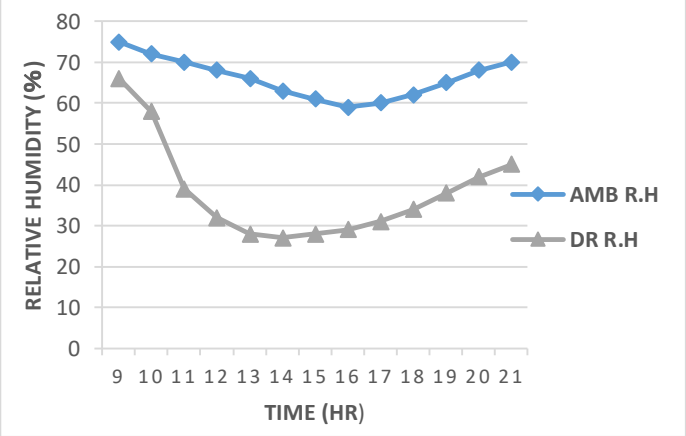


FIGURE 4: Variation of Relative Humidity in the Dryer

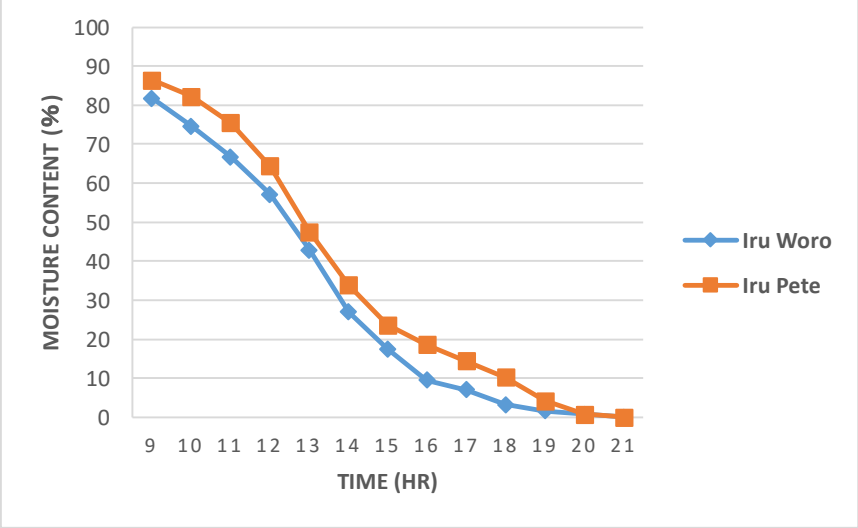


Figure 5: Drying Curve for Iru Woro and Iru pete

Drying behaviour of Iru woro and iru pete in the dryer relatively

The drying curve for processed locust bean products (iru woro and iru pete) in the solar dryer is shown in figure 5. It was observed that the drying rate increased due to increase in temperatures between 12.00h noon and 16.00h but decreased thereafter, which shows the earlier and faster removal of moisture from the dried item. The drying continues for about three hours beyond the day time due to the inclusion of the heat storage system.

Comparison of solar drying with sun drying

The initial moisture content of the processed locust bean seeds was found to be 85.2 percent and 79 percent in iru woro and iru pete respectively. These samples were dried to 8.0 percent moisture content inside the solar dryer. The sun drying took 12 hours spread over two days to achieve the same moisture content. The use of improved solar dryer leads to considerable reduction in drying time compared to open sun drying system.
Plate 2 shows the state of the processed locust bean seeds (iru woro and iru pete) before drying while plates 3 and 4 shows the results from solar dryer and open sun drying respectively.



PLATE 2: Iru Woro and Iru Pete before Drying



PLATE 3: Solar dried Iru Woro and Iru Pete



PLATE 4: Sun dried Iru Woro and Iru Pete

Conclusion

The study successfully developed and evaluated an improved solar dryer incorporating a 12 V battery and thermal energy storage system for drying processed locust bean (*Parkia biglobosa*) seeds.

Performance evaluation showed that the developed solar dryer achieved higher drying temperatures and shorter drying time than open-sun drying under the conditions evaluated. The battery-powered fan provided a consistent airflow throughout the drying process, resulting in more uniform moisture removal and improved drying kinetics. The thermal energy storage unit retained excess heat during periods of high solar radiation and released it gradually during periods of reduced sunshine, maintaining a stable drying temperature and preventing abrupt temperature fluctuations.

The enclosed drying chamber reduced direct exposure of the processed locust bean seeds to dust, insects, rainfall and other environmental contaminants associated with open-sun drying, and lower final moisture content suitable for safe storage. The enclosed drying chamber also minimized contamination from dust, insects, rain, and animals, thereby improving product hygiene and overall quality.

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SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO UNRELIABLE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

The persistent unreliability of electricity supply in many developing nations, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa, continues to undermine economic productivity, social welfare, and industrial growth. This paper examines the potential of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems as a practical and sustainable alternative to the erratic power supply that characterizes electricity delivery in several low- and middle-income countries. Drawing on recent data from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the International Energy Agency (IEA), and peer-reviewed scholarship published between 2022 and 2025, the study evaluates the current state of global solar energy deployment, the technological and economic factors driving the decline in solar installation costs, and the specific role that distributed solar systems and mini-grids can play in improving electricity access in underserved regions. The paper further considers the environmental advantages of solar energy, including its capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower dependence on fossil-fuel-based power generation. Challenges to widespread solar adoption, such as high upfront capital costs, inadequate policy frameworks, maintenance difficulties, and energy storage limitations, are also discussed. The paper concludes that with appropriate financing mechanisms, supportive regulatory structures, and community-level engagement, solar energy systems represent a viable pathway toward resolving the problem of inconsistent electricity provision in energy-poor regions.

Keywords*: Solar energy, renewable energy, photovoltaic systems, epileptic power supply, energy access, sub-Saharan Africa, mini-grids*

Introduction

Access to a stable and reliable electricity supply remains one of the most pressing developmental challenges of the twenty-first century. In many parts of the developing world, electricity grids are plagued by frequent outages, voltage fluctuations, and prolonged blackouts that disrupt everyday life and stunt economic progress. The term " unreliable electricity supply" has entered common usage in countries like Nigeria to describe this pattern of unpredictable and intermittent electricity delivery (Jimah et al., 2019). The problem is not limited to a single country or region. Across sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of Latin America, hundreds of millions of people either lack electricity access altogether or receive power so inconsistently that its practical value is severely diminished.

The scale of the challenge is considerable. According to the International Energy Agency, approximately 733 million people globally lacked access to electricity as of 2021, with the overwhelming majority concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (IEA, 2023). Even where grid connections exist, the quality of supply is often poor. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, provides a stark illustration of this problem. The country's national grid collapsed multiple times throughout 2024 and 2025, and average daily generation hovered around 4,000 to 5,700 megawatts for a population exceeding 220 million people (Adelabu, 2025). These repeated grid failures have pushed businesses to rely on costly diesel and petrol generators, adding to operational expenses and environmental pollution.

Against this backdrop, solar photovoltaic technology has emerged as one of the most promising alternatives for addressing the electricity deficit in energy-poor regions. The cost of solar panels has

fallen dramatically over the past two decades, global installation capacity has surged to record levels, and technological improvements have made solar systems increasingly efficient and adaptable to diverse settings (IRENA, 2025). This paper explores the case for solar energy as a credible solution to the problem of unreliable power supply, drawing on recent statistical data, policy developments, and field-level evidence from countries that have begun to embrace solar technology at scale.

Literature Review

The Problem of Erratic Power Supply

The literature on electricity access in the developing world consistently identifies inadequate generation capacity, aging transmission infrastructure, and poor governance as the primary factors behind unreliable power delivery. Jimah et al. (2019) documented the causes and consequences of erratic electricity supply in Nigeria, noting that chronic underinvestment in generation and transmission assets has left the country unable to meet even a fraction of its actual electricity demand. The authors argued that the resulting load-shedding and outages impose severe costs on households, small enterprises, and industrial operations alike.

The economic toll of unreliable electricity is well documented. Businesses that cannot count on a steady power supply must invest in backup generators, which are expensive to purchase and maintain. The World Bank has estimated that power outages cost African economies billions of dollars annually in lost productivity and damaged equipment (World Bank, 2023). Beyond the direct financial burden, erratic electricity undermines confidence in domestic industries and discourages foreign investment, creating a cycle in which poor infrastructure perpetuates underdevelopment.

In fragile and conflict-affected states, the situation is even more dire. A 2024 study published in arXiv observed that as of 2022, roughly 64% of the population lacking electricity access lived in regions affected by conflict, political instability, or environmental vulnerability (Cleaner Energy Microgrids, 2025). In such contexts, extending centralized grid infrastructure is often technically impossible or prohibitively expensive, making decentralized energy solutions not merely desirable but essential.

The Rise of Solar Photovoltaic Technology

Solar photovoltaic technology converts sunlight directly into electrical energy through semiconductor materials, most commonly crystalline silicon. Since the first practical solar cells were developed in the 1950s, the technology has undergone continuous refinement. Early solar panels were extraordinarily expensive and could only be justified for specialized applications such as spacecraft. By the early 2000s, however, manufacturing improvements and growing demand had begun to push costs downward in a pattern now well described by Swanson's Law, which holds that the price of solar PV modules drops by approximately 20% for every doubling of cumulative production volume (Renogy, 2025).

The pace of cost reduction has accelerated in recent years. Between 2010 and 2024, the cost benchmarks for residential PV systems in the United States decreased by 65%, while utility-scale system costs fell by 83%, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL, 2025). Module prices alone dropped by roughly 90% over this period. These dramatic cost reductions have fundamentally altered the economics of electricity generation, making solar PV competitive with, and in many cases cheaper than, fossil-fuel-based alternatives.

Simultaneously, the efficiency of solar panels has improved. Commercial crystalline silicon modules now regularly achieve conversion efficiencies in the range of 20% to 24%, and laboratory records for advanced cell architectures continue to push above 26% (Clean Energy Reviews, 2026). Bifacial panels, which capture reflected sunlight on their rear surface, have gained traction in utility-scale installations and are beginning to appear in commercial deployments across Africa and Asia (Alpojedje et al., 2025).

Global Solar Deployment Trends

The growth in global solar capacity has been remarkable. According to IRENA's Renewable Capacity Statistics 2025 report, a record 452 gigawatts of solar PV capacity was added worldwide in 2024 alone, representing a 32.2% year-on-year increase (IRENA, 2025). By the end of that year, total installed solar

PV capacity had reached 1,865 GW globally, accounting for more than three-quarters of all renewable energy capacity additions. Solar and wind together made up 96.6% of net renewable additions in 2024.

The IEA has projected that global renewable power capacity will increase by approximately 4,600 GW between 2025 and 2030, with solar PV representing nearly 80% of that expansion (IEA, 2025). Distributed solar applications, including residential rooftop installations, commercial systems, and off-grid projects, are expected to account for 42% of overall PV expansion during this period. This growth is being driven by a combination of low module costs, streamlined permitting processes, and strong public acceptance of solar technology.

Investments in solar energy have matched this growth trajectory. In 2024, global investments in solar photovoltaics reached $514 billion, growing by 20.5% compared to the previous year (Jäger-Waldau, 2025). This placed solar PV second only to electrified transport in terms of clean energy investment. The sheer scale of financial commitment to solar technology reflects a broad consensus among governments, development banks, and private investors that solar energy will be central to the global energy transition.

Solar Energy as an Alternative to Unreliable Power Supply

Distributed Solar and Mini-Grid Systems

For communities that suffer from poor or nonexistent grid connections, distributed solar systems and solar mini-grids offer a practical route to electrification. Unlike centralized power plants that require extensive transmission networks, distributed solar installations can be deployed close to the point of consumption, reducing transmission losses and bypassing the bottlenecks that typically afflict national grids.

In sub-Saharan Africa, where close to 600 million people still lack electricity access, solar mini-grids have emerged as one of the most scalable pathways for bridging the energy gap (Chatham House, 2025). These systems typically combine solar PV panels with battery storage to provide a reliable supply of electricity to rural and peri-urban communities that the main grid has failed to reach. The Africa Mini-Grid Developers Association reported that the number of mini-grids serving more than 500 residential connections tripled between 2022 and 2024, with Nigeria being one of the largest markets for concessional and commercially financed mini-grid deployments (ESI-Africa, 2025).

The economics of mini-grids are improving, although they remain more expensive in Africa than in other parts of the world. Capital expenditure per kilowatt-peak for mini-grids in sub-Saharan Africa declined by approximately 20% between 2020 and 2024, falling from $8,500 to a four-year average of $6,824 (AMDA, 2025). This figure remains above the global average of roughly $3,000, but continued reductions in component costs and improved project management are expected to narrow the gap over time.

Solar Home Systems

At the household level, solar home systems (SHS) provide a low-cost entry point for electricity access. These typically consist of a small solar panel, a battery, a charge controller, and basic loads such as LED lights and phone chargers. In several East and West African countries, pay-as-you-go financing models have made solar home systems accessible to low-income households that could not afford the upfront purchase price. Companies operating in this space have deployed millions of systems across Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, and other countries, providing first-time electricity access to families that had previously relied on kerosene lamps and candles.

The health and educational benefits of household solar systems are significant. Replacing kerosene with solar-powered lighting eliminates exposure to indoor air pollutants that are associated with respiratory illness and other health conditions (Muyanja et al., 2017). Children in electrified homes gain the ability to study after dark, which has been linked to improved educational outcomes in multiple studies conducted in rural Africa and South Asia.

Grid-Connected Solar Installations

Beyond off-grid applications, grid-connected solar installations can help stabilize national electricity systems by adding generation capacity without the long lead times associated with conventional power plant construction. Countries such as South Africa, Egypt, and Morocco have attracted significant investment in utility-scale solar farms, and Nigeria's federal government has announced plans to inject 1,900 MW of modular solar power into the national grid as part of a broader strategy to achieve 8,000 MW of total generation capacity by 2027 (Punch Nigeria, 2025).

The IEA has noted that decentralized solar systems can serve a dual purpose in countries with unreliable grids: they can fill the energy access gap in remote areas where grid extension is too expensive, and they can provide backup power in urban areas where the grid supply is intermittent (IEA, 2026). In Pakistan, for instance, rapid consumer-driven adoption of rooftop solar has led to the importation of 17 GW of solar panels in 2024 alone, double the amount imported the year before (Ember, 2025). This surge was driven largely by frustration with unreliable grid electricity and rising fuel costs.

Environmental Benefits of Solar Energy

The environmental case for solar energy rests on its capacity to generate electricity without directly emitting greenhouse gases during operation. Unlike coal, natural gas, and diesel generators, solar PV systems produce no carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, or particulate matter while converting sunlight into electricity. Over the full lifecycle of a solar installation, including manufacturing, transport, and decommissioning, carbon emissions are estimated to be roughly 95% lower than those associated with coal-fired power generation (Dias De Oliveira et al., 2005; Raha & Pal, 2010).

A recent study published in Science Advances quantified the emissions reduction potential of solar energy in the United States. The researchers estimated that a 15% increase in solar generation would be associated with an annual reduction of 8.54 million metric tons of CO2 emissions, contributing approximately 12.4% toward the yearly target needed to cut total US power sector emissions over the next two decades (Dominici et al., 2025). The study also highlighted important regional variations, noting that the climate benefits of solar adoption differ depending on what type of fossil fuel generation is being displaced.

For developing countries that rely heavily on diesel and petrol generators as stopgap measures during power outages, the shift to solar energy carries particular environmental significance. Diesel generators are not only expensive to operate but are also significant sources of localized air pollution, contributing to respiratory health problems and adding to global carbon emissions. Replacing generator use with solar-plus-storage systems offers a double benefit: cleaner air for communities and lower greenhouse gas output at the national level.

Challenges to Solar Energy Adoption

High Upfront Capital Costs

Despite the dramatic reduction in solar panel prices at the global level, the upfront cost of installing a solar system remains a significant barrier for many households and small businesses in developing countries. In Nigeria, for example, a 5kVA solar setup that includes an inverter, panels, and lithium batteries can cost between 2.5 million and 5 million naira, an amount that exceeds ten times the national minimum wage (Blueprint, 2026). By comparison, a generator of equivalent capacity can be purchased for a fraction of that price, making diesel generators the default choice for most Nigerian households and businesses despite their higher long-term operating costs.

The financing challenge is compounded by limited access to credit in many African and South Asian markets. Banks and microfinance institutions are often reluctant to extend loans for solar installations because they lack experience in assessing the creditworthiness of solar projects and face uncertainty about repayment in economically volatile environments. Without affordable financing, the benefits of declining panel costs do not fully translate into increased adoption among the populations that need solar energy most.

Energy Storage Limitations

Solar energy is inherently intermittent. Panels produce electricity only during daylight hours, and output fluctuates with cloud cover and seasonal changes in solar irradiance. To provide round-the-clock power, solar installations must be paired with energy storage systems, typically lithium-ion or lead-acid batteries. While battery costs have been falling, with lithium-ion prices declining by approximately 20% in 2024 alone (African Leadership Magazine, 2026), storage still represents a substantial portion of total system cost and adds complexity to system design and maintenance.

In sub-Saharan Africa, battery storage capacity has grown rapidly, increasing more than fiftyfold from 31 MWh in 2017 to over 1.6 GWh by 2024 (African Leadership Magazine, 2026). Projections suggest that installed capacity could reach 83 GWh by 2030. This growth is encouraging, but the gap between current capacity and the level of storage needed to fully stabilize solar-powered systems across the continent remains large. Research into longer-duration storage technologies and community-scale battery installations will be critical in the years ahead.

Policy and Regulatory Gaps

The adoption of solar energy requires a supportive policy environment that includes clear regulatory frameworks, transparent permitting processes, and consistent financial incentives. In many countries where epileptic power supply is most acute, the regulatory landscape for renewable energy is underdeveloped or inconsistent. Alpojedje et al. (2025) found that in Nigeria, awareness of government policies supporting solar adoption remains low among the general population, indicating a disconnect between policy formulation and practical implementation on the ground.

Tariff structures present an additional complication. In some markets, electricity tariffs are set below cost-recovery levels as a political measure, which undermines the financial viability of private-sector investment in solar generation and distribution. Without tariff reform and clearer rules governing grid interconnection for distributed solar systems, the private capital needed to scale solar deployment may not materialize at the required pace.

Maintenance and Technical Capacity

Solar PV systems are generally low-maintenance compared to diesel generators, but they are not maintenance-free. Panels need periodic cleaning, batteries must be monitored and eventually replaced, and inverters can fail. In rural communities with limited technical expertise, the absence of trained technicians and readily available spare parts can lead to system degradation or outright failure within a few years of installation. Building local technical capacity through training programs and ensuring the availability of after-sales service networks are essential preconditions for the long-term sustainability of solar projects in remote areas.

Discussion

The evidence reviewed in this paper points to a clear conclusion: solar photovoltaic technology has matured to a point where it represents a genuinely viable alternative to the unreliable electricity supply that afflicts many developing countries. The cost of solar hardware has fallen to historic lows, global deployment continues to break records, and the technology itself has become more efficient and more adaptable to a wide range of deployment contexts.

The particular appeal of solar energy for countries with epileptic power supply lies in its modularity and scalability. Solar systems can be deployed at any scale, from a single household panel to a multi-megawatt utility farm, and they can be installed in weeks rather than the years required for conventional power plant construction. For communities that have been waiting decades for grid extension, solar mini-grids and home systems offer a path to electrification that does not depend on the pace of national infrastructure development.

The regional disparities in solar deployment highlighted by IRENA's 2025 data deserve particular attention. While Asia, Europe, and North America accounted for the vast majority of new solar capacity in 2024, Africa contributed only 4.2 GW of the global total despite possessing some of the highest solar irradiance levels on the planet (IRENA, 2025). This imbalance reflects structural barriers including limited access to finance, underdeveloped supply chains, and the absence of enabling policy

frameworks rather than any lack of solar resource potential. Addressing these barriers must be a priority for national governments, international development institutions, and the private sector alike.

The integration of battery storage technology with solar PV is transforming the practical utility of solar systems. As battery costs continue to decline and storage capacity grows, the argument that solar energy is inherently unreliable due to intermittency becomes less persuasive. The trajectory observed in Africa, where installed battery storage capacity increased more than fiftyfold in seven years, suggests that the market for storage solutions is expanding rapidly and that commercial viability is within reach for a growing number of applications.

It is equally important to acknowledge the limitations of solar energy. Solar alone cannot substitute for an entire national electricity system. Large-scale industrial consumers require continuous, high-capacity power supplies that current solar-plus-storage systems may not yet be able to deliver at competitive cost. Hybrid approaches that combine solar with other energy sources, including wind, natural gas, and hydropower, are likely to be necessary during the transition period. The goal should not be to replace all conventional generation overnight but to progressively increase the share of solar in the energy mix while improving the reliability and reach of the broader electricity system.

Conclusion

The problem of erratic and unreliable electricity supply has constrained development in many countries for decades. Traditional approaches centered on expanding centralized grid infrastructure have proven slow, expensive, and vulnerable to the governance failures that characterize many of the worst-affected countries. Solar photovoltaic technology offers a fundamentally different proposition: a modular, rapidly deployable, and increasingly affordable energy source that can operate independently of the national grid or in conjunction with it.

Global trends in solar deployment, cost reduction, and technological improvement all point in a favorable direction. The record 452 GW of solar capacity added in 2024, the continued decline in module and battery costs, and the growing evidence of successful solar mini-grid and home system deployments in previously unelectrified communities all suggest that solar energy is moving from the margins of the energy system to its center.

Realizing the full potential of solar energy as an alternative to epileptic power supply will require deliberate action on multiple fronts. Governments must create regulatory environments that encourage private investment in solar generation and distribution. Development finance institutions must channel concessional capital toward solar projects in the markets where electricity access gaps are largest. Training programs must equip local technicians with the skills to install, maintain, and repair solar systems. And research institutions must continue to push the boundaries of solar cell efficiency and energy storage technology.

The transition to solar energy will not happen overnight, and it will not, by itself, resolve every dimension of the electricity challenge in developing countries. But the evidence assembled in this paper demonstrates that solar systems represent a credible, scalable, and increasingly cost-effective pathway toward a future in which reliable electricity is available to all, regardless of geography or income. The opportunity is substantial, and the cost of continued inaction grows with every blackout, every collapsed grid, and every business forced to shut down for lack of power.

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FINANCIAL & ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

SECRETARIES' READINESS TO USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TOOLS FOR JOB EFFICIENCY IN IBARAPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

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Abstract

This study examined the readiness of secretaries to use digital technology tools for job efficiency in Ibarapa Local Government Areas, viz: Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Igboora and Ibarapa North Local Government Area, Ayete. To achieve the objectives of the study, three research questions were raised and answered.

***Survey research design** was adopted for the study, the population comprised 40 professional secretaries and there is no sampling because the population is manageable. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire. Frequency counts, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The instrument used was face and content validated by two experts in the Department of Office Technology and Management, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, and its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha method at 0.85 co-efficient.*

The findings of the study revealed that all the factors influencing secretaries readiness in adopting digital technologies has a great positive influence on secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies ranging from adequate training and development programs, practical digital skills. Adoption of digital technology has a lot of impact in improving on the productivity of secretaries. Various challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools ranging from limited training, lack of access to necessary digital resources and equipment are barriers to secretaries' productivity.

Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that, institutions should provide regular and adequate training programs to equip secretaries with up-to-date digital skills, investment in digital infrastructure, such as computers, internet access, and relevant software, should be prioritized to support secretarial duties, institutions should ensure technical support is readily available to address issues arising from the use of digital tools, management should encourage secretaries by creating a culture that fosters innovation and continuous learning.

Keywords*: Secretaries, Readiness, Digital Technology Tools, Job efficiency.*

Introduction

Secretaries are the image maker of any organization as such; their jobs rely majorly on the image and integrity of the organization. Their performance can dent the image of their boss and also mar the integrity of the organisation as a whole. Thus, they must be adequately developed, employing digital technological facilities in task production in a conducive environment and also motivated through awareness and adoption of digital technology to improve their productivity.

In the early days, the secretarial profession was limited to typing, writing, and transcribing of shorthand only. But today, it goes far beyond this, it involved functions as sorting and retrieving of information, passing on information and so on with the help of electronic equipment (Oladeji & Afolabi, 2021).

Over the years, secretarial professionals have become increasingly important for organizations, whether in the private or public sector (Moreira, Rodrigues, do Vale, & da Rosa, 2016). Traditionally, secretarial professionals limited their performance to routine and technical tasks, such as document filing, control, and organization of agenda and meetings and telephone answering (Lima & Soares, 2014; Marcio et al, 2021).

According to (Fasae, 2023) Secretaries, often referred to as office professionals, office information managers, administrative assistants, office coordinators, executive assistants, office managers, and other similar titles, are increasingly important in modern workplaces. This is due to their special work schedules and experiences in the areas of office administration and practice, human relations and

keeping up to date with technological advancements and changes for themselves, their executives and their organizations in general.

According to (Akinrele, 2015; Umar, 2020) defines a secretary as a person who is an Executive Assistant, who possesses a mastery of office skills, who demonstrates the ability to ensure responsibility without direct supervision, who exercise initiative and judgment and makes decisions within the scope of assigned authority.

Job efficiency means achieving the best possible results with a minimal amount of time, effort, and resources. To complete a task efficiently, your output must be at least equal to the time and effort you invest (Caitlin, 2024).

Job efficiency is about building a team or having individual employees who have a track record for making time, resources, and energy count for maximum output. A major metric used to measure employee efficiency is the amount of time or resources put into a specific task compared to the result achieved (Skynova, 2024).

Digital technology has completely enveloped secretarial profession such that it is now safe for one to say that without new technology there would be no secretarial profession (Deendenwii, 2022).

Digital technology refers to the use of digital systems, tools, and devices that process, store, and transmit data in electronic form. It encompasses a wide range of technologies, including computers, smartphones, software applications, the internet, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain (InfoScipedia, 2023).

Digital technologies are reshaping contemporary economies. They can be understood as part of the current technological paradigm based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which is unfolding in the same way of previous technological revolutions associated to long term cycles of growth (Freeman & Louca, 2001; Reljic, Evangelista & Pianta, 2019).

Study has shown that, as organizations in Nigeria increasingly embrace technology, the use of digital tools for record keeping is becoming essential, particularly for secretaries who play a crucial role in managing office operations (Ogunyemi, 2021), meanwhile, the previous study focused on digital tools for record keeping but did not discuss on their readiness to use the digital technology tools.

However, this study laid emphasis on the readiness of secretary to use digital technology tools for job efficiency which has a lot of benefits, ranging from; increased productivity, automation of repetitive and time-consuming tasks, demonstrates professionalism and adaptability, enhancing the perception of secretaries as technologically proficient, etc.

Statement of the problem

Digital technology has significantly transformed the roles and productivity of secretaries in modern organizations. Secretaries now leverage various digital tools to enhance their efficiency, accuracy, and multitasking abilities, ultimately contributing to organizational success.

Secretaries are now expected to manage digital documents, handle virtual meetings, and communicate seamlessly through digital channels. Consequently, their readiness to embrace these technologies is a key factor in determining their productivity, and by extension, the overall efficiency of the organizations they serve. As such, the need to explore the readiness of secretaries in using digital technology is increasingly important in understanding how best to optimize their contributions to workplace efficiency. But, despite the huge benefits presented by new technologies, secretaries were still low in the performance of their duties. Hence, this study examined secretaries' readiness to use digital technology tools for job efficiency.

Objectives of the study

i. To examine the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies.
ii. To assess the impact of digital technology on the productivity of secretaries.
iii. To explore the challenges secretaries face in adopting and using of digital tools

Research questions

i. What are the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies?
ii. What are the impacts of digital technology on the productivity of secretaries?
iii. What challenges do secretaries face in adopting and using digital tools?

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design in order to address the subject matter of this study to the respondents through the use of questionnaire. The total population of the respondents were forty (40) secretaries from two Local Government Areas of Ibarapa Axis, viz: Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Igboora – (20) respondents and Ibarapa North Local Government Area, Ayete – (20) respondents, both in Oyo State. There was no sampling for this study. The entire population was used for the study because the size is few and manageable to carry out the study. However, the researcher decided to use two Local Government Areas for the study in order to get the appropriate result as required. The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled: secretaries' readiness on the use of digital technology tools for effective job efficiency. The questionnaire items were generated based on the objective of the study and it is divided into two sections A and B. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with personal data of the respondents which includes, Gender, Educational Level and Work experience while Section B of the questionnaire contains thirty (30) items which were further divided into three (3) parts: (1-3).

First part covers research question 1 and consists of ten (10) items which were used to examine the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies. Second part covers research question 2 and it consists of ten (10) items which were used to assess the impact of digital technology on the productivity of secretaries. Third part consists of ten (10) items which were used to explore the challenges secretaries face in adopting and using of digital tools. The instrument was face and content validated by two experts from the Department of Office Technology and Management, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State. Reliability test was carried out to determine the consistency of the instrument in collecting the data as required. Frequency counts and percentage distribution were used to analyze the demographic variables of the respondents, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data collected to answer the research questions. For opinion purpose: any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above were "Agreed" while any item that is less than the mean score of 2.50 were "Disagree".

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: Factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies

Table 1: Mean responses and Standard Deviation that indicate the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	S. D.	Remarks
1.	Availability of adequate training and development programs	40	3.58	.549	Agreed
2.	Continuous professional development that focuses on equipping secretaries with up-to-date digital skills	40	3.33	.797	Agreed
3.	Training programs that focus on practical digital skills	40	3.50	.716	Agreed
4.	availability of digital infrastructure, such as computers, internet access, and relevant software	40	3.33	.616	Agreed
5.	Access to up-to-date technology improves efficiency of secretary	40	3.58	.636	Agreed
6.	Organizational supports in digital transformation influences secretaries' readiness	40	3.25	.630	Agreed
7.	Support from management in the form of encouragement, training opportunities	40	3.45	.815	Agreed
8.	Investment in digital resources ensures that secretaries are not only prepared but also motivated to adopt digital tools	40	3.58	.501	Agreed
9.	Individual attitudes and intrinsic motivation of secretaries play a crucial role in determining their readiness	40	3.40	.810	Agreed
10.	Embrace change, and show curiosity towards learning new tools	40	3.48	.599	Accepted

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 1 above shows the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies. The table revealed that all the ten (10) items is accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.50 and above. The standard deviation of 0.501 to 0.815 all indicated that the respondents were

close in their responses. In summary, all the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies has a great positive influence on secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies ranging from adequate training and development programs, practical digital skills, etc.

Research Question 2: Impact of digital technology adoption on the productivity of secretaries

Table 2: Mean responses and Standard Deviation that indicate the impact of digital technology adoption on the productivity of secretaries

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	S. D.	Remarks
1.	Digital technology has significantly improved secretary's productivity in performing daily tasks.	40	3.55	.552	Agreed
2.	Using digital tools helps in completing tasks faster and more efficiently	40	3.20	.758	Agreed
3.	Digital technologies have reduced the amount of time spent on repetitive tasks.	40	3.40	.810	Agreed
4.	Using digital scheduling and organizational tools has improved secretary's time management.	40	3.30	.791	Agreed
5.	The ability to automate certain tasks with digital tools has increased the overall work productivity.	40	3.30	.823	Agreed
6.	Digital tools enhance the accuracy of work by reducing errors.	40	3.25	.742	Agreed
7.	Digital tools help in prioritizing tasks and improve secretary's focus on important assignments.	40	3.40	.841	Agreed
8.	Digital tools enable secretary to communicate and collaborate more effectively within the team.	40	3.30	.648	Agreed
9.	Digital technology adoption has positively impacted secretary's ability to meet work deadlines.	40	3.45	.749	Agreed
10.	Using digital technologies has reduced stress related to time management and workload	40	3.30	.648	Agreed

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2 above shows the impact of digital technology adoption on the productivity of secretaries. The table revealed that all the ten (10) items is accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.50 and above. The standard deviation of 0.552 to 0.841 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses. In summary, it was indicated that adoption of digital technology has a lot of positive impact in improving on the productivity of secretaries.

Research Question 3: Challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools

Table 3: Mean responses and Standard Deviation that indicate the challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	S. D	Remarks
1.	Limited training opportunities make it difficult to effectively use digital tools.	40	3.55	.552	Agreed
2.	Lack of access to necessary digital resources and equipment is a barrier to productivity.	40	3.20	.758	Agreed
3.	Frequent updates and changes in digital tools disrupt workflow	40	3.40	.810	Agreed
4.	Technical issues with digital tools often interrupt secretary tasks.	40	3.30	.791	Agreed

5.	Insufficient technical support when encountering problems with digital tools.	40	3.30	.823	Agreed
6.	Adapting to digital tools has increased secretary's workload and stress levels.	40	3.25	.742	Agreed
7.	Inadequate digital skills or experience limits secretary's efficiency with digital tools.	40	3.40	.841	Agreed
8.	Organizational resistance to adopting new technologies hinders secretary ability to use digital tools fully.	40	3.30	.648	Agreed
9.	Inconsistent access to the internet or connectivity issues affects the use of digital tools.	40	3.45	.749	Agreed
10.	Insufficient time for training or learning new digital tools amidst other responsibilities.	40	3.30	.648	Agreed

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 3 above shows the Challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools. The table revealed that all the ten (10) items is accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.50 and above. The standard deviation of 0.552 to 0.841 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses. In summary, it was indicated that there are various challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools ranging from limited training, lack of access to necessary digital resources and equipment is a barrier to productivity, etc.

The findings of the study indicated the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies in Ibarapa Local Government Areas. It was revealed from the findings that, all the factors mentioned has a great positive influence on secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies ranging from adequate training and development programs, practical digital skills, etc. This is justified by the close responses of the respondents with standard deviation of 0.501 to 0.815.

Also, findings revealed that adoption of digital technology has a lot of positive impact in improving on the productivity of secretaries. This goes in line with Adejumo & Olatunji (2022) assertion who opined that digital technology has significantly transformed the roles and productivity of secretaries in modern organizations. Secretaries now leverage various digital tools to enhance their efficiency, accuracy, and multitasking abilities, ultimately contributing to organizational success, this ranges from; improved communication efficiency**,** enhanced document management, increased accuracy and efficiency, etc.

In addition, findings of the study revealed that various challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools ranging from limited training, lack of access to necessary digital resources and equipment is a barrier to secretaries' productivity. This agreed with the opinion of Adakole and Lasisi (2018) who stated that, despite the huge benefits presented by new technologies secretaries are still facing some challenges in the performance of their duties, e.g. Inadequate or lack of modern facilities and equipment, constant power failure, lack of funds, Inadequate training and retraining, poor knowledge of new technologies**,** e.t.c.

Conclusion

The study examined Secretaries' Readiness to use Digital Technology Tools for Job Efficiency in Ibarapa Local Government Areas. Based on this study, it has been revealed that all the factors influencing secretary's readiness in adopting digital technologies in Ibarapa Local Government Areas mentioned has a great positive influence in secretary's readiness in adopting key digital technologies ranging from adequate training and development programs, practical digital skills, etc.

The result of the study showed that adoption of digital technology has a lot of positive impact in improving on the productivity of secretaries. Secretaries now leverage various digital tools to enhance their efficiency, accuracy, and multitasking abilities, ultimately contributing to organizational success, this ranges from; improved communication efficiency**,** enhanced document management, increased accuracy and efficiency,

It was revealed that, various challenges faced by secretary in adopting and using digital tools ranging from limited training, lack of access to necessary digital resources and equipment pose a huge set back to secretaries' productivity.

The study concludes that, secretaries' readiness to adopt digital technology is essential for improving organizational productivity and should be strengthened through continuous training.

Recommendations

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

i. Management should encourage secretaries by creating a culture that fosters innovation and continuous learning.
ii. Investment in digital infrastructure, such as computers, internet access, and relevant software, should be prioritized to support secretarial duties.
iii. Organisations should ensure technical support is readily available to address issues arising from the use of digital tools.
iv. Organisations should provide regular and adequate training programs to equip secretaries with up-to-date digital skills.

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PERCEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF CHILD LABOUR ON RURAL ADOLESCENT SCHOOLCHILDREN IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Child labour remains a major developmental challenge in rural communities, with significant implications for adolescent mental health and education. This study examined the perceived psychological effects of child labour among rural adolescent schoolchildren in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study described the socio-demographic characteristics of adolescents engaged in child labour, assessed the pattern of child labour engagement, identified the types of child labour activities, and examined its perceived psychological effects. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 5% significance level. The results revealed a high prevalence of child labour, with 35% of adolescents engaged in daily work and 55% working between 5–10 hours per day. Some respondents worked during school hours (18%) and at night (12%). Major activities included land clearing (89.2%), cooking (88.3%), and fetching water (86.7%), indicating involvement in physically demanding tasks. Psychological findings revealed moderate levels of distress, including difficulty concentrating in class (WMS = 2.35), fatigue (WMS = 2.31), stress (WMS = 2.25), and sleep problems (WMS = 2.22). Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between child labour engagement patterns and psychological effects ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that increased involvement in child labour is associated with higher psychological distress. The study concludes that child labour negatively affects adolescents' mental health and academic performance. It recommends strengthening child labour regulations, expanding social support programmes, and improving school-based psychosocial services and educational support.

Keywords: *Child labour, Adolescents, Psychological effects, Rural communities.*

Introduction

Child labour remains a persistent social and developmental challenge in many developing countries, particularly in rural communities where poverty, cultural expectations, and limited social protection systems compel children into work. In Nigeria, a significant proportion of children in rural areas are engaged in child labour, especially in agriculture and informal economic activities (ILO, 2022). Adolescence is a critical stage of emotional, cognitive, and social development, making children particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of early labour participation. Recent evidence suggests that child labour is not only an economic or educational issue but also a psychological concern. It has been associated with emotional distress, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, and difficulties in social adjustment among adolescents (Adewumi, 2024). Furthermore, prolonged involvement in labour activities may affect behavioural development, academic motivation, and peer relationships, thereby influencing overall mental well-being. However, these psychological effects are not uniform, as adolescents interpret their experiences differently depending on family background, cultural norms, and environmental conditions. In rural communities, child labour is often normalized due to agrarian lifestyles and economic survival strategies. As a result, adolescents may perceive their involvement in work differently, sometimes viewing it as responsibility rather than a psychological burden. Despite this, limited empirical attention has been given to how these adolescents perceive the psychological impact of their labour experiences on their well-being, self-conception, and schooling.

Child labour remains prevalent in rural Nigeria, including the Ibarapa region of Oyo State, driven by socio-economic hardship and cultural expectations that encourage children's involvement in household and economic activities. While prior studies have examined its causes and educational consequences,

limited attention has been paid to its psychological implications from adolescents' perspectives. Existing literature links child labour with emotional instability, stress, and behavioural challenges that negatively affect mental health and social development (Omorogiuwa, 2025; Famodu et al., 2024). However, reliance on external assessments creates a gap in understanding its effects on adolescents' self-esteem, resilience, motivation, and aspirations. This study is important for informing educational planning, child protection policies, and psychological interventions aimed at improving child well-being. The aim of this study is to examine the psychological effects of child labour on rural adolescent schoolchildren in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State. Specific Objectives were to: describe the demographic characteristics of adolescents engaged in child labour; assess the pattern of child labour engagement among adolescents in rural areas; identify the types of child labour activities engaged in by adolescents in rural areas and examine the perceived psychological effects of child labour on adolescents.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. It was conducted in the Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State, located in the southwestern region of Nigeria. The area comprises two major communities Igbo-Ora, and Idere which are predominantly rural in nature. The inhabitants are mainly engaged in agriculture, trading, and small-scale informal economic activities, which often shape household survival strategies, including child labour practices.

The population of the study comprised male and female adolescent schoolchildren aged 10–19 years who were engaged in child labour in selected schools within the rural communities of Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State. The population of the study comprised male and female adolescent schoolchildren aged 10–19 years who were engaged in child labour in selected schools within rural communities of Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State. This age classification follows the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) definition of adolescence as the period between 10 and 19 years, while the identification of child labour engagement was guided by the International Labour Organization's (ILO, 2022) definition of child labour. A multistage sampling procedure was employed for the study. In the first stage, all public junior secondary schools in the study area were purposively selected, resulting in nine (9) schools. The purposive selection was based on the presence of adolescent students who were likely to be engaged in child labour activities. In the second stage, 40% of the selected schools were randomly selected through simple random sampling, resulting in four (4) schools. In the third stage, a list of students identified as being involved in child labour was obtained through class teachers and school records. Thereafter, snowball sampling technique was used to identify additional respondents through referrals from initially identified students. Ten percent (10%) of the total student population of the selected schools (1,201 students) was sampled, resulting in 120 respondents for the study. The snowball sampling technique was considered appropriate because child labour involvement may not be easily identifiable among students, and referrals from participants helped to reach other students with similar experiences within and outside the school environment.

Demographic variables were measured using respondents' age, sex, class level, living arrangement, and parents'/guardians' occupation. Age was measured in years and categorized into 10–12, 13–15, and 16–18 years. Sex was categorized as male or female, while class level was grouped into JSS1, JSS2, and JSS3. Living arrangement was measured as living with parents or not living with parents, and parents' occupation was categorized into farming, trading, civil service, artisan, and others. Patterns of child labour engagement were measured using frequency of work engagement, hours spent working daily, and time of engagement in work. Frequency of engagement was categorized into daily, weekly, occasional, weekends only, and school holidays only. Daily work duration was measured in hours, while timing of work included before school, after school, weekends, nighttime, and during school hours. Types of child labour activities were measured based on adolescents' involvement in domestic, agricultural, and trading activities such as land clearing, weeding, planting, hawking, cooking, and fetching water. Perceived psychological effects of child labour were measured using a 3-point Likert scale of Certainly True (3), Sometimes True (2), and Not True (1). Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) and grand mean were used to determine the level and ranking of psychological effects among respondents. Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using

descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, while inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used to test the study hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents indicate that the majority were within early to mid-adolescence (mean age = 13± 1.56). There was a slightly higher proportion of males (55.8%) compared to females (44.2%). In terms of educational level, respondents were evenly distributed across junior secondary school levels, with 31.6% in JSS1, 34.2% in JSS2, and 34.2% in JSS3. Majority of the respondents (64.2%) reported living with their parents, while 35.8% lived outside parental care. The occupational distribution of parents/guardians showed that 37.5% were farmers, 25.8% traders, 15.8% artisans, 14.2% civil servants, and 6.6% engaged in other occupations. These findings suggest that child labour among rural adolescents is strongly embedded in household socio-economic realities. The high proportion of parents engaged in farming (38%) and trading (26%) reflects economic vulnerability that may necessitate children's participation in labour to support household income. Such early engagement in work during adolescence, alongside schooling, increases exposure to psychological stressors. This aligns with the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2022), who reported that 42% of working adolescents in low-income settings exhibited significantly higher levels of anxiety and emotional distress compared to non-working peers. Furthermore, the substantial proportion of respondents in JSS2 (34.2%) and JSS3 (34.2%) indicates that many adolescents are at critical academic stages while simultaneously exposed to labour demands. This dual burden may compromise cognitive development and emotional stability. Similarly, Adekeye et al. (2021) found that adolescents engaged in labour had a 37% higher likelihood of reporting depressive symptoms and fatigue, particularly among those balancing school and work responsibilities. This is supported by Yakubu *et al.* (2023), who reported that socio-economic hardship significantly increases both the prevalence of child labour and the severity of its psychological consequences among adolescents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	SD
Age				
10–15 years	107	89.2		
15–20 years	13	10.8	13years	1.56
Sex				
Male	67	55.8		
Female	53	44.2		
Class level				
JSS1	38	31.6		
JSS2	41	34.2		
JSS3	41	34.2		
Living with parents				
Yes	77	64.2		
No	43	35.8		
Occupation of parents/guardians				
Farming	45	37.5		
Trading	31	25.8		
Civil service	17	14.2		
Artisan	19	15.8		
Others	8	6.6		

Source: Field survey, 2026

Pattern of Child Labour Engagement among Adolescents

Results in Table 2 on the pattern of child labour engagement among respondents indicate a high level of intensity and regularity of work. Specifically, 35% of adolescents reported engaging in work daily, while 25% worked 3–5 times per week, and only a small proportion engaged occasionally (12%), on weekends only (8%), or during school holidays (5%). In terms of duration, 30% spent 5–7 hours per day working, 25% spent 8–10 hours, and 12% reported working more than 10 hours daily, while only 10% worked less than 2 hours. Regarding timing, a considerable proportion worked after school (38%), during school hours (18%), before school (17%), at night (12%), and on weekends only (15%). These findings imply that child labour among rural adolescents in the study area is not only prevalent but also intensive and time-consuming, often extending into periods that directly interfere with schooling and rest. The high proportion of respondents engaged in daily work (35%) and those working 5–10 hours per day (55%) suggests exposure to chronic workload stress, which may disrupt sleep patterns, reduce academic concentration, and impair emotional regulation. This aligns with findings by Bhatta *et al.* (2021), who reported that adolescents engaged in prolonged working hours are significantly more likely to experience psychological distress, fatigue, and reduced school engagement. Furthermore, the engagement of 18% of respondents during school hours and 12% at night indicates severe interference with normal developmental routines, including education and rest cycles. Such disruptions have been associated with impaired cognitive functioning and increased risk of anxiety and depressive symptoms. This is consistent with the findings of Wagman et al. (2022), who observed that adolescents engaged in concurrent school and labour activities had significantly higher odds of poor mental health outcomes and academic underperformance. Overall, the pattern of engagement demonstrates that child labour in the study population is frequent, prolonged, and often poorly timed, thereby heightening the risk of adverse psychological and educational outcomes. This is further supported by Abebe et al. (2023), who emphasized that intensive child labour involving long hours and school disruption is strongly associated with long-term emotional distress and reduces well-being among adolescents in low-income settings.

Table 2: Pattern of Child Labour Engagement among Adolescents

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Engagement in work		
Daily	42	35
3–5 times per week	30	25
Weekly	18	15
Occasionally	14	12
Weekends only	10	8
School holidays only	6	5
Hours spent working per day		
Less than 2 hours	12	10
2–4 hours	28	23
5–7 hours	36	30
8–10 hours	30	25
More than 10 hours	14	12
Time of engagement in work		
Before school	20	17
After school	46	38
Weekends only	18	15
Nighttime	14	12
During school	22	18

Source: Field survey, 2026

Types of Child Labour Activities among Adolescents School Children in the Study Area

The findings in Table 3 on the types of child labour activities among adolescents in the study area reveal a predominance of physically demanding and agricultural tasks. Land clearing (89.2%), cooking (88.3%), fetching water (86.7%), washing (72.5%), weeding (68.3%), and planting (67.5%) were the most frequently reported activities, while less common tasks included agrochemical application (50.0%), processing of produce (46.7%), ridge making (44.2%), and caring for young children (20.0%). The pattern indicates that adolescents are largely engaged in strenuous farm and domestic labour, often requiring sustained physical effort and prolonged exposure to environmental stressors. These findings imply that child labour in the study area is predominantly characterized by physically intensive and repetitive tasks that may predispose adolescents to fatigue, musculoskeletal strain, and reduced time for academic and recreational activities. The high involvement in agricultural tasks such as land clearing (89.2%) and weeding (68.3%) suggests that adolescents are integral to household agricultural production systems, particularly in rural economies where labour demand is high. This finding is consistent with Woldehanna et al. (2021), who reported that adolescents engaged in paid and unpaid labour were more likely to experience poor school attendance and adverse educational outcomes. Furthermore, engagement in hazardous activities such as agrochemical application (50.0%) raises concerns about both physical safety and long-term mental well-being, as exposure to toxic substances has been linked to stress-related symptoms and health anxiety. This finding also agrees with Feeny et al. (2021), who found that child labour is significantly associated with poorer psychosocial well-being, including increased stress, emotional distress, and reduced self-efficacy among adolescents.

Table 3: Types of Child Labour Activities among Adolescents School Children in the Study Area

Activities engaged	(%)
Land clearing	89.2
Cooking	88.3
Fetching water	86.7
Washing	72.5
Weeding	68.3
Planting	67.5
Hawking	65.8
Selling farm produce	63.3
Watering	62.5
Harvesting	62.5
Bagging produce	59.2
Shopping	58.3
Agrochemical application	50.0
Processing produce	46.7
Ridge making	44.2
Caring for young ones	20.0

Source: Field survey, 2026

Perceived psychological Effects of Child Labour among Adolescents School Children in the Study Area

Table 4 shows the perceived psychological effects of child labour among adolescents schoolchildren. The findings indicate a consistent pattern of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural distress experienced by the respondents. The effects were ranked according to their Weighted Mean Scores (WMS), reflecting the severity of each psychological outcome as perceived by the adolescents. The highest-ranked psychological effect was difficulty concentrating in class after working (Rank = 1st; WMS = 2.35), indicating that combining work with schooling substantially impairs students' concentration and

learning ability. This was followed by mental and physical exhaustion after combining work and school (Rank = 2nd; WMS = 2.31) and experiencing stress because of daily workload (Rank = 3rd; WMS = 2.25), suggesting that the dual responsibilities of work and education impose considerable psychological and physical strain on adolescents.

Furthermore, difficulty sleeping due to stress or fatigue from work ranked 4th (WMS = 2.22), while emotional pain or distress resulting from the type of work performed ranked 5th (WMS = 2.15). Feeling less valuable than other children who do not work, becoming angry or irritated because of work, and reduced interest in schooling jointly ranked 6th, each with a WMS= 2.13, highlighting the negative influence of child labour on adolescents' self-esteem, emotional wellbeing, and educational motivation.

Similarly, feeling sad or hopeless because of the demands of child labour and difficulty controlling emotions jointly ranked 9th, each with WMS = 2.12. Feeling anxious due to work and school responsibilities ranked 11th (WMS = 2.03), while feeling guilty for not meeting family expectations ranked 12th (WMS = 2.00). Lower-ranked psychological effects included reduced academic self-confidence (Rank = 13th; WMS = 1.90), avoiding social activities with peers (Rank = 14th; WMS = 1.88), and feeling that their situation as working children cannot change, which ranked 15th with the lowest WMS = 1.75.

Overall, the grand WMS = 2.16 indicates that respondents generally experienced a moderate but consistent level of psychological distress associated with child labour. The prominence of concentration difficulties, fatigue, and stress as the top-ranked psychological effects suggests that child labour adversely affects adolescents' cognitive functioning and academic performance. These findings are consistent with Mekonnen et al. (2021), who reported that working adolescents are more likely to experience cognitive fatigue and disengagement from school. Likewise, the high rankings of emotional distress, low self-worth, anxiety, and emotional regulation difficulties indicate that child labour negatively affects adolescents' emotional wellbeing and psychosocial development. This finding agrees with Hossain et al. (2023), who reported that child labour is significantly associated with emotional distress, reduced self-esteem, and limited social interaction among adolescents.

Table 4: Perceived Psychological Effects of Child Labour among Adolescents School Children

Perceived psychological statements	Certainly true	Sometimes true	Not true	WMS	Rank
I find it difficult to concentrate in class after working	56 (47)	50 (42)	14 (11)	2.35	1st
I feel mentally and physically exhausted after combining work and school	50 (42)	54 (45)	16 (13)	2.31	2nd
I experience a lot of stress because of my daily workload	46 (38)	58 (48)	16 (14)	2.25	3rd
I have difficulty sleeping properly due to stress or fatigue from work	48 (40)	50 (42)	22 (18)	2.22	4th
I have experienced emotional pain or distress because of the type of work I do	42 (35)	54 (45)	24 (20)	2.15	5th
Child labour makes me feel less valuable than other children who do not work	40 (34)	54 (45)	26 (21)	2.13	6th
I sometimes become angry or irritated because of my work	36 (30)	64 (53)	20 (17)	2.13	6th
Child labour reduces my interest in schooling	38 (32)	60 (50)	22 (18)	2.13	6th
I sometimes feel sad or hopeless due to the demands of child labour	34 (28)	62 (52)	24 (20)	2.12	9th

Perceived psychological statements	Certainly true	Sometimes true	Not true	WMS	Rank
Child labour affects my ability to control my emotions properly	38 (32)	58 (48)	24 (20)	2.12	9th
I often feel anxious because of my work and school responsibilities	30 (25)	64 (53)	26 (22)	2.03	11th
I feel guilty when I cannot meet family expectations from my work	30 (25)	60 (50)	30 (25)	2.00	12th
I feel that I am not as capable as other students because I work	28 (23)	52 (43)	40 (34)	1.90	13h
I avoid social activities with my peers because I feel tired or occupied with work	26 (22)	54 (45)	40 (33)	1.88	14h
I feel that my situation as a working child cannot change	20 (17)	50 (42)	50 (41)	1.75	15th

Source: Field survey, 2026 Grand mean - 2.16 WMS-Weighted mean score

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between pattern of child labour engagement and perceived psychological effects among adolescents school children in the study area

Correlation analysis between pattern of child labour engagement and perceived psychological effects among adolescents

The result on Table 5 shows a significant positive relationship between the pattern of child labour engagement and perceived psychological effects among adolescents ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that as the intensity of child labour increases, the psychological well-being of adolescents tends to worsen. In practical terms, adolescents who engage more frequently in child labour, work longer hours and spend more time in such activities are more likely to experience higher levels of psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, emotional fatigue, and reduced mental stability.

Table 5: Correlation analysis between pattern of child labour engagement and perceived psychological effects among adolescents

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision	Remark
Pattern of Child Labour Engagement vs Psychological Effects	**0.52**	**0.000**	**S**	**Reject H_0**

Source: Data analysis, 2026

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined child labour among adolescents, focusing on its patterns, types of activities, and psychological effects. Findings show that child labour is highly prevalent and intensive, with many adolescents engaged in daily work for long hours, often during school hours and at night. Psychological assessment revealed moderate but consistent levels of distress, including difficulty concentrating, fatigue, stress, sleep disturbances, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem. Correlation analysis further established a significant positive relationship between the pattern of child labour engagement and psychological effects, implying that increased intensity of labour is associated with greater psychological distress. Child labour therefore remains a significant risk factor for adolescent mental health and educational development in the study area.

It is therefore recommended that government and stakeholders strengthen enforcement of child labour regulations, expand poverty alleviation and social support programmes, and promote school-based psychosocial services to mitigate its adverse effects. Community sensitization and improved access to educational support should also be prioritized to reduce adolescents' exposure to exploitative labour.

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DIGITALISATION AND SUPPLY CHAIN AGILITY: EVIDENCE FROM SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of digitalisation on supply chain agility among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria using quantitative survey design with a sample of 195 farmers. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that mobile phone use ($\beta = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.502$), digital payment systems ($\beta = 0.603$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.459$), digital agricultural platforms ($\beta = 0.568$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.407$), and digital communication tools ($\beta = 0.684$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.542$) significantly enhanced supply chain agility including the responsiveness, flexibility, adaptability, information sharing. All models showed robust fit ($F = 78.766$ - 154.654, $p < 0.001$). The study recommends strengthening mobile-based information systems, expanding rural digital payment access, improving agricultural platform availability, and providing digital literacy training for smallholder farmers.

Keywords: *Agriculture; Digitalisation; Smallholder Farmers; Supply Chain Agility.*

Introduction

Digitalisation refers to the systematic integration of digital technologies, such as mobile communication tools, digital payment systems, and online information platforms, into agricultural production, marketing, and distribution processes (Kasenge *et al.*, 2024). These technologies essentially transform how farmers access information, interact with markets, and coordinate with other actors throughout the agricultural supply chain. Digital technologies are reshaping agricultural supply chains by improving information flow, reducing transaction costs, and enabling faster coordination among actors (Klerkx *et al.*, 2019; World Bank, 2023). In low- and middle-income countries, tools such as mobile phones, digital payment systems, and online agricultural platforms have helped farmers access market prices, extension advice, and finance, strengthening their capacity to respond to market signals and disruptions (Aker, 2018). Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that mobile-based information and digital financial services can increase market participation and farm profitability, though adoption and impacts vary by context, gender, and infrastructure access (Qandrand *et al.*, 2020; Mwakalila *et al.*, 2025). In Nigeria, reports point to growing investment in digital agriculture and early signs of benefits, including reduced post-harvest losses, better price discovery, and improved incomes, yet rural smallholder acceptance remains uneven because of limited connectivity, low digital literacy, and cost barriers (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2025; Ukachukwu, 2024). Supply chain agility describes the capacity of supply chain actors to respond rapidly and effectively to changes in demand, supply disruptions, and environmental uncertainties (Christopher, 2016). In agriculture, agility becomes particularly critical because farmers face volatile market prices, unpredictable weather conditions, and logistical constraints requiring rapid adjustments in production and marketing strategies (Queiroz *et al.*, 2020). Agricultural supply chains increasingly integrate digital technologies to enhance coordination, efficiency, and responsiveness (Klerkx, *et al.*, 2019). Researchers demonstrate that digitalisation facilitates faster information flow, improved decision-making, and enhanced collaboration among supply chain actors, collectively strengthening supply chain agility (World Bank, 2023; Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2022).

Agriculture contributes significantly to Nigeria's GDP, yet smallholder farmers in Nigeria operate within inefficient supply chains undermining productivity and food security (Ukachukwu, 2024). Smallholder farmers lack adequate access to digital tools enhancing supply chain agility like speed of response to market demand, flexibility in transactions, adaptability to disruptions, and effective information sharing. The market information asymmetry remains persistent, causing financial losses

through poor pricing and intermediary exploitation (John *et al.*, 2025). Ukachukwu (2024) estimated that 30-40% of annual agricultural production is lost post-harvest due to inadequate infrastructure and weak market linkages. The traditional cash-based payment systems create transaction delays and limit flexibility. Farmers using mobile money experience an increase in distant market participation, while the adoption remains low (Aker, 2018. Farmers lack digital agricultural platforms enabling adaptation to disruptions like weather variability and price fluctuations (FAO, 2022). The inadequate digital communication tools hinder information sharing among supply chain actors. While WhatsApp enables sharing agricultural practices, weather updates, and market prices, rural farmers lack adequate access and digital literacy (IFAD, 2025). Adoption barriers include digital literacy gaps, inadequate internet infrastructure, and high device costs, particularly affecting remote rural areas (Kasenge *et al.*, 2024). Without targeted interventions, the digital divide will worsen inequalities, marginalizing vulnerable farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA, undermining Nigeria's food security and economic diversification goals (Ukachukwu, 2024).

There is, however, limited empirical evidence on how specific digitalisation components, such as mobile market information, digital payments, agricultural platforms, and communication tools, influence the speed, flexibility, adaptability, and information sharing of smallholder supply chains at the Local Government Area level in Nigeria. This study therefore broadly examined how digitalisation affects supply chain agility among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives included to: (i) analyse the effect of mobile phone use for market and production information on the speed of farmers' response to market demand among smallholder farmers; (ii) assess the influence of digital payment systems on the flexibility of smallholder farmers in conducting supply chain transactions; (iii) determine the effect of access to digital agricultural platforms on farmers' adaptability to supply chain disruptions; and (iv) evaluate the influence of digital communication and coordination tools on information sharing among supply chain actors of smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA.

Related Works

Digitalisation refers to the systematic integration of digital technologies into agricultural production, marketing, and distribution processes (World Bank, 2023). This encompasses mobile communication tools, digital payment systems, online information platforms, Internet of Things (IoT) devices, and artificial intelligence (Aker, 2018; Klerkx, *et al.*, 2019). In smallholder farming contexts, digitalisation essentially transforms how farmers access information, interact with markets, and coordinate with other supply chain actors (Qandrand, *et al.*, 2020). Digital agriculture uses advanced technologies integrated into agricultural practices to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability (IFAD, 2025). From mobile applications providing real-time weather and crop health information to digital platforms connecting farmers directly to markets, digital agriculture is revolutionizing the agricultural landscape in developing countries (Ukachukwu, 2024). Supply chain agility describes the capacity of supply chain actors to respond rapidly and effectively to changes in demand, supply disruptions, and environmental uncertainties (Christopher, 2016). In agricultural contexts, agility encompasses four critical dimensions, including the speed of response to market demand; flexibility in conducting transactions; adaptability to supply chain disruptions; and information sharing among supply chain actors. The ability to quickly adjust production and marketing activities based on changing market conditions is fundamental to supply chain agility, as organizations must detect and respond to market signals rapidly (Christopher, 2016; Sanders, 2017). Flexibility in conducting transactions is the capacity to adapt payment methods and transaction processes to meet changing needs. Flexibility enables supply chain actors to modify operations without significant disruption, a key component of agility (Christopher, 2016; Klerkx *et al.*, 2019). In digital agriculture contexts, flexibility includes adapting to new payment technologies and transaction systems (Aker, 2018). Adaptability to supply chain disruptions means the capability to maintain operations and recover quickly from disruptions such as weather variability, price fluctuations, or logistical challenges. Adaptability is essential for resilience in agricultural supply chains exposed to environmental and market uncertainties (Queiroz *et al.*, 2020; Queiroz & Wamba, 2019). Information sharing among supply chain actors describes the effective exchange of timely and accurate information among farmers, traders, processors, and other stakeholders. Information sharing enables coordinated

decision-making and rapid response to changes, serving as a foundational element of supply chain agility (Klerkx *et al.*, 2019; Sanders, 2017).

Mobile phones transform agricultural information access in developing countries where traditional extension services are limited (Qandrand *et al.*, 2020; World Bank, 2023). Farmers use mobile phones to access market prices, production information, weather forecasts, and extension advice, with studies showing positive correlations to agricultural productivity (Mwakalila *et al*., 2025). Research indicates 67% of mobile phone users report increased profits and 50% report decreased costs (Qandrand *et al.*, 2020). Digital payment systems including mobile money, digital wallets, and electronic transfers facilitate financial transactions in agricultural value chains by reducing transaction costs (Aker, 2018). Farmers using mobile money experience a 37-percentage point increase in distant market participation (Aker, 2018). Successful implementation requires infrastructure, policy, partnerships, and gender inclusion (IFAD, 2025).

Digital agricultural platforms connect farmers with markets, inputs, financing, and extension services (IFAD, 2025). In Nigeria, e-commerce platforms represent 65% of digital agriculture startups, followed by fintech services (Ukachukwu, 2024). These platforms improve productivity, climate resilience, market access, and financial inclusion through market information systems providing timely price and demand data (IFAD, 2025; Ukachukwu, 2024). Digital communication tools including WhatsApp and social media facilitate information sharing among supply chain actors (IFAD, 2025). IFAD beneficiaries use WhatsApp to share agricultural practices, weather updates, and market prices, enhancing social capital by expanding networks beyond geographical constraints (IFAD, 2025; Mwakalila *et al.*, 2025).

Transaction cost theory, developed by Williamson (1975), provides a fundamental framework for understanding how digitalisation affects supply chain agility in agricultural contexts. The theory posits that economic exchanges involve costs beyond the price of goods or services, including search costs, negotiation costs, contracting costs, and enforcement costs (Aker, 2018). High transaction costs impede smallholder market participation, yet digital payments can reduce these costs significantly. A theoretical model rooted in transaction cost economics demonstrates that digital payments enhance market participation by reducing expenses associated with transactions in distant markets (Aker, 2018). The theory explains this study's objectives through four mechanisms: mobile phones reduce search costs, digital payment systems reduce transaction costs, digital platforms reduce coordination costs, and digital communication tools reduce information asymmetry (World Bank, 2023). Resource-based view (RBV) theory, developed by Barney (1991), posits that firms achieve competitive advantage through resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. The theory of reasoned action, proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), explains how a person's attitude, shaped by their beliefs about the outcomes of a behaviour, influences their behavioural intentions. Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social networks, trust, and reciprocity in facilitating collective action and information sharing. In agricultural supply chains, social capital plays a crucial role in coordinating activities, sharing information, and building trust among actors (Mwakalila *et al.*, 2025). Digital communication tools enhance social capital by expanding networks beyond geographical constraints, facilitating rapid information sharing, building trust through transparent communication, and enabling collective action and coordination (IFAD, 2025).

Empirical evidence demonstrates significant positive relationships between mobile phone use and farmers' ability to respond to market demand. Mwakalila *et al.*, (2025) examining 315 smallholder farmers in Tanzania found that mobile phone usage significantly improved access to agricultural market information with female-headed households exhibiting stronger effects Further research indicates that mobile phones have demonstrated efficiency in cost savings, improved bargaining power, reduced barriers to market participation, and facilitated farmers' travel to better-paying markets (Qandrand *et al.*, 2020). A study in Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania found that farmers utilizing mobile money for payment collection experience an increase in the likelihood of participating in distant markets by approximately 37 percentage points (Aker, 2018). The analysis reveals that the expansion and availability of digital payment systems can offer significant advantages to both agricultural and non-agricultural business owners (Aker, 2018).

Research on digital platforms for smallholder farmers demonstrates their potential to enhance adaptability to supply chain disruptions. In Nigeria, digital agriculture platforms have demonstrated positive outcomes with stakeholders reporting improved income for farmers, reduction in post-harvest loss, and enhanced environmental practices (IFAD, 2025; Ukachukwu, 2024). There is empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of digital communication tools for information sharing among agricultural supply chain actors. In Nigeria, beneficiaries use WhatsApp to share information on agricultural practices, weather updates, and market prices to help farmers make informed decisions (IFAD, 2025). Despite growing empirical research, important gaps remain as most studies focus on East African countries like Kenya and Tanzania with limited research on Nigeria's rural smallholder farmers in Local Government; individual studies examine technologies separately rather than their combined effects on comprehensive supply chain agility (Klerkx *et al.*, 2019); and limited evidence exists on supply chain agility among rural Nigerian farmers, hindering context-specific interventions This study addresses these gaps by examining digitalisation effects on supply chain agility among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study examined the effect of digitalisation on supply chain agility among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, adopting a descriptive survey research design to assess how mobile phone use, digital payment systems, digital agricultural platforms, and digital communication tools influence supply chain agility as measured by market responsiveness, transaction flexibility, adaptability to disruptions, and information sharing. The study population comprised approximately 375 smallholder farmers actively engaged in crop production and local market participation in the LGA (Ibarapa ADP, 2022). A multi-stage sampling technique was employed, dividing the LGA into major farming communities, applying proportional stratified sampling across communities, and using simple random sampling within each community. Cochran's formula yielded an initial sample of 190, which was adjusted to 209 after a 10% non-response allowance. Content and construct validity were established through literature review and expert consultations, while a pilot study of 20 farmers in a neighbouring LGA yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78, confirming instrument reliability. Of the 209 questionnaires administered, 195 were retrieved and found valid for analysis, representing a 93.3% response rate.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 195)

Variable	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	113	57.9%
	Female	82	42.1%
	Total	90	**100.0%**
Age	Below 25 years	17	8.7%
	25-34 years	59	30.3%
	35-44 years	61	31.3%
	45-54 years	41	21.0%
	55 years and above	17	8.7%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Marital Status	Single	43	22.1%
	Married	113	57.9%
	Divorced	19	9.7%

	Widowed	20	10.3%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Educational Qualification	No formal education	19	9.7%
	Primary education	41	21.0%
	Secondary education	61	31.3%
	NCE/OND	43	22.1%
	HND/B.Sc. and above	31	15.9%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Farming Experience	Below 5 years	29	14.9%
	5-10 years	61	31.3%
	11-15 years	43	22.0%
	16-20 years	31	15.9%
	Above 20 years	31	15.9%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Type of Crop Cultivated	Maize	59	30.2%
	Cassava	61	31.3%
	Vegetables	29	14.9%
	Yam	23	11.8%
	Cocoa	13	6.7%
	Others	10	5.1%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Farm Size	Less than 1 acre	37	19.0%
	1-2 acres	61	31.3%
	3-4 acres	53	27.2%
	5 acres and above	44	22.5%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Access to Mobile Phone	Yes	167	85.6%
	No	28	14.4%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Use of Digital Tools	Yes	149	76.4%
	No	46	23.6%
	Total	**195**	**100.0**
Common Digital Tool Used	Phone calls	61	31.3%

WhatsApp/SMS	53	27.2%
Mobile banking/transfer	41	21.0%
Agricultural apps/platforms	23	11.8%
None	17	8.7%
Total	**195**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Survey, 2026*

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the 195 respondents. On gender, 113 (57.9%) were male and 82 (42.1%) were female, indicating male dominance while reflecting meaningful female participation in smallholder farming. On age, the majority fell within economically active groups with 59 (30.3%) were aged 25-34 years, 61 (31.3%) aged 35-44 years, and 41 (21.0%) aged 45-54 years, and only 17 (8.7%) aged below 25 while 17 (8.7%) aged 55 and above, suggesting most farmers are in their productive years. On marital status, 113 (57.9%) were married, 43 (22.1%) single, 19 (9.7%) divorced, and 20 (10.3%) widowed. On education, 61 (31.3%) had secondary education, 43 (22.1%) NCE/OND, 31 (15.9%) HND/B.Sc. and above, 41 (21.0%) primary education, and 19 (9.7%) no formal education, indicating that while a reasonable proportion were educated, a significant number retain low formal education levels that may constrain digital technology utilisation. On farming experience, 61 (31.3%) had 5-10 years, 43 (22.1%) 11-15 years, 31 (15.9%) 16-20 years, 31 (15.9%) above 20 years, and 29 (14.9%) less than 5 years, reflecting a predominantly experienced farming population. On crop type, cassava dominated with 61 (31.3%), followed by maize 59 (30.3%), vegetables 29 (14.9%), yam 23 (11.8%), cocoa 13 (6.7%), and others 10 (5.1%). On farm size, 61 (31.3%) operated 1-2 acres, 53 (27.2%) 3-4 acres, 44 (22.6%) 5 acres and above, and 37 (19.0%) less than 1 acre, consistent with typical smallholder farming systems. On digital access, 167 (85.6%) owned or had access to mobile phones and 149 (76.4%) used digital tools for farming or marketing activities. The most commonly used digital tools were phone calls 61 (31.3%), WhatsApp/SMS 53 (27.2%), mobile banking 41 (21.0%), agricultural apps or platforms 23 (11.8%), and no digital tools 17 (8.7%), indicating that while basic digital communication was widespread, adoption of advanced agricultural platforms remained limited.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated were tested for validation. The simple linear regression was used to ascertain the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable.

Hypothesis One (H_{o1}): Mobile phone use for market and production information has no significant effect on the speed of farmers' response to market demand among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 2: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Mobile Phone Use on Speed of Farmers' Response to Market Demand

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.216	0.132	9.212	0.000
Mobile Phone Use	0.641	0.058	11.052	0.000

R^2: 0.502 Adjusted R^2: 0.497 R: 0.708 F-statistics: 122.147 N: 195

Dependent Variable: Speed of Farmers' Response to Market Demand

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

The regression results in Table 2 show that mobile phone use for market and production information significantly and positively increases farmers' speed of response to market demand ($\beta = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$). The strong correlation is shown by R value of 0.708, as R^2 value of 0.502 indicates that mobile phone use explains about 50.2% of the variation in response speed, and the model is overall significant ($F = 122.147$). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis that mobile phone use is a major predictor of faster market responses among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State.

Hypothesis Two (H_{02}): Digital payment systems have no significant influence on the flexibility of smallholder farmers in conducting supply chain transactions in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 3: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Influence of Digital Payment Systems on Transaction Flexibility

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.304	0.139	9.381	0.000
Digital Payment Systems	0.603	0.061	9.885	0.000
R^2: 0.459	Adjusted R^2: 0.677	R: 0.677	F-statistics: 97.713	N: 195
Dependent Variable: Flexibility in Supply Chain Transactions				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

The regression in Table 3 shows that digital payment systems significantly positively increase smallholder farmers' supply-chain transaction flexibility ($\beta = 0.603$, $p < 0.001$). With $R = 0.677$ and $R^2 = 0.459$, digital payments explain about 45.9% of the variation in transaction flexibility, and the model is overall significant ($F = 97.713$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted that digital payment systems substantially improve farmers' ability to receive or pay, transact with distant buyers, and operate without relying solely on cash in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State.

Hypothesis Three (H_{03}): Access to digital agricultural platforms has no significant effect on farmers' adaptability to supply chain disruptions among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 4: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Effect of Digital Agricultural Platforms on Adaptability to Supply Chain Disruptions

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.421	0.146	9.733	0.000
Digital Agric. Platforms	0.568	0.064	8.875	0.000
R^2: 0.407	Adjusted R^2: 0.401	R: 0.638	F-statistics: 78.766	N: 195
Dependent Variable: Adaptability to Supply Chain Disruptions				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

The regression results presented in Table 4 shows that access to digital agricultural platforms significantly and positively improves farmers' adaptability to supply-chain disruptions as indicated by the coefficient and probability values ($\beta = 0.568$, $p < 0.001$). With $R = 0.638$ and $R^2 = 0.407$, the platform access explains about 40.7% of the variation in adaptability, and the model is significant ($F = 78.766$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that digital platforms meaningfully enhance smallholder farmers' ability to adjust to unexpected changes in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State.

Hypothesis Four (H_{04}): Digital communication and coordination tools have no significant influence on information sharing among supply chain actors of smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Table 5: Summary of Linear Regression Test of the Influence of Digital Communication and Coordination Tools on Information Sharing

Variables	Co-efficient (β)	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.108	0.127	8.724	0.000
Digital Communication and Coordination Tools	0.684	0.055	12.436	0.000
R^2: 0.542	Adjusted R^2: 0.537	R: 0.736	F-statistics: 154.654	N: 195
Dependent Variable: Information Sharing among Supply Chain Actors				

Source: SPSS computation 27.0

The regression results shown in Table 5 indicates that digital communication and coordination tools significantly and positively improve information sharing among supply-chain actors as indicated with the coefficient and probability values ($\beta = 0.684$, $p < 0.001$). With $R = 0.736$ and $R^2 = 0.542$, the tools

explain about 54.2% of the variation in information sharing, while the model is significant as shown with the F value of 154.654. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted that digital communication channels substantially enhance coordination and information exchange among smallholder farmers and their supply-chain partners in Ibarapa Central LGA, Oyo State.

Conclusion

This study assessed how four digitalisation dimensions, including mobile phone use, digital payments, digital agricultural platforms, and digital communication tools, affect supply-chain agility measured by responsiveness, flexibility, adaptability and information sharing, among 195 smallholder farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA. Using the linear regressions, all four digital tools showed significant positive effects on their respective agility indicators, with communication tools and mobile-phone use most widely used and impactful while platform access remained less developed. The results imply that digitalisation substantially enhances farmers' market responsiveness, transaction flexibility, disruption adaptability, and coordination, but gaps in access and digital literacy limit full benefits. Policy recommendations include strengthening mobile-based information systems, expanding and simplifying digital payments, improving platform access, building digital skills, upgrading rural connectivity, promoting farmer digital networks, and integrating digital agriculture into policy. Suggested future research include regional comparisons, longitudinal adoption studies, inclusion of other value-chain actors, barriers to adoption, emerging technologies (AI, blockchain, IoT), and gender-differentiated analyses.

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DISPOSITION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARD AGRICULTURE AS A PROFESSION IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the disposition of secondary school students towards agriculture as a profession in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study described the demographic characteristics of students, identified factors discouraging their interest in choosing agriculture as a profession, assessed their perceptions of agriculture as a career, and examined the constraints influencing their career choice. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 80 secondary school students. Data were collected using a structured interview guide and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and Weighted Mean Score (WMS), while Chi-square analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The results showed that the mean age of the respondents was 16 years. The majority (57.5%) were male, 40.0% belonged to the science class category, and the mean family size was four persons. Most respondents (61.3%) had parents whose primary occupation was farming. Major factors discouraging students from choosing agriculture as a profession included perceived drudgery associated with agricultural activities (96.3%), course content (95.0%), peer group influence (88.8%), parental influence (52.5%), and lack of job opportunities (51.3%). Students also exhibited negative perceptions, including the belief that agriculture is meant for low-achieving students (WMS = 3.98) and that studying agriculture at the university level makes one appear inferior (WMS = 3.96). Key constraints identified were strenuous practical activities (WMS = 2.48), inadequate funding for agricultural education programmes (WMS = 2.45), and lack of equipment for practical sessions (WMS = 2.35). Chi-square analysis revealed no significant relationship between the selected socio-demographic characteristics and students' interest in agriculture ($p > 0.05$). The study recommends strengthening agricultural education and promoting agricultural career opportunities to improve students' disposition towards agriculture as a profession.

Keywords: *Disposition, Secondary School Students, Agriculture, Profession, Career Choice.*

Introduction

Agriculture has always been the backbone of Nigeria's economy, providing sustenance for the population and contributing to economic growth (Ajayi *et al.*, 2020). Despite its central role in national development, the agricultural sector faces an ongoing challenge: a lack of interest from younger generations in pursuing careers in agriculture (Ajayi *et al.*, 2020). This is particularly noticeable in rural areas where agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood. However, despite its prominence, many secondary school students in this region are reluctant to choose agriculture as a profession (Ajayi *et al*., 2020). Despite its relevance, there is a noticeable decline in youth interest in agricultural careers, especially among secondary school students. This is of great concern as the sector's long-term sustainability depends on attracting and retaining a younger workforce. In rural communities like Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, where agriculture is the mainstay of economic activity, the problem is particularly evident. Secondary school students are increasingly favoring careers in white-collar professions such as medicine, law, and engineering, while agriculture is often perceived as a "dirty" or "low-status" occupation meant only for the uneducated or poor (Ogunlela and Mukhtar, 2019).

Several factors have been identified as constraints to the selection of agriculture as a profession by young people. One of the key factors is negative societal perception. Many students and their parents view agriculture as labor-intensive and unrewarding, particularly in comparison to urban professions (Yusuf *et al.*, 2020). Economic factors also play a significant role; lack of access to land, capital, and modern farming equipment makes agriculture seem unprofitable and unattractive. Furthermore, the outdated curriculum and ineffective delivery of agricultural science in schools contribute to students' disinterest (Adekunle and Adefalu, 2021). Most secondary schools lack functional school farms, skilled

agricultural science teachers, and adequate exposure to modern agro-technologies. Consequently, students are not adequately informed about the vast opportunities in agribusiness and value chain development. Given the global push toward sustainable food systems and agricultural transformation, it is imperative to understand and address the barriers preventing young people from embracing agriculture. The future of food security and rural development in Nigeria hinges on the willingness of the youth, particularly those in agriculturally rich regions, to view agriculture not just as a means of survival, but as a promising profession. Therefore, identifying the specific constraints faced by secondary school students in this locality is crucial for developing targeted interventions aimed at reviving interest in agricultural careers and ensuring the generational continuity of the profession (Alarape and Aremu 2022). Therefore, the study provides answers to the following research questions;

i. What are the demographic characteristics of secondary school students in the study area?
ii. What are the factors distracting students' interest in choosing agriculture as a profession?
iii. What is the perception of the respondents regarding agriculture as a profession?
iv. What are the constraints faced by students in choosing agriculture as a profession?

Objectives of the Study

i. describe the demographic characteristics of secondary school students in the study area
ii. identify the factors distracting students' interest in choosing agriculture as a profession
iii. examine the perception of the respondents regarding agriculture as a profession
iv. identify the constraints faced by students in choosing agriculture as a profession

Hypothesis of the study

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between selected demographic characteristics of secondary school students and their disposition to agriculture as a profession.

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between perception of respondents and their disposition to agriculture as a profession.

Research methodology

The study was conducted in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, with its administrative headquarters located in Igboora. The Local Government Area was created on 4 December 1996 during the administration of the former Head of State, General Sani Abacha, following its separation from the then Ifeloju Local Government Area. Ibarapa Central is bounded in the east by Ibarapa East Local Government Area, in the west and north by Ibarapa North Local Government Area, and in the south by Ogun State. According to the National Population Commission (NPC) 2006 provisional census, the Local Government Area has an estimated population of 116,809 people and covers a land area of approximately 440 km^2.

Sampling procedure

A two-stage sampling technique was employed for the study.

In the first stage, four secondary schools were randomly selected from the study area. The selected schools were Igboora High School, Methodist Grammar School (Igboora), Iberekodo High School (Igboora), and Ayelogun Grammar School (Idere). All the students in these secondary schools constituted the sample frame for the study.

In the second stage, Senior Secondary School III (SSS III) students from the selected schools were considered. The total number of SSS III students in the schools were 82 in Igboora High School, 78 in Methodist Grammar School, 68 in Iberekodo High School, and 41 in Ayelogun Grammar School. Fifty percent (50%) of the students in each school were randomly selected, resulting in a total sample size of 135 respondents used for the study.

Results and discussion

Demographic characteristics of the respondent

Table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The results indicated that 47.5% of the students were within the age range of 16–18 years, while 45.0% were 15 years or below, and only 7.5% were between 19 and 20 years. The mean age of the respondents was 16 years. This distribution is consistent with the Nigerian 6–3–3–4 educational system, where students who begin formal education between the ages of 4 and 8 years are expected to reach senior secondary school between the ages of 16 and 20 years. At this developmental stage, students begin to develop awareness of occupational roles

and responsibilities, which influences their future career choices. This finding corroborates the report of Fakoya *et al.* (2021), who identified age as an important socio-economic factor influencing students' career decisions. The results further show that the majority 57.5% of the respondents were male, while 42.5% were female. The dominance of male students may be linked to the perception that agricultural activities are physically demanding. However, Ibitoye *et al.* (2018) reported that although gender differences may not significantly affect students' interest or performance in agricultural science, male students tend to show greater involvement in solving practical agricultural problems. Regarding academic class category, 40.0% of the respondents were in the science class, while only 13.8% were in the arts class. Being in the science class may influence students' inclination toward science-related disciplines such as agriculture. This finding aligns with the report of Nwankwo *et al.* (2019), who noted that agricultural science is one of the science-based disciplines that students can pursue as a lifelong career.

The results also reveal that 57.5% of the respondents indicated that their parents had formal education, while 42.5% reported that their parents had only informal education. Parental educational status plays a significant role in shaping children's educational attainment and career aspirations. Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2020) reported that parental education is one of the key determinants influencing adolescents' educational plans and occupational aspirations. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the majority 92.5% of the respondents had a family size ranging from three to five members, while only 2.5% reported a family size of two or fewer members. The mean family size was four persons, suggesting a moderate household size. Family size has been identified as an important factor influencing adolescents' career aspirations, as larger family sizes may limit financial resources available for educational advancement (FAO, 2021). Finally, the results show that more than half 61.3% of the respondents reported farming as their parents' primary source of income, while 36.3% indicated civil service and only 2.5% reported business as their parents' main occupation. Adebo *et al.* (2019) noted that parental occupation and financial capacity significantly influence children's educational opportunities and career choices, as parents who value education often encourage their children to pursue professional careers.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
≤15	36	45.0	16
16-18	38	47.5	
19-20	6	7.5	
Sex			
Male	34	57.5	
Female	46	42.5	
Student Class Category			
Science	11	40.0	
Commercial	32	13.8	
Art	11	13.8	
Ethnic Group			
Yoruba	73	91.3	
Hausa	2	2.5	
Igbo	2	2.5	
Fulani	3	3.8	
Religion			
Islam	30	37.5	
Christianity	49	61.3	
Traditional	1	1.3	
Parent Education Level			
Formal Education	34	57.5	
Non Formal Education	46	42.5	
Students' Family Size			

≤2	4	5.0	4
3-5	74	92.5	
>5	2	2.5	
Parent Primary Occupation			
Farming	30	37.5	
Civil servant	50	62.5	
Source of Parent Income			
Farming	29	36.3	
Civil servant	49	61.3	
Business	2	2.5	
TOTAL	**120**	**100.00**	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The factors distracting students' interest in choosing agriculture as a profession

The results presented in Table 2 revealed the factors discouraging students from choosing agriculture as a profession. The findings indicated that the perceived drudgery associated with agricultural activities (96.3%), the nature of the course content (95.0%), and peer group influence (88.8%) were the most prominent factors discouraging students from considering agriculture as a career. Other notable factors included parental influence (52.5%) and the perceived lack of job opportunities in the agricultural sector (51.3%). However, the majority of respondents (91.3%) indicated that teachers' personality was not a factor discouraging them from choosing agriculture as a profession. This suggests that teacher-related factors may have minimal influence on students' career decisions in this context. The findings imply that negative perceptions about the nature of agricultural work, combined with social influences and concerns about employment prospects, significantly discourage students from considering agriculture as a viable profession in the study area.

Table 2: The factors distracting students' interest in choosing agriculture as a profession

Distracting Factor	Yes	No
Associated drudgery	77(96.3)	3(3.8)
Teachers personality	7(8.8)	73(91.3)
Lack of job opportunities	41(51.3)	39(48.8)
Course contents	76(95.0)	4(5.0)
Parental influence	42(52.5)	38(47.5)
Peer group influence	71(88.8)	9(11.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The perception of the respondents regarding agriculture as a profession

The results presented in Table 3 showed the respondents' perceptions of agriculture as a profession, measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The responses were analyzed using the Weighted Mean Score (WMS) and ranked accordingly. The findings indicated that the statement *"Peer groups believe agriculture is meant for low-achieving students"* ranked first with a WMS of 3.98. This was followed by *"Studying agriculture in the university makes one appear inferior"* (WMS = 3.96) and *"Engaging in agriculture makes someone look dirty"* (WMS = 3.80). Other notable perceptions included *"Studying agriculture in the university takes longer years"* (WMS = 3.33), *"Agricultural graduates find it difficult to secure jobs"* (WMS = 3.10), and *"There are no available tools and implements for agricultural field practical's"* (WMS = 3.08). Conversely, some statements recorded lower mean scores, including *"Agricultural graduates have opportunities to work in different establishments"* (WMS = 2.55), *"Agriculture teachers are not available in schools"* (WMS = 2.16), and *"Parents do not support their children to study agriculture at the university level"* (WMS = 2.13). The results suggest that the majority of respondents hold negative perceptions about agriculture as a profession, largely influenced by peer opinions, societal attitudes, and concerns about career prospects in the agricultural sector.

Table 3: The perception of the respondents regarding agriculture as a profession

S/N	Perceptional Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	WMS	RANK
1	Peer groups believe agriculture is for low-achieving students.	2(2.5)	76(95.0)	0(0.00)	2(2.5)	0(0.00)	3.98	1st
2	Studying agriculture in the university makes you look inferior.	2(2.5)	75(93.8)	1(1.3)	2(2.5)	0(0.00)	3.96	2nd
3	Engaging in agriculture makes someone dirty.	1(1.3)	68(85.0)	6(7.5)	4(5.0)	1(1.3)	3.80	3rd
4	Studying agriculture in the university takes longer years.	33(41.3)	2(2.5)	4(5.0)	40(50.0)	1(1.3)	3.33	4th
5	Agricultural graduates find it difficult to secure jobs.	5(6.3)	37(46.3)	2(2.5)	33(41.3)	3(3.8)	3.10	5th
6	There are no available tools and implements for agriculture field practical.	2(2.5)	6(7.5)	69(86.3)	3(3.8)	0(0.00)	3.08	6th
7	Agricultural graduates have opportunities to work in different establishments.	1(1.3)	2(2.5)	37(46.5)	40(50.0)	0(0.00)	2.55	7th
8	Agriculture teachers are not available in schools.	2(2.5)	4(5.0)	7(8.8)	67(83.8)	0(0.00)	2.16	8th
9	Parents do not support their child to choose agriculture in university.	2(2.5)	2(2.5)	1(1.3)	74(92.5)	1(1.3)	2.13	9th

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The constraints faced by students in choosing agriculture as a profession

The results presented in Table 3 showed the constraints faced by students in choosing agriculture as a profession. The responses were measured using an adopted scale consisting of major constraint, minor constraint, and not a constraint. The Weighted Mean Score (WMS) was calculated and used to rank the identified constraints. The findings reveal that strenuous activities involved in agricultural practical sessions ranked highest among the constraints (WMS = 2.48). This was followed by inadequate funding for agricultural education programmes (WMS = 2.45) and lack of adequate equipment and tools for practical sessions (WMS = 2.35). Other constraints identified include limited opportunities for hands-on learning in agricultural studies (WMS = 2.08) and an inadequate number of teachers (WMS = 2.02). In addition, difficulties in accessing school library facilities (WMS = 1.55), insufficient time allocated for agricultural practical sessions, and the unavailability of agricultural materials in schools (WMS = 1.16) were also reported by the respondents as challenges. the results imply that several institutional and practical challenges hinder students' interest in choosing agriculture as a profession in the study area. These constraints largely related to inadequate resources, limited practical exposure, and insufficient institutional support for agricultural education.

Table 4: The constraints faced by students in choosing agriculture as a profession

S/N	Constraints	Major Constraint	Minor Constraint	Not a Constraint	WMS	Rank
1	Strenuous activities engaged during agricultural practical	45(56.3)	29(36.3)	6(7.6)	2.48	1st
2	Inadequate funding for agricultural education programs	38(47.5)	40(50.0)	2(2.5)	2.45	2nd
3	Lack of adequate equipment and tools for practical sessions	31(38.8)	46(57.5)	3(3.8)	2.35	3rd

4	Limited opportunities for hands-on learning in agricultural studies	9(11.3)	69(86.3)	2(2.5)	2.08	4th
5	Inadequate number of teachers	6(7.5)	71(88.8)	2(2.5)	2.02	5th
6	Difficulties in accessing school library	4(5.0)	73(91.3)	3(3.8)	2.01	6th
7	Insufficient time allotted for agricultural practical Sessions	6(7.5)	32(40.0)	42(52.5)	1.55	7h
8	Unavailability of agricultural material in school	4(5.0)	5(6.3)	71(88.8)	1.16	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Test of Hypothesis

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between selected demographic characteristics of secondary school students and their disposition to agriculture profession.

A chi-square test of independence was used to examine the relationship between selected students' demographic characteristics (age, gender, class category, parental education, and parental occupation) and their interest in agriculture. The results indicated that gender, class category, and parental occupation significantly influence students' interest in agriculture, while age and parental education were not significant predictors. Male students and students in science classes were more likely to express interest in agricultural careers, aligning with previous researches suggesting that gender and academic orientation shape career preferences (Ibitoye *et al.,* 2018; Nwankwo *et al.,* 2019). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate accepted.

Table 5: Test of significant relationship between selected demographic characteristics of secondary school students and their disposition to agriculture profession

Demographic variables	χ^2	Df	p-value	Decision
Age	4.32	2	0.115	Not significant
Gender	5.87	1	0.015	Significant
Class Category	7.41	2	0.025	Significant
Parent Education	3.21	1	0.073	Not significant
Parent Occupation	6.10	2	0.047	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between perceptions of respondents and their disposition to agriculture as profession.

Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) were used to assess students' perceptions, followed by Spearman rank correlation to examine the relationship between perceptions and interest in agriculture. A significant negative correlation was observed between students' negative perceptions and their interest in agriculture. This indicates that as negative perceptions increase, students' disposition towards agriculture decreases, supporting previous studies highlighting societal stigma as a major barrier to youth engagement in agriculture (Ogunlela & Mukhtar, 2019). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 6: Test of significant relationship between perceptions of respondents and their disposition to agriculture as profession.

Perception statement	WMS	Spearman ρ	p-value
Agriculture is for low-achievers	3.98	-0.62	0.001
Studying agriculture makes one look inferior	3.96	-0.59	0.002
Engaging in agriculture makes one dirty	3.80	-0.55	0.004

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Conclusion and recommendations

This study demonstrates that secondary school students' disposition toward agriculture as a profession is shaped by a complex interplay of socio-demographic characteristics, prevailing perceptions, social influences, and institutional factors. Although a substantial proportion of the respondents were female and many were enrolled in the commercial class, parental educational attainment was generally low, with more than half of the parents lacking formal education. These background characteristics may have influenced students' career aspirations and perceptions of agriculture.

The findings revealed that students' career choices were negatively influenced by the perceived drudgery associated with agricultural activities, teachers' personalities, limited employment prospects, the nature of agricultural course content, parental expectations, and peer influence. Furthermore, respondents held several unfavorable perceptions of agriculture, particularly the belief that the discipline is primarily intended for academically weak students, that pursuing agriculture at the tertiary level is socially inferior, and that agricultural work is physically demanding and associated with poor social status. Concerns regarding the duration of agricultural training, limited employment opportunities for graduates, and inadequate facilities for practical instruction further reinforced these negative perceptions.

Institutional constraints also emerged as important barriers to students' interest in agriculture. The most prominent challenges included the strenuous nature of practical activities, inadequate funding of agricultural education programmes, insufficient teaching equipment and practical facilities, limited opportunities for experiential learning, and shortages of qualified teachers. Additional concerns, such as inadequate library resources, insufficient time allocated for practical sessions, and the unavailability of instructional materials, further weakened students' motivation to pursue agriculture as a career.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

i. Quality assurance departments of Ministries of Education should ensure prompt and effective supervision of teachers to ensure right transfer of agricultural knowledge from teachers to students through the use of modern agricultural teaching aids and practical.
ii. Government should make agriculture responsive to the needs and aspirations of students through the provision of job opportunities, farm inputs at affordable prices or even on loan basis.
iii. Government or Non-governmental organizations should create farm settlement schemes and create jobs for students that excelled in agricultural activities right from secondary schools so as to create positive attitude towards agriculture as a course and a career.
iv. Mechanized agriculture should replace manual labour by subsidizing the price of mechanized implements by government or donor agencies to solve the problem of drudgery attached to manual labour in agricultural operations.
v. Agriculture students' scholarship funds should be introduced by the government and or non-governmental organizations to arouse the interest of the students towards choosing agriculture as a course and a career.

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MARKETING ANALYSIS OF FRUIT VEGETABLES IN IFO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study analyzed fruit vegetables marketing in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Multistage random sampling technique was used to select 120 women fruit vegetable marketers through a well-structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Result shows that majority of the marketers were married (56%), educated (60.00%) with average age of 42 years and 5 people per household. The various common fruit vegetables marketed were tomatoes (35.83%), okra (27.50%), pepper (23.33%), carrot (1.67%), cucumber (8.33%) and garden egg (3.33%). It is a profitable enterprise since the estimated gross margin (₦27,666.53) is positive with the BCR of 1.28. The market was efficient with estimated marketing efficiency of 128.51% and the marketing margin of 28.24%. Fruit vegetable marketers always faced with the challenges of high perishability, high cost of transportation and price fluctuation while they sometimes faced the challenge of vegetable scarcity. Government and community leaders should intensify efforts to improve rural infrastructure such as rehabilitation of the poor feeder roads, storage facilities, and formation of social groups which would facilitate faster delivery of vegetables to reduce wastage and transport fare. Since the enterprise is profitable, good road network and formation of social group will motivate more marketers into the enterprise in the study area. This will thereafter enhance profitability, market efficiency and rural development.

Keywords: *Fruit vegetables marketing, Marketers, Profitability, Gross margin analysis, Market efficiency.*

Introduction

Agriculture contributes significantly to the economy of Nigeria. Not less than 70% of Nigerians earn their living from agriculture and it provides among others food, employment, income, foreign exchange and raw material for the manufacturing sector (FAO, 2010). Its contribution in real terms is far beyond farm output, and includes its role as supplier of raw materials to industry, income support and food security to a large number of rural households, protection of natural environment, a market for industrial products and an earner of significant portion of foreign exchange. Among the wide range of agricultural crops vegetables occupy an important place because of their economic potentials (Joyce, 2020). The term 'vegetable' refers to the plants and plant parts that are edible shoots, leaves, fruits and roots of plants that are eaten whole or part raw or cooked as a supplement to starchy foods (Balogun *et al.*, 2015). Vegetables do not only contribute to the share of agriculture in national economy, but possess a great potential and comparative advantage to compete in the liberalized economy. Also, vegetable is highly beneficial for the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases, they contain valuable food nutrients, which can be successfully utilized to build up and repair the body organs (Ohen *et al.*, 2014).

In many states in Nigeria, vegetables are among the most significant and commonly grown food and income-generating crops for both small and large-scale businesses (Jonathan and Zanding FIBI 2023). It includes leafy vegetables such as green amaranth, telfaira occidentalis, pumpkin and celosia etc (Anugwo and Egwue, 2025b), and fruit vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumber, bell and chill pepper, okra etc. The cultivation and marketing of fruit vegetables create trading opportunities where women and youth play a prominent role in the activities, especially local and informal market where fruit vegetables such as tomatoes, chili peppers, okra, cucumber, eggplant, and garden eggs, cabbage, carrot, bell pepper, peas are sold directly to consume (World Bank 2012; Hassan, 2022). Despite the high demand for fruit vegetables, marketers often experience low and unstable profits due to several production and marketing constraints (Adebisi-Adelani *et al*., 2011).

Vegetable marketing is one of the most lucrative but risky agribusinesses due to high perishable nature, seasonality, and the need for uniformity. Jonathan and Zanding FIBI (2023) identifies inadequate storage facilities, poor transportation systems and market infrastructure as major problems facing fruit vegetable marketers which often results in substantial post-harvest losses before the products reach the consumers. Although fruit vegetable marketing has the potential to generate substantial income, there is limited empirical evidence on the level of its profitability and the efficiency of its market performance in Ifo Local Government Areas, Ogun State. Despite the fact that fruit vegetables require specialized marketing facilities, most government intervention schemes used to focus more on production rather than marketing, which has led to low productivity in the processing industries and high costs for both fresh and processed products (Bulama *et al*., 2020). Most existing studies on vegetable marketing and profitability have focused on leafy vegetables but there is limited empirical evidence on the marketing and profitability aspect of fruit vegetable in the study area. This knowledge gap limits the formulation of effective policies and interventions aimed at improving marketing efficiency. It also lowers the profit marketers could realize and their welfare. Hence, the study aims to analyze fruit vegetables marketing in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State. The findings of this study will provide useful information to marketers, policymakers, agricultural extension agents, financial institutions, investors and agribusiness in designing strategies to improve the efficiency and profitability of fruit vegetable especially in Ogun State Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State Nigeria. It is strategically located within the southwestern region of Nigeria, sharing boundaries with Ado/Ota local government area, Ewekoro and Lagos state. Ifo local government area lies between, latitude 6º45'N and 6 º 55'N and longitude 3º10'E and 3º25'E, with a tropical climate characterized by distinct wet and dry season. The area receives an average annual rainfall of about 1200-1300mm, which support the cultivation of a wide variety of fruit vegetable such as tomatoes, chili pepper, bell pepper, cucumber, okra, pumpkin and peas (Ojo and Adebayo, 2017). The fertile soil and favorable agro-ecological condition make agriculture a major economic activity in the area. Multistage random sampling technique was used in selecting 120 women fruit vegetable marketers in the study area. The first stage involves purposive selection of 4 wards. In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select 2 major markets from each ward. While the third stage involves the selection of 4 women fruit vegetable marketers from each market in the study area. This resulted to 4 wards, 8 markets and 4 marketers given a total of 128 marketers. Meanwhile a total of 120 filled questionnaires were retrieved and used for the analysis.

Analytical techniques

The analytical tools that were used to achieve the research objectives include descriptive statistics (frequency table, means and percentages) and inferential statistics such as profitability ratio, market performance and gross margin analysis.

Profitability ratio

i. Gross Margin

Gross margin was used to examine the profitability of fruit vegetable marketers

$$GM = TR - TVC \quad (1)$$

$$TC = TFC + TVC \quad (2)$$

Where: TC = total cost, TFC = total fixed cost, TVC= total variable cost in Naira

GM = gross margin in Naira, TR = total revenue in Naira (Unit Price x Quantity),

ii. Profit = TR-TC (3)

$$\text{Benefit-Cost Ratio} = \frac{\text{Gross Income (TR)}}{\text{Total Costs (Variable + Fixed)}} \quad (4)$$

iii. Return on investment (ROI)

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{Net\ Icome}{Total\ Cost} x100 \quad (5)$$

Net income = Total revenue- Total cost

If the ROI is positive = profitable

If ROI is negative = not profitable

Market performance

Marketing efficiency and market margin were used to ascertain the performance of fruit vegetable market in the study area.

i. Marketing margin analysis

Marketing margin has remained an important tool in analyzing the performance of marketing systems. It is the difference between what the consumer pays for final the product and the amount the producer receives (Arene, 2003). It is expressed in equation as:

$$\text{MM} = \frac{\text{selling price} - \text{cost price}}{\text{selling price}} x \frac{100}{1} \quad (6)$$

Where: MM = Marketing margin (₦), SP = Selling Price (₦), CP = Cost Price (₦)

Marketing efficiency

Marketing efficiency was used also to ascertain the performance of fruit vegetable market. Efficiency in the agricultural industry is the most frequently used measure of market performance. Efficient marketing optimizes the ratio between inputs and outputs. Efficiency can be expressed in physical or monetary terms, if monetary terms are used, the efficiency concept becomes a ratio of benefits to cost or if in physical, it becomes output to input used. Following Olugbire, *et al.,* (2020), Umar and Yaro, (2017) and Adejobi *et al.*, (2011) the study used monetary terms in measuring marketing efficiency of fruit vegetable.

$$\text{Marketing Efficiency (ME)} = \frac{\text{Ttoal revenue}}{Total\ Marketing\ cost} x100 \quad (7)$$

Total marketing cost = sum of all costs from producer till the product reaches the consumer such as transport, market due, storage, labour, packaging cost etc.

1. When ME = 100%, it implies that the marketers just recovered the cost incurred in carrying out the marketing services. This is breakeven point for the marketer.
2. ME > 100% implies that the marketers covered the cost of marketing and made a margin above the 100%. The market is efficient. This is profit for the marketer
3. ME< 100% indicates that the marketers are operating at a loss.

Results and discussions

Result in Table 1shows that more than half of the fruit vegetable marketers were married (56%) and educated (60.00%) while greater percentage had primary school education (37%). This implies that majority of the marketers were literate having at least primary level of education. This is contrary to the findings of Onah *et al.,* (2022) who observed low literacy level among marketers in Enugu State Nigeria in state, marketers' low level of education can reduce profitability as marketers may not have needs to access market strategies so as to enhance production and marketing needs. The mean age of the respondents was 42years which implies that majority of the households were young and still in their active age group. Majority of the marketers were full time fruit vegetable marketers (74.16%) with 5 people per households. The average monthly income was about ₦48,000 with 9years average year of marketing experience. However, about 67% of the fruit vegetable marketers do not belong to any cooperative society and had no access to credit facility.

Table 1: Distribution of respondent according to socio-economic characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age Group			
≤30	18	15.00	
31-50	81	67.50	42
50 and above	21	17.50	
Marital status			
Single	18	15.00	
Married	68	56.67	
Divorce	18	15.00	
Widow	16	13.33	
Educational level			
No formal education	46	38.33	
Primary	44	36.67	
Secondary	22	18.33	
Tertiary	8	6.67	
Secondary occupation			
vegetable Marketing	89	74.16	
Others	31	25.83	
House hold size			
≤ 3	17	14.17	
4 – 6	90	75.00	5
6 and above	13	10.83	
Year of experience			
≤ 5	41	34.17	
6 – 10	55	45.83	9.45
11 – 15	9	7.50	
15 above	15	12.50	
Income			
≤ 10,000	11	9.17	
11000- 50,000	51	42.50	48,092
51000-100000	38	31.66	
100000 above	20	16.67	
Access to coop			
Yes	43	35.83	
No	77	64.17	
Access to credit			
Yes	39	32.50	
No	81	67.50	

Field survey 2026

The major types of fruit vegetables marketed in the study area

Result in Table 2 shows the distribution of the different type of fruit vegetable marketed in selected markets in Ifo local government area of Ogun state. The results revealed that 35.83% of the respondent sells tomatoes, 27.50% sold okra, 23.33% sold pepper, 1.67% sold cucumber, 3.33 % sold garden egg, 8.33% sold carrot. This implies that majority of the respondent engage in tomatoes marketing. Cucumber and garden egg has the lowest percentage in the market, this may be due to the fact that they are not plenty in the market because the two-fruit vegetables were seasonal.

The result also revealed that tomatoes constituted the highest proportion of fruit vegetables marketed in the study area. This finding may be attributed to the high demand for tomatoes in households and food service establishments (Olugbire *et al.*, 2020).

Table 2: The major types of fruit vegetables marketed in the study area

Type of fruit marketed	Frequency	Percentage
Tomatoes	43	35.83
Okra	33	27.50
Pepper	28	23.33
Cucumber	2	1.67
Garden egg	4	3.33
Carrot	10	8.33
Total	120	100.00

Field survey 2026

Estimating the profitability of fruit vegetables marketing

The result of cost and return analysis as a measure of profitability among the marketers shows that fruit vegetable marketers had an average total variable cost and total revenue of ₦40,234.03 and ₦67,900.56 respectively with a total cost of ₦52,835.00 per month as revealed in the result in Table 3. Also, the gross margin analysis revealed a value of ₦27,666.53 per month and a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 1.28. Notably, the marketing of fruit vegetables yields a considerable profit of ₦ 15,065.56 per month with an average rate of returns to total investment of 0.2851 = 28.51%, this implies that for every ₦100 invested into the business, marketers will get ₦29 profit, suggesting that this enterprise is economically viable. Thus, fruit vegetables marketing is a profitable business venture in the study area because the estimated gross margin value was positive and BCR is greater than 1. This is similar to the previous studies (such as Anugwo and Egwue, 2025a) that vegetable marketing is a profitable venture in Nigeria. The result in Table 3, further shows that marketing margin was found to be 28.24%. This reveals that vegetable marketer exhibit a moderate level of daily marketing activities. The estimated marketing efficiency is 128.51% which implies that fruit vegetable marketing is efficient in the study area since the efficiencies is greater than 100%. This suggest that 28% of what consumer pays is the marketer profit after covering the product cost. This result is consistent with the studies of Olukosi *et al.* (2005) and Onah *et al.*,2022**)** that vegetable marketing margin has a good market performance.

Table3: Determination of cost and return of fruit vegetables marketing

Variable	Mean (₦/Month)
Total Variable cost (TVC)	40,234.03
Total revenue (TR)	67,900.56
Total cost	52,835.00
Gross margin (GM)	₦27,666.53
Benefit cost ratio (BCR)	1.28
Return on investment (ROI)	28.51%
Average selling price per bundle	₦23,718
Average cost price per bundle	₦17,019
Marketing margin	28.24%
Net profit	15,065.56
Marketing efficiency	128.51%

Field survey 2026

Constraints faced by fruit vegetable marketers in the study area

Result in Table 4 shows the constraints fruit vegetable marketers were confronting in the study area. Perishability (spoilage) of the fruit vegetable was a major challenge that the majority (87.50%) of the marketers always faced. The Perishability nature of the fruit vegetable couple with customers' demand for fresh fruit vegetables has resulted in a great wastage and loss for the marketers. These losses reduce the quantity available for sale and ultimately affect marketers' profitability (Thompson and Agbugba, 2013). This is consistent with the findings of Jonathan and Zanding Fibi (2023) that perishability (spoilage) nature and price fluctuation of the produce were predominantly constraints faced by the vegetable marketers in Taraba state, Nigeria. Majority (90%) of the marketers always faced the challenge of price fluctuation especially during the harvest periods when there is always a surplus in the market supply (excess supply), price falls and many times marketers bear the loss. Haruna *et al.* (2012) reported that fluctuations in market prices caused by seasonal production, inconsistent supply, inflation, and changing consumer demand make it difficult for marketers to predict returns on their investments. Furthermore, the result in Table 4 reveals that all the fruit vegetable marketers always face the challenge of high cost of transportation. However, the fruit vegetables marketers rarely face the challenges of poor customer patronage, inadequate capital, lack of storage facility and marketing information.

Table 4: Constraints faced by fruit vegetable marketers in the study area

Constraints	Always		Sometimes		Rarely	
	Freq	**percentage**	**Freq**	**percentage**	**Freq**	**percentage**
Perishability	105	87.50	0	0	15	12.50
High cost of transportation	120	100.00	0	0	0	0
Price fluctuation	108	90.00	04	3.33	8	6.67
Lack of storage facility	12	10.00	25	20.83	83	69.17
Poor marketing information	17	14.16	20	16.67	83	69.17
Inadequate capital	20	16.67	35	29.17	65	54.16
Poor patronage	5	4.17	20	16.67	95	79.17
Scarcity	7	5.83	85	70.83	28	23.33
Market due/ commission	17	14.16	25	20.83	78	65.00

Field survey 2026, Always a challenge, sometimes a challenge and rarely a challenge Freq= Frequency

Conclusion and recommendations

Fruit vegetables marketing is profitable enterprise in the study area with positive gross margin and BCR being greater than 1 and marketing margin of 28.24%. The Fruit vegetable marketing is economically viable and efficient in the study area as the marketers get 28% of what consumer pays as profit after covering the product cost. Fruit vegetable marketers always face with challenges of high perishability, high cost of transportation and price fluctuation and rarely face the challenges of poor customer patronage and marketing information.

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

1. Government and community leaders should intensify efforts to improve rural infrastructure such as rehabilitation of the poor feeder roads, storage facilities, and formation of social groups (cooperative society) which would facilitate faster delivery of vegetables to reduce spoilage, it will also reduce the transport fare and thereby increase the profit.
2. Since the enterprise is profitable, good road network and formation of social group will motivate more marketers into the enterprise, help to obtain government support on provision of credit and other factors of production in the study area.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING ENTREPRENEUR'S CHOICE OF MAIZE VALUE-ADDITION ENTERPRISES IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Maize value-addition has become an important agribusiness activity because maize is widely cultivated and consumed, a multipurpose crop that contributes to global food security however, despite these opportunities, entrepreneurial choice in maize value-added enterprises in Nigeria remain low and skewed toward raw grain trading. Thus, this study examined the factors influencing entrepreneur's choice of maize value-addition enterprises in Ibarapa central local government area Oyo State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling techniques was used to select 120 entrepreneurs using structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Result shows that majority of the entrepreneurs were female (94.20%), married (80.83%) and educated with average age of 43years. Majority of the entrepreneurs chose to engage in roasted and boiled maize value-addition enterprises. The common forms of maize value-added enterprises in the study area includes roasted corn (47.50%), boiled maize (35.58%), eko (cooked pap) etc. Factors such as processing experience, access to credit, educational level were positively influenced the choice of almost all the common maize value-added enterprises while factors like sex of the entrepreneurs, household size and raw materials and processing costs were negatively influenced the choice of almost all the common maize value-added enterprise in the study area. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions, such as improved rural infrastructure (to ease transportation) lowering raw materials and processing cost, effective higher educational training to strengthen the processing enterprise and the promotion of maize entrepreneurs' cooperative group to enhance efficiency and better choice of maize value addition in the study area.

Keywords: *Maize value addition, Profitability, Maize entrepreneurs, Choice of maize value-added enterprise*

Introduction

Maize is one of the most important agricultural crops in the world produced in a large quantity in Nigeria with the country as one of the top producers in Africa (FAO, 2023; USDA, 2022). Maize production in Nigeria is characterized by seasonality in production and lack of storage facilities which has been a serious threat to global food security (Obasi *et al.*, 2025). Despite the improvement in agricultural sector in the past two decay, Nigeria's *per capita* food output has continued to decline as a result of farmers and other entrepreneurs who were not getting the best return on their investments. This could be due to several factors, including insufficient technology and essential processing machines, post-harvest losses, high transportation cost, lack of market access, capital, extension services, low fertilizer usage etc, (Adejobi *et al.*, 2020). Thus, to increase return on investments and to ensure sustainability in the agricultural sector, the primary focus lies in mitigating postharvest losses of already produced food, rather than only focusing on increasing agricultural production levels.

This approach refers to the concept of value-addition of agricultural products which is seen as a pivotal strategy for improving the viability, profitability, and sustainability of agricultural systems. It also plays a vital role in fighting hunger, alleviating poverty, improving living standards, and bolstering food security (UNIDO, 2021). Value-addition simply implies the transformative process that elevates a product from its original state to a more valuable form through innovation and creativity (Mmasa, 2013). It serves as a critical input for the poultry feed industry, breweries, and food manufacturers such as

promasidor, Nestlé, and flour mills (Ater *et al.*,2018). Such enterprises have the potential to increase profit margins by 30-70%, create jobs, strengthen agribusiness competitiveness and retain more values within the local economy (Mordor Intelligence, 2021).

However, despite these opportunities derived from the maize value-addition enterprises, entrepreneurial choice /participation in maize value-added enterprises in Nigeria remain low and skewed toward raw grain trading. Over 85% of maize is sold without processing while less than 15% is processed by small and medium-scale entrepreneurs. Most processors concentrate on low-capital options of maize value-addition like boiled and roasted maize, local milling, ogi etc, even when industrial markets exist, while only few entrepreneurs choose to engage in feed mill, starch and other industrial derivatives of maize products which could yield higher profit returns and larger market shares. Omoare *et al*. (2019) reported that most maize entrepreneurs often struggle with the decision of which maize enterprise options to invest in due to high capital risk and uncertain returns. In view of the above, this study set out to explore on the profitability of various maize value-added enterprises and the factors influencing the entrepreneur's choice among the enterprise.

Several studies have examined the significant of maize value-addition in Nigeria, for instance, analysis of entrepreneurial profitability and participation level in maize value-addition was examined by Obasi *et al*. (2025), while analysis of maize value-addition among entrepreneurs was examined by Maku *et al.* (2023). However, there is a gap of information on the factors influencing entrepreneurs' choice among different maize value-addition enterprises option in the study area. The choice among different maize value-addition enterprises is not random because it offers varying economic returns and requires different levels of capital investment, technical training, technology and labor (Muyu *et al.*, 2025). Thus, understanding the factors influencing entrepreneur's choice among maize value- addition enterprises will facilitate increase varieties of maize value-addition products, industrialization, employment generation, and increase exportation of Nigeria's maize-based foods. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the factors influencing entrepreneurs' choice among different maize value addition enterprises in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo state. The outcome of this study will provide a useful information for policymakers, extension agents, financial institutions, agribusiness owners and investors, on the key factors influencing entrepreneur's choice of maize value-addition enterprise in the study area.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo state Nigeria. The local government area consists of two major towns such as Igboora and Idere. The rainfall pattern in the area follows a tropical type with an average annual rainfall pattern of 300mm and fairly high temperature with land mass area of 408,424sq/km. Ibarapa central area sustains its economy primarily through agriculture with fertile land supporting the cultivation of crops such as yams, cassava, cocoa, maize, and vegetables and cash crops like cocoa, oil palm and cashew. Livestock farming in the area ensuring a supply of meat and dairy products contributing to the local economy, this includes poultry, goat and cattle production. Multistage random sampling technique was used in selecting 120 maize entrepreneurs in the study area.

Analytical techniques
Gross Margin

$$GM=TR-TVC \quad (1)$$

Where, GM= Gross margin

TR=Total Revenue and TVC=Total Variable Cost

Multinomial Logistic Regression model

Factors influencing entrepreneurs' choice among different maize value-addition enterprises in the study area was investigated using multinomial logistic regression.

The model is specified as

The multinomial logistic regression model is generally specified in equation

$$\Pr(Y_i = j) = \frac{e^{\beta_j' x_i}}{1+\sum_{k=1}^{J} e^{\beta_k' x_i}} \quad \text{for} \quad = 1,2,3,4 \qquad (2)$$

Given the based category Y = 0, the relative probability of Yi = j is provided.

The model is explicitly expressed as

$$Y_0 = \alpha_0 + \beta_{10} X_1 + \beta_{20} X_2 + \cdots \beta_n X_n + \epsilon_i \qquad (3)$$

Where:

Y = frequency count representing choice of a particular maize value-addition enterprise

Y_0 = representing choice of pap as maize value-added enterprises

Yi = representing choice of eko (cooked pap) as maize value-added enterprises

Y_2 = representing choice of boiled maize as maize value- added enterprises

Y_3 = representing choice of feed mill as maize value- added enterprises

Y_4 = representing choice of roasted maize as maize value- added enterprises

X_1 - X_n = the vector of the explanatory variables where n = 1,2,3…

$\beta_1 - \beta_{11}$ = coefficients.

ϵ_i = error terms.

$\propto_0 - \propto_3$ the intercept or constant terms.

$X_1 - X_{11}$ = explanatory variable

X_1 = Age, X_2 = Sex, X_3 = Marital status, X_4 = Level of education, X_5 = Household size, X_6 =Access to credit, X_7 = Membership of cooperative society, X_8 = primary occupation, X_9 = Processing experience, X_{10} = income, X_{11} = Raw materials and Processing cost

Results and discussions

Result in Table 1shows that more than 90% of the maize entrepreneurs were female, 80.83% were married and educated with greater percentage held secondary education (54.17%). The mean age of the respondents was 43years which implies that majority of the maize entrepreneurs were young and still in their active age group. Gaining access to education helps to develop human capital, which increases income and labour productivity. The mean household size was 5 people per households. Majority of the respondents were full time maize entrepreneurs (82.50%) and about 47.00% of the maize entrepreneurs engaged in maize value-added enterprises as their primary occupation. However, more than 70.00% of the maize entrepreneurs do not belong to any cooperative society and had no access to credit facility.

Table 1: Distribution of Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Sex			
Male	7	5.80	
Female	113	94.20	
Age Group			
≤ 30 years	5	4.20	
31 - 40 years	44	36.70	43 years
41 - 50 years	60	50.0	

> 50 years	11	9.20	
Marital Status			
Married	97	80.83	
Divorced	3	2.50	
Widowed	7	5.80	
Single	13	10.83	
Household Size			
≤ 3 persons	28	23.30	
4 - 6 persons	77	64.20	
> 6persons	15	12.50	5 persons
Education			
No formal	20	16.67	
Primary	11	9.16	
Secondary	65	54.17	
Tertiary	24	20.00	
Access to Credit			
Yes	13	10.80	
No	107	89.20	
Cooperative Membership			
Member	34	28.33	
Non-Member	86	71.67	

Source: field survey 2025.

Different forms of maize value-additions enterprises in the study area

The various maize value-additions enterprises chosen by the maize entrepreneurs in the study area were presented in the result in Table 2. This indicates that 47.50% of the maize entrepreneurs chose to add value to their maize and process it into roasted corn for sale, 38.58% boiled their maize for sale and 29.17% of the maize entrepreneurs chose to engage in both boiled and roasted maize enterprises. The result reveals further that 25.83% of the maize entrepreneurs processed their maize into eko (cooked pap) while 23.33%, 12.50%, 11.67%, 4.17%, 5.83% and 6.67% processed their maize into pap (ogi), mosa, tuwo, feed mill, popcorn and corn flour, respectively. The result suggest that many entrepreneurs mostly chose to engage in roasted and boiled maize value-addition enterprises and only few choses to engage in industrial value-added maize enterprises like feed mill and corn flour. The result is consistent with the findings of Omoare *et al.* (2019) study that most processors concentrate on low-capital options of maize value-addition like boiled and roasted maize, local milling, ogi etc, while only fewer chosen to engage in feed mill, starch, or industrial derivatives of maize products.

Table 2: Distribution of different forms of processed maize value-addition enterprise

Processed Maize	Frequency	Per centage (%)
Roasted maize	57	47.50
Boiled maize	43	35.58
Boiled /roasted maize	35	29.17
Pap (ogi)	28	23.33
Massa	14	11.67
Popcorn	07	5.83

Tuwo	15	12.50
Corn Flour	08	6.67
Eko	31	25.83
Feed mill	05	4.17
Starch	04	3.33

Source: field survey 2025 *Multiple responses*

Cost and returns of maize value addition enterprises

Result in Table 3 shows the costs and returns of maize value-addition enterprises per week in the study area. Maize entrepreneurs that processed their maize into boiled maize for sale has the highest gross margin of ₦ 23,241.67 per week followed by feed mill (₦15,765.22), eko (₦15,483.34) and pap (₦ 14,541.66). The result further reveals that maize entrepreneurs that processed their maize into roasted corn for sale has a lower gross margin of ₦ 12,641.54 despite that it has highest percentage of people engaging in it when compare with boiled maize as revealed in Table 2. Therefore, the overall total variable cost (TVC) is ₦111,565.20, total returns (TR) is ₦191,058.89 and the gross margin is ₦ 91,539.12 per week. The positive value of the gross margin implies that the maize value-addition is profitable in the study area. The result is consistent with other previous study findings that maize value-addition enterprises is profitable in Nigeria (Obasi *et al.*,2025).

Table 3: Costs and returns of maize value addition in naira (₦) per week

	Mossa	**Tuwo**	**Feed Mill**	**Eko (Cooked Pap)**	**Pap (Ogi)**	**Roasted**	**Boiled**	**Pooled**
VARIABLE	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Total Variable Cost (TVC)	4,095.17	5,839.17	41,672.00	16,558.33	6,791.67	11,733.33	24,875.00	111,565.20
Total Revenue (TR)	7,716.67	10,083.33	57, 437.22	32,041.67	21,333.33	24,400.00	48,116.67	191,058.89
Gross Margin (GM)	3,621.50	4,244.17	15,765.22	15,483.34	14,541.66	12,641.54	23,241.67	91,539.12

Source: field survey 2025.

Factors influencing the choice of maize value-added enterprises

Factors influencing the choice of maize value-added enterprises by the maize entrepreneurs was examined using multinomial logistic regression. In accordance to the a-prior expectation the coefficient of sex was negative and statistically significant with eko (cooked pap) β= -0.352, p< 0.05). Though not significant with the choice of pap and boiled maize value-added enterprises as revealed in Table 4; that is, it has no influence on the likelihood of maize entrepreneurs chosen both pap and boiled maize but the negative sign on their coefficient suggests that male entrepreneurs are less involved in the choice of these maize value-added enterprises unlike their female counterpart. The result implies that being female entrepreneurs influence the choice of eko, pap and boiled maize value-added enterprises more than their male counterpart. However, being male influences the choice of feed mill enterprise. This agrees with the findings of Ater *et al.,* (2018) that women are more involves and responsible for food, farm processing and post-harvest operations in Nigeria. The marginal effects result of the product implies that the choice of eko (cooked pap) was reduced by 61.80 % among male entrepreneurs and also increases by 61.80% among female entrepreneurs relative to the base category.

The coefficient of age was negative and statistically significant with pap (β= -0.085, p< 0.10) and feed mill enterprises (β= -0.335, p< 0.10), This implies that the older the maize entrepreneurs the less they make choice of pap and feed mill enterprises. The study suggest that age of processors favored grain entrepreneurs as against processing it into pap, feed mill and eko. The marginal effects for these variables imply that 1% increase or a year older in age of entrepreneurs reduces the choice of processing maize into pap and feed mill by 0.02% and 3.2% respectively relative to the base category. Despite both pap and feed mill enterprises were significant, feed mill has a higher coefficient value to pap. This implies that feed mill enterprise requires more active younger people who are energetic and still in their productive age because of the rigor or power-consuming activities it involves when compare to pap maize value-added enterprise.

Furthermore, marital status was positive and statistically significant influencing the choice of pap (β= 0.765, p< 0.01) and feed mill enterprises (β= 2.912, p< 0.05). But it was negative and has no significant influence on the choice of boiled maize and eko. The choice of engaging in pap and feed mill enterprises increases by 36.2% and 32.12% respectively among married entrepreneurs and lower among unmarried entrepreneurs relative to the based category.

The cost of both raw materials and processing (transport cost, input cost) was negative and statistically significant with all the most common maize value-added enterprises in the study area. This implies that 1% increase in the raw materials and processing costs reduces the choice of engaging in maize value-added enterprises in the study area. The result revealed that high cost of both raw materials and processing reduces the choice of all the common maize value-added enterprises in the study area.

Table 4: Factors influencing the choice of maize value-added enterprise

	Pap (Ogi)			Boiled maize			Eko (cooked ap)			Feed mill		
Variables	**Coeff**	**P-value**	**Marginal effect**	**Coeff**	**P-value**	**Marginal effect**	**Coeff**	**P-value**	**Marginal effect**	**Coeff**	**P- value**	**Marginal effect**
Age	-0.085* (0.143)	0.053	-0.002	0.079 (0.075)	0.292	0.041	-0.102 (0.116)	0.382	-0.007	-0.335* (0.194)	0.085	-0.032
Sex	-0.205 (0.621)	0.400	-0.370	-0.552 (1.380)	-0.441	-1.327	-0.352** (1.180)	-0.031	0.618	0.900 (2.298)	0.695	0.341
Marital status	0.765*** (0.238)	0.002	0.362	-1.508 (1.154)	-0.192	-0.033	-0.484 (0.368)	-0.189	-0.071	2.912** (1.148)	0.011	0.321
Edu level	2.756* (1.486)	0.064	0.095	1.730* (0.891)	0.052	0.014	1.730* (0.891)	0.052	0.014	2.332 (1.96)	0.235	0.189
Household size	0.292 (0.309)	0.346	0.013	-0.110*** (0.041)	-0.008	-0. 030	-3.675* (1.910)	-0.054	-0.150	0.560 (0.475)	0.239	0.346
Proc exp	3.760*** (1.298)	0.004	0.107	1.160 (0.871)	0.183	0.032	0.122 (0.636)	0.847	0.057	4.023* (2.075)	0.052	0.032
Access to credit	0.572** (0.675)	0.047	0.012	0.366 (0.571)	0.521	0.189	1.414* (0.812)	0.081	0.143	1.912** (0.809)	0.018	0.070
Income	4.867** (2.095)	0.020	0.100	2.650** (0.000)	0.022	0.346	1.441* 0.778	0.064	0.100	2.912** (1.148)	0.011	0.062
Cooperative	2.855* (1.660)	0.085	0.034	3.114** (1.441)	0.031	0.081	5.909*** (1.461)	0.000	0.371	1.536* (1.644)	0.065	0.423
Raw materials and processing cost	-0.082* (0.048)	0.093	-0.002	-1.240** (0.013)	0.010	-0.093	-3.460** (0.210)	-0.037	-0.074	-0.003* (0.002)	0.086	-0.051
Constant	-1.865 (1.343)	1.39		-3.978 (4.834)	0.823		1.752 (0.773)	2.267		2.270 (5.370)	0.960	

Note: ***, **, * Significant at 1%, 5% and 10%; Observations = 118; LR chi^2(11) = 194.49; Prob > chi^2 = 0.000; Pseudo R^2= 0.5189; Log likelihood = -90.151897; Source: field survey 2025.

Conclusion and recommendations

Maize value-addition is a profitable enterprise in the study area with a positive value of the estimated gross margin. Factors such as processing experience, access to credit, educational level, monthly income and membership of a cooperative society had positive influence on the choice of almost all the common maize value-added enterprise in the study area while factors like sex of the entrepreneurs, household size, raw materials and processing costs had negative influence on the choice of almost all the common maize value-added enterprise among maize entrepreneurs in the study area.

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

- The result revealed that high cost of both raw materials and processing reduces the choice of all the common maize value-added enterprises in the study area. Thus, the need for targeted interventions by both government and non-governmental organization such as good roads (to ease transportation) lowering raw material and processing cost, effective higher educational training to strengthen the processing enterprise and the promotion of maize entrepreneurs' cooperative, to enhance efficiency, access to credit and better choice of maize value addition in the study area.
- The study revealed that majority of the maize entrepreneurs did not chose to engage in the maize value-added enterprises such as corn flour. The study therefore recommended that partnerships should be fostered amongst governments, NGOs and local community leaders to create a supportive environment for value-addition in maize enterprises.

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ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATION AND BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRO-ALLIED SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Agro-allied small and medium enterprises operate in a volatile environment in which sustained competitiveness depends on their capacity to innovate. This study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and business sustainability among agro-allied small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Anambra State, Nigeria. Data were collected from 396 qualifying enterprises located in Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi and Ekwulobia. Eligible enterprises operated in an agro-allied value-chain activity, employed 10–199 workers and fell within the small-enterprise net-asset band of ₦5 million to below ₦50 million or the medium-enterprise band of ₦50 million to below ₦500 million, excluding land and buildings. Each enterprise was represented by a knowledgeable owner-manager, chief executive, operations manager or senior manager. A cross-sectional survey of the 396 respondents was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling and hierarchical regression. The 32-item instrument demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity: indicator loadings ranged from 0.763 to 0.875, Cronbach's alpha from 0.854 to 0.888, composite reliability from 0.902 to 0.918, and average variance extracted from 0.652 to 0.718. Product innovation ($\beta = 0.130$, $p = .007$), process innovation ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < .001$), marketing innovation ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < .001$) and organisational innovation ($\beta = 0.242$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted business sustainability. The aggregate entrepreneurial innovation construct had a strong effect ($\beta = 0.667$, $p < .001$), explained 44.5% of the variance, and showed predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.421$). Hierarchical regression confirmed that the four dimensions added 40.6% explanatory power beyond firm age, size and sub-sector. The findings establish that entrepreneurial innovation significantly strengthens business sustainability, with organisational and marketing innovation producing the strongest direct effects and product innovation the smallest. The study recommends that agro-allied SMEs prioritise formal organisational routines and market-facing innovation while coordinating them with process and product improvements.

Keywords: *Agro-allied SMEs, Business Sustainability, Entrepreneurial Innovation, Product Innovation, Process Innovation*

Introduction

Small and medium enterprises link local resources, entrepreneurship, employment and market development. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria and the National Bureau of Statistics (SMEDAN & NBS, 2021) identify the MSME sector as a major route through which households enter productive activity and participate in value chains. Agro-allied SMEs are particularly important because they transform agricultural outputs through processing, storage, packaging, logistics, input supply and distribution. Sustaining these contributions, however, depends on how effectively agro-allied SMEs respond to the increasingly difficult conditions in which they operate. These firms operate under unstable input prices, irregular energy supply, climate-related disruptions, post-harvest losses, limited finance, infrastructure gaps and changing consumer expectations. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD, 2022) identifies innovation, digitalisation, research linkages and value-chain development as central to agricultural transformation. In relation to Anambra State, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ, 2024) similarly emphasises financing, mechanisation, renewable energy, risk management, post-harvest loss reduction and climate-smart practices. Responding to these pressures requires a continuous capacity to adapt, which brings entrepreneurial innovation into focus as the practical means through which SMEs renew their activities.

Entrepreneurial innovation is the purposeful creation, adoption or commercial application of new or significantly improved ideas. In SMEs, it may involve improved foods and packaging, efficient

production or storage methods, digital sales channels, new distribution partnerships, mobile inventory systems, employee training or revised work structures. Quadri (2021) found that product, process and organisational innovation improved the productivity of Nigerian SMEs. Within Anambra State, Okoli et al. (2024) also reported that product, process, technological and marketing innovation were associated with important performance outcomes. These studies show that innovation is embedded in the daily decisions of SMEs and can be examined systematically through its principal dimensions.

The present study treats entrepreneurial innovation as four related dimensions. Product innovation introduces new or meaningfully improved goods and services. Le and Ikram (2022) showed that sustainability-oriented innovation can strengthen SME competitiveness and performance, while Oduro (2024) confirmed a positive relationship between product eco-innovation and sustainable performance. Process innovation improves production, storage, delivery, energy use, quality control and waste management. Rustiarini et al. (2022) demonstrated that green innovation can produce both financial and sustainability benefits, and Molina-García et al. (2025) identified process innovation as a mechanism supporting environmental sustainability. Marketing innovation applies new approaches to branding, pricing, promotion, customer engagement and distribution. Organisational innovation involves managerial practices, work arrangements, partnerships and knowledge systems. Phonthanukitithaworn et al. (2023) found that intellectual capital, sustainability initiatives and openness to external knowledge support SME innovation, while Oduro (2024) reported a particularly strong contribution from organisational eco-innovation. Taken together, these four dimensions represent the innovation practices through which SMEs may strengthen their broader economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Business sustainability is the capacity to remain economically viable while creating acceptable social value and managing environmental effects. Kannan and Gambetta (2025) describe technology-enabled market orientation and customer engagement as recurring features of SME sustainability strategies, while Oduro (2024) treats sustainability as an outcome that integrates economic, social and environmental performance. Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains the expected relationship by proposing that firms remain viable when they sense changes, seize opportunities and reconfigure resources and routines. Alharthi (2025) linked technological innovation capabilities and creativity with enterprise performance and sustainability, and Mehmood et al. (2026) showed how digital and sustainable innovation capabilities support environmental, social and governance outcomes. Nevertheless, Nigerian evidence remains centred mainly on sales, productivity, customer satisfaction and related conventional indicators. Nwankwo et al. (2022) examined entrepreneurial orientation and agro-processing SME performance, while Okoli et al. (2024) assessed innovation practices and selected performance outcomes. The joint economic, social and environmental sustainability effects of product, process, marketing and organisational innovation therefore remain insufficiently established. This unresolved relationship constitutes the central empirical problem of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State face volatile input costs, energy constraints, post-harvest losses, environmental pressures, changing customer preferences and strong competition. Although continuous innovation is required for survival, owner-managers often introduce isolated changes without knowing which forms of innovation most strongly support long-term sustainability. Packaging may improve while production remains inefficient; equipment may be purchased without employee skills, maintenance routines or market access; and short-term sales growth may coexist with waste, unsafe work practices or weak stakeholder relationships. Such fragmented responses can undermine economic continuity, social responsibility and environmental performance. Nwankwo et al. (2022) linked entrepreneurial orientation with the performance of agro-processing SMEs in Anambra State, while Okoli et al. (2024) connected innovation practices with conventional SME performance indicators. However, neither study clearly established the relative and joint effects of product, process, marketing and organisational innovation on multidimensional business sustainability, particularly after controlling for firm age, size and sub-sector. Many local studies also depend on bivariate correlation or ordinary regression without fully validating multidimensional constructs. Consequently, enterprise support programmes lack sufficiently robust evidence on the innovation practices that produce the strongest

sustainable benefits. This study therefore tested a validated higher-order model and the predictive relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and business sustainability among agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State;
2. determine the relationship between process innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State;
3. assess the relationship between marketing innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State;
4. evaluate the relationship between organisational innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State; and
5. determine the joint predictive effect of entrepreneurial innovation on business sustainability after controlling for firm age, firm size and agro-allied sub-sector.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What relationship exists between product innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State?
2. What relationship exists between process innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State?
3. What relationship exists between marketing innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State?
4. What relationship exists between organisational innovation and business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State?
5. To what extent does entrepreneurial innovation jointly predict business sustainability after controlling for firm age, firm size and agro-allied sub-sector?

Null Hypotheses

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

1. Product innovation has no significant relationship with business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State.
2. Process innovation has no significant relationship with business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State.
3. Marketing innovation has no significant relationship with business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State.
4. Organisational innovation has no significant relationship with business sustainability of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State.
5. Entrepreneurial innovation does not significantly predict business sustainability after controlling for firm age, firm size and agro-allied sub-sector.

Research Method

The study adopted a positivist orientation and explanatory cross-sectional survey design. The enterprise was the unit of analysis, while one knowledgeable owner-manager, chief executive, operations manager or senior manager represented each firm. The study covered enterprise clusters in Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi and Ekwulobia and included food and crop processing, poultry, feed and fisheries, agricultural inputs, storage, logistics, packaging and related value-chain services. Enterprises were grouped by cluster, agro-allied sub-sector and size. Small enterprises were those with 10–49 employees and net assets of ₦5 million to below ₦50 million, excluding land and buildings, while medium enterprises had

50–199 employees and net assets of ₦50 million to below ₦500 million. Where the employment and asset criteria produced different classifications, workforce size took precedence in line with the Nigerian MSME classification (SMEDAN & NBS, 2021).

Cochran's large-population formula yielded a minimum sample of approximately 384 at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The final analytical sample comprised 396 complete cases. A multi-stage procedure first selected the four enterprise clusters, then stratified firms by sub-sector and size before allocating the sample. Inclusion required an active agro-allied enterprise within one of the selected clusters, a workforce of 10–199 employees, a net-asset value within the applicable small- or medium-enterprise band, and an owner-manager or senior manager with adequate knowledge of the firm's operations. Micro enterprises with fewer than 10 employees, large enterprises with 200 or more employees, non-agro-allied businesses, enterprises outside the selected clusters and responses that were incomplete, duplicated or straight-lined were excluded. Data were collected through direct administration of one questionnaire to the eligible representative of each enterprise at the business premises after the purpose of the study and confidentiality of responses had been explained. Completed questionnaires were retrieved and screened before analysis. The Entrepreneurial Innovation and Business Sustainability Questionnaire contained enterprise characteristics, five items each for product, process, marketing and organisational innovation, and four items each for economic, social and environmental sustainability. The 32 substantive items used a five-point scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree and referred to the preceding three years. Experts in business administration, entrepreneurship, agricultural economics and measurement assessed content validity.

Data screening covered incomplete cases, duplicates and straight-lining. Descriptive statistics and correlations were followed by measurement-model assessment using indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, average variance extracted and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. Accepted benchmarks were loadings near or above 0.708, reliability between 0.70 and 0.95, AVE of at least 0.50 and HTMT below 0.85 (Hair et al., 2022). Partial least squares path modelling estimated the direct and aggregate effects with 5,000 bootstrap resamples, effect sizes, coefficients of determination and ten-fold cross-validated Q^2. Hierarchical ordinary least squares regression with HC3 robust standard errors tested whether the four innovation dimensions added explanatory power beyond firm age, workforce size and sub-sector controls.

Model Specification

The direct-effects model was specified as:

$$BS_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PDI_i + \beta_2 PSI_i + \beta_3 MKI_i + \beta_4 ORI_i + \gamma_1 AGE_i + \gamma_2 SIZE_i + \gamma_3 SUBSECTOR_i + \varepsilon_i$$

BS denotes business sustainability; PDI, product innovation; PSI, process innovation; MKI, marketing innovation; ORI, organisational innovation; AGE, firm age; SIZE, workforce size; SUBSECTOR, industry controls; and ε, the disturbance term. A separate aggregate model estimated the overall entrepreneurial innovation effect.

Results

Response Rate and Enterprise Profile

The final dataset contained 396 usable and complete cases. The sample covered firms of different ages, sizes, net-asset bands, locations and agro-allied activities. Each enterprise was represented by an owner-manager, chief executive, operations manager or senior manager, thereby ensuring that the organisational information was supplied by a knowledgeable decision-maker.

Table 1: Profile of Participating Agro-Allied SMEs

Characteristic	Category	n (%)
Firm size	Small enterprise	325 (82.1)
	Medium enterprise	71 (17.9)
Firm age	1–5 years	97 (24.5)

Characteristic	Category	n (%)
	6–10 years	168 (42.4)
	Above 10 years	131 (33.1)
Cluster	Awka / Onitsha / Nnewi / Ekwulobia	97 / 109 / 104 / 86
Sub-sector	Food/crop processing	111 (28.0)
	Poultry/feed/fisheries	122 (30.8)
	Inputs/storage/packaging/logistics	125 (31.6)
	Other eligible activity	38 (9.6)
Net asset band (excluding land and buildings)	₦5 million–below ₦50 million (small)	325 (82.1)
	₦50 million–below ₦500 million (medium)	71 (17.9)
Organisational/management representation	Owner-manager, chief executive, operations manager or senior manager	396 (100.0)

Measurement Model

All indicators loaded satisfactorily on their intended constructs. Loadings ranged from 0.763 to 0.875, Cronbach's alpha from 0.854 to 0.888, rho_A from 0.873 to 0.900, composite reliability from 0.902 to 0.918 and AVE from 0.652 to 0.718. The largest HTMT value was 0.675, below the 0.85 threshold. Harman's first factor explained 37.7% of variance and full-collinearity VIFs ranged from 1.53 to 1.98; thus, the diagnostics did not indicate a dominant common factor or problematic collinearity.

Table 2: Measurement Model Results

Construct	Loading range	α	CR	AVE
Product innovation	0.778–0.856	0.866	0.903	0.652
Process innovation	0.788–0.859	0.888	0.918	0.691
Marketing innovation	0.763–0.847	0.870	0.906	0.658
Organisational innovation	0.810–0.838	0.880	0.913	0.677
Economic sustainability	0.814–0.875	0.868	0.910	0.718
Social sustainability	0.823–0.857	0.854	0.902	0.696
Environmental sustainability	0.821–0.872	0.868	0.910	0.717

Descriptive and Structural Results

Construct means ranged from 3.48 for marketing innovation to 3.60 for organisational innovation; business sustainability had a mean of 3.54. All innovation dimensions correlated positively with business sustainability: product innovation, r = 0.455; process innovation, r = 0.555; marketing innovation, r = 0.516; and organisational innovation, r = 0.545. The correlations were moderate and did not suggest construct redundancy.

Table 3: Structural Path Results

Path	β	SE	t	p	95% CI	f^2	Decision
PDI → BS	0.130	0.048	2.703	.007	[0.036, 0.222]	0.020	Reject H_0
PSI → BS	0.232	0.051	4.547	< .001	[0.130, 0.330]	0.052	Reject H_0
MKI → BS	0.236	0.050	4.679	< .001	[0.140, 0.336]	0.068	Reject H_0
ORI → BS	0.242	0.049	4.922	< .001	[0.142, 0.336]	0.063	Reject H_0
EI → BS	0.667	0.038	17.625	< .001	[0.593, 0.741]	0.802	Reject H_0

Note: PDI = product innovation; PSI = process innovation; MKI = marketing innovation; ORI = organisational innovation; EI = aggregate entrepreneurial innovation; BS = business sustainability.

Every bootstrap confidence interval excluded zero. Product innovation had the smallest direct effect, while organisational and marketing innovation were marginally stronger than process innovation. The aggregate model showed a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and business sustainability.

Table 4: Explanatory and Predictive Performance

Outcome	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2	RMSE comparison	Interpretation
Business sustainability	0.447	0.442	0.421	0.660 < 0.873	Moderate explanation; strong prediction
Economic sustainability	0.370	0.364	0.356	0.826 < 1.034	Moderate explanation; predictive
Social sustainability	0.257	0.249	0.239	0.878 < 1.013	Modest explanation; predictive
Environmental sustainability	0.306	0.299	0.283	0.895 < 1.064	Moderate explanation; predictive

Robustness Check

Hierarchical regression produced the same conclusion. Firm age, workforce size and sub-sector explained 7.2% of the variance in Block 1. Adding the four innovation dimensions increased R^2 to 47.8%, a significant gain of 40.6 percentage points, F change = 74.35, $p < .001$. With HC3 robust standard errors, product innovation ($\beta = 0.123$, $p = .010$), process innovation ($\beta = 0.202$, $p < .001$), marketing innovation ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < .001$) and organisational innovation ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < .001$) remained significant. Innovation-variable VIFs ranged from 1.50 to 1.95, indicating no serious multicollinearity.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion is organised in line with the five specific objectives and hypotheses of the study. Before interpreting the structural relationships, the measurement results established that the indicators and constructs were suitable for inference. The satisfactory loadings, internal-consistency coefficients and average variance extracted values showed that the items represented their intended constructs, while the HTMT results confirmed that product, process, marketing and organisational innovation were empirically distinct. This provides a sound basis for discussing the individual effects rather than treating

the four dimensions as interchangeable. Hair et al. (2022) emphasise that structural coefficients should be interpreted only after reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity have been established. The present measurement results satisfy those requirements and strengthen confidence that the reported relationships reflect substantive differences among the innovation dimensions.

The first finding showed that product innovation had a positive and significant relationship with business sustainability ($\beta = 0.130$, $p = .007$); consequently, the first null hypothesis was rejected. The result implies that agro-allied SMEs that improve product quality, safety, composition, packaging and variety are more likely to achieve stronger economic, social and environmental outcomes. Product improvements can increase customer value, open new market segments and reduce dependence on a narrow product range. Le and Ikram (2022) similarly found that sustainability-oriented innovation improved the competitiveness and performance of SMEs. Oduro (2024) also reported a positive association between product eco-innovation and sustainable performance, while Okoli et al. (2024) found that product innovation enhanced customer satisfaction among SMEs in Anambra State. Thus, the direction of the present finding agrees with the evidence from both international and local studies. The agreement may be explained by the fact that customers increasingly judge agro-allied products through quality, safety, convenience, shelf life and packaging information. Nevertheless, product innovation recorded the smallest coefficient among the four dimensions. This suggests that a new or improved product may not generate enduring sustainability when inefficient processes, weak market access or poor organisational support remain unchanged. The study therefore extends previous findings by showing that product innovation is beneficial but is less influential when the other dimensions are considered simultaneously.

The second finding revealed that process innovation significantly and positively predicted business sustainability ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < .001$), leading to the rejection of the second null hypothesis. This finding indicates that changes in production methods, storage, inventory control, energy use, traceability, quality assurance and waste management have important sustainability implications for agro-allied SMEs. Such firms frequently handle perishable inputs and operate under high energy and logistics costs; consequently, small operational improvements can reduce spoilage, downtime and material losses while improving product consistency and environmental responsibility. Rustiarini et al. (2022) found that green innovation improved both the sustainability and financial performance of SMEs, which agrees with the present result. Molina-García et al. (2025) likewise established that process innovation was an important mechanism through which managerial capability supported environmental sustainability. In the Nigerian setting, Quadri (2021) reported a positive relationship between process innovation and SME productivity. The current finding is therefore consistent with previous studies in both direction and practical interpretation. Its contribution lies in demonstrating that process innovation remains significant even when product, marketing and organisational innovation are entered in the same model and firm characteristics are controlled. This implies that operational efficiency is not merely a technical issue; it is a direct pathway through which agro-allied enterprises can protect margins, meet quality expectations and reduce adverse environmental effects.

The third finding established that marketing innovation had a positive and significant relationship with business sustainability ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < .001$); therefore, the third null hypothesis was rejected. The result shows that new approaches to branding, pricing, promotion, customer engagement and distribution help agro-allied SMEs stabilise demand and gain access to wider markets. This is particularly relevant in Anambra State, where many small firms compete in crowded markets and depend heavily on informal intermediaries. Okoli et al. (2024) reported that marketing innovation improved brand awareness among SMEs in the state, and their finding agrees with the present evidence. Kannan and Gambetta (2025) also identified market orientation and technology-enabled customer engagement as recurring elements of SME sustainability strategies. In addition, Oduro (2024) found that marketing eco-innovation contributed positively to sustainable performance. These studies support the argument that sustainability depends not only on producing efficiently but also on communicating value, building trust and developing dependable routes to market. The slightly stronger coefficient for marketing innovation than process innovation suggests that an efficient product may still fail commercially if customers cannot identify its value or access it conveniently. The present study adds a multidimensional sustainability perspective by showing that marketing innovation can support economic continuity while

also improving information transparency, customer relationships and the distribution of products that embody safer or more responsible practices.

The fourth finding showed that organisational innovation had a positive and significant relationship with business sustainability and produced the largest direct coefficient ($\beta = 0.242$, $p < .001$). The fourth null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This result suggests that employee participation, clear allocation of responsibilities, formal record keeping, external collaboration and disciplined decision routines enable agro-allied SMEs to convert ideas into repeatable organisational practices. Oduro (2024) reported that organisational eco-innovation produced the strongest average effect among the innovation forms included in his meta-analysis; this closely agrees with the ranking observed in the present study. Phonthanukitithaworn et al. (2023) also found that intellectual capital, sustainability initiatives and openness to external knowledge supported SME innovation and sustainable development. Similarly, Mokbel Al Koliby et al. (2024) demonstrated that innovation helped translate entrepreneurial competencies into sustainable performance. The consistency across these studies indicates that organisational arrangements provide the coordinating structure for other forms of innovation. Product improvements can deteriorate when quality responsibilities are unclear, and new equipment can underperform when employees are not trained or maintenance routines are absent. The finding therefore reinforces the view that organisational innovation is not simply an administrative adjustment; it is the mechanism through which knowledge is shared, responsibilities are sustained and product, process and marketing initiatives become embedded in everyday operations.

The fifth finding indicated that the aggregate entrepreneurial innovation construct strongly and significantly predicted business sustainability ($\beta = 0.667$, $p < .001$) and explained 44.5% of its variance. Accordingly, the fifth null hypothesis was rejected. The dimensional model produced a comparable R^2 of 44.7%, and the cross-validated Q^2 value of 0.421 confirmed that the model had useful predictive relevance beyond the analysed sample. Ismail (2022) found that entrepreneurial innovation connected entrepreneurs' competencies with SME sustainability, while Mokbel Al Koliby et al. (2024) reported that innovation partially mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and sustainable performance. Both findings agree with the present evidence that innovation functions as an integrated enterprise capability. Alharthi (2025) similarly showed that technological innovation capabilities and creativity supported enterprise performance and sustainability. Mehmood et al. (2026) further reported that digital innovation capability and sustainable innovation transmitted the effects of sustainable entrepreneurial orientation to environmental, social and governance performance. The present study supports these conclusions and extends them to agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State by combining product, process, marketing and organisational innovation within a single sustainability model. The hierarchical regression provides additional support: firm age, size and sub-sector explained only 7.2% of the variance, whereas the innovation dimensions increased explained variance by 40.6 percentage points. Nwankwo et al. (2022) had earlier shown that entrepreneurial orientation mattered for agro-processing SME performance in Anambra State; the present evidence advances that position by demonstrating that specific innovation practices explain substantial additional variation in integrated sustainability outcomes. Overall, the findings support Dynamic Capabilities Theory because sustainable firms do not rely solely on accumulated experience or size. They remain viable by sensing changes, seizing useful opportunities and reconfiguring products, operations, markets and organisational routines in a coordinated manner.

Conclusion

The results showed that product innovation ($\beta = 0.130$, $p = .007$), process innovation ($\beta = 0.232$, $p < .001$), marketing innovation ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < .001$) and organisational innovation ($\beta = 0.242$, $p < .001$) each made a positive and significant contribution to business sustainability among agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State. Organisational innovation produced the largest direct effect, followed closely by marketing and process innovation, while product innovation produced the smallest effect. The aggregate entrepreneurial innovation construct also strongly predicted business sustainability ($\beta = 0.667$, $p < .001$), explained 44.5% of its variance and remained important after firm age, size and sub-sector were controlled. The study therefore concludes that business sustainability improves when agro-allied SMEs combine formal organisational routines and effective market practices with efficient processes and relevant product improvements, rather than implementing innovation dimensions in isolation.

Recommendations

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

1. Because organisational innovation produced the largest direct effect (β = 0.242), owner-managers should establish clear work responsibilities, formal record-keeping, employee participation, quality-control duties and regular review routines so that innovation becomes part of daily operations.
2. Given the strong effect of marketing innovation (β = 0.236), agro-allied SMEs should strengthen digital promotion, product labelling, traceability information, customer-feedback systems and direct links to household, retail and institutional buyers.
3. Since process innovation significantly improved sustainability (β = 0.232), firms should conduct periodic process reviews aimed at reducing spoilage, energy use, downtime, material loss and quality variation before committing funds to major equipment purchases.
4. As product innovation had the smallest but still significant effect (β = 0.130), new products, packaging and product varieties should be introduced only after customer testing and should be supported by adequate production capacity, quality assurance and market access.
5. Because the combined innovation construct strongly predicted business sustainability (β = 0.667) and explained 44.5% of its variance, each enterprise should adopt a coordinated innovation plan that links product, process, marketing and organisational actions to measurable economic, social and environmental targets.
6. State agencies, financial institutions and business-development organisations should design support programmes around the observed ranking of effects by prioritising organisational capability, market access and process efficiency, while providing sub-sector-specific finance, training and advisory support for product improvements.

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DIGITAL SUPPLY CHAIN CAPABILITY AND OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF AGRO-ALLIED SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

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Abstract

Agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State operate in supply chains that require timely information, partner coordination, data-based decisions and continuity during disruption. The study examined the relationship between digital supply chain capability and operational performance of agro-allied small and medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria, with supply chain resilience as a mediator. An explanatory cross-sectional survey was conducted among owner-managers and functional managers of eligible agro-allied SMEs in Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi, Ekwulobia and adjoining localities. From a sampling frame of 1,247 SMEs, Cochran's formula produced 384 respondents, while 371 usable copies were returned. Respondents were selected from businesses engaged in agro-processing, packaging, storage, aggregation, transportation, agricultural input distribution and related services; the selected enterprises were small and medium-scale firms with active supply-chain operations, identifiable owner-management or functional structures, and asset/turnover characteristics consistent with SME status rather than large corporate organisations. The 32-item instrument underwent expert review, cognitive face validation, content validity assessment, and pilot testing. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.864 to 0.897, composite reliability from 0.902 to 0.921, and average variance extracted from 0.637 to 0.681. Partial least squares structural equation modelling and 5,000-resample bootstrapping were used. The four dimensions jointly explained 46.3% of operational performance. Analytics-based decision capability made the strongest contribution (β = 0.332), followed by digital partner integration (β = 0.216), electronic transaction and process capability (β = 0.213), and digital information visibility (β = 0.178). Digital supply chain capability predicted resilience (β = 0.616, p < 0.001), while resilience predicted operational performance (β = 0.445, p < 0.001). The indirect effect was significant (β = 0.274, 95% CI [0.211, 0.341]), indicating partial mediation. The study concluded, in line with the major findings, that analytics-based decision capability, partner integration, electronic transactions and information visibility improve operational performance most effectively when they strengthen resilience. The study recommended focused investment in data analysis skills, partner integration, controlled electronic transactions, information visibility systems and continuity planning among agro-allied SMEs in the selected communities.

Keywords: *Digital Supply Chain Capability; Supply Chain Resilience; Operational Performance; Agro-Allied SMEs; Business Administration.*

Introduction

Supply chain management has developed from a mainly transactional function into a strategic responsibility that shapes cost, delivery, quality, responsiveness, and business continuity (Zhao et al., 2023; Tiwari et al., 2024). This change is particularly important for small and medium enterprises because limited buffers and strong dependence on external suppliers and distributors make them vulnerable to interruptions in information, materials, finance, and transport. Tiwari et al. (2024) explain that digital technologies can improve visibility and coordination, but their value depends on how they are embedded in managerial decisions. This distinction directs attention from the possession of digital devices to the organisational meaning of digital supply chain capability.

Digital supply chain capability is the organisational ability to use connected technologies, shared data, analytics, and electronic processes to sense conditions and coordinate decisions across the supply chain (Canhoto et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). Zhao et al. (2023) found that supply chain digitalisation improved resilience and performance through information-processing and operational mechanisms, while Lu et al. (2025) showed that digital sensing and responding capabilities improved SME outcomes partly through information sharing. These findings position digital supply chain capability as a strategic

management competence rather than isolated information-technology use, and its practical value becomes especially visible in agro-allied operations.

Agro-allied SMEs process, package, store, aggregate, transport, and market agricultural products and inputs. Their operations are exposed to perishability, seasonal supply, quality variation, uncertain lead times, price changes, transport constraints, and the participation of many independent actors. Ajayi and Laseinde (2023) argued that connected technologies can integrate Nigeria's agro-allied supply chains and reduce waste, while Ali and Govindan (2023) showed that digital transformation can strengthen monitoring, traceability, and coordinated risk response in agri-food chains. These pressures make the specific dimensions of digital supply chain capability important for managerial analysis.

The study examined four related dimensions. Digital information visibility provides timely information on inventory, orders, suppliers, production, and logistics; digital partner integration coordinates electronic exchange with suppliers, transporters, distributors, and customers; analytics-based decision capability converts operational data into forecasts and managerial action; and electronic transaction and process capability standardises ordering, invoicing, payment, documentation, and workflow control. Razak et al. (2023) linked traceability with resilience benefits, Jing and Fan (2024) demonstrated the performance value of supply chain integration, and Ellstrom et al. (2022) emphasised learning and reconfiguration in digital transformation. However, these capabilities may not improve performance fully unless they are converted into supply chain resilience.

Supply chain resilience is the capacity to prepare for disruption, respond promptly, recover essential operations, and learn in ways that reduce future vulnerability. De Sa et al. (2023) found that visibility, collaboration, digital transformation, and flexibility supported SME resilience, while Stentoft and Mikkelsen (2024) stressed deliberate vulnerability mapping and action planning. In agri-food settings, Ali et al. (2023) and Zhong et al. (2024) similarly identified technological and managerial capabilities that protect continuity. Yet evidence remains limited on the relative effects of the four digital capability dimensions and on whether resilience mediates their relationship with operational performance among agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State; this unresolved mechanism leads directly to the study problem.

Statement of the Problem

Agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State face a practical performance problem created by the difference between the availability of simple digital tools and the weak development of those tools into integrated supply chain capability. Many enterprises use mobile phones, bank applications, social-media platforms and spreadsheets, yet raw-material sourcing, inventory records, production scheduling, dispatch, supplier follow-up and customer-order monitoring often remain fragmented. This creates late information, duplicated or missed orders, weak traceability, delayed procurement, avoidable stock-outs, product loss and unreliable delivery. The problem is not the complete absence of digital technology, but the limited capacity to combine information visibility, partner integration, analytics-based decisions and electronic transaction controls into a coordinated system that improves operational performance.

The empirical gap is that previous studies have established broad links between digitalisation, supply chain resilience and performance, but they have not sufficiently explained the relative contribution of each digital supply chain capability dimension among agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State. Existing evidence also gives limited attention to the mechanism through which digital capability is converted into performance in a disruption-prone agro-allied environment. In particular, it remains unclear whether supply chain resilience, expressed through preparedness, responsiveness, recovery and organisational learning, explains how digital supply chain capability improves operational outcomes. The study therefore addressed a context-specific problem gap by testing the direct effects of digital information visibility, digital partner integration, analytics-based decision capability and electronic transaction/process capability, as well as the mediating role of supply chain resilience.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine the relationship between digital supply chain capability and operational performance of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State, with supply chain resilience as a mediating variable. Specifically, the study:

1. determined the effect of digital information visibility on operational performance of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State;
2. ascertained the effect of digital partner integration on operational performance of the enterprises;
3. examined the effect of analytics-based decision capability on operational performance of the enterprises;
4. determined the effect of electronic transaction and process capability on operational performance of the enterprises;
5. examined the effect of the higher-order digital supply chain capability on supply chain resilience; and
6. determined whether supply chain resilience mediated the relationship between digital supply chain capability and operational performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does digital information visibility affect operational performance of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does digital partner integration affect operational performance of the enterprises?
3. To what extent does analytics-based decision capability affect operational performance of the enterprises?
4. To what extent does electronic transaction and process capability affect operational performance of the enterprises?
5. To what extent does digital supply chain capability affect supply chain resilience?
6. To what extent does supply chain resilience mediate the relationship between digital supply chain capability and operational performance?

Null Hypotheses

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

1. Digital information visibility does not significantly affect operational performance of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State.
2. Digital partner integration does not significantly affect operational performance of the enterprises.
3. Analytics-based decision capability does not significantly affect operational performance of the enterprises.
4. Electronic transaction and process capability does not significantly affect operational performance of the enterprises.
5. Digital supply chain capability does not significantly affect supply chain resilience.
6. Supply chain resilience does not significantly mediate the relationship between digital supply chain capability and operational performance.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory of Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), which explains how firms achieve performance in changing environments by sensing opportunities and threats, seizing appropriate responses, and reconfiguring resources and routines. Digital tools are ordinary resources until management integrates them into repeatable routines for information sensing, partner coordination, decision making, and process adaptation. Canhoto et al. (2021) similarly argued that SMEs require alignment between digital strategy and organisational capabilities, while Cannas (2023) showed that digital transformation in agrifood SMEs depends on leadership, collaboration, and relationship reorganisation.

Within the theory, digital information visibility and analytics support sensing; partner integration and electronic transactions facilitate seizing; and supply chain resilience represents the reconfiguration capacity through which firms prepare, respond, recover, and learn. Operational performance is expected when these capabilities reduce waste, stabilise quality, improve delivery, and preserve continuity. The framework therefore supports both direct effects of the four digital capability dimensions and an indirect higher-order effect through supply chain resilience.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presents the four digital supply chain capability dimensions as direct predictors of operational performance and positions supply chain resilience as the mediator between the higher-order digital capability and operational performance. The direct higher-order path is retained to determine whether mediation is partial or complete.

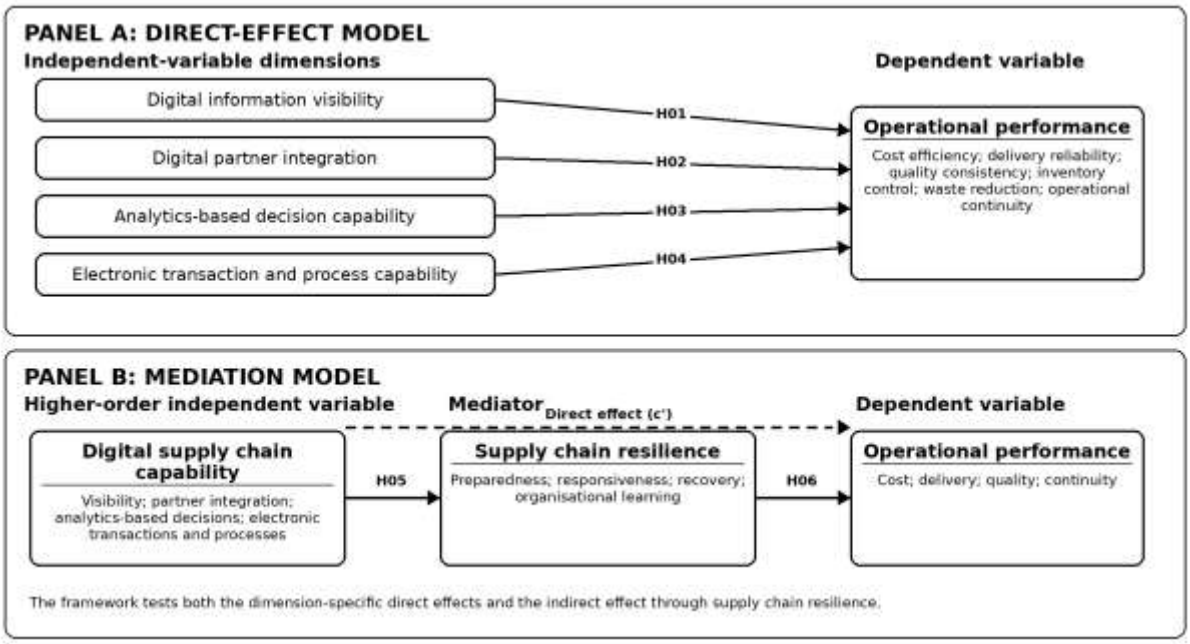


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of digital supply chain capability, supply chain resilience, and operational performance

Source: Researchers' conceptualisation (2026), based on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory.

Empirical Review

Evidence generally supports positive relationships among digitalisation, integration, resilience, and performance. Zhao et al. (2023) reported that supply chain digitalisation improved resilience and performance through multiple mechanisms. Jing and Fan (2024) found that supply chain integration partially transmitted the performance effect of digital transformation, while Meng et al. (2025) identified integration and agility as mechanisms of digitally enabled performance. Lu et al. (2025) further demonstrated among SMEs that digital sensing and responding capabilities improved financing performance through information sharing. These studies support a capability perspective, although they do not compare the four dimensions within Nigerian agro-allied SMEs.

Agriculture-related and SME evidence reinforces the relevance of resilience. Ali and Govindan (2023) linked digital transformation with monitoring and risk reduction in agri-food supply chains; Ali et al. (2023) identified supplier alternatives, logistics security, cold-chain digitalisation, and crisis preparation among agri-food SMEs; and De Sa et al. (2023) found that visibility, collaboration, and flexibility supported anticipation and recovery. Nakandala et al. (2025) also identified digital capabilities as antecedents of SME resilience, while Ajayi and Laseinde (2023) established the practical relevance of connected technologies in Nigeria's agro-allied industry. At the state level, Anusi (2025) found that digital technology influenced SME performance in Anambra State, but the study did not isolate supply chain capabilities or test resilience.

The literature therefore agrees on the broad value of digitalisation but provides limited evidence on which capability dimension contributes most strongly and on whether resilience mediates the relationship in resource-constrained agro-allied SMEs. The present study filled this gap by comparing the four dimensions and estimating both direct and indirect effects within Anambra State.

Research Method

The study adopted an explanatory cross-sectional survey design. The study was conducted in Anambra State, with emphasis on Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi, Ekwulobia and adjoining localities where agro-allied trading, food processing, storage, input distribution, packaging, logistics and related SME activities are concentrated. The unit of analysis was the agro-allied SME, while respondents were owner-managers and managers responsible for operations, procurement, production, logistics, inventory, or distribution. Eligible firms operated in agro-processing, food and beverage production, packaging, agricultural input distribution, storage, aggregation, transport, equipment support, and related services.

The sampling frame consisted of 1,247 eligible SMEs that met the study criteria. The criteria were that each business had to be located within the selected study communities, operate in an agro-allied activity, fall within small or medium enterprise operating scale rather than large corporate status, have an identifiable owner-manager or functional management structure, and carry out supply-chain activities involving suppliers, inventory, production, logistics, distribution or customers. Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error produced an initial sample of 384. To avoid bias, respondents were selected through a multi-stage procedure. First, the study locations were treated as clusters; second, eligible businesses were grouped by activity strata; third, the sample was proportionately allocated across the clusters and strata; and fourth, one knowledgeable owner-manager or functional manager was selected from each sampled enterprise.

Of the 384 questionnaires administered, 371 were usable, representing a 96.6% response rate. The 371 respondents were therefore not a convenience replacement group; they were the valid responses obtained from the scientifically selected sample after excluding incomplete or unusable returns. The Digital Supply Chain Capability, Resilience and Operational Performance Questionnaire contained 32 five-point items: five items for each digital capability dimension and six items each for resilience and operational performance. Expert review, cognitive face validation, and content validation reduced the initial 38 items to 32; retained item-level validity indices ranged from 0.80 to 1.00, and the scale-level content validity index was 0.94. A pilot study involving 35 managers in Enugu State produced alpha coefficients from 0.864 to 0.897. Data were screened and analysed with descriptive statistics, simultaneous multiple regression, partial least squares structural equation modelling, and 5,000-resample bootstrapping. Reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed before testing the direct and mediated paths. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < 0.05$, while effect sizes, explained variance, confidence intervals, and predictive relevance were interpreted alongside significance.

Results

The measurement model met the required standards. Indicator loadings ranged from 0.766 to 0.860, Cronbach's alpha from 0.864 to 0.897, composite reliability from 0.902 to 0.921, and average variance extracted from 0.637 to 0.681. Heterotrait-monotrait ratios ranged from 0.315 to 0.776, below the 0.85 threshold, and the constructs displayed sufficient variation for structural analysis.

Table 1. Measurement model and descriptive statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	Loading range	α	CR	AVE
Digital information visibility	2.974	0.979	0.773-0.833	0.866	0.904	0.652
Digital partner integration	3.027	1.024	0.773-0.857	0.881	0.913	0.677
Analytics-based decision capability	3.022	1.027	0.781-0.860	0.883	0.914	0.681
Electronic transaction/process capability	3.000	1.010	0.769-0.849	0.864	0.902	0.647
Supply chain resilience	2.972	0.981	0.769-0.816	0.886	0.913	0.637
Operational performance	3.022	1.000	0.766-0.860	0.897	0.921	0.661

Direct Effects of the Capability Dimensions

The simultaneous model was significant, $R = 0.680$, $R^2 = 0.463$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.457$, $F(4, 366) = 78.88$, $p < 0.001$. Thus, the four dimensions jointly explained 46.3% of operational performance. All variance inflation factors were below 2.0. Each direct effect was positive and significant, and all four null hypotheses were rejected; analytics-based decision capability made the strongest unique contribution.

Table 2. Direct effects on operational performance

Predictor	β	SE	t	95% CI	p	f^2	Decision
Digital information visibility	0.178	0.042	4.215	[0.095, 0.262]	< .001	0.049	Reject H01
Digital partner integration	0.216	0.044	4.871	[0.129, 0.303]	< .001	0.065	Reject H02
Analytics-based decision capability	0.332	0.044	7.520	[0.245, 0.418]	< .001	0.155	Reject H03
Electronic transaction/process capability	0.213	0.043	4.947	[0.128, 0.297]	< .001	0.067	Reject H04

Higher-Order and Mediation Model

Digital supply chain capability significantly predicted supply chain resilience ($\beta = 0.616$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 38.0% of its variance. Resilience significantly predicted operational performance ($\beta = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$). With digital capability and resilience entered together, the model explained 57.7% of operational performance; Q^2 values were 0.241 for resilience and 0.371 for operational performance, and SRMR was 0.061. The indirect effect was significant, while the direct effect remained significant, establishing complementary partial mediation and rejecting the fifth and sixth null hypotheses.

Table 3. Higher-order structural and mediation results

Effect/path	β	SE	t	95% CI	p	R^2/VAF	Interpretation
DSCC → resilience	0.616	0.041	15.039	[0.536, 0.697]	< .001	$R^2 = .380$	Reject H05
Resilience → performance	0.445	0.043	10.343	[0.361, 0.530]	< .001	$R^2 = .577$	Supported
Direct: DSCC → performance	0.400	0.043	9.283	[0.315, 0.484]	< .001	-	Significant
Indirect: DSCC → resilience → performance	0.274	0.033	-	[0.211, 0.341]	< .001	VAF = 40.7%	Partial mediation; reject H06
Total: DSCC → performance	0.674	0.038	-	[0.598, 0.750]	< .001	-	Significant

Discussion of Findings

The overall result established digital supply chain capability as a significant organisational resource for agro-allied SMEs. The four dimensions explained 46.3% of operational performance, while the higher-order model showed that capability also operated through resilience. This agrees with Zhao et al. (2023), who reported direct and mediated performance effects of supply chain digitalisation, and with Lu et al. (2025), who showed that digital sensing and responding capabilities create value through information processing. The present study extends those findings to resource-constrained agro-allied SMEs and supports Dynamic Capabilities Theory by showing that technology produces outcomes when managers organise it into sensing, coordination, analysis, and reconfiguration routines.

The first finding showed that digital information visibility significantly improved operational performance ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$), leading to rejection of the first null hypothesis. This agrees with De Sa et al. (2023), who identified visibility as a practical source of SME anticipation and recovery, and with Razak et al. (2023), who linked traceability benefits with supply chain resilience. Tiwari et al.

(2024) likewise associated digital visibility with stronger resilience-oriented coordination. The agreement is reasonable because timely information reduces guesswork in purchasing, production, inventory, and delivery. Although the effect was the smallest of the four, it remained significant after the other dimensions were controlled, indicating that basic, dependable records are a necessary foundation rather than a complete digital solution.

The second finding revealed that digital partner integration significantly affected operational performance ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$), and the second null hypothesis was rejected. This result agrees with Jing and Fan (2024), who found that supply chain integration transmitted part of the performance effect of digital transformation, and with Meng et al. (2025), who identified integration and agility as mechanisms of sustainable performance. The finding also complements Cannas (2023), whose agrifood evidence emphasised collaboration and relationship reorganisation. No reviewed study reported a contrary direction; however, most examined larger or non-Nigerian firms. The present result therefore shows that agreed electronic channels, shared schedules, and timely partner updates can generate measurable operational benefits even where systems are relatively simple.

The third finding established analytics-based decision capability as the strongest predictor of operational performance ($\beta = 0.332$, $p < 0.001$), resulting in rejection of the third null hypothesis. This agrees with Zhao et al. (2023), whose information-processing explanation shows that digital data must be converted into decisions, and with Ellstrom et al. (2022), who placed learning and reconfiguration at the centre of digital transformation. Lu et al. (2025) similarly demonstrated the value of sensing and responding capabilities. The distinctive contribution of the present study is the ranking of analytics above visibility, integration, and electronic processing. The result suggests that software acquisition alone is insufficient; managers must interpret demand, supplier, inventory, cost, waste, and delivery data and use the analysis to alter operational decisions.

The fourth finding showed that electronic transaction and process capability significantly improved operational performance ($\beta = 0.213$, $p < 0.001$), and the fourth null hypothesis was rejected. This is consistent with Anusi (2025), who found that digital technology influenced SME performance in Anambra State, and with Ajayi and Laseinde (2023), who argued that connected technologies could integrate agro-allied supply activities and reduce waste. The present evidence advances those studies by isolating controlled electronic ordering, invoicing, payment, documentation, and workflow tracking as an operational capability. Its effect was comparable with partner integration, indicating that efficiency gains depend on governance controls such as authorisation, reconciliation, access management, and data backup as well as transaction speed.

The fifth finding indicated that the higher-order digital supply chain capability strongly predicted resilience ($\beta = 0.616$, $p < 0.001$), leading to rejection of the fifth null hypothesis. The result agrees with Nakandala et al. (2025), who identified digital capabilities as antecedents of SME robustness and resilience, and with Fornasiero and Tolio (2025), who treated digital supply chains as a foundation for ecosystem resilience. It also supports Zhong et al. (2024), whose agri-food review identified connected capability factors that strengthen resilience. The consistency across studies shows that visibility, integration, analytics, and electronic records help enterprises anticipate disruption, coordinate alternatives, preserve critical information, and learn from operational failures.

The sixth finding showed that supply chain resilience significantly mediated the relationship between digital capability and operational performance (indirect $\beta = 0.274$, $p < 0.001$), while the direct effect remained significant. The sixth null hypothesis was therefore rejected and complementary partial mediation was established. This agrees with Zhao et al. (2023), who found that resilience transmitted part of the effect of digitalisation on performance, and with Ali et al. (2023), who showed that agri-food SMEs relied on combined technological and organisational strategies during disruption. Stentoft and Mikkelsen (2024) similarly emphasised vulnerability mapping and action planning rather than technology alone. The partial mediation is academically important because it shows two routes to performance: digital capability improves routine efficiency directly and protects operations indirectly by strengthening preparedness, response, recovery, and organisational learning.

Conclusion

The study concluded from the major findings that digital supply chain capability significantly improves the operational performance of agro-allied SMEs in Anambra State. Specifically, digital information visibility, digital partner integration, analytics-based decision capability, and electronic transaction and process capability each made positive and significant contributions to operational performance. Analytics-based decision capability made the strongest contribution, showing that the interpretation and use of operational data are central to improved performance. The study also concluded that digital supply chain capability strengthens supply chain resilience and that resilience partially mediates the relationship between digital capability and operational performance. Therefore, agro-allied SMEs achieve better results when digital tools are not used in isolation but are converted into routines for visibility, partner coordination, data-based decision making, controlled electronic transactions, preparedness, response, recovery and learning.

Recommendations

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

1. Since digital information visibility had a positive and significant effect on operational performance, owner-managers should maintain simple but reliable electronic records for inventory, supplier orders, production, customer orders, dispatch status and product losses so that daily decisions are based on timely information.
2. Since digital partner integration significantly improved operational performance, agro-allied SMEs should agree on shared digital communication channels, order formats, delivery schedules and proof-of-delivery procedures with major suppliers, transporters, distributors and customers.
3. Since analytics-based decision capability produced the strongest effect, managers should give priority to practical training in spreadsheet use, demand forecasting, inventory turnover analysis, supplier-performance evaluation, cost analysis, delivery monitoring and waste measurement.
4. Since electronic transaction and process capability significantly contributed to operational performance, finance, procurement and operations personnel should standardise electronic ordering, invoicing, payment confirmation, approval, documentation and workflow tracking with access controls, secure passwords, reconciliation and regular backup.
5. Since digital supply chain capability significantly predicted supply chain resilience, each enterprise should prepare a continuity plan that identifies critical suppliers, inputs, routes, storage points and distribution channels, together with alternative arrangements for periods of disruption.
6. Since supply chain resilience partially mediated the relationship between digital capability and operational performance, business associations, tertiary institutions, government agencies and financial institutions should provide targeted support that helps agro-allied SMEs move from basic digital tool use to resilient supply-chain routines involving preparedness, response, recovery and learning.

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EFFECTS OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT ON ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH AMONG AGRIBUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN AKINYELE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, MONIYA, IBADAN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Infrastructure is a critical driver of entrepreneurial growth and sustainable agribusiness development. However, inadequate transportation, electricity, and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure continue to impede the performance of agribusiness enterprises in many developing economies, including Nigeria. This study examined the effect of infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effects of transportation infrastructure deficit, electricity infrastructure deficit, and ICT infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Primary data were collected from 200 agribusiness entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts, while its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyze the research questions, whereas multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses at a 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that transportation infrastructure deficit, electricity infrastructure deficit, and ICT infrastructure deficit each exerted a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial growth. Electricity infrastructure deficit had the strongest adverse influence, followed by transportation and ICT infrastructure deficits. The study concludes that persistent infrastructure deficits constrain business expansion, reduce productivity, increase operating costs, and weaken the competitiveness of agribusiness enterprises. It recommends increased investment in rural road rehabilitation, reliable electricity supply, and digital infrastructure to create an enabling environment for sustainable agribusiness development and entrepreneurial growth.

Keywords: *Infrastructure Deficit, Entrepreneurial Growth, Agribusiness Enterprises, Transportation Infrastructure, Electricity Infrastructure, ICT Infrastructure, Oyo State, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Agribusiness has become a major catalyst for economic transformation, food security, employment generation, and poverty reduction across developing economies. Beyond agricultural production, agribusiness encompasses the supply of farm inputs, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, distribution, and value addition to agricultural products. In many developing countries, agribusiness enterprises have increasingly been recognised as vehicles for promoting inclusive economic growth because they strengthen value chains, enhance market access, and encourage innovation among entrepreneurs. Consequently, governments and development agencies continue to prioritise agribusiness development as an important strategy for achieving sustainable development and economic diversification.

The performance and sustainability of agribusiness enterprises, however, depend largely on the availability of functional infrastructure. Infrastructure provides the physical and institutional foundation upon which productive economic activities thrive. Essential infrastructure such as transportation networks, electricity supply, water systems, and information and communication technology (ICT) enhance business efficiency by reducing production costs, facilitating access to markets, improving communication, and increasing productivity. According to Adenikinju (2005), infrastructure constitutes an important determinant of enterprise productivity because inadequate infrastructure raises production

costs and reduces business competitiveness. Similarly, Oseni and Pollitt (2013) maintained that reliable infrastructure, particularly electricity supply, significantly improves firm performance by reducing operational disruptions and production losses. The continued relevance of these studies is reflected in more recent evidence, which demonstrates that investment in infrastructure remains fundamental to enterprise growth and economic competitiveness.

Recent empirical studies have further reinforced the strategic role of infrastructure in promoting agribusiness development. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2024) reported that improvements in digital infrastructure enable enterprises to access wider markets, improve business communication, adopt digital innovations, and strengthen value-chain integration, thereby enhancing entrepreneurial competitiveness. Similarly, Buntu et al. (2024) found that infrastructure development significantly improves African countries' participation in regional and global value chains by lowering transaction costs, facilitating trade, and increasing enterprise productivity. Their findings suggest that investment in transportation and communication infrastructure creates an enabling environment for business expansion and sustainable economic development.

Among the major components of infrastructure, transportation remains one of the most critical determinants of agribusiness performance. Efficient road networks facilitate the movement of agricultural inputs to production centres and ensure timely distribution of farm produce to processors and consumers. Conversely, poor transportation infrastructure increases logistics costs, contributes to post-harvest losses, delays market access, and reduces the profitability of agribusiness enterprises. In many developing countries, particularly within Sub-Saharan Africa, inadequate rural road infrastructure continues to constrain agricultural commercialization and entrepreneurial development. Buntu et al. (2024) observed that countries with better transportation infrastructure experience stronger enterprise performance and improved trade competitiveness because efficient logistics reduce transaction costs and enhance market integration.

Electricity infrastructure also plays a vital role in supporting agribusiness entrepreneurship. Reliable electricity supply enables enterprises to preserve perishable products, operate processing equipment, support cold-chain systems, and improve production efficiency. However, unstable electricity supply remains one of the most persistent constraints confronting businesses in Nigeria. Frequent power outages compel entrepreneurs to rely on costly alternative energy sources, thereby increasing operational expenses and reducing profitability. Recent evidence indicates that inadequate electricity infrastructure continues to undermine enterprise productivity and competitiveness across Sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, International Finance Corporation (2023) identified unreliable electricity supply as one of the most significant barriers to private-sector development, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises operating in developing economies.

The growing digital economy has equally increased the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in promoting entrepreneurship. Access to reliable internet services, mobile communication, and digital platforms enables entrepreneurs to obtain market information, communicate efficiently with customers and suppliers, conduct electronic transactions, and expand their businesses beyond traditional markets. In the agricultural sector, digital technologies have improved access to extension services, financial inclusion, and market intelligence, thereby strengthening enterprise performance. The UNCTAD Digital Economy Report (2024) emphasizes that countries with improved digital infrastructure are better positioned to promote innovation, enterprise competitiveness, and inclusive economic growth. Conversely, inadequate ICT infrastructure limits business expansion, weakens innovation capacity, and reduces entrepreneurs' ability to compete in increasingly digital markets.

Despite the recognized importance of infrastructure in stimulating entrepreneurial development, infrastructure deficits remain widespread in Nigeria. Poor road conditions, inadequate electricity supply, and weak digital connectivity continue to impose substantial costs on businesses and reduce

enterprise productivity. Although governments at different levels have implemented several infrastructure development initiatives, many rural and semi-urban communities still experience limited access to quality infrastructure. These deficiencies increase production and transportation costs, constrain market access, discourage investment, and weaken the competitiveness of agribusiness enterprises. Such challenges are particularly severe among small-scale entrepreneurs, whose businesses depend heavily on affordable transportation, stable electricity, and effective communication facilities for daily operations.

In Oyo State, agribusiness constitutes one of the major economic activities supporting household income and rural employment. Akinyele Local Government Area, particularly Moniya, serves as an important agricultural and commercial hub where numerous agribusiness enterprises engage in crop production, input distribution, processing, marketing, and agricultural services. However, entrepreneurs operating within the area continue to face significant infrastructure-related challenges, including deteriorating road networks, erratic electricity supply, and inadequate ICT facilities. These infrastructural deficiencies increase business operating costs, reduce access to profitable markets, delay product distribution, and constrain business expansion, thereby limiting entrepreneurial growth and long-term sustainability.

Although several empirical studies have examined infrastructure and economic development in Nigeria, much of the existing literature has concentrated on macroeconomic outcomes, national infrastructure investment, or the performance of small and medium enterprises in general. Comparatively few studies have investigated how specific dimensions of infrastructure deficit—namely transportation, electricity, and ICT influence entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises at the local government level. This gap is particularly evident in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State, where empirical evidence remains limited despite the area's growing importance as an agribusiness centre. Consequently, this study examines the effects of transportation, electricity, and ICT infrastructure deficits on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence that will support policymakers, development partners, and other stakeholders in designing integrated infrastructure policies capable of enhancing agribusiness productivity, promoting entrepreneurial growth, and fostering sustainable rural economic development.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

(i) Examine the effect of transportation infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.
(ii) Determine the effect of electricity infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.
(iii) Assess the effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

(i) What effect does transportation infrastructure deficit have on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State?

(ii) To what extent does electricity infrastructure deficit affect entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State?

(iii) How does ICT infrastructure deficit affect entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested in the study:

H_{01}: Transportation infrastructure deficit has no significant effect on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.

H_{02}: Electricity infrastructure deficit has no significant effect on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.

H_{03}: ICT infrastructure deficit has no significant effect on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State.

Literature Review

The literature review provides the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical foundation for understanding the relationship between infrastructure deficit and entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises. It reviews existing knowledge on the key concepts underpinning the study, examines the theoretical perspective explaining the relationship between infrastructure and enterprise growth, synthesises relevant empirical studies, and identifies the knowledge gap that justifies the present study.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Infrastructure Deficit

Infrastructure is widely recognised as a fundamental driver of economic development and entrepreneurial success because it provides the physical and institutional facilities that support productive activities. Infrastructure encompasses transportation systems, electricity supply, water resources, telecommunications, and other public utilities that facilitate the efficient production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services. According to the World Bank (2023), quality infrastructure enhances business productivity by reducing transaction costs, improving connectivity, facilitating market access, and encouraging private investment. Consequently, countries with adequate infrastructure generally experience higher levels of enterprise development, innovation, and economic competitiveness.

Infrastructure deficit, however, refers to the inadequacy, poor quality, or absence of essential infrastructure required for effective economic and business activities. It reflects the gap between existing infrastructure and the level required to support sustainable economic growth and entrepreneurial development. The African Development Bank (2024) observed that infrastructure deficits remain one of the most significant constraints to enterprise development across Africa, particularly in transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure. These deficiencies increase production costs, reduce operational efficiency, and discourage investment, thereby limiting the growth of businesses.

Within the agribusiness sector, infrastructure deficit is particularly detrimental because agricultural enterprises depend heavily on efficient logistics, reliable electricity, and effective communication systems. Poor road networks delay the movement of farm inputs and produce, increase transportation costs, and contribute to post-harvest losses. Likewise, unstable electricity supply disrupts agro-processing, storage, and preservation activities, while inadequate ICT infrastructure limits access to market information, digital financial services, and online marketing opportunities. As noted by the Food

and Agriculture Organization (2022), inadequate rural infrastructure continues to constrain agricultural productivity and agribusiness competitiveness in many developing countries.

In the context of this study, infrastructure deficit refers to deficiencies in transportation infrastructure, electricity infrastructure, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure that hinder the growth, productivity, profitability, and competitiveness of agribusiness enterprises operating in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State. These dimensions constitute the independent variables through which the study examines the effects of infrastructure on entrepreneurial growth.

Theoretical Foundation

Infrastructure-Led Development Theory

This study is anchored on the Infrastructure-Led Development Theory, propounded by Hirschman (1958). The theory posits that investment in economic and social infrastructure is fundamental to enterprise development, productivity, and sustainable economic growth. According to the theory, infrastructure such as transportation networks, electricity supply, and information and communication technology (ICT) creates an enabling environment that reduces production costs, facilitates market access, improves operational efficiency, and stimulates private sector investment.

The theory further argues that inadequate infrastructure constrains entrepreneurial activities by increasing operational costs, limiting access to markets, reducing productivity, and weakening business competitiveness. Consequently, economies and businesses operating under poor infrastructural conditions experience slower growth and reduced investment opportunities.

The relevance of the Infrastructure-Led Development Theory to this study lies in its explanation of how deficits in transportation, electricity, and ICT infrastructure can impede the growth of agribusiness enterprises. Since agribusiness activities depend largely on efficient transportation systems, reliable electricity supply, and effective communication networks, the theory provides an appropriate framework for examining the effects of infrastructure deficits on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of quantitative data from respondents at a single point in time and facilitated the examination of the relationship between infrastructure deficit and entrepreneurial growth.

The target population comprised registered agribusiness entrepreneurs operating within Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, including enterprises engaged in agricultural input supply, production, processing, storage, distribution, and marketing activities.

The sample size for the study was 200 respondents. Since the exact population of agribusiness enterprises was not readily available, the sample size was determined using the Cochran (1977) formula for an unknown or large population:

Where:

n = required sample size

Z = standard normal deviation at 95% confidence level (1.96)

p = estimated proportion possessing the characteristic (0.50)

q = 1-p (0.50)

e = acceptable margin of error (0.07)

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{Z^2pq}{e}$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.07)^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.0049)} = 196$$

The computed sample size was approximately 196, which was rounded up to 200 respondents to improve representativeness and compensate for possible non-response.

A multistage sampling technique was employed. First, purposive sampling was used to identify active agribusiness enterprises within the study area. Thereafter, simple random sampling was adopted to select respondents from the identified enterprises, ensuring that each eligible entrepreneur had an equal chance of being selected.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth Questionnaire (IDEGQ). The instrument comprised two sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic characteristics, while Section B contained items measuring transportation infrastructure deficit, electricity infrastructure deficit, ICT infrastructure deficit, and entrepreneurial growth. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by experts in Business Administration and Measurement and Evaluation. Their observations and recommendations were incorporated before the final administration of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study using the Cronbach's Alpha technique, which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Out of the 200 questionnaires distributed, all were properly completed and returned, representing a 100% response rate.

Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe respondents' characteristics and answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using Multiple Linear Regression Analysis at a 5% level of significance.

The regression model for the study is specified as:

$$EG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TID + \beta_2 EID + \beta_3 ICT + e$$

Where:

EG = Entrepreneurial Growth

TID = Transportation Infrastructure Deficit

EID = Electricity Infrastructure Deficit

ICTD = Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure Deficit

β_0 = Constant (intercept)

β_1–β_3 = Regression coefficients

ε = Error term

The hypotheses were tested as follows:

H_{01}: EG = β_0 + β1TID + e

H_{02}: EG = β_0 + + β2EID + e

H_{03}: EG = β_0 + β3 ICT + e

Decision rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the p-value is less than 0.05; otherwise, fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex (N = 200)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	113	56.5
Female	87	43.5
Total	200	100

Table 4.1 reveals that 113 respondents, representing 56.5%, were male while 87 respondents, representing 43.5%, were female. This implies that male respondents constituted a larger proportion of agribusiness enterprise operators in the study area.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age (N = 200)

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30 years	40	20.0
31-40 years	72	36.0
41-50 years	56	28.0
51 years and above	32	16.0
Total	200	100

The table shows that respondents aged 31–40 years constituted the highest proportion (36.0%), followed by those aged 41–50 years (28.0%). This indicates that agribusiness enterprises in the study area are predominantly operated by economically active adults.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One

What effect does transportation infrastructure deficit have on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State?

Table 4.3: Transportation Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth (N = 200)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	D	SD	mean	Decision
1	Poor road networks increase transportation costs	80	65	20	21	14	3.88	Accepted

2	Poor roads reduce access to markets	71	74	18	22	15	3.82	Accepted
3	Transportation challenges delay movement of products	74	71	19	23	13	3.85	Accepted
4	Poor transportation infrastructure affects business expansion	79	67	18	24	12	3.89	Accepted
	Grand mean						3.86	

The grand mean of 3.86 exceeds the benchmark mean of 3.00, indicating that respondents agreed that transportation infrastructure deficit negatively affects entrepreneurial growth. The findings suggest that poor road conditions increase transportation costs, restrict market access, delay product distribution, and limit business expansion.

Research Question Two

To what extent does electricity infrastructure deficit affect entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises?

Table 4.4: Electricity Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth (N = 200)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	D	SD	mean	Decision
1	Erratic power supply increases operational costs	90	70	16	13	11	4.08	Accepted
2	Electricity outages reduce productivity	83	69	17	19	12	3.96	Accepted
3	Dependence on generators affects profitability	89	65	15	18	13	4.00	Accepted
4	Inadequate electricity hinders business expansion	81	71	16	20	12	3.95	Accepted
	Grand mean						4.00	

The grand mean of 4.00 indicates a high level of agreement among respondents that electricity infrastructure deficit adversely affects entrepreneurial growth. The findings suggest that unstable electricity supply increases operational expenses and reduces business productivity and profitability.

Research Question Three

How does ICT infrastructure deficit affect entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises?

Table 4.5: ICT Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth (N = 200)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	UD	D	SD	mean	Decision
1	Poor internet access limits market information	92	65	14	16	13	4.04	Accepted
2	Inadequate ICT facilities reduce communication efficiency	89	70	13	14	14	4.03	Accepted
3	Limited digital technology constrains business growth	84	71	17	16	12	4.00	Accepted
4	Poor ICT infrastructure limits online marketing opportunities	90	67	16	15	12	4.04	Accepted
	Grand mean						4.00	Accepted

The grand mean of 4.03 indicates that respondents agreed that ICT infrastructure deficit negatively affects entrepreneurial growth. The result suggests that inadequate ICT facilities limit access to information, reduce communication effectiveness, and constrain market expansion opportunities.

4.3 Test of Hypotheses

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.6: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Growth

Predictor variables	Beta	t-value	Sig (p-value)	Decision
Transportation Infrastructure Deficit	-0.412	-6.284	0.000	Reject H_{01}
Electricity Infrastructure Deficit	-0.486	-7.115	0.000	Reject H_{02}
ICT Infrastructure Deficit	-0.394	-5.872	0.000	Reject H_{03}

Model Summary

R	R2	Adjusted R2	F-value	Sig
0.764	0.584	0.578	91.762	0,000

The multiple regression analysis revealed a strong relationship between infrastructure deficit and entrepreneurial growth (R = 0.764). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.584) indicates that transportation, electricity, and ICT infrastructure deficits jointly explained 58.4% of the variation in entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya.

The F-statistic of 91.762 with a significance value of 0.000 indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. Consequently, infrastructure deficit significantly predicts entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises.

The beta coefficients show that electricity infrastructure deficit (β = -0.486) exerted the strongest negative influence on entrepreneurial growth, followed by transportation infrastructure deficit (β = -0.412) and ICT infrastructure deficit (β = -0.394). Therefore, all three null hypotheses were rejected.

Results and Discussion

Transportation Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth

The findings of this study revealed that transportation infrastructure deficit has a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State. The descriptive analysis showed that poor road networks increase transportation costs, reduce access to markets, delay the movement of agricultural inputs and outputs, and constrain business expansion. Furthermore, the regression analysis indicated that transportation infrastructure deficit significantly predicts entrepreneurial growth, leading to the rejection of the first null hypothesis.

This finding is consistent with the study of Buntu et al. (2024), who found that improvements in transportation infrastructure enhance enterprise competitiveness by reducing transaction costs, facilitating trade, and strengthening market integration across African economies. Similarly, the World Bank (2023) reported that inadequate transportation infrastructure remains a major constraint to private-sector development and agribusiness productivity in developing countries because it limits market access and increases operational costs. The implication is that improving rural transportation infrastructure would enhance the efficiency, profitability, and long-term sustainability of agribusiness enterprises in the study area.

Electricity Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth

The study further established that electricity infrastructure deficit exerts a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises. The descriptive results indicated that erratic electricity supply increases operational costs, reduces productivity, lowers profitability, and limits business expansion. The regression analysis further revealed that electricity infrastructure deficit recorded the strongest negative influence on entrepreneurial growth among all the explanatory variables, resulting in the rejection of the second null hypothesis.

This finding corroborates the report of the International Finance Corporation (2023), which identified unreliable electricity supply as one of the most critical barriers to enterprise productivity and competitiveness among small and medium-sized enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa. Likewise, Tabash et al. (2024) found that improved electricity infrastructure significantly enhances business productivity, stimulates private investment, and promotes sustainable economic growth. These findings suggest that providing reliable and affordable electricity is essential for improving the operational performance and growth of agribusiness enterprises in Moniya and similar rural communities.

ICT Infrastructure Deficit and Entrepreneurial Growth

The findings also revealed that ICT infrastructure deficit has a significant negative effect on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises. Respondents agreed that poor internet connectivity and inadequate digital facilities restrict access to market information, reduce communication efficiency, limit online marketing opportunities, and constrain business growth. The regression analysis confirmed that ICT infrastructure deficit significantly influences entrepreneurial growth, leading to the rejection of the third null hypothesis.

This finding agrees with the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2024), which emphasized that digital infrastructure is a critical driver of enterprise innovation, market expansion, and sustainable economic development. The finding is also supported by Akinola et al. (2024), who reported that the adoption of digital technologies improves agribusiness performance by facilitating access to market information, promoting financial inclusion, and strengthening business management practices. The implication is that expanding broadband connectivity and improving digital infrastructure would enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of agribusiness enterprises in the study area.

Conclusion

This study examined the effects of infrastructure deficit on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria, with particular emphasis on transportation, electricity, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure deficits. The findings from the descriptive and multiple regression analyses established that all three dimensions of infrastructure deficit significantly and negatively influence entrepreneurial growth.

Specifically, the study found that poor transportation infrastructure increases transportation costs, delays the movement of agricultural inputs and outputs, restricts market access, and limits business expansion. Similarly, unreliable electricity supply was found to increase operational costs, reduce productivity, and weaken the profitability of agribusiness enterprises. The study further revealed that inadequate ICT infrastructure constrains entrepreneurs' access to market information, limits digital business opportunities, and reduces communication efficiency, thereby impeding enterprise growth.

The study therefore concludes that infrastructure remains a critical determinant of entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises. Addressing deficits in transportation, electricity, and ICT infrastructure is essential for improving business productivity, enhancing competitiveness, promoting

market integration, and achieving sustainable agribusiness development in Akinyele Local Government Area and Nigeria at large.

Recommendations

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

Government at the federal, state, and local levels should prioritize the rehabilitation and maintenance of rural and feeder roads within Moniya and other agribusiness clusters to facilitate the efficient movement of agricultural inputs and products, reduce transportation costs, and improve market accessibility.

Public and private sector stakeholders should invest in improving electricity infrastructure to ensure a stable and affordable power supply for agribusiness enterprises. Renewable energy solutions, particularly solar-powered systems, should also be promoted to reduce dependence on fuel-powered generators.

Government agencies and telecommunication service providers should expand broadband infrastructure and improve internet connectivity in rural and semi-urban communities. Enhanced digital infrastructure will strengthen business communication, improve access to market information, and promote digital entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship development agencies, financial institutions, and extension service providers should organize regular capacity-building programmes to improve the digital literacy and business management skills of agribusiness entrepreneurs, enabling them to maximize the benefits of modern technologies.

Policymakers should adopt an integrated infrastructure development strategy that simultaneously addresses transportation, electricity, and ICT deficits, as these infrastructure components collectively influence entrepreneurial productivity, competitiveness, and sustainable business growth.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the combined effects of transportation, electricity, and ICT infrastructure deficits on entrepreneurial growth among agribusiness enterprises in Moniya, Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Unlike many previous studies that focused on national infrastructure development or general enterprise performance, this study provides localized evidence from a rural agribusiness setting.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that electricity infrastructure deficit exerts the greatest negative influence on entrepreneurial growth, followed by transportation and ICT infrastructure deficits. These findings provide useful insights for policymakers, development partners, and investors in designing integrated infrastructure policies aimed at promoting agribusiness development, rural entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic growth.

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FACTOR INFLUENCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICBUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study analysed youth participation in agribusiness activities in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State. Nigeria. Multistage random sampling technique was used to select 150 youth through a well-structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as three-points Liker scale, participatory index and tobit regression analysis. Result shows that majority of the youth were male (78.67%), married (64.00%), educated (33.33%) with average age of 29 years and 3 people per household. Major agribusiness activities identified include crop production (41.33^), cattle/ sheep and goat (9.33%), fish farming (9.33%) etc. The result also revealed that youth always participated in input supplies activity (98,88%), snail farming (96.67%). Also, youth sometimes participated in crop production (31.33%), poultry production in the study area. Factors like sex, marital status, household size, cooperative society, access to credit were significant and had positive influence on youth participating in agribusiness activities. The majority of the youth identified high cost of raw materials, poor marketing factor, inadequate capital, disease outbreaks, transportation problem as the major constraints to youth participation in agribusiness activities. The study therefore recommends that Government and non-governmental organization (NGO) and community leaders should intensify effort in improving the rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, storage facilities, and market centers to reduce production and marketing costs so as increase their level of participation.

Key words: *Youth participation, Agribusiness activities, participation level*

Introduction

The agricultural sector in Africa remains a cornerstone of economy in many developing countries and in particular Nigeria contributing significantly to living standard and economic development (FAO, 2021; USDA, 2022). It contributes significantly to gross domestic product (GDP), supports national food security and provides employment for a large proportion of the population most especially the growing youth population (Yami *et al.*, 2019). Agribusiness which is the major component of agriculture offers substantial potential, as it links to agricultural production with related industries and services along the value chain. Previous studies (ILO, 2020; Mukembo *et al.*, 2015 and Mwaura, 2017) emphasized the potential of this interconnected system to drive economic growth and create employment at multiple stages ranging from production and processing to wholesale and retail. Agribusiness has the potential to absorb a large proportion of unemployed youths due to its broad value chain which encompassing production, processing, storage distribution, and marketing of agricultural products.

Youth play a critical role in national development as a dynamic and productive segment of the population (Afolabi *et al.*, 2022). In Nigeria, youths are defined as individuals aged 18–35 years and constitute a significant proportion of the workforce (ILO, 2020; Akinwekomi *et al.*, 2017). Agriculture and agribusiness offer offers vast opportunities for self-employment, income generation and economic growth. Thus, engaging youth in agribusiness has the potential to modernize agriculture, improve productivity, and ensure food security (United Nations, 2015). Despite agriculture being a major contributor to Nigeria's GDP and a source of livelihood for a significant portion of the population yet many young people perceive agricultural activities as labor-intensive, low-income, and unattractive, limited access to land, credit, training, markets, and weak policy support compared to other sectors

(Akinwekomi *et al.*, 2017). This has led to a decline in the agricultural workforce and underutilization of the economic potential of rural youth. It also has implications for youth unemployment, food security, and the sustainability of agricultural enterprises.

Empirical evidence suggests that meaningful participation of youth in agribusiness can stimulate rural development, reduce unemployment, enhance household incomes, and contribute to economic diversification. Youth bring creativity, energy, and adaptability to adopt modern technologies that can transform traditional agricultural practices. Sumberg *et al*. (2021) posit that youth possesses knowledge, attitudes, capacities, and skills that, if properly harnessed, can lift communities and nations out of the persisting challenges of poverty, unemployment, and low agriculture productivity. Recognizing the importance of youth in development, several African leaders and development organizations have implemented policies and programs to encourage youth participation in agriculture (Adebayo and Adeola,2018).

Despite its importance, youth participation in agribusiness has historically been low relative to other sectors such as commerce and the digital economy (Oluwatayo and Ojo, 2019). According to the findings of Adeyanju *et al., (*2020) many youths remain reluctant to engage in agricultural enterprises. This phenomenon has raised concerns among policymakers, educators, and economic planners, especially in the context of high youth unemployment and underemployment (FAO, 2015). However, the factors influencing youth participation in agribusiness is not fully understood. Without identifying and addressing these factors, efforts aimed at promoting youth involvement in agribusiness may not achieve the desired results. Hence, there is a need for a detailed study on the factors influencing youth participation in agribusiness activities. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis on the factors influencing youth participation in agribusiness activities in the study. The study intends to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the youth in the study area, identify different agribusiness activities as well as the major constraints hinder youth from participating in these activities. Also, the study seeks to examine the factors influencing youth participation in the identified agribusiness activities in the study area.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ibarapa central local government area of Oyo state. The local government area is characterized by its agricultural significance, with a substantial portion of the population engaged in farming activities contributing to the production of various crops and livestock in the state. It consists of two major towns such as Igboora and Idere. The rainfall pattern in the area follows a tropical type with an average annual rainfall pattern of 300mm and fairly high temperature with land mass area of 408,424sq/km. The early season usually begins from March and end towards June while the late season planting ends around December. The vegetation of the area is largely rainforest and savannah. Ibarapa central area sustains its economy primarily through agriculture with fertile land supporting the cultivation of crops such as yams, cassava, cocoa, maize, and vegetables and cash crops like cocoa, oil palm and cashew. Livestock farming in the area ensuring a supply of meat and dairy products contributing to the local economy, this includes poultry, goat and cattle production. Multistage random sampling technique was used in selecting 150 youth in the study area. The first stage of selection involves random sampling of 6 wards from the two major towns in the local government (that is, selection of four wards in Igboora and two wards in Idere). In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select 5 community in each ward. While the third stage involves the purposive selection of 5 youth engaging in agribusiness from each community. This resulted to 6 wards, 5 rural communities and 5 youth engaging in agribusiness given a total of 150 youth.

Nigeria currently uses different age ranges depending on the policy document, but for federal government programs, scholarships, and NYSC-related policies the following official definitions were erupted. The National Youth Policy (NYP, 2019) defines youth as citizens of Nigeria between the age of 15-29 years (NYP,2019, p.3). Politically, the Nigerian democratic system recently passed the 'Not too Young to Run' (NTYTR) Act in 2018. This defines youth as within the age of 18-35 years (Tukur, 2018). Also, Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (2021-2024) and National Youth

Council of Nigeria defines "youth as persons between the ages of 18 and 35 while focusing on employment ability of the youth (African Youth Charter, 2023). Therefore, this study follows the youth definition offers by Youth Employment Action Plan (2021-2024) since the study is focusing also on youth employment and occupation. The selected youth vary from 18-35 years.

Analytical Techniques

The analytical tools used to achieve the research objective includes descriptive statistics, three-points Liker scale, participatory index and tobit regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency distribution tables and arithmetic mean.

Tobit regression model

$y^* = x'\beta + \varepsilon$ $\quad y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_{11} X_{11} + \varepsilon$

Where; Y= Participation index

X_1 = Age of the youth participating in agribusiness, X_2 = Household size, X_3 = Level of education, X_4 = Years of experience in the chosen agribusiness activities, X_5 = Access to credit (1=Yes 0= otherwise), X_6 = Sex (1=male), X_7 = Marital status (1= Married, 0= not married), X_8 =, Cooperative society, X_9 = Annual Income, X_{10} = Employment status, X_{11} = Source of labour, X_{12} = Land acquisition, X_{13} = Farm Size, X_{14} = Extension service, ßo = constant, $\beta_1 - \beta_{14}$ = Coefficient to be estimated and ε = error term

Results and Discussion

Result in Table 1 shows that 78% of the respondents were male while 21% of the respondents were female. Larger percentage of the youth had tertiary education (33.33%) and were married (64.00%). The mean age of the respondents was 29 years which implies that majority of the youth were young and still in their active age group This finding is consistent with the findings of Nnamani and Obediah (2022) that the mean age of youth in agribusiness activities in Abia State Nigeria, was 28 years. The mean household size was 3 people per households. Majority of the respondents were full time in their occupation (92.00%). This is consistent with the findings of Afolabi *et al.* (2022) that majority of the youth in agricultural related activities were married men with post-secondary education.

Table 1: Socio economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Sex			
Male	118	78.67	
Female	32	21.33	
Age			
Less than 20	6	4.00	
20-25	18	12.00	
26-30	83	55.33	29 years
30 Above	43	28.67	
Marital Status			
Single	49	32.67	
Married	96	64.00	
Divorced	5	3.33	
Household Size			
Less than 3	90	60.00	
4-5	45	30.00	
6 Above	15	10.00	3 persons
Educational Level			
No Formal	36	24.00	
Primary	30	20.00	
Secondary	34	22.67	
Tertiary	50	33.33	
Employment Status			
Full Time	138	92.00	
Part-Time	12	8.00	

Cooperative Society			
Yes	125	83.33	
Land Acquisition			
Inheritance	101	67.33	
Purchase	17	11.33	
Rentage/Lease	18	5.33	
Community Land	11	7.33	
Access Credit			
Yes	140	93.33	
No	10	6.67	
Source of Lab			
Family	32	21.33	
Hired	100	66.67	
Extension Service			
Yes	130	86.67	
No	20	13.33	
Years of Exp			
≥3	54	36.00	
4-6	75	50.00	
≤6	21	14.00	4 years
Farm Size			
≥5	84	58.33	
5-10	32	22.22	
≤11	28	19	3hac

Source: Field survey 2026

Different (Various)agribusiness activities youth participated in the study area

Result in Table 2 shows that 34.66% of the respondents participated in crop production, 9.33% of the respondents participated in cattle/sheep and goat farming, 9.33% of the respondents participated in fish farming, 8% of the respondents participated in agro-processing enterprises, 10% of the respondents participated in agricultural marketing. The highest percentage of youth participated in the crop production, may be because crop production is common in the study area, also the respondent has access to land because result in Table 1 shows that majority of the youth acquired land by inheritance. The result is consistent with the findings of Nnamani and Obediah (2022) who's study also identified crop production, animal production, agro processing enterprises as various agribusiness activities participated in by the youth in Abia State, Nigeria.

Different agribusiness activities youth participated in the study area

Agribusiness activities	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Crop Production	52	34.66
Cattle/Sheep Farming	14	9.33
Fish Farming	14	9.33
Agro Processing enterprises	12	8.00
Agricultural Marketing	15	10.00
Input Supply	9	6.00
Poultry Production	15	10.00
Snail Farming	5	3.33
Piggery	10	6.66
Bee Keeping	4	2.67

Source: Field survey 2026

Level of youth participation in agribusiness activities in the study area

The result in Table 3 shows that youth always participated in cattle/sheep and goats farming, Snail farming and Beekeeping (86.66%). Followed by agro processing, agricultural marketing and input supply (80.00%), Piggery (66.66%) and crop production (64.00%). This finding is consistent with the findings of Nnamani and Obediah (2022) that youth always participated in animal production followed by crop production in the study area. Beekeeping

Level of youth participation in agribusiness activities

Agribusiness Activities	Always		Sometimes		Rarely	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Crop production	96	64.00	47	31.33	7	4.66
Cattle/sheep farming	130	86.66	9	6.00	11	7.33
Fish farming	84	56.00	46	30.66	20	13.33
Agro processing	120	80.00	13	8.67	17	11.33
Agricultural marketing	120	80.00	16	10.67	14	9.33
Input supply	120	80.00	10	6.66	20	13.33
Poultry production	110	73.33	32	21.33	8	5.33
Snail farming	130	86.66	5	3.33	15	10.00
Piggery	100	66.66	35	23.3	15	10.00
Beekeeping	130	86.66	11	7.33	9	6.00

Source: Field survey, 2026

Factors influencing youth participation in agribusiness activities in the study area

The Tobit regression result in Table 4 shows that the model is statically significant (LR chi^2 = 31.97, p = 0.004), indicating that the explanatory variables jointly influence youth participation in agribusiness. Result in Table 4 shows that sex of the respondents was significant and positive; this implies that being male influences youth participation in agribusiness activities than female. This is consistent with the findings of Osabohien *et al. (*2021) that the gender of the youth influenced their participation in agriculture activities. Marital status of the respondents is also significant and positive, this implies that been married may increase the participation of youth in selected agribusiness activities than their single counterpart in the study area.

Table 4: Factors influencing youth participation in agribusiness activities in the study area

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	t- values	p>t
Sex	0.1075**	0.2125	0.51	0.014
Age	0.0059	0.2358	0.25	0.861
Marital status	0.2017*	0.1761	1.15	0.064
Household size	0.0158*	0.0467	0.34	0.083

Educational level	0.0594	0.0860	0.69	0.492
Employment status	0.0439	0.3330	0.13	0.895
Cooperative society	0.1129***	0.2515	0.45	0.003
Land acquisition	-0.0-574	0.0717	-0.80	0.425
Year of experience	0.0420	0.0476	0.88	0.380
Access credit	1.1274***	0.4107	2.74	0.007
Farm Size	-0.0259	0.0386	-0.67	0.502
Annual income	7.52e-08**	3.34e-08	2.25	0.026
Source of labour	0.0284	0.1460	0.19	0.846
Extension service	1.3500***	0.2623	5.15	0.000
Constant	-0.3578	1.0878	-0.33	0.743

Source: Field survey, 2026 *** Significant at 1%, ** significant at 5%, and * significant at 10%

Constraints faced by youth participating in agribusiness activities in the study area.

Result in Table 5 reveals that 100% of the respondents faced the challenges of high cost of materials, transportation problems, insufficient land, poor storage and government policy, follows by spoilage, poor marketing factors and inadequate capital. These challenges will consequently result to reduce income, reduce yield, and limit the level of youth participation in agribusiness activities in the study area (Mulema, 2021; Akinwekomi *et al.*, 2017).

Table 5: Constraint's faced by youth participating in agribusiness activities in the study area.

Constraints	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
High Cost of Raw Material		
Yes	150	100.00
Poor Marketing Factor		
Yes	148	98.67
No	2	1.33
Inadequate Capital		
Yes	149	99.33
No	1	0.67
Insufficient Land		
Yes	150	100.00
Disease Outbreak		
Yes	146	97.99
No	3	2.01
Transportation Problem		
Yes	150	100.00
Poor storage		
Yes	150	100.00
Spoilage		
Yes	149	99.33
No	1	0.67

Poor Credit Access		
Yes	143	95.33
No	7	4.67
Government Policy		
Yes	150	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2026

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the result concludes, that the male gender dominates the study area. Crop production, cattle/sheep and goat, fish farming, agro processing, bee beeping etc, were different agribusiness activities identified in the study area. Youth always participated in cattle/sheep and goats farming, snail farming and beekeeping. Followed by agro processing, agricultural marketing and input supply, Piggery and crop production. Sex of the respondents, being married and being a member of a cooperative society were factors influencing youth participation in the study area. The majority of the youth identified high cost of raw materials, poor marketing factor, inadequate capital, insufficient land, disease outbreaks, transportation problems, spoilage, poor access to credit and government policy as the major constraints in participating agribusiness activities.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made

Government, NGO and community leaders should intensify effort in improving the rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, storage facilities, and market centers to reduce production and marketing costs so as increase their level of participation.

Youths should be encouraged to form cooperative societies to facilitate access to loans, farm inputs, markets, and other agricultural support services.

Training and refresher program on agricultural farming activities should be organized to improve youth knowledge skills and productivity in agribusiness so as increase their level of participation.

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INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND RESTAURANT BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY: CASE STUDY OF MARINA RESORT RESTAURANT CALABAR AND MAMA GIFT RESTAURANT UGEP, CROSS RIVER STATE NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigatdhow innovative agricultural practices enhance the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of restaurants using Marina Resort Restaurant, Calabar and Mama Gift Restaurant, Ugep in Cross River State as case studiesThe study adopted a convergent mixed-methods design. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 60 respondents'staff and registered suppliers. Secondary data were sourced from restaurant records, supplier invoices, and Cross River State agricultural bulletins. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 with descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regressions. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo 14 Findings show that both restaurants reduced food cost volatility by 28-35% between 2022-2025 through direct sourcing from innovative farms. Marina Resort's hydroponics and RAS ensured 95% year-round supply of lettuce, basil, and catfish, compared to 60% supply reliability for restaurants relying on open markets. Mama Gift's composting and zero-waste model reduced waste disposal costs by 40% and created 12 direct jobs for local women farmers. The study concludes that backward integration into innovative agriculture is a strategic pathway for restaurant sustainability in Nigeria. It recommends targeted government incentives, renewable energy subsidies, technical training through development of cold-chain Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). This research contributes empirical evidence to literature on sustainable food systems in Sub-Saharan Africa and provides a replicable SME model for the Nigerian hospitality business.

Keywords: *Innovative Agriculture, Restaurant Sustainability, Hydroponics, Aquaponics, Farm-to-table*

Introduction

Background of the Study

Innovation simply means creating something new or modifying existing product or practices to get a better outcome or result Science and Technology have become a driving force of innovation in the 21st Century. To guarantee food security through agricultural practices and boost restaurant businesses in Nigeria, there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift from the traditional methods of agricultural practiced to a modernize and innovative system leveraging on science and technology to achieve all round food sufficiency for the country. Restaurant operators depends heavily on agricultural farm produces such as garri, yam tubers, vegetables of all kinds, palm oil, plantain, rice, chicken eggs, fresh fish etc for their daily menus. Hence, the need to adopt backward integration approach for food cost reduction and better menu planning and reduce over dependent on farmers or suppliers in apost Covid 19 era.

The global hospitality and food service Industry represents one of the fastest growing sectors in world economy. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTC,2024), the total contribution of travel and tourism to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 9.9% in 2023, with food and beverage services accounting for approximately 30% of all tourism expenditure. Within the broader hospitality industry, restaurants constitute the largest sub-sector and serve as critical nodes in the food value chain. They provide employment, drive agricultural demand, and shape consumer dietary source.

In Nigeria, the restaurant industry has experienced significant expansion over the past decade, propelled by rapid urbanization, growth of the middle class, increased female workforce participation, and the rise of domestic tourism. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS,2024) reports that the accommodation and food services sector contributed N1.34 trillion Naira to Nigeria GDP in 2024, representing an average annual growth rate of 8.5% between 2020 and 2024. This growth trajectory is expected to continue, with projections indicating a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.2% through 2030, fueled by the expansion of Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs), casual dining outlets, and tourism – driving establishments in urban centers.

Cross River State, located in the South – South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, has strategically positioned itself as a premier destination for eco-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and business conferencing. Calabar, the state capital, hosts the internationally renowned Calabar Carnival, Tinapa Business and Leisure Resort, and numerous hospitality establishments that cater to domestic and international tourists. Marina Resort complex along Restaurant, situated within the Marina Resort complex along the Calabar River, exemplifies high-end tourism - oriented dining that integrates local Cross River Cuisine with international culinary standards. The restaurant serves an average of 300 customers daily and employs 35 staff members directly, with additional employment generated through its supply chain.

Ugep town in Yakurr Local Government Area (LGA) represents the agrarian heartland of Cross River State, characterized by large – scale production of yam (Dioscoreaspp), cassava Manihotesculenta), plantain (Musa Paradisiaca), vegetables, and spices. The town's proximity to fertile agricultural land and its reputation as a food basket for the state make it a strategic location for farm – to – table initiatives. Mama Gift Restaurant in Ugep, established in 2015, has leveraged this agricultural endowment to build a reputation for authentic, locally sourced traditional meals. The restaurant serves approximately 150 customers daily and maintains direct relationships with 25 women farmers in surrounding communities. (Bassey and Ewa (2024).

Despite the evident growth potential and natural resource advantage, restaurants in Nigeria operate within a fragile and inefficient agricultural supply environment that threatens long – term sustainability. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO,2023) estimates that Nigeria loses between 40% and 50% of its horticultural produce post – harvest due to poor handling practices, inadequate cold chain infrastructure, weak market linkages, and transportation bottlenecks. For highly perishable vegetables such as tomatoes (Solanumlycopersicum), pepper (Capsicum spp), and leafy greens including fluted pumpkin (Telfairiaoccidentalis) and waterleaf (Talinumtriangulare), losses can exceed 60% during peak production seasons. This systemic inefficiency creates a destructive undermines both farmer incomes and restaurant operations.

The concept of innovative agriculture refers to the application of science, technology, ecological principles, and alternative production systems to increase agricultural productivity, reduce resource consumption, and improve resilience to climate variability. Innovative relevant to restaurant supply chains includes: (1) Hydroponics, a soil- less cultivation method where plants grow in nutrient – rich water solutions without soil media: (2)Aquaponics, an integrated system combining Recirculating Aquaculture systems (RAS) for fish production with hydroponics for plant cultivation in a symbiotic relationship,' (3) Vertical farming, which maximizes production per square meter using stacked growing systems and controlled environment agriculture;(4) Organic farming, which emphasizes soil health, biodiversity, and elimination of synthetic chemical inputs; and (5) Waste – to – resource systems such as composting and biogas production that convert restaurant food waste into organic fertilizer or renewable energy.

Hydroponics has gained global attention for its resource efficiency. The Nutrition film Technique (NFT) is particularly suitable for leafy vegetables and herbs that form the backbone of restaurant salads and garnishes.

Aquaponics closes the nutrient loop by using fish waste as plant fertilizer, reducing the need for producing two products simultaneously. Organic farming improves carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and eliminates pesticide residues that pose health risk to consumers.

The farm – to – table movement operationalizes sustainability by shortening the distance between food production and consumption, thereby reducing transportation costs, preserving nutritional quality, and building consumer trust. Globally, pioneering restaurants such a Noma in Copenhagen, Denmark; Blue Hill at Stone Barns in New York, United State of Kingdom, have demonstrated that direct involvement in agricultural production enhances menu authenticity, reduces supply risk, and builds customer loyalty.

In Nigeria, the farm – to –table concept is emerging but remains under-researched, particularly for SMEs outside major metropolitan centers like Lagos and Abuja. Most existing studies focus on large hotels or agricultural production systems without examining the critical linkage between farm innovation and restaurant performance.

Marina Resort Restaurant and Mama Gift Restaurant provide two contrasting but complementary models for empirical study. Marina Resort Restaurant represents a capital intensive, technology driven approach to backward integration. In 2021, management invested N8.5million naira to install a 200 square meter Nutrient Film Technique (NFT) hydroponic greenhouse and twelve Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) tanks for African catfish (Clariasgariepinus). The facility produces approximately 300 kilograms of leafy vegetables and 1.5tons of catfish annually, meeting 60% of the restaurant's vegetable and fish demand. Solar photovoltaic panels provide backup power to address Nigeria's electricity instability.

Mama Gift Restaurant represents a low-cost, community – integrated model that leverages social capital and traditional knowledge. It was established in 2015, the restaurant developed a 500 square meter organic vegetable garden using poultry manure and vermicompost produced on – site. It operates a three bin composting system that processes 70 kilograms of food waste weekly into organic fertilizer, eliminating disposal cost while closing the nutrient loop. Seventy percent of vegetables and spices are sourced directly from 25 women farmers in Yakurr Local Government Area through informal collective marketing arrangements that guarantee purchase and fair pricing. The restaurant brands itself as "100% Ugep- Grown" and has built strong customer loyalty based on freshness, authenticity, and community connection.

The significance of studying these two establishments lies in their demonstration that sustainability pathways can be tailored to different resource levels and operational contexts. Marina Resort's model requires high capital investment but delivers high productivity, consistency, and year-round supply security. Mama Gift's model requires minimal capital but maximizes social capital, community relationships, and ecological processes. Documenting both models provides policy-relevant insights for scaling across Nigeria's diverse restaurant sector, which includes high-end tourism establishments, urban casual dining, and rural community eateries.

Statement of the problem

The restaurant industry in Nigeria faces a triad of interlocking challenges that threaten long-term sustainability: supply inconsistency, cost pressure, and environmental degradation.

Supply Inconsistency. Observation has shown that Nigerian agriculture is predominantly rain-fed and seasonal. This seems to create periods of glut where prices crash and farmers incur losses, followed by scarcity periods where restaurants cannot source key ingredients. For leafy vegetables, tomatoes, and peppers, supply gaps of 3-4 months are common. Restaurants respond by changing menus frequently, which reduces customer satisfaction and brand consistency. Marina Resort reported that before 2021, 40% of its planned menu items were unavailable weekly due to supply failure leading to service inconsistency.

. This squeezes profit margins and forces price increases that reduce customer traffic. Both case study restaurants reported that food cost volatility was their single biggest operational stress before adopting innovative sourcing.

While Marina Resort and Mama Gift have pioneered solutions, their experiences reveal systemic barriers. Marina Resort's hydroponics system cost ₦8.5 million to install, excluding solar power backup. This capital requirement is prohibitive for most SMEs. Both restaurants struggle with erratic power supply, requiring diesel generators that increase operating cost. Technical knowledge for

hydroponics nutrient management is scarce and most local farmers lack training creating GAP. It seems there are no standardized contracts for farm-to-restaurant supply, leading to disputes and supply failure. This study therefore seeks to answer the extent of innovative agricultural practices on the sustainability of restaurants business in Cross River State?

Objectives of the study

The broad objective is to examinethe impact of innovative agricultural practices on the sustainability of restaurant businesses in Cross River State, Nigeria**.**

Specific objectives include;

1. To identify and describe innovative agricultural practices adopted by Marina Resort Restaurant and Mama Gift Restaurant.
2. To examine the effect of direct farm sourcing and controlled production on restaurant food cost and supply reliability.
3. To evaluate environmental sustainability outcomes including waste reduction, water use efficiency.
4. To assess the socioeconomic impact of restaurant agricultural innovation on local farmers and employment.
5. To identify and analyze constraints limiting adoption and scaling of agricultural innovation by restaurants
6. To propose evidence – based strategies for strengthening agricultural-restaurant linkages in Nigeria.

Research questions

1. What types of innovative agricultural practices that are currently adopted by Marina Resort and Mama Gift Restaurants?
2. Does direct farm sourcing and controlled of agricultural production affect restaurant food cost and supply stability compared to market sourcing?
3. What are the environmental benefits of innovative agricultural practices in terms of waste reduction and resource efficiency from these practices?
4. What socio-economic impacts do restaurant agricultural innovations have on local communities?
5. What are the possible constraints that may hinder wider adoption of innovative agricultural practice byrestaurants?

Research hypotheses

1. H_{o1} Innovative agricultural practices adopted by Marina Resort and Mama Gift have no significant effect on sustainability of restaurant businesses in Cross River State.
2. H_{o2}: Direct farm sourcing and controlled of agricultural production haveno significant effect on food cost and supply stability compared to market sourcing.
3. $Ho_{3;}$There is no significant environmental benefits from innovative agricultural practices in terms of waste reduction and resource efficiency.
4. $H_{o4;}$ There is no scio-economic impacts on restaurant agricultural innovation on local communities.
5. $H_{o5;}$ There are not possible constraints that hindered wider adoption of innovative agricultural practice by restaurants in Cross River State.

Material and methods

Theoretical Review

This study is theoretically grounded in three complementary frameworks. First, the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, proposed by Barney (1991), argues that competitive advantage stems from firm-specific resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized. Direct control over food production through innovative agriculture constitutes such a strategic resource for restaurants, as it is difficult for competitors to replicate quickly. Second, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

developed by the Department for International Development (DFID, 1999) links household or firm assets to strategies and outcomes, emphasizing resilience and vulnerability reduction. Third, Innovation Diffusion Theory by Rogers (2003) explains how new agricultural practices spread through adopter categories, with Marina Resort acting as an innovator and Mama Gift as an early adopter within the local context.

Empirical review

Akinbile and Adekunle (2021) studied 15 urban hydroponic farms in Lagos and found 70% water savings and 40% higher yield per m² in soil farming. Challenge was power cost, constituting 35% of operating expense.

Ojo, Musa and Danladi, (2022) Surveyed 40 Abuja restaurants. The study concluded that restaurants practicing direct farm sourcing reduced food cost by 22% and improved menu consistency by 55%.

FAO 2023: Global report estimated Nigeria's post-harvest loss at 45% for perishables. Recommendeddecentralized cold storage and aggregation centres.

Bassey and Ewa (2024), studiedCross River vegetable farmers found 30% tomato loss due to absence of cooling within 24 hours of harvest. Farmers willing to supply restaurants if guaranteed purchase.

Smith 2020: Meta-analysis of 120 zero-waste restaurants globally. Composting reduced waste disposal cost by 35% and improved customer perception scores by 28%.

Eneji, Ogar and Okpa (2023): studied 60 SMEs in Calabar. The study concluded that Solar adoption increased operational hours by 60% and reduced diesel cost by 55%.

Methodology

Research Design: Convergent mixed-methods case study design to capture both statistical patterns and contextual insights.

Population: Marina Resort Restaurant population includes; 35 staff and 12 suppliers. Mama Gift Restaurant = 18 staff + 8 suppliers. Total population = 73.

Sample Size: Using Taro Yamane formula at 5% error margin, n=60. Stratified into managers 6, kitchen staff 24, and suppliers 30.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling for managers, stratified random for staff and suppliers.

Instruments: Structured questionnaire with Likert scales, semi-structured interview guide, and observation checklist for farm facilities.

Validity: Content validity through expert review by 2 hospitality lecturers. Pilot test on 10 respondents at a non-case restaurant.

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha = 0.82 for sustainability scale.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data analyzed with SPSS using descriptive stats, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. Qualitative data coded thematically in NVivo. Triangulation used to validate findings.

Data analysis

Table 1. Socio-economic profile and Background of Respondents

Sex	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Male	34	56.7
Female	26	43.3
Total	60	100

Sources: Field work 2026

Table 2. Education Background of Respondents

Educational background	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Senior Secondary (SSCE)	12	20.0
National Diploma/ National Certificate in Education (ND , NCE)	18	30.0

Bachelor's / Higher Diploma (B.Sc/HND)	21	35.0
Master's Degree (M.sc/MBA/MA	9	15.0
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)	-	-
Total	60	100

Source: Field work 2026

Table 2: Analysis of Research Question 2: Effect of Direct Sourcing on Food Cost.

Variable	Mean (₦)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Food Cost Before Innovation	485,000	52,300	153,000	12.45	0.000
Food Cost After	332,000	41,100	-	-	0.000

Significant at $p < 0.05$. Paired Sample t-test shows significant reduction in monthly food cost after adopting innovative agricultural sourcing.

Table 4: Analysis of Research Question 3: Environmental Sustainability Outcomes

Indicator	Before Innovation	After Innovation	Percentage Change (%)
Water use (liters/kg produce)	250	38	-84.8
Food Waste to Landfill (kg/month)	350	210	-40.0
Energy Cost (% of total operating cost)	18	12	-33.3

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing – Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Restaurant Sustainability Score

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.245	0.312	3.99	0.000
Innovative Agriculture Index	0.673	0.089	7.56	0.000
Capital Investment	0.112	0.065	1.72	0.091
Power Supply Reliability	0.205	0.078	2.63	0.011

Model Summary: $R = 0.819$, R Square (R^2) = 0.671, Adjusted R Square = 0.654

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): $F(3,56) = 37.82$, $p < 0.001$

Significant at $p < 0.05$. Null hypothesis rejected. Innovative agricultural practices have significant positive effect on restaurant sustainability.

Findings

Findings revealed that innovative Practices: Marina Resort operates 200m² hydroponics for lettuce, basil, mint, and 12 RAS tanks for catfish. Mama Gift runs 500m² organic beds using poultry manure and vermicompost, plus 3-bin composting system for food waste.

Economic Impact: Findings revealed that both restaurants reported average food cost reduction of 31.5%. Marina's vegetable cost dropped from ₦450/kg market price to ₦180/kg production cost. Supply reliability increased from 60% to 95% for core ingredients. Menu consistency improved customer retention by 22%.

Environmental Impact: It was revealed that Marina's hydroponics uses 85% water than soil farming. Composting at Mama Gift diverted 2.1 tons of food waste from landfill in 2024, saving ₦320,000 in disposal fees. Both reported improved environmental compliance scores.

Social Impact: Findings revealed that Mama Gift's sourcing created direct income for 25 women farmers, average monthly increase of ₦28,000 per farmer. Marina Resort trained 8 youths in hydroponics, 3 now run their own micro-farms.

Constraints: Findings revealed that 78% cited power supply as top challenge. 65% cited high capital cost. 52% cited lack of technical knowledge. 45% cited absence of formal contracts leading to supply breach.

On Hypothesis Test: Regression analysis shows $R^2 = 0.67$, $p<0.05$. Innovative agriculture practices explain 67% of variation in sustainability score. H0 rejected.

Conclusion

This study provides compelling evidence that innovative agricultural practices are a critical driver of sustainability for restaurants in Cross River State. The contrasting models of Marina Resort and Mama Gift demonstrate that both capital-intensive and low-cost approaches can yield significant benefits when aligned with local context. Economic benefits manifest in reduced cost volatility, improved margins, and enhanced supply security. Environmental benefits include reduced water use, waste diversion, and lower carbon footprint. Social benefits are evident in job creation and farmer income improvement.

The findings validate the Resource-Based View: restaurants that internalize control over critical food inputs develop a competitive advantage that market-dependent competitors cannot easily replicate. The study also highlights that innovation alone is insufficient without addressing systemic constraints. Power instability remains the single biggest threat to science and technology-driven agriculture in Nigeria. Financial barriers prevent scaling, and knowledge gaps limit productivity.

For Nigeria's food system, the implications are clear. Restaurants must be recognized as active players in agricultural value chains, not just end consumers. Policies that treat them as such can unlock significant efficiency gains. Cross River State, with its tourism focus and agricultural potential, is well-positioned to pioneer a "Green Restaurant" certification program that can become a national model.

Future research should expand to more Local Government Areas, include lifecycle assessment of carbon footprint, and explore block chain for supply chain transparency. The partnership between hospitality and agriculture demonstrated in this study offers a practical pathway toward achieving SDG 2, 8, and 12 in Nigeria.

. **Recommendations**

i. Fiscal Incentives: Federal and state governments should provide tax rebates and pioneer status to restaurants investing in hydroponics, aquaponics, and renewable energy.
ii. Renewable Energy Subsidy: Expand CBN solar intervention fund to cover restaurant agricultural facilities, reducing diesel dependence.
iii. Technical Training: Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), Federal Polytechnic Ugep (FPU) and Ministry of Agriculture should run quarterly training for restaurant managers and suppliers on hydroponics, composting.
iv. Cold Chain Infrastructure: Develop Public Private Partnership (PPP) cold storage hubs at Calabar, Ugep, and Ikom to reduce post-harvest loss and enable bulk supply.
v. Standard Contracts: State Ministry of Justice should develop template MOUs for farm-to-restaurant supply with clear pricing and quality clauses.

vi. Waste Management Policy: Make composting mandatory for restaurants with >50 seating capacity. Provide bins and technical support.
vii. Access to Finance: BOI and BOA should create a "Restaurant Innovation Fund" with single-digit interest for agricultural integration projects.
viii. Certification & Marketing: Cross River Tourism Bureau should launch "Green Restaurant" certification and promote certified outlets in tourism marketing to attract eco-conscious tourists.
ix. Research Collaboration: Establish a Restaurant-Agriculture Innovation Hub at Cross River University of Technology Calabar (CRUTECH) and Federal Polytechnic Ugep (FPU) to conduct R&D and serve as demonstration center.
x. Aggregation Platforms: Develop digital platform linking restaurants directly to verified farmer groups to reduce middlemen

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MEDIA RESOURCES CENTRES AS THE MISSING LINK IN TRANSFORMING LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Media Resources Centres (MRCs) as a transformative element in modern education. The justification for this is the recognized insufficiency of industrial-era schools in fostering the development of critical 21st-century abilities, even when technological integration frequently leads to flimsy "technological substitution." A conceptual analysis founded on a thorough synthesis and critical evaluation of the body of available literature is the methodology used. The MRC is positioned as the "missing link" in educational change by this method's theoretical framework. According to key findings, a strong MRC serves as a multifaceted hub that includes an institutional mechanism for promoting information literacy and critical thinking, a digital nexus that bridges the technology gap and promotes equity, an environment designed to foster creativity and collaboration, and a community center that fosters a lifelong love of reading, all under the direction of a media specialist who acts as an educational catalyst. According to the study's findings, MRCs are a crucial element in maximizing students' potential rather than just an improvement. To fully achieve the MRC's revolutionary potential, recommendations are made to include deep curricular integration, professional development for media experts, strategic investment in MRC infrastructure, and a concentrated effort to promote equity and a culture of reading and innovation.

Keywords: *Learning Outcomes; Media Resources Centres; Missing Link; Transforming*

Introduction

Today's education system is in a crossroads, trying to adapt an industrialized teaching method to fit the needs of an information age, knowledge-based and intellect-oriented society. For over 100 years, the traditional classroom has formed the basis of education. This classroom relies on a passive learning-centered approach and on textbooks that must be followed, (Kerres & Heinen, 2015).It was a good idea when it was difficult to obtain information, access was restricted and the aim of education was to teach a disciplined population a finite set of facts.Yet two massive and interrelated events have utterly disrupted the very fundamental concepts in this system - the digital revolution and the deluge of knowledge that followed it. Today's students are not just learning; they're swimming in a large, unfiltered sea of information, and often it's difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. This is where mere knowledge is insufficient. The success relies on the new skills of critical thinking, using information ethically, being fluent in digital technology and being able to work well in changing teams (Muslimov & Umarova, 2021).

The traditional classroom and its limitations have been shown to be woefully inadequate in the development of these essential 21st-century skills. Educational reform in this context has been much more a question of catching up rather than large-scale changes, and has tended to focus on making minor adjustments. As technology has been integrated, such as smart boards and one-to-one device programs, there has been a rush to add technology, but not necessarily teaching or infrastructure. This frequently results in what many educational researchers call “technological substitution,” meaning that new technologies are used merely as new instruments to perform the same tasks as in

the past, for example, the use of a digital textbook instead of a physical one without a significant change in the learning process (Sveda et al., 2023).

A key weakness in these methods is the absence of a central and dynamic learning platform for the integration and improvement of learning in all subjects and forms. They do not consider how to evolve from passive learning to active, inquiry-based learning in the institutional environment and professional knowledge. Based on this, this study argues that the media resources centre is the exact missing link, a vital, but not always obvious, connection that can transform a conventional school environment into a thriving ecosystem for deep learning. An MRC is not simply a library, but a dynamic and rich environment that changes the very concept of the school's core learning space.It is a place where both print and electronic resources are blended harmoniously, where students are given the freedom to increase their own range of inquiry beyond the boundaries of the text, and where a trained expert serves as guide and mentor. The MRC allows members to use the building's space as a 'commons' and fosters the physical and intellectual space that is crucial to developing the skills which the modern world relies on. This article will seek to outline how the proposed development and complete integration of well-established media resources centres will not just be a positive development, but the key solution that will have to be put in place to close the gap between conventional education and a genuinely transformative experience.

Methodology

The study's main methodology was a thorough synthesis and critical evaluation of the body of existing literature. The researchers analysed and synthesised information from a number of academic sources to make a compelling argument for the role of Media Resources Centres. This involves identifying the gap in the existing educational models with the help of information science, pedagogy, and educational technology concepts and reflecting on the MRC as a systemic solution. The methodology is not empirical, but analytical and argumentative. It uses the knowledge gained from the quoted studies regarding such topics as technological substitution, information literacy, collaborative learning, and the digital divide to make inferences about the goals and benefits of MRCs. The study builds on these concepts to create a theoretical model that will see the MRC as the missing link that will transform learning outcomes. It is a detailed creation of theory, not a new data collection or statistical analysis, but a justification based on the findings of previous research for the definition, goals, and importance of an MRC.

Fostering Critical Inquiry and Information Literacy

In the current information world, it is not possible to predict what kind of information is going to be available, and that information might be provided from a variety of sources, often of questionable accuracy, so the emphasis needs to be changed from acquiring content to learning the skills that will help students to acquire content. From this point of view, the MRC is the major institutional framework in constructing information literacy, which is one of the important skills of 21st-century learners (Ekeh, 2024). MRCs offer a supervised safe place for pupils to practise and build the skills for the search, evaluation, integration and responsible use of knowledge. A media specialist is trained to help students determine whether information is reliable or unverified online information, to define biases that can exist in various types of media, and to put together a well-supported argument using a triangulation of evidence (Alekseeva, Svyatchenko & Zvereva, 2019).

This is a dynamic, hands-on approach that goes beyond the rote-learning of information, and asks students to be intellectual detectives who question, verify and build their understanding of complex topics. Thus, MRC is a laboratory for the discovery of ideas, directly confronting the challenge of disinformation in society and educating pupils to have informed and reasoned communication (Pedagogical Monitoring of Media Resources, 2020). Digital information has created a new wave of problems that traditional schools that were built to work with scarce resources and authoritative books are poorly prepared to deal with. Today’s students are growing up in a world where they can find social media feeds, search engine results, and "fake news" and "deep fakes" (Umarova, 2020) everywhere.

This free flow of information can give rise to echo chambers, uncritical reception of distorted information and failure to distinguish between fact and fiction when none is in place and there is no expert leadership. The MRC is seen as the key remedy to this pedagogical problem. It is a controlled environment designed to encourage students to ask questions and provides a secure place to deal with the complexities of information. One of the major objectives of the MRC is to help the students learn to critically analyze sources. The media expert presents and applies the CRAAP test (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose), the SIFT model (Stop, Investigate the source, Find better coverage, Trace claims to original context), and other frameworks to transform abstract concepts into real skills. A student might be asked to compare a Wikipedia article to a peer-reviewed journal article and a letter written in that historical period (a primary source).In this process, they acquire the ability to not only understand the differences in authority and purpose but also the process of knowledge creation (Muslimov & Umarova, 2021).

They discover that the Wikipedia page is a starting point, an article in a journal is the result of scholarly research, and a primary source document provides a first-hand point of view which needs to be placed in context. This hands-on, comparative study is a cornerstone of critical thinking and advances beyond passive learning to active intellectual engagement. In addition, the MRC serves as the physical and virtual lab for the development of Information Retrieval skills. Students, with media specialist support, develop effective search strategies, differentiate among source types (e.g. opinion, reportage, academic research) and understand the algorithmic biases affecting their online experiences. The workshops and teaching sessions within the MRC emphasize skills that are applied in real-world settings and directly address these skills. For instance, if the students were studying the impact of climate change, they would be able to access a scientific data online repository, a government website to retrieve policy documents, and a news archive to retrieve media coverage over time. This is a multi-layered activity in which they must identify data, understand its source and intent, and be aware of possible data limitations. The active sourcing and evaluation is the core of critical thinking.

The MRC serves as a place to teach digital citizenship and the ethical use of information as well as to retrieve. Media Specialist teaches students about proper citation, Intellectual Property, and responsible use of digital materials in an era when plagiarism is easily done and sources are often misused. They offer instruction on the complexities of fair use and the importance of giving credit to the work of others and instill in students a deep appreciation for academic integrity. This moral education is a crucial part of the student's development, equipping them for the challenges of further education and their working lives where honesty and honesty in reporting are essential. The MRC revolutionizes the way learning is done, shifting the emphasis from what should be learned to how it is learned. It encourages students to be interested in learning beyond the classroom and equips them with the transferable, enduring skills essential for dealing with a knowledge-driven world that is constantly evolving. While passive data collection takes the place of critical inquiry, an active lifelong practice, they will find themselves equipped with this skill long after they have finished their classroom work.

The Digital Nexus: Bridging the Technology Gap

Technology in the classroom does not automatically results in better learning outcomes. If not properly designed, managed and led, digital tools can often be a source of distraction or inequality. The MRC serves as the digital crossroads that can effectively mitigate this technology divide, and ensure students have access to and can master key digital tools (Sveda et al., 2023).From specialized data analysis software and multimedia editing tools to robotics kits and 3D printers, these centers are equipped with cutting-edge technology tools that aren't commonly found in a standard classroom. Most significantly, MRC can provide access to high-quality learning resources to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, reducing the digital divide (Dirckinck-Holmfeld et al., 2023).

Students are taught to use technology as a practical tool for learning, and change a passive electronic object to an active medium for creation and expression, under the guidance of a media

professional. The use of technology is essential in facilitating students' technical fluency and adaptability in learning, which is crucial for success in higher education and the labor market in the modern era (Hidayat & Suryadi, 2023). Promises of instructional technology have long outstripped its use. Schools have invested a significant amount of resources into the purchase of Laptops, Tablets and Interactive White Boards, but the potential of these tools is not always fully realised (Lopes, 2022). The reason for this divide is that there is no centralized, managed and supported hub to facilitate the hardware and pedagogy needed for true integration. Limited time and resources can't make the traditional classroom a technological training ground! Teachers are already pressed for time on curriculum content, and often don't have the expertise to troubleshoot complicated software, organize digital projects, or introduce students to cutting-edge technological applications.

This leads to a situation where high-dollar tech is not being used to its full potential, or even being used for simple, low impact tasks which need not cost as much.The MRC is the institutional answer to this challenge as a dedicated digital nexus.It is the basic nervous system of the technological world in a school and is equipped with both the physical infrastructure and the human knowledge to facilitate strong digital learning (Kerres&Heinen, 2015).The MRC has a variety of specialized hardware that are available beyond the standard office laptop.This can range from advanced video and music production stations to graphic design software and coding tools, and hands-on equipment such as 3D printers and virtual reality gear (Sveda et al., 2023).

This physical access is an important piece of equity as children without these instruments at home are not at a disadvantage.In addition to hardware, the MRC also has a collection of state-of-the-art software and web platforms.A vast array of licensed academic materials, advanced data visualization options and coding platforms are made available for students, well beyond what would be feasible in a typical classroom setting.The media specialist is the individual responsible not only for keeping these licenses but also for significant training in efficient use of these licenses.For example, in an English class, students could use a digital storytelling program to create a multimedia story, and in a science class they could use GIS software to map the wildlife in their area and observe how the environment affects it.The professional takes the part of a guide, giving courses on any topic from the most basic concepts in graphic design to advanced data analysis methods.This pedagogical support is what makes a room of computers into a learning center, where technology is not employed for consumption, but for invention and critical inquiry (Umarova, 2020).

In addition, MRC is an important factor in reducing the digital divide and it is still a significant challenge for equitable education (Dirckinck-Holmfeld et al., 2023). Having access to technological devices and high-speed internet at home significantly impacts pupils' achievement and future opportunities for learning. The MRC offers a structured, level environment in which all students, regardless of their circumstances, have access to the same quality resources. The democratic use of technology gives every student the chance to be technologically literate, which is crucial for success in the modern world and the academic program. The after school and weekend hours of MRC also can provide additional time for kids to complete homework, work on projects and pursue digital interests in a safe, productive setting.

Promoting Collaboration and Creativity

Global connection has turned team working and creativity into an essential ability and less of a second skill in the world (Rahmadi, 2017). Such skills are not easily fostered in the typical classroom, where the focus is to evaluate each student separately. The media resources centre, however, will be a flexible space that encourages collaboration and creativity, with flexible spaces, a variety of resources and an innovative environment that promotes sharing and learning. This cooperative approach is reflected in the physical space of the MRC.The MRC offers group study rooms, whiteboards, comfortable seating for informal discussions and quiet areas for focused work, all while replacing the rigid classroom rows.

This flexible concept enables to overcome physical walls and to motivate students to address interdisciplinary problems (Thiault 2016). The MRC is also a technology centre, fostering

creativity. Students will create documentaries, podcasts, websites, and interactive presentations with advanced video, audio, graphic design, and coding software, 3D printers, and virtual reality tools (Sveda et al., 2023).This access enables learners to express knowledge in the form of formats that are suitable for their interests and abilities (Arofah et al., 2023).A student who has a problem with writing could describe a biological process by animating it, and another student could create a podcast about social issues. Collaboration is an inherent requirement of these projects from storyboarding until editing, teaching communication, negotiation and division of labour (Rahmadi, 2017). The culture in the media specialist's head is also important.

The MRC recognizes the importance of the creative process, rather than the final product, and encourages experimentation and learning from failure without any academic consequences. Creating requires the ability to take risks (Nouraey & Syeda, 2017), which in turn requires psychological safety. The specialist delivers mini-workshops and supports students on an individual basis, bridging students with similar interests together to create communities of practice. This collaborative environment directly meets the needs of today's workforce in which team-based projects, with various disciplines, are essential. The MRC provides a low stress environment for students to develop the skills of providing and receiving feedback, working with deadlines, and effectively collaborating (Kerres & Heinen, 2015).

Building Community and a Culture of Reading

In addition to the academic aspects, the MRC is also very much involved in promoting school community and lifelong reading. It crosses over conventional lines and becomes a space that is neutral and inviting, where students, teachers and parents are intellectually connected. The MRC is fundamentally an open system for exploration and casual interaction as opposed to subject-based classrooms (Nouraey&Syeda 2017).It's easy to sit and talk here and there, easy to have intellectual connections.The MRC is the venue for extracurricular events, school-wide events, and a common intellectual bond.A basic role is to develop a culture of reading.Reading for enjoyment is particularly difficult in today's world of short-form reading, but predicting academic achievement across subjects, it is a well-documented fact that reading for pleasure augments vocabulary, writing and comprehension skills (Nouraey&Syeda, 2017).The MRC collects a variety of fiction, non-fiction and recreational media that students will be interested in; the media specialist is responsible for identifying trends and ensuring that the collections include a range of cultures and identities.This personalized method helps to make reading real and makes the reading process more likely to be voluntary.

The collection offers students a place to find their reading identity with graphic novels, coding history, or fantasy worlds.MRC co-organises reading challenges, which help to make reading a game, and book clubs led by experts or students, which help to make reading a social conversation.Author visits and virtual Q&A sessions put a face on the literary process, inspiring young readers and writers.MRC also organizes several school-wide events like science fair and debates, and creative writing showcases encouraging the community.The events enable students to get together from various classes and groups to exchange interests.The MRC is a place where students can explore their interests without the pressure of academic competition or athletics, and where ideas can flourish and grow.It also involves the parents in workshops and family reading time, thus reinforcing the home-school link.This makes the MRC more than a repository of resources, but the intellectual and social hub of the school (Jahyus et al., 2023).

The Role of the Media Specialist: From Curator to Catalyst

The role of the media specialist has from a passive librarian become a complex catalyst in the learning process (Lawrason & Parkhurst, 2019). This professional has an extensive information resources knowledge and instructional design skills along with a breadth of digital tools. They work closely with classroom teachers to co-plan lessons incorporating the resources, and to explicitly teach students how to use the internet, how to search for academic information, and how to evaluate

information sources. It is the specialist's responsibility not just to present materials but to train students effectively and appropriately to use these materials. This mentorship is a shift in a classroom from a passive learning environment to a learning environment, and the mentor is an important part of the equation.

Conclusion

The path to improving learning outcomes lies in realizing that a new century necessitates a new model of education. The media resources hub is the linchpin of this transition. By operating as a dynamic, resource-rich ecosystem that stimulates critical inquiry, bridges the technology gap, cultivates cooperation, establishes a strong intellectual community, and is overseen by a competent media expert, the MRC provides the vital support system that traditional classrooms lack. It is in these hubs of active learning that students are empowered to progress beyond the passive acquisition of facts and become inquiring, critical, and creative citizens. The data is clear: the media resources centre is not only a desirable addition to a school; it is the fundamental, and often missing, connection required to unlock the full potential of every student and genuinely revolutionize the future of education.

Recommendations

The study, based on its conclusion, recommends the following:

1. Educational institutions and legislators should give top priority to funding the establishment and outfitting of MRCs with cutting-edge digital tools, a variety of media resources, and adaptable learning environments. This is necessary to encourage creative and collaborative work,
2. To help media professionals move from custodial positions to active educational catalysts who can co-teach, mentor students in digital literacy, and assist with curriculum integration, invest in specialized training.
3. To ensure that MRCs become essential to the learning process, promote interdisciplinary cooperation between educators and media professionals in order to integrate digital fluency, critical inquiry, and information literacy into all subject areas.
4. To close the digital gap, MRCs should be designed as welcoming centers that give all students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, fair access to resources and technology.
5. There is need to take advantage of MRCs to actively encourage reading through carefully chosen collections and neighborhood gatherings, all the while establishing a secure space for experimentation, project-based learning, and artistic expression.

MRCs can realize their promise as transformative venues that equip students for the intricacies of a digital, knowledge-driven world by putting these strategies into practice.

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COMPUTER LITERACY SKILL AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS OF OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

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Abstract

This study examines academic staff members' computer literacy and job satisfaction at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Ninety-two academic staff members of the institution were chosen using a stratified random sampling procedure. Questionnaire on Computer Literacy and Job Satisfaction designed by the researcher (r =0.76) was used to gather the data. Data collected were subjected to analysis of variance and Pearson Product Moment Correlation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) at the 0.05 significant level. The results showed that job satisfaction and computer literacy were significantly positively correlated (r =.91, p <.05). There was a significant difference in work satisfaction between educational qualifications (F(2,89) = 519.276, p <.05). In addition, a significant difference between computer literacy levels was discovered (F(2,89) = 132.216, p <.05). Post hoc analysis revealed that employees with advanced computer literacy had the highest job satisfaction, followed by those with intermediate and basic levels. According to the study's findings, academic staff members' job satisfaction is significantly influenced by their computer literacy. To improve employee happiness and institutional efficacy, management was advised to establish tiered computer literacy training programmes and supply sufficient technology infrastructure.

Keywords: *Computer literacy, Job satisfaction, Academic staff, Polytechnic education*

Introduction

The ubiquitous impact of technology, which has drastically changed the nature of employment, teaching, and administrative procedures, is rapidly defining the landscape of modern academia. In Nigeria, using digital tools in higher education is now essential to staying relevant and accomplishing institutional objectives. The idea of computer literacy, or the capacity to use digital tools and software efficiently, is at the center of this technological revolution and has emerged as a crucial skill for academic personnel (Quadri & Oluwasina, 2022). Concurrently, an educational institution's quality is inextricably related to the dedication and well-being of its faculty, a reality that is sometimes summed up by the idea of job satisfaction. Fostering motivation, lowering inclinations to leave, and increasing overall productivity all depend on high levels of job satisfaction (Otache & Inekwe, 2022). The relationship between academic staff members' digital competency and job happiness is crucial for Nigerian polytechnic academic staff, who are responsible for developing a trained technical workforce. Even though the separate ideas of computer literacy and job satisfaction have been studied in a variety of settings, a concentrated study of their connection within a particular institutional setting, especially in a college of agriculture and technology remains crucial gap in the literature. In order to provide empirical insights that can guide policy and practice, the primary goal of this study is to examine computer literacy skills and job satisfaction among academic staff at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora.

Statement of the Problem

There seems to be a gap between the emphasis on technology adoption and the evaluation of its effects on the human aspects of the institution, especially the job satisfaction of academic staff, notwithstanding

the quick digitization of academic tasks in Nigerian polytechnics. The contextual issue is that, like many other similar institutions, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, is making investments in technology infrastructure without fully comprehending the relationship between its instructors' computer literacy and their general well-being, motivation, and job satisfaction. There is a gap in the literature because most studies have not sufficiently isolated the unique role of digital competency among staffs in polytechnics. Instead, they have concentrated on computer literacy as a tool for student learning (Ajegbomogun, Achigbue, & Diyaolu, 2022) or on job satisfaction in relation to general work environments (Ebeloku, Adeoduy, & Akinbode; Salawu, 2024). Additionally, while some studies have looked at how educational credentials affect satisfaction (Jude, Ikenna, & Ngozi, 2024) or productivity (Okoche & Nwali), few have looked at how they interact with computer literacy within a unified framework. Furthermore, little is known about how different computer literacy levels, from basic to advanced, affect satisfaction. In order to close these gaps, this study particularly examines the relationship between computer literacy and job happiness, the impact of educational background on satisfaction, and the variation in literacy levels among the academic staff at OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate computer literacy skill and job satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the relationship between computer literacy skill and job satisfaction academic staff of OYSCATECH, Igboora
2. analyze the effect of educational qualifications on job satisfaction of academic staff of OYSCATECH, Igboora.
3. inquire into the effect levels of computer literacy skills on job satisfaction of academic staff of OYSCATECH, Igboora.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses which guided the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between computer literacy skill and job satisfaction academic staff of OYSCATECH, Igboora
2. There is no significant difference in job satisfaction of academic staff of OYSCATECH, Igboora based on their educational qualifications (Bachelor's, masters' and PhD).
3. There is no significant difference in job satisfaction of academic staff of OYSCATECH, Igboora based on their computer literacy level (basic, intermediate, advance).

Literature of Review

From a rudimentary grasp of hardware, computer literacy has developed into a broad skill set that includes information management, internet communication, and software competency. According to Adedokun and Popoola (2024), computer literacy is a crucial part of a larger framework for digital competency and is necessary for activities like using electronic resources. Uchendu and Ifeka (2026) showed computer literacy abilities to be a significant correlation of task performance among librarians, demonstrating its direct connection to professional efficacy, which supports this position. Such abilities are essential for academic professionals to incorporate ICT into research, administration, and curriculum delivery (Immam, 2022). Lecturers who lack sufficient computer literacy may find it difficult to perform necessary tasks, which can cause them to feel inadequate and frustrated.

A crucial outcome variable in organizational research is job satisfaction, which is described as the positive emotional state brought on by an evaluation of one's work. Numerous antecedents have been found in Nigerian tertiary education studies, such as personality qualities (Ogbuanya et al., 2024), training opportunities (Ibrahim & Umar), and the work environment (Ebeloku et al., 2024; Adejoh, 2024). Nonetheless, the importance of digital skills is growing. For example, Obadimeji et al. (2023) showed that digital competence was a strong predictor of lecturers' job satisfaction, indicating that a pleasant work experience is closely correlated with the capacity to use digital tools efficiently. This is further supported by Patience and Oserada (2023), who discovered that academic staff members' job productivity was impacted by their contentment with electronic journals, which is dependent on their capacity to use them.

Through the lens of self-efficacy, the precise relationship between computer literacy and job happiness can be comprehended. The use of digital literacy skills was proven to be a predictor of productivity by Quadri et al. (2022), and an employee's sense of mastery and capacity is likely to increase their level of satisfaction. On the other hand, a lack of these abilities may lead to stress at work and have a detrimental effect on morale (Adejoh, 2024). Additionally, noteworthy is the impact of educational credentials on contentment. According to Otache et al.'s (2022) investigation of doctorate-holding teachers' work satisfaction and plans to leave, advanced degrees frequently come with increased expectations, which might negatively impact satisfaction if they are not fulfilled. In a similar vein, Okoche and Nwali contend that both ICT proficiency and educational background have an impact on employee productivity, implying that having both is a powerful factor in favourable job outcomes. Jude, Ikenna, and Ngozi's (2024) study on academic staff at a federal polytechnic emphasizes the significance of job satisfaction in promoting positive organizational behaviors by connecting it to elements like a supportive and enabling work environment, which is increasingly characterized by digital readiness. Adigun et al. (2025) add to this discussion by evaluating teachers' work satisfaction and pointing out that it is sensitive to contextual elements such as institutional support, which would naturally include training and technological access. These combined results point to a complicated but significant relationship between computer literacy, educational background, and academic staff members' general job satisfaction in Nigerian polytechnics.

Methodology

The target population consists of approximately 120 academic staff members from Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora. This group encompasses faculty from various departments engaged in teaching and research activities. To ensure a representative sample, a stratified random sampling method was utilized. This sample size offers a sufficiently strong foundation for drawing conclusions about the entire population. The chosen sampling technique was implemented to provide all subgroups within the population an opportunity for selection. These subgroups include gender and faculties. A total of 92 academic staff members were selected as the sample size, following the guidelines established by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for a population of this magnitude.

Questionnaire on Computer Literacy and Job Satisfaction designed by the researcher is the main tool for gathering collection. The research instrument is divided into sections to collect data on demographics, educational background, computer literacy (measured using a self-assessment scale covering areas like word processing, spreadsheet use, internet navigation, and use of specialized software), and job satisfaction (measured using a validated scale that assesses facets like satisfaction with work, pay, promotion, supervision, and colleagues). Experts in Library Studies, Educational Technology and Research, Measurement and Evaluation vetted and worked on the instrument to determine its face and content validity. A pilot test using 20 academic staff members from Osun State Polytechnic, Ire, were used to assess the instrument's reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to guarantee internal consistency, yielding 0.76 coefficient. In order to guarantee a high return rate, the questionnaires administered directly to the respondents with the assistance of qualified research assistants. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and mean were used to analyze the sociodemographic data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to teste the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Strict adherence to ethical principles was observed to ensure information is kept private and confidential, that informed consent is obtained, and that they have the freedom to leave the study at any time.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Information of the Respondents

Variable	N	%	mean	SD
Gender				
Male	35	38.0		
Female	57	62.0	1.62	.488
Total	92	100.0		
Age (in year)				
20-29	14	15.2		

30-39	16	17.4			
40-49	34	37.0	2.83		
1.034					
50 & above	28	30.4			
Total	92	100.0			
Educational Qualification					
HND	27	29.3			
B.Sc	25	27.2			
Masters	24	26.1	2.32		1.079
PhD	16	17.4			
Total	92	100.0			
Field or Discipline Area					
Arts	28	30.4			
Management	25	27.2			
Science	22	23.9	2.30		1.097
Technology	17	18.5			
Total	92	100.0			

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic information for a group of 92 respondents. The majority of respondents were female (62.0%), outnumbering the males (38.0%). In terms of age, the largest group of respondents was between 40 and 49 years old (37.0%), followed by those 50 and above (30.4%). Younger respondents, aged 20-29 and 30-39 made up a smaller proportion of the sample (15.2% and 17.4%, respectively).

Regarding educational qualifications, the respondents had diverse backgrounds. A significant portion held an HND (29.3%) or a B.Sc (27.2%). Those with a Master's degree comprised 26.1% of the sample, while those with a PhD made up the smallest group at 17.4%. Finally, the respondents came from a variety of academic disciplines. The most common fields were Arts (30.4%) and Management (27.2%). Science and Technology disciplines were less represented, accounting for 23.9% and 18.5% of the respondents, respectively.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Computer Literacy Skill and Job Satisfaction Academic Staff

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Remarks
Computer Literacy Skill	92	35.20	9.467	.91	.000	High positive relationship
Job Satisfaction	92	34.00	10.001			

Table 2 shows that computer literacy skill (mean = 35.20, SD = 9.467) correlates significantly with job satisfaction (mean = 34.00, SD = 10.001) with a significant and high correlation coefficient (r = .91). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 which states that there is no significant relationship between computer literacy skill and job satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora is rejected.

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance showing difference in Job Satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora across Educational Qualifications (HND, Bachelor's, Masters' and PhD Degrees)

ANOVA

Job satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8383.560	2	4191.780	519.276	.000
Within Groups	718.440	89	8.072		
Total	9102.000	91			

Table 4 shows that a significant difference exited in job satisfaction of the respondents across among academic staff with bachelor's, masters' ad PhD degrees with a significant F-ratio (F (2, 89) = 519.276;

p = .000 < .05). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 which states that there is no significant difference in job satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora across educational qualifications is rejected.

Table 4

Analysis of Covariance showing difference in Job Satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora across Levels of Computer Literacy (Basic, Intermediate and Advance)

ANOVA

Job satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6809.967	2	3404.984	132.216	.000
Within Groups	2292.033	89	25.753		
Total	9102.000	91			

Table 4 shows that a significant difference exits in job satisfaction of the respondents among academic staff across level of computer literacy (basic, intermediate and advance) with a significant F-ratio (F (2, 89) = 132.216; p = .000 < .05). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 which states that there is no significant difference in job satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora across levels of computer literacy is rejected.

Table 5

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction

Bonferroni

(I) level of computer skill	(J) level of computer skill	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
basic	intermediate	-10.797*	1.331	.000	-14.04	-7.55
	advance	-21.585*	1.331	.000	-24.83	-18.34
intermediate	basic	10.797*	1.331	.000	7.55	14.04
	advance	-10.788*	1.249	.000	-13.84	-7.74
advance	basic	21.585*	1.331	.000	18.34	24.83
	intermediate	10.788*	1.249	.000	7.74	13.84

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The table reveals significant differences in job satisfaction across all computer skill levels ($p < 0.001$). Staff with advanced skills reported the highest job satisfaction, scoring significantly higher than those with intermediate (mean difference = 10.79) and basic (mean difference = 21.59) skills. Intermediate users also reported significantly higher satisfaction than the basic users (mean difference = 10.80). All pairwise comparisons are statistically significant, demonstrating a clear pattern: job satisfaction increases progressively with higher levels of computer literacy. This suggests that greater computer proficiency is strongly associated with enhanced satisfaction among academic staff.

Discussion of Findings

The study found a significant positive relationship between computer literacy skill and job satisfaction academic staff in OYSCATECH, Igboora. The discovery that job satisfaction among academic staff at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, is significantly positively correlated with computer literacy skill is consistent with an increasing amount of research that highlights digital competence as a crucial factor in determining workplace well-being in modern academia. According to this relationship, academic staff members' total job satisfaction rises in proportion to their proficiency with computers and related technology. This finding's theoretical foundation is found in self-efficacy theory, which holds that an individual's emotional reactions to work are influenced by their confidence in their ability to complete particular activities. Strong computer literacy abilities enable academic personnel to better handle the growing digital demands of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities, which increases their sense of competence and lowers stress levels at work.

This finding is supported by two pieces of evidence from the literature. According to Obadimeji et al. (2023), the ability to effectively use digital tools results in a more seamless and fulfilling work experience. They showed that digital competence was a strong predictor of lecturers' job satisfaction. According to their research, academic staff members feel less frustrated and more fulfilled in their careers when they can easily access electronic resources, create digital teaching materials, and interact with online learning platforms. In a similar vein, Patience et al. (2023) discovered that academic staff members' overall job productivity and happiness were significantly impacted by their contentment with electronic journals, which is intrinsically dependent on their capacity to access and utilize these resources. This research supports the notion that computer literacy is a gateway to more extensive professional resources that improve job satisfaction rather than just a technical skill.

However, conflicting data indicate that there may not always be a clear connection between computer knowledge and job happiness. Adejoh (2024) offered a more nuanced viewpoint, pointing out that while a lack of digital skills can result in stress and low morale, computer literacy alone does not ensure job satisfaction. Inadequate institutional infrastructure, such as erratic internet connectivity or limited access to contemporary computing equipment, might occasionally cause academic staff with high computer literacy to get frustrated rather than their own skill gaps. This implies that organizational support acts as a mediator in the interaction. In addition, Ebeloku et al. (as noted in the provided text) stressed that the contribution of digital skills to total job satisfaction can occasionally be overshadowed by the work environment more widely, including elements like administrative support and collegial relationships. Even, highly computer proficient employees may report low job satisfaction in settings when these other elements are seriously lacking, suggesting that computer literacy is a required but insufficient prerequisite for workplace contentment.

A significant difference was found in job satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora across educational qualifications. The discovery that academic staff members at OYSCATECH, Igboora, have considerably variable levels of job satisfaction depending on their educational background highlights the intricate relationship between professional satisfaction and academic success. According to this research, academic staff members' perceptions and experiences of their workplace are influenced by their level of formal education, including master's degrees, doctorates, and other professional credentials. Different expectations, job perceptions, and professional objectives connected with different educational levels may be the underlying explanation for this discrepancy. Higher qualified academic staff members frequently pursue additional degrees in anticipation of chances for career progression, professional recognition, and participation in worthwhile leadership and research projects.

Otache et al.'s (2022) study on the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of lecturers with doctorates provides evidence to support this conclusion. They found that advanced degrees often come with higher expectations. According to their research, satisfaction levels might be considerably lowered when these expectations, such as chances for research funding, participation in curriculum creation, or access to institutional decision-making are not sufficiently fulfilled. This implies that the discrepancy between expectations and reality becomes more noticeable at higher educational levels rather than just more qualifications ensuring increased satisfaction. Furthermore, Okoche et al. (2024) contended that employee productivity and happiness are jointly influenced by both ICT proficiency and educational background, suggesting that the influence of educational qualifications is frequently mitigated by other elements like digital competence. Their research backs up the idea that diverse kinds of employees with varying professional needs and experiences are produced by educational credentials.

However, conflicting data casts doubts on the idea that job happiness is only determined by educational background. Training opportunities are a more important antecedent of contentment than static qualifications, according to Ibrahim and Umar (quoted in the text). According to their research, academic staff members who believe they have access to opportunities for skill development and ongoing professional development report higher levels of satisfaction, regardless of the degree they hold. This suggests that the disparity between qualifications may not be due to the qualifications themselves, but rather to differences in access to chances for training and growth. Moreover, a study on academic staff at a federal polytechnic by Jude, et al. (2024) highlighted that a supportive and enabling work environment is more strongly connected with job satisfaction than individual characteristics like educational level. According to their findings, the impact of educational credentials may be superseded by elements like physical working circumstances, administrative transparency, and collegial ties.

Satisfaction may be low across all qualification levels at institutions where these environmental variables are consistently bad, removing any notable variations. On the other hand, inequalities between qualifications may also lessen in situations where environmental influences are consistently prominent, indicating that the importance of qualifications as a differentiating factor depends on the circumstances. It was found that levels of computer literacy influenced job satisfaction among academic staff members of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora as academic staff with advance computer literacy reported highest job satisfaction, followed by those with intermediate. This result shows that there is a distinct gradient in job happiness that corresponds to computer literacy levels, indicating that there is a continuum rather than a binary link between digital skills and professional fulfillment. The highest levels of job happiness were reported by academic staff with advanced computer literacy, followed by those with intermediate abilities. This suggests a dose response connection in which increasing digital competence leads to increasing levels of professional fulfillment. Through the lens of digital self-efficacy, this pattern can be explained. People with advanced skills feel more confident navigating the increasingly digital landscape of academic work, which allows them to engage with creative teaching methods, complete tasks more quickly, and access a greater variety of professional resources.

Quadri et al. (2022) provided evidence for this gradient effect by showing that the use of digital literacy abilities was a direct predictor of production. According to their findings, academic staff members with advanced skills are better positioned to use digital tools for student engagement, research dissemination, and administrative efficiency, all of which lead to a more fulfilling work experience. Although, they are capable of performing simple activities, the intermediate group may occasionally become frustrated when faced with complicated digital demands, which results in moderate satisfaction levels. Furthermore, Uchendu et al. (2026) demonstrated that computer literacy skills were a significant predictor of librarians' task performance, proving that different skill levels correspond to different levels of professional efficacy. Because higher skill levels allow for more efficient and self-assured job performance, this supports the finding that happiness rises with skill level.

However, there are significant limitations to this gradient relationship due to contradicting findings. In their evaluation of teachers' job satisfaction, Adigun et al. (2025) noted that contextual elements like institutional support had a significant impact. According to their findings, an academic staff member with excellent computer literacy may nevertheless have a low level of job satisfaction if the institution does not offer sufficient technological infrastructure, such as up-to-date software, dependable hardware, or technical support. It is because the person has abilities that the institutional environment does not support, advanced skills become a source of irritation rather than happiness in these situations. In addition, Immam (2022) pointed out that although computer literacy is crucial for incorporating ICT into curriculum delivery, other elements like time management, class numbers, and student preparedness also play a role in the integration's effectiveness. As a result of their inability to employ their advanced skills in a meaningful way, academic staff members who are assigned to teach in crammed classrooms with little access to digital resources may not find much satisfaction in their abilities. This conflicting evidence implies that although the study's gradient relationship is legitimate, institutional variables probably temper it. Only when institutional infrastructure, administrative support, and organizational culture are equally advanced, creating an atmosphere where advanced talents can be fully exploited and recognized, may individuals with advanced computer literacy experience the maximum levels of happiness.

Conclusion

This study shows that among academic staff at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, computer literacy is a strong predictor of job satisfaction. The results show a strong correlation between job satisfaction and computer literacy, with employees with advanced abilities expressing the highest levels of pleasure. Furthermore, there are notable differences in job satisfaction between educational levels, suggesting that employees with varying educational backgrounds have distinct experiences at work. These results highlight the increasing importance of digital competency in determining professional well-being in Nigerian polytechnics. Institutions must acknowledge that computer literacy is now a crucial factor in determining teacher performance and satisfaction as technology continues to change the academic landscape. The consequences are obvious: expenditure in

skill development and digital infrastructure are also investments in organizational stability and human capital.

Recommendations

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

1. The management of OYSCATECH, Igboora should establish an organized, tiered computer literacy training programme that targets employees at basic and intermediate levels. This is necessary to improve overall job satisfaction of the academic staff members of the institution.

2. To address qualification-based discrepancies in job satisfaction, the OYSCATECH, Igboora management should carry out a "NEEDS ASSESSMENT" to comprehend the particular expectations of staff across various educational qualifications, especially doctorate holders, and develop targeted interventions like research support, leadership opportunities, and recognition mechanisms.

3. There should be computer literacy programmes accompanied by sufficient investment in technological infrastructure for all academic staff members of OYSCATECH, Igboora.

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CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF QUOTED CONSUMER GOODS FIRMS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The probability of firms is closely linked to business governance mechanisms, particularly corporate governance. The study examines corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The study was designed to achieve three research objectives, to determine the effect of corporate governance on Return on assets [ROA], Return on equity [ROE] and Net profit Margin [NPM] of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. A quantitative research Approach was used, and data were collected from the financial statement of 6 quoted consumer goods firms. The data was analyzed with statistical Techniques. The correlation co-efficient was to determine and relationship between the variables. The regression method of data analysis was used to make inferences on the hypotheses. Findings revealed that positive and insignificant relationship [B= 0.0026, t= 1.039, t > 0.05] for Board composition, Ownership structure [OS] is [B = 0.007,t= 0.225, t > 0.05] and Audit committee [AC] is [B= 0.048, t= 1.161, t > 0.05]. The study recommended that the stock performance of deposit money banks through the use of key performance indicators such as Return on Assets [ROA], Return on Equity [ROE] and Net profit Margin [NPM] associated with Financial performances.

Keywords: *Corporate Governance, Net Profit Margin, Return on Assets and Return on Equity.*

Introduction

Financial performance refers to a firm's ability to generate revenue, manage expenses, and achieve profitability over a specific period. It provides an indication of how effectively a company utilizes its resources to create value for shareholders and meet its financial obligations (Pandey, 2024). Assessing financial performance is crucial for understanding the sustainability, competitiveness, and growth prospects of a firm. Financial performance is particularly important because these in a capital-intensive and highly regulated industry that requires significant investment in research and development, production, and distribution. Financial performance reflects how well a firm utilizes its resources to generate profit and maximize shareholders' wealth. It is commonly measured using financial ratios such as return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), net profit margin (NPM), and earnings per share (EPS), Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2024.

Corporate governance is defined as the system of rules, practices, and processes directing and controlling a firm, striking a balance between various stakeholders (Jame, 2023). Its goal is to enhance business prosperity through accountability (Mohamed, 2023). Strong corporate governance practices are associated with developed economies achieving high and predictable earnings growth, while weak governance contributes to low performance and economic growth in developing nations (Anya, 2022). Corporate governance provides a framework for achieving objectives, delineating the distribution of rights and responsibilities among stakeholders (OECD, 2022). Key stakeholders include shareholders, debt holders, trade creditors, suppliers, the community, and customers externally, and the board of directors, executives, and employees internally (Akpan & Riman, 2022). Effective governance ensures checks and balances, preventing dominance in decision-making and aligning with the company's mission and values (Ranti, 2022). Conversely, weak governance can lead to a lack of accountability, bribery, violations of shareholder rights, negligence, ineffective internal controls, insider abuse, and fraudulent practices (Olumuyiwa & Babalola, 2022). The Enron scandal is a stark example of the consequences of weak corporate governance (Healy and Palepu, 2022). Given these concerns, companies assess their corporate governance practices continuously. This study aims to investigate the relationship between corporate governance and the performance of consumer goods firms in Nigeria, seeking insights for improvement and enhancing governance frameworks.

Research Objectives

iv. to assess the effect of corporate governance on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.
v. to determine the effect of corporate governance on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.
vi. to evaluate the effect of corporate governance on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Research Questions

iv. What is the effect of corporate governance on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria?
v. What is the effect of corporate governance on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria?
vi. What is the effect of corporate governance on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

H_{02}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

H_{03}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Financial Performance

Performance is a multidimensional concept that measures an organization's success in achieving its goals (Efanga 2023). It involves the outcomes achieved by individuals or teams aligned with the organization's strategic objectives. Scholars, such as Campbell, define performance as behavior, distinct from outcomes, which are the results of individual performance (Efanga et al., 2023). Policymakers and investors increasingly focus on financial performance as a crucial gauge for evaluating firms, particularly in the manufacturing sector (Tailab, 2023). In the realm of financial performance, companies are evaluated based on how efficiently and profitably they manage policies, operations, and financial results. Financial performance assessment involves indicators like return on investment, assets, equity, and capital employed, using ratios such as productivity, profitability, cost, liquidity, and solvency (Naz 2022). Financial analysis also employs predictive models like the Altman and Ohlson models for creditworthiness and bankruptcy risk evaluation. Proper financial performance assessment provides crucial information for decision-making and industry comparisons. Non-financial performance measures, including productivity, market premium, and profitability, focus on inputs/outputs, market/book value relationships, and earnings, respectively (Omondi & Muturi, 2021). Overall, performance evaluation is critical for business management, offering insights for improving operations, strategic decision-making, and ensuring financial and operational success in organizations.

Return on Assets (ROA)

ROA measures how efficiently a firm uses its total assets to generate profits. It indicates management's effectiveness in deploying company resources (Pandey, 2021).

Return on Equity (ROE)

ROE assesses the return generated on shareholders' investments. It reflects how well a firm uses equity capital to produce earnings for its owners (Brigham & Ehrhardt, 2022).

Net Profit Margin (NPM)

Net profit margin measures the proportion of revenue that remains as profit after all expenses have been deducted. It reflects cost control, pricing efficiency, and overall operational performance (Atrill, 2020).

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance, a set of established rules, guides company management to maximize profitability and stakeholder value, aligning with agency theory's focus on shareholder interests (Shahid, 2001; Jensen & Meckling,2024). It encompasses norms, systems, and cultures, emphasizing board roles and accountability (OECD, 2024). Globally, corporate governance in financial management seeks to balance stakeholder interests, going beyond profit maximization (Bhattacharyya, 2023). It protects shareholders, strengthens boards, enhances efficiency, ensures sustainability, and upholds ethical

values. Corporate governance is a vital aspect of running organizations, ensuring fairness for owners and stakeholders, and navigating the relationships among shareholders, boards, management, staff, customers, and the wider community (Clarkson 2021).

Corporate governance refers to the system of rules, practices, policies, and processes by which a company is directed and controlled. It defines the relationship between a company's management, board of directors, shareholders, and other stakeholders. Corporate governance provides the framework for setting company objectives, determining the means of achieving those objectives, and monitoring performance (Cadbury, 2021; OECD, 2021).

Agency Theory

Agency Theory, developed by Jensen and Meckling (2022), explores the separation of ownership and control in large corporations, leading to conflicts between shareholders and managers. In this principal-agent relationship, shareholders enlist managers to run the firm, but their interests may differ (Sappington, 2021). Information asymmetry and potential opportunism by managers result in agency costs, including monitoring and bonding costs, and residual costs. The principal-agent paradigm emphasizes ownership and organizational structures' impact on agency conflicts. Agency theory highlights equity ownership, aligning manager and shareholder interests, with the board of directors monitoring potential opportunism (Hart, 2021). Corporate governance mechanisms such as board independence, audit committees, ownership concentration, and separation of the CEO and board chair roles are designed to reduce agency conflicts. When these mechanisms function effectively, managerial opportunism is minimized, operational efficiency improves, and financial performance increases. Thus, agency theory supports the argument that strong corporate governance leads to improved financial performance.

Empirical Review

Dulyamba, Benjamin, Stephen, and Daniel (2024) studied the effect of corporate governance mechanisms on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Secondary data was collected, and a judgmental sampling technique was used for the sample selection. Descriptive statistics, Correlation Matrix, OLS, and the Hausman test were used in the analysis. The results revealed that top management team and CEO characteristics have a significant and positive impact on ROE, whereas audit committee independence and external auditors' independence have a significant negative influence on ROE of consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Finally, shareholders' involvement has a negative but insignificant influence on ROE.

Molokwu and Duru (2024) investigated the effect of Corporate Governance on the Performance of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. Ex-Post Facto research design was adopted, and secondary data was obtained from Annual reports of selected Deposit Money Banks for a period of ten years (2009-2018). The objectives are to investigate the extent to which Board size affects Return on Equity and to determine the effect of Board composition on the Net profit of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. Hypotheses were formulated and analyzed using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression method. The result reveals that the Board size has a significant and positive effect on the Return on Equity (ROE) of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. It equally shows that Board composition has a significantly positive effect on their net profit as well. The study recommends that efforts should be made to increase shareholders' returns on investment by making sure that corporate organizations appoint Board members based on professional expertise and integrity.

Adeoye and Amupitan (2023) investigated corporate governance in Nigeria Banking Sector. Data was sourced from the survey questionnaire. The findings revealed that the lack of presentation of information is more common in the pre-consolidation era than in the post-consolidation era. Frauds, override of internal control, and non-adherence to limit of authority in a bid to meet set targets, and recapitalization of banks play a vital role in promoting effective corporate governance. It recommends that promoting the culture of whistleblowing and promoting business ethics through moral education will strengthen the financial system and encourage compliance with the code of corporate governance. Also, establishing strong anti-fraud controls that would serve as deterrents to fraudsters at every level within the deposit money banks.

Adeusi, Akeke, Aribaba, and Adebisi (2022) studied the relationship between corporate governance and performance in the Nigerian banking sector. Based on the econometric model, the result indicated that improved performance of the banking sector is not dependent on increasing the number of executive

directors and board composition. It shows further that when there are more external board members, the performance of banks tends to be worse. The study recommended the need for an increase in board size and a decrease in board composition as measured by the ratio of outside directors to the total number of directors to increase bank performance.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach which allow for the measurement and statistical analysis of the relationship between corporate governance and financial performance. This approach is suitable because the study relies on numerical data from financial statements and corporate governance reports of quoted consumer goods firms. The population of this study will comprise all quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024. Some consumer goods firms are quoted on the Nigeria Exchange Goods (NXE). A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select six (6) quoted consumer goods firms that have the required information. The study extracted secondary data from the published accounts and reports of the selected consumer goods firms over ten years (2015 - 2024).

Presentation of Findings

Research Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.1.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.319[a]	.102	.053	.2315470

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

From the table 4.1.1 above, *R = 0.319* and it implies that there is a positive weak relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. *R- Square* which is the coefficient of determination is 0.102 which indicates that 10.2% changes in the financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the combined effects of Audit Committee (AC), Board Composition (BC) and Ownership Structure (OS) which are proxies of Corporate Governance (CG). The adjusted *R-square* of 0.053 explained the fitness of the model.

Table 4.1.2 Coefficients of the Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.500	.278		-1.799	.077
	BC	.026	.013	.271	1.939	.058
	OS	.007	.031	.032	.225	.823
	AC	.048	.042	.148	1.161	.250

a. Dependent Variable: ROA

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 4.1.2 above indicates the coefficients of the independent variables (Corporate Governance). The coefficient of Board Composition (BC) is *(β = 0.026, t = 1.039, t > 0.05),* the coefficient of Ownership Structure (OS) is *(β = 0.007, t = 0.225, t > 0.05)* positive insignificant, while that of audit committee (AC) is *(β = 0.048, t = 1.161, t > 0.05).* This implies that there is linear relationship between board composition (BC), ownership structure (OS) and audit committee (AC) on one hand, and financial performance (FP) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria, on the other hand. The inference from the result is that a unit increase *in* board composition (BC), ownership structure (OS) and audit committee (AC) will not result into 2.6%, 0.7% and 1.54% increase in return on asset (RoA) respectively. This result also indicated that all parameters of Corporate Governance are not significant factors influencing return on asset of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.1.3 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.339	3	.113	2.111	.109[b]
	Residual	3.002	56	.054		
	Total	3.342	59			

a. Dependent Variable: ROA
b. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

On the basis of *F-Stat, (F=2.11, 0.109, F > 0.05),* we do not reject the null hypothesis that Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Therefore, corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on assets (ROA) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria

Research Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.520[a]	.270	.231	.7313373

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

From the table 4.2.1 above, *R = 0.520* and it implies that there is a positive moderate relationship between corporate governance and return on equity (RoE) *R- Square* is 0.27 which indicates that 27% changes in the return on equity of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the combined effects of audit committee (AC), board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) which are proxies of corporate governance (CG). The adjusted *R-square* of 0.231.

Table 4.2.2 Coefficients of Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-3.495	.878		-3.980	.000
	BC	.070	.042	.209	1.658	.103
	OS	.037	.099	.048	.375	.709
	AC	.541	.131	.473	4.118	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ROE
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 4.2.2 above indicates the coefficients of the independent variables (corporate governance). The coefficient of board composition (BC) is *(β = 0.070, t = 1.658, t > 0.05),* the coefficient of Ownership Structure (OS) is *(β = 0.037, t = 0.375, t > 0.05),* while that of audit committee (AC) is *(β = 0.541, t = 4.118, t > 0.05).* This implies that there is positive insignificant linear relationship between board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) while audit committee (AC) relationship on the other hand has significant relationship with returns on equity which is the proxy of financial performance (FP) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The inference from the result is that a unit increase *in* board composition (BC), ownership structure (OS) and audit committee (AC) will result into 0.7%, 0.37% and 5.4% increase in return on equity (ROE) respectively. This result also indicated board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) are not significant factors influencing return on equity of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.3 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.093	3	3.698	6.914	.000[b]
	Residual	29.952	56	.535		
	Total	41.045	59			

a. Dependent Variable: ROE
b. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

On the basis of *F-Stat, (F=6.914, 0.000, F < 0.05)*, the study reject the null hypothesis that corporate governance has no significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria Therefore, corporate governance represented by audit committee has significant effect on the return on equity (ROE) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Corporate governance has no significant effect on the net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.3.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.175[a]	.031	-.021	2.0840773

a. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

From the table 4.3.1 above, *R = 0.175* and it implies that there is a positive weak relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. *R- Square* which is the coefficient of determination is 0.031 which indicates that 30% changes in the financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria is accounted for by the combined effects of audit committee (AC), board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) which are proxies of corporate governance (CG).

Table 4.3.2 Coefficients of Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.326	2.503		.530	.598
	BC	-.054	.120	-.066	-.453	.652
	OS	-.255	.283	-.132	-.902	.371
	AC	.075	.374	.026	.199	.843

a. Dependent Variable: NPM

Table 4.3.2 above indicates the coefficients of the independent variables (corporate Governance). The coefficient of Board Composition (BC) is *(β = -0.054, t = -0.453, t > 0.05)* and the coefficient of Ownership Structure (OS) is *(β = -0.255, t = -0.902, t > 0.05)* negative insignificant, while that of audit committee (AC) is *(β = 0.075, t = 0.199, t > 0.05)*. This implies that there is linear relationship between board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) while audit committee (AC) relationship on the other hand has insignificant positive relationship with net profit margin (NPM), The inference from the result is that a unit increase *in* board composition (BC) and ownership structure (OS) will not result into 0.54%, 0.37% and 2.55% decrease in Net Profit Margin (NPM) respectively, while a unit increase in and audit committee (AC) will result into 0.75 increase in net profit margin (NPM). This result also indicated all proxies of corporate governance are not significant factors influencing net profit margin of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.3.3 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.659	3	2.553	.588	.626[b]
	Residual	243.229	56	4.343		
	Total	250.888	59			

a. Dependent Variable: NPM
b. Predictors: (Constant), AC, BC, OS
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

On the basis of *F-Stat, (F=0.588, 0.626, F < 0.05)*, we reject the null hypothesis that Corporate governance has no significant effect on net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria Therefore, corporate governance has significant effect on net profit margin (NPM) of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant effect of corporate governance on financial performance, this negative the findings of Okonla and Ojochema which established a positive and statistically significant effect on ROA. It is in line with the view of Adeusi, Akeke, Aribaba, and Adebisi (2022) that improved performance of the banking sector is not dependent on increasing the number of executive directors and board composition.

While hypothesis two testing confirmed a significant effect of corporate governance with the returns on equity as confirmed by Okonla and Ojochema, (2024). It is also consistent with the summation of Dulyamba, et al., (2024); Molokwu and Duru (2024).

The third hypothesis testing revealed no significant effect of corporate governance on net profit margin of consumer goods industries in Nigeria. it supports the summation of Adedei et al (2020) that corporate governance intervention should be directed towards the stock performance of deposit money banks.

Summary

The findings also implies that there is a positive moderate relationship between corporate governance and all the proxies of financial performance i.e, return on assets, return on equity, net profit margin.
Overall, The result implies that, return on assets [ROA] and return on equity [ROE] have positive insignificant relationship between the board composition [BC] and ownership structure [OS],while there is negative linear relationship between board composition and ownership structure with Net profit Margin [NPM] which are the proxies to measures financial performance. While audit committee [AC] has significant impact on financial performance with return on assets, return on equity, net profit margin associated with financial performance.

Conclusion

The study has highlighted that there is a positive weak relationship between corporate governance and financial performance of quoted consumer good firms in Nigeria. The study has provided valuable support that corporate governance intervention should be directed towards the financial performance of deposit money banks.
Furthermore, The study has also highlighted that, return on asset and return on equity have positive insignificant, the negative insignificant linear between the relationship board composition and ownership structure, while audit committee [AC] has significant impact on financial performance with return on asset, return on equity, net profit margin associated with financial performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended:

iv. That regulatory, managerial and academic concern should strengthen corporate governance to improve the financial performance of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria. This can be achieved by optimizing the return on assets, return on equity and net profit margin.

v. The study also recommends that, the indicators should focus on the relationship between corporate governance and financial performance with specific emphasis on key governance mechanisms, including board composition structure, ownership structure, audit committee and transparency disclosure effectiveness.

vi. Additionally, Corporate governance should be directed towards the stock performance of deposit money banks through the use of key performance indicators such as Return on Assets [ROA], Return on Equity [ROE] and Net profit Margin [NPM] associated with Financial performances.

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ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLES OF PROFESSIONAL SECRETARIES IN MODERN OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

Advancement in automation and digital technologies has significantly change the job market making it necessary for professional secretaries to acquires new skills and improve existing ones. The study examined roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration. To achieve the objective of the study, two research questions were raised and answered while one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) secretaries working at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Census sampling was used because the population is manageable to carry out the research. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was face and content validated by two experts from the department of Office Technology and Management, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that professional secretaries highly utilized digital tools such as computers, internet services, email platforms for effective job delivery. The study further revealed that the roles of secretaries have shifted from traditional clerical functions to more strategic responsibilities including digital record management, virtual communication, and technical support services. The results of the Hypothesis testing showed no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female secretaries on problems faced by professional secretaries in the use of digital technologies. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the Management of Federal University of Agriculture should ensure secretarial officers are well-equipped with digital tools and stable internet access, there should be policies that support digital literacy as a mandatory requirement for recruitment and promotion of secretaries

Keyword: *Assessment, Professional Secreteries, Office Administration*

Introduction

The role of professional secretaries has expanded over the years from typing and receiving calls to administrative and technical tasks. This shift is largely attributed to the increasing reliance on digital tools and platforms, which have become integral to modern business operations. A secretary can be defined as a person who acts as a personal representative, responsible for the accurate conveying of information to his or her employer and the accurate execution of instruction (Iheukwumere, 2023). Deedenwii (2022); Enonche et al, (2024) defined a secretary as an executive assistant who is proficient in office procedures, exhibits the capacity to take responsibilities and accountability both under and outside of supervision, uses initiative and sound judgment, and takes decisions within the parameters of designated authority. The researcher stated further that in contrast to a half-baked secretary who is limited to shorthand, typewriting, and basic office procedures, a qualified secretary should have a broad understanding of business acumen, versatile knowledge in accounting, personnel, office practice, and communication, as well as inside knowledge of the operation of all departments with the organisation where she works. According to Musty (2023), a secretary is a member of a business management team, who must be able to keep abreast of business changes and development and utilizes digital tools to be more productive and efficient in carrying out their secretarial duties. The modern secretary is a multi-skilled administrative professional who combines communication, organisation, technology, and coordination to support overall business efficiency.

The Digital technology age has changed the ways things are done now. Secretaries now adapt to the use of the digital technology to aid their functions most things including office duties are carried out online. Instead of the use of office files, most secretarial functions everywhere in the world have undergone technical changes, as a result of the introduction of many new offices technological equipment (Kayode, 2016). The author expatiated further that the use of technology and paper based used by secretaries has allowed organizations to get prompt information, communicate with each other, and also have an overall effect on the educational environment using computer tools or digital equipment positively. Digital technologies are new innovations in offices that enables the discharge of office functions by the secretary more rapidly and efficiently. The emergence of this technology in modern day organisation has challenged occupational skills of the secretary (Nwaokwa & Okoli, 2017). Digital technology can be defined as the set of tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. Examples include computers, mobile phones, tablets, social media platforms, software applications, cloud systems, and virtual reality. It supports the creation, storage, sharing and manipulation of information in digital form (International Telecommunication Union, 2020).

Digital technology ability includes the capacity to utilize a computer for word processing and data processing, the internet for online browsing, and social media information sharing. The secretary needs to be able to open an email account, use a web browser, and access internet application software, and communicate online with clients and co-workers (Mshella & Orheruate, 2020). Proficiency with digital technology has enabled secretary to create, store, process, transmit, and display inform through electronic means, which has makes it possible to effectively interact, share digital content, and resolve issues remotely (Ademiluyi, 2019). Mshelia and Ejiro-Oghen (2023); Oluwasina (2025) opined that the integration of digital technologies in office administration has led to the development of new competencies among professionally-trained secretaries. These include proficiency in office software, digital communications tools, and online collaboration platform which are now essential. This evolution has also necessitated continuous professional development to keep pace with technological advancements.

The use of digital technologies in modern offices have greatly contributed to the success of professional secretaaries by assisting them in relieving executive of the workload, generating documents that can be sent by mails, managing incoming and outgoing correspondence, and collaborating with their boss (Fasae, 2024). The technology and its skills applied in office task has not only changed the secretarial profession but has also enlarged it. Technology has brough about development in communication systems worldwide, and as a direct consequence secretarial profession is becoming more multi-dimension and sophisticated (Gbega-Akande, 2023).

In spite of the recognitions of digital technologies importance, limited access to digital infrastructure and insufficient technical support remains major obstacles to effective ICT adoption in office administration (Odusanya et al 2020). It is against this background that the study sought to assess roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration.

Statement of the Problem

The relevance of professional secretaries in today's office is increasingly threatened by the influx of technologies which has made them being challenged by the wonders of technology. There is therefore the need for professional secretaries to acquire skills that will enable them cope with these developments. Secretaries who are not well equipped in terms of digital technology skills and competencies required in modern office may reduce their efficiency in handling digital records, managing electronic communication and supporting administrative functions. Consequently, the inability to adapt to modern technological requirements may negatively affect the quality of services delivery and the overall effectiveness of office operations. In addition, many organizations have not fully leveraged these technologies due to poor implementation strategies and lack of continuous professional development. Hence, this study examined roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration while the specific objectives are to:

i. identify the level of usage of digital tools by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta;
ii. examine the roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration;
iii. ascertain the problems faced by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta in the use of digital technologies.

Research Questions

Two research questions and one hypothesis were raised to guide the study

i. What is the level of usage of digital tools by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta?
ii. What are the roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female responds on the problems faced by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture in the use of digital technologies.

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) secretaries working at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Census sampling was used because the population is manageable to carry out the research. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled: Roles of Professional Secretaries in Modern Office Administration (RPSMOAQ). The questionnaire was face and content validated by two experts from the department of Office Technology and Management, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of usage the level of usage of digital tools by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

Table 1: Mean responses and Standard Deviation that shows the level of usage of the digital tools by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	I use internet for official research and assess to updated global knowledge.	120	2.633	.898	ML
2.	I use calendar and schedule management tools for setting appointments and organizing meeting	120	2.617	.918	ML
3.	I use Grammarly to proofread texts and makes recommendations along with catching spelling and grammatical mistakes.	120	2.558	.906	ML

4.	I use video conferencing tools like Zoom to participate in or host virtual meetings.	120	2.642	.828	ML
5.	I use Google Drive to store administrative documents, share files and collaborate in real-time on Google Docs or Sheets.	120	2.600	.844	ML
6.	I use email to send and receive messages with attachments.	120	2.700	.846	ML
7.	I use scanners to digitize physical documents and files	120	2.650	.866	ML
8.	I use cloud storage to save, share, and backup my work files.	120	2.800	.931	ML

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1 shows the Mean responses and Standard Deviation that indicate the level of usage of digital technology tools by professional secretaries in modern office administration. The table revealed that all the eight (8) items are accepted indicating with the mean scores of 2.56 and above. The standard deviation of 0.828 to 0.931 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration?

Table 2: Mean responses and standard Deviation that shows the roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration.

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	S D	Remarks
1.	Virtual or on-line meetings are held in place of face-to-face meeting	120	3.18	1.016	Agreed
2.	With the use of internet and technological advancement, secretaries can now carryout work activities regardless of location.	120	3.34	.674	Agreed
3.	Secretary can now open and work with more than one application at time(multi-tasking) for records creation.	120	3.29	.679	Agreed
4.	Secretary can now use office application to create, edit, revise and print text materials.	120	3.25	.771	Agreed
5.	Creating email account and use same to send and receive messages with attachment.	120	3.20	.818	Agreed
6.	Secretary can use storage devices like CD and flash for storing and sharing Files	120	3.41	.758	Agreed
7.	Secretary can communicate and collaborate with colleagues online in place of the former face-to-face communication	120	3.11	.779	Agreed
8.	Secretary can upload information into the internet and download information from the internet.	120	3.11	.857	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table 2 shows the Mean responses and Standard Deviation that shows the roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration. The table revealed that all the eight (8) items are agree indicating with the mean scores of 3.11 and above. The standard deviation of 0.674 to 1.023 all indicated that the respondents were close in their responses.

Table 3: Summary of the T-test result of the mean responses of male and female secretaries on the problems faced by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture in the use of digital technologies

S/N	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P-value	Decision
1.	Male	30	35.57	2.50				
					- 1.58	118	0.12	NS
2.	Female	90	36.47	2.76				

P >0.05

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The analysis of data in Table 9 reveals that there are 30 male and 90 female respondents in the study. The table shows the mean and standard deviation of male and female responses ($\bar{x}$ = 35.57, SD = 2.50) and ($\bar{x}$ = 36.47, SD = 2.76), the result indicates the response value of p>0.05 which is 0.12. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, signifying that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the challenges faced by secretaries in using digital file management systems (t_{118}, P>0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female secretaries on the challenges faced in using digital file management systems was not rejected and the alternative hypothesis rejected. This implies that male and female respondents do not differ in their responses regarding the challenges faced in using digital file management systems.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration. The result of research question one revealed from the findings that professional secretaries make use of digital tools like grammaly, zoom, google docs, email, videoconferencing tools, and cloud storage. This corroborates the findings of Mshella & Orheruate, (2020) who stated the digital technology ability includes the capacity to utilize a computer for word processing and data processing, the internet for online browsing, and social media information sharing. The secretary needs to be able to open an email account, use a web browser, access internet application software, and communicate online with clients and coworkers.

The result of research question two indicated the roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration. The findings revealed that secretaries now held meetings online in place of face-to-face meeting, use internet to carry out activities regardless of location, and send and receive messages with attachment via email. This is in conjunction with Kayode (2016) who reported that the digital technology age has changed the ways things are done now. Secretaries now adapt to the use of the digital technology to aid their functions most things including office duties are carried out online. Instead of the use of office files, most secretarial functions everywhere in the world have undergone technical changes, as a result of the introduction of many new technological equipment. In the same vein, Gbega-Akande (2023) reported that technology and its skills applied in office task has not only changed the secretarial profession but has also enlarged it. Technology has brough about development in communication systems worldwide, and as a direct consequence secretarial profession is becoming more multi-dimension and sophisticated.

The findings of the hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female respondents on the problems faced by professional secretaries in Federal University of Agriculture in the use of digital technologies. This indicates that both male and female secretaries experience similar problems in the use of digital technologies. This goes in line with Abdullahi (2025), who stated that the rapid advancement of digital technologies requires continuous skill upgrading among secretaries; however, inadequate training and lack of institutional support often hinder effective technology utilisation. Similarly, Odusanya *et al.* (2020) observed that limited access to digital infrastructure and insufficient technical support remain major obstacles to effective ICT adoption in office administration.

Conclusion

The study examined roles of professional secretaries in modern office administration. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the role of professional secretaries has significantly evolved from traditional clerical tasks to the use a broad range of digital technologies that enhance efficiency, productivity, and communication in the modern office environment, many secretaries are now adapting to digital tools, and gaps still exist in access to training, infrastructure, and awareness.

Recommendations

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

1. Government and organizations should organize continuous training and workshops on emerging digital tools to enhance the secretaries' competencies.
2. The Management of Federal University of Agriculture should ensure secretarial offices are well-equipped with digital tools and stable internet access.
3. There should be policies that support digital literacy as a mandatory requirement for recruitment and promotion of secretaries.
4. Encourage experienced digital-savvy staff to mentor others in learning and adapting to new technologies.

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SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING DISCLOSURE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF LISTED CONSUMER GOODS COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of sustainability accounting disclosure on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. It specifically investigated the effects of environmental disclosure, social disclosure and governance disclosure on Return on Assets (ROA). The study adopted an ex post facto research design and relied on secondary data obtained from audited annual reports and sustainability-related reports of five purposively selected companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) for 2020–2024. The companies were Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Coca-Cola HBC Nigeria Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc and Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, producing a balanced panel of 25 firm-year observations. Environmental, social and governance disclosure indices were developed using the GRI Universal Standards (2021). Descriptive statistics and panel regression techniques were employed, including Fixed Effects and Random Effects models, with the Hausman specification test used to select the preferred estimator. The results from the selected Random Effects model showed that environmental disclosure had a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with ROA, social disclosure had a negative and statistically insignificant relationship with ROA, while governance disclosure was statistically significant. The study therefore emphasizes the importance of strengthening sustainability disclosure, particularly governance-related disclosure, in the consumer goods sector.

Keywords: *Sustainability Accounting Disclosure, Environmental Disclosure, Social Disclosure, Governance Disclosure, Financial Performance and Return on Assets*.

Introduction and Background

Sustainability accounting disclosure has become an important component of corporate reporting because stakeholders increasingly require information about the environmental, social and governance consequences of corporate activities. Rather than reporting only financial outcomes, firms are expected to communicate how they manage environmental risks, employee and community interests, corporate governance and other sustainability-related matters. The study links this development to concerns about climate change, resource depletion, accountability and sustainable development, as well as the growing adoption of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) reporting frameworks.

Within Nigeria, sustainability reporting has received increasing attention from the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN), the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) and the Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance. The consumer goods industry is economically important because of its contribution to employment, production and government revenue, but it also generates environmental and social effects through energy consumption, water use, waste generation and community interaction. These characteristics make sustainability disclosure particularly relevant to the sector.

The study identifies an unresolved empirical problem: previous findings on the relationship between sustainability disclosure and financial performance are mixed. Some studies report positive relationships, while others report insignificant or negative relationships. It further notes that relatively few Nigerian studies have focused specifically on listed consumer goods, food and beverage companies using recent observations. The study therefore investigates whether environmental; social and governance disclosure influences financial performance, measured by ROA, among selected listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria during 2020–2024.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem addressed by the study is the paucity of empirical evidence on whether sustainability accounting disclosure produces measurable financial benefits for Nigerian consumer goods companies. Much of the earlier evidence is drawn from developed economies or broad industry samples, and reported findings are inconsistent. In the Nigerian context, limited sector-specific evidence makes it difficult for managers and other stakeholders to determine whether sustainability-related investments and disclosures contribute to financial performance or primarily serve reputation, legitimacy and accountability purposes. The study further argues that the evolving sustainability-reporting environment increases the need for recent evidence.

Aim and Specific Objectives

The broad aim of the study was to examine the effect of sustainability accounting disclosure on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. The study pursued three specific objectives:

to examine the effect of environmental disclosure on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria;

to determine the effect of social disclosure on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria; and

to assess the effect of governance disclosure on the financial performance of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria.

Conceptual and Theoretical Review

Sustainability accounting disclosure is presented as the integration of financial and non-financial information concerning environmental, social and governance performance. Environmental disclosure covers matters such as greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, pollution control and biodiversity. Social disclosure covers employee welfare, occupational health and safety, diversity, human rights, customer responsibility and community development. Governance disclosure covers board structure, ethics, risk management, internal controls, executive remuneration, shareholder protection and regulatory compliance.

The study is anchored on Stakeholder Theory, Legitimacy Theory and Institutional Theory. Stakeholder Theory explains that firms should create value for a broad group of stakeholders, so sustainability reporting can enhance stakeholder confidence. Legitimacy Theory views disclosure as a mechanism through which firms demonstrate conformity with societal expectations and maintain their social licence to operate. Institutional Theory explains sustainability reporting as a response to pressures from regulators, investors, professional bodies and international standards. Together, these theories provide the rationale for examining sustainability disclosure as a potential determinant of corporate financial performance.

Empirical Review and Research Gap

The empirical review reports mixed findings. Aifuwa, Saidu and Osariemen (2023) reported a positive influence of environmental disclosure on profitability among Nigerian listed manufacturing firms. Bako (2023) emphasized the importance of governance disclosure to financial performance among listed consumer goods companies. Okoye, Eze and Nwankwo (2024) reported a positive but statistically insignificant relationship between environmental disclosure and financial performance and a significant effect of governance disclosure among listed food and beverage companies. Christensen, Hail and Leuz were cited for the view that high-quality sustainability reporting can improve information transparency, reduce information asymmetry and enhance investor confidence and long-term corporate value.

The study identifies contextual, sectoral, temporal, variable and methodological gaps in the existing literature. In particular, there is limited recent evidence on the simultaneous effects of environmental, social and governance disclosure on financial performance among Nigerian listed consumer goods or food and beverage companies. The study addresses this gap by focusing on five listed firms during 2020–2024 and applying panel-data techniques.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex post facto research design because the analysis relied on historical corporate data without manipulating the variables. The population comprised food and beverage companies listed on the NGX during 2020–2024. Purposive sampling was used to select firms that consistently published audited annual reports and sustainability-related disclosures throughout the period. The final sample comprised five companies: Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Coca-Cola HBC Nigeria Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc and Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc. Five firms observed over five years generated a balanced panel of 25 firm-year observations.

Financial performance was measured using Return on Assets (ROA). Sustainability disclosure information was obtained through systematic content analysis of sustainability and governance reports. Environmental disclosure was based on information concerning energy, waste, emissions, water and environmental protection; social disclosure covered employee welfare, occupational health and safety, community development, customer responsibility and human rights; and governance disclosure covered board structure, internal control, risk management, ethics, shareholder protection and regulatory compliance. The disclosure indices were developed using the GRI Universal Standards (2021).

The model was specified as a panel regression relating ROA to environmental disclosure, social disclosure and governance disclosure, with firm size and financial leverage included as control variables in the revised model:

$ROA_{it} = ß0 + ß_1ED_{it} + ß_2SD_{it} + ß_3GD_{it} + ß_4FS_{it} + ß5L + £_{it}$

Descriptive statistics included the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness and kurtosis. Inferential analysis used Fixed Effects and Random Effects models, with the Hausman specification test used to choose the appropriate estimator. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% level and the analysis was conducted with EViews 9.

Results and Discussion

The descriptive results were based on 25 observations. ROA had a mean of 7.435, while environmental disclosure, social disclosure and governance disclosure had means of 4.486, 9.023 and 3.597 respectively. The data showed variation across firms and years, with ROA ranging from -17.010 to 31.850. The study also reported that the variables displayed differing degrees of skewness and kurtosis.

Variable	Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Environmental disclosure (ED)	0.776294	0.1753	Positive; not significant
Social disclosure (SD)	-0.118605	0.2003	Negative; not significant
Governance disclosure (GD)	-1.329058	0.0038	Significant; negative coefficient in reported REM

The Fixed Effects model produced an R-squared of 0.4939, while the reported Random Effects model produced a weighted R-squared of 0.7345 and an adjusted R-squared of 0.6771. The overall Random Effects F-statistic was 4.08375 with a probability of 0.01276, indicating that the explanatory variables were jointly significant at the 5% level. The Hausman test produced a chi-square statistic of 18.96644 with a p-value of 0.0003. On the basis of the decision rule stated in the study, the Random Effects model was selected for interpretation.

For the first hypothesis, environmental disclosure had a p-value of 0.1753, which is greater than 0.05; the null hypothesis was therefore retained, indicating no statistically significant relationship between environmental disclosure and ROA. For the second hypothesis, social disclosure had a p-value of 0.2003; the null hypothesis was retained, indicating no statistically significant effect on ROA. For the third hypothesis, governance disclosure had a p-value of 0.0038, which is below 0.05; the null hypothesis was rejected and governance disclosure was considered statistically significant.

A point requiring careful interpretation is that the reported Random Effects coefficient for governance disclosure is negative (-1.329058), although parts of the study narrative describe governance disclosure

as improving financial performance. The numerical regression output supports statistical significance and a negative estimated coefficient, whereas the concluding narrative emphasizes governance as a strong determinant of performance. The summary therefore preserves both aspects without changing the reported results.

Conclusion

The study concludes that sustainability accounting disclosure is an important strategic reporting mechanism for listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria, but the financial effects differ across disclosure dimensions. Environmental disclosure was positively associated with ROA but not statistically significant, suggesting that environmental initiatives may not produce immediate measurable financial benefits. Social disclosure was also statistically insignificant, implying that social initiatives such as employee welfare, community development and customer engagement may contribute more to longer-term corporate value than short-term profitability. Governance disclosure was statistically significant and was identified by the study as the most important of the three disclosure dimensions in relation to financial performance.

Recommendations

The recommendations are aligned with the three specific objectives. First, listed consumer goods companies should improve the quality and completeness of environmental disclosures and link them to effective environmental management practices. Second, companies should strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of social disclosures, particularly in areas such as employee welfare, community development, customer responsibility and occupational health and safety. Third, companies should give greater attention to governance practices and governance disclosure, especially internal controls, risk management, board structure and accountability, because governance disclosure was statistically significant in the reported model.

Contribution and Significance

The study contributes recent empirical evidence on sustainability accounting disclosure and financial performance among selected listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria using panel data for 2020–2024. It extends the discussion by considering environmental, social and governance disclosures together and by situating the analysis within the evolving sustainability-reporting environment associated with the ISSB. The study is relevant to managers and other stakeholders seeking evidence on the financial implications of sustainability disclosure in the Nigerian consumer goods sector.

Limitations

The study was limited to five listed food and beverage companies, which constrains generalizability to other sectors and firms. It relied solely on secondary data from annual and sustainability reports, so the analysis depends on the quality and completeness of corporate disclosures. The study period of 2020–2024 may not fully capture long-term effects, and financial performance was measured only by ROA. The study therefore recognizes that other accounting-based and market-based measures could provide additional evidence.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should include all listed food and beverage companies in Nigeria to increase the sample size and statistical power, extend the study period to capture longer-term effects, and examine other sectors such as banking, insurance, telecommunications, oil and gas, agriculture and healthcare. Future research may also investigate the moderating effects of corporate governance, firm size, ownership structure and leverage, and employ advanced methods such as System GMM, Panel Quantile Regression or Structural Equation Modelling to provide more robust evidence.

Overall Summary

Overall, the study addresses an important Nigerian corporate-reporting issue by examining whether sustainability accounting disclosure translates into financial performance. Its evidence suggests that environmental and social disclosure did not have statistically significant effects on ROA over 2020–2024, while governance disclosure was statistically significant in the selected model. The study

consequently supports continued improvement in sustainability reporting, with particular emphasis on governance-related practices and disclosures, while recognizing the need for larger samples, longer periods and more robust future analyses.

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ACCESSIBILITY OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION THROUGH COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES AMONG SMALL HOLDER FARMERS IN IBARAPA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract
Agricultural information is a critical driver of improved farm productivity, technology adoption, and sustainable rural livelihoods among smallholder farmers. Cooperative societies have increasingly served as important platforms for disseminating agricultural information, particularly in areas where formal extension services are inadequate. This study examined the accessibility of agricultural information through cooperative societies among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. A two-stage sampling technique was employed to select 120 smallholder farmers from four registered cooperative societies. Primary data were collected using interview schedule and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and ranking) and inferential statistics (Chi-square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation). The findings revealed that the respondents had a mean age of 42.3 years, with 65.0% being male and 70.0% married. The major types of agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies included fertilizer application and usage (90.0%), market prices of agricultural commodities (88.3%), pest and disease control measures (87.5%), improved crop varieties (85.0%), and planting dates/cropping calendars (84.2%). Most respondents (43.3%) had moderate access to agricultural information, while 33.3% reported high access. The major constraints affecting effective information dissemination were poor communication channels (mean = 3.45), inadequate funding (mean = 3.38), low literacy level (mean = 3.20), poor participation of members (mean = 3.10), and weak extension linkage (mean = 3.05). Chi-square analysis showed that educational level ($\chi^2 = 18.36$, $p = 0.005$) and farming experience ($\chi^2 = 14.22$, $p = 0.007$) significantly influenced farmers' access to agricultural information, whereas age had no significant influence ($\chi^2 = 10.24$, $p = 0.115$). Pearson Product Moment Correlation further revealed a significant positive relationship between the types of agricultural information disseminated and farmers' access to agricultural information ($r = 0.62$, $p = 0.001$). The study concluded that cooperative societies are effective channels for disseminating agricultural information and enhancing farmers' access to agricultural innovations. However, improving communication systems, strengthening financial support, promoting farmers' literacy, and enhancing collaboration with agricultural extension services are recommended for increasing the effectiveness of cooperative societies in agricultural information dissemination.
Keywords: *Agricultural information, Cooperative societies, Accessibility, Smallholder farmers.*

Introduction

Agriculture remains a fundamental pillar of economic growth, food security, and rural livelihoods in many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, smallholder farmers account for the majority of agricultural production and contribute significantly to national food supply and employment. However, their productivity is constrained by limited access to timely, reliable, and relevant agricultural information, which is essential for informed decision-making, adoption of improved technologies, and sustainable farm management (Aker, 2011; Anderson & Feder, 2007).

Inadequate access to information often results in low adoption of improved production practices, poor market participation, and reduced agricultural productivity. Cooperative societies have emerged as important institutional mechanisms for improving farmers' access to agricultural information, production inputs, credit facilities, and extension services. By providing platforms for knowledge sharing, training, collective action, and farmer-to-farmer learning, cooperatives complement the efforts of formal agricultural extension systems, particularly in rural communities where extension coverage remains inadequate (FAO, 2019; Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). Through these functions, cooperative societies enhance farmers' capacity to adopt improved agricultural technologies, increase productivity, and strengthen household livelihoods. Despite the growing importance of cooperative societies in agricultural development, empirical evidence on their effectiveness in improving farmers' accessibility to agricultural information remains limited in many parts of Nigeria, including Ibarapa North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Existing studies have largely focused on the economic and financial roles of cooperatives, with relatively little attention given to their information dissemination function. This knowledge gap underscores the need to evaluate the extent to which cooperative societies facilitate farmers' access to agricultural information and the factors influencing their effectiveness. Therefore, this study examined the accessibility of agricultural information through cooperative societies among smallholder farmers in Ibarapa North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study provides answers to the following research questions;

i. What are the socio-economic characteristics of smallholder farmers in Ibarapa North LGA?
ii. What are the types of agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies?
iii. How accessible is agricultural information to farmers via cooperative societies?
iv. What are the factors affecting the effectiveness of cooperative societies in disseminating agricultural information?

Objectives of the study

i. describe the socio-economic characteristics of smallholder farmers in the study area.
ii. identify the types of agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies.
iii. examine farmers' access to agricultural information through cooperative societies.
iv. examine factors affecting the effectiveness of cooperative societies in information dissemination.

Hypotheses of the study

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of farmers and their access to agricultural information through cooperative societies.
HO_2: There is no significant relationship between the types of agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies and farmers' accessibility to agricultural information through cooperative societies

Research methodology

The study was conducted in Ibarapa North Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State, Nigeria. The LGA comprises predominantly rural communities where agriculture is the principal occupation. Major crops cultivated include cassava, maize, yam, plantain, and vegetables, while livestock production consists mainly of poultry, goats, and sheep. The high concentration of smallholder farmers and active cooperative societies makes the area suitable for investigating farmers' accessibility to agricultural information through cooperatives.

Sampling procedure

The study targeted smallholder farmers who were registered members of agricultural cooperative societies in the study area. A two-stage sampling procedure was adopted. In the first stage, four major

farmers' cooperative societies Iwajowa I (Ayete), Iwajowa II (Tapa), Ifelodun (Igangan), and Orisun (Igangan) were purposively selected because of their members' active involvement in agricultural activities. In the second stage, respondents were selected through simple random sampling from the membership registers of the selected cooperatives, resulting in a total sample size of 120 farmers distributed proportionately as follows: Iwajowa I (23), Iwajowa II (56), Ifelodun (32), and Orisun (9).

Results and discussion

Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

The results in Table 1 present the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and provide insight into factors that may influence their access to agricultural information through cooperative societies. The age distribution shows a mean age of 42.3 years, indicating that the respondents are predominantly in their active and productive years. Below average of the respondents fall within the 31–40 years (31.7%) and 41–50 years (28.3%) age brackets. This suggests that most farmers are mature and economically active, which enhances their ability to participate in cooperative activities and adopt agricultural innovations. The presence of older farmers (23.3%) also implies the availability of farming experience, which may positively influence decision-making. The sex distribution reveals that 65.0% of the respondents are male, while 35.0% are female, indicating male dominance in farming activities within the study area. This may reflect cultural norms that favor male involvement in agriculture, although the proportion of female farmers suggests increasing participation of women in cooperative-based farming. Regarding marital status, a large proportion (70.0%) of the respondents are married. This implies that most farmers have family responsibilities, which may motivate them to seek improved agricultural information to enhance productivity and household welfare. Married individuals are also more likely to participate actively in cooperative societies due to social and economic stability. The educational status of the respondents shows that a considerable number have secondary education (35.0%), followed by primary education (30.0%), while 20.0% attained tertiary education and 15.0% have no formal education. This indicates that the majority of farmers are literate to some extent, which is crucial for understanding and utilizing agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies. Higher levels of education are often associated with better adoption of innovations and improved access to information. The household size of respondents has a mean of 6.2 persons, with half (50.0%) having between 6–10 members. This suggests relatively large household sizes, which can provide family labor for farming activities. However, larger households may also increase dependency pressure, thereby influencing the need for improved agricultural productivity through better information access. Farming experience shows a mean of 14.5 years, with the majority (43.3%) having 11–20 years of experience. This indicates that respondents are experienced farmers who are likely to have accumulated substantial knowledge over time. Such experience can enhance their ability to evaluate and utilize information obtained from cooperative societies effectively. The findings suggest that the respondents possess characteristics such as being in their active age, having moderate education, and substantial farming experience that are favorable for effective participation in cooperative societies and utilization of agricultural information.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of smallholder farmers (n = 120)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age (years)			**42.3**
21–30	20	16.7	
31–40	38	31.7	
41–50	34	28.3	
51 and above	28	23.3	
Sex			
Male	78	65.0	
Female	42	35.0	
Marital Status			
Single	24	20.0	

Married	84	70.0	
Divorced/Widowed	12	10.0	
Education Level			
No formal education	18	15.0	
Primary	36	30.0	
Secondary	42	35.0	
Tertiary	24	20.0	
Household Size			**6.2**
1–5	46	38.3	
6–10	60	50.0	
Above 10	14	11.7	
Farming Experience (years)			**14.5**
1–10	40	33.3	
11–20	52	43.3	
Above 20	28	23.3	
Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Types of Agricultural Information Disseminated

The findings in Table 2 reveal the various types of agricultural information disseminated to smallholder farmers through cooperative societies in the study area. The results indicate that cooperative societies serve as important channels for delivering diverse and relevant agricultural information. The most widely disseminated information is on improved farming techniques (81.7%), suggesting that cooperative societies place strong emphasis on enhancing agricultural productivity. This type of information is critical as it exposes farmers to modern practices such as improved planting methods, efficient resource use, and better farm management strategies, which can significantly increase yield. Information on input supply such as seeds and fertilizers (76.7%) and access to credit facilities (75.0%) are also prominently disseminated. This highlights the dual role of cooperative societies not only as information providers but also as facilitators of production resources and financial support. Access to quality inputs and credit is essential for smallholder farmers who often face financial constraints, thereby enabling them to adopt improved technologies. Furthermore, pest and disease control information (73.3%) is widely shared, reflecting the importance of protecting crops from losses. Effective pest and disease management is crucial for ensuring food security and maintaining farm productivity, making this information highly valuable to farmers. The dissemination of market information (70.8%) indicates that cooperative societies help farmers make informed decisions regarding pricing, timing of sales, and market opportunities. This can improve farmers' bargaining power and income by reducing exploitation by middlemen. Lastly, storage and processing techniques (66.7%), although the least among the listed information types, still represent a significant proportion. This suggests that while post-harvest management is addressed, it may not receive as much attention as production-related information. However, improving storage and processing is essential for reducing post-harvest losses and adding value to agricultural products. The findings demonstrate that cooperative societies provide a comprehensive range of agricultural information covering production, input access, financial support, pest management, and marketing. This underscores their critical role in enhancing farmers' knowledge, productivity, and livelihoods.

Table 2: Types of Agricultural Information Disseminated

S/N	Types of Agricultural Information	Yes F(%)	No F(%)
1	Information on improved crop varieties	102(85.0)	18(15.0)
2	Information on improved livestock breeds	84(70.0)	36(30.0)

3	Information on fertilizer application and usage	108(90.0)	12(10.0)
4	Information on pest and disease control measures	105(87.5)	15(12.5)
5	Information on weed control practices	98(81.7)	22(18.3)
6	Information on climate-smart agricultural practices	89(74.2)	31(25.8)
7	Information on soil management and conservation techniques	86(71.7)	34(28.3)
8	Information on irrigation and water management	75(62.5)	45(37.5)
9	Information on farm mechanization services	80(66.7)	40(33.3)
10	Information on planting dates and cropping calendar	101(84.2)	19(15.8)
11	Information on post-harvest handling and storage	94(78.3)	26(21.7)
12	Information on value addition and agro-processing	83(69.2)	37(30.8)
13	Information on marketing strategies for farm produce	91(75.8)	29(24.2)
14	Information on market prices of agricultural commodities	106(88.3)	14(11.7)
15	Information on access to agricultural credit facilities	88(73.3)	32(26.7)
16	Information on government agricultural policies and programs	79(65.8)	41(34.2)
17	Information on agricultural insurance schemes	61(50.8)	59(49.2)
18	Information on farm record keeping and financial management	87(72.5)	33(27.5)
19	Information on group marketing and collective sales	90(75.0)	30(25.0)
20	Information on training/workshops and capacity building opportunities	97(80.8)	23(19.2)

Source, Field Survey, 2026.

Agricultural Information accessible to respondents

Table 3 presents the accessibility of different categories of agricultural information among the respondents. The findings reveal that improved crop production practices (81.7%) constituted the most accessible agricultural information, followed by improved seed varieties (79.2%) and fertilizer application and management (76.7%). This suggests that extension service providers and other agricultural information channels have placed considerable emphasis on disseminating production-related technologies to farmers, thereby enhancing their access to information capable of improving farm productivity. Similarly, information on pest and disease control (75.0%) and market price information (71.7%) was widely accessible, indicating that many respondents had opportunities to obtain information that could improve crop protection and marketing decisions. Access to storage and post-harvest technologies (68.3%), weather and climate information (66.7%), and government agricultural programmes (65.0%) was also relatively high, although a substantial proportion of respondents still lacked access to these important information categories. Conversely, credit and loan opportunities (61.7%) and livestock management information (58.3%) were the least accessible information types among the respondents. Limited accessibility to financial information may reduce farmers' ability to secure production capital, while inadequate access to livestock management information could hinder diversification and productivity in mixed farming systems.

Table 3: Agricultural Information accessible to respondents

S/N	Agricultural Information Accessible to respondents	Yes F(%)	No F(%)
1	Improved crop production practices	98(81.7)	22(18.3)
2	Fertilizer application and management	92(76.7)	28(23.3)
3	Pest and disease control measures	90(75.0)	30(25.0)
4	Improved seed varieties	95(79.2)	25(20.8)
5	Weather and climate information	80(66.7)	40(33.3)
6	Market price information	86(71.7)	34(28.3)
7	Credit and loan opportunities	74(61.7)	46(38.3)
8	Livestock management information	70(58.3)	50(41.7)
9	Government agricultural programmes	78(65.0)	42(35.0)
10	Storage and post-harvest technologies	82(68.3)	38(31.7)

Source: Field survey, 2026

Factors Affecting Effectiveness of Information Dissemination

The results in Table 4 highlight the key factors influencing the effectiveness of information dissemination through cooperative societies, using a cut-off mean of 2.50. All the identified factors recorded mean scores above the threshold, indicating that they significantly constrain effective information delivery in the study area. Foremost among these is poor communication channels (WMS = 3.45), ranked 1st. This suggests that ineffective or inadequate means of communication such as irregular meetings, lack of timely information flow, or limited use of modern communication tools constitute the most critical barrier to efficient dissemination of agricultural information. Closely following is inadequate funding (WMS = 3.38), ranked 2nd, which underscores the financial limitations faced by cooperative societies. Insufficient funds may restrict the organization of training programs, extension activities, and access to necessary information resources, thereby reducing their operational effectiveness. Low literacy level (WMS = 3.20), ranked 3rd, further constrains information dissemination, as farmers with limited educational background may find it difficult to understand and apply technical agricultural information. This highlights the need for simplified and more practical communication approaches. Additionally, poor participation of members (WMS = 3.10), ranked 4th, indicates that inactive involvement of farmers in cooperative activities can hinder the flow and utilization of information. Active participation is essential for ensuring that members benefit from shared knowledge and experiences. Lastly, weak extension linkage (WMS = 3.05), ranked 5th, suggests inadequate collaboration between cooperative societies and agricultural extension services. Strong linkages are crucial for accessing up-to-date and reliable agricultural information. The findings imply that although cooperative societies serve as important channels for information dissemination, their effectiveness is limited by structural, financial, and socio-economic constraints. Addressing these challenges particularly improving communication systems and funding will enhance the capacity of cooperatives to deliver timely and relevant agricultural information to farmers.

Table 5: Factors Affecting Effectiveness of Information Dissemination

Factors	WMS	Rank
Poor communication channels	3.45	1st
Inadequate funding	3.38	2nd
Low literacy level	3.20	3rd
Poor participation of members	3.10	4th
Weak extension linkage	3.05	5th

Source: Field Survey, 2026 (Cut-off mean = 2.50) WMS = Weighted Mean Score

4.5 Test of Hypotheses

4.5.1 Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics and accessibility to agricultural information.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis revealed that age (r = 0.430, p = 0.018), household size (r = 0.502, p = 0.011), and farming experience (r = 0.298, p = 0.022) were all significantly and positively related to respondents' accessibility to agricultural information through cooperative societies, since their p-values were less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics and accessibility to agricultural information is rejected for these variables. The findings demonstrate that socio-economic characteristics play an important role in determining farmers' accessibility to agricultural information through cooperative societies. Among the variables examined, **household size exerted the strongest influence**, followed by **age**, while **farming experience** had a relatively smaller but still significant contribution. These findings imply that cooperative societies should adopt inclusive information dissemination strategies that target younger and less experienced farmers, while encouraging active participation of all members irrespective of household characteristics. Such strategies will enhance equitable access to agricultural information and improve the effectiveness of cooperative societies in promoting agricultural development.

Table 6: PPMC Analysis showing the relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics and accessibility to agricultural information.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Age	0.430	0.018	Significant
Household size	0.502	0.011	Significant
Faming experience	0.298	0.022	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2026 **Significant at $p < 0.05$.

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between types of information disseminated and access to agricultural information.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis revealed a **significant positive relationship** between the types of agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies and farmers' accessibility to agricultural information **(r = 0.621, p = 0.011)**. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) is **rejected.** This finding indicates that the nature and diversity of agricultural information disseminated through cooperative societies significantly influence farmers' access to agricultural information. The findings underscore the pivotal role of cooperative societies in agricultural information dissemination and rural agricultural development. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that the effectiveness of agricultural information dissemination significantly enhances farmers' accessibility to agricultural information. Consequently, strengthening the capacity of cooperative societies through improved extension linkages, regular training programmes, increased funding, and the integration of digital communication technologies would further enhance information dissemination and promote the adoption of improved agricultural innovations among smallholder farmers.

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Analysis showing relationship between types of information disseminated and accessibility of farmers to agricultural information.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Information types vs Accessibility	0.621	0.011	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2026 **Significant at $p < 0.05$.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study concludes that cooperative societies are pivotal in disseminating agricultural information to smallholder farmers, thereby enhancing knowledge, productivity, and access to resources. Their effectiveness, however, is moderated by socio-economic factors, the diversity of information provided, and structural constraints such as communication inefficiencies, funding limitations, and weak extension linkages.

To fully realize their potential, cooperative societies must improve information accessibility, participation, and resource mobilization. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Strengthen communication systems: Cooperatives should leverage modern technologies (mobile alerts, social media platforms, radio programs) to improve the timeliness, reach, and clarity of agricultural information.
ii. Enhance financial capacity: Government agencies, NGOs, and development partners should support cooperative societies with funding to facilitate training, extension services, and acquisition of information resources.
iii. Promote literacy and capacity building: Training programs targeting low-literacy farmers should be implemented to improve comprehension, adoption, and application of agricultural knowledge.

iv. Encourage active member participation: Strategies such as incentives, regular meetings, and inclusive decision-making processes should be adopted to engage all members effectively.

v. Diversify and contextualize information: Cooperatives should balance production-oriented information with post-harvest management, marketing, and storage techniques, ensuring farmers receive holistic support for productivity and income generation.

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POST-HARVEST LOSS ACCOUNTING AND FOOD SECURITY COSTING AMONG SMALL SCALE FARMERS IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract
Post-harvest losses remain a major constraint to food availability and farmer income in Nigeria, yet the economic implications of these losses are poorly documented at the smallholder level. This exploratory study examined Post-harvest Loss Accounting and Food Security Costing among Small Scale Farmers in Abia State, Nigeria. The study focuses on three dominant perishable value chains in the state: cassava, vegetables, and poultry products. The study seeks to determine the extent and cost of post-harvest losses; assess current loss recording and costing practices among farmers; and estimate the contribution of losses to food insecurity and income reduction at household level. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 250 small scale farmers across the three agricultural zones of Abia State through structured questionnaires, farm record review, and focus group discussions. Activity-Based Costing was applied to trace losses and associated costs to specific post-harvest activities such as harvesting, sorting, packaging, storage, and transportation. The findings demonstrated that post-harvest losses remain a significant challenge to agricultural productivity and household welfare. Vegetables experienced the highest level of losses, followed by cassava and poultry products, indicating that highly perishable commodities are particularly vulnerable to inadequate storage, poor handling practices, and inefficient transportation systems. The study further established that systematic post-harvest loss accounting is largely absent among small-scale farmers, with the majority failing to maintain records of produce lost or the associated financial implications. The study recommended that, agricultural extension agencies, universities, and relevant government institutions should organize regular training programmes on farm record-keeping, post-harvest loss accounting, and financial management. Farmers should be equipped with simple accounting tools to quantify both physical and monetary losses.

Keywords: *Post-harvest loss, Food security costing, Small scale farmers, Activity-based costing, Abia State*

Introduction

Agriculture remains a fundamental pillar of Nigeria's economy, contributing significantly to employment, rural livelihoods, poverty reduction, and national food security. The sector contributes substantially to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides livelihoods for millions of Nigerians, particularly those residing in rural communities. Small-scale farmers constitute over 80% of Nigeria's farming population and produce the bulk of staple food crops consumed across the country. Their contributions are indispensable to national food availability, income generation, and poverty reduction. However, despite their strategic importance, these farmers continue to face numerous production and post-production constraints that undermine agricultural productivity and food system sustainability (World Bank, 2024; Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2019). One of the most critical challenges confronting agricultural development globally is post-harvest loss (PHL). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), approximately 14% of the world's food produced for human consumption is lost between harvest and retail, while substantially higher losses occur in developing countries because of poor infrastructure, inadequate storage technologies, inefficient transportation systems, pest infestations, and weak agricultural value chains. In Sub-Saharan Africa,

post-harvest losses continue to threaten food availability, increase production inefficiencies, reduce farmers' incomes, and exacerbate household food insecurity (FAO, 2019; Affognon et al., 2015). Nigeria experiences some of the highest post-harvest losses in Africa, particularly for highly perishable commodities such as fruits, vegetables, cassava, yam, maize, tomatoes, and legumes. Available estimates indicate that between 20% and 50% of agricultural produce is lost annually before reaching consumers, depending on the commodity and geographical location. These losses represent enormous economic waste, amounting to billions of naira annually, while simultaneously reducing food availability, increasing food prices, and worsening malnutrition. Recent studies have also established that households experiencing higher post-harvest losses are significantly more likely to suffer food insecurity and reduced dietary diversity (Adeagbo et al., 2026; FAO, 2019). Small-scale farmers bear a disproportionate share of these losses because they often operate under severe financial, technological, and infrastructural constraints. Limited access to modern storage facilities, poor rural road networks, inadequate processing equipment, insufficient extension services, unstable electricity supply, and limited access to agricultural credit expose harvested produce to rapid deterioration before it reaches the market. Consequently, farmers lose not only the physical quantity of produce but also the financial investments made in seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, labour, irrigation, harvesting, transportation, packaging, and storage. These cumulative losses substantially reduce farm profitability and weaken household resilience against food insecurity (Affognon et al., 2015; World Bank, 2024). Closely associated with post-harvest loss accounting is the concept of food security costing, which refers to the estimation of the economic costs required to achieve and sustain household food security. Food security costing encompasses direct costs, including replacement of lost food, increased household food purchases, additional storage investments, transportation expenses, and processing costs, as well as indirect costs arising from malnutrition, reduced labour productivity, declining household welfare, poverty, and increased healthcare expenditure. Estimating these costs provides policymakers with valuable information for prioritizing investments in post-harvest infrastructure, storage technologies, rural transportation systems,

agricultural processing, and extension services capable of reducing food losses and improving food availability (FAO, 2019; World Food Programme, 2023). Abia State, located in southeastern Nigeria, is predominantly agrarian, with a large proportion of its rural population engaged in small-scale farming. The state possesses favourable ecological conditions suitable for the production of cassava, yam, maize, cocoyam, vegetables, oil palm, plantain, and several horticultural crops. Agriculture remains a major source of employment and household income across rural communities in the state. Nevertheless, inadequate storage facilities, poor transportation infrastructure, limited processing capacity, high post-harvest handling costs, poor access to markets, and weak extension support continue to expose farmers to considerable post-harvest losses. Empirical evidence from Abia State has shown that inadequate storage technologies and ineffective post-harvest management practices significantly contribute to losses among root and tuber crop producers (Nwafor et al., 2019; National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). Given the increasing incidence of food insecurity, rising food prices, declining farm profitability, and persistent agricultural losses in Nigeria, there is an urgent need to investigate the accounting dimensions of post-harvest losses and their implications for food security costing among small- scale farmers. Such an exploratory study will generate empirical evidence capable of informing government agencies, agricultural accountants, policymakers, extension service providers, development partners, and financial institutions on appropriate interventions for reducing post- harvest losses, improving farm income, strengthening household food security, and promoting sustainable agricultural development in Abia State and Nigeria as a whole (Adeagbo et al., 2026; World Bank, 2024).

Purpose of the Study

The exploratory study examined Post-harvest Loss Accounting and Food Security Costing among Small Scale Farmers in Abia State, Nigeria. The specific purposes of the study are:

1. Examine the extent of post-harvest losses among small-scale farmers
2. Ascertain the current post-harvest loss accounting practices
3. Examine the cost implication of post-harvest losses

4. Determine the food security cost of post-harvest losses

Hypotheses

5. There is no significant relationship between post-harvest loss accounting practices and household income.
6. There is no significant difference in post-harvest losses among cassava, vegetable and poultry farmers.
7. Post-harvest losses do not significantly predict household food insecurity.

Literature Review

Post-harvest losses (PHLs) represent one of the greatest challenges to agricultural productivity and food system sustainability in developing countries. The Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) defines post-harvest losses as measurable quantitative and qualitative reductions in the quantity, quality, market value, or nutritional content of agricultural commodities occurring between harvest and final consumption (FAO, 2019). These losses occur during harvesting, handling, transportation, storage, processing, packaging, and marketing and are particularly severe in tropical countries where inadequate infrastructure, poor storage technologies, high temperatures, and humidity accelerate spoilage (Affognon et al., 2015). Globally, approximately 14% of food produced for human consumption is lost before reaching the retail stage, while considerably higher losses occur in low- and middle-income countries due to weak post-harvest management systems (FAO, 2019). Sub-Saharan Africa records some of the highest post-harvest losses worldwide, with annual losses estimated at approximately US$4 billion for grains alone. These losses significantly reduce food availability, increase production costs, decrease farmers' incomes, and contribute to persistent food insecurity (World Bank, 2024). Nigeria experiences substantial post-harvest losses across virtually all agricultural commodities. Studies estimate that between 20% and 50% of agricultural produce is lost annually before reaching consumers, depending on commodity type, climatic conditions, and geographical location (Adeagbo et al., 2026; Affognon et al., 2015). Root and tuber crops, vegetables, fruits, and poultry products are among the most affected due to their highly perishable nature and inadequate cold chain infrastructure (FAO, 2019). Cassava is Nigeria's most important staple crop and the country remains the world's largest producer. Despite this achievement, cassava producers experience considerable post-harvest losses because fresh cassava roots begin physiological deterioration within 24–72 hours after harvesting. Delays in processing, poor rural roads, limited mechanization, and inadequate storage facilities substantially reduce product quality and market value (FAO, 2019). Studies by Nweke et al. (2017) indicate that cassava farmers lose between 15% and 35% of harvested roots annually, translating into significant financial losses and reduced household incomes. Vegetables are among the most perishable agricultural commodities produced by smallholder farmers. Leafy vegetables, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, cabbage, and okra are particularly susceptible to physiological deterioration, microbial spoilage, and mechanical damage during harvesting, transportation, and marketing. Studies conducted across Nigeria report post-harvest losses ranging from 30% to 60% due to poor packaging, inadequate cooling facilities, poor transportation, and prolonged exposure to heat (Kitinoja & Kader, 2015; FAO, 2019). These losses significantly reduce farmers' earnings while contributing to urban food shortages and price instability. Poultry products, particularly eggs and processed chicken, also experience considerable post-harvest losses resulting from poor cold chain management, transportation damage, inadequate preservation facilities, and unstable electricity supply. Egg breakage, microbial contamination, spoilage, and quality deterioration account for significant economic losses among poultry farmers. Ojedokun et al. (2022) reported that inadequate storage infrastructure remains one of the leading causes of financial losses in Nigeria's poultry value chain. The economic consequences of post-harvest losses extend beyond the market value of lost commodities. Farmers also lose investments in seeds, fertilizers, labour, pesticides, irrigation, harvesting, transportation, packaging, and storage. Consequently, the true economic cost includes direct financial losses, opportunity costs, and reduced returns on agricultural investments (Rühl et al., 2022). Recent studies estimate that Nigeria loses agricultural commodities worth several trillion naira annually

due to post-harvest losses, representing substantial forgone income and reduced national food availability (Adeagbo et al., 2026).

Although numerous studies have quantified physical post-harvest losses, relatively few have estimated their comprehensive financial costs at household level, particularly among smallholder farmers in southeastern Nigeria. Agricultural accounting provides information for planning, resource allocation, financial management, and decision-making. However, accounting practices among smallholder farmers in most developing countries remain largely informal, with limited documentation of production costs, revenues, inventories, and post-harvest losses (IFAC, 2021). Loss accounting refers to the systematic identification, measurement, valuation, recording, and reporting of losses incurred during post-harvest operations. Effective loss accounting enables farmers to estimate financial implications of spoilage, shrinkage, pest infestation, transportation damage, quality deterioration, and market price reductions (Rühl et al., 2022). Evidence from Nigeria indicates that the majority of smallholder farmers rarely maintain formal farm records. Instead, they rely on memory-based estimates of production costs and harvested outputs. Such practices limit farmers' ability to determine profitability, identify major sources of losses, or make informed investment decisions (NBS, 2023). Furthermore, extension services have traditionally emphasized production technologies while paying comparatively little attention to farm accounting and post-harvest financial management (FAO, 2019). Several studies have reported that less than one-third of Nigerian smallholder farmers maintain written production records, while only a negligible proportion quantify post-harvest losses in monetary terms (World Bank, 2024). Consequently, many farmers underestimate the actual economic implications of post-harvest losses and often attribute declining profitability solely to low market prices or increasing production costs. Several empirical studies have established strong relationships between post-harvest losses and household food insecurity. Adeagbo et al. (2026) found that Nigerian households experiencing higher post-harvest losses reported significantly lower dietary diversity, reduced food consumption scores, and increased vulnerability to seasonal hunger. Similarly, Affognon et al. (2015) concluded that reducing post-harvest losses could substantially improve food availability and rural livelihoods across Sub-Saharan Africa. Income reduction represents another important consequence of post-harvest losses. Since most Nigerian smallholder farmers depend on agriculture as their primary livelihood, losses occurring after harvest directly reduce marketable surplus, household income, and savings. Lower incomes subsequently reduce farmers' capacity to purchase food during lean seasons, invest in improved technologies, educate children, or access healthcare services (World Bank, 2024). Food security costing provides an important analytical framework for estimating both direct and indirect economic consequences of post-harvest losses. Direct costs include replacement of lost produce, increased food purchases, transportation expenses, storage investments, and processing costs. Indirect costs include malnutrition, reduced labour productivity, declining educational outcomes, increased healthcare expenditure, and persistent poverty (World Food Programme, 2023). Despite growing recognition of these relationships, empirical evidence quantifying food security costs attributable to post-harvest losses remains scarce in Nigeria. Most available studies focus on physical losses rather than comprehensive economic costing, highlighting the need for exploratory studies that integrate agricultural accounting with household food security analysis. The reviewed literature demonstrates that substantial evidence exists regarding the magnitude and causes of post-harvest losses in developing countries. Furthermore, limited empirical evidence exists for cassava, vegetable, and poultry value chains in Abia State. Consequently, this exploratory study seeks to bridge these knowledge gaps by examining the extent and cost of post-harvest losses, assessing current loss recording and costing practices, and estimating the contribution of post-harvest losses to household food insecurity and income reduction among small-scale farmers in Abia State, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods exploratory research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of post-harvest loss accounting and food security costing among small-scale farmers in Abia State, Nigeria. The mixed-methods approach is appropriate because the phenomenon under investigation involves both measurable economic variables, such as the quantity and monetary value of post-harvest losses, and subjective issues,

including farmers' perceptions, experiences, and record-keeping practices. The study was conducted in Abia State, located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Agriculture remains one of the principal economic activities in the state, with cassava, vegetables, maize, yam, oil palm, plantain, poultry, and fisheries constituting major agricultural enterprises. Administratively, the state is divided into three agricultural zones: Aba, Ohafia, and Umuahia which collectively account for a significant proportion of agricultural production. The predominance of small-scale farming and the importance of perishable agricultural commodities make Abia State an appropriate setting for investigating post-harvest losses and their implications for food security. The target population for the study comprises all registered and unregistered small-scale farmers engaged in cassava production, vegetable cultivation, and poultry farming across the three agricultural zones of Abia State. This includes farmers affiliated with the Abia State Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), farmers' cooperative societies, and community-based farmer organizations. A total sample size of 250 small-scale farmers were selected for the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select participants for the study. Structured questionnaire and Focus group discussions were designed specifically to collect data for the study. Data collection was undertaken with the assistance of trained research assistants who are proficient in both English and the local Igbo language. The questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews to accommodate respondents with varying literacy levels. Focus group discussions were audio-recorded, subject to participants' consent, while detailed field notes were maintained throughout the data collection process. Quantitative data was coded and analysed using the SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and estimate the extent and cost of post-harvest losses. Cost accounting techniques and gross margin analysis were employed to estimate the financial implications of post-harvest losses. Inferential statistical techniques, including Pearson correlation analysis, multiple linear regression, and ANOVA were used to examine relationships among post-harvest losses, accounting practices, household income, and food security. All hypotheses were tested at the 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Qualitative data generated through focus group discussions were summarized.

Results

This section presents the analysis of data obtained from 250 small-scale farmers selected from the three agricultural zones of Abia State. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations, Activity-Based Costing (ABC), food security costing models, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. The criterion mean for interpretation was 2.50 based on a four- point Likert scale.

Agricultural Zone	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Aba Zone	85	34.0
Umuahia Zone	82	32.8
Ohafia Zone	83	33.2
Total	250	100

Table 1 shows that the respondents were fairly distributed across the three agricultural zones of Abia State. Aba Zone constituted 34.0%, Umuahia Zone 32.8%, while Ohafia Zone accounted for 33.2%. This balanced distribution ensured adequate representation of farming practices across the state.

Enterprise	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cassava	102	40.8
Vegetables	81	32.4

Poultry Products	67	26.8
Total	250	100

Table 2 shows that, cassava farming represented the largest proportion (40.8%), followed by vegetable production (32.4%) and poultry production (26.8%). This reflects the dominance of cassava production in Abia State.

Research Question One: What is the extent of post-harvest losses among small-scale farmers?

Enterprise	Mean Harvest (kg)	Mean Loss (kg)	Loss (%)
Cassava	2800	460	16.4
Vegetables	1120	292	26.1
Poultry Products	910	103	11.3

Table 3 shows that, vegetables experienced the highest post-harvest loss (26.1%), followed by cassava (16.4%), while poultry products recorded the least loss (11.3%). This indicates that highly perishable commodities remain more vulnerable to post-harvest deterioration.

Cause	Mean	SD	Decision
Poor storage facilities	3.68	0.59	Accepted
Poor transportation	3.52	0.64	Accepted
Lack of processing facilities	3.45	0.67	Accepted
Delayed marketing	3.29	0.81	Accepted
Pest infestation	3.18	0.74	Accepted
Poor harvesting methods	2.94	0.71	Accepted
Weather conditions	2.81	0.79	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.27		

Table 4 shows that, all identified factors had mean scores above the criterion mean (2.50), indicating that respondents generally agreed that inadequate storage, transportation constraints, limited processing facilities, delayed marketing, pests, poor harvesting methods, and adverse weather significantly contribute to post-harvest losses.

Research Question Two: What are the current post-harvest loss accounting practices?

Practice	Yes	No
Keep written farm records	92 (36.8%)	158 (63.2%)
Record quantity harvested	116 (46.4%)	134 (53.6%)
Record quantity lost	54 (21.6%)	196 (78.4%)

Estimate monetary value of losses	43 (17.2%)	207 (82.8%)
Use accounting records for planning	38 (15.2%)	212 (84.8%)

Table 5 shows that, most farmers did not maintain comprehensive post-harvest accounting records. Less than one-quarter documented actual losses or estimated their financial implications. This suggests weak accounting practices among smallholder farmers.

Statement	**Mean**	**SD**	**Decision**
I record harvested produce	2.92	0.73	High
I record produce lost	2.08	0.79	Low
I estimate financial losses	1.94	0.84	Low
I calculate storage costs	2.12	0.75	Low
I use farm records for decision-making	2.18	0.78	Low
Grand Mean	2.25		

Table 6 shows that, the grand mean of 2.25 indicates a generally low adoption of post-harvest accounting practices among farmers. Most respondents merely recorded harvest quantities without documenting losses or associated costs.

Research Question Three: What is the cost implication of post-harvest losses?

Activity	**Mean Cost (₦)**	**Percentage of Total Cost**
Harvesting	23,600	19.3
Sorting	13,450	11.0
Packaging	17,820	14.6
Storage	39,240	32.1
Transportation	28,200	23.0
Total	122,310	100

Table 7 shows that, Storage constituted the largest proportion (32.1%) of post-harvest costs, followed by transportation (23.0%). These activities therefore represent major intervention points for reducing post-harvest losses.

Enterprise	**Average Loss (kg)**	**Unit Price (₦/kg)**	**Annual Loss (₦)**
Cassava	460	350	161,000
Vegetables	292	700	204,400

Poultry Products	103	1,900	195,700

Table 8 shows that, vegetables generated the highest monetary loss due to their high perishability and market value, followed closely by poultry products. Cassava also recorded substantial financial losses despite a lower unit price.

Research Question Four: What is the food security cost of post-harvest losses?

Enterprise	Quantity Lost (kg)	Equivalent Household Food Supply (Months)	Estimated Household Feeding Cost Lost (₦)
Cassava	460	3.8	161,000
Vegetables	292	2.6	204,400
Poultry Products	103	1.9	195,700

Table 9 shows that, the estimated food lost through post-harvest deterioration could have sustained households for between two and four months. These losses therefore have significant implications for household food security.

Income Reduction Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 10%	28	11.2
10–20%	64	25.6
21–30%	92	36.8
Above 30%	66	26.4

Table 10 shows that, nearly two-thirds (63.2%) of respondents reported income reductions exceeding 20%, indicating that post-harvest losses substantially diminish household earnings.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between post-harvest loss accounting practices and household income.

Variables	r	p-value	Decision
Loss accounting practices vs Household income	0.684	0.000	Significant

Table 11 shows that, the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a strong positive relationship between improved post-harvest accounting practices and household income. Farmers who maintained better accounting records experienced lower financial losses and higher incomes.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in post-harvest losses among cassava, vegetable and poultry farmers.

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	85.41	2	42.71			

Within Groups	721.38	247	2.92	14.62	0.000	Significant
Total	806.79	249				

Table 12 shows that, the ANOVA result ($F = 14.62$, $p < 0.05$) shows a statistically significant difference in post-harvest losses among the three enterprise groups. Vegetable farmers experienced significantly higher losses than cassava and poultry farmers.

Hypothesis Three: Post-harvest losses do not significantly predict household food insecurity.

Predictor	**B**	**Beta**	**T**	**p-value**
Quantity Lost	0.512	0.468	8.92	0.000
Storage Cost	0.307	0.284	5.61	0.000
Transportation Cost	0.241	0.211	4.82	0.000

R	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**F**	**p-value**	**Decision**
0.781	0.610	0.604	127.48	0.000	Significant

The regression model explained 61.0% of the variation in household food insecurity ($R^2 = 0.610$). Quantity of produce lost emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.468$), followed by storage costs ($\beta = 0.284$) and transportation costs ($\beta = 0.211$). The model was statistically significant ($F = 127.48$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion of the Findings

The study found that vegetables recorded the highest post-harvest losses (26.1%), followed by cassava (16.4%) and poultry products (11.3%). This finding is consistent with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2019), which estimates that approximately one-third of food produced globally is lost or wasted, with fruits and vegetables experiencing the highest levels of post-harvest losses because of their high moisture content, rapid physiological deterioration, and inadequate cold-chain infrastructure. In Nigeria, poor storage facilities, inadequate transportation systems, and limited access to processing technologies have been identified as major contributors to high post-harvest losses among perishable agricultural commodities (Aulakh & Regmi, 2013; World Bank, 2020). Similarly, Affognon et al. (2015) reported that post-harvest losses in sub- Saharan Africa are particularly severe for fresh vegetables and root crops due to poor harvesting practices, inappropriate packaging, and inefficient market distribution systems. The relatively lower losses recorded for poultry products may be attributed to faster market turnover and greater commercial orientation among poultry farmers, although cold storage deficiencies continue to pose significant challenges.

Another important finding revealed that more than 75% of the farmers did not maintain systematic records of post-harvest losses or estimate their financial implications. This finding supports the observations of Kitinoja and Kader (2015), who argued that most smallholder farmers in developing countries lack formal accounting systems capable of documenting production and post-harvest losses. Without accurate records, farmers are unable to quantify economic losses, evaluate operational efficiency, or make evidence-based management decisions. Likewise, the FAO (2021) emphasized that inadequate farm-level record-keeping remains one of the most neglected components of post-harvest management in low-income countries, limiting opportunities for investment planning, access to agricultural credit, and adoption of improved post-harvest technologies. The findings therefore

reinforce the need for integrating financial literacy and post-harvest accounting into agricultural extension programmes. The study also established that storage costs (32.1%) and transportation costs (23.0%) constituted the largest components of post-harvest expenditure. This aligns with the findings of Gustavsson et al. (2011), who identified inadequate storage infrastructure and inefficient transportation networks as major drivers of post-harvest losses in developing economies. In Nigeria, weak rural road networks, inconsistent electricity supply, and limited access to modern storage facilities increase both the direct and indirect costs associated with preserving agricultural produce (World Bank, 2020). Affognon et al. (2015) similarly argued that investments in improved storage technologies often reduce total post-harvest losses despite increasing initial storage costs, ultimately generating higher returns for farmers. Therefore, the predominance of storage and transportation costs observed in this study reflects structural deficiencies within agricultural value chains rather than inefficient farm management alone. The findings further demonstrated that post-harvest losses translated into food quantities capable of feeding an average household for approximately two to four months annually. This finding corroborates the assertion by the FAO (2023) that reducing post-harvest losses represents one of the most cost-effective approaches to improving food security without increasing agricultural production. The World Food Programme (2022) similarly noted that food lost after harvest significantly reduces household food availability and nutritional security, particularly among rural farming households that depend primarily on self-produced food. In Nigeria, where food inflation and rising production costs continue to threaten household welfare, minimizing post- harvest losses could substantially improve food availability and reduce vulnerability to seasonal food shortages (IFPRI, 2023). Consequently, the findings underscore the strategic importance of post-harvest management as a key component of national food security policy. A particularly significant finding of the study was the positive relationship between improved post-harvest accounting practices and household income ($r = 0.684$). This suggests that farmers who systematically monitor and document post-harvest losses are better positioned to identify inefficiencies, reduce unnecessary costs, and improve overall profitability. This finding is supported by the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), which posits that effective managerial capabilities, including information management and accounting practices, constitute valuable organizational resources that enhance performance. Although these theories were originally developed within business management, their principles are increasingly applicable to agricultural enterprises, where accurate production and financial records enhance operational efficiency and profitability (IFAD, 2021).

Finally, the regression analysis showed that post-harvest losses significantly predicted household food insecurity ($R^2 = 0.610$), indicating that approximately 61% of the variation in household food insecurity could be explained by the magnitude of post-harvest losses. This finding strongly agrees with empirical evidence reported by the FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO (2023), which emphasizes that reducing food losses across agricultural value chains is essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger). Likewise, Affognon et al. (2015) concluded that effective post-harvest loss reduction interventions significantly improve food availability, household income, and nutritional outcomes among smallholder farmers in sub- Saharan Africa. which identifies food availability as one of the principal determinants of household food security. By demonstrating that post-harvest losses account for a substantial proportion of household food insecurity, the study provides empirical evidence that investments in post-harvest accounting, storage facilities, transportation infrastructure, and farmer education can simultaneously enhance economic welfare and food security among rural farming households.

Conclusion

The study examined post-harvest loss accounting and food security costing among small-scale farmers in Abia State, Nigeria, with emphasis on the extent of post-harvest losses, accounting practices, the economic cost of losses, implications for household food security, and the relationships among these variables. The findings demonstrated that post-harvest losses remain a significant challenge to agricultural productivity and household welfare. Vegetables experienced the highest level of losses, followed by cassava and poultry products, indicating that highly perishable commodities are particularly vulnerable to inadequate storage, poor handling practices, and inefficient transportation

systems. The study further established that systematic post-harvest loss accounting is largely absent among small-scale farmers, with the majority failing to maintain records of produce lost or the associated financial implications. This deficiency limits farmers' capacity to evaluate production efficiency, make informed management decisions, and accurately determine farm profitability. The analysis also revealed that storage and transportation constitute the largest components of post-harvest costs, highlighting infrastructural deficiencies as major contributors to food losses and increased production expenses. More importantly, the findings demonstrated that post-harvest losses substantially reduce household food availability, with the quantity of food lost annually being sufficient to feed an average household for approximately two to four months. The significant positive relationship between improved post-harvest accounting practices and household income suggests that effective documentation and monitoring of losses enhance financial performance and resource utilization. Furthermore, the regression results confirmed that post-harvest losses are a major predictor of household food insecurity, emphasizing that reducing these losses would not only improve farmers' incomes but also strengthen household food security and contribute to national food security objectives. Overall, the study concludes that effective post-harvest loss accounting should be regarded as an integral component of agricultural management rather than merely a financial record-keeping exercise. Strengthening farmers' accounting capacity, investing in modern storage and transportation infrastructure, and promoting improved post-harvest technologies will significantly reduce food losses, improve farm profitability, enhance household food security, and support Nigeria's efforts toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger).

Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested based on the findings: 1. Agricultural extension agencies, universities, and relevant government institutions should organize regular training programmes on farm record-keeping, post-harvest loss accounting, and financial management. Farmers should be equipped with simple accounting tools to quantify both physical and monetary losses. 2. Federal and state governments should increase investments in rural storage facilities, including community warehouses, cold rooms, refrigerated storage systems, and improved cassava preservation technologies to reduce deterioration of highly perishable produce. 3. Government should rehabilitate rural road networks and facilitate access to affordable transportation services for agricultural produce. Better transportation infrastructure will minimize delays, reduce mechanical damage during transit, and lower post-harvest costs. 4. Financial institutions and agricultural development agencies should provide low-interest loans and targeted credit facilities that enable small-scale farmers to invest in improved storage structures, transportation equipment, and post-harvest technologies. 5. Government should formulate and implement comprehensive national and state-level policies that prioritize post-harvest loss reduction through investments in rural infrastructure, value-chain development, digital agricultural information systems, and incentives for private-sector participation in storage and logistics. 6. Future studies should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches across different agroecological zones of Nigeria to examine seasonal variations, evaluate the effectiveness of post-harvest interventions, and develop context-specific models for post- harvest loss accounting and food security costing. Such studies would provide stronger evidence for policy formulation and sustainable agricultural development.

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MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES AND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AMONG RURAL FARMERS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of media technologies on the dissemination of agricultural information among rural farmers in the Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey and provided answer to four research questions. Sample comprised of 320 rural farmers selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data was collected using structured interview-guide Questionnaire on Media and Agricultural Information Dissemination (QEDAID, r = .84). Data analyzed using descriptive statistics revealed that the most frequently accessed radio formats were interview programmes (25.0%) and agricultural news bulletins (18.4%)while rural drama was the least accessed format (5.3%). Farmers primarily received information regarding credit loan facilities (19.4%) and post-harvest storage/processing (14.1%), whereas government agricultural programmes were the least received (6.6%). The perceived benefits included improved household food security (17.8%), increased household income (13.5%), and reduced post-harvest waste (11.8%). However, significant challenges included a lack of electricity or batteries to power radios (19.7%) and limited access to radio sets (18.4%), along with inconvenient programme timings (11.8%) and poor signal quality (10.2%). Despite the potential of radio as an accessible medium, structural barriers severely limit effective information dissemination. The study concludes that addressing infrastructure deficits, simplifying content in Yorubaand integrating extension follow-up are vital for leveraging radio to enhance agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Keywords: *Media technologies, agricultural information dissemination, rural farmers, radio programmes, Ibarapa Central Local Government Area*

Introduction

Agriculture is a fundamental component of Nigeria's economy, providing jobs for over 70% of the rural population and serving as an essential support for food security and national income (Bello, Yahaya&Adamu, 2024).The Ibarapa region, located in the southwestern part of Oyo State, is recognized as a prominent agricultural centre, historically known for its extensive cultivation of melons and other staple crops including yam, cassava and maize.Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, which encompasses major towns such as Igbo-Ora and Idere, is primarily an agricultural society where farming is the leading occupation. However, despite the region's significant potential, rural farmers often struggle with low productivity and limited access to modern agricultural advancements.

The advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and media technologies has brought about a transformative digital drive designed to narrow the information gap in the agricultural sector.Contemporary smart-media tools, such as mobile applications, the internet and digital platforms, are now enhancing traditional media like radio and television to support real-time information sharing between researchers and farmers.According to Afolabi et al. (2025), these interactive platforms serve

as vital enhancements to traditional extension services, especially when direct communication is limited.

Additionally, Adedokun (2025) underscores that development communication, which involves the strategic application of communication tools for social and behavioural change, is crucial for empowering rural farmers with insights on climate-resilient practices and market opportunities. In Ibarapa Central, the distribution of agricultural information is progressively reliant on the amalgamation of media technologies. While traditional radio remains a highly accessible and favored medium for rural inhabitants due to its immediacy and affordability, there is an increasing awareness of the potential of digital tools to furnish scientific and statistical data for effective farm management. Taiwo et al. (2023) found that rural populations in the wider Ibarapa region make extensive use of media for essential information, although significant infrastructural obstacles persist. Comprehending how these media technologies are utilized is vital for enhancing agricultural outcomes and ensuring the sustainable development of rural livelihoods in the local government area.

Statement of the Problem

Although agriculture is central to the economy of Ibarapa Central people, the sector continues to grapple with enduring challenges that include low productivity, insufficient adoption of improved farming practices and a lack of awareness about modern technologies. A primary factor contributing to these challenges is the weak linkage that exists among agricultural research institutions, policy implementation and farmers at the grassroots level. This information gap frequently results in farmers using outdated techniques, which leads to less than optimal yields and increased vulnerability to environmental stressors.

While development communication strategies and media technologies are intended to bridge this gap, their effectiveness in rural communities like Ibarapa Central Local Government Area (ICLGA) is often hindered by a variety of systemic obstacles. Rural farmers are often isolated from the 'digital drive' due to inadequate infrastructure, such as limited electricity supply and poor telecommunication signals, which diminish the effectiveness of ICT-based tools. In addition, financial limitations often prevent smallholder farmers from acquiring modern media devices or accessing paid internet services.

Furthermore, there is a significant lack of consistent evaluation regarding the actual impact of existing communication efforts on agricultural development in the region. Many farmers remain uninformed about weather forecasts, government support programmesand market dynamics because information channels often deteriorate in rural settings. Consequently, without a critical assessment of how media technologies are utilized for information dissemination, the potential for digital and traditional media to promote a resilient agricultural sector in Ibarapa Central remains largely unfulfilled.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to investigate media technologies and agricultural information dissemination among rural farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. identify the types of radio programmes through which rural farmers in the study area receive agricultural information.
2. ascertain the types of agriculture-related information rural farmers in the study area receive through radio.
3. analyze the benefits of information dissemination through radio programmes on farm practices and agricultural productivity as perceived by rural farmers in the study area.
4. determine the challenges encountered by rural farmers in the study area in recieving information disseminated through radio programmes.

Research Questions

1. What type of radio programme gives rural farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area agricultural information?
2. What type of agriculture-related information do rural farmers in the study area receive through radio?
3. What are the benefits of information dissemination through radio programmes on farm practices and agricultural productivity as perceived by rural farmers in the study area?
4. What are the challenges encountered by rural farmers in the study area in receiving information disseminated through radio programmes?

Literature Review

The integration of media technologies within agricultural extension represents a key element of modern development communication, aiming to enhance knowledge transfer and foster sustainable social change. Adedokun (2025) characterizes development communication as a vital mechanism bridging the information gap between researchers and rural farmers, promoting behavioural changes for technology adoption. In Nigeria, agricultural success increasingly depends on digital real-time information sharing. Ali et al. (2020) assert that robust extension systems are essential for socio-economic viability, requiring continuous exchange of information and technical skills.

Traditional media, particularly radio, remains the most dominant medium for engaging rural audiences. Okunlola et al. (2022) stress that radio broadcasts are crucial for informing farmers due to rural prevalence and local language capabilities. Taiwo et al. (2023) found radio is favoured in Ibarapa region for its accessibility and low cost. While television offers visual demonstration advantages, its use is limited by unstable power supply in rural communities. Smart-media tools represent a convergence of ICT applications facilitating digital information manipulation. Afolabi et al. (2025) explain these tools support 'digital farming' through real-time data collection. However, Ezeh et al. (2021) noted that mobile application usage remains limited compared to countries like Kenya.

The effectiveness of media dissemination is explained by Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Njinma et al. (2024) underscore mass media's role in promoting food security through agricultural innovation advocacy. Obiora et al. (2021) add that broadcast media and Internet are crucial for combating rural poverty. Despite advancements, rural farmers face significant constraints. Sulaiman et al. (2024) identify the need for participatory communication, while Adekola et al. (2020) notedthat media use is limited by financial constraints and illiteracy. Oleribe et al. (2019) concluded that rural dwellers, who need information most, often find it unavailable or inaccessible. Jacob et al. (2020) emphasize technology utilization depends on farmers' perception of utility and accessibility.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria with headquarters in Igbo-Ora. The target population comprised approximately 3,200 rural farmers registered with agricultural extension services in the area. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. In the first stage, five out of ten political wards were selected using simple random sampling. In the second stage, purposive sampling identified active farmers from established agricultural associations, such as the Cashew Farmers' Association and Maize Growers' Association, ensuring at least two years of farming experience. In the third stage, systematic random sampling selected every third household from farming household lists in the five wards, yielding 320 respondents based on Yamane's (1967) formula at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error.

The primary instrument was a structured interview-guide Questionnaire on Media and Agricultural Information Dissemination (QEDAID), comprising five sections addressing socio-demographic characteristics, types of radio programmes accessed, agriculture-related information received, perceived benefits and challenges encountered. The questionnaire was developed in English and

translated into Yoruba. Face and content validity were established by three experts in agricultural extension and communication studies. Reliability was tested through a pilot study with 30 farmers from Ibarapa East, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

Data collection involved five trained research assistants fluent in English and Yoruba. Questionnaires were administered through direct distribution and face-to-face interviews, collected immediately upon completion. Out of 320 distributed, 304 were correctly filled and returned, representing a 95.3% response rate. Data analysis used SPSS version 25.0, employing descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Mean scores of 2.5 and above were interpreted as agreement, while below 2.5 indicated disagreement. Ethical considerations included informed consent, clear explanation of the study purpose, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw without negative consequences.

Results

Table 1

Type of Radio Programme that Gives the Rural Farmers Information in the Study Area

Type of Radio Programme	n	%
Agric new bulletin	56	18.4
Farm talk show/phone in programme	36	11.8
Technical lecture/farm casting	31	10.2
Rural drama with farming messages	16	5.3
Magazine programmemixed with interviews)	76	25.0
Weather forecast	35	11.5
Market price updates	28	9.2
Programme in local language (Yoruba)	26	8.6
Missing	16	5.0
Total	320	100.0

Table 1 presents radio programme types supplying agricultural information to rural farmers, based on 304 valid responses from 320 farmers. The most favoured type is magazine programmes with interviews (25.0%, n=76), followed by agricultural news bulletins (18.4%, n=56). Farm talk show/phone-in (11.8%, n=36) and weather forecast (11.5%, n=35) showed moderate demand. Technical lectures (10.2%, n=31), market price updates (9.2%, n=28)a nd local language programmes (8.6%, n=26) received lower mentions. Rural drama with farming messages is least utilized (5.3%, n=16). This reveals a preference for informative, magazine-styleand news-based programmes over dramatized or purely technical formats.

Table 2
Types of Agriculture-Related Information that Rural Farmers in the study area Receive Through Radio

Types of Radio Programme	n	%
Information about crop planting	28	9.2
Information about pest/diseases	25	8.2
Information about soil management	26	8.6
Information about market prices	26	8.6
Information about credit loan facility	59	19.4
Information about prices of crops/livestock	22	7.2
Information about climate/smart agric practice	25	8.2
Information about post-harvest storage/processing	43	14.1
Information about veterinary care	30	9.9
Information about government agricprogramme	20	6.6

Missing	16	5.0	
Total	320		100.0

Table 2 presents agriculture-related information rural farmers acquire through radio broadcasts, based on 304 valid responses. Credit loan facilities were most received (19.4%, n=59), followed by post-harvest storage/processing (14.1%, n=43), indicating these are primary farmer concerns. Veterinary care (9.9%, n=30), crop planting (9.2%, n=28), soil management and market prices (8.6% each), pest/disease management and climate-smart practices (8.2%, n=25), and crop/livestock prices (7.2%, n=22) followed. Government agricultural programmes were least accessed (6.6%, n=20). Farmers predominantly receive credit and post-harvest information, while government initiatives are least accessible. Radio broadcasters and extension agents should enhance coverage of government programmes and pricing information to address these gaps.

Table 3
Perceived Benefits of Information Received by Rural Farmers through Radio Programmes

Types of Radio Programme	n	%	
Help in changing my farming practice	34	11.2	
Reduction of losses from pest/diseases	27	8.2	
Assist in getting better market prices	31		10.2
Increased farm yield/harvest	25		8.2
Help in reducing post-harvest waste	36		11.8
I am now more confident in making farm decisions	22		7.2
Increased household food security	54		17.8
Increased household income	41		13.5
Better knowledge of sustainable soil management	34		11.2
Missing	16	5.0	
Total	320		100.0

Table 3 presents perceived benefits farmers receive from radio information, based on 304 valid responses. The most frequently reported benefit was increased household food security (17.8%, n=54), followed by increased household income (13.5%, n=41). Assistance in reducing post-harvest waste accounted for 11.8% (n=36). Changes in farming practices and enhanced soil management knowledge each represented 11.2% (n=34). Help obtaining better market prices was reported by 10.2% (n=31). Pest/disease loss reduction and increased farm yield each accounted for 8.2% (n=27 and n=25 respectively). The least cited benefit was increased confidence in farm decisions at 7.2% (n=22). Overall, radio information primarily enhances food security and income.

Table 4
The challenges encountered by rural farmers in the Study Area in Getting Information Disseminated through Radio Programmes

Types of Radio Programme	n	%	
No access to radio	56		18.4
Radio programmes come at inconvenient time	36	11.8	
Poor radio signal or network	31		10.2
Lack of electricity/batteries to power the radio	60	19.7	
Programmes are in language in do not understand	16		5.3
Information is too technical to understand/implement	22	7.2	
I don't trust the information given on radio	16		5.3
No extension agent to follow up on the radio advice	21		6.9
The same information is repeated to often	18		5.9

Missing	16	5.0
Total	320	100.0

Table 4 outlines the challenges faced by rural farmers in the study area when attempting to access information disseminated through radio programmes. Among the 320 respondents, 16 (5.0%) had missing responses. The most significant challenge is the lack of electricity or batteries to power the radio, reported by 19.7% (n=60), followed closely by the lack of access to a radio at 18.4% (n=56). These two infrastructure-related barriers alone account for nearly 40% of all challenges, indicating that basic access to radio hardware and power sources is the primary obstacle. The timing of radio programmes is inconvenient for 11.8% (n=36), while poor radio signal or network issues affect 10.2% (n=31). Information being too technical to understand or implement is reported by 7.2% (n=22) while the absence of an extension agent to follow up on radio advice is noted by 6.9% (n=21). The repetition of the same information too often accounts for 5.9% (n=18). Furthermore, programmes being broadcast in a language that is not understood and a lack of trust in the information provided on radio each represent 5.3% (n=16). In conclusion, the predominant challenges are structural, which specifically the lack of radio sets and electricity, rather than content-related.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that rural farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA primarily obtain agricultural information through magazine programmes combined with interviews (25.0%) and agricultural news bulletins (18.4%). This corroborates Okunlola et al. (2022) that radio is the most effective medium for engaging rural populations due to accessibility and local dialect presentation. Taiwo et al. (2023) similarly identified radio as preferred for its cost-effectiveness and immediacy. Conversely, rural drama featuring farming messages (5.3%) was minimally utilized, contrasting with entertainment-education benefits discussed in development communication. Adedokun (2025) posits strategic communication facilitates behavioral change, yet farmers in this area favour straightforward formats over dramatized contents.

Regarding information types, credit loan facilities (19.4%) and post-harvest storage/processing (14.1%) were most encountered, while government agricultural programmes were least accessed (6.6%). This aligns with Bello, Yahaya, and Adamu (2024), who note that despite agriculture employing over 70% of Nigeria's rural population, farmers face low productivity and limited access to modern advancements. The prevalence of credit information indicates significant financial need, consistent with smallholder farmers being financially constrained. The low government programme information highlights a development communication gap, contradicting Adedokun's (2025) expectation of empowering farmers with policy insights.

Perceived benefits were primarily increased household food security (17.8%) and income (13.5%), supporting Njinma et al. (2024) on mass media enhancing food securityand Obiora et al. (2021) on broadcast media alleviating poverty. However, only 7.2% reported boosted confidence in farm decision-making, contrasting with smart-media transformative possibilities described by Afolabi et al. (2025), likely due to radio's lack of interactive capabilities.

Primary challenges included lack of electricity or batteries (19.7%) and limited radio access (18.4%), confirming Taiwo et al. (2023) on infrastructural barriers and Oleribe et al. (2019) on rural information access difficulties. Distrust towards radio information (5.3%) contrasts with Diffusion Theory assumptions, aligning with Jacob et al. (2020) that utilization depends on perceived utility. Absence of extension follow-up (6.9%) further undermines impact, supporting Afolabi et al. (2025) on the need for interactive platforms.

Conclusion

It is concluded that rural farmers in Ibarapa Central LGA primarily depend on magazine-style and news bulletin radio programmes, while drama formats are infrequent. Information on credit facilities and post-harvest management is most received, whereas government programmes are least utilized. Farmers recognized significant advantages including enhanced food security, increased incomeand reduced

waste. However, substantial structural challenges hinder dissemination, particularly electricity absence and lack of radio sets. Other barriers include poor signal quality, inconvenient broadcast times, technical language, excessive repetition and absence of extension follow-up to reinforce radio-based advice.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusion of the study.

6. Concerned authorities in Ibarapa Central LGA should facilitate solar-powered radios and community charging stations to address electricity and hardware challenges.
7. Radio stations in Oyo State should revise agricultural programme schedules to early mornings or evenings, ensuring farmers can listen when not occupied with fieldwork.
8. Radio broadcasters should simplify technical contents and convey it in plain Yoruba language to enhance comprehension, trustand practical application.
9. Agricultural extension agencies should merge radio broadcasts with periodic farm visits, establishing feedback mechanisms for agents to clarify, reinforceand demonstrate advice, thereby improving adoption rates.

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PHYSICAL AND NATURAL SCIENCE

POLYNOMIAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF SOLID WASTE GENERATION IN IKORODU, LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

Proper solid-waste management is an important aspect for the protection of public health, safety and environmental quality. Waste generation and disposal has become a serious problem in Nigeria and it has attracted considerable interest among communities and Government because of its complex nature and associated economic, environmental and sociological problems. The research was a retrospective review of existing data on waste generation in Odogunyan, Odokekere and Odonla area under the jurisdiction of the Ikorodu Municipal. Structured proforma form was used to obtained data on the variables of interest like: Volume of waste generated across the major dump site in Ikorodu, Waste Composition across different locations, and Average Weight of Waste Composition. Polynomial regression model was used in analyzing waste data across Ikorodu Municipality and the volume of waste across the three (3) major sites in Ikorodu was compared. It was observed that the parameters in the model are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The adjusted R-Squared = 0.9761 indicates a high joint contribution of all the parameters to the response variable (Waste Generated). From the descriptive statistics as well as the Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA), it was observed that most of the waste generated in Ikorodu are from the Odongunyan, this may be attributed to the dense population of people within the area as well and the number of companies around the area. The zero-intercept polynomial regression model was appropriate to study the pattern of waste generated in Ikorodu, Lagos. The study concluded that generated residuals from the regression model are normally distributed; this was confirmed by the results gotten from Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests carried out of the residuals. It was recommended that both private sector and the municipal authorities must improve their methods of solid waste management by allocating or buying more vehicles for transportation of solid waste.

Keywords*: Statistical Analysis, Solid Waste Generation, Regression, Municipal*

Introduction

Solid waste are the materials that is made up of residential, domestic, institutional, commercial, agricultural, industrial and street or highway refuse. It includes garbage, rubbish, ashes, street refuse, dead animals, abandoned automobiles, demolition, rubbles and sewage sludge. In other words, Solid waste means useless, unwanted or discarded materials with insufficient liquid content to be free flowing (UNEP, 2006).

The rapid urbanization that has been taking place during the 20th century virtually transformed the world in to communities of cities and towns facing similar challenges on environmental issues in which most of them have to be addressed at international level (Smith, 2010). Among those environmental issues is a solid waste management is a critical one because as long as humans have been living in settled communities, solid waste generation has been an unavoidable and critical issue both in developed and developing nations. As a result, solid waste management became a worldwide agenda at united nation conference on environment and development in Rio dejieneiro in 2002 with a great emphasis on reducing wastes and maximizing environmentally sound waste reuse and recycling as first step in waste management (UNEP, 2006).

Municipal solid waste (MSW), commonly known as trash or garbage (US), refuse or rubbish (UK) is a waste type consisting of everyday items that are discarded by the public.
Municipal Solid Waste Management refers to systematic control of generation, collection, storage, transport, source separation, processing, treatment, recovery and disposal of solid waste.
Poor solid waste management can lead to some significant environmental and health hazards. For instance, leachate from waste can contaminate underground water system, open burning of waste releases green house gases which causes air pollution, and a failure to use recycled materials from solid waste leads to accelerated depletion of 'raw' materials. Unfortunately, it is the urban poor who live and work near solid waste disposal sites that are most at risk sometimes suffering acute health impacts. These striking facts and figures, along with the reality of poor institutional capacity, financial constraints and lack of political will, makes the management of solid waste one of the most significant planning challenges faced by developing economies in the 21st century.

In Nigeria, attempts to have any kind of solid waste collection are found only in urban areas, as rural wastes are mainly organic and hence get returned to their local ecosystem one way or another. The habit of separating out certain types of solid waste that have direct value for reuse or recycling, such as plastic containers has not yet been popular, there is no waste separation at household level and very little at institutional level. Some individuals and informally organized groups carryout waste separation of items that can be reused or recycled in different places including at the municipal disposal site. This activity creates job opportunities for unemployed people by organizing them to have waste collection points to purchase the sorted waste from those who bring it to them. Similarly, individuals or groups will collect one type of solid waste, such as a mixture of old plastic and metal, which can be sold to artisans that create other items out of the waste.
Management of solid wastes should be considered as an integral part of environmental hygiene and infection control. The solid wastes generated within Ikorodu area should always follow an appropriate and well identified stream from their point of generation until their final disposal, and recycling to create wealth. This stream is composed of several steps that include generation, segregation, collection and onsite transportation, on-site storage, offsite transportation and finally on or offsite treatment, disposal and recycling.

Related Works

Adeolu et al., (2014) observed that Irrespective of the social and economic status, man must inevitably generate wastes of various forms which include gas, liquid and solid on daily basis. Inefficient waste management has the potential to damage the environment and cause adverse effects to man's health.

Agagu, (2009) Solid waste management has gained notoriety in Nigeria today because of its visibility and the embarrassment it has constituted to the image of the nation. Only few state capitals in Nigeria have been able to put in place fairly sustainable urban waste management programmes. It is a common sight to find mountains of waste product that has littered all over our cities for days or even weeks with no apparent effort displayed at getting rid of them, even with the attendant risk of air and ground-water pollution.

Leton and Omotosho (2004) defined Wastes as non-liquid and nongaseous products of human activities, regarded as being useless. It could take the forms of refuse, garbage and sludge.

Cities in Nigeria, being among the fast growing cities in the world (Onibokun and Kumuyi, 1996) are faced with the problem of solid waste generation. The implication is serious when a country is growing rapidly and the wastes are not efficiently managed.

Methodology

Data Collection Methods

The data was sourced from Lagos State Waste Management Agency (LAWMA) between 2010 and 2020.

Regression Model Used

Model the expected value of y as an nth degree polynomial, giving the polynomial regression model:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x + \beta_1 x^2 + \beta_1 x^3 + \ldots + \beta_n x^n + \epsilon$$

Where,

y = Dependent (Response) Variable

x = Independent (Predictor) Variable

β_0 = Intercept (the value of y when x = 0)

β_1 = Co-efficient of linear term

β_2 = Co-efficient of squared term

β_3 = Co-efficient of cubic term

β_n = Co-efficient of highest polynomial term

$x^2, x^3, \ldots, x^n$ = Higher-order power of the predictor variables

ϵ = Random error

The least squares estimates of the parameters in the model can be expressed in matrix form

$$\hat{\beta} = (X^T X)^{-1}(X^T Y)$$

With respect to the data,

Since $r_{ij}^{(k)} \subset R^+$ which is fixed under the deterministic condition, then

$$Y(k) = r(k)Y(t)$$

With

$$r^{(k)} = \left[Y^{(t)T} Y^{(t)}\right]^{-1}\left[Y^{(t)T} Y^{(k)}\right]$$

Where $Y^{(k)}$ is a vector of $Y_{ij}^{(k)}$ and $Y^{(t)}$ is a vector of $Y_{ij}^{(t)}$

Results of Findings

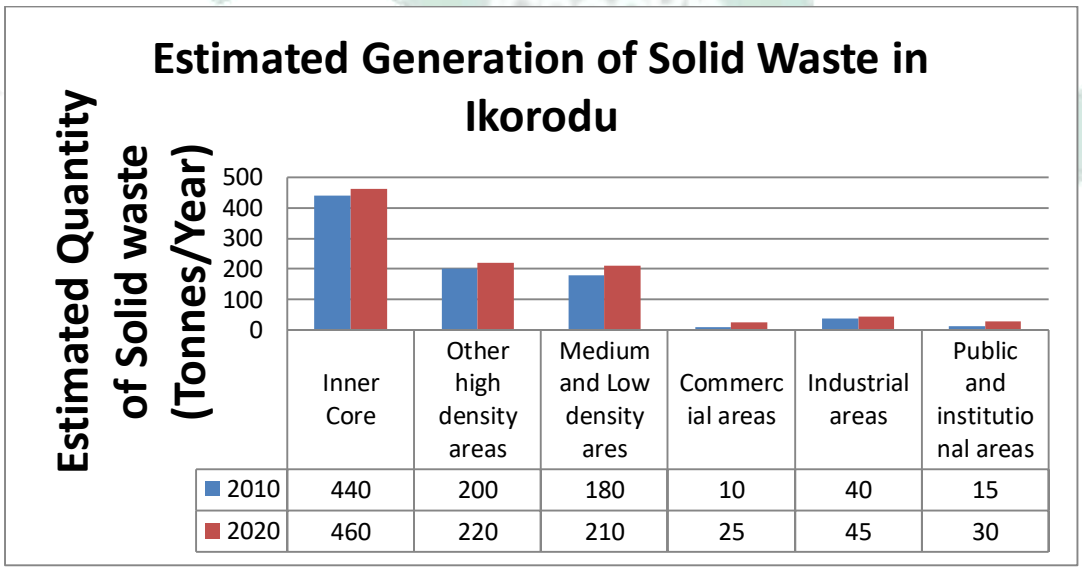


Figure 1: Estimated Generation of Solid Wastes in Ikorodu

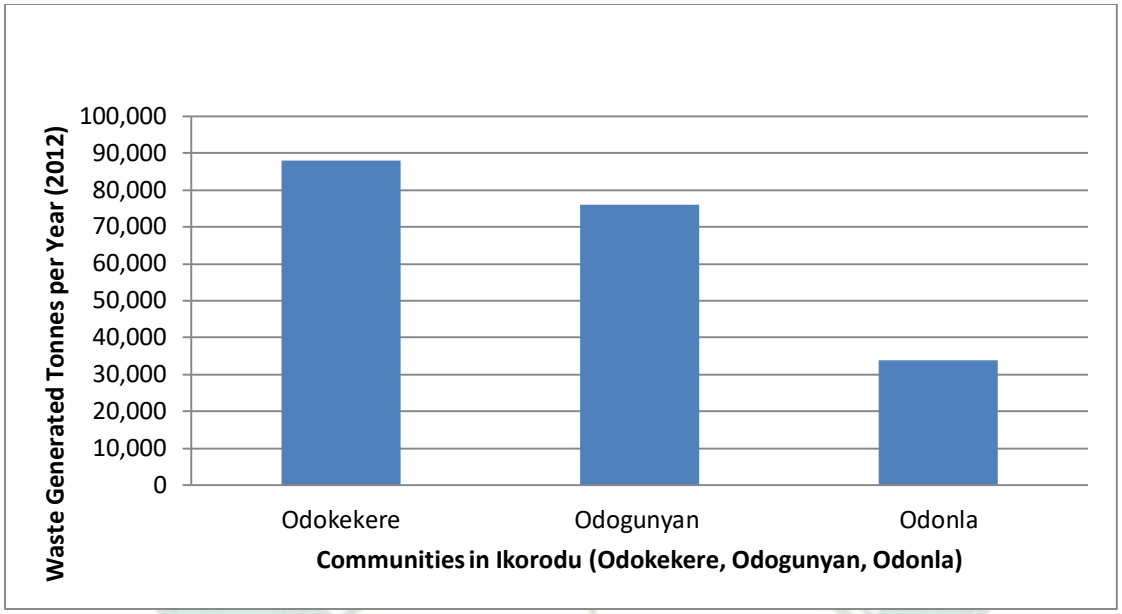


Figure 2: Estimated Waste Generated in Selected Communities of Ikorodu in 2012

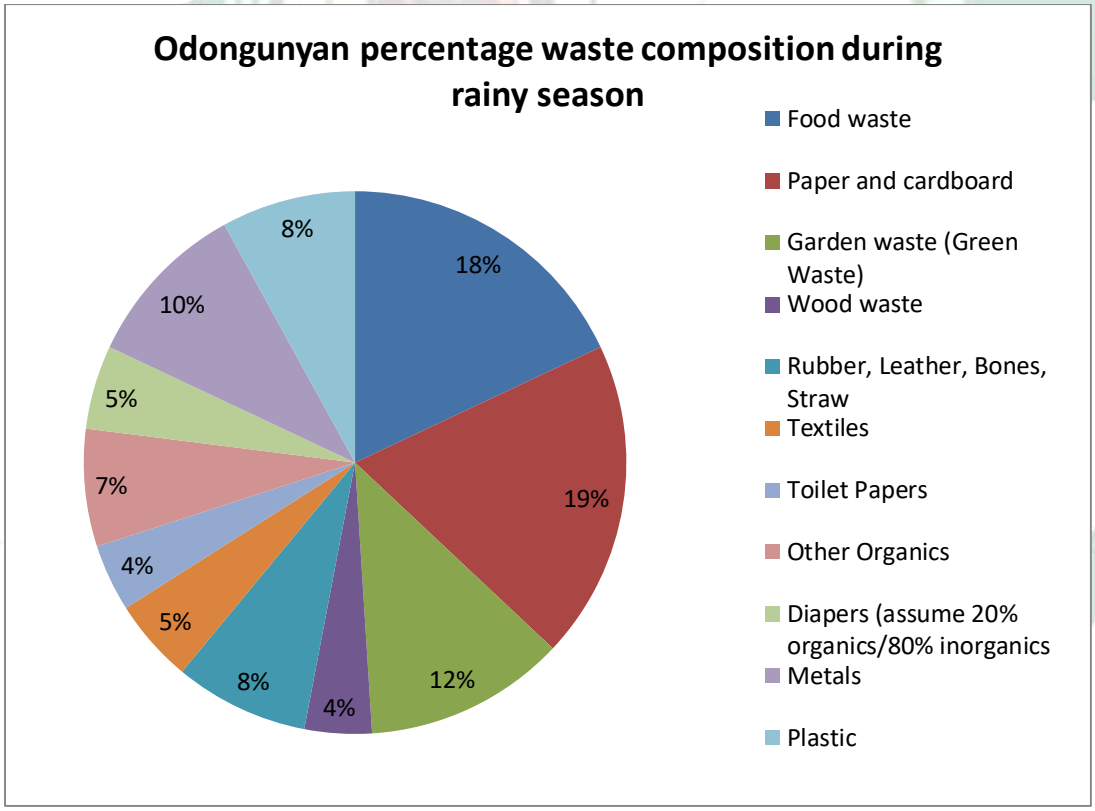


Figure 3: Percentage Composition of Solid Waste Generated in Odogunyan During the Rainy Season

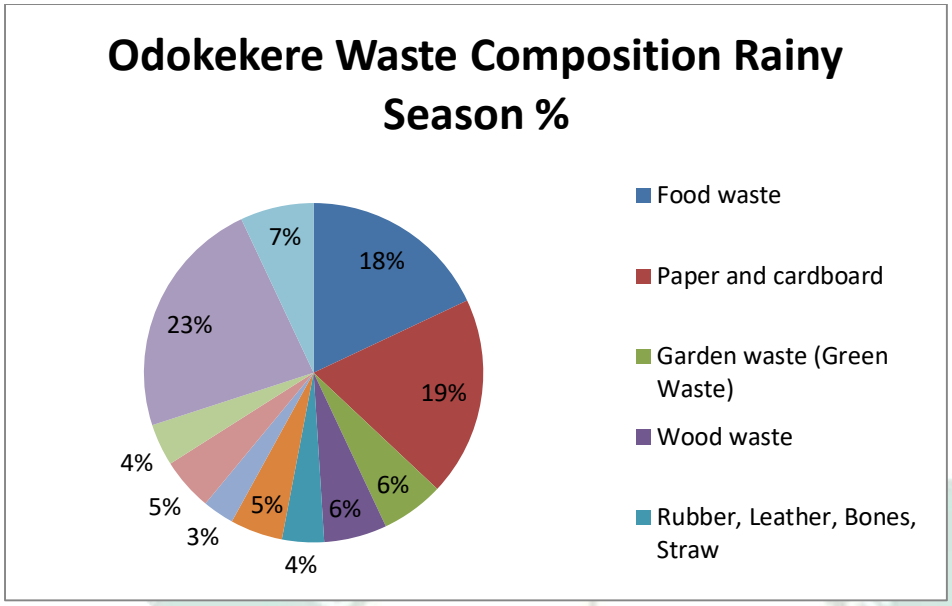


Figure 4: Percentage Composition of Solid Waste Generated in Odokekere During the Rainy Season

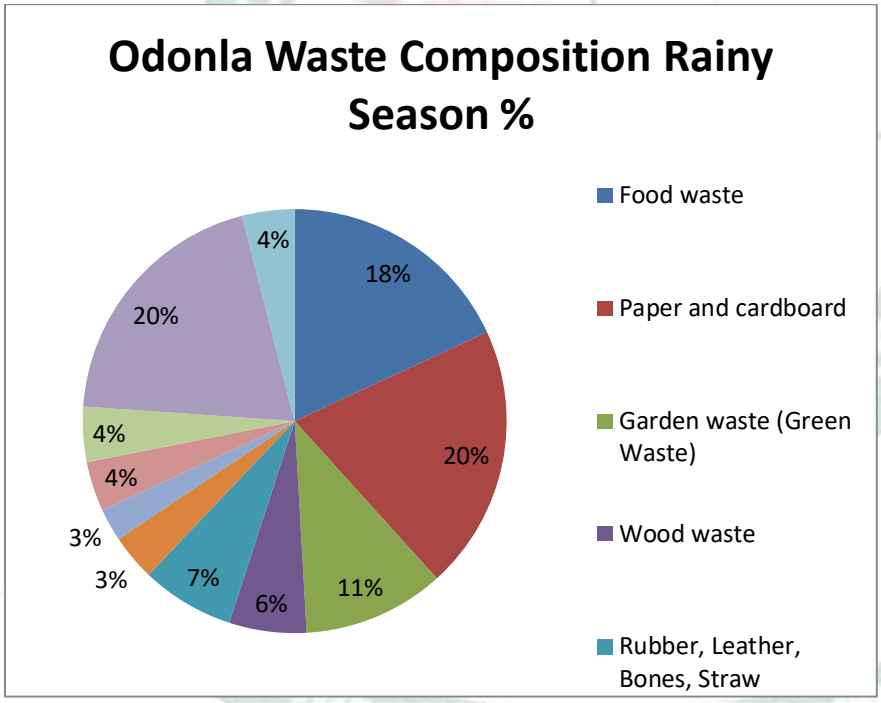


Figure 5: Percentage Composition of Solid Waste Generated in Odonla During the Rainy Season

Table 1: Table Showing Average Weight of Waste Composition

Composition	**Average Weight**		
	Odongunyan	**Odokekere**	**Odonla**
Vegetable Matter	77	70	70

Putrescible	0	0	0
Paper	12	13	12
Textile	4	2	4
Metals	2	4	5
Plastics	2	3	4
Total	**97**	**92**	**95**

Table 2: Estimation of Parameters

Parameter	Estimate	Std	t value	P-value
Intercept	31606.7230	7625.4523	1.362	0.02724 *
Odongunyan	0.3378	0.5681	0.5241	0.00415**
Odonla	0.2562	0.4468	0.561	0.0173***
Odokekere	3.6541	0.5209	3.178	0.000137 ***

A table showing the estimates of the parameters for the Regression models

Interpretation: It is observed that the parameters in the model are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The adjusted R-Squared = *0.9761* indicates a high joint contribution of all the parameters to the response variable (Waste Generated)

Table 3: A table showing the Analysis of Variance for the models

Sources of Variation	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	P-Value
Odongunyan	1	1.3438e+10	1.4628e+10	2.2e-14 ***
Odonla	1	8.2535e+09	8.1355e+09	0.0001105***
Odokekere	1	3.3211e+08	3.5321e+08	0.0006714 ***

Interpretation: The ANOVA table above shows the appropriateness of the Regression model used for the data, as all the parameters are significant.

Residual Analysis

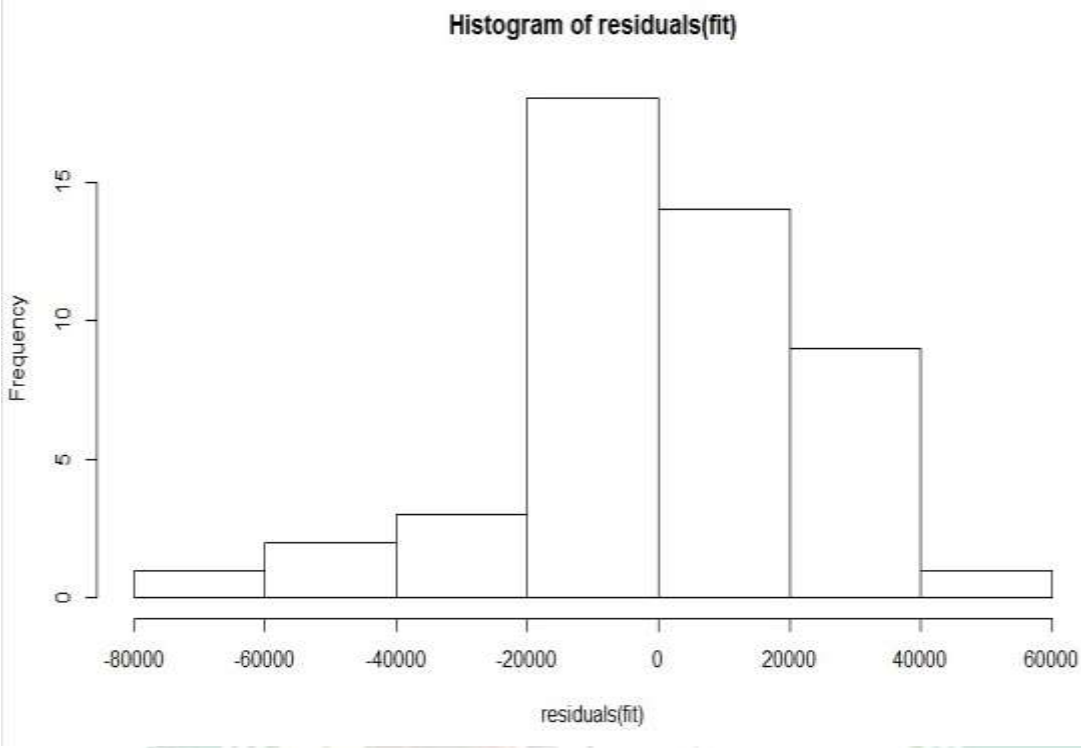


Figure 6: Histogram of Residuals

The histogram as well as the Quartile-Quartile (QQ) Plots suggests that almost all the models generated residuals that are normally distributed.

Summary of findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

From the descriptive statistics as well as the EDA (Exploratory Data Analysis), it was observed that most of the wastes generated in Ikorodu are from the Odongunyan. This may be due to the population of people within the area as well as the number of company around the area.

The generated residuals from the regression model are normally distributed. This was confirmed by the results gotten from Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests carried out of the residuals.

It was observed that the parameters in the model are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The adjusted R-Squared = 0.9761 indicates a high joint contribution of all the parameters to the response variable (Waste Generated)**.** The zero-intercept polynomial regression model was appropriate to study the pattern of waste generated in Ikorodu, Lagos**.** The study concluded that generated residuals from the regression model are normally distributed; this was confirmed by the results gotten from Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests carried out of the residuals. It was recommended that both private sector and the municipal authorities must improve their methods of solid waste management by allocating or buying more vehicles for transportation of solid waste.

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PHYSICOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS AND ANTIBACTERIAL ACTIVITY OF HONEY FROM *Apis melifera* (STING BEE) AND *Melipona amazonica* (STINGLESS BEE)

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Abstract

Honey is a natural sweet substance produced by bees from floral nectar or plant exudates. This study evaluated the in-vitro antibacterial activities of honey derived from Apis mellifera *(AMH; sting bee honey) and* Melipona amazonica *(MAH; stingless bee honey), alongside their physicochemical properties. Antibacterial susceptibility was determined using the agar well diffusion method at concentrations of 20%, 40%, 60%, and 80%, while physicochemical parameters were analysed using standard methods of analysis. Results showed that AMH exhibited significantly greater (P < 0.05) antibacterial activity against* Staphylococcus aureus*, with inhibition zones of 31.30 mm and 48.30 mm at 60% and 80%, respectively. AMH also inhibited* Aerobacter aerogenes *(15.5 mm) at 60%, whereas MAH showed no inhibition at this concentration and minimal activity (8.0 mm) at 80%. In contrast,* Shigella *spp. were more susceptible to MAH (15.3 mm at 80%) than AMH (7.50 mm). All the bacterial isolates were resistant to AMH at 20%, though* Aerobacter aerogenes *and* Escherichia coli *showed slight susceptibility at 40% (3.50 mm and 4.20 mm) and 60% (4.50 mm and 5.00 mm). Physicochemical analysis revealed differences between the honey types in ascorbic acid content (2.487 and 2.137 mg/100 g) and pH (3.475 and 3.215). AMH had higher reducing sugar content (24.827 mg/100 g) than MAH (22.567 mg/100 g). These findings indicate that both honey types possessed antibacterial potentials and may serve as alternative therapeutic agents against susceptible bacterial infections.*

Key words: *Honey, bacterial isolates, inhibition, antibacterial activity*

Introduction

Since the advent of mankind, traditional medicine has been adopted for the treatment of infection even when the knowledge about their active components was unknown ((Zumla and Lulat, 2019). One of these important traditional folks is honey which was discovered in 19th century to have antimicrobial activity (Zumla and Lulat, 2019). Honey is a sweet mixture produced from the nectar of plant flowers by bee insects and it is 95% of sugar component, small water content and great numbers of minor components (Diaz-Forestier *et al*., 2019). It has antimicrobial properties that vary with the botanical origin, geographical location and entomological source (Diaz-Forestier *et al*., 2019). The most common honey produced in Nigeria is that from the genus *Apis melifera* (sting bee) which differs in properties and components (catalase, ascorbic acid, flavonoids, hydrogen peroxides, phenolic acids, carotenoid derivatives, organic acids) from that produced from *Melipona* species (stingless bee) (Malik *et al*., 2010). Research revealed that the darker the honey the more concentrated is the phenolic contents (Malik *et al*., 2010). However, the antibacterial potential of honey may be due to the presence of enzymes such as glucose oxidase, catalase and compounds like phenolic acids, flavonoids and organic acids (Dzugan *et al*., 2020). Due to the variability in the components of honey, this study aimed at determining the antibacterial potency and physicochemical properties of two different honeys produced from two commonly reared bees (*Apis melifera* and *Melipona amazonica*) in Nigeria.

Materials and methods

Area of Study

The study was conducted at the Biology Laboratory of Oyo state College of Agriculture and Technology, Iggoora located in Ibarapa Central Local Government of Oyo State.

Collection of honey samples

Two honey samples from *Melipona Amazonica* and *Apis Melifera* bees were collected from keepers in Eruwa, Oyo State. The matured combs, laden with honey, were harvested and aseptically collected in sterile screwed bottles. They were kept in a cool and dry place before being transported to the laboratory for further study.

Physicochemical analyses

Determination of pH

The pH of a 10% (w /v) solution of homogenized honey prepared in boiled warm water was measured using a digital pH meter (H I 98127, Hanna instruments, Mauritius) following the AOAC (2000) guidelines. The pH meter was standardized using buffers of 4.0 and 10.0 before measuring the pH of the samples, a sample solution was placed in a beaker and inserted into the pH meter. After the first reading was completed, the electrode was washed with distilled water and dried with tissue paper. The procedure was repeated for other samples and readings were taken.

Determination of moisture content

The moisture content was determined based on the refractometric method following the harmonized methods of the International Honey Commission (Bogdanov *et al*., 2009). Generally, the refractive index increases with an increase in solid content. The refractive indices of honey samples were measured at ambient temperature using an Atago hand refractometer and the readings were further corrected for a standard temperature of 20°C by adding/subtracting the correction factor of 0.00023/°C. The percentage moisture content values corresponding to the corrected refractive index values were calculated using Wedmore's table (AOAC, 2000).

Determination of protein contents

The protein content of honey was measured following Lowry's method used by James and Marc, (2009). Bovine Serum Albumin (BSA) solutions were prepared by diluting a stock BSA solution (1 mg/ml) to a final volume of 5 ml BSA concentrations ranges from 0.05 to 1.00 mg/ml Based on these dilutions, 0.2 ml of the protein solution was placed in a separate test tubes and 2 ml of alkaline copper sulphate reagent (analytical reagent) was added. After thorough mixing, there suiting solution was incubated at room temperature for 10 minutes. Subsequently, 0.2 ml of the Folin-Ciocalteure agent solution was added to each tube and incubated for 30 minutes. The colorimeter was calibrated using a blank, and the absorbance was measured at 660 nm.

Determination of ascorbic acid content

A sample of the honey (100 mg) was extracted with 10 ml of 1% metaphosphoric acid at room temperature for 45 minutes and then filtered through Whatman No. 4 filter paper. The resulting filtrate (1 ml) was mixed with 9 ml of 0.005% 2, 6-Dichloro Phenol Indo-Phenol (DCPIP), and the absorbance of the mixture was measured within 30 minutes at 515 nm against a blank. The ascorbic acid content was calculated based on a calibration curve of pure L-ascorbic acid (50,100, 200, and 400 µg/ml; Y = 3.2453X -0.0703r̂^2 = 0.9440). The results were expressed as mg of ascorbic acid/kg of honey (Ferreira *et al*., 2009).

Collection of test microorganisms

The clinical bacterial isolates (*Staphylococcus aureus, Aerobacter aerogenes, Escherichia coli, Shigella* species) were collected from Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, on nutrient agar slants, labelled properly and was transferred to Microbiology Laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora for further study.

Standardization of bacterial isolates and antibacterial assay of honeys

A modified method of Obuotor *et al.* (2022) was used. The bacterial isolates were sub-cultured on nutrient agar plates and were incubated at 35°C for 24 hours. Each isolate was standardized using 0.5 McFarland standards and standard isolate was plated to obtain $2x10^8$ cfu/ml colonies. Molten sterile Mueller Hinton agar was poured on plates and was allowed to solidify. Sterile swab stick was dipped

into each standard bacterium and was inoculated on the agar surface in duplicates. Cock borer of 6 mm diameter was used to bore well in the agar and the various concentrations (20%, 40%. 60% and 80%) of each honey variety was introduced into the well as labelled. Plates were incubated at 35°C for 24 hours. Commercially sold antibiotics discs were used as positive control while sterile distilled water was used as negative control. The diameters of the zone of inhibition of the bacterial isolates were measured in millimetre and were recorded as bacterial susceptibility to the Honey varieties (*Apis melifera* and *Melipona amazonica*).

Results

Table 1 shows the antibacterial activity of *Apis mellifera* honey where no inhibition at 20% (0.00 mm) across all isolates, but increased with concentration, with the highest activity observed against *Staphylococcus aureus* at 80% (48.30 mm), followed by *Aerobacter aerogenes* (4.50 mm). *Escherichia coli* exhibited low inhibition at 40% (4.20 mm). An irregular pattern was observed for *Shigella* spp., which showed no inhibition at 60% (0.00 mm) but measurable zones at 40% (5.0 mm) and 80% (7.50 mm). For *Melipona amazonica* honey (Table 2), no inhibition was recorded at 40% and 60% (0.00 mm) for all isolates. At 20%, only *Aerobacter aerogenes* and *Escherichia coli* showed minimal (3.0 mm), while *E. coli* and *Shigella* spp. remained uninhibited (0.00 mm) at 20–60%. At 80%, increased activity was observed against *Shigella* spp. (15.3 mm), *E. coli* (12.5 mm), and *Staphylococcus aureus* (8.0 mm).

The antibiotic susceptibility profile of the isolates to commercially sold antibiotics (table 3) revealed that azithromycin and erythromycin produced uniform inhibition zones (25.0 mm) against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Aerobacter aerogenes*, *Shigella* spp., and *Escherichia coli*. *Aerobacter aerogenes* and *E. coli* showed intermediate responses to cefexime (15.5 mm and 14.0 mm, respectively), while *Shigella* spp. exhibited intermediate susceptibility to Augmentin (14.5 mm), cefotaxime (17.5 mm), imipenem (17.0 mm), and cefuroxime (16.5 mm).

The physicochemical properties (Table 4) indicated that *Apis mellifera* honey had higher values of ascorbic acid (2.44 mg/100 g), non-reducing sugars (18.553 mg/100 g), reducing sugars (24.44 mg/100 g), moisture content (17.68%), and pH (3.48) compared to *Melipona amazonica* honey (2.14 mg/100 g, 15.31 mg/100 g, 22.56 mg/100 g, 16.87%, and 3.22%, respectively), whereas protein content was higher in *Melipona amazonica* honey (0.44%) than in *Apis mellifera* honey (0.36%)

Table 1: Antibacterial activity of *Apis mellifera* Honey

	Zone of inhibition of bacterial isolates (mm)			
Concentration of Honey (%)	*Staphylococcus aureus*	*Aerobacter aerogenes*	*Escherichia coli*	*Shigella* species
20	0.00±0.00^{d}	0.00±0.00^{d}	0.00±0.00^{d}	0.00±0.00^{c}
40	11.30±5.65^{c}	3.50±1.65^{c}	4.20±2.00^{c}	5.00±2.50^{c}
60	31.30±15.50^{b}	4.50±2.25^{b}	5.00±4.00^{b}	0.00±0.00^{c}
80	48.30±24.15^{a}	13.50±7.50^{b}	13.80±6.75^{a}	7.50±3.75^{a}

Mean value within the column with different letters are significantly different ($p<0.05$

Table 2: Antibacterial activity of *Melipona amazonica* Honey

Concentration of Honey (%)	Zone of inhibition of bacterial isolates (mm)			
	Staphylococcus aureus	*Aerobacter aerogenes*	*Escherichia coli*	*Shigella* species
20	0.8±0.40[a]	3.0±1.50[b]	3.00±1.50[a]	0.00±0.00[b]
40	0.00±0.00[b]	1.50±0.25[b]	1.50±0.25[c]	0.00±0.00[b]
60	0.00±0.00[b]	0.00±0.00[b]	0.00±0.00[b]	0.00±0.00[b]
80	8.0±0.40[a]	12.50±6.25[a]	12.50±6.25[a]	15.30±7.25[a]

Mean values within the column with different letters are significantly different ($p<0.05$

Table 3: Antibiotics susceptibility of bacterial isolates to commercial antibiotics (discs)

isolates/zone of inhibition (mm)

Antibiotics	*Staphylococcus aureus*	*Aerobacter aerogenes*	*Escherichia coli*	*Shigella* species
Augmentin	20.0	20.0	20.0	14.5
Cefotaxime	20.0	19.0	19.0	17.5
Ceftriaxone	20.0	14.0	14.0	19.5
Cefexime	20.0	15.5	15.5	20.0
Levofloxacin	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Ciprofloxacin	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Imipenem	20.0	19.5	19.5	17.0
Cefuroxime	25.0	20.0	20.0	16.5
Azithromycin	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Erythromycin	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Ofloxacin	25.0	25.0	22.0	22.0
Gentamicin	25.0	22.0	22.0	22.0

Table 4: Physicochemical properties of *Melipona amazonica* and *Apis mellifera* Honey

Parameters	*Melipona amazonica* honey	*Apis mellifera* honey
Ascobic acid (mg/100g)	2.14±0.05	2.487±0.03
Non-reducing sugar (mg/100 g)	15.31±0.09	18.55±0.09
Reducing sugar (mg/100 g)	22.56±0.11	24.83±0.60
Moisture (%)	16.82±0.09	17.68±0.21
Protein (%)	0.44±0.01	0.36±0.01
pH	3.22±0.01	3.48±0.01

Mean values between the groups are significantly different ($p<0.05$, mean ± SD of triplicate values)

Discussion

Honey has been used for centuries as a natural remedy for various ailments due to its antimicrobial activity, with some being more potent than others (McLoone *et al*., 2016; Nolan *et al*., 2019). In this study, *Apis melifera* honey (AMH) demonstrated higher inhibitory potency against *Staphylococcus aureus, Aerobacter aerogenes, Escherichia coli* and *Shigella* species than *Melipona amazonica* honey (MAH) at the highest concentration applied. One of the key factors that contribute to the antimicrobial activity of honey which create a hypertonic environment that inhibits the growth of bacteria is reducing sugars (Ewnetu *et al*., 2013; Almasaud, 2020). In this study, AMH has a higher reducing sugar contents than MAH, which may explain its greater inhibitory potency against the tested bacterial species (Ewnetu *et al*., 2013; Almasaud, 2020; Mudenda *et al*., 2023). Although, *A. aerogenes* and *E. coli* were susceptible to MAH but the zone of inhibition could be regarded as resistance when compared with the standard range specified by the Clinical Laboratory and Standard Institute (CLSI) for susceptibility of bacteria to antibiotics. These bacteria may possess certain mechanisms such as efflux pump used to pump out the antimicrobial compounds present in the honey before they can exert their effects (Dashtbani-Roozbehani and Brown, 2021; Lekshmi *et al*., 2022).

The physicochemical parameters revealed AMH contained ascobic acid higher than that in MAH. This powerful antioxidant in honey has been found to enhance its antibacterial properties making it an effective treatment for wounds and infections (Al-Kafaween *et al*., 2023; Zapata-Vahos *et al*., 2023). Several studies have investigated the relationship between the ascorbic acid content of honey and its antibacterial activity. In a study by Luitel *et al*. (2023), it was found that honey with high levels of ascorbic acid exhibited stronger antibacterial activity against various strains of bacteria including *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*.

Staphylococcus aureus was most susceptible to AMH at highest concentration. This phenomenon could be attributed to various factors including the composition of the honey, the resistance mechanisms of the bacteria, and the concentration used in this study However, *Shigella* species was neither susceptible nor resistant to the MAH. The cell wall structure, enzyme production and efflux pump may contribute to its lack of susceptibility or resistance to highest concentration of MAH. Furthermore, a study by Combarros-Fuertes *et al*. (2018) demonstrated that the antibacterial efficacy of honey is not solely attributed to its sugar content, but also the presence of ascorbic acid and other bioactive compounds. The researchers found that honey variety with higher levels of ascorbic acid had greater inhibitory effects on bacterial growth, suggesting that ascorbic acid plays a significant role in enhancing honey's antibacterial properties (Majtan *et al*., 2020; Margaoan *et al*., 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that *Apis mellifera* honey exhibits superior antibacterial activity compared to *Melipona amazonica* honey against the tested bacterial strains, particularly at higher concentrations. This enhanced efficacy appears to be closely associated with its higher reducing sugar and ascorbic acid contents, both of which contribute to the creation of an unfavourable environment for microbial growth and the potentiation of antibacterial effects. While both honey types showed some level of activity, the comparatively reduced effectiveness of *M. amazonica* honey-especially against *Aerobacter aerogenes* and *Escherichia coli*-highlights the potential influence of intrinsic bacterial resistance mechanisms, including efflux systems. Furthermore, the results emphasize that the antimicrobial activity of honey is multifactorial, involving not only osmotic effects but also bioactive constituents such as ascorbic acid and other phytochemicals. The pronounced susceptibility of *Staphylococcus aureus* to *A. mellifera* honey reinforces its potential relevance in therapeutic applications, particularly in the management of wound-associated infections. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the variability in antibacterial potency among different honey types and emphasizes the importance of physicochemical composition in determining their efficacy. Future research should focus on elucidating the specific bioactive compounds responsible for these effects and exploring their clinical applicability.

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PROXIMATE AND SENSORY EVALUATION OF CAKE AND COOKIES ENRICHED WITH BLENDED CARROT (150-250 GRAMS)

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Abstract

The study investigated the proximate and sensory evaluation of cake and cookies enriched with 150g and 250g of blended carrot to produced cake and cookies using flour, sugar, nutmeg, margarine, eggs and many more. The cake had three (3) samples and three (3) samples of cookies given six (6) produced. The production was done using accurate measurement and adequate processing with cake and cookies control. Sample A is production of cake and B is for cookies and the remaining four (4) were produced using 150g to 250g of blended carrot enrichment and baked separately at accurate temperature with an oven in which twenty (20) questionnaires were administered to staff and students in the Department of Home and Rural Economics of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora using 9-point hedonic scale ranging from like extremely (9) to dislike extremely (1)with the range of colour, texture, flavour, aroma and overall acceptability. The result obtained from sensory evaluation revealed of colour sample C had highest percentage of 14(70.0%), texture sample D had 11(55.0%), flavour and taste sample F gave 10(50.0%), aroma sample C, E and F had highest 9(45.0%) and F had highest percent of 17(85.0%) in term of overall acceptability. The remaining food samples were taken to laboratory for nutritional analysis; moisture, ash, crude fibre, crude fat, carbohydrates and protein content and the results revealed that the moisture content from sample F (8.10g), ash (1.05g), crude fibre (5.50g), crude fat (27.15g), carbohydrate (17.50g) and finally the protein content had (20.50g). In conclusion adding 150-250g blended carrot increased moisture, ash, crude fibre, and carbohydrate content in cake and cookies with control had more nutritious products. It was recommended that bakers should incorporate 150-250g blended carrot to improve nutrition and appeal, also reduce other liquids to manage the extra moisture and maintain good texture and shelf-life.

Keywords: *Proximate, Cake, Cookies, Sensory, Blended, Carrot*

Introduction

The increasing global emphasis on functional foods and nutrient-enhanced bakery products has stimulated considerable research interest in the incorporation of fruits and vegetables into conventional baked goods (Adeleke and Odedeji; 2010). Bakery products; cakes and cookies are widely consumed across diverse age groups due to their sensory appeal, convenience, and versatility. However, despite their popularity, these products are often considered nutritionally inadequate since they are typically high in refined carbohydrates, fats, and sugars, but low in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and bioactive compounds. The observed information prompted food scientists to explored the use of locally available plant-based ingredients to enhance the nutritional and functional quality of baked foods (Ohijeagbon *et al.*, 2025).

Carrot (*Daucus carota)* is nutrient-dense root vegetable rich in B-carotene (a precursor of vitamin A), minerals, antioxidants, dietary fiber and phytochemicals, has been identified as a promising natural fortifying agent in bakery formulations offers potential benefits such as improved vitamin A content, enhanced fiber levels, increased moisture retention, and improved antioxidants properties asserted by Adebiyi *et al;* (2017). Incorporating blended carrot into baked products such as cakes and cookies has become a growing trend due to its nutritional and functional benefits illustrated by Sadaf *et al.*, (2024). Cake and cookies are widely consumed snacks, but are often low in micronutrients. Enriching them with carrot provides an opportunity to improve their nutritional quality while maintaining desirable sensory attributes. Moreover, carrot is widely accessible, affordable, and culturally accepted in many regions, making it an ideal ingredient for nutritional enhancement, especially in low-resource setting.

Incorporating carrot into widely consumed snacks such as cakes and cookies may contribute to addressing micronutrient deficiencies, particularly hypovitaminosis A, which remains a public health concern in many developing countries (Gupta *et al.*, 2024). The integration of carrot into baked products

also aligns with global efforts to promoting healthier dietary patterns, diversify food choices, and reduce reliance on synthetic fortification and artificial additives.

Although, several studies have examined the utilization of fruit and vegetable puree in baked products, comparative research on carrot-enriched cake and cookies remains limited. Similarly, variations in product formulation, processing methods, baking conditions, and proportions of carrot incorporation can significantly influence the proximate composition and sensory attributes of the final product in line with the findings of Kausar *et al.*, (2024). Thus, a systematic comparison of the proximate composition and sensory evaluation of carrot-enriched cake and cookies is warranted (Apa., Fashipe., & Meludu., 2024).

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to assess the proximate and sensory evaluation of cake and cookies enriched with blended carrot. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the proximate composition of cake and cookies enriched with blended carrot.
2. Evaluate the sensory attributes of the carrot-enriched products using structured panel.
3. Compare the nutritional quality of the enriched cake and cookies.
4. Assess the acceptability of carrot-enriched baked products among consumers

Materials and methods

Table 1: Materials used for the production of cake using 150g and 250g

Recipe	Sample A (control)	Sample B (using 150g BC)	Sample C (Using 250g BC)
Wheat flour	500g	500g	500g
Sugar	250g	250g	250g
Margarine	200g	200g	200g
Eggs	4 large(200g)	4 large(200g)	4 large(200g)
Baking powder 10g	10g	10g	10g
Milk (liquid)	150ml	150ml	150ml
Vanilla flavor	5ml	5ml	5ml
Salt		2g	2g
Carrot puree	**0g**	**150g**	**250g**

Method of preparation

Preparation of carrot puree

- Fresh carrots were washed thoroughly under running water
- Carrot were peeled and cut into small slices. The slices were steamed for 3-5 minutes to soften them.
- The steamed carrot was blended into a smooth puree without adding water. Puree was stored in a clean, airtight container before use.

Methods adopted for the preparation of cake

- Margarine and sugar were weighed and creamed using an electric mixer for 5-8 minutes until light and fluffy.
- Eggs were added one by one while mixing continued continuously.
- For sample A and B, the appropriate quantity of carrot puree (150g and 250g) was added and mixed thoroughly.
- Flour, baking powder, and salt were sieved together to introduce air.
- The dry ingredients were gradually folded into the creamed mixture.
- Milk was added gradually to enabled to a smooth batter consistency.
- Vanilla flavor was added.
- The batter was poured into greased baking pans.
- Baked at 170-180^{o}C

Table 2: Materials used for the production of cookies using 150g and 250g

Recipe	Sample D (control)	Sample E (using 150g BC)	Sample F (Using 250g BC)
Wheat flour	500g	500g	500g
Sugar	200g	200g	200g
Margarine	250g	250g	250g
Eggs	1 large(50g)	1large(50g)	1large(50g)
Baking powder	5g	5g	5g
Milk (liquid)	40ml	40ml	40ml
Vanilla flavour	5ml	5ml	5ml
Salt	1g	1g	1g
Carrot puree	**0g**	**150g**	**250g**

Method of adopted for the preparation of cookies

- The measurement margarine and sugar were placed in a mixing bowl and creamed for 4-6 minutes until light and fluffy.
- The egg was added into the creamed mixture and mixed thoroughly.
- The required quantity of carrot puree was added for enriched samples, while the control had none.
- Flour, baking powder and salt were sieved together to incorporate air.
- Dry mixture was added gradually to the creamed mixture and mixed to form a firm dough.
- Small quantities of milk were added
- The dough was rolled out on a clean board to about 0.5-1cm thickness and cut into shapes using cookies cutter.
- Cookies were arranged on greased baking tray and baked in a preheated oven at 160-170^{O}C for 12-18minutes until golden brown.
- Baked cookies were allowed to cool on wire racks, packaged in airtight containers, labeled, and stored for proximate and sensory evaluations.

Table 3: Sensory evaluation of the production of cake (Control)

Parameter	Score	Colour	Texture	Flavour	Taste	Aroma	Overall Acceptability
Like extremely	9	17 (85.0)	8 (40.0)	8 (40.0)	11 (55.0)	12 (60.0)	9 (45.0)
Like very much	8	2 (10.0)	12 (60.0)	8 (40.0)	3 (15.0)	5 (25.0)	11 (55.0)
Like moderately	7	1 (5.0)	00	4 (20.0)	5 (25.0)	3 (15.0)	00
Like slightly	6	00	00	00	00	00	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4: Cake production enriched with 150g of blended carrot

Parameter	Score	Colour	Texture	Flavour	Taste	Aroma	Overall Acceptability
Like extremely	9	14 (70.0)	10 (50.0)	6 (30.0)	9 (45.0)	5 (25.0)5	5 (25.0)
Like very much	8	3 (15.0)	6 (30.0)	7 (35.0)	5 (25.0)	9 (45.0)	14 (70.0)
Like moderately	7	3 (15.0)	4 (20.0)	7 (35.0)	6 (30.0)	5 (25.0)	1 (5.0)
Like slightly	6	00	00	00	00	1 (5.0)	00

Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5: Cake production enriched with 250g of blended carrot

Parameter	**Score**	**Colour**	**Texture**	**Flavour**	**Taste**	**Aroma**	**Overall Acceptability**
Like extremely	9	9 (45.0)	9 (45.0)	7 (35.0)	8 (40.0)	9 (45.0)	3 (15.0)
Like very much	8	11 (55.0)	4 (20.0)	7 (35.0)	7 (35.0)	7 (35.0)	16 (80.0)
Like moderately	7	1 (5.0)	7 (35.0)	4 (20.0)	5 (25.0)	4 (20.0)	1 (5.0)
Like slightly	6	00	00	2	00	00	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 6: Sensory evaluation on the production of cookies (Control)

Parameter	**Score**	**Colour**	**Texture**	**Flavour**	**Taste**	**Aroma**	**Overall Acceptability**
Like extremely	9	7 (35.0)	7 (35.0)	6 (30.0)	11 (55.0)	8 (40.0)	5 (25.0)
Like very much	8	11 (55.0)	6 (30.0)	7 (35.0)	5 (25.0)	8 (40.0)	13 (65.0)
Like moderately	7	2 (10.0)	7 (35.0)	6 (30.0)	4 (20.0)	3 (15.0)	2 (10.0)
Like slightly	6	00	00	00	00	1 (5.0)	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 7: Cookies production enriched with 150g of blended carrot

Parameter	Score	Colour	Texture	Flavour	Taste	Aroma	Overall Acceptability
Like extremely	9	5 (25.0)	11 (55.0)	9 (45.0)	8 (40.0)	6 (30.0)	3 (15.0)
Like very much	8	6 (30.0)	6 (30.0)	6 (30.0)	7 (35.0)	6 (30.0)	16 (80.0)
Like moderately	7	9 (45.0)	3 (15.0)	4 (20.0)	5 (25.0)	8 (40.0)	1 (5.0)
Like slightly	6	00	00	1 (5.0)	00	00	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 8: Cookies production enriched with 250g of blended carrot

Parameter	Score	Colour	Texture	Flavour	Taste	Aroma	Overall Acceptability
Like extremely	9	9 (45.0)	8 (40.0)	10 (50.0)	9 (45.0)	9 (45.0)	3 (15.0)
Like very much	8	5 (25.0)	8 (40.0)	5 (25.0)	10 (50.0)	7 (35.0)	17 (85.0)
Like moderately	7	6 (30.0)	4 (20.0)	5 (25.0)	1 (5.0)	4 (20.0)	00
Like slightly	6	00	00	00	00	00	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Colour: The colour in the production of cake and cookies with different grams (150g-250g) of blended carrot and the highest percentage is gotten from cake production using 150g of blended carrot and this had 14 frequency with 70.0% indicated 14(70.0%) which indicated the colour of cake production using 150g of blended carrot was liked by the trained panelists in the study.

Texture: The texture results on the sensory evaluation of cake and cookies enriched with blended carrot in 150g-250g was administered and the most acceptable with highest score rate in cakes and cookies and from cookies production using 150g of blended carrot enrichment and this had 11(55.0%), 9 in score and like extremely means that the texture of cookies produced with 150g of blended carrot was accepted.

Flavour: The flavour examined in the production of cake and cookies using 150g-250g blended carrot enrichment but cookies production with the use of 250g of blended carrot enrichment was accepted with highest frequency and percentage 10(50.0%), 9 in score and like extremely, was liked by the consumers.

Taste: The taste examined on the sensory attribute of cake and cookies with 150g-250g of blended carrot enrichment was administered but cookies with 250g of blended carrot enrichment was accepted in term of taste and had 10 frequencies and 50.0% in percentage, like very much and had 8 in score rate indicated that the cookies was accepted by the trained Panelists.

Aroma: From the results obtained in the aroma of cake and cookies blended with carrot enrichment in 150g-250g and the most acceptable sample was obtained from sample B with 150g of blended carrot, sample C Cake production with 250g of blended carrot enrichment and sample E with 250g of blended carrot enrichment while all the three (3) samples had the same frequency and percentages of 9(45.0%) but the three (3) samples were liked in term of aroma by the consumers.

Overall acceptability: From the results obtained in term of colour, texture, flavour, taste and aroma, the overall acceptability sensory attributes of cake and cookies enriched with 150g-250g of blended carrot but the most acceptable cookies enriched with 250g of blended carrot gave the highest frequency and percentage indicating 17(85.0%) was acceptable by the trained panelists.

Table 9: Proximate analysis of cake and cookies using 150g-250g of blended carrot enrichment

Nutritional Composition	Sample A (%)	Sample B (%)	Sample C (%)	Sample D (%)	Sample E (%)	Sample F (%)
Moisture	30.20	20.05	25.10	28.12	10.50	8.10
Ash	2.84	2.21	2.10	1.32	1.20	1.05
Fibre	5.09	5.50	5.20	3.30	3.15	2.40
Fat	29.40	27.15	20.05	25.60	11.40	15.10
Carbohydrate	13.84	15.66	17.50	10.12	12.15	20.40
Protein	25.97	20.50	18.22	27.45	8.12	15.12

Source: Tayo; 2026.

Moisture Content Determination: The Moisture content is the amount of water in food sample and the highest percentage of moisture in food attract more deterioration which the lowest moisture will take a long time before spoilage. Sample F which is the cookies enriched with 250g of blended carrot had the lowest amount of moisture with 8:10g.

Ash Content Determination: The ash content in food is indication of how processing had taken place and the lowest ash is preferred and the lowest among ash content was produced by cookies with 250g of blended carrot enrichment which gave 1.05g of ash.

Crude Fibre Content Determination: The crude fibre content is indigestible parts from the result, sample B with 150g of blended carrot enrichment gave 5.50g and mainly carbohydrate and keep the digestive system healthy.

Crude Fat Content Determination: Sample B cake enriched with 150g of blended carrot had 27.15g which gave highest percentage content among other food samples and implicated enough crude fat that can accommodate the body of an individual in the right proportion.

Carbohydrates Content Determination: Sample C cake enriched with 250g of blended carrot had 17.50g and had sugar molecules along with protein and fat. The carbohydrates are one of the three (3) main nutrients in foods and the breakdown of carbohydrate into sugar, glucose or blood sugar and the

main source of energy for body cells, tissues and organs (Ekeocha., Nwokeke., and Eweama *et al.*, 2025)

Protein Content Determination: Proteins are essential for the human body cells and one of the building block of the body tissues and also serve as a fuel source and had the highest content from all food samples gotten from sample B cake with 150g of blended carrot enrichment and had 20.50g compared to other food samples.

Conclusion: From the results in the proximate analysis and sensory evaluation of cake and cookies enriched with 150g to 250g of blended carrot enrichment had moderate amount and can help the body to develop properly. Also, the blended carrot are good sources of beta carotene, fiber, vitamin k, vitamin A, potassium, and antioxidants with a number of health benefits, lower cholesterol levels and improved eye health.

Recommendations: The following recommendations are drawn from the proximate and sensory evaluation of cake and cookies enriched with 150g-250g of blended carrot:

1. Snacks (cake and cookies) can be enriched with blended carrot using different grams (g) to improve body vitamin and minerals.
2. Home management could be enlightened or trained on the proximate and sensory evaluation of cake and cookies enriched with 150g to 250g blended carrot.
3. The production of cake and cookies with blended carrot enrichment with 150g-250g should be considered encouraged to improve youth knowledge towards eradicating poverty in the country.

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ACCESSESSMENT OF PHYTOCHEMICAL AND ANTIOXIDANT PPROPERTIES OF SESAME SEED (*Sesamum indicum*)

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Abstract
Plants of various kinds have been of immense used to man since time immemorial Some are basically used for food while others are for the health purposes Sesame (Sesamum indicum) is an annual crop that is used s for the production of oil and as food materials. It is also important in traditional medicine because it contains bioactive compound that treat different ailments. This research therefore set out to investigate the phytochemical and antioxidant potential of sesame. Sesame seeds were obtained from Towobowo market, Igboora, Ibarapa, Oyo State. The seeds were air dried for four weeks at research laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Air-dried seeds were pounded in mortal until it became powder. 50g of the powdered were weighed into 250ml round bottom flask and 100ml of ethanol was added. The mixture was shook for thirty minutes. The mixture was separated using filter paper. Rotarory evapourator was used to recover the extracted bioactive compounds from the ethanol. The powder obtained was kept in the sample bottle for analysis. The chemical analysis (qualitative and quantitative, showed that phenols, alkaloids, flavonoids and steriods are abundantly present Saponins followed while tanins are the least occurrence. Steriods (56.50± 0.01) has the highest concentration, alkaloids and flavonoids (47.90±0.01) and (39.80±0.02) respectively. Phenols (36.80±01) and saponins (22.00±0.01) followed; while tanins (0.40±0.02) had least concentration. Antioxidant results showed that sesamum indicum is a good antioxidant. At 800µg/ml, the relative antioxidant of the sesame seed extract to ascorbic acid was found to be 79.04%. Higher concentration of Phenols and flavonoids made Sesamium indicum good antioxidants, while the higher alkaloids are an indication that the seed used as analgesics. The present of saponins and and tanins, suggests that the plant is a giid anti-microbial agents. From the thee result of the analysis, it could be concluded that Sesame indicum is a natural seeds that have medicinal, pharmaceutical industrial benefits to man.

Keywords: Sesamum indicum, *phytochemicals, ethanol and pharmaceutical- industrial value*.

Introduction

Man depends on plants for survival, food to prevent malnutrition, supply of energy energy and for health as different plants are used in traditional medicine to cure diseases before the advent of orthodox medicine. Plant parts such as leaes, seeds, flowers fruits stem and bark are used for different purposes. Sesame (Sesamum indicum) is an annual plant that has been known to man since time immemorial. Sesame indicum is a nutritional plant that contained minerals and trace element s that made it a suitable dietary for huma being. (Odiajunwa *et al*.,2005). Sesame seeds are very important because they contain a large amount of proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. The seeds possess approximately 55 of oil and 22.5% protein, and essential nutrients for man consumption. The oil from sesame seeds is particularly rich in unsaturated fatty acids, this contained oleic and linoleic acids. Oleic and linoleic enhances cardiovascular functions in the body. Sesame oil also contain calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, zinc and iron functions (Andargie *et al.*,2021) Most of the African diets lack protein and vital minerals that body needs for proper development. Meat and fish are another source of protein, and minerals to man but the poor man can not afford the meat ad fish, he therefore resulted to plant protein. Sesame is majorly used for edible oil production and food materials. Sesame plants, root, seeds and leaves are used in the traditional medicine for the treatment of catarrh, eye pains, inflamed membranes of the mouth, chicken pox and hair shampoo (Gill 1992). There has been an increasease in demand for There has been an increase in the demand for food to meet ever human increase population to reduce the incidence of malnutrition. In addition, the use of sesame indicum in

traditional medicine, has brought relieve to village people, because most of them can not afford the high cost of the drugs, that often have adverse effect affer they have been used by the patients. With these loud reports on Sesame, both on nutritional and medicinal uses, this research therefore set out to investigate the phytochemical and antioxidant potential of *Sesame indicum*



Figure 1: *Sesame indicum seed*

Materials and methods

Area of the study

The research was conducted at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State

Plant sample and sample Preparation

Fresh *Sesame indicum* seeds were obtained from Towobowo Market Igboora, Oyo State.The seeds were air-dried for four weeks.

Preparation of the extract

The dried seeds of *Sesame indicum* were ground using mortal and pestle until the seeds turned to powder. The power was sieved using 2mm sieve. 50g of the powder were weighed, into the 250ml round bottom flask, 100ml of ethanol was added. The set up was put in mechanical shaker for thirty minutes. The mixture was filtered and the filtrate was put in another 250ml round bottom flask connected to the rotatory evaporator to remove the solvent and the extract in dried form. The extract was later analyzed into different compositions.

Qualitative phytochemical analysis

Qualitative analysis was done according to the methods recommended by the Omale and Okafor (2008)

Quantitative Phytochemical Analysis

Quantitative composition was done according to the methods recommended by Omale and Okafor (2008).

Results and discussions

Table1 Qualitative Analysis *Sesamum indicum*

Qualitative phytochemical contet of Sesamum indicum

S/N	PHYTOCHEMICAL	Relative presence
1	Alkaloids	+++
2	Phenol	+++
3	Flavonoids	+++
4	Saponins	++
5	Tannins	+
6	Steroids	+++

Source: Laboratory analysis

Key: +++ = abundant presence of phytochemical **++ =** strong presence of phytochemical **+**=slightly presence of phytochemical

Table 1 showed the qualitative phytochemical analysis of sesame seeds the results showed the presence of bioactives substances in the *Sesame indicum* seed. The bioactive compounds present are saponins, tannins, alkaloids, glycosides, oxalates, and flavonoids. The analysis showed that flavonoids were highly abundant (+++), tannins and alkaloids were strongly present (++), while saponins, glycosides, and oxalates were moderately present (+). Phytochemicals present contributed to higher antioxidant and therapeutic activities in the plant seed.
The higher abundance flavonoids and phenolic compounds agree with the findings of Elleuch *et al.*, (2007) who reported that sesame contained higher quantities pheno;ic antioxidants. The presence of tannins in the seeds also supports its antioxidant and antimicrobial potential.. The result was in agreement with Aiyelaagbe and Osamudiamen (2009) ,who stated that tannins possess antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activities which boost the medicinal value of plants. Tanins enchances the preservation and therapeutic effectiveness of the sesame. . Alkaloids also present , they enchance analgesic, antimicrobial, and pharmacological activities of the seed. This findings was in agreement with Amoo *et al*.(,2014) that stated that alkaloids are among the most important naturally occurring compounds used in medicine because of their physiological effects Saponins were moderately present in the sample. Saponins present in smaller quantities used for the boos cholesterol-lowering, immune-boosting, and antioxidant effects. This finding is alos in agreement Shittu et al.,(2007) repoted that saponins possess anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties which are good for medicine. ,

Table 2 Quantitative phytochemical concentration of *Sesamum indicum*

S/N	Phytochemical	Percentage composition (%)
1	Alkaloids	47.90
2	Phenol	36.80
3	Flavonoids	39.80
4	Saponins	22.00

5	Tannins	0.40
6	Steroids	56.50

Table 2 shows the quantitative phytochemical composition *of Sesamum indicum* extract. Alkaloids has the highest concentration (47.90 ± 0.02%), followed by phenols (36.80 ± 0.01%), while steroids (5.12 ± 0.03%), tannins (4.00 ± 0.01%), and flavonoids (3.98 ± 0.03%). Saponins (2.20 ± 0.02%) were present in lower concentrations. The higher alkaloidcontent was in agreement with Amoo et al., (2014) who reported that sesame contained high amount of alkaloids. In the same vein, high amount of flavonoids and and pheno;s was in in agreement with the report of Pathak et al.,(2014), reported flavonoids as animportant of phenolic comound.The Saponins occurred in moderate amoun 22,00%, and this finding afree with Shittu et al., that stated that saponins in moderate amount and is responsible immune- stimulating and antimicrobial activities.Tnnins has the lowest concentration,similar report was observed by Mohammed et al.,(2009) in his sesame analysis.

Table 3 Antioxidant activities of *Sesamum indicum*

S/N	Concentration (Ug/ml)	Relative % inhibition of Extract	% Inhibition of Ascorbic Acid
1	200	15.80 ± 0.00	36.10 ± 0.01
2	400	32.10 ± 0.01	47.50 ± 0.02
3	600	40.30 ± 0.02	69.50 ± 0.01
4	800	59.60 ± 0.02	75.40 ± 0.01
5	1000	54.10 ± 0.02	88.50 ± 0.01

Table 3 shows the result of antioxidant activities of *Sesamum indicum* seed extract at different concentrations (200–1000 µg/ml) compared with ascorbic acid ,the standard. The result showed that the percentage inhibition of the seed extract increased progressively with increase in concentration from 15.80% at 200 µg/ml to 59.60% at 800 µg/ml. This showed that the activity is concentration-dependent . There was a slight decrease at 1000 µg/ml (54.10%), where the extract showed appreciable free radical scavenging activities. The antioxidant activity of the
extract was lower than that of ascorbic acid at all concentrations, where ascorbic acid showed stronger inhibition ranging from 36.10% to 88.50%.
The observed antioxidant activity may be attributed to the presence of phytochemicals such as flavonoids, and phenolic and tanins that present in sesame seeds. This finding was in agreement with Namiki (2007), that reported that sesame contains polyphenols compound that scavenge free radicals.. Similarly, Elleuch *et al*., (2011) reported that *Sesamum indicum* contains phytochemicals that are useful as antioxidant.. The findinding also agree with Shyu and Hwang (2002) that stated that antioxidant activity increases with the concentration of the sesame extracts which resulted in the increases in concentration of the phenolic compounds.

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USE OF FTIR FOR IDENTIFICATION OF FUNCTIONAL GROUP PRESENT IN ETHANOLIC LEAF EXTRACT OF *Andrographis paniculata* FROM IGBOORA, OYO STATE

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Abstract
The functional group present in the Andrographis paniculata (AP) leaves or also known as Kalmegh, the English name is king of bitter was examined by using Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) with the absorbance range of 400 cm^{-1} - 4000 cm^{-1}. Andrographis paniculata (Nees) is a cherished traditional medicinal plant and it has many vital bioactive compounds. Andrographis paniculata leaves powder was soaked in 80% ethanol. After soaked for 120 hours, the kalmegh leaves was extracted using rotary evaporator to get the crude extract before using Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy to determine the functional group present in the leaves. It showed the presence of carbonyl group (ketone), amide, aromatic nature of compounds, sulfur compounds, nitro compounds, halogen compounds, non-conjugated diene, gem distributed, anthracene and flavones, fistein, quercetin, NaQSA [Sodium Salts of Quercetin 5' Sulfonic Acid], myricetin, anthocyanin types of flavonoids. This indicated that bioactive compounds mostly contributed to medicinal utilities of the plant and this study exhibited the use of FTIR. Further investigation employing chromatographic techniques (HPLC, GC-MS and LC-MS/MS) are recommended to identify bioactive compounds.

Keywords: *Andrographis paniculata*; FT-IR spectroscopy; flavonoids.

Introduction

Plants that are medicinal have been the source of basic treatment of disease in Africa. About 80% of our population still depends on traditional medicine for treatment. *Andrographis paniculata* is one of those medicinal plants that are being used for treating a lot of diseases (Hossain, *et et.*, 2021; Dai, *et et.*, 2019; Deora, 2017). *Andrographis paniculata* also known as Mala-tita which means 'King of Bitters' and it belongs to the family *Acanthaceae*. Taxonomic of *A. Paniculata* (Jiaqi *et et.*, 2011; Akbar, 2011) is given as follow: Domain- *Eukaryota;* Kingdom- *Plantae;* Subkindom- *Tracheobionta;* Superdivision- *Spermatophyta;* Division- *Angiosperma;* Class- *Dicotyledonea*; Subclass- *Gamopetalae*; Series- *Bicarpellatae;* Order- Personales; Family- *Acanthaceae;* Subfamily- *Acanthoideae;* Tribe- *Justiciae*; Subtribe- *Andographideae*; Genus- *Andrographis*; Species- *paniculata*.

Acanthaceae consists of about 40 species. Out of these, only a few are used in folk medicine for many health issues. From all these, *Andrographis paniculata* is the most popular and important plant. (Jarukamjorn *et et.*, 2008; Trived and Rawal, 2001). *Andrographis paniculata*, or Kalmegh is an annual, branched plant with a height of about half to one meter. The plants originated from Peninsular India and Sri Lanka and it is cultivated abundantly in Asia, China, America, and West Indies. It is well planted because of its medicinal use and it grows in all of soil types, hence, it is well distributed (Zimo, *et et.*, 2025)



Fig 1 Image of mature *Andrograhis paniculata* plant

Kalmegh is one of a great herbal plant that have many advantage for medicinal resolutions meanwhile the plant owns the properties of analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, antifertility, antibacterial, antipyretic and antihepatotoxic (WHO,2002; Trivedi & Ruwal (2001) and Kabir, *et et.*, 2014). *A. paniculata* leaves produce a diversity of compounds such as flavonoid and andrographolide that display lower side outcome when compares to other commercialize medicine for the same purpose since it comprises phytochemical constituent (Burkil, *et et.*, 1966). Up till now, numerous methods have been introduced for analytical process of plant extract. Such as high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), gas chromatography (GC), thin layer chromatography (TLC), and UV spectrometry, while all of the technique references are precise and highly appreciated for their precise performance, but they require a lot of time and need numerous reagents to operate. Therefore, this research attempts to device a simple and less time consuming method to achieve the same task. Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy is one of the general methods used for physiochemical analysis to determine unidentified composition of compound by identifying their functional groups (Rajagopal *et et.*, 2003). The method makes used of the force of absorption spectra and frequency by determining the efficiency of photon energy transported and vibrational frequency of molecules when uncovered to infrared light source (Cheung & Cheung, 2005). The advantage of this method is that, it is cheap since it does not need reagents to work, saves time, very accurate in its determination and environmentally-friendly. Currently, the application of FTIR has been effectively applied in several fields particularly in medicine for the documentation of Pharmacopoeia (Zhang, *et et.*, 2007).

Materials and methods

Collection and identification of the plant Sample

Distilled water was taken from Research Laboratory Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria, Ethanol (Sigma Aldrich), *A paniculata* leaves was plucked from kalmegh tree at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora, Oyo State.

Preparation of plant extract:

The kalmegh matured leaves were pulled and collected early in the morning to guarantee its freshness. Then, it was washed properly for 3-5 times under running tap water to remove the debris before drying under room temperature. Later, the leaves were grindedcrushed into finely powder form by using grinder.

Preparation of ethanolic leaf Extract

For the procedure of extraction, powered leaf material of *A. paniculata* (100g) was soaked in ethanol in an air-tight separating funnel for 5 days at room temperature with irregularly shaking and stirring. The main portion of the extractabl1e compounds of the plant materials was liquefied in the solvent during this and hence extracted as solution. Then the extract was dried by using a rotary evaporator to get ethanol extract Adepoju, *et et.*, (2024).

Identification of Functional Group

Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometry was used to examine and characterize the functional group existing in the leaves. A minor amount of crude extract was positioned at the germanium piece of infrared spectrophotometer with the absorbance collected over the wave number between 400 cm^{-1} to 4000 cm^{-1}.

Results and discussion

The infrared spectroscopic study gave the information about the possible functional groups of active principles. The functional group analysis of the dried powder, ethanol of kalmegh leaves was achieved by using solid FT-IR spectroscopic analysis using KBr disc method. Figure 2 showed the graph of FTIR spectrum of kalmegh leaves extract.

The FTIR spectrum of ethanolic extract of A. *paniculata* leaves displayed the peak at 630.86 cm^{-1} showed the existence of alkyne, C-H bending vibrations and quercetin. The sharp peak at 879.59cm^{-1} was owned to aromatic substitution, gem spread, olefinic groups. The very sharp peak at 1046.55cm^{-1} allowed the presence of sulfur compound, S=O stretching vibrations, thiocarbonyl group sulfoxides and NaQSA [Sodium Salts of Quercetin 5' Sulfonic Acid]. The existence of sulfur compound, thiocarbonyl and NaQSA [Sodium Salts of Quercetin 5' Sulfonic Acid] further supported by the strong peak at 1086.49cm^{-1}. Sulfur compound prominently active against microbes. The FTIR spectrum showed the peak at 1273.49 cm^{-1} agreed with the existence of C-N stretching, C-O stretching vibration and aliphatic amine, secondary alcohol functional group. Myricetin with the functional group of nitro or sulfur compounds, gem- dimethyl group, tertiary alcohol, phenol was indicated by the C-CH3 bending, C-O stretching vibration peak at 1381.53cm^{-1}. The characteristic peaks at 1452.47cm^{-1} and 2975.03cm^{-1} point out the existence of C-H bending & C-H stretching respectively and designates the alkanes functional group. The peak at 1646.37cm^{-1} revealed -C=C- stretching vibration, alkenes and non-conjugated diene functional group. The peaks 1743.74cm^{-1} and 2928.53cm^{-1} represented the C=O stretching and C-H stretching bonding, carbonyl and cycloalkanes functional group. FT-IR spectrum of A. *paniculata* leaves revealled the presence of three types of flavonoids viz. quercetin, NaQSA [Sodium Salts of Quercetin 5' Sulfonic Acid], myricetin (Fig: 2, Table: 1). Likewise, the peak at 800-600cm^{-1} and 1400-1000cm^{-1}also indicated the presence of halogen compounds C-Cl stretching and C-F stretching vibration respectively.

Table 1: FT-IR Spectroscopy of ethanolic leaf extract of *A, paniculata*

S/N	Peak Value (cm-1)	Bonding types	Functional Group
1	830.86	C-H bending	Alkyne
2	879.59	C-H bending vibration	Aromatic substitution gem distributed olefinic group
3	1046.55	S=O Stretching vibration	Sulfur compounds sulfoxides Thiocarbonyl group.
4	1086.49	S=O Stretching vibration	Sulfur compounds, Thiocarbonyl group
5.	1273.49	C-N Stretching C-O Stretching	Aliphatic amine Secondary alcohol
6.	1381.53	C-CH3 bending C-O Stretching	Nitro or Sulfur compounds gem dimethyl group, tertiary alcohol, Phenols
7.	1452.47	C-H bending	Alkanes

8	1646.37	-C=C- Stretching N=O Stretching	Alkenes, Non- Conjugated diene, O-NO2
9	1743.74	C=O Stretching	Carbonyl, Cyclopentanone, Saturated esters
10.	2928.53	C-H (Stretching in CH3)	Cycloalkanes
11	2975.63	C-H Stretching	Alkanes
12	3391.75	N-H Stretching O-H	Primary amines, alcohols.

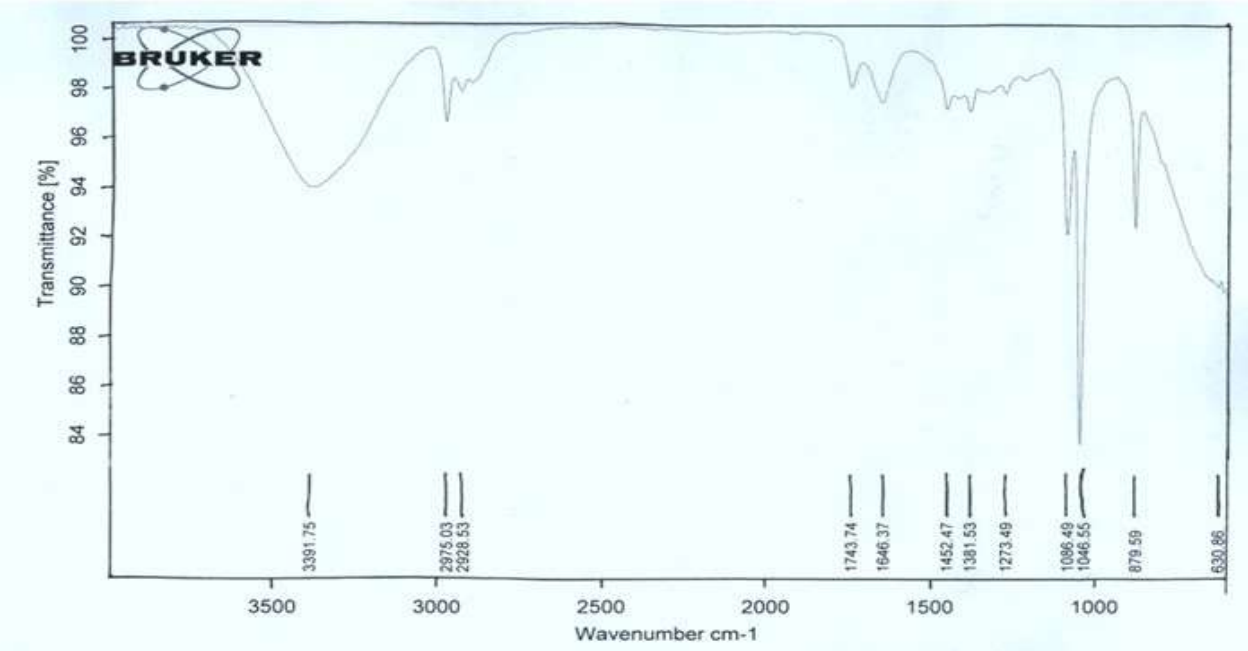


Fig 2: FT-IR Spectrum peaks of ethanolic leaf extract of *A. paniculata*

The results of the analysis gave the introductory knowledge as a potential source of drugs to determine the chemicals composition of A. *paniculata* leaf. The presence of chromophoric groups, functional groups and flavonoids has mainly contributed to the medicinal utilities of the plant. The present study enhances the traditional usage of A. *paniculata* which possess several known and unknown bioactive compounds. By isolating and identifying these bioactive compounds new noble drugs can be formulated to treat various diseases. The FTIR spectrum of the ethanolic leaf extract of A. *paniculata* comfirmed the presence of hydroxyl, carbonyl, alkene, alkane, amine, ester, sulfur-containing and aromatic functional groups. These functional groups are characteristic of biological active phytochemicals such as diterpene lactones, flavonoids, which collectively explain the plant reported antioxidant, antimicrobial and anticancer activities (Xiaohong, *et et*., 2022)

Conclusion

In this present study, preliminary screening confirmed the presence of functional group present in kalmegh leaves extract. Hence, the kalmegh leaves extract need to be further studied to investigate bioactive compound content, maybe, it can be used for various field applications that give many benefit in future. Purification and chromatography techniques are required to isolate bioactive compound in future work.

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PROXIMATE ANALYSIS OF SORGHUM PAP (OGI) ENRICHED WITH SOYA BEANS, GINGER AND CLOVES FOR CONSUMER ACCEPTABILITY

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Abstract

This study evaluates the proximate composition and consumer acceptability of sorghum-based ogi enriched with soybean, ginger, and cloves. Four formulations were prepared, including a control (100% sorghum) and three enriched samples with varying proportions of soybean and spices. Proximate analysis was conducted using standard AOAC methods, while sensory evaluation was performed using a 9-point hedonic scale. Results showed significant ($p < .05$) improvements in protein, fat, ash, and fiber contents of enriched samples compared to the control, with protein increasing from 8.12% to 16.84%. Sensory evaluation also revealed enhanced aroma, taste, and acceptability, especially in samples containing both soybean and spices. The findings indicated that enrichment of sorghum ogi with soybean, ginger, and cloves can substantially improve the nutritional quality and consumer appeal, making it a viable dietary option for addressing protein-energy malnutrition in rural communities.

Keywords*: Sorghum ogi, soybean enrichment, proximate composition, sensory evaluation, rural nutrition*

Introduction

Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) is one of the most important cereal crops in sub-Saharan Africa and other semi-arid regions due to its drought tolerance, adaptability to marginal soils, and relatively low production cost (Awika, 2019). It serves as a staple food for millions of rural households and used in various traditional products, with *ogi* (fermented cereal porridge) being among the most commonly consumed. Ogi is widely used as a weaning food for infants, a breakfast meal for children, and an energy source for adults (Adelekan and Oyewole, 2010). Despite its widespread consumption, sorghum ogi is nutritionally limited, particularly in protein, essential amino acids, and certain micronutrients, which may contribute to protein-energy malnutrition in rural populations (FAO, 2021).

Protein deficiency remains a significant public health concern in developing countries, especially among children and vulnerable populations. Cereal-based foods, such as sorghum ogi, are often deficient in lysine and tryptophan, essential amino acids required for growth and development (Iwe, 2002). A good strategy towards improving the nutritional quality of staple foods is food-to-food fortification, which involves enriching cereal with locally available nutrient-dense ingredients such as legumes and spices. Soybean (*Glycine max*) is a rich source of high-quality protein (approximately 35–40%) and contains essential amino acids, vitamins, and minerals. Its incorporation into cereal products has been shown to significantly improve protein content and nutritional quality (Aderinola *et al.*, 2021).

Beyond protein enrichment, spices such as ginger (Zingiber officinale) and cloves (Syzygium aromaticum) offer functional benefits. These spices are rich in bioactive compounds such as phenolics, flavonoids, and essential oils, which exhibit antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties (Shahrajabian *et al.*, 2019; Gbadamosi *et al.*, 2022). Incorporation of spices into cereal-based foods can improve sensory attributes, such as aroma and taste, and may also contribute to food preservation, enhancing shelf life under rural storage conditions.

Several studies have highlighted the effectiveness of cereal-legume-spice fortification. For instance, blending cereals with legumes improves protein quality and digestibility, while spice inclusion enhances flavor and acceptability (Olatunde *et al.*, 2020; Adeyemi *et al.*, 2018). However, research on

the combined effect of soybean, ginger, and cloves on sorghum ogi is limited, especially in the context of rural dietary applications. There is the need to Understand the impact of such fortification on both proximate composition and consumer acceptability towards critical nutritional enhancement, cultural acceptablity, and economically feasible food products.

This study aims to evaluate the proximate composition of sorghum ogi enriched with soybean, ginger, and cloves and assess its sensory acceptability. The findings will provide insight into the potential of locally sourced fortificants to improve dietary protein intake, enhance micronutrient content, and promote rural food security. Specifically, the study seeks to determine how varying levels of soybean and spice inclusion affect nutritional quality and consumer preference, with the goal of developing a nutritionally superior and palatable version of traditional sorghum ogi.

Materials and methods

Materials

The raw materials used included sorghum grains (Sorghum bicolor), soybeans (Glycine max), ginger (Zingiber officinale), and cloves (Syzygium aromaticum). All ingredients were procured from local markets in state the home. Only undamaged, mature sorghum grains and fresh legumes and spices were selected. All chemicals and reagents used for proximate analysis were of analytical grade.

Experimental design and sample formulation

A completely Randomized Design (CRD) was employed to prepare four sorghum ogi formulations, including one control (100% sorghum) and three enriched samples. The formulations are presented in

Table 1:

Sample code	Composition
A (Control)	100% sorghum
B	80% sorghum + 20% soybean
C	75% sorghum + 20% soybean + 3% ginger + 2% cloves
D	70% sorghum + 25% soybean + 3% ginger + 2% cloves

The proportions were chosen based on previous studies on cereal-legume blends (Aderinola *et al.*, 2021) and preliminary sensory trials to ensure palatability.

Sample preparation

Sorghum Ogi preparation

5. Sorghum grains were cleaned to remove debris and stones.
6. The grains were soaked in water for 48 hours to initiate fermentation.
7. Soaked grains were wet-milled into a smooth slurry using a laboratory grinder.
8. The slurry was sieved through muslin cloth to remove coarse particles and allowed to ferment for an additional 24 hours at room temperature (28–30℃) to produce ogi.

Soybean processing

1. Soybeans were cleaned and dehulled.
2. They were roasted at 120℃ for 15 minutes to improve flavor and reduce anti-nutritional factors.
3. Roasted soybeans were milled into fine flour using a laboratory mill.

Spice preparation

- Fresh ginger and cloves were cleaned, dried in an oven at 50℃ for 24 hours, and ground into fine powders.

Preparation of enriched Ogi

IV. Sorghum ogi was blended with soybean flour and the specified amounts of ginger and cloves according to the formulation table.
V. The mixture was stirred to ensure homogeneity.

VI. The resulting blends were stored in airtight containers at room temperature until analysis.

Proximate analysis

Proximate composition of all samples was determined using standard AOAC (2016) methods:

5. Moisture Content: Oven-drying at 105°C until constant weight.
6. Crude Protein: Kjeldahl method; nitrogen content multiplied by 6.25.
7. Crude Fat: Soxhlet extraction using petroleum ether.
8. Ash Content: Combustion at 550°C for 6 hours in a muffle furnace.
9. Crude Fiber: Acid and alkali digestion.
10. Carbohydrate Content: Calculated by difference:

$$\text{Carbohydrate (\%)} = 100 - (\text{Protein} + \text{Fat} + \text{Ash} + \text{Fiber} + \text{Moisture})$$

All analyses were performed in triplicate, and the mean values were recorded.

Sensory evaluation

A panel of 30 semi-trained judges consisting of students and staff familiar with traditional ogi assessed the samples. Each panelist evaluated:

iv. Color
v. Aroma
vi. Taste
vii. Texture
viii. acceptability

A 9-point hedonic scale was used, where 1 = "dislike extremely" and 9 = "like extremely" (Iwe, 2002). Samples were presented in randomized order to reduce bias, and panelists rinsed their mouths with water between samples.

Statistical analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0.

1. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Tested for significant differences among samples for proximate composition and sensory attributes.
2. Post-hoc Analysis: Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was applied to separate mean differences at $p < .05$, and significant differences were indicated using superscript lettering (a, b, c).
3. Presentation of Results:
    - Proximate and sensory data are presented as mean ± standard deviation (SD).
    - SPSS-style tables and charts were generated, and multi-panel figures (Figure 1A–1D) were prepared to illustrate trends across samples.

All measurements were conducted in triplicate, and the average values were used for analysis.

Results

Proximate composition

The proximate composition of sorghum ogi samples is presented in **Table 1**. Significant differences ($p < .05$) were observed across the four formulations.

- **Protein:** Increased progressively from 8.12% in the control (Sample A) to 16.84% in Sample D, indicating the effect of soybean inclusion.
- **Fat:** Also increased, reflecting the lipid content of soybeans.
- **Ash and fiber:** Increased in enriched samples, suggesting improved mineral content and dietary fiber.
- **Moisture and carbohydrate:** Slight decreases were observed with enrichment, though moisture remained within acceptable storage limits.

Table 1: *Proximate Composition (%) of Sorghum Ogi Samples (Mean ± SD)*

Parameter	A	B	C	D	p-value
Moisture	10.45[a]	10.20[a]	10.05[a]	9.98[a]	.072
Protein	8.12[d]	13.76[c]	15.92[b]	16.84[a]	.001*
Fat	2.10[c]	4.85[b]	5.10[ab]	5.42[a]	.003*
Ash	1.25[c]	1.95[b]	2.15[ab]	2.30[a]	.005*
Fiber	1.80[c]	2.45[b]	2.80[ab]	3.05[a]	.007*
Carbohydrate	76.28[a]	66.79[b]	63.98[c]	62.41[c]	.002*

*Means with different superscripts in a row are significantly different ($p < .05$).

Sensory evaluation

Sensory evaluation results are shown in **Table 2**. All attributes showed significant differences among samples ($p < .05$).

7. **Color, aroma, and taste:** Highest scores figure was observed in Sample D, which contained both soybean and spices.
8. **Texture:** Slight improvement was observed in enriched samples.
9. **Acceptability:** Increased from 6.10 in the control to 8.30 in Sample D.

Table 2: *Sensory Scores of Sorghum Ogi Samples (9-Point Hedonic Scale)*

Attribute	A	B	C	D	p-value
Color	6.50[c]	6.80[b]	7.20[a]	7.10[a]	.041*
Aroma	5.80[c]	6.70[b]	7.80[a]	8.10[a]	.000*
Taste	6.00[c]	7.10[b]	7.90[a]	8.20[a]	.000*
Texture	6.80[b]	7.20[a]	7.50[a]	7.60[a]	.033*
Acceptability	6.10[c]	7.20[b]	7.90[a]	8.30[a]	.000*

*Means with different superscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$).

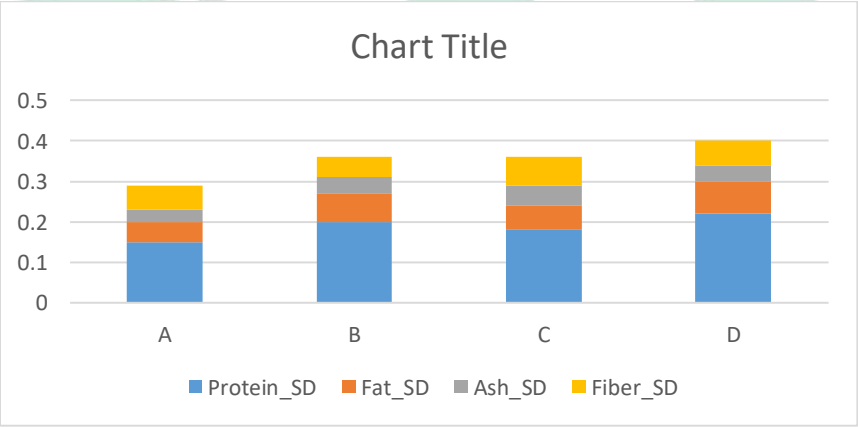


Figure 1 Bar chart for protein content with significance lettering (a, b, c, d).

Protein content of sorghum ogi samples showing significant differences among formulations.

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that fortification of sorghum ogi with soybean, ginger, and cloves significantly improves its nutritional quality and sensory acceptability.

Proximate composition

The protein content of enriched samples increased substantially from 8.12% in the control to 16.84% in Sample D, reflecting the protein-dense nature of soybean. This confirms the effectiveness of cereal-legume fortification in improving the amino acid profile of sorghum-based foods (Aderinola *et al.*, 2021; Olatunde *et al.*, 2020). Protein enrichment is particularly important in rural communities where protein-energy malnutrition remains prevalent, especially among infants and children. The progressive increase across samples indicated that higher soybean inclusion corresponds to higher protein enhancement.

Fat content also increased in enriched samples due to the lipid content of soybean. This improvement enhances the energy density of the ogi, which is critical for meeting daily caloric needs in low-resource settings (FAO, 2021). The observed increases in ash and fiber mineral content and digestive health, is consistent with the findings of Adeyemi et al. (2018), who reported similar increases in fortified cereal-legume blends. The slight reduction in carbohydrate content is expected as legumes partially replace cereal starch; however, the nutritional trade-off favors higher protein and fiber levels, which are essential for balanced diets.

Sensory evaluation

The sensory evaluation revealed significant improvements in aroma, taste, color, and acceptability of enriched samples compared to the control. Sample D, contained the highest proportion of soybean and spice inclusion, received the highest ratings. These results aligned with the findings of Gbadamosi et al. (2022), who demonstrated that spices such as ginger and cloves enhance flavor, aroma, and consumer acceptance due to their volatile bioactive compounds.

The texture of enriched samples was slightly firmer than the control, which may be likely due to protein-starch interactions and higher fiber content from soybeans. Despite the increase in protein and fiber, the texture remained acceptable, highlighting the suitability of soybean fortification without compromising palatability. Sensory acceptability is critical for adoption, particularly in rural households where taste preferences strongly influence food consumption.

From the the result, enriched sorghum ogi offers a locally available, affordable, and culturally acceptable strategy to improve protein intake and dietary diversity. The incorporation of soybean not only enhances protein content but also contributes essential amino acids lacking in traditional ogi. Furthermore, spices like ginger and cloves provide antioxidant and antimicrobial properties, which may improve shelf life and food safety under rural storage conditions (Shahrajabian *et al.*, 2019).

The combination provides nutritional improvement with enhanced sensory acceptability for the likelihood of sustained consumption, making it a strategy with a viable intervention to combat protein-energy malnutrition and improve micronutrient intake among vulnerable populations.

Previous studies on cereal-legume fortification have reported similar trends in protein enhancement and sensory improvement. For instance, Aderinola et al. (2021) observed significant protein increases in maize-soy blends, while Olatunde et al. (2020) reported improved fiber and ash content in fortified cereal products. This study indicated combined fortification not only improves nutritional quality but also enhances consumer acceptability, which is essential for practical adoption in rural communities.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study demonstrated that enrichment of sorghum ogi with soybean, ginger, and cloves significantly enhances both nutritional quality and sensory acceptability. Protein content doubled in the most

enriched sample (16.84%) compared to the control (8.12%), while fat, ash, and fiber contents also increased significantly ($p < .05$). Sensory evaluation showed higher scores in aroma, taste, color, and acceptability, particularly in formulations containing both legumes and spices.

These findings concluded that fortified sorghum ogi is a viable strategy for improving protein intake, dietary diversity, and rural food security. The use of locally available ingredients ensures affordability and cultural acceptance, which is critical for adoption in low-resource communities. Also, spice inclusion contributes functional benefits such as improved flavor, aroma, and potential antimicrobial properties, which may enhance shelf life.

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COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF NUTRITIONAL VALUES OF RIPE AND UNRIPE NATURALLY FERMENTED *Ananas comosus* PURCHASED IN IGBOORA

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Abstract

The nutritional quality of fruits varies with ripening, and pineapple (Ananas comosus) is widely consumed for its health-promoting properties. This study was carried out to comparatively evaluate the nutritive, selected mineral elements and vitamin composition of ripe and unripe naturally fermented pineapple peels and mesocarp purchased in Igboora. The standard method of analysis were used to analyze for nutritional composition of ripe and unripe naturally fermented Ananas comosus. The proximate composition of the samples revealed that moisture content was highest in the ripe peel (42.0%) and lowest in the unripe mesocarp (26.0%). Fat content was generally low, with the unripe peel containing the highest value (4.2%): while protein was highest in the mesocarp of ripe fruit (40.8%) and lowest in the unripe peel (20.1%). Fibre content was higher in unripe samples (10.0% in peel and 8.0% in mesocarp) compared to ripe samples (3.2–3.3%): suggesting better dietary fibre potential in unripe peels. Carbohydrate content was highest in the unripe mesocarp (20.8%) and lowest in ripe mesocarp (12.2%). Mineral analysis showed that magnesium content was highest in the mesocarp of ripe fruit (36.5 mg/100g) and lowest in unripe peel (10.5 mg/100g): while calcium was most abundant in the ripe peel (56.4 mg/100g). Sodium, potassium, and iron contents varied significantly across samples, with iron highest in the ripe peel (126.5 mg/100g). Vitamin analysis revealed that vitamin C was exceptionally high contents in the unripe mesocarp (18270 ppm); vitamin B was highest in the mesocarp of ripe fruit (175.0 ppm): while vitamins A, E, and K were present in moderate amounts across all samples. These findings indicated that both ripe and unripe pineapple peels and mesocarp are rich sources of nutrients, minerals, and vitamins, with unripe fruit providing superior antioxidant potential due to elevated vitamin C content. Consequently, pineapple by-products could be utilized as functional dietary supplements to improve human nutrition.

Keywords*: Ananas comosus, proximate composition, minerals, vitamins, antioxidant, dietary supplement*

Introduction

Fruits are essential dietary components rich in nutrients, phytochemicals, and antioxidants, contributing significantly to human health and nutrition. Among tropical fruits, *Ananas comosus* (commonly known as pineapple) holds a vital position due to its high content of vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, and bioactive compounds (Ajila *et al*., 2011). Pineapple is consumed widely in fresh and processed forms, and its production generates a large quantity of peels, which are often discarded as waste. However, these peels have been reported to possess valuable nutrients and bioactive compounds that can be explored for nutritional and industrial applications (Akinyele and Akinyosoye, 2005). In many local communities, particularly in Nigeria, including Igboora in Oyo State, pineapple is sold in open markets where post-harvest handling practices often lead to the natural fermentation of fruit peels. Naturally fermented fruit waste, under controlled or spontaneous conditions, may undergo biochemical changes that influence its proximate and mineral content (Olukomaiya *et al*., 2019). These changes could enhance or diminish the nutritional quality of the fruit by-products. As such, there is increasing interest in evaluating the nutritional potential of fermented fruit wastes as sustainable food ingredients, animal feed, or raw materials for bio-based products.

Proximate analysis involves the determination of essential components such as moisture, ash, crude fiber, fat, protein, and carbohydrates, which collectively indicate the nutritional composition of food materials. On the other hand, mineral analysis identifies important micronutrients like calcium (Ca): magnesium (Mg): iron (Fe): zinc (Zn): potassium (K): and sodium (Na): which play crucial

physiological roles in the human body (Oduori *et al*., 2021). The composition of these nutrients can vary significantly between fresh and fermented forms due to microbial activities and chemical reactions during fermentation (Oyeleke *et al*., 2012).

The investigation of naturally fermented pineapple peels compared to fresh fruit samples is particularly relevant for communities such as Igboora, where local consumption and informal food processing practices are prevalent. Understanding the changes in nutritional and mineral profiles of fermented peels could provide insights into their possible reuse, value addition, and reduction of environmental waste. Moreover, such studies may inform small-scale food industries and households on the potential of fruit by-products for nutritional supplementation or feed formulation.

Materials and methods

Description of the study area: The research was conducted in the Research Laboratory of the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. Igboora is situated at a latitude of 7°15'N and longitude of 3°30'E, with an average annual rainfall of about 150 mm and an average temperature of 27°C. The climatic conditions of the area support both warm and cold weather throughout the year (Sanusi, 2011).

Sample collection: *Ananas comosus* was purchased from Towobowo Market in Ibarapa Central Local Government Oyo State. The samples was identified by botanist, and hygienically packed into polyethylene bags and equal amount of sterilized water were added and allowed to undergo natural fermentation for three days

Proximate composition Analysis: The AOAC (2023) method of analysis was used to determine the moisture, ash, protein, fat, fiber, and carbohydrate content.

Mineral element analysis: Atomic absorption spectrophotometer (AAS) was used to determine the content of selected mineral elements which included sodium, potassium, iron and magnesium in the juice. Phosphorus was evaluated by using Titrimetric method (Alpha, 2022)

Determination of selected vitamins: The vitamins which included vitamins A, B, C E and K were determined by Spectrophotometric methods.

Result and discussion

Result

Table 1: Proximate composition of ripe and unripe peel and mesocarp of *Ananas comosus* in percentage

Proximate composition (%)	Ripe peel	Mesocarp ripe	Peel unripe	Mesocarp unripe
Moisture	42.0±0.01	40.0±0.02	26.5±0.05	26.0±0.01
Fat	0.7±0.05	0.6±0.01	4.2±0.06	4.0±0.01
Ash	1.9±0.04	3.9±0.04	19.2±0.05	19.2±0.05
Fibre	3.2±0.04	3.3±0.50	10.0±0.08	8.0±0.02
Protein	36.8±0.01	40.8±0.70	20.1±0.01	22.0±0.01
Carbohydrate	15.4±0.02	12.2±0.01	20.0±0.04	20.8±0.04

The values were expressed as standard error of mean ±SEM P>0.05 were significant

Table 2: Mineral composition of ripe and unripe peel and mesocarp of *Ananas comosus*

Element (Mg/100g)	Ripe peel	Mesocarp ripe	Peel Unripe	Mesocarp Unripe
Magnesium	26.5±0.05	36.5±0.02	10.5±0.04	16.8±0.05
Calcium	56.4±0.01	18.8±0.12	15.9±0.1	7.8±0.00
Sodium	46.9±0.02	55.7±0.8	42.6±0.50	29.4±0.05
Potassium	36.7±0.01	15.9±0.60	23.6±0.02	39.7±0.04
Zinc	7.8±0.04	3.6±0.02	1.9±0.004	1.8±0.02
Iron	126.5±0.06	100.0±0.02	1.6±0.002	10.8±0.03
Phosphorus	9.7±0.06	0.9±0.50	3.8±0.01	2.6±0.02

The values were expressed as standard error of mean ±SEM P>0.05 were significant

Table 3: Vitamin composition of ripe and unripe peel and mesocarp of *Ananas comosus* (ppm)

Vitamins (ppm)	Ripe peel	Mesocarp ripe	Peel Unripe	Mesocarp unripe
A	14.8±0.01	24.8±0.04	16.9±0.32	25.6±0.12
B	100.25±0.23	175.0±0.005	149.6±0.25	96.8±0.01
C	1270.90±0.002	169.6±0.22	155.1±0.20	18270.0±0.07
E	22.4±0.001	6.2±0.01	4.9±0.002	17.8±0.02
K	0.84±0.004	0.2±0.005	0.7±0.04	1.5±0.03

The values were expressed in standard error of mean ±SEM P>0.05 were significant

Discussion:

The proximate analysis revealed that moisture content was highest value in the ripe peel, followed by protein value, carbohydrates value, fibre value, and ash value, while fat value was the least abundant. These results indicate that pineapple peels and mesocarp, especially at different ripening stages, could serve as valuable sources of dietary nutrients, aligning with findings by Akin-Idowu *et al.* (2015), which stated that the proximate analysis indicated that moisture content was highest in the ripe peel (42.0%) and lowest in the unripe mesocarp (26.0%); suggesting that water content decreases as the fruit matures. High moisture in ripe peel could contribute to higher susceptibility to microbial spoilage, but also

indicates freshness and water availability (Onwuka, 2005). Fat content were low across all samples, with the unripe peel having the highest value (4.2%): confirming that pineapple peels are not significant sources of lipids.

Similar findings were reported by Singh *et al.* (2019); who observed low fat content in pineapple by-products. Ash content, a reflection of total mineral content, was highest in the unripe peel and mesocarp (19.2%): suggesting that unripe fruit parts are richer in minerals, corroborating the findings of Adeyeye and Ayejuyo (2006). Fibre content was higher in unripe samples (10.0% in peel and 8.0% in mesocarp) compared to ripe (3.2–3.3%): indicating that unripe parts could be a better source of dietary fibre for digestive health. Protein content varied significantly, being highest in ripe mesocarp (40.8%) and lowest in unripe peel (20.1%); highlighting a redistribution of protein during fruit maturation, consistent with reports by Oboh *et al*. (2012). Carbohydrate content was highest in unripe mesocarp (20.8%) and lowest in ripe mesocarp (12.2%): suggesting that carbohydrate accumulation is influenced by ripening stages (Akinyele *et al.*, 2014).
Magnesium, calcium, sodium, potassium, and iron were the major minerals detected, with iron being particularly high in the ripe peel. Zinc and phosphorus were present in lower amounts. This mineral profile suggests that both ripe and unripe parts of *Ananas comosus* could provide essential minerals for nutritional support, consistent with the observations of Adeyemi and Adediran (2018).

Mineral analysis showed substantial variation with ripening. Magnesium content was highest in ripe mesocarp (36.5 mg/100g) and lowest in unripe peel (10.5 mg/100g). Calcium content was most abundant in ripe peel (56.4 mg/100g): while sodium peaked in ripe mesocarp (55.7 mg/100g) and potassium in unripe mesocarp (39.7 mg/100g). Iron content was notably high in ripe peel (126.5 mg/100g): indicating its potential as a dietary iron source. Zinc and phosphorus were consistently low across all samples. These results indicated that both peel and mesocarp can be utilized as mineral-rich dietary supplements, supporting previous studies by Onwuka (2005) and Adeyeye and Ayejuyo (2006), which emphasized the importance of fruit by-products as alternative mineral sources.

Vitamin C content was exceptionally high in the unripe mesocarp, followed by vitamins B, A, and K, with vitamin E being the least abundant. These findings highlighted the antioxidant potential of unripe pineapple and are in agreement with reports by Olaleye *et al*. (2020); emphasizing the fruit's contribution to essential vitamins and health benefits.

Vitamin analysis revealed that vitamin C content was exceptionally high in the unripe mesocarp (18270%): indicating strong antioxidant potential and possible application in functional foods (Akinyele *et al.*, 2014). Vitamin B content was highest in ripe mesocarp (175.0%), whereas vitamins A and K were moderately present and vitamin E content was low, suggesting that pineapple by-products provide essential vitamins for human nutrition. These findings are consistent with reports by Singh *et al.* (2019); who highlighted the rich vitamin C content of unripe pineapple and its potential in boosting immune function and preventing oxidative stress-related disorders.

Conclusion

The study revealed that both ripe and unripe pineapple peels and mesocarp are rich in nutrients, minerals, and vitamins. Carbohydrates and protein were predominant, while fat was low. Mineral analysis showed high levels of calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium, and iron, indicating nutritional value. Vitamin C was exceptionally high in the unripe mesocarp, suggesting strong antioxidant potential. Overall, pineapple by-products possess significant nutritional and health-promoting properties, supporting their use as functional foods or dietary supplements.

Recommendation

From the finding of this study, it is recommended that pineapple peels and mesocarp be further explored as a source of nutrients and antioxidants in food and nutraceutical industries. Studies should focus on extraction and utilization of vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin C, for health benefits. Additionally, awareness programs could encourage the use of pineapple by-products to reduce waste and promote sustainable nutrition.

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EVALUATION OF ANTIMICROBIAL ACTIVITIES OF N-HEXANE EXTRACTS OF LEAF AND SEED OF *Ageratum conyzoides* (GOAT WEED) AGAINST SELECTED MICROORGANISMS

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Abstract

The growing resistance of pathogenic microorganisms to conventional antibiotics has intensified the search for alternative antimicrobial agents from natural sources. This study evaluated the antimicrobial activities of Ageratum conyzoides (Goat weed) leaf and seed extracts were prepared using standard method and was used against selected bacterial and fungal strains, such as Escherichia coli, Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Staphylococcus aureus, Candida albicans, Aspergillus niger, and Aspergillus flavus. Agar well diffusion method was used for antimicrobial activities by assays for zones of inhibition and minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) at concentrations of 100, 200, and 300 mg/ml. Results revealed that the leaf extract exhibited selective antibacterial activity, inhibiting E. coli at 20 and 30 mg/ml with zones of 4.0 mm and 10.0 mm at 300 mg/ml respectively, while P. aeruginosa and S. aureus showed no susceptibility. Seed extracts demonstrated only weak activity against E. coli. MIC analysis supported these findings, showing a dose-dependent response primarily for E. coli. In antifungal assays, leaf extracts showed moderate activity against Candida albicans (zones of 4.0 mm and 14.0 mm) and mild inhibition of Aspergillus flavus, while Aspergillus niger showed minimal sensitivity. Seed extracts had limited antifungal effects, with weak inhibition observed only at 300mg/ml concentration. Commercial antibiotics generally outperformed Goat weed extracts, though Goat weed exhibited some promise as a complementary antimicrobial agent. In conclusion, the n-hexane leaf extract of A. conyzoides showed modest antimicrobial activity, particularly against E. coli and C. albicans, suggesting potential for use in the development of plant-based antimicrobial formulations. However, further research is needed to isolate active compounds and optimize efficacy.

Keywords: *Ageratum conyzoides, goat weed, N-hexane extract, Antibacterial activity, Antifungal activity, Minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC), Antibiotic resistance*

Introduction

The emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has become a significant global public health concern, with an increasing number of bacterial, viral, and fungal infections becoming resistant to conventional drugs. This challenge has led to a growing interest in the exploration of natural products as alternative sources of antimicrobial agents. Among these natural sources, plants have long been used in traditional medicine due to their bioactive compounds that exhibit broad-spectrum antimicrobial activities. One such plant is *Ageratum conyzoides*, (goat weed) a herbaceous plant commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions. The plant is known for its medicinal properties, including its potential use as an antimicrobial agent.

Ageratum conyzoides has been recognized for its rich content of secondary metabolites, such as flavonoids, alkaloids, and terpenoids, which contribute to its therapeutic effects (Banso *et al.*,2009). Studies have shown that the leaf and seed extracts of Goat weed possess significant bioactive properties that may inhibit the growth of various microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, and viruses (Sadeghian *et al.*,2014). One of the key methods of extracting these bioactive compounds is by using organic solvents such as n-hexane, which is known for its ability to extract non-polar compounds, particularly lipophilic substances.

The antimicrobial activities of *Ageratum conyzoides*, specifically the leaf and seed extracts, have been studied against a variety of pathogenic microorganisms such as *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Candida albicans*, and *Aspergillus niger* (Akinmoladun *et al.*, 2015). These microorganisms were selected due to their relevance in human health and their varying susceptibility to antimicrobial agents. The effectiveness of n-hexane extracts from the leaves and seeds of goat weed is hypothesized

to be due to the lipophilic nature of the active compounds, which are capable of disrupting microbial cell membranes or interfering with metabolic pathways (Akinmoladun *et al.*, 2015).
Ageratum conyzoides, commonly known as goat weed, is a member of the Asteraceae family and is widely distributed in tropical and subtropical regions (Siti *et al.*,2014). Traditionally, various parts of this plant, including the leaves, seeds, and roots, have been used in folk medicine to treat a variety of ailments, ranging from fever to wound infections (Akinmoladun *et al.*,2015). The antimicrobial properties of goat weed have been attributed to its rich chemical composition, which includes flavonoids, alkaloids, phenols, and terpenoids (Mishra *et al.*,2017). These compounds are known for their ability to interfere with microbial cell functions, either by disrupting cell membranes, inhibiting enzymes, or interfering with the synthesis of essential cellular components (Mishra *et al.*,2017).

The extraction of antimicrobial compounds from plant materials can be achieved through the use of various solvents, with n-hexane being one of the most commonly used for extracting non-polar compounds (Balogun *et al.*,2018). N-hexane is particularly effective in isolating lipophilic compounds such as essential oils and fatty acids, which often exhibit antimicrobial activity. Previous studies have shown that the leaf and seed extracts of *Ageratum conyzoides*, when prepared using n-hexane, possess significant antimicrobial activities against a wide range of pathogens, including bacteria like *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, and fungi such as *Candida albicans* and *Aspergillus niger* (Onyido *et al.*,2015; Doss *et al.*,2016).

Material and Methods
Description of the Study
The experiment was carried out at the research laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo state. Igboora is located in Nigeria country in Africa continent (or region). Igboora lies on latitude 7°15N and longitude 3°30E of the equator with annual rainfall of 150mm and temperature of 27° C. The area rainfalls within south west region Oyo State and noted for both and cold weather condition.
Material: The materials used in this work include conical flask, Petridishes, test tubes, McCartney bottles, measuring cylinder, thermometer, sterile container for sample collection, foil paper, ethanol, distilled water, cotton wool, paper tape, agar mediums Goat weed, leaf and seed.

Collection and Preparation of Plant Material: goat weed (*Ageratum conyzoides*), specifically the leaves and seeds, was collected from Towobowo market during the Rainy season. The plant material was carefully selected, cleaned of any dust or contaminants, and air-dried under shaded conditions to prevent the degradation of active compounds. The dried plant parts were then ground into fine powders using an electric grinder to facilitate the extraction process.

Extraction of Plant Material: The powdered plant material (leaves and seeds) was subjected to solvent extraction using N-hexane. A quantity of 50 g of powdered leaves and seeds was each soaked separately in 500 mL of N-hexane in a conical flask. The mixtures were kept at room temperature and agitated intermittently for 72 hours to ensure thorough extraction. After the extraction period, the plant material was filtered using a fine mesh to remove solid particles. The N-hexane was evaporated under reduced pressure using a rotary evaporator at 40°C, leaving behind the crude extract, which was stored in an airtight container at 4°C until further use (Chaudhary and Sharma, 2019).

Microbial Strains and Culturing Conditions: The antimicrobial activities of the N-hexane extracts were tested against selected microorganisms: *Staphylococcus aureus* (Gram-positive bacterium), *Escherichia coli* (Gram-negative bacterium), *A. aeruginosa Candida albicans* (fungus), and *Aspergillus niger* (fungus) *A flavus*. The bacterial strains were procured from a standard microbial culture collection, and the fungal strains were obtained from. All cultures were maintained on nutrient agar for bacteria and Sabouraud dextrose agar for fungi and incubated at 37°C and 25°C, respectively, prior to antimicrobial testing (Sultana *et al.*,2019).

Antimicrobial Activity Testing: The antimicrobial activity of the N-hexane extracts was determined using the agar disk diffusion method (Bauer *et al.*,2016). Sterile paper discs (6 mm in diameter) were impregnated with 50 µL of the N-hexane extract at different concentrations (100 mg/mL, 200 mg/mL, and 300 mg/mL) and placed onto the surface of the inoculated agar plates. The plates were then incubated at 37°C for 24 hours for bacterial strains and at 25°C for 48 hours for fungal strains. The zones of inhibition surrounding the discs were measured in millimeters and compared with those of standard antibiotics (e.g., gentamicin for bacteria and fluconazole for fungi) to determine the antimicrobial activity of the plant extracts. All experiments were performed in triplicate to ensure reliability and reproducibility of results (Iqbal *et al.*,2020).

Determination of Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC): The Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) of the N-hexane extracts was determined using the broth dilution method (Wiegand *et al.*,2008). Different concentrations of the N-hexane extract (5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 mg/mL) were prepared in Mueller-Hinton broth for bacterial strains and Sabouraud dextrose broth for fungal strains. The inoculated broth was incubated at 37°C for 24 hours for bacteria and at 25°C for 48 hours for fungi. The MIC was defined as the lowest concentration of the extract that inhibited visible growth of the microorganism.

Result and Discussion

Result

Table 1: Zone of inhibition of n-hexane Leaf Extract extract of goat weed (mm)

Test Organisms	Concentration (Mg/ml)			NHLSa	NHSSa
	100	200	300		
Eschericia coli		4.0	10.0	-	-
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-
Staphylococcus aureus	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-

Table 2: Minimum inhibitory concentration of n-hexane leaf extract of goat weed (mm)

Test Organisms	**Concentration(mg/ml)**			**Nhlsa**	**Nhssa**
	100	**200**	**300**		
Eschericia coli	2.0	4.0	12.5	-	-
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	4.0	0.0	0.0	-	-
Staphylococcus aureus	0.0	5.0	6.5	-	-

Table 3: Zone of inhibition of n-hexane Seed Extract extract of goat weed (mm)

Test Organisms	**Concentration(mg/ml)**			**NHLSa**	**NHSSa**
	100	**200**	**300**		
Eschericia coli		2.0	2.0	-	-
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	0	0	0	-	-
Staphylococcus aureus	0	0	0	-	-

Table 4: Susceptibility of clinical bacterial isolate to commercial antibiotics

Organism	ERY	AZN	CIP	AUG	CTX	IMP	OFX	GN	CXM	CRO	ZEM	LBC	ZEM	LBC
Eschericia coli	14	10	10	2	0	8	14	6	8	2	0	40	-	40
Staphylococcus aureus	26	26	12	0	6	0	12	26	0	20	6	20	-	24
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	6	26	16	2	2	6	26	26	4	2	0	24	6	20

KEYS: Erythromycin (ERY), Azithromycin (AZN), Ciprofloxacin (CIP), Amoxicilin (AUG), Cefotaxime (CTX), Imipenem (IMP), Oflaxacin (OFX), Gentamycin (GN), Cefuroxine (CRO), Cefexime (ZEM), Leitofloxecin (LBC).

(-) means no zone of inhibition

TABLE 5: Antifungal Effects of Leaf of Goat weed Showing of Inhibition

Test organisms	Concentration (mg/ml)			NHLSa	NHSSa
	100	200	300		
Aspergillus niger	-	0.0	0.0	-	-
Candida albican	4.0	14.0	0.0	-	-
Aspergillus flavus	4.0	0.0	0.0	-	-

TABLE 6: Minimum inhibitory concentration of n-hexane leaf extraction

Test organisms	Concentration (mg/ml)			NHLSa	NHSSa
	100	200	300		
Aspergillus niger	2.5	0.0	0.0	-	-
Candida albican	4.0	20.0	25.0	-	-
Aspergillus flavus	6.0	0.0	22.0	-	-

TABLE 7: Antifungal effects of seed of goat weed showing of inhibition

Organisms	Concentration (mg/ml)			NHLSa	NHSSa
	100	200	300		
Aspergillus niger	0.0	0.0	4.0	-	-
Candida albican	4.0	0.0	0.0	-	-
Aspergillus flavus	4.0	0.0	0.0	-	-

TABLE 8: Minimum inhibitory concentration of n-Hexane seed extract of goat weed

Organisms	Concentration (mg/ml)			NHLSa	NHSSa
	100	200	300		
Aspergillus niger	2.0	6.0	8.0	-	-
Candida albican	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-
Aspergillus flavus	4.0	2.5	0.0	-	-

TABLE 9: Antifungal Effect of Antibiotics

Organisms	Kenstatin	Flucamed	Refucil	NHLSa	NHSSa
Aspergillus niger	8.0	2.0	0.0	-	-
Candida albican	16.0	0.0	8.0	-	-
Aspergillus flavus	16.0	4.0	0.0		

Discussion

The results obtained from the antibacterial activity of Goat weed (*Ageratum conyzoides*) leaf extracts indicated that *Escherichia coli* was moderately inhibited, with inhibition zones increasing as concentration rose, while *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus* showed no inhibition across the tested concentrations. This observation was in agreement with the findings of Okwu and Emenike (2006), who reported that the antibacterial activity of plant extracts is often selective and concentration-dependent, with Gram-negative bacteria such as *E. coli* being more susceptible than others. Similarly, Adebolu and Oladimeji (2005) emphasized that the phytochemical constituents of Goat weed, particularly flavonoids and alkaloids, play important roles in disrupting bacterial growth, though resistance patterns may vary among different organisms.

The antibacterial assay of Goat weed seed extract revealed weak inhibition against *Escherichia coli* at higher concentrations, while *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Staphylococcus aureus* exhibited complete resistance. This finding corroborated the work of Eze *et al.* (2017), who reported that seed-derived extracts often contain lower concentrations of bioactive compounds compared to leaves, leading to reduced antimicrobial activity. The result also agreed with the work of Okwu and Emenike (2006), who stated that the distribution of phytochemicals in plants differs significantly among plant parts, and this accounts for variations in biological activity.

The susceptibility of clinical isolates to commercial antibiotics demonstrated that *Staphylococcus aureus* showed the highest zones of inhibition with erythromycin and azithromycin, while *E. coli* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* showed moderate to weak susceptibility to most of the tested antibiotics. These results were consistent with the report of Cheesbrough (2006), who documented that antibiotic sensitivity varies depending on the bacterial strain and resistance mechanism. The observed resistance of *E. coli* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* to amoxicillin and cefotaxime aligned with the findings of Iroha *et al*. (2011), who highlighted the increasing problem of antibiotic resistance among clinical pathogens in Nigeria.

The antifungal activity of Goat weed leaf extract revealed moderate inhibition against *Candida albicans* at 100mg/l and 200mg/l, while *Aspergillus niger* and *Aspergillus flavus* showed only slight inhibition or complete resistance. This observation was supported by the findings of Ngono *et al*. (2013), who reported that *A. conyzoides* leaf extracts possess antifungal potential but are more effective against yeast-like fungi such as *Candida* spp. than filamentous fungi. The role of phytochemicals such as tannins and flavonoids in disrupting fungal membranes has been previously emphasized by Ngono *et al.* (2013), which explains the moderate activity observed.

The antifungal assay of Goat weed seed extracts indicated that *Aspergillus niger*, *Candida albicans*, and *Aspergillus flavus* showed very weak or no inhibition. This supported the work of Oyetayo *et al*. (2009), who explained that seed extracts of medicinal plants generally exhibit lower antifungal potential compared to leaves due to reduced concentrations of secondary metabolites. It further agreed with the report of Akinmoladun *et al*. (2010), who noted that the antifungal efficiency of plant parts depends largely on the abundance and stability of phenolic compounds.

The minimum inhibitory concentration data demonstrated that leaf extracts showed a stronger dose-dependent inhibitory effect against *Candida albicans* and *Aspergillus flavus* than the seed extracts. While leaf extracts inhibited *Candida albicans* up to 25 mm zone at the highest concentration tested, seed extracts failed to show any significant inhibition against the same organism. This finding emphasizes the importance of plant part selection for antimicrobial extraction and validates prior studies highlighting higher concentrations of bioactive compounds in leaves (Okwu and Emenike, 2006).

Finally, the antifungal effect of antibiotics demonstrated greater activity against *Candida albicans* compared to *Aspergillus* species, with the highest zone of inhibition recorded at 16 mm. This trend was in line with the report of Pelczar *et al*. (2008), who documented that antibiotics are generally more effective against yeasts than molds, owing to differences in cell wall structure and resistance mechanisms. The reduced susceptibility of *Aspergillus* spp. to the antibiotics confirmed earlier findings by Klich (2002), who observed that filamentous fungi often exhibit natural resistance to many antifungal agents.

Collectively, the results suggest that Goat weed possesses modest antibacterial and antifungal activity, particularly in its leaf extracts, while seeds demonstrated limited bioactivity. The comparative analysis with antibiotics further highlights the potential of Goat weed as a complementary antimicrobial agent, though its efficacy is lower than standard drugs. This aligns with the growing body of literature supporting the use of medicinal plants as alternative therapeutic agents, but also emphasizes the need for purification, standardization, and synergy studies to enhance their clinical application.

Conclusion and recommendation

Conclusion

The present study evaluated the antimicrobial activities of Goat weed seed and leaf extracts prepared using N-hexane solvent against selected microorganisms. The results demonstrated that the leaf extracts exhibited modest inhibitory activity against certain bacterial and fungal isolates, whereas the seed extracts showed only weak or negligible antimicrobial potential. This difference in bioactivity can be attributed to the higher concentration of phytochemical constituents in the leaves compared to the seeds. The findings also indicated that while Goat weed possesses some antimicrobial properties, its activity was limited when compared with the efficacy of commercial antibiotics. Nonetheless, the study highlights that Goat weed contains bioactive compounds that may be exploited as natural antimicrobial agents, especially in the face of rising antibiotic resistance.

Recommendation

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

Further studies should be conducted using different solvents such as ethanol, methanol, and aqueous extractions to compare the antimicrobial efficacy with N-hexane extracts. Advanced analytical methods should be employed to isolate and identify the specific phytochemical compounds responsible for antimicrobial activity. Comparative studies should be carried out to determine the synergistic or antagonistic effects of Goat weed extracts with commonly used antibiotics. Standardization of dosage and formulation should be considered to enhance the therapeutic application of Goat weed in traditional and modern medicine. Broader screening against multidrug-resistant bacterial and fungal pathogens should be undertaken to establish the plant's full antimicrobial spectrum. Toxicological studies are recommended to confirm the safety of Goat weed extracts for potential pharmaceutical applications. Agricultural and industrial utilization of Goat weed should be encouraged, as it is an abundant and underutilized resource. The bioactivity of Goat weed in combination with other medicinal plants should be investigated to explore possible synergistic effects. Antimicrobial assays should be repeated under in vivo conditions to confirm the biological relevance of the observed results. Government and research institutions should support further exploration of indigenous medicinal plants like Goat weed to reduce dependency on synthetic drugs.

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ASSESSMENT OF FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES OF AMALA PRODUCED FROM BLENDS OF COCOYAM, UNRIPE PLANTAIN AND SOYBEANS FLOUR

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Abstract

This study investigated the functional properties of Amala of Amala (a dough-based meal) produced from blends of cocoyam, unripe plantain, and soybean flours. Seven samples combinations were formulated by varying the proportions of ingredients. Loose bulk density, Tapped bulk density, water absorption capacity and swelling capacity at varying temperature 50-90 ^{0}C were analyzed. The results showed significant differences (P<0.0.5) among the samples. The loose bulk density ranged from 0.34 to 0.60g/ml, while tapped bulk density range from 0.54 to 0.80g/ml, ranging 0.34 to 0.60/ml of the loose bulk density indicating variations in packaging and handling characteristics. The water absorption capacity ranged from 1.66 to 2.61g/g, with Samples demonstrating superior hydration properties. Swelling capacity increased with temperature for all sample, with highest values recorded at 90^{0}C. The study highlights the potential of locally available crops in the development of functional traditional food products that support better public health outcomes. However, among the formulated blends, CPSD which is 40% Cocoyam, 50% plantain and 10% Soybean showed the best overall performance and can be recommended as the best composite formulation because it combines good swelling characteristics and better balance of functional properties than the other blends

Keywords: ***Amala, cocoyam, plantain, soybean, composite flour, nutritional enhancement.***

Introduction

Food serves as a means of sustenance but as an important representation of culture and heritage. In southwestern Nigeria, Amala is a popular meal locally produced from yam flour. Amala is widely valued as a cultural delicacy commonly consumed in homes and during social gathering. However, with the increasing cost and seasonal unavailability of yam, there is a growing interest in developing alternative formulation that can preserve the traditional qualities of Amala while enhancing its nutritional value and promoting food security (Fayemi and Alabi, 2022).

One promising direction lies in the use of composite flours derived from locally available crops such as cocoyam (Colocasia esculenta), plantain (Musa paradisiaca), and soybean (Glycine max). These crops are nutrient rich and widely grown across various agroecological zones in Nigeria. Cocoyam is often undervalued despite its high digestible starch, potassium, and dietary fiber content, along with its low glycemic index, making it suitable for both children and diabetic patients (Akomolafe *et al*., 2020). Plantain offers complex carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals such as iron and vitamin A precursors, which are essential for immune function and blood health (Fagbemi and Olanrewaju, 2023). Soybean is widely acknowledged for its high-quality protein and presence of essential amino acid, a functional legume that can address protein-energy malnutrition when incorporated into staple foods (Ojo *et al*., 2022).

Blending these crops into composite flours has shown great promise in improving the nutritional quality of food products, reducing post-harvest losses, and promoting sustainable diets (Olagunju and Fagbemi, 2019). The integration of these blends into traditional foods like Amala represents an innovative but culturally respectful approach to enhancing dietary diversity and public health. Similarly, several studies have examined composite flour applications in bread and snacks, limited research still exists on their application in traditional dough-based foods like Amala, especially in the context of their proximate composition (Ajala *et al.*, 2021).

The functional properties of food materials, including water absorption capacity, bulk density, tapped bulk density and swelling capacity provide important information with regards to their behavior during processing, preparation and consumption. These properties influence the texture, cooking quality, consistency and overall acceptability of the product(AOAC, 2019) Evaluating these parameters in

alternative Amala formulations is essential for understanding of how cocoyam, plantain and soybeans flour blends perform in comparison with conventional yam flour as well as their suitability for food application.

Therefore, this study investigates the functional properties of Amala (dough) produced from different blends of cocoyam, plantain, and soybean flours. By assessing the functional properties of the flour blends, the study aims to identify suitable combinations with improve processing quality and balanced nutrition .This research aims to produce adequate innovative development with healthier Amala options that align with both traditional preferences and modern nutritional needs.

Materials and methods

Raw materials sourcing and preparation

The key ingredients for this study are cocoyam (*Colocasia esculenta*), unripe plantain (*Musa paradisiaca*), and soybean (*Glycine max*) were all sourced fresh from Towobowo market in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. This choice reflects the real-life availability of the crops in local communities and their potential for functional food development. Each raw material underwent careful cleaning and preparation. Cocoyam was peeled, sliced, and parboiled shorty to soften the texture and reduce antinutrients. It was then sun-dried to ensure shelf stability. Unripe plantain slices were oven-dried at 60℃ to maintain their nutrient integrity, while soybeans were soaked, dehulled, lightly boiled to deactivate antinutritional factors, and sun-dried. The drying methods used reflect to locally accessible food processing practices while preserving the functional quality of the ingredients.

The dried samples produced were milled into fine flour using a hammer mill and sieved through a 500 µm mesh for uniformity. These flours were stored in clean, moisture-free containers until ready for blending and further analysis.

Formulation of flour blends

To create a range of nutrient-enhanced Amala products, seven composite flour blends were formulated by varying the proportions of cocoyam, plantain, and soybean flours. These formulations are presented Table 1:

Table 1Sample formulation.

Sample code	Cocoyam	Unripe Plantain	Soybean	Yam flour
Sample A	50%	30%	20%	------
Sample B	30%	50%	20%	------
Sample C	50%	40%	10%	------
Sample D	40%	50%	10%	------
Sample E	100%	------	------	------
Sample F	------	100%	------	------
Sample G	------	------	------	100%

Preparation of Amala

Amala, a traditional West African dough meal, was prepared from each flour blend by slowly stirring 200 g of flour into 300 ml of boiling water. The mixture was stirred continuously over low heat to prevent lumping and ensure a smooth, elastic dough. Once adequately thickened and cohesive, the Amala was portioned and allowed to cool before being stored in food-safe containers pending analysis.

Functional properties analysis

The functional properties of the Amala flour samples were determined using standard analytical procedures as described in relevant literature. the Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC, 2019). The analyses focused on evaluating the behavior and performance of the flour during processing and preparation. The functional properties analyzed include water absorption capacity, bulk density, tapped bulk density and swelling capacity following components of Amala were analyzed. Each analysis was conducted in triplicate to ensure accuracy and reproductibility.

Statistical analysis

Data from the functional properties were expressed as mean ± standard deviation. To determine significant differences between the samples, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA), and where necessary, post-hoc comparisons were made.

Results and discussion

The results of the functional properties of the formulated Amala samples (CPSA, CPSB, CPSC, CPSD, CYFA, PTFA AND YAFA) revealed noticeable significant variation ($P< 0.05$), indicating that compositional differences strongly influenced their physicochemical behaviour. The Loose bulk density (LBD) ranges from 0.34-0.60g/cm^3 across all samples. Sample CYFA 0. 0.60g/cm^3 recorded the highest LBD, which suggested better packing ability and reduced porosity, whereas YAFA with 0.34g/cm^3 showed the lowest value, which indicated a lighter and more porous structure. In 2015, Kiin-Kabari, *et al.* (2015) reported bulk density of 0.34 g/ml for whole wheat flour. The low bulk density of these flour blends enabled to be fitted as weaning foods. Weaning foods are expected to have bulk density of less than 0.6 g/cm3. Low bulk density is of essential in the formulation of infant complementary foods (Ojo *et al*., 2022).

Similarly, Tapped bulk density (TBD) followed a comparable trend, with CYFA 0.80g/cm^3 given the highest value and YAFA 0.54g/cm^3 is the lowest. No significant difference ($P \leq 0.05$) was observed in the flour blend of cocyam, plaintain and soybeans at proportions of 50:30:20 (CPSA) and 50:40:10 (CPSC) respectively. Significant differences was observed in the other samples produced. The high bulk density recorded for the flour blends might likely aid its industrial applications, and its application in bakery industry. High bulk density of material is also important in relation to handling requirements and packaging (Linus-Chibuezeh *et al*., 2017).

Water absorption capacity (WAC) is the ability of a product to associate with water under condition where water is limited. Water absorption capacity of *Amala* made from flour blend of cocoyam, plaintain and soybeans flour analysed ranged from 1.66 to 2.61% with sample PTFA obtained from 100% plaintain flour had the highest water absorption capacity while the least water absorption capacity was observed in sample with 100% yam flour. There were significant differences ($P \leq 0.05$) in sample CPSB, CYFA and CPSD. The result showed that plaintain flour enhanced the water absorption capacity of the flour blends. Ndife *et al*., (2020) had earlier reported that the ability of food materials to absorb water is sometimes attributed to the starch content. This suggested that increase in water absorption in the blends can be useful in bakery products like as bread, cakes, cookies that requires hydration to improve dough handling characteristics. Water absorption capacity is the ability of a product to absorb water (Oladele and Aina, 2007). Good water absorption capacity of these flour blends makes them ideal for preparation of dumpling such as *Amala*.

Table 2: Functiomal properties of the formulated Amala sample

Means within the column having the same superscripts are not significant difference P < 0.05

SAMPLE	LBD	TBD	WAC	SWELLING50	SWELLING60	SWELLING70	SWELLING80	SWELLING90
CPSA	0.45±0.02^{c}	0.69±0.01^{d}	2.30±0.05^{d}	2.05±0.03^{c}	2.18±0.03^{d}	2.30±0.02^{d}	2.98±0.06^{e}	4.42±0.06^{c}
CPSB	0.45±0.00^{c}	0.66±0.01^{e}	2.34±0.03^{cd}	2.36±0.07^{b}	2.56±0.06^{b}	2.60±0.05^{c}	3.08±0.06^{de}	4.30±0.09^{cd}
CPSC	0.45±0.03^{c}	0.71±0.01^{d}	2.46±0.07^{b}	2.30±0.12^{b}	2.58±0.05^{b}	2.30±0.00^{d}	3.20±0.07^{d}	3.96±0.08^{e}
CPSD	0.48±0.01^{c}	0.74±0.00^{c}	2.42±0.04^{bc}	2.14±0.04^{c}	2.36±0.07^{c}	2.72±0.04^{b}	3.52±0.07^{c}	3.51±0.07^{f}
CYFA	0.60±0.01^{a}	0.80±0.00^{a}	2.43±0.03^{bc}	2.34±0.06^{b}	2.51±0.04^{b}	2.58±0.04^{c}	2.96±0.04^{e}	4.14±0.09^{de}
PTFA	0.55±0.01^{b}	0.77±0.00^{b}	2.61±0.03^{a}	2.88±0.06^{a}	2.99±0.03^{a}	3.37±0.07^{a}	4.31±0.01^{a}	5.24±0.04^{a}
YAFA	0.34±0.00^{d}	0.54±0.01^{f}	1.66±0.02^{e}	1.19±0.01^{d}	1.36±0.01^{e}	1.42±0.03^{e}	3.90±0.05^{b}	4.61±0.10^{b}

The capacity increased progressively with temperature across all samples. The swelling capacity of *Amala* producd from cocoyam, plaintain and soybeans flour blends at 50^{o}C ranged from 1.19 to 2.88% with sample PTFA made from 100% plantain flour given the highest swelling capacity at a temperature of 50^{o}c while the least swelling capacity at 50^{o}c was observed in sample YAFA made from 100% yam flour. These trend was observed for swelling capacities at 70^{0}, 80^{0}, and 90^{0}. 100% plantain flour had highest swelling powder compared to cocoyam flour, Yam flour and those blends with Soyabeans.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that compositional variation significantly affects the functional properties of blends of cocoyam, plantain, and soybean flours. Among all the samples evaluated, Plantain flour (PTFA) exhibited the most favourable hydration and swelling characteristics, suggesting its potential for improved product quality. The outcomes provides useful insights for optimizing flour blends for enhance consumer acceptability, industrial application and reinforce the potential of using local, underutilized crops to formulate nutrient-enriched traditional foods that align with modern nutritional goals. Future studies may explore the sensory properties, consumer preferences, and shelf stability of the blends, as well as assess their impact on specific health outcomes when integrated into regular diets.

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ANTIMICROBIAL QUALITIES OF GINGER ON THE SAFETY AND SHELF LIFE OF SMOKED TILAPIA FISH (*Oreochromis niloticus*)

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Abstract
Fish has been playing an important role in nutritional and livelihood security of people in the developing countries. This work was carried out to assess the microbial qualities of ginger on the safety and shelf life of smoked tilapia fish (Oreochromis niloticus). The microbial load counts (TVC, TCC and TFC cfu/g) and isolated microorganism were evaluated on smoked tilapia fish preserved for 0, 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks with 5g of salt, ginger (natural preservatives) and untreated sample. Highest Bacteria Count (TVC) of 3.5 × 10^5 was recorded in salt sample at the 8 weeks of storage and highest fungi count (TFC) of 5.5 x 10^6 was recorded in untreated sample at week 2 of storage while highest coliform count (TCC) of 4.2 x 10^5 is recorded in untreated samples at week 2 of storage and the microorganism isolated from the samples showed that the highest number of microorganism species was recorded in untreated sample with 8 species of microbes, ginger sample had 5 species of microbes and salt sample had 4 species of microbes. Statistical analysis shows a significant difference in the number of colonies formed between the groups at ($p < 0.05$). The preservative samples used in this work, reduced the microbial load, discourage quick spoilage, and encourage longer shelf-life of smoked tilapia fish.

Keywords: *Smoked fish, Microbial load, Ginger and Salt.*

Introduction

Fish is the best and a good source of various nutrients that promote dietry protein. They are considered as a popular source of low-priced animal protein (Ahmed *et al*., 2017). Fishes are a vital source of vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids, which play an important role for the build up of strong bones and a healthy heart (Lock *et al*., 2010; Molnár and Pal, 2020). Fishes also contain essential elements such as calcium, iron, phosphorus, and they are also considered as the source of some trace elements such as iodine, selenium, and zinc, which are significant for human health (Lund, 2013; Tilami and Samples, 2018). Due to microbial spoilage, fish and fisheries products are among the most perishable commodities worldwide. The recent research work shown that about one-third of the world's food production is lost annually as a result of microbial spoilage. According to Lund et al. (2000), microbial activity is responsible for spoilage of most preserved sea foods including fish production. To prolong the shelf life of fish and prevent spoilage or contamination, the fishery industry has adopted many methods to combat deterioration. Smoking of fish is one of the method implemented to preserve fish from spoilage or contamination in many countries including Nigeria. About 25 to 30% of the world fish catch is consumed in the dried, salted, smoked form or combination of these processes (Aliya *et al*., 2012). Smoked seafood products vary widely in microbial stability, but this depends on the physical nature and degree of severity of smoking. To ensure short time storage of dry fish that is safe from moulds and bacteria infestation, the moisture content must be less than 30% (Eyo, 2001). During the smoking process, salt is applied to the fishes before smoking them but some people are allergic to salt tolerance and prefer natural or herbal preservative agents. Some of these herbal preservatives consist of proteins, eugenol, gallic-acid, folate, tannis, vitamins, choline and triterpene (Otekunrin, 2026). Ginger (*Z. officinale* R.) is one of the most important plant species with medicinal values (Akram *et al*., 2011). It is used as a natural preservative due to its antimicrobial activity and antioxidant properties (Mesomo *et al*., 2013; Olaniran *et al*., 2015; Pisoschi *et al*., 2018). Edible part of ginger and other spices is added to foods to increase the flavor and taste, and to disrupt the rancidity. Some researchers have been reported that fishes are preserved using ginger extract. Iheagwara (2013) found that the shelf-life of smoked mackerel fish extended due to antioxidative and antimicrobial activities of ginger extract and delayed oxidative rancidity. Tairu *et al*. (2017) revealed that different natural preservatives (ginger, clove, and garlic) reduced the microbial growth, extended the shelf-life, and delayed the spoilage of smoked tilapia fish. Several studies have focused on the effect of ginger extract on fish products such

as fillets, sausage, surimi, etc. (Ahmed *et al*., 2019; Ranendra *et al*., 2017). The aim of this study is to investigate the antimicrobial qualities of ginger on the safety and shelf life of smoked tilapia fish (*oreochromis niloticus*).

Materials and methods

Study Area: The study was carried out at Oyo state college of Agriculture and Technology which is located in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria, is situated at approximately 7.41^0 North latitude and 3.30^0 East of the equator with an average annual rainfall of 1278mm and average annual temperature 27^0c (Taiwo *et al*., 2025).

Collection of the sample: Thirty kilogramme (30 kg) of fresh tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) were purchased from Oyan dam in Ogun State of Nigeria. The samples were taken to the Department of Science Laboratory Technology of the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora where the experiment was carried out. The natural Preservative (ginger) was bought at Towobowo local market in Igboora, Oyo State.

Processing of natural preservatives: The ginger was milled to fine powder with the aid of a Binatone blender (Model BLG+10), sieved and weighed, then poured inside an air-tight container until ready for use. The samples were subjected to treatments where group 1, was not treated (control) and group 2 was mixed with 5g of ginger or salt. Smoking was done at fish farm processing unit of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology Igboora, according to the methods described by Tairu *et al*. (2017) and Omojowo and Ibitoye (2005).

Microbiological Analysis: The samples were subjected to analysis after two, four, six and eight weeks of storage at a room temperature on total viable count (TVC), total coliform count (TCC) and fungi count according to the methods described by Tairu *et al*. (2017).

Results and Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis carried out on microbial plate counts of freshly and smoked fish samples are given in Table 1 and the microorganisms isolated from each samples are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Microbial Analysis of Fish Samples

Microbial load of smoked tilapia fish treated ginger extract

WEEK 0	TVC (Cfu/g)	TFC (Cfu/g)	TCC (Cfu/g)
Untreated	7.5×10^3	9.5×10^3	5.5×10^3
Salt	9.0×10^3	6.1×10^3	3.1×10^4
Ginger	NG	6.5×10^3	NG
WEEK 2			
Untreated	2.5×10^4	5.5×10^6	4.2×10^5
Salt	NG	5.7×10^4	3.9×10^4
Ginger	2.4×10^3	4.3×10^4	2.0×10^3
WEEK 4			
Untreated	2.9×10^4	SPLT	SPLT
Salt	NG	1.4×10^5	NG
Ginger	5.5×10^3	5.0×10^4	NG
WEEK 6			

Untreated	SPLT	SPLT	SPLT
Salt	7.5×10^4	3.5×10^5	NG
Ginger	1.7×10^4	5.5×10^4	2.8×10^3
WEEK 8			
Untreated	SPLT	SPLT	SPLT
Salt	3.5×10^5	NG	NG
Ginger	NG	NG	NG

KEY: NG=No growth, TVC=Total viable count, TFC=Total fungi count, TCC=Total coliform count, SPLT= Spoilt

Table 2: Microorganisms Isolated from Freshly Smoked Tilapia Fish Samples

Fish sample	Microorganism (bacteria and fungi species)
Untreated	*Bacillus cereus, Klebssiella spp, Bacillus Subtilis, Proteus mirabilis, 4 bacteria + 4 fungi Species, Nigrospora spp, Aspergillus spp, Aspergillus flavus, penicillium spp*
Salt	*Bacillus cereus, Klebssiella spp*, 2 bacteria + 2 fungi, *Nigrospora spp, Aspergillus spp*
Ginger	*Bacillus subtilis, Proteus mirabilis, Klebssiella spp*, 3 bacteria + 2 fungi, *Aspergillus fumigatus, mucor*

Microbial Load Counts of the Samples

As shown in Table 1, the numbers of microbial colonies formed by each sample was obtained. The microbial load varied significantly ($P < 0.05$) among the three samples (untreated/control, salt and ginger). TVC at fresh state of the samples, salt recorded higher value of (9.0×10^3), followed by untreated of (7.5×10^3) and (zero/no growth) was recorded in ginger. In the second week, higher value of (2.5×10^4) in untreated, followed by ginger of (2.4×10^3) while salt recorded (zero/no growth). In the fourth week, the higher value of (2.9×10^4) in untreated and ginger recorded (5.5×10^3) while salt recorded (zero/no growth). In the sixth week, the higher value of (7.5×10^4) in salt, and ginger recorded (1.7×10^4) while untreated got spoilt at the sixth week of storage and count could not be made again. In the eighth week, the higher value of (3.5×10^5) in salt while (zero/no growth) was recorded in ginger and no record was recorded in untreated. The bacterial load (TVC) count results for all the samples used for this study are below the maximum bacteria count of 5×10^5 Cfu for good fish product according to the International Commission on Microbiology Safety for Food and it was shown that bacteria species were presented in all the samples (table 2). Ginger has been revealed to be effective against TVC, which slows down the microbial growth rate in treated samples. Islam *et al*., 2022, Tairu *et al*. (2017) and Frank *et al*. (2014) also reported the same result on smoked tilapia fish (*O. niloticus*) treated with ginger and liquid smoked silver carp (*H. molitrix*) treated with equivalent concentrations of fresh and powdered ginger respectively. That the growth of microbial population of treated samples were reduced with the storage time might be due to the antibacterial activities (Sivasothy *et al*., 2011) and antiseptic components (Kumolu-Johnson *et Al*., 2015) of ginger. The results obtained were similar to those observed by Olusegun and Jacob 2013.

The TFC at fresh state of the samples recorded higher value of (9.5×10^3) in untreated, followed by ginger and salt of (6.5×10^3) and (6.1×10^3) respectively. In the second week, the higher value of (5.5×10^6) in untreated, followed by salt and ginger of (5.1×10^4) and (4.3×10^4) respectively. In the fourth week, the higher value of (1.4×10^5) in salted, followed by ginger of (5.0×10^4) while untreated got spoilt at the week four of storage and the count could not be made again. In the sixth week, the higher value of (3.5×10^5) in salt, followed by ginger of (5.5×10^4) while no record was recorded in untreated. In the eighth week, zero/no growth was recorded in salt and ginger while no record was recorded in

untreated. It shows that fungi species were presented in all the samples (table 2). The results obtained were similar to those observed by Adebayo-Tayo *et al.* (2008) and Fafioye, *et al.* (2002).
The TCC at fresh state of the samples recorded high er value of (3.1×10^4) in salt and the least value of (5.5×10^3) in untreated, while (zero/no growth) was recorded in ginger. In the second week, the higher value of (4.2×10^5) in untreated and (3.9×10^4) was recorded in salt while ginger recorded (2.0×10^3). In fourth week, salt and ginger recorded (zero/no growth) while untreated got spoilt at the week four of storage and the count could not be made again. In sixth week, salt and ginger recorded (zero/no growth) and untreated, count could not be made again. In eighth week, all the samples recorded (zero/no growth) except untreated which have been spoilt at week four of storage. The increased in (TCC) of some fresh fish samples which later generally dropped significantly ($P < 0.05$) at the end of 8 weeks may be due to presence of water. Addition of ginger extracts were found to be effective against TCC and extended the shelf-life of tilapia fish sample. Ayeloja *et al*. (2019) stated that antibacterial activities of ginger against TCC on smoked African mud catfish (*C. gariepinus*) prevented the growth of TCC. Results of the present experiments are also in agreement with the findings of Islam *et al*. (2022) and Khalafalla *et al*. (2015) who also found that plant extract (thyme) slows down the growth of TCC count in treated Nile tilapia (*O. niloticus*) fillet.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This work shows that some natural preservatives can serve as substitute for salt in food preservation; it may be due to the preservatives effects which slow down autolysis of smoked fish samples and consequently slow down the protein break down. With the results of this work, it is recommended that ginger as a natural preservative used in this work can serve as replacement for salt.

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EFFECT OF pH AND CARBON SOURCES ON THE PRODUCTION OF FUNGAL XYLANASE ENZYME FROM THE SOIL SAMPLE

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Abstract
Xylanase is the most abundant noncellulosic polysaccharide. It is more heterogeneous polysaccharides and the second most abundant organic structure in the plant cell wall and is considered to be forming an interphase between lignin and other polysaccharides. This study determined the effect of pH and carbon sources on the production of fungal xylanase enzyme from the soil sample. seventy-three (73) fungi strains were isolated from the soil samples and microbial load count for each sample was determined in which fungal load counts range from 1.0 X 10^2 – 7.5 X 10^3. Xylanase producing fungal were isolated in which, five strains show the maximum activity on xylan agar plates while among the five strains, a strain ***(SSF26)*** *shown maximum enzyme activity through hydrolytic Index and tested against different fermentation pH and carbon sources. The highest number of 11720.33 U/ml was recorded at pH 7.0 and lowest number of 3340 u/ml was recorded in pH 5.0 on xylanase, the effect of carbon on xylanase shows highest number of 7320 U/ml was recorded in fructose and lowest number of 3466.667 U/ml was recorded in glucose. Therefore, the production of xylanase should be encourage in large quantity to assist in paper industry and food industry*.

Keywords: *Xylanase, carbon source, fermentation pH, enzyme, total fungal count*

Introduction

Enzyme technology has enabled scientists and researchers to use, modify and enhance the efficiency of enzymes in such a way that maximum functionality and enhanced efficacy is obtained (Ofman *et al*., 2010; Savitri *et al*., 2003). Enzymes are biological catalysts/biocatalyst that improve chemical reactions and improve productivity by boosting the quantity of catalysts available for downstream processes (Wang *et al*., 2021). The enzymes which degrade the linear polysaccharide beta-1,4-xylan into xylose, thus breaking down hemicellulose. Hemicellulose plays a major role in micro-organisms thriving on plant sources for the degradation of plant matter into usable (Moorthy *et al*., 2020). Many enzymes have been identified as commercially significant enzymes, including amylase (starch and fuel, baking, and beverage), Xylanase (for food and drugs) (Batool *et al*., 2016), Xylanases have commercial value in food industries, juice industries for clarification. It is used for oil extraction and waste paper recycling (Sharma and Kumar, 2013). They have application in improving digestibility of animal feed (Wong *et al*. 1998), pulp bleaching (Rifaat *et al*., 2005), and bioconversion of lignocelluloses into feed stock and fuels (Kim *et al* 2000). Xylanases find specific application in jute fibre upgradation also (Cobley and Steele, 1976 ; Kshirsagar *et al*., 2018).

Nonetheless, researchers and industrialists preferred to use microorganisms for industrially important enzyme production because they can be produced quickly and under controlled conditions, resulting in products of the highest purity. The enzyme xylanase degrades β-1,4 xylan by cleaving β-1,4 glycosidic linkages and shapes utilizable products like xylose and xylobiose (Kanagasabai and Maruthai, 2021).

Xylanases are produced by diverse group of organisms such as bacteria, algae, fungi, protozoa, astropods and arthropods (Collins *et al.*, 2005). Fungi are the major producers of biomass degrading enzymes such as cellulases and hemicellulases in industry. Fungi are of special interest as they secrete enzymes in large quantities. Xylanase titres are much higher than those found in yeast and bacteria (Shabeena Anjum *et al*., 2017). Xylanases show great potential for industrial applications in the bioconversion of lignocelluloses to sugar, ethanol, and other useful substances, clarification of juices and wines, improving the nutritional quality of silage and green feed and the de-inking processes of waste papers (Viikari *et al.*, 2001; Shabeena Anjum *et al*., 2017).

In the production of xylanases, several factors that significantly influence fungal enzymes production during fermentation comprise substrate concentration, incubation time, pH, moisture content, and

temperature, which must be optimized for higher productivity. To meet the industrial requirements, more interest is fixed on the stability of the enzyme over various experimental conditions, as well as its ability to hydrolyze xylans (Shabeena Anjum *et al.*, 2017). Interest in xylanolytic enzymes has increased due to their potential use in several industrial processes such as biopulping and bleaching; bioconversion of lignocellulose; food processing, including clarification of beer, wine, and juice; increasing digestibility of animal feedstock; and bread making (Bastawade 1992: Vikari *et al* 1994, Shabeena Anjum *et al*., 2017).

Materials and methods

Sample collection

Fifteen (15) soil samples were collected from different places at a depth of 10 to 15 cm in and around Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The samples were collected into a sterile polythene bags and carried to department research laboratory for further microbial analysis.

Media preparation

Total of 15.6g of potato dextrose agar (PDA) was weighed in a sterile conical flask and mixed with 400ml of distilled water and shake vigorously till powdery particles dissolved. To avoid the bacteria contamination streptomycin (50µg/mL) was added to the medium and autoclaving for 20 minutes at 121^{O}C for fungi isolation.

Isolation of microorganisms

Total of 9ml of Sterile water was prepared in six (6) test tubes for each soil sample and 1g of each soil sample was added into the first test tube and serial dilution was taken for the rest test tubes. The dilution factor of 10^{-1} and 10^{-3} was taken for fungal isolates Pour plate method was used for fungi with their dilution factors and incubated at 28^{o}C for 3 – 5 day. After incubation, the viable organisms were counted for fungi in Cfu/g.

Qualitative screening of xylanase producing microorganisms

The isolated fungi were screened for their ability to produce xylanase. Mycelial plug was inoculated onto Modified fermentation medium in 400ml, [agar/agar powder (7.2 g/ L−1), glucose (0.8 g/L−1), L-asparagine (4.0 g/L−1), KH2PO4 (0.61 g/L−1), KCl (0.21 g/L−1), MgSO4·7H2O (0.21 g/L−1), CuNO3·3H2O (0.012 g/L−1), ZnSO4·7H2O (0.02 g/L−1), FeSO4·7H2O (0.012 g/L−1) and 0.00036 % phenol red dye (indicator). Controls were prepared by inoculating mycelial plugs on fermentation medium without asparagine. Duplicates for each isolate were prepared. All Petri plates were incubated at 28◦C. After 5 days of incubation, the diameter of the pink zone was evaluated.

Production of xylanase

The fungal isolate was sub-cultured and transferred into fermentation medium without (Agar and phenol red) in which fungi isolate was stabbed with 7mm cork borer and shake very well in a flavor bottle and leave at a room temperature for 4 days. Filter paper was used to filtrate the supernatant (crude enzyme) from the mixture after 4 days' incubation.

Effect of pH on the production of xylanase

Aspergillus flavus was inoculated onto 20ml of modified medium comprises of glucose (0.8 g/L−1), KH2PO4 (0.61 g/L−1), KCl (0.21 g/L−1), MgSO4·7H2O (0.21 g/L−1), CuNO3·3H2O (0.012 g/L−1), ZnSO4·7H2O (0.02 g/L−1) and FeSO4·7H2O (0.012 g/L−1) with different pH from pH4 - 8 and dispensed into flavor bottle and later medium were incubated at 28◦C for 4 days of incubation.

Effect of carbon sources on the production of xylanase

Aspergillus flavus was inoculated onto 80ml of modified medium comprises of glucose (0.8 g/L−1), KH2PO4 (0.61 g/L−1), KCl (0.21 g/L−1), MgSO4·7H2O (0.21 g/L−1), CuNO3·3H2O (0.012 g/L−1), ZnSO4·7H2O (0.02 g/L−1) and FeSO4·7H2O (0.012 g/L−1) at pH 7 with different carbon sources such as glucose, lactose, fructose, galactose, maltose and sucrose and dispensed into flavor bottle then medium were incubated at 28◦C for 4 days.

Statistical analysis

The obtained experimental data were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the means with SPSS version 23 and the level of significance was set at $P \leq 0.05$.

Results

Table 1: Microorganisms isolated from the soil samples

Sample code	Fungi isolates
SSF1	7
SSF2	7
SSF3	6
SSF4	7
SSF5	6
SSF6	5
SSF7	6
SSF8	7
SSF9	4
SSF10	5
SSF11	3
SSF12	3
SSF13	3
SSF14	2
SSF15	2
TOTAL	73

Keys: SSF = Soil sample fungi

Table 2: Fungi Load Counts of Each Soil Sample

Sample code	Fungal isolates
SSF1	3.4×10^3
SSF2	2.6×10^3
SSF3	2.1×10^3
SSF4	2.8×10^3
SSF5	1.8×10^3
SSF6	4.5×10^2
SSF7	1.3×10^3
SSF8	6.5×10^2
SSF9	7.5×10^3
SSF10	1.0×10^2
SSF11	1.1×10^3

SSF12	**2.5×10^3**
SSF13	**2.0×10^2**
SSF14	**6.2×10^3**
SSF15	**1.1×10^3**

Table 3. Qualitative screening of microorganisms for Xylanase production

	Fungi		
Sample code	**Diameter of organism**	**Diameter of pink colour**	**Hydrolytic Index**
SSF4	**1.1**	**3.1**	**2.82**
SSF10	**1.1**	**2.1**	**1.91**
SSF13	**1.0**	**4.5**	**4.50***
SSF17	**1.0**	**2.6**	**2.60**
SSF23	**1.2**	**3.8**	**3.17***
SSF25	**3.5**	**8.0**	**2.29**
SSF26	**0.6**	**3.0**	**5.00***
SSF33	**1.3**	**4.0**	**3.08**
SSF35	**1.5**	**3.0**	**2.00**
SSF41	**0.6**	**2.0**	**3.33***
SSF47	**1.5**	**4.6**	**3.07**
SSF48	**2.7**	**6.6**	**2.44**
SSF49	**1.0**	**3.0**	**3.00**
SSF60	**1.6**	**5.0**	**3.13**
SSF61	**0.9**	**2.6**	**2.89**
SSF63	**3.0**	**6.0**	**2.00**
SSF68	**0.6**	**2.0**	**4.30***
SSF73	**0.9**	**2.0**	**2.22**

Table 4: Effect of pH on production of Xylanase

Fermentation pH	**Fungi isolate Xylanase (U/mL)**
pH 4.0	2036.667
pH 5.0	3340
pH 6.0	676.667
pH 7.0	**11720.33**
pH 8.0	673.333

Control	0.0000

KEY: Bold = The best pH picked

Table 5: Effect of carbon source production on the xylanase

Carbon source	Fungi isolate (xylanase U/ml)
Glucose	3466.667
Lactose	6786.667
Fructose	**7320**
Galactose	4933.333
Maltose	5340
Sucrose	4920
Control (without sugar)	3313.33

KEY: Bold = The best carbon source picked

Discussion

An enzyme remains a major cost factor for the lignocellulosic fuels and chemical industries. In the recent study most of the enzymes are produced from lignocellulosic material by fermentation processes. An important consideration in fermentation processes is the cost of carbon source, which contributes significantly to overall production expenses. Although, soil contain hemicellulose was examined as substrate to xylanase production by fungal isolate. The plates were incubated for 7 days' incubation period. Maximum xylanase production was found at 7th day with different carbon sources and pH values.

Microorganism isolates from the soil samples were 73 fungal isolates (Table 1). The microbial load count for each sample was determined in which fungal load counts range from $1.0 \times 10^2 - 7.2 \times 10^3$ Cfu/g. The highest number of microbial load was determined in sample SSF9 of 7.5×10^3 Cfu/g while the least microbial load was recorded in SSF10 of 1.0×10^2 Cfu/g. Pink colouration on plate was formed by 18 out of 73 fungal isolates with a hydrolytic index ranging from 1.91 to 5.00 while the best five fungal isolates (SSF13, SSF23, SSF26, SSF41 and SSF68) were selected for further work. (Table 3) and isolate SSF26 was the best producer of xylanase among the selected fungi. Xylanase production accompanies pH increase of the growth medium due to the breakdown of xylan into aspartic acid and ammonia. The release of ammonia causes alkalinity of medium which leads to change in colour. For effect of pH on xylanase, the microbes were able to produce xylanase at different pH. respectively and were able to produce xylanase with different pH. The highest number of 11720.33 u/ml was recorded at pH 7.0 and lowest number of 3340 u/ml was recorded in pH 5.0 (Table 4). For effect of carbon on xylanase, the xylanase produced by fungal isolate was higher in media with different carbon sources than the control where no carbon source was added. The highest production of xylanase of (7320 U/ml) by fungal isolate was recorded when fructose was used as the carbon source and the production of xylanase with fructose as a carbon source was significantly different ($p \leq 0.05$) from productions with other carbon sources used. The highest number of 7320 u/ml was recorded in fructose and lowest number of 3466.667 U/ml was recorded in glucose (Table 5). Therefore, the results obtained from this research work were similar to the results of Fasiku *et al.*, (2023) in which he discovered the highest activity of 3.58 u/ml at pH 6.2 with fructose and sucrose as best carbon sources.

Conclusion

The usage of soil brought down the xylanase enzyme production cost and also reduces environmental pollution. For production of xylanase by fungal isolate, best Xylanase-producing fungus were able to produce xylanase with different pH and carbon sources. The exploration of the biodiversity and exploitation of microbial enzyme is good for the human welfare and for the environment.

From the present study it can be concluded that a potent Xylanase producing fungal isolate SSF26 was isolated from soil sample and screened on PDA media with the highest production of 11720.33 u/ml of pH 7.0 and carbon sources of 7320 U/ml was recorded in fructose from potent isolate produced. Therefore, further investigation on molecular characterization identification of the potent isolates should be encourage to ascertain the best fungal strain.

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EFFECTS OF FILLING STATION ACTIVITIES ON HEAVY METAL CONCENTRATIONS IN GROUNDWATER IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Heavy metals are persistent environmental contaminants that pose significant health risks when their concentrations exceed established regulatory thresholds. This study investigated the effects of fuelling station activities on heavy metal concentrations in groundwater within Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Nine hand-dug wells situated within close proximity to fuelling stations that had been in operation for more than five years were selected using a purposive sampling strategy. Water samples were collected and analyzed for copper (Cu), iron (Fe), chromium (Cr), nickel (Ni), lead (Pb), cadmium (Cd) and zinc (Zn) using flame atomic absorption spectrophotometry (FAAS). Results indicated that all detected heavy metal concentrations were within permissible limits set by the World Health Organization (WHO). Copper concentrations ranged from 0.057 to 0.134 mg/L, iron from 0.000 to 0.870 mg/L, and zinc from 0.000 to 0.006 mg/L. Chromium, nickel, lead, and cadmium were below detection limits across all sampling points. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in copper, iron, and zinc concentrations across sampling sites, indicating a measurable influence of fuelling station proximity on groundwater metal loading. If these activities remain unregulated, long-term accumulation of heavy metals in groundwater poses a potential risk to public health. Routine monitoring and regulatory enforcement are recommended to safeguard groundwater quality in the study area.

Keywords*: Heavy metal; underground water; fuelling station; quality*

Introduction

Environmental pollution has emerged as a global challenge with far-reaching consequences for human health, biodiversity, and ecosystem integrity (Khan and Ghouri, 2011). The proliferation of industrial activities, rapid urbanization, and increased vehicular transport has compounded pollution burdens in both developed and developing nations (Begum *et al.*, 2009).

In Nigeria, the widespread and largely unregulated construction of fuelling stations, particularly in peri-urban and residential communities, has heightened concerns about soil and groundwater contamination through leakage of petroleum hydrocarbons and associated heavy metals from underground storage tanks (Arokoyu *et al.*, 2015). Fueling stations represent one of the major anthropogenic sources of environmental pollution. Petroleum products stored in underground tanks may leak through corrosion, poor maintenance, or structural failure. Such leakages often introduce contaminants into surrounding soils and groundwater systems. Heavy metals associated with petroleum products and station operations may accumulate in groundwater and pose serious health risks to humans (Nganje *et al*, 2007). Studies conducted in different parts of Nigeria have reported elevated concentrations of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, chromium, nickel, and zinc in groundwater near petrol stations. These contaminants may originate from fuel spills, lubricants, vehicular emissions, and corrosion of metallic infrastructure. Elevated concentrations of these metals have been associated with kidney damage, neurological disorders, cancer, and other health problems. Groundwater around petrol stations in Nigeria has been reported to contain heavy metals above permissible limits in some locations (Adedeji *et al*, 2024).

Heavy metals, defined as metallic elements with a density greater than 5 g/cm³, are persistent environmental contaminants that accumulate in biological systems and resist natural degradation processes (Bose and Hemantaranjan, 2005). At trace concentrations, some heavy metals perform essential biochemical functions, including facilitating enzyme activity; however, concentrations exceeding established maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) trigger adverse metabolic and

physiological responses (Misra and Mani, 2009). Metals such as mercury (Hg), cadmium (Cd), lead (Pb), and copper (Cu) are particularly hazardous due to their ability to bind with enzymes, disrupt metabolic pathways, and accumulate in critical organs (Adeleken and Abegunde, 2011).

Leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) at fuelling stations are among the most documented sources of heavy metal contamination in groundwater. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), petroleum storage tanks exceeding 20 years of age are at significantly elevated risk of corrosion-induced leakage. In the Nigerian context, poorly maintained tanks, absent environmental safeguards, and inadequate regulatory oversight collectively amplify the risk of subsurface contamination (Olukoya *et al*., 2016).

The rapid increase in fueling stations across Ibarapa Central Local Government Area necessitates an investigation into their environmental impacts, particularly on groundwater quality. This study therefore sought to evaluate the effects of fuelling station activities on heavy metal concentrations in groundwater in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria, with the aim of generating baseline data to inform environmental management policy.

Materials and methods

Sampling

The sample size for this study was purposively selected based on;

10. Fuelling stations has wells within its premises or at close proximity.

11. Has been in operation above 5 years.

The limitation of the study to fuelling stations above 5 years was guided by;

- Findings that most Chinese made oil quality single tank used here in Nigeria has an average life expectancy of 8 years (Chen *et al., 2013).*
- *H*and-dug wells are the most available source of potable water in the study area.

Study area

The study was conducted in Ibarapa central local government area, Oyo State, Nigeria. The local government area has two major towns which are Igboora as the headquarters and Idere. In 2018, the population was estimated to be around 322,189 (NPC, 2018) with a land mass of 440km^2. The study area is located on longitude 7^o 26' 1.79"N, latitude 3^{o}17' 16.37' E, which is approximately 66 km North-northwest of Ibadan, the Oyo State capital and about 32 km North of Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State. The study area shares boundary with Ogun State to the South and West, Ibarapa North Local Government Area to the North-West, Iseyin Local Government Area to the North-East and Ibarapa East Local Government to the East. (Adejumo and Adeyemi, 2021). The study area lies within the tropical climatic zone, marked by two distinct seasons of wet and dry periods. The dry season extends from November to march with an average monthly precipitation of less than 25mm and the wet season peaks around June and September with monthly rainfall exceeding 100mm (Daly *et al.,* 2011). The total annual rainfall in the area ranges from 813 to 1853 mm, while the annual temperature ranges from 24 to 29^{0}C. (Munasere, 2019).

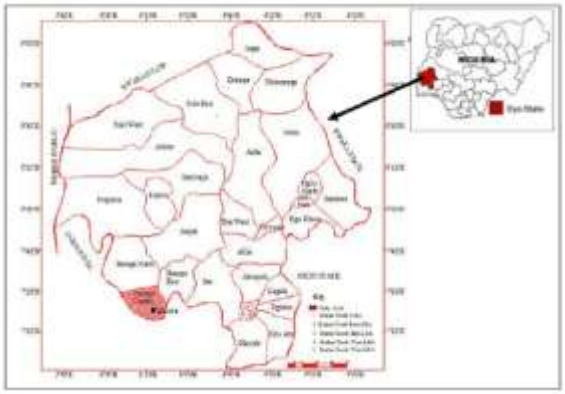


Figure 1: Map of Oyo State showing Ibarapa Central Local Government Area (Source; Adejumo and Adeyemi, 2021)

Chemicals reagents

Chemicals and reagents used were of analytical grade. They included; nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, distilled water, hydrogen peroxide, lead nitrate, zinc nitrate, Chromium oxide, manganese powder, ammonium chloride and Cd nitrate.

Cleaning of glassware

All apparatus were initially washed with detergents then soaked in 2 M nitric acid for 24 hours then washed thoroughly. They were rinsed with aqua regia, followed by tap water and then rinsed in distilled water. The glassware was then dried in a hot oven at 105^0C.

Water sampling and pre-treatment

Water samples were collected from hand dug well within close proximity to the underground storage tank of filling stations within the study area into a 500 ml sample bottles for analysis using grab/spot sampling. All samples were collected using pre-cleaned plastic bottles. Plastics utilized were pre-washed with detergent water solution, rinsed with tap water and soaked for 48 hours in 50% HNO_3, then rinsed thoroughly with distilled-deionized water. They were then air-dried in a dust free environment. Duplicate samples were also taken from the sampled wells for precision. While collecting water samples, some physical parameters such as temperature and pH value was taken at the sample location to give more scientific details of the surrounding environment. The distance of the well (sample points) to the underground storage tanks were measured. The samples were labeled according to the source from which it was obtained. The water samples were acidified with 2 ml of analytical grade nitric acid in order to preserve metals and avoid precipitation (Kar *et al*., 2008). The water samples were stored in an ice pack awaiting the transportation to the laboratory for analysis. The pictures in the plates 1 and 2 show some of the water sampling sites.



Plate 1: Observation of Environmental Conditions at groundwater Site



Plate 2: Collection of Samples

Sample digestion

Water digestion

The water sample bottles were shaken thoroughly in their plastic containers by use of hand. A volume of 100 ml of the sample was measured using a 100 ml volumetric flask and put in a conical flask and 5 ml of concentrated nitric acid was then added. The mixture was heated slowly on a hot plate and

evaporated to about 20 ml ensuring that the water did not boil. A further 5 ml of concentrated nitric acid was added and the beaker was covered with a watch glass while heating continued. Nitric acid continued to be added until the solution appeared light coloured and clear. Lastly, 2 ml of concentrated hydrochloric acid was added and heated slightly to dissolve any remaining residue. Few drops of hydrogen peroxide were then added to ensure complete digestion had taken place. The solution was filtered and the filtrate was transferred to a 100 ml volumetric flask to cool and the filtrate was made up to the mark with distilled water (Radojovenic and Bashkin, 2006).

Preparation of stock solutions and standards

Lead stock solution and standards
Lead stock solution (1000 mg/l) was prepared by dissolving 1.59 g of lead (II) nitrate in 500 ml of distilled water and then made up to 1 litre of solution using distilled water.

Zinc stock solution and standards
Zinc stock solution (100 mg/l) was prepared by dissolving 0.289 g of zinc nitrate salt in 300 ml of distilled water and then made up to 1 liter of solution using distilled water. A working zinc standard solution (20 mg/l) was made by diluting 20 ml of the stock solution to 100 ml of solution.

Manganese stock solution and standards
Manganese stock solution (100 mg/l) was prepared by dissolving 0.10 g of manganese metal powder in 10 ml of concentrated hydrochloric acid mixed with 1 ml of concentrated nitric acid. A 10 ml of nitric acid was then added and the solution finally diluted to 1000 ml with distilled water. A working manganese standard solution (20 mg/l) was made by diluting 20 ml of the stock solution to 100 ml of solution using distilled water.

Cadium (Cd) stock solution and standards
Cd stock solution (1000 mg/l) was prepared by dissolving 0.275 g of Cd nitrate salt in 500 ml of distilled water and made up to 1 liter of solution using distilled water. A working Cd standard solution (10 mg/l) was made by diluting 10 ml of the stock solution to 100 ml of solution with distilled water.

Chromium (Cr) stock solution and standards
Chromium stock solution (1000 mg/l) was prepared by dissolving 0.38 g of CrO_3 in a solution of 20 ml water and 4 ml of concentrated nitric acid and diluted to 200 ml using distilled water. Through serial dilution, standard working solutions of chromium were made.

Sample analysis
Buck scientific (210 VGF) flame atomic absorption spectrophotometer machine was used in this analysis. Its parameters were set according to the specifications given in the manufacturer's manual including lamp current and fuel system of air/acetylene flame. The AAS machine had a picking meter that indicated when the optimum conditions had been realized.

Data analysis
The data derived from various determinations was subjected to statistical analysis using one way ANOVA at significant level $p<0.05$ using SPSS. Means were separated using Duncan's New Multiple Range Test (DNMRT).

Result and Discussion

Result

Preliminary observation on sampled groundwater in the study area

Table 4.1 shows the preliminary observation on sampled groundwater in the study area. The water samples were collected from nine fuelling stations that has been in continous operation for over five years. The years of operations of the fuelling stations ranges from 15 to 24 years. Fuelling stations underground storage tanks to underground water sampled were measured and the range of 11.35 to

65.53m was observed. Appearance of the water samples was also observed and majority (6) of the sampled water has a clear colour appearance. The environmental conditions at groundwater site were observed and majority of the wells were not ringed, area not cemented, not covered, with few close to dumping sites. All the groundwater sources were used for domestic purposes.

Table 1: Preliminary observation on sampled groundwater in the study area

Sample point	Fuelling station years of operation	Well distance to fuelling station underground storage tank (m)	Depth of well (m)	Water appearance	Environmental Conditions at groundwater site
A	15	64.13	8.58	Not clear	Well is not ringed, area not cemented, not Covered and close to dumping site.
B	17	52.03	8.84	Clear	Well is ringed, area not cemented, Covered with metal lid and close to dumping site.
C	22	11.35	8.62	Clear	Well ringed, area not cemented and covered with lid metal.
D	24	54.92	7.59	Clear	Well ringed, area not cemented and not covered.
E	19	43.47	9.07	Not clear	Well ringed, area not cemented and not covered.
F	21	52.06	5.44	Clear	Well ringed, well area not cemented and covered with lid metal.
G	20	65.53	8.48	Clear	Well ringed, well area cemented with spill over drainage and covered with lid metal.
H	19	33.95	8.70	Clear	Well ringed, well area cemented and covered with lid metal.
I	18	12.36	7.63	Not clear	Well ringed, well area cemented and covered with lid metal.

Heavy metal Parameters of Groundwater samples in the study area

The results of the heavy metal parameters of groundwater samples across sampling point in the study area are shown in Table 4.2. The lowest Cu value recorded was 0.067±0.002 mg/L at sampling point H while the highest was 0.134±0.002 mg/L at sampling point I. The iron (Fe) content recorded across all

sampling point ranges from 0.000 to 0.870±0.001 mg/L. The zinc (Zn) values recorded across the sampling points were relatively low, with values ranging from 0.000 to 0.006 mg/L. Throughout the sampling points, heavy metal parameters were not recorded for chromium (Cr), nickel (Ni), lead (Pb) and cadmium (Cd).

Table 2: Heavy Metal Concentration (mg/L) in Groundwater Samples

Samples	Cu (mg/L)	Fe (mg/L)	Cr (mg/L)	Ni (mg/L)	Pb (mg/L)	Cd (mg/L)	Zn (mg/L
A	0.076 ±0.001^{e}	0.000^{d}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000 ±0.001^{bc}
B	0.057 ±0.001^{g}	0.000^{d}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006 ±0.001^{a}
C	0.114 ±0.001^{b}	0.870 ±0.001^{a}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000^{c}
D	0.076 ±0.002^{e}	0.000^{d}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000^{c}
E	0.084 ±0.002^{d}	0.000^{d}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006 ±0.001^{a}
F	0.108 ±0.002^{c}	0.000^{d}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003 ±0.002^{b}
G	0.087 ±0.002^{d}	0.000^{d}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002 ±0.002^{bc}
H	0.067 ±0.002^{f}	0.064 ±0.002^{c}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000^{c}
I	0.134 ±0.002^{a}	0.846 ±0.002^{b}	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000^{c}
P-value	0.000	0.000	**	**	**	**	0.000
WHO standard	**2.000**	**0.5000-50.000**	**0.012**	**	**0.010**	**0.003-0.005**	**

Discussion

Preliminary observation on sampled groundwater in the study area

The most important aspect of groundwater depth is not the absolute depth, but rather how far its casing extends below the water table because it explains the quantity of water pumped from the well (Farrell and Pater, 2011). Shallow wells are wells with depth within 15 meters while deep wells are those above 15 meters depth (Burroughs, 2009). All the wells sampled in the study area were shallow wells (4.9 - 13.0 m).

However, due to sparsely population of the study area, shallow wells are the major source of the drinking water. This is because, shallow wells allows maximal control of drinking water quality since it will be mainly recharged through the non-polluted land (Farrell and Pater, 2011). The study area is mainly residential with no industrial activity. This explains why most of the well water quality parameters were mostly within the stipulated standards of World Health Organization.

The effect of fuelling station activities on heavy metal properties of underground water sample

Copper (Cu)

Food and water are the primary sources of copper exposure in developed countries. Concentrations found in drinking-water range from ≤ 0.005 mg L^{-1} to >30 mg L^{-1}, primarily as a result of the corrosion of interior copper plumbing (WHO, 2011). The mean concentration of Copper recorded in this study

ranged from 0.057 - 0.134 mg L^{-1}. This value is below the recommended limit of 2.0 mg/L set by WHO (2011). There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the concentration of copper across the sampling points, which might likely due to year of operation and proximity of the stations.

Iron (Fe)

The aesthetic and taste value of iron in drinking water is more significant than its health effects. The concentration of iron greater than 1.0 mg/l would impair the quality of the water. Iron concentration below 0.3 mg/l (WHO, 2014) usually has no noticeable taste. The concentration of iron in all sample are within the limit of WHO standard value (0.5- 50 mg/L). Among the sample sites, sample C has the maximum number of irons (0.870±0.001 mg/L). The findings of this study were lower than the value reported by Koju *et al.*, 2015; and Shrestha *et al.*, 2016 for iron concentrations inside the groundwater of the Kathmandu valley. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the concentration of iron across the sampling points which indicated that the fuelling stations as a significant effects on the physiochemical properties of underground water within its proximity.

Chromium (Cr)

The main source of exposure to Chromium is food. Chromium (III) is an essential nutrient in human nutrition (WHO, 2011). A value of 0.000 was recorded for Cr across all sampling sites. Comparably these values were lower than the WHO (2003) maximum allowed limits of Cr of 0.012 mg/L in water. There was no significant difference between the levels of Cr obtained across all sampling sites. The levels of Cr obtained in this study were lower than the levels recorded in the study done by Mebrahtu and Zebrabruk (2011) to determine the levels of heavy metals in the Tigris region of Northern Ethiopia which recorded the following mean levels; Alamata 0.11 mg/l, Mekelle 0.146 mg/l, Wekro 0.116 mg/L.

Nickel (Ni)

Nickel is a mineral needed by the body, but in small amount. It aids the absorption of iron, thereby preventing iron deficient anemia and weak bones (osteoporosis). The dominant source of nickel exposure in the non-smoking, non-occupationally exposed population is food, while water is generally a minor contributor to the total daily oral intake. Concentration in drinking-water is usually less than 0.02 mg L^{-1}, but in special cases, nickel released from taps and fittings may contribute up to 1 mg L^{-1} (WHO, 2011). The mean value of nickel recorded in this study is 0.000 mg/L. This value is below the recommended limit of 0.02 mg/L set by SON (2007). There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) across the sampling points.

Lead (Pb)

Pb is the most significant of all the heavy metals because it is toxic, very common and harmful even in small amounts (Mebrahtu and Zerabruk, 2011). However, as exposure to Pb is cumulative over time, there is still risk of buildup, particularly in children. Studies on Pb are numerous because of its hazardous effects. High concentration of Pb in the body can cause death or permanent damage to the central nervous system, the brain, and kidneys (Mebrahtu and Zerabruk, 2011).

The mean concentration of Lead (Pb) recorded across all sampling sites in this study area is 0.000 mg/L. This value is below the value (0.24±0.03mg/L) reported by Adekunle *et al*., (2007) in the dry season at Igboora and lower than the stipulated standard of 0.01 mg/L by WHO (2011). There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) across the sampling points.

Cadmium (Cd)

There is evidence that cadmium is carcinogenic by the inhalation route and it is classified as a probable carcinogen. However, there is no evidence of carcinogenicity by the oral route and no clear evidence for its genotoxicity (WHO, 2011).

From the result presented in table 4.2, a value of 0.000 mg/L was recorded for Cd across all sampling sites. The level of Cd detected in the water samples across all sampling sites were lower than the maximum allowed limit of 0.003 to 0.005mg/L recommended by WHO. There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) across the sampling points. The levels of Cd obtained in study were lower than the value reported by Kaplan *et al*. (2011) who recorded values in drinking water ranging from 0.050 to 1.670 mg/L.

Zinc (Zn)

The level of Zn obtained in this study ranges from 0.000 to 0.006 mg/L. The levels of zinc obtained in this study were lower than the levels obtained by Kisamo (2003) in his study on environmental hazards associated with heavy metals in Lake Victoria Basin (East Africa), Tanzania with a recorded value of Zn ranging from 0.04-0.08 mg/L. WHO (2011) set no standard for zinc in drinking water based on the fact that it is not found in drinking water at levels that could cause health concern. There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) across the sampling points.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study investigated effects of fuelling station activities on heavy metal properties of groundwater in Ibarapa central local government area, Oyo State, Nigeria. In order to determine the current status of groundwater quality. Nine hand-dug wells within close proximity to fuelling stations that has been in operation for over five years were identified and analyzed for water quality parameters. Base on the results obtained, the following conclusions were drawn in line with the objectives of the study;

11. The heavy metal properties of the groundwater samples in the study were within the specified limits by WHO.
12. The investigation on the effects of fuelling station activities on heavy metal properties of underground water in the study area show a significant ($p<0.05$) difference which indicate that, if an uncontrolled activates should continue, this could have effects on the quality of the underground water over time

Recommendations

Following the findings of this research, the following recommendations are suggested in order to avoid the deterioration of groundwater in the study area;

10. Activities of fuelling stations in the study area should be monitored to ensure compliance with standards.
11. The groundwater of the study area should be tested and monitored regularly so that it can maintain good quality for drinking water.

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ISOLATION AND CHARACTERISATION OF BACTERIA FROM OIL CONTAMINATED SOILS COLLECTED FROM MECHANIC WORKSHOP IN IGBOORA TOWN

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Abstract

Oil has remained one of the major pollutants in Nigeria mechanic workshops, account for a sizable fraction of oil leaks that go unnoticed most of the time. The capability of microorganisms to utilize oil in polluted soil from some major mechanic workshops as the sole source of carbon and energy need to be studied. This study looked into the isolation and characterization of bacteria isolates from oil contaminated soil collected from mechanic workshops in Igboora, Oyo State. Soil samples were collected differently based on top and depth soils from the mechanic workshop. The bacteria were isolated using standard microbiological procedures. Also, physicochemical parameters of the oil contaminated soils were carried out. Microbial counts were noted as well as percentage occurrence of isolates in soil sample. The isolates in oil contaminated soil was evaluated on Bushnell Haas medium. Bacteria isolates were identified using morphological techniques and biochemical assays. The pollution index of the different physicochemical parameters obtained from the oil polluted soil samples showed that the fine soil had pH level of 6.8 and temperature of 30.1^{O}C. The bacterial count ranged from 2.0 × 10^{-1} to 2.1 × 10^{-1} cfu/ml in polluted soil. Bacteria genera that were commonly isolated from the samples include Staphylococcus aureus, Staphylococcus saprophyticus, Bacillus cereus and Bacillus substilis This study showed that oil contaminated soil samples obtained from the mechanic workshop contained appreciable amount of oil degrading bacteria as they can be used for remediation purpose to reduce soil pollution and hence could be exploited in bioremediation activities in cases of accidental oil spillage.

Keywords: *Staphylococcus* aureus, mechanic workshop, temperature, Bunshell Hass agar, soil

Introduction

Soil is one of the most treasured natural resources available to man as it is very important for sustenance of life on the earth. The environment is a common heritage that should be properly nurtured. Man's residence on earth has resulted in tremendous environmental degradation due to inhabitancy and developmental efforts. This degradation in turn puts the goals of sustainable development at risks and as such should be abated as a matter of both necessity and urgency (Aligwekwe, 2018).

Soil contamination leads to a significant change in soil microbial diversity, an important factor for the mineralization of soils (Ikhajiagbe *et al*., 2014). In modern society, environmental pollution has become a never-ending problem that poses a severe threat to people's livelihoods.

Crude oil is one of the most polluting products due to its extensive application (Jolaoso *et al*., 2019). As the usage of petroleum hydrocarbon products increase, soil contamination with diesel and engine oil is becoming one of the major environmental problems and as a result, environmental pollution with used engine oil continues to generate interest (Kim et al., 2020). One of the most catastrophic outcomes of oil spills and soil contamination by petroleum compounds is clogging of the soil surface, which will lead to sealing of air pores and significantly limits the aeration of organisms living in soil (Ogbonna et al., 2020). Petroleum products such as lubricating oil, petrol, and diesel are used in various forms in mechanic workshops (Song et al., 2016).

Also, in mechanic workshops, there are accidental or deliberate releases or discharge of petrol, diesel, solvents, grease and lubricants on the land. The major wastes generated in these workshops are solvents used in servicing different engines undergoing repairs, paints, spent heat, transfer fluids, hydraulic fluids, spent lubricants, and stripped-oil sludge, among others (Jolaoso *et al*., 2019). This indiscriminate discharge of spent oil is a major non-point source of oil pollution to the environment. This creates a serious monitoring and control challenge as mechanic workshops and mechanic villages spring up every

day and everywhere without plan and policy for management of waste and protection of the environment (Ololade, 2014).

Bioremediation is a process by which microorganisms mediate the transformation or degradation of contaminants into non-hazardous or less hazardous substances is introduced into the environment to clean up the hydrocarbons (Hambali et al., 2021).

However, some remediation approaches are energy-intensive, may require large areas of land (land-farming, soil vapour extraction, thermal desorption, etc.) and many depend on the introduction of inorganic fertilizers which rely on energy-intensive synthesis and mining of non-renewable resources, such as phosphorus (Nwankwegu and Onwosi, 2017). The heart of bioremediation techniques are microbes like biopiles and it is advantageous to understand how soil amendments may influence the process. Biodegradation as biological activities resulting in the breakdown of a compound or organic contaminant. The use of these biological activities is low-cost and a sustainable remediation method for contaminated soil (Ravi et al., 2016). Use of living organisms such as bacteria or fungi for degradation of hydrocarbons in the environment is connected to a number of physical and chemical factors including the concentration and chemical structure of contaminant, moisture, oxygen, temperature and pH. The rate and efficiency of biodegradation depend on the occurrence of adequately numerous and active microflora in the contaminated or polluted environment (Adagunodo et al., 2018).

Bacteria are the most active agents in petroleum degradation and they work as primary degraders of spilled oil in the environment (Jiji and Prabakaran, 2020). Several bacteria are even known to feed exclusively on hydrocarbons. *Acinetobacter* species was found to be capable of utilizing n- alkanes of chain length C10-C40 as a sole source of carbon. Bacterial genera namely, *Gordonia, Mycobacterium, Brevibacterium, Aeromicrobium, Dietzia,* and *Burkholderia* isolated from petroleum contaminated soil proved to be the potential organisms for hydrocarbon degradation **(**Ikpe et al., 2023**).**

Materials and methods

Sample collection

The mechanic workshop was located along Sawmill, Igbole, Ibarapa Central LGA in Oyo State of Nigeria. Two soil samples were obtained from the workshop using a soil Auger to get top soil surface (S. Top; 10 cm) and the other by digging up the soil at 30 cm deep (S. Depth). The physicochemical characteristics of the soil samples were analyzed. The various characteristics like texture, pH and temperature were taken for each of the samples. The samples; S1 Top and S1 Depth along Sawmill, Igbole was collected into a sterile petri dish and conveyed to research laboratory of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora within 24 hours of collection. Physicochemical properties of the soil such as temperature and pH were measured using a thermometer and pH meter by Hanna respectively.

Isolation of bacterial cultures from oil contaminated soil

The isolation of bacteria from oil polluted soils were carried out using Bushnell Haas Agar with an addition of 5ml of sealed engine oil as sole carbon source, which is an enriched medium for the isolation of engine oil degrading bacteria. One gram (1g) of each sample was measured into a test tube containing 9ml of sterile distilled water to form stock. This was placed in a laboratory shaker (S20) for 3mins to homogenize the solution and this served as the stock solution. A ten-fold serial dilution were done up to ten diluents. Then 0.1ml from dilutions $10^{-6}{}_1$, $10^{-6}{}_2$, $10^{-8}{}_1$, $10^{-8}{}_2$ *were inoculated in duplicates on sterile Bushnell Haas Agar plates. Incubation was carried out at 37°C for 5–7 days (*Feizi et al., 2020*).* Colonies on the plates were counted using Colony Counter and purify by sub-culturing on nutrient agar containing 2ml of engine oil with sterile 50 mg/ml of fluconazole tablet incorporated into 100ml distilled water for the inhibition of fungi in the medium. The discrete colonies were stored in nutrient agar slant.

Biochemical screening of isolates

Biochemical tests were done on the bacterial isolates according to the method described by Cho and Chung (2020).

Physicochemical properties of polluted soil

The various properties like texture, pH and temperature were measured for each sample using thermometer, pH meter and the result was shown in Table 1.

Statistical Analysis

Each set of data in the experiment were collected in replicates and the analytical results was taken as the mean of the replicated measurements.

Results

Table 1: Physicochemical Properties of Oil Polluted Soil Samples (Top Soil and Depth Soil)

S/N	Parameters	S/Top	S/Depth
1	pH	6.90	6.80
2	Structure	Fine	Creasy
3	Temperature (^{O}C)	30.10	30.20
4	Colour	Darken and oily	Light darken and oily
5	Nitrate (mg/g)	10.65	10.66
6	Dissolve Oxygen (DO) (mg/g)	7.30	7.40
7	Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) mg/g	11.80	11.80

Table 2: Bacteria Growth on Bushnell Haas Agar for Top and Depth Soils

S/N	Samples	10^{-1} 1	10^{-1} 2	10^{-6} 1	10^{-6} 2	10^{-8} 1	10^{-8} 2
1	S Top	-	+	+	+	-	-
2	S Depth	+	-	+	+	+	+

Keys:
$10^{-1}{}_1$, $10_2{}^{-6}$, $10_2{}^{-6}$, $10^{-1}{}_2$, $10^{-8}{}_1$, $10_2{}^{-8}$ = Dilution factors

Table 3: Colony Count of Bacterial Growth from Top and Depth of Contaminated Soils on Bushnell Haas Agar

S/N	Samples	Colony count (10^{-6} 1)	Total count (cfu/ml)	Percentage (%)
1	S Top	20	2×10^{-1}	48.78
2	S Depth	21	2.1×10^{-1}	51.22
Total		41		100

Table 4: Morphological Characteristics and Microscopic Observation of Bacterial Isolates

S/N	Bacterial Isolates	Morphological characteristics	Gram reaction	Endospore reaction
1	*Staphylococcus aureus*	Lobate, purple, convex, transparent, dry mucoid, punctiform	Gram positive cocci	Non-spore former
2	*Staphylococcus saprophyticus*	Lobate, milky, flt, opaque, shiny, viscous, punctiform	Gram positive cocci	Non-spore former
3	*Bacillus cereus*	Erose (Serrated), green, convex, transparent, shiny, viscous, filamentous	Gram positive rod	Spore former
4	*Bacillus subtilis*	Lobate, milky, convex, opaque, dry mucoid, irregular	Gram positive rod	Spore former

Table 5: Morphological and Microscopic Observation and Biochemical Identification of Bacterial Isolates

Isolates	GR	Shape	S.F	CAT	GLU	GAL.	MAL	FRU.	S.H	S.A	V.P	CIT	C.D	S.C	6.5%	G	M	Y.P	N.S	Probable Organisms
10^{-8}_{1}	+	C	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	*Staphylococcus aureus*
10^{-8}_{2}	+	C	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*Staphylococcus saprophyticus*
10^{-6}_{1}	+	R	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	*Bacillus cereus*
10^{-6}_{2}	+	R	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*Bacillus subtilis*

Key: GR-Gram reaction, LAC-Lactose production, GLU-Glucose production, SH-Starch Hydrolysis, GAL-Galactose, FRU-Frutose, MAL-Maltose, CAT-Catalase, S.A – Strict Anaerobic, YP-Yellow Pigment, VP- Voges Proskauerm, CIT=Citrate, C.D = Cell Diameter, S.C. = Swollen Cell, 6.5% = 6.5% Nacl, G = Growth @ 55^{O}C, M = Mannitol, N.S = Novobiocin Sensitivity , 10^{-8}_{1} , 10_{2}^{-8} , 10_{2}^{-6}, 10_{2}^{-6} = Dilution factor, + = Positive, - = Negative, C = Cocci, R = Rod

Discussion

The present study focus on isolation and characterization of bacteria from oil contaminated soil samples (Top;10 cm and depth; 30 cm) obtained from Mechanic workshop in Igboora. The four (4) bacteria isolated from the soil samples were gram positive; *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Staphylococcus saprophyticus*, *Bacillus cereus* and *Bacillus subtilis*. The study also revealed that the colony counts from soil samples STop and SDepth were (20 and 21) cfu/ml and expressed in percentage as 48.78% and 51.22% respectively. The result indicated a higher activity of bacterial species from the depth soil than from the top. From, the data obtained it was found that depth soil has more presence and activity of bacterial species, perhaps there is less disturbance in the depth soil than top soil. The bacterial species observed in the result revealed that Mechanic workshop in Igboora harbours hydrocarbon degraders which may have occurred as a result of indiscriminate exposure to used engine oil collected from motor vehicles, motor bikes and other machinery in Igboora town. The result was in correlation with the work reported by one critical factor for microbial growth and survival is soil pH. A pH of near neutral is suitable for growth of diverse bacterial populations (Abioye *et al*., 2019). The soil pH (6.90 and 6.80) values obtained were similar to that detected by Abioye *et al.* (2019), who reported a range of pH values (5.96–8.88) for top and depth soil samples. The pH values also fall within the optimal soil pH range recommended to support bacterial growth which was from 6 to 8 reported by Jones *et al.* (2018) as well as the optimum soil pH for efficient bioremediation which is 5.5 to 8.8. The results also correlated with Kachienga *et al.* (2018), who reported high utilization of spent oil at pH of 6.5 and 7.5 which was in agreement with our findings in this study. Soil pH is of importance because most microbial species can survive only within a pH range. In addition, soil pH can affect availability of nutrients.

Result of the particle size analysis for the sampling sites was indicative that the soil was clayey in nature. The particle size distribution is known to have an influence on the bacteria diversity of soils (Bala *et al.,* 2022). The effect of temperature on utilization of spent oil from mechanic workshop as observed in this study showed that high temperature affects the utilization of hydrocarbon. It was observed that the temperature of oil polluted soil was recorded as 30.1^{O}C and 30.20^{O}C. However, this might be as a result of high utilization of spent hydrocarbon by the microorganisms and this was similar to study reported by Shi *et al.* (2022), who stated an increase in population of bacteria in soil and water due to high temperature in area contaminated with hydrocarbon. But disagrees with the findings of Jafari *et al*. (2019), who reported a wide range of temperature stability (30 - 100℃) from bio-surfactant by *Bacillus subtilis* SA9 (Ebulue, 2022).

Biological Oxygen Demand (B.O.D) is a measure of the oxygen in the soil and water that is required by the aerobic organisms. The BOD values obtained (11.80 mg/g) in this study was in line with report of Bala *et al.* (2022), who reported BOD of loamy soil to be in the range 10-35mg/g. This B.O.D value showed that there was high biological activity in the samples thus safe for utilization since high B.O.D values suggested a high number of bacteria in the environment (Bala *et.al*., 2022).

Dissolved oxygen is one of the most important parameters of water quality that give direct and indirect information on nutrient availability, the level of pollution, metabolic activities of microorganisms, strati*f*ication, and photosynthesis in water body (Adeleye et al., 2018). The DO values obtained in this study were 7.3 and 7.4 mg/g which was lower when compared with WHO acceptable standards for soil and water (10-50 mg/g). Temperature of soil influences the amount of dissolved oxygen with only lesser oxygen dissolved in soil water. Therefore, high temperature of the water sources could be one of the factors for low DO values recorded in the current study.

The nitrate levels of tested soil samples were recorded as 10.65 10,66 mg/g. The nitrate levels of the tested soil samples were all below the WHO (10-50mg/g) approved range. This *f*inding was similar to the report of Mishra et al. (2020), who recorded high nitrate concentration of 10.69 mg/g in Soil at Ikorodu. The low variation recorded for nitrate concentration in this study may be due to differences in hydro-geological regimes and agricultural use of nitrates in organic and chemical fertilizers has been a major source.

In the Bushnell Haas medium, hydrocarbons were employed as carbon and energy sources. The bacterial isolates are likely to have the enzymatic ability to use the oils through various metabolic pathways. The existence of hydrocarbon utilizers in an environment indicated that native

microorganisms capable of decomposing the contaminant present in the soil. The bacteria load of oil polluted soils (Top and Depth) were presented in (Table 3), as the table showed the colony count of Bacteria growth ranging from $2.0 \times 10^{-1} - 2.1 \times 10^{-2}$ cfu/ml where dilution factor $10^{-6}{}_1$ had the highest colony count and growth percentage while dilution factor $10^{-8}{}_2$ had the lowest colony count and growth percentage. The result obtained in this study was lower when compared with the findings of heterotrophic bacteria counts carried out by Hambali *et al.* (2021), which showed that the mechanic workshop had the high counts of 7.3×10^3 cfu/ml which partly correspond with the reports of Hambali *et al.* (2021). The result also deviated from the work of Adeleye *et al.* (2018) with *Bacillus* range of $5.11 \times 10^5 - 5.25 \times 10^5$. From the various biochemical identification test carried out, the following organisms were isolated from the oil polluted soil samples. This study (Table 4) showed the presence of *Staphylococcus aureus, Bacillus cereus, Staphylococcus saprophyticus* and *Bacillus subtilis* in the oil contaminated soil samples. The isolation of these organisms from the environment showed that these organisms have evolved strategies of adapting to the environment and utilizing these substances as energy sources (Nwankwegu and Nwosi, 2017). Otobong *et al.* (2017), reported some bacteria species belonging to the genera in hydrocarbon degradation as a sole source of carbon and energy. This finding agrees with that of Achife *et al.* (2021) who also identified *Bacillus, Streptococcus* and *Pseudomonas species* from oil contaminated soil from Suleja, Minna Nigeria. Highest occurrence of *Bacillus* and *Staphylococcus* partly corresponds with the review of Adeleye *et al.* (2018) on the effects of bacterial organisms on bioremediation of engine oil polluted soil. The result also corresponded with that of Achife *et al.* (2021) who also reported *Bacillus* and *Pseudomonas* as hydrocarbon degraders. Spent engine oil contamination of soil has been reported to affect soils adversely by increasing their organic matter content, altering soil pH to acidic and increasing heavy metal content of the polluted soil (Adeleye *et al.*, 2018).

Conclusion

This research work has revealed the presence of *Staphylococcus aureus, Staphylococcus* saprophyticus, Bacillus cereus and Bacillus subtilis from oil contaminated soil in mechanic workshop, Igboora town. This study has been able to show the microbial communities present in oil contaminated soil samples from mechanic workshop at Igbole, Ibarapa Central Local Government Oyo State. The physicochemical properties obtained were moderate in the polluted soil. It has been shown that these oil contaminated soil samples contain in them bacterial organisms that can perform bioremediation of the oil pollution, if the right conditions be provided. It is therefore concluded that oil polluted soil samples obtained from Mechanic workshop contained appreciable amount of oil degrading bacteria as they could be used for remediation purpose to reduce soil pollution and this can be exploited for large oil-spill cleanup campaigns and contracts.

Recommendations

Based on this study, it is therefore recommended that:

1. More research be done by introducing the hydrocarbon-utilizing bacterial isolates singly and then in combination randomly to treat the spent engine oil contaminated soil.
2. Also good and proper personal and environmental sanitary practices must be maintained. Appropriate oil waste management processes should be designed to reduce random discharge of oil waste in the auto service business.
3. The health extension workers should educate the community members about the correct use of oil, the need for safe sanitation facilities, personal and environmental hygiene and oil pollution, aiming at reliable behavioral change.
4. The need for routine bacteriological assessment of oil should also emphasize reduction of possible pollution. There is, therefore, need for WHO to intensify efforts in the routine monitoring of activities of the oil spillage in the communities.
5. Analysis of the crops from the bioremedated soil is essential to ascertain their safety for human consumption.

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PROXIMATE AND SENSORY EVALUATION OF YAM FLOUR PRODUCED FROM COMPOSITE FLOUR OF SWEET POTATO (*Ipomoea batatas)* AND COCOYAM (*Colocasia esculenta*)

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Abstract
This study assessed the proximate and sensory attributes of yam flour produced from blends of yam, sweet potato (Ipomea batatas), and cocoyam (Colocasia esculenta) using oven dry as the heat source. Fresh tubers were washed, peeled, sliced to 3-5mm thickness, blanched at 85^{0}C for 3minutes, and oven-dried at 60^{O}C for 12-14hours to constant weight. Dried chips were milled and sieved through 250um mesh. Composite flours were formulated for yam, sweet potato and cocoyam at ratios of 100:0:0, 80:10:10, and 60:20:20 with 100% yam flour, sweet potato flour and cocoyam flour as control. Proximate analysis was carried out using AOAC (2019) methods for moisture, ash, crude protein, crude fat, crude fibre, and carbohydrate by difference. Sensory evaluation of 'amala" prepared from each blennds were evaluated by 20 trained panelists using 9-point hedonic scale for colour, taste, appearance, aroma, and overall acceptability. Data were analyzed by one-way ANOVA at p≤0.05. Moisture content decreased significantly from 9.34% blend of 80:10:10 to 7.08% in 100% sweet potato flour, improving shelf stability. Crude protein increased from 3.55% to 5.98%, ash from 3.06% to 3.18%, and crude fibre 2.50% to 14.10% as blends of 80:10:10 and 100% sweet potato inclusion increased, while carbohydrate from 71.8%-81.35%. Oven drying retained higher nutrient compared to other methods, ranged recorded and the highest protein 5.98%, and ash 3.18% and fat content from 80:10:10 (2.23%) was noticed. Sensory scores for colour 10(50.0%), appearance 9(45.0%), aroma 8(40.0%), and overall acceptability 14(70.0%)was recorded in cocoyam flour using 100%. Sample D had highest in colour10(50.0%) and overall acceptability 14(70.0%). Lastly sample D had highest in taste 9(45.0%). It can be concluded that flour produced from cocoyam and 80:10: 10 composite using oven drying improved nutritional quality and maintained acceptable sensory properties at up to 10% substitution. This flour provides a cost-effective, nutrient-dense alternative to 100% yam flour for food security and value addition.
Keywords: *Proximate, Sensory, Sweet potato, Cocoyam, Flour, Oven-dried, Composite.*

Introduction

Yam *(Dioscora spp.)* flour, commonly called "yam flour" or "elubo" is a staple carbohydrate source in West Africa due to its energy density, ease of storage, and culinary versatility. However, 100% yam flour is often limited by post-harvest losses, high cost, and low protein content. Composite flour technology offers a way to improving nutritional quality, reduce cost, and diversify utilization of underutilized root and tuber crops such as sweet potato *(Ipomea batatas)* and cocoyam *(Colocasia esculenta and Xanthosoma sagittifolium)*. Root and tuber crops play significant role in food security and nutrition in many developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Among these crops, yam, sweet potato, and cocoyam are widely cultivated and consumed because of their high carbohydrate content and ability to provide energy (Ogunlakin *et al;* 2012). These crops serve as important raw materials for the production of flour and other value-added food products.

Yam flour is a popular processed food product obtained from yam tubers through peeling, slicing, drying, milling, and sieving. It is commonly used in the preparation of amala, a staple food widely consumed in Nigeria. However, the increasing cost and seasonal availability of yam have necessitated the exploration of alternative root crops such as sweet potato and cocoyam for flour production (Oluwafemi *et al.,* 2025). The blending of different root crop flours offers opportunities to improving nutritional quality, diversify food products, and reduce production costs asserted by Offia-Olua *et al.,* 2023).

Sweet potato *(Ipomoea batatas)* is an important root crop known for its high carbohydrate content, dietary fibre, vitamins, especially beta-carotene, and antioxidant compounds (Makhuvha *et al.,* 2024). Cocoyam is also valued for its digestible starch, minerals, and dietary fibre illustrated by Chinasa &

Ngwoke, (2025). The incorporation of sweet potato and cocoyam into yam flour production may enhance the nutritional composition and functional properties of the final product (Okache *et al.*, 2025). Drying is one of the most important operations in flour production because it reduces moisture content, inhibits microbial growth, and prolongs shelf life. Oven drying is commonly used method due to its controlled temperature conditions, uniform heat distribution, and effectiveness in preserving product quality according to Tilahun & Mequanint, (2024). The use of oven-dried heat sources can improve efficiency and produce flour with desirable physicochemical characteristics.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to determine the proximate and sensory evaluation of yam flour produced from composite flour of sweet potato and cocoyam using oven dried heat sources. The specific objectives are to:

i. produce yam flour from blends of yam, sweet potato, and cocoyam at different substitution levels using oven drying
ii. determine the proximate composition of the composite yam flour produced from yam, sweet potato, and cocoyam
iii. evaluate the sensory attributes of the products made from the composite yam flour using 9-point hedonic scale and
iv. compare the proximate and sensory evaluation results with 100% yam flour control.

Materials and methods

Materials

Fresh mature tubers of yam *(Dioscorea rotundata),* Orange-fleshed sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas), and cocoyam *(Colocasia esculenta)* were procured from Lanfenwa Market in Abeokuta, Ogun State. During peak of the harvesting season all tubers were free from mechanical damage, insect infestation, and microbial spoilage.

Stages of processing tubers (yam, sweet potato, and cocoyam) into flour using oven drying methods

i. Fresh tuber were sorted to remove damaged, decayed, and undersized tubers
ii. Selected tubers were washed in running potable water with gentle scrubbing to remove soil, latex, and adhering debris.
iii. Washed tubers were manually peeled with stainless steel knife to remove periderm.
iv. Peeled tubers were rewashed and immediately dipped in 0.5% sodium metabisulphite solution for 5 minutes.
v. Peeled tubers were sliced into uniform chips of 3-5mm thickness using a mechanical slicer.
vi. Slices were blanched in hot water at 85^0C for 3 minutes.
vii. Blanched chips were spread in a single layer on perforated stainless steel trays to allow air circulation
viii. Drying was done in a hot air cabinet oven at 60^0C for 12-14 hours until constant weight was achieved.
ix. Dried chips were removed and allowed to cool to room temperature at 28^OC in desiccators for 30 minutes.
x. Cooled chips were milled into flour using a hammer mill fitted with 2mm screen
xi. Milled flour was sieved through a 250um mesh sieve to obtain fine, uniform flour.
xii. Flour was packaged separately in low-density polyethylene LDPE pouches, heat-sealed, labeled, and stored at room temperature.

Sensory evaluation produced from composite flour of yam, sweet potato and cocoyam

A total of twenty (20) trained panelists were used consisting of staff in the Department of Home and Rural Economics of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora in Oyo State. The sensory attributes of the yam flour produced into paste (amala) were examined one after the other with soups like ewedu with stew, efo riro, and egusi and these attributes were assess using 9-point hedonic

scale ranging from like extremely (9) to dislike extremely (1) with the measurement with the characteristic of colour, taste, appearance, aroma, and overall acceptability.

Result of the sensory evaluation of flours produced from composite flour of sweet potato and cocoyam

Sample A: Result on sensory evaluation of yam flour (Control)

Parameter	Score	Colour	Taste	Appearance	Aroma	Overall acceptability
Like extremely	9	13(65.0)	8(40.0)	6(30.0)	9(45.0)	8(40.0)
Like very much	8	6(30.0)	8(40.0)	11(55.0)	8(40.0)	11(55.0)
Like moderately	7	1(5.0)	3(15.0)	2(10.0)	2(10.0)	1(5.0)
Like slightly	6	00	1(5.0)	00	00	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	1(5.0)	1(5.0)	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field survey; 2026

Sample B: Result on sensory evaluation of paste using (100% cocoyam flour)

Parameter	Score	Colour	Taste	Appearance	Aroma	Overall acceptability
Like extremely	9	10(50.0)	8(40.0)	9(45.0)	7(35.0)	5(25.0)
Like very much	8	9(45.0)	6(30.0)	6(30.0)	8(40.0)	14(70.0)
Like moderately	7	00	5(25.0)	5(25.0)	3(15.0)	1(5.0)
Like slightly	6	1(5.0)	1(5.0)	00	2(10.0)	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field survey; 2026

Sample C: Result on sensory evaluation of paste using (100% sweet potato flour)

Parameter	Score	Colour	Taste	Appearance	Aroma	Overall acceptability
Like extremely	9	9(45.0)	6(30.0)	7(35.0)	8(40.0)	7(35.0)
Like very much	8	5(25.0)	9(45.0)	6(30.0)	6(30.0)	8(40.0)
Like moderately	7	5(25.0)	5(25.0)	6(30.0)	6(30.0)	5(25.0)
Like slightly	6	1(5.0)	00	1(5.0)	00	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field survey; 2026

Sample D: Result on sensory evaluation of paste using (80% yam flour +10% sweet potato flour 10% cocoyam flour)

Parameter	Score	Colour	Taste	Appearance	Aroma	Overall acceptability
Like extremely	9	4(20.0)	4(20.0)	5(25.0)	6(30.0)	2(10.0)
Like very much	8	10(50.0)	7(35.0)	8(40.0)	7(35.0)	14(70.0)
Like moderately	7	6(30.0)	8(40.0)	5(25.0)	5(25.0)	4(20.0)
Like slightly	6	00	1(5.0)	2(10.0)	1(5.0)	00
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	1(5.0)	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field survey; 2026

Sample E: Result on sensory evaluation of paste using (60% yam flour +20%sweet potato flour+ 20% cocoyam flour)

Parameter	Score	Colour	Taste	Appearance	Aroma	Overall acceptability
Like extremely	9	5(25.0)	5(25.0)	3(15.0)	5(25.0)	5(25.0)
Like very much	8	5(25.0)	8(40.0)	8(40.0)	4(20.0)	5(25.0)
Like moderately	7	8(40.0)	6(30.0)	6(30.0)	6(30.0)	9(45.0)

Like slightly	6	2(10.0)	1(5.0)	3(15.0)	4(20.0)	1(5.0)
Neither like nor Dislike	5	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike slightly	4	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike moderately	3	00	00	00	1(5.0)	00
Dislike very much	2	00	00	00	00	00
Dislike extremely	1	00	00	00	00	00
TOTAL		**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**	**20(100.0)**

Source: Field survey; 2026

Colour: The colour on the sensory evaluate of flour paste using different percentage of yam, sweet potato, and cocoyam flour ranged and the highest score was noticed from sample B which is the production of flour paste using 100% cocoyam flour and sample D (production of paste using 80% yam flour +10% sweet potato and 10% cocoyam flour)with 10(50.0%), 9 and 8 in score and like extremely and like very much indicated that the paste was liked and accepted in terms of colour by the trained panelists.

Taste: The highest taste of flour paste (amala) was recorded from sample C which is the production of paste using 100% sweet potato flour with frequency of 9, percentage of 45.0, 8 in score rate and like very much in parameter denoted as 9(45.0%) indicating that sample C was liked and accepted by the trained panelist in terms of taste

Appearance: The appearance of flour paste in the study varied with different score, frequency and percentage and the highest score was produced from sample B, the production of paste using 100% cocoyam flour with 9(45.0%) indicated that it was accepted in terms of appearance by the consumers.

Aroma: The highest value in term of aroma in the different paste produced was recorded by sample B (100% cocoyam flour) and sample C (100% potato flour) with different in parameter (like very much and like extremely) but with the same frequency and percentage of 8(40.0%) indicated that both samples were liked and accepted in terms of aroma by the taste panelists.

Overall acceptability: In term of colour, taste, appearance, and aroma the overall acceptability on the production of yam, sweet potato and cocoyam flour for paste production indicated that the highest result was recorded sample B (production of paste using 100% cocoyam flour) followed by sample D (production of paste using 80% yam flour +10 % sweet potato flour +10% cocoyam flour) with frequency and percentage denoted as 14(70.0) and this indicated that sample B and D were totally acceptable by the trained panelists.

Results on the proximate analysis of yam, sweet potato, and cocoyam flour

Samples	Moisture (%)	Ash (%)	Protein (%)	Fiber (%)	Fat (%)	Carbohydrate (%)
A	1.45	1.88	1.96	1.38	0.50	92.83
B	15.05	3.18	5.98	0.78	1.33	73.68
C	7.80	2.30	3.50	14.1	0.50	71.8
D	9.34	3.06	3.55	2.50	2.23	79.32
E	12.0	1.30	2.70	1.70	0.95	81.35

Moisture content determination: The highest moisture content was produced sample B which is the production of paste using 100% cocoyam flour and this highest in moisture content means it had much water which is liable to spoil easily and will not last long but the lowest moisture in is sample C the production of paste using 100% potato flour had 7.8% acceptance and may have long life storage.

Ash content determination: The ash content ranges from 3.18% to 1.3% and the highest percentage in term of ash was produced by sample B which is the production of paste using 100% cocoyam for the production of flour with the percentage of 3.18%.

Crude protein content determination: The highest percentage in term of protein content recorded by sample B which is the production of flour using 100% cocoyam flour with the highest was protein content of 5.98% indicated that the sample had the highest percent of protein and good for the repair of worn out tissue in the body system.

Crude fiber content determination: The highest among all the sample of flour produced using different percentage in term of fiber content is from sample C which is the production of flour using 100% potato flour had 14.1% use for specific purpose in the body.

Crude fat content determination: Fat is needed in the body in moderate and the production of flour samples using yam, sweet potato and cocoyam had ranged from 0.5% to 2.23% and the least was produced from sample C which is the production of flour using 100% potato flour and the highest is from sample D which is the production of flour using 80% yam flour +10% sweet potato flour +10% cocoyam flour with (2.23%) and sample E had moderate percent of (0.95%) that is production of flour using 60% yam flour +20% sweet potato +20% cocoyam flour.

Carbohydrate content determination: The highest percentage of carbohydrate content was produced from sample E which is the production of flour using 60% yam flour+ 20% sweet potato flour + 20% cocoyam flour had the highest carbohydrate of 81.35% which means the sample is capable of supplying energy to the body for daily activities.

Conclusions

The study concluded that the production of composite flours from sweet potato and cocoyam using oven dry method produced nutritionally rich and sensorially acceptable products suitable for amala preparation. The proximate analysis showed that the composite flours contained appreciable levels of protein, fiber, ash, and carbohydrates, indicating good balanced diet and potential health benefits. The oven-drying methods effectively reduced moisture content, enhancing shelf stability and preventing microbial spoilage. The sensory evaluation revealed that (amala) prepared from the blended flours had desirable colour, smooth texture, pleasant aroma, and good overall acceptability especially at moderate blending ratios. This indicated that combining sweet potato and cocoyam flours can produce an acceptable substitute for traditional yam flour amala. Overall, the use of oven drying sweet potato and cocoyam flours in composite form is a viable approach to developing nutritious, cost-effective, and locally sourced food products that can contributes to food diversification and security.

Recommendations

Hence, the use of sweet potato and cocoyam is therefore recommended for composite flour production to substitute yam flour consumption.

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PREVALENCE OF INTESTINAL PARASITE IN DAILY CONSUMED GREEN LEAFY VEGETABLES SOLD IN TWO MARKETS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IGBOORA

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Abstract

Vegetables are a crucial component of every diet and a good source of vitamins and minerals. Many raw vegetables, such as salads, are consumed, and consuming raw vegetables contaminated with human and animal feces can lead to a variety of intestinal parasite diseases. The goal of this study was to investigate the prevalence of intestinal parasites in daily consumed leafy vegetables found and sold for human consumption in two markets in Ibarapa central. 120 leafy vegetables (Waterleaf, Quil grass, Spinach, White juice) were collected from two markets in Ibarapa Central. The vegetables were sorted, labelled, and evaluated in the laboratory after being completely washed with distilled water, examined for sediment, staining, and microscopically examined. Chromatographic immunoassay tests were also used to confirm parasite identification. Cyst of Entamoeba histolytica is higher (23.7± 1.2) in water leaf purchased from Oja Oba compare to other vegetables in the two markets. E. histolytica is more common in all the vegetables but very high in waterleaf. Ova of Ascaris lumbricoides is also higer in Spinach (14.7 ± 1.5) bought in Ayeda but low in Quilgrass (2.3 ± 0.6) bought in Oja Oba. It was found that Cyst of E. histolytical and ova of A. Lumbricoides are common parasites in all the vegetables studies. Miracidial of Tapeworm were only found in waterleaf and white juice. It was highly prevalence in Quill Grass (5.7 ±3.7) then white juice (2.0 ± 1.0). Hookworm is the least common. It only present in Quill grass and white juice, but the number present is high (5.7 ± 3.7 in Quill grass. There was no statistically significant relationship between the kind of vegetable, seasonal parasite prevalence in green vegetables, and parasite type. These findings highlight the need of monitoring vegetables grown from parasitic-endemic areas. As a result, it is critical to establish strategies and control measures to limit the likelihood of parasites in food-borne diseases.

Keywords: *contamination; intestinal parasites; leafy vegetables*

Introduction

Intestinal parasitic infections, particularly soil-transmitted helminths, remain a major public health problem worldwide, especially in lower- and middle-income countries (Duedu et al., 2014; World Health Organization, 2002). These infections can cause diarrhea, malnutrition, anemia, and even death, particularly among vulnerable populations, including young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and immunosuppressed individuals (Brooker *et al*., 2004; Djuardi et al., 2021; Sch¨ar *et al*., 2013). Ingestion of contaminated food and water is a common transmission route for intestinal parasites (IPs), including protozoa and helminths (Yahia et al., 2023). Vegetables are a known source of contamination with these parasites, as they are often consumed raw or minimally processed (Altwaim *et al*., 2023; Bekele and Shumbej, 2019; Kpoda et al., 2022; Punsawad et al., 2019). Several studies have documented the presence of IPs in fresh vegetables across various regions, including Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America (Abougrain et al., 2010; Bekele and Shumbej, 2019; Caradonna et al., 2017; Falcone et al., 2023; Ferreira et al., 2018 (Gemechu et al., 2023Robertson and Gjerde, 2001Sia Su et al., 2012; Yahia et al., 2023). Both intestinal protozoa and helminths, such as *Blastocystis* sp., *Entamoeba* spp., *Giardia* spp., *Ascaris* spp., *Taenia* spp., hookworm larvae, *Strongyloides* spp., and *Trichuris* spp., have been reported in contaminated fresh vegetables (Abougrain et al., 2010; Falcone et al., 2023; Mohamed et al., 2016; Punsawad et al., 2019). Notably, the highest prevalence of protozoan contamination has been observed in Asia (Eslahi et al., 2024). Thus, the location and type of markets are crucial factors influencing the transmission of infectious pathogens (IPs).

Nevertheless, limited information is available on the prevalence and distribution of these parasites in fresh vegetables in Igboora and its surroundings. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the prevalence and distribution of intestinal parasites in fresh vegetables in Igboora and its environment.

Intestinal parasitic infections continue to be a health concern worldwide. Furthermore, they can also impair the physical and mental growth of children (Kozan et al., 2005; Stephenson et al., 2000; Stoltzfus et al., 2004).In the past decade, incidences of human parasitic diseases have also been attributed to the consumption of raw fruits and vegetables (Drake et al., 2000). It is estimated that approximately one billion individuals are infected with intestinal helminths such as *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Trichura trichiura* (795 million), and hookworms (740 million) worldwide (Guyatt, 2000). Inadequate sanitation, unclean water, and substandard sanitary conditions may be playing an important role by contributing to infections with medically significant parasites including intestinal worms and protozoa (De Silva et al., 2003; Wegayehu et al., 2013). In addition, substandard agricultural practices during production, transport, processing, and preparation by handlers could also contribute to produce contamination. Thus, the location and type of markets are crucial factors influencing the transmission of infectious pathogens (IPs).

Materials and methods
Experimental site

This study was carried out in Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The college is located at the extreme of the town with latitude 7^0 15 North and longitude 3^0 East of the equator with annual rain fall of 1278mm and average annual temperature of 270c (Sanusi *et al.,* 2011)

Experimental Design

Four samples of green vegetables were selected in this study. A total of 120 leafy vegetables from samples of the following vegetables were collected for this study. Talinium trangulare (Water leaf), *Celosia argenta* (quill grass –Soko yokoto), *Amaranthus Spinosus* (spinach – Tete), *Corchorus olitorius* (white Jute –Ewedu). These vegetables will be bought randomly from Ayeda market, Idere and Oba market, Igboora brought to the laboratory.

Procedure for sample preparation and washing
The vegetable samples were transported to laboratory in plastic bags. According to the traditional procedure which is generally used for washing vegetables, they were immersed immediately in tap water inside a sink and left approximately 6-7 min for sedimentation of mud and dust. Then, it was gently collected and put in a plastic basket. A subset of each sample (250g) was chopped into small pieces, put in a plastic basket and were washed with physiological saline solution (0.95% Nacl) and the washing water/saline left overnight. A bits of leaves need to be removed and volume of supernatant also were removed and the remainder were transferred to 5ml test tubes and centrifuge at 2000 for 20 min. Supernatant has to be discarded into disinfectant jar as described by Downes and Ito (2003).

Detection of parasites
The sediment was mixed and examined as follow:
Simple Smear; a drop of the sediment was applied on the center of a clean grease-free slide. A clean cover slip placed gently to avoid air bubbles and over flooding. The preparation was examined under a light microscope Using x10 and x40 objectives. Iodine smear; a drop of the sediment was mixed a drop of lugol's iodine solution and examined as in simple smear. Simple and iodine smears was used for detection of parasitic eggs, cysts and larva. The process was systematically repeated until the mixture in each. Tube has been exhausted. Eggs cysts and oocysts of parasites found under the light microscope was identified as previously described by Dowines and Ito (2003). Staining of sediment smear was performed by modified Zeihl-Neelsen (Broundson 1904) as modified trichrome (Kokoskin 1994) to detect protozoal parasitic oocysts and spores of microsporidium spp. Each parasitic eggs, cycsts or oocysts present ineach sample was enumerated and recorded. Data was analyzed statistically using descriptive statistics, two sided t-test and ANOVA.

Result and discussion

Table 4.1: Parasite isolates counts of the vegetable in the two markets in Igbora

Vegetable	Parasite Isolate	Markets	
		Ayeda	Oja Oba
Waterleaf	Cyst of E*ntamoeba histolytical*	15.0 ± 1.0	23.7± 1.2*
(Talinum triangulare)	Ova of *Ascaris lumbriciodes*	10.0 ± 2.0	11.3 ± 1.2
	Miracidial of Tapeworm	2.3 ± 0.6	2.3 ± 0.6
Quil grass (*Celosia argenta)*	-	-	-
	Cyst of *Entamoeba histolytical*	9.0 ± 1. 0	9.0 ± 1.0
	Ova of *Ascaris lumbricoides*	3.3 ± 0. 6	2.3 ±0.6
	Hook worm	-	5.7 ± 3.7*
Spinarch	Cyst of *Entamoeba*	-	-
Amaranthus	*histolytica*	5.3 ± 0.6	2.3 ± 0.6
	Ova of Ascaris	14.7 ± 1.5*	3.0 ± 1.0
	lumbricoides -	-	
White juice	Cyst of *Entamoeba*	10 .0 ± 2.0 *	2.0 ± 1.0
Corchorus olitorius	*histolytuca*	-	-
	Ova of Ascaris	5.0 ± 1.0	3.3 ± 0.6
	lumbricoides	-	-
	Miracidial of Tapeworm	2.0 ±1.0	-
	Hookworm	-	2.0 ± 1.0

Table 2: Comparison of quantity of parasite between the vegetable in the two markets Vegetable

Parasite		Ayeda Mkt	Oja Oba Mkt	T-statistics	P-Value
Waterleaf	Cyst of Eh	15.0 ± 1.0	23.7 ± 1.2	9.827	0.001*
Talium	Ova of Al	10.0 ± 2.0	11.3 ± 1.2	1.000	0.374
triangulare	Miracidity	2.3 ± 0.6	2.3 ± 0.6	0.000	1.000
-	Tapeworm	-	-	-	-
Quill grass	Cyst of Eh	9.0 ± 1.0	9.0 ± 1.0	0.000	1.000
Celosia	Ova of Al	3.3 ±0.6	2.3 ± 0.6	0.00	1.000
argentia	-	-	-	-	-
Spinarch	Cyst of eh	5.3 ± 0.6	2.3 ± 0.6	6.344	4.000
Amaranthus	Ova of Al	14.7 ± 1.5	3.0 ± 1.0	11.068	<0.001*
spinosus	-	-	-	-	-
White juice	Cyst of Eh	10.0 ± 2.0	2.0 ± 1.0	6.197	0.003*
Corchorus	Ova of A1	5.0 ±1.0	3.3 ± 0.6	2.500	0.067
olitorius					

Note: AL = Ascaris lubricoides, Eh = Entamoeba histolytica

Table 3: Parasite Isolated

Vegetable	Market	Isolate
Waterleaf	Oja Oba	Cyst of *Entamoeba histolytica*
		Oval of *Ascaris lumbricoides*
		Miracidial of Tapeworm
Quil grass		Ova of *A. Lumbricoides.*
		Cyst of *E. Hystolilya*
Spinarch		*E. Histolytica*
		A. Lumbricoides
White juice		Cyst of *E. Histolytica,*
		Ova of *A lumbricoides,*

		Miracidia of Tapeworm.	
Waterleaf	Ayeda	Cyst of *E. histolytica,* Miracidal of Tapeworm	
Quill grass		Cyst of *E. histolytical, ova of A.*	*lumbricoides,* Hookworm
Spinarch		*Cyst of E. Histolytica, ova of A.*	*Lumbricoides*, Hookworm

Table 4: Prevalence of Parasites found in the two markets

S/N	Parasite	Total number of Parasite
1.	Cyst of Entamoeba histolytica	63 (60.0%)
2.	Ova of Ascaris lumbricoides	30 (28.6%)
3.	Miracidal of Tapeworm	07 (6.7%)
4.	Ova of Hookworm	05 (4.8%)
Total		**105**

Table 1 revealed that cyst of *Entamoeba histolytica* is higher (23.7± 1.2) in water leaf purchased from Oja Oba compare to other vegetables in the two markets. *E. histolytica* is more common in all the vegetables but very high in waterleaf. This might be because Ayeda market is not as developed as the market located within Igboora town, which are relatively more urbanized and may benefit from better infrastructure, improved sanitation and access to safer water sources. Ova of *Ascaris lumbricoides* is also higer in Spinarch (14.7 ± 1.5) bought in Ayeda but low in Quilgrass (2.3 ± 0.6) bought in Oja Oba. It was found that Cyst of *E. histolytical* and ova of *A. Lumbricoides* are common parasites in all the vegetables studies. Miracidial of Tapeworm were only found in waterleaf and white juice. It was highly prevalence in Quill Grass (5.7 ±3.7) then white juice (2.0 ± 1.0). Hookworm is the least common. It only present in Quill grass and white juice, but the number present is high (5.7 ± 3.7 in Quill grass.

Table 2 compare the count of parasite isolated between the vegetables in the two markets. The number of cyst of Entamoeba histolytica in water leaf from Oja Oba is significantly higher (23.7 ± 1.2) than those bought at Ayeda market (15.0 ± 1.0). it is even higher than the number isolated from other vegetables in the two markets. The result shows significant difference, $P < 0.005$. The least value of E. hystolytical was obtained from white juice (2.0 ± 1.0).

There is a correlation between the cyst of E. histolytical and waterleaf. There is significant different. $P < 0.05$. Oval of Ascaris lumbricoides were more prevalent in spinarch from Ayeda market 14.7 ± 1.5 when compare to that Oja Oba (11.3 ± 1.2). a significant is observed $P < 0.001$. The lowest number of the parasite was obtained in Quill grass (2.3 ± 0.6). Miracidial of tapeworm was only isolated from waterleaf bought from the two market and the same number were present. There is no significant difference $P>0.005$

Table 3 show parasites Isolated from vegetable in the two markers. Cyst of Entamoeba histolytical are isolated in all the vegetables in the two markets. This indicated that the parasite is a common parasite in vegetables. Spinarch does not contain A. Lumbricoides. The table shows that A. Lumbricoides is second most prevalence. Hookworm is holy present in Quill grass and white juice in Oja Oba. Miracidial of Tapeworm is isolated in water leaf bought from the two markets, and white juice from Ayede market. It is shown from the table that miracidial is least common. Findings from the table also shows that water leaf is the only vegetable hat contain a lot of parasites.

Table 4 shows comparative prevalence of Parasites found in each markets. There was high prevalence of cyst of Entamoeba histolytica in Oja Oba 60.0% than Ayeda market 28.6%. This can be justified because the major product sold in Oja Oba is mainly farm produce which may be from any Table 1 presents the parasite isolates counts of the vegetable in two markets. The Table revealed that cyst of *Entamoeba histolytica* is higher (23.7± 1.2) in water leaf purchased from Oja Oba compare to other vegetables in the two markets. *Entamoeba histolytica* is more common in all the vegetables but very high in waterleaf. Ova of *Ascaris lumbricoides* is also higer in Spinarch (14.7 ± 1.5) bought in Ayeda but low in Quilgrass (2.3 ± 0.6) bought in Oja Oba. It was found that Cyst of *Entamoeba histolytica* and ova of *Ascaris lumbricoides* are common parasites in all the vegetables studies.

Miracidial of Tapeworm were only found in waterleaf and white juice. It was highly prevalence in Quill Grass (5.7 ±3.7) then white juice (2.0 ± 1.0). Hookworm is the least common. It only present in Quill grass and white juice, but the number present is high (5.7 ± 3.7 in Quill grass.

Discussion

Vegetables are an essential component of a healthy diet, and many of them are consumed raw. Thus, they may play a crucial role in the transmission of parasitic pathogens spread by food (Geary and Haque, 2021; Kpoda et al., 2022; Nazemi et al., 2012). Examining vegetables sold in markets and stores for parasite contamination could highlight improper vegetable harvesting and handling practices and highlight the prevalence of intestinal illnesses among local entities (Alhabbal, 2015). The recovery of parasites from vegetables enriched our perception of the possible source of pathogenic parasite acquisition in this study area. Several previous studies on the parasitic contamination of vegetables have been conducted in neighboring countries and other cities in Oyo State. However, to our knowledge, no studies have been reported in Igboora, A total of 120 vegetable samples were examined for gastrointestinal parasites, out of which 105 samples were contaminated, representing 67.1% prevalence (Table 4). This rate is higher than figures reported in previous studies conducted across Nigeria.

The result in Table 1 revealed that cyst of *Entamoeba histolytica* is higher (23.7± 1.2) in water leaf purchased from Oja Oba compare to other vegetables in the two markets. *E. histolytica* is more common in all the vegetables but very high in waterleaf. This might be because waterleaf can grow in anywhere which might have contaminated with feacal samples. Ova of *Ascaris lumbricoides* is also higer in Spinarch (14.7 ± 1.5) bought in Ayeda but low in Quilgrass (2.3 ± 0.6) bought in Oja Oba. It was found that Cyst of *E. histolytical* and ova of *A. Lumbricoides* are common parasites in all the vegetables studies. Miracidial of Tapeworm were only found in waterleaf and white juice. It was highly prevalence in Quill Grass (5.7 ±3.7) then white juice (2.0 ± 1.0). Hookworm is the least common. It only present in Quill grass and white juice, but the number present is high (5.7 ± 3.7 in Quill grass. This might be because Ayeda market is not as developed as the market located within Igboora town, which are relatively more urbanized and may benefit from better infrastructure, improved sanitation and access to safer water sources. In contrast, Ayeda market, being situated in a more rural setting, may experience limited access to clean water, poorer waste disposal systems and less regulatory oversight on hygiene practices. Similarly, lower prevalence rates of 41.85%, 37.4% and 33.3% were reported by Dawet *et al.* (2019), Okunola (2020), and Fumilayo *et al.* (2020) in Jos, Ede and Ilorin respectively. This rate is higher than figures reported in previous studies conducted across Nigeria. Adejayan and Morenikeji (2015) reported a prevalence of 11% in Ibadan, while Okpala *et al.* (2016) documented a contamination rate of 42.4% in Ekpoma Market. Similarly, lower prevalence rates of 41.85%, 37.4% and 33.3% were reported by Dawet *et al.* (2019), Okunola (2020), and Fumilayo *et al.* (2020) in Jos, Ede and Ilorin respectively. There was high prevalence of cyst of *Entamoeba histolytica* in Oja Oba 60.0% than Ayeda market 28.6% (Table 4). This can be justified because the major product sold in Oja Oba is mainly farm produce which may be from any type of farms.

Similar studies conducted in other parts of the world also reported lower contamination levels. Eraky *et al.* (2014) recorded a prevalence of 29.6% in Egypt, Balarak *et al.* (2016) found 30.0% of vegetables in Iran, Vizon *et al.* (2019) reported 40.3% in the Philippines and Bekele *et al.* (2020) documented 36.3% in Ethiopia. However, the prevalence in this study is lower than prevalence rate of 73.5% and 82.69% reported by Fagbenro *et al.* (2016) and Ozor *et al*., (2024) in Abeokuta and Jos respectively The variation in prevalence reported in studies from other regions may be attributed to differences in sample sizes, the techniques used and level of sanitation.

The results show that five parasite species (*Ascaris* sp., hookworm, *Strongyloides* sp., *Trichuris trichiura* and coccidian) were detected in vegetables sampled. The identified parasites are consistent with finding of Lawal *et al.*, (2015) in Zaria, and Sounyo and Gboeloh, (2021) in Port Harcourt.

Table 3 show parasites Isolated from vegetable in the two markers. Cyst of Entamoeba histolytical are isolated in all the vegetables in the two markets. This indicated that the parasite is a common parasite in vegetables. Spinach does not contain *A. Lumbricoides*. The table shows that *A. Lumbricoides* is second most prevalence. Hookworm is holy present in Quill grass and white juice in Oja Oba. Miracidial of Tapeworm is isolated in water leaf bought from the two markets, and white juice from Ayede market. It is shown from the table that miracidial is least common. Findings from the table also shows that water

leaf is the only vegetable contain a lot of parasites. Most of the parasites identified in this study were Helminth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the presence of intestinal parasites in some fresh leafy green vegetables in Ibarapa Central Local Government indicates a potential risk for individuals who consume raw vegetables on a regular basis. The incidence of food-borne parasitic infections is concerning and underscores the need to implement effective control techniques aimed at reducing disease transmission. These interventions may include improved sanitation practices during cultivation, harvesting and distribution of produce, as well as targeted education campaigns focused on safe food handling practices among consumers. Such measures are strongly advocated to mitigate risks associated with parasitic infections linked to consumption of contaminated fruits and vegetables in this region. Expanding academic research in this area could also yield insights into novel strategies that can further reduce these risks while ensuring availability of nutritious produce options for all consumers across diverse demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds within Idere communities.

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ADSORPTIVE REMOVAL OF SELECTED HEAVY METALS FROM SYNTHETIC WASTEWATER USING *COCOS NUCIFERA* (COCONUT) SHELL-DERIVED ACTIVATED CARBON

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Abstract

The increasing discharge of heavy metals into the environments poses significant environmental and public health challenges, necessitating the development of efficient, sustainable and low-cost treatment technologies. This study investigated the adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} from wastewater using activated carbon prepared from Cocos nucifera (coconut) shell. The adsorbent was produced through chemical activation with 3 M sodium hydroxide ($NaOH_{(aq)}$), followed by neuralisation and adsorption experiments. The impact of parameters such as adsorbent dosage (0.5-2.5g), temperature (35-75^{o}C), contact time (30-150mins) and initial metal ion concentration (20-100ppm) on removal efficiency of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} were evaluated using one factor at a time approach. Residual metal concentration was determined using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer. The results showed that adsorption efficiency increased with factors investigated except with initial metal ion concentration. The optimum removal efficiency achieved for the two ions were, 81.43% for Ni^{2+} and 88.48% for Cd^{2+} at an adsorbent dosage of 2.5g, 63.00% and 75.10 % at 75^{o}C and 61.37% and 65.58% after 150mins contact time, respectively. Conversely, increasing the initial metal ion concentration from 20 to 100ppm reduced Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} removal efficiency from 83.01% to 29.00% and 90.00% to 40.40%, respectively. Cd^{2+} consistently exhibited higher adsorption efficiency than Ni^{2+} throughout the study, under identical experimental conditions, indicating a greater affinity of coconut shell derived adsorbent for Cd^{2+}. The findings demonstrate that Cocos nucifera shell derived adsorbent is an effective, environmentally friendly, and economically viable biosorbent for the removal of heavy metal from contaminated water.

Keywords: *Adsorption, Activated carbon, Cocos nucifera, Heavy metals, and Wastewater*

Introduction

Water pollution is the release of chemical, physical or biological materials into natural water bodies, leading to water pollution and adversely affect aquatic organisms and human health. (Babatunde and Ibrahim, 2020). It is a well-recognised environmental issue next to air pollution due to persistent discharge of toxic pollutants, including heavy metals, organic, and other non-biodegradable compounds which not only disrupts aquatic ecosystems but also renders water unsuitable for domestic, agricultural, and industrial uses, thereby threatening food security, biodiversity, and public health (Ekong and Ojiwegbamayo, 2023). Among the various pollutants, heavy metals are of particular concern because they are non-biodegradable, persistent, toxic, and capable of bioaccumulating in living organisms (Shafiq *et al*., 2018). Heavy metals such as nickel (Ni), cadmium (Cd), lead (Pb), copper (Cu) and among others are frequently detected in wastewater generated from various activities (Anjum, 2019; Zhou *et al*., 2020). Their accumulation in living organisms poses severe ecological and health risks, including organ damage, neurological disorders, carcinogenic effects but few to mention (*Shafiq et al*., 2018; Velarde *et al*., 2023; Fu and Xi, 2020). To regulate the uncontrollable discharge of these hazardous pollutants in wastewater, conventional techniques like membrane filtration, ion exchange, chemical precipitation, coagulation-flocculation, electrochemical treatment, reverse osmosis, and solvent extraction have been employed (Ukay *et al*., 2025).

However, the relatively high operating and production cost as well as secondary environmental pollution of conventional methods of heavy metal removal have encouraged researchers to investigate environmentally friendly, economical and renewable biomass materials as alternative precursors (Kolur

et al., 2019; *Bakar et al*., 2021). Among these approaches, adsorption process with activated carbon precursor has gained considerable attention because of its well-developed pore structure, exceptionally high surface area, excellent chemical stability, simplicity and ease of operation, high efficiency, and its cost effective (Gupta *et al*., 2014; Gunawan *et al*., 2020). Adsorption is a surface phenomenon in which molecules or ions (adsorbates) sticks to the surface of a solid material (adsorbent) (Ratnadipa *et al*., 2025). The process occurs mainly through two mechanisms: physisorption and chemisorption. Physisorption involves weak van der Waals interactions and is generally reversible and absorbed heat energy, whereas chemisorption involves the formation of stronger chemical bonds, making it selective, irreversible, and usually exothermic (Huang and Koseoglu 1993; BrbootI *et al*., 2011; Tang *et al*., 2016).

Several studies have demonstrated that activated carbon produced from coconut shell exhibits a remarkable adsorption performance for the removal of metal ions from aqueous solution (Kumar *et al*., 2017). Despite this, further research is required to evaluate its adsorption characteristics under different operating parameters for the removal of nickel and cadmium ions from aqueous solutions. This work was therefore set out to investigate the adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} from wastewater using activated carbon prepared from *Cocos nucifera* (coconut) shell with the aim of effectiveness of the adsorbing substance in the adsorption of heavy metals.

Materials and methods

Materials and reagents: The carbonaceous material *Cocos nucifera* (coconut) shell was obtained from Towobowo, a local market situated at Igboora, Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, South-western part of Nigeria with Latitude 7.4300° N and Longitude 3.2800° E. Residual metal concentration was determined using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (AAS).

Preparation of carbonaceous adsorbent: Impurities on the surface of the shells were handpicked while the fine particles were thoroughly rinsed off the sample with distilled water, dried at 105°C until constant weight was attained. The dried sample was pulverized using mortar and pestle to increase its surface area for effective chemical activation. 3 M aqueous solution of NaOH was prepared by dissolving 120 g of NaOH in 1000 ml of distilled water. Approximately 1500 g of pulverized coconut shell was steeped in the prepared aqueous solution of 3M NaOH at atmospheric temperature. For complete activation to take place, the mixture was vigorously mixed for 2 hours and allowed to stand for 24 hours. After that, the excess NaOH in the mixture was repeatedly washed with distilled water and neutralized with 1.0 M HCl (aq) until a pH of 7.4 was reached. The resulting carbonaceous activated carbon from coconut shell was filtered, dried in an oven to eliminate traces of moisture and then stored.

Batch adsorption experiment: Adsorption study for each experimental batch was carried out at room temperature (23±1°C) with 0.5 g adsorbent dosage, adsorbent pH of 7.4, 100 ml of 1000 ppm nickel and cadmium solution and contact time of 30mins. In this work, effect of adsorption dosage, temperature of the mixture, contact time between the adsorbent and heavy metal solution and initial concentration of the solution were studied. Adsorbent dosage range of 0.5 g, 1.0 g, 1.5 g, 2.0 g, 2.5 g was investigated, also range of temperature analysed include 35°C, 45°C, 55°C, 65°C, 75°C, contact time range between 30 minutes to 150 minutes. and working solution of concentration ranging from 20 - 100 ppm (20, 40, 60 80, and 100 ppm) was prepared from each of the stock solution of metal using dilution principle. The dilution equation used is given below:

$$C_1V_1 = C_2V_2 \qquad \text{---------- (1)}$$

One factor at a time method was used to study the effects of adsorption factors to obtain optimum conditions. Considering the effect of adsorbent dosage (g), varying dosage of the adsorbent (g) 0.5, 1.0. 1.5, 2.0, 2.5 were weighed inside different volumetric flask of which, each contain 100ml of 1000ppm metal solution of Ni and Cd ions. The mixtures were placed in a rotary shaker, agitated at 180rpm for 30mins after which it was withdrawn. The resulting mixture was then separated using Whatman No 1 filter paper and unabsorbed heavy metal was assessed with Atomic Adsorption Spectrophotometer (AAS) at Tetra A Analytical Laboratory, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. This was done in duplicate, and the mean value was determined and recorded (APHA, AWWA and WPCF, 1998). The same procedure was repeated for other factors investigated in this study. The

two equations below: equations II and III were respectively employed in determining the biosorption capacity (q_e) and removal efficiency (%) of the prepared biosorbent.

$$q_e = \frac{(Co-Ce)\ X\ V}{m} \quad \text{----------} \quad (2)$$

$$\%R = \frac{Co-Ce}{Co} \text{ X } 100 \quad \text{----------} \quad (3)$$

Where;
q_e = Amount (mg/g) of heavy metal adsorbed at equilibrium per gram of adsorbent,
V (l) = Volume of the solution of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+}
C_o and C_e = Initial and equil. concs (ppm) of heavy metal in the solution, respectively
m = Mass (g) of the adsorbent used and %R = Removal efficiency of the plant based activated carbon (*Cocos nucifera* shell derived activated carbon).

Results and discussion

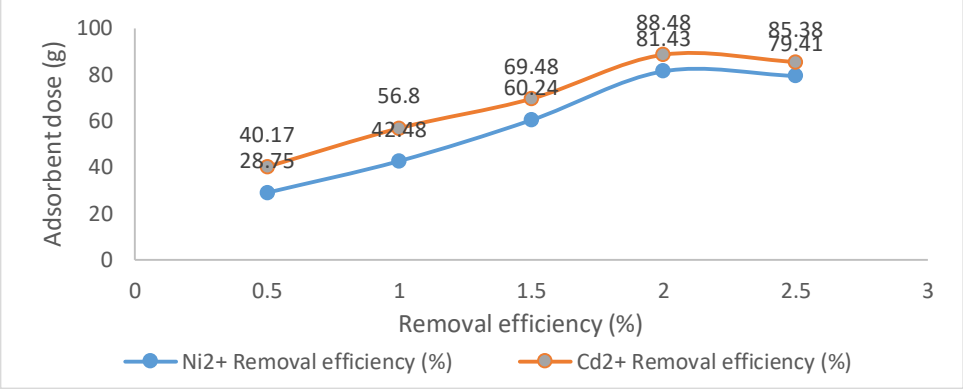


Figure 1: Impact of Adsorbent dosage (g) on adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} using *Cocos nucifera* shell derived activated carbon.

The results in Figure 1 revealed that increasing adsorbent dosage significantly increase the removal efficiency of the two metal ions, although differences in their adsorption rate was observed. At the starting dosage of 0.5 g, Cd^{2+} exhibited a significant higher removal efficiency (40.17%) than that of Ni^{2+} (28.75%) and the trend continue throughout the adsorption process. This indicated that the adsorbent has a substantial greater affinity for Cd^{2+} because it has higher ionic radius and lower hydration energy than Ni^{2+} making it easier for Cd^{2+} to diffuse and adhered to the active adsorbent sites. This result is in accordance with Kumar *et al*. (2017) investigation on biomass derived activated carbons (rice husk) used for Cr^{4+} removal. The trend in the % removal efficiencies of the two metal ions in this study continue to increase with increase quantity of adsorbent dosage from 0.5 to 2.0 g after which a slight decline was observed at a dosage above 2.0 g after equilibrium has been reached. The increase in removal efficiency resulted from more availability of active adsorbent site for metal ion binding and at adsorbent dosage above 2.0 g, removal of metal ions decreased with increasing dosage. This finding, also, corresponds to the findings of Kumar and Jena (2017) who researched the influence of pea nutshell derived activated carbon dose in removing Cr^{4+}. The removal efficiency abruptly increased with dosage until constant was attained. In addition, Özsin *et al.* (2019), report also supported that before equilibrium is attained, the removal of metal ion decreases with increasing dose of the adsorbent.

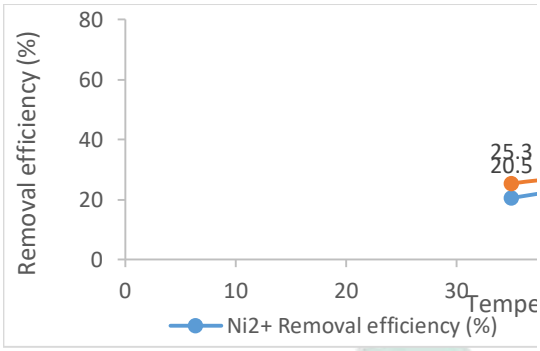


Figure 2: represents the impact of temperature (°C) on the adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} using *Cocos nucifera* shell derived adsorbent.

The result indicated that there was progressive increase in the removal efficiency of the ions: Ni^{2+} (20.5-63 %) and Cd^{2+} (25.3-75.10 %) with temperature ranging from 35 - 75°C, this shows the significance of temperature in the enhancement of adsorption process which suggested the process as an endothermic reaction. High temperature elevates the metal ions kinetic energy thereby easily activating their flow onto the surface of the activated carbon. Increase in temperature also aided the active adsorption sites, encouraged receptiveness and readiness for metal ions interaction by enhancing the pore structure and minimising the boundary layer of the adsorbent particles hereby promoting intraparticle diffusion (Foo and Hameed, 2010).

Furthermore, the ions performance in accordance with increasing temperature is attributed to their physical and chemical characteristics. Cd^{2+} possess higher electronegativity, higher ionic radius and lower hydration energy than Ni^{2+}. Lower hydration energy of divalent cadmium ion facilitates easier adsorbent surface interaction with oxygen containing functional groups. This phenomenon describes the greater % removal efficiency of Cd^{2+} compared to Ni^{2+} under similar operating conditions (Tran *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, activation energy decline with rise in temperature above 55°C thereby resulting in abrupt increase in % removal efficiency for Cd^{2+} and Ni^{2+}. This behaviour was attributed to the chemisorption assisted adsorption where an elevated temperatures incite and increase the activity of the force of attraction between the functional group of the adsorbent and the adsorbate ions (Ayawei *et al.*, 2017).

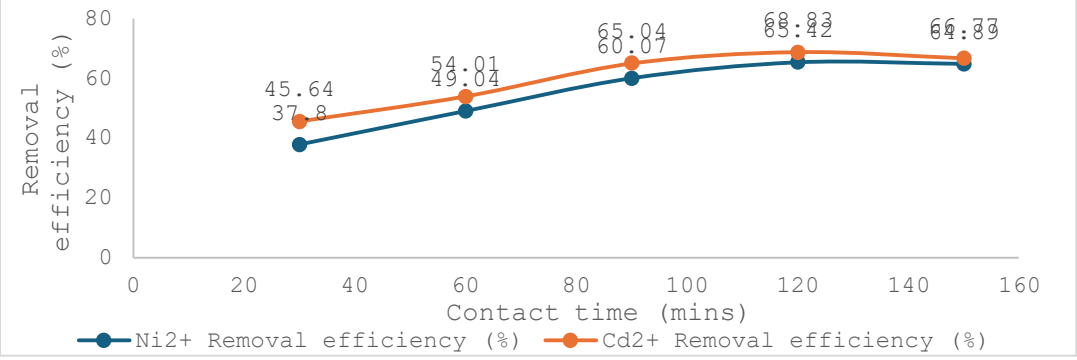


Figure 3: Impact of contact time (mins) on the adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} using *Cocos nucifera* shell derived activated carbon

It was observed in Figure 3, that at 30 minutes, the adherence of the two metal ions (Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+}) onto the adsorbent surface were the lowest, leading to minimum % removal efficiencies (37.80 and 45.64 %) which increases as contact time rises from 30 to 120 minutes and later reduces to (64.89 and 66.77 %) at longest process duration of 150 minutes. The optimum removal efficiency (65.42 and 68.83 %) was observed at 120 minutes when equilibrium was attained. This discovery is in support of the investigation done by Khatoon and Rai (2016). Gradual decrease in metal ions uptake was noticed at 121 minutes after the commencement of the adsorption process. Nevertheless, the decline in Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} removal is in accordance with the research of Dwivedi and Rajput (2014); Bohli *et al.* (2015) who at an elevated contact time, reported reduction in the availability of adsorption sites and the metal ions adsorption declined thereby minimising the percentage removal efficiency of the carbonaceous adsorbent.

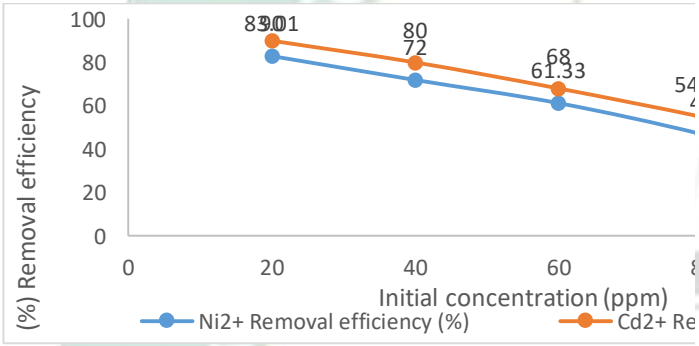


Figure 4: Impact of initial concentration (ppm) on the adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} using *Cocos nucifera* shell derived activated carbon

The graph in figure 4 depicts that, at the initial heavy metal ions concentration (20 ppm), the concentration of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} that clinged to the carbonaceous adsorbent surface rises, reaching the optimum removal efficiency (90.00 and 83.01 %) of the adsorbent, thereby limiting its effectiveness and consequently decreasing its removal efficiency to 29.00 and 40.4 %, respectively. In this finding, the percentage removal at the lowest (20 ppm) and the highest (100 ppm) adsorbate concentration were respectively recorded as the optimum; 83.0 and 90.0 % and the minimum; 29.00 and 40.40 % for the two metal ions (nickel and cadmium). The result in this investigation corresponds to that of Dwivedi and Rajput (2014); Alkherraz *et al*., (2020) who reported that further increase in concentration of metal ions gradually blocked the adsorbent sites thereby reducing its activeness and effectiveness before the sites got saturated.

Conclusion

This study investigated the adsorption of Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} from wastewater using activated carbon derived from *Cocos nucifera* (coconut) shell. The work reported that activated carbon derived from *Cocos nucifera* shell was an effective and environmentally friendly adsorbent for Ni^{2+} and Cd^{2+} adsorption from aqueous solutions. The adsorption process was considerably influenced by adsorbent dosage (g), temperature (^oC), contact time (minutes) and initial concentration of metal ions (ppm). Optimum adsorption conditions resulted in higher percentage removal efficiency for the two metal ions, with Cd^{2+} constantly demonstrating slightly higher adsorption performance than Ni^{2+}.

This study also revealed that *Cocos nucifera* shell (agricultural waste) based activated carbon was a good and promising alternative for wastewater treatment, adding values to sustaining wastes management and environmental protection. The trend in the adsorption process showed that this agricultural waste had a significant potential for practical application in treating industrial effluents contaminated with heavy metals.

Future research works should investigate thermodynamics and kinetic models, adsorption isotherms, regeneration and reuse of the carbonaceous activated carbon and validation using real industrial wastewater to facilitate large scale implementation.

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BACTERIAL ISOLATES AND THE DIVERSITY OF INFECTIVE PARASITIC STAGES OF SMOKED HAKE (*MERLUCCIUS MERLUCCIUS*) INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The quest for pathogenic microbes, including bacteria and parasites that are responsible for many public health illnesses in humans, involves examining smoked fish intended for human consumption, as these products may harbour such pathogens and therefore help to spread diseases, the need to assess the diversity of the bacterial and parasites in smoked fish cannot be overemphasis. Smoked Merluccius merluccius were collected from the market in a sterile bag and examined using standard laboratory procedures. Microscopic and culture examinations was done to determine the bacterial colonies and parasites developmental stages. Bacterial isolates were identified using standard microbiological techniques. A total of nine (9) microbial and parasitic taxa were identified comprising two bacterial taxa, two helminths taxa and five protozoa taxa. These findings support the classification of smoked Merluccius merluccius as a potential public health risk. Hence, it should be adequately reheated before consumption to minimize the risk of exposure to pathogens.

Keywords: *Smoked Merluccius merluccius; bacterial contamination; Parasite contamination; pathogen diversity; food safety.*

Introduction

Unsafe food remains the most significant means through which pathogenic food hazards such as bacteria and parasites are transmitted and enters the body (WHO, 2026). The conscious efforts of humans to maintain good personal health through the consumption of healthy, balanced nutrition have led to the inclusion of various food sources, such as fish, in their daily diets to support growth and development. Fish are nutritious and rich source of animal protein that play a significant role in supplying daily dietary requirements of many homes across the country. Mafimisebi (2012), as cited in Odum and Amuzie (2020), reported that many Nigerians prefer consuming fresh fish to beef because it is a good source of protein. Nigeria, especially its coastal and riverine regions, is characterized by diverse freshwater, brackish water, and marine ecosystems, including rivers, lakes, lagoons, estuaries, and coastal waters, which support the existence of various highly consumed fish species. However, fish is easily contaminated by pathogenic germs, due to its high moisture content if left unpreserved; hence, it is mostly preserved through smoking because it partly dries out water from food , prevent pathogenic growth, add burnt flavour and sustain marketability of the fish by the seller (Etchutakang *et al.*,2023;Mahmud *et al*, 2018). Therefore, smoked fish remains susceptible to microbial contamination. This is because inhibition of microbial growth by smoking only reduced microbial load. Thus, the smoking process should be complemented with good hygiene practices such as handling, storage and suitable transportation of fish because contamination can occur if any of the hygienic practices are poorly implemented
(Etchutakang *et al., 2023;* Mahmud *et al*, 2018*). Merluccius merluccius* is a demersal fish species (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2024). They are of considerable commercial value, are widely available and are usually sold in smoked form in marketplaces.
Bacteria and parasitic organisms are biological contaminants that may be present in fish and may act as infectious agents in humans. The consumption of bacterial and parasitic pathogens from contaminated food sources such as smoked fish could results in serious illnesses in humans. Aladejana *et al*. (2023) recovered bacterial pathogens, including *Enterobacter* spp., *Klebsiella* spp., *Proteus* spp., *Salmonella* spp., *Shigella* spp., *Bacillus* spp. and *Staphylococcus* spp. from smoked blue whiting fish (*Micromesistius poutassou*) sold in Odeomu, Nigeria, indicating that the consumption of contaminated smoked fish may pose significant health menace and contribute to the occurrence and spread of antimicrobial resistant bacteria in infected individuals. The effects of consuming fish contaminated with

parasites have been associated with gastroenteritis and allergic reaction in humans (Audicana and Kennedy, 2008). Review studies on the parasitic pathogens of fish have highlighted several medically important parasitic organisms, including *Anisakis* spp., *Diphyllobothrium* spp., *Clonorchis sinensis*, *Opisthorchis* spp. and other fish-borne helminth and protozoa pathogens which may be harboured by fish species (Mina Ziarati *et al*., 2022; Moratal *et al*., 2020). The burden of bacterial and parasitic pathogens from contaminated food is a global public health issue and infection outbreaks from these agents could pose a serious threat to the health systems (WHO, 2015). Hence, this paper therefore assessed Bacteria and Human- infective parasites on smoked *Merluccius merluccius.*

Materials and methods

Study area

The study area, Igboora, is located in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Igboora is a town characterized by the presence of Towobowo Market, a popular market that serves as a major commercial centre in the locality.

Fish sample collection and processing

The smoked fish used in this study, *Merluccius merluccius*, was collected from Towobowo market in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. The fish were sampled for the presence of bacteria and the developmental stages of both protozoan and helminth parasites. Specimens were transported in a sterile plastic bag to the Laboratory, Department of Science Laboratory Technology, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The samples were immersed in 750 mL of 0.9% normal saline solution to cover the samples placed in a sterile covered container for 24 hours. The contents of the container were manually agitated gently and periodically to dislodge the surface-associated bacteria and developmental stages of protozoan and helminth parasites.

Examination of smoked *Merluccius merluccius* wash solution

The fish samples in the normal saline were carefully removed from the solutions after the soaking period using sterile forceps to minimize external contamination and ensure a reliable microbial analysis. After the removal of the fish, the wash solution was left undisturbed for 45 minutes and the supernatant was decanted. Sedimentation technique was carried out for further analysis on the wash solution according to the method described by Ensink *et al*. (2007). The sediment obtained was used to prepare smears on a slide with Lugol iodine for the identification of protozoan cysts and helminth eggs while Modified Ziehl-Neelsen stain was used on the smear for the detection of *Cryptosporidium* oocysts. The smears was observed under a binocular microscope of 40 X objectives. All observed parasitic stages were properly identified with the aid of taxonomic keys according to Cheesbrough (2006) and Rai *et al.* (1996). This was followed by microbial analysis. The solution was used to carry out ten-fold serial dilutions for bacterial isolation and determination of the Total Viable Count (TVC). An aliquot of 0.1 mL of both 10^{-5} and 10^{-6} dilutions was inoculated on nutrient agar plates using the spread plate technique. Each dilution was plated in triplicate. The agar plates were incubated at 37 ºC for 24 hours and then examined for colonial growth. The colonies were counted manually on plates that were within the countable range of 30-300 colonies per plate. The triplicate plate counts were averaged and used to compute the colony-forming units per milliliter (CFU/mL). Bacterial identification was done using standard microbiological techniques.

Data Analysis

The data generated were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis using means, standard deviations, and tables to determine bacterial density, overall parasite abundance and parasite diversity indices.

Results

Bacterial species recovered by culture and developmental stages of parasites detected by microscopic examination were identified in the smoked *Merluccius merluccius.* The isolation of bacterial species together with the developmental stages of protozoa and helminths in the samples revealed bacterial–parasitic co-contamination. A total of nine (9) taxa were identified (Table 1). The distribution of the taxa in descending order was five protozoan taxa, two bacterial taxa, and two helminth taxa.

Table 1: **Overall Results of Culture and Microscopic Examination of Microbial and Parasitic Concomitants in Smoked *Merluccius merluccius***

Examination	Observed forms	Findings	Diversity/No. of taxa	Presence/Absence
Culture	Bacterial colony	*Morganella morganii and Staphylococcus aureus*	2	Present
Microscopic	Cysts	*Giardia lamblia, Entamoeba coli, Entamoeba histolityca and Blastocystis* spp.	4	Present
	Oocysts	*Cryptosporidium parvum*	1	Present
	Eggs	*Hookworm and Ascaris lumbricoides*	2	Present
Overall	Bacteria colony, cysts, oocysts and eggs	Bacteria, Protozoan and helminth parasites	9	Present

The number of bacterial colonies obtained from 0.1 mL aliquots of the wash solution in positive samples ranged from 80 to 88 colonies. Table 2 shows the analysis of the diversity indices of parasites in the wash solution of *Merluccius merluccius*. There was moderate diversity in the parasite community.

Table 2: Diversity Indices of Parasite Developmental Stages in Sampled Smoked *Merluccius merluccius*

Diversity index	Value	Interpretation
Shannon_H	1.84	High parasite diversity
Simpson_I-D	0.83	High diversity with no single developmental stage completely dominating
Richness_S	7	Seven parasite taxa

It was revealed that the wash solution had seven parasite taxa comprising protozoan (cysts and oocysts) and helminths (eggs). The values of Shannon diversity index (H′) of approximately 1.84 and Simpson's diversity index (1 − D) of approximately 0.83 were recorded in the sample. This implies that smoked fish harboured multiple developmental stages from a moderately diverse parasite community.

Table 3: Values and Qualitative Parameters for the Assessment of the Potential Risk Associated with Sampled Smoked *Merluccius merluccius*

Risk determinant	Observation/Mean±SD	Risk implication
Bacterial density	84.0 ± 5.66 CFU/g	Indicates bacterial contamination
Parasite abundance	16.0 ± 1.73	Indicate parasitic contamination
Pathogenic bacteria	*Morganella morganii, Staphylococcus aureus*	Potential foodborne bacterial infection.
Infective parasite stages	Cysts, oocysts and eggs	Potential transmitter of parasitic infections
Concomitant microbial and parasitic contamination	Present	Indicates mixed contamination and increased public health risk
Overall qualitative risk classification	-	Potential health risk

The risk index value and qualitative risk assessment of bacteria and parasite from smoked *merluccius merluccius* indicated a high potential public health risk. The mean bacterial density was 84.0±5.66 CFU/g, while the mean parasite abundance was 16.0±1.73 parasite Stages (Table 3). Cultured examination for bacteria revealed the presence of two bacterial taxa comprising pathogenic bacterial specie while microscopic examination revealed the presence of seven parasite taxa of which protozoa cysts, oocysts and helminths eggs were the developmental stages observed. The occurrence of both pathogenic bacteria and parasite stages indicates co-contamination which may serve as a potential avenue for the transmission of foodborne infections in humans.

Discussion

Assessing the diversity of microorganisms in food has important benefits in public health. To this end, this study shows that smoked *merluccius merluccius* can carry bacterial species and developmental stages of parasite. The bacterial density and parasite abundance of the organisms revealed the contamination level of the samples (Table 3). In Nigeria, previous studies have consistently demonstrated the presence of bacteria in smoked fish. Ehizibolo *et al*. (2008); Abolagba and Igbinevbo (2010) have implicated smoked fish to be potential source of foodborne pathogens. The presence of two bacterial species observed in this study (Table 1 and Table 3) might be due to poor handling and storage practices of the smoked fish. *Morganella morganii is a* commensal bacterium and an opportunistic pathogen of the gastrointestinal tract capable of establishing opportunistic infections in immune-compromised hosts (Bennett *et al*., 2020; Carroll *et al*., 2019). The natural occurrence of *Morganella morganii* in histamine-rich fish species such as albacore, mackerel and sardine has been reported in a study by Kim *et al*. (2003). This observation is consistent with the present research, which isolated *Morganella morganii* as a surface contaminant in smoked *Merluccius merluccius*. *Staphylococcus aureus* are known to cause infection termed foodborne illnesses (Ogofure and Igbinosa, 2021). The occurrence of this organism from smoked *Merluccius merluccius* is consistent with the findings of Akinwumi and Adegbehingbe (2015), that reported that smoked fish such as tilapia, herring and catfish harbour *Staphylococcus aureus*. This is in consistent with the work done by Edeh *et al.* (2023) in South-Eastern Nigeria that the occurrence of *Staphylococcus aureus* in food is associated with smoked fish. The absence of other bacterial species from this study could be attributed to examination of one fish species and sampling size.The consumption of food contaminated with parasites has been implicated in the continued transmission of parasitic infections, posing a substantial public health menace (European Food Safety Authority [EFSA], 2026). In the present study, diversity of parasite taxa including *Entamoeba histolytica, Entamoeba coli, Giardia duodenalis, Cryptosporidium* spp., and *Blastocystis*

spp., and helminths including hookworm eggs and *Ascaris* eggs were observed in smoked *Merluccius merluccius*. *However*, there are limited published reports describing these intestinal protozoan contaminants in smoked *Merluccius merluccius*, the findings are similar with research on foodborne intestinal protozoan contamination by Ajakaye *et al*. (2021), which identify some of the organisms as contaminants commonly encounter due to poor sanitary condition which could expose food to parasite stages. *Entamoeba histolytica*, *Cryptosporidium* spp., and *Giardia duodenalis* are recognized human pathogens associated with amoebiasis, cryptosporidiosis, and giardiasis respectively. In similar study conducted by Moratal *et al*. (2020), *Cryptosporidium* spp. and *Giardia duodenalis* are reported to be transmitted mechanically and capable of causing fish-borne infections. Moreover, the detection of these protozoan developmental stages also suggests inadequate hygiene and sanitation during food handling and processing, which may serve as routes for the transmission of protozoan developmental stage (Utaaker *et al*., 2017). *Entamoeba coli* is a non-pathogenic commensal whose presence indicates faecal contamination (Akhlema Haidar *et al*., 2023). However, the presence of *Ascaris lumbricoides* and hookworm eggs in this study corroborate previous reports of parasitic contamination of foods (Ajakaye *et al*., 2021; Okunlola, 2020; Sam-Wobo *et al* (2004). These helminths are of public health importance which may be ingested through contaminated ready-to-eat foods, such as smoked fish, particularly when the fish is handled under poor hygiene and consumed without subjecting to adequate reheating process. The qualitative risk determinants assessed in this study is consistent with the quantitative findings on the bacterial and parasites contaminant of smoked *Merluccius merluccius*. The assessed risk determinants, including bacterial density, parasite abundance and infective parasite stages, provide additional information of the potential health hazards related with the consumption of smoked fish, available in the market and consumed as a ready-to-eat food. Moreover, the risks indicated poor hygienic handling, transportation and bad storage. This finding corroborates the review by Ramos, (2020) which highlighted the public health concerns of zoonotic parasites in fish. Hence, consumption without reheating to kill the pathogens already present may predispose the consumers to pathogenic bacteria and parasitic developmental stages harboured as surface contaminants, causing potential public health impact.

Conclusion

The study Revealed the presence of bacteria and diverse parasitic stages in smoked *Merluccius merluccius* sampled from the market. The presence of these organisms indicate public health risk in consumption of contaminated fish. Consumer's exposure should be avoided as they pose a potential health risk to humans. Standard food hygiene measures that prevent the risk of contamination supplemented with health awareness campaigns should be given priority in various households. Furthermore, Public Health Authorities should enlighten food vendors and handlers in rural markets on how to prevent poor hygiene practices during handling, storage and marketing processes.

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ACCESSMENT OF PHYTOCHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF BANANA INFLORESCENCS (*Musa Sapiens*)

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Abstract

Nature is kind to human being because all we needs are in our environment. Plants are used both for food, shelter and for health purposes because they contained, bioactive substances, carbohydrate, protein and vitamins. Banana plant is a fruit of immense importance. Green banana is used to control blood sugar, diarrhea management, and health related diseases. This research set out to investigate the phytochemical composition of banana inflorescence. Banana inflorescence was obtained from Oyo State College of Agricultural farm, Igboora. The lbanana inflorescence was air dried for four weeks at research laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. Air-dried inflorescences were pounded in pestle and mortal until it becomes powder. 50g of the powdered was weighed into 250 ml round bottom flask.100ml of ethanol was added, the mixture was agitated for thirty minutes with mechanical shaker. The mixture was then filter, the filtrate was transferred into quick fitted 250ml round bottom flask to rotary evaporator to dry the extract and recover the solvent. The extract was kept in sample bottle for further analysis into different bioactive substances. The qualitative and quantitative analysis showed that: Phenols, alkaloids and flavonoids are abundantly present, Tannins and steroids followed while saponins and glycosides are the least occurrence. Phenols (57.80± 0.01) has the highest concentration, flavonoids and and alkaloids (53.40±0.01) and (49.73±0.02) respectively. Steroids (29.80±01) and tanins (27.80±0.01) followed, while saponins (0.80±0.02) and Glycosides (0.30±0.01) have lower concentration. Higher concentration of phenols and alkaloids, make banana inflorescence a good antioxidants, while the higher alkaloids is an indication that the inflorescence is good as analgesics and antihypertensive substance. Occurrence of saponins and and tannins , means that the plant can be used as anti-microbial agents. The result of the analysis, therefore, showed that banana inflorescence possesses a lot of medicinal attribute that are beneficial to man.

Keywords: *Banana-infloresence, phytochemicals, ethanol and medicinal attribute*.

Introduction

Banana plant (*Musa sapientum* Linn) is a bless to human kind because every part of the plant is useful for one thing or the others. Plant fruits are used majorly as a staple fruit that made into flower, boil and fried to meet human demands. Banana is consumed globally (Wahab *et al*., 2020) because they are used for nutritional and therapeutic purposes (Rodrigues *et al*.,2020). Banana is a very tall plant between 3-6metres (10feet) height. The trunk is made up of basal leaf sheaths and is crown with rosette of 10 to 20 oblong to elliptic leaves. Banana (*Musa sapientum* Linn) inflorescence is a complex structure that contain flowers developed into fruits. The inflorescence contains female and male flowers that changes to fruits. Literature has shown that inflorescence has been regarded as a waste until recently when attention was shifted to the inflorescence because of its nutrient and bioactive compounds it contains (Padam, Tin, Chye, & Abdullah, 2020). Banana inflorescent is reported to contain useful bioactive substances (Sharma *et al*., 2020). It is used as herbs in Thailand for enhancing milk production in nursing or postpartum mother (Foong *et al*., 2020). Fruits are natural antioxidant, they are cheap, readily available and contain secondary metabolites that scavenge the free radical in the body, and hence they help to prevent diseases in the body. Banana inflorescence, because of the available bioactive presents can be used as alternative to drugs that are scarce, and very expensive. The aim of this research is to explore the bioactive compounds present in Banana inflorescence.



Figure 1: shows the Picture of Banana inflorescence. Source ; internet

Materials and methods

Area of the study

The research was conducted at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State

Plant sample and sample Preparation

Fresh banana inflorescence was obtained from Towobowo Market Igboora, Oyo State.The banana inflorescence was air-dried for four weeks.

Preparation of the extract

The dried seeds of The banana inflorescence was ground using mortal and pestle until the inflorescence turned to powder. The power was sieved using 2mm sieve. 50g of the powder were weighed, into the 250ml round bottom flask, 100ml of ethanol was added. The set up was put in mechanical shaker for thirty minutes. The mixture was filtered, the filtrate was put in another 250ml round bottom flask connected to the rotary evaporator to remove the solvent and the extract in dried form. The dried extract was kept in sample bottle, later analyzed into different compositions.

Qualitative phytochemical Analysis

Selected phytochemicals present in *banana inflorescence* were determined by the methods recommended by the Omale and Okafor (2008)

Quantitative phytochemical Analysis

Selected phytochemical composition present in *banana inflorescence* was determined using standard procedures recommended by Omale and Okafor (2008)

Results and discussion

TABLE 1: Shows the qualitative analysis of selected phytochemicals in banana inflorescence

PARAMETERS.	ABUNDANCE
Phenols.	+++
Alkaloids.	+++
Flavonoids.	+++
Saponins.	+
Tannins.	++

Source: Laboratory analysis

Key: +++ = abundant presence of phytochemical **++ =** strong presence of phytochemical **+=**slightly presence of phytochemical

Table1 showed that banana inflorescences contained alkaloids, phenols, sapoinins, flavonoids, tannins, steroids, and glycosides. Alkaloids, flavonoids and phenols were found to have higher abundance (+++) , which means that the inflorescence is rich in N- compound. Higher alkaloids mean good therapeutic potential against microbial infection. This finding was in agreement with (Linus, Shagal, & Nkafamiya, 2023) that confirmed that the alkaloids in banana blossom extract. Hiher abundance in phenols is an indication that banana inflorescence is a good antioxidant. The inflorescence is therefore good in preventing oxidative related diseases. Similarly, flavonoids were found in higher concentration. Flavonoids are also a good antioxidant. Higher amount of flavonoids makes flavonoids a good an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial

This finding was in agreement with (Ramasamy, Kumar, & Bhat, 2024) that stated that, the presence of flavonoids in banana inflorescence enhances pharmaceutical and therapeutic activity of the plant. Saponins and tanins (++) were came next after alkaloids, falonoids and phenols. The presence of saponins and tanins suggested that banana inflorescence is a good antibacterial antifungal activities and wound healing.. In the same vein, steriods (++) are a good anti-inflammatory. The finding was (Padam *et al.*, 2020), that stated, banana infloresence contain tanins, steiods and saponins in lower concentration.

TABLE 2: Shows the Quantitative analysis of selected phytochemicals in banana inflorescence

PARAMETER.	%COMPOSITION
Phenols.	57.80±0.01
Alkaloids.	49.73±0.02
Flavonoids.	53.40±0.01
Saponins.	0.80±0.02
Tannins.	27.80±0.01
Steroids.	29.80±0.01
Glycosides	0.30±0.01

Table 2, shows the quantitative analysis of banana inflorescence. Phenols as the highest percentage distribution of 57.80 ± 0.01% with thus result, banana inflorescence has a good antioxidant. Phenols

protect the cell by scavenging the damaged cells, free radicals and the foreign bodies. This finding was in agreement with (Amornlerdpison et al., 2021), higher phenolic content enhanced antioxidant activities of the cells. Flavonoids followed with (53.40 ± 0.01%). Flavonoids are a good antioxidant, antiflamatory, antimicrobial and anticancer. Higher contents of flavonoids made banana inflorescence good pharmaceutical substance. This finding was in agreement with (Ramasamy, Kumar, & Bhat, 2024) , flavonoids account for the most of biological activities of banana blossom as an antioxidant. Alkaloids, a nitrogen compound, has a percentage composition of (49.73 ± 0.02%). The present of alkaloids make the plant good as analgesics, antihypertensive and antimalarial. Same reports were found by (Linus, Shagal, & Nkafamiya, 2023) where the higher concentration of alkaloid was found useful as anti-microbial and pathogenic microorganism. Steroids and tannins were found to occur at lower concentration (29.80 ± 0.01%). and at (27.80 ± 0.01% respectively. The present of steroids encourage the cholesterol reduction, hormone regulating while tans enhances wound healing.
Saponins were found to have the lowest concentration. 0.80 ± 0.02%. Saponins also assist in lowering the cholesterol in the body.

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PRODUCTION OF BIOETHANOL FROM AGRICULTURAL WASTE (CORN COB)

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Abstract

The continuous rise in global energy demand driven by industrialization and population growth has intensifies the need for sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels. Bioethanol, a renewable and eco-friendly biofuel, offers significant promise due to its biodegradability, low emission profile, and compatibility with existing energy systems. This research investigated the production of bioethanol from corn cob, an abundant agricultural residue in Nigeria, with the aim of evaulating its potential as a low cost and sustainable feedstock for renewable energy generation. Corn cob samples were dried, grind and subjected to both acid and alkali pretreatments to enhance cellulose accessibility. Enzymatic hydrolysis was performed to release fermentation sugars, which were subsequently fermented using Saccharomyces cerevisiae. The fermentation broth was distilled and purified to obtain bioethanol. Physiochemical properties such as color, odor, boiling point, pH, density, solubility and volatility were analyzed, and ethanol yield was quantified. The results showed that the bioethanol obtained was colorless, highly volatile, pungent in odor and soluble in water, with a boiling point of 77.5^{o}C and a density of 0.73g/ml. the fermentation and distillation process yielded 450ml of ethanol from 100g of corn cob, corresponding to a percentage yield of 55%. These values aligned with previously reported findings on bioethanol from lignocellulosic biomass. The study concluded that corn cob is a viable raw material for bioethanol production, offering a sustainable solution for waste management and energy diversification. It is recommended that further optimization of pretreatment, hydrolysis, and fermentation processes be undertaken to enhance yields at both laboratory and industrial scales. The adoption of corn cob bioethanol production in Nigeria could contribute to clean energy development, rural empowerment, and the achievement of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: *Bioethanol, corn cob, fermentation, lignocellulosic biomass.*

Introduction

The continuous increase in global energy consumption fueled by industrialization, urbanization and population growth has intensified the demands for sustainable and ecofriendly alternatives to fossil fuels. Conventional energy sources such as petroleum, coal and natural gas are not only finite but are also major contributors to environmental degradation due to greenhouse gas emissions, which are linked to climate change, air pollution and other ecological concerns (Demirbas, 2007).

Researchers and government around the world are shifting focus towards renewable energy options, among which bioethanol stands out due to its biodegradability, lower emission levels and compatibility with existing combustion engines (Naik *et al.*, 2010). Bioethanol is a form of ethanol (ethyl alcohol) derived biologically, primarily through the fermentation of simple sugars by microorganisms such as yeast. It is recognized as one of the most promising renewable biofuels due to its clean-burning properties, high octane rating and potential to reduce dependency on fossil fuels (Demirbas, 2007). Bioethanol can be used in its pure form (E100) or more commonly blended with petrol in various proportions, such as E10 (10% ethanol, 90% gasoline) or E85 (85% ethanol, 15% gasoline) to power internal combustion engines without significant modifications.

Traditional bioethanol production primarily relies on starch and sugar-based crops such as maize, sugarcane and cassava (Balat, Balat 2009). Bioethanol production focuses on lignocellulosic biomass non-food, fibrous plant materials rich in cellulose, hemicellulose and lignin. Agricultural residues, forest by-products and municipal solid wastes fall into this category (Zebed *et al.*, 2016). Among these, corn cob, the leafy outer coverings of an ear of maize (*Zea mays*) are one of the most abundant agricultural residues generated during corn harvesting and processing. In many parts of the world, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, corn cob is typically discarded, burned or used in

minimal quantities for animal feed and craft materials. However, their chemical composition and availability make them a valuable feedstock for bioethanol production through lignocellulosic conversion processes (Olugbenga *et al*., 2016). Corn cob are primarily composed of cellulose (35 to 45%). Hemicellulose (25 to 35%) and lignin (15 to 25%)- the three major polymers that constitute lignocellulosic biomass (Sun and Cheng, 2002; Oyeleke *et al.*, 2012).

Cellulose is a linear polysaccharide consisting of β-1, 4-linked glucose units, which can be hydrolyzed into fermentable sugars such as glucose. Hemicellulose is a branched heteropolymer containing sugars like xylose, arabinose and mannose. Lignin is a complex aromatic polymer that acts as a protective barrier, contributing to the rigidity of plant cell walls and reducing enzymatic access to cellulose and hemicellulose (Taherzadeh and Karimi, 2008). The high cellulose and hemicellulose content of corn cob makes them a promising raw material for bioethanol production. The production of bioethanol from corn cob involves a series of biochemical and chemical processes that convert the complex lignocellulosic structure into fermentable sugars with the use of microorganism, saccharomyces cerevisiae and ultimately into ethanol. The key stages in the production process are pretreatment, hydrolysis fermentation, distillation and purification. Each of these steps play a crucial role in maximizing the yield and efficiency of bioethanol production from corn cob (Mosier *et al*., 2005). Hence, this approach provides a dual benefit of managing agricultural waste effectively and providing a renewable source of energy. It supports rural development, creates employment opportunities and aligns with Nigeria's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDP, 2022). Moreover, adopting this strategy contributes to reducing the nations reliance on imported petroleum products and enhance energy security. Therefore, the production of bioethanol from corn cob represents a sustainable, low-cost and environmental friendly solution to the challenges of energy scarcity and agricultural waste accumulation.

Methodology

Study Area: The experiment was conducted at the Research laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. It was located in the southwestern part of Nigeria, characterized by both hot and cold weather conditions.

Collection and Preparation of Corn Cob

The corn cob was collected from local corn farms in Igboora. The collection process involved local farmers in the region who were willing to supply the cob. After collection, the cob was airdried to reduce the moisture content to about 10-50%. Drying is necessary to prevent microbial growth and to facilitate the pretreatment and fermentation processes.

The dried cob was grounded into smaller particles to increase the surface area, which will improve the efficiency of the subsequent hydrolysis and fermentation process (Sanchez and Cardona, 2008).

Pretreatment of Corn Cob

Pretreatment process is essential to effectively convert the cellulose in the corn cob into fermentable sugar for easy accessibility of cellulose (Mosier *et al.*, 2005). Acid and Alkali pretreatment was carried out on the dried cob.

Acid Pretreatment: Sulphury acid (H_2SO_4) was used in a concentration of 20% (v/v) and applied to the corn cob at a temperature of 170^{o}C for 45 minutes. These methods broke down the hemicellulose and softened the lignin structure, making the cellulose more accessible for enzymatic hydrolysis. The residues were neutralized using distilled water (Sanchez and Cardona, 2008) after the pretreatment.

Alkali Pretreatment: In addition to acid pretreatment, sodium hydroxide (NaoH) solution was used at a concentration of 3%(w/v). the alkali pretreatment was conducted at 120^{o}C for 60 minutes. This treatment primarily targeted lignin and hemicellulose, allowing for better sugar release during the hydrolysis stage (Taherzadeh and Karimi, 2008).

Hydrolysis of Pretreatment Corn Cob

The pretreated corn cob was subjected into enzymatic hydrolysis to convert the complex polysaccharides (cellulose and hemicellulose) into fermentable sugars, primarily glucose and xylose.

The enzyme concentration and hydrolysis time was optimized through preliminary experiments. The hydrolysis was carried out at 50°C for 48 hours to ensure maximum conversion of polysaccharides into sugars. After hydrolysis, the liquid fraction was filtered to remove the solid residues (Sun and Cheng, 2002).

Fermentation of hydrolyzed sugars

The hydrolyzed sugar (glucose and xylose) was fermented using *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (a widely used yeast for ethanol production). The fermentation process took place in a 5-liter bioreactor, with parameters such as temperature, pH and inoculum size being optimized for the best ethanol yield.

Fermentation Conditions

The pH was maintained between 4.5 and 5.5 and the fermentation temperature was set at 30-35°C, ideal foe yeast growth and ethanol production. The yeast was inoculated into the hydrolysate at an inoculum concentration of 10% (v/v), and fermentation was produced for 48-72 hours. Regular sampling was conducted to monitor ethanol production, sugar consumption and microbial growth. Ethanol production was measured using gas chromatography (GC).

Distillation and Purification of Bioethanol

The ethanol-rich fermentation broth was subjected into simple distillation to separate ethanol from the residual biomass and impurities. The distilled process was carried out at temperature of approximately 78°C, the boiling point of ethanol. The distilled was further purified through fractional distillation to achieve an ethanol concentration of 95-98% (v/v). The ethanol was analyzed for purity using a hydrometer and gas chromatography (Onifade *et al*., 2017).

Yield Determination and Optimization

The efficiency of the bioethanol process was evaluated by calculating the ethanol yield, which is the volume of ethanol produced per unit mass of corn cob. Optimization was performed for pretreatment conditions, enzyme concentration and fermentation parameters to maximize ethanol yield.

Statistical analysis such as response surface methodology (RSM) was applied to determine the optimal conditions for maximum ethanol production (Okonkwo *et al*., 2016; Montagomery, 2017).

Result

Table 4.1 Physiochemical Parameters of Bioethanol Produced from Corn Cob

S/N	Physiochemical parameters	Results
1	Colour	Colourless
2	Odour	Pungent
3	Volatility	Highly Volatile
4	Boiling point	77.5^0c
5	pH	6.8
6	Density	0.73
7	Solubility in water	Highly soluble
8	Solubility in Oil	Partially soluble
9	Percentage yield	55%

Table 4.2 Ethanol yield of Bioethanol produced from corn cob

S/N	Ethanol yield	Value
1	Initial weight of substrate	100g
2	Weight after hydrolysis	500g
3	Weight of fermented mash	99.5g
4	Volume of ethanol obtained	450ml

Table 1 showed the physiochemical parameters of the bioethanol produced from corn cub was colourless with a pungent odor, which was typical of ethanol, indicating successful fermentation. Its high volatility and boiling point points of 77.5^{o}C were consistent with the properties of pure ethanol, confirming the identity of the product. The pH of 6.8 suggested a nearly neutral solution suitable for most applications. The density of 0.78g/ml was slightly lower than standard ethanol (0.78g/ml), possibly due to residual water or impurities. The bioethanol was highly soluble in water but partially soluble in oil, demonstrating its polar nature. Finally, the percentage yield of 55% indicated that more than half of the available fermentable sugar in the corn cob was successfully converted to ethanol, which was a moderate and acceptable yield for laboratory scale production.

Discussion

The colorless nature of the bioethanol obtained in this study agreed with the observation of Okonkwo and Nwankwo (2016), who reported that ethanol produced from cassava peel was also colorless indicating high purity. The colorless appearance of the bioethanol in this study was in agreement with the findings of Adewale and Okoye (2017), who noted that ethanol produced from lignocellulosic agricultural residues typically exhibits a clear appearance, indicating minimal contamination during distillation.

The pungent odor of the bioethanol was consistent with findings by Adeyemi *et al.*, (2018), who noted that fermented bioethanol typically exhibited a strong characteristics smell due to alcohol content. Similarly, the pungent odor observed corresponds with the report by Fawole *et al.*, (2019), who highlighted that the characteristics smell of ethanol is an indication of successful fermentation and the presence of volatile compounds.

The bioethanol from agricultural wastes evaporates quickly, reflecting its low boiling point. The high volatility recorded aligned with previous work by Ibrahim and Usman (2018), who stated that bioethanol derived from maize residues demonstrates rapid evaporation due to its low molecular weight and high vapor pressure.

The boiling point of 77.5^{o}C corresponds closely to the 78^{o}C reported by Onifade *et al.*, (2017) for ethanol derived from corn waste. The boiling point of 77.5^{o}C matches the observation of Okafor *et al*., (2020), who reported that bioethanol obtained from agricultural wastes has a boiling point close to that of pure ethanol, reflecting the efficiency of the purification process.

The pH value of 6.8 was similar to the findings of Bello and Ajayi (2020), who reported a near neutral pH in bioethanol obtained from sugarcane bagasse, suggesting minimal acidic or basic impurities. The slightly acidic to neutral pH of 6.8 was consistent with the study by Eze and Chukwu (2016), who found that bioethanol from fermented plant biomass tends to have near neutral pH, suggesting that fermentation by yeast did not significantly alter the acidity.

The measured density of 0.73g/ml was slightly lower than the standard ethanol density reported by Chinedu and Emeka (2015), who recorded 0.78-0.79g/ml, possibly due to residual water in the sample. The measured density of 0.73g/ml is within the range observed by Akinola *et al.*, (2018), who recorded densities slightly lower than pure ethanol due to residual moisture and minor impurities.

The solubility characteristics, being highly soluble in water and partially soluble in oil was consistent with reports by Ibe and Nwosu (2018), who highlighted the polar nature of ethanol influencing its solubility. The solubility behavior being highly soluble in water but only partially soluble in oil, was also reported by Nwachukwu and Onyekachi (2019), who explained that ethanol's polarity makes it miscible with polar solvents while limiting solubility in non-polar substances.

Finally, the percentage yield of 55% agreed with the study of Oladele *et al.*, (2016), who reported moderate yield ranging from 50-60% for bioethanol from corn cob at laboratory scale. The percentage yield of 55% was in line with findings by Olajide and Bamidele (2017), who reported that conversion efficiencies from corn cob to bioethanol under laboratory condition often range between 50% and 60%, indicating that the process adopted in this study achieved moderate efficiency comparable to past studies.

The finding was consistent with reports by Okeke *et al.*, (2017), who observed that corn cob and other lignocellulosic residues can produce significant ethanol yields due to their high cellulose content. Similarly, Nwabueze and Afolabi (2019) reported that hydrolysis followed by fermentation of corn

residues gives yield within the range of 50-60% which aligned with the present study's percentage yield of 55%.

Likewise, Ezeonu and Okafor (2018) reported that agricultural residues such as corn cob and reliable feedstocks for bioethanol generation, with yields compared to those from other lignocellulosic materials. In support of this, Kumar *et al.*, (2019) highlighted that the efficiency of ethanol production from corn driven wastes largely depends on optimized fermentation conditions, which influences sugar utilization by microorganisms. Similarly, Bello and Ibrahim (2021) emphasized that bioethanol yield can be significantly enhanced through proper pretreatment of biomass, thereby improving hydrolysis efficiency and subsequent fermentation.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study has demonstrated that corn cob, an abundant agricultural residue, can serve as viable feedstock for bioethanol production. The conversion yielded a significant volume of ethanol, showing that corn cob contains sufficient fermentable sugars capable of supporting microbial fermentation. The increased in substrate weight after hydrolysis confirmed the successful breakdown of complex carbohydrates into simpler sugars, while the subsequent fermentation and ethanol recovery further highlighted the efficiency of the process. These findings indicated that corn cob was not only a low-cost raw material but also an environmentally friendly alternative for renewable energy production. Therefore, bioethanol production from corn cob offers a sustainable solution for waste management and contributes to the diversification of energy sources.

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that bioethernol production from corn cob should be further optimized at both laboratory and industrial scales. Future studies should explore improved hydrolysis techniques, microbial strain selection, and fermentation parameters to maximize ethanol yield. Additionally, economic feasibility assessments should be conducted to evaluate the scalability and cost-effectiveness of using corn-cob for commercial bioethanol production. It is also advised that government policies and industrial stakeholders promote the utilization of agricultural wastes such as corn cob for renewable energy projects. Integrating this bioethanol production process into rural and agro-based communities could be only reduce environmental pollution but also generate alternative energy, create employment opportunities and support sustainable development.

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CHARACTERIZATION, ANTIOXIDANT AND ANTIBACTERIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE BIOSYNTHESIZED SELENIUM NANOPARTICLES USING *Pentaclethra macrophylla* SEED EXTRACT

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Abstract

Selenium nanoparticles (SeNPs) are known to have a good advantage over other nanomaterials due to its promising role in stabilizing the immune system and as a defense mechanism. It helps in boosting the immune system and help the body to fight against the pathogens. Pentaclethra macrophylla (African oil bean), an indigenous tropical plant majorly found in the Eastern part of Nigeria and the seed is used as a nutritious food condiment. It is a tropical crop belonging to the family Leguminosae. This study reported the green synthesis, characterization, antioxidants, and antibacterial evaluation of selenium nanoparticles (SeNPs) using Pentaclethra macrophylla seed extract. The biosynthesis was confirmed by a visible colour change from pale yellow to reddish-brown, indicating the reduction of selenite ions (Se^{4+}) to elemental selenium (Se^{0}). UV-Vi's spectroscopy revealed a characteristic absorption peak of 278 nm, while SEM analysis showed irregular, aggregated spherical nanoscale particles. Energy-dispersive X-ray (EDX) analysis confirmed selenium as the dominant element, with minor contributions from carbon and oxygen, indicating phytochemical capping. The antibacterial activity of the synthesized nanoparticles (PM-SeNPs) demonstrated significant ($p < 0.05$) concentration-dependent inhibition against selected pathogenic bacterial, with notable activity against Staphylococcus aureus and variable responses among Gram-negative strains. In contrast, the crude extract showed negligible activity, confirming enhanced efficacy due to nanoparticle formation. Antioxidant evaluation using the DPPH assay revealed a significant ($p < 0.05$) dose-dependent radical scavenging activity (8.79–51.21%), although lower than the standard ascorbic acid. The observed biological activities are attributed to the synergistic interaction between selenium and bioactive phytochemicals present in the extract. This finding demonstrates that P. macrophylla-mediated SeNPs possess appreciable antibacterial and antioxidant properties, highlighting their potential as eco-friendly and multifunctional nanomaterials for biomedical applications. This study supports the growing application of plant-mediated nanotechnology as a sustainable approach to addressing microbial resistance and oxidative stress related conditions

Keyword: *Selenium, Nanoparticles, Antioxidants, Pentaclethra macrophylla, green synthesis*

Introduction

Pentaclethra macrophylla is a multipurpose tree from Africa with potential for agro forestry in the tropics (Balogun, 2021). It belongs to the family *Leguminosae* and sub-family *Mimosoideae*. It is the sole member of the genus occurring naturally in the humid lowlands of West Africa (Akindahunsi, 2021). It is a leguminous tree and recognized by peasant farmers in the south east of Nigeria for its soil improvement properties (Alinnor and Oze *et al*., 2019). It has been cultivated in Nigeria since 1937 (Omeh *et al*., 2022). The tree grows to about 21 m in height and about 6 m in girth (Enujiugha, 2019). The bark is grayish to dark reddish brown. The compound leaves possess a stout angular petiole. The local names include "Congo acacia" in Congo, "Duala Kombola" in Cameroon. It is popular in Nigeria where it is known as Apara in Yoruba, Ukana in Efik, and, the most prominent, Ugba or Ukpaka in Igbo in local parlance (Alinnor and Oze *et al*., 2019), in South Eastern part of Nigeria, (Eze and Ukeka, 2023). It is generally called "African Salad" in Nigeria. Ugba the Igbo name for an indigenous Nigerian fermented seed also known as African oil bean, estimated to be consumed by about 15 million people in the south-eastern Nigeria. It is a popular Igbo condiment and delicacy made from traditional household solid state fermentation of African oil bean seed.

Selenium is known to be an essential trace element that is required for effective functioning of human and animal immune systems. It prevents various types of degenerative diseases (Khurana, *et al.,* 2018,

Ikram *et al.,* 2021). Selenium have been reported as an important element which acts as cofactor and coenzyme in catalyzing active sites of many selenoproteins and the enzymes in the body of human being which provides protection to the cells and tissues arising from oxidative injuries and stress (Hosnedlova, *et al*., 2018). It is also considerable that nanoparticles can act as a carrier for antibiotics, vaccines, and adjuvants, (Wang, *et al.,* 2017, Ghaderi, *et al.,* 2021). and among their various kinds, metal nanoparticles (MNPs) such as Se, Ag, Au, Ce, Fe, Ti, and Zn received the attention of many for their numerous applications due to containing optical, electronic, and magnetic properties and catalytic activity. Selenium is an essential element in humans that has a crucial responsibility in the structure of enzymes (Patel., *et al.,* 2020). Previous studies indicated that Se-NPs have broad applications in medical diagnostics with low toxicity as well as excellent antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, nanobiosensor, anticancer, and anti-inflammatory biological properties (wang, *et al.,* 2017).

Nanoparticles are known as an alternative for antimicrobial agents (Ghaderi, *et al.,* 2021) since they contain a small size (about 1 to 100 nm), possess an increased surface area to volume ratio that results in a high biological activity, and are able to enhance the interactions with microbial cells (Taghavizadeh, *et al.,* 2019). Due to the misuse and overuse of antibiotics, as well as mutation, pollution, and changing environmental conditions, the exceeding resistance to antibiotics and traditional medicines by microorganisms has become a threat to the global healthcare system (Ghaderi, *et al.,* 2021). Thus, there is an essential requirement to develop appropriate, novel, less toxic, and shorter drug regimens that would be cost-effective and provide more effective treatment for bacterial infections (Ghaderi *et al.,* 2021). Currently, there are several drugs available that are based on nanoparticles and can function against bacterial infections if they undergoing clinical trials (Wang *et al.,* 2017). Selenium is an essential element in humans that has a crucial responsibility in the structure of enzymes (Patel, *et al.,* 2020). Previous studies indicated that Se-NPs have broad applications in medical diagnostics with low toxicity as well as excellent antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, nanobiosensor, anticancer, and anti-inflammatory biological properties (Ghaderi *et al.,* 2021). In conformity to previous studies, Se-NPs can combat via both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria (Ghaderi *et al.,* 2021). Studies displayed that selenium inhibits the growth of the pathogen by disrupting the membrane system, DNA, and bacterial protein synthesis (Thangamani *et al.,* 2016). The goal of this paper was to synthesize, characterize, evaluate the antimicrobial, antioxidant, anticoagulant and thrombolytic activities of Se-NPs that were achieved through a green method. The biosynthesis of Se-NPs by *Pentaclethra macrophylla* seed extract is been performed for the first time.

Materials and Methods

Selenium nitrate was procured from Merck KGaA. The fresh seed of *Pentaclethra macrophylla* were purchased from a local market in Ibadan. Organisms used were collected the Microbiology unit of Ladoke Akintola University Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso.

Preparation of plant extract

Pentaclethra macrophylla seed obtained were pealed from its pod, washed with distilled water and airdried at room temperature. The dried seed were grinded into powdery form using electric blender, sieved and stored in a dried air tight container. The method of Lateef *et al.* (2016) with a little modification was used in preparation of the solution, whereby, 2.0 gram of the powder was weighed and suspended in 200 mls of distilled water, heated in a water bath at 60°c for 2 hours. The extract was filtered with Whatman No.1 filter paper and centrifuged at 4000 rpm for 20 minutes. The supernatant was collected and stored at 4 °C for further use (Lateef *et al.,* 2018).

Synthesis of *Pentaclethra macrophylla* SeNPs

Green synthesis of Se-NPs was carried out by dissolving 10 mM of $SeNO_3$ in 1000 mls of distilled water to form the solution. One ml of *Pentaclethra macrophylla* seed extract was added to 40mls of selenium solution prepared gradually and the mixture was placed on the shaker for 48 hours for continuous shaking. The preparation of SeNPs was indicated by observing a colour alteration in the mixture, which changed from colourless to red (Behera *et al.,* 2024).

Characterization of *Pentaclethra macrophylla* (PM-SeNPs)

The biosynthesis of PM-SeNPs was visually monitor by changes in colour of the reaction mixture. The absorption spectra due to surface plasmon resonance (SPR) were determined using UV-Vis spectrophotometer, FTIR spectroscopic analysis was carried out on the powdered form of the biosynthesized nanoparticles to determine the functional groups and the characteristic peaks ranging from 400-4000 cm^{-1}, using KBr pellets in IR Affinity-1S spectrophotometer. The powdered form was obtained by drying the nanoparticles in a hot-air oven at 60 ^{o}C using glass Petri plates. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) was conducted to view the nanoparticles in order to determine their sizes and shapes. EDX study was carried out to ascertain purity of the SeNPs nanoparticles (Lateef et al., 2018)

Evaluation of Antioxidant Activity:

The antioxidant activity was determined using DPPH Radical Scavenging Assay. DPPH solution of 0.1 mM was dissolved in methanol and mixed with different concentrations of SeNPs. The mixture was incubated in the dark for 30 minutes and absorbance was measured at 517 nm using a spectrophotometer. The percentage inhibition of DPPH radicals was calculated using,

$$\%inhibition = \frac{Acontrol - Asample}{Ablank} \times 100$$

where $Acontrol$ is the absorbance of the control reaction (containing DPPH solution without nanoparticles) and $Asample$ is the absorbance of the test sample containing nanoparticles.

This procedure was conducted following established methods with slight modifications (Lateef *et al.*, 2015; Adebayo *et al.*, 2018; Akinola *et al.*, 2020)

Determination of Antibacterial Activity

The antibacterial effect of biologically synthesized selenium nanoparticles was evaluated against four crucial human pathogenic bacterial strains, containing *Klebsiella pneumoniae, Staphylococcus aureus, Pseudomonas aeruginosa and Salmonella typhi* which were procured from Ladoke Akintola University Teaching hospital, Ogbomoso, 0.5 McFarland standards of each of these organisms were prepared and swabbed on a freshly prepared Muhiller Hinton Agar using a sterile swab stick. These were allowed to stay for one hour and a sterile cork borer was used to create wells on the plates. Different concentration of 10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 mg/µl were prepared and each of the concentration were pipetted into the well and labelled accordingly. The plates were incubated at 37 ^{O}C for 24 hours. The antibacterial effect was determined through the zone of inhibition that appeared on each concentration which were measured and recorded in millimeter (Trianes *et al.,* 2022).

Result and discussion

The biosynthesis of selenium nanoparticles (PM-SeNPs) using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* seed extract in Figure 1 was successfully achieved and confirmed through visual observation and physicochemical characterization. A distinct colour change from pale yellow to light orange colour indicated the reduction of selenite ions (Se^{4+}) to elemental selenium (Se^{0}), which is consistent with the formation of selenium nanoparticles via surface plasmon resonance (SPR). This observation agrees with recent reports on plant-mediated SeNPs synthesis (Fouda *et al.*, 2022; Aftab *et al.*, 2023; Alsinani *et al.*, 2026). The UV-Vis spectroscopy (Figure 2A) revealed a characteristic absorption peak of 278 nm, confirming nanoparticle formation. The broad peak suggested polydispersity, which is typical of biosynthesized nanoparticles due to heterogeneous phytochemical capping (Al-Otaibi *et al.*, 2025). SEM analysis in figure 2B, showed irregular to spherical particles with noticeable aggregation, likely due to biomolecular interactions and drying effects.

EDX analysis (Figure 2C) further confirmed selenium as the dominant element (60.60 wt%), with minor contributions from carbon and oxygen, indicating phytochemical capping and stabilization. These findings are consistent with recent studies highlighting the role of plant metabolites in nanoparticle reduction and stabilization (Behera *et al.*, 2024; Alsinani *et al.*, 2026). The synthesized PM-SeNPs exhibited significant antibacterial and antioxidant activities, supporting their potential application in biomedical and pharmaceutical fields. The findings further reinforce the growing evidence that plant-

mediated nanoparticles offer a sustainable and multifunctional approach to combating microbial infections and oxidative stress-related diseases.



Fig 1: Synthesis of SeNPs using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* (A) Seed of *Pentaclethra macrophylla* (B) Biosynthesis of PM-SeNPs

The antioxidant activity evaluated using the DPPH assay showed a significant ($p < 0.05$) concentration-dependent increase in radical scavenging activity, ranging from 8.79% to 51.21% for PM-SeNPs. However, this activity was significantly lower than that of the standard (ascorbic acid), which ranged from 44.40% to 88.30%. The antioxidant effect of PM-SeNPs is attributed to the synergistic interaction between selenium and phytochemicals such as phenolics and flavonoids, which donate electrons or hydrogen atoms to neutralize free radicals (Aneesha and Karthikeyan, 2026). Similar moderate antioxidant activities of plant-mediated SeNPs have been reported in recent studies (Aftab *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, these results confirm that *P. macrophylla* seed extract is an effective bio-reducing and stabilizing agent for the green synthesis of selenium nanoparticles.

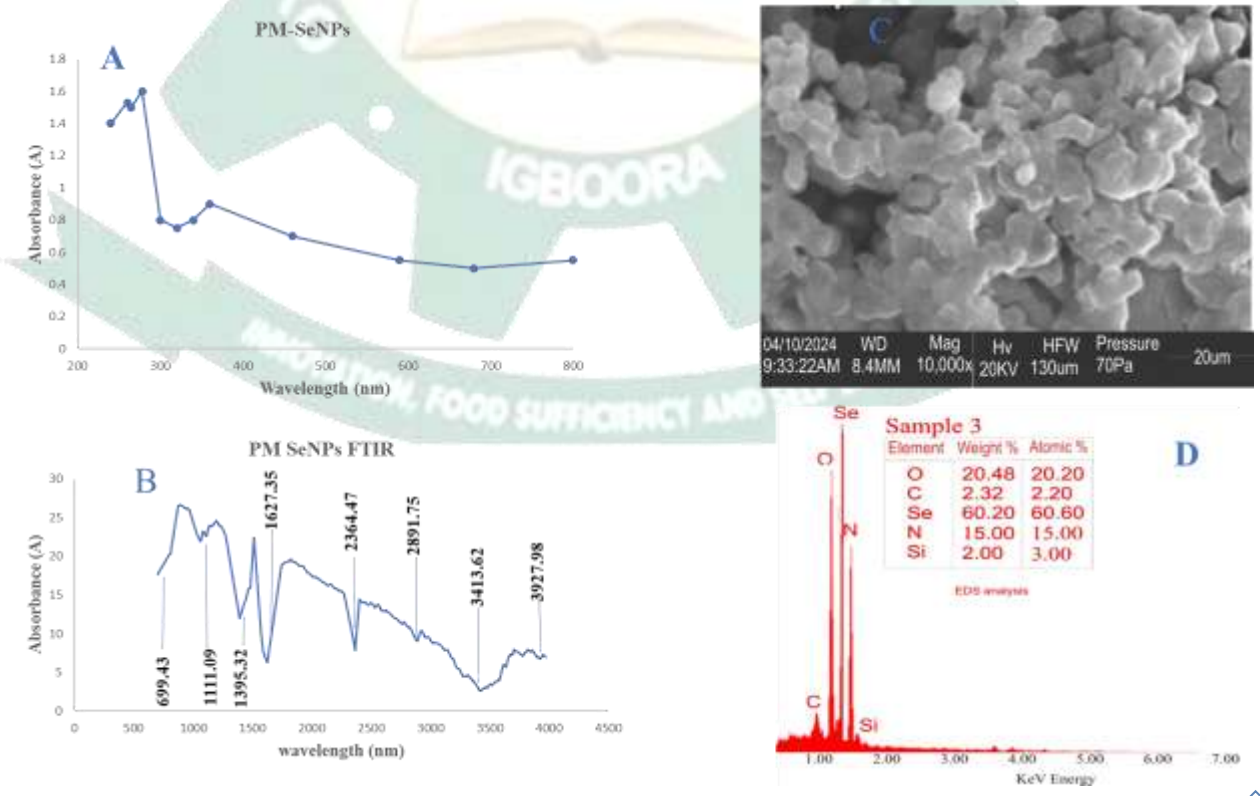


Fig. 2: Characterization of SeNPs using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* seed extract (A) UV-Vis of synthesized SeNPs (B) FTIR (C) TEM (D) EDX of the biosynthesized selenium nanoparticle

Table 1**:** DPPH Scavenging Activities of the Biosynthesized Selenium Nanoparticle using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* Seed Extract

CONCENTRATION	**PM-SeNPs%**	**STANDARD VALUE (ascorbic acid) %**
100	51.21±0.01	88.30±0.00
80	48.01±0.00	77.41±0.00
60	36.50±0.01	64.03±0.00
40	24.02±0.00	59.01±0.00
20	08.79±0.01	44.40±0.10

Table 2**:** Antibacterial Activity of Selenium Nanoparticles using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* Seed Extract against Selected Pathogenic Bacterial

	Inhibition Zone (mm) Concentration g/ml						
Name of Organisms	**10**	**20**	**40**	**60**	**80**	**100**	**Extract**
Staphylococcus aureus	NZ	9	10	11	16	19	NZ
Salmonella typhi	10	5	12	7	15	12	10
Klebsiella pneumoniae	14	6	15	9	NZ	16	NZ
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	25	12	NZ	9	11	15	NZ

Key: NZ-No Zone

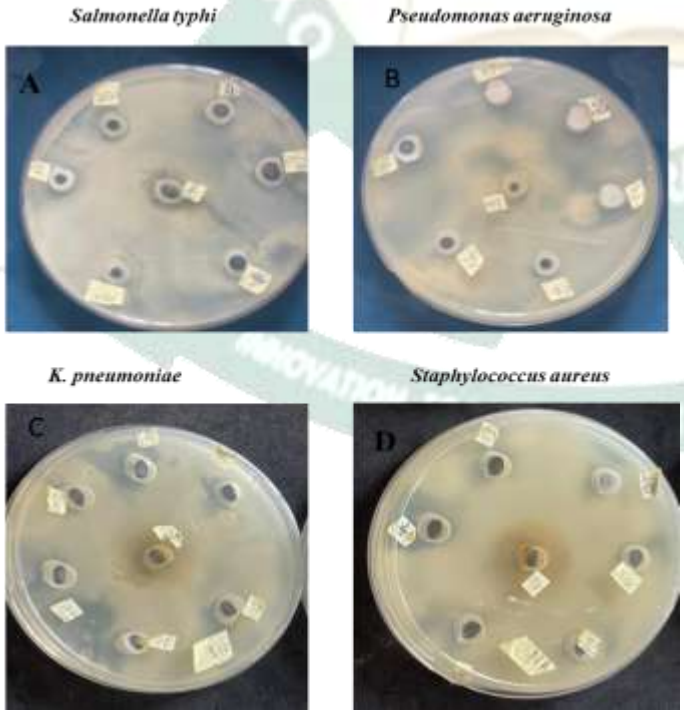


Fig 3: Antimicrobial activities of biosynthesized SeNPs using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* seed extracts against A – *Salmonella typhi*; B – *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*; C – *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and D – *Staphylococcus aureus***.**

The antibacterial activity of PM-SeNPs demonstrated concentration-dependent and organism-specific effects. Statistical analysis (ANOVA) showed that variations in inhibition zones across concentrations were significant ($p < 0.05$). *Staphylococcus aureus* exhibited a progressive increase in inhibition from 9 mm to 19 mm, indicating strong susceptibility, while *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* showed the highest inhibition (25 mm) at 10 µg/mL with fluctuating responses at higher concentrations. *Salmonella typhi* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae* displayed moderate and variable inhibition patterns. The crude extract showed no activity, confirming that antimicrobial efficacy was enhanced by nanoparticle formation. These findings align with early and recent studies, which report that SeNPs exhibit greater activity against Gram-positive bacteria and variable responses in Gram-negative strains due to differences in cell wall structure and permeability (Tran and Webster, 2011; Zhang *et al.*, 2021; Fouda *et al.*, 2022; Puri *et al.*, 2024).

Conclusion

This study successfully demonstrated the green synthesis of selenium nanoparticles (PM-SeNPs) using *Pentaclethra macrophylla* seed extract as an effective bio-reducing and stabilizing agent. The formation of nanoparticles was confirmed by colour change, UV-Vis spectroscopy, SEM, and EDX analysis, which verified nanoscale structure, morphology, and elemental composition dominated by selenium. The biosynthesized PM-SeNPs exhibited significant ($p < 0.05$) antibacterial activity against both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria, with greater efficacy observed against *Staphylococcus aureus*. The nanoparticles also demonstrated concentration-dependent antioxidant activity, although lower than the standard ascorbic acid. These biological activities are attributed to the synergistic interaction between selenium and phytochemical constituents of the plant extract.

Conclusively, the findings confirm that *P. macrophylla*-mediated SeNPs possess appreciable antimicrobial and antioxidant properties, highlighting their potential as eco-friendly and multifunctional nanotherapeutic agents. This study further supports the relevance of plant-mediated nanoparticle synthesis as a sustainable approach for biomedical applications and also in line with the third (Good Health and Well-being) and nineth (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) goal of Sustainable Development goal.

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COMPARATIVE EFFECTS OF ETHANOL AND N-HEXANE EXTRACTION ON THE FATTY ACID PROFILES AND THE INFERRED CARDIOPROTECTIVE AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY POTENTIALS OF *PORTULACA OLERACEA* LEAVES

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Abstract
This study compared the fatty acid profiles of ethanol and n-hexane extracts of Portulaca oleracea L. *leaves and evaluated their potential cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory capacities based on their fatty acid compositions. Fresh leaves were air-dried, powdered, sieved and extracted separately using ethanol and n-hexane. The fatty acid composition was determined by gas chromatography (GC). The identified fatty acids were comparatively evaluated using chromatographic peak areas and quantified concentrations, where available. The biological implications of the identified fatty acids were interpreted using current scientific evidence from published literature. Both extracts contained palmitic acid (C16:0), stearic acid (C18:0), oleic acid (C18:1), α-linolenic acid (C18:3), linoleic acid (C18:2), arachidic acid (C20:0), behenic acid (C22:0), and lignoceric acid (C24:0). The ethanol extract exhibited higher chromatographic peak areas for most detected fatty acids, including palmitic acid (5640.77 vs. 5164.50), oleic acid (4511.95 vs. 3512.45), α-linolenic acid (5169.52 vs. 4432.45), linoleic acid (19522.16 vs. 17806.21), and behenic acid (1369.39 vs. 986.27), compared with the n-hexane extract. Linoleic acid was the predominant fatty acid in both extracts. The abundance of unsaturated fatty acids suggests considerable cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory potential, with the ethanol extract demonstrating superior extraction efficiency. Ethanol extracted higher amounts of the principal bioactive fatty acids than n-hexane and might therefore be the preferred solvent for obtaining lipid fractions of P. oleracea intended for nutraceutical and pharmaceutical applications targeting cardiovascular and inflammatory disorders.*

Keywords: *Portulaca oleracea, fatty acids, ethanol and n-hexane extracts, cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory activities, gas chromatography*.

Introduction

Natural products continue to occupy a central position in modern drug discovery because of their chemical diversity and broad spectrum of pharmacological activities. Medicinal plants remain indispensable sources of bioactive compounds capable of preventing or managing chronic diseases, particularly cardiovascular diseases, metabolic disorders, inflammatory conditions, and oxidative stress-related illnesses (Newman and Cragg, 2020). Among these medicinal plants, *Portulaca oleracea* L. (family Portulacaceae), commonly known as purslane, has attracted considerable scientific attention owing to its remarkable nutritional and therapeutic properties. The plant is widely distributed across tropical and temperate regions and is consumed as both a vegetable and a traditional medicinal herb in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas (Simopoulos, 2004; Petropoulos *et al*., 2016). Purslane is exceptionally rich in biologically active constituents, including omega-3 fatty acids, omega-6 fatty acids, flavonoids, alkaloids, terpenoids, phenolic compounds, vitamins A, C, and E, glutathione, carotenoids, polysaccharides, minerals, and essential amino acids (Uddin *et al*., 2014; Zhou *et al*., 2015). Among these phytochemicals, its lipid fraction is particularly important because purslane is recognized as one of the richest terrestrial sources of α-linolenic acid (ALA), an omega-3 fatty acid more commonly associated with marine foods (Simopoulos *et al*., 1992).

Numerous experimental and epidemiological studies have demonstrated that dietary unsaturated fatty acids reduce the incidence of cardiovascular diseases through several mechanisms, including lowering plasma low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, improving endothelial function, reducing platelet

aggregation, decreasing oxidative stress, and suppressing vascular inflammation (Mozaffarian and Wu, 2011; Kris-Etherton *et al*., 2021). Similarly, omega-3 fatty acids inhibit the synthesis of pro-inflammatory eicosanoids while promoting the formation of specialized pro-resolving mediators, such as resolvins, protectins, and maresins, thereby limiting chronic inflammation (Calder, 2017).

The extraction solvent substantially influences the qualitative and quantitative recovery of phytochemicals from medicinal plants (Azmir *et al*., 2013). Polar solvents, such as ethanol, effectively dissolve polar and moderately non-polar compounds, whereas non-polar solvents, such as n-hexane, preferentially extract neutral lipids and hydrophobic constituents (Azmir *et al*., 2013). Consequently, solvent selection plays a critical role in determining the biological activity of plant extracts.

Although several investigations have characterized the phytochemical composition of *P. oleracea*, comparative studies evaluating the influence of extraction solvents on its fatty acid composition remain limited. Understanding these solvent-dependent differences is essential for optimizing extraction procedures for nutraceutical, pharmaceutical and functional food applications. Therefore, the present study compared the fatty acid profiles of ethanol and n-hexane extracts of *P. oleracea* leaves and discusses their implications for cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory activities based on current scientific evidence from the laboratory work carried out.

Materials and methods

***Area of study*:** The research was carried out at the Department of Science Laboratory Technology (Chemistry Unit), Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria.

***Plant material*:** Fresh leaves of *Portulaca oleracea* were harvested from healthy mature plants and authenticated prior to analysis. The leaves were thoroughly washed with distilled water to remove adhering soil particles and contaminants before being air-dried under shade at room temperature. The dried leaves were milled into fine powder using a laboratory grinder and stored in airtight containers until extraction.

Preparation of plant extracts: Two extraction solvents with different polarities were employed to evaluate their influence on fatty acid recovery.

Ethanol extraction: Approximately 50g of the prepared sample was serially extracted with 100 mL of methanol according to the laboratory analytical procedure. The extract was subsequently stabilized with ethyl acetate before being concentrated to approximately 1 mL for chromatographic analysis.

n-Hexane extraction: An identical extraction procedure was carried out using n-hexane. Following stabilization with ethyl acetate, the concentrated extract was subjected to chromatographic analysis under the same analytical conditions. Using identical analytical conditions ensured that the observed differences in fatty acid composition were attributable primarily to the extraction solvent rather than analytical variability.

***Gas chromatographic analysis of fatty acids*:** Fatty acid determination was performed at Bato Chemical Laboratory Limited using gas chromatography equipped with an SE-30 column and nitrogen as the carrier gas. One microliter of each concentrated extract was injected into the chromatograph for the separation and detection of fatty acids. Retention times were compared with those of authenticated standards for compound identification.

***Data analysis*:** Chromatographic peak areas were used to compare the relative abundance of fatty acids in the two solvent extracts. Available concentrations reported by the laboratory were recorded in parts per million (ppm). The comparative evaluation focused on total saturated fatty acids (SFAs), total unsaturated fatty acids (UFAs), monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs), polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), relative abundance of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, solvent extraction efficiency

Descriptive statistics were used to compare the fatty acid profiles of both extracts.

Results and discussion

Comparative fatty acid profiles of ethanol and n-hexane extracts

Table 1. Comparative fatty acid composition of ethanol and n-hexane extracts of *Portulaca oleracea* leaves

Fatty acid	Carbon chain	Ethanol extract (peak area)	n-Hexane extract (peak area)	Higher extract
Palmitic acid	C16:0	5640.77	5164.50	Ethanol
Stearic acid	C18:0	1125.12	1063.96	Ethanol
Oleic acid	C18:1	4511.95	3512.45	Ethanol
α-Linolenic	C18:3	5169.52	4432.45	Ethanol
Linoleic acid	C18:2	19522.16	17806.21	Ethanol
Arachidic acid	C20:0	400.82	453.94	n-Hexane
Behenic acid	C22:0	1369.39	986.27	Ethanol
Lignoceric acid	C24:0	198.91	271.12	n-Hexane

Source: *Laboratory GC analysis*.

Distribution of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids: Both extracts contained a mixture of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids. However, unsaturated fatty acids constituted the dominant lipid fraction. The major saturated fatty acids included palmitic acid**,** stearic acid**,** arachidic acid**,** behenic acid and lignoceric acid while major unsaturated fatty acids included oleic acid**,** linoleic acid and α-linolenic acid. Among these compounds, linoleic acid exhibited the highest chromatographic response in both extracts, indicating that it is the predominant fatty acid in *P. oleracea* leaves under the extraction conditions employed.

***Effect of solvent on fatty acid recovery*:** The polarity of ethanol appeared to enhance extraction of most fatty acids compared with n-hexane, ethanol increased recovery of: Palmitic acid by approximately, 9.2%, stearic acid by 5.8%, oleic acid by 28.5%, α-linolenic acid by 16.6%; linoleic acid by 9.6% and behenic acid by 38.9%. Conversely, n-hexane extracted slightly greater quantities of arachidic acid and lignoceric acid, suggesting a modest preference for certain long-chain saturated fatty acids.

Overall, ethanol demonstrated superior extraction efficiency for the biologically important unsaturated fatty acids, especially oleic acid, linoleic acid, and α-linolenic acid, which are closely associated with cardiovascular health and regulation of inflammatory responses.

Discussion

The present study demonstrated that the extraction solvent significantly influenced the fatty acid profile of *Portulaca oleracea* leaves. Although ethanol and n-hexane recovered the same fatty acid species, ethanol consistently produced higher peak areas for the major bioactive fatty acids, including oleic, α-linolenic, linoleic, palmitic, stearic, and behenic acids, whereas n-hexane showed only slight advantages for arachidic and lignoceric acids. These findings indicate that solvent polarity plays an important role in fatty acid recovery and are consistent with the observations of Azmir *et al*. (2013) and Dai and Mumper (2010), who reported that ethanol enhances the extraction of lipid-associated phytochemicals because of its intermediate polarity and superior ability to penetrate plant tissues.

Linoleic acid was the predominant fatty acid detected in both extracts, followed by α-linolenic acid and oleic acid. This agrees with previous reports identifying *P. oleracea* as one of the richest edible leafy vegetables in essential polyunsaturated fatty acids (Simopoulos, 2004; Petropoulos *et al*., 2016). Linoleic acid plays an essential role in maintaining membrane integrity, regulating immune function, and improving cardiovascular health through reductions in low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and improved endothelial function (Calder, 2015; Farvid *et al*., 2014). Likewise, α-linolenic acid, the principal plant-derived omega-3 fatty acid, serves as the metabolic precursor of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), which suppress inflammatory signalling and promote the formation of specialized pro-resolving mediators (Calder, 2017; Serhan, 2014). The higher recovery of α-linolenic acid by ethanol therefore suggests a greater potential for anti-inflammatory and cardioprotective applications.

Oleic acid was also recovered in substantially greater amounts by ethanol than by n-hexane. Oleic acid, the predominant monounsaturated fatty acid in olive oil, has been associated with improved lipid metabolism, enhanced insulin sensitivity, reduced oxidation of low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and suppression of inflammatory pathways (Schwingshackl and Hoffmann, 2014; Sales-Campos *et al*., 2013). Consequently, the greater abundance of oleic acid in the ethanol extract may further enhance its biological value.

Although saturated fatty acids such as palmitic, stearic, arachidic, behenic, and lignoceric acids were detected in both extracts, they occurred alongside abundant unsaturated fatty acids that are considered nutritionally beneficial. Stearic acid has been reported to exert little or no cholesterol-raising effect because it is rapidly converted to oleic acid in the liver (Mensink *et al*., 2003; Hunter *et al*., 2010). Similarly, arachidic, behenic, and lignoceric acids primarily contribute structural and metabolic functions and have limited adverse cardiovascular effects at the concentrations normally present in foods (Astrup *et al*., 2020; Gunstone *et al*., 2007; Vance and Vance, 2008). Therefore, the predominance of unsaturated fatty acids supports the favourable nutritional quality of the extracts.

The superiority of ethanol extraction observed in the present study corroborates previous investigations on *P. oleracea* and other medicinal plants, where ethanol generally recovered greater quantities of biologically active compounds than non-polar solvents (Petropoulos *et al*., 2015; Uddin *et al*., 2014; Azmir *et al*., 2013). Consequently, ethanol appears to be the preferred solvent for obtaining fatty acid-rich extracts intended for nutraceutical, pharmaceutical, and functional food applications.

Overall, the predominance of linoleic, α-linolenic, and oleic acids indicates that *P. oleracea* leaves possess considerable cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory potential. These fatty acids have been associated with improved lipid profiles, preservation of endothelial function, suppression of oxidative stress, inhibition of pro-inflammatory cytokine production, and enhanced resolution of inflammation (Mozaffarian and Wu, 2011; Calder, 2017; Kris-Etherton *et al*., 2021). However, because these biological activities were inferred from fatty acid composition rather than validated experimentally, further in vitro and in vivo studies are required to confirm the predicted therapeutic effects.

Study limitations: Despite providing valuable comparative information, this study has several limitations: The investigation was based on chromatographic analysis of a single batch of plant material, and seasonal or geographical variations were not evaluated. Biological activities were inferred from fatty acid composition rather than confirmed through *in vivo* or *in vitro* cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory assays. Statistical comparisons were limited by the absence of replicate chromatographic analyses. Other lipid constituents such as phytosterols, tocopherols, and phospholipids were not quantified and may also contribute to the biological properties of the extracts. Future studies should include replicated analyses, detailed lipidomics, and experimental validation using cell culture and animal models to confirm the predicted biological activities.

Conclusion

This study compared the fatty acid profiles of ethanol and n-hexane extracts of *Portulaca oleracea* leaves and evaluated their potential cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory capacities based on their fatty acid compositions. The study demonstrated that both ethanol and n-hexane extracts of *P. oleracea* leaves contain a diverse range of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, including palmitic, stearic, oleic, α-linolenic, linoleic, arachidic, behenic, and lignoceric acids. However, ethanol consistently extracted higher amounts of the principal biologically active fatty acids, particularly oleic acid, α-linolenic acid, linoleic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, and behenic acid, whereas n-hexane showed only slight advantages in extracting arachidic and lignoceric acids. The predominance of unsaturated fatty acids, especially linoleic acid, α-linolenic acid, and oleic acid, indicates that *P. oleracea* is an excellent plant source of lipid constituents associated with cardiovascular protection and regulation of inflammatory processes. These fatty acids are known to improve lipid profiles, preserve endothelial function, reduce oxidative stress, inhibit pro-inflammatory signaling pathways, and promote the resolution of inflammation.

Overall, the findings indicated that ethanol is a more efficient extraction solvent than n-hexane for recovering the nutritionally and pharmacologically important fatty acids from *P. oleracea* leaves. This supports the use of ethanol extracts in the development of functional foods, nutraceuticals, and phytopharmaceutical products intended for the prevention and management of cardiovascular and inflammatory diseases.

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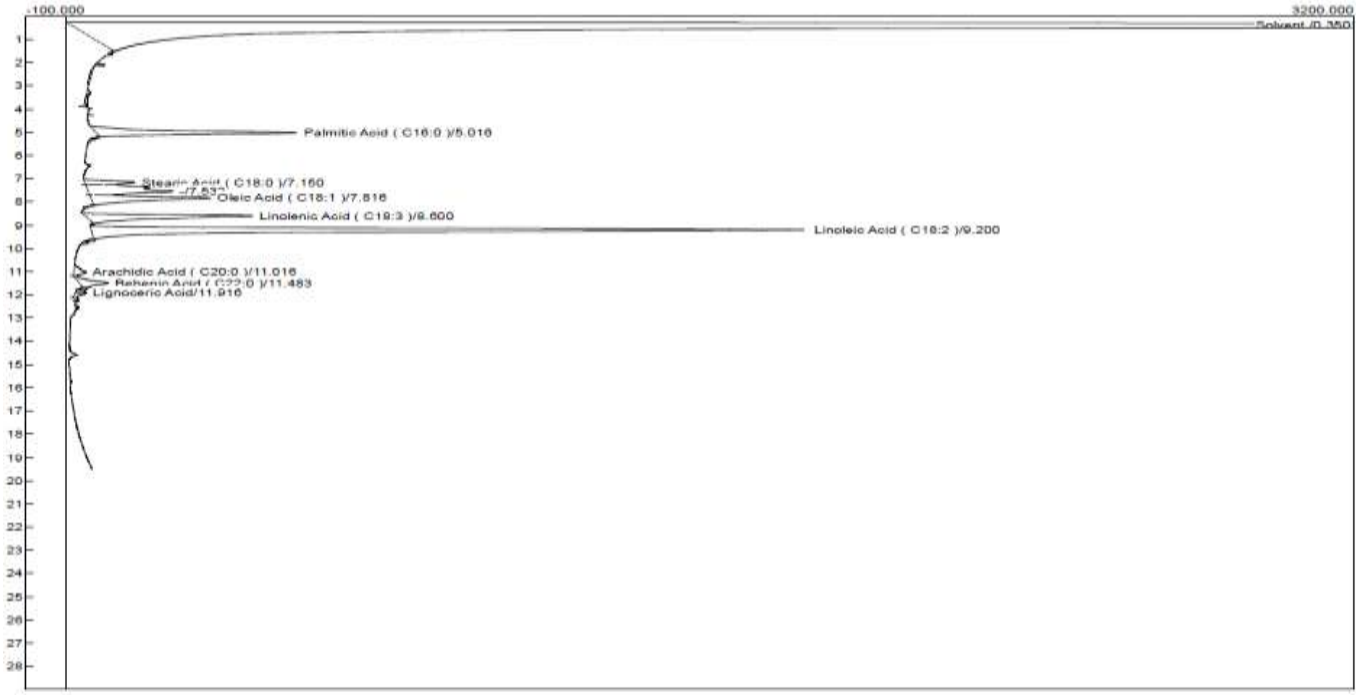
Appendices

Appendix 1. *Portulaca olerecea* (purslane): Ethanol extract - fatty acid profile GC Chromatograph



Component	Retention	Area	Height	External	Units
Solvent	0.350	88186.0410	5876.209	0.0000	
Palmitic Acid (C16:0)	5.016	5640.7690	516.403	892.8981	ppm
Stearic Acid (C18:0)	7.150	1125.1230	129.286	0.0000	
Oleic Acid (C18:1)	7.816	4511.9470	321.050	0.0000	
Linolenic Acid (C18:3)	8.600	5169.5220	430.856	0.0000	
Linoleic Acid (C18:2)	9.200	10522.1565	1013.163	0.0000	
Arachidic Acid (C20:0)	11.016	400.8225	26.869	0.0000	
Behenic Acid (C22:0)	11.483	1388.3850	82.450	158.8731	ppm
Lignoseric Acid	11.816	188.9070	26.444	0.0000	
		126124.6790		661.2693	

Appendix 2. *Portulaca olerecea* (purslane): n-Hexane extract - fatty acid profile GC Chromatograph



Component	Retention	Area	Height	External	Units
Solvent	0.350	86512.5525	5673.246	0.0000	
Palmitic Acid (C16:0)	5.016	5164.5030	499.862	633.0629	ppm
Stearic Acid (C18:0)	7.150	1063.9630	124.508	0.0000	
Oleic Acid (C18:1)	7.816	3512.4630	297.168	0.0000	
Linolenic Acid (C18:3)	8.600	4432.4460	416.589	0.0000	
Linoleic Acid (C18:2)	9.200	17806.2090	1779.986	0.0000	
Arachidic Acid (C20:0	11.016	453.9440	29.040	0.0000	
Behenic Acid (C22:0	11.483	986.2710	72.391	110.7939	ppm
Lignoceric Acid	11.916	271.1190	27.917	0.0000	

COMPARATIVE PHYSIOCHEMICAL AND ORGANOLEPTIC ANALYSES BETWEEN UNDERUTILIZED LEAVES FROM CASSAVA AND COCOA YAM FOR THE PREPARATION OF IJAKPO

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Abstract

Nutrition remains a major challenge in the midst of numerous underutilized nutrient rich crops, part of these underutilizes crops in Africa include cassava and cocoyam leaves in Africa. Ijakpo, a traditional delicacy perculiar to the Yakuur people from cassava leaf. The aimof this study is tinvestigates the comparative sensory and physicochemical properties of the prepared diet. A sample was prepared from cassava leaf(A) and cocoa yam leaf(B) respectively using the same traditional methods. The products were subjected to blind organoleptic score (appearance, aroma taste, mouth feel and general acceptance) and analysis using 25 panelists (most of which are semi trained Yakuur citizens) used to the diet for. Then the samples were subjected to selected physicochemical parameters including browning, wettability, specific gravity, foaming capacity chlorophyll iodine and gelation. All data obtained were subjected to analysis using (Ai aided) Microsoft Excel software at p< 0.05.The result showed that cassava is significantly lower than cocoyam in appearance (3.46 against 4.96),taste(3.68 against 5.04).mouth feel(3.25 against 5.58) and general acceptance(4.08 against 5.04) but insignificant in appearance indicating that apart from aroma, cocoa yam leaf Ijakpo was significantly higher in preference in the blind sensory score in all parameters except aroma where there is no significant difference except for the later itchy throat feel on the cocoa yam Ijakpo. Similarly, the physiococheмical properties of both products were significantly different except with browning and specific gravity. This suggest the potency of cassava leaf beyond Cross River State and the novel Cocoa yam Ijakpo as useful diets in both malnurished and well nourished populations globally. These findings highlight the extended potential of cassava leaves beyond Cross River State and demonstrate the viability of novel cocoyam Ijakpo as a nutrient-dense dish suitable for addressing nutritional needs.

Key Words: *Undertulized, Food Crops, Organoleptic, physicochemical, Nutrition*

Introduction

With increase in population, wars, violence and crises, food shortages and malnutrition increases proportionally. Nigeria for example which is associated with insecurity and economic hardships ranks 109/125 in hunger index (von Grebmer *et al* 2023). However, they are also abundant of underutilized food sources such as different parts of weeds or unused parts of food crops (USDA, 2022, Aworh, 2020). Some of these are nutrient dense comparable to or more than in conventional food crops, fruits and or seeds. In this research Cassava and Cocoa yam leaves.

These unused parts are usually considered wastes and environmental pollutants. New technologies consider them as biomass (Ehoche *et al* 2026). However, these are still nutrient rich food sources which can serve as direct, alternative or supplementary roles in places like south America, Asia and Africa where nutritional crises are highest and utilization of emerging technologies are lowest.

Cassava leaf, mostly considered wastes in many circles has been proven to be rich in proteins (20- 25% crude), antioxidants (flavonoid, tannins, phenols), reducing sugars, minerals (calcium, iron, potassium, manganese and Phosphorous), Vitamins A,C, B-complex, and E and other antioxidants(Okoro and Ajibade; Temesgen *et al*; 2019). Although it also contains toxic cyanide but the water soluble and heat-sensitive compound can be removed by processing, (Latif and Muller 2015).

Cocoa yam leaf is also nutrient dense. Its protein contains all the essential amino acids. It is also rich in other nutrients. These include proteins (16.7% crude), antioxidants (flavonoid, saponins, phenols),

reducing sugars, minerals (calcium, iron, potassium, manganese, Zinc, sodium and phosporus) Vitamins A,C, and E and other antioxidants (Tmesgen *et al*., 2022, Aremu *et al*., 2021).

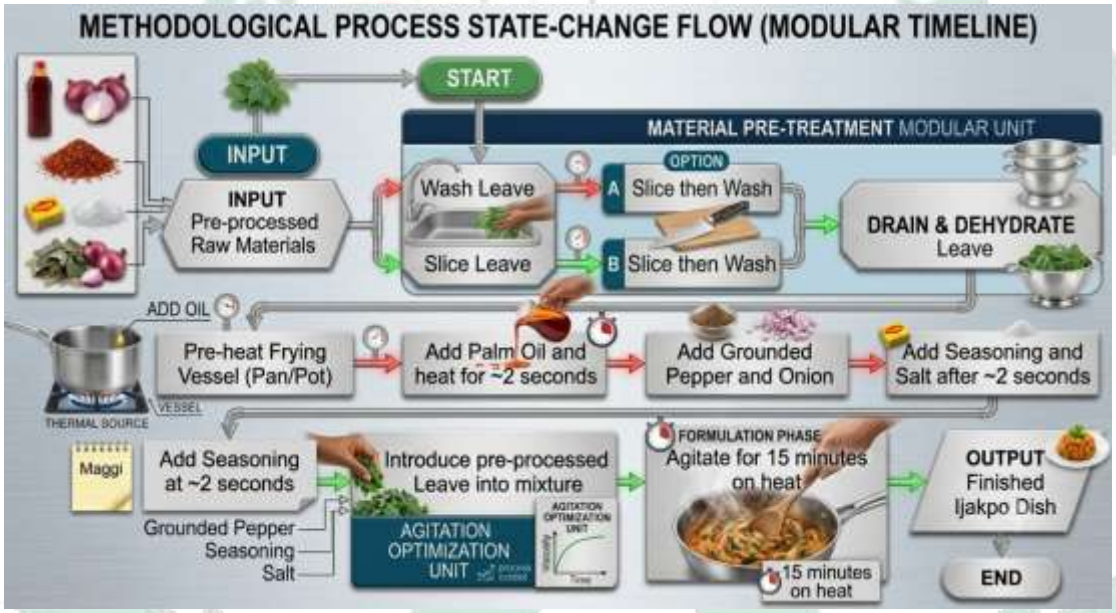
Ijakpo is a traditional delicacy of the Yakurrs of Cross River State of Nigeria. It is a simple vegetable source made primarily from cassava leaf. Other nutreints include onion, spices and salt. Other ingridients such as crayfish, meat or cow hide (kpomo) is optional. Traditionally, seasonings or "maggi" are not accepted t be added but can be added.

Documented research regarding the comparative sensory acceptability and functional properties of these leaves remains limited outside local communities. Furthermore, the preparation and analysis of Ijakpo using cocoyam leaves has not been previously reported.

This research was designed to examine and compare the sensory evaluation and physicochemical properties of Ijakpo made from two underutilized leaves to see which of them are contains more nutrients

Materials and Methods

Sample preparation: The procedure follows the traditional methods for preparing cassava Ijakpo. Fresh leaves from Cassava (new sprout) and cocoa yam leaf were respectively obtained from the local ugep farmers right on their farm located behind campus 1 of. The ingredients used to a scale of 500g product include: 1 cube Seasoning (Maggi), Pepper to taste, Onion 2 small sized and Salt to taste and Palm oil. The procedure are listed and described in the flow chart below.



1. Sensory Analysis

A 7 point hedonic scale was used by employed 25 semi trained adult panelists that consisted of native Yakurr citizens and residence of Ugep. The samples were scored blindly by them after giving their consents. The Analysis include : appearance, aroma, taste, mouth feel and overall acceptance.

2. **Physicochemical analysis**. The standard methods for the following were adapted (as decribed by the given references)

I. Gelation (as decribed by Onwuka 2005)
II. Iodine for Vitamin C(as decribed by Witham *et al*. 1971, Raghuramulu *et al.* 2003, Agoreyo *et al.* 2012).
III. Chlorophyl (as decribed by Onwuka 2005)
IV. Foam (as decribed by Onwuka 2005)
V. Specific Gravity (as decribed by Egan *et al.* 1981, Pearson's Chemical Analysis (Onwuka 2005).
VI. Wettability (as decribed by Onimawo & Akubor 2012.)

VII. Browning index (as decribed by Akinyele & Ikujenlola 2008.)

3. Statistical Analysis

The (25) scores from the sensory analysis and triplicate values from the physicochemical properties where subjected to mean frequency and ANOVA at $p< 0.05$ using Ai aided Microsoft Excel.

Results and Discussion

The figures 1 and 2 revealed the comparative physicochemical and sensory analysis results of Ijakpo from cassava and cocoa leaves.

Physicochemical properties

The null hypothesis for all the parameters are rejected except for specific gravity and Browning(which has a value of zero).because coco yam Ijakpo is higher in all the values but for the exceptions, significantly at $P<0.5$.

These parameters indicate the physical and chemical properties of the processed food which reflects their quality, preservation, and guides how to handle and utilize them. Gelation indicates the ability of the starch granules in the leaf to absorb water molecules and expand. A better Gelation indicates the needlessness of thickeners if used as soup. Iodine value tests the vitamin C composition which is higher in Cassava. Chlorophyl which indicates the greenish appearance of the product can be used to predict the acceptable appearance and general acceptability of the product also trends In line with the sensory evaluation as coco yam ijakpo was more rated with higher significance. Foaming capacity predicts the tendency of the leaf to spill out of the pot and cocoyam showed the trend while cassava ijakpo did not. The lower the foam, the better the soup. The specific gravity values have no significant difference High specific gravity values indicates the leaves sinks faster to the pot bottom, wettablilyt measure the interaction of the leaf aspects of the diet with oil and water. How it can easily get we suggesting a higher tendency for imcrease microbial actitivy due to increased water absorbtion reflecting the storage value of the food.

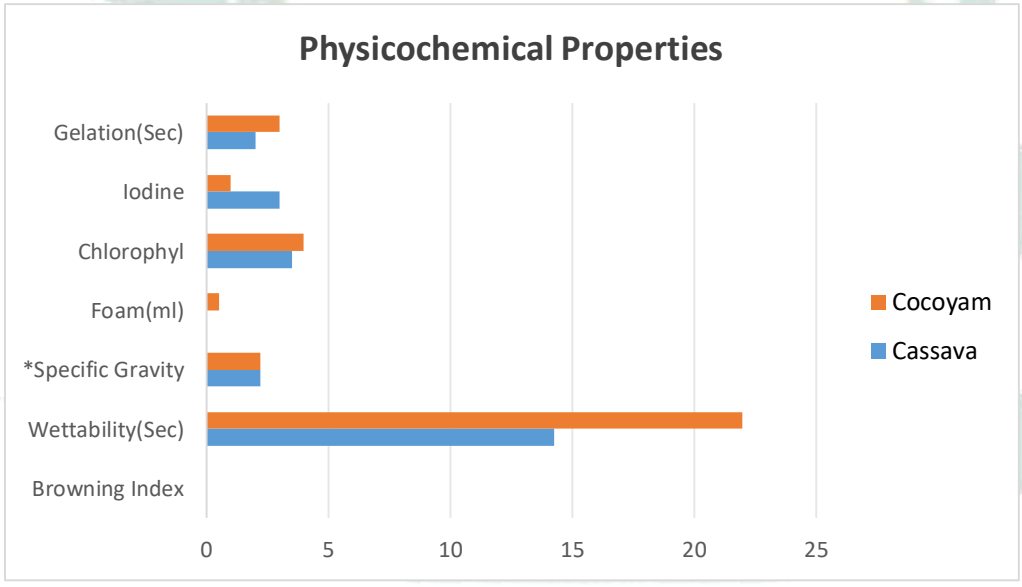


Figure 1: Physicochemical properties: *only specific gravity is not significantly different($P< 0.05$)

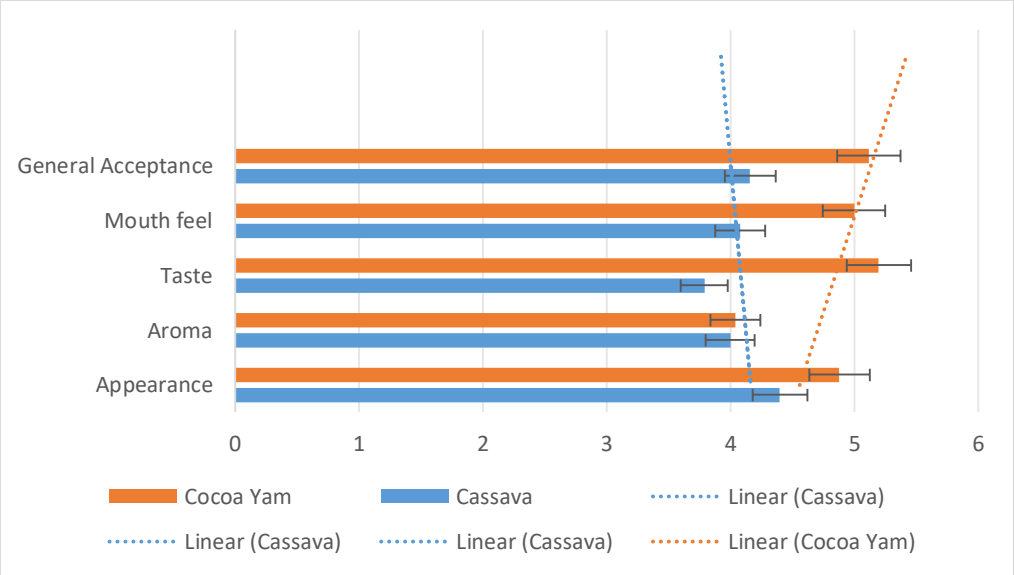


Figure 2 : Organoleptic Analysis. *Only aroma had no significant difference

The organoleptic analysis for diets indicates that apart from aroma, coco yam ijakpo is significantly more preferred (at $p < 0.05$) than cassava in the blind assay that prevented bias due to sentiments. However by observing further reactions form the panelists during the sensory analysis, they were reports of itchy throats from consuming the coco yam leaf about 3 minutes after scoring.

Limitation of studies

This study provides a novel comparison between traditional cassava leaf Ijakpo and its new cocoyam leaf variant. Direct literature comparisons are limited due to the novelty of cocoyam leaf utilization in this specific traditional dish. Extended cooking duration or pre-soaking treatments are recommended for cocoyam leaves to completely eliminate throat irritation from calcium oxalates. Further research into digestibility, detailed anti-nutrient quantification, and long-term toxicity testing is recommended.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Increasing awareness of cassava Ijakpo and introducing cocoyam leaf Ijakpo offers a promising strategy to enhance local diet diversity and combat nutrient deficiencies. Cocoyam leaf Ijakpo demonstrated high sensory acceptability and favorable functional properties. Extended boiling or mild alkaline pre-treatments are recommended to improve palatability by neutralizing acridity. Promoting these underutilized leafy crops can strengthen food security and rural nutritional health across Nigeria and broader sub-Saharan Africa.

Confict of interest:

Authors declare no conflict of interest

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Appendix

Table I

Sensory Analysis

Attribute	Cassava	Cocoyam	Significant
Appearance	3.46	4.96	TRUE

Aroma	4	4.04	FALSE
Taste	3.68	5.04	TRUE
Mouth feel	3.25	5.58	TRUE
General Acceptance	4.08	5.04	TRUE

Table II: Phyisico chemical properties

Parameter	Cassava_R1	Cassava_R2	Cassava_R3	Cassava_Mean	Cocoa_yam_R1	Cocoa_yam_R2	Cocoa_yam_R3	Cocoa_yam_Mean	p_value	Significance (p < 0.05)
Browning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	No Variance
Wettability	14.62	14.17	14.73	14.51	23.68	21.74	21.74	22.39	0.0003	Significant
Specific Gravity	2.25	2.24	2.23	2.24	2.23	2.22	2.22	2.22	0.0668	Not Significant
Foam(ml)	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.001	Significant
Chlorophyll	3.54	3.17	3.2	3.3	3.89	3.8	4.06	3.92	0.0122	Significant
Iodine	2.86	2.79	3.22	2.96	0.99	1	0.93	0.97	0.0001	Significant
Gelation	1.95	2.01	1.88	1.95	3.06	2.91	2.96	2.98	0.0001	Significant

DETERMINATION OF BACTERIAL ISOLATES FROM SELECTED CONTAMINATED STREETS FOOD

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Abstract
Street-vended foods serve as a vital source of affordable nutrition for many people in developing regions; however, they are often prepared and sold under unsanitary conditions that may predispose consumers to foodborne illnesses. This study was carried out to assess the microbial quality of roasted plantain sold in two locations — Towobowo and Igboole — in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. Samples were collected from both sites and analyzed using standard microbiological methods, including Gram staining, morphological evaluation, and a range of biochemical tests for bacterial identification. A total of five bacterial isolates were identified: Salmonella spp., Streptococcus spp., Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Escherichia coli, and Clostridium perfringens. The presence of Salmonella and E. coli in both locations highlights the likelihood of fecal and environmental contamination, likely due to inadequate personal hygiene, poor handling practices, or unclean utensils. Clostridium perfringens and Streptococcus were detected only in samples from Igboole, suggesting localized contamination sources. The study underscored the need for improved hygiene practices and stricter regulation of street food vending, particularly for ready-to-eat products such as roasted plantain. Regular microbial assessment and public health education are recommended to ensure food safety and protect consumers from foodborne diseases

Keywords: *Roasted plantain, street food, microbial contamination.*

Introduction

Street food refers to ready-to-eat food and beverages prepared and sold by vendors or hawkers, typically in outdoor public places such as streets, markets, and fairs. These foods are often accessible, affordable, and cater to a large segment of the urban and semi-urban population, particularly in developing countries (FAO, 2007). Despite their economic and cultural significance, street foods are commonly prepared under unhygienic conditions, making them vulnerable to microbial contamination and foodborne diseases (Barro *et al*., 2006).

The microbiological safety of street-vended foods is a public health concern due to the exposure of these foods to environmental contaminants such as dust, flies, polluted water, and improper handling practices (Tambekar *et al*., 2011). Several studies have reported the presence of pathogenic microorganisms like *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* spp., *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Shigella* spp., and *Listeria monocytogenes* in a variety of street foods (Mensah *et al*., 2002; Chukuezi, 2010). These pathogens can cause foodborne illnesses ranging from mild gastroenteritis to life-threatening systemic infections.

A critical aspect of ensuring food safety is the identification and quantification of microbial contaminants in food products. The determination of microbial load in street foods provides insight into the level of hygiene practiced by vendors and the potential risk posed to consumers (Bryan *et al*., 1997). Factors contributing to contamination include the use of unclean utensils, lack of access to potable water, poor personal hygiene of vendors, and prolonged holding of food at ambient temperature (Muinde and Kuria, 2005).

The rise in street food consumption, particularly in densely populated urban centers, underscores the importance of routine microbial assessment. This is not only essential for safeguarding public health but also for guiding policy decisions and vendor training programs on safe food handling (WHO, 2010). In Nigeria, as in many other developing nations, there is a dearth of stringent regulatory oversight on street food vending, further increasing the likelihood of contamination and disease outbreaks (Oranusi and Braide, 2012).

Street food refers to ready-to-eat food and beverages prepared and sold by vendors or hawkers, typically in outdoor public places such as streets, markets, and fairs. These food items are widely consumed due to their affordability, convenience, and cultural relevance, especially in urban and semi-urban areas of developing countries (Rane, 2011). Street food vending not only provides income opportunities for millions of informal workers but also contributes to food security among low-income populations (Steyn *et al*., 2014). However, the safety of these foods is often compromised by unsanitary preparation environments, poor vendor hygiene, and exposure to contaminants such as dust, insects, and polluted water sources (Lues *et al*., 2006).

Microbial contamination of street-vended foods remains a significant public health issue, with frequent reports of bacterial pathogens such as *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* spp., *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Listeria monocytogenes* in cooked and uncooked items (Altekruse *et al*., 1997; Mosupye and Von Holy, 2000). These microorganisms are associated with various foodborne illnesses ranging from diarrhea to typhoid fever and more severe gastrointestinal infections. The lack of infrastructure such as clean water, waste disposal systems, and refrigeration further elevates the risk of contamination during food preparation, storage, and vending (Barro *et al*., 2007).

Routine microbiological analysis of street foods is crucial to determine microbial load and detect the presence of pathogens. Such assessments help identify lapses in food handling and reveal the overall sanitary condition of the vending environment (Umoh and Odoba, 1999). In many settings, food vendors operate with little or no training in basic food safety practices, contributing significantly to cross-contamination through dirty hands, reused utensils, and unclean preparation surfaces (Martins, Anelich and Jolly, 2001). Moreover, food left exposed for extended periods, especially under ambient tropical temperatures, creates a favorable environment for rapid bacterial growth (Omemu and Aderoju, 2008). Therefore, the aim of the studies is to determine bacteria ca using contamination in the selected vended street food

Materials and methods

Study Area

The study was conducted in selected markets and bus terminals, a densely populated urban area known for its high volume of street food consumption. The area was chosen due to its economic dependence on informal food vending and the large number of daily consumers, which increases the risk of widespread foodborne illnesses

Sampling Method

A total of **2 roasted plantain samples** were collected from **2 different vendors**, ensuring representation of various food types and locations (Mensah *et al*., 2002).

Sample Handling

Samples was collected in sterile containers using aseptic techniques to prevent additional contamination. Each sample was labeled and immediately transported in an icebox to the microbiology laboratory for analysis within 2 hours of collection (Bryan *et al*., 1992).

Materials and Equipment

Sterile Petri dishes, Nutrient Agar, Salmonella-Shigella Agar, and Mannitol Salt Agar, Incubator (set at 37°C): Autoclave for sterilization, Microscope and Gram staining kit, Sterile pipette, test tubes, Distilled water and saline solution

All materials used was sterilized prior to use to avoid external contamination of samples (Cheesbrough, 2006).

Microbiological Analysis

Total Viable Count (TVC)

Each food sample (10g) was homogenized in 90 ml of sterile peptone water and serially diluted up to 10^{-6}. An aliquot of 1 ml from each dilution was plated on nutrient agar using the pour plate technique. Plates was incubated at 37°C for 24–48 hours, after which colony-forming units (CFUs) were counted and expressed as CFU/g (Frazier and Westhoff, 2008).

Isolation and Identification of Pathogen

Data Analysis

Microbial counts was recorded, and the means of colony counts for each food type were computed. The results was compared with microbiological safety standards set by the International Commission on

Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF, 2002) and the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007). Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages were also used to present data.

Results and discussion

Result

Table 1: Bacterial Isolates Count

Plates	Bacterial Count (cfu/g)
Plates A	20cfu/g
Plates B	20cfu/g
Plates C	18cfu/g
Plates D	16cfu/g
Plates E	10cfu/g
Plates F	14cfu/g
Plates G	13cfu/g
Plates H	16cfu/g
Plates I	12cfu/g

The bacterial count results presented in Table 1 indicated varying levels of microbes present across the different plates analyzed. Plates A and B recorded the highest bacterial counts of 20 cfu/g each, suggesting a relatively high level of contamination or microbial growth in these samples. This may be attributed to higher nutrient availability, favorable moisture content, or possible exposure to environmental contaminants. Plate C followed closely with 18 cfu/g, while Plates D and H each had similar bacterial growth of 16 cfu/g.

In contrast, Plates E and I exhibited lower bacterial counts of 10 cfu/g and 12 cfu/g, respectively, indicating a comparatively reduced microbial load. Plate G also showed minimal contamination (13 cfu/g), which could be due to lower organic content or better hygienic handling of the sample. Plate F recorded 14 cfu/g, reflecting a mid-range bacterial population among all samples tested.

Table 2: Characterization and Identification of Bacterial Isolates

Bacterial Isolate	Gram reaction	Cell shape	Motilsity	Oxidase	Catalase	Coagulase	Starch	Hydrolase	Indolase	Glucose	Sucrose	Maltose	Fructose	Probable organism
1	-	R	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	*Salmonella spp*
2	+	C	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	*Streptococus spp*
3	-	R	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	*Pseudomonas aureginosa*
4	+	C	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	*Escherichia coli*
5	+	C	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*Clostridium pefrigens*

- = Negative reaction, += Positive reaction, r= Rod, c= Cocci

Table 1: The table presents the morphological and biochemical characteristics used in the identification of five distinct bacterial isolates obtained from laboratory samples. Each isolate was assessed based on standard microbiological tests, including Gram staining, cell shape, motility, oxidase, catalase, and coagulase reactions, along with starch hydrolysis, indole production, and sugar fermentation tests (glucose, sucrose, maltose, and fructose):

Bacterial Isolate 1 was identified as *Salmonella spp*. It showed a Gram-negative rod shape and was motile. It tested positive for oxidase, starch hydrolysis, and maltose fermentation, but negative for catalase, coagulase, indole, and all other sugars tested. These biochemical traits are consistent with *Salmonella spp*, a known foodborne pathogen often found in contaminated surfaces and laboratory environments (MacFaddin, 2000):

Bacterial Isolate 2 was Gram-positive and cocci in shape. It was motile and positive for oxidase, starch hydrolysis, and indole productionHowever, it tested negative for catalase, coagulase, and all sugar fermentation tests. These features aligned with *Streptococcus* species, which are generally catalase-negative and often associated with respiratory and oral flora but can contaminate laboratory surfaces (Franz *et al*., 2007):

Bacterial Isolate 3 showed a Gram-negative rod morphology with motility. It was positive for oxidase, catalase, and starch hydrolysis, but negative for coagulase, indole, and all sugars tested. These characteristics are typical of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a metabolically versatile bacterium commonly found in moist laboratory environments and sinks (Beuchat, 2016):

Bacterial Isolate 4 was Gram-positive and cocci-shaped. It exhibited motility and tested positive for oxidase, starch hydrolysis, and indole production but was negative for catalase, coagulase, and all sugars tested. The biochemical pattern supports its identification as *Escherichia coli*, a facultative anaerobe that can be found in both pathogenic and commensal forms, especially in laboratory waste and contaminated materials (Goebel *et al*., 2014):

Bacterial Isolate 5 was also Gram-positive cocci, motile, and positive for oxidase only. It tested negative for catalase, coagulase, starch hydrolysis, indole, and all sugar fermentations. These results suggested the organism could be *Clostridium perfringens*, an anaerobic, spore-forming bacterium commonly found in soil and implicated in foodborne illnesses (MacFaddin, 2000; Ogunbanwo *et al*., 2003):

The integration of both morphological and biochemical data provides a comprehensive approach to bacterial identification. This information is critical for assessing potential contamination sources in laboratory environments and for implementing appropriate microbial control measures.

Table 3: Occurrence of Bacterial Isolates on Roasted plaintain from Towobowo and Igboole.

Isolate	Towobowo	Igboole
Salmonella spp	+	+
Streptococus spp	_	+
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	+	+
Escherichia coli	+	+
Clostridium pefrigens	-	+

Keys:

+ = Present

- =Absent

Table 3: This table presents the distribution of bacterial isolates found on roasted plantain samples obtained from Towobowo and Igboole. The analysis focused on the detection of five key bacterial species commonly associated with food contamination and spoilage. The presence ("+") or absence ("_") of each organism in the samples provides insight into the microbial quality and potential food safety risks associated with roasted plantain sold at these locations.

Salmonella spp was detected in samples from both Towobowo and Igboole, indicating a widespread occurrence of this pathogen. Its presence was a significant concern due to its association with foodborne illnesses, often resulting from poor handling, undercooked products, or cross-contamination during preparation (Franz *et al*., 2007):

Streptococcus was absent in Towobowo but detected in samples from Igboole. This suggested localized contamination, possibly introduced through human contact or environmental exposure at the point of sale.

Pseudomonas aeruginosa was present in both locations. This organism was known for its ability to survive in moist environments and on a wide range of surfaces, making it a common contaminant in both food and environmental samples (Beuchat, 2016):

Escherichia coli was found in samples from Towobowo and Igboole. The presence of E. coli indicated possible fecal contamination, often due to inadequate handwashing, use of contaminated water, or poor hygiene practices during food processing.

Clostridium perfringens was absent in Towobowo samples but detected in those from Igboole. This anaerobic bacterium can be introduced via soil, dust, or improper storage conditions, and is associated with food poisoning, especially when foods are held at unsafe temperatures (Ogunbanwo *et al*., 2003):

Overall, the presence of multiple bacterial species, including potential pathogens, suggests lapses in hygienic handling, preparation, or storage of roasted plantain at both locations. These findings emphasize the need for improved food safety education and enforcement of hygiene standards among street food vendors.

The detection of multiple potentially pathogenic organisms in laboratory environments underscores the need for rigorous disinfection protocols, personal hygiene practices, and regular microbial assessments to maintain a safe laboratory space.

Discussion

Table 1 present the total number of bacteria isolates per each plate, it was discussed that in plate A the total viable count of bacteria was 20cfu/g; plate B, 20cfu/g; plate C 18 cfu/g; plate D 16 cfu/g and plate E 10cfu/g. It could be seen that plate A and B have highest viable count of the bacteria and plate E has the lowest number of bacteria

The results of the morphological and biochemical characterization of bacterial isolates (Table 2) revealed key features that aided in their identification. Researchers reported that five bacterial isolates were obtained and analyzed using a combination of Gram reaction, cell shape, motility, fermentation ability, and other biochemical tests.

It was observed that Isolate 1, identified as *Salmonella spp*, was Gram-negative, rod-shaped, and motile. It exhibited positive reactions for oxidase, coagulase, starch, and maltose fermentation, while showing negative results for catalase and most other sugars. These features are consistent with *Salmonella* spp a foodborne pathogen commonly associated with raw and undercooked food products (Franz *et al*., 2007; MacFaddin, 2000):

Isolate 2, identified as *Streptococcus spp*, was Gram-positive, cocci in shape, and motile. It showed positive reactions for oxidase, coagulase, starch hydrolysis, and indole production, but negative reactions for catalase and all sugars. These characteristics are typical of *Streptococcus* species, which are often introduced into food through poor hygiene or handling practices (Goebel *et al*., 2014):

Isolate 3, identified as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, was Gram-negative, rod-shaped, and motile. It tested positive for oxidase, catalase, and starch hydrolysis, while being negative for sugar fermentation and indole. These features are indicative of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a spoilage organism known for its ability to thrive in moist environments and on exposed food surfaces (Beuchat, 2016):

Isolate 4, identified as *Escherichia coli*, was Gram-positive, cocci-shaped, and motile. It showed positive reactions for oxidase, coagulase, starch hydrolysis, and indole, while remaining negative for all sugars tested. *Escherichia coli* is commonly associated with fecal contamination and serves as an indicator of poor sanitation in food handling (Ogunbanwo *et al*., 2003):

Isolate 5, identified as *Clostridium perfringens*, was also Gram-positive, cocci-shaped, and motile. It tested positive only for oxidase and was negative for all other biochemical tests. This aligned with known properties of *Clostridium perfringens*, an anaerobic bacterium associated with food poisoning, especially in cases of improperly stored cooked food (Franz *et al*., 2007):

Salmonella spp was present in both Towobowo and Igboole, indicating its widespread occurrence in roasted plantain sold in the two markets. This could be due to cross-contamination during roasting or after preparation from surfaces, utensils, or handlers (Barth, 2012):

Streptococcus spp was absent in Towobowo but present in Igboole, suggesting a localized contamination issue, potentially arising from vendor hygiene or environmental conditions at the selling site.

Pseudomonas aeruginosa and *Escherichia coli* were detected in both locations. Their presence could be linked to environmental factors such as dust, water used in processing, or contaminated handling surfaces. These organisms are commonly associated with spoilage and potential health risks if ingested (Beuchat, 2016): *Clostridium perfringens* was not found in Towobowo but was present in samples from Igboole, which could be attributed to poor storage conditions or contamination from soil and other anaerobic environments.

The presence and distribution of these organisms on roasted plantain samples indicate lapses in hygiene and food safety practices. The results highlight the importance of strict sanitary measures in street food vending, particularly for ready-to-eat products like roasted plantain. Cross-contamination from hands, surfaces, or equipment during or after roasting can significantly impact the microbial quality and safety of food sold to the public.

These findings supported previous studies on microbial contamination of street-vended foods and underscored the need for regular monitoring, improved hygiene education, and stricter regulatory oversight to ensure food safety (Franz *et al*., 2007; MacFaddin, 2000; Goebel *et al*., 2014):

Conclusion

The evaluation of microbial contamination in street-vended roasted plantain from Towobowo and Igboole markets revealed the presence of a variety of bacterial species, indicating possible lapses in hygiene practices during preparation and sale. The study successfully identified *Salmonella spp*, *Streptococcus spp*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Clostridium perfringens* through a combination of morphological and biochemical analyses.

The detection of *Escherichia coli* and *Clostridium perfringens* suggested fecal and environmental contamination, possibly from dirty hands, unsanitized surfaces, or exposure to dust and flies during preparation. The presence of *Salmonella* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* further confirmed the risk of foodborne illness due to inadequate hygiene and storage conditions.

The occurrence of multiple organisms across both locations underscored the vulnerability of ready-to-eat foods like roasted plantain to microbial contamination, especially when sold in open-air markets with minimal sanitary regulation. These findings emphasized the need for food safety awareness and the enforcement of hygiene standards among street food vendors.

Most food pathogens are of soil or intestinal origin and are transmitted through poor food preparation, personal hygiene or public sanitation practices. Therefore, to ensure the safety of the foods, producer and hawkers must maintain a clean environment, minimize contact with the food samples after production and also maintain a high level of personal hygiene. Also, utensils should be properly clean at all stages of production.

Recommendation

Firstly, implementing proper food hygiene practices among street food vendors is essential to minimize microbial contamination. Vendors should be trained on personal hygiene, regular handwashing, proper food storage, and the use of clean utensils and surfaces.

Secondly, public health authorities should carry out routine microbial assessments and health inspections of street food vending sites. This would ensure compliance with hygiene regulations and help identify high-risk areas or vendors for corrective action.

In addition, the establishment of sanitary infrastructure, such as access to clean water, covered vending stands, and waste disposal units, will significantly reduce the risk of contamination from environmental sources like dust, flies, and dirty surface.

Finally, future research should incorporate advanced molecular tools such as 16S rRNA sequencing or PCR-based diagnostics to accurately identify bacterial strains and assess their pathogenic potential. This would improve understanding of the microbial ecology associated with street foods and support the development of targeted control strategies.

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ADSORPTION OF NICKEL IONS IN WASTE WATER USING ANIMAL WASTE AS ACTIVATED CARBON

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Abstract

Animal wastes, such as, bones, crab shell, arca shell and egg shell are currently being investigated as potential adsorbents for removal of heavy metals from wastewater. The utilization of low cost adsorbents obtained from animal waste as a replacement for costly conventional methods of removing heavy metal ions from wastewater aims to develop an eco-friendly, efficient and economically viable treatment technology for industrial effluents, thereby reducing environmental pollution and treatment costs. The study focused on adsorption of nickel ions (Ni^{2+}) by activated carbon derived from animal waste (cow bones). The effect of different factors such as contact time, adsorbent dosage and initial concentration were studied. The bow bone was modified before proceeding with batch studies using the initial concentration of Ni^{2+} solutions at 10 ppm. The analysis was continued using different concentration, ranging from 10-50 ppm, contact time in range of 30 – 150 seconds. Besides that, the influence of adsorbent dosage was also being studied in range of 0.5g to 2.5g. Contents of Ni^{2+} ions were analyzed using Atomic Absorption Spectrometer (AAS). For the contact time, the adsorption of Ni^{2+} increased when the contact time increased and the maximum adsorption was 92.12% at 150 secs. The research also gave similar results with the adsorbent dosage, where the adsorption of Ni^{2+} increased with increasing adsorbent dose because of greater surface area with maximum value of 97.35% at 2.5g. The adsorption of Ni^{2+} using activated carbon derived from cow bone decreased when the initial concentration increased from 10 to 50 ppm and the percentage adsorption decreased from 68 – 23.5% at initial concentration of 10ppm and 20ppm for Ni^{2+}. In conclusion, the rapid uptake and high sorption capacity achieved when the experiments were conducted at contact time, adsorbent dosage and initial concentration showed that activated carbon obtained from cow bones was an attractive alternative adsorbent material for the removal of Ni^{2+}.

Keywords: *Adsorption, nickel, chromium, dosage, contact time, cow bones, AAS*

Introduction

Humans, plants and animals, including other living individuals on Earth, interact with environmental components like air, water and soil for survival. The discharge of toxic heavy metals into the environment poses a significant threat to the quality of water and aquatic ecosystems, endangering human health making it a pervasive concern in the modern world due to the active interaction of toxic metals, including lead, cadmium and mercury, which can find their way into water bodies, soils and even the food chain, leading to a multitude of adverse effects, ranging from ecosystem disruption to severe health complications (Zhao *et al.*, 2022).Other trace elements such as arsenic (As), chromium (Cr), cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), nickel (Ni), and zinc (Zn) are also recognized as metallic pollutants in wastewater, industrial effluent and sewage sludge (Handayani *et al.*, 2024). Contaminants in wastewaters are usually a complex mixture of organic and inorganic compounds.

Wastewaters are, therefore, not easily characterized. Most heavy metals found in wastewater are in the inorganic form. However, in some industries such as textiles and dyeing, heavy metals are in the organic form. Treatment technology is different for these two forms (Ramlan, *et al.*, 2022). Increasing population, urbanization, industrialization and anthropomorphic activities contribute to the excess deposition and distribution of heavy metals in environments (Source). The natural phenomena and anthropogenic activities, such as mining, agricultural activities, and industrial and municipal discharge rapidly increased heavy metal and metalloid release, and ultimately deteriorate the ecosystem (Sharma *et al.*, 2022).

The World Health Organization has established maximum contaminant or permissible limits for As, Cu, Pb, Cd, Cr, Co, Hg, Ni and Zn in drinking water at 0.01, 2.5, 0.05, 0.003, 0.05, 0.1, 0.001, 2.0, and

5.0 mg/L, respectively (Moshood *et al.*, 2024). The heavy metals are considered harmful at concentrations greater than or equal to 5 mgL^{-1}, which pose a severe threat to human life, such as atherosclerosis, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, etc. (Gogoi *et al.*, 2021).

Heavy metals are non-biodegradable and highly toxic, initiating bio magnification/ bioaccumulation at very low concentrations after entering the food chain of living organisms. Many research reports have confirmed the existence of heavy metal pollution in several countries, which signifies it is a global problem (Gogoi *et al.*, 2021). According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)(Date) compilation, eight heavy metals, namely, lead (Pb), chromium (Cr), arsenic (As), zinc (Zn), cadmium (Cd), copper (Cu), mercury (Hg) and nickel (Ni) are found to be the most widespread heavy metals in the environment (Li *et al.*, 2020).

Human activities further exacerbate the issue, with industries and mining operations significantly contributing to heavy metal pollution (Li *et al.*, 2020). As heavy metals find their way into our daily lives, primarily through contaminated water and food, they pose a direct risk to human health, potentially leading to neurological disorders, organ damage, and even cancer (Li *et al.*, 2020).

Traditional methods of heavy metal remediation, such as chemical precipitation and ion exchange, have been valuable in some contexts, but need to be improved by limitations (Kumar *et al.*, 2020).

These methods are often expensive, generate secondary pollutants and may not be sustainable in the long term. Moreover, they may not effectively address the complex mixtures of heavy metals found in real world contaminated sites (Kumar *et al.*, 2020).

As heavy metal contamination becomes increasingly intricate and pervasive, there is a compelling need for novel and versatile techniques that are both effective and environmentally friendly (Yan *et al.*, 2022).

Among the emerging solutions, biomass-derived carbon materials have emerged as a beacon of hope in heavy metal remediation. These materials, including bio-char and activated carbon derived from various organic sources, have gained prominence due to their unique properties (Yusuf, 2019). Biomass-derived carbon materials possess high surface areas, well-defined pore structures, and functional groups, making them exceptionally efficient at adsorbing heavy metals from aqueous solutions and contaminated environments. Their sustainable and eco-friendly attributes further enhance their appeal, aligning with the global emphasis on green technologies and environmental responsibility (Yusuf, 2019).

Amongst all the mentioned processes, carbon-based adsorption proves higher efficiency in removing heavy metals. Thus, significant efforts have been put into developing efficient carbon-based adsorbents and understanding the mechanisms of heavy metal adsorption on biomass-derived carbon adsorbents (Huang *et al.*, 2020). Activated carbon can function as an adsorbent material due to its large specific surface area, capacity adsorption size, structure, type of pore and reactivity on various surfaces (Handayani *et al.*, 2024).

Activated carbon (AC) derived from bone char has a porous structure, ease of use, affordability, and ability to function well in a variety of temperatures and humidity conditions (Source). Low-cost adsorbents such as sawdust, banana pith, peanut hull, coir pith, wheat bran and fruit shells have been employed effectively (Moshood *et al.*, 2024).

Though activated carbon is usually available, it is still very expensive. Activated carbon could be obtained from organic materials such as plants and animals. In this research, activated carbon was extracted from cow bones. A way of converting environmental waste to something useful that will be helpful in cleaning the environment.

Materials and methods

Study area: The experiment was carried out at the Research Laboratory, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State.

Standardization and sterilization of reagents: All the reagents used in this research were of analytical grade and were used without further treatment. The apparatus was thoroughly washed with detergents, rinsed with tap water; rinsed again with distilled and deionized water and dried in an oven at 50° C for 2 hrs. The instruments were properly calibrated before being used.

Sample collection: The animal waste used in this study was cow bones, which was obtained from Oja-Igboora Abattoir, along Idere Road, Igboora, Oyo State.

Sample preparation and carbonization of the animal waste:
Firstly, the bones were degreased with boiling water in a cooking pot for 1 hour and dried in an oven at 110°C. The bones were placed in a closed vase and introduced into a furnace at 600°C in the absence or limited presence of oxygen (Vunain *et al.*, 2021). The carbonized material was recovered after 1 hour of carbonization. The coal obtained was kept in a closed flask to prevent any interaction with air. The carbonized materials were ground into powder and sieved in order to have uniform particles (Vunain *et al.*, 2021).

Activation of the charcoal: The activation of bone charcoal was achieved using concentrated sulphuric acid as an activating agent with a ratio of 12.5ml per 50g and a contact time of 4 hours. Exactly 2000mg of powdered bone sample was macerated with 500ml of conc. H_2SO_4. Then NaOH solution was added to neutralize the acidic reaction, the mixture was then sieved and spread on foil paper. The activated carbon was washed with distilled water till a neutral medium (pH=7) was attained. This was done to remove the remains of acid, then filtered and dried at 100° C in an oven for 4 hours. The powdered activated charcoal acquired was stored in air tight container for adsorption analysis (Vunain *et al.*, 2021).

Preparation of metal ions standard solution: A stock solution of metal ions (1000 mg/l) was formulated by dissolving the metal salt in deionized water, as described by Vunain *et al.* (2021)

Working solution of selected heavy metals: The working solutions concentration of 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 ppm were prepared from 1000 mg/dm^3 of stock by serial dilution (Al-Asheh *et al.*, 2020).

Adsorption experiments: The experiments were carried out using the method of Razi *et al.*, (2018). Exactly 50.0cm^3 of working solution was measured into polythene bottles and 0.5g adsorbent was transferred into each of these bottles. The mixtures in polythene bottles were agitated at the same time with a basic reciprocating shaker at 200 rpm for 3 hours and left undisturbed on the desk for 24 hours to allow the system to equilibrate. After 24 hours, the mixtures were filtered through a Whatman filter paper into another 100cm^3 polyethylene bottle (Osman *et al.*, 2019). The concentration of the residual or remaining metal ion in the filtrate after adsorption process was determined using AAS.

Effect of initial concentrations of selected heavy metal on the adsorption: The adsorption experiment was done by batch method. The experiment was carried out at ambient temperature (27 ± 2 ^{O}C) with a basic reciprocating shaker using 100 cm^3 polythene bottle as a reactor. The working concentrations in mg/dm^3 for all metal was 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 ppm (Coltre *et al*., 2020).

Effect of adsorbent dosage on the removal of selected heavy metal: Adsorbent dosage of 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0 and 2.5g was used to determine the adsorption efficiency of activated carbon of cow bones on these selected metals. Each of the pre weighed adsorbents was mixed with 100 mg/dm^{3}of selected heavy metals, agitated for predetermined time of 60 minutes in a Griffin shaker at 27±2° C. The adsorbent and adsorbate solution were separated by filtration using Whatman filter paper. The concentrations of un-adsorbed heavy metals were determined using AAS technique of MUSRL (Coltre *et al*., 2020).

Effect of contact time on the removal of selected heavy metal: Exactly 0.50 g of activated carbon sample was used as constant adsorbent dose and 10 cm^3 working solution of 100mg/dm^3. The effect of contact time is important in order to determine the time for maximum adsorption. The mixtures of adsorbent and metal ions solutions were shaken together at allowed agitation times of 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5 and 4 minutes. The final concentration of filtered supernatant filtrate was determined by spectrometer (Coltre *et al*., 2020).

Atomic Absorption Spectrometry:
The concentration of the residual/remaining metal ion in the filtrates after adsorption process was determined using the Schimadzu Scientific Absorption Spectroscopy machine with model number BUCK 230. Air- acetylene flame was used for all the determination (Coltre *et al*., 2020).

Results and discussion

Results:

Table 1: The effect of dosage (g) on the adsorption of nickel ions activated carbon obtained from cow bones

Dosage (g)	Final concentration (ppm)	Percentage absorbed (%)
0.5	266.8	73.3
1.0	118.1	88.2
1.5	98.5	90.2
2.0	33.9	96.6
2.5	26.5	97.4

Table 2: The effect of concentration (ppm) on the adsorption of nickel ions activated carbon obtained from cow bones

Concentration (ppm)	Final concentration (ppm)	Percentage absorbed (%)
10	3.2	68
20	15.3	23.5
30	18.2	39.4
40	25.1	37.3
50	30.3	39.4

Table 3: The effect of contact time (Sec) on the adsorption of nickel ions activated carbon obtained from cow bones

Contact time (sec)	Final concentration (ppm)	Percentage absorbed (%)
30	252.0	74.8
60	189.2	81.08
90	122.8	87.72
120	103.5	89.65
150	78.8	92.12

Discussion

Effect of adsorbent dosage on adsorption of nickel ions

The impact of the adsorbent dose was analyzed by the variable quantity from 0.5 to 2.5 g and kept other parameters constant. In this work, As the adsorbent dose increased, the adsorption capacity increases, which was attributed to adsorption sites staying unsaturated throughout the adsorption reaction due to the increased number of accessible adsorption sites favoring enhanced metal ion uptake.

Adsorption capacity increased due to the availability of a greater surface area and adsorption sites for a constant amount of metal ions, and accessible sites (Zahir *et al.*, 2021). When the adsorbent dose was increased from 0.5 to 2.5 g, the percentage nickel removal increased. As the dosage amount increased from 0.5 to 2.5, the removal efficiency rose from 72% to 97%. The optimum removal efficiency was obtained when the adsorbent dosage was 2.5g, i.e., 97%. The higher number of accessible adsorption sites encouraged the enhanced uptake of the metal ions which is the cause of the constant adsorption capacity with increasing doses of adsorbent (Zahir *et al.*, 2021).

Effect of initial concentration on adsorption of nickel ions

The influence of initial metal ion concentration was piloted on nickel ions using animal waste (cow bones) activated carbon as adsorbents. The results show percentages adsorbed at predetermined times corresponding to different initial metal concentrations ranging from 10 to 50 ppm. The initial metal concentration discloses if the adsorption of metal ions on the adsorbent surface happens by growing a monolayer or multilayer.

It can be observed that the amount of nickel ions adsorbed increased as the initial metal ion concentration increased. As the concentration of nickel ions increased from 10 to 50ppm, there was a corresponding rapid increase in adsorption. The rate of metal uptake increased with increase in initial metal concentration (Qasem *et al.*, 2021). Sharma *et al.* (2022), observed that % adsorption efficiencies of ash and activated maize cobs increased from 4 to 91% and from 23 to 91% respectively as the initial

concentration was varied from 5 to 200 mg/l. These findings are corroborated by those of Qasem *et al.* (2021), who both reported that the percentage removal of metal ions from solution increased with increase in their initial concentrations. It is believed that increase in concentration of the adsorbate brings about increase in competition of adsorbate molecules for few available binding sites on the surface of the adsorbent hence increase in the amount of metal ions removed (Karim *et al.,* 2023).

Effect of contact time on adsorption of nickel ions

The results of effects of contact time on nickel (II) ions adsorption at different adsorption times (30, 60, 90, 120 and 150 sec) were shown in Table 3. The initial adsorption was highly rapid, and as the adsorption duration increased, the sorption kinetics increased gradually until the adsorption eventually hit equilibrium in 150 min in the case of Ni^{2+} with a removal efficiency of 92.12 (Table 3). Ni^{2+} had a high removal efficiency of 92.12% at 150 secs, matching the findings of Raji *et al.* (2023). During the adsorption process at the initial stage, many vacant sites were available for adsorption. As adsorption time progresses the active sites are occupied by adsorbates which make constant adsorption efficiency. This may be clarified by the fact that originally, the ion absorption rate was higher since entire sites on the adsorbent were unoccupied and the concentration of ions was high, but that rate remained constant as all sites were filled consequently because doing so prevents the additional adsorbate from being taken up (Bello *et al.,* 2020).

Conclusion

This study focused on adsorption of nickel (II) ions from waste water using activated carbon derived from animal waste (bone). Activated carbon derived from animal waste (bone) was evaluated for its efficacy in removing heavy metal ions from wastewater and its adsorption capacity. The effect of adsorption factors such as contact time, initial metals concentration, and adsorbent dose on adsorption capacity and removal efficiency was examined. The removal efficiency was recorded at 97%. From this study, it is concluded that the activated carbon derived from animal waste (bone) is an excellent adsorbent for the removal of the heavy metal ions such as Ni^{2+} from wastewater samples and could also be a potential candidate for the massively efficient adsorptive removal of heavy metal ions from wastewater

Recommendation

Public enlightenment on effects of heavy metal contamination on our environment. Educating the populace on indiscriminate disposal of heavy metals containing materials Effectively manage sewage and industrial waste disposals system. Treatment of waste waters introduced into the rivers.

Remediation of the environment so as to prevent further heavy metal contamination. Furthermore, studies are required to apply the design and simulation model to larger scale and not on small scale laboratory applications.

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ETHNOBOTANICAL SURVEY OF THE MEDICINAL USES OF CASHEW PLANT (*Anacardium occidentale L.*) IN IGBOORA, OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study conducted an Ethnobotanical survey of the Medicinal Uses of Cashew plant (Anacardium occidentale L.) in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. A total of 50 respondents were selected using purposive sampling technique and interviewed using Interview guide. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were female (52%), married (66%), and within the age range of 30–49 years (64%), with secondary education (44%) and farming as the primary occupation (40%) The study found a high level of awareness (96%) of the medicinal uses of cashew plant, with indigenous knowledge transmitted mainly through parents and grandparents (40%) The leaves were the most frequently used plant part (92%), followed by the bark (76%), cashew apple (68%), roots (50%), nuts (42%), and gum/resin (24%) The leaves were predominantly used for treating malaria (84%), fever (76%), and wound dressing (62%), while the stem bark was mainly used for diarrhea (72%), dysentery (66%), and stomach ulcer (58%) Decoction (boiling) was the most common method of preparation (86%), and oral administration was the predominant mode (92%) The majority of respondents perceived cashew-based remedies as very effective (52%) and reported no side effects (84%), with 48% expressing very high confidence in the remedies The study identified bush burning (68%) and deforestation (62%) as major threats to cashew trees, while community awareness programs (80%) and planting more cashew trees (76%) were suggested as conservation measures The study concluded that cashew plant plays a significant role in the traditional healthcare system of Igboora community, with high awareness, perceived effectiveness, and safety The study recommends public awareness programs on sustainable harvesting, collaboration between healthcare practitioners and traditional healers, scientific validation of cashew-based remedies, and enforcement of environmental policies to ensure conservation and sustainable utilization of the cashew plant

Keywords: *Ethnobotany, Anacardium occidentale L., Herbal Medicine, Indigenous knowledge, Conservation*

Introduction

Plants have supported human survival for centuries by providing food, raw materials, energy and remedies for numerous diseases. Across many developing countries, particularly in Africa, medicinal plants continue to serve as an important component of primary healthcare because they are affordable, culturally acceptable and readily available (Idu *et al*.,2014). Consequently, traditional medicine remains an indispensable healthcare option for many rural households despite advances in conventional medicine (Opara and Osayi, 2016).

Medicinal plants are important natural products in drug discovery due to their pharmacological activities. Medicinal plants have become an element of international importance both in terms of medical and economic benefit (Sija *et.al*., 2019). Plant materials are a major source of drugs. They are readily available and affordable (Arumugam *et.al*.,2013). Plants have been the basis for medical treatments through much of human history and such traditional medicine is still widely practiced today (Yakubu *et.al*.,2015). Traditional herbal medicines are naturally occurring, plant-derived substances with minimal or no industrial processing that are used to treat illness within local or regional healing practices (Wilcox and Bodeker, 2004). Plants extracts have been used for medical purposes for a very long time in contrast to synthetic pharmaceuticals. This strategy has been promoted recently since it has fewer negative consequences (Ajiboye *et.al*.,2019), therefore, the World Health Organization has consistently encouraged member states to recognize, regulate and integrate traditional medicine into national healthcare systems because of its contribution to primary healthcare services (WHO, 2008). Several powerful and effective drugs that are used medicinally in various nations come from plants.

Examining medicinal plants potential for therapeutic use is of great interest to researchers. *Anacardium occidentale* is a plant with therapeutic qualities in all of its parts.

The cashew plant (*Anacardium occidentale*) belongs to the family Anacardiaceae under the order Sapindales. The family comprises 60 to 74 genera and 400 to 600 species (Saroj and Mohana, 2016) and is widely grown in tropical countries such as Malaysia, India and Brazil. It had been traditionally used for treating many health problems as it contained many beneficial phytochemical compounds such as polyphenols, flavonoids, tannin, vitamin C and carotenoids and also by the indigenous inhabitants of northeastern Brazil since 1500, when they used the cashew fruit as one of the most complete and important foods (Sauer, J.D. 1993; Engels *et al*.,2012). The family is rich in important secondary metabolites with varieties of interesting biological activities (Abu-Reidah *et al*.,2015).

The cashew tree is a tropical dicotyledonous, composed of a fully developed root consisting of a main root surrounded by an extensive and well-developed network of lateral roots, 90% of which are found in the soil layer at a depth of 15 to 32 cm. The tree has low branches with an average height of 5 to 8 m and 10 to 12 m wide, simple leaves ranging in size from 6 to 24 cm in length and 15 cm wide, and flowers called terminal panicles that are both male (staminate) and bisexual or hermaphrodite in the same panicle. The fruit of this tree is called nut or cashew (the main product of the crop) and is gray kidney-shaped, wrapped by the shell or testa. Its average weight is 7 to 12 g. The cashew apple corresponds to the peduncle of the fruit and is called pseudo fruit, with a fleshy and juicy consistency. Its size is elongated, round, and pear-shaped. Depending on the variety, its texture, color, and flavor differ (Das and Arora, 2017).

Interestingly, cashew fruit is tasty and rich in minerals, vitamins, and some essential nutrients. It has high vitamin C, nearly to five times higher than oranges and also with high minerals content. The fruit comprises some volatile compounds, e.g., esters, terpenes, and carboxylic acids (Bicalho and Rezende, 2001). Cashew bark and leaves have a rich number of tannins (Mota *et. al*.,2001). Cashew nut kernel testa contains tannin as an interesting economic source of antioxidants that can be used for both food and nutraceutical purposes (Viswanath *et.al*.,2016). The species also contains a rich number of flavonoids with diverse physiological effects. Cashew plants have been used for centuries as folk medicine in South America and West Africa. Quite several of biological properties have been reported, among them antimicrobial, antioxidant, antiulcerogenic, and anti-inflammatory effects have drawn public attention. In Nigeria, these species have also been used to treat cardiovascular disorders. In Brazil, these species are used as infusions for curing ailments (Barbosa-Filho, V.M. *et al*.,2014).

Scientific evidence increasingly supports many of these traditional claims. Phytochemical studies have identified bioactive constituents such as anacardic acids, cardanols, cardols, flavonoids and tannins, which possess antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities (Silva *et.al*.,2015). Experimental studies have also demonstrated the anti-inflammatory effects of stem-bark extracts, thereby lending scientific support to traditional practices among Yoruba communities in southwestern Nigeria (Ojewole, 2004).

Nigeria ranks among the leading producers of cashew in Africa, with commercial cultivation concentrated mainly in the southwestern and central regions of the country. States such as Oyo, Osun, Kogi, Kwara, Benue, and parts of Enugu possess favourable climatic and soil conditions for successful cashew production (Adegoke and Adebayo, 2020). In Oyo State, where Igboora is located, cashew cultivation constitutes an important agricultural enterprise for many farming households and contributes substantially to local livelihoods through the production and marketing of nuts and other value-added products (Adepoju *et al.*, 2017). In Oyo State, particularly within Igboora communities, knowledge of medicinal plants is commonly transmitted through families, experienced herbal practitioners and community elders. However, rapid urbanization, changing lifestyles, deforestation and declining interest among younger generations threaten the continuity of this indigenous knowledge (Abiolu, 2018). Without proper documentation, valuable information relating to medicinal plant use may gradually disappear.

This study therefore seeks to document indigenous knowledge relating to the medicinal uses of the cashew plant in Igboora, Oyo State. The findings are expected to contribute to the preservation of traditional knowledge, support future pharmacological research and provide useful information for conservation planning and evidence-based integration of traditional medicine into healthcare systems.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Igboora Town which is the headquarters of Ibarapa Central Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Igboora is located approximately 80 km southwest of Ibadan, within the derived savanna zone (Ogunleye and Akinwale, 2018; Adepoju *et al*.,2017). Purposive sampling technique was employed to elicit information from 50 respondents who use traditional herbal remedies, including traditional healers, elderly community members, cashew farmers, and regular users of herbal remedies. Interview guide was administered to collect data on socio-demographics, awareness of medicinal uses, specific uses of different plant parts, and perception of effectiveness and safety of Cashew-based Herbal remedies.

Results and discussion

This presents the results obtained from the analysis of data collected from 50 respondents during the field survey on the Ethnobotanical Survey of the Medicinal Uses of Cashew Plant (Anacardium occidentale) in Igboora town, Oyo State. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data. Where respondents selected more than one response, the data were analyzed as using multiple responses therefore, percentages may exceed 100% in some tables.

Table 4.1: Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 50)

Variable	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender	Male	24	48.0
	Female	26	52.0
	Total	50	100.0
Age (Years)	<18	0	0.0
	18-29	8	16.0
	30-39	17	34.0
	40-49	15	30.0
	50-9	7	14.0
	60 and above	3	6.0
	Total	50	100.0
Marital status	Single	14	28.0
	Married	33	66.0
	Widowed	3	6.0
	Divorced	0	0.0
	Total	50	100.0
Educational level	No Formal Education	3	6.0
	Primary Education	9	18.0
	Secondary Education	22	44.0
	Tertiary Education	16	32.0
	Total	50	100.0
Occupation	Farmer	20	40.0
	Trader	12	24.0
	Civil servant	8	16.0
	Artisan	12	12.0
	Others	8	8.0
	Total	50	100.0
Religion	Islam	30	60.0
	Christianity	18	36.0
	Traditional religion	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Field study, 2026

Table 4.2: Awareness and Indigenous Knowledge of the Medicinal Uses of Cashew Plant

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness of Medicinal Uses of Cashew	Yes	48	96.0
	No	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0
Source of Indigenous Knowledge	Parents/Grandparents	20	40.0
	Traditional Healers	12	24.0
	Friends/Neighbors	8	16.0
	School	5	10.0
	Media/Internet	5	10.0
	Total	50	100.0
Years of Knowledge of Medicinal Uses	<5	5	10.0
	5-10	10	20.0
	11-20	14	28.0
	>20	21	42.0
	Total	50	100.0
Frequency of Cashew Remedies Usage	Rarely	4	8.0
	Occasionally	12	24.0
	Often	18	36.0
	Very Often	16	32.0
	Total	0	100.0
*Reasons for Using Cashew as Medicine	Easily Available	44	88.0
	Affordable	39	78.0
	Effective	42	84.0
	Cultural Acceptance	30	60.0
	Few Side Effects	34	68.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026. *Multiple responses, percentages > 100%.

Table 4.3: Medicinal Parts of the Cashew Plant Used by Respondents

Plant Part	*Frequency of Mention	*Percentage (%)
Leaves	46	92.0
Bark	38	76.0
Cashew Apple	34	68.0
Roots	25	50.0
Nuts	21	42.0
Gum/Resin	12	24.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026. *Multiple responses, percentages > 100%.

Table 4.4: Medicinal Uses of Different Parts of the Cashew Plant by Respondents

Plant Part	Common Medicinal Uses by Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Leaves	Malaria	42	84.0
	Reduction of Fever	38	76.0
	Wound Dressing	31	62.0
	Skin Infections/Irritations	27	54.0
	Hypertension	18	36.0
Stem Bark	Diarrhea	36	72.0
	Dysentery	33	66.0
	Stomach ulcer/ache	29	58.0
	Toothache	22	44.0
	Sore throat	15	30.0
Roots	Malaria	21	42.0
	Persistent cough	18	36.0
	Fever	17	34.0
	Body Weakness	12	24.0
Cashew Apple	Vitamin supplement	32	64.0
	Anemia	24	48.0
	Constipation	18	36.0
	Improvement of Appetite	15	30.0
Cashew Nut	Energy Supplement	20	40.0
	Heart Health	17	34.0
	Management of Diabetes	12	24.0
Gum/Resin	Wound Healing	11	22.0
	Skin Diseases	9	18.0
	Small Skin Cuts	8	16.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026. *Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may not =100%.

Table 4.5: Preparation, Dosage and Administration of Cashew-Based Herbal Remedies

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
*Method of Preparation	Decoction (Boiling)	43	86.0
	Infusion (Soaking in water)	28	56.0
	Crushing/Pounding	24	48.0
	Juice Extraction	19	38.0
	Drying and Powdering	13	26.0
	Chewing Fresh Plant Parts	11	22.0
Dosage Determination	Age or Weight	22	44.0
	Level of Illness	15	30.0
	Traditional Experience	10	20.0
	No Specific Measurement	3	6.0
	Total	50	100.0

*Mode of Administration	Oral	46	92.0
	Skin Application	29	58.0
	Bathing	17	34.0
	Gargling	11	22.0
	Steam Inhalation	8	16.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026. *Multiple responses were allowed so, percentage >100%.

Table 4.6: Respondents' Perception of the Effectiveness and Safety of Cashew-Based Herbal Remedies

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Perceived Effectiveness of Cashew Based Herbal Remedies	Very effective	26	52.0
	Effective	17	34.0
	Moderately effective	5	10.0
	Slightly effective	2	4.0
	Not effective	0	0.0
	Total	50	100.0
Experience of Side Effects	Yes	8	16.0
	No	42	84.0
	Total	50	100.0
*Reported Side Effects	Stomach discomfort	4	8.0
	Bitter taste	3	6.0
	Dizziness	2	4.0
	Skin irritation	1	2.0
Confidence Level in Cashew Remedies	Very high	24	48.0
	High	16	32.0
	Moderate	8	16.0
	Low	2	4.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026. *Multiple responses were recorded and so response is <100%

Table 4.7: Respondents' Awareness of Conservation Practices and Perceived Threats to the Cashew Plant

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness to Conserve Cashew Trees	Yes	45	90.0
	No	5	10.0
	Total	50	100.0
Respondents Who Plant Cashew Trees	Yes	34	68.0
	No	16	32.0
	Total	50	100.0
Harvesting Practice	Sustainable (Leaves, Fruits, Twigs)	36	72.0
	Unsustainable (Excessive Bark/Root Removal)	14	28.0
	Total	50	100.0
*Major Threats to Cashew Trees	Bush Burning	34	68.0
	Deforestation	31	62.0
	Agricultural Expansion	27	54.0
	Excessive Bark Harvesting	23	46.0
		18	36.0

	Climate Change	12	24.0
	Overgrazing		
	Community Awareness Programmes	40	80.0
	Planting More Cashew Trees	38	76.0
*Suggested Conservation Measures	Government Support and Extension Services	35	70.0
	Enforcement of Environmental Laws	29	58.0
	Sustainable Harvesting Education	33	66.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026, *Multiple responses were recorded so, percentages > 100%.

Discussions

The findings on the socio-economic characteristics of respondents in Igboora town show that females (52.0%) constituted a higher proportion of the sample than males (48.0%), suggesting that women play a central role in the use of cashew-based herbal remedies. A majority of the respondents (64.0%) were between 30 and 49 years of age, meaning that the knowledge base is mainly within an economically active set. Most participants were married (66.0%) while educational attainment was mostly formal, with 76.0% having secondary or tertiary education and only 6.0% lacking formal schooling. Occupationally, farming was highest (40.0%), followed by trading (24.0%), directly facilitating closeness to cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) plants and reinforcing practical knowledge of the use of Medicinal plants. The respondents were mostly Muslims (60.0%), followed by Christians (36.0%), and Traditional worshippers (4.0%), and this shows there was no restrictive influence on the use of medicinal plants, showing that herbal remedies transcend religious boundaries in the study area.

Awareness of the medicinal value of the cashew plant is almost rampant in Igboora, with 96.0% of respondents aware of its uses and only 4.0% unaware. People mostly learned these remedies from their parents and grandparents (40.0%), traditional healers (24.0%), or neighbors and friends (16.0%), while schools and media accounted for just 10.0%; therefore, it shows how deeply rooted this knowledge is within families and local traditions. It further shows that 42.0% had been using cashew remedies for over 20 years, and 28.0% had 11 to 20 years of experience. Use of Cashew-based herbal remedies is a daily routine, with 36.0% using cashew remedies often, 32.0% using them very often, and only 8.0% rarely using them. People rely on cashew mainly because it is easy to find (88.0%), works well (84.0%), costs little (78.0%), causes few side effects (68.0%), and fits naturally into local culture (60.0%).

Boiling the plant parts into a tea (decoction) was the primary preparation method (86.0%), followed by soaking in water (infusion, 56.0%), pounding or crushing (48.0%), squeezing out fresh juice (38.0%), grinding dried parts into powder (26.0%), or simply chewing fresh parts (22.0%). When it comes to dosage, 44.0% adjusted the amount based on the patient's age and weight, 30.0% based it on how sick the person was, 20.0% relied on experience, and 6.0% used no set measurement. Most people drank the remedies (92.0%) or applied them directly to the skin (58.0%), while others used them in baths (34.0%), as gargles (22.0%), or inhaled the steam (16.0%).

Ethnobotanical mapping revealed that leaves were the most frequently used plant part (92.0%), followed by stem bark (76.0%), cashew apples (68.0%), roots (50.0%), nuts (42.0%), and gum/resin (24.0%). The preference for leaves stems from their year-round availability and non-destructive harvesting profile, whereas parts such as roots and exudates (gum/resin) were less frequently used due to awareness of plant survival and sustainability constraints.

Methods of Preparation were majorly by decoction (86.0%), infusion (56.0%), crushing/pounding (48.0%), juice extraction (38.0%), drying into powder (26.0%), and direct chewing of fresh parts (22.0%). Drug dosage was governed by the age and weight of patients (44.0%), severity of illness (30.0%), and traditional clinical experience (20.0%), though 6.0% reported no standardised dosage measurement. Oral administration was the predominant route (92.0%), supplemented by topical application (58.0%), therapeutic bathing (34.0%), gargling (22.0%), and steam inhalation (16.0%).

Perceptions of the herbal efficacy were largely trusted, with 52.0% stating the remedies as very effective, 34.0% as effective, 10.0% as moderately effective, and 4.0% as slightly effective, while none of the respondents reported inefficacy. Similarly, user confidence was high (48.0% very high; 32.0% high). Safety evaluations showed that 84.0% experienced no adverse effects, while 16.0% reported mild symptoms such as stomach discomfort (8.0%), bitter taste (6.0%), dizziness (4.0%), and skin irritation (2.0%).

As regards conservation and management, 90.0% of respondents recognized the importance of conserving *Anacardium occidentale*, and 68.0% had actively planted at least one cashew tree. While 72.0% practiced sustainable harvesting techniques (focusing on leaves, fruits, and twigs), 28.0% engaged in destructive practices such as excessive bark stripping and root cuttings. Bush burning (68.0%), deforestation (62.0%), agricultural expansion (54.0%), destructive bark harvesting (46.0%), climate change (36.0%), and overgrazing (24.0%) were mentioned as key threats to local tree stands. To ensure long-term sustainability, respondents recommended community awareness programs (80.0%), targeted tree planting (76.0%), government agricultural extension services (70.0%), sustainable harvesting education (66.0%), and environmental regulation enforcement (58.0%).

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that *Anacardium occidentale* (Cashew plant) plays a huge role in the traditional healthcare system of the people of Igboora Town. Cultural knowledge as regards its medicinal uses is still widely preserved and transmitted across generations, particularly through family members and traditional healers.

The study recorded that different parts of the cashew plant are used in treating various ailments, with the leaves and stem bark being the most frequently used. Respondents generally perceived the Cashew plant as very effective, safe, affordable, and readily available, making it an important alternative source of healthcare and for treating different ailments in the community.

Despite the constant and consistent use, unsustainable harvesting practices and environmental factors such as bush burning and deforestation pose serious threats to the long-term availability of the Cashew plant species. Therefore, there is a need to combine indigenous knowledge with scientific research and sustainable conservation strategies to ensure the continued availability and safe use of the Cashew plant for future generations.

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Public awareness programs should be organized to educate local communities on the medicinal importance of the Cashew plant and the need for its sustainable utilization and harvesting methods which should be promoted, particularly encouraging the harvesting of leaves rather than excessive removal of bark and roots, which may damage or kill the trees.
2. Healthcare practitioners and traditional healers should collaborate in documenting indigenous medicinal knowledge before it is lost due to modernization and changing lifestyles.
3. Standardized dosage and preparation methods should be developed through scientific studies to improve the safety and effectiveness of Cashew-based herbal remedies.
4. Bush burning, indiscriminate tree felling and deforestation should be controlled through effective environmental policies and community participation in forest conservation programs.

Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes to existing knowledge by documenting the indigenous medicinal uses of the Cashew plant (*Anacardium occidentale*) in Igboora Town, Oyo State. It provides empirical information on the plant parts used, ailments treated, methods of preparation, perceived effectiveness, and conservation practices among the respondents in the study area. The findings also serve as valuable reference for Ethnobotanists, Forestry researchers, Herbal Medicine Practitioners and future researchers interested in Medicinal Plants and Biodiversity Conservation.

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STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ON THE AWARENESS OF EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVES UTILIZATION AND THE RELATED SIDE EFFECTS AMONG FEMALE NURSING STUDENTS OF LAUTECH, OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE

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Abstract

Emergency Contraception is a contraceptive method used to prevent pregnancy after a known or suspected failure of Contraception or unprotected sexual intercourse including sexual assault. This study assessed the awareness of emergency Contraceptive and its related adverse effects among female Nursing Students of Ladoke Akintola University Technology Ogbomoso. A cross-sectional study was conducted and data were collected from a population of 170 female students using a predesigned questionnaire and responses were analysed using simple percentages. Findings from this study shows that 110 (64.7%) respondents have used at least one contraceptive method. Sixty 68 (40%) respondents have used pills, 30 (17.6%) have used injectable, 90 (52.9%) have used condom, 9(5.3%) have used Implant, 71(41.8%) have used withdrawal, 8(4.7%) have used lime, 26(15.3%) have used salt water, 8 (4.7%) have used herbs, while 5(2.9%) have used potash, 86(50.6%). However, 40 (23.5%) stopped using contraceptives because of the fear of side effect and 7 (4.1%) stopped because of religious factors. 25(14.7%) stopped because they felt there's no need of using it again, while 25(23.5%) stopped because they felt no need of using it again while 12(7.1%) stopped as a result of partner's influence. From the two hypotheses tested, there was no significant relationship between the level of Study and knowledge of emergency contraceptives use among respondents (P= 0.691), X^2 Cal = 0.1580). Also there was no significant relationship between the religion of respondents and level of knowledge of the associated adverse effects of emergency contraceptives (p=0.958, X^2 Cal = 0.0039). It was discovered that majority of the respondents have good awareness of emergency contraceptives use and are also knowledgeable and familiar with the related adverse effects linked with the use of emergency contraceptive. It is hereby recommended that government should sponsor workshop/ seminar where Hospitals/health sector will educate the society on related adverse effects of use of contraceptive

Keywords: *Emergency Contraception, contraceptive, Awareness, Adverse effects*

Introduction

Emergency contraception (EC) is a Contraceptive method used to Prevent pregnancy after a known or Suspected failure of Contraception or un protected Intercourse, including sex assault. According to Rosenfeld 2017, Emergency Contraception hinders or delays ovulation, prevents fertilization and may affect Implantation, but does not disrupt an already established pregnancy. The two most commonly used contraceptive methods are oral hormonal pills and IVD insertion. Hormonal tablets are widely referred to as the morning after pill or second chance. The Commonest Emergency contraception prescribed is two tablets of levonorgestrel 0.75mg, however in the private sector, the IVD method is also available.

According to Croxatto et-all 2016, if emergency contraception is taken with 22 hours of sexual intercourse it can reduce the risk Pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse or Contraceptive failure by between 75% and 99%. Also, Rodriques et al in Bobby and Juli 2018 established that even when taken Between 72 and 120 hours after sexual intercourse there is also a favourable Success rate Ganatra et al. 2016, established that, unplanned pregnancies Lead to at least 50 million abortions worldwide every year, which lead to approximately 80,000 maternal deaths. In almost all developing countries with Africa having the highest risk 4 dying, about 25 million unsafe abortions take place each year.

Women with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies tend to seek for unsafe abortion services in countries where abortion is illegal Report from 2007 to 2011 on mortality show that 22% of maternal death were as a result of abortion, despite all forms of Contraception.

Also, Ray et al. 2016 Opined that in 2008 the Contraceptive prevalence rate was low, that is 52.8% which is statistics from the World Bank Lack of awareness / knowledge About Emergency Contraception

Maternal mortality and morbidity rate is high in low-income countries as a result of lack of awareness / knowledge about Emergency contraception and its accessibility. Many sexually activities Female students in Nigeria engage in unprotected sexual intercourse, having multiple partners. Many students see University/higher institution life as a move towards independence from parental supervision, having new friendship, new relationships and a chance to experience romantic or sexual relationships.

Problem Specification

The Vulnerability and unintended sex and unwanted pregnancy is high among the undergraduate of students due to the fact that most of the students are from rural areas, where the chance of getting information on sexual and reproductive health is limited in the absence of parents' supervision on campus. Understanding the level of awareness and practice on Emergency Contraceptive is important especially for female undergraduates. Therefore, this study aimed at assessing the level of awareness of emergency Contraceptive use and its related Complications among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study analyzed the awareness & Emergency Contraceptive use and its related adverse effects among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso. Specifically the study shall:

1. Access the awareness of emergency contraceptive use among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State.

2. Determine the awareness of the related complications of emergency contraceptive use among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the awareness of emergency contraceptive use among Female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State?

2. 2) What is the level of the awareness of the related complications of emergency contraceptives among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State?

Research Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between the level of study and level of awareness of emergency contraceptives use among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State.

2. There is no significant relationship between the region of respondents and level of awareness of the related complications of emergency contraceptive among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State.

Significance of the study

The survival of the future of a society is determined by the survival of the Vulnerable groups in that society which is the group of the female students of the society.

The study will provide an overview of what emergency contraception entails, examine key determinant factors affecting the awareness and use of emergency contraceptives and identify possible pit falls arising from the unguided use of emergency contraceptives.

Limitations and Side Effects of Emergency Contraceptives, Hirsch (2018).

1. Emergency contraceptives (e-Pills) do not prevent against STIS, HIV/ADS not to be used as regular method
2. EC (e pills) are only effective if used within120 hours of unprotected Intercourse
3. Weight gain and changed mood

Methodology

This study was designed to investigate awareness of emergency Contraceptives and its related complications among female under- graduates Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso Oyo State.

The methodological approach is descriptive and Inferential Statistical tool

Sample size Determination

The 170 sample size was obtained by using Taro Yamane (1976) formula with 95% confidence level with allowable error (0.05).

Data Analysis

Chi-square was used to analyse the result at 5% level of significance

Results

A total number of one hundred and seventy questionnaire were distributed and all were completely retrieved. Table 1 shows the socio demographic characteristics of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (62.9%) were within the age of 21-25 years and nearly all of them (90.6%) were single. The majority were Christians (72.9%) and more than half (52.9%) were in 400level.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	15-20	44	25.9
	21-25	107	62.9
	26 and above	19	11.2
Marital Status	Divorced	1	0.6
	Married	15	8.8
	Single	154	90.6
Religion	Christianity	124	72.9
	Islam	46	27.1
Level of Study	300	80	47.1
	400	90	52.9
	TOTAL	**170**	**100**

Table 2. Relationship between level of study and awareness of emergency contraceptive

Variables	Categories	Level of awareness of emergency contraceptives use		Total	X^2	df	P-value
		Poor knowledge	Good knowledge				
Level of study	300 level	27	53	80	0.1580	1	0.691
	400 level	33	57	90			
	Total	60	110	170			

Findings from table 2 revealed no significant association between level of study and knowledge of contraceptive use among the respondents.

Table 3: Relationship between religion and knowledge of possible associated complications of emergency contraceptive use

Variables	Categories	Level of knowledge of associated complications of emergency contraceptives use		Total	X^2	df	P-value
		Poor knowledge	Good knowledge				
Religion	Christianity	22	102	124	0.0039	1	0.958
	Islam	8	38	46			
	Total	30	140	170			

Findings from table 3 showed no significant relationship between religion of the respondents and level of knowledge of emergency contraceptive use.

Discussion

This research work assesses the awareness of emergency contraceptive use and its related adverse effects / complications among female nursing students of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Ogbomoso, Oyo State.

Sample size of 170 respondents was chosen using Taro Yamane Formula. 300L and 400L nursing students administered the questionnaires. It was discovered that 110 (64.7%) have Practiced Contraception while the rest 60 (35.3%) have not. Regarding the methods of contraception, 68 (40%) have used Pills before, 30 (17.6%) have used injectable before, 90 (52.9%) have used condom before, 9 (5.3%) have used implant before, 71 (41.8%) have used withdrawal before, 8 (4.7%) have used lime before, 26 (15.3%) have used salt water, 8 (4.7%) have used herbs, 5 (2.9%) have used Potash. 86 (50.6%) said they have never used contraceptives pills, 62 (36.5%) said they have stopped using it and 22 (12.9%) said they are still using it. 40 (23.5%) stopped using it because of fear of side effect, 7 (4.1%) stopped as a result of compulsion from the partner.

From the two-hypothesis tested, there is no significant relationship between the level of study and the level of awareness of emergency contraceptives use among the respondents (p= 0.691, X^2cal = 0.158a), and there is no significant relationship between the religion of respondents and their level of awareness of the related adverse effects/complications of emergency contraceptives (p= 0.958, X^2cal= 0.003a).

Conclusion

From this research carried out, the awareness of emergency contraceptive used and its related adverse effects among female nursing students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso, Oyo State was analysed. It was discovered that most of the respondents have good awareness of emergency contraceptives use and are also familiar with related complications linked to the use of emergency contraceptives.

It was also discovered that there is no significant relationship between the level of study and level of aware-ness of emergency contraceptive use among respondents (p= 0.691, X^2 cal 0..1580), and there is no significant relationship between the religion of respondents and their level of awareness of the related adverse effects / complications of emergency contraceptives (p= 0.958, X^2cal= 0.0039). it was discovered that.

Recommendation

Having studied the awareness of emergency Contraceptive use and its related complications among female Nursing Students of LAUTECH Ogbomoso, Oyo State, the following recommendations were made:

1. The health sector should educate the society on the different types of Contraceptives and their appropriate use

2. The health sector should educate the society On Complications related with we of Contraceptive.

3. Government should sponsor workshop/ seminars where Hospital health sectors will educate the Society on related / complications 4 use of contraceptives

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MICROBIAL SPOILAGE OF MAIZE GRAINS: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND CONTROL MEASURES - A REVIEW

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Abstract
Microbial spoilage of stored maize grains remains a significant post-harvest challenge worldwide, particularly in developing countries where inadequate storage practices contribute substantially to food losses and food safety concerns. Maize (Zea mays L.) is an important cereal crop that serves as a major source of food, animal feed, and industrial raw material. However, microbial contamination during storage reduces grain quality, nutritional value, marketability, and may result in the accumulation of harmful mycotoxins that pose serious health risks to humans and animals. This review critically synthesizes scientific literature published between 2005 and 2026 on microbial spoilage of stored maize grains and available control measures. Relevant studies were sourced from scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and PubMed, using predefined search terms related to maize storage, microbial spoilage, and preservation technologies. Findings indicate that fungal species, particularly Aspergillus, Fusarium, and Penicillium, are the predominant spoilage organisms associated with stored maize grains, whereas bacteria and yeasts contribute under favourable storage. Emerging technologies such as hermetic storage systems, biological control strategies, and smart storage monitoring technologies have demonstrated considerable potential in reducing microbial contamination and post-harvest losses. The adoption of integrated storage management practices is therefore essential for improving grain quality, enhancing food security, and promoting sustainable post-harvest handling systems.

Keywords: *Microbial spoilage, stored maize grains, mycotoxins, post-harvest losses, hermetic storage, food safety.*

Introduction

Maize (*Zea mays* L.) is one of the most widely cultivated cereal crops globally and plays a critical role in ensuring food and nutritional security, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing regions (FAO, 2023). The crop is utilized extensively for human consumption, livestock feed, and industrial applications due to its high carbohydrate content and versatility in food processing. In Nigeria and many tropical countries, maize contributes significantly to household income generation and agricultural productivity.

Despite increasing maize production worldwide, post-harvest losses remain a major constraint to food security and economic development. Among these losses, microbial spoilage during storage is considered one of the most important factors limiting grain quality and shelf life (Bevilacqua *et al.*, 2017). Poor storage practices, inadequate drying, insect infestation, and unfavourable environmental conditions frequently create suitable environments for microbial proliferation in stored grains. Consequently, substantial quantities of maize are lost annually due to microbial deterioration and contamination by toxic metabolites.

Microbial spoilage refers to the deterioration of food products resulting from the growth and metabolic activities of microorganisms, including fungi, bacteria, and yeasts. These microorganisms utilize nutrients present in maize grains, leading to undesirable physical, chemical, and microbiological changes such as discoloration, nutrient degradation, off-flavours, reduced germination capacity, and mycotoxin contamination (Frazier and Westhoff, 2008).

Among microbial contaminants, fungal species are particularly important because of their ability to survive under relatively low moisture conditions and produce toxic secondary metabolites known as mycotoxins. Species belonging to the genera *Aspergillus*, *Fusarium*, and *Penicillium* have been

extensively reported as the dominant fungal contaminants of stored maize grains worldwide (Tournas, 2012). These fungi are responsible for the production of aflatoxins, fumonisins, and ochratoxins, which have been associated with liver cancer, immune suppression, and growth retardation in humans and animals.

Previous studies have demonstrated Maize grains stored in controlled atmospheric silos retained more nutrient in terms of protein than normal atmospheric storage. It was concluded that the grains maintain the storage moisture content in concrete silo better than clay silo.

(Akintola *et al*., 2023). Improper drying and storage practices remain major contributors to microbial contamination in tropical regions where climatic conditions favour fungal growth and toxin production. Despite its economic and nutritional importance, post-harvest losses remain a major challenge, particularly in regions where modern storage facilities are unavailable. Maize is typically harvested at high moisture content, creating favourable conditions for microbial growth (fungi and bacteria) and insect infestation (Ibigbami *et al*., 2025)

Recent advances in post-harvest management have introduced innovative storage technologies, including hermetic storage systems, modified atmosphere storage, biological control agents, and smart monitoring systems that significantly improve grain preservation (Hell *et al*., 2010). These technologies provide sustainable alternatives to conventional storage methods and have shown promising results in reducing microbial growth and post-harvest losses.

Although numerous studies have investigated microbial contamination and storage practices in maize grains, there remains a need for an updated and comprehensive review that critically synthesizes available evidence on spoilage organisms, contributing factors, associated losses, and emerging control technologies. Such information is essential for improving storage practices and informing policy decisions aimed at reducing post-harvest losses and enhancing food safety.

The main objective of this review is to critically examine microbial spoilage in stored maize grains and evaluate available control measures for improving storage quality and food safety.

Materials and Methods

Literature Search Strategy

This study adopted a review-based research approach to critically synthesize scientific literature on microbial spoilage of stored maize grains and available preservation technologies. Relevant publications were obtained from reputable scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Science Direct. These databases were selected because of their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed publications in food microbiology, grain storage, post-harvest technology, and food safety studies.

Literature published between 2005 and 2026 was considered to ensure that both foundational and recent developments in microbial spoilage and maize storage technologies were adequately represented. The search process employed combinations of relevant keywords and Boolean operators to improve search efficiency and relevance (Bevilacqua *et al.*, 2017).

The keywords used included: Microbial spoilage of stored maize grains , Storage fungi in maize, Maize grain deterioration, Mycotoxin contamination in maize , Grain storage technologies , Hermetic storage systems, Biological control of storage fungi, Post-harvest losses in cereals , Food safety in stored maize, Preservation technologies for maize grains

The use of multiple databases and keywords enabled the identification of studies from different geographical locations and research disciplines, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness of this review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Publications included in this review met the following criteria: Peer-reviewed journal articles. Books and academic publications relevant to food microbiology and grain storage. Studies focusing on microbial spoilage of maize grains during storage, Studies evaluating environmental factors influencing microbial growth, Publications discussing storage technologies and preservation methods, English-language publications published between 2005 and 2026. The exclusion criteria included publications focusing exclusively on crops other than maize, duplicate studies identified across databases, articles lacking sufficient scientific information and non-scientific publications and opinion pieces without verifiable sources.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to ensure that only scientifically credible and relevant literature was synthesized for this review (Frazier and Westhoff, 2008).

Selection of Reviewed Publications

The literature searches initially yielded numerous publications from the selected databases. Following title and abstract screening, relevant studies were subjected to full-text evaluation. Publications that met the inclusion criteria were critically reviewed and organized according to the major themes of this study, including microbial spoilage organisms, environmental factors influencing spoilage, food safety implications, and storage technologies.

Special consideration was given to studies reporting microbial diversity, mycotoxin contamination, post-harvest losses, and recent technological innovations for maize storage. Comparative analysis of findings from previous researchers was employed throughout the discussion section to identify similarities, differences, and emerging trends in microbial spoilage control strategies (Fellows, 2017).

Results and Discussion

Major micro-organisms associated with stored maize spoilage

Microbial spoilage of stored maize grains is primarily caused by fungi, bacteria, and yeasts. Their occurrence and severity are influenced by environmental conditions during storage, including moisture content, temperature, relative humidity, and storage duration. Although several microorganisms have been implicated in grain deterioration, fungi remain the dominant spoilage organisms because of their ability to thrive under relatively low moisture conditions and produce toxic metabolites known as mycotoxins (Tournas, 2012).

Several researchers have reported that fungal contamination contributes significantly to post-harvest losses in cereals worldwide, particularly in tropical and subtropical environments where climatic conditions favour fungal growth. Comparative studies further indicate that the prevalence of specific microbial contaminants varies across geographical locations and storage practices.

Fungi

Fungi constitute the most economically significant microbial contaminants of stored maize grains. Species belonging to the genera *Aspergillus*, *Fusarium*, and *Penicillium* are consistently reported as the predominant storage fungi affecting maize quality and safety (Jay *et al.*, 2005).

Among these fungi, *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus* are of particular concern because of their ability to produce aflatoxins, which are highly toxic and carcinogenic compounds. Studies have demonstrated that aflatoxin contamination increases considerably when maize is stored under high moisture and temperature conditions. According to Hell *et al*. (2010), inadequate drying practices and prolonged storage significantly increase the risk of fungal colonization and mycotoxin accumulation in maize grains.

Researchers have also reported the occurrence of *Penicillium* species in stored maize, particularly under cool and damp storage conditions. Although less prevalent in tropical climates, *Penicillium* contamination contributes to grain deterioration and toxin production when storage hygiene is compromised (Tournas, 2012).

Bacteria

Although bacterial spoilage is generally less significant than fungal contamination in stored maize, several bacterial species have been implicated in grain deterioration under unfavourable storage conditions. Bacterial contamination is more common in improperly dried grains or storage environments characterized by excessive moisture (Frazier and Westhoff, 2008).

Species of *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas*, and *Clostridium* have been reported in stored cereal products. The ability of *Bacillus* species to produce resistant spores enables their survival under relatively harsh environmental conditions. These spores may subsequently germinate when storage conditions become favourable.

In contrast, *Pseudomonas* species are commonly associated with moisture-damaged grains and contribute to nutrient degradation and reduced storage quality. Previous studies have demonstrated that bacterial spoilage often occurs alongside fungal contamination rather than independently, suggesting

that poor post-harvest handling practices significantly increase microbial risks during storage (Jay *et al*., 2005).
Although bacterial contamination contributes less to mycotoxin-related food safety concerns, its impact on grain quality, marketability, and shelf life should not be underestimated.

Yeasts
Yeasts are unicellular microorganisms capable of proliferating in food materials containing sufficient moisture and nutrients. Their contribution to maize spoilage is relatively limited compared with fungi and bacteria; however, they may become significant under improper storage conditions.
Yeast growth is typically associated with fermentation processes that produce undesirable flavours, alcohol, and carbon dioxide. Studies have shown that yeast contamination becomes more pronounced when grains are inadequately dried or exposed to humid storage environments (Ray, 2005).
Comparative studies indicate that yeasts are usually secondary contaminants in stored maize and are more likely to occur alongside other microbial populations. Their presence may therefore serve as an indicator of poor storage management practices.

Table 1. Major Microorganisms Associated with Stored Maize Spoilage

Microorganism	Storage Conditions Favoring Growth	Effects on Maize	Major Toxins Produced
Aspergillus flavus	High temperature and moisture	Mould growth and quality loss	Aflatoxins
Aspergillus parasiticus	Warm and humid storage	Grain deterioration	Aflatoxins
Fusarium verticillioides	Moderate humidity	Nutritional losses	Fumonisins
Penicillium spp.	Damp storage conditions	Quality deterioration	Ochratoxins
Bacillus spp.	High moisture	Nutrient degradation	None
Pseudomonas spp.	Poor storage hygiene	Spoilage	None
Yeasts	Moist conditions	Fermentation	None

Factors Influencing Microbial Growth in Stored Maize
The growth and proliferation of spoilage microorganisms in stored maize are largely influenced by environmental and storage-related factors. Previous studies have consistently identified moisture content, temperature, oxygen availability, storage duration, and sanitation practices as critical determinants of microbial activity during grain storage (Fellows, 2017).

Temperature
Temperature significantly influences microbial metabolism and reproductive rates. Most storage fungi associated with maize exhibit optimum growth at temperatures commonly encountered in tropical environments. Elevated temperatures accelerate microbial growth and may increase mycotoxin production, whereas low temperatures suppress microbial activities.

Moisture Content
Moisture content is arguably the most important factor influencing microbial spoilage of stored maize. Several studies have reported that maize grains stored above recommended moisture levels are highly susceptible to fungal contamination and toxin accumulation (Hell *et al*., 2010).
Proper drying of maize to safe storage moisture levels has therefore been widely recommended as one of the most effective strategies for reducing microbial spoilage.

Oxygen Availability
Oxygen availability is an important factor influencing the growth of aerobic microorganisms, especially storage fungi such as *Aspergillus* and *Penicillium*. High oxygen levels encourage fungal growth, while reduced oxygen suppresses microbial respiration and development (Navarro, 2012). Hermetic storage technologies reduce oxygen concentration and increase carbon dioxide levels, thereby limiting fungal

growth, insect activity, and grain deterioration (Murdock *et al*., 2012). Baoua *et al*. (2014) also reported that low-oxygen storage effectively preserves maize quality and minimizes post-harvest losses.

Storage Duration

Storage duration significantly influences microbial contamination and quality deterioration of stored maize. As the storage period increases, maize grains are more likely to experience fungal growth, nutrient deterioration, and mycotoxin accumulation, particularly when temperature and moisture conditions are not properly controlled (Mannaa & Kim, 2017; Adejumo & Adeyeye, 2020). Hell *et al*. (2000) reported increased fungal contamination after 3–6 months of storage under tropical conditions, while Bankole and Mabekoje (2004) observed higher aflatoxin levels in maize stored for 6–12 months. However, properly dried maize stored under good conditions can remain safe for over 12 months (FAO, 2011).

Storage Hygiene and Handling Practices

Poor harvesting, transportation, drying, and storage practices introduce microorganisms into stored maize and increase the risk of contamination. Damaged kernels and unclean storage facilities encourage fungal invasion and spoilage (Bankole & Adebanjo, 2003). According to Jay *et al*. (2005), proper sanitation, adequate drying, and careful handling of grains are essential in reducing microbial contamination and maintaining grain quality during storage.

Effects of Microbial Spoilage on Stored Maize Grains

Microbial spoilage adversely affects the physical, nutritional, economic, and microbiological quality of stored maize. Frazier and Westhoff (2008) explained that spoilage microorganisms degrade carbohydrates, proteins, and lipids, resulting in nutrient loss and reduced grain quality. Christensen and Kaufmann (1974) reported that fungal spoilage causes discoloration, off-odours, heating, and reduced seed viability. According to Pitt and Hocking (2009), fungi such as *Aspergillus* and *Fusarium* produce mycotoxins that pose serious health risks. Bankole and Adebanjo (2003) further noted that microbial spoilage leads to economic losses through reduced market value and poor grain quality, while Williams *et al*. (2004) linked mycotoxin contamination with liver cancer, immune suppression, and other health problems.

Nutritional Losses

Microbial growth in stored maize leads to the degradation of important nutrients, thereby reducing its nutritional value. Fungal and bacterial activities have been reported to decrease carbohydrate and protein contents through metabolic processes that utilize grain nutrients for microbial proliferation (Bevilacqua *et al*., 2017). Consequently, contaminated maize grains become less suitable for human consumption and livestock feed formulation.

Mycotoxin Contamination

One of the most serious consequences of fungal spoilage is the production of mycotoxins. Studies have consistently reported that aflatoxins produced by *Aspergillus* species and fumonisins produced by *Fusarium* species constitute major food safety concerns in stored maize (Hell *et al*., 2010). Consumption of mycotoxin-contaminated maize has been associated with several adverse health effects, including liver cancer, immune suppression, growth retardation in children, gastrointestinal disorders and increased susceptibility to infectious diseases.

The economic implications of mycotoxin contamination are also substantial, as contaminated maize often fails to meet both local and international food safety standards.

Reduction in Market Value

Microbial spoilage negatively affects the commercial value of stored maize grains. Physical changes such as mould growth, discoloration, unpleasant odours, and insect infestation significantly reduce consumer acceptability and marketability. Farmers and grain merchants therefore experience considerable financial losses due to quality deterioration (Fellows, 2017).

Food Safety Implications

Food safety remains a major concern in maize storage systems. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), microbial contamination contributes substantially to global food losses and poses serious challenges to food security. Improving microbial control strategies is therefore essential for safeguarding public health and ensuring sustainable food systems (FAO, 2023).

Emerging Storage Technologies for Microbial Control in Stored Maize

Advances in post-harvest technology have led to the development of innovative storage systems aimed at minimizing microbial spoilage and improving grain quality. Compared with traditional storage practices, modern storage technologies offer enhanced protection against microbial contamination, insect infestation, and environmental fluctuations (Navarro, 2012; Murdock *et al*., 2012). FAO (2011) also reported that improved storage technologies play a significant role in reducing post-harvest losses and maintaining the safety and quality of stored grains.

Hermetic Storage Technology

Hermetic storage systems have gained widespread acceptance due to their effectiveness in controlling microbial growth without the use of chemical preservatives. These systems operate by creating airtight environments that reduce oxygen availability and increase carbon dioxide concentrations, thereby inhibiting microbial metabolism and insect activities (Navarro, 2012). Murdock *et al*. (2012) demonstrated that hermetic storage significantly reduces fungal growth and insect infestation through oxygen depletion. Similarly, Baoua *et al*. (2014) reported that hermetic bags effectively preserve maize quality by minimizing moisture absorption and microbial contamination. Hell *et al*. (2010) further observed that hermetic storage bags significantly reduce fungal contamination and maintain maize quality during prolonged storage periods. Their relatively low cost and ease of adoption make them particularly suitable for smallholder farmers in developing countries.

Metal Silos

Metal silos provide durable and effective storage conditions for maize grains by protecting them from moisture ingress and environmental contamination. Unlike traditional storage structures, metal silos facilitate better environmental control and significantly reduce microbial spoilage when properly managed (FAO, 2011). Although the initial cost of installation may be relatively high, their long service life, reduced maintenance requirements, and effectiveness justify their adoption for both household and commercial grain storage (Tefera *et al*., 2011).

Modified Atmosphere Storage

Modified atmosphere storage involves the deliberate manipulation of gaseous compositions within storage facilities to suppress microbial and insect activities. Reduced oxygen concentrations inhibit fungal growth and slow microbial metabolism (Banks & Annis, 2010). Navarro (2012) reported that modified atmosphere storage effectively controls storage fungi and insect pests without chemical pesticides. Likewise, Phillips and Throne (2010) concluded that modified atmosphere technologies are highly effective for long-term grain preservation, although their adoption may be constrained by equipment costs and technical expertise.

Smart Storage Technologies

The integration of smart technologies into grain storage systems represents one of the most significant recent developments in post-harvest management. Smart storage systems utilize sensors and digital monitoring devices to continuously assess storage conditions such as temperature, relative humidity, moisture content, oxygen concentration, and carbon dioxide levels. According to Navarro *et al*. (2017) reported that sensor-based storage management improves grain quality, reduces post-harvest losses, and enhances food safety. Although still emerging in many developing countries, smart storage technologies have considerable potential for improving maize storage efficiency and minimizing microbial spoilage.

Table 2. Emerging Storage Technologies for Stored Maize Preservation

Storage Technology	Major Advantages	Limitations
Hermetic storage bags	Low oxygen environment and reduced fungal growth	Initial purchase cost
Metal silos	Durable and reusable	Requires proper maintenance
Modified atmosphere storage	Effective microbial suppression	Relatively expensive
Biological control	Environmentally friendly	Limited commercial availability
Smart storage systems	Real-time monitoring	High technological requirements
Improved warehouses	Better environmental control	Infrastructure cost

Source: Internet search

Control Measures for Microbial Spoilage of Stored Maize

Effective control of microbial spoilage in stored maize requires an integrated approach involving proper drying, adequate moisture management, improved storage facilities, good sanitation, environmental management, hermetic storage, and regular monitoring. Recent studies have demonstrated that appropriate drying and storage conditions are essential for limiting fungal development, maintaining grain quality, and reducing the risk of mycotoxin contamination. Hermetic storage technologies, in particular, have shown considerable effectiveness because they create low-oxygen conditions that restrict microbial and insect activity and help maintain grain quality during storage (Ngoma *et al*., 2024; Yewle *et al*., 2024).

Proper Drying

Proper drying is one of the most effective methods of preventing microbial spoilage in stored maize. Fellows (2017) stated that reducing grain moisture content to about **12–13%** inhibits the growth of spoilage fungi and reduces mycotoxin production. Similarly, Pitt and Hocking (2009) reported that adequately dried grains are less susceptible to fungal invasion during storage.

Temperature and Moisture Management

Maintaining suitable temperature and moisture conditions is essential for controlling microbial growth Magan *et al*. (2003) also reported that controlling storage temperature and relative humidity significantly limits fungal growth and toxin production.

Good Hygiene Practices

Good hygiene practices during harvesting, drying, transportation, and storage reduce the introduction and spread of spoilage microorganisms. According to Jay *et al*. (2005), cleaning storage facilities and using clean storage containers minimize microbial contamination. Bankole and Adebanjo (2003) further observed that proper handling and sanitation reduce fungal infection and mycotoxin contamination in stored maize.

Improved Storage Structures

The use of improved storage structures such as hermetic bags, metal silos, and modern warehouses has greatly enhanced maize preservation. Murdock *et al*. (2012) reported that hermetic storage systems reduce oxygen availability, thereby suppressing fungal growth and insect infestation. Similarly, Baoua *et al*. (2014) found that hermetic bags effectively maintain grain quality by preventing moisture absorption and microbial contamination.

Biological and Chemical Preservation Methods

Biological and chemical preservation methods can also be used to reduce microbial spoilage. Pitt and Hocking (2009) explained that approved chemical preservatives inhibit fungal growth when properly applied. Nychas (2015) further reported that natural antimicrobial substances obtained from plants

possess antifungal properties and can serve as safe alternatives for grain preservation, provided they comply with food safety regulations.

Routine Monitoring and Inspection

Routine monitoring and inspection are essential for maintaining the quality of stored maize. FAO (2011) recommended regular assessment of grain moisture content, temperature, insect infestation, and visible mould growth for early detection of spoilage. Navarro (2012) also emphasized that periodic inspection enables timely intervention before microbial contamination becomes severe.

Conclusion

Microbial spoilage remains one of the most significant causes of post-harvest losses in stored maize grains worldwide. Fungi, particularly *Aspergillus*, *Fusarium*, and *Penicillium* species, constitute the major microbial contaminants responsible for grain deterioration and mycotoxin contamination. Environmental factors such as moisture content, temperature, oxygen availability, storage duration, and poor handling practices strongly influence microbial proliferation during storage.

This review demonstrates that effective microbial control requires an integrated approach involving proper drying practices, environmental management, improved storage structures, and the adoption of emerging preservation technologies. Hermetic storage systems, biological control methods, and smart storage technologies offer promising and sustainable alternatives for reducing microbial spoilage and improving food safety.

The adoption of modern storage technologies and good post-harvest management practices will significantly contribute to minimizing post-harvest losses, enhancing farmers' incomes, and improving food security, particularly in developing countries where maize remains a staple food crop.

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DETERMINATION OF SELECTED PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF AFRICAN STAR APPLE (*Chrysophyllum albidum*) SEED OIL

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Abstract
The underutilization of Chrysophyllum albidum seeds necessitated investigation into their industrial oil potential. This study determined selected physicochemical properties of African star apple seed oil for possible industrial applications. Oil was extracted from dried seeds using n-hexane in a Soxhlet apparatus and evaluated for yield, peroxide, iodine, saponification, free fatty acid, and acid values; colour, specific gravity, and moisture content using standard analytical methods. The physicochemical analysis showed that the oil had a peroxide value of 2.10 meq/kg, iodine value of 258.03 I.V/Wijs, saponification value of 28.05 mg KOH/g, free fatty acid value of 0.15%, acid value of 1.50%, colour of 2.56 PCI, specific gravity of 1.46 g/cm³, moisture content of 5.80%, and yield of 34.5%. These results indicated that the oil possesses good oxidative stability, low hydrolytic deterioration, and a high degree of unsaturation, suggesting its potential nutritional value and industrial usage. These properties suggested that C. albidum seed oil has acceptable physicochemical characteristics for edible use. However, further evaluation of fatty acid profile, micronutrients, and toxicological safety is needed to confirm its potential as a novel food oil and optimize its industrial utilization.

Keywords: *Chrysophyllum albidum, seed oil, physicochemical properties, industrial application, oxidative stability.*

Introduction
African star apple (*Chrysophyllum albidum*) is an important tropical fruit tree widely distributed in West and Central Africa. The fruit is eaten fresh, while the seeds are often discarded as waste after pulp consumption. However, growing interest in underutilized plant resources has shifted attention to the seed as a potential source of oil for industrial, cosmetic, pharmaceutical, and possibly energy-related applications (Anang *et al*., 2019; Izuakor *et al*., 2024).

Vegetable oils are assessed not only by how much oil can be extracted from the seed, but also by their physicochemical characteristics. These properties help determine whether an oil is suitable for edible use, storage, soap production, biodiesel, or other industrial purposes. In the case of *C. albidum* seed oil, studies have shown that the oil yield is generally moderate, often around 11% to 17%, indicating that the seed is not necessarily a high-oil crop but still a valuable one for non-food uses (Anang *et al*., 2019; Izuakor *et al*., 2024).

The physicochemical profile of an oil provides insight into its stability, purity, degree of unsaturation, and likely behavior during processing. Acid value and free fatty acid content indicate the extent of hydrolytic rancidity and help assess whether the oil has deteriorated during extraction or storage. The iodine value reflects the level of unsaturation in the fatty acids; oils with higher iodine values generally contain more double bonds and may be more prone to oxidation, but they can also be valuable in industries such as paint and soap manufacturing. The saponification value reveals an estimate of the average molecular weight of the fatty acids; it is especially important for industrial applications such as soap making, while peroxide value indicates the extent of primary oxidation and thus the oxidative stability of the oil (Anang *et al*., 2019; Mohammed *et al*., 2023).

Several reports have shown that African star apple seed oil has measurable and promising physicochemical characteristics; this therefore informs the necessity to determine the physicochemical properties of the oil before recommending it for a particular use. Beyond quality evaluation, the analysis of African star apple seed oil is also important from a waste-to-value perspective. Since the seeds are

usually discarded, extracting and characterizing their oil could support sustainable utilization of agro-waste and provide raw materials for local industries. This is particularly relevant in developing economies where there is increasing interest in replacing imported industrial oils with indigenous plant resources. The oil may also be relevant in pharmaceutical or cosmetic formulations because some studies describe favorable characteristics such as low peroxide value, acceptable specific gravity, and useful fatty acid composition (Abel *et al*., 2020).

The need for this study is therefore grounded in both scientific and practical considerations. Scientifically, it adds to the body of knowledge on the composition and quality of *Chrysophyllum albidum* seed oil. Practically, it provides baseline data that can guide its possible use in food-related, cosmetic, and industrial formulations. Determining the selected physicochemical properties of African star apple seed oil is thus an important step toward evaluating its suitability, stability, and potential economic value.

Materials and Methods

Materials

African Star Apple seeds, solvents and reagents – n-hexane, ethanol, distilled water, potassium hydroxide (KOH), phenolphthalein indicator, iodine solution (Wijs solution), sodium thiosulfate, acetic acid, chloroform, hydrochloric acid (HCl), starch indicator, etc.; laboratory equipment – analytical balance, Soxhlet extraction apparatus, hot air oven, mortar and pestle, rotary evaporator, centrifuge, separating funnel, burettes, conical flasks, beakers, measuring cylinders, reflux condenser, etc.

Methods

Fruit Collection and Seed Preparation

Fresh ripe fruits of *Chrysophyllum albidum* were purchased from Towobowo, a local market in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. The seeds were extracted from the fruits, decorticated, and the resulting cotyledons were dried under ambient conditions for one week. Oven drying was avoided to prevent the loss of constituents due to thermal degradation. The dried cotyledons were then ground into smaller particles (powder) using a porcelain mortar and pestle to increase surface area and improve extraction efficiency. The modified method of Mohammed *et al*. (2023) was adopted.

Oil Extraction

Oil extraction was carried out using the Soxhlet extraction method. Approximately 150 g of the powdered seed sample was weighed and placed in a thimble. The round-bottom flask of the Soxhlet extractor was filled with 250 mL of solvent (normal hexane). The reflux condenser was fitted to the top of the extractor, and the water flow was turned on. The round-bottom flask was placed in a water bath, and the temperature of the water bath was adjusted to 65°C, as the boiling point of normal hexane ranges from 55 to 65 °C, bringing the solvent to its vaporization point. Each extraction process took place over a period of 6 to 8 hours. The extract was then poured into a conical flask and exposed to air for the solvent to evaporate.

Maceration: The powdered sample was soaked in 250 mL of normal hexane for 72 hours. The glass container used for soaking was tightly covered, and the mixture was periodically shaken throughout the 72 hours. Afterward, the sample was filtered, and the filtrate was exposed to air for the normal hexane to evaporate, leaving behind the oil.

Analyses

Percentage Oil Yield

The formula that was used for calculating percentage oil yield is

$$\% \ yield = mass \ of \ oil / mass \ of \ sample \ used \ x \ 100$$

Determination of Peroxide Value

Two (2. 0) g of oil was weighed into a conical flask, and 12 mL of chloroform, 10 mL of acetic acid, and 0.5 mL of 0.1 N potassium iodide (KI) were added. Then, 30 mL of distilled water was added. Quickly, 0.5 mL of starch indicator was added to make the yellow colour disappear, and a faint blue colour appeared. 0.1 N sodium thiosulphate ($Na_2S_2O_3$) solution was titrated against the contents in the

conical flask until the faint blue colour disappeared. This procedure was repeated three times. A blank was also prepared using the same method and titrated with 0.1 M $Na_2S_2O_3$.
The peroxide value was then calculated using the formula,

$$PV = \frac{100N\ (Vs - Vc)}{W}$$

Where: Vs =volume of sodium thiosulphate used in the sample titration
Vc =volume of sodium thiosulphate in the control titration
W = weight of oil sample
N =normality of sodium thiosulphate

Determination of Iodine Value

0.5 g of the oil was weighed into a 250 mL conical flask, and 20 mL of carbon tetrachloride solution was added. 25 mL of Hanus solution was added to the flask, and the flask was covered with a piece of aluminium foil. The solution was shaken for one minute and kept in a dark place for thirty minutes. 10 mL of 0.1 N potassium iodide (KI) was added, followed by 100 mL of distilled water. The solution was shaken for 30 seconds, and 10 mL of starch indicator was added. 0.1 N sodium thiosulphate ($Na_2S_2O_3$) solution was then titrated against the solution in the flask, and the volume was recorded. This process was repeated three times. The same procedure was carried out for the blank. The iodine value was then calculated using the formula: $IV = \frac{12.69(Vc - Vs)}{W}$

Where: Vc = volume of $Na_2S_2O_3$
Vs = volume of $Na_2S_2O_3$ used for the sample titration
W = weight of sample
N = normality of $Na_2S_2O_3$

Determination of Saponification Value

0.1 g of oil was weighed into a conical flask, and 25 mL of the alcoholic KOH (1:1) solution was added. The contents were stirred for 5 minutes, then boiled for one hour using a condenser. The resulting solution was titrated against 0.1 M aqueous HCl using phenolphthalein as an indicator. The experiment was repeated three times. The same procedure was followed for the blank.
The saponification value was calculated using the formula.

$$SV = \frac{56.1\ N\ (Vc - Vs)}{W}$$

Where: Vc = volume of standard HCl in the control
Vs =volume of HCl in the sample test
W = weight of oil taken for the test
N =normality of standard HCl solution

Determination of Acid Value and Free Fatty Acid

2.0 g of oil was weighed into a conical flask, and 20 mL of ethanol was added, followed by three drops of phenolphthalein. The mixture was titrated with 0.1 N aqueous potassium hydroxide (KOH) solution until a persistent faint pink colour appeared for 10 seconds. This process was repeated three times. The same procedure was carried out for the blank. The acid value was calculated using the formula:

$$AV = \frac{56.1\ NV}{W}$$

V = volume in mL of KOH
N = normality of KOH solution
W = weight in grams of sample

$$\text{Free fatty acid} = \frac{Acid\ value}{1.99}$$

Colour Determination

The photometric colour index (PCI) was determined using the method described by AOAC (2003). The oil sample (1 g) was weighed and dissolved in 20 mL of hexane. The absorbance was read at the following wavelengths: 400, 550, 620, and 670 nm using a spectrophotometer (T80+, PG Instruments,

England). The solvent was used as a blank. Photometric colour index was calculated as shown in the equation below:

PCI = 1.29 x (A400) + 69.70 x (A500) + 41.20 x (A620) – 56.41 x (A670)

Where A is the absorbance

Determination of Specific Gravity (SG)

A 2 mL pipette was used to measure 2 mL of oil, and the mass of the oil was weighed using an electronic balance (Sartorius). The mass of an equal volume of distilled water was also determined using the same method and was measured. The specific gravity of the oil was then calculated using the formula:

Specific gravity = $mass\ of\ oil/mass\ of\ equal\ volume\ of\ water$.

The methods of Mohammed *et al*. (2023) were adopted in all the laboratory analyses except colour. All experiments were carried out in triplicate, and results were expressed as mean ± standard deviation.

3.0 Results

Table 1: The Results of the Physicochemical Analysis of *Chrysophyllum albidum* Oil

S/N	Parameter	Value
1	Peroxide Value (meq/kg)	2.10±0.01
2	Iodine Value (g I_2/100 g)	258.03±8.46
3	Saponification Value (mg KOH/g)	28.05±0.01
4	Free Fatty Acid (mg KOH/g)	0.15±0.02
5	Acid Value (mg KOH/g)	1.50±0.18
6	Colour (PCI)	2.56±0.12
7	Specific Gravity (g/cm^3)	0.92±0.01
8	Moisture Content (%)	5.80±0.54
9	Oil yield (%)	34.5

Mean ± SD of triplicate determinations in each sample

Discussion

The oil yield was moderate, with a value of 34.5% as compared to 12% recorded by Adebayor (2012) and 12.70% for Umaru *et al.* (2015). This indicated that the seed may not be a good source of abundant oil when compared with groundnut, soybeans, etc., which may yield up to 45-55%. The low oil yield could be attributed to variation in genes, climate, plant species, soil condition, and improper processing techniques such as prolonged exposure of harvested seeds to sunlight, which is capable of impairing the oil yield considerably (Antony *et al*., 2011).

Peroxide value is an index of rancidity, indicating the oil's resistance to peroxidation during storage (Mohammed and Hamza, 2008). The peroxide value of *Chrysophyllum albidum* seed oil in this study was 2.10 meq/KOH/g, which is below the WHO/FAO standard value of 10 meq/KOH/g and the maximum acceptable value set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for oils like groundnut seed oil (Codex Alimentarius Commission, 1993), but comparable with the value of 4.50 meq/KOH/g by Mohammed *et al*. (2023). However, it varies considerably from the Indian Medicinal Oils Standards (India Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Standards, 2011), suggesting that *Chrysophyllum albidum* seed oil may not be suitable for medicinal purposes due to its peroxide value. A low peroxide value indicates oil stability, and fresh oils typically have values below 10 meq/kg. Values of between 20 and 40 result in a rancid taste (Akubugwo and Ugbogu, 2007). The low acid and peroxide values indicated the oil's ability to resist lipolytic hydrolysis and oxidative deterioration (Akanni *et al*., 2008)

The iodine value is a measure of the degree of unsaturation of vegetable oils, which determines their stability to oxidation and allows the overall unsaturation of the fat to be measured quantitatively (Nzikou *et al*., 2009). The iodine value of the extracted oil was measured and found to be 258.03 mg/KOH/g. This was higher than that obtained by Adebayor (2012) and Anang *et al*. (2019).

The saponification value is related to the average molecular mass of fatty acids in the oil sample (Anang *et al*., 2019). The saponification value obtained was 28.05 mg/KOH/g, which was lower than the values of 200 mg/KOH/g and 199.50 mg/KOH/g obtained by Anang *et al*. (2019) and Adebayor (2012). Typical edible oils have a high saponification value of between 180 and 200 mg/KOH/g, and this may also suggest the use of the oil in the production of liquid soap, shampoos, and lather shaving creams (Akbar *et al*., 2012; Mahale and Goswami-Giri, 2012). The low saponification value may be attributed to process parameters such as extraction time, the temperature of extraction, and particle sizes of the milled seeds, as reported by Mahale and Goswami-Giri (2012), which may have long-chain waxes that are poorly digested by humans and may therefore provide very little metabolisable energy compared to palm oil, groundnut oil, etc.

The free fatty acid of the extracted oil was 0.15 mg/KOH/g as compared to 2.25 mg/KOH/g by Adebayor (2012) and 9.90 mg/KOH/g by Ominyi *et al*. (2016). Low free fatty acid content indicated low enzymatic hydrolysis (Anang *et al*., 2019). This could be an advantage as oil with high free fatty acids develops off-flavor during storage (Mahale and Goswami-Giri, 2012).

The acid value is an important indicator of oxidation in oil. It is the weight (mg) of potassium hydroxide required to neutralize the free acid in 1 g of the oil. In good oil, the acid value should be very low (< 0.1), and an increase in acid value is an indicator of oxidation of the oil, which may lead to gum and sludge formation, apart from corrosion (Anang *et al*., 2019). The acid value was found to be 1.50 mg KOH/g, which is lower than the value of 7.72 mg/KOH/g by Anang *et al*. (2019). It is also different from values of 2.57 mg/KOH/g by Umaru *et al*. (2015), 4.50 mg/KOH/g by Adebayor (2012), and 19.70 mg/KOH/g by Ominyi *et al*. (2016).

The result for colour was 2.56 PCI; this was found to be light yellow, clean, and appealing, which is different from the deep red colour reported by Anang *et al*. (2019) and Umaru *et al*. (2015), while Adebayor (2012) and Ominyi *et al*. (2016) also recorded it as red.

The oil has a specific gravity of 0.92 at room temperature, which differs slightly from those reported by Adebayor (2012) (0.89) and Ominyi *et al*. (2016) (0.83). This result agrees with the 0.92 obtained by Anang *et al*. (2019).

The oil yield of 34.5% was lower than that of palm kernel oil (45.6%) and groundnut oil (35.76%) (Oscar, 2012).

Conclusion

The results of the physicochemical analysis of the oil extracted from the African Star Apple seeds were compared favorably with those of other traditional seed oils such as palm kernel and groundnut. The seed oil of African star apple (*Chrysophyllum albidum*) exhibits promising physicochemical characteristics, making it potentially useful for both food and industrial applications. Reported values such as moderate oil yield, relatively low saponification value, and appreciable iodine value suggested that the oil contains a good proportion of unsaturated fatty acids and may be suitable for soap making, cosmetics, and possibly edible uses after proper refinement. Its acid value and free fatty acid content indicated that hydrolytic deterioration may not occur easily in the oil, but quality control and refining are important before storage or consumption. Overall, the oil can be considered a valuable non-conventional plant oil with economic potential, especially if extraction conditions and post-extraction handling are optimized to improve stability and quality.

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HOLT–WINTERS EXPONENTIAL SMOOTHING METHOD FOR MODELLING BLOOD GLUCOSE CONCENTRATION

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Abstract
Diabetes mellitus remains one of the leading chronic diseases worldwide, with blood glucose concentration serving as a critical indicator for monitoring disease progression and treatment effectiveness. Accurate forecasting of blood glucose concentration is essential for preventing severe diabetic complications through timely clinical intervention. This study applies the Holt–Winters (HW) exponential smoothing technique to model and forecast blood glucose concentration using daily time-series observations. The Holt–Winters method was selected because it effectively captures the level, trend, seasonality, and random components inherent in non-stationary time-series data. Daily blood glucose concentration records consisting of 300 observations collected between April and September 2023 were analyzed. The adequacy of the fitted model was evaluated using residual analysis and the Ljung–Box test. Results indicate that the residuals were independent ($p = 0.1901 > 0.05$), confirming that the Holt–Winters model adequately represented the blood glucose concentration series. The findings demonstrate that Holt–Winters exponential smoothing provides a reliable and computationally efficient approach for short-term blood glucose forecasting and offer a practical alternative to more computationally intensive forecasting models.

Keywords: *Diabetes Mellitus, Blood Glucose Concentration, Holt–Winters Model, Time Series Forecasting, Exponential Smoothing, Ljung–Box Test*

Introduction

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a chronic metabolic disorder characterized by persistent elevation of blood glucose concentration resulting from inadequate insulin production, impaired insulin action, or both (Elsayed et al., 2021). The disease has become a significant global public health concern because of its increasing prevalence and its association with severe complications such as cardiovascular diseases, kidney failure, diabetic neuropathy, retinopathy, lower limb amputation, and premature mortality (Elsayed et al., 2023; Hoyos et al., 2024). According to the American Diabetes Association (2024), maintaining blood glucose concentration within recommended physiological limits remains the cornerstone of effective diabetes management.

Blood glucose concentration exhibits substantial temporal variation due to food intake, insulin administration, physical activity, emotional stress, medication, and circadian rhythms. These fluctuations generate non-stationary time-series data with trend, seasonal, cyclical, and random components. Consequently, forecasting future blood glucose concentration has become an important research problem in medical statistics and healthcare analytics.

Several forecasting techniques have been developed for analysing time-series data, including Box–Jenkins (ARIMA), regression models, transfer function models, econometric methods, and exponential smoothing techniques (Makridakis et al., 1999). Among these approaches, the Holt–Winters exponential smoothing method is particularly attractive because it simultaneously models the level, trend, and seasonal behaviour of time-series data while remaining computationally efficient and easy to interpret (Winters, 1960).

Although recent studies have focused primarily on machine learning and deep learning algorithms for blood glucose prediction, these approaches often require large datasets, extensive computational resources, and sophisticated parameter tuning. In contrast, relatively few studies have examined the application of Holt–Winters exponential smoothing for modelling blood glucose concentration despite its simplicity and forecasting capability. This study therefore investigates the suitability of the Holt–Winters exponential smoothing method for modelling and forecasting blood glucose concentration.

Statement of the Problem

Diabetes mellitus continues to impose enormous clinical and economic burdens worldwide. While considerable research has focused on predicting diabetes onset, disease classification, and long-term complications, comparatively little attention has been devoted to modelling blood glucose concentration using classical time-series techniques. Since blood glucose measurements are naturally collected sequentially over time, there is a need to develop forecasting models capable of capturing the temporal dynamics of glucose fluctuations.

Most existing prediction models rely on machine learning and artificial intelligence methods that demand large datasets and high computational resources. Such approaches may not be practical in healthcare environments with limited computational capacity. Furthermore, few studies have investigated the performance of Holt–Winters exponential smoothing in modelling blood glucose concentration despite its ability to accommodate trend, seasonal variation, and random fluctuations. This knowledge gap motivates the present study.

Research Motivation

The motivation for this research is based on three major considerations:

- The increasing global prevalence of diabetes mellitus and its associated complications.
- The availability of longitudinal blood glucose measurements obtained through continuous monitoring systems.
- The need for an interpretable, computationally efficient forecasting technique that can support clinical decision-making, particularly in low-resource healthcare environments.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to model and forecast blood glucose concentration using the Holt–Winters exponential smoothing method

The specific objectives are to:

1. Fit an appropriate seasonal Holt–Winters model to blood glucose concentration data.
2. Estimate the smoothing parameters of the model.
3. Evaluate model adequacy using diagnostic tests.
4. Forecast future blood glucose concentration.
5. Assess the suitability of the Holt–Winters model for diabetes management.

Literature Review

Time-series forecasting has become an indispensable analytical tool in medicine for predicting disease progression and supporting healthcare decision-making. Box and Jenkins (1976) developed the ARIMA framework, which has been widely used for modelling stationary time-series data. However, ARIMA models often require differencing and transformation when data exhibit pronounced seasonality.

Winters (1960) extended Holt's exponential smoothing technique by incorporating seasonal effects into the forecasting process. The resulting Holt–Winters model has been successfully applied in economics, manufacturing, energy forecasting, and inventory management because of its ability to simultaneously estimate level, trend, and seasonal components.

Makridakis et al. (1999) emphasized that the selection of an appropriate forecasting model depends largely on the underlying characteristics of the time-series data. Supranto (2000) classified time-series data into trend, seasonal, cyclical, and irregular patterns, recommending Holt–Winters smoothing for seasonal datasets.

Recent diabetes research has increasingly employed machine learning approaches for blood glucose prediction (Georga et al., 2013; Almutairi et al., 2025). While these techniques often achieve high predictive accuracy, they typically require extensive computational resources and complex model

training. Classical statistical forecasting techniques remain attractive because of their transparency, ease of implementation, and relatively low computational requirements.

Research Gap

The reviewed literature indicates that most existing studies emphasize artificial intelligence and machine learning approaches for blood glucose prediction, whereas comparatively few studies investigate Holt–Winters exponential smoothing for modelling blood glucose concentration. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the suitability of Holt–Winters forecasting in diabetes management remains limited.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative time-series research design.

Daily blood glucose concentration data consisting of **300 observations** collected from **April to September 2023** were obtained from the **AIM-94 diabetes dataset** developed by Michael Kahn, MD, PhD.

The analysis involved:

- Exploratory time-series analysis.
- Seasonal decomposition.
- Stationarity testing using the Augmented Dickey–Fuller (ADF) test.
- Estimation of the Holt–Winters additive model.
- Forecast generation.
- Diagnostic checking using residual plots, autocorrelation function (ACF), and the Ljung–Box test.

Forecast accuracy was evaluated through residual independence rather than prediction error measures alone.

Summary of Findings

The study found that:

- Blood glucose concentration exhibits strong seasonal and random variations.
- The ADF test confirmed that the series was suitable for time-series modelling.
- Estimated smoothing parameters were:

Parameter	Estimate	Interpretation
Alpha (α)	0.0184	Small updates in the current glucose level, indicating relatively stable level estimates remained.
Beta (β)	0.0044	Minimal trend adjustment, suggesting that long-term glucose levels changed slowly over time.
Gamma (γ)	0.0001	Seasonal effects highly stable throughout the observation period.

The fitted Holt–Winters model adequately represented the blood glucose concentration series.

Residual diagnostic analysis showed no significant autocorrelation, while the Ljung–Box test produced a **p-value of 0.1901**, indicating that the residuals were independent. Consequently, the Holt–Winters model generated reliable forecasts for future blood glucose concentration.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the Holt–Winters exponential smoothing model effectively captures the temporal behaviour of blood glucose concentration by incorporating trend, seasonality, and random variation into a unified forecasting framework. Unlike single exponential smoothing, which is

appropriate only for data without trend or seasonality, Holt–Winters accommodates the complex characteristics commonly observed in glucose measurements.

The satisfactory performance of the model, as confirmed by the Ljung–Box diagnostic test, suggests that Holt–Winters provides an effective statistical alternative for analysing medical time-series data. Its relatively low computational complexity also makes it attractive for implementation in healthcare settings where advanced artificial intelligence tools may not be readily available.

Conclusion

This study successfully applied the Holt–Winters exponential smoothing method to model and forecast blood glucose concentration. The fitted model adequately captured the seasonal and stochastic characteristics of the blood glucose series and produced reliable short-term forecasts. Diagnostic evaluation using the Ljung–Box test confirmed that the residuals were independent, indicating that the model was statistically adequate.

The study therefore concludes that the Holt–Winters exponential smoothing method is a suitable and computationally efficient forecasting technique for modelling blood glucose concentration. Its simplicity, interpretability, and forecasting capability make it a valuable decision-support tool for diabetes monitoring and management.

Recommendations

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

1. **Comparative Model Evaluation:** Future studies should compare the predictive performance of the Holt–Winters model with Box–Jenkins (ARIMA), SARIMA, and state-space models using the same blood glucose datasets.
2. **Comparison with Artificial Intelligence Models:** Researchers should evaluate Holt–Winters against modern machine learning and deep learning algorithms such as Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Support Vector Regression (SVR), Random Forests, Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), and Transformer-based models to determine the trade-off between forecasting accuracy, computational cost, and interpretability.
3. **Use of Larger and More Diverse Datasets:** Future research should validate the Holt–Winters model using larger datasets collected from multiple hospitals, continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices, and diverse patient populations to improve the generalizability of the findings.
4. **Incorporation of Explanatory Variables:** Subsequent studies should integrate additional clinical variables such as insulin dosage, meal timing, physical activity, age, body mass index, and medication adherence into forecasting models to improve prediction accuracy.
5. **Development of Clinical Decision-Support Systems:** The Holt–Winters forecasting model should be integrated into real-time diabetes monitoring systems and mobile health applications to provide early warnings of hypo- and hyperglycaemic events and support timely clinical intervention.

Further Research

The present study provides a foundation for several future research directions:

- Development of hybrid forecasting models combining Holt–Winters with machine learning techniques.
- Investigation of multivariate time-series models that jointly analyse blood glucose concentration with physiological and lifestyle variables.
- Application of advanced forecasting methods such as Prophet, Bayesian Structural Time Series, and deep learning architectures for comparison.
- Development of personalized forecasting models capable of adapting to individual patient characteristics.

- Integration of Holt–Winters forecasting into mobile health (mHealth) applications and clinical decision-support systems for real-time diabetes management.

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NUTRITIONAL EVALUATION OF MAIZE COMPOSITE FLOUR BLENDS PRODUCED FROM MAIZE, SORGHUM, AND CASSAVA

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Abstract

This study is explained the production of four different blended semovita samples from three different composite flours of Maize (MF), Sorghum (SF), and Cassava (CF). The sensory attributes, and proximate analysis of the four samples were evaluated by specialized selected panelists and in reputable laboratory. The increase reliance on wheat flour as a major ringredient for semovita production; and limited essential nutrients such as protein, vitamins, fibre, and minerals led to the conduct of this research conduct of study. The blending ratio of the four maize flour blend composite (MASCVITA) samples are sample. A (control): MF80%, SF10%, CF10%, SampleB:MF70%, SF20%, CF10%, SampleC:MF60%, SF30%, CF10% and Sample D:MF50%, SF40%, CF10%. All the four blended samples were evaluated by twenty-five randomly selected panelists using nine (9) point hedonic scale of like extremely-9 to strong dislike-1. The four samples results considered by the panelists indicated that sample B was the best rated and had highest overall acceptability value 64% with least value of 24% in sample D. Other samples A and C having values 40% and 36% respectively. The proximate analysis of the laboratory result reported that in moisture, sample A had highest value 8% while sample C had least obtained value 6%. On dry matter sample B recorded highest value 67.44%, while least value 50.93% evaluated in sample D. On fat, sample A had highest score value 4.53% with least value 3.23% assessed in sample C. On ash, sample C recorded highest value 1.77% with least value 1.53% obtained in sample A. On crude fibre, sample A recorded highest value 0.71%, while least value 0.61% evaluated in sample C. On crude protein, sample A had highest value 12.57%, and least value 10.68% in sample C. On carbohydrate, highest value 77.71% obtained in sample C and least value 72.65% assessed in sample A. The result showed that incorporation of sorghum and cassava flour had significant influence on the sensory attributes and proximate analysis of all the four semovita samples, especially in terms of appealing taste, colour, and texture. It also creates enabling environment for nutrients enhancement, product freshness, and overall acceptance for consumers. It is recommended that consumer preferences with different flour combination ratios should always the best put into considerations during semovita production in terms of colour, sweetness, and nutritive values.

Keywords: *Mascivita samples, Composite flour, Panelists, Sensory Attributes, Nutritional Evaluation*

Introduction

Semovita is one of the staple food called semolina which is the name given to coarsely milled Durum wheat mainly used to produce other nutritive food products such as pasta and sweet Puddings (Detwiller and Varella, 2016). These are staple foods in most developing countries and mainly carbohydrate with protein based starchy foods on the various cereal crops use for production of the food product. Many research work conducted on semovita revealed that semovita aids in greatly reduce the risk of high cholesterol, as well as heart disease. It contains a low density lipoprotein and does not contain trans fatty acids, saturated fats and Cholesterol (Kamiloghu and Calmac, 2019). The researches conducted on semovita have positive impacted academics and health status of people in different countries of the world. In the critical study of varied semovita production, it was discovered that there was less quantityof protein, and some required nutrients in the blended raw ingredients (especially composite cereal flours) in different varied ratio (Kelsy and Richard, 2018). Proteinous foods are usually expensive and beyond the reach of most of the populace. It's scarcity has major impact on children, whose physical and mental development requires nutritionally balanced diets. This deficiency led to some diseases such as malnutrition which resulted to body stunting and underweight (Muthia and Ninick,2013). In addressing the discovered challenges of enhancing the semolina protein deficiency, there is the need for alternative measure using local crops like maize, sorghum, and cassava in boosting food nutrients

requirement of the people. Cereals and tubers are most widely cultivated and consumed crops globally (Harris and Joseph, 2019). The local crops serve as major food across the country, and provides energy and protein in the diet of many people (Odeh and Achike, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to preserve these identified local crops by processing them into flours for effective utilization in the industries.can be preserved by processing them into flours,

Materials and method

The research was carried out at the food processing laboratory unit of Home and Rural Economics Department, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The raw materials used for semovita (MASCIVITA) production were purchased at Towobowo local market Igboora, Oyo State. The cassava tubers were washed, peeled manually with sharp knife, and cut into reasonable sizes, sun dried and milled with hammer mill machine into fine flour. The maize and sorghum were sorted out for best product, dried to reduce some water molecule to zero tolerance and milled to flour with hammer mill machine. The three local crop flours were blended and formulated into four different ratio samples.

Blended and Production procedure of flour into four different ratio samples

Table 1: The blending ratio of producing 1kilogram (1000g) quantity of semovita

Sample of Semovita (MASCIVITA) Formulation	Maize Flour (g)	Sorghum Flour (g)	Cassava Flour (g)
A	800	100	100
B	700	200	100
C	600	300	100
D	500	400	100

i. The production procedure is of different stages; first step is based on multi stage process of sorting and measuring all the dry raw ingredients into three cleaned separate mixing bowls with each containing 1000g of each sample at a time.

ii. The dried raw ingredients blending ratio were measured according to formulate of four different semovita (MASCIVITA) samples of blended composite for local crop flours (maize, millet and cassava).

iii. Each formulated semovita (MASCIVITA) was packaged each into an air free sealed cellophane packaging material for future usage and chemical analysis

Experimental Procedure details

The experimental procedure of mascvita production depends on several factors such as physicochemical characteristics that includes pH, moisture content, ash, carbohydrates, dry matter, crude protein, and crude fibre

i. Determination of pH

pH refers to the degree of acidity or basicity of a given solution (AOAC, 2016). The semovita produced samples (10 g) were weighed and dissolved in distilled water. The solution was made up to 100 ml. The pH meter was calibrated using a buffer solution of pH 7 and 10 before measuring the pH of the solutions. The meter used for pH determination was Hanna pH-211 microprocessor pH meter. Two grams each of prepared MASCIVITA samples were dissolved in 10 mL of distilled water and retained till sample dissolved and the pH values determined.

ii. Determination of moisture content

The moisture content (MC) is the quantity of water present in semovita produced. It is determined by heating semovita samples at 103±2°C until constant mass was observed. 5 g semovita material was put in clean and dried dish and dried in an oven for 2 hours and temperature of 101°C. The heating was repeated until a constant weight was reached. The % moisture was calculated using the equation below:

% moisture = C_S-C_Lx 100

C_S-C_W

Where, C_W= weight of crucible, C_S= weight of crucible + sample, C_L= weight of crucible + sample after floating

iii. Determination of total fatty matter

Total Fatty matter (TFM) is defined as total amount of fatty matter, mostly fatty acids, that can be separated from a sample after splitting with mineral acid, usually HCl (Detwiler and Varela, 2016)TFM was one of the crucial characteristics describing quality and nature of food product. In this study, determination of TFM was done following a method described with slight modifications. The tests were carried out by reacting semovita produced with acid in the presence of hot ethanol and measuring the fatty acids obtained. 10 grams of semovita produced was mixed with 150 mL of warm neutralized ethanol, and was heated; the semovita produced materials were dissolved. The dissolved solution was then filtered, and the residue dried in oven at 110℃ for 1 hour and reweighed again. The total fat matter was obtained using the equation below:

100- (MC + MIA)

1.085

Where, MC = moisture content and MIA = matter insoluble in alcohol

Procedure for Sensory Evaluation

The semovita samples were subjected to sensory evaluation with varied ratio of blended Maize, Sorghum and Cassava flour in which sample A (MF 80%, SF 10%, CF 10%) stand as control. Twenty (20) panelists was drawn from Academic staff randomly from five different departments in faculty of Agricultural Extension, Home and Rural Economics, Oyo State College of Agricultural and Technology, Igboora to evaluate the samples. The panelists made use of ninehedonic scale from like extremely to dislike extremely to rate the semovita produced samples in term of texture, aroma, colour, appearance, and overall acceptability.

Statistical Analysis

Data subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey Test was used to determine the significant difference among the various samples in duplicates. Data were analyzed using the software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.00 (SPSS inc., Chicago), IL, USA at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 2: Proximate analysis of mascvita produced from composite flour of maize, sorghum, and cassava

MASCVITA SAMPLE (GRAMS)	MOISTURE CONTENT(%)	CRUDE PROTEIN(%)	CRUDE FIBRE(%)	ASH(%)	DRY MATTER(%)	CARBOHYDRATES(%)
SAMPLEA	8.00	12.57	0.71	1.53	65.41	72.65
SAMPLE B	6.67	12.04	0.68	1.57	67.44	75.51
SAMPLE C	6.00	10.68	0.61	1.77	56.73	77.71
SAMPLE D	7.50	11.86	0.67	1.60	50.93	73.93

Table 3: The sensory evaluation analysis of the MASCIVITA produced from composite flour of maize, sorghum and cassava using Like Extremely as assessment tool

Samples	Texture	Aroma	Colour	Appearance	Overall Acceptability
Rating	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
A	13 52	11 44	14 56	11 44	10 40
B	8 32	8 32	10 40	7 28	16 64
C	7 28	14 56	8 32	10 40	9 36
D	6 24	3 12	3 12	9 36	6 24

Sample A (MF-80%, SF-10%, CF-10%), Sample B (MF-70%, SF-20%, CF-10%), Sample C (MF-60%, SF-30%, CF-10%) and Sample D (MF-50%, SF-40%, CF-10%)

KEY-Maize flour-MF, Sorghum flour-SF and Cassava flour-CF

Result discussion

From the sensory analysis result, the texture of sample A (MF-80%, SF-10%, CF-10%) gave thehighest evaluation score 52% and product D (MF-50%, SF-40%, CF-10%) recorded the least assessment score 24%. The texture was determined by panelists using hand fill. All Semovita samples recorded a significant ($p<0.05$) different from each other. The sample C (MF-60%, SF-30%, CF-10%) recorded highest value 56% in aroma assessment and leastvalue 12% in sample D (MF-50%, SF-40%, CF-10%).Colour is one of the sensory attributes consumers explore in purchasing new products due to its aesthetic appeal. The panelists rated the colour of the various semovita samples, thus, rated based on like extremely. From the hedonic scale, sample A (MF-80%, SF-10%, CF-10%), was rated the best followed by samples B, C and D, respectively. From results, Sample A (MF-80%, SF-10%, CF-10%) was significantly different from the other samples. Thus, these findings was similar to the work of (Detwiler, *et al.*, 2016) who concluded that colour is vital quality trait of semovita. Colour is the foremost and most important sensory attribute that influences consumer preference and acceptance for product especially in food products (Hofmann and Knox, 2020). The result of appearance shows that semovita sample A (MF-80%, SF-10%, CF-10%) recorded the highest score followed by samples C, D, and B respectively. There was a significant difference between the semovita samples. The quality attributes of the semovita (texture, aroma, colour, and appearance) had influence on the overall acceptability of samples. There was significant difference among all mascvita samples. Sample B(MF-70%, SF-20%, CF-10%) had the highest score (44%) followed by sample A (MF-80%, SF-10%, CF-10%), with a score of (40%).Sample B*(*MF-70%, SF-20%, CF-10%*)*was accepted most by the panel followed by sample A (MF- 80%m, SF-10%, CF-10%)compared to the other two samples C (MF-60%, SF-30%, CF-10%*)*,and D (MF-50%, SF-40%, CF-10%) respectively.

Conclusion

The incorporation of composite flours of maize, sorghum and cassava had significant influence on all the sensory attributes and proximate analysis of the MASCIVITA production especially in terms of taste, texture and colour. It also had the advantage of creating appealing blend of freshness, nutrient enhancement and consumer expectation for lightness, and sweetness of the product.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were suggested based on the outcome of the results as follows;

1. The consumer preference of blending composite local food crop flour should always be put into consideration during semovita production with regards to colour, texture, sweetness and nutritive value.

2. The underutilized local crop flours in semovita production such as sorghum and cassava flour should be introduced and encouraged as food for food manufacturer to reduce environmental crop wastage during their production season.

3. Government should support research work by providing financial assistance through loan and encouraging environmental condition with good policy.

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RISK FACTORS AND PREDICTORS OF DIABETES MELLITUS AMONG ADULTS

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Abstract
Diabetes mellitus is a major public health problem and one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide. This study investigated the prevalence, risk factors and predictors of diabetes among adults. The findings showed that 60.2% of the respondents had diagnosed diabetes. It revealed Type 2 diabetes having the highest proportion (60.1%). Chi-square was used to analyze the diagnosis and the result revealed that diabetes stage was significantly associated with diagnosed diabetes ($p < 0.05$), whereas gender was not significantly associated ($p > 0.05$). The independent samples t-test showed significant differences in age ($p = 0.00$) and diet score ($p = 0.013$) between diabetic and non-diabetic respondents. Binary logistic regression identified age (OR = 1.021, $p < 0.05$), diet score (OR = 0.917, $p = 0.023$), and family history of diabetes (OR = 0.342, $p < 0.001$) as significant predictors of diabetes, while gender, smoking status, alcohol consumption, sleep duration, hypertension history, cardiovascular history, and body mass index were not significant predictors. The study concludes that Type 2 diabetes is highly prevalent among adults and that increasing age, poor dietary habits, and family history are the major predictors of diabetes. The study recommends routine diabetes screening for high-risk individuals, promotion of healthy dietary practices and strengthened public health interventions to reduce the burden of diabetes.

Keywords: *Diabetes mellitus, Type 2 diabetes, prevalence, risk factors, predictors, logistic regression, Odd Ratio (OR).*

Introduction

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic metabolic disorder resulting in hyperglycemia from defective insulin, secretion or action which is also reported to be a leading cause of blindness, renal failure, lower limb amputation, susceptibility to infections and hypertension and other forms of cardiovascular complications due to damage to the blood vessels in the kidneys, heart, eyes and nervous system (Egwin et al., 2024). It is a major cause of mortality globally accounting for 1 in 9 deaths annually, with a global prevalence that has quadrupled in the last 30 years (Zheng et al., 2018).

In Nigeria, diabetes remains a growing concern because a large propotion of individuals are unaware of their disease status until complications occur. Poor awareness of diabetes risk factors, unhealthy lifestyles and socio-economic barriers contribute to delayed diagnosis and ineffective management of the disease (WHO, 2025). As a result, many adults living with diabetes experience serious health consequences such as cardiovascular diseases, kidney damage, nerve damage, diabetic foot ulcer and reduced quality of life.

Diabetes exists in different forms with Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the immune system mistakenly destroys the insulin-making beta cells of the pancreas. It typically develops more quickly than other forms of diabetes (ADA, 2025). Type 2 diabetes is by far the most common form of diabetes accounting for approximately 90-95% of all diabetes cases in adults (ADA, 2025). It is a disorder of metabolism, usually involving excess weight and insulin resistance. Gestational diabetes is a temporary metabolic disorder that any previously nondiabetic woman can develop during pregnancy.

Although several studies have investigated diabetes prevalence and associated risk factors, there is still a need for a comprehensive understanding of how multiple factors, including demographic characteristics, lifestyle behaviors, family history, obesity, hypertension, and dietary practices, contribute to diabetes development among adults. Furthermore, inadequate information regarding the management practices adopted by individuals with diabetes makes it difficult to determine whether current approaches are effective in preventing complications and improving health outcomes.

Literature Review

Several studies have investigated diabetes prevalence and associated risk factors in Nigeria. Amaewhile et al., (2021) investigated the prevalence and risk factors of diabetes. They revealed that it was common in females, with aged 40years & above especially the married women. Although no risk factor had any statistically significant association with diabetes. There was a higher preponderance of Diabetes in non-drinkers, smokers, high salt consumers and those with dyslipidemia.

A study by Carter et al., (2023) in China examined the relationship between lifestyle behaviours and diabetes complications among 1,200 adults. The findings indicated that smoking, alcohol consumption, poor dietary habits, and lack of physical activity significantly increased the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetic nephropathy, and diabetic neuropathy. The authors emphasized the importance of comprehensive lifestyle interventions in diabetes management.

Amoo et al., (2018) concluded type 2 Diabetes Mellitus is more common in males than females, males generally have low health- seeking behavior compared to females in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Oshinlonya et al., (2015) concluded that Type 2 - diabetes mellitus is also strongly linked to age as susceptibility to the disease tends to increase with age and women are more at risk because they are more likely to be overweight and physically inactive.

In Egypt, Ismail et al. (2019) conducted a study on the prevalence of depression and predictors of glycemic control among patients with type 2 DM. The results showed that 74.3% of the respondents had poor glycemic control, and the predictors were depression, comorbidities, and the presence of complications from diabetes.

Okafor et al. (2024) evaluated diabetes self-management practices among adults attending specialist clinics in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study revealed that although most participants were aware of diabetes management strategies, only a small proportion consistently adhered to medication, dietary recommendations, and regular physical exercise. Poor adherence was associated with low educational level and financial constraints.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative research design and utilized secondary data obtained from a publicly available diabetes dataset on Kaggle. A total of 1,000 respondents were used in the study. The dataset comprised demographic characteristics, lifestyle factors, clinical history, anthropometric measurements, and laboratory variables relevant to diabetes.

The dependent variable was diagnosed diabetes, while the independent variables included age, gender, smoking status, alcohol consumption, diet score, sleep duration, family history of diabetes, hypertension history, cardiovascular history, and body mass index (BMI). The data were cleaned and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the prevalence of diabetes and describe the characteristics of the respondents. The Chi-square test was employed to examine associations between categorical variables, the independent samples t-test was used to compare the means of continuous variables between diabetic and non-diabetic respondents, and binary logistic regression was used to identify significant predictors of diabetes. All statistical tests were conducted at a 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Findings

Table 1: Demographic Variables

Variable	Group	Frequency (%)	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	494 (49.4)	49.4
	Female	491 (49.1)	98.5
	Others	15(1.5)	100
Smoking Status	Current	219 (21.9)	21.9
	Former	205 (20.5)	42.4
	Never	576(57.6)	100

Family History	No	782 (78.2)	78.2
	Yes	218 (21.8)	100
Hypertension History	No	752 (75.2)	75.2
	Yes	248 (24.8)	100
Cadiovascular History	No	922 (92.2)	92.2
	Yes	78 (7.8)	100
Diabetes Stage	Gestational	1(0.1)	0.1
	No Diabetes	98(9.8)	9.9
	Pre-Diabetes	298(29.8)	39.7
	Type 1	2(0.2)	39.9
	Type 2	601(60.1)	100
Diagnosed Diabetes	No	398(39.8)	39.8
	Yes	602(60.2)	100

Interpretation: The table presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents to their demographic. 49.4% were males, 49.1% were females and 1.5% were identified as others. The majority of the respondents 57.6% have never smoked, 21.9% were current smokers and 20.5% were former smokers. Most patients reported no family history of diabetes (78.2%) while 21.8% had a positive family history. 75.2% of the patients had no history of hypertension while 24.8 reported a history of hypertension. 92.2% had no cardiovascular disease history while 7.8% had a previous cardiovascular condition.
60.15 patients had Type 2 diabetes, making it the most common stage in the population. 29.8% were classified as pre-diabetic, 9.8% had no diabetes, 0.2% had Type 1 diabetes and 0.1% had gestational diabetes.
60.2% of the patients were diagnosed with diabetes while 39.8 were not diagnosed.

Table 2: Diagonised Diabetes and Gender

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.033[a]	2	.219
Likelihood Ratio	2.963	2	.227
N of Valid Cases	1000		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.97.

Interpretation: Since the p-value which is 0.219 is greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. We concluded that there is no significant relationship between diagnosed diabetes and gender among the patients

Table 3: Diagonised Diabetes and Diabetes Stage

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1000.000[a]	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1344.385	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	1000		

7. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

Interpretation: Since the p-value which is 0.00 is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. We concluded that there is significant relationship between diagnosed diabetes and diabetes stage among the patients.

Table 4: Independent sample t-test

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
age	Equal variances assumed	.231	.631	-4.649	998	.000	-4.559	.981	-6.483	-2.635
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.655	853.655	.000	-4.559	.979	-6.481	-2.637
diet_score	Equal variances assumed	1.040	.308	2.476	998	.013	.2868053	.1158538	.0594603	.5141503
	Equal variances not assumed			2.467	840.047	.014	.2868053	.1162523	.0586263	.5149843
bmi	Equal variances assumed	.729	.394	-1.309	998	.191	-.2904239	.2218860	-.7258405	.1449928
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.300	830.957	.194	-.2904239	.2233413	-.7288033	.1479556
cholesterol_total	Equal variances assumed	1.845	.175	-1.174	998	.241	-2.402	2.047	-6.419	1.614
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.166	830.062	.244	-2.402	2.061	-6.447	1.642
insulin_level	Equal variances assumed	.630	.427	-1.626	998	.104	-.5144371	.3164191	-1.1353601	.1064860
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.616	833.276	.106	-.5144371	.3182429	-1.1390889	.1102148
sleep_hours_per_day	Equal variances assumed	.881	.348	-1.535	998	.125	-.1059534	.0690056	-.2413661	.0294594
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.518	815.803	.130	-.1059534	.0698166	-.2429946	.0310879
heart_rate	Equal variances assumed	.059	.808	-.096	998	.923	-.052	.538	-1.107	1.004
	Equal variances not assumed			-.096	834.948	.924	-.052	.541	-1.113	1.009

Interpretation: The results showed that age differed significantly between the two groups (t(998) = -4.649, p < 0.001), with a mean difference of -4.559 years. Diet score also differed significantly (t(998) = 2.476, p = 0.013), indicating differences in dietary habits between diabetic and non-diabetic participants. However, there were no statistically significant differences in BMI (t = -1.309, p = 0.191), total cholesterol (t = -1.174, p = 0.241), insulin level (t = -1.626, p = 0.104), sleep duration (t = -1.535, p = 0.125), or heart rate (t = -0.096, p = 0.923).

Logistic Regression

Table 5: Classification Table[a]

	Observed		Predicted		
			diagnosed_diabetes		Percentage Correct
			No	Yes	
Step 1	diagnosed_diabetes	No	143	255	35.9
		Yes	100	502	83.4
	Overall Percentage				64.5

a. The cut value is .500

Interpretation: The classification table showed that the binary logistic regression model correctly classified 64.5% of the patients. The model identified 35.9% without diagnosed diabetes and 83.4% with diabetes.

Table 6: Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1[a]	Age	.021	.005	20.561	1	.000	1.021	1.012	1.030
	Gender			3.251	2	.197			
	gender(1)	.777	.551	1.989	1	.158	2.175	.739	6.400
	gender(2)	.907	.552	2.701	1	.100	2.478	.840	7.313
	smoking_status			1.351	2	.509			
	smoking_status(1)	.115	.170	.461	1	.497	1.122	.804	1.567
	smoking_status(2)	.191	.176	1.187	1	.276	1.211	.858	1.708

alcohol_consumption_per_week	-.056	.048	1.361	1	.243	.945	.860	1.039
diet_score	-.087	.038	5.183	1	.023	.917	.850	.988
sleep_hours_per_day	.114	.064	3.210	1	.073	1.121	.989	1.269
family_history_diabetes(1)	-1.072	.182	34.621	1	.000	.342	.240	.489
hypertension_history(1)	-.146	.161	.832	1	.362	.864	.631	1.183
cardiovascular_history(1)	-.021	.259	.007	1	.934	.979	.590	1.625
Bmi	.011	.020	.320	1	.572	1.011	.973	1.052
Constant	-.966	1.034	.873	1	.350	.381		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: age, gender, smoking_status, alcohol_consumption_per_week, diet_score, sleep_hours_per_day, family_history_diabetes, hypertension_history, cardiovascular_history, bmi.

Interpretation: The result showed that age was a significant predictor of diabetes (B= 0.021, OR=1.021 and 95% CI: 1.012-1.030, p-value<0.05) indicating that increasing age was associated with higher odds of diabetes.

Diet_Score was also a significant predictor (B= -0.087, OR=0.917 and 95% CI: 0.86-0.988, p=0.023) indicating that better diet scores were associated with reduced odds of diabetes.

Family history of diabetes also significantly predicted diebeties status (B= -1.072, OR=0.342 and 95% CI: 0.240-0.489, p-value<0.05).

Gender, Smoking status, alcohol consumption, sleep duration, hypertension history, cardiovascular history and BMI were not statistically significant predictors because their p-values are greater than 0.05.

Conclusion

This study investigated the prevalence, risk factors, health effects, and predictors of diabetes among the study population. The findings revealed a high prevalence of diabetes, with Type 2 diabetes being the most common form. Although gender and smoking status were not significantly associated with diabetes, family history was found to have a significant relationship with diabetes status.

The study also showed that age and diet score differed significantly between diabetic and non-diabetic respondents, suggesting that increasing age and unhealthy dietary habits are important factors associated with diabetes. Furthermore, the logistic regression analysis identified age, diet score, and family history of diabetes as significant predictors of diagnosed diabetes, while gender, smoking status, alcohol consumption, sleep duration, hypertension history, cardiovascular disease history, and BMI were not significant predictors in this study.

Finally, the findings emphasize the importance of promoting healthy dietary practices, encouraging early screening among older adults and individuals with a family history of diabetes, and implementing preventive public health interventions aimed at reducing the burden of Type 2 diabetes. Early detection and lifestyle modification remain essential strategies for improving diabetes prevention and management.

Recommendations

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

1. Routine diabetes screening should be encouraged, particularly among older adults and individuals with a family history of diabetes, to facilitate early diagnosis and timely treatment.
2. Healthy dietary practices should be promoted through community-based nutrition education and counselling, as better diet quality was associated with lower odds of diabetes.
3. Government and public health agencies should develop and implement policies that support diabetes prevention and control, including regular community screening programmes and improved access to affordable diabetes care.

4. Future researchers should conduct longitudinal and multicentre studies involving more diverse populations and include additional behavioural, genetic, and environmental factors to improve the prediction and understanding of diabetes risk.

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SOIL, CROP AND CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

EFFECTS OF FERTILIZER TYPES ON GROWTH AND YIELD OF MAIZE (*Zea mays* L.)

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Abstract
Compost and organo-mineral fertilizers are sustainable nutrient sources that enhance soil fertility and maize productivity. This study evaluated the effects of compost fertilizer (CMF) and organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF) on the growth and yield of Quality Protein Maize (QPM). The experiment was conducted during the 2013 planting season at the Teaching and Research Farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Nigeria, using a Randomized Complete Block Design with three replications and seven treatments: control, CMF at 2.5, 5, and 10 t ha^{-1}, and OMF at the same rates. Growth parameters, yield components, NPK uptake, and post-cropping soil properties were assessed, while data were analyzed using ANOVA and Duncan's Multiple Range Test at the 5% significance level. Compost fertilizer contained higher nutrient concentrations (1.73% N, 0.58% P, and 11.05% K) than OMF (0.45% N, 0.16% P, and 3.40% K), resulting in superior maize performance. The 10 t ha^{-1} CMF treatment produced the tallest plants (321.67 cm), largest leaf area (1954.67 cm^2), highest leaf number (14.00), thickest stems (4.70 mm), and greatest grain yield (1525.17 kg plot^{-1}). Although NPK uptake showed no significant differences among treatments, compost consistently improved growth and yield. The study concluded that compost fertilizer applied at 10 t ha^{-1} is an effective and sustainable alternative to organo-mineral fertilizer for improving maize productivity and should be promoted for sustainable crop production in similar agro-ecological zones.

Keywords: *Compost fertilizer, organo-mineral fertilizer, maize, Quality Protein Maize, grain yield, sustainable agriculture, soil fertility*.

Introduction
Fertilizer management is fundamental to improving maize productivity through efficient nutrient supply and sustainable soil fertility. Inorganic NPK fertilizers provide readily available nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, promoting rapid vegetative growth, enhanced photosynthesis, improved root development, and efficient assimilate translocation, which collectively increase biomass and grain yield (Wang *et al*., 2016b; Qian *et al*., 2023). Organic fertilizers, including compost and farmyard manure, release nutrients gradually through microbial decomposition, improving soil structure, water-holding capacity, and soil organic carbon while reducing nutrient losses (Demelash *et al*., 2014). Controlled-release fertilizers further improve nitrogen use efficiency by synchronizing nutrient release with crop demand and minimizing volatilization and leaching (Li *et al*., 2020). Emerging technologies such as biochar, nitrification inhibitors, nano-fertilizers, and precision fertigation also enhance nutrient retention and fertilizer use efficiency (Gao *et al*., 2023; Liu *et al*., 2023; Cui *et al*., 2024). Despite these advances, maize yields in Nigeria remain low due to declining soil fertility and inefficient fertilizer management. Farmers in the derived savanna of southwestern Nigeria have limited comparative information on the effectiveness of different fertilizer types under similar field conditions. This study therefore evaluated the effects of selected fertilizer types on maize growth and yield to identify effective nutrient management options that improve productivity and promote sustainable maize production.

Materials and methods
Experimental site
The experiment was conducted during the 2013 planting season at Oyo State College of Agriculture Training and Research farm Igboora, located between longitude 20°30' and 55°15'E and latitude 6°45'N of Oyo State, Nigeria. The site of the experiment was dominated with secondary weeds such as *Tridax procumbens*, *Euphorbia hirta* and *Calopogonium* spp.

Field establishment

Land clearing and preparation was done manually with local implements such as cutlass, hoe, spade, and rake. The total area of land for the experiment was 24 × 8m, and the size of each plot was 3m × 2m with 1m space between rows and 0.5m within rows respectively. Two seeds were sown per stand at a spacing of 75cm × 25cm, and thinning of seedlings to one plant per stand was done two weeks after sowing (2WAS). Weeding was managed manually by hoeing whenever weeds emerged.

The maize variety planted was Quality Protein Maize (QPM), sourced from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan (IITA). Sowing was done on flat beds on June 7, 2013.

Experimental layout

The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) replicated three times. There were seven treatments which include:

Control: No soil additive at 0 tons' ha^{-1}, Compost fertilizer at 2.5, 5, and 10 tons' ha^{-1} Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF) at 2.5, 5, and 10 tons' ha^{-1}

The composition of the compost used was a mixture of *Tridax* and cow dung at 1:3. Organo-mineral fertilizer was sourced from Oyo State Agricultural Development Program Ibadan. The analysis of both the compost and organo-mineral fertilizer used is presented in **Table 1.**

Data collection

At four weeks after sowing (4WAS), three plants were tagged per plot for data collection. Growth parameters assessed included plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf area, and stem girth. Assessments were carried out at two-week intervals.

Plant height was measured from ground level to the tip of the longest leaf; leaf number was counted per stand

Stem girth was measured; and leaf area was calculated by measuring leaf length and breadth.

At six weeks after sowing (6WAS), two plants per plot were uprooted, oven-dried, and sampled for dry matter yield to determine nutrient uptake. Nutrient uptake was calculated by multiplying nutrient concentration per treatment by dry matter yield. Harvesting occurred sixteen weeks after planting (16WAP). Ears and cobs were weighed per plot, shelled, and grain yield per plot determined. Post-cropping soil samples were collected for analysis.

Data analysis

All data were subjected to ANOVA (SAS, 2004), and means separated using Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) at 5% probability.

Results and discussion

Nutrient composition of fertilizers used

The compost fertilizer contained higher concentrations of major nutrients compared to the organo-mineral fertilizer as shown in Table 1. Compost recorded nitrogen (N) at 1.73%, phosphorus (P) at 0.58%, and potassium (K) at 11.05%, whereas organo-mineral fertilizer had lower values: N at 0.45%, P at 0.16%, and K at 3.40%. This substantial difference shows that compost provided a richer source of macronutrients, particularly potassium, which is essential for stomatal regulation and assimilate translocation in maize. The higher nitrogen content of compost also suggests its greater potential for supporting vegetative growth, chlorophyll formation, and biomass accumulation compared to the organo-mineral fertilizer. The comparatively lower nutrient concentrations in organo-mineral fertilizer imply that higher application rates may be necessary to match the nutrient-supplying capacity of compost for optimum maize performance.

Table 1: Nutrient Composition of Fertilizers Used

Parameter (%)	Compost	Organo-Mineral
N	1.73	0.45
P	0.58	0.16
K	11.05	3.40

Effects of fertilizer types on plant Height (cm) of Maize

Significant differences occurred in maize height at 4 and 8 WAP ($p < 0.05$) as presented in Table 2, with 10 t ha^{-1} CMF recording the tallest plants (108.67 cm and 321.67 cm, respectively). At these periods, heights under 10 t ha^{-1} CMF were statistically similar to 5 and 2.5 t ha^{-1} CMF and 2.5 t ha^{-1} OMF. Control plants consistently had the shortest stature, recording 72.00 cm at 4 WAP and 271.67 cm at 10 WAP. By 10 WAP, the highest height (356.67 cm) came from 2.5 t ha^{-1} CMF, followed by 5 t ha^{-1} OMF (356.33 cm), both significantly higher than control. No significant differences were observed at 6 and 10 WAP. Generally, compost fertilizer treatments promoted superior vegetative growth, particularly 10 t ha^{-1} CMF in early stages, while unfertilized maize remained shortest throughout.

Table 2: Effects of Fertilizer types on Plant Height of Maize at Different WAP

Treatment	4 WAP	6 WAP	8 WAP	10 WAP
CTR-0	72.00c	134.33a	224.67d	271.67a
OMF-2.5	96.67ab	177.33a	275.33bc	333.00a
OMF-5	92.33b	147.33a	266.00c	356.33a
OMF-10	93.33b	150.00a	282.00bc	333.67a
CMF-2.5	100.00ab	150.33a	278.67bc	356.67a
CMF-5	106.00ab	192.00a	292.00b	345.67a
CMF-10	108.67a	170.67a	321.67a	330.33a
	*	ns	*	ns

Means with same letter(s) in a column are not significantly different (DMRT, $p \leq 0.05$
Compost fertilizer (CMF), Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF), CTR- Control

Effects of fertilizer types on Leaf Area (cm²)

Leaf area differed significantly at 4 and 8 WAP, with 10 t ha^{-1} CMF showing maximum expansion (577.33 cm² and 1954.67 cm², respectively). At 4 WAP as presented in Table 3, this was statistically similar to 5 and 2.5 t ha^{-1} CMF. The smallest leaf area consistently appeared in the control (211.00 cm² at 4 WAP; 1226.00 cm² at 8 WAP). By 10 WAP, differences were not significant, but compost and organo-mineral fertilizer treatments still exhibited greater values (up to 2086.33 cm² under 10 t ha^{-1} OMF) compared to control (1481.00 cm²). Growth patterns indicated that CMF, particularly at 10 t ha^{-1}, promoted the largest leaf area, enhancing photosynthetic surface early, while untreated maize maintained the lowest values throughout growth.

Table 3: Effects of fertilizer types on Leaf Area of Maize at Different WAP

Treatment	4 WAP	6 WAP	8 WAP	10 WAP
CTR-0	211.00c	775.67a	1226.00d	1481.00b
OMF-2.5	413.67b	1089.00a	1441.00cd	1836.00a
OMF-5	379.33b	1050.67a	1404.67cd	1900.00a
OMF-10	391.00b	836.33a	1514.67bcd	2086.33a
CMF-2.5	442.67ab	876.00a	1713.00abc	1821.67a
CMF-5	457.33ab	1089.00a	1802.33ab	1821.00a
CMF-10	577.33a	1332.67a	1954.67a	2063.00a
	*	ns	*	*

Means with same letter(s) in a column are not significantly different (DMRT, $p \leq 0.05$).
Compost fertilizer (CMF), Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF)

Effects of fertilizer types on Number of Leaf

Significant differences in leaf count were evident only at 4 WAP, with 10 t ha^{-1} CMF producing the highest number (14.00), statistically similar to all fertilized treatments but superior to the control (9.60). At later stages (6, 8, and 10 WAP), differences were not significant, though fertilized maize consistently

maintained higher leaf numbers, ranging from 16.00 to 18.33 leaves at 10 WAP, compared to 16.67 in control. Overall, early application of compost and organo-mineral fertilizers enhanced leaf production, while the control recorded the fewest leaves across all intervals, highlighting fertilizer influence on early vegetative canopy development.

Table 4: Effects of fertilizer types on leaf count at different WAP

Treatment	4 WAP	6 WAP	8 WAP	10 WAP
CTR-0	9.60b	13.67a	13.67a	16.67a
OMF-2.5	11.83a	14.00a	15.67a	18.33a
OMF-5	13.00a	15.33a	15.67a	18.00a
OMF-10	12.17a	13.00a	16.00a	18.00a
CMF-2.5	12.00a	16.67a	16.33a	18.00a
CMF-5	12.83a	16.67a	16.00a	16.00a
CMF-10	14.00a	16.00a	16.00a	17.67a
	*	ns	ns	ns

Means with the same letter(s) in a column are not significantly different (DMRT, $p \leq 0.05$).
Compost fertilizer (CMF), Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF), CTR- Control, ns= not significant

Effects of fertilizer types on stem girth (mm) of maize

Stem girth showed significant variation only at 8 and 10 WAP. At 8 WAP, the thickest stems (4.70 mm) occurred with 10 t ha^{-1} CMF, statistically similar to 5 t ha^{-1} CMF (4.63 mm) and superior to the control (3.10 mm). At 10 WAP, all fertilized treatments (4.70–4.93 mm) were significantly greater than the control (3.70 mm), with no difference among them. No significant effects were observed at 4 and 6 WAP. Fertilizer application, particularly compost at higher rates, improved stem robustness, supporting better mechanical strength compared to the unfertilized (control).

Table 5: Effects of fertilizer types on Stem Girth of Maize at Different WAP

Treatment	4 WAP	6 WAP	8 WAP	10 WAP
CTR-0	2.30a	2.80a	3.10d	3.70b
OMF-2.5	2.70a	3.03a	4.47c	4.87a
OMF-5	2.67a	3.10a	4.57abc	4.70a
OMF-10	2.70a	3.23a	4.53bc	4.83a
CMF-2.5	2.87a	3.17a	4.47c	4.87a
CMF-5	2.73a	3.13a	4.63a	4.93a
CMF-10	4.13a	3.33a	4.70a	4.93a
	ns	ns	*	*

Means with the same letter(s) in a column are not significantly different (DMRT, $p \leq 0.05$)
Compost fertilizer (CMF) Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF), CTR- Control, ns= not significant

Effects of fertilizer types on yield parameters of maize

Yield parameters varied significantly across treatments. Highest grain yield (1525.17 kg) and cob weight (3.57 kg) were achieved with 10 t ha^{-1} CMF, statistically similar to 2.5 and 5 t ha^{-1} CMF. Control plots produced the lowest grain yield (394.33 kg) and cob weight (0.60 kg). Ear weights followed similar trends, peaking at 4.67 kg under 10 t ha^{-1} CMF, while control recorded 1.07 kg. Compost treatments consistently outperformed organo-mineral and control treatments, with significant yield advantages at all measured parameters.

Table 6: Effects of fertilizer types on the yield components of Maize

Treatment	Ear Weight (kg)	Cob Weight (kg)	Grain Yield (kg)
CTR-0	1.07a	0.60c	394.33d
OMF-2.5	2.17a	1.40bc	639.67cd
OMF-5	3.67a	2.70ab	768.33bcd
OMF-10	2.57a	1.77bc	881.00abcd
CMF-2.5	3.23a	2.47ab	1361.33ab
CMF-5	3.63a	2.63ab	1096.83abc
CMF-10	4.67a	3.57a	1525.17a
	ns	*	*

Means with the same letter(s) in a column are not significantly different (DMRT, $p \leq 0.05$).
Compost fertilizer (CMF), Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF), CTR- Control, ns= not significant

Effects of fertilizer NPK Uptake by Maize

Nutrient uptake did not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$) among treatments. Nitrogen uptake ranged from 1.52 to 2.94, phosphorus from 0.21 to 0.41, and potassium from 1.86 to 2.35 across all fertilizer applications. Control plots shows intermediate values with an average of 2.86 for N, 0.27 for P, and 2.15 for K, respectively. This shows that differences in growth and yield were not directly mirrored by measurable NPK uptake under the experimental conditions.

Table 7: Effects of fertilizer types on NPK Uptake by Maize

Treatment	N Uptake	P Uptake	K Uptake
CTR-0	2.86	0.27	2.15
OMF-2.5	2.78	0.24	2.15
OMF-5	1.68	0.34	2.21
OMF-10	2.62	0.28	2.20
CMF-2.5	2.86	0.21	1.86
CMF-5	2.94	0.41	2.26
CMF-10	1.52	0.27	2.35

No significant differences ($p \leq 0.05$). Compost fertilizer (CMF), Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF)Organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF)

Discussion

The study evaluated the effects of compost fertilizer (CMF) and organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF) on maize growth and yield, measuring plant height, leaf area, number of leaves, stem girth, yield components, and nutrient uptake. Each parameter responded distinctly to the type and rate of fertilizer applied, underlining the importance of nutrient source and concentration in crop performance.

Nutrient composition of fertilizers

The nutrient composition analysis revealed compost fertilizer to be substantially richer in macronutrients 1.73% N, 0.58% P, and 11.05% K than organo-mineral fertilizer, which contained 0.45% N, 0.16% P, and 3.40% K. These results correlate with findings by Demelash *et al.* (2014), who emphasized compost's potential to sustain yields while improving soil organic carbon content. High potassium in compost aligns with Qian *et al.* (2023), who reported that adequate K supports assimilate translocation and drought tolerance in maize. Thus, the superior nutrient profile of compost positions it as a potent bio-resource for vegetative and reproductive growth phases.

Plant height

Plant height showed significant variation, especially at 4 and 8 WAP. The tallest plants were observed with 10 t ha^{-1} CMF, closely followed by other compost rates. This aligns with Wang *et al.* (2016b), who reported that balanced NPK enhances vegetative growth by stimulating chlorophyll content and photosynthesis. Early-stage height increase under CMF can be attributed to readily available N and K, essential for shoot elongation and turgor regulation (Shi *et al.*, 2020). Notably, control plots consistently recorded the shortest plants, underscoring the essential role of external nutrient input in crop development.

Leaf area

Leaf area, a crucial determinant of photosynthetic capacity, was significantly influenced by fertilizer treatment at 4 and 8 WAP. The highest values were recorded under 10 t ha^{-1} CMF. This result supports the view of Gao *et al.* (2023), who associated organic fertilizer application with improved leaf expansion due to enhanced water retention and microbial activity. Broader leaf surface area contributes to higher light interception, photosynthesis, and biomass production (Zamora-Re *et al.*, 2020). Compost's slow nutrient release and improvement in soil structure likely supported continuous nutrient supply, which expanded foliage during critical growth phases.

Number of leaves

At 4 WAP, 10 t ha^{-1} CMF also produced the highest leaf count. While subsequent WAP showed no significant differences, fertilized plots consistently maintained higher values than the control. This corroborates Overman and Scholtz (1999), who described a strong correlation between nutrient availability and vegetative canopy development. Compost likely promoted early leaf initiation due to higher nitrogen content, a key component of amino acids and chlorophyll synthesis. As Meng *et al.* (2023) highlighted, genotype-specific responses may also play a role, but nutrient sufficiency remains the primary factor in determining leaf proliferation.

Stem girth

Stem girth improved significantly at 8 and 10 WAP with fertilizer application, especially with higher CMF rates. Thicker stems under CMF treatments could be linked to better nutrient availability and improved turgor maintenance via potassium, supporting stronger vascular development (Shi *et al.*, 2020). These results align with the findings of Cheng *et al.* (2024), who demonstrated that organic inputs improve structural resilience under stress. Fertilized plants exhibited mechanical strength necessary to support reproductive structures and mitigate lodging risk, which is crucial for harvesting success.

Yield parameters

Yield components ear weight, cob weight, and grain yield responded positively to compost application. The highest values were again recorded under 10 t ha^{-1} CMF, followed by 2.5 and 5 t ha^{-1} compost treatments. Compost's consistent superiority over OMF and control aligns with findings by Demelash *et al.* (2014) and Gao *et al.* (2023), who emphasized compost's role in increasing yield stability through enhanced soil fertility and moisture conservation. Furthermore, Li et al. (2020) observed that integrated nutrient sources like CRU and organic amendments foster higher agronomic efficiency. The low performance of control plots confirms the indispensability of fertilizer inputs in achieving optimum maize productivity.

NPK uptake

Contrary to the pronounced differences in growth and yield, nutrient uptake showed no significant variation among treatments. Nitrogen uptake ranged from 1.52 to 2.94 g, phosphorus from 0.21 to 0.41 g, and potassium from 1.86 to 2.35 g. Interestingly, control plots recorded relatively high N and K uptake, possibly due to low biomass diluting nutrient concentration or variability in soil nutrient availability. These observations align with Li *et al.* (2021), who noted that nutrient uptake does not always directly translate to higher yield unless aligned with growth stages and root activity. Additionally, Terrer *et al.* (2021) cautioned that carbon allocation trade-offs may alter nutrient partitioning, explaining the lack of direct correspondence.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that compost fertilizer, particularly at the 10 t ha^{-1} application rate, significantly enhanced the growth and yield of maize compared to organo-mineral fertilizer and unfertilized control. Parameters such as plant height, leaf area, leaf number, stem girth, and grain yield responded most positively to compost treatments, owing to its superior nutrient composition, especially in nitrogen and potassium. Although nutrient uptake did not show statistically significant differences among treatments, the visible improvements in vegetative and reproductive traits, however, shows the effectiveness of compost in supporting physiological development. These results affirm existing literature emphasizing the benefits of organic fertilizers in improving soil structure, moisture retention, and long-term fertility. For sustainable maize production, integrating compost at optimal rates offers a viable alternative to conventional mineral inputs, with added environmental and soil health benefits. Future strategies should consider blending compost with precision nutrient technologies to maximize efficiency and yield stability.

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INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS AFFECTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRIBUSINESS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study assessed factors influencing youth participation in agribusiness in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 103 Youth participating in Agribusiness in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo state. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Result on participation in agribusiness from the study area revealed that three quarter of the respondents (75.0%) were actively participating in arable crop production with the weighted mean score of (2.66). Also, the study showed that majority (99%) of the respondents had no access to infrastructure. The study further showed that less than 70% of the respondents had improved standard of living as the perceived benefit towards participating in agribusiness. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency count percentage and mean while inferential analytical tools used to test the hypotheses were Chi-square, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis showed that perceived benefit/participation is not significant. Chi-square test revealed that market (χ^2=6.760, p=0.009), infrastructure (χ^2=96.240,p=0.000),capital(χ^2=23.040,p=.000), and education (χ^2=38.440,p=.000) were significant. It was concluded from the study that perceived benefit did not significantly influence youth participation in agribusiness in the study area because youth in the study area believed it as their usual activities and received no incentives in form of motivation to boost their participation as discovered in the course of this study. It was therefore recommended that youth should be involved in the design and planning of interventions to have sense of belongingness in the programmes targeted at them and to inform their participation in the modern way of doing things effectively.

Keywords: *Factors, Youth, Participation, Agribusiness*

Introduction

The population of youth in the world is about 1.2 billion and it is projected to increase to 1.3 billion by2030 (United Nations, 2019). However, in its Revised National Youth Policy (2019), Nigeria redefined "youth" for national policy purposes to include those aged 15 to 29 years. The United Nations uses 15 to 24 years for its statistical definition of youth. International Labor Organization statistics showed that there are about 1.3 billion youth aged 15–24 globally as of 2019 accounting for one out of every four people (17.6%) worldwide. This is an increase of about 300 million youth population since 1999 (International Labour Organisation, 2020). Majority of youths shy away from engaging in Agribusiness and this can be attributed to lack of information and misconceptions that have burdened agribusiness (Boye *et al*., 2024). Many researchers and practitioners in the field of agribusinesses argue that the sector holds opportunities and there is a need to erase all the perceptions that have burdened the sector for many years. Youth in particular must starting investing in agribusinesses to create jobs for themselves and the entire society at large. Studies by Osabohien *et al.* (2021) and Ogunmodede *et al*., (2020) showed that many youths were willing to engage in agribusiness activities but faced a lot of obstacles which include lack of land and credit to enhance their startups. One of the ways of addressing the ever increasing rate of unemployment among young people is to debunk the perceptions and misperceptions behind youth involvement in agribusiness (Ikuemonisan, *et.al*., 2022). Young people should be encouraged to engage in agribusinesses which will lead to job creation and food production for the ever growing population (Boye, *et. al*., 2024).

Statement of the problem

The potential that lies in agriculture as an economically viable sector to address the problem of youth unemployment and food security has not been realized due to low youth participation (Awobajo, *et. al*., 2025). Globally, a number of factors have been identified that influence youth participation in agribusiness. In particular, youths are not willing to take or accept agribusiness as their career path because they have a negative perception about farming, lack access to land and have low access to financial resources. Because of the poor perception and attitudes, agriculture has been left for the elderly in rural areas and uneducated which lead to poor performance of the agricultural sector. The problem of youth's unemployment has also led to proliferation of rural-urban migrations in pursue of white collar jobs which has relegated agribusiness into the periphery of economic activities and also aggravated the unemployment situation in Nigeria (Begho and Daubry, 2025). This provided the impetus to carry out this study to examine the factors affecting youth participation in agri-business in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State in Nigeria that depend largely on agriculture. The study specifically considered the following objectives: examine youth' participation in agri-business in the study area, identify factors that determine youth' participation in agri-business, and examine perceived benefits towards youth participation in agri-business in the study area.

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between factors that determine youth participation in agri-business in the study area.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between perceived benefits and youth participation in agri-business in the study area.

Methodology

This study was conducted in Ibarapa Central Local Government, Oyo State Nigeria. Ibarapa central comprises of communities in Igboora and Idere town, Oyo State, and has an area of 440km². The rainfall in the area follows a tropical pattern with an annual rainfall ranging from 1000mm to 1400mm and fairly high temperature, the occupation in the area is farming (mainly subsistence and partly commercial). The human population in the area is heterogeneous. The population for the study was youth involved in agri-business in the study area. Two- stage sampling procedure was employed to select sample for this study. **Stage 1:** Simple random selection of active registered youth in agribusiness was given as: 160 from Igboora and 98 from Idere. **Stage 2:** 40% of the active registered member were chosen from both towns that made up Ibarapa Central Local Government to make 64 respondents from Igboora and 39 from Idere to give a total sample size of 103respondents for the study. The data for this study was from primary source, with the use of well structured questionnaire to elicit information from the youth involved in agri-business in the study area. Data were analyzed using both descriptive analytical tools such as frequency, percentage and mean, while the inferential tools used to analyze the hypotheses were Chi-square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Youth's participation in agribusiness was measured on three level of high participation, moderate participation, and no participation.

Results and discussion

Youths' participation in agribusiness in the study area.

Result from Table 1 revealed the participation of youth in agribusiness in the study area. It showed that majority of the respondents were into arable crop farming with weighted mean score 2.66 ranked 1st, participation in cashew plantation ranked 2nd with weighted mean score 2.32, and respondents participation in sheep and goat rearing ranked 3rd with weighted mean score 2.27. This implies that arable crop farming, cashew plantation and sheep/goat rearing are the major agribusiness that youth were involved in the study area. This finding was in line with Abdullahi *et al*., 2025, Boye, *et al.*, 2024 and Daudu *et al*., 2023 which say crop production especially arable farming is the dominant agribusiness activity among the youth. Also, youth engaged in high value tree crops such as cashew and cocoa due to their profitability and export potential. Finally, say that youth were involved in livestock production especially the small ruminants (goats and sheep) because they are accessible, less risky, low capital requirements and quick turn over.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to participation in agribusiness

SN	Variables	High Participation	Moderate Participation	No Participation	Weighted Mean Score	Rank
1	Arable Crop	75(72.8)	16(15.5)	11(10.7)	2.66	1st
2	Cashew Plantation	58(56.3)	22(21.4)	23(22.3)	2.32	2nd
3	Sheep &Goat Rearing	55(53.4)	23(22.3)	25(24.3)	2.27	3rd
4	Local Chicken Rearing	35(34.0)	25(24.3)	43(41.7)	1.89	4th
5	Cocoa Plantation	25(24.3)	33(32.0)	44(42.7)	1.79	5th
6	Rabbit Rearing	13(12.6)	9(8.7)	81(78.7)	1.29	6th
7	Fishery	15(14.6)	3(2.91)	85(82.3)	1.27	7th
8	Agricultural Marketing	4(3.9)	18(17.3)	81(78.8)	1.19	8th
9	Veterinary Service	9(8.7)	5(4.9)	89(86.1)	1.17	9th
10	Duck Rearing	9(8.7)	5(4.9)	89(86.1)	1.17	9th
11	Piggery	10(9.7)	3 (2.9)	90(87.4)	1.17	9th
12	Oil palm Plantation	8(7.8)	4(3.9)	91(88.3)	1.14	12th
13	Sales of Agro Allied	8(7.8)	3(2.9)	92(89.3)	1.13	13th
14	Agro-Processing	7(6.8)	3(2.9)	93(90.3)	1.11	14th
15	Hybrid Chicken Rearing	40(38.8)	16(15.5)	47(45.7)	1.09	15th
16	Snail Rearing	6(5.9)	-	97(94.1)	1.06	16th
17	Horticulture	5(4.9)	1(0.97)	97(94.1)	1.05	17th
18	Floriculture	5(4.9)	3(2.9)	96(93.2)	1.05	17th
19	Cattle Rearing	-	5(4.9)	98(95.1)	1.05	17th
20	Quail Rearing	-	5(4.9)	98(95.1)	1.05	17th
21	Grass Cutter rearing	-	4(3.9)	99(96.1)	1.02	21st
22	Ornamental Crops	-	1(0.97)	102(99.03)	1.01	22nd

Source: Field Survey, 2024

*Figures in Parenthesis are Percentages.

Factors determining youth participation in agribusiness

Table 2 showed the distribution of the respondents according to the factors that determine youth participation in Agribusiness in the study area. The study revealed that majority (96.1%) opined that infrastructural facility was the major factor that determines their participation because it is not readily available and accessible. Furthermore, (82.5 %) of the respondents gave their reason to be perception and attitude to agriculture. Also, 81.6% of the respondents admitted that poor education and skills affected their participation. This is consistent with the findings of Boye, *et al.*, (2024) and Abdullahi, *et*

al., (2025) that indicated that youth participation in agribusiness is significantly influenced by infrastructural deficiencies, perception and attitude toward agriculture, and inadequate skills.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents' according to factors that determine participation in Agribusiness

SN	Variables	No	Yes
1.	Market/Sales outlet	37(35.9)	66(64.1)
2.	Availability of infrastructure	4(3.9)	99(96.1)
3.	Technology and Innovation	34(33.0)	69(67.0)
4.	Capital	26(25.2)	77(74.8)
5.	Human/Material Resources	45(43.7)	58(56.3)
6.	Education and Skills	19(18.4)	84(81.6)
7.	Government policy/ Support Programmes	44(42.7)	59(57.3)
8.	Risk and Uncertainty	42(40.8)	61(59.2)
9.	Perception and Attitude toward Agriculture	18(17.5)	85(82.5)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

*Figures in Parenthesis are Percentages.

Perceived benefit towards youth participation in agribusiness

Result from Table 3 showed the perceived benefits of youth participation in agribusiness in the study area. It was revealed that improved standard of living ranked 1st with weighted mean score 4.58, increased income ranked 2nd with 4.33. This conforms with Osabohien *et al.*,2021,foundthat youth participation in agriculture as a primary occupation significantly increased household per capita income and reduced poverty, thereby improving welfare and standard of living in Nigeria.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to perceived benefit towards participation in agribusiness

SN	Variables	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Mean Score	Rank
1.	Improved standard of living	72(69.9)	23(22.3)	6(5.8)	1(0.97)	1(0.97)	4.58	1st
2.	Increased income	45(43.7)	52(50.5)	3(2.9)	3(2.9)	-	4.33	2nd
3.	It makes you independent	51(49.5)	40(38.8)	3(2.9)	9(8.7)	-	4.13	3rd
4.	Broadens knowledge in agriculture	35(34.0)	53(51.5)	9(8.7)	6(5.8)	-	4.11	4th
5.	It allows for diversification	51(49.5)	23(22.3)	10(9.7)	15(14.6)	3(2.9)	4.08	5th
6.	Less worried about white collar job	37(35.9)	52(50.5)	9(8.7)	5(4.9)	-	3.78	6th
7.	Broad opportunity to be familiar with every aspect of agriculture	18(17.5)	56(54.4)	16(15.5)	12(11.7)	1(0.97)	3.72	7th
8.	Availability of raw material	32(31.1)	43(41.7)	5(4.9)	11(10.7)	12(11.7)	3.66	8th

9.	Allows to know market demand and supply	24(23.3)	47(45.6)	11(10.7)	17(16.5)	4(3.9)	3.64	9th
10.	High yield Return	18(17.5)	57(55.3)	10(9.7)	12(11.7)	6(5.8)	3.63	10th

Source: Field Survey, 2024

*Figures in parenthesis are percentages.

Test of Hypotheses

Chi-square analysis results as indicated in Table 4 showed the criteria for participation in agribusiness. Market (χ^2=0.009, df=1), infrastructure (χ^2=0.000,df=1), skill/motivation (χ^2=.0001,df=1), capital (χ^2=.000,df=1) and education (χ^2=.000,df=1) had significant association with perceived benefit and youth participation in agribusiness. Therefore, meeting the criteria for participation will determine the perceived benefits derived from involvement in Agribusiness while Human/material resources (χ^2=0.317), Government policy (χ^2=.230,), and lack of white collar job (χ^2=.110) had no significant association with perceived benefits and participation in Agribusiness. It could be inferred from the finding that market, infrastructure, skill/motivation, capital, and education were the enabling factors to venture into agribusiness in the study area. This conforms to the findings of Ikuemonisan *et al* (2022) that many youths were willing to engage in Agribusiness but faced a lot of obstacles which include lack of land and credit to finance their startups. Also, Boye *et al*, (2024) that the number of young people that access the improved input for agricultural productivity is very low. Finally, Amankwah2023 that youth were seriously affected with limited assets and capital.

Table 4: Chi-Square test showing relationship between factors that determine youth' participation in agribusiness

Variables	χ^2	Df	p-value	Remark
Market/sales outlet	6.760	1	0.009	S
Infrastructure	96.240	1	0.000	S
Skill/motivation	10.240	1	.0001	S
Capital	23.040	1	.000	S
Human/material resources	1.000	1	0.317	NS
Education	38.440	1	.000	S
Government policies	1.440	1	.230	NS
Enabling environment	2.568	1	.110	NS

Source: Field Survey, 2024

P<0.05

S=Significant

NS=Not Significant

Ho_2: There is significant relationship between youth perceived benefit and participation in Agribusiness.

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Monument Correlation (PPMC) and the result was presented as follows. Findings from Table 5 showed that there is no significant relationship between youth perceived benefits and participation in Agribusiness in the study area. This implies that youth perceived benefit has nothing to do with their participation in Agribusiness. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant association between perceived benefit and youth

participation in Agribusiness was accepted. This conforms to Boye *et al.*, (2024) states that despite the fact that many people are aware of the benefits of participation in agriculture they still require to be motivated into participation and becoming agriculture entrepreneurs.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) test showing relationship between youth' perceived benefits and participation in Agribusiness

Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision
Perceived Benefits/Participation	.0115	0.254	NS

Source: Field Survey, 2024
P <0.05
NS= Not Significant

Conclusions
It was concluded from the study that poor access to agricultural inputs such as credit from commercial banks to finance their agribusiness projects and access to social capital to finance their agribusiness, mechanization, seeds, fertilizer, lead to a significant decrease in youth participation in agribusiness. Also, perceived benefit did not significantly influence youth participation in agribusiness in the study area because youth in the study area believed it as their normal activities and received no incentives in form of motivation to boost their participation as discovered in the course of this study respectively.

Recommendations
It was therefore recommended that there is need for non-government organization and government to subsidize agricultural input such as machineries, fertilizer, seed. It was further recommended that youths should employ an integrated and holistic approach to facilitate their access to resources in order to boost agricultural productivity, to change the perception of those that are reluctant in venturing into agribusiness as an alternative source of livelihood. Youth should be involved in the design and planning of interventions to have sense of belongingness in the programmes targeted at them as this informs their participation in the modern way of doing things effectively.

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EFFECTS OF CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES ON FOOD SECURITY AMONG MAIZE FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN ONA ARA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Climate change poses significant threats to agricultural productivity and household food security in Nigeria, particularly among smallholder maize farmers. This study examined the effect of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) on food security among maize farming households in Ona Ara Local Government Area of Oyo State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents from four communities. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and logit regression at 5% significance level. Results revealed that the mean age of respondents was 37.5 years, with the majority (80.7%) being male, married (74.7%), and relatively literate, as 73.3% had at least secondary education. Awareness of CSAPs was high, with mixed farming (98%), mixed cropping (97.3%), drought-tolerant maize varieties (87.3%), and mulching (79.3%) being the most adopted practices. Despite this, 60% of households were food insecure, 30% moderately food secure, and only 10% fully food secure. Regression analysis indicated that CSAP adoption index ($\beta = 1.84$, $p < 0.001$), household size ($\beta = -0.85$, $p < 0.01$), farm size ($\beta = 1.21$, $p < 0.01$), farming experience ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$), education ($\beta = 2.18$, $p < 0.01$), income ($\beta = 0.009$, $p < 0.05$), and access to extension services ($\beta = 3.72$, $p < 0.05$) significantly influenced household food security. Major constraints to adoption were high input costs (2.52), inadequate financial resources (2.48), poor extension contact (2.41), and pest/disease outbreaks (2.39). The study concludes that CSAPs enhance resilience but recommends subsidizing climate-smart agricultural inputs, improving farmers' access to affordable credit, and strengthening extension services and farmers' cooperatives to enhance food security outcomes.

Keywords: *Climate-Smart Agriculture, Food Security, Maize Farmers, Households*

Introduction

Maize (*Zea mays*) remains one of Nigeria's most important staple crops, providing food, feed, and income for millions of rural households and contributing substantially to national food supply systems. However, maize production in Nigeria is increasingly threatened by climate variability, including erratic rainfall, drought episodes, and rising temperatures, which reduce yields and undermine household food security (Oyetunde-Usman & Shee, 2023). In response to these challenges, Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) has been promoted as an integrated approach for sustainably increasing agricultural productivity, building resilience to climate shocks, and enhancing food and nutrition security (Saadu, Saidu & Abubakar, 2024).

CSA encompasses practices such as drought-tolerant maize varieties, soil and water conservation, crop diversification, and integrated soil fertility management, all of which can contribute to stabilizing yield under climate stress and improving household food access (Oyetunde-Usman & Shee, 2023; Obute et al., 2025). For example, evidence from northern Nigerian contexts indicates that adoption of CSA practices significantly enhances crop yield, income, and food security status of smallholder farmers (Saadu et al., 2024). Likewise, studies in Southwest Nigeria show that climate-smart maize varieties have positive effects on productivity and food security outcomes where farmers have access to extension support and credit (Obute et al., 2025). Further, recent empirical research confirms that

climate-smart practices are linked to improved food security levels among maize producers in other agro-ecological zones of Nigeria (Ibrahim et al., 2025). There is limited empirical evidence on how CSA adoption affects food security among maize farmers in Ona Ara LGA, Oyo State. Most studies focus on northern Nigeria or broader regional contexts, leaving a gap for local assessment in this part of Southwest Nigeria. Few studies have examined CSA adoption, household food security, and related socioeconomic factors together in a single framework for this area. Therefore, this study aims to assess the effect of climate-smart agricultural practices on the food security status of maize-farming households in Ona Ara Local Government Area of Oyo State. The objectives are to: (i) describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents; (ii) assess the awareness of climate-smart agricultural practices by maize farmers; (iii) identify the climate-smart agricultural practices adopted by maize farmers; (iv) assess the level of food security among maize farmers in the study area; (v) examine the effects of CSA practices on the food security status of maize farming households; and (vi) identify the challenges faced by maize farmers in adopting CSA practices in the study area

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ona Ara Local Government Area (LGA) of Oyo State, Nigeria, located in the Southwestern part of the state with Akanran as its headquarters. The LGA covers about 290 square kilometres and lies between latitude 7.2833°N and longitude 4.0333°E. It experiences a tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons and an average annual temperature of 28°C. The fertile soils and favourable climate of the area makes it suitable for maize cultivation, which constitutes the main livelihood of most residents. Ona Ara has an estimated population of 379,500 (2022 projection) and comprises communities such as Akanran, Olorunda, Araromi, Badeku, Gbada-Efon, and Olosunde. The study population comprised registered maize farmers under the Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme (OYSADEP) and the Maize Farmers Association in Ona Ara LGA. A multistage sampling procedure was employed. In the first stage, 4 out of 11 wards in the LGA were randomly chosen: Akanran/Olorunda, Gbada-Efon, Olode/Gbefun/Ojebode, and Ward 7. In the second stage, one community was then purposively selected from each ward, giving four communities—Akanran, Gbada-Efon, Ojebode, and Olosunde, respectively. In the third stage, a list of registered maize farmers obtained from the Maize Farmers Association in the LGA (375 farmers) was used, and 40% were selected through systematic random sampling to obtain 150 respondents.

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules. Variables measured included socioeconomic characteristics (age, sex, education, household size, farm size, farming experience, income, and access to extension services), awareness and adoption of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs), their effects on food security, and challenges affecting adoption. Awareness and adoption were measured using yes/no responses, while the effects of CSAPs on food security were assessed on a five-point Likert scale. The food security variables were measured using household calorie intake and derived indices. Households were categorized as **food secure, moderately food secure, or food insecure** based on their daily per capita calorie consumption. The **Food Security Index (z)** quantified the overall level of food security, while the **Head Count Ratio (H)** measured the proportion of food-insecure households. The **Shortfall Index (P_1)** indicated the extent to which calorie intake of food-insecure households fell below the recommended minimum, and the **Severity Index (P_2)** captured the depth of food deprivation among these households. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression at 5% significance level A generalized multiple linear regression model was employed to examine the determinants of household food security. The model is expressed as: The generalized multiple linear regression model is given as: $\mathbf{Y = a_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \ldots + b_8X_8 + u}$ where **Y** represents the Food Security Index (FSI), the dependent variable. The independent variables include: adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices (X_1), age of respondent (X_2), household size (X_3), farm size (X_4), years of farming experience (X_5), educational level (X_6), annual income from maize farming (X_7), and access to extension services (X_8).

Results and discussion

Socioeconomic characteristic Bottom of Form

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The results in Table 1 present the Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The result shows that most farmers were in their productive years, with 37.5years as their mean age, and the majority are male (80.7%) and married (74.7%). A high literacy level is evident, with 73.3% having at least secondary education, which can facilitate understanding and adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices (CSAPs). Household sizes averaged 5 persons, indicating moderate labor availability, while small farm sizes (mean = 2.86 ha; 41.3% < 1 ha) reflect typical smallholder characteristics. The respondents also exhibited considerable farming experience (mean = 8.43 years), which may support CSAP uptake. Low annual income from maize (mean = ₦280,333) suggests subsistence or low earnings, this is consistent with limited access to formal credit, with 40.7% relying on personal savings and 34.0% on cooperative resources, highlighting the need for stronger financial support to enable CSAP investments.

Labor sources were flexible, with most using self- or mixed labor. Cooperative membership (62.0%) offers potential platforms for shared learning and financing CSAP adoption, while extension services reached just over half of respondents (54.0%), indicating gaps in formal advisory support. Information on CSAPs primarily came from fellow farmers (26.0%), radio/TV (20.7%), and extension agents (18.0%), underscoring the importance of leveraging multiple sources of information to increase CSA uptake. These findings align with Oladeji et al. (2024), who reported that age, gender, farm size, marital status, household size, and access to credit are significant socio-economic determinants of food security and farming outcomes among maize producers in Oyo State, Nigeria. Moreover, broader Nigerian CSA studies also show that farming experience, education, and group membership significantly influence farmers' capacity to adopt improved practices (e.g., access to extension and cooperative networks) in contributing to food security outcomes.

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Age (in years)				
30 – 40 years	46	30.7	37.47	9.11
Sex				
Male	121	80.7		
Marital Status				
Single	21	14.0		
Married	112	74.7		
Divorced	5	3.3		
Widowed	12	8.0		
Educational Background				
No formal education	11	7.3		
Primary	29	19.3		
Secondary	59	39.3		
Tertiary	51	34.0		
Household Size				
4 – 6 members	80	53.3	5.02	1.44
Farm Size (Hectares)				
1 – 5 hectares	47	31.3	2.86	2.06

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Years of Farming Experience				
5 – 10 years	64	42.7	8.43	3.38
Annual Income from Maize Farming				
₦201,000 – ₦400,000	77	51.3	280,333.33	117,558,45
Source of Capital				
Friends and family	26	17.3		
Personal savings	61	40.7		
Bank loans	12	8.0		
Cooperative society	51	34.0		
Source of Labour				
Self	51	34.0		
Hired	39	26.0		
Family	20	13.3		
Self/Hired/Family	40	26.7		
Membership of Cooperative Group				
Yes	93	62.0		
No	57	38.0		
Access to Extension Services				
Yes	81	54.0		
No	69	46.0		
Source of Info on CSA Practice				
Extension agents	27	18.0		
Radio/TV	31	20.7		
Fellow farmers	39	26.0		
Training programs	8	5.3		
Cooperative/farmer group	24	16.0		
Internet	21	14.0		

Source: Field survey, 2026 SD- Standards deviation

Awareness and Adoption of Climate Smart Agricultural Practices

The results in Table 2 on awareness and adoption of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) among farmers show varied engagement levels. **Mixed cropping (100% awareness, 97.3% adoption)** and **mixed farming (100%, 98%)** are highly accepted, indicating they are effective, feasible, and culturally integrated. **Intercropping (98.7%, 73.7%)** shows a moderate adoption gap, possibly due to labor or technical challenges. Similarly, **agroforestry (76.7%, 53.5%)** faces adoption constraints, such as land and input availability. High awareness and adoption of **drought-resistant maize varieties (86.7%, 87.3%)** reflect farmers' interest in climate-resilient options. On the other hand, **organic manure application (92%, 66.7%)** shows lower adoption, likely due to labor or supply constraints. **Crop rotation (80%, 63.3%)** and **compost making (70%, 53.3%)** show moderate to low adoption, suggesting a need for further education and technical support. Encouragingly, **planting of cover crops (86%, 82%)** is well adopted due to its soil conservation benefits. **Integrated Pest Management (IPM) (73.3%, 70%)** indicates growing interest in sustainable pest control. **Weather forecast use (80%, 63.3%)** reveals a gap, potentially from access or understanding issues. Lastly, **mulching (93.4%, 79.3%)** is widely used, underlining its visible advantages in moisture retention and weed suppression. Overall, the findings indicate that farmers are more likely to adopt practices that are low-cost, familiar, and provide immediate benefits, while labour-intensive or technically demanding practices experience slower adoption. This pattern aligns with findings that Nigerian farmers' adoption of CSAPs is strongly

influenced by awareness, access to extension services, labour availability, and perceived benefits (Adebayo & Ogunlade, 2021; Oladipo et al., 2022). These results emphasize the need for strengthened extension services, practical demonstrations, and improved access to climate information to enhance adoption rates.

Table 2: Awareness and adoption of Climate Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs)

Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices	Awareness (Yes)	Awareness (%)	Adoption (Yes)	Adoption (%)
Mixed cropping	150	100.0	146	97.3
Mixed farming	150	100.0	147	98.0
Intercropping	148	98.7	110	73.7
Mulching	141	93.4	119	79.3
Organic manure application	138	92.0	100	66.7
Use of drought-resistant maize varieties	130	86.7	131	87.3
Planting of cover crops	129	86.0	123	82.0
Crop rotation	120	80.0	95	63.3
Use of weather forecast information	120	80.0	95	63.3
Agroforestry	115	76.7	81	53.5
Integrated Pest Management	110	73.3	105	70.0
Compost making	105	70.0	80	53.3

Source: Field survey, 2026

Effect of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) on food security of maize farmers

Results in Table 3 present the effect of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) on the food security of maize farmers, where weighted mean scores reflect the degree to which farmers agreed with each statement regarding CSAPs' impact, ranked from highest to lowest mportance. Climate-smart agriculture practices improve crop yields ranked first (WMS = 3.91). This implies that farmers strongly believe CSAPs directly enhance productivity, which contributes to higher farm income and better household food access. **Using drought-resistant crop varieties increases food availability and soil conservation techniques improve soil fertility and structure** both ranked second (WMS = 3.81). This indicates that farmers acknowledge the importance of improved crop varieties and soil fertility management in sustaining food production under changing climatic conditions. **Conservation agriculture techniques help reduce soil erosion and improve soil health** ranked fourth (WMS = 3.80), suggesting that farmers value practices that preserve the soil and enhance long-term sustainability of their farmland. **Climate-smart agricultural practices reduce post-harvest losses** ranked fifth (WMS = 3.78), showing recognition of CSAPs' role in minimizing food waste and improving food availability. **Climate-smart agriculture practices are too expensive for small-scale farmers** ranked sixth (WMS = 3.34), implying that while CSAPs are beneficial, cost remains a major barrier to widespread adoption. **Climate change affects the nutritional quality of crops** ranked seventh (WMS = 3.52), reflecting farmers' awareness of potential adverse effects of climate change on food quality. Lastly, **Climate change has no impact on food security in my community** ranked eighth (WMS = 2.56). This low mean suggests that most farmers strongly disagree with this statement, recognizing that climate change indeed poses significant threats to food security. The findings indicate that climate-smart agricultural practices (CSAPs) enhance productivity, resilience, and food security among Nigerian farmers. These results are supported by the findings of Ogunleye et al. (2021), and Ojo, Baiyegunhi, and Salami (2021), all of whom reported similar positive impacts of CSAPs on productivity and household food security.

Table 3: Effect of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) on food security of maize farmers

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	WMS	Rank
Climate-smart agriculture practices improve crop yields	62 (41.3)	48 (32.0)	14 (9.3)	16 (10.7)	10 (6.7)	3.91	1st
Soil conservation techniques improve soil fertility and structure	60 (40.0)	44 (29.3)	14 (9.3)	20 (13.3)	12 (8.0)	3.81	2nd
Using drought-resistant crop varieties increases food availability	58 (38.7)	46 (30.7)	16 (10.7)	20 (13.3)	10 (6.7)	3.81	2nd
Conservation agriculture techniques help reduce soil erosion and improve soil health	55 (36.7)	52 (34.7)	12 (8.0)	20 (13.3)	11 (7.3)	3.80	4th
Climate-smart agricultural practices reduce post-harvest losses	54 (36.0)	50 (33.3)	16 (10.7)	20 (13.3)	10 (6.7)	3.78	5th
Climate change affects the nutritional quality of crops	46 (30.7)	44 (29.3)	18 (12.0)	26 (17.3)	16 (10.7)	3.52	6th
Climate-smart agriculture practices are too expensive for small-scale farmers	40 (26.7)	42 (28.0)	18 (12.0)	30 (20.0)	20 (13.3)	3.34	7th
Climate change has no impact on food security in my community	18 (12.0)	20 (13.3)	25 (16.7)	52 (34.7)	35 (23.3)	2.56	8th

Source: Field survey, 2026 Figures in parentheses are percentages Grand mean (overall WMS) = 3.57 WMS – Weighted Mean Score

Food Security Indices of Maize Farmers

Food security analysis revealed that 40% of maize-farming households were food secure, while 60% were food insecure. On average, food-secure households consumed 2,980.6 Kcal per capita per day, which is above the FAO-recommended minimum of 2,260 Kcal/day, whereas food-insecure households consumed only 1,745.2 Kcal/day. The shortfall index (P_1) was 0.28, indicating that food-insecure households consumed about 28% less than the recommended daily calorie intake, while the severity index (P_2) was 0.12, showing that a segment of the food-insecure population experienced severe food deprivation. This implies that although some maize farmers have achieved moderate food security, a large proportion remain vulnerable, underscoring the need for interventions to enhance food availability, accessibility, and stability through increased adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. These results are consistent with findings from Oladeji et al. (2024), who reported significant food insecurity among smallholder maize farming households in Oyo State, where larger household size and limited access to productive resources increased the likelihood of food insecurity and lower calorie intake among rural maize farmers. Similarly, food security analysis among maize farming households revealed that 69% were food secure, while 31% were food insecure. On average, food-secure households consumed 4,079.9 Kcal per capita per day, exceeding the recommended 2,260 Kcal/day, whereas food-insecure households consumed only 1,634.04 Kcal/day. The shortfall index (P_1) was 0.30, indicating a 30% calorie deficit among food-insecure households, while the severity index (P_2) was 0.14, suggesting that a portion of this group experienced deep food insecurity. These findings highlight the significant role of maize farming in improving household calorie intake and supporting sustainable food security.

Table 4: Food Security Indices of Maize Farmers

Households	Food Secure	Moderately Food Secure	Food Insecure	Total
Percentage of Households	15 (10%)	45 (30%)	90 (60%)	150 (100%)
Daily per capita Calorie Consumed (Kcal)	2,980.6	2,410.3	1,745.2	2,078.7
Food Security Index (z)	1.85	1.21	0.68	1.25
Head Count Ratio (H)	0.40	–	0.60	–
Shortfall Index (P_1)	–	–	0.28	–
Severity Index (P_2)	–	–	0.12	–

Source: Field survey, 2026

Challenges to Adopting Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) among Maize Farmers

Results in Table 5 present the challenges to adopting Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) among maize farmers. The identified constraints were ranked according to their Weighted Mean Scores (WMS), reflecting the severity of each challenge as perceived by the respondents. The most critical challenge was the **high cost of inputs**, which ranked 1st with **WMS = 2.52,** as 60.7% of the respondents perceived it as a severe challenge. This was followed by **inadequate financial resources,** ranked **2nd** with **WMS = 2.48, i**ndicating that limited access to finance remains a major barrier to CSAP adoption. **Pest and disease outbreaks** ranked 3rd with **WMS = 2.41,** while **limited access to extension services** ranked **4th with WMS = 2.39**, highlighting the importance of technical support in promoting climate-smart practices.

Furthermore, **illiteracy of farmers r**anked **5th** with **WMS = 2.37**, suggesting that low educational attainment limits farmers' understanding and adoption of innovative agricultural technologies. The **high cost of improved varieties** ranked 6th with **WMS = 2.35**, while **poor access to climate information r**anked **7th** with **WMS = 2.35**, indicating that both financial and informational constraints significantly affect farmers' capacity to adopt CSAPs. Overall, the **grand WMS = 2.32** indicates that maize farmers generally perceived these factors as significant challenges to the adoption of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices. The findings suggest that financial constraints, inadequate institutional support, limited access to information, and socio-economic barriers remain the major impediments to the widespread adoption of CSAPs among maize farmers. These findings are consistent with those of Ojo, Baiyegunhi, and Salami (2021), who reported that financial constraints, weak institutional support, and limited access to information reduce farmers' ability to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices and undermine their resilience to climate change.

Table 5: Challenges faced in adopting climate smart agricultural practices (CSAPs) among Maize Farmers

Challenges	Not a challenge	Mild challenge	Severe challenge	Weighted mean score	Rank
High cost of inputs	13 (8.7)	46 (30.7)	91 (60.7)	2.52	1st
Inadequate financial resources	19 (12.7)	40 (26.7)	91 (60.7)	2.48	2nd
Pest and disease outbreak	24 (16.0)	41 (27.3)	85 (56.7)	2.41	3rd
Limited access to extension services	17 (11.3)	57 (38.0)	76 (50.7)	2.39	4th
Illiteracy of farmers	22 (14.7)	51 (34.0)	77 (51.3)	2.37	5th
High cost of improved varieties	22 (14.7)	53 (35.3)	75 (50.0)	2.35	6th
Poor access to climate information	29 (19.3)	40 (26.7)	81 (54.0)	2.35	7th
Lack of market access	30 (20.0)	43 (28.7)	77 (51.3)	2.31	8th
Lack of awareness of CSA practices	29 (19.3)	49 (32.7)	72 (48.0)	2.29	9th
Inadequate government support	36 (24.0)	44 (29.3)	70 (46.7)	2.23	10th

Challenges	Not a challenge	Mild challenge	Severe challenge	Weighted mean score	Rank
Cultural beliefs/practices	37 (24.7)	52 (34.7)	61 (40.7)	2.16	11th
Lack of improved storage facilities	36 (24.0)	54 (36.0)	60 (40.0)	2.16	11th
Land tenure issues	36 (24.0)	55 (36.7)	59 (39.3)	2.15	13th

Source: Field survey, 2026 Figures in parentheses are percentages Grand Mean = 2.32

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between the adoption of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) and farming household food security among maize farmers

Table 6 reveals the multiple linear regression analysis on the relationship between the adoption of CSA and the food security of maize farmers in Ona Ara LGA of Oyo State. The R^2 value of 0.50 indicates that the model explains 50% of the variation in household food security, while the F-statistic (15.62, $p < 0.001$) confirms the overall model is statistically significant. The results show that CSA adoption index ($\beta = 1.84$, $p < 0.001$), household size ($\beta = -0.85$, $p < 0.01$), farm size ($\beta = 1.21$, $p < 0.01$), farming experience ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$), education level ($\beta = 2.18$, $p < 0.01$), income ($\beta = 0.009$, $p < 0.05$), and access to extension services ($\beta = 3.72$, $p < 0.05$) significantly contributed to household food security. This implies that adoption of CSA practices, larger farm size, higher income, better education, and access to extension services positively influence food security, while larger household size tends to reduce food security due to increased consumption pressure. Age, however, was not significant ($p = 0.184$), suggesting that food security outcomes are more strongly influenced by productive resources and institutional support than by farmers' age. This finding corroborates the report of Nnadi et al. (2019), who observed that household size and farm resources strongly influence food security among smallholder farmers in Southeastern Nigeria The findings emphasize that while CSA adoption is crucial in enhancing food security, complementary factors such as access to extension services, income diversification, and education remain vital in strengthening household resilience against food insecurity.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of the Effect of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) Adoption on Household Food Security among Maize Farmers in Ona Ara Local Government Area of Oyo State

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (β)	Std. Error	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Constant	24.12	5.78	4.17	0.000***
CSA Adoption Index	1.84	0.42	4.38	0.000***
Age	-0.12	0.09	-1.33	0.184
Household Size	-0.85	0.28	-3.04	0.003**
Farm Size	1.21	0.46	2.63	0.010**
Farming Experience	0.34	0.17	2.00	0.047*
Education Level	2.18	0.87	2.51	0.013**
Income (₦'000)	0.009	0.004	2.25	0.026*
Access to Extension Services	3.72	1.56	2.38	0.019*

Source: Data analysis, 2026

Model Summary: $R = 0.71$ $R^2 = 0.50$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.47$ F-statistic = 15.62 ($p < 0.001$) *= sig 10% ** = sig 5%, ***= sig 1% Significance levels

Conclusion and recommendations

The study examined the effect of Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices (CSAPs) on the food security of maize farming households in Ona Ara Local Government Area of Oyo State. Findings revealed that most farmers were in their productive age, relatively literate, and depended primarily on small-scale maize production for livelihood. Although awareness of CSAPs was high, adoption levels differed

across practices, with mixed farming, mixed cropping, and drought-tolerant maize varieties being the most common. Despite these efforts, a significant proportion (60%) of households remained food insecure, indicating that CSAP adoption alone is insufficient to ensure food security without addressing socioeconomic and institutional constraints. Regression results showed that CSA adoption, farm size, income, education, and access to extension services positively influenced food security, while large household size had a negative effect. To strengthen food security outcomes, the study recommends that government and development partners subsidize improved seeds, organic inputs, and irrigation facilities while facilitating access to affordable credit. Extension services should be expanded to provide practical, inclusive, and continuous training on CSAPs, especially for resource-poor and less-educated farmers. Strengthening farmers' cooperatives will enhance access to inputs, credit, and information sharing. Furthermore, integrating women farmers into agricultural support programs, improving market infrastructure and storage facilities, and investing in timely climate information systems will enhance resilience. Policies that promote favorable land tenure, rural infrastructure, and private sector participation should also be prioritized to create an enabling environment for sustainable CSAP adoption and improved household food security in the study area.

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ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABLE AGRICULTURAL CAREER-ORIENTED TRAINING CONTENT AMONG STUDENTS IN OYO STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IGBOORA

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Abstract

Effective agricultural career-oriented training is critical for equipping students with practical skills, entrepreneurial competence, and industry-relevant knowledge necessary for modern agribusiness opportunities in Nigeria. This study assessed the availability of agricultural career-oriented training content among students at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora. A purposive sampling technique identified graduating agricultural students, from which 103 respondents (60%) were randomly selected. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and Weighted Mean Scores) and inferential statistics (Chi-square) at a 5% significance level. Findings revealed that foundational training areas such as crop production (59.2%), agricultural extension (54.4%), animal husbandry (50.5%), and soil management (48.5%) were relatively available, with a moderate level of accessibility (grand mean WMS = 2.10). However, modern and entrepreneurial training areas, including greenhouse/climate-smart farming (26.2%) and value chain management (24.3%), were limited. Major constraints included inadequate practical exposure (WMS = 2.48), limited training materials (2.40), and outdated curricula (2.30). Chi-square analysis showed significant relationships between sex ($\chi^2 = 5.136$, $p = 0.023$) and department ($\chi^2 = 27.000$, $p < 0.01$) with access to training content.

The study concludes that curriculum diversification, improved practical exposure, and equitable access are necessary to enhance students' preparedness for modern agricultural careers.

Keywords: *Agricultural training; career-oriented education; accessibility; practical skills; OYSCATECH*

Introduction

Agriculture plays a critical role in Nigeria's economy, contributing to food security, employment, and national development. Beyond traditional crop and livestock production, the sector now offers diverse career opportunities in agribusiness, agro-processing, agricultural technology, and value chain management. As global trends in technology and climate evolve, agricultural training must equip students with practical, entrepreneurial, and market-relevant skills (Lamidi and Animashaun, 2025). Such training integrates classroom instruction with experiential learning, hands-on demonstrations, industry linkages, and exposure to modern agribusiness practices, ensuring students develop both technical competence and innovation capacity. The scope of agricultural careers has expanded to include entrepreneurship, digital agricultural platforms, processing and value addition, branding, quality assurance, and market access. Graduates can now pursue roles as agripreneurs, consultants, value chain managers, and agritech innovators (Olowa, Oke and Okoye, 2023). For students to leverage these opportunities, training must align with contemporary industry demands, enhance employability, foster self-reliance, and stimulate agribusiness development that drives rural transformation and economic diversification.

Despite this, many agricultural graduates in Nigeria remain ill-prepared for modern careers due to limited practical exposure, overemphasis on theory, and inadequate integration of emerging agribusiness topics (Olorunleke and Olorunfemi, 2024). Negative perceptions about agriculture as low-status work further discourage youth participation (Arokoyo, Olaniyan, and Adeoye, 2020). Strengthening career-oriented training is therefore critical for youth employment, food system resilience, and sustainable economic growth. Specialized institutions like Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, are central to this effort, offering a curriculum that combines theoretical knowledge with practical training in crop production, livestock management, agribusiness, marketing, and processing. However, the availability, accessibility, and relevance of

career-oriented training content at OYSCATECH remain insufficiently documented in empirical literature. Students may complete programmes with strong theoretical foundations but lack practical skills, entrepreneurial competence, industry insights, and confidence to engage effectively in agricultural enterprises. This knowledge gap raises key questions: What are the demographic characteristics of the respondent in the study area? What career-oriented training contents are available to agricultural students at OYSCATECH? What is the level of access to these contents? And what challenges hinder students from fully benefiting from the training? Addressing these questions is crucial to reform curricula, enhance student preparedness, and ensure equitable access to modern agricultural career opportunities. The hypothesis tested there is no significant relationship between the selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their level of access to available agricultural career-oriented training contents.

Methodology

The study was conducted at the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. Established in 2006, OYSCATECH is a leading institution dedicated to agricultural and technological education, offering National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes in agriculture, engineering, management sciences, and related fields. The Faculties of Agricultural Technology provides specialized training in crop production, animal production, horticulture, agricultural extension, and agribusiness management, with integrated entrepreneurship training designed to prepare students for self-reliance in the agricultural sector. Igboora, situated in the derived savannah zone, provides an agrarian environment where students can apply theoretical knowledge through practical farm activities, entrepreneurship projects, and the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES).

The population of the study comprised all graduating students in the School of Agriculture at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora. The faculty consists of four departments: Agricultural Technology, Animal Health and Production Technology, Fisheries Technology, and Forestry Technology.

The study focused on graduating students because they had completed all required academic and practical training modules and were therefore considered to have adequate exposure to agricultural extension and mobile technology applications. A purposive sampling technique was used to define the sampling frame, which consisted of 171 graduating students. However, no graduating students were available in the Forestry Technology department at the time of data collection. Therefore, the study was limited to three departments: Animal Health and Production Technology, Agricultural Technology, and Fisheries Technology. A sample size of 103 respondents, representing 62% of the population, was selected using simple random sampling procedure. The sampled respondents were distributed as follows: Animal Health and Production Technology (55), Agricultural Technology (36), and Fisheries Technology (12).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and included information on respondents' demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, marital status, level of study, and department. Information on the availability and relevance of training was measured on a binary scale, with scores of 1 for available and 0 for not available. Accessibility was measured using a three-point scale: highly accessible (2), moderately accessible (1), and not accessible (0). The results were later categorized into highly accessible and low-accessibility areas. Challenges in accessing training were also measured on a 3-point scale; severe (2), mild (1), and not a challenge (0), with Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) computed to rank the severity of these challenges. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means. Chi-square (χ^2) tests were employed to examine the relationships between selected demographic characteristics and access to training at a 5% level of significance.

Results and discussion

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 provides insights into the student population engaged in agricultural training at OYSCATECH, Igboora. Most respondents (58.2%) are aged 21–25 years, with a mean age of 22, indicating that the

majority are youths within the productive age group, a demographic capable of adopting innovative practices and engaging in agribusiness (FAO, 2021; Lamidi & Animashaun, 2025). Females represent 61.2% of respondents, suggesting increasing female interest in agricultural education. This highlights the need for gender-responsive training programs, as women's participation can enhance agribusiness outcomes and household food security (Olaniyi et al., 2021). Departmental distribution shows that 53.4% of students are in Animal Health and Production Technology, 35.0% in Agricultural Technology, and 11.6% in Fisheries Technology. This concentration in animal-based programs indicates a need to ensure balanced training across all agricultural disciplines to broaden skills and improve employability (Olowa et al., 2023). Religious distribution showed that 55.3% were Muslim, 36.9% Christian, and 7.8% practiced traditional religion, this underscores the importance of inclusive and culturally sensitive training delivery, ensuring all students can access and benefit from career-oriented programs (Lamidi and Animashaun, 2025). The data suggest a young, predominantly female, and academically diverse population, which has implications for tailoring training content, improving engagement, and promoting sustainable agricultural career pathways.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
16-20	35	34.0	22.0
21-25	60	58.2	
26-30	8	7.8	
Sex			
Male	40	38.8	
Female	63	61.2	
Department			
Animal Health and production Technology	55	53.4	
Fisheries Technology	12	11.6	
Agricultural Technology	36	35.0	
Religion			
Christian	38	36.9	
Islam	57	55.3	
Traditional	8	7.8	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Agricultural career-oriented training available in the study area

Table 2 shows that the most available agricultural training among students at OYSCATECH includes crop production techniques (59.2%), agricultural extension practices (54.4%), animal husbandry (50.5%), and soil and land management (48.5%). In contrast, greenhouse or climate-smart farming (26.2%) and value chain and marketing (24.3%) were less common, indicating limited exposure to innovative technologies and entrepreneurial skills needed for modern agricultural careers. This indicates

a structural imbalance in training exposure, which may limit interdisciplinary competence and reduce graduate adaptability in diverse agricultural sectors (Olaniyi *et al*., 2021).

Table 2: Agricultural career-oriented training available in the study area

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Crop production technique	61	59.2
Soil and land management	50	48.5
Agricultural extension practices	56	54.4
Animal husbandry	52	50.5
Agribusiness development	40	38.8
Greenhouse or climate smart farming	27	26.2
Farm equipment operation	45	43.7
Value chain and marketing	25	24.3

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Accessibility of agricultural career-oriented training content

Table 3a reveals that students' access to agricultural career-oriented training at OYSCATECH was moderate (grand mean = 2.10). Training in soil and land management (2.44) and crop production techniques (2.15) was relatively accessible, while greenhouse/climate-smart farming (1.89) and agricultural extension practices (2.00) were less accessible. The findings in Table 3b revealed that 54.5% of respondents had high access while 45.5% experienced low access, suggesting that not all the training contents were equally reachable to students, especially those linked to modern innovations and agribusiness skills. This uneven pattern of accessibility may restrict students from acquiring essential competencies for agribusiness development, value chain engagement, and climate-smart agriculture, which were increasingly required for meaningful participation in contemporary agricultural careers (Izuakor *et al*., 2025). Research also shows that skills gaps and limited access to relevant training content can weaken graduates' employability and reduce their ability to respond to evolving labour market needs in the agricultural sector (Boye, 2024). Therefore, improving accessibility to underserved training areas, particularly those that develop innovation and entrepreneurship skills will better position graduates to take advantage of diverse career opportunities in agriculture.

Table 3a: Accessibility to Agricultural Career Oriented Training Contents

Training content	High Access	Moderate Access	No Access	WMS	Rank
Soil and land management	24(23.3)	50(48.5)	29(28.2)	2.44	1st
Crop production technique	50(48.5)	18(17.6)	35(33.9)	2.15	2nd
Agribusiness development	42(4.8)	32(31.0)	29(28.2)	2.13	3rd
Animal husbandry	30(29.1)	52(50.5)	21(20.4)	2.09	4th
Value chain and marketing	33(32.0)	44(42.8)	26(25.2)	2.07	5th
Farm equipment operation	37(35.9)	35(34.0)	31(30.1)	2.06	6th

Agricultural extension practices	35(34.0)	33(32.0)	35(34.0)	2.00	7th
Greenhouse/climate smart farming	26(25.2)	40(38.9)	37(35.9)	1.89	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2025 Grand mean = 2.10 WMS= Weighted Mean **Score**

Table 3b: Categorization Agricultural Career Oriented Training Content

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Mean**
Highly accessible	56	54.5	
Low accessibility	47	45.6	
Mean			16.65
Maximum	24		
Minimum	8		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Challenges faced by respondents in accessing agricultural training

The grand mean of 2.19 in Table 4 indicates that students experienced moderate to severe challenges in accessing agricultural training. The most critical constraints were inadequate practical field exposure (2.48), limited training materials (2.40), and outdated curriculum (2.30), and it suggested that students were not fully able to develop hands-on skills, engage effectively with the training, or keep up with current agricultural practices. These constraints suggest systemic deficiencies in experiential learning infrastructure, which is critical for competency-based agricultural education. Addressing these gaps is essential to enhance the effectiveness of career-oriented training and ensure students are well-prepared for modern agricultural careers and entrepreneurship (Izuakor *et al*., 2025)

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Respondents in Accessing Agricultural Training Contents

Challenges	**Severe Challenge**	**Mild Challenge**	**Not a challenge**	**WMS**	**Rank**
Inadequate practical field exposure	41(39.8)	35(34.0)	27(26.2)	2.48	1st
Inadequate training materials and resources	21(20.4)	51(49.5)	31(30.1)	2.40	2nd
Poor or outdated training curriculum	53(51.5)	28(27.1)	22(21.4)	2.30	3rd
Limited access to trainers/ mentors	43(41.7)	34(33.1)	26(25.2)	2.17	4th
Poor student engagement or interest	42(40.8)	34(33.0)	27(26.2)	2.15	5th
Inadequate of modern instructional tools	32(31.1)	46(44.6)	25(24.3)	2.07	6th
Inadequate internship period	24(23.3)	54(52.4)	25(24.3)	1.99	7th
Irregular or inconsistent training programs	26(25.2)	49(47.6)	28(27.2)	1.98	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2025 Grand mean= 2.19 WMS= Weighted Mean Score

Chi- Square Analysis of Relationship Between Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents and Access to Agricultural Career-Oriented Training Contents

The Chi-square results in Table 5 indicate that sex ($\chi^2 = 5.136$, $p = 0.023$) and department ($\chi^2 = 27$, $p = 0.000$) significantly influenced students' access to agricultural career-oriented training. The significant relationship between sex and access suggests potential gender-based disparities in training exposure, possibly influenced by institutional practices or socio-cultural factors. Similarly, departmental differences indicate unequal distribution of training resources across academic units. This implies that male and female students, as well as students from different academic programs, do not have equal opportunities to access available training, highlighting the influence of demographic and institutional factors on skill acquisition and career preparation (Etim and Okon, 2019). Consequently, training programs need to be designed and implemented in a way that ensures equitable access across genders and departments, so all students can benefit fully from career-oriented agricultural education.

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis of Relationship Between Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents and Access to Agricultural Career-Oriented Training Contents

Variables	Chi-square(x^2)	df	Significance	Remark
Sex	5.136	1	0.023	Significant
Department	27	2	0.000	Significant

Source, Field Survey 2025

Conclusion and recommendations

The study demonstrates that while foundational agricultural training is adequately provided, there is a critical gap in modern, innovation-driven, and entrepreneurial training areas. Structural constraints including inadequate practical exposure, insufficient learning resources, and outdated curricula significantly limit students' preparedness for contemporary agricultural careers. Furthermore, disparities in access based on sex and department highlight inequities within the training system.
Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations were made:
OYSCATECH should integrate climate-smart agriculture, digital agriculture tools, agribusiness incubation, and value chain analytics into the curriculum to better prepare students for emerging career opportunities.
Practical field exposure and provision of adequate training materials and modern instructional tools should be prioritized to enhance hands-on learning and skill acquisition.
Training programs should be designed to ensure equitable access across genders and departments, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunity for all students in agricultural career-oriented education.

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EXPLORING ARABLE CROP FARMERS' GENDER-SPECIFIC COPING STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Food insecurity remains a critical challenge among arable crop farmers in Nigeria, particularly in Southwest, where socio-economic vulnerabilities and climatic shocks continue to undermine food availability and accessibility. This study investigated the coping strategies adopted by arable crop farmers in the face of food insecurity, aiming to provide insights for policy interventions. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 480 respondents across key agricultural zones in Oyo State. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentage rankings of coping strategies. Findings reveal that the most frequently adopted coping mechanisms include allowing children to eat first (27.3%), eating once a day (37.2%), and selling household assets (16.5%). Other strategies such as reducing food quality, picking leftover food at events, and begging for food were less commonly reported, possibly due to associated stigma or cultural reservations. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents (57%) occasionally bought food on credit, while 59.5% relied on food assistance from relatives or friends. These coping strategies reflect both adaptive and erosive responses, with implications for long-term food system resilience and household welfare. The study concludes that food insecurity among arable crop farmers in Oyo State triggers a range of short-term coping mechanisms, many of which may compromise future livelihoods and productivity. It is recommended that government and development agencies strengthen rural social protection programs, enhance farmers' access to credit and productive assets, and promote community-based food support systems.

Keywords: *Arable crop; Food insecurity; Multistage; Nigeria; Vulnerable*

Introduction

Food insecurity remains one of the most pressing development challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Nigeria, where a significant portion of the population relies on agriculture for both livelihood and sustenance (Omotayo, Omotoso, *et al.*, 2025a). Despite being a major producer of arable crops, Nigeria continues to grapple with high levels of food insecurity, as reflected in the Global Hunger Index and national surveys. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), over 20% of Nigerian households experience moderate to severe food insecurity, with the rural poor especially smallholder farmers being the most affected (Ayodele *et al.*, 2025; Iyiola *et al.*, 2023). Notably, the arable crop farmers, who cultivate crops like maize, cassava, yam, sorghum, and vegetables, are paradoxically both food producers and among the most food-insecure groups. Contributing factors include land fragmentation, limited access to credit and modern inputs, climate variability, and inadequate extension services (Abdo *et al.*, 2025; Omotoso & Omotayo, 2024a). The food insecurity faced by these farmers is not only a reflection of insufficient food availability but also issues of food accessibility, utilization, and stability key pillars of food security. Consequently, arable crop farmers in the region often adopt various coping and adaptation strategies to mitigate the impacts of food insecurity. These may range from short-term consumption changes and asset liquidation to longer-term adjustments such as livelihood diversification, seasonal migration, and informal borrowing (Banda, 2024; Omotayo, Adediran, *et al.*, 2025).

Consequently, this research seeks to fill this empirical and policy-relevant gap by conducting a comprehensive assessment of food insecurity strategies among arable crop farmers in Oyo State. The study investigated the types of strategies used, the socioeconomic and institutional drivers behind their adoption, and the extent to which these strategies contribute to household food and livelihood resilience.

Such insights are essential for guiding government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders in designing targeted interventions that build adaptive capacities and promote long-term food security. By situating the study within the broader discourse on agricultural vulnerability and resilience, this research aims to contribute to both the academic literature and practical solutions for food systems transformation in Nigeria.

Methodology

Study area

The study was conducted in Southwest Nigeria which is one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria and is comprised of six states: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. The region is located within the tropical rainforest and derived savannah zones offering favorable conditions for diverse agricultural activities and agricultural practices (Omotayo, Omotoso, *et al.*, 2025a). Mean annual rainfall ranges between 1,200 mm and 2,000 mm, while temperatures are relatively high throughout the year, averaging between 21℃ and 34℃ (Omotayo, Adediran, *et al.*, 2025). This agroecological setting supports the cultivation of a variety of crops such as maize, cassava, yam, cocoyam, cocoa, kola nut, and oil palm, as well as livestock production. However, the region's agriculture remains predominantly rain-fed, making it highly susceptible to seasonal and inter-annual climate variability.

Sampling population, technique and size

The target population for this study comprised rural-based food crop farmers across Southwest Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample captured the diversity of farming households across the region. In the first stage, three states Oyo, Osun, and Ondo were purposively selected based on their high concentration of rural farming households and significant contributions to food production in Southwest Nigeria. The second stage involves selection of two LGAs randomly from each of the states (6 LGAs). Additionally, the third stage involves random selection of 4 rural communities from the 6 selected LGA (24 communities). While the final stage involves collecting lists of arable crop farmers registered with ADP from ADP officers where the respondents were randomly selected systematically to avoid biasness. A sample size of 480 respondents was systematically selected from the list.

Results and discussion

Socioeconomic profile of arable crop farmers

The age distribution (Table 1) reveals that the majority of respondents (64.6%) were above 50 years, with a mean age of 53.91 years. This finding aligns with the aging trend of rural agricultural populations reported by (Ayodele *et al.*, 2025; Iyiola *et al.*, 2022) where the youth are increasingly absent from the agricultural workforce due to rural–urban migration and the allure of white-collar jobs. The advanced age profile implies a potential decline in physical productivity, highlighting the urgent need to incentivize youth engagement in farming through targeted policy interventions, training, and technological support. Gender distribution shows that 90.1% of the respondents were male, underscoring the gender imbalance in access to productive agricultural resources. This pattern is consistent with the findings of (Ajibade *et al.*, 2024; Ayodele *et al.*, 2025), who noted that despite women's substantial contribution to food production, they are often underrepresented in formal agricultural systems due to socio-cultural constraints and unequal access to land and extension services. Marital status indicates that 79.3% of the farmers are married. Studies by (Mrabet, 2023; Omotoso & Omotayo, 2024b) suggest that married individuals are more likely to be food secure due to household cooperation in labor and shared economic responsibilities. Additionally, household size averages at 6 persons, aligning with large rural household sizes in Nigeria as noted by (Mrabet, 2023; Omotayo, Omotoso, *et al.*, 2025b) which can be a double-edged sword providing labour supply but also increasing dependency burden and food consumption pressures.

Economic factors such as farm size (mean = 2.95 ha), years of farming experience (mean = 5.52 years), and access to cooperative financing (90.9%) show that farmers operate at a semi-subsistence level with

limited capacity to scale production. This supports earlier evidence from (Ayodele *et al.*, 2025; Iyiola *et al.*, 2022), who found that credit access and farm size are crucial determinants of productivity among Nigerian smallholder farmers.

Table 1: Socio economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area

Socioeconomic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
Less than 30	16	3.2	
30 – 40	48	9.9	53.91
41 – 50	108	22.3	
Above 50	318	64.6	
Sex			
Male	432	90.1	
Female	48	9.9	
Religion			
Christian	200	41.3	
Muslim	260	53.7	
Traditional	24	5.0	
Marital status			
Married	96	79.3	
Widow	7	5.8	
Divorced	7	5.8	
Separated	10	8.3	
Single	1	0.8	
Household size			
2 – 5	34	28.1	6.05
6 – 9	87	1.9	
Education level			
No formal education	28	23.1	
Primary	20	16.5	
Secondary	59	48.8	
Tertiary	14	11.6	
Farm size			

1 – 4	112	92.5	2.95
5 – 7	9	7.5	
Years of experience			
2 – 7	104	85.9	5.52
8 – 15	17	14.1	
Annual income			
Less than 100,000	2	1.7	
100,001 – 500,000	41	3.39	
500,000 – 1,000,000	77	63.6	
Above 1,000,000	1	0.8	
Income spent on food			
45,000 – 75,000	55	45.4	86,074.38
80,000 – 150,000	66	54.6	
Total	120	100.00	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Coping strategies employed by arable crop farmers to manage food insecurity

The coping strategies adopted by arable crop farmers as revealed in the study (Table 2), reflect a multidimensional response to food insecurity, shaped by socio-economic constraints and limited institutional support. The frequent adoption of consumption-based strategies such as reducing meal frequency (83.5%) and lowering food quality (59.5%) indicates acute food stress and highlights the prioritization of caloric sufficiency over dietary diversity. These findings align with the work of (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2017; Iyiola *et al.*, 2022), who noted that in food-insecure households, dietary adjustments are the first line of response due to their immediate impact and reversibility. Such strategies, while initially effective in mitigating short-term hunger, may have long-term implications for nutrition and health, especially among vulnerable groups like children and women. The use of financial coping mechanisms such as buying food on credit (57%) and selling household assets (37.2%) reflects more severe and chronic dimensions of food insecurity.

Notably, (Mrabet, 2023; Omotoso & Omotayo, 2024b) observed that asset depletion is a last-resort strategy and signifies a household's transition from transitory to chronic food insecurity. This form of coping undermines the long-term resilience of farming households, as the disposal of productive assets compromises their capacity to recover and sustain future agricultural productivity. Interestingly, the practice of collecting leftover food at social gatherings (13.2%) indicates extreme coping behaviour and social vulnerability. This aligns with the work of (Iyiola *et al.*, 2023), who categorized such strategies as indicative of severe food insecurity and social exclusion. The use of such strategies may also reflect a breakdown in formal support systems and the need for government or institutional intervention. It raises concern about the dignity, psychosocial well-being, and agency of the affected households, suggesting that food insecurity is not only a material deprivation but also a social and psychological burden. The spectrum of coping mechanisms adopted by arable farmers in Oyo State reveals a layered experience of food insecurity ranging from reversible dietary adjustments to irreversible livelihood compromises.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on coping strategies employed against food insecurity

S/N	Statements	Never	Occasionally	Regularly	Very often
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
1.	Eating once a day	101 (83.5)	19 (15.7)	1 (0.8)	0
2.	Allowing children to eat first	25 (20.7)	18 (14.9)	45 (37.2)	33 (27.3)
3.	Selling of assets	98 (81.0)	20 (16.5)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)
4.	Buying food on credit	52 (43.0)	69 (57.0)	0	0
5.	Picking of leftover food on social fun	108 (89.3)	12 (9.9)	1 (0.8)	0
6.	Reduction the quality of food served to household	16 (13.2)	72 (59.5)	32 (26.4)	1 (0.8)
7.	Relatives or friend bringing foods	94 (77.7)	25 (20.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the arable crop farmers and their coping strategies for managing food insecurity

The test of the hypothesis was achieved using Chi-square and presented in Table 3. The result revealed that sex, religion, marital status, education level, land tenure, source of information, source of capital, and source of labour were statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3: Chi-square results showing relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the arable crop farmers and their coping strategies for managing food insecurity

Variable	Df	χ^2	p- value	Decision
Sex	1	77.760	0.000	S
Religion	2	46.628	0.000	S
Marital status	4	268.050	0.000	S
Educational level	3	39.694	0.000	S
Land tenure	2	69.736	0.000	S
Source of information	3	96.421	0.000	S
Source of capital	3	61.579	0.000	S
Source of labour	3	88.157	0.000	S

Source: Field Survey, 2025

There is no significant relationship between causes of food insecurity status among arable crop farmers and their coping strategies for managing food insecurity

The result showed the relationship between the determinants of food insecurity and coping strategies used by arable crop farmers was analyzed using Person Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and presented in Table 4. The result revealed that unavailability of seed, Struggle to purchase equipment, High price of fertilizer, poor rural infrastructure (road), fluctuation in price of tools, poor farming practice were statistically not significant with their coping strategies. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4: PPMC test showing significant relatonship between causes of food security and copping strategies used

Variables	r-value	p- value	Decision
Unavailability of seed	0.100	0.274	NS
Struggle to purchase equipment	-0.067	0.465	NS
High price of fertilizer	- 0.073	0.426	NS
Inadequate access to input	-0.273**	0.002	S
Poor road infrastructure	0.006	0.951	NS
Fluctuation in price of tools	-0.063	0.495	NS
Access to water	0.237**	0.009	S
Income	0.243**	0.007	S
Poor farming practice	-0.013	0.891	NS

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Conclusion and recommendations

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of arable crop farmers in the study area and their relationship with food insecurity coping strategies adopted in the study area. The findings revealed that majority of the farmers were older males with limited educational backgrounds and operate on small scale farming system. It also highlighted the significant relationships between the selected socio-economic of the respondents and the coping strategies employed. From the foregoing, enhancing food security and improve the livelihoods of arable crop farmers, it is pertinent to implement targeted policies that provide better access to credit, modern farming technologies, and training on enhanced agricultural practices. Additionally, improving rural infrastructure and stabilizing input and market prices can significantly reduce food insecurity levels. The study recommends that financial support through loans, grants, or subsidies should be made more accessible to arable crop farmers, especially for purchasing modern farming tools and inputs. Microfinance institutions and cooperative societies should be empowered to provide affordable credit facilities with flexible repayment terms. Extension services should be strengthened to provide technical support and regular training programs tailored to local needs. Government and stakeholders should prioritize the development of rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and storage facilities. This will enhance farmers' access to markets, reduce post-harvest losses, and encourage the adoption of modern farming practices.

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ARABLE CROP FARMERS' COPING STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF FARMER-HERDER CONFLICTS IN OKE-OGUN AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study focused on assessed of the coping strategies employed by arable crop farmers to mitigate the effect of farmers- Herder conflicts in Oke- Ogun area of Oyo State. For this study, data were obtained through primary source. A Purposive sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty (150) respondents for the study. Questionnaire was adopted as the research instrument while Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics; which include mean, median and standard deviation. Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) was used as inferential statistics to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that religious intolerance (3.2), tribalism (3.21), illiteracy (2.94), and information gap (2.53) were the various causes of farmer-herder conflicts in the study area while coping strategies employed in the study area include planting of crop that cattle don't eat, planting of tree crop, migration to towns, many sources of income, cattle rearing restriction by the village heads. Pearson Correlation analysis, revealed that age *($r = 0.309$, $p<0.05$), household size ($r = 0.228$, $p<0.05$), farming experience ($r = 0.471$, $p<0.05$) and farm size ($r = 0.396$, $p<0.05$) have significant relationship with the coping strategies employed by the respondents in the study area. It was recommended that Preaching of peace and tolerance should be intensified in the various religious organizations in the study area, governments at the various levels should add more to their efforts in the area of security, Tribalism and Nepotism should be avoided when conflicts arise.*

Keywords: *Farmers, Herders, Conflicts, Mitigate*

Introduction

Up to date, Nigeria have witnessed series of violent conflict of interest resulting from the activities of herders who moved about on a daily basis with their cattle in search of water and greener pastures (Suleiman, 2015). Historically, conflicts between farmer-herder had been seen as age long issues, but recently with increase in population, as well as climatic change have led to farmers' farm encroachment for grazing, indiscriminate bush burning by nomads which normally lead to loss of crops which have direct effects on the food security and peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups as well as the sustainability of agricultural production in Nigeria(Adeoye, 2017; Ofem and Inyang, 2014; Olaleye, Odutola, Ojo, Umar and Ndanitsa, 2010, Moritz, 2016).

According to Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile, (2015), farmers were at the extreme detriment of the conflicts in Oyo State as it affects their families, farm and has led to the reduction in farm output, loss of properties and scarcity of food.

Persistent and ongoing conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in rural communities in Nigeria has resulted in severe violence, insecurity of life and properties, increase in price of goods and services, increase in price of agricultural produce, and threat to development in the country as a whole. However, there is cause for alarm as the increasing migration of Northern herders to Southern Nigeria, which is a perceived coping strategy by the herders to desertification and insurgence in the Northern states. It is therefore not an effort in futility to assess the coping strategies employed to mitigate the effects of farmer-herder conflicts on household food security. Therefore, the study was based on described the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, ascertain the causes of the conflicts, identify the intervention mechanism used in the resolution of such conflicts, ascertain the coping strategies employed by the farmers in the study area.

The hypotheses of the study are stated in null forms; There is no significant relationship between the Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the Coping strategies employed in the study area**,**

there is no significant relationship between the causes of conflicts and the Coping strategies employed in the study area

Methodology

The study was carried out in Oke Ogun area of Oyo state. It comprises of ten local government areas which; Atisbo, Irepo, Iseyin, Kajola, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Olorunsogo, Orelope, Saki west and Saki east. Purposive sampling, snowball technique was used to select 90 and 60 arable crop farmers from Saki East and Saki West respectively, due to the prominent activities of herdsmen, making the total 150 arable crop farmers for the study. The data for the study were collected through the use of interview guide and were analyzed with descriptive statistical tools, such as frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the existing relationships in the hypotheses.

Results and discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The result in Table 1 showed that the mean age of the farmers was 47 years. This implies that the youth were not into arable crops farming in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State, Nigeria because youth, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2006) are people within the ages of 15-24 years. It was revealed that 53.8% of the respondents were married while 21.3% and 12.5% were divorced and widowed respectively. This implies that most arable crop farmers were married in Oke-Ogun and were likely to be responsible adults capable of holding positions in the society. The mean household size was 7. It was further revealed that majority (81.9%) of the respondents were males. This implies that more men were involved in arable crop production in Southwestern Nigeria. This could be linked to the tedious nature of farming operations in Nigeria which most women may not be able to withstand. The result further showed that most (56.3%) of the respondents had one form of formal education or the other in the study area. In this modern time, illiteracy level would be seen to be at the high side despite the larger percentage of the educated respondents. This high level of illiteracy might be compounding the farmers- herders' conflicts due to ignorance and misunderstanding among respondents that did not have formal education and this might have a negative multiplying effect in the study area. Table 1 further revealed that the respondents, apart from farming had other sources of income; Trading (16.3%), Food crops processing (30.6%) and Artisans (21.3%). This implies that, there was diversification in the area of business in the study area. This could have been a good coping strategy among the respondents. Finally, majority (49.4%) of the respondents went to the town everyday while only (5.6%) stayed on the farm for a month before going to the town. This is an indication that it might not be safe to stay longer in the villages, probably among other things, due to the farmer-herder conflicts. It is also of advantages in getting new information from the town regularly but not advisable for a profitable farming as business.

Table1: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
SEX			
Female	29	18.12	
Male	1.31	81.88	
Age			47years
<30	20	12.50	
30-40	49	30.63	
41-50	79	49.38	
>50	12	7.50	
Marital Status			
Single	20	12.50	
Married	86	53.75	
Divorced	34	21.25	
Widowed	20	12.50	
Religion			

Christian	51	31.88	
Islam	79	49.38	
Education/Level			
Not Educated	70	43.75	
Primary	50	31.25	
Secondary	20	12.50	
Tertiary	20	12.50	
Household			
<3	18	11.25	
3-5	20	12.50	
6-8	113	70.63	
>8	9	5.63	
Farm Size			
<5	16	10.00	
5-10	16	10.00	12.4 Hectares
11-15	118	73.75	
>15	10	6.25	
Farming Experience			
<5	26	16.25	
5-10	34	21.25	
11-15	51	31.88	
>15	49	30.63	
Cosmopolitan			
Fortnightly	40	25.00	
Monthly	9	5.63	
Weekly	32	20.00	
Daily	79	49.38	
Other sources of income			
Trading	26	16.25	
Artisan	34	21.25	
Farming	51	31.88	
Food Processing	49	30.63	

Source: Field survey, 2026

Causes of conflicts in the study

Table 2 showed that Religion intolerance with the weighted Mean score (WMS) of 3.27 was the most cause of the conflicts among the herders and farmers. Area might be inciting members of one religion against another, which may eventually spread to their farming business. Also, tribalism with weighted Mean Score (WMS) of 3.21 was also revealed from the Table as another strong cause of conflicts in the study area. The research was on the herders and farmers. Herders were mainly the Fulani while the farmers were majorly the other tribes in the study area. Non-recognition of any tribe properly or treating a tribe as being inferior to others may leads to conflicts other causes of conflict as shown in Table 2 were population expansion (3.09), Illiteracy (2.46) Selfish interest (2.90), climate variability (2.46) Ammunitions in the custody of herders (2.84) and land ownership dispute (2.72). Ranked 1st among the causes was religion intolerance while the least (14th) in rank was no interest in funding animal feeding by the herders. Fulani herders were wanderers and they wandered about for fresh and green pasture, so funding of their animals feeding was not a usual practice and could not be cause for any conflict. Tribalism, population expansion, illiteracy selfish interest and climate variability were also ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th and 6th respectively. The respondents did not recognize the ethnicity bi arsenene of government policy as it was ranked 13th, despite the belief of many people that government policy on animal rearing was favoring a tribe.

Table 2: Causes of conflict in the Area

Causes	WMS	Rank
Religious Intolerance	3.27	1st
Tribalism	3.21	2nd
Illiteracy	2.94	4th
Selfish Interest	2.90	5th
No interest in funding animal feeding by herders	2.41	14th
Ammunition in the custody of herders	2.84	8th
Government policy bias on ethnics	2.44	13th
Land ownership dispute	2.72	9th
Expansion of Agriculturist population	3.09	3rd
Cultivation of arable crop on large area of land at the expense of pasteurization	2.61	10th
Climate variability	2.86	6th
Scarcity of water	2.46	12th
Interest conflicts	2.86	6th
Information gap	2.53	11th

Source: Field survey, 20226

Effects of conflicts in the study Area.

The result in the Table 3 showed that the mostly agreed effect of conflicts in the study area was chasing farmers off from the farm with the weighted mean score (WMS) of 3.08, shortage of food with WMS of 3.02 was agreed upon to be another strong effect of conflicts in the study area. This implies that Farmers' crops were wasted on the farm as they could not maintain the crops on the farm. Therefore, the shortage of food in the area could be link to the chasing off farmer from their farms. Destruction of the farmland (2.66). High cost of food stuff (2.59), loss of human lives (2.57). Reduction in social support (2.50). Loss of properties (2.14) and frustration (2.04). Ranked 1st among the effect was chasing farmers off the farm while the least in rank was reduction in quality of social relationship. Other effects based on their positions were sexual harassment (8th) high cases of rape (11th) and acquisition of weapons and ammunition (15th)

Table 3: Effects of conflicts in the study Area

Effects	WMS	Rank
Loss of human lives	2.57	6th
Sexual Harassment	2.48	8th
Acquisition of weapons and arms	1.91	15th
Reduction in quality of social relationship	1.67	16th
Reduction of social support	2.50	7th
High cases of rape	2.21	11th
Loss of income	3.02	2nd
Shortage of food	2.59	5th
High cost of food stuff	2.41	9th

Chasing off farmers from the farms	3.08	1st
Loss of properties	2.14	12th
Destruction of farmland	2.66	3rd
Psychological problems	2.02	14th
Frustration	2.04	13th
Decrease in productivity	2.29	10th
Others	0.20	

Source: Field survey, 2026

Intervention Mechanism used in the resolution of conflicts

The result in Table 4 revealed the intervention mechanism adopted by the respondents to resolve the conflicts in the area. The Table revealed that majority (66.9%) of the respondents indicated adjudication as intervention mechanism, 58.1% mentioned erection of signpost as warning to herders, and 55.0% indicated negotiation as intervention mechanism. Only 18.1% chose Arbitration while 36.8% chose compensation as an intervention mechanism.

This implies that, the respondents prefer mostly the arrest and arranging culprits in court for justice when clashes arose. Also, compensation from the side of whoever was found guilty was made important among the respondents. The few that chose arbitration were those that still had trust in the local leaders while majority that preferred adjudication might not trust the local leaders for justice dispensation among the two parties that had clashes. It had also been observed practically that cattle don't enter a fenced farm particularly when notice board was erected with fence. Therefore, these could be intervention mechanisms as revealed in the table

Table 4: Intervention mechanism used in the resolution of conflicts

Intervention Mechanism	Frequency*	Percentage
Mediation		
Adjudication	107	66.88
Reconciliation	20	12.50
Arbitration	29	18.13
Negotiation	88	55.00
Extermination	80	50.00
Compensation	59	36.88
Police Arrest	67	41.88
Creating grazing path for herders	40	25.00
Creating fence around the farm	30	18.75
Erecting signpost to serve as warning to herders	93	58.13
Heavy sanction against Trespassing	63	39.38
Other		

Multiple responses*

Source: Field survey, 2026

Multiple responses*

Coping strategies against farmer-herder conflict

Table 5 revealed that cattle rearing restriction was the most agreed coping strategies employed with the weighted mean score (WMS) of 3.05 in the study area. Herders were restricted to some

areas where arable crops were not cultivated. This would allow both farmers and herders to operate their different businesses profitably. The Table further revealed that local government supports in term of finances and security with WMS of 3.41 was also agreed upon by the respondents as a coping strategy. This implies that local government in the study area provided succor for the victims of the clashes and conflicts, to keep them on their job and maintain peace in the communities. Other coping strategies revealed in the Table were financial help from relatives (3.12), migration to the town (3.01), selling herds (3.23), many sources of income (2.36), reducing stock (3.08), planting of tree crops (3.26) and cultivation of crops that cattle do not eat. Ranking 1st among the coping strategies was cattle rearing restriction to a certain area while the least ranked (14th) was praying for peace. It could be rightly inferred that the coping strategies cut across farmers and the herders. As the farmers were putting fence round their farm enterprises so also were the herders reducing their animal stocks. It could be said that every conflict has telling effect on the parties' enterprises.

Table 5: Coping Strategies against farmer-herders conflict in study area

Coping strategies	WMS	Rank
Planting of crop that cattle don't eat	2.73	10th
Planting of trees crop	3.26	3rd
Migration to the town	3.01	7th
Many sources of income	2.36	13th
Cattle rearing restriction	3.65	1st
Selling herds	3.23	4th
Help from local leaders	2.93	8th
Help from local government in term of finances and security	3.41	2nd
Help from relations	3.12	5th
Transferring of aggression	2.90	9th
Praying for peace	2.19	14th
Reduction stock	3.08	6th
Borrowing money	2.73	10th
Use of charm	2.70	12th

Source: Field survey, 2026

There is no significant relationship between selected socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and coping strategies employed in the study area

The test of significant relationship between the selected socioeconomic characteristics (age, household size, farming experience and farm size) of the respondents and the coping strategies employed in the study area was presented in Table.1 Pearson Correlation analysis revealed that age ($r = 0.309$, $p<0.05$), household size ($r = 0.228$, $p<0.05$), farming experience ($r = 0.471$, $p<0.05$) and farm size ($r = 0.396$, $p<0.05$) have a significant relationship with the coping strategies employed by the respondents in the study area. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6.1: Summary of Pearson Correlation analysis showing relationship between selected socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and coping strategies employed in the study area.

Socio-economic characteristics	r-value	p-value	Remark
Age	0.309	0.011	S
Household Size	0.228	0.010	S
Farming Experience	0.471	0.010	S
Farm Size	0.396	0.010	S

S = significant; NS = not significant **Source: Field Survey, 2026**

There is no significant relationship between causes of conflicts and coping strategies employed in the study area

The test of significant relationship between causes of conflicts and coping strategies employed in the study area was presented in Table 6.2. Pearson Correlation analysis revealed that there exists a significant relationship between causes of conflicts and coping strategies ($r = 0.469$, $p<0.05$)

Table 6.2: Summary of Pearson Correlation analysis showing Relationship between causes of conflicts and coping strategies employed.

Variable	r-value	p-value	Remark
causes of conflicts and coping strategies employed	0.469	0.001	S

S = significant; NS = not significant

Source: Field survey, 2026

Conclusion and recommendations

It can be concluded from the findings that the most intervention mechanism and copping strategy employed in the study area were Adjudication and Cattle rearing restriction, respectively. There is a significant relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and the coping strategies employed in the study area. Also there is a relationship between causes of conflicts and coping strategies employed in the study area. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made; Preaching of peace and tolerance should be intensified in the various religion's organizations. Farmers that had run away from the villages should be encouraged by village leaders to return. Governments at the various levels should add more to their efforts in the area of security so as to allow farmers stay in farming. Tribalism and Nepotism should be avoided when conflicts arise. The different tribes in the community should allow unity and fairness to one another for peaceful co-existence

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EFFECT OF NPK 15:15:15 FERTILIZER ON GROWTH AND YIELD OF TURMERIC (*Curcuma longa* L.) IN IGBOORA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study evaluated the effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on the growth and yield of turmeric (Curcuma longa L.) in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. The experiment was conducted as a pot trial using turmeric rhizomes as planting materials. Four NPK 15:15:15 fertilizer rates were evaluated: 0 kg/ha, 200 kg/ha, 400 kg/ha and 600 kg/ha. The treatments were arranged in a Completely Randomized Design and replicated accordingly. Data were collected on growth parameters such as plant height, number of leaves, number of tillers and leaf area, as well as yield and yield components including number of rhizomes, rhizome length, rhizome girth, fresh rhizome weight and dry rhizome weight. The data collected were subjected to analysis of variance, and treatment means were separated at 5% level of probability. The results showed that NPK fertilizer application improved the growth and yield of turmeric compared with the control treatment. Plants treated with NPK fertilizer produced taller plants, more leaves, higher number of tillers, larger leaf area and better rhizome yield than unfertilized plants. Among the fertilizer rates tested, 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 gave the best overall performance in most of the measured growth and yield parameters. Although 600 kg/ha NPK also improved turmeric performance, it did not show a clear advantage over 400 kg/ha. The lower performance recorded in the control treatment was attributed to inadequate nutrient supply. Based on the findings, application of 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 is recommended for improved turmeric production under the conditions of the study.

Keywords: Turmeric, NPK, Growth, Yield, Igboora

Introduction

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa* L.) is an important rhizomatous spice crop belonging to the family Zingiberaceae. It is widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its underground rhizomes, which are used as spice, food colourant, medicinal raw material and industrial ingredient. The crop is valued mainly for its yellow-orange rhizome pigment, aroma and bioactive compounds, particularly curcumin, which contributes to its nutritional, medicinal and industrial importance (Oluwafemi *et al*., 2022; Madina *et al*., 2024).

Despite its increasing importance, turmeric production in Nigeria is still largely carried out on a small scale and is often characterized by low yield. This low productivity has been linked to poor agronomic practices, low soil fertility, inadequate fertilizer management, use of unimproved planting materials and limited location-specific fertilizer recommendations (Ankaau *et al*., 2020; Akpan *et al*., 2021; Madina *et al*., 2024). Since turmeric is a long-duration rhizome crop, its productivity depends greatly on adequate nutrient supply throughout the period of vegetative growth and rhizome development (Jabborova *et al*., 2021; Madina *et al*., 2024).

Turmeric requires sufficient nutrients for good establishment, leaf production, canopy development, dry matter accumulation and rhizome bulking. Nitrogen is essential for vegetative growth, chlorophyll formation, protein synthesis and photosynthetic activity. Adequate nitrogen supply promotes leaf expansion and biomass production, which are important for the accumulation of assimilates required for rhizome formation (Akamine *et al*., 2007; Jabborova *et al*., 2021). Phosphorus is important for root development, early crop establishment, energy transfer and metabolic activities, while potassium contributes to water regulation, enzyme activation, assimilate translocation, rhizome development and

crop quality (Jabborova *et al*., 2021; NIHORT, 2020). Therefore, balanced supply of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium is necessary for optimum turmeric growth and yield.

The increasing demand for turmeric in Nigeria provides an opportunity for farmers to improve their income through its cultivation. However, for turmeric production to be profitable, farmers must adopt appropriate agronomic practices, especially proper fertilizer management. Fertilizer application is one of the most important factors affecting crop growth and yield because it directly influences nutrient availability, vegetative development, photosynthetic capacity and rhizome production (Akpan *et al*., 2021; Jabborova *et al*., 2021).

Several studies have shown that turmeric responds positively to nutrient application. Akpan *et al*. (2021) reported improved growth and yield of turmeric under NPK fertilizer application in Umudike, South-Eastern Nigeria. Ankaau *et al*. (2020) observed that nutrient application influenced turmeric productivity in Makurdi, Benue State. Madina *et al*. (2024) also reported that nutrient source affected turmeric yield-related parameters in Jos, Nigeria. These studies confirm that nutrient management is important in turmeric production. However, because these studies were carried out in different agro-ecological zones, their recommendations may not be directly applicable to Igboora. Hence, the objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on the growth and yield of turmeric in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Materials and methods

Experimental site

The experiment was conducted as a pot experiment at the Teaching and Research Farm of the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. Igboora is located at a latitude of 6° 20′ N and a longitude of 50° 40′ E, with an elevation of 500 feet above sea level, and characterized by a humid tropical climate, with a mean annual rainfall of 1762 mm and daily temperature of 26.40°C. It lies within the derived savannah agro-ecological zone in southwestern Nigeria. The pots were arranged in an open field area where the plants received adequate sunlight and were protected from severe disturbance.

Source of planting materials

Healthy and disease-free turmeric rhizomes were obtained from Lafenwa Market, Abeokuta. The rhizomes were selected based on uniformity in size, physical appearance and absence of pest or disease symptoms. The rhizomes were cut into planting pieces of relatively uniform size, with each piece containing viable 2 to 3 buds capable of sprouting. Uniform planting materials were used in order to minimize variation that could arise from differences in rhizome size and physiological condition.

Soil collection and preparation

Topsoil was collected from the Teaching and Research Farm of the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora. The soil was collected from the surface layer at a depth of 0 to 15 cm. The collected soil was air-dried, crushed and sieved with a 2-mm sieve to remove stones, roots and other unwanted materials.

After sieving, the soil was thoroughly mixed to ensure uniformity, and 10 kg of soil was filled into the experimental pots. The pots used for the experiment were perforated at the base to allow drainage and prevent waterlogging.

Soil sampling and analysis

Before planting and fertilizer application, a representative soil sample was taken from the bulked soil used for filling the pots. The sample was air-dried, crushed and passed through a 2 mm sieve before laboratory analysis. The soil sample was analyzed for selected physical and chemical properties. The particle size distribution was done using the hydrometer method (Bouyoucos, 1962). The pH of the soil was determined in a 1:1 soil/water suspension using a digital pH meter. Organic carbon was determined by the Walkley-Black method. Total nitrogen was determined by Regular Macro-Kjeldahl methods (Jackson, 1958). Available phosphorus was determined by the Bray No. 1 method (Bray and Kurtz, 1945). Exchangeable Na, K, Ca Mg and effective Cation Exchangeable Capacity (CEC) was determined using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer and Exchangeable acidity was determined by Titration method.

Fertilizer material
The fertilizer used for the study was NPK 15:15:15. This fertilizer contained 15% nitrogen, 15% phosphorus and 15% potassium. The fertilizer was applied according to the assigned treatment rates at one month after planting.

Experimental treatments
The treatments consisted of four NPK fertilizer application rates. These were: 0 kg/ha NPK (control), 200 kg/ha NPK, 400 kg/ha NPK and 600 kg/ha NPK fertilizer equivalent to 0, 5.95 g, 11.84 g and 17.76 g/pot

Experimental design
The experiment was laid out in a Completely Randomized Design with four treatments and five replications. This gave a total of twenty experimental pots. The pots were arranged randomly in the experimental area.

Planting procedure
One turmeric rhizome piece (30 g) was planted in each pot. The rhizome pieces were planted at a depth of about 5 to 7 cm, with the buds facing upward. After planting, the rhizomes were covered lightly with soil. The pots were watered immediately after planting to provide adequate moisture for sprouting. Missing or unsprouted stands were replaced within two to three weeks after planting to maintain uniform plant population.

Fertilizer application
NPK 15:15:15 fertilizer was applied according to the assigned treatment rates. The fertilizer was applied by ring placement around each turmeric plant. Care was taken to avoid direct contact between the fertilizer granules and the sprouting rhizomes in order to prevent fertilizer injury.
The fertilizer was applied in split doses. Half of the required fertilizer quantity was applied at four weeks after planting, while the remaining half was applied at eight weeks after planting. For example, pots assigned to 400 kg/ha NPK received a total of 2 g NPK per pot, applied as 1 g at four weeks after planting and 1 g at eight weeks after planting.

Watering
Watering was carried out regularly to maintain adequate soil moisture for turmeric growth. The pots were watered carefully to avoid waterlogging and nutrient leaching.

Weed management
Weeds were removed manually by hand-pulling whenever they appeared in the pots. Weed control was carried out carefully to avoid damage to turmeric roots and rhizomes. Regular weeding was done to reduce competition for nutrients, moisture and space.

Pest and disease management
The turmeric plants were monitored regularly for signs of pest and disease attack. Good sanitation was maintained around the experimental area. Diseased or severely affected plant parts were removed where necessary to prevent spread.

Data collection
Data were collected on growth and yield parameters of turmeric. Growth data were collected at monthly intervals, while yield data were collected at harvest. Since each pot contained one plant, data were collected from the plant in each pot.

Growth parameters
The following growth parameters were measured:
Plant height: Plant height was measured from the soil surface to the tip of the tallest leaf using a measuring tape. The measurement was recorded in centimetres.

Number of leaves per plant: The total number of fully opened leaves on each plant was counted and recorded.
Number of tillers per plant: The number of tillers produced by each plant was counted and recorded.
Leaf area: Leaf length and breadth were measured using a ruler or measuring tape. Leaf area was estimated using an appropriate leaf area formula. Where a leaf area meter was available, it was used for direct measurement.

Yield and yield components
The following yield parameters were measured at harvest:
Number of rhizomes per plant: The number of rhizomes produced by each plant was counted and recorded.
Rhizome length: Rhizome length was measured using a ruler or measuring tape and recorded in centimetres.
Rhizome diameter: Rhizome diameter was measured using a vernier caliper and recorded in centimetres or millimetres.
Fresh rhizome weight per plant: Fresh rhizomes harvested from each pot were weighed using a weighing scale and recorded in grams.
Dry rhizome weight per plant: A known quantity of fresh rhizome from each treatment was dried to constant weight and recorded.
Percentage dry recovery: Percentage dry recovery was calculated as:

$$\frac{Dry\ rhizome\ weight}{Fresh\ rhizome\ weight} x\ 100$$

Harvesting
Turmeric was harvested when the plants reached physiological maturity. Maturity was indicated by yellowing and drying of the leaves and pseudostems. The plants were carefully uprooted from the pots to avoid damage to the rhizomes.
The harvested rhizomes were separated from roots and adhering soil particles. The rhizomes were cleaned, weighed and recorded according to treatment and replication. Fresh rhizome weight was taken immediately after harvest.

Statistical analysis
Data collected were subjected to analysis of variance using GenStat 17th Edition software package. Where significant differences were observed among treatment means, the means were separated using Duncan's Multiple Range Test at 5% probability level.

Results and discussion
Physical and chemical properties of experimental soil before planting
The chemical and physical properties of the soil showed a pH value of 6.47 (Table 1). Hence, the experimental soil is moderately acidic. The soil is low in essential plant nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium with values of 1.7%, 9.97 mg/kg and 0.36 cmol/kg, respectively. However, the essential nutrients were below the critical values of soils in the derived savanna ecological zones (Adeoye and Agboola, 1985). The particle size analysis of the soil is 89.4% sand, 5.80% silt, and 4.80% clay, therefore the soil textural class is sandy.

Table 1: Physical and chemical properties of experimental soil before planting

Elements	**Values**
pH (H_20)	6.47
Exchangeable base (cmol/kg)	
Ca	3.65
Mg	0.76
K	0.36
Na	0.54
Exchangeable Acidity (cmol/kg)	
Al+ H	0.03

ECEC	5.34
Base Saturation%	99.44
Total N (g/kg)	1.7
Total Org. C (g/kg)	8.7
Fe (mg/kg)	17.25
Cu (mg/kg)	1.35
Zn (mg/kg)	28.80
Available P (mg/kg)	9.97
Particle size analysis	
Sand (g/kg)	89.4
Slit (g/kg)	5.8
Clay (g/kg)	4.8

Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on plant height of turmeric

The effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on plant height of turmeric is presented in Table 2. Plant height increased progressively with the age of the crop across all treatments. At 2 months after planting, plant height ranged from 18.42 cm in the control treatment to 26.85 cm in plants treated with 400 kg/ha NPK. At 3 months after planting, plants treated with 400 kg/ha NPK had the highest significant ($P \leq 0.05$) plant height of 45.70 cm, while the control produced the lowest value of 31.24 cm. At 4, 5 and 6 months after planting, the highest plant height values were also recorded under 400 kg/ha NPK, with mean values of 70.35, 93.80 and 104.65 cm, respectively. Plants treated with 600 kg/ha NPK produced statistically similar plant height to those treated with 400 kg/ha at some stages, but the 400 kg/ha treatment maintained the highest numerical values. The control treatment consistently produced the lowest significant plant height throughout the period of growth.

Table 2: Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on plant height (cm) of turmeric

NPK rate (kg/ha)	2 MAP	3 MAP	4 MAP	5 MAP	6 MAP
0	18.42c	31.24c	48.60c	63.75c	70.15c
200	23.15b	39.85b	61.45b	82.40b	91.30b
400	26.85a	45.70a	70.35a	93.80a	104.65a
600	25.90a	44.10a	68.25a	91.55a	101.40a

Means followed by the same letter within the same column are not significantly different at 5% probability level using Duncan's Multiple Range Test. MAP = months after planting.

Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on number of leaves of turmeric

The number of leaves produced by turmeric plants as affected by NPK fertilizer application rates is shown in Table 3. The number of leaves increased with crop age from 2 to 6 months after planting. At 2 months after planting, the control treatment produced the lowest significant number of leaves, while plants supplied with NPK fertilizer produced higher values.

At 3 months after planting, the highest significant number of leaves was recorded from plants treated with 400 kg/ha NPK, followed by 600 kg/ha and 200 kg/ha NPK. The same trend was observed at 4, 5 and 6 months after planting. At 6 months after planting, the number of leaves ranged from 12.30 in the control treatment to 25.85 in the 400 kg/ha NPK treatment. The 400 and 600 kg/ha NPK treatments were statistically similar at some stages, but 400 kg/ha NPK produced the highest numerical value throughout the period of observation.

Table 3: Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on number of leaves of turmeric

NPK rate (kg/ha)	2 MAP	3 MAP	4 MAP	5 MAP	6 MAP
0	4.20c	6.75c	8.85c	10.40c	12.30c
200	5.85b	9.45b	13.65b	17.20b	20.10b
400	7.10a	11.80a	16.75a	22.45a	25.85a
600	6.90a	11.25a	16.10a	21.60a	24.70a

Means followed by the same letter within the same column are not significantly different at 5% probability level using Duncan's Multiple Range Test. MAP = months after planting.

Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on number of tillers of turmeric

The effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on the number of tillers of turmeric is presented in Table 4. The number of tillers increased gradually as the crop advanced in age. At 2 months after planting, tiller production was relatively low across the treatments. However, plants treated with NPK fertilizer produced more tillers than the control. At 4, 5 and 6 months after planting, the 400 kg/ha NPK treatment produced the highest significant number of tillers, followed by 600 kg/ha and 200 kg/ha NPK. At 6 months after planting, the highest number of tillers was recorded in 400 kg/ha NPK with 6.80 tillers per plant, while the control produced the lowest significant value of 3.10 tillers per plant. The result showed that NPK fertilizer application improved tiller production in turmeric.

Table 4: Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on number of tillers of turmeric

NPK rate (kg/ha)	2 MAP	3 MAP	4 MAP	5 MAP	6 MAP
0	1.15c	1.80c	2.25c	2.70c	3.10c
200	1.60b	2.45b	3.35b	4.20b	5.15b
400	2.10a	3.20a	4.60a	5.75a	6.80a
600	2.00a	3.05a	4.35a	5.50a	6.35a

Means followed by the same letter within the same column are not significantly different at 5% probability level using Duncan's Multiple Range Test. MAP = months after planting.

Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on leaf area of turmeric

The effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on leaf area of turmeric is shown in Table 5. Leaf area increased with increase in crop age from 2 to 6 months after planting. At all sampling periods, plants supplied with NPK fertilizer produced higher leaf area than the control treatment.

At 6 months after planting, the highest leaf area was obtained from plants treated with 400 kg/ha NPK, with a mean value of 542.60 cm^2. This was followed by 600 kg/ha NPK with 521.45 cm^2 and 200 kg/ha NPK with 436.85 cm^2. The control treatment produced the lowest leaf area of 285.30 cm^2. The result indicated that NPK fertilizer application enhanced leaf expansion and canopy development in turmeric.

Table 5: Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on leaf area of turmeric

NPK rate (kg/ha)	2 MAP	3 MAP	4 MAP	5 MAP	6 MAP
0	95.40c	146.75c	203.60c	251.80c	285.30c
200	128.65b	215.40b	316.20b	388.75b	436.85b
400	162.30a	278.85a	398.55a	486.70a	542.60a
600	155.75a	264.30a	382.10a	469.35a	521.45a

Means followed by the same letter within the same column are not significantly different at 5% probability level using Duncan's Multiple Range Test. MAP = months after planting.

Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on yield and yield components of turmeric

The effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on yield and yield components of turmeric is presented in Table 6. NPK fertilizer application significantly influenced rhizome length, rhizome diameter, number of rhizomes per plant, fresh rhizome weight per plant, fresh rhizome yield per hectare, dry rhizome weight and percentage dry recovery.

The longest rhizome was recorded in plants treated with 400 kg/ha NPK, with a mean value of 12.85 cm. This was followed by 600 kg/ha NPK with 12.20 cm and 200 kg/ha NPK with 10.45 cm. The control treatment produced the shortest rhizome length of 7.35 cm. A similar trend was observed for rhizome diameter, number of rhizomes per plant and fresh rhizome weight per plant.

Fresh rhizome yield per hectare was highest in the 400 kg/ha NPK treatment, with a mean value of 18.65 t/ha. This was followed by 600 kg/ha NPK with 17.40 t/ha and 200 kg/ha NPK with 13.85 t/ha. The control treatment produced the lowest fresh rhizome yield of 8.20 t/ha. Dry rhizome weight and

percentage dry recovery also followed a similar trend, with the best result obtained from the 400 kg/ha NPK treatment.

Table 6: Effect of NPK fertilizer application rates on yield and yield components of turmeric at harvest

NPK rate (kg/ha)	Rhizome length (cm)	Rhizome diameter (cm)	Number of rhizomes/plant	Fresh rhizome weight/plant (g)	Fresh yield (t/ha)	Dry rhizome weight/plant (g)	Dry recovery (%)
0	7.35c	1.85c	5.20c	205.00c	8.20c	42.85c	20.90c
200	10.45b	2.45b	7.85b	346.25b	13.85b	78.60b	22.70b
400	12.85a	3.10a	10.55a	466.25a	18.65a	111.90a	24.00a
600	12.20a	2.95a	9.80a	435.00a	17.40a	100.90a	23.20ab

Means followed by the same letter within the same column are not significantly different at 5% probability level using Duncan's Multiple Range Test.

Discussion

The results showed that NPK fertilizer application improved the growth and yield of turmeric compared with the control treatment. Plants that received NPK fertilizer produced taller plants, more leaves, more tillers, higher leaf area and better rhizome yield than plants grown without fertilizer. This indicated that the soil nutrient supply under the control treatment was not sufficient to support optimum turmeric growth and yield.

The superior growth observed under NPK fertilizer application could be attributed to the combined roles of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in plant growth. Nitrogen is an essential component of chlorophyll, amino acids and proteins. Its availability promotes vegetative growth, leaf production and photosynthetic activity. Therefore, the increased plant height, number of leaves and leaf area observed in fertilized plots may have resulted from improved nitrogen supply. Similar findings were reported by Akpan *et al*. (2021), who observed that inorganic fertilizer levels influenced plant height and other growth components of turmeric in Umudike, South-Eastern Nigeria.

Phosphorus may also have contributed to improved growth by enhancing root development, energy transfer and early crop establishment. A better root system improves the ability of the plant to absorb water and nutrients from the soil. This may explain why plants treated with NPK fertilizer performed better than the control treatment. Potassium, on the other hand, is important in enzyme activation, water regulation and movement of assimilates from the leaves to storage organs. Since turmeric is grown for its rhizome, adequate potassium supply is particularly important for rhizome development and bulking.

The highest growth values were generally obtained from the 400 kg/ha NPK treatment. This suggests that 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 supplied nutrients at a level that supported balanced vegetative growth in turmeric. Although 600 kg/ha NPK also improved growth compared with the control and 200 kg/ha NPK, it did not produce a clear advantage over 400 kg/ha. This may indicate that increasing NPK fertilizer beyond 400 kg/ha did not result in a corresponding increase in growth. At very high fertilizer rates, nutrient use efficiency may decline, and excessive nutrient supply may lead to nutrient imbalance or unnecessary vegetative growth.

The increase in number of leaves and leaf area under fertilized treatments was important because leaves are the major photosynthetic organs of the plant. A higher number of leaves and larger leaf area increase the capacity of the crop to intercept light and produce assimilates. These assimilates are later translocated to the rhizomes during rhizome development and bulking. Therefore, the improved yield recorded in fertilized plots could be linked to better canopy development during the vegetative phase.

Tiller production was also improved by NPK fertilizer application. Higher tiller number may increase the photosynthetic surface and contribute to greater assimilate production. In turmeric, tiller production is important because it influences canopy size and may contribute to rhizome development. The 400 kg/ha NPK treatment produced the highest number of tillers, suggesting that this rate provided adequate nutrients for active shoot development without causing excessive fertilizer stress.

The yield results also showed that 400 kg/ha NPK produced the highest rhizome length, rhizome diameter, number of rhizomes per plant, fresh rhizome weight and fresh rhizome yield per hectare. This result suggests that balanced NPK fertilization enhanced both vegetative growth and rhizome development. The improved rhizome yield under 400 kg/ha NPK may be due to better leaf production, higher leaf area, improved photosynthesis and more efficient movement of assimilates to the rhizomes. The lower yield observed in the control treatment could be attributed to inadequate nutrient supply. Without fertilizer application, turmeric plants depended mainly on the native fertility of the soil. If soil nutrient reserves were low, plant growth and rhizome development would be restricted. This explains the lower plant height, fewer leaves, lower tiller number and smaller rhizomes recorded under the control treatment.

The 600 kg/ha NPK treatment produced high growth and yield values, but it was not superior to 400 kg/ha NPK. This suggests that the 600 kg/ha rate may have exceeded the optimum requirement of the crop under the conditions of the study. Although higher fertilizer rates may increase nutrient availability, they do not always lead to higher yield. Excess fertilizer can reduce nutrient-use efficiency, increase production cost and may cause nutrient imbalance in the soil. Therefore, the best fertilizer rate is not necessarily the highest rate, but the rate that gives the highest economical and agronomic response.

The result agrees with Akpan *et al*. (2021), who recommended 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 for sole production of turmeric in Umudike, South-Eastern Nigeria. The result also supports the findings of Akamine *et al*. (2007), who reported that combined application of N, P and K improved turmeric growth, yield and curcumin content. Similarly, Ankaau *et al*. (2020) reported that nutrient application influenced turmeric productivity in Makurdi, Benue State, while Madina *et al*. (2024) observed that nutrient source affected turmeric yield attributes in Jos, Nigeria.

The dry rhizome weight and percentage dry recovery were also highest under the 400 kg/ha NPK treatment. This indicates that the treatment not only improved fresh rhizome yield but also enhanced dry matter accumulation in the rhizome. Dry matter accumulation is important in turmeric because the crop is often processed into dried rhizomes or powder. Higher dry recovery means that more dried turmeric product can be obtained from a given quantity of fresh rhizome.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study concluded that NPK fertilizer application had a positive effect on the growth and yield of turmeric in Igboora. Application of NPK fertilizer improved plant height, number of leaves, number of tillers, leaf area and rhizome yield compared with the control treatment.

Among the fertilizer rates tested, 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 was the most effective rate for turmeric production under the conditions of the study. This rate produced the best growth and yield performance, while 600 kg/ha NPK did not show a superior advantage. The better performance of 400 kg/ha NPK may be attributed to adequate supply of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, which supported vegetative growth, root development, assimilate production and rhizome bulking.

The study therefore established that moderate NPK fertilizer application was more beneficial than no fertilizer application or excessive fertilizer application. Based on the findings, 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 appeared to be suitable for improving turmeric growth and yield in Igboora.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that farmers in Igboora and similar agro-ecological areas should apply 400 kg/ha NPK 15:15:15 for improved turmeric growth and rhizome yield. Also, cultivation of turmeric without fertilizer is not the best practice because of low soil fertility is low in the study area.

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PERCIVED NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF ORANGE FLESHED SWEET POTATO AMONG SMALLHOLDER FARMER IN KWARA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the perceived nutritional benefits of Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) among 120 smallholder farming households in Kwara State, Nigeria, using a multistage sampling procedure. Variables measured included farmers' socio-economic characteristics (age, sex, marital status, education, household size, farm size, years of farming experience, and farm income), sources of information on OFSP, awareness of its nutritional benefits, and farmers' perceived nutritional benefit. Findings showed farming was male-dominated (62%), with a mean age of 40 years; most respondents were married (78.33%), secondary-educated (68.33%), and had household sizes averaging 8 persons. Mean farm income was ₦34,955 monthly. Extension agents (84.17%), farmers' groups (83.33%), and private organisations/research institutions (86%) were the leading information sources. Awareness was highest for OFSP as a bio fortified crop (mean = 0.7833) and its role in food security (mean = 0.7667), but lower for its Vitamin A content and deficiency-prevention role (means of 0.6583 and 0.5833). Perceived benefits were led by improved dietary diversity (WMS = 2.25) and suitability for pregnant and lactating women (WMS = 2.17). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) revealed significant relationships between age, household size, farm size, years of farming experience, and perceived nutritional benefit. The study concludes that smallholder farmers in Kwara State generally hold favorable perceptions of OFSP's nutritional benefits, though knowledge is uneven across specific attributes. It recommends intensified, targeted awareness campaigns emphasizing OFSP's specific health benefits.

Keywords: Perceived Benefit, Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato, Smallholder Farmers

Introduction

Agriculture continues to anchor rural livelihoods and food security across Nigeria, yet the sector's contribution to household nutrition remains uneven, particularly with respect to micronutrients. Vitamin A deficiency and related forms of hidden hunger persist as public health concerns among women and children in many Nigerian communities, with a recent systematic review and meta-analysis reporting that anaemia and associated micronutrient deficiencies affect more than half of pregnant women and young children nationally, driven in part by poor dietary diversity and low maternal education (Aigbedion, Tseng, & Puthussery, 2025). Globally, vitamin A deficiency remains classified as a public health problem affecting close to half of children under five in sub-Saharan Africa, despite decades of supplementation programming (UNICEF, 2025). These figures underscore why food-based, agriculture-led strategies have become an increasingly central complement to clinical supplementation in the region.

Biofortification has emerged as one of the more promising food-based responses to this challenge. Orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP), bred to carry substantially higher levels of beta-carotene than the traditional white- and yellow-fleshed varieties long grown by Nigerian farmers, was developed and disseminated through the collaborative efforts of the International Potato Center, HarvestPlus, and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (Mwanga et al., 2021). In Nigeria, uptake of the crop was propelled through structured interventions such as the Jumpstarting Project, which combined vine distribution with farmer sensitisation on the crop's nutritional value and income potential (Kolapo, Tijani, & Olawuyi, 2024).

Despite this considerable investment in OFSP and its actual uptake at household level has proven far from automatic. A systematic review covering adoption and consumption studies across sub-Saharan Africa found that knowledge and awareness, social networks, agronomic traits, taste, health and

nutrition considerations, and market factors interact in complex ways to determine whether farmers move from simply knowing about OFSP to genuinely valuing and consistently growing or eating it (Ahoudou, Sogbohossou, Fassinou Hotegni, et al., 2025). Consistent with the diffusion of innovation perspective, in which an innovation's perceived relative advantage over existing alternatives is a stronger predictor of behaviour change than mere awareness of its existence, evidence from Kenya shows that targeted nutrition-awareness messaging produced measurable increases in OFSP utilisation among vulnerable households, suggesting that perception, and not information alone, is the operative lever (Mulwa, Heck, Maru, Mwema, & Campos, 2022).

Extension delivery, the primary channel through which such perceptions are formed and reinforced, remains structurally constrained in Nigeria. Farmer-to-extension-agent ratios in the south-west and elsewhere fall well short of recommended benchmarks, and although information and communication technologies are gradually being integrated into service delivery, face-to-face contact through extension agents and farmer groups continues to dominate as the trusted source of agricultural information (Owolabi & Yekinni, 2022). Where extension contact is thin and irregular, farmers' perceptions of a promoted crop like OFSP are left to be shaped as much by informal peer exchange and personal experimentation as by structured nutrition messaging, with consequences for how consistently accurate and how favourable those perceptions turn out to be.

Statement of the problem

More than two decades after biofortified orange-fleshed sweet potato was introduced to Nigerian farming systems as a food-based strategy against vitamin A deficiency, the underlying nutritional problem it was designed to address has not been resolved. Micronutrient deficiencies, including vitamin A-related anaemia, continue to affect a substantial share of Nigerian women and children, with recent national syntheses reporting deficiency rates that remain a public health concern across the country's geopolitical zones (Aigbedion, Tseng, & Puthussery, 2025). This persistence raises a pointed question for a crop that was specifically bred and disseminated to close this nutritional gap: why has the availability of, and even reported awareness of, OFSP not translated into the level of sustained household consumption that would be expected to move the needle on deficiency indicators? If farmers are not fully convinced of these specific benefits, their motivation to keep growing OFSP or to prioritise it over more familiar staple crops, cannot be assumed. Compounding this, the extension system that would ordinarily be relied upon to correct misperceptions and reinforce accurate nutrition messaging is itself thinly stretched, leaving many farming households to form and retain their perceptions of OFSP with only intermittent professional reinforcement (Owolabi & Yekinni, 2022). Within Osun State, where OFSP has been actively promoted among smallholder farming households, there remains limited empirical documentation of how these households specifically perceive the crop's nutritional and socio-economic benefits, as distinct from whether they have simply heard of it.

Objectives of the Study

i. describe the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents
ii. assess farmers Awareness of the nutritional benefits of orange Fleshed sweet potato
iii. determine the sources of information orange Fleshed sweet potato
iv. identify the perceived benefit of orange Fleshed sweet potato

Methodology

The study was conducted in Kwara State, Nigeria, located in the North-Central geopolitical zone between latitudes 7°45′N and 9°30′N and longitudes 2°30′E and 6°25′E. The state covers approximately 36,825 km² and shares boundaries with Niger State to the north, Kogi State to the east, Ekiti, Osun, and Oyo States to the south, and the Republic of Benin to the west. Kwara State experiences a tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons, annual rainfall ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 mm, and average temperatures of 25–35°C, providing favourable conditions for agricultural production. According to the 2022 population projection by the National Population Commission, the state has an estimated population of about 3.6 million people. Agriculture is the main livelihood of the rural population, with the cultivation of crops such as maize, cassava, yam, rice, sorghum, and sweet potato. The predominance of farming households and the state's favourable agroecological conditions make it an

appropriate setting for investigating the utilisation of Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) among farming households. The population of the study were all orange fleshed sweet potato farmers in Asa Local government Area of Kwara State.

A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 120 respondents for the study. Stage1: six wards were selected from Asa Local Government Area using simple random sampling. Stage 2: two communities were randomly selected from each of the selected wards, giving a total of twelve communities. Finally, 10 respondents were randomly selected from each community. This resulted in a total sample size of 120 respondents

Results and discussion

Sex

The result shows that 62% of the respondents were male while 38% were female, indicating that farming activities in the study area were male-dominated. This pattern mirrors the wider structure of Nigerian agriculture, where men conventionally dominate primary production activities, land control, and decision-making, while women are more often engaged in processing and marketing roles. This collaborates the findings of Adeyonu et al. (2019), who attributed the pattern to customary land tenure systems and the physically demanding nature of certain farm operations that favour male participation.

Age

The mean age of the respondents was 40 years, with the majority (70.0%) falling within the 26–45 years bracket. This suggests that the respondents were largely within the economically active and productive age range, a stage typically associated with greater physical strength, risk tolerance, and receptiveness to innovation. This collaborate the findings of Daudu et al. (2023) similarly found that farmers within the active age bracket were more likely to participate in productivity-enhancing farming programmes in Nigeria.

Marital status

The majority of respondents (78.33%) were married, while single, divorced, and widowed respondents constituted smaller proportions. Marriage is often associated with greater access to household labour, as spouses and children commonly contribute to farm activities. This finding is consistent with Tanko et al. (2023), who reported that married household heads were more likely to be food secure and productive, partly due to the pooling of family labour and resources.

Education level

Most respondents (68.33%) had attained secondary education, while 22.50% had tertiary education, and only 1.67% had no formal education. This suggests a moderately literate farming population capable of understanding and adopting improved agricultural information and technologies.

Household size

The result reveals that more than half of the respondents (52.5%) had household sizes above 7 persons, with a mean household size of about 8 persons. Large household sizes are common among Nigerian smallholder farmers and are frequently associated with the availability of family labour for farm operations, thereby reducing dependence on hired labour.

Years of farming experience

Farming experience ranged widely, with 45.0% of respondents having more than 9 years of experience and a mean of about 5 years overall. Farming experience is an important proxy for accumulated tacit knowledge. This collaborate the findings of Oyetunde-Usman and Olagunju (2021) reported that farming experience significantly determines the extent of improved technology adoption among Nigerian smallholders.

Farm size

Farm size distribution shows that 43.33% of respondents cultivated between 6 and 10 acres, confirming that the study area is dominated by smallholder farm operations. This is consistent with the broader characterization of Nigerian agriculture as smallholder-dominated.

Income from farming

The majority of respondents (57.50%) earned between ₦31,001 and ₦50,000 from farming, with a mean farm income of about ₦34,955. This relatively modest income level reflects the general low-productivity, low-income character of smallholder farming in Nigeria, where poverty remains widespread among farming households. (FAO, 2019).

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Sex			
Male	75	62.0	
Female	45	38.0	
Age (years)			
Below 25	17	14.17	
26 – 45	84	70.00	40
Above 46	19	15.83	
Marital Status			
Single	7	5.83	
Married	94	78.33	
Divorced	14	11.67	
Widowed	5	4.17	
Education Level			
No formal education	2	1.67	
Primary	9	7.50	
Secondary	82	68.33	
Tertiary	27	22.50	
Household Size			
Less than 3	17	14.17	
4 – 6	40	33.33	
Above 7	63	52.50	8 persons
Years of Farming Experience			
Less than 5	19	15.83	
6 – 9	47	39.17	
Above 9	54	45.00	5 years
Farm Size (Acre)			
Less than 5	35	29.17	
6 – 10	52	43.33	
11 – 15	33	27.50	
Income from Farming (₦)			
11,001 – 30,000	6	5.00	
31,001 – 50,000	69	57.50	34,955
Above 50,001	45	37.50	

Source: field survey 2023

Awareness of the Nutritional Benefits of orange fleshed sweet potato

Table 2 presents farmers' awareness of the nutritional benefits of OFSP, The statement that OFSP is a biofortified crop developed to improve nutritional outcomes with mean score (0.7833), followed closely by awareness that OFSP contribute to food and nutrition security with mean of 0.7667, rich in Vitamin A with a mean of (0.6583) and regular consumption of OFSP can help prevent Vitamin A deficiency with mean (0.5833) were the main top awaearness of statement from respondents on OFSP.

Table 2: Awareness of the nutritional benefits of orange fleshed sweet potato

S/N	Awareness Statement	Aware (%)	Not Aware (%)	WMS	Rank
1	I am aware that OFSP is a biofortified crop developed to improve nutritional outcomes	78.33	21.67	**0.7833**	**1**
2	I am aware that OFSP can contribute to food and nutrition security	76.67	23.33	**0.7667**	**2**

S/N	Awareness Statement	Aware (%)	Not Aware (%)	WMS	Rank
3	I am aware that orange-fleshed sweet potato is different from the common white-fleshed sweet potato	65.83	34.17	**0.6583**	**3**
4	I am aware that orange-fleshed sweet potato is rich in Vitamin A	58.33	41.67	**0.5833**	**4**
5	I am aware that regular consumption of OFSP can help prevent Vitamin A deficiency	49.17	50.83	**0.4917**	**5**
6	I am aware that OFSP helps to boost the immune system	48.33	51.67	**0.4833**	**6**
7	I am aware that OFSP contributes to improved eye health	31.67	68.33	**0.3167**	**7**
8	I am aware that OFSP is beneficial for children's growth and development	31.67	68.33	**0.3167**	**8**
9	I am aware that OFSP can be processed into various food products such as flour, bread, biscuits, and porridge	20.83	79.17	**0.2083**	**9**
10	I am aware that OFSP can contribute to improved household nutrition	10.00	90.00	**0.1000**	**10**

Source: field survey 2023

Sources of Information on orange fleshed sweet potato

Table 3 reveals the sources of information on OFSP. The Table shows that Extension agents 84.17% was the highest source through which farmers heard of OFSP, Followed by Farmers Group 83.33% and private organizations/research institution 86% and ICT 64.17% ranked third and fourth respectively. This is consistent with Owolabi & Yekinni, 2022 Which affirms that extension personnel remain the primary and most trusted link between research findings and farm-level practice despite persistently high farmer-to-agent ratios that limit personal contact.

Table 3: Sources of information orange fleshed sweet potato

INFORMATION SOURCES	Frequency	Percentage (%)
EXTENSION AGENTS	101	84.17
FARMERS GROUP	100	83.33
PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS	86	71.67
RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	77	64.17
ICT/ SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS	72	60.00

Source: field survey 2023

Perceived nutritional benefit of OFSP

Table 4 presents farmers' perceived nutritional benefits of OFSP, The reaveals that OFSP in household diets improves dietary diversity with weighted mean score (WMS = 2.25) was ranked first, followed by the perception that OFSP is a healthy food for pregnant and lactating women with mean of (2.17) was ranked second while OFSP provides essential nutrients needed for good health with mean (2.17) and The belief that OFSP helps build the immune system were ranked third and fourth respectively. This pattern, in which general health claims are more readily accepted than specific physiological claims, echoes findings from Kwara State, where farmers demonstrated only moderate knowledge of the health

and socioeconomic benefits of OFSP despite favourable overall attitudes toward the crop (Adebisi et al., 2023).

Table 4: Perceived Nutritional Benefit of Orange fleshed sweet potato

S/N	Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	WMS	Rank
1	Including orange-fleshed sweet potato in household diets improves dietary diversity	55.0	30.0	15.0	**2.25**	**1**
2	Orange-fleshed sweet potato is a healthy food for pregnant and lactating women	50.0	33.3	16.7	**2.17**	**2**
3	Orange-fleshed sweet potato provides essential nutrients needed for good health	48.3	31.7	20.0	**2.17**	**3**
4	Orange-fleshed sweet potato is more nutritious than many other staple food crops	50.0	37.5	12.5	**2.13**	**4**
5	OFSP helps to build immune system	50.8	39.2	10.0	**2.12**	**5**
6	Orange-fleshed sweet potato contributes to improved eyesight	45.0	35.0	20.0	**2.10**	**6**
7	Orange-fleshed sweet potato is a rich source of Vitamin A	46.7	40.8	12.5	**2.06**	**7**
8	Orange-fleshed sweet potato is an important source of beta-carotene	40.0	38.3	21.7	**2.02**	**8**
9	Orange-fleshed sweet potato can help reduce malnutrition among vulnerable groups	30.0	28.3	41.7	**2.02**	**9**
10	OFSP is a high source of dietary protein	36.7	40.0	23.3	**1.97**	**10**

Source: field survey 2023

Findings from table 5 showed a significant relationships between the farmers's age, household size, farm size, and years of farming sweet potato and perceived nutritional benefit derived from the consumption of orange flesh sweet potato in the study area. Therefore these selected socio-economic characteristics however affects perceived nutritional benefit derived among farmers in the study.

Table 5: Test Showing Relationship between Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Orange Flesh Sweet Potato Farmers and Level of Production. (PPMC)

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Age	**.24**	**.00**	**S**
Household size	**-.42**	**.00**	**S**
Marital status	**.93**	**.13**	**NS**
Farm size	**-.20**	**.00**	**S**
Years of farming	**-.59**	**.00**	**S**
Years of farming potato	**-.23**	**.00**	**S**

Source: field survey 2023

Conclusion

The study concludes that smallholder farmers in Kwara State generally have favourable perceptions of the nutritional benefits of Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP), although their knowledge is uneven across different nutritional attributes. Farmers were more aware of OFSP's general benefits than its specific health and nutritional advantages.

Recommendation

Extension agencies and other stakeholders should intensify targeted awareness campaigns that emphasize the specific nutritional and health benefits of OFSP. Research institutions and NGOs should also collaborate with local extension agents to ensure information dissemination is sustained and reaches vulnerable groups most in need of nutritional improvement.

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EFFECT OF AGRO-ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT ON FOOD SECURITY STATUS OF FARM HOUSEHOLDS IN IBARAPA ZONE OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of agro-ecosystem management practices on the food security status of farm households in the Ibarapa Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria. Sustainable agro-ecosystem management has been recognized as an important approach for improving agricultural productivity, conserving natural resources, and enhancing household food security. However, the adoption of these practices among rural farmers remains limited due to socio-economic and institutional constraints. A descriptive survey research design was employed, and data were collected from 180 farm households selected through a multistage sampling technique across Eruwa, Lanlate, and Igboora communities. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Foster–Greer–Thorbecke (FGT) food security indices, and Probit regression analysis. The findings revealed that the average age of respondents was 43 years, with a mean farm size of 2.7 hectares, while only 37.78% and 42.78% had access to extension services and credit, respectively. Slightly more than half (53.89%) of the respondents adopted agro-ecosystem management practices. Terracing (WMS = 3.72), organic manure application (WMS = 3.67), and integrated pest management (WMS = 3.60) were the most frequently adopted practices, whereas agroforestry, climate-resilient crop cultivation, and shifting cultivation recorded relatively low adoption. Probit regression results showed that household size negatively influenced food security ($\beta = -0.2806$; $p < 0.01$), while agro-ecosystem management utilization ($\beta = 0.0625$; $p < 0.01$), farm size ($\beta = 0.5337$; $p < 0.01$), and monthly income ($\beta = 0.000149$; $p < 0.01$) had significant positive effects on household food security. The study concludes that agro-ecosystem management practices significantly improve the food security status of rural farm households in the Ibarapa Zone. It recommends strengthening agricultural extension services, improving farmers' access to affordable credit and subsidized production inputs, and promoting training on climate-smart and sustainable agro-ecosystem management practices to enhance adoption and improve household food security.

Keywords: *Agro-ecological, Management Practice, Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Household, Food Security*.

Introduction

Production of agricultural products is still an integral part of food security, especially among the rural communities where increases population have made it increasingly necessary to practice sustainable approaches that guarantee food availability and access. The term agro-ecosystems management, which entails the integration of approaches for managing agricultural lands without disrupting ecological balance, plays a vital part in ensuring increased agricultural productivity, biodiversity conservation, and minimizing environmental degradation (Adepoju and Yusuf, 2012).. This is very important in regions like Ibarapa in southwestern Nigeria, where environmental factors like climate variability, soil degradation, deforestation, and water shortages pose a danger to agriculture.

Agro-ecosystems management through techniques like terracing, integrated pest management, crop rotation, agroforestry, and fertilization of soils organically has been widely recommended as an affordable and sustainable way of enhancing agricultural productivity and household food security (Altieri, 1995; Gliessman, 2014). However, adoption of these techniques in the research setting is not yet universal and even uneven: while some farmers adopt well-known and affordable techniques like

terracing and mulching, the more knowledge and capital-intensive innovations like agroforestry, climate-resistant farming, and landscape planning have not been sufficiently embraced. Agricultural activities form a significant economic activity in the southwestern part of Nigeria, where rural households are faced with problems of land degradation, low agricultural output, and climatic variations, thereby influencing food security (Adepoju and Yusuf, 2012). Agro-ecosystems management through techniques like crop diversification, soil fertility improvement, agroforestry, integrated pest management, conservation agriculture, and sustainable water use have been identified as a viable approach towards solving the problem (Altieri, 1995; Gliessman, 2014).

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), food security is when all individuals can access adequate amounts of quality food continuously to meet their nutritional needs (FAO, 1996). Despite this explanation of food security, food insecurity remains a significant challenge amongst many rural communities in Nigeria as a result of lack of access to production resources, poor infrastructure, and environmental degradation (World Bank, 2019). The issue of food insecurity is still rife among small-scale farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa, owing to the challenges faced such as low soil fertility, lack of access to technology, and low financial capital, which affect their agricultural productivity and food security (IFPRI, 2021). Food security is one of the most pressing development issues in rural Nigeria, especially considering the fact that small-scale agriculture activities serve as a livelihood source to many rural farming families. The situation is not much different in Southwestern Nigeria where food security is affected by soil infertility, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and degradation of the soil. Despite several efforts by the government and other donors to increase agricultural productivity, food insecurity still persists, leading to lower meal frequencies, and chronic anxiety over food availability among rural households (FAO, 2021; IFPRI, 2020).

Problem statement

Food security remains one of the major developmental challenges in Nigeria despite various measures that the government has taken to boost agriculture in order to raise the standard of living of its people. The small-scale farmers, who make up the bulk of the rural population, depend heavily on the natural environment for crop production, and therefore are very vulnerable to environmental degradation, soil erosion, erratic rainfall, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and even climatic changes. These challenges have resulted in poor agricultural production and food insecurity among the farming community in places like Ibarapa Zone of Oyo State (FAO, 2023; IFAD, 2023).

It has been recognized that the management of agro-ecosystems is sustainable in terms of increasing the agricultural productivity without harming the natural resources. Agro-ecological practices such as crop rotation, agro-forestry, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, soil fertility improvement, mulching, terracing and water management have shown their efficacy for enhancing soil quality, agricultural productivity and food security in the household level (Altieri, 1995; Gliessman, 2015; FAO, 2023). However, the adoption of these practices among the smallholder farmers in Nigeria has been low due to inadequate technical knowledge, weak extension services, lack of financial resources, insecure land tenure, labor shortage, and costly nature of the implementation of these practices.

Ibarapa Zone is an agricultural community within Oyo State whereby farming households are mainly dependent on rain-fed agricultural production, but the continued environmental problems such as soil infertility, land degradation, irregular rainfall, bush burning, and unsustainable farming practices keep decreasing the level of agricultural production and worsening food security problems of households. Though many researches have been conducted on the issue of food security, climate change adaptation, and sustainable agriculture in Nigeria, empirical studies related to the effect of agro-ecosystem management practices on the food security status of rural farm households especially in the Ibarapa Zone are still few. This lack of information impedes the development of location-based policies and

interventions that could help in achieving sustainable agriculture and food security. Therefore, this study sought to explore the effect of agro-ecosystem management practices on the food security status of rural farm households in the Ibarapa Zone of Oyo State by first understanding the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, agro-ecosystem management practices used, and finally their effects on household food security status.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ibarapa Local Government Area, located in the southwestern part of Oyo State, Nigeria. The area is predominantly agrarian, with major towns including Eruwa, Lanlate, and Igboora. It has a tropical climate with distinct wet (April–October) and dry (November–March) seasons, an average annual rainfall of 1,200–1,500 mm, and temperatures ranging from 22°C to 34°C,

A descriptive survey research design was adopted to assess the current state of agro-ecosystem management practices and their effect on food security among farm households. The population of the study comprised farm households in Ibarapa Local Government Area, including both male and female household heads actively engaged in farming. A multistage sampling technique was employed: Ibarapa Local Government Area was purposively selected because of its agrarian character and the prevalence of food insecurity; three communities Eruwa, Lanlate, and Igboora were then randomly selected; and simple random sampling was used to select a final sample of 180 farm households across the three communities.

Method of data analysis

The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive Statistics like Frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents and their agro-ecosystem management practices. Inferential Statistics FGT and probit regression analysis were used to determine the relationship between agro-ecosystem management practices and food security among farm households.

Probit model specification

The households under FGT indices were categorized into food secure and food insecure households. From such kind of data, the appropriate model is Probit model because ordinary linear regression would produce biased estimation as a result of violations of the assumptions of the econometric model. Probit model employs the normal cumulative distribution function to estimate the probability of occurrence of an event. The dependent variable shows Yes/No variable.

From the regressors X_i, our aim is to represent P ($y^i = 1 / x_i$) as conditional distribution.

The model is written as:

$Pi = B_0 + \beta_i X_i + e_i \ldots \ldots$

Where;

$\boldsymbol{P_i}$ *= 1 if the household is food secure 1 and 0 if otherwise.*

$\boldsymbol{X_i}$ *= Vector of explanatory variables*

$\boldsymbol{\beta_i}$ *= Slope or coefficients , i = 0,1, 2, …*

$\boldsymbol{e_i}$ *= Independently distributed error term i = number of households = 1 , 2 ,3*

The probability of being food insecure is related to the following independent variables explicitly *slated as:*

X_1 = *Age of household head (in years)*

X_2 = *Sex of household head (1 if male, 0 if otherwise)*

X_3 = *Household size (number of person)*

X_4 = *Level of education*

X_5 = *Agro-ecosystem utilization (1 if used, 0 if not used)*

X_6 = *Farm size (Ha)*

X_7 = *Farming experience (years)*

X_8 = *Monthly income (amount in naira)*

Results and discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The mean age of respondents was 43 years, with 38.33% above 50 years and 25.56% aged 30 years or younger, indicating that household heads were within their active farming age. Male respondents (58.33%) outnumbered females (41.67%), reflecting the dominant role of men in farming decisions in the study area. Regarding marital status, 28.89% were single, 25.00% married, 21.67% divorced, and 24.44% widowed. Polygamous households (51.67%) slightly outnumbered monogamous households (48.33%), with an average household size of six persons. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed among Muslims (33.89%), Christians (32.78%), and Traditionalists (33.33%). Farming was the primary occupation for 30.56% of respondents, while others engaged in artisan work (27.78%), civil service (23.33%), and trading (18.33%). About 21.11% had no formal education, while only 17.78% attained tertiary education. Approximately 35% had fewer than five years of farming experience, while 27.77% had more than fifteen years (mean of 10.6 years). Most respondents (36.11%) cultivated 2–3 hectares, with a mean farm size of 2.7 hectares, and only 14.45% cultivated more than five hectares.

Only 37.78% of respondents had access to extension services, and 42.78% had access to credit, indicating substantial institutional and financial constraints. Land was predominantly inherited/family land (27.78%) or rented (26.11%), with only 23.33% of respondents owning their land outright. More than half (55.55%) earned less than ₦40,000 monthly, limiting capacity to invest in capital-intensive practices, although low-cost options such as mulching and composting remained feasible. Slightly more than half of respondents (53.89%) practiced some form of agro-ecosystem management, suggesting moderate but constrained adoption.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Economic Characteristics

Socio-economics	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Mean**
Age			
≤ 30 years	46	25.56	
31–40 years	39	21.67	
41–50 years	26	14.44	
Above 50 years	69	38.33	43 years
Sex			
Male	105	58.33	

Female	75	41.67	
Household size			
1–5	85	47.22	
6–10	75	41.67	6 persons
11–15	20	11.11	
Farming experience (years)			
1–5	63	35.00	
6–10	39	21.67	
11–15	28	15.56	
Above 15	50	27.77	10.6 years
Farm size (hectare)			
≤ 1	56	31.11	
2–3	65	36.11	
4–5	33	18.33	
Above 5	26	14.45	2.7 ha
Access to extension			
Yes	68	37.78	
No	112	62.22	
Access to credit			
Yes	77	42.78	
No	103	57.22	

Source: Field survey, 2025.

Frequency of Utilization of Agro-Ecosystem Practices

Weighted mean scores show that terracing (WMS = 3.72) was the most intensively used practice, followed by organic manure application (3.67) and integrated pest management (3.60), highlighting farmers' reliance on affordable, locally available inputs and pest control. Intercropping (3.51) and crop rotation (3.46) remained popular for requiring little external input while improving soil fertility. Conservation tillage (3.42) and alley cropping (3.34) showed moderate adoption, while cover cropping (3.25), improved varieties (3.20), and mulching (3.18) reflected medium-level usage constrained by limited technical know-how. Compost (2.89), irrigation (2.77), and agroforestry (2.70) recorded lower scores due to high labour or capital demands, while landscape-level planning (2.63), ridge-and-furrow farming (2.58), and climate-resilient crops (2.45) were poorly utilized due to inadequate training and input. Shifting cultivation (2.33) was the least used, confirming its decline as land scarcity renders the practice unsustainable.

Table 2: Frequency of Utilization of Agro-Ecosystem Management Practices (Selected)

Agro-ecosystem Management	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always	WMS	Rank
Terracing	12 (6.7)	20 (11.1)	34 (18.9)	65 (36.1)	49 (27.2)	3.72	1st
Organic manure application	15 (8.3)	22 (12.2)	34 (18.9)	66 (36.7)	43 (23.9)	3.67	2nd

Agro-ecosystem Management	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always	WMS	Rank
Integrated Pest Management (IPM)	15 (8.3)	20 (11.1)	38 (21.1)	64 (35.6)	43 (23.9)	3.60	3rd
Intercropping	18 (10.0)	24 (13.3)	41 (22.8)	59 (32.8)	38 (21.1)	3.51	4th
Crop rotation	16 (8.9)	26 (14.4)	42 (23.3)	59 (32.8)	37 (20.6)	3.46	5th
Conservation tillage	20 (11.1)	25 (13.9)	40 (22.2)	60 (33.3)	35 (19.5)	3.42	6th
Alley cropping	22 (12.2)	28 (15.6)	40 (22.2)	55 (30.6)	35 (19.4)	3.34	7th
Cover cropping	28 (15.6)	30 (16.7)	38 (21.1)	55 (30.6)	29 (16.0)	3.25	8th
Use of improved varieties	27 (15.0)	29 (16.1)	39 (21.7)	52 (28.9)	33 (18.3)	3.20	9th
Mulching	25 (13.9)	27 (15.0)	40 (22.2)	55 (30.6)	28 (15.6)	3.18	10th
Integrated crop-livestock management	28 (15.6)	31 (17.2)	42 (23.3)	50 (27.8)	29 (16.1)	3.12	11th
Compost	30 (16.7)	35 (19.4)	36 (20.0)	47 (26.1)	32 (17.8)	2.89	12th
Irrigation techniques	35 (19.4)	30 (16.7)	42 (23.3)	47 (26.1)	26 (14.5)	2.77	13th
Agroforestry	38 (21.1)	36 (20.0)	41 (22.8)	43 (23.9)	22 (12.2)	2.70	14th
Landscape-level planning	42 (23.3)	38 (21.1)	40 (22.2)	37 (20.6)	23 (12.8)	2.63	15th
Ridge and furrow farming	45 (25.0)	36 (20.0)	38 (21.1)	35 (19.4)	26 (14.5)	2.58	16th
Climate-resilient crop cultivation	50 (27.8)	39 (21.7)	37 (20.6)	33 (18.3)	21 (11.7)	2.45	17th
Shifting cultivation	52 (28.9)	41 (22.8)	36 (20.0)	30 (16.7)	21 (11.7)	2.33	18th

Source: Field survey, 2025.

Effect of Agro-Ecosystem Management Practices on household Food Security status

Probit regression analysis examined the determinants of food security among respondents. The result revealed that household size, farm size, agro-ecosystem utilization and monthly income significantly influenced food security levels in the study area.

Household size had a negative and significant effect (β=-0.28062, P<0.008). This implying that households with large household size are likely to be food insecure.

Agro-ecosystem management utilization was positively correlate with food security status and significant at 1% level (β=0.062472, P<0.009). This result reveals that agro-ecosystem management has the likelihood of improve food security status of rural households. Farm size was significant at 1% level of significance (β=0.533678, P<0.004).and has positive relationship with household food security status. This implies that farmers with big farm size have high likelihood to be food secure. Also, household income was significant at 1% level of significance (β = 0.0001496, P<0.000).and has positive relationship with food security status. This means that households with high income are more likely to be food secured. In conclusion, agro-ecosystem management has positive effect on rural household food security.

Table 3: Effect of Agro-Ecosystem Management Practices on household Food Security status

Food Security Status	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Age	-0.213482	0.234928	-0.31	0.362
Sex	-1.034469	0.462044	1.60	0.109
Household Size	-0.280620	0.09896	-2.83	0.008***
Level of Education	0.117390	0.214918	-0.55	0.538
agro-ecosystem management practices	0.062472	0.0291299	2.14	0.009***
Farm Size	0.533678	0.1857529	2.87	0.004***
Years of Experience	-1.261199	0.8171211	-1.54	0.123
Monthly Income	0.000149	0.000379	3.94	0.000***
Constant	-11.50328	3.799589	3.03	0.002

$R^2 = 0.672$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.659$, F-statistic = 51.34, Prob (F-statistic) = 0.000

*** *significant at 1% level.*

Conclusion and recommendations

The study concludes that agro-ecosystem management practices play a significant role in improving food availability, soil fertility, and income generation among farm households in Ibarapa Zone. However, adoption remains moderate and uneven, with farmers favouring traditional, low-cost, and accessible practices over capital- and knowledge-intensive innovations. Based on the findings. The study recommended that Government and non-governmental organizations provide subsidized inputs, including improved seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation kits, to reduce the cost burden of adopting agro-ecosystem management practices. Rural households should endeavor to practice agro=ecosystem management.

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ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF PALM KERNEL NUT PROCESSING AMONG FARMERS IN IBARAPA EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study analyzed the economics of palm kernel nut processing with the view of examining the profitability of palm kernel processing, identifying various palm kernel products and examining the constraints militating against palm kernel processing among farmers in Ibarapa East Local Government area of Oyo State. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview schedule to select 120 respondents through multistage sampling techniques. The first stage was random selection of six wards, second stage was purposive selection of four villages out of the six wards, third stage was purposive selection of six farming household from each village making 144 respondents but 24 respondents were not detailed. The mean age of the respondents was 49.4 years, 65.83% were female, majority (68.91%) were married. The mean household size was 5 persons, 71.67% were farmers and the mean farm size was 5.4 acres. The most common source of credit for financing palm kernel processing was cooperative (64.17%). This study also revealed that the most available palm kernel products in the study area were Palm kernel cake and palm kernel oil. It was revealed that average total variable cost (TVC) was ₦97286.15, while the average total fixed cost was ₦53,987.50; the average total cost (TC) was ₦151,273.65. The average total revenue (TR) received by the farmers was ₦197,509.20. The gross margin (GM) was 23.41%. This indicated that palm kernel is highly profitable in the study with profit (π) ₦46,235.55 per ton per week. The benefit cost ratio (BCR) was 1.31, this indicates 130% return on investment. It simply means that every ₦1 invested in palm kernel processing will bring ₦1.31k. The most common challenges facing farmers in the study area were High labor cost and limited access to finance. Effort should be made to attract investors to support the smallholders palm kernel farmers in order to improve their livelihood through access to credit, improved infrastructure, quality control, access to market and export funding.

Keywords: *Economic Analysis, farmers, Palm kernel Nut and Processing*

Introduction

The oil palm (Elaeis guineensis) is a legendary, famous and exemptional plant that was first cultivated in West Africa's tropical rain forest (Akinniran *et. al.*, 2013) with several economic uses (Sanusi *et. al.*, 2022). It is a palm species that serve as the sole source of palm related oils to humans (Owutuamor *et. al.*, 2019). Through its revenue-generating endeavors and value addition in its supply chain, it has the potential to promote economic growth, food security and livelihood (Owutuamor *et. al.*, 2019).

Palm oil and palm kernel are basically the primary product- of oil palm fruit processing with the latter particularly valuable because of the oil derived from it. (FAO, 2020). The palm kernel, contained within the nut of the oil palm fruit has emerged as a crucial raw material in the production of palm kernel oil (PKO), palm kernel cake (PKC), and other industrial inputs. The processing of palm kernel, therefore, occupies a pivotal role in the agricultural value chain, offering opportunities for income generation, employment, and industrial development (FAO, 2020). Palm kernel represents only 4 to 6 percent of the fresh fruit palm bunch and its only 10 to 15 percent of the value of the primary product of oil palm fruit processing (Okoli, 2003). A significant section of the rural population relies on palm oil as a key source of income and employment in Nigeria, where production has experienced significant fluctuations (Palm Oil Analytics, 2017; Owutuamor et al., 2019).

According to Ilori *et. al.*, 2017, there are three conventional methods used for extracting PKO from palm kernel. These include; Traditional, Solvent extraction and Mechanical extraction. The processing of palm kernel to extract PKO and PKC is done at small, medium and large scales levels in Nigeria. Ilori (2016) reported that this firms process production and some innovation capabilities.

The maximization of farmers' net farm income and wealth is generally acknowledged to be one of the main goals of value addition (Shashi et al., 2017). Expanding the activities in value adding processes is crucial if they are to take advantage of economies of scale and avoid producing merely to benefit participants in their supply chains downstream. Furthermore, the lack of good roads in potential high-producing areas, high labor costs in oil palm processing, and a lack of the necessary infrastructure for credit facilities and the processing of oil palm have all seriously hampered value addition processes (Nwalieji and Ojike, 2018). A thorough understanding of the economics behind processing can help bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern agro-industrial systems, thereby enhancing productivity and competitiveness in both domestic and export markets (Nzeka, 2014). This study aims to evaluate the economic performance of palm kernel processing enterprises in Nigeria, assess profitability and return on investment, and identify constraints and opportunities within the value chain. Through quantitative analysis and field-based data, the research will contribute to evidence-based policy formulation and strategic investments aimed at revitalizing Nigeria's oil palm sub-sector.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to analyze the economics of palm kernel nut processing with the view of examining the profitability [cost and returns] of palm kernel processing, identify various palm kernel products in the study area and examining the constraints militating against palm kernel processing among farmers in Ibarapa East Local Government area of Oyo State.

Literature review

A study by Afolabi (2017) found that the cost of raw materials, labor, and energy were the major cost components of palm kernel processing in Nigeria. Another study by Ogunwusi (2015) found that the profitability of palm kernel processing in Nigeria was influenced by the scale of production, cost of raw materials, and selling price of palm kernel oil. The cost structure of palm kernel processing includes the costs of raw materials, labor, energy, and processing (Ogunwusi, 2015). The cost of raw materials, particularly palm kernels, is the most significant component of the cost structure, accounting for up to 60% of the total cost (Afolabi, 2017).

A study by Oladejo (2015) on the economics of palm kernel processing in southwestern Nigeria found that the cost of raw materials accounted for 60% of the total cost, followed by labor costs (21%), and equipment maintenance costs (19%). The study recommended that processors adopt efficient processing techniques and negotiate better prices with suppliers to reduce costs.

Research in Ikwerre and Etche local government areas of Rivers State, Nigeria, found that improved labor productivity and efficient processing techniques can lead to higher gross margins. Similarly, a study in Ghana's Kwaebibirem district revealed that palm kernel oil production can be profitable, with a gross margin of 35.6% (Amusa *et. al.,* 2017). Gross margin analysis is a useful tool for evaluating the profitability of palm kernel processing. Studies have shown that the gross margin of palm kernel processing is influenced by factors such as the price of raw materials, labor productivity, and processing efficiency.

The profitability of palm kernel processing has been analyzed in several studies. Afolabi (2015) found that the profitability of palm kernel processing was influenced by the scale of production, cost of raw materials, and selling price of palm kernel oil. Another study by Sarku (2014) found that processing of palm kernel by small-scale producers had the ability to increase income, reduce rural unemployment, rural poverty, and wastages in oil palm processing.

Methodology

Study area

The study was carried out in Ibarapa East Local Government area and is classified as sub urban Local Government. It is bounded in the West by Ibarapa Central Local Government, in the East by Ido Local Government while it's bounded in the North and South by Iseyin and Odeda Local Government in Ogun State.

The Local Government has towns and villages. The economic life of the Local Government is dependent on Agriculture. The Local Government Areas has admirable tropical climate which favours the growth of both food and cash crops. The agricultural sector provides income and employment

opportunities for over seventy-five (75) percent of the populace. As a result of this, the Local Government encourages and facilitates agricultural empowerment and developmental initiatives. This explains why the area is a hub to so many Agro-Allied investments. Among the agro-allied companies located in the area are: Nico Oil Palm Plantation, Zartech, Global-West, Obasanjo farms among others.

Sampling procedure & sample size

A multistage sampling procedure was employed in selecting a total of 120 respondents that constitute the sample size for this study using appropriate statistical methods to ensure its representativeness and reliability of the findings**. 1st Stage:** Six wards were randomly selected**: 2nd Stage:** Purposive selection of four villages out of the six wards**: 3rd Stage:** Selection of six farm household from each village. 120 respondents were used for this study while the remaining 24 were not detailed using structured questionnaires and also interview schedule.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, such as means, frequencies, percentages and weight mean score. Also, gross margin and profitability were used to determine the cost and returns.

Model specification

Budgetary Technique

Estimating the profitability of palm kernel nut processing in the study area involved costs and returns analysis. The cost function is written as follows, using modifications from Obalola et al. (2017): π = TR – TC, π = Profit; TR = Total revenue from palm kernel nut processing; TC = Total cost of palm kernel nut processing

Gross margin analysis

$GM = \sum piqi - \sum rjxj$

Where GM= Gross Margin, P*i* = Unit Price of Output *i*, q*i* = quantity of output *i*, r_j = unit cost of variable input *j*, x_j = quantity of the variable input *j*, piqi = Total Revenue (TR) rjxj = Total Variable cost (TVC) ,GM = TR-TVC π = GM-TFC Where; π = Profit

Results and discussion

Socio- economic characteristics of the respondents

The socio- economic characteristics of the respondents were presented in table 1 below. The mean age was approximately 49 years. This implies that the farmers were still in their economic active age. The sex of the respondents revealed that majority 79 (65.83%) in the study area were female. The marital status of the respondents revealed that majority of the respondents, 82 (68.90%) were married. The mean household size was 5 persons. The educational level of the respondents revealed that more than half of the respondents, 68 (56.67%) had secondary school education. 71.67% of the respondents chose farming as their primary occupation. The mean years of experience was 16 years. The mean farm size was 5.4 acres. 77.50% of the respondents hired labor for agricultural activities. 64.20% received credit from cooperative society.

Table 1: Socio economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area

AGE (in years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Less or 40 years < 40	38	31.7		
41-50	27	22.5	49.4	13.5
51-60	31	25.8		
Above 60	24	20.0		
SEX				
Male	41	34.2		
Female	79	65.8		
MARITAL STATUS				
Single	8	6.7		
Married	82	68.9		
Divorced	10	8.4		

Separated	9	7.6		
Widowed	10	8.4		
RELIGION				
Christianity	65	54.2		
Islam	52	43.3		
Traditional worshippers	3	2.5		
HOUSEHOLD SIZE				
1-5 member	83	69.2		
6-10 member	37	30.8	5.0	1.4
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL				
Primary	15	12.5		
Secondary	68	56.7		
Tertiary	29	24.2		
Adult education	8	6.7		
YEARS OF EDUCATION				
Primary	23	19.2		
Secondary	68	56.7	11.3	3.6
Tertiary	29	24.2		
PRIMARY OCCUPATION				
Farming	86	71.7		
Artisans	15	12.5		
Civil services	7	5.83		
Trading & business	12	10.0		
YEARS OF FARMING EXPERIENCE (in years)				
1-10	19	15.8		
11-20	82	68.3	16.42	
21-30	19	15.8		4.97
SECONDARY OCCUPATION				
None	21	17.5		
Farming	29	24.2		
Artisans	42	35.0		
Civil servants	3	2.5		
Trading	25	20.8		
FARM SIZE (in acres)				
1-5	73	60.8		
6-10	47	39.2	5.41	1.61
LAND TENURE				
Purchase	4	3.3		
Family land	51	42.5		
Rented	44	36.7		
Communal	2	1.7		
Government	19	15.8		
SOURCE OF LABOR				
Family	4	3.3		
Hired	93	77.5		
Self	5	4.2		
Both family and Hired	18	15.0		
SOURCE OF CREDIT				
Family & friends	3	2.5		
Personal savings	37	30.8		
Bank loan	3	2.5		
Cooperatives	77	64.2		

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2. Processed palm kernel products in the study area

Table 2 below showed the palm kernel products being processed in the study area. 106 (88.33%) respondents produced palm kernel cake, 105 (87.50%) respondents produced palm kernel oil, 93(77.50%) respondents produced palm kernel meal while 13 (10.83%) respondents produced palm kernel butter. Majority of the respondents processed palm kernel products into palm kernel cake and palm kernel oil in the study area. This is similar to the study carried out by Aboaba *et. al.*, 2024 whose findings revealed that majority (72.50 %) of the palm kernel nut processors were into extraction of palm kernel oil and cake from palm kernel nuts in Ogun State, South West, Nigeria.

Table 2: Processed palm kernel products in the study area

Variables	Produced Freq. (%)	Not Produced Freq. (%)
Palm kernel cake	106(88.33)	14(11.67)
Palm kernel oil	105(87.50)	15(12.50)
Palm kernel meal	93(77.50)	27(22.50)
Palm kernel butter	13(10.83)	107(89.17)

Source: Field survey, 2024

ND : freq – frequency , % - percentage

Table 3. Gross margin and profitability analysis of palm kernel processing

Table 3 presented the result of gross margin and profitability analysis of palm kernel processing in the study area. It was revealed that average total variable cost (TVC) was ₦97286.1467, while the average total fixed cost was ₦53,987.5; the average total cost (TC) was ₦151,273.647.

The average total revenue (TR) received by the farmers was ₦197,509.2. This indicated that palm kernel is highly profitable in the study with profit (π) #46,235.553 per ton per week.

The benefit cost ratio (BCR) was 1.31, this indicates 130% return on investment. It simply means that every ₦1 invested in palm kernel processing will bring ₦1.31k.

This implies 31% profit margin on investment. It implies that for every ₦1 invested in the enterprise, ₦1.31 will be return to the enterprise. This makes the return on investment and shows that the enterprise is a profitable venture.

TC=TVC +TFC =97,286.1467+53,987.5=151,273.647

TR=197509.2

Gross margin= Gross Profit / Revenue x 100% =46,235.55/ 197,509.20 x100% = 23.41%

Profitability= TR – TC 197509.2 - 151,273.647 = 46,235.553

BCR= TR/TC 197509.2 / 151,273.647 = 1.31

This supports the work of Aboaba *et. al.*, 2024 who revealed that for every ₦1 invested in the enterprise ₦1.37 will be return to the enterprise. Also, Sanusi *et. al.*, (2022) revealed that for every ₦1.00 invested in palm oil processing enterprise, a net profit of one naira thirty-two kobo (₦1.32) was realized.

Table 4.3: Gross margin and profitability analysis of palm kernel processing

Variables	Average value (₦)/ ton/ week
Cost of equipment	43,800
Rent cost	10,187.5
TFC	**53,987.5**
Cost of palm kernel	76018.33
Cost of transportation	2129.167

Cost of processing	1495.833
Cost of milling	1348.333
Cost of labour	14697.5
Cost of packaging	1146.667
Marketing cost	450.3167
T.V.C	**97,286.1467**
Sales revenue (T.R)	**197,509.2**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Where: TVC= Total Fixed Cost, TFC= Total Variable Cost, TR= Total Revenue, TC= Total Cost, BCR= Benefit Cost Ratio

Constraints of Palm Kernel processing in the study area

High labor cost: This constraint was ranked 1st with a weighted mean score (W.M.S) of 2.37 with 60.83% of the respondents. **Limited access to finance** was ranked 2nd with a W.M.S of 2.28. with 59.17% respondents. **Storage and handling challenges:** This constraint was also ranked 2nd with a W.M.S of 2.28. **Inadequate infrastructure:** This constraint was ranked 3rd with a W.M.S of 2.08. **High cost of equipment maintenance**: This constraint was ranked 4th with a W.M.S of 1.99. **Dependence on imported equipment**: This constraint was ranked 5th with a W.M.S of 1.96. **Energy** cost: This constraint was ranked 6th with a W.M.S of 1.93. Limited market access: This constraint was ranked 6th with a W.M.S of 1.93.

Water scarcity was ranked 7th with a W.M.S of 1.28. Skilled labor shortages: was ranked 8th with a W.M.S of 1.05. Government policies and regulations: This constraint was ranked 9th with a W.M.S of 0.99. Environmental concern: This constraint was ranked 10th with a W.M.S of 0.79 Seasonal fluctuations: was ranked 11th with a W.M.S of 0.78. Limited research and development: This constraint was ranked 12th with a W.M.S of 0.48. Quality control issues: This constraint was ranked 13th with a W.M.S of 0.40

Table 4 Constraints of Palm Kernel processing in the study area

CONSTRAINTS	V. S.	S.	M.	N.C	W.M. S	RANK
High labor cost	73(60.83)	24(20.00)	17(14.17)	6(5.00)	2.37	1st
Limited access to finance	71(59.17)	25(20.83)	11(9.17)	13(10.83)	2.28	2nd
Storage and handling challenges	68(56.67)	26(21.67)	18(15.00)	8(6.67)	2.28	2nd
Inadequate infrastructure	60(50.00)	25(20.83)	19(15.83)	16(13.33)	2.08	3rd
High cost of equipment maintenance	48(40.00)	33(27.50)	29(24.17)	10(8.33)	1.99	4th
Dependence on imported equipment	51(42.50)	30(25.00)	23(19.17)	16(13.33)	1.96	5th
Energy cost	46(38.33)	34(28.33)	26(21.67)	14(11.67)	1.93	6th
Limited market access	50(41.67)	29(24.17)	23(19.17)	18(15.00)	1.93	6th
Water scarcity	32(26.67)	8(6.67)	41(34.17)	39(32.50)	1.28	7th
Skilled labour shortages	17(14.17)	19(15.83)	37(30.83)	47(39.17)	1.05	8th
Government policies and regulations	19(15.83)	11(9.17)	40(33.33)	50(41.67)	0.99	9th
Environmental concern	9(7.50)	19(15.83)	30(25.00)	62(51.67)	0.79	10th
Seasonal fluctuations	9(5.70)	20(16.67)	27(22.50)	64(53.33)	0.78	11th
Limited research and development	0(0.00)	6(5.00)	46(38.33)	68(56.67)	0.48	12th
Quality control issues	0(0.00)	5(4.17)	38(31.67)	77(64.17)	0.40	13th

Source: Field Survey 2024 **Note: values in parentheses are percentages**

V.S= Very severe: 2.1-3.0, S= Severe: 1.1-2.0 M= Mild: 0.5-1.0, N.C= Not a constraint: 0-0.49

W.M.S = Weighted mean score

Conclusion

The respondents were in their economic active age who are majorly female. Most of the respondents were married with mean household size of 5 members and their major occupation was farming with average farming experience of 16 years with mean farm size of 5.4 acres and most of them hired labor for agricultural activities.

Major processed palm kernel products in the study area were palm kernel cake and palm kernel oil.

The average total revenue (TR) received by the farmers was ₦197,509.2. This indicated that palm kernel is highly profitable in the study with profit (π) #46,235.553 per ton per week. The benefit cost ratio (BCR) was 1.31, this indicates 130% return on investment. It simply means that every ₦1 invested in palm kernel processing will bring ₦1.31k. This makes the return on investment and shows that the enterprise is a profitable venture.

The most common constraints faced by the respondents were high labor cost, limited access to finance, storage and handling challenges and inadequate infrastructure.

Recommendation

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

1. Promote value addition activities, such as processing and packaging, to increase the value of palm kernel products.

2. Effort be made to attract investors to support the smallholders in order to improve their livelihood and export funding.

3. High labor cost, limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, seasonal fluctuations, quality control issues, limited market access were the registered constraints faced by the palm kernel nut processors. The study there recommends that processors be provided the avenue to access credit which can be used to scale up their operations.

4. Also, a strong advocacy that is capable of attracting investors be implemented. This is expected to enhance production and help solve the demand and supply gap met via importation.

5. Develop markets for palm kernel products to increase demand and profitability.

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CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF YIELD TRAITS OF DRUM COWPEA [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp] VARIETY

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Abstract
The study assessed traits correlation in Drum Cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp] *based on the quantitative characters measured across 3 blocks. The study was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora during the late season (September) of 2025. Field experiment was laid out in Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with three replication of Drum Cowpea variety spaced 60cm x 45cm. Data were collected on growth and quantitative characters; number of branches per plant, number of days to flowering, plant height at flowering, number of peduncle per plant, number of pod per peduncle, number of seeds per pod, number of days to maturity and grain yield per plant. These were subjected to Pearson's correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics showed that plant height had the highest variability (CV = 54.99%) while days to maturity was the most stable (CV = 0.17%). Grain yield per plant ranged from 99.92 g to 125.23 g with a mean of 109.63 g and a moderate CV of 12.35%. Correlation analysis revealed that grain yield per plant was strongly and positively correlated with pods per plant (r = 0.90) and days to 50% flowering (r = 0.87). Strong negative correlations were observed between grain yield and pods per peduncle (r = -0.84) and pod length (r = -0.79). Perfect negative correlations were also found between plant height and seeds per pod (r = -1.00), and between days to maturity and peduncles per plant (r = -1.00). The results suggested that selection for increased pods per plant and appropriate flowering time will be effective for improving grain yield in Drum Cowpea.*

Keywords: *Drum, Cowpea, correlation, variability, grain yield.*

Introduction

Cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.] is a food and animal feed crop grown in the semi-arid tropics covering Africa, Asia, Europe, the United States, and Central and South America. The name cowpea" probably derives from when it was an important livestock feed for cows in the United States. (IITA, 2026).

It originated and was domesticated in Southern Africa and later moved to East and West Africa and Asia, valued for its high protein content and drought tolerance. The grains contain 25% protein and several vitamins and minerals. The plant tolerates drought, performs well in a wide variety of soils, and as a legume replenishes low fertility soils when the roots are left to decay. It is grown mainly by small-scale farmers in developing regions where it is often cultivated with other crops as it tolerates shade. It also grows and covers the ground quickly, preventing erosion.

Cowpea's high protein content, its adaptability to different types of soil and intercropping systems, its resistance to drought, ability to improve soil fertility and prevent erosion makes it an important economic crop in many developing regions. The sale of the stems and leaves as animal feed during the dry season also provides a vital income for farmers. (IITA, 2026).

All parts of the cowpea crop are used because they are rich in nutrients and fiber. In Africa, humans consume its young leaves, immature pods, immature seeds, and the mature dried seeds. The stems, leaves, and vines are used as animal feed and often stored for use during the dry season. Fifty-two percent of Africa's production is used for food, 13% as animal feed, 10% for seeds, 9% for other uses, and 16% is wasted. Regional preferences occur for the different seed size, colour texture of seed coat. For example, Ghanaians are willing to pay a premium for black-eyed peas, while Cameroonians would lower their prices for them. More than 4 million tons of peas of various sorts are consumed worldwide, with 387,000 tons consumed in Africa .(IITA, 2026).

The Drum variety is widely cultivated in Nigeria for its early maturity and adaptability. Yield is a complex trait influenced by several component factors such as number of branches, flowering time, plant height, pod number, and pod length.

Several studies have reported significant correlations among yield and yield components of cowpea. (Singh *et al*., 2003) revealed that number of pods per plant and pod length had positive and significant correlation with grain yield. (Omo-Ikerodah and Fawole, 2008) reported that early flowering and increased number of branches contributed to higher yield in cowpea genotypes.

Plant height at flowering has been associated with biomass accumulation, which indirectly affects yield (Aremu *et al*., 2015). Number of peduncles per plant determines pod bearing capacity and had been identified as a key yield determinant (Gerrano *et al*., 2015).

Despite these reports, correlation varies with genotypes and environments. Hence, variety- with specific correlation studies such as this on 'Drum' is necessary to guide local breeding and selection decisions.

Understanding the relationship among these traits and their direct association with yield is critical for effective selection in breeding programs. Correlation analysis provides insight into preferable traits that can be used as indirect selection criteria to improve yield. However, information on trait associations specifically for the Drum variety under local conditions in the studied environment is limited.

Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the correlation among 10 agronomic traits and identify traits that are most closely associated with grain yield in Drum cowpea variety in Igboora.

Materials and methods

The research was carried out at the Teaching and Research farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora (OYSCATECH), Igboora during the late season (September) of 2025.

The experimental site was prepared mechanically by ploughing and harrowing. The cowpea seeds were obtained at farmers' shop in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria. The field experimental laid out was arranged in a Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with 3 replications of Drum Cowpea varieties spaced 60cm x 45cm. Two seeds per hole were sown at a depth of 2 cm on the field. Each replicate consisted of plants grown under uniform agronomic practices. The following cultural activities were carried out:

Weeding: This was carried out by regular weeding on the experimental plot to ensure maximum growth of crops and reduce the infestation of pest and disease-pathogens that may be harboured by these weeds.

Spraying: Spraying of cypermetrin 10% EC was done to prevent the infestation of pests. Five (5) plants were selected in each plot for data collection considering border effects.

Agronomic data were collected at flowering stage with proper monitoring.

Data were collected on quantitative characters; number of branches per plant, number of days to flowering, plant height at flowering, number of peduncle per plant, number of pod per peduncle, number of seeds per pod, number of days to maturity and grain yield per plant. All data collected were subjected to Pearson's correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. Correlation coefficients (r) were computed among all pairs of traits. Significance was tested at 5% and 1% probability levels.

Results and discussion

Results

Correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship among 10 quantitative traits in Drum Cowpea. Pearson's correlation coefficients among the traits are presented in Table 1.

Grain yield per plant showed a strong positive correlation with number of pods per plant (r = 0.90) and days to 50% flowering (r = 0.87). Number of branches per plant also had a moderate positive association with grain yield (r = 0.72), while days to maturity showed a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.59).

Conversely, grain yield exhibited strong negative correlations with pods per peduncle (r = -0.84) and pod length (r = -0.79). Plant height and peduncles per plant showed moderate negative associations with

yield, with r = -0.48 and r = -0.59, respectively. Number of seeds per pod gave a weak positive correlation with yield (r = 0.48).

Among other traits, plant height was perfectly negatively correlated with number of seeds per pod (r = -1.00). Days to maturity was perfectly negatively correlated with peduncles per plant (r = -1.00) and strongly negatively correlated with pod length (r = -0.99). Pod length was also strongly negatively correlated with pods per plant (r = -0.99) and days to flowering (r = -0.91). Pods per plant showed a very strong positive correlation with number of branches (r = 0.97).

The descriptive statistics for the 10 traits are presented in Table 2. Plant height gave the highest variability with a CV of 54.99% and a range of 53.8 cm, while days to maturity were the most stable trait with a CV of 0.17%. Grain yield per plant ranged from 99.92 to 125.23 g with a mean of 109.63 g and a CV of 12.35%, indicating moderate phenotypic variation that are suitable for selection.

Discussion

The correlation results provided an insight into trait associations that can guide selection for yield improvement in Drum Cowpea. The strong positive correlation between grain yield per plant and pods per plant (r = 0.90) indicated that pod number is a key yield component. This is in agreement with previous studies of cowpea; Owusu *et al*., 2021 and Basavaraj *et al.*, 2026 that reported grain yield (GWT) positively and significantly correlated with number of pods per plant.

The positive association between days to 50% flowering and grain yield (r = 0.87) suggested that genotypes flowered slightly later tended to produce higher yields in this environment. However, breeders should balance this with the need for earliness to escape terminal drought.

The strong negative correlation between pods per peduncle and grain yield (r = -0.84) indicates a possible source-sink limitation where genotypes with too many pods concentrated on a single peduncle may experience pod abortion or poor seed filling, leading to reduced yield. Similarly, the negative correlation between pod length and yield (r = -0.79) suggests that selection for very long pods may not necessarily translate to higher grain yield per plant.

The perfect negative correlation between plant height and seeds per pod (r = -1.00) and between days to maturity and peduncles per plant (r = -1.00) highlight strong trait trade-offs that should be considered in breeding programs.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, direct selection for increased pods per plant and optimal flowering time is likely to result in genetic gains for grain yield in Drum Cowpea. However, attention should be paid to pod distribution on peduncles to avoid yield penalties. Multi-location testing with larger population sizes is recommended to confirm these associations and to obtain statistically robust estimates.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation Matrix for 10 Traits of Drum Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp)

TRAITS	NOBRANCH	DAYFLOWER	PLTHEIGHT	PEDUNCLE/PLT	POD/PEDUNCLE	POD/PLT	NOSEED/POD	LENGHT POD	DAYSMATURITY	GRAIN YIELD/PLT
NOBRANCH	1.00	0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.87	0.97	0.87	-0.71	0.71	0.72
DAYFLOWER	0.50	1.00	-0.02	-0.87	-0.50	0.71	0.50	-0.91	0.87	0.87
PLTHEIGHT	-0.73	-0.02	1.00	0.08	0.93	-0.90	-1.00**	0.50	-0.02	-0.48

PEDUNCLE/PLT	-0.50	-0.87	0.08	1.00	0.33	-0.87	-0.08	0.99*	-1.00**	-0.59
POD/PEDUNCLE	-0.87	-0.50	0.93	0.33	1.00	-0.97	-0.93	0.71	-0.33	-0.84
POD/PLT	0.97	0.71	-0.90	-0.87	-0.97	1.00	0.90	0.99*	0.87	0.90
NOSEED/POD	0.87	0.50	-1.00**	-0.08	-0.93	0.90	1.00	-0.50	0.08	0.48
LENGHT POD	-0.71	-0.91	0.50	0.99*	0.71	-0.99*	-0.50	1.00	-0.99*	-0.79
DAYS MATURITY	0.71	0.87	-0.02	-1.00**	-0.33	0.87	0.08	-0.99*	1.00	0.59
GRAIN YIELD/PLT	0.72	0.87	-0.48	-0.59	-0.84	0.90	0.48	-0.79	0.59	1.00

* = significant at P<0.05, ** = significant at P<0.0

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for 10 traits in Drum Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp)

Traits	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Std Dev	CV (%)
NOBRANCH	4.27	4.0	4.4	0.4	0.23	5.40
DAYFLOWER	35.73	35.6	36.0	0.4	0.23	0.65
PLTHEIGHT	49.27	25.0	78.8	53.8	27.09	54.99
PEDUNCLE/PLT	13.00	12.2	13.6	1.4	0.72	5.52
POD/PEDUNCLE	2.33	2.0	2.6	0.6	0.31	13.14
POD/PLT	30.33	27.2	32.4	5.2	2.65	8.73
NOSEED/POD	11.33	9.0	14.0	5.0	2.52	22.22
LENGHT POD	11.49	10.44	12.20	1.76	0.90	7.85
DAYS MATURITY	66.67	66.6	66.8	0.2	0.12	0.17
GRAIN YIELD/PLT	109.63	99.92	125.23	25.31	13.53	12.35

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Acknowlegdements
The management of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Nigeria is appreciated through the physical planning unit for the support in provision of land.

COMPOST: A REVIEW OF PRODUCTION PROCESSES, NUTRIENT PROFILES, AND AGRONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

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Abstract
Compost production is an important practice that involves the decomposition of organic materials like; plant residues, animal manures, kitchen wastes, and other biodegradables to produce nutrient-rich organic fertilizer. Recently, there have been, increasing concerns on soil degradation, declining soil fertility, and environmental pollution caused by excessive chemical fertilizers use. Hence, this calls for urgent attention for sustainable fertility management practices. Compost production is therefore, the best option with environmental sustainability for improving soil health and crop productivity. Compost plays a significant role in improving soil structure, soil organic matter, and enhancing the availability of essential nutrients for plant growth. It also promotes microbial activity in the soil, water retention capacity, and maintain long-term soil fertility. In addition, compost production enhances proper waste management by recycling waste materials that would have accumulated in the environment. Through composting process, wastes are converted into valuable soil amendments for sustainable farming. This paper reviewed the concept, processes, methods, and importance of compost production in agriculture and its environmental sustainability. It also highlights the role of compost in soil fertility management, crop performance and sustainable farming. It further considered the environmental benefits of composting, waste reduction and improved ecosystem health. Conclusively, compost production is the best practice for sustainable production, and its adoption should be encouraged among resource poor farmers to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers, and promote environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *Compost, Organic Matter, Soil Fertility, Sustainable Agriculture.*

Introduction

Background of the study

Soil fertility is a fundamental factor that determines agricultural productivity and food security across the world. In many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, soil fertility has been declining due to continuous cultivation, poor soil management practices, erosion, and the excessive use of chemical fertilizers. These challenges have led to reduced crop yields and increasing concerns about the sustainability of agricultural systems. As a result, there is a growing interest in environmental and sustainable fertility management practices that demands for compost production.

Compost production involves the controlled biological decomposition of organic materials into a stable and nutrient-rich product that can be applied for soil quality improvement and productivity (Zhang *et al.*, 2023). During the composting process, microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi are responsible for breakdown of organic matter with controlled conditions of moisture, aeration, and temperature. This biological activity transforms raw materials into a dark, crumbly, and nutrient-rich substance known as compost. The resulting product contains essential nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, as well as organic matter that improves soil structure and fertility (Bernal *et al.*, 2023). Compost production in agriculture has become increasingly important as farmers seek alternatives to chemical fertilizers. Although, utilization inorganic fertilizers supply immediate nutrients need to crops, their continuous and excessive use gave rise to soil degradation, nutrient imbalance, and environmental pollution. Compost, also, improves soil fertility in a more sustainable way by enhancing soil organic matter, nutrient retention, and supporting beneficial soil microorganisms. According to Chen *et al.*, (2024), the application of compost significantly improves soil physical properties such as soil aggregation, water infiltration, and moisture retention, that are essential for healthy plant growth. In addition to soil fertility improvement, compost production also plays a critical role in waste management and environmental protection. Composting provides an option for recycling waste materials and converting them into useful agricultural inputs. Through compost production, wastes that would have accumulated in landfills can be transformed into valuable organic manure that supports

sustainable crop production (*Singh et al., 2022*). More so, compost production enhances the improvement of soil biological activity which invariably plays a vital role in nutrient cycling, organic matter decomposition, and plant health. Compost incorporates introduces beneficial organisms into the soil and ensures a favorable environment for their survival. These organisms help break down organic materials and release nutrients in forms that plants can easily be absorb. As a result, soils amended with compost tend to have higher biological activity and improved soil health compared to soils treated with chemical fertilizers (Liu et al., 2023). In Nigeria and many other developing countries, compost production has gained increasing attention as a low-cost and sustainable approach to improving soil fertility and agricultural productivity. Many smallholder farmers rely on locally available organic materials such as farmyard manure, crop residues, and household wastes for compost production. By adopting compost production practices, farmers can reduce their dependence on expensive chemical fertilizers while improving soil fertility and crop yield (Ogunlade *et al.*, 2022). Despite the numerous benefits of compost production, its adoption among farmers is still relatively low in many regions due to lack of awareness, inadequate knowledge of composting techniques, and labor requirements associated with the composting process. Many farmers are also unaware of the long-term benefits of compost application in maintaining soil fertility and improving crop productivity. Therefore, there is the need to promote awareness and encourage the adoption of compost production as an essential component of sustainable agricultural practices.

Statement of the problem

Soil fertility decline is a major challenge affecting agricultural productivity in many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. Continuous cultivation of land without adequate soil nutrient replacement has resulted in the depletion of essential nutrients required for crop growth. Many farmers depend heavily on chemical fertilizers to improve crop yield; however, the excessive and uncontrolled use of these fertilizers has contributed to soil degradation, nutrient imbalance, and environmental pollution. Over time, this practice reduces soil organic matter and negatively affects soil structure, thereby limiting the long-term productivity of agricultural lands (Adekiya *et al.*, 2022). In addition to soil fertility decline, the improper disposal of waste materials has become an increasing environmental concern. Large quantities of plant residues, animal manure, kitchen waste, and market wastes are generated daily in rural and urban areas. These wastes are often dumped indiscriminately in open spaces or landfills where they contribute to environmental pollution, unpleasant odors, and the release of greenhouse gases. This practices not only create sanitation problems but also led to the loss of valuable organic resources that could otherwise be recycled into useful soil amendments through compost production (Singh *et al.,* 2022). Many farmers lack adequate knowledge of composting techniques, the benefits of compost application, and the role it plays in enhancing soil health and crop productivity. As a result, waste materials that could be used for compost production are often underutilized, while soils continue to experience fertility decline. This situation calls for the need to examine the role of compost production in sustainable agriculture and to promote greater awareness of its importance in improving soil fertility and environmental sustainability (Chen *et al.,* 2024).

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this paper is to examine the role of compost production in improving soil fertility, crop productivity, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. The specific objectives of this paper are to; examine the concept of compost and its production in relation to sustainable agriculture, identify the different organic materials in compost production and their roles in soil fertility improvement. It also discusses the various methods and processes in compost production, examine the effect of compost in soil properties improvement.

Justification of the study

The importance of compost production in modern agriculture cannot be overemphasized, especially in the context of declining soil fertility and increasing environmental challenges. Many agricultural soils have experienced significant nutrient depletion due to continuous cropping, poor soil management practices, and erosion. As a result, crop productivity has declined in many farming communities. Compost production provides an effective and sustainable solution to this problem by improving soil organic matter and supplying the essential nutrients required for plant growth. The use of compost helps

restore soil fertility, improve soil structure, and enhance the overall productivity of agricultural lands (Adekiya *et al.,* 2022). Another reason is the increasing environmental problems associated with improper waste disposal. Huge quantities of wastes are generated from households, markets, farms, and food processing industries are often poorly managed. Compost production offers a sustainable waste management strategy by converting waste materials into valuable organic fertilizer. Through composting, waste materials are recycled and reused in agricultural production, thereby reducing environmental pollution and promoting sustainable resource management (Singh *et al.,* 2022). In addition, promoting compost production will help reduce farmers' dependence on chemical fertilizers, which are often expensive and cause negative environmental effects when used excessively. Compost are natural and environmentally friendly alternative that improves soil fertility while maintaining ecological balance.

This paper focuses on the role of compost production in improving soil fertility, enhancing crop productivity, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. It also reviewed the concept, processes, and methods of compost production as well as the types of materials for composting and the effect of compost to soil physical, chemical, and biological properties for sustainable farming.

Concept of compost

Compost can be defined as a biologically stable, humus-like material resulting from the controlled decomposition of organic materials by microorganisms under aerobic (oxygen-rich) conditions. In essence, it is the end product of composting, a natural recycling process where bacteria, fungi, and sometimes invertebrates break down organic wastes into a nutrient-rich soil amendment that improves soil structure, fertility, and moisture retention. Composting transforms organic inputs (crop residues, food scraps, yard wastes, and animal manures) into a dark, crumbly product with high organic matter and essential plant nutrients (carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus) that support plant growth and soil health. This transformation relies on microbial activity, balanced moisture levels, aeration, and optimal carbon-to-nitrogen ratios to function efficiently (Bernal *et al.,* 2023). The composting process is fundamentally anaerobic biochemical decomposition. As aerobic microorganisms metabolize organic compounds, release heat, carbon dioxide, and water, gradually breaking down complex carbon structures like cellulose and lignin into simpler compounds and ultimately into stable organic matter (humus). Compost is valued not merely for nutrient content but also for its ability to increase soil organic matter, enhance soil structure, facilitate water infiltration, and support beneficial microbial life in the soil ecosystem. In contemporary sustainable agriculture and waste management, composting plays a critical role in closing nutrient cycles and reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers. By recycling organic wastes into valuable soil amendments, composting aligns with principles of circular economy and sustainable resource utilization. In addition, traditional on-farm applications, research recently focused on optimizing compost quality and process efficiency through technological innovations and microbial amendments (Zhang *et al.,* 2023).

Types of compost materials

Compost materials are broadly categorized based on their nutrient composition, physical properties, and role in the decomposition process. The primary distinction among compost materials is between carbon-rich "browns" and nitrogen-rich "greens." Browns include dry, carbon-dominant materials such as dry leaves, straw, wood chips, shredded paper, and cardboard. These materials provide energy and structure to the compost pile but decompose more slowly due to their high carbon content. Greens, on the other hand, comprise nitrogen-rich inputs like fresh grass clippings, kitchen scraps, vegetable and fruit wastes, coffee grounds, and green plant residues. Nitrogen is essential for the rapid growth and reproduction of composting microorganisms, facilitating faster organic matter breakdown. Maintaining an appropriate carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio often around 25:1 to 30:1 is critical for efficient composting and to avoid odors or slow decomposition. Beyond these, compost materials also include bulking agents such as straw, wood chips, or co-composted bark that improve aeration and porosity in dense feedstocks (e.g., sewage sludge, fine food waste) (Singh *et al.,* 2022). Bulking agents ensure that oxygen can penetrate the mixture effectively, supporting aerobic microbial processes. Other specialized feedstocks include manures from livestock, which are rich in nitrogen and micronutrients, and biosolids from municipal wastewater treatment, which may need structural admixtures to balance moisture and texture. Some modern composting systems also integrate biochar, earthworm bedding (vermi

composting), and even microbial inoculants to tailor nutrient release profiles and enhance final compost quality. Compost additions aim to increase nutrient availability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and accelerate decomposition (Chen *et al.*, 2024). In waste management practices, selecting appropriate compost materials and balancing their proportions is crucial not only for compost quality but also for process efficiency, environmental safety, and economic viability.

Compost production process

Generally, composting involves four essential phases: preparation of feedstocks, active decomposition, curing, and maturation. Each phase is governed by physical, chemical, and biological factors critical to the success of the process.

1. Feedstock Preparation: Before composting commences, materials are collected, sorted, and prepared. Preparation often involves resizing the inputs (e.g., shredding wood chips, chopping plant residues) to increase surface area and promote microbial access. An appropriate mixture of carbon-rich and nitrogen-rich materials is formulated to achieve a desirable carbon-to-nitrogen ratio, commonly around 25:1 to 30:1. Moisture content is adjusted to support microbial activity without creating anaerobic conditions.
2. Active Composting: Once the feedstock mix is established, microorganisms begin the decomposition process. Aerobic microbes metabolize organic compounds, producing heat, carbon dioxide, and water. This resulted in rising temperature within the compost mass, often entering mesophilic (moderate) and thermophilic (high temperature) phases. Temperature in the thermophilic phase (50–70°C and above) accelerate decomposition and help reduce pathogens and weed seeds. During this phase, careful management of moisture, aeration, and pile structure is essential, as excessive moisture or compaction can restrict oxygen flow and hinder microbial activity.
3. Curing Stage: As decomposition slows and temperatures decline, the compost enters the curing stage. In this phase, slower-growing microbes continue the breaking down of more resistant organic compounds, leading to further stabilization of the material. Curing enhances the formation of stable humus and reduces potential phytotoxicity.
4. Maturation and Harvest: During maturation, compost stabilizes into a final product with dark color, earthy smell, and nutrient availability. Mature compost is screened to remove oversized particles and impurities. Quality testing (e.g., nutrient content, pathogen levels) ensures that the compost meets safety and performance standards before application. Overall, the compost production process is adaptable to various scales from backyard piles to industrial windrow or in-vessel systems and is central to sustainable organic waste management and soil fertility enhancement.

Methods of compost production

Compost production can be achieved through several established methods that vary in scale, technology level, and management intensity. The major composting methods used globally includes windrow composting, aerated static pile composting, in-vessel composting, and vermicomposting. Windrow composting is one of the most widely adopted methods in agriculture and organic waste recycling, especially on farms and at community compost facilities. In this method, organic materials such as crop residues, manure, or green wastes are formed into long, narrow piles (windrows) that are periodically turned to introduce oxygen, redistribute moisture, and ensure even decomposition. Turning also helps regulate temperature peaks and pathogen reduction. Windrow systems are especially suitable for large volumes of compostable materials and require low technology, though they are labor-intensive and may take longer to mature compared to more controlled systems. Aerated static pile composting (ASP) uses forced aeration through perforated pipes or ducts to maintain aerobic conditions without frequent turning. This method can be implemented in outdoor beds or enclosed spaces and is effective in reducing odors and emissions while ensuring efficient microbial activity. ASP systems are often used where land area is limited or when processing wet, dense waste streams like manure or biosolids (Singh *et al.*, 2022). In-vessel composting involves enclosing organic wastes in drums, silos, or reactors where conditions such as temperature, moisture, and airflow are closely monitored. This controlled environment accelerates composting, enhances pathogen kill-off, and shortens the processing time, making it suitable for urban or industrial settings with space and time constraints. Vermicomposting utilizes earthworms (e.g., Eisenia fetida) to biologically break down organic materials. The worms and associated microbes accelerate decomposition and produce worm castings that are exceptionally rich in

nutrients and beneficial soil microbes. Vermicomposting is particularly effective for kitchen wastes and small-scale applications and yields a highly stable, fine compost product (Ogunlade *et al.,* 2022). Other methods include bokashi fermentation, which uses microbial inoculants to ferment food waste before further decomposition, and community composting systems that combine several techniques to manage neighborhood organic waste (Liu *et al.,* 2023). Each composting method has advantages and limitations. The choice depends on available resources, scale of waste generation, environmental concerns (e.g., emissions), and desired compost quality. Proper selection and management of the compost production method is essential for maximizing nutrient retention and producing a high-quality organic soil amendment (Liu et al., 2023).

Compost and its nutrient composition

Compost provides both macronutrients and micronutrients that are essential for plant growth, soil fertility, and overall crop productivity. The major nutrients commonly measured in compost are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), often referred to collectively as NPK, but also contains secondary nutrients (e.g., calcium, magnesium, sulfur) and trace micronutrients (e.g., iron, zinc, manganese, copper) that support plant metabolic functions. The composition of compost varies depending on the feedstock materials, composting conditions, and methods used. For example, composts derived from kitchen wastes, farmyard manure, or mixed agricultural residues typically contain total nitrogen values in the range of approximately 1.2– 1.8%, while phosphorus and potassium contents can vary widely but often fall within 0.1–2.0% based on material sources and treatment conditions (Singh *et al.,* 2022). During composting, organic matter undergoes mineralization and humification. Microorganisms convert complex organic N into plant-available forms such as ammonium and nitrate, while phosphorus and potassium become more soluble and accessible to plants. The composting method influences nutrient dynamics: aerobic methods tend to reduce carbon losses and help retain nitrogen, whereas anaerobic conditions often lead to greater nutrient losses through leaching or volatilization (Zhang *et al.,* 2023). Research has shown that mature composts not only supply primary nutrients but also improve soil cation exchange capacity (CEC), organic carbon levels, and microbial biomass. These enhancements improve soil structure, water retention, and nutrient cycling, contributing to sustained soil fertility (Singh *et al.,* 2022).

Role of compost in soil fertility and crop production

Compost plays a pivotal role in enhancing soil fertility by improving both its physical and chemical properties. At the physical level, compost increases soil porosity, aeration, and water-holding capacity, which in turn reduces erosion and enhances root penetration. The organic matter in compost forms aggregates that stabilize soil structure, preventing compaction and allowing better infiltration of rainwater. Such improvements are particularly significant in sandy or degraded soils, where nutrient retention is otherwise poor (Zhang *et al.,* 2023). Chemically, compost supplies essential nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in both immediate and slow release forms, providing a balanced nutrient profile that promotes healthy plant growth. Beyond macronutrients, compost contributes secondary nutrients (calcium, magnesium, sulfur) and trace elements (zinc, manganese, iron, copper) that are crucial for plant enzymatic activities and metabolic functions (Kumar *et al.,* 2022). The humic substances in compost also enhances cation exchange capacity (CEC), enabling soils to hold more nutrients and release them gradually to plants, reducing the risk of leaching and environmental contamination. Additionally, compost improves microbial activity in soils, fostering a diverse and resilient soil microbiome. Beneficial microbes decompose organic matter further, fix nitrogen, solubilize phosphorus, and suppress soil-borne pathogens. This biological enrichment is particularly important in sustainable agriculture systems, where minimizing chemical fertilizer use is a priority (Singh *et al.,* 2023). By combining these physical, chemical, and biological effects, compost not only replenishes nutrient-depleted soils but also maintains long-term fertility. Its application can transform marginal lands into productive agricultural areas, supporting both smallholder and commercial farming. Consequently, compost is recognized as a cornerstone of integrated soil fertility management and a sustainable alternative to synthetic soil amendments.

Compost significantly influences crop production by supplying essential nutrients, enhancing soil conditions, and promoting plant health. As a nutrient-rich organic amendment, compost delivers both macronutrients (N, P, K) and micronutrients in bioavailable forms, which improves crop growth, yields,

and quality (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2022). Unlike chemical fertilizers, compost releases nutrients slowly, providing a sustained nutrient supply throughout the crop growth cycle. The humic acids and fulvic acids in compost also improve soil structure and nutrient uptake, resulting in stronger root systems and enhanced resistance to water stress.

Recent studies, had shown that crops grown with compost-amended soils demonstrated higher biomass, improved fruit and grain quality, and better resilience to environmental stresses compared to crops solely grown with synthetic fertilizers (Chandra *et al.*, 2023). In addition, compost supports soil microbial communities that interact with plant roots, promoting nutrient cycling, and producing plant growth promoting substances, and suppressing pathogens. This biological synergy reduces the need for chemical pesticides and enhances crop health naturally..

Environmental Impact of Compost Production

Compost production has far-reaching environmental benefits that extend beyond soil fertility and crop productivity. First, it contributes to waste management and reduction by recycling organic residues from households, farms, and agro-industrial processes. Converting biodegradable waste into compost diverts materials from landfills, thereby reducing methane emissions, leachate formation, and environmental pollution (Rahman *et al.*, 2022). Secondly, composting reduces the dependence on chemical fertilizers, which are associated with greenhouse gas emissions during production and nutrient leaching into water bodies. By substituting organic amendments for synthetic inputs, composting mitigates the environmental impact of agriculture, including soil acidification, eutrophication, and groundwater contamination (Mohan *et al.*, 2023). Compost also enhances carbon sequestration in soils. Humic substances and stabilized organic matter in compost can persist in soils for years, storing carbon and helping to reduce atmospheric CO_2 levels. This makes composting a valuable strategy in climate change mitigation. Additionally, compost improves soil water retention and reduces surface runoff, minimizing soil erosion and sedimentation in rivers and lakes (Singh and Verma, 2023). From an ecosystem perspective, composting encourages biodiversity by supporting soil microbial communities, insects, and earthworms, which collectively improve nutrient cycling and soil health. Properly managed composting systems thus contribute to environmental sustainability, resource efficiency, and ecological resilience. Overall, compost production aligns with the principles of circular economy and sustainable agriculture, providing both agronomic and environmental benefits.

Conclusion and recommendations

Compost production is a sustainable agricultural practice that enhances soil fertility, crop productivity, and environmental protection. By converting organic waste into nutrient-rich amendments, it reduces dependence on chemical fertilizers, improves soil structure, and supports microbial activity. Composting also contributes to waste management and greenhouse gas reduction, aligning with sustainable farming practices.

Farmers should adopt compost production to improve soil fertility and crop yields. Governments should support organic farming initiatives. Agricultural extension agents need to educate farmers on composting techniques. Further research is necessary to optimize compost production efficiency and quality.

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VARIETAL AND PLANTING MATERIALS EFFECT ON YIELD OF YAM

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Abstract

The use of quality planting materials is crucial to improving the growth and yield performance of yam varieties. This study assessed the influence of varietal and planting materials on yield of yam. Two yam varieties were utilized; (Discorea alata and Discorea rotundata), each of this variety were cut into two sets: Discorea alata: (Akuabata minituber Yam (AMNYa) and Vine yam (VWYa) and Discorea rotundata (Super Micro Yam (SMicYr) and Super Akosu Minituber (SMnYr). These four setts were used to produce planting seed in the planting season and use for cultivation in the next planting season. The four materials (VWYa, AMYa, SMicYr and SMnYr) were cultivated using Randomized Complete Block Design replicated four times. The yield parameter taken were; plant emergence (%) at two months after planting (2 MAP), Number of stands at harvest, Tuber count at harvest and weight of tubers at harvest T/ha and analyzed using ANOVA. D. alata varieties produced gave higher proportion of yams compared to that D. rotundata varieties and gave the performance trend of VWYa > AMYa and SMicYr > SMnYr respectively. The use of setts techniques especially vine and micro should be considered for yam seed production and Discorea rotundata is thus recommended to farmers for bigger tuber yam production in the region.

Keyword: *Influence, Planting Materials, Yield, Yam varieties*

Introduction

Yam (*Dioscorea spp.*) is an important staple food crop in sub-Saharan Africa and a major source of carbohydrates, dietary fiber, and essential minerals for millions of people. Globally, yam production is concentrated in West Africa, which accounts for about 95% of the world's total output, with Nigeria contributing nearly 67% (FAO, 2022). The crop is central not only to food and nutrition security but also to income generation, cultural identity, and rural livelihoods. In many yam-producing communities, yam is associated with prestige, used in traditional rites, and celebrated in annual yam festivals, highlighting its socio-economic and cultural importance (Asiedu and Sartie, 2010).

Yams are typically propagated vegetative using tuber sets, and their performance varies considerably depending on the genetic characteristics of the variety, soil fertility, climatic conditions, and management practices. Growth parameters such as vine length, number of leaves, stem girth, and leaf area index are critical indicators of photosynthetic efficiency, biomass accumulation, and ultimately, tuber yield (Ile *et al*., 2006). Different yam varieties also show variable tolerance to biotic stresses such as yam mosaic virus, anthracnose, nematodes, and insect pests, as well as abiotic stresses including drought and poor soil fertility (Mignouna *et al*., 2003).

The high cost of seed yam tubers (SYTs) has reduced yam production by 40%, given a total for as much as 63% of the total variable cost of yam production (Palemo *et al.* , 2018). Seed yam tubers sorted from the previous harvest, seeds from the second harvest, and setts generated from table-size tubers (ware yam; tubers weighing above 500 g) have been used to obtain planting materials for yam propagation among farmers.

Farmers often cut tubers into setts to meet their seed needs. The sett multiplication ratio is low for yam (1: 10) compared with other root tuber crops Asiedu *et al.* (2003). In cassava and sweet potato, food organs are not used as propagules. However, the demand for yam tubers both as planting materials and as a food source is critical. However, there are indications that yam has excellent prospects for

alleviating Africa's projected food deficit in the 21st century if efforts are made to identify and overcome its SYT constraints. Therefore, there is a need to improve methods that will increase the amount of SYT produced yearly, ensuring availability and affordability.

To address this challenge, the yam minisett technique (YMT) was developed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Nigeria (Aighewi *et al.* , 2015; Okoro, 2008). The primary aim of the technique is to increase the quantity and quality of seed tubers available to farmers. This development were based on the principle that any tuber section cut into small pieces/minisetts can develop buds and sprout, provided it has a portion of the periderm (Aighewi *et al.* , 2015). Aside from YMT, other techniques have been deployed for SYT production; these include the aeroponics system, in vitro propagation, Temporary Immersion Bioreactor System, Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponics, and vine-cutting techniques, among others. Among these techniques, YMT is most applicable at the farmers' level.

Yam farming in Ibarapa has a long history, and the crop remains central to both subsistence and commercial agriculture. Despite this, yield levels often fall below potential due to reliance on traditional production practices and limited information on the performance of yam varieties in the area. Given the ecological importance of Ibarapa as a yam-producing zone, assessing the growth performance of different yam varieties as influenced by planting materials is crucial. Such studies will provide scientific data on varietal adaptability, growth vigor, and potential productivity under the prevailing environmental conditions. This will help farmers optimize variety selection, choice of planting materials thereby promote food security, and strengthen the economic role of yam in the region. Therefore, this study aim to evaluate varietal and planting materials effect on yield of yam Ibarapa land.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted at the Teaching and Research Farm of the Faculty of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Nigeria. The site was located on latitude 6° 20′ N and longitude 50° 40′ E, and was on an elevation of 500 ft above sea level. The location is characterized by a humid tropical climate. It has a mean annual rainfall of 1762 mm and daily temperature of 26.40℃. It lies within the rainforest agro-ecological zone in Southern Nigeria.

The experimental field was cleared and prepared manually. Mounds were constructed at a spacing of 1m × 1m. Yam seed of varying weighst were planted on the mounds at the onset of the rainy season of 2025. Each plot consisted of ten mounds per treatment replicated four times using Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD), with borders separating plots to minimize edge effects. The soil samples were collected with soil auger at a depth of 0-30cm. The soil was air-dried and sieved with 2mm sieve and sent to the laboratory for physical and chemical analyses

Experimental materials

Planting Materials (Yam Varieties): Two improved yam varieties were obtained from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). These varieties were cut into (micro and mini sett), The setts produced were planted to produce seeds in 2024 planting season and the seeds were then planted in 2025 for the experiment.

White yam, (*Discorea alata*) had two planting materials; (Akuabata minituber (AMNYa) and Vine water yam (VWYa)) while water yam (*Discorea rotundata*) also had two planting materials: (Super microtubers (SMYr) and Super minitubers (SMYra) respectively.

Preparation of experimental materials minisetts were generated from selected non-dormant yam tubers weighing between 100 and 400 g. These seed tubers were screened for nematodes and rot during selection to ensure quality. The weights of cut minisetts were determined using a sensitive weighing balance, ensuring a ratio of 1:1 to 1:2 for the cut surface to the periderm area. Generated minisetts were loosely bagged using a net bag to avoid bruising and then treated with Mancozeb 80% WP (Ethylene Bis-dithiocarbamate) applied at 200 g/L of water. Karate CS (lambda-cyhalothrin) was used at 20 mL/L for 10 min. Setts were air-dried in a cool, dry place for 24 hr.

Crop management practices

Routine management practices such as weeding, staking, and pest control was carried out uniformly across all plots. Staking was done two weeks after sprouting using bamboo stakes to support vine

growth. Weeding was carried out manually at regular intervals. Pesticides were applied when necessary to control insect pests, and no chemical fertilizer was used to avoid bias in varietal performance.

Data collection

Yield estimate:

Yield parameters (number of stands harvested, total weight of tubers harvested per plot, number of tubers, and plant emergence) were collected and evaluated at harvest.

i. Number of stands harvested: The total number of plant stands per variety with yam tubers at harvest.
ii. Tuber count at harvest: Total number of tubers harvested per plant in a plot at harvest.
iii. Weight of tubers at harvest: The measured weight of the tubers harvested per variety per plot at harvest (measured in g).

Data Analysis

The collected data were subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) appropriate for a Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD). Significant treatment means was separated using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test at a 5% probability level. Statistical analysis was conducted using software such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Result

The result obtained from Table 1, on plants emergence (sprouts) shown two months after planting among the four planting materials considered showed that the highest percentage of plant emergence was recorded by VWYa. In the trials conducted for this study, all the planting materials used demonstrated over 70% sprouting even with small seeds.

The performance of VWYa was significantly higher than other materials evaluate while SMnYr gave the least. The result further indicated that *Discorea alata* did better than *Discorea rotundata* (VWYa and AMYa > SMicYr and SMnYr).

At harvest, the use of VWYa gave the highest number of plant stands, which was significantly higher than other materials while the use of SMnYr gave least number of plant stand at harvest.

From table 2, the number of tubers obtained at harvest was highest in VWYa plots and significantly higher than others. Similarly, the tuber weight recorded by the planting materials was significantly influenced. The use of VWYa gave the highest tuber weight (45.8t/ha) followed by AMYa (37.6t/ha) and SMicYr (25.7t/ha) respectively while SMnYr gave the least (22.6t/ha). Similarly treatments VWYa and AMYa are better than SMicYr and SMnYr. The above observation indicated that minisett technology holds promise by enhancing the significant deficit of seed yam, which exceeds 70%, contributing to improved production and yield (Aighewi *et al.* , 2015).

The use of mini and macro setts led to yield increases, the yield did not proportionately increase with tuber harvested. Information on varietal responses to this technique, including different seed material produced per variety and Size, is valuable for farmers in addressing low productivity and adoption challenges associated with the initial transfer of YMT to farmers. Genotypes with desirable traits, such as early plant emergence, field establishment, early tuber initiation, and short tuber dormancy periods, were significant contributors to yam's tuber yield. *(D. rotundata)* with reduced size produced the highest percentage of plant emergence (%).

A general overview of plant emergence at the different timelines indicated that *D. alata* performed better than *D. rotundata.* The improved lines of both species were also found to have performed better. It also suggested that *D. rotundata* performs better for number of tubers production than *D. alata.* Similarly, *Discorea alata* variety produced higher tuber weight compared to *Discorea rotundata*.

These findings suggest that *D. alata* varieties may be more suitable for yam tuber production, while *D. rotundata* has better tendency to produce more seed yam. The findings above support the findings of Aighewi *et al.*, (2003) who compared the use of the whole tuber and the minisett of *D. rotundata* in tuber production.

Akoroda *et al*., (2007) corroborated this observation, noting that smaller tubers with more periderm tend to sprout more than larger ones. Despite using smaller yam tubers treated with chemicals, sprouting depended on Seed weight and variety, with breeder lines outperforming landraces. Thus, introducing breeder lines to farmers could enhance productivity.

Table 1: Percentages of emerged plants and number of stands harvested Dioscorea alata and *Dioscorea rotundata* yam species evaluated in 2025 planting seasons.

Varietal/planting materials	Plant emergence (%)	Number of Stand harvested /plot
VWYa	95.0	88.4a
AMYa	92.0	86.6a
SMicYr	90.4	81.0b
SMnYr	85.6	75.4bc

Means followed by the same letter are not significantly different from one another

VWYa = Vine water yam alata, AMYA = Akuabata mini yam alata, SMic Yr = Super micro yam rotundata and SMnYr = Super miniyam rotundata

Table 2: Number of tubers harvested *and* tuber weight of *Dioscorea alata* and *Dioscorea rotundata yam* species aluated in 2025 planting seasons.

Varietal/planting materials	Number of tubers/plot	Tuber weight (t/ha)
VWYa	35.2a	45.8a
AMYa	27.5ab	37.6ab
SMicYr	21.9c	25.7c
SMnYr	19.6c	22.6d

Means followed by the same letter are not significantly different from one another

VWYa = Vine water yam alata, AMYA = Akuabata mini yam alata, SMic Yr = Super micro yam rotundata and SMnYr = Super miniyam rotundata

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FACTORS DETERMINING RISK ATTITUDES OF WATERMELON FARMERS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract
Risk Attitudes play a critical Role in shaping farmers' production Decisions, technology Adoption, investment Behavior, and overall agricultural Productivity. In Nigeria, where Agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate Variability, market Fluctuations, and production Uncertainties, understanding the Factors influencing farmers' risk Attitudes is essential for designing effective agricultural Policies and Interventions. This Study examines the Determinants of risk Attitudes among Farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State by analyzing the Influence of socioeconomic, demographic, institutional, and farm-specific Characteristics. The Study considers Factors such as Age, Gender, Education, Farming Experience, Household Size, Farm Size, Income Level, and Access to Credit, Extension Services, Membership in Farmers' Cooperative Societies, and Access to agricultural Insurance. Using primary Data collected from a representative Sample of watermelon Farmers and employing appropriate econometric Techniques such as Unordered Multinomial Logistic Regression Model, the Study identifies the key Drivers of farmers' risk Preferences. The Findings revealed that Education, Access to Credit, Extension Contact, farm Income, and Cooperative Membership significantly influence farmers' Willingness to take production and investment Risks, while Age and farming Experience contribute to greater Risk Aversion. The Study provides empirical Evidence that can guide Policymakers, financial Institutions, and development Agencies in formulating targeted Interventions aimed at improving farmers' Resilience, promoting technology Adoption, enhancing Access to agricultural Finance and Insurance, and strengthening Extension Services. Ultimately, the Research contributes to a better Understanding of farmers' Decision-making under Uncertainty and supports Strategies for sustainable agricultural Development and Food Security in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Risk Attitudes, Technology Adoption, Risk Aversion, Determinants, Agricultural Productivity, Econometric Analysis.*

Introduction

Agriculture remains one of the most important Sectors of the Nigerian Economy, serving as a major source of Employment, Income, food Security, and raw Materials for Industries. Despite the Discovery and Exploitation of crude Oil, Agriculture continues to sustain the Livelihoods of Millions of Nigerians, particularly those residing in rural Communities. The sector contributes significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides Employment for a substantial proportion of the labour Force. Within the agricultural Sector, horticultural crops Production has gained increasing Attention due to its high economic Value, nutritional Importance, and growing market Demand. Among these horticultural Crops, watermelon has emerged as one of the most profitable and widely cultivated fruit Crops in Nigeria. Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) is a warm-season fruit Crop valued for its nutritional, medicinal, and commercial Importance. It is rich in vitamins A and C, Potassium, dietary Fibre, Antioxidants such as Lycopene, and other essential Nutrients that promote human Health. The fruit is widely consumed fresh and serves as a source of Income for Farmers, Traders, Processors, and Marketers across Nigeria. The increasing awareness of healthy Diets, Urbanization, population Growth, and changing consumer Preferences have contributed to the rising Demand for watermelon in both urban and rural Markets. Consequently, watermelon Production has become an attractive Enterprise for many smallholder and commercial Farmers due to its relatively short production cycle, high market value, and potential for generating substantial Returns on Investment. Watermelon farming has become an important source of Livelihood for many rural Households, contributing to poverty Reduction,

employment Creation, and improved household Welfare. The crop is cultivated under both rain-fed and irrigated Conditions, enabling Farmers to supply Markets throughout different seasons of the Year. In addition to its economic Benefits, watermelon Production contributes to food and nutritional Security by providing Consumers with affordable Fruits rich in essential Nutrients. Despite the Profitability associated with watermelon Production, Farmers operate under Conditions characterized by considerable Uncertainty and Risk. Agricultural Production generally involves numerous Uncertainties arising from natural, economic, institutional, and social Factors. These Uncertainties expose Farmers to production, market, financial, institutional, and environmental Risks that influence their decision-making Processes. Watermelon Farmers, in particular, are highly vulnerable to these Risks because of the crop's Perishability, Sensitivity to weather Fluctuations, pest and disease Outbreaks, price Volatility, and inadequate post-harvest handling Facilities. The Inability to effectively manage these Risks often results in reduced Productivity, income Instability, and significant financial Losses. Production Risks represent one of the major Challenges confronting watermelon Farmers in Nigeria. Agricultural Production largely depends on weather Conditions, especially rainfall Distribution, Temperature, and sunshine Duration. Climate Variability and climate Change have intensified the Occurrence of Droughts, Floods, excessive Heat, and irregular rainfall Patterns, all of which negatively affect watermelon Growth, fruit Quality, and Yield. In addition, Outbreaks of Pests such as Aphids, fruit Flies, and Whiteflies, as well as Diseases including fusarium Wilt, powdery Mildew, Anthracnose, and bacterial fruit Blotch, frequently reduce Productivity and increase production Costs. These biological and environmental Uncertainties create significant Risks that influence farmers' production Decisions and willingness to adopt improved Technologies. Market-related Risks also constitute a major Source of uncertainty for watermelon Farmers. Watermelon is highly perishable and requires efficient transportation, storage, and marketing Systems to minimize post-harvest Losses. However, inadequate rural Infrastructure, poor road Networks, limited storage Facilities, and inefficient market information Systems often result in substantial Losses after Harvest. Furthermore, seasonal Gluts frequently lead to sharp declines in market Prices, thereby reducing farmers' Incomes and Profitability. Conversely, during periods of low Supply, Prices may rise considerably, creating Uncertainty regarding the optimal Timing of production and marketing Decisions. These Fluctuations expose farmers to considerable income Risks and affect their Willingness to invest in watermelon Production. Financial Risks further complicate the production Environment for watermelon Farmers. Access to agricultural Credit remains limited for many smallholder Farmers due to inadequate Collateral, high interest Rates, bureaucratic lending Procedures, and weak financial Institutions in rural Areas. As a result, many Farmers rely on personal Savings or informal Borrowing to finance production Activities. Limited access to Credit restricts the Adoption of improved Seeds, irrigation Facilities, Fertilizers, Agrochemicals, and mechanized Equipment that could enhance Productivity and reduce production Risks. Similarly, Fluctuations in input Prices, Inflation, and exchange rate Instability increase production Costs and create additional financial Uncertainties. Institutional Risks are equally important in shaping farmers' production Decisions. Inconsistent government Policies, inadequate extension Services, poor implementation of agricultural Programmes, weak farmer Organizations, and limited access to agricultural Insurance reduce farmers' Capacity to effectively manage Risks. Although several government Interventions have been introduced to promote agricultural Development, many watermelon Farmers continue to face Challenges in accessing these Programmes due to poor Awareness, administrative Bottlenecks, and inadequate Coverage. The Absence of reliable agricultural insurance Schemes further increases farmers' Vulnerability to unexpected production Losses resulting from adverse weather Events or pest Infestations. The way Farmers perceive and respond to these Uncertainties is commonly described as their risk Attitude. Risk Attitude refers to an individual's behavioural Disposition toward uncertain Outcomes involving potential Gains or Losses. In agricultural Economics, Farmers are generally classified into three broad Categories based on their risk Attitudes: Risk-averse, Risk-neutral, and Risk-seeking. Risk-averse Farmers prefer safer production Options with relatively lower but more certain Returns and tend to avoid Innovations perceived as risky. Risk-neutral Farmers make Decisions primarily based on expected Returns without attaching significant Importance to Uncertainty. Risk-seeking Farmers are more willing to undertake risky Investments in anticipation of higher Profits despite the Possibility of substantial Losses. Farmers' risk Attitudes significantly influence agricultural production Decisions, including technology Adoption, enterprise diversification, resource allocation, investment behaviour, credit utilization, input Application, crop Choice, and

participation in insurance Programmes. For instance, Risk-averse Farmers may be reluctant to adopt improved watermelon Varieties, precision irrigation Systems, or integrated pest management Practices if they perceive these Innovations as Uncertain or financially risky. Conversely, Farmers with higher risk Tolerance are generally more willing to experiment with new Technologies, expand cultivated Areas, and invest in productivity-enhancing Inputs. Consequently, understanding farmers' risk Attitudes is essential for designing effective agricultural Policies and Interventions that promote sustainable agricultural Development. Risk Attitudes among Farmers are influenced by numerous socioeconomic, demographic, institutional, and psychological Factors. Age, Education, farming Experience, household Size, farm Size, income Level, wealth Status, access to Credit, extension contact, membership in farmer Associations, market Access, Gender, marital Status, access to Information, and previous experiences with production Losses have all been identified as important Determinants of farmers' risk Behaviour. Older Farmers may exhibit greater Risk aversion due to accumulated Experiences and shorter planning Horizons, whereas younger farmers may be more willing to adopt innovative Technologies. Similarly, educated Farmers often possess better managerial Skills and access to Information, enabling them to make more informed Decisions under uncertain Conditions. Farm size and wealth Status also influence risk Attitudes by affecting farmers' Ability to absorb potential Losses. Larger-scale Farmers with diversified income Sources may be more willing to undertake risky Investments than resource-constrained Smallholders. Access to Credit provides Farmers with financial Flexibility to invest in improved Technologies and cope with production Shocks, thereby reducing perceived Risks. Likewise, regular extension Services expose Farmers to improved production Practices, weather Information, pest management Techniques, and market Opportunities, which can enhance Confidence in adopting Innovations. Membership in farmer Cooperatives facilitates information Sharing, collective Marketing, access to Credit and farmers' risk Attitudes. Individual Perceptions of Uncertainty, Confidence in personal Abilities, previous Experiences with crop Failures, and Expectations regarding future market Conditions, and personal Aspirations influence Decision-making under risky Conditions. Behavioural Economics has increasingly emphasized that farmers' Decisions are not solely determined by objective Probabilities and expected Profits but also by subjective Perceptions, cognitive Biases, and emotional Responses to Uncertainty. Therefore, Analyzing risk Attitudes requires Consideration of both economic and behavioural Dimensions of Decision-making. In Nigeria, numerous Studies have examined the Determinants of technology Adoption, Productivity, technical Efficiency, and Profitability among Farmers. However, relatively few empirical Studies have specifically focused on the Determinants of risk Attitudes among watermelon Farmers despite the increasing commercial Importance of the Crop and the numerous Uncertainties surrounding its Production. Most existing Studies concentrate on staple food Crops such as Maize, Rice, Cassava, and Yam, leaving a significant knowledge gap regarding high-value horticultural Crops such as Watermelon. Furthermore, the unique production Characteristics of Watermelon including its short production Cycle, Perishability, high input Requirements, and Sensitivity to weather Conditions suggest that Farmers cultivating this Crop may exhibit risk Attitudes that differ from those of Producers of other Crops. Understanding the Determinants of risk Attitudes among watermelon Farmers is important for several Reasons. First, it provides valuable Insights into farmers' decision-making Processes under Uncertainty and helps explain Variations in technology Adoption, Productivity, and farm Performance. Second, identifying Factors that influence risk Attitudes enables Policymakers, agricultural extension Agencies, financial Institutions, and development Organizations to design targeted Interventions that address farmers' specific Needs. Such Interventions may include improved access to agricultural Credit, crop insurance Schemes, climate-smart agricultural Technologies, market information Services, and capacity-building Programmes aimed at enhancing farmers' risk management Skills. Third, knowledge of farmers' risk Attitudes contributes to the Formulation of Policies that encourage Investment in high-value horticultural Production while minimizing production and marketing Uncertainties. Moreover, the increasing Impacts of climate Change, market Globalization, rising input Costs, and changing consumer Preferences have heightened the need for effective risk management Strategies in Nigerian Agriculture. Sustainable watermelon Production requires Farmers to make complex Decisions regarding input Use, Irrigation, pest Control, Harvesting, Storage, and Marketing under Conditions of Uncertainty. These Decisions are largely influenced by farmers' Willingness and Ability to bear Risk. Therefore, empirical Evidence on the Determinants of risk Attitudes among watermelon Farmers is essential for promoting agricultural

Resilience, improving Productivity, increasing farm Income, and enhancing food and nutritional Security.

Problem statement

Agricultural Sector is characterized by numerous Sources of Uncertainty that expose Farmers to varying Levels of Risk. These Risks include climate Variability, pest and disease Outbreaks, fluctuating market Prices, inadequate access to Credit, poor Infrastructure, Insecurity, and inconsistent government Policies. The Manner in which Farmers perceive and respond to these Uncertainties is largely influenced by their risk Attitudes, which ultimately affect their production Decisions, investment Behavior, technology Adoption, and overall farm Productivity. Risk attitudes vary across Individuals due to socioeconomic, institutional, demographic, and psychological Factors such as Age, Education, farming Experience, household Size, income Level, access to extension Services, and availability of financial Resources. However, empirical Evidence on the determinants of farmers' risk Attitudes in Nigeria remains limited and fragmented, with many Studies focusing primarily on production Constraints or technology Adoption rather than the underlying behavioral Factors influencing Decision-making. Without a clear Understanding of the Factors shaping farmers' risk Attitudes, agricultural Policies may fail to encourage Investment in improved Technologies, climate-smart Practices, and sustainable farming Systems. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive Investigation into the Determinants of risk Attitudes among Farmers in Nigeria. Such a Study will provide empirical Evidence that can support the Formulation of targeted Policies and Programs aimed at enhancing farmers' Resilience, improving Productivity, reducing Vulnerability to agricultural Risks, and promoting sustainable agricultural Development in the Country.

Objectives of the study

The general Objective of this study was to examine the Factors determining the risk Attitudes among Farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State.
The specific objectives of the study were to:

i. examine the socioeconomic characteristics of Farmers in the study Area.

ii. assess the risk attitudes of Farmers in study Area.

iii. identify the demographic, and institutional Factors that influence farmers' risk Attitudes.

iv. analyze the effect of access to Credit, extension Services, and farmer Organizations on farmers' risk Attitudes.

v. provide policy Recommendations for promoting appropriate risk-taking Behaviour and improving agricultural Productivity among Farmers in the Study Area.

Justification of the study

Despite the theoretical Relevance and empirical Evidence on risk Attitudes in Nigerian Agriculture, several Gaps remain, particularly in the context of watermelon Production. Firstly, much of the existing Literature on risk Attitudes in Nigeria centers on staple Crops or general crop Farming. There is a Paucity of focused Studies examining how watermelon Farmers perceive Risk and what specific Factors determine these Perceptions. Given the crop's economic Importance and distinct production Challenges (e.g., Perishability, water Dependency, market Seasonality), risk Attitudes among watermelon Producers may differ from those observed in other Commodities. Secondly, empirical Research rarely integrates a comprehensive set of Determinants including socio-economic, institutional, market, and environmental Factors in a single Analysis of watermelon farmers' risk Attitudes. This Gap limits policymakers' Abilities to design holistic Interventions that enhance Resilience and Adoption of beneficial Practices among watermelon Producers. Thirdly, Studies that explore watermelon farmers' risk Attitudes across multiple States and agro-ecological Zones are scarce. Regional Variations in Climate, Infrastructure, cultural Attitudes toward Risk, and access to Markets and Services imply that Findings from one Area may not generalize Nationwide.
Furthermore, most existing Work has treated risk Attitudes descriptively without delving into how these Attitudes influence actual Production and marketing Behaviors among watermelon Farmers.

Understanding this Linkage is crucial for devising effective risk mitigation Policies, credit Instruments, insurance Schemes, and extension Programs tailored to watermelon Farming. Finally, given the rising Importance of horticultural Crops to rural Livelihoods in Nigeria and watermelon's Potential to contribute to food Security and income Diversification, a clearer understanding of Determinants of risk Attitudes is urgently needed to support sustainable Growth in this Sub-sector.

Methodology

Study area

The Study was carried out in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State. The Local Government consists of two Towns, Igboora and Idere. It is situated approximately on 7.33^0 Latitude and 3.0^0 Longitude. As at 2006 population Census, the Population of the study Area was 103,243 with population Projection of 147,600 by 2022. It covers an Area of 437.4 square Kilometer with population Density of 337.5/Km^2 in 2022.

The major Crops grown in the Area are Cassava, Maize, Yam, Watermelon and Cocoyam. Major Cash Crops in the Area are Cashew, Cocoa, Mango and Oil Palm. The Local Government is populated largely by Yoruba then Fulani, Hausa, Igbo and Igede Tribes.

Population of the study

The Population of the Study included both Male and Female Watermelon Farmers in the study Area.

Sample Size

The Sample Size for the Study was 120 Watermelon Farmers in the study Area. This is selected using Jamane (1967) formula.

$S = N/ 1 + N(e^2)$ Where S = Sample Size, N = Population of all registered watermelon Farmers in the study Area (Igboora – 102 and Idere -69, Total = 171)

E = 0.05(5%). Therefore, $S = 171/ 1+ 171(0.05^2) = 171/ 1+ 171(0.0025) = 171/ 1+ 0.4275$

$= 171/ 1.4275 = 119.79$ approximately 120 Respondents.

Data collection: Data used for the Study were Primary Data. Data were collected using Structured Questionnaires and interview Guide in order to accommodate Farmers who are not literate. Questionnaires were administered to only registered Members of watermelon Farmers Association.

Sampling techniques and procedures

A multi-stage purposive Sampling Procedures was adopted to select 120 Respondents for the Study.

Step I: Division of the Local Government into its two comprising Towns.

Step II: Distribution of registered Members into Clusters using Gender and Towns.

Number of Males selected for Sampling = (117/171) *120 = 82

Number of Females selected for Sampling= (54/171) * 120 =38, Totalling = 120.

Therefore, Number of Females selected from Igboora = (31/54) ×38 = 29 and 19 from Idere.

Number o Males selected from Igboora = (71/117) ×82 = 50 and 32 was selected from Idere.

Step III: Random selection of Male and Female registered watermelon Farmers from the Register as explained above.

Research hypotheses

The Hypotheses of the Study stated in null Forms are:

$H_0$1: There is no significant Relationship between Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents and Risk Attitudes of watermelon Farmers in the study Area.

$H_0$2: There is no significant Relationship between Institutional Factors and Risk Attitudes of Farmers in the study Area.

Data analysis

The Research made use of both Descriptive and Inferential Statistics in this work.
Descriptive Statistics used include Frequency Counts, Percentages and Means. Inferential Statistics used are Safety-first Principle (Roy, 1952) and Multinomial Logistic Regression.

Safety-first Principle: It was used to categorize Farmers into Risk-averse, Risk-neutral and Risk-seeking using Farmers farm Income.

$$Z = \frac{m - \mu}{\sigma}$$

where, Z = Safety Ratio, m = Expected farm income, μ = Minimum acceptable farm income (Subsistence income, Income just enough for Debt repayment etc.) and

σ = Standard deviation (Income Variability e.g. 5%).

Decision Rule: High Ratio i.e. low Probability of Income falling below Minimum income level Farmers with High Ratio are classified as **Risk-averse**

Low Ratio indicates high Probability of Income falling below the disaster level; these Farmers are classified as **Risk-seeking**. Farmers with moderate Ratio are classified as **Risk- neutral**

Multinomial Logistic Regression Model Specification

The Model was used in place of Probit or Logit Regression in that the dependent Variable has more than two Categories of Outcome (Risk-averse, Risk-neutral and Risk-seeking) and are not ordered.

$$Z = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \text{--------} + \beta_nX_n + \varepsilon$$

Where, Z = Risk Attitudes of watermelon Farmers (Risk-averse, Risk-neutral and Risk-seeking)

$\beta_0 - \beta_n$ = Coefficients of the Econometric Model.

$X_1 - X_n$ = Independent Variables of the Model.

ε = Error term.

Results and discussion

Table 4.1 revealed the socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents. 70.8% of the Respondents are Male while, 29.2 are Female indicating that there are more Males than Females in Watermelon Farming. The mean Age of the Respondents was 40.9 implying that Farmers are still in their active Age. About 82.5% of the Farmers had over Six Years farming Experience hence, Farmers are going to be less Risk-averse as more farmers developed Risk-coping
Mechanisms and make better Decisions. 56.7% of the Respondents have Farm size between 1- 5 Hectares while, 5.8% have less than 1 Hectare. Farm Size and Cooperative Membership increase the Willingness of Farmers to take Risk. 13.3% of the Respondents do not have formal Education, 31.7% have primary Education and 44.2% have secondary Education. This implies that most of the Respondents are educated and will have ability to process agricultural Information, understand new Innovations and Production Technologies.

Table 4.1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Gender:			
Male	85	70.8	
Female	35	29.2	100.0
	120		

Age (Years):				
Below 25	7	5.8		
25 – 34	22	18.3		40.9
35 – 44	47	39.2		
45 - 54	35	29.2		
55 Above	9	7.5	100.0	
Marital Status:				
Single	10	8.3		
Married	71	59.2		
Divorced	27	22.5		
Widow(ed)	12	10.0		
	120	100.0		
Farming Experience(Years):				
1 – 5	21	17.5		
6 – 10	48	40.0		
11 – 15	41	34.2		9.7
16 Above	10	8.3		
	120	100.0		
Education Level:				
No formal Education	16	13.3		
Primary Education	38	31.7		
Secondary Education	53	44.2		
Tertiary Education	9	7.5		
Vocational Education	4	3.3		
	120	100.0		
Farm Size (Hectare):				
Less than 1	7	5.8		
1 – 5	68	56.7		4.9
6 – 10	41	34.2		
Above 10	4	3.3		
	120	100.0		
Farm Income (₦):				
Less than 500,000	33	27.5		
500,000 – 1,000,000	49	40.8		619,056.25
1,000,000 – 2,000,000	29	24.2		
2,000,000 and Above	9	7.5		
	120	100.0		
Land Ownership:				
Owned	35	29.2		
Rented	24	20.0		
Inheritance	55	45.8		
Communal	6	5.0		
	120	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The Results of the Research revealed that 83.3% of the Respondents belong to one Cooperative Society or the other. This implied that more than half of them are likely to have Access to Credit and improved production Inputs such as Fertilizers, Chemicals and improved Seeds. Membership also enhances their abilities to share Information with one another thus, improving their level of Risk Management and have Confidence in adopting improved Technologies.

Table 4.2: Membership of Cooperative Society

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	100	83.3
No	20	16.7
	120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.3 showed that 96.7% of the Farmers have Access to Credit. This implies that they will be able to increase their farm Size, adopt new Technologies and diversify agricultural Activities. It also enhances their abilities to manage Farm Risks.

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents on access to credit

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	116	96.7
No	4	3.3 100.0
	120	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The Study discovered that only a small Number of the Respondents (21.7%) have agricultural Insurance Policy. This is likely to affect their Ability to access Credit and undertake risky Ventures or adopt new agricultural Technologies.

Table 4.4: Respondents response to Agricultural Insurance

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	26	21.7
No	94	78.3
	120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.5 revealed the Risk Attitudes Assessments of the Respondents. The weighted mean Score indicated that Respondents prefer to diversify their farming Activities in order to protect them from Uncertainties. The weighted mean score of 3.41 showed that most Respondents will adopt Diversification as Strategy to guide them against Risks. Also, most Respondents feel Uncomfortable taking financial Risks on the Farm.

Table 4.5: Risk Attitudes Assessment of Respondents

Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	WMS	Rank
Prefer stable but lower Income over higher Income with Uncertainty	50 (41.7)	51 (42.5)	13 (10.8)	6 (5.0)	3.21	2nd
I am willing to try new farming Technologies even if they might fail	20 (16.7)	50 (41.7)	25 (20.8)	25 (20.8)	2.54	7th
I avoid borrowing Money because of payment Risk	18 (15.0)	63 (52.5)	35 (29.2)	4 (3.3)	2.79	4th
I invest in high-yield Crops even when Prices fluctuate	41 (34.2)	62 (51.7)	14 (11.7)	3 (2.5)	3.18	3rd
I diversify my farming Activities to reduce Risk	59 (49.2)	56 (46.7)	5 (4.2)	0 (0.0)	3.41	1st

I feel Comfortable taking financial Risks in Farming	3 (2.5)	8 (6.7)	46 (38.3)	63 (52.5)	1.59	8th
I would take a Loan if the expected Profit is high despite Uncertainty	7 (5.8)	70 (58.3)	39 (32.5)	4 (3.3)	2.67	5th
I delay adopting Innovations until Others try them First	23 (19.2)	43 (35.8)	38 (31.7)	16(13.3)	2.61	6th

Note: Figures in Parenthesis are Percentages. WMS = Weighted Mean Score

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.6 showed the Categorization of the Respondents into Risk-averse, Risk-neutral and Risk-seeking using Safety-first Principle. 44.2% are Risk-neutral and few of the (25.8%) are Risk-seeking. This implied that only few of them have the ability to take production Risks. This may be because they are educated to some extent and will be able to process agricultural information, understand new Innovations and easily adopt new Technologies.

Table 4.6: Respondents Categorized according to their Risk Attitudes (Safety-first Principle)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Risk-averse	36	30.0
Risk-neutral	53	44.2
Risk-seeking	31	25.8
	120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.7 revealed the Results of the Multinomial Logistic Regression. The results showed that Age and Farming experience have negative significant relationship with Risk attitudes of water melon farmers. Older Farmers are significantly more likely to be Risk-averse. A year increase in Age reduces the likelihood of being Risk-seeking by 6.8%. Education increases the Probability of being Risk-neutral or Risk-seeking indicating that educated Farmers are more confident in adopting new Innovations and Technologies in watermelon farming. Farm size significantly increases Risk-taking attitude. Farmers with larger Holdings are 2.39 times more likely to be Risk-seeking while, Farmers 'Access to Credit are 2.59 times more likely to be Risk-neutral and 3.77 times more likely to be Risk-seeking. Frequent Extension visits increase Willingness to take production Risks. Cooperative Membership also Positive Relationship with Risk Attitudes implying that Cooperative membership Improves Information Flow and collective Risks prevention and increases Farmers Risk Tolerance. The Model is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and explains approximately 56% of the total Variation in Farmers' Risk Attitudes.

Table 4.7: Results of the Multinomial Logistic Regression

Category I: Risk-Neutral vs Risk-Averse (Base Outcome)

Variables	Coefficients (β)	Std. Error	Wald	p-value	Odd Ratio
Age -	0.043	0.023	3.50	0.029**	0.96
Education	0.182	0.069	6.96	0.013**	1.20
Farming Experience -	0.030	0.018	2.78	0.095*	0.97
Farm Size	0.614	0.208	8.71	0.003***	1. 85
Farm Income	0.00004	0.00002	4.00	0.045**	1.00
Access to Credit	0.950	0.407	5.45	0.020**	2.59
Extension Contact	0.217	0.093	5.44	0.019**	1.24
Cooperative Membership	0.628	0.312	4.05	0.043**	1.87

Category II: Risk-seeking vs Risk-Averse (Base Outcome)

Variables	Coefficients (β)	Std. Error	Wald	p-value	Odd Ratio
Age -	0.068	0.023	8.74	0.010**	0.93
Education	0.257	0.093	7.64	0.005***	1.29
Farming Experience	0.045	0.022	4.18	0.027**	0.96
Farm Size	0.870	0.281	9.59	0.002***	2.39
Farm Income	0.00005	0.00002	6.25	0.043**	1.00
Access to Credit	1.328	0.479	7.69	0.006***	3.77
Extension Contact	0.323	0.118	7.49	0.005***	1.38
Cooperative Membership	1.047	0.379	7.63	0.010**	2.85

2 log likelihood - 184.70

Chi- square - 60.62

df - 46.00

Pseudo R^2 - 0.56

* = Significance at 10%

** = Significance at 5%

*** = Significance at 1%

Summary, conclusion and recommendation

The Study examined the Determinants of Risk Attitudes of watermelon farmers in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State with the Objective of identifying the socio-economic and institutional Factors influencing Farmers' Ability to take Production Risks. The Study found out that watermelon Farmers showed different Levels of Risk Attitudes ranging from Risk-averse to Risk-neutral and Risk-seeking Behaviours. These Differences are are influenced by Factors such as Age, Education, farming Experience, farm Size, farm Income, access to Credit, Membership of Cooperative Societies and access to agricultural Insurance.

The Study highlighted that limited access to Credit, inadequate extension Contact, lack of agricultural Insurance, Fluctuation in the prices of Inputs and Outputs and climate Variability posed Threats to agricultural Production and farm Income. Furthermore, the Study Concluded that Farmers' access to institutional Supports, financial Services and adequate and reliable market Information will enhance farmers' Capacity to manage farm Risks effectively.

Based on the research Findings, the following Recommendations are proposed

i. Policies that promote the Development and Expansion of agricultural insurance Schemes should be encouraged.
ii. Farmers' Cooperatives and producers Associations should be Strengthened to improve Members' Access to production Inputs, market Information, credit Facilities and collective marketing Opportunities thereby reducing production and marketing Risks.

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CLIMATE VARIABILITY ADAPTATION AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AMONG FOOD CROP FARMERS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of climate change adaptation strategies (CCAS) on the production efficiency of food crop farmers in Southwest Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 480 rural farming households from three states in the region. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Tobit regression model. The results showed that the majority (76.0%) of the respondents were married, with an average age of 47.1 years, an average household size of 5.31 persons, and an average farm size of 3.77 hectares. Crop diversification emerged as the most widely adopted climate change adaptation strategy among the respondents. The Tobit regression results indicated that gender, farm size, contact with extension agents, and the adoption of specific climate change adaptation strategies including crop diversification, mulching, and crop rotation significantly influenced farmers' production efficiency. The findings suggest that the adoption of climate change adaptation practices enhances the production efficiency of food crop farmers in the study area. Therefore, policies and interventions that promote the adoption of sustainable climate change adaptation strategies should be strengthened by government agencies and other stakeholders to improve agricultural productivity, enhance production efficiency, and build resilience against the adverse effects of climate change in rural farming communities.

Keywords: *Climate change adaptation, production efficiency, food crop farmers, Tobit regression, crop diversification, Southwest Nigeria.*

Introduction

Food provision for households is a necessity, with approximately 820 million people worldwide facing the challenge of hunger, and more than two-thirds of the world population lacking essential nutrients, affecting their diet, well-being, and life expectancy (Ayodele et al., 2025). Climate change is one of the most serious environmental issues confronting humanity. Climate change has far-reaching consequences, affecting everything from health to agriculture. Climate change has had a considerable impact on world agriculture in the twenty-first century (Ayodele et al., 2025). Climate change's impacts on agricultural productivity and food security are predicted to worsen with time and vary among nations and areas. Despite its significant contribution to the broader economy, this sector has faced several problems, the most severe of which are climate-related calamities such as drought and flooding. Climate variability and change are having a negative impact on agriculture, and the situation is predicted to deteriorate in the future (Omotoso et al., 2023). There is increasing fear that climate change may adversely impact the capacity to satisfy the food needs of the world's approximately 10 billion people by 2050, which is a major reason why experts are supporting climate-smart agriculture (Omotoso et al., 2022). Climate change adaptation solutions include socioeconomic and ecological components to guarantee that present food production operations do not jeopardize future food production capacity. Conventional agricultural techniques, which emphasize producing widely accessible low-yielding cultivars with heavy nitrogen fertilizer application, are no longer sustainable due to increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Omotoso et al., 2024).

Despite several efforts aimed at sensitizing farmers on the relevance of climate change adaptation measures, adoption among farmers in developing countries, particularly Nigeria, remains low. According to (Ayodele et al., 2025; Omotayo et al., 2025), technical know-how, poor awareness, cost, culture, and traditional beliefs, as well as poor infrastructures, financing, unsustainable government policy, and other socioeconomic constraints such as education level and years of farming experience, all contribute to Nigeria's low level of adoption of climate change adaptation strategies. There is an urgent need for farmers to prepare for the effects of climate change by adopting adaptation and risk reduction methods such as agroforestry, mulching, and crop diversification in order to attain the highest level of agricultural products locally and worldwide. This article aims to add to the body of knowledge

on how to improve crop farmer production efficiency in rural farming families via climate change adaptation measures. Using Nigeria as a case study, the research intends to discover distinct CCAS and analyze the influence of CCAS on the production efficiency of food crop producers

Methodology

Study Area

This research was conducted in the rural Southwest of Nigeria, which includes six states: Ekiti, Osun, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, and Lagos. The region is limited in the east by Delta State, in the west by the Republic of Benin, in the north by Kwara and Kogi States, and in the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Farming is the most common activity in the geopolitical zone, with maize, cassava, yam, oil palm, cocoa, and lumber all being commercially produced. Most rural households in the zone rely on subsistence farming, with additional income from trade, hunting, food collection, and handcrafting. As a consequence, rural families fell into a more severe poverty category, forcing the majority to rely on savings and aid from relatives.

Sampling techniques and data analysis

This research relied on primary data, which was gathered using a standardized questionnaire. The sample population is made up of rural agricultural families that mostly cultivate for subsistence. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to choose 480 rural farming families from six states in Nigeria's southwest. The first step entailed the random selection of 50% of the Southwestern geopolitical zone's states (Oyo, Ekiti, and Ogun). The second step included choosing two Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Zones from each state, for a total of six zones. The final step entailed picking two blocks at random from each of the six ADP zones, totaling 12 blocks. The fourth step involves picking four cells at random from each of the 12 blocks, totaling 48 cells. The last step involves picking 10 homes at random from each of the 48 cells, for a total of 480 rural farming households. Descriptive statistics (means and frequencies) were used to examine the acquired data. The Tobit regression model was used to estimate the influence of CCAS on agricultural producers' production efficiency in the research region.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, with more than two-thirds of the households (81.0%) led by men and a mean age of 47 years, indicating that they are likely to be productive with the available resources. This was consistent with Akano et al., (2021), who found that the average age of respondents in rural farming families in Nigeria was between 45 and 50 years. About 76.00% of the respondents were married, and 78.00% had farming as their main source of livelihood activities with mean household size and farm size of 5 persons and 3.77 hectares respectively. The majority (72.00 percent) of the rural farming households earned less than $250.00 while about two-thirds (81.0 percent) of them had contact with extension agents. Extension agent is very important in information dissemination and the adoption of new technology (Ajibade et al., 2024; Omotoso & Omotayo, 2026). The result of the CCAS used by the respondents revealed that crop diversification is the form of CCAS mostly used in the study area. About 3.13% of the respondents are low users while 61.25% and 15.63% of the respondents are medium and high users respectively (see Fig. 2). The result was in line with Amare et al., (2018) who positioned that CCAS in rural areas are being silent and the importance is not well pronounced which could be the reason for its moderate usage in the study area

Table 1: Summary of the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents (n = 480)

Variable	Mean	SD
Gender of respondent (1 = male, female = 0)	0.81	0.193
Age group (1 = adult; 0 = youth)	47.1	0.201
Education level of respondent (1 = formal; 0 = Non formal)	0.62	0.117
Household size (number)	5.31	0.410
Marital Status (1 = Married; 0 = Otherwise)	0.76	0.291
Farm size (hectares)	3.77	1.321

Farming experience (years)	8.23	1.092
Contact with extension agent (1 = yes)	0.81	0.018
Main source of income: (1 = Farming, 0 = Others)	0.78	0.512
Income from farming: <100,000 USD	0.72	0.221
100,000 – 200,000 USD	0.20	0.012
> 200,000	0.08	0.162

Table 2: CCAS and Degree of Usage

CCAS	WMS	SD
Crop diversification	4.723	1.004
Crop rotation	4.281	0.961
Mulching	2.104	0.452
Agroforestry	1.982	0.142
Use of Organic manure	3.441	0.811
Use of Fadama land	2.981	0.051
Planting crops with early maturity	3.831	1.031
Planting drought-tolerant crop varieties	4.016	1.441
Planting cover crop	1.052	1.113
Intercropping	4.101	0.742
Irrigation	1.961	0.022

WMS = Weighted Mean Score SD = Standard Deviation

Maximum likelihood estimate of Tobit regression of the effect of CCAS on production efficiency of food crop farmers

The result of the Tobit regression analysis shows the effects of selected socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and CCAS on the production efficiency of the respondents (as shown in Table 3). The statistically significant variables affecting the production efficiency of the respondents were the gender of household head ($p<0.1$), farm size ($p<0.01$), contact with extension agent ($p<0.05$), main occupation ($p<0.05$) and CCAS practices ($p<0.01$). The gender of the household's head was positive (0.1045) and significant ($p<0.1$), implying that a male-headed household had a higher probability of production efficiency than their female counterparts, and this might be due to more males having higher income-generating activities. The result was buttressed by (Ayodele et al., 2025; Omotoso et al., 2024) who reported that there is more efficient male-headed households than female-headed in Nigeria. In addition, the coefficient of farm size was positive (1.3011) and significant ($p<0.01$). This shows that the larger the farm size of a household the more the likelihood of being efficient with the available resources. The coefficient of the education status of the household's head was positive (0.1167) and significant ($p<0.05$), which implies that educational level had a higher probability of leading to efficient farming production. Education is expected to increase the capacity of farmers to obtain, process and utilize information relevant to the adoption and management of agricultural resources (Omotayo et al., 2025). The coefficient of access to extension service and training was positive (1.0413) and significant ($p<0.05$), implying that an increase in access to extension service increased the likelihood of being efficient in the utilization of resources.

Furthermore, the coefficient of CCAS practices was positive (2.0017) and significant ($p<0.05$), indicating that the more CCAS practice, the higher probability of achieving production efficiency in farming output in the study area. The results imply that CCAS adaptation would brighten the chances for farming households in the study area to be production efficient. The Adjusted R2 of 0.6275 implies that the explanatory variables explain about 62.75 % of the variations in the Tobit regression model.

Table 3: Tobi regression result of the effect of CCAS on production efficiency of crop farmers

Variables	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error	Z	Marginal effect
Constant	-0.1218***	0.1173	-2.4145	-0.0152
Gender	0.1045*	0.0891	1.8871	0.0229
Formal Education	0.1167**	0.0316	1.9409	0.0231
Household size	-0.0021	0.2184	-0.9618	-0.1209
Farm size	1.3011***	0.7101	2.3314	0.0321
Farming experience	-1.0019	0.5331	-0.9928	-0.0318
Farm income	0.0031	0.0346	1.0201	0.0313
Contact with an Extension agent	1.0413**	0.1942	1.9903	0.0122
Main occupation	0.1043	0.2813	1.1193	0.0218
CCAS Practice	2.0017***	0.5012	2.6711	0.1033
Likelihood =	-157.021			
Pseudo R^2	0.6275			
Chi Square	35.42***			
Number of observation	480			

Note: ***, **, and * represent 1%, 5%, and 10% significance level, respectively

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined the adoption of climate change adaptation strategies (CCAS), their level of utilization, and their effects on the production efficiency of food crop farmers in Southwest Nigeria. The findings revealed that the use of CCAS significantly improved the production efficiency of food crop farmers, underscoring the critical role of adaptation measures in enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience to climate change. Among the various adaptation strategies identified, crop diversification, crop rotation, planting of drought- and heat-tolerant crop varieties, intercropping, and the use of organic manure were the most widely adopted by farming households in the study area. The results further demonstrated that mainstreaming climate change adaptation strategies into food crop production systems can positively influence farmers' livelihoods, strengthen their capacity to cope with climate-related shocks, and improve production efficiency.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that government agencies, development partners, and other relevant stakeholders should intensify efforts to promote and encourage the adoption of climate change adaptation strategies that support agricultural sustainability and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change in rural farming communities. Extension services should be strengthened to improve farmers' awareness and access to climate-smart agricultural practices, while affordable credit facilities and other financial support mechanisms should be provided to facilitate the adoption of adaptation technologies. Furthermore, farmers should be encouraged to diversify their livelihood sources through off-farm and non-farm income-generating activities, thereby enhancing household resilience and providing the financial capacity needed to implement various adaptation measures. Integrating climate change adaptation into agricultural development policies and programs will contribute to sustainable food production, improved production efficiency, and enhanced food security among smallholder farming households in Southwest Nigeria.

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FOOD EXPENDITURE PATTERNS AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS AMONG RURAL FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN OGUN STATE

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Abstract
The study assessed food expenditure pattern among rural households in Ogun state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to estimate the amount spent weekly on food and determine the factors affecting amount spent of food in the household. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 240 rural households in the study area. Interview schedule was used to elicit needed information such as age, marital status, amount spent on foods by the respondents in the study area. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistic and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression showed the determinant of amount spent on food expenditure in the household of the respondents in the study area. The result of descriptive statistics revealed that 56.67 percent of the respondents are married, 75.0 percent were educated with mean age, household size and monthly income estimated at 45 years, 6 persons and ₦49,500.50 respectively. Majority (66.67 percent) of the respondents spent less than ₦20,000.00 on food with mean amount spent on food at home and away from home estimated at ₦17,544.60 and ₦16,700.55 respectively. OLS regression revealed that household income ($p<0.01$), age of the household head ($p<0.1$), household size ($p<0.01$) and occupation ($p<0.05$) have positively significantly influence on food expenditure of the households. This research concluded that household income, household size and age of household head had a significant effect on food expenditure. The study recommended that policy attention should be focused on the price control system on food to be more affordable to rural dwellers

Keywords: *Determinant; Expenditure; Food; Socioeconomic; Regression*

Introduction

Households have varying degrees of spending capacity which influences their spending patterns. According to Engel's law of expenditure, proportion of expenditure spent on food is inversely related to total income (Ajibade et al., 2024). According to (Ajibade et al., 2024; Daud et al., 2018), the nature and patterns of food expenditure reflect the socio-economic characteristics of households. A household's relative expenditure on food is a reliable indicator of vulnerability. It describes household's capacity to cope with price increases, as well as their ability to remain productive by investing in health services, education, tools and other productive assets for its members. Households spending in excess of 65% of their total expenditure on food are clearly vulnerable in this regard as such a high percentage suggests that the household is forced to choose between meeting their food and non-food needs or reduce consumption of one or both below their needs (Omotoso et al., 2023)

The level of household income is often a major determinant of expenditure patterns of households, and hence differences between patterns of expenditure are largely a reflection of differences in income between household groups or individual households (Omotoso et al., 2022). Studies (Daud et al., 2018; Omotoso et al., 2022), have shown that poverty in developing countries, like Nigeria, takes various forms such as low nutritional status, low level of education, declined in the spending on social services, high percentage of household income spent on food, low level of savings, low level of investments and low level of productivity. Thus, study on household income and expenditure is important in addressing the poverty situation in the country.

Previous studies (Ayodele et al., 2025; Omotoso et al., 2022) that have evaluated household expenditure concluded that food is important in household expenditure because of the amount of income dedicated to food. They further submitted that, for most households spending on food is the largest expense followed by housing (rent, mortgage payments, opportunity cost or implied rent), but for richer households, it comes second after housing expenditure. Households with less income tend to spend

higher percentages of income on food and this leaves less for education, housing and transportation. Notably, (Ayodele et al., 2025; Omotayo et al., 2025), opined that the level of poverty in Nigeria is on the increase due to low level of income, high cost of food products as well as the inadequate production of food by farmers and lack of capital to establish on a large scale. Several studies have been conducted on various determinants of food expenditures such as socio-economic and demographic factors. Ayodele et al. (2025) examined the factors affecting expenditure on rice, fish, and meat in Nigeria. Their results indicated that income and household size are important factors affecting the amount of money spent on the three examined food items, and that the expenditure on the three examined food items was not highly responsive to changes in households' incomes.

Problem Statement

Studies of food consumption and expenditure have often been the subject of research in the developed and developing world. They provide important inputs into food and related nutritional policy initiatives, by providing estimates of how food consumption is likely to change with changes in prices, incomes and taxation. The national expenditure data in Nigeria has shown an increase in proportion of food expenditure to the total households' expenditure (Daud et al., 2018). This as indicated by the Central Bank of Nigeria was at the rate of 70% (Omotoso et al., 2022) leaving many Nigerians in the dilemma of having neither the means to produce food nor the money to buy food. All these are clear evidences that a great number of people regularly are joining the train of those who are hungry, starving and malnourished suggesting that the country is characterized by high level of food insecurity with Kogi and Kwara states not exempted. National food expenditure data show that almost two thirds of total expenditure in 2024 was on food.

The percentage of a household's total expenditure on food gives an indication of their vulnerability to food insecurity in the future. In the case of a job loss, natural disaster, disease onset or price policy reform, a household will be particularly at risk if over 70 percent of the income is spent on food (Omotayo & Omotoso, 2025). Many people thought that food insecurity is increasingly concentrated in particular regions or groups within Nigeria and thus there is a great need for sub-national information. Household income and expenditure surveys (HIES) are used to obtain information on a variety of specific conditions, experiences and behaviours indicating the severity of the condition. They are sources of policy relevant measures allowing monitoring and targeting of regional or national prevalence of food insecurity. But data collection and computation costs are high in terms of time, financial resources and technical skills required and cannot determine inequalities of access to food between individuals within a household (Ajibade et al., 2024). The household is only examined at the time of interview so changes may well occur, and estimates may be biased through systematic non-sampling errors. In addition, social desirability problems may occur when respondents do not want to look bad in front of interviewers. The objectives of the study area to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, estimate the food expenditure patterns among households and determine the factors affecting food expenditure patterns among rural households in Ogun state, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Ogun State, South Western Nigeria. The state lies between longitudes $2^{0}2^{1}$ and $3^{0}55^{1}$ and latitudes $7^{0}01^{1}$ and $7^{0}18^{1}$.It has a tropical climate with rainforest vegetation on its southern part and a derived savannah on its northern end. It has an estimated land area of 16,409.26 square kilometers. The estimated human population is 3751140 (2006 population census) and it is characterized commercially by a dual economic focus, the bourgeoning industrial sector and a dominant agricultural sector.

Sampling Techniques

Multistage samplingtechnique was used to select 240 rural households from 20 communities in two agricultural zones of Ogun State (Abeokuta and Ilaro).

First stage involved the selection of two Zones which are Abeokuta and Ilaro randomly. Second stage involved simple random selection of three (3) and two (3) blocks from each of the two ADP zones respectively making 6 blocks. Stage three involved random selection of four (4) cells from each of the

6 blocks making 24 cells. While the last stage involved random selection of eight (10) rural households from each of the 24 cells making 240 rural households. Primary data were collected using structured interview guide. Data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, mean and Ordinary Least Square Regression

Results and discussion

Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area

Table 1 revealed the socioeconomic characteristics such as Age, Marital status, Education, Farm size, Religion and Household size of the respondents in the study area. The study showed that 57.50 percent of the respondents were male with means age of the respondent estimated at 45 years. This was in line with Omotoso et al. (2023) who also showed the mean age of the respondents to be 48 years. In terms of marital status, 56.67 percent of the respondents were married, 24.17 percent were single while 11.67 percent were divorced. On the educational level, 25.00 percent of the respondents had primary education, 40.00 percent of the respondents had secondary education, and those with tertiary education were 10.00 percent, while 10.83 percent of the respondent had no formal education.

Table 1: Distribution of Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	MEAN
Age			
Less than 30	66	27.50	
30 – 40	38	15.83	
41 – 50	46	19.17	45
51 - 60	22	9.17	
Above 60	68	28.33	
Marital Status			
Single	58	24.17	
Married	136	56.67	
Widowed	28	11.67	
Divorced	18	7.50	
Gender			
Male	138	57.50	
Female	102	42.50	
Occupation			
Farming	52	21.85	
Trading/Civil servant	138	57.50	
Artisan	50	20.65	
Household size			
Less than 4	88	36.97	
4 – 8	86	36.13	6
9 - 12	52	21.85	
Above 12	12	5.04	
Education level			
Primary Education	60	25.00	
Secondary Education	96	40.00	
Tertiary Education	24	10.00	
No formal Education	60	25.00	
Religion			
Christian	78	32.50	
Islam	128	53.33	
Traditional	28	14.13	
Income (₦)			
Less than 50,000	156	65.00	49,500.50
50,000 - 100,000	60	25.00	
Above 100,000	24	10.00	
Total	240	100.00	

Food Expenditure Pattern of the households

The distribution of respondents based on amount spend on food at home, away from home and frequency of food purchased/consumed away from home were presented in Table 2. Majority (66.67 percent) of the respondents spent less than ₦20,000.00 on food with mean amount spent on food at home and away from home estimated at ₦17,544.60 and ₦16,700.55 respectively. Also, grouping of respondents based on frequency of food purchased/consumed away from home revealed that majority (75.83 percent) consumes/purchases food away from home either on daily basis or weekends as against about 1.0 percent of the respondents that consumes once a week

Table 2: Distribution of Food Expenditure Pattern of the households in the study area

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Amount spent on food at home (₦)			
Less than 20,000	160	66.67	17,544.60
20,000 - 40,000	44	18.33	
Above 40,000	36	15.00	
Amount spent on food away from home (₦)			
Less than 20,000	180	75.00	16,700.55
20,000 - 40,000	26	10.83	
Above 40,000	34	14.17	
Frequency of food purchases/consumes away from home			
Once a week	2	0.83	
Twice a week	6	2.50	
Thrice a week	50	20.83	
Only weekends	62	25.83	
Everyday	120	50.00	
Total	240	100.00	

Determinants of Food Expenditure of the respondents

The data on the determinants of household food expenditure was analyzed using OLS which was chosen based on theoretical and statistical criteria. Food expenditure was the dependent variable while the explanatory variables included age of household head, marital status of household head, level of education, sex, household size, household income and household composition. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3. The result of the regression analysis revealed that household income ($p<0.01$), age of the household age ($p<0.1$), household size ($p<0.01$) and occupation ($p<0.05$) were positively significantly have influenced on food expenditure of the households. This result shows that household will spend more on food with rising household income, household size and presence of dependants and risk group (infants and pregnant women). In addition, with relatively low income and high household size in the study area, this result calls attention to the need for intervening policy with respect to the nutritional status of the target population especially considering the high cost of food items in the urban communities. The result was in line with Omotoso et al. (2023) who reported that effect of household size on their expenditure pattern has a combination of two effects- 'a specific effect' and an 'income effect'..

The adjusted R^2, measures the ability of the explanatory variables to explain all the variation in the dependent variable for the equation is 0.681 which shows that the combine effect of the independent variables accounted for 68.1 percent of the variations in the household expenditure on food items.

Table 3: Socioeconomic Determinants of Food Expenditure in the households of the respondents

Variables	Coefficients	T-value	P value
Constant	1.231* **	3.562	0.001
Household income	0.189***	2.921	0.005
Age of household head	0.214*	1.886	0.051
Marital status	0.224	1.324	0.231

Educational status	-0.345	-0.882	0.113
Sex of household head	0.845	1.451	0.212
Household size	0.279***	3.021	0.001
Occupation	1.230**	2.091	0.040
Adjusted R^2	0.681		
F-ratio	32.12***		

Conclusion and Recommendation

The finding concluded that majority of the respondents are young, married with average household size of 5 persons and estimated monthly income of ₦49,500.50. Also, majority of the respondents purchases/consumes food away from home on daily basis with estimated weekly expenditure of ₦17,544.60. Also, It was observed that household income, tribe, household size and occupation of household head had a significant effect on food expenditure. Therefore, there is a suspected existence of food insecurity and vulnerability to poverty in the study area which could be as a result of high cost of food items.

Recommendation

Based on the foregoing, the study recommends that:

1. With relatively low income and high household size in the study area, this result calls attention to the need for intervening policy with respect to the nutritional status of the target population especially considering the high cost of food items in the communities.
2. Better policy attention should be focused on the price control system to food with high nutritional value to be more affordable to rural dwellers. Supportive efforts such as improvement in inter-state transport and road network will ameliorate spatial differential prices.
3. Provision of subsidies on the food items mostly consumed by infants and pregnant should be explored by government as part of the health and nutrition policy for these groups of citizens.

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POULTRY PRODUCTION AS AN INCOME GENERATION SOURCE AND MEANS OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Despite the leading role of poultry production in the livestock industry, it's not without challenges. The challenges of poultry production in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. These challenges have slowed down the rate of production in the industry and make them to be under developed. Poultry production as an aspect of livestock production is important to the biological needs, economic growth and social development of the people in any nation. Despite the acknowledged importance of poultry production, the industry is still characterized by low production level due to limited finance for the procurement of basic poultry equipment and materials, lack of technical know-how, low youth involvement and participation, prevailing government policies, cost of drugs and lack of tools or equipements, scarcity and how cost of feedstuffs to mention few. Consequently, detrimental to potential of the industry as a means of socio-economic development of the country. It was concluded that poultry production has a great potential in bridging animal protein gap, create employment for people, generate sufficient income for the poultry farmer and increase food security in our society. The study recommends that Nigeria government, NGOS and all stake holders concerns should carefully consider all strategies put forward in addressing the hindrances and obstacles enumerated in ensuring sustainability of poultry industries in Nigeria.

Keyword: *Poultry, Income, Food Security*

Introduction

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is very alarming and high as reflect by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) with the statistics that 700,000 jobs were available in the country compared with 7,000,000 graduates being turned out by Nigeria Universities. This is as a result of imbalance in labour supply, rapid population growth rate and faulty educational system among others. The domestication of birds such as chicken, ducks, quails, turkey, and geese with the intent of rearing them for meat, egg production as well as using their bye products such as faecal droppings and feathers in industries as organic unprocessed materials has been registered in poultry farming (Stiles, 2017).

Poultry are domesticated birds kept by humans for their eggs, meat and feathers, reasonable numbers of these birds are typically members of the suborder Galloanserae (fowl), especially the order Galliformes (which includes chickens, quails, and turkeys). The poultry sector offers the quickest returns of investment outlays in any enterprises by virtue of its short gestation period, high feed conversion ratio alongside being one of the cheapest, commonest and best sources of animal protein in the country (Ojo, 2002).

Poultry production can be subdivided into three distinct parts named small, medium and large scale (Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015), these are also otherwise known as backyard, semi-commercial and commercial (Omiti and Okute, n.d.; Ricke, 2017; Rimi, et al., 2017). The country's standing poultry population is at present 180 million birds, a substantial increase from about 151 million birds (Onwualu, 2011; FAO, 2018) most of which are domiciled in the southern part of the country either in semi intensive farms or intensive ones (FAO, 2018).

Poultry offers a great potential by producing egg and meat which are the two major divisions of poultry production (United States Department of Agriculture USDA, 2018) although other divisions exists such as chick production, point of lay production, feed production, poultry tools and equipment production in addition to poultry processing and marketing (Compassion in World Farming -CIWF, 2019). The nutritional benefits derived from poultry products such as animal protein, minerals, fat-soluble vitamins, carbohydrates, pigments, fat and oil is attributable to its relevance as the world major source of food (Dilger, Schroeder and Moseley, 2016).

Consequently, literatures reviewed showed that 0.2% of Nigeria's aggregate meat demand is met by the poultry industry while the rest is supplied by such segments of other livestock market such as cattle

production, rabbitry, sheep and goat and grasscuttery. This revealed a wide deficient gap in comparison to that of European countries which is characterized by large supply to citizenry at cheapest cost (World Economic Forum, 2019). Hence, there is urgent need to take a cursory look into myriad of problem and hindrances facing development of poultry industry as well as its potential in Nigeria.

Current trend of poultry farming systems in nigeria

In Nigeria poultry production is still in the hands of small scale operators, existence of varying degrees of technology because the size of farms vary from small- to large-scale (Adeyonu, et al., 2016; Butler, 2016; Derbe and Nachimuthu, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2019). Poultry farming systems in Africa include Intensive, semi intensive, and extensive systems. According to Ali (2018), poultry is considered to be the most affordable meat in most developed countries, can be slaughtered at home by farmers and households, while egg production is exclusively from chickens. Approximately 80% of chickens raised in Africa are local dwarf chickens that are of little importance and of which 60% are raised under backyard systems by households (Mpundu, Mbewe, Muma, Zgambo, and Munyeme, 2019). In backyard farming, poultry are generally housed at night, but allowed to roam freely during the day; feed is administered to supplement scavenging.

In semi-intensive systems, poultry are kept in a structure at night and fed, but allowed to scavenge and forage during the day in a fenced designated area. Extensive systems comprise of free-range and backyard practices, which are usually employed by small-scale and household farmers. Free-range flocks may comprise of different ages and breeds, which are allowed to roam freely over a wide area, rudimentary shelters may be provided, but birds may roost outside. It has been estimated that by 2030, the demand for poultry products across the African continent will increase by 60% especially in Nigeria, (World Economic Forum, 2019).

Problem of poultry production in nigeria

Lack of technical know how

Most poultry houses in rural settlements of the country are substandard and handled by less competent farm operators who are not favourably disposed to using relevant or new equipment to managing poultry production efficiently and thus affecting poultry yield adversely (FAO, 2018). This constituted the major reason why European countries have usually had a higher yield in their poultry production and consumption than less developed countries across the world especially Africa and Asia (Augère-Granier, 2019; Ritchie and Roser, 2019). This ineffective resource management and inadequate knowledge of operating new tools and equipment has caused a devastating effects on growth and development of poultry industries. Majority of advance tools like incubator, full automated battery cages, fogging machines to cool down the environmental temperature, faecal or droppings evacuators can not be handled by average poultry farmers in Nigeria because of their levels of education. Hence represent a major limitation.

Youth involvement and participation

Youth empowerment can be actively enhanced by engaging the adults and youth in empowerment programmes like poultry production which aims at enhancing their standard of living (Dominique and Dominique, 2014). They should be inspired or sensitized on how to take full charge of their living by placing priority on self-employment. The orientation of the present day youths should be changed from looking for a white collar job and tailored towards the access to available resources which would improve their values, beliefs and attitudes as well as their standard of living (Ile and Boadu, 2018). Poultry business has been the most demanding section of animal rearing as regards farm products in Nigeria which offers great potentials for sustainable development in youth empowerment programmes (Ajani, Mgnbenka, and Onah, 2015; Price, 2019). The youth have a great part to play, since they are the largest demographic segment of the country at present and they are agile, strong and healthier than the now aging current population of poultry farmer in the country. Inadequate number of youths who are the actively growing population involved in the poultry production business, poorly funded and staffed existing or moribund extension services to train and give advisory services to youths engaged in poultry production (Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015).

Availability and cost of feedstuffs

Nigeria's poultry production industries has myriad of challenges. Some of which stems from exorbitant price of raw materials used for animal feed production; although, this issue is a general concern in every part of the world (Ahmed and Mohammed, 2015; Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015). This challenge is further accentuated by the following: inadequate local production of corn, soya and fish meal.

Inadequate and poor quality feed resources can make any expansion of the poultry sector impossible. The readily availability of commercial feed can be an important requirement for the promotion of semi-intensive production, and is essential for intensive family poultry production. (Sonaiya, E.B. 2006). To have a successful poultry production, ration with which the birds are fed must be well formulated with all nutrient classes in exact quantity and quality for specific age for the birds to meet their nutritional requirements.

Cost of drugs and lack of tools

Poultry production systems frequently use antimicrobials to maintain flock health and productivity. According to some reports the use of antimicrobials in poultry production for prophylaxis, therapeautic and growth promotion has been reduce drastically and tremendously, this is not because they are not efficient or effective but average poultry farmers find it difficult to afford them because of their exorbitant prices. Consequently, emergence and spread of resistant bacterial strains, including Salmonella, Newcastle, discouraging young poultry farmers from practicing. (Adene and Oguntade, 2006). Government subsidizing materials, although inputs like vaccines and diagnostic services were either subsidized by government or even given out freely are not readily available to interested poultry farmers.

Epidemic diseases and veterinary services

High mortality, often due to Newcastle disease, is a disincentive for owners to invest in improving their poultry raising activities. Other common diseases are fowl cholera, coccidiosis, internal and external parasites, and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). It is important to note that insufficient animal health services are the trend of today health services. The qualified veterinary staff and vaccinators, means of communication, cold chain and transport availability, animal health education, and sale of veterinary medicines or drugs in rural and urban centers are not properly coordinated (Alders, R.G., Bagnol, B. & Young, M.P. 2010)

Other challenges facing poultry production

According to Njenga, Mugo, and Opiyo (as cited in Ajala, Ogunjimi, Famuwagun, Samuel, and Adebimpe, 2020), the challenges facing poultry production includes poor mindset about the sector, poor access to factors of production, Income fluctuation and seasonality results from egg glut, poor infrastructures, the labour-intensitivity of the sector. Other challenges includes: problems of tradition, the effect of climate change, poor parental, family and societal view of agriculture generally (although fast changing), use of less effective production methods, and poor government policies (Ajani, Mgbenka, and Onah, 2015).

Socio-economic role of poultry production

Employment generation

Poultry production is one of the important components of the livestock subsector in the Nigerian economy, which can be embarked upon by the people with small or little capital (Conroy, 2005). Nigeria's poultry industry is composed of local unimproved breeds and the high performing commercial breeds. Over the last 50 years, the exotic breed has made an aggressive incursion into the production economy of the country, while the local chicken is driven by traditional system management, the exotic breeds have stimulated an industrial advancement of the poultry industry through specialization in egg or meat type strains to satisfy the increasing demand for poultry commodity in the food market (Rekwot et al., 2015). It provides direct employment for a large number of rural and urban people and indirect employment to suppliers of products and services such as grain farmers, feed mill operators as well as those producing various goods and services used to support poultry production and marketing activities (Adeyemo and Onikoyi, 2012).

Increasing household protein intake

Poultry is considered to be a means of livelihood and a way of achieving a certain level of economic Independence in Nigeria, the primary purpose for keeping poultry in all parts of the country is for both dietary and economic reasons (Ogundipe and Sanni, 2002). Poultry as an aspect of livestock production is important to the biological needs, economic and social development of the people in any nation (Oladeebo and Ambe-Lamidi, 2007). However, the contribution of poultry production (meat and eggs) to total protein intake increased from tremendously in the past years with an increase in egg consumption alone accounting for about 13% during the period (Ojo, 2003). The development of the poultry industry has also been described as the fastest means of bridging the protein deficiency gap prevailing in most of the developing countries. Poultry meat and eggs offers considerable potential for meeting human needs for dietary animal supply (Folorunsho and Onibi, 2005).

Source of foreign exchange

The poultry industry, if properly harnessed can also serve as a source of foreign earnings complementing crude oil which at present constitutes the main source of foreign earnings in Nigeria (The poultry site news 2009). In poultry production, small scale poultry production represents one of the few opportunities for saving, investment and security against risks. It accounts for approximately 90% of total poultry production (Branckaert, 1999). Poultry production in rural parts of the country is more important because of the divergent roles it plays (Nwagu, 2002). Poultry products like eggs, meat and bye-products like organic manure from droppings, offals and feathers has been found to be exported to the neighboring countries like cotonour, Niger republic hence represent a form of internally generated revenue (IGR) for the country.

Provisions of raw materials and ingredient for industries

Poultry plays significant role in human economy through provision of food while also creating wealth through job provision for our teeming population (Alders, et al., 2019). The industry also provides raw materials to some industries as well as serve as a take up industry for other industries such as animal health industries (Omiti and Okuthe, as cited in Ajala, Ogunjimi, Famuwagun, Samuel, and Adebimpe, 2020). Furthermore, according to Darre (as cited in Ajala, Ogunjimi, Famuwagun, Samuel, and Adebimpe, 2020), the poultry industry provides economic support and development for other sectors as well as the fashion industries. Specifically, poultry industry is relevant to human lives and human living in many ways, such as industrial production and uses of vaccines, fertilizers and animal feeds; pharmaceutical importance including as preservatives during semen storage, in paint and adhesive production companies as varnishes, adhesives, and printers ink, in leather producing companies as leather tanners and in textile industries during the production of different types of cloth dyes. Furthermore, the hospitality industry relies on it for the supply of feathers for display and comfortable luxury mattresses, pillows and cushions as well as in the agricultural industry in the production of organic fertilizers.

Continuous income generation and cash flows

The aspects of the poultry industry relevant to youth empowerment due to their ease of commencement and availability of factors of production includes Broiler Farming which involves the production of fast growing bird breeds (4-7 weeks) for meat consumption using production methods such as the deep litter system, (Nwandu, et al., 2016). Egg Production which involves raising birds specifically for the sales and supply of eggs using good production practices (Lieshout, Touray and ITC Consultants, 2017; Nordhagen And Klemm, 2018)

Feed formulation and production/sales which involves the production of high quality poultry feeds for local farms based on each farmers requirements and poultry breed needs (Olugbenga, et al., 2015; Swain, 2016; Alhotan, 2016).

Sales and marketing which involves obtaining poultry products such as broiler chicken, eggs, faecal waste, feeds, Day Old Chicken, Point of Lay, etc. from production centres (e.g. mills, farms, and hatcheries) and selling to farmers, retailers and final consumers (Simonič, Dumičić, and Žmuk, 2016).

Value Addition which involves the processing of poultry products/by-products into ready to eat or utilize products such as roasted fried chicken, chicken soup, fried/boiled/ scotched eggs, bread-egg sandwiches, grilled chicken, and chicken barbeques, turkey kielbasa, chicken nuggets, ginger lemon chicken drum sticks, and honey garlic marinated chicken wings (Barbut, 2015). Vaccines, Medications and Veterinary Services (although technical) which involves the sale of drugs, vaccines, and the treatment/care/provision of animal health consultancy services to farmers to ensure successful production of desired poultry products all year round (Donadeu, et al., 2019).

Agro transportation which involves providing specialized transportation services to poultry farmers including movement of live and processed poultry products between farms and from farms to consumers/retailers (Aldridge, 2019). In summary, the sector is an appropriate sector for the creation of jobs and employment (Wahyono and Utami, 2018).

Overcoming the problem and challenges

Nigerian government should, incorporate poultry production into its current Agricultural Development Plan at all levels (Nwaobiala, Nnamdi and Ekumankama, 2018), poultry production seminars and workshops targeting the youth should be organized regularly (Dumas, et al., 2016), Specialised Youth Entrepreneurial Poultry Financial Support Initiatives should be introduced where the country's youths can be given loans/grants of up to a million naira for starting and managing their farms successfully (Timi and Adaigho, 2015; Adeyonu, et al., 2017; Chloma, 2017), cooperative farms should also be engaged so that the benefits of economies of scale can be adequately utilized and therefore reduce business failure rates. (Heise, Crisan and Theuvsen, 2015; Obasi, 2015), similarly more support should be offered to those who would like to go into poultry value addition and processing (Barbut, 2015), as well as the re-training and continuous training of extension agents in the country on new developments in the sector so as to ensure the success of the initiatives recommended (Olumide-Oyaniyi and Ajayi, 2019).

Possible solutions to the challenges of poultry production in nigeria

Despite the enormous prospects of poultry production in Nigeria, various limitation has hindered proper functioning, and these challenges have slowed down its production rate. Solution to cub these challenges are not farfetched. On incidence of diseases outbreak which is one of the pressing challenge of poultry production in Nigeria, there is need for veterinary intervention in order to cub losses due to disease as suggested by (Ajala et al. 2007). Also educations simple disease control programmes are possible short-term methods to improve poultry production in Nigeria. Information dissemination on technical know-how for improving poultry production should be made available to poultry keepers through extension service. Thus the extension workers have a major role to play in improving rural poultry production as suggested by (Ajala et al., 2007). Aromolaran et al. (2013), in their research on small poultry farms did recommended that small scale layer poultry famers should be encouraged to form cooperative societies or join the existing one to be able to access loan for their business and government could also make fund available to assist the poultry farmers. There should be a capacity training for farmers on poultry to enable them cope with the challenges of modern poultry farming and commercialization of small scale poultry production to prevent the decline of the sectors as a result of unprofitable operation or increase in the price of its products. Anosike, et al. (2015) did recommend that to reduce the rate mortality to a barest minimum, hatchery industry should be inspected by relevant agencies to ensure that healthy day old chicks are produced under good hygiene condition.

Conclusion

Conclusively, poultry production has a great potential in bridging animal protein gap, create employment for people generate sufficient income for the poultry farmer and increase food security in our society. "Poultry farming represents a veritable tool for economic emancipation, it is therefore necessary to note that poultry production when properly managed is highly profitable, capable of generating employment for teeming population and provide nutrition food for the citizens.

Recommendations

i To reduce cost of production farmers should form agricultural cooperative groups which will enable them to benefit from the economy of scale through bulk purchases of farm inputs.

ii. Government should encourage the youths involved by providing them technical knowledge in the area of resource management through the extension agents to assist in reduction of production cost.

iii. Government should try to provide the essential farm input such as drugs and vaccine to the farmers at the right time and at subsidized prices to reduce the cost of production in order to improve profitability.

iv. Government in all arms and private bodies should intervene in provision of good credit facilities to the poultry farmers, subsidize the cost of feeds and feed ingredients, create access to ready markets, provide good electricity, provide veterinary centers and veterinary personnel for the poultry industry in the study area.

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EFFECT OF DIVERGENT SOWING MEDIA ON THE GROWTH OF OKRA (Abelmoschus esculentus L.)

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Abstract
A pot experiment was conducted to evaluate the effect of different sowing media on the growth performance of okra (Abelmoschus esculentus L.). Three media—topsoil, sawdust, and composted male inflorescence of oil palm (Elaeis guineensis)—were compared at the Teaching and Research Farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-ora, Nigeria. The experiment was laid out in a Completely Randomized Design (CRD) with five replications. Data were collected on plant height, number of leaves, number of branches, and leaf area at 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 weeks after planting (WAP). Results showed significant differences ($p < 0.05$) among the treatments. Topsoil produced the best growth performance with the highest plant height (27.60 cm), number of leaves (12.50), number of branches (3.20), and leaf area (32.50 cm²) at 6 WAP. Male inflorescence of Elaeis guineensis performed better than sawdust and showed promising potential as a sustainable alternative medium. Sawdust recorded the poorest performance due to low nutrient content and poor water retention capacity. The study concludes that topsoil is superior for okra growth, while composted oil palm male inflorescence offers a viable waste-to-wealth option for sustainable vegetable production.

Keywords: *Okra, growth media, topsoil, sawdust, male inflorescence of *Elaeis guineensis*, sustainable agriculture*

Introduction

The choice of sowing medium is a critical factor influencing seed germination, seedling establishment, and overall plant growth. Growth media affect essential parameters such as nutrient availability, water retention, aeration, pH, and root penetration (Durand et al., 2024). Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus L.*), commonly known as lady's finger, is an important warm-season vegetable crop valued for its nutritional and economic benefits (Liu et al., 2021). In Nigeria, okra production is often constrained by poor soil quality and limited access to high-quality sowing media.

Conventional topsoil is widely used but may suffer from compaction, nutrient depletion, and pathogen accumulation. Agricultural wastes such as sawdust and male inflorescence of oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) are abundant in Nigeria and could serve as low-cost, eco-friendly alternatives. This study therefore investigated the comparative effects of topsoil, sawdust, and composted male inflorescence of *Elaeis guineensis* on the growth of okra with the aim of promoting sustainable farming practices.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective is to evaluate the effect of divergent sowing media on the growth of okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus L.*).

Specific Objectives are to;

1) examine the effect of sawdust, topsoil, and male inflorescence of E*laeis guineensis* on germination and early growth of okra.

2) compare the influence of these media on plant height, number of leaves, number of branches, and leaf area.

Statement of the Problem

Limited information exists on the performance of locally available waste materials (sawdust and oil palm male inflorescence) as sowing media for okra. Most farmers rely solely on topsoil, which is becoming increasingly unsustainable. This study addresses this gap.

Justification of the Study

Findings from this research will guide farmers in selecting appropriate and sustainable sowing media, reduce environmental waste burden, and enhance okra productivity in resource-limited settings.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The experiment was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm, Faculty of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-ora, Nigeria (Latitude 7° 26′ N, Longitude 3° 35′ E, elevation ≈ 152 m above sea level).

Treatments and Experimental Design

Three sowing media were tested:

1. Topsoil (control)

2. Sawdust

3. Composted male inflorescence of *Elaeis guineensis (*MI)

The experiment was arranged in a Completely Randomized Design (CRD) with five replications. Two seedlings were raised per 5 kg polythene bag.

Media Preparation

- Sawdust: Collected, air-dried, and sieved.

- Topsoil: Collected from a fertile fallow land, screened, and partially sterilized.

- Male inflorescence of *Elaeis guineensis*: Collected, shredded, and composted for 4–6 weeks.

Cultural Practices

Regular watering was done twice daily. Weeding and other silvicultural practices were carried out as required.

Data Collection

Growth parameters (plant height, number of leaves, number of branches, and leaf area) were measured at 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 WAP. Leaf area was estimated using the formula: Length × Breadth × 0.75.

Statistical Analysis

Data were subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and means were separated using Duncan's Multiple Range Test at 5% probability level.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Effect of sowing media on plant height (cm) of okra

VARIABLES	PH2WAP	PH3WAP	PH4WAP	PH5WAP	PH6WAP
MI	11.94b	11.32b	12.34b	12.52b	12.73b
Sawdust	11.40b	12.46b	13.06b	13.76b	13.92b
Top soil	17.70a	20.60a	24.40a	26.60a	27.60a

Table 2: Effect of sowing media on number of leaves

VARIABLES	NL2WAP	NL3WAP	NL4WAP	NL5WAP	NL6WAP
MI	2.80b	4.00b	5.20b	5.40b	5.70b
Sawdust	3.20b	3.80b	5.20b	5.60b	5.90b
Top soil	7.40a	9.20a	10.80a	12.20a	12.50a

Table 3: Effect of sowing media on number of branches

VARIABLES	NB2WAP	NB3WAP	NB4WAP	NB5WAP	NB6WAP
MI	1.00a	2.00a	2.00b	2.40b	2.50b
Sawdust	1.00a	2.00a	2.20b	2.20b	2.30b
Top soil	1.00a	2.00a	2.60a	3.00a	3.20a

Table 4: Effect of sowing media on leaf area (cm²)

VARIABLES	LA2WAP	LA3WAP	LA4WAP	LA5WAP	LA6WAP
MI	9.36b	11.50b	12.30b	13.09b	14.19b
Sawdust	8.57b	10.33b	11.01b	12.69b	13.22b
Top soil	19.41a	22.40a	27.01a	31.40a	32.50a

Means with the same superscript in the same column are not significantly different at *p* = 0.05.

Topsoil consistently outperformed the other media across all parameters. This is attributed to its superior nutrient balance, water-holding capacity, and physical structure. The promising performance of male inflorescence of *Elaeis guineensis* is linked to its rich organic matter and gradual nutrient release. Poor performance of sawdust agrees with Trolove and Reid (2005), who attributed it to high C:N ratio and low inherent fertility.

Conclusion

Topsoil remains the most effective sowing medium for okra production. However, composted male inflorescence of oil palm is a promising sustainable alternative that can reduce environmental waste while supporting good plant growth.

Recommendations

1. Topsoil should be used as the primary sowing medium for optimal okra growth.
2. Composted male inflorescence of *Elaeis guineensis* should be promoted, especially in oil palm-producing areas.
3. Sawdust should only be used when amended with organic manure or topsoil.
4. Further research is recommended on the combined use of these media and their effect on yield and fruit quality.

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EFFECT OF DIFFERENT RATES OF WORM CAST AND BIOCHAR ON THE GROWTH OF CUCUMBER *CUCUMIS SATIVUS* L.) IN IGBOORA, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Experiment was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm of the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria, to evaluate the effect of different rates of worm cast and biochar on the growth of Cucumis sativus L. The treatments consisted of 100 % worm cast, 100 % biochar, 50 % biochar + 50 % worm cast, 75 % biochar + 25 % worm cast 25 % biochar + 75 % worm cast and the control. The study was arranged in a Completely Randomised Design (CRD) with six treatments replicated four times. Growth parameters taken were plant height, number of leaves, leaf area and stem diameter. Data collected were analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and means separated using Least Significant Difference (LSD) at the 5 % probability level. The results showed that the organic amendments significantly improved cucumber growth compared with the control. The treatment 25 % biochar + 75 % worm cast produced the highest plant height (25.80 cm) and leaf area (123.15 cm²) at 7 weeks after sowing, while 75 % biochar + 25 % worm cast also recorded the highest number of leaves (8.06) and stem diameter (3.16 cm). The result indicated that integrated application of worm cast and biochar in ratio 3:1 enhances vegetative growth and can serve as a sustainable nutrient management strategy for cucumber production in the study area.

Keywords: *Biochar, Cucumber, Nutrient management, Organic amendment, Worm cast.*

Introduction

Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus* L.) is one of the most widely grown vegetable crops because of its nutritional value, early maturity and economic importance (Robinson and Decker-Walters, 1997; Rubatzky and Yamaguchi, 2012). It may be consumed fresh, processed into salads and pickles and contributes essential vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre to human nutrition. In Nigeria, cucumber production has increased considerably due to increasing in consumer demand and its profitability for small-scale farmers (FAO, 2022). However, the decreasing soil fertility and increasing cost of inorganic fertilizers have become major constraints to sustainable vegetable production (Lal, 2020).

Organic soil amendments such as worm cast (vermicast) and biochar have gained considerable attention because they improve soil fertility while minimizing environmental degradation (Lehmann and Joseph, 2015; Glaser *et al*., 2002). Worm cast is produced through the decomposition of organic materials by earthworms and contains readily available plant nutrients, beneficial microorganisms, humic substances and plant growth regulators that stimulate plant growth (Atiyeh *et al*., 2002; Edwards *et al*., 2018). Biochar is a carbon-rich material produced by the pyrolysis of biomass under limited oxygen conditions. It improves soil physical and chemical properties by increasing nutrient retention, cation exchange capacity, water-holding capacity and microbial activity (Lehmann and Joseph, 2015; Agegnehu *et al*., 2017).

The application of combined worm cast and biochar may produce synergistic effects that improve nutrient availability, enhance root development and increase crop productivity (Agegnehu *et al*., 2017; Steiner *et al*., 2007). Although previous studies indicated individual benefits of these organic amendments, information on their combined effects on cucumber growth in southwestern Nigeria especially in the study area remains limited. Therefore, this study evaluated the effect of different rates of worm cast and biochar on the growth of cucumber (*Cucumis sativus* L.) in Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

It was pot experiment carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm of Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH), Igboora, Oyo State, Nigeria, located within the derived savannah agro-ecological zone. The area experiences annual rainfall of approximately 1100 - 1300 mm and average temperatures ranging from 26℃ to 32℃. The soils are predominantly sandy loam, making them suitable for Cucumber production.

Experimental Design

The experiment was laid out in a Completely Randomised Design (CRD) consisting of six treatments replicated four times, giving a total of 24 experimental pots.
The treatments were:
T1 = 100 % worm cast (WC)
T2 = 100 % Biochar (BC)
T3 = 50 % BC+ 50 % WC
T4 = 75% BC + 25 % WC
T5 = 25 % BC + 75 % WC
T6 = Control (Topsoil)
Each treatment was thoroughly mixed with 10 kg of topsoils placed in perforated polythene bags two weeks before sowing. The cucumber variety used in this study was Murano F1, obtained from Jubaili Agrotec, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Two cucumber seeds were sown per bag and later thinned to one healthy seedling ten days after sowing. Routine agronomic practices carried out includes; watering, manual weeding and pest monitoring were done throughout the experimental period.

Data Collection

The following vegetative growth parameters were measured and recorded weekly. Plant height in cm using measuring tape, Number of leaves by physical counting, Leaf area in cm^2using leaf area meter and Stem diameter in cm using vernier caliper.

Statistical Analysis

Data collected were subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the means were separated using Least Significant Difference (LSD) at 5% level of probability.

Results and Discussion

Effect of different rates of Worm cast and Biochar on plant height of Cucumber

Table 1 presents the effect of different rates of worm cast and biochar on the plant height of cucumber from 3 to 7 weeks after sowing (WAS). Plant height progressively increased across all treatment levels throughout the period of study. T5 consistently produced the tallest plants, recording the highest plant height (25.80 cm) at 7 WAS, while the control had the lowest (20 cm) response. Treatments containing worm cast, either alone or in combination with biochar, performed better than the control, showing the positive influence of organic amendments on cucumber vegetative growth. This result agrees with the findings of Edwards *et al.,* (2018), who reported enhanced plant growth following vermicompost application and Agegnehu *et al*., (2017), who observed improved crop performance with the combined application of biochar and organic amendments.

Table 1: Effect of Worm cast and Biochar on plant height of Cucumber

TREATMENT	3 WAS	4 WAS	5 WAS	6 WAS	7 WAS
BC 25 % +WC 75 %	10.50a	17.00a	19.33	23.20	25.80
BC 50 % + WC 50 %	9.25ab	15.25	16.33	19.59	21.70
BC 75 % + WC 25 %	10.25a	15.25	17.57	21.09	23.45
BIOCHAR 100 %	8.50ab	14.75	16.32	19.59	20.00
CONTROL	7.00b	14.00	16.32	19.59	21.79
WORM CAST 100 %	10.25a	15.75	15.82	18.88	21.12

Means followed by the same letter within a column are not significantly different according to the LSD test at P ≤ 0.05. BC = Biochar; WC = Worm cast; WAS = Weeks After Sowing.

Effect of Worm Cast and Biochar on number of leaves of Cucumber

Table 2 presents the effect of different rates of worm cast and biochar on the number of leaves of cucumber from 4 to 7 weeks after sowing (WAS). The number of leaves increased progressively across all treatments throughout the study period. T4 also gave the highest number of leaves (8.06) at 7 WAS, while T3 recorded the lowest (6.05) results. Generally, it was observed that treatments with worm cast and biochar produced more leaves than the control, showing that the combined application of these organic amendments improved vegetative growth. This finding agrees with Arancon *et al.*, (2019) and Agegnehu *et al.,* (2017), who reported an improved crop growth following the integrated use of vermicompost and biochar.

Table 2: Effect of worm cast and biochar on number of leaves of Cucumber

TREATMENT	4 WAS	5 WAS	6 WAS	7 WAS
BC 25 % +WC 75 %	4.25ab	5.75	6.44	7.73
BC 50 % + WC 50 %	2.25c	4.50	5.04	6.05
BC 75 % + WC 25 %	4.75a	6.00	6.72	8.06
BIOCHAR 100 %	4.00abc	5.00	5.60	6.72
CONTROL	3.50bc	4.75	5.32	6.05
WORM CAST 100 %	4.00abc	5.25	5.88	7.06

Means followed by the same letter within a column are not significantly different according to the LSD test at P ≤ 0.05. BC = Biochar; WC = Worm cast; WAS = Weeks After Sowing.

Table 3: Effect of worm cast and biochar on leaf area of Cucumber (cm^2)

Table 3 presents the effect of different rates of worm cast and biochar on the leaf area of cucumber from 3 to 7 weeks after sowing (WAS). Leaf area increased steadily across all treatments throughout the experimental period. T5 consistently produced the largest leaf area (123.15 cm^2) at 7 WAS while the control generally recorded the smallest leaf area (81.83). It was generally recorded that the treatments with worm cast and biochar boost leaf production compared with the control, indicating improved vegetative growth and photosynthetic capacity. The superior leaf area observed in T5 may be attributed to improved nutrient availability from worm cast and enhanced soil moisture and nutrient retention provided by biochar according to the findings of Lehmann and Joseph (2015); Edwards *et al*., (2018). These findings were also corroborated by Atiyeh *et al*., (2002), Glaser *et al*.,(2002), Steiner *et al*., (2007) and Agegnehu *et al*. (2017), who observed that the application of vermicompost, biochar or their combination significantly improved leaf development, plant vigour and overall crop growth.

Table 3: Effect of worm cast and biochar on leaf area of Cucumber

TREATMENT	3 WAS	4 WAS	5 WAS	6 WAS	7 WAS
BC 25 % +WC 75 %	33.00a	64.00	98.00	109.50	123.15
BC 50 % + WC 50 %	22.50b	40.50	82.50	92.56	103.67
BC 75 % + WC 25 %	31.75a	65.50	79.50	89.20	99.91
BIOCHAR 100 %	22.50b	44.50	71.25	79.94	89.54
CONTROL	18.00b	42.50	67.50	75.73	81.83
WORM CAST 100 %	19.25b	35.25	82.25	76.57	85.77

Means followed by the same letter within a column are not significantly different according to the LSD test at P ≤ 0.05. BC = Biochar; WC = Worm cast; WAS = Weeks After Sowing.

Effect of worm cast and Biochar on stem diameter of Cucumber in cm

Stem diameter increased progressively across all treatments throughout the experimental period. T4 consistently produced the thickest stems, recording the highest stem diameter of 3.16 cm at 7 WAS, whereas T3 and the control recorded the lowest (2.02 cm). Generally, the application of worm cast and biochar improved stem development indicating improved vegetative growth and plant vigour. The

highest stem diameter observed in T4 may be attributed to improved nutrient availability, enhanced soil physical properties and increased water retention resulting from the complementary effects of biochar and worm cast (Lehmann and Joseph, 2015; Edwards *et al*., 2018). Similar findings were reported by Atiyeh *et al*., (2002), Steiner *et al*., (2007) and Agegnehu *et al*., (2016), who observed that the application of vermicompost, biochar and their combinations significantly enhanced vegetative growth, stem development and overall crop performance through improved soil fertility and overall crop performance.

Table 4: Effect of worm cast and biochar on stem diameter of Cucumber

TREATMENT	3 WAS	4 WAS	5 WAS	6 WAS	7 WAS
BC 25 % +WC 75 %	1.12	1.14	2.20	2.42	2.93
BC 50 % + WC 50 %	1.02	1.03	2.02	2.23	2.56
BC 75 % + WC 25 %	1.38	1.39	2.38	2.61	3.16
BIOCHAR 100 %	1.05	1.06	2.05	2.25	2.73
CONTROL	1.07	1.08	1.93	2.12	2.02
WORM CAST 100 %	1.15	1.16	2.08	2.28	2.77

BC = Biochar; WC = Worm cast; WAS = Weeks After Sowing. Values represent treatment means.

Conclusion

The combined application of worm cast and biochar significantly improved the growth of cucumber compared with the control. T5 (25 % biochar + 75 % worm cast) produced the highest plant height and leaf area while T4 (75 % biochar + 25 % worm cast) had the greatest number of leaves and stem diameter. Generally, T5 performed best, indicating that the integration of 25 % biochar with 75 % worm cast is an effective, environmentally friendly and sustainable soil fertility management strategy for enhancing cucumber growth while reducing dependence on synthetic fertilizers. It is recommended that further field experiments should be conducted across different agro-ecological zones to validate these findings before recommending the technology for large-scale adoption by farmers.

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INFLUENCE OF THREE MULCHING PRACTICES ON SOME SOIL PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES

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Abstract
The influence of mulching on some soil properties in three (3) difference practices were carried out. The study aim to establish the important of crop residue management, as well as coping and adaptation strategies used. The representative soil sampling site were then selected based on the quantities of mulch cover on each site. Following this, three mulching practices were considered (complete, partial and no mulching) and evaluated for each sampling site, the sampling site was sketched. Composite soil samples were collected from the depths of 0-15cm. Each composite soil samples was made from 2-4 sub samples collected from within the respective area delineated as replication of such mulching practices. Temperature produced by complete mulching had major contribution to tuber germination and tuberization. Bulk density resulted in soil compaction at no mulching plot whilst the mulching plot had lowest bulk density. Total nitrogen was higher at complete mulching plot compare with no mulching, and this was attributed to the moderate value of phosphorus at the site. The value of available phosphorus was higher at complete mulching plot than no mulching. This was associate with the fact that crop residue management enriched soil with much nutrients both micro and macro. This reviewed were indicated that soil health can be improved through greater use of mulching practices at the study area. Therefore, farmers are advice to embrace mulching practice for sustainable crop production.

Keywords: *Soil temperature, macro and micro, delineated, crop residue, enrich.*

Introduction

Globally, rapid increase in Population raised the demand for food. Although green revolution enhanced production during the initial years, due to unprecedented use of external inputs resulted in poisoning the soil in due course (Singh, 2011).
To overcome the short comings of the green Revolution and to sustain food Production towards meeting the need of the expanding population, inclusion of resource conserving technologies in farming can be viewed as promising alternative (Pingali, 2012). Among the various resources conserving technologies considered mulching was found to be a cheap and popular alternative (Hussain *et al;* 2015).

Mulching is a process of covering the soil surface with certain loose materials either organic or inorganic in nature derived from a German word 'Molsch' meaning 'easy to decay' which focuses on improving infiltration, minimize fertilizer leaching, restrict weed infestation and thereby result in profitable crop production (Chakraborty *et al*., 2008; Aragues *et al*; 2004). The materials used for mulching are called mulches mulching is a soil management strategy used in agriculture. It compost of materials that are deposited on the soil surface to protect it from excessive water, evaporation, sunlight as well as prevent weed germination and growth. It guide soils from extreme temperatures by maintaining soils condition in hot condition.

Mulching is the spreading of various covering materials on the surface of soil to minimize moisture losses, weed population and enhance crop yield. Mulches are very supportive in the commercial crop production on a regular basis in dry and hot regions of the World. Consequently, the effects of mulching (both on the long and short term) on cultivated lands to control the weeds and water deficiency problem is needed (Käder *et al*., 2019).

Mulches conserve soil moisture, mitigate soil erosion, improve soil conditions, suppress weed growing and provide organic matter and plant nutrients in the soil (Bilalis *et al.,* 2002; Jodauugiene *et al*; 2006).

Depending on the type of mulching material used, mulching preserves soil water, reduce soil temperature and consequently promoted seedling establishment and increases the seedling survival under extreme conditions mainly by reducing the soil surface exposure to direct solar radiation (Murungu *et al*., 2011). Mulches can also improves physical, chemical and biological properties of soil, as they decompose and release nutrients to the soil (Carter, 2002). Youkhana and Idol, (2009), noted that mulching increases organic matter through decomposition which in turn improves soil moisture conservation. Huang *et al*; (2008) and Ckapparro *et al*; (2012) also observed that organic material for mulching increase soil organic matter content that can improve soil physical and chemical properties as well as the activity of the soil microbial community.

Mulching enhances soil environment and this increase crop growth and yield (Lal *et al*; 1979). Yang-min *et al*; (2006) noted that mulching enhance crop growth and yield by improving water content of soil the heat energy and addition of nitrogen and other minerals that improve the nutrient status of the soil. Mahmood *et al;* (2011) also observed that mulching conserves soil moisture content by reducing evaporation which in turn mitigates the negative effect of water stress on plant growth and yield especially in semi-arid conditions.

In most developing countries, including Nigeria, a large number of farmers rely on rainfall for their crop production and it is estimated that about 58% of the world's food production comes from rain-fed agricultural (Rosegrant *et al;* 2002; Rockstrom *et al;* 2003). However Countries in the tropics experience high evapotranspirative losses of soil moisture due to high temperature. Application of mulch can help to a large extent control both evaporation and Evapotranspiration. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effect of mulches on some selected soil properties using 3 different mulching practices at Oyo State College of Agriculture Technology at Teaching and Research Farm, Igboora.

Materials and Methods

The experiment was carried out at the Teaching and Research Farm, of Oyo state College of Agricultural and Technology, Igboora. Igboora is in Ibarapa central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Igboora is Located within 96.0k m away from the Oyo State capital City Ibadan, in the south -western Nigeria and 5km away from the host town lgboora.

Igboora is situated in the southern Guinea Savanna Zone of Agro-ecological of western region. Topographically the district's characterized by hilly landscape which extends from East to West and develop into a step hilly and mountainous areas as One move, toward the West and North west.

The region is characterized by subtropical climate with an average temperature fluctuating between 674.6^{0}C (Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology

Rainfall is characteristics with Bimodal distribution of peaks occurring in July, September and October. A period of lower precipitation mostly in August dry season which last from November to March. The annual rainfall is highly intensive. The mean annual rainfall ranges between 1340, and 187. 40mm. The mean annual temperature for the area ranges from 26.15^{0}C to 35.50^{0}C and 36.40^{0}C and 32.74^{0}C respectively. Annual average rainfall for the past 5year (2018-2023) indicated that the precipitation is less than the potential evapo-transpiration throughout the months.

Three different mulched practices were carried out at Oyo State College of Agriculture Teaching and Research Farm, Igboora between November, 2023-August, 2024 cropping season with mono cropping farming system. The mulch practices are: complete mulch, partial mulched and no mulched (control).

An acre of land was cultivated with yam (*Dioscorea alata*) and later divided into three portions. The first was complete mulch with different straws, the second partial mulched with only maize straw while the third was no mulch at all.

All post cultural farm operations were carried out in accordance with the modern farm techniques. Yam plots were weeded, diseases and pests were control, stalking was done as at when due.

From the plots, complete mulched (M1), partial mulched (M2), and no mulched (M3), data on soil.

Soil samples and analysis

The soil were characterized following procedures proposed by (Yerima and Van Ranst, 2005a). Soil samples were collected from the three different mulched, partially mulched and non-mulched. under each mulched farm, soil samples were obtained from dimensions of 1333m^2, at a constant depth of 0-15cm, following a'Z-layout' design .Soli samples were taken from the four corners and center of each layout.Approximately,1kg of composite samples were collected from each location and placed into plastic bags and air-dried at room temperature, crushed, homogenized and pass through a 2mm sieve before laboratory analysis. A total of fifteen (15) soil samples were evaluated replicate per samples plot x one soil depth (0-15cm) were collected.

Undisturbed soil samples were taken with a core sampler that was 7.5cm long and 6.4cm in diameter for bulk density determination

Laboratory Analysis

Soil Bulk Density was measured by core method (Grossman and Peinsch, 2002). Undisturbed soil samples were carefully taken by metal core samples. The core sampler way vertical and pushed with metal plate rod uniformly into the soil deep enough to fill the sampler can. The sampler was dig out by spade and removed without disturbing the soil core in the can and trim the extra soil from both ends of the can with a sharp knife. Weigh the sample can along with the soil up to 1 gramme of accuracy. The core was dry with metal cylinder in an oven at 105^{0}C, cool and the weight of metal cylinder plus (+) soil. Remove the soil core from the metal cylinder and weigh the cylinder, then subtract the mass of metal cylinder from the weight of the over-dried soil core + metal cylinder to obtain the weight of oven dry soil. Measure the radius (r) and height (h) of the metal cylinder in centimeter (cm) using vernier caliper and calculate the volume of soil core by the equation of $\pi 2r^2$ in centimeter and calculate the bulk density with the following formula.

Bulk Density =

$$\frac{\text{Mass of oven dry soil g/cm}^3}{\text{Volume of soil core cm}^3}$$

Take clean dry 100ml capacity graduated cylinder and add distilled water to fill the graduated cylinder up to 50ml mark. Weigh 40gm of oven-dry soil and put into the same cylinder filled with 50ml of water. Stir the contents thoroughly for 10minutes with a glass rod and allow the particle to settle. Note, the increase in the volume of water on adding 40gm of soil to measure the volume of water displaced by the soil in cm^3.

Particle density (g/cm^3) =

$$\frac{\text{mass of oven-dry soil}}{\text{Volume of water displaced by the soil (cm}^3\text{)}}$$

The pH of the soil was determined in two solutions, using the procedure pH in water (1:2.5 soil to water ratio). (Thomas, 1996). Weight 20gm of air dry soil (passed 2mm sieve) into an extraction cup and add 50cm^3 of distilled water, stir and allowed to stand for 30minutes. Stir occasionally with a glass rod. Also, the pH of the soil was determined in pH in INRCL (1:1 soil to solution ratio) by weighing 20gm of soil into an extraction cup add 20cm^3 of INKCL. Stir the two solutions separately with glass rod occasionally for about 30minutes or shake for 5minutes with a reciprocating mechanical shaker. Standardizing the pH meter before use to measure the solutions and immerse the glass electrode in buffer solution (pH 7.0) and adjust the pH reading to pH 7.0 of the pH meter. Wash the electrode with distilled water and repeat procedure for another known standard buffer solution (pH 4.0 for acid soil or pH 9.2 for alkaline soil). The reading was then carried out by immersing the electrodes of the pH meter in the soil-water and soil – KCL suspension separately and records the pH reading.

Organic carbon will be determine using method described by (Nelson and Sommers, 1982). Dry and grind the soil sample to <2mm, then mix 0.5g grind soil with 10ml chronic acid ($K_2Cr_2O_7$) 0.167m and 20ml tetraoxosulphate(vi) acid (H_2SO_4) 0.5m in a flask. Heat the mixture at 150^{0}C for

30minutes. Let it cool, then add 20ml ferrous ammonium sulphate (CNH_4) $2Fe(SO_4)_2$) 0.5m. titrate the mixture with orthophosphoric acid (H_3PO_4) 0.5m until the colour changes from green to purple. Affirm the volume of phosphoric acid use to titrate (end point) and calculate the organic carbon % using the following formula:

$$OC\% = \frac{V \times 0.003 \times 10}{\text{Soil weight} \times 100}$$

H_2SO_4, Ammonium Molybdate, 0.05 HCl was prepared by making 20.5ml of concentrated HCl to 9 litre of water with distilled water. Bray 1 P was prepared by addition of NH_4F in 1 litre beaker and making it up to litre with distilled water.

Procedure: 2gm of soil was weighted into each of the cups 20ml of Bray P1 solution (extractant) was added and the suspension shaken for 5 minutes. The soil was filtered with 9cm diameter and 5ml of the aliquate was pipetted in to a 50ml volumetric flask and 4ml of ascorbic acid solution + 6ml of distilled water (made up to 2.5 litre) was added to develop the colour. The available phosphorus was determined with the aid of supertonic 70 on a wave length of 882mm.

Soil total nitrogen (TN) was determined by the Kjeldahl distillation method (Pauwels *et all*; 1992), where 1 gramme each of air-dried soil samples were place into 500ml Kjeldahl flasks, followed by the addition of 5ml of distilled deionized water. A scoop of digestion accelerator mixture (Sulphuric-Salicylic acid mixture) was then added to each flask. Five milliliter of concentrated H_2SO_4 was added and the mixture was allowed to digest for 1 hour in a fume cupboard by gentle heating until the vigorous effervescence subsided to ensure that the digest was free of charred organic matter. The digest was allowed to cool followed by addition of 20ml of distilled water. After ensuring settlement, the supernatant solutions were decanted into 100ml volumetric flasks. The process was repeated and 5ml of 40% NaOH and 100ml of distilled water were added. The distillate was collected and mixed with 5ml of the boric acid (H_3BO_3) solution-indicator mixture. The distillate was titrated with 0.01m H_2SO_4 from green to pinkish endpoint and the titer value recorded. The Soil Total Nitrogen calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Kjeldahl N\%} = (T - B) \times M \times \frac{2.8}{5}$$

Where:

T = Ml (volume) of standard acid with sample titration

B = Ml (volume) of standard acid with blank titration

M = Molarity of sulphoric acid

S = Weight of soil sample (g)

Results and Discussions

The result of physical and chemical properties of the soil in the study area were presented in Table 1 and 2 respectively. The mulches played a significant role in regulating the soil temperature (Donk *et al;* 2011). Usually, the change in soil temperature depends on duration and intensity of direct exposure of soil surface to solar radiation and exchange of heat between the soil and atmosphere (Pramanik *et al;* 2017). At germination stage the mulched plot had 95% germination followed by partial mulched that gave 60% while no mulched had 5% germination. This result can be attributed to high temperature generation at no mulching, the soil condition can cause rusting of the yam tuber.

Bulk density ranges from 2.20g/cm^2 (no mulching) to 1.15g/cm^2 (complete mulching). The highest value of bulk density was recorded on the no mulching plot and the lowest 115g/cm^2 value was on complete mulching. Compaction from exposure of surface land to direct sunlight for the treatments but there is no mulching to prevent direct radiation from the sun. Liu xi *et al.,* and Celik, (2005) reported that land use and soil management practices such as mulching influence the soil nutrients and related soil processes, such as erosion, oxidation, mineralization and leaching etc. Moreover, complete mulch

plot, the type of residues cover is a factor influencing the soil organic carbon content as reported by Liu *et al*., (2015).

The highest (5.1) and the lowest (4.0) soil pH H_2O values were recorded under the complete mulching and no mulching plot at 0-15cm soil depth, respectively (Table 2). Excessive precipitation could be one of the factors responsible for the variation in pH of the studied area.

The total nitrogen of the studied area ranges from 0.24 (complex mulching) to 0.05 (no mulching) Table 2. The very high total N content in soils of the complete mulch area could be associated with the high available P contents of the portion area.

Available Phosphorus (P) ranges from 25.0 (complete mulching) to 3.1 (no mulching). The content of available phosphorus (P) in the mulching area appeared to be higher than the other two treatments. The higher available P contents in soils of mulching land were due to residue mineralization. This study agrees with the finding of Boke (2004) that high availability of P under onset farms is due to rapid mineralization and additions of manure and crop residue.

Table 1: Physical properties of soil of the study area.

Depth (cm)	Treatment	Particle Density	Bulk Density	Total Porosity
0-15	Complete	2.10	1.15	40.5
0-15	Partial	0.12	2.13	21.20
0-15	No Mulching	0.18	2.00	1.39

Table 2: Chemical properties of soil of the study area.

Depth (cm)	Treatment	pH	Organic Carbon	Total Nitrogen	Available Phosphorus
0-15	Complete	5.1	0.10	0.24	25.0
0-15	Partial	4.5	0.08	0.08	18.0
0-15	No Mulching	4.0	0.03	0.05	3.1

Conclusion

The result of this finding indicated that normal soil temperature at complete mulching area significantly increase the value of germination and tuberization. The bulk density of no mulching area was greater than these value of complete mulching area thereby significantly reduce yam yield at mulching. The total nitrogen and available phosphorus were relatively higher in two mulched area than no mulched area. Therefore, the yam yield in complete mulching practice is significantly higher than other two practices. However, mulching practices influenced some of the soil properties that are favourable for yam production and other crops; farmers are therefore encouraged to adopt the practices for sustainable production of yam in the study area.

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