Social Media, Civic Vitality and Nigeria's 2019 General Elections

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Abstract

This paper explores civic vitality in Nigeria in the build-up to and after the country's 2019 elections. This study was motivated by widening the research trajectory, especially in citizens' political expression, voter education, electioneering, and mobilization. It investigates Facebook and Twitter subscribers from the cyber-ethnographic standpoint via the qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings show that while social media platforms enhance these civic vitality areas, this performance does not translate to real-time political participation in any significant way. The assertion is therefore confirmed: online activities are no good predictors of election undertakings or outcomes.

Keywords: Social Media, Elections, Politics, Mobilization, Education, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria has a vibrant democracy characterized by grassroots lobbying, energetic campaigning, thoughtful scholarly and artistic expressions, and widespread social media engagement. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and blogs have become popular platforms for socio-political activities. These activities including voter education, online polling, political campaigns, and election monitoring. Citizen journalism has further democratized the process. Anyone who wields an internet-enabled device can report a scene or share opinions with thousands or perhaps millions of users across vast spaces. This paper examines how Nigerian citizens utilized social media as a tool of political expression, electioneering, and mobilization during the 2019 elections.

The agency of new media in political expression, mobilization, or education is hardly a novel subject. There are several studies on media and politics with a focus on Nigeria (Ekanem, 2013; Galadima and Goshit, 2013; Nwokeafor, 2014; Uzukwu, 2010; Adebanwi, 2016), on Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2005; Nyamnjoh, 2011; Willems and Mano, 2017; Chibita, 2011; Zeleza, 2009), and the world at large (Axford and Huggins, 2001; Trottier and Fuchs, 2015). However, social media and influence on civic vitality in Nigeria have only

recently started attracting scholarly attention.

Upon analyzing blog posts and tweets related to the 2007 general elections in Nigeria, Ifukor (2010) asserts that smartphones usage was rapidly increasing among Nigerians. This development enabled people's participation in democratic governance through their involvement in social media. Nnanyelugo and Adibe (2013) examined the role of social media platforms and users and how these roles determined the outcome of the 2011 general elections in Nigeria. The authors noted that social media provided a public sphere that enabled a wide political discourse. They added, however, that these platforms contributed to violence before, during, and after the general elections as users transmitted and shared hate messages and disinformation.

Dogona et al. (2013) surveyed youth participation and attitudes towards politics from a psychological standpoint, asserting that a relationship exists between Facebook use and political participation in Nigerian elections. Similarly, Smyth and Best (2013), comparing elections in Liberia and Nigeria, suggest that social media has not only availed the electorate the opportunity to feel included during political processes. It also has the potential to reduce electoral tension and help build public trust. Nevertheless, Alakali et

al. (2017) state that social media also serves as a platform for disseminating hate speech through text, audio, and video during electoral campaigns in Nigeria. Social networking sites avail governments, neutral bodies, and citizens a platform to interact during elections. Through user-generated texts, images, and memes, citizens bare their minds on the political atmosphere and critique the hegemonic political system in the country (Uzuegbunam, 2020).

This paper explores how the government, citizens, independent institutions, and the media utilized and deployed social media during, during, and after the 2019 Nigeria elections. Social media users share content that they are concerned about or find intriguing. Often, they are moved to share messages they believe will move others to action or bring about change in society. The study tracks the use of Facebook and Twitter by citizens to encourage people to vote and use these platforms by the government and non-governmental organizations for voter education.

Furthermore, the research investigates election monitoring and witnessing. Perhaps the most notable role social media played in the election process was monitoring and witnessing as citizens share narratives about the elections in the comfort of their homes. WhatsApp and Twitter came to life, with people uploading and recording live videos from different election polling units. These videos, which were often sensational, stimulated fear among citizens. On the flip side, it kept people well informed, thereby allowing some to avert possible harm. In addition to tracing the history and progress of media in political communication and electioneering in Nigeria, this study analyses contemporary social media roles in elections while reflecting on its general effect on political outcome and governance in the country.

Theoretical Insight

We draw insights from the Social Media Participation Model to understand why and how digital citizens employ social networking sites to explore their political selves. The model, propounded by Knoll et al. (2020), was used to explain the psychological processes underlying the negative or positive relationship between social media use and political participation. They looked to accentuate conditions that foster political concurrence when a person or a collective unit is exposed to social media.

This model predicts the effects of social media on the level of political participation. However, in doing so, one must scrutinize the main processes behind the direct influence of the frequency of social media use and political participation.

This model envelops a complex scope of media and political studies. It incorporates theories of general media use and goal preferences, such as goal systems theory with the uses and gratification approach (Katz, 1974), appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991), and primacy paradigm (Higgins, 1996). Not all social media exposure results in significant political participation. Hence, it is necessary to know the contingent conditions behind the psychological processes that lead to differential effects. This upshot can, in turn, help in studying how they promote or dampen participatory political outcomes.

Social Media Participation Model predicts under which conditions exposure to social media fosters political participation. This model recognizes that the effects of social media use depend on a chain of different contingencies experienced through the communication of political messages via social media platforms. Thus, phases of exposure to social media content to users are constructed systematically and addressed independently. These phases are:

Pre-exposure
Here the motivation to use social media is primal. The uses and gratification theory is influential in this aspect of the model as people have particular needs (Rubin, 2009).

People may feel the need to relax or to become informed about political issues. As a result, media use is goal-oriented, and this motivation drives one's intent during social media use.

Exposure
The user's activities are then tailored to coincide with the conditions of their pre-exposed state. They actively seek political information if that is their initial interest. They look at news sites and access profiles of candidates and political parties continually on their news feeds. This access helps determine the political expressions and identity of the user.

Reception
Reception is the stage where these contents are assessed and seen as either relevant or mere discrepant. When users view these contents as relevant, they expose themselves to related political content in other media or interpersonal communication.

Behavioral Situation
Given that a goal is explicitly formulated and activated, users appraise whether the goal is the dominant goal once they are in a behavioral situation (Kruglanski, 2015).

This appraisal is referred to as the dominant goal appraisal. This appraisal pertains to the fact that people often activate numerous goals but lack the time and ability to

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achieve all of them simultaneously (Fishbach and Ferguson, 2007). A goal related to political participation may become superseded by other goals. The stronger the activation of competing goals, the greater the inhibition of the participatory goal (Shah et al., 2002). In this paper, these phases are embroidered within the context of the 2019 Nigerian electoral process.

The Social media participation model comes in sound as it is germane in evaluating the interplay between social media users in Nigeria and participation in politics. Authors have critiqued the relevance of the Social Media Political Participation Model. They assert that many other media participation models may overlap parts of the Social Media Participation Model. They all include human processing mediated information (Walther, 2009). This model has also been criticized for being another speck on a wheel of numerous media behavior forecasting models.

In this regard, Knoll et al. (2020) have asserted that the Social Media Participation Model is more complex and seeks to explain psychological processes. For example, the O-S-R-O-R (Orientation-Stimulus-Reasoning-Orientation-Response) model includes online messaging, a key variable of social media use (Shah et al., 2007, Amodu, et al., 2019). However, it does not explain the detailed psychological processes which may explain participatory outcomes. The Social Media Political Participation Model is hence complex for a good reason. It combines existing theories of general media use and participation with psychological theories and, most importantly, incorporates social media-specific features.

History of Political Communication in Nigeria: From Traditional Media to New Media

Following an increased contact with Europeans and the consequent establishment of colonial rule in the 19th century, Nigerians were availed with new affordances, the most prominent of them, perhaps, being western education. Nigerians embraced and absorbed this new kind of education. With time, many educated youths were enlightened enough to understand the nuances of colonialism and demand more participation in government (Aborisade and Mundt, 2002). Accordingly, western education created a new elite that challenged British imperialism through publications.

The early newspapers established in Nigeria helped set the scene for democratizing public opinion and advocating nationalism (Okon, et al., 2018). Influential

figures such as Ernest Ikoli, James Bright-Davies, Kitoyi Ajasa, and Thomas Jackson Horatio shouldered the African Messenger, Nigerian times, Nigerian Pioneer, and the Lagos Weekly Record in the early days of Nigerian journalism. They all confronted injustice and encouraged cultural awareness through their publications. These men profoundly influenced the first crop of nationalists and politicians that emerged in the early 1900s who equally utilized newspapers in electioneering. Among them was Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria's first president (Omu, 1978).

Hodgkin (1961) noted that these nationalist movements recorded major successes towards establishing a representative government and later developed into political associations that contested elections. The first political party in Nigeria, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), was co-founded by Herbert Macaulay in 1922/1923. As a result of his initial radical anti-colonial misrule stand, mainly popularised by his newspaper articles, the party became the most successful at the time.

The party's newspaper, the Lagos Weekly Record, served as a campaign medium and a way to update concerned citizens on their activities. The party swept up elective seats in the Lagos Town Council in its heydays (Falola, 1999). Undoubtedly, their activities and successes ushered in a new era of journalism concerning politics in the country. Macaulay found another political party – The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) with Nnamdi Azikiwe. Azikiwe, who assumed leadership of the party following the death of Herbert Macaulay two years later, was himself an astute journalist and nationalist.

A newspaper he helped establish, the West African Pilot launched in 1937, was primarily concerned with the fight for independence. The paper helped to spread socio-political consciousness among the masses and served as a vehicle for campaigning for candidates during elections. In this era, journalism drove politics; broader newspaper coverage meant increased political support. Soon, the radio became ubiquitous, complementing the newspaper in information dissemination and political communication.

The radio broadcasting industry and its contribution to the dynamics of politics in Nigeria's history cannot be neglected. Uche (1985) writes that even though the Nigerian public initially accused the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) of being a hegemonic government tool, the medium soon gained popularity. NBS

was founded in 1951 by the colonial government. As part of democratizing radio broadcasting and information dissemination in extension, broadcast media was regionalized in 1959. The Awolowo-led western region took the lead to establish a radio and television station that became the first in Nigeria and Africa. The government of the Eastern region followed the next year.

Similarly, the Northern region began its broadcasting system two years later, in 1962. Radio soon became a popular medium for political information and mobilization around the country. Because of its relative ubiquity, especially at the grassroots level, it became a sensation, as far as political up-to-dateness is concerned. The regional radio stations would become more popular in the wake of tribal cum regional tensions. Like the newspapers that preceded it, they asserted and propagated regional interests (Uche, 1985). Between 1966 and 1970, radio was used by the two warring sides during the Nigerian civil war to communicate, disseminate news, and push propaganda. It was equally instrumental during Nigeria's era of military rule.

However, the manipulation of radio for political gains has not been a strategy exclusive to the military.

Successive democratic governments have also adopted this, with calculated subtlety, to maintain their grip on power and remain in charge. Shehu (2013) observed that the former president, Obasanjo established federal radio stations all over the country. He focused on states controlled by the opposition parties to achieve broader access to the masses and gain more supporters.

Television came with ground-breaking advantages concerning political enlightenment all over the world. In Nigeria, political dynamism birthed the first television station, Western Nigerian Television (WNTV), established by the Western Nigerian Government in 1959. Due to the fiercely competitive political atmosphere of the country, fuelled by sectarianism and distrust, other regions began to open up television stations shortly after. In 1962, the Federal government established the National Television Service in Lagos. The government united all regional broadcasting outlets and inaugurated it as the Nigerian Television Authority in 1977 (Nwokeafor, 2010). Through the years of sociopolitical fluctuations in the nation, television served the interest of the current governments and relatively repressed opposing political voices.

The 1993 presidential election offered a glimpse of hope to the

Nigerian populace by promising a new democracy and political inclusion due to its vibrant electoral process. The military government, under General Babangida, had agreed to transfer power to civilians after a June 12, 1993, election. For this purpose, two candidates emerged: Chief M.K.O Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tofa. Many Nigerians who had access to a television in 1993 would remember the sensational campaign advertisements on television at the time.

Unimpressively, even though a winner emerged, the military government refused to hand over power to civilians, throwing Nigeria back into an abyss of dictatorship. Television played a crucial role in the general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 (Aririguzoh, 2012). Political parties and candidates engaged the medium extensively and competitively to reach the targeted audience.

Since 2007, due to the wide distribution of smart devices globally, social media has been effectively utilized for elections in Nigeria. Ifukor (2010) explored how citizens used twitter and blogs to engage in political discussions during the 2007 elections in Nigeria. Correspondingly, research by Aleyomi & Ajakaije (2014) reveal that social media platforms were extensively used by both candidates and voters during the 2011 general

elections in Nigeria. President Goodluck Jonathan even announced his candidacy on Facebook in an unprecedented move (p.40). Political parties were not left out. The People's Democratic Party (PDP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) could boast of an account online. Nigerian politicians were keying into the global trend. Social media, which primarily served as a space for friendly chit-chat, suddenly metamorphosed into a socio-political sphere to serve the masses.

The 2015 elections can only be described as intense. The opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) used digital media in every way possible to change the narrative and ultimately take power. The period leading to the election was a defining time in Nigerian democracy and political communication (Olowojolu, 2016). 2011 seemed to have confirmed the indispensability of social media in Nigerian politics. Stakeholders were not testing the waters anymore; they were throwing in all they had.

The incumbent PDP tried to use the same strategy used in 2011 against their key opponent, Mohammadu Buhari—by portraying him in the media as an unbending, poorly educated religious fundamentalist. This tactic seems to have failed. Their strategy was used

against them, leading to the unseating of President Goodluck Jonathan. The 2015 election was a war of perception, pushed by the media and delivered to the hands of citizens through social media, accessed via mobile phones. The media had painted President Jonathan as a heavily corrupt, inadequate, and weak leader who had embarked on a money embezzling spree with his goons. Olowojolu (2016, p.9) opined that "despite the postponement of the general elections from February 14 to March 28, the incumbent government could not overturn the negative perceptions towards Jonathan and the ruling party, the PDP". As the elections began around the country, it was somewhat clear from online and offline overtones that Goodluck Jonathan may not be retaining his position. The Nigeria media, over time, has played the role of providing information, education, and entertainment. Social media, despite its relative newness, has reshaped political participation in Nigeria.

Research Design and Methodology

The qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods were adopted to understand how different actors engaged in social media in the 2019 elections in Nigeria. Content analysis of over 200 Facebook and Twitter posts was carried out. Borrowing techniques from cyber-ethnography, social media forums, Facebook groups, and Twitter treads were explored and studied. Comments, shares, and posts made within the focus period relating to this research theme were analyzed. However, the researchers recognize that this study has methodological limitations. For one, demographic information of commenters on social media is sometimes not sufficient or reliable. Hence, while it may be relatively easy to gather data on these sites, proper analysis requires the knowledge of context and, often, demographics of the posts and posters, respectively.

The quantitative methods helped to elevate the reliability and validity of the investigation. A questionnaire was designed and randomly distributed online. In the end, over 290 individual responses were gathered. Some 49 percent of the respondents identified as female, the rest being male. A few weeks after the elections, copies of the questionnaire were filled out and handed in between April and May 2019.
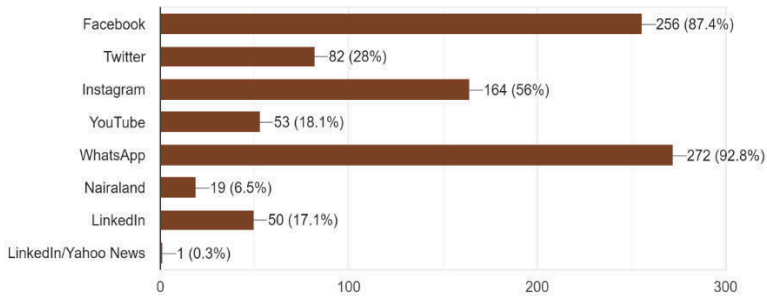
Findings and Discussion

Voters Education: The Role of *Nigeria's* Election Umpire in the Social Media Matrix

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the election

umpire in Nigeria. In recent years, INEC has intensified its efforts to educate the Nigerian public on electoral process issues. To meet this urgent global demand for voter and civic education, INEC has dedicated a section of its website to voter education. In addition to the information on its website, the body utilized social media networks to reach citizens and the general public during the elections.

Among the most popular social media platforms in Nigeria are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. For this study, we asked respondents to mention three social media platforms in which they were most active. Responses show that WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are the most popular. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that INEC capitalized on these platforms to reach its audience.

Choose three social media platforms where you are most active.
293 responses

Platform	Value
Facebook	256 (87.4%)
Twitter	82 (28%)
Instagram	164 (56%)
YouTube	53 (18.1%)
WhatsApp	272 (92.8%)
Nairaland	19 (6.5%)
LinkedIn	50 (17.1%)
LinkedIn/Yahoo News	1 (0.3%)

Figure 1: Study participants*' social media sites* **usage**

In this section, we reflect on how INEC used social media to foster voter education in the 2019 Nigeria general elections. What are the outcomes of these efforts? Are there any visible challenges or limitations of using social media for civic education? The Commission is reasonably visible on Facebook. INEC's official Facebook page boasts nearly 400,000 followers

(as of June 2021). Before and during the 2019 general elections, INEC utilized this medium extensively to educate Nigerians. For instance, on the 23rd of November 2018, a video enlightening voters on the permanent voters' card (PVC) was posted on the page. Again, in November, the commission sought to inform voters about their intention to clean up the

voters' register to eliminate deceased registered voters, non-Nigerians, and under-aged persons.

INEC's Twitter participation has the best showing. Its official Twitter page created in 2010 has 1.8 million followers (as of June 2021). This development is not particularly surprising as Twitter has metamorphosed into a primarily political platform in many parts of the world. By July 2021, the page had almost 17,000 tweets, pictures, and videos. These posts get a reasonable number of comments and reactions, and hundreds of retweets for popular posts are not uncommon. Expectedly, a good number of the comments are from trolls. They were either insulting the administration of INEC, expressing their distrust/dissatisfaction towards the commission or the government, or proffering quick solutions to perceived problems. Their educational tweets (on Twitter) achieved the highest post reach compared to their pages on other social networks. State branches of INEC also have online social media accounts that have less followership. INEC's account has over 400 subscribers and 90 uploaded videos on YouTube (as of June 2021). Before the 2019 elections, the account was partially inactive, and the uploaded videos were mainly poorly edited and untargeted. However, barely one month before the 2019 elections, the page became relatively active.

Thoughtful and professionally made videos were shared, but unfortunately, these highly educative videos did not reach a large audience. Some of the videos sought to educate the public on voting procedures and election offenses, and malpractice. Many of the videos were inclusive in that they considered people with disabilities and non-English speakers. INEC invested more resources like never before in voter education for the 2019 elections.

Despite the extensive adoption of new media tools by INEC in the 2019 elections, it can be argued that their social media contents were under-engaged. INEC did post educational posts on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. However, it did not reach a vast audience, and even when it did, engagement with the posts was not optimal. A few factors may have limited the efficacy of voter education by INEC in Nigeria during the 2019 general elections:

1. Citizens' apathy towards INEC as a body — Nigerians are very wary of government institutions. The ethnic tensions in the country contribute to the distrust of politicians or heads of establishments (elected or appointed), whom they believe will not favor their ethnoreligious interests (Morah & Omojola, 2020, Morah, Omojola & Uzochukwu, 2016). INEC has had quite a controversial history,

and many Nigerians perceive the commission as a puppet of the ruling class. As voters do not trust INEC, information from them is often treated with negligence and apathy.

2. Citizens' indifference to non-sensational news/information — In this era of sensationalism, emotion-triggering pieces of information are highly desirable. That attention is drawn more to controversial news than to issues like voter education, is hardly contestable. Netizens seem to engage more when the post is surprising, funny, exciting, controversial, or motivational.

3. Poor internet connectivity, especially among rural dwellers — Many Nigerians living in rural areas do not have a strong internet connection. Consequently, their online activities are limited. Such participants avoid heavy data-consuming sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Even when they visit these sites, they do not usually share videos or pictures. Some urban dwellers are equally affected as they cannot afford full and sustained internet access.

4. Propaganda — Even when citizens share educational posts, some use these posts to push different propaganda to stimulate distrust and fear among voters.

Interpretation matters in every message and posts could be interpreted to mean something entirely different from what was intended.

**Citizen-to-Citizen Social Media Voter Education**

Ordinary citizens were equally involved in voter education through social media. In August 2018, several hashtag campaigns such as #PVCisagoal, #GetyourPVC, #GoGetyourPVC #NigeriaDecides were launched by ordinary Nigerians on Twitter to encourage eligible citizens to obtain their Permanent Voters Card (PVC). Without the permanent voters' card, a person cannot vote in Nigeria. Many Nigerian celebrities joined the trend and shared messages on social media concerning the voters' card. Famous Nigerian online comedians like Frank Donga, Craze Clown, MC Lively, and Emmaomagod made short funny skits with 'Get Your PVC' as the key message. These posts were widely shared by politicians and ordinary people on social media. By the end of the PVC registration process, 84 million people had registered to vote, according to INEC. The campaign was a huge success, considering the widespread voter apathy before that time.

In this study, 295 respondents were given multiple options and asked

to choose their activities during the elections. The respondents could choose more than one option, which includes:

a. I campaigned for or against a particular party/candidate.
b. I shared posts encouraging people to get their voters' cards and/or to cast their votes.
c. I shared vital information relating to the electoral process.

d. I talked about the elections in general through posts, comments, and private messages when necessary.
e. I discouraged people from getting involved.
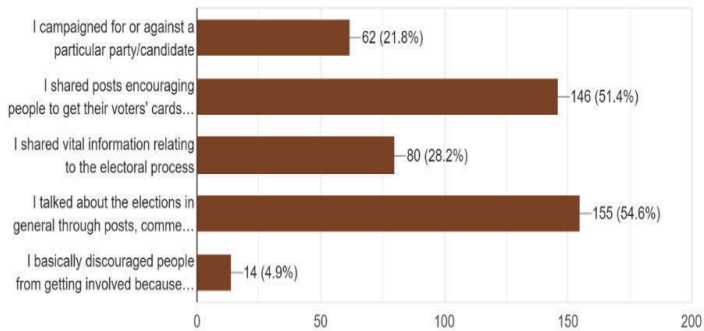
Figure 2: Political activities of study participants on social media during the 2019 elections.

The results show that most respondents participated in the elections in some way through social media. While levels of participation may differ significantly, it is hardly debatable that Nigerians are willing to engage in political discourses online. From persuading fellow citizens to exercise their political agency by getting their voters' card or showing up on the elections day to cast their votes to campaign for their preferred candidates, Nigerians wielding internet-enabled devices were committed to citizen-to-citizen voter education and sensitization. It is hardly shocking that nearly five percent of respondents reported that they discouraged people from getting involved in the elections.

This is perhaps a case where the exception proves the rule.

Civil Participation in the 2019 Elections—The Online against the Offline.

The 2019 general elections in Nigeria might go down in history as having one of the lowest voter turnout. Out of over 82,000,000 voters registered to vote, only about 27,000,000citizens were actually at the polling units to cast their votes. In other words, less than 35 percent of the registered voters showed up.

The figures show an unfortunate drop from 43.6 percent voter turnout in the last elections in 2015 (IDEA, n.d). This plummeting interest in civic participation is a broad concern to both the government and international observers. When rigging, manipulations, and violence characterize local and general elections year after year, the resultant effect is that the people begin to lose faith in the electoral process. Consequently, distrust in the electoral process will lead to low interest.

In the survey conducted for this study, respondents were asked to indicate their interest/involvement in Nigerian politics. Some 10.3 percent reported that they were involved, while 28.4 percent said they were very interested but not necessarily involved. Some 41.8% reported that they were occasionally interested, while 15.4 percent indicated indifference to Nigerian politics.

Table 1: *Study participants'* level of engagement with Nigerian politics

Question: What is your attitude towards Nigerian Politics?	Involved	Very Interested	Occasionally Interested	Indifferent	Abhorrence
	10.3%	28.4%	41.8%	15.4%	4.1%
	n=30	n=83	n=122	n=45	n=12

Given that a majority had agreed to have participated online somehow, respondents who indicated that they were involved in Nigerian politics

shared posts on politics. Ditto those who declared that they were very interested or occasionally interested. However, it is difficult to determine how much their interest—which they showed during the 2019 elections by engaging with election-related posts—can translate to actual offline participation, such as voting, contesting, or attending an in-person political rally. Table 2 shows the level and degree of participation online against offline.

Table 2: Study part*icipants'* level of participation during the 2019 general elections in Nigeria

Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)	Cannot remember (%)
Are you a registered member of any political party?	6.5	92.6	0.7
Did you attend any political rally?	11.7	79.4	8.9
Do you belong to any Nigerian political group on social media? (Any group in support of a candidate, a party or a political agenda)	18.6	76.6	4.8
Did you donate to any political group or any political cause during the elections?	3.8	84.9	11.3
Did you physically participate in the elections (by voting or working as an ad-hoc staff)?	44.3	45.4	10.3
Did you share your experience on social media during or after the voting process through notes, photos, or videos?	36.6	51.7	11.6

The table shows that while non-committal engagements such as post-sharing or online commentary on political issues are widespread, citizens do not typically translate that to offline political commitments in the same manner. Responses show that less than 45 percent of respondents went to the polling units to cast their votes. The low turnout

may have resulted from insecurity and fear in many parts of the country, distrust in the political process, or apathy towards actual involvement in elections and politics in general.

Nonetheless, citizens' online participation during the 2019 elections is commendable. In the quest for civic vitality, Nigerians have shown their will to be involved in preserving their democracy. For instance, the hashtag "NigeriaDecides" and "NigeriaDecides2019" were used millions of times. Citizens took to Twitter and Facebook to express their thoughts on the elections in 2018 and 2019.

Electoral Monitoring and Social Media Witnessing

On February 15, 2019, just a few hours to the scheduled general elections, Sahara Reporters -a popular news outlet in Nigeria - made a post on their official Twitter account titled "Be A Citizen Journalist." The post urged citizens to send videos or photo evidence of electoral malpractices to the news agency (Sahara Reporters) on Facebook, Twitter, or through email if they encounter any. Recently, citizen journalism

has been on the rise in Nigeria. Television stations such as Channels TV and TVC dedicate prime time to show images or videos of happening sent in by concerned citizens. Videos sent captured, among other things, dilapidated structures forgotten by the government used as polling booths and a policeman unjustly harassing an innocent citizen.

In the 2015 general elections, citizen journalism played a vital role during and after the elections. A particular video showed underaged voters gaining access to polling booths in Northern Nigeria. The video drew massive responses, causing some concerned citizens to question the integrity of the nation's electoral system.

Nigerians were willing to record and share any anomaly they might notice on their social media accounts. This posture is unlike journalists who might be less sanguine in reporting such scenes. During the presidential and gubernatorial elections, social media users posted texts, images, videos, and live happenings on various platforms.

The trend began with politicians and celebrities and extended to others. On the morning

of the election day, a wealthy Nigerian celebrity, identified as Femi Otedola, posted a video of himself walking to the voting center with his daughter, who is a popular singer. In the video, they encouraged citizens using the following words, "Go and vote and let us change the future of Nigeria." Other celebrities, including singer Timi Dakolo and TV presenter Mo Abudu, posted videos showing decorum in their polling units. Another singer, 'Banky W,' uploaded a video on Instagram alleging that a polling station did not have ballot papers for the House of Representatives elections.

While the democratization of election monitoring and witnessing seems like a positive development, it appears to have the propensity to be overly sensational and result in scaring people away from casting their votes. Violent occurrences at these centers are more likely to go viral than reports of decorum. However, it is no wonder that many believe that elections in Nigeria are synonymous with pandemonium. The following questions were asked to estimate the effect of social media posts (particularly citizen journalism) on public perception and voter turnout during elections.

Table 3: Social-media-induced public perception in the 2019 elections

Question: From social media, I got the impression that the elections will be well organized, free, and fair.	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**
	36.5%	42%%	21.4%
	n=106	n=122	n=62

Item: Textual narrations, videos, or photos shared by witnesses of the elections at certain polling units, showing violence or pandemonium, affected/or will likely influence your voting behavior in the future.

Table 4: Social-media-induced public perception in the 2019 elections II

Agree	Disagree	Neutral
71.9%	9.9%	18.2%
n=210	n=29	n=18.2

Citizen journalism and social media witnessing ensured accountability to a reasonable extent during the elections. Internet users had the opportunity of following the voting exercise in different centers in real-time from different parts of the world. However, it is vital to be aware of the implications of these images and videos shared by witnesses. While it provides invaluable information and may even keep people aware of and away from impending danger or violence in these centers, it often significantly influences voter turnout.

Conclusion
This paper casts light on the intersections between social media usage in Nigeria and electioneering, campaigns, and political processes. Findings suggest that in the Nigerian 2019 general elections, social media was employed extensively and profitably by diverse political actors.

In retrospect, the 2019 elections in Nigeria featured differently on various social media platforms. The way citizens and voters engaged posts and information on Facebook differed from how they engaged the identical posts on Twitter or Instagram. Twitter—thanks to its interface, which allows 280 characters per tweet—was used to pass short but meaningful messages with punchlines or call to action.

Posts on Twitter are retweeted rapidly within the first hour, after which retweets become less frequent (Elmer, 2012). Posts are engaged by the most active users who can follow up trends. This finding is fascinating because even though Nigerians on Facebook outnumber those on Twitter, politicians have far more followers on Twitter than they do on

Facebook and Instagram. Hence, the assertion can be made that the Nigerian Twitter users are primarily interested in politics and governance matters. However, it is worth questioning the relationship between having a large following on social media and winning elections. Nigerians of northern extraction voted massively for the current President Muhammadu Buhari. They were less preponderant on social media, but they became significant influencers of the elections that brought in the president.

A post on Twitter by @Mai_bulala, a northerner on the 26th of February 2019, after President Buhari declared winner pushes this point further. He tweeted:

> *"#IAMNorth and I pride* myself as a northerner. I may not always have data to vote on Twitter like you, but I listen to Radio and I have PVC. I vote with my PVC in the polling unit not with data on Twitter. Proudly Aboki. *Proudly Almajiri. 'cuz #iamnorth".*

A few other catchphrases were also circulated after the elections, such as *"votes are not won on Twit*ter*"* and others that conveyed the same or similar meaning. This meaning elicits questions about Twitter as a political influencer. Twitter, from our findings, has shown to be a civic vitality promoter as netizens embrace thoughts and counter-thoughts, notwithstanding the trolling and attacks that go with such exchanges (Gainous & Wagner, 2014). However, it remains open to debate how this vitality translates to an actual political victory for the political actors in Nigeria.

Through its community-friendly features such as Facebook groups, Facebook allowed users to participate in the elections differently. The platform users started different groups whose primary aims revolved around campaigning, praise-singing, or information dissemination. It appears that the political posts on Facebook are less critical than posts shared on Twitter.

Nonetheless, Facebook captured a more diverse audience - from teenagers and younger adults to the elderly. Discussions were more robust, open-ended, and tend to mirror the African sense of community. Facebook provided a platform for voters and supporters with a more traditional perspective to catch up on electoral activities. Instagram, a Facebook sister medium, emerged to enable people

to share images and short videos with friends and followers. The actors in the elections employed it to serve as a platform for voters to engage with multimedia.

Twitter and Facebook, unlike Instagram, offer an adaptable and effective means of communication to a wide range leading to a significant diverse dataset. This capacity causes it to analyze large amounts of data essentially on every topic from online users. Consequently, media structures, politicians, institutions, entertainers, artists utilize social media as an interface with a more ubiquitous audience. As shown in this study and past investigations, social media platforms are fundamentally contributory in election campaigns and other political disputes. How this vitality translates to election victories is fuzzy and subject to further investigations. However, researchers can also extend their interest to how disinformation and hate speech can be curbed to make social media safer for users.

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Exploring the Dominant Network Television Coverage of Child Labor Crisis in Nigeria

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Abstract
This work explores media sensitivity to the child labor crisis in Nigeria by investigating its online coverage on three dominant television networks – the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), African Independent Television (AIT), and Television Continental (TVC) from 2015 to 2017. Findings show that coverage was low. Of the 116 stories published, AIT put out the most with 77.6 percent, leaving TVC and NTA with 12.9 and 9.5 percent, respectively. Only 7.8 percent of the stories appeared on the index pages, with 92.2 tucked in the interior pages. As the networks sourced their stories, it is surprising that none of their reporters had any substantial direct contact with the child laborers to tell their stories. The networks have to create a reportorial schedule subject to regular evaluation to reverse the low reporting.

Keywords: Child labor, television networks, online coverage, Nigeria.

Introduction

The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2013, p. vii) reports that approximately 168 million children aged between five and 14 are globally engaged in one form of child labor. This figure accounts for 11 percent of the child population as a whole. Nigeria is home to many of these children.

Abubakar (2018) reports that more than half of the country's 79 children aged 17 and below are child laborers. They work as street vendors, car washers, shoe shiners, apprentice mechanics, farmhands, domestic servants, and the like under hazardous conditions. Indices show that they are not psychologically and physically fit for those jobs. Another proof of the prevalence of the problem is that more than 15 years after adopting the National Children's Rights Act in Nigeria, only 24 out of 36 states of the federation have domesticated the law.

In contrast, at least ten states of the country's northern region have refused to adopt it. This behavior makes unrealistic article 16(2) of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of putting an end to abuse, trafficking, and all types of savagery and torment against youngsters. This work explores the visibility of the child labor issue in the country through the contents of the dominant media.

Children the world over are regarded as the most vital resource of any nation, so the future depends on how they are raised (Tade, 2010). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 by the United Nations (UN) had stressed that adolescence was qualified for extraordinary care as each child had the inborn right to life. This would recognize and shield them from abuse. Despite the efforts of multilateral agencies to enhance the status of young people, child labor continues to be an issue exacerbated by the irresponsible attitude of governments of many countries. The insensitivity makes this attitude complex of the media to the problem. It appears children are not viewed as hotly debated issues for the media unless they are the central figures in an appalling story riled with stunning information.

Researchers (Sharma, Kukreja & Shama, 2012; Ali, Shahab, Ushijima & Muynck, 2004; Osita-Oleribe, 2007) have observed that media coverage influences how government addresses the issues of societal concern and how the citizens respond. Media challenges have made the coverage of such issues as child labor unattractive. Hence, in terms of effectively raising awareness, scholars and advocates of the eradication of child labor are compelled to reassess the social responsibility credential of the media in terms of the coverage they give the crisis (Oyero, 2011).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. To determine the profile of child labor reporting in Nigeria by the dominant broadcast media in various dimensions.

2. To determine the sources of child labor reporting by the dominant media and the extent to which they report directly from child laborers.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of child labor reporting in Nigeria by the dominant broadcast media in various dimensions?

2. What are the dominant networks' sources of child labor reporting, and to what extent do they report directly from child laborers?

Significance of the Study

The claim exists about Nigeria that child labor issues are not prominent in the public space due to the media's insensitivity. This conjecture will need to be substantiated by empirical evidence. This work covers the gap and investigates the media coverage of child labor, and puts it in the proper perspectives for easy referencing. This work serves as an eye-opener for the authorities and policymakers, organizations, non-governmental organizations, multilateral agencies, and individuals who need to make decisions based on facts. The work could be the beginning of a solid attempt to give the Nigerian child a voice and wake up the relevant authorities to their children's responsibility and welfare. This study also widens the research trajectory and makes literature available for consultation by scholars and researchers interested in the area.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Characteristics of Child Labour

Child labor is still a prevalent incident in the world though it is more challenging in emerging economies. The phrase may sometimes be confusing because a person considered to be a child in a particular clime or context might be different in another (Basu, 1998, p.413). Many would think that child labor only pertains to prostitution, scavenging, or back-breaking activities in construction sites. In contrast, the definition is more complex than these. It would include different activities in a wide range of situations in which ethical and legal responses could be different.

ILO (2013) defines child labor

as an exploitative activity or quasi-slavery of feudal relationships. An individual below 18 years engages in full-time, works long hours with over the top physical, social and mental strains that hinder the person's development. Child labor can also be explained to mean exposing children to long, unpaid, or underpaid hours in the workplace in an unhealthy environment at the expense of their education. The characteristics of child labor, according to ILO, also include the following:

- Starting all-day work at a very early age.
- Depriving offspring of their rights to education and training even where schools are accessible and affordable.
- Participating in work that ends in unreasonable physical, social and mental strains on the child.
- Working as errand boys and girls in a way that does not advance them mentally.

Types of Child Labor in Perspectives

In the context of the definition given by ILO, some situations have been categorized as child labor. They include the following.

Child Trafficking

Child trafficking involves the sale of children for economic activities and profit. The practice has existed for a long time. However, it gained traction in the 1990s when children were being moved from the Republic of Benin to Cameroon, Nigeria, Cote d' Ivoire, and Gabon to work as undocumented housemaids and servants. Sadly, no correct figure exists, but estimates of between 980,000 and 1,225,000 youngsters are in the constrained work situation due to this trafficking.

Sexual Exploitation and Pornography

Sexual exploitation, prostitution, and smut are among the foulest types of child labor that should attract well-meaning people and be eradicated. UNICEF (1999) studies indicated that child prostitution and pornography were common in Port Harcourt, Calabar, and Owerri. Children pornography entails a child who is engaged in actual or simulated sexual activities primarily for sexual gratification.

Street Begging and Forced Labor

There are three major categories of child beggars. First are those who beg entirely on their own to feed. Second, are those who lead their blind parent or relative. The third comprises those

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who beg on behalf of parents. These parents hide from the public view but supervise the kids from a close distance – all on the streets. This practice has social, psychological, and health consequences. Children remain vulnerable because they engage in tasks that include running between cars in heavy traffic, which puts them in danger of accidents.

Illicit Activities Including Drug Trafficking:
Drug trafficking is a global problem. The United Nations characterizes illegal drug activity to mean production in whatever form, offering for sale, distribution, and delivery of any narcotic drug or any psychotropic substance contrary to law or convention. There is an association between the commitment of youngsters to child trafficking, substance misuse, and wrongdoing. Children who are utilized as a part of the illegal activity of drugs gradually end up being dependent on those drugs, thereby increasing their tendencies for criminal activities.

Child Labor in the Media and Television Portrayal

The media assume the responsibility of shaping citizens' conduct and government policies and actions through the content they publish. Understanding how the media effect works and how to utilize the media productively can be a fundamental tool for those individuals who advocate children's rights. However, the media effect is impossible without media content. Coverage of child labor issues in Nigeria, and many developing nations is low despite the evidence of child labor and prostitution by unscrupulous elements, including those done under the guise of charity. It is not surprising that most Nigerians are oblivious to the plight of children who are forced into labor. This lack of knowledge extends to the provisions of the Child Rights Act. This fundamental law deals with this situation as it remains unpopular among the people.

Concerned people and organizations regard television as the media through which the child's rights can be advanced. The United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) sponsored in Nigeria a family-oriented 30-minute TV serial titled "I *Need to Know"* targeted at adolescent youths and children in general and aired on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) network about two decades ago. The serial featured prominent Nollywood actors and actresses, including Funke Akindele, Amaka Egwuatu, and Taiwo Lesh. The series depicts the life chaos associated with prostitution, teenage marriages, HIV/AIDS, child labor, the benefits of sound productive

health, open dialogue on sexual matters, and regular parent-child communication. Another serial titled 'Izozo' also came on national television, sponsored by the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), to tackle the problem. Child labor and abuse constitute a severe menace as disasters are associated (Fuller-Thomson, Stefanyk, & Brennenstuhl 2009, 214). The serials depicted all these.

Observers claim that these programs are insignificant compared to the volumes of content published in such areas as politics, sports, and the economy. Dinopoulos and Zhao (2007, p.554) note that it is time for revival to create awareness and educate the citizens about its dangers. Okorie, Loto, and Omojola (2018, p. 291) support this, stressing that the media must focus on areas other than politics to move the nation forward.

Even then, the claim of de-prioritizing of child labor issues, especially by the media, has remained conjectures as empirical evidence is not visible to prove it. In this study, we present the results of the child labor coverage on three dominant Nigerian television networks in various dimensions and how their reporters connected directly with child laborers in their reporting.

Theoretical Guidance

This work is anchored on the Agenda Setting and Priming theories. The agenda-setting postulation developed sequel to the findings of Max McCombs and Donald Shaw's study of the 1968 Presidential election in the United States, is that media audience will regard as necessary those issues that frequently occur in the news and that the media do not reflect reality, but they can shape it (McCombs & Stroud, 2014, p. 70; Groshek, 2008, p. 58; Davie & Maher, 2006, p. 361; McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p. 59; Wiebe, 1972, p.134).

The idea is that media can set a country's agenda, focusing the public attention on some key issues previously not popular with the public. This assertion means that if the media focus attention on child labor issues, the audience will make these issues top in the hierarchy of the content they get from the media. The agenda-setting system has been subject to debate by several authors (Cornway, Kenski & Wang, 2015, p.364; West & Turner, 2013, p. 378; Ragas & Roberts, 2009, p. 55; McCombs, 2005, p. 545), but the basic postulations still stand. In this study, the theory guides us into the knowledge of how much and frequently the dominant television networks in Nigeria had published on child labor.

Priming theory (Iyengar, Peter

& Kinder, 1982, p. 848) avers that the media audience does not have detailed knowledge about issues and consider this knowledge when making decisions. However, the media can set the agenda for them and then shape the thinking and decisions of this agenda in the way they report, thereby having a significant psychological ramification on that audience. While the agenda-setting system deals with the saliency of issues in the news, priming orientates people's judgment of those issues.

The media do the shaping by reporting some issues in a particular way, thereby altering the standards by which people evaluate those issues. For instance, after making an issue salient, the media can continue to use a particular bold font to draw people's attention to it or publish it in a particular position on the front cover. As this media practice continues, it tends to shape the judgment of that audience on that issue. The saliency of issues can happen in a short time, but priming takes a while. Iyengar, Peter and Kinder (1982) first identified the priming effect in their study of some television news programs. The theory has undergone much critiquing (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Ferguson & Dyke, 2012, p.221; Bushman, 1998, p.538; Goidel, Shields, & Peffley,1997), but the original characteristics still subsist. In this study, the prominence in presentation, positioning of stories, among others, are discussed.

Descriptions of Networks' Online Broadcast

The contents investigated in this work were the child labor stories broadcast online via the websites of television networks. It is usual for the networks to transmit the stories aired on television sets to their online portals. This transmission makes the websites the more appropriate places to conduct content analysis. The stories remain online for a more extended period than television. The three websites investigated were AIT's www.aitonline.tv, TVC's http://tvcnews.tv, and NTA's www.nta.ng The AIT site has on its task menu, on the index page, three items that deal with the news and reports and from where the content investigated in the story were sourced. First is News, which contains 20 items of various subjects in its dropdown. The second is *'TV'* which contains 14 items on various news subjects and three on the program description, schedule, and presenters. One striking thing about this TV category is that one of the 13 items is labeled "Children," which zeros in on the news and reports about children. The third is AIT Live, which streams stories live to its audience.

The NTA's online portal is well

organized. It has on its task menu on the index page nine items, including security and economy. None has a dropdown. Each simply hyperlinked to the stories that capture the item's subject matter in the interior pages. Headline stories are featured on the index page. TVC's site is also well organized. There were nine items on the menu bar. All the items except 'anchor' hyperlink to news stories and reports that relate to the item. Like AIT, one of the items is 'Live streaming.' All these stories were explored from 2015 to 2017 to ascertain which of them were about child labor.

Methodology

Content analysis (Krippendorf, 1989, p.403; Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p.1285; Neuendorf 2002, p. 50-51; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005, p.55) was adopted in this study. The content analysis system looks at "who says what through which channel to whom with what impact (Lasswell, 1948, p.117). "It is a primary message centered methodology" (Neuendorf, 2002, p.9) that enables one to assess the manifest content and produce the requisite empirical evidence contextualized in terms of the "values, goals, states of mind and perceptions" (Carley, 1997) needed to make a decision.

It is important to reiterate that the content investigated were those stories that the broadcast networks transmitted to their websites' index and interior pages. Those stories could be news, documentaries, features, interviews, special reports, and any other genre as long as it is on the theme of child labor. The networks – NTA, AIT, and TVC- were purposely selected since preliminary investigations confirmed that they contained stories on child labor worth investigating.

Besides that, they are among the dominant broadcast networks in the country with between 15 and 50 years of broadcasting experience and were available for viewing both terrestrially and on the cable system locally, nationally, and globally. The Nigerian government owns NTA, while AIT and TVC are privately owned. Each online portal was investigated between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2017, with stories in text, photographs, videos, and rare case audio. Each story serves as the unit of analysis. The data gathered were in line with the study's objectives. The data were analyzed as percentages and frequencies.

Data Analysis
Research Question (RQ) 1:
What is the profile of child labor reporting in Nigeria by the dominant broadcast media in various dimensions?

The following are the tables showing the frequencies and percentages of the content analyzed in different dimensions or levels in alignment with Research Question 1.

Table 1: Coverage of child labor stories on AIT, NTA, and TVC networks between 2015 and 2017

TV Networks	*f Coder1	%	f Coder2	f Coder3
AIT	90	77.6	90	88
NTA	11	9.5	12	11
TVC	15	12.9	15	15
n=116	116	100	117	114

*Original coder

Table 1 is significant because it presents the overall picture of the analysis. AIT's component of the coverage is a whopping 90 (77.6%) of the total child labor stories posted to the sites of the three television networks, TVC published 15 (12.9%). In contrast, NTA published the least with 11 stories, translating to 9.5 percent. Three coders were engaged. In addition to the lead researcher's count of 116, Coder 2 and Coder 3 counted 117 and 114, respectively. Even though the coders' counts show a prima facie agreement, we still went ahead and conducted the inter-coder reliability test.

The Cronbach alpha measure computed at a 95% confidence interval was .9997. This result was cross-checked with Kuder-Richardson (K20) measure, which showed the same result. This sameness means that any of the coders' figures were most appropriate for analysis. The original coder (Coder 1's) figure of 116 was adopted.

Table 2: Genre of child labor stories on AIT, NTA, and TVC networks between 2015 and 2017

Genre of Stories	f	%
News story	97	83.6
Feature	9	7.8
Editorial	8	6.9
Picture/Photo News	2	1.7
Opinion article	0	0
Cartoon	0	0
Total	**116**	**100**

Table 3: The prominence of the child labor stories on AIT, NTA, and TVC networks between 2015 and 2017

Genres of Stories	f	%
Index page	9	7.8
Interior page	107	92.2
Total	**116**	**100**

Table 4: Visible themes of child labor stories on AIT, NTA, and TVC networks between 2015 and 2017

Story sources	f	%
Children's education	18	15.5
Assistance rendered to children	12	10.3
Children's predicament	44	37.9
NGO's intervention	11	9.5
Government's efforts to curb child labor	24	20.7
Parents/guardians of child laborers	4	3.4
Advice for/call on government	3	2.6
Total	**116**	**100**

Table 5: Direction of the child labor stories on AIT, NTA, and TVC networks between 2015 and 2017

Direction	f	%
Favorable (to the children)	79	68.1
Neutral	21	18.1
Unfavorable	16	13.8
Total	**116**	**100**

Table 6: People mentioned in the child labor stories on AIT, NTA, and TVC networks between 2015 and 2017

People mentioned in story	f	%
Children	51	44
Politicians	1	0.9
Teachers	2	1.7
Parents/Guardians	5	4.3
Government	48	41.4
Police	1	0.9
NGOs	8	6.9
Total	**116**	**100**

Discussion of Findings from RQ1

Table 1, which shows all the stories published, has a surprising aspect to it. NTA, owned by Nigeria's federal government, published least among the three networks with a disappointing 9.5 percent. A few things may be suggested here as responsible for the low reporting. One is that the network did not do enough to report on child labor or second. The government did not do enough to warrant significant reporting. The second argument appears plausible because no fewer than 12 states of Nigeria's federation had refused to enforce the National Child Rights Act 15 years after it was passed. Incidentally, the majority of the non-conforming states are located in the northern part of the country with its endemic cases of child abuse (Magashi, 2015, p. 66; Sossou & Yogtiba, 2009, p. 1220; Omeni, 2015, p. 131; Hansen, Jima, Abbas & Abia, 2016, p. 86). An implication of this is that if the government scores low in anti-child labor activities, chances are that beat reporting from this area will be adversely affected. On the other hand, AIT can be accorded some commendation for contributing a whopping 77.6 percent of the stories. This network is the only one that had "children" as a subject on its dropdown list.

Table 2 shows that the networks source their stories mainly as straight news with 83.6 percent. In comparison, features and editorial had 7.8 and 6.9 percent, respectively. This configuration aligns with the global standard of the primacy of news in mass media reportage. It would not make any difference whether the platform of transmission is broadcast, print, or online. However, commendation seems appropriate for all the networks because low reporting notwithstanding, they still managed to push up to 7.8 percent of all the stories on the index page, as shown in Table 3.

Table 4 exhibits the most visible theme of coverage as the predicament of child laborers with 44 percent. At the

Coverage of Child Labor Crisis in Nigeria

same time, attention was also given to their education and the assistance they were getting from different sources. While the themes appear diverse, there is a particular area of coverage that has been neglected. This area pertains to multilateral organizations like the United Nations and its affiliated organizations like Unicef and the ILO. These bodies exert significant influence on the policies and actions of governments the world over. They are the organizations that set the rules of engagement by which government policies and actions on child labor are assessed.

The Table 5 figures that say 68.1 percent is favorable to child laborers is not surprising. The concern is the 13.8 percent that is not favorable. One of such negative stories could be the case of the almajiris. These are mainly male children, usually between the ages of five and 18, found in the country's northern parts. Many of them have been engaged by Boko Haram for terrorist activities. They could gather together and inflict severe injuries on law-abiding citizens with flimsy excuses. Such unfavorable stories could discourage potential helpers of child laborers. Table 6 shows that child laborers and governments were the most frequently mentioned. This shows that the latter's reaction to child labor issues is significant. However, it is difficult to predict whether these reactions advance the interest of the child laborers or not.

Research Question (RQ)2:
What are the dominant networks' sources of child labor reporting and the extent to which they report directly from child laborers?

The following Table 7 shows the three networks' sources of stories.

Table 4: Sources of the child labor stories in the selected television stations between 2015 and 2017

Story sources	f	%
In house (research)	16	13.8
News agencies	31	26.7
Police/Court	1	0.9
NGOs	10	8.6
Government agencies	45	38.8
Unidentified source	9	7.8
Contact with child laborers	**0**	**0**
Others	4	3.4
Total	116	100

Discussion of RQ2

AIT, NTA, and TVC sourced 13.8 percent of their stories through research. This result suggests the existence of a library – electronic or physical and this is commendable. The networks also relied on the government for their stories (38.8%). The figures corroborate those figures in Table 6 that shows the government constituting a whopping 41 percent of the people mentioned in the news. The networks relied next on news agencies with 26.7 percent and NGOs (10%). The combined percentage of reliance on both government, news agencies, and NGOs (85%) shows some proof of the incapability of the networks to source stories by themselves. The question is: what if there were no stories from these sources? How would they survive and be able to perform their social responsibility to the citizens? These are the questions that deserve serious attention from the media.

The most unimpressive showing of these networks is the zero direct contact their reporters had with child laborers in their reporting (shown in white over black) in Table 7. The meaning of this is that they relied mainly on secondary sources for their stories! This has legal implications and a profound consequence on the ethics of practice. The ethical principles of objectivity and fairness demand that media be accountable for the stories they publish and the sources of these stories. By sourcing from secondary sources, the accountability principle becomes fragile as the defense of those sources slips out of their control.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to determine the level of child labor reporting by analyzing the content posted to the online platforms of TVC, AIT and NTA, three television networks selected based on some criteria, including their status as among the dominant broadcast media. Coverage is low, with a paltry 116 stories published on child labor. Besides the troubled children, the government also featured prominently in their reports, suggesting a significant level of official reactions to the crisis. Nevertheless, the dependence of these networks on the government, news agencies, and NGOs for their news put their journalism practice in jeopardy and undermines their capacity to be accountable. As part of the solution to the problem, the following are recommended:

1. Media houses and their reporters should, as a matter of concern for the country's future, prioritize the reporting of children. This prioritization should be in the form of a policy that makes child reporting mandatory.

2. To enhance performance in child reporting, a reporting schedule, backed up by an assessment mechanism, should be crafted as the guide for performance. Regular evaluation will show defaults in reporting and signpost the way to solve the problem.

3. According to Table 2, the three networks did not have many cartoons and photos to show their coverage. According to Omojola (2016), and Omojola, Odiboh and Amodu, 2018, one of the ways to make an impactful impression on the audience is through the use of symbols, shapes, illustrations, and the like in reporting. This strategy could go a long way in reducing the evils associated with the crisis.

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A Comparative Analysis of Students' Technology Uses During Covid-19 Lockdown in Ghana

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Abstract
The study tests an author-derived quantitative version of the Student Technology Use Framework by assessing the effectiveness of distance learning technologies deployed by universities in Ghana during the Covid-19 lockdown period. It focuses on the knowledge acquisition needs of students who were initially admitted into the traditional learning mode but had to adapt to distance learning following the lockdown. The population comprises undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Christian Service University College (CSUC), a private university in Kumasi, and the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), a public university in Accra. The sample size was 351 - 187 from CSUC and 164 from GIJ. Copies of a questionnaire were distributed to CSUC students by personal contact, and a Google Forms link to GIJ students via e-mail. Results show that students in public universities had lower technological learning capabilities than their compatriots in private universities, resulting in a better learning experience throughout the lockdown.

Keywords: **Student, technology use, knowledge acquisition, distance learning, Ghana**

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken center stage in Ghana, giving way to a new normal as people, including scholars and academics, rely on technology to get things done. These technologies have been deployed essentially as an emergency response to avoid disrupting academic work during the Covid-19 lockdown period. This article examines how these technologies have been adopted or adapted in the institutions of higher learning in the country. The result of the investigation is imperative to help take stock as a basis for future decision-making.

Background to the Study

On 11th March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak of SARS-Cov-2, which causes the Covid-19 a global pandemic. As a result, Ghana's President, on 15th March 2020, suspended all public gatherings. The suspension, which extended to public and private educational institutions, became effective Monday, 16th, until further notice. In addition, he mandated the Ministry of Education to roll out distance learning programs on television.

The announcement caught most institutions of higher learning unawares as they struggled to plot the way forward right in the mid-second semester of the 2019/2020 session.

Both public and private universities rolled out emergency responses in distance learning programs, using WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Moodle platforms. Students who had hitherto received academic tuition and instructions through the traditional method of face-to-switched overnight into distance learning, encountering some challenges in the process. These distance learning platforms were adopted with little room to train students on their use, though the teaching staff was given some training. The assumption that college students are digital natives (Miller, 2017), owing to their life-long exposure and experience with technology, is possibly the motivation for the sudden switch over. But it remains to be seen if these technologies have served as the process and content gratifications tools.

The students' new experiences from mid-March to the end of May 2020 are significant and worth exploring to inform future decisions. This significance is because, as indicated by Stevens et al. (2018), although the same learning goal drives traditional and distance or independent learning students, the paths for gratifications attainment differ. This viewpoint questions the homogeneity in technology use for

students' knowledge acquisition needs and achievement. This study uses a multi-level approach to investigate the effectiveness of the distance learning technologies deployed by two institutions of higher learning in Ghana during the Covid-19 lockdown period. The study employed a quantitatively adapted version of the Students' Technology Use Hierarchical Framework (Guo et al., 2012) (STUHF) designed by the researchers who tested its application in this study.

Objectives of the Study

The study addresses three main objectives as follows:

i. To assess how students used technology deployed by their institutions of higher learning to meet their knowledge acquisition needs.

ii. To assess the effectiveness of the various technologies integrated or combined to help students acquire their knowledge needs.

iii. To ascertain the extent to which students' expectations to acquire knowledge were gratified through the technologies deployed.

Hypotheses

The study sought to test the following hypothesis through the application of the author-derived quantitative version of the STUHF (Guo et al., 2012):

HI: students in public institutions of higher learning are likely to have better learning capabilities than those of private institutions of higher learning when technology is applied in teaching and learning.

H2: The more e-learning platforms deployed by institutions of higher learning, the more interactive and gratified students will be in acquiring knowledge.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for some reasons. First, the study has generated a quantitative version of the STUHF (Guo et al., 2012); initially, a qualitative theoretical framework applied to small sample size. This quantitative version is suitable for surveys and thus applicable to larger sample sizes. Secondly, this study assesses the knowledge acquisition gratifications of students admitted initially into the traditional mode but had to adapt to distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This assessment is a way to take stock of previous activity to accurately ascertain future actions in

terms of technology application in academic work, should the need arise or the Covid-19 pandemic linger on.

Literature Review

Everybody has a need or problem. Any means to achieving a solution gives some amount of satisfaction that passes as gratification. Gratifications, according to Rubin (2009, 167) are "expectations and desires that emanate from, and are constrained by personal traits, social context and interaction." The uses and gratifications (U&G) (Katz et al., 1973) theoretical foundations have over the years been used to explain peoples' motivations for using media and technology.

However, the question of how gratified students will be when they seek out face-to-face knowledge acquisition but get distance learning instead via technology remains unanswered. Newness to distance learning systems can overwhelm and induce anxiety in the students because they are not familiar with the technologies. Most institutions of higher learning in Ghana had to battle with this during the Covid-19 lockdown era when there was a need to continue academic work amidst limited options. As a result, institutions adopted various technological tools for use, such as video conferencing, chat, and audio applications, to convey teaching lessons to students.

Anchoring this situation only on the U&G may not achieve the intended objective. First, U&G assumes that media users are goal-directed in choosing a media type to satisfy their needs. Secondly, users are aware of their needs and select suitable media to gratify their needs (Katz et al., 1974, Yartey et al., 2021, Adesina et al., 2021). In the case presented above, students did not choose the media type deployed by their institutions. They only had to adapt to it as a means to end the semester's activities. Therefore, the STUHF (Guo et al., 2012) shows a better anchor. It presents valuable criteria to assess how gratified students achieved their knowledge acquisition needs using various forms of technology. It accounts for both content acquisition and content gratification variables (Rubin 2009). It also allows gratifications assessment. The term technology operationalizes as any application, whether hardware or software applications, used to store, create, exchange, and use information (Nkosi et al., 2011; Tubaishat et al., 2016).

Students from high school to university have been theorized as 'digital natives (Miller, 2017), largely because of their life-long exposure and experience with technology tools. Some scholars have advocated for substituting teachers with technology tools, claiming that "technology is the language of this

age so undoubtedly it should be used primarily in addressing the young generation who understand it well enough" (Miniawi & Brenjekjy, 2015).

Akin to the stand of Stevens, Guo and Li (2018, 2), Understanding the profiles of different groups of digital natives would assist educators in incorporating technologies in teaching more responsively. Additionally, deploying technology for teaching may not be transformative in itself because it is not an end but rather a means to an end. The transformative ability of a teaching method often adopted largely depends on the content delivered and the process of delivery. Therefore, adopting a technology should be done with the demographics of the students in mind. Students in public institutions of higher learning in Ghana fall within the true digital natives (Miller, 2017) category. Most of them enter the universities immediately after completing senior high school at relatively younger ages and may have explored technology (Banahene et al., 2018). Students in private institutions, however, present a different scenario.

The general opinion is that they are mature (aged 27 years and above). They are admitted into universities years after completing senior high school and are working class (Banahene et al., 2018). Such students may not be technology savvy and may lack the luxury of exploring hi-tech gadgets and technology platforms. Students of this caliber could encounter difficulties when they have to adapt to technology overnight.

The use of technology in education

The use of technology in the context of education has received extensive attention lately, mainly because of the far-reaching use and the perceived advantages it could bring on board (Briz-Ponce et al., 2014; Orgaz et al., 2018; Briz-Ponce et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2007; Weng et al., 2018). Most of these studies measure perception, behavior, and attitudes towards acceptance of technologies in teaching and learning. Only a few recognize how the gratification sought using technology relates to the gratification obtained (Dvoretskaya et al., 2011; Miniawi & Brenjekjy, 2015; Song & Kang, 2012; Zhang & Martinovic, 2008). Like Ghavifekr & Athirah (2015) and Miniawi & Brenjekjy (2015), some of these studies target teachers and institutional managers instead of students. One study found close to this current study is Dvoretskaya et al. (2011).

In a Russian context, they used the survey method in a university to investigate students' expectations and what was achieved in their school's implementation of mobile teaching technologies in their

education system. In seeking what the actual reality gaps were, they found discrepancies between what students expected and the working practices of teachers in using technologies to meet those expectations.

Education thrives on interactions between the environment of the learning community and its members. Guo et al.'s (2012) identification of interaction existing between the means (process gratifications) and ends (gratifications obtained) attests to this assertion. Moreover, this assertion is provable since interactions dictate whether content gratifications will be achieved or not. Like traditional face-to-face learning, based mainly on interactivity, distance learning communities thrive on interactivity (Wenger, 1998). However, in this instance, it is enabled by technology as a means (process gratification) to achieve interactivity.

Moore (1989) identifies three types of interactions for the success of every academic work: learner-content interaction, learner-instructor interaction, and learner-learner interaction. Learner-content interaction considers how learners engage with the content of the taught subject, resulting in changes in learner's knowledge, understanding, and the cognitive structures of the mind. Learner-instructor interaction deals with the interaction between the learner and the instructor, while learner-learner advances the inter-learner interactions.

The traditional mode of learning in the classroom and campus environment supports all three forms of interaction. They may be difficult to achieve on the distance learning platforms except based on various technology tools and affordances targeted at achieving this goal. The reason is, as argued by U&G enthusiasts, "some media meet certain needs while others fulfill a slightly different configuration of needs" (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, 509-510). The process gratification type, which uses a medium to achieve content gratification (Rubin, 2009), does not always guarantee satisfaction, especially when the technology is not varied. This situation leads to a denied gratification. Palmgreen et al. (1985) aver that gratifications sought from the media may not always guarantee gratifications obtained from them in such a situation.

For traditional mode students, the classroom serves as the place to receive face-to-face information. To transform into distance learning mode students means that, technology takes over the classroom experience. Thus the need for variations and an assortment of technology tools (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, 509-510). Moreover, technology availability, the user-friendliness of the technology, enabled affordances, and

internet service must be reliable to satisfy the sought-after knowledge acquisition.

Theoretical Framework

The STUHF (Guo et al., 2012) underpins this study. Maslow (Maslow 1943) had conceptualized human needs to be hierarchical in nature. Students are not exempt, but the mode of achievement and motivation to use technology to achieve these needs differs and is also hierarchical.

This framework conceptualizes students' technology use motivations as a set of interrelated and hierarchically categorized elements. It draws on the uses and gratifications system of using technologies and the means-end chain approach (Gutman, 1982) for understanding technology use motivations. Combining the U&G theory and the Means-End Chain Approach provides an integrated goal-directed platform for conceptualizing consumer behavior and understanding peoples' motivation and usage behavior of technology (Guo et al., 2012).

The U&G, as a media effect theory, is an audience-centered approach that focuses on what people do with media, as opposed to what media does to people. Thus, its applicability in this study provided a guide to understanding traditional learning students' interaction with technology tools during the Covid-19

lockdown period in Ghana. Arguably, the main reason students used the technologies deployed by their institutions was to acquire

knowledge. It also played a big role in assisting students to achieve their learning goals (Guo et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the theory proponents aver that, for students to use technologies and interact well, they must first learn how to use them. Otherwise, they risk achieving a negative technology needs fulfilment. Thus, the three-level hierarchies include the Means or interrelated technology attributes (access and content control, accessibility, communication mode, managing contents, self-disclosure, and course management). These independent technical variables enable students' interaction (consequences), which make up the second level of the hierarchical framework. The final level ends, represents the expected goals to be achieved in the learning process after using the technology. These include information seeking, communication efficiency, communication quality, and learning capabilities.
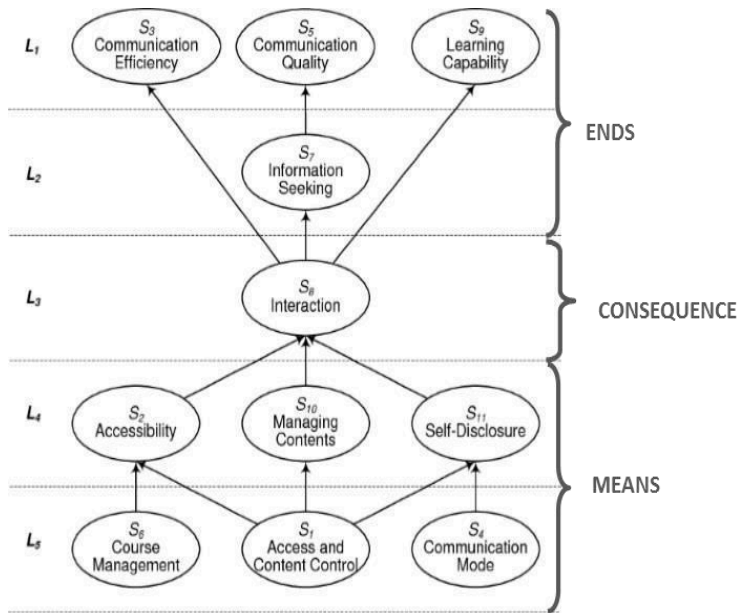
Fig 1: Student Technology Use Hierarchical Framework
Source: Guo, Li & Stevens (2012: 213)

Methodology

Research Method and Measurement of Constructs

This study aimed to explore how beneficial the technologies deployed were to students in gratifying their knowledge acquisition needs. In addition, it tested the applicability of the quantitative version of the

STUHF put together by the researchers.

The study adopted a survey method, administering a structured questionnaire to collect data from undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Christian Service University College (CSUC). This institution is a prominent university based in Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The questionnaire was also distributed in the Ghana

Institute of Journalism (GIJ), a public institution of higher learning based in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. CSUC has a student population of 1,904, far less than that of GIJ, with 4,259 students.

The Guo et al. (2012) study conceptualized the STUHF from the qualitative standing by interviewing participants. However, this current study opted for a quantitative paradigm to give it a granular effect of increasing the sample size. The study utilized a researcher-developed structured questionnaire version of Guo et al.'s (2012) STUHF. The structured questionnaire of sixty statements and questions had two sections.

The A section comprised 53 phrased statements about using distance learning technologies to acquire knowledge. It also had items on whether or not the knowledge needs and expectations were obtained through the e-learning platforms deployed by their universities. These items align with the means, consequences, and ends hierarchy of the STUHF.

The variables access and content control, accessibility, communication efficiency, communication mode, communication quality, course management, information seeking, interaction, learning capability, managing contents, and self-

disclosure served as the basis for statement framing. Each dimension was measured on various items on a seven-point Likert scale. The statements were framed by adapting descriptions on the eleven items in the three-level hierarchy (Guo et al., 2012, 209) and also by using researchers own framed statements. Statements for three items (Access and Content Control, Accessibility, and Communication Efficiency) were based on an adaptation of the questionnaire by Gao et al. (2011). The researchers framed the statements for the remaining eight items. The second part (Part B) of the questionnaire had seven questions to collect respondents' bio data information.

A pilot study was conducted with 30 students who commented on the clarity of questions and suggested modifications based on their understanding. The feedback received was in respect of the number of questions anticipated to translate into a longer time for answering (about 15 minutes). This could not be scaled down owing to the scope of the research and 11-measures within the hierarchy of the framework. The questionnaires were administered by personal contact to students of the CSUC because they visited campus regularly as part of their end-of-semester examinations. This effort provided detailed engagement with

respondents for maximum response rate (Sureshchandar et al., 2002). GIJ students responded to the questionnaire via a Google form link.

Researchers sent weekly reminders to the respondents through their e-mails to enhance engagements throughout questionnaire distribution and completion; between June and July 2020. There were 351 responses in all. Of the 200 questionnaire copies administered in CSUC, there were 187 responses, representing 93.5 percent. There were 164 responses from GIJ on the other hand. However, the response rate was low in this case because the data collection period coincided with the examinations period.

However, it was also an excellent period to assess the effectiveness of the just ended technology-use period. The low response rate notwithstanding, a sample size of 351 is acceptable for studies of this nature (Neuman, 2006). Students engaged in the study were 338 undergraduate students from four 100 to 400 levels of both institutions and 13 postgraduate students from GIJ, studying different programs. This approach ensured maximum variation of samples because of diversity in background, level of study, program or discipline of study, and institution characteristics. The data were analyzed using the SPSS software.

Data Cleaning

The first phase of the data analysis process was to enter the data into SPSS 20.0 and clean up where necessary. The process involved manual entry for CSUC data and then saving Google Forms data of the Ghana Institute of Journalism into Microsoft Excel before exporting to SPSS. All errors were identified in the original data file and corrected by re-visiting the original response sheets for CSUC students and the Excel download from Google Forms for GIJ students. Next, the researchers performed the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to purify scales and evaluate internal consistency.

The main justification for using CFA in this study was to test how well the measured variables represent the constructs in the framework. It also helped express the degree of discrepancy between predicted and empirical factor structure and the "goodness of fit" (GOF) of the framework (Prudon, 2015). Finally, it assessed the discriminant validity after problematic indicators had been taken out. Regression and correlation analysis were the main tools used to estimate relationships.

Validity and Reliability Assessment

To evaluate the reliability and validity of the quantitatively adapted

STUHF dimensions, CFA was run and refined using SPSS to show a good fit. After purification, a reliability test was performed for each of the eleven constructs to ascertain whether they measured their stated constructs. Two items were removed from the model because they loaded poorly on their respective factors. The initial four items each, measuring the constructs of Communication Quality (CMQ) and Self Disclosure (SDF), had Cronbach's Alpha values of .526 and .576.

These poor outcomes were due either to poor responding by students or poor loading. By omitting the third item in the Communication Quality construct (Lecturer had to reduce illustrative examples because of limited time) to reduce the number of items to three, the Cronbach's Alpha value improved to .675. For self-disclosure, the fourth item -I need to portray a different self on the technology to feel accepted - was deleted. This step reduced the number of items to three and improved the Cronbach's Alpha to .633. Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding .6 cut-off (Hair et al., 2014) were applied in this study. As displayed in Table 1, the estimated reliability coefficients were high, indicating that the adapted scales for the eleven constructs were highly reliable instruments to measure them.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity test using CFA

Measures and items retained		Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Access and Content Control	Item 1	.815	.834
	Item 2	.795	
	Item 3	.800	
	Item 4	.812	
	Item 5	.796	
	Item 6	.828	
Accessibility	Item 1	.817	.842
	Item 2	.815	
	Item 3	.810	
	Item 4	.808	
	Item 5	.811	
	Item 6	.854	
	Item 7	.832	
	Item 8	.839	
Communication Efficiency	Item 1	.771	.804
	Item 2	.757	

	Item 3	.737	
	Item 4	.758	
Communication Mode	Item 1	.794	.822
	Item 2	.731	
	Item 3	.766	
	Item 4	.810	
Communication Quality	Item 1	.525	.675
	Item 2	.603	
	Item 3	.607	
Course Management	Item 1	.798	.806
	Item 2	.732	
	Item 3	.757	
	Item 4	.737	
Information Seeking	Item 1	.830	.834
	Item 2	.760	
	Item 3	.804	
	Item 4	.819	
	Item 5	.787	
Interaction	Item 1	.881	.902
	Item 2	.881	
	Item 3	.865	
	Item 4	.873	
	Item 5	.899	
Learning Capability	Item 1	.654	.747
	Item 2	.767	
	Item 3	.638	
	Item 4	.685	
Managing Contents	Item 1	.728	.773
	Item 2	.698	
	Item 3	.782	
	Item 4	.729	
	Item 5	.713	
Self-Disclosure	Item 1	.457	.633
	Item 2	.587	
	Item 3	.555	

Results and Discussions

Demographic Information

For a descriptive summary of students according to the individual institutions, the universities were cross-tabulated with demographic information like ages, the technology deployed by the universities, programs of study, levels, gender, and their work or employment status, as displayed in Table 2. Most of the respondents in the study were females (201), representing 47.3 percent, and 150, representing 42.7 percent were males. Thus, the males were less than the females, contrasting the general university statistics in Ghana, where males outnumbered females (Banahene et al., 2018:144).

Students who offered communication-related programs from both institutions dominated the study (202), representing 57.5 percent because GIJ is a dedicated institution for studying Communications and related programs. CSUC, aside from offering Communications, also had other non-communication studies-related programs like Bachelor of Business Administration, BSc.

Nursing, BSc. Computer Science and BSc. Information Technology. CSUC has 38 communication students out of the 202 (18.8%). More 400- Level students – 121- completed the questionnaire, representing 34.8 percent.

Additionally, the mature students who completed the questionnaire from CSUC outnumbered those from GIJ. In this study 60 people, aged 31 and above from CSUC responded to the questionnaire representing 17 percent, compared to 11 in GIJ, representing 3 percent. These figures could represent the students' age distribution in both institutions since private universities in Ghana have more mature students than public universities. Furthermore, more students in CSUC than GIJ were found to work aside from their academic careers. This is the general feeling in the educational environment in Ghana, where more students in private universities than public universities are working alongside schooling. Some 122 students of CSUC, representing 34.8 percent, worked alongside schooling. In contrast, 58 (16.5%) of GIJ students who partook in the survey worked alongside schooling.

Table 2: Demographic information

Item	CSUC	GIJ	total	Item	CSUC	GIJ	total
Gender				**Level**			
Male	107	43	**150**	100	40	3	**43**
Female	80	121	**201**	200	57	30	**87**
Total	**187**	**164**	**351**	300	46	41	**87**
				400	44	77	**121**
Programme of study				Postgraduate	0	13	**13**
BBA	64	-	**64**	**Total**	**187**	**164**	**351**
BA Communication Studies	38	148	**186**				
BSc. Nursing	19	-	**19**	**Age Distribution**			
BSc. Physician Assistantship	19	-	**19**	15-20	16	11	**27**
BSc. Information Technology	15	-	**15**	21-30	111	142	**253**
BSc. Computer Science	18	-	**18**	31-40	56	10	**66**
BA Theology	14	-	**14**	41-50	4	1	**5**
Master of Development Communication	-	7	**7**	**Total**	**187**	**164**	**351**

Master of Public Relations	-	3	**3**	**Work and Schooling**			
Master of Public Administration	-	1	**1**	Yes	122	58	**180**
Diploma in Communication	-	5	**5**	No	65	106	**171**
Total			**351**	**Total**	**187**	**164**	**351**

Technology Deployed by Institutions

From the analysis, nine technologies were deployed in total. CSUC used Moodle, Zoom, and WhatsApp, while GIJ deployed Zoom, Moodle, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Telegram, Youtube, E-Portal, WIX App, and V Class.

Regression Analysis

Two sets of multiple regression analysis were performed to assess the degree of relationship between the criterion variables and predictor variables, the proportion of variance in the criterion variables predicted by regression, and the relative importance of the various criterion variables

(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2005, 161) in the three levels of the STUHF.

Regression of Means Variables

The first hierarchical multiple regression used the items within the Means (Course Management, Access and Content Control, Communication Mode, Accessibility, Managing Contents, Self-Disclosure) as predictor variables on the Consequence (Interaction), which was the criterion variable. The predictor variables were also in a hierarchy, thus, the first level predictor variables (Access and Content Control, Course Management, and Communication Mode) served as the first block and the second level

predictor variables (Accessibility, Managing Contents, and Self-Disclosure) served as the second block.

The results in Tables 3, 4, and 5 reveal that the first level of predictor variables - Access and Content Control, Course Management and Communication Mode - predict 38.7 percent (where R = .622 and R^2=.387) of the variance when the other means variables are controlled. This indicates that, aside from other variables, the first three predictor variables contribute to 38.7 percent of students' interaction with the technologies deployed by their various institutions. Upon adding the second block - Accessibility, Managing Contents, and Self-Disclosure - the total contribution to variance by the predictors was 53.1 percent. These figures indicate an R^2 change of 14.4 percent.

This development shows that when the first hierarchy of predictors and all other indicators are controlled, the second block of predictors contributes 14.4 percent to variance. These figures are pretty significant, though not as strong as the first level predictor variables. Therefore, it downgrades the model by reducing the total Fitness of the predictor variables to the model from F=72.88 to F=64.916 (where F≥ 4).

Notwithstanding, the predictor variables translated into a significantly Fit model, indicated by the ANOVA result of the six variables where F=64.916, p = .000[a], p = .000[b]. An F-statistic of 4 shows that the model is fit. Therefore, a value of 64.916 indicates that the Means to Consequence model is fit (Table 3).

Table 3: Model summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of means variables

Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.622^a	.387	.382	1.22819	.387	72.988	3	347	.000
2	.729^b	.531	.523	1.07885	.144	35.239	3	344	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), COMMMODE, ACCANDCONTROL, COURSEMGT

b. Predictors: (Constant), COMMMODE, ACCANDCONTROL, COURSEMGT, SELFDISC, ASSESSIBILITY, MGNCONTENTS

c. Dependent Variable: INTERACTION

Table 4: Analysis of variance of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of means variables

ANOVA^c

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	330.299	3	110.100	72.988	.000^a
	Residual	523.436	347	1.508		
	Total	853.735	350			
2	Regression	453.345	6	75.558	64.916	.000^b
	Residual	400.390	344	1.164		
	Total	853.735	350			

a. Predictors: (Constant), COMMMODE, ACCANDCONTROL, COURSEMGT

b. Predictors: (Constant), COMMMODE, ACCANDCONTROL, COURSEMGT, SELFDISC, ASSESSIBILITY, MGNCONTENTS

c. Dependent Variable: INTERACTION

Table 5: Coefficients of regression of Means and Consequence

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	St. Coeff.. Beta	*t*	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.644	.258		2.491	.013					
ACCANDCONTROL	.086	.055	.075	1.582	.115	.306	.085	.066	.787	1.271
COURSEMGT	.590	.052	.562	11.277	.000	.615	.518	.474	.713	1.403
COMMMODE	.053	.054	.051	.991	.322	.367	.053	.042	.679	1.472
2 (Constant)	-.031	.238		-.130	.897					
ACCANDCONTROL	-.122	.053	-.106	-2.292	.022	.306	-.123	-.085	.643	1.555
COURSEMGT	.291	.055	.277	5.285	.000	.615	.274	.195	.497	2.012
COMMMODE	-.044	.050	-.042	-.875	.382	.367	-.047	-.032	.595	1.681
ASSESSIBILITY	.368	.065	.292	5.640	.000	.559	.291	.208	.509	1.964
MGNCONTENTS	.431	.063	.357	6.852	.000	.644	.347	.253	.502	1.991
SELFDISC	.043	.054	.037	.794	.427	.415	.043	.029	.636	1.572

a. Dependent Variable: INTERACTION

On an individual level, it was possible to assess the contribution of each element within the predictors to the criterion (Consequence or Interaction) of students in using the technologies deployed. The coefficients table (Table 5) shows the first level predictor variables (Access and Content Control; Course Management and Communication Mode). Model 2 combines all six predictor variables against the criterion variable (Consequence). Here, four variables made significant contributions (Sig $\leq$ .05) to the interactions students had on the technologies. In order of statistical significance, Managing Content, Accessibility, Course Management, and Access and Content Control made significant contributions to interactions with Beta values (ignoring negative signs) of .357, .292, .277, and .106, respectively; and t values of 6.852, 5.640, 5.285 and -2.292 respectively.

On the other hand, Communication Mode and Self-Disclosure did not make statistically significant contributions to Interaction. They had Beta values of .382 and .427, respectively, with t values of -.875 and .794. According to this model and the sample used, the meaning of this is that, in using technology for academic purposes, Access and Content Control, Course Management, Accessibility, and Managing Contents are more important than Self-Disclosure and Communication Mode. The 'self' a

person communicates on the technology is of no significance to the information needs of students (Guo et al., 2012). This upshot is so because there are no video affordances on some of the technologies to give visual effects, so personal expression is not essential to students' knowledge acquisition on technology. According to Guo et al. (2012), Communication Mode relates to audibility, multimedia, or visibility on the technology. These specifications are essential depending on the technology being accessed. For technologies like Whatsapp and Moodle, audibility, multimedia, or visibility may not cause any significant impact on the usefulness of the technology.

Regression of Ends (gratification variables)
The second part of the study was to determine the gratifications that students of the two institutions attained in the knowledge acquisition process using the technologies deployed by their institutions. Thus, the Consequence (Interactions) obtained by students was assessed as an indicator of Information Seeking, Communication Efficiency, Communication Quality, and Learning Capability, which together formed the Ends or gratifications obtained in the hierarchical framework.

A hierarchical regression analysis was also carried out. Information Seeking was on a

different level from the remaining three Ends in the STUHF (Guo et al., 2012). It showed up as the first level block of the hierarchy, followed by the remaining three. The regression analysis tables (Tables 6,7,8) show that Information Seeking alone contributed 52.2 percent ($R^2 = .522$) to the variance of gratifications students sought in using the technologies deployed by their institutions.

This outcome could have emerged because students were mainly seeking the information as part of their knowledge acquisition process. Even though they were initially face-to-face mode students, they did not lose sight that using the technology continued their academic work. The remaining three Ends (Communication Efficiency, Communication Quality, and Learning Capability) contributed 14.5 percent (R^2 change = .145) to the variance of gratifications achieved. Although the variables - Communication Efficiency, Communication Quality, and Learning Capability of the technology contributed to the quality

of the information sought, these variables were not as important to students as the information they needed to add to their knowledge.

As shown in Table 6, all the four Ends made statistically significant (Sig ≤ .05) contributions to the gratifications achieved by students of the two institutions, with Beta values of (in order of statistical significance) Information Seeking (.337), Learning Capability (.329), Communication Quality (.230) and then Communication Efficiency (.123). It is also evident from the Fitness of the model where the F value for Information Seeking alone is F=380.837. The remaining three variables in the second hierarchy brought it down to 172.858. Notwithstanding this, the Ends variables translated into a significantly Fit model, indicated by the ANOVA result of the four variables where F=172.858, p = .000[b]. An F-statistic of 4 shows that the model is fit. Therefore, a value of 172.858 indicates that the model of Ends variables to Consequence is fit (Table 7).

Table 6: Model summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of Consequence (Interaction) and Ends (gratifications achieved)

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
					Change Statistics				
1	.722[a]	.522	.520	1.08155	.522	380.837	1	349	.000
2	.816[b]	.666	.663	.90716	.145	50.030	3	346	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), INFOSEEKING

b. Predictors: (Constant), INFOSEEKING, COMMEFFICIENCY, COMMQTY, LEARNCAPA

c. Dependent Variable: INTERACTION

Table 7: Analysis of Variance of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of Consequence (Interaction) and Ends (gratifications achieved)

ANOVA[c]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	445.488	1	445.488	380.837	.000[a]
	Residual	408.247	349	1.170		
	Total	853.735	350			
2	Regression	569.001	4	142.250	172.858	.000[b]
	Residual	284.734	346	.823		
	Total	853.735	350			

a. Predictors: (Constant), INFOSEEKING

b. Predictors: (Constant), INFOSEEKING, COMMEFFICIENCY, COMMQTY, LEARNCAPA

c. Dependent Variable: INTERACTION

Table 8: Coefficients of regression of Consequence (Interaction) and Ends (gratifications achieved)

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstd. Coeff. B	Std. Error	Std. Coeff. Beta	t	Sig.	Correlations Zero-order	Part ial	Part	Collinearity Statistics Toler ance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.582	.160		3.636	.000					
INFOSEEKING	.794	.041	.722	19.515	.000	.722	.722	.722	1.000	1.000
2 (Constant)	-.558	.167		-3.338	.001					
INFOSEEKING	.371	.049	.337	7.530	.000	.722	.375	.234	.480	2.082
COMMEFFICIENCY	.149	.043	.123	3.479	.001	.460	.184	.108	.774	1.292
COMMQTY	.286	.050	.230	5.769	.000	.617	.296	.179	.604	1.654
LEARNCAPA	.373	.046	.329	8.076	.000	.682	.398	.251	.582	1.719

a. Dependent Variable:

INTERACTION

The individual contributions of the Ends variables to the gratifications obtained by students were analyzed. As expected, all the Ends (gratifications) variables made statistically significant contributions (Sig ≤ .05) to the gratifications that face-to-face students achieved using technology to continue their academic work for the semester. This development implies that indeed the students benefited from the technologies deployed by their institutions. It is evident in the t and Beta values of the coefficients table (Table 6) of the Ends variables where Information Seeking, Communication Efficiency, Communication Quality and

Learning Capability contributed t and Beta values of 7.530, 337; 3.479, 123; 5.769,.230 and 8.076,.329 respectively.

Correlation

The study further sought to find out the relationship between students' interaction on the technology tools and the variables of the gratification they attained using the various technologies deployed by their institutions separately. Pallant (2002, 130-135) provided a guide. The Pearson correlation to test the relationship between the Ends variables in a bid to access which institution's students had a better learning experience on the technologies deployed by their institutions. For a robust method, correlation statistics should not exceed 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2005). The results are displayed in Table 7.

The correlation between all the Ends constructs for the two institutions was positive, with Pearson's Correlation values ranging between 0.3 and 0.7. These figures indicate a moderate relationship between the different variables in students achieving their knowledge acquisition needs. Multicollinearity is not a threat to this analysis. It also implies that students had a good interaction on the e-learning technologies deploying, translating positively with all the Ends gratifications.

This result further confirms that "the greatest affordance of the web for educational use is the profound and multifaceted increase in communication and interaction ability" (Anderson, 2004:42; McLoughlin & Lee, 2007:666). This shows that the technologies deployed by the various institutions were effective in helping students have communication efficiency, communication quality, and thus good learning capability and information-seeking abilities. The implication is that there is a need to continue deploying those technologies if distance learning is to be continued for face-to-face learning students.

Table 9: Correlation matrix

CSUC					
Variables	Info. Seeking	Comm. Efficiency	Comm Quality	Learning Capability	Interaction
Information Seeking	1				
Communication Efficiency	.477**	1			
Communication Quality	.693**	.419**	1		
Learning Capability	.603**	.456**	.376**	1	
Interaction	.757**	.572**	.667**	.668**	1
GIJ					
Information Seeking	1				
Communication Efficiency	.450**	1			
Communication Quality	.530**	.465**	1		
Learning Capability	.634**	.388**	.498**	1	
Interaction	.703**	.429**	.573**	.695**	1

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

From the output in Table 7, the findings for CSUC show that the correlation between Interaction and Information Seeking, Communication Efficiency, Communication Quality, and Learning Capability were .757, .572, .667, and .668, respectively. For GIJ, the output showed that the correlation between Interaction and Information Seeking, Communication Efficiency, Communication Quality, and Learning Capability was .703, .429, .573, and .695. Comparatively, it is evident that the technologies deployed by CSUC and the kind of interaction they enjoyed on it helped them seek information better, have

better communication efficiency, and better communication quality than GIJ students did. On the other hand, the interactions on the technology revealed that GIJ students had a better learning capability than CSUC students.

The above findings support hypothesis 1 (**H1**), while hypothesis 2 (**H2**) is not supported. Though CSUC students were relatively older and most were workers compared to GIJ students, CSUC students had better learning experiences and knowledge acquisition than GIJ students who had better learning capabilities. Though GIJ deployed six more technologies than CSUC, CSUC students had better gratifications from the interactions than GIJ students.

The implications of these findings could be diverse. It could mean that the students of GIJ were not familiar with the interface of most of the technologies deployed and so did not get the best out of them. Though GIJ deployed nine and CSUC deployed three technologies, it could mean that CSUC students were very familiar with their technologies or were easy to access and manage, hence the better experience. CSUC introduces students to Moodle right on admission, and WhatsApp is popular with students. Zoom, being a video conferencing app, has a simple user interface.

It confirms that for students to use technologies and interact well, they must first learn how to use the technologies or risk achieving a negative technology needs fulfilment (Guo et al., 2012). It could also mean that students of GIJ deployed their technology capabilities in other areas apart from teaching and learning. Most of the students of CSUC were workers. They were possibly excited about shuffling less between the workplace and school campus to acquire knowledge. Therefore, they sought to achieve the best technologies to achieve their desired gratifications.

These reasons can, however, not be conclusive. There is a need for a qualitative study to ascertain the higher gratifications for CSUC students further, though the institution deployed a small number of technologies than GIJ.

Discussion: Policy and Managerial Implications

With the realities of Covid-19, higher institutions should not lose sight of the importance of having some of their academic work on virtual platforms. Technology use should be regarded as equally important as the type of interaction to be achieved and, subsequently, the gratifications to be obtained by students. From the

output presented above, the gratifications obtained are dependent on the types of technologies deployed.

Besides that, not all technologies give the same amount of gratification. Other gratifications in knowledge acquisition (e.g., communication efficiency) are equally important as much as information seeking is essential to students. These depend on the type of interaction to be achieved in using the technologies. In deploying technologies for students, the Means to accessing the technology and interactive nature are vital. Therefore, all decisions taken should not be short of these considerations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study derived and tested a quantitative version of the STUHF which was originally a qualitative framework by Guo et al (2012). It has been used to test the knowledge acquisition gratification by students who were originally admitted into face-to-face academic work but had to adapt to using technology due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Though the literature review suggested that digital natives (Miller, 2017), as we have in current students are familiar with technological tools and so will have minimal challenges in adapting to technology, the findings of this study have indicated otherwise.

The study recommends training before the adaptation of technological tools to ensure that students achieve the best out of it. Further to this, the researchers recommend that a qualitative study be conducted to ascertain why CSUC students achieved higher gratifications than GIJ students though the institution deployed lower number of technological tools and vice versa.

Finally, the researchers recommend that the framework used in this study should be tested in other contexts to ascertain its applicability in different contexts. Additionally, in the context of CSUC and GIJ, one each of the constructs for the variables Communication Quality and Self-Disclosure was found not to provide a significant contribution, thus their exclusion in the reliability tests. These items were Lecturer had to reduce explanatory examples because of limited time for Communication Quality, and I need to portray a different self on the technology to feel accepted for Self-Disclosure. A test of the individual items in the various constructs also requires contextual applicability in other areas to ascertain their inclusion or exclusion.

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Using Vignettes to Study Nigerian Undergraduates Cyber-ethical Behaviors

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Abstract

Students' unethical academic practice on the internet is a global concern. The disquiet raises how well students understand cyber-ethical issues beyond what a few quantitative studies have revealed. This study investigates the undergraduate students' perception and comprehension of these issues in Nigeria using the qualitative approach, focusing on plagiarism and copyright infringement. Fifty students of the University of Ibadan and Lead City University responded to the questions. The data were analyzed using the Nvivo software tool. The vignettes generated helped significantly to expose the upshots. Although most participants reported their familiarity with the two cyber-ethical issues, many could not correctly explain them. Some respondents mixed up their perceptions of plagiarism and copyright infringement. The majority exhibited a relatively high level of comprehension of the issues. Half of the respondents would engage in plagiarism when faced with no other choice, even though overreaching copyrights seemed unattractive to them. These findings suggest that both students and their instructors need some enlightenment on cyber-ethics. The study created the enlightenment trajectory during the investigation by presenting the respondents with scenarios that enabled them to understand cyber-ethics.

Keywords: **Vignettes, cyber-ethics, perception, perception, comprehension, undergraduate students, Nigeria.**

Introduction

Cyber-ethics is a broad term for the responsible actions in cyberspace that influence social, legal, political, and business activities and the guidelines for such actions (Srivastava, 2014). It is the study of ethics relevant to computer networks. It covers the users' behavior and its impact on individuals and society. Some issues related to cyber-ethics include copyright, plagiarism, cyber-bullying, and software piracy (Igwe & Ibegwam, 2014).

Ethics in cyberspace is essential as information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become part of life. Educational activities depend significantly on these technologies (Varlan & Tomozei, 2018). Students now use the computer and internet more for academics, entertainment, and social networking than ever before (Iyadat, Iyadat, Ashour, & Khasawneh, 2012; Amodu et al., 2019; Okorie et al., 2018).

While many users derive benefits from their use, cases of abuse, crime, and fraud are also growing concomitantly (Parks, Lowry, Wigand, Agarwal, & Williams, 2018; Varlan & Tomozei, 2018). For example, students' plagiarism practices have continued to concern researchers, faculty members, and higher institutions' management (Buraimo, Oyedokun, Olusanya, & Adekunmisi, 2019; Idiegbeyan-ose, Ifijeh, Segun-Adeniran, Esse, & Owolabi, 2018). The Committee of Vice-Chancellors (CVC), in partnership with a United Kingdom Information Technology firm, agreed on the deployment of software that helps to tame the problem. Many Nigerian universities now carry out originality checks on students' dissertations and theses to ensure credible intellectual contribution to scholarship.

Although this vice-chancellors' initiative has succeeded in creating awareness among students, the problem has not abated (Idiegbeyan-ose, Nkiko, & Osinulu, 2016; Adeyeye et al., 2020; Yartey et al., 2021). Studies on higher institutions have also reported high levels of awareness of cyber-ethical issues, which are however not matched with avoidance (Adum, Ekwenchi, Odogwu, & Umeh, 2019; Amiri & Razmjoo, 2016; Babalola, 2012; Hosny & Fatima, 2014; Idiegbeyan-ose et al., 2016; Maina, Maina & Jauro, 2014; Oyewole, 2017).

This situation raises how well students perceive and comprehend cyber-ethical issues, considering that most cyber-ethics studies adopted the quantitative approach, featuring only the questionnaire as the research instrument.

The quantitative approach cannot fully explore why students

behave unethically because of broader issues beyond the numbers. The qualitative approach, adopted in this study, helps understand meanings, motives, beliefs, values, and attitudes behind those numbers and the operationalization of variables (Maxwell, 2013). Moreover, the vignette technique for this study helped to facilitate a deeper understanding of the subject.

The Problem Statement and Objectives of the Study

Cyber-ethical issues continue to raise concerns among institutions of higher learning. The fact of students' awareness of cyber-ethical issues has not translated into high moral standards in academics. It appears that students do not have a clear understanding of the issues involved, meaning that their comprehension of those issues is also limited (Kashem 2016; Okafor, Imhonopi & Urim, 2011). Based on this background, this study used the vignette technique to elicit a more holistic view of students' perception and understanding of cyber-ethical issues.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:
1. To understand the level of perception and comprehension of cyber-ethics by undergraduate students of Nigerian Universities.
2. To investigate the influence of their comprehension on their intention towards cyber-ethical practices.

Research questions

1. What is the level of perception of cyber-ethics by undergraduate students of Nigerian Universities?
2. What is the level of comprehension of cyber-ethics by undergraduate students of Nigerian Universities?
3. How does their comprehension influence their intention towards cyber-ethical practices?

Significance of the study

The need to curb the prevalence of unethical academic practices in cyberspace makes it imperative to use a different approach in understanding how knowledgeable students are on cyber-ethical issues. An accurate understanding of these issues is the first step towards helping students to avoid them. Hence, for researchers, faculty members, and management of educational institutions, findings from this research would expose them to more critical areas they need to give attention to in reducing unethical

academic practices among students. Study outcomes on the perception and comprehension of undergraduate students can help formulate institutional policies on cyber-ethics. Findings from this study can also benefit Nigeria's copyright observers, including the country's copyright commission seeking to replace the obsolete Copyrights Act of 2004. According to Al-Ameen (2020):

> There is something wrong with a law that routinely threatens teenagers and students with astronomical penalties for an activity whose implications they may not have fully understood (p. 185).

Literature review/Theoretical framework

Plagiarism and copyright infringement are two cyber vices that have attracted much attention among information professionals. The plagiarist uses material without citing and referencing its source (Idiegbeyan-ose et al., 2016). Word processing programs that allow students to cut smoothly and post materials electronically have heightened the proclivity for plagiarism (Hinman, 2002). A copyright is an exclusive right granted by the government to

reproduce, publish, and distribute the substance and form of something or an item over some time. Items such as literary works, movies, musical works, sound recordings, paintings, photographs, software, and industrial designs are a few examples (Intellectual Property, 2011).

A few studies have investigated students' awareness and perception of plagiarism and copyright infringement. Lindahl and Grace (2018) reported that over 98 percent of both students and supervisors were knowledgeable about plagiarism in two institutes in Europe and Africa. A similar high level of awareness was documented for undergraduates in Nigeria (Oyewole, 2017). Idiegbeyan-ose et al. (2016) reported that awareness and perception were unremarkable among the postgraduate students in federal, state, and private universities in the Ogun State of Nigeria.

Investigation (Sambo & Ojei, 2018) conducted on a Nigerian federal institution showed that students' remarkable level of plagiarism awareness did not translate to not practicing the vice. Adum et al. (2019) examined the awareness of copyright laws among Nnamdi Azikiwe University undergraduate students in Nigeria. They reported that most students had

a high level of awareness of copyright law violations and the attendant consequences. However, this awareness did not translate into copyright law compliance. These studies have shown that awareness does not translate into compliance (Osman, Ahmad, Rashidah, Yatim, & Sauid, 2019; Starovoytova & Namango, 2016). What is more, these studies relied primarily on quantitative data without exploring the potential of qualitative exploration.

Vignettes are becoming visible in both quantitative and qualitative research designs. In quantitative research design, they are "short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond" (Finch, 1987, p.105). In this case, the researcher presents them as a series of predetermined responses (Wilks, 2004). However, in qualitative research designs, vignettes are short scenarios about hypothetical characters and their behavior on which research participants can express their opinions and beliefs (Hazel, 1995; Hill, 1997; Hughes, 1998). Usually, participants are presented with a particular story or situation, often a moral dilemma. They respond by stating what they would do or how they expect the character to react, thus exploring the participants'

subjective belief system (Hazel, 1995). Participants are allowed to define a particular situation in their terms. Vignettes are thus valuable in exploring people's beliefs, perceptions, and understanding of specific situations (Barter & Renold, 1999).

Moreover, according to Jenkins et al. (2010), vignettes enable an indirect and non-confrontational data collection method, especially when sensitive issues are involved. Vignettes are visible in research from various disciplines (Barter & Renold, 2000; Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000; Wainwright, Gallagher, Tompsett, & Atkins, 2010). The current study adopted the qualitative approach, using vignettes to understand students' perception of cyber-ethical issues, anchoring it on the Situation Awareness (SA) theory (Endsley, 1988).

Endsley (1995) defines situational awareness as a three-point sequence. The order is the perception of elements in the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning, and the projection of their status. The progression depicts perception, comprehension, and projection. The meaning here is that, beyond just being aware of the state of events, situational awareness also involves the ability to contextualize these events to facilitate their current and

future understanding. The SA theory is preponderant in studies with quantitative orientation.

Starovoytova and Namango (2016) adapted the theory in investigating the engineering students of a Kenya university. In Nigeria, Idiegbeyan-ose et al. (2016) used this theory to study the perception of plagiarism among postgraduate students in Ogun State. Oyewole, Rasheed, and Ogunsina (2018) adapted the theory to examine the perception and attitude of distant learners of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The current study dealt with perception and comprehension components in the context of qualitative tradition.

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to unveil the respondents' characteristics, opinions, and beliefs. The study population comprised the University of Ibadan (UI) and Lead City University (LCU) undergraduate students, both located in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. UI had 15 faculties with a population size of 14,778, while Lead City University had ten with a population of 2,885 as of 2019.

Respondents' selection came via the multistage sampling method. The faculties that shared similar features emerged in the first stage. Faculties of Education, Science, Law, and Social Sciences – purposively materialized because they shared similar characteristics. A total of 50 respondents (30 from UI, 20 from LCU) emerged via convenience sampling, making any of the students eligible for investigation. Having more than 50 was not likely to produce any additional data or insight on the subject matter. Table 1 displays the selection.

Table 1: Sample size for selected faculties

Faculty	University of Ibadan		Lead City University	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Education	2,199	8	489	
Science	2,168	8	874	5
Law	775	7	530	5
The Social				5
Sciences	1,070	7	992	
				5
Total	6,212	30	2,885	20

Structured interviews took place, and data collected using vignettes in short scenarios about a hypothetical character. According to Lorents, Maris, Morgan, and Neal (2006), scenarios are most helpful in understanding ethical issues. A scenario describes a situation and the resulting action (Pierce & Henry, 1995). Respondents will analyze the individual's actions in the scenario and state their opinion on any identified ethical issue. Plagiarism and copyright infringement were the issues in focus in the current study.

Scenario One - Plagiarism

Alfred's business management lecturer gives him a take-home assignment for submission in six weeks. Five weeks down the line, Alfred has been busy with other subjects. He also works after school, making it difficult to get started on the paper. The assignment is essential, up to 20 percent of the course grade. If Alfred fails the class, he may lose his scholarship and, subsequently, his studentship. This lax unsettles Alfred as the paper requires more than one week of effort. His solution is to photocopy pages from sources that deal with his topic. Using whole paragraphs from these pages, he hurriedly puts together his paper. He completes the assignment, including a reference list with the sources he used.

Scenario Two – Copyright infringement

Alfred, a literature student, gets an assignment to write a short play to be staged in a state inter-school competition. However, he has access to foreign novels online, purchased by his father, a publisher. He picks one of the plays in a portable format, digests the content, changes the characters' names, and adds more characters to make the play more enjoyable. The set does not allow the coercing or cajoling of respondents. They have sufficient information about the purpose of the research before the commencement of the interviews. They respond to any noticeable ethical issue in each scenario by identifying it and stating their thoughts and opinions if they find themselves in such a scenario.

Analysis and Results
All interviews were recorded. Transcripts were analyzed thematically using the qualitative software tool Nvivo (Vers. 12). Table 2 shows the data.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of the participants. The table shows an equal representation of the respondents' gender. Most of the participants were aged 21 to 25 years (60.0%), followed by 34.0 percent of respondents who were 20 years and below.

Table 2: Demographic distribution of respondents

Demographics	Variable	f	(%)
Gender	Male	25	50.0
	Female	25	50.0
Faculty	Science	13	26.6
	Social Sci.	12	24.3
	Education	13	26.6
	Law	12	24.3
Age (years)	20 and below	17	34.0
	21 - 25	30	60.0
	26 – 30	3	6.0

Perception of cyber-ethics

The first stage was to examine the participants' understanding of the concepts of plagiarism and copyright infringement. Participants responded to how they understood the two concepts, and their responses provided insight into their perception of these issues.

Plagiarism

The Nvivo word count (Table 3) shows that nearly half of the participants could not explain the meaning of plagiarism at all. The sentence "I don't know" occurred 16 times (weighted percentage of 17.28), and "not heard of it before" occurred four times (weighted percentage of 4.94). Concerning students who offered explanations, some explained the concept clearly. In contrast, a few others reduced plagiarism to copying someone else's work without citing the source. Still, others confused it with copyright infringement. Figure 1 depicts these representations.

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Table 3: Word count for the perception of plagiarism

Word	Length	Count	Weighted %
I don't know	10	16	17.28
Copying someone else's work	22	12	9.88
Not giving credit	15	7	8.64
Without adding reference	22	6	7.41
Not heard of it before	18	4	4.94
Copy and pasting	14	3	3.70
Presenting work as your own	23	3	3.70
Stealing someone's idea	21	2	2.47
Without acknowledging source	29	2	2.47
Copying verbatim	15	1	1.23
Copying without permission	23	1	1.23
Copying word for word	18	1	1.23

Figure 1. Word cloud for the perception of plagiarism

Below are some of the responses on plagiarism as perceived by the students.

"Plagiarism is copying someone else's work without adding all references, like copying and

pasting.*"* (Female, 20 years and below, Social Sciences, LCU)

*"*Plagiarism is, *'*I have a creative work, I have not registered it, and somebody comes and steals it.*'"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences, UI)

"Plagiarism means you're copying something that does not belong to you directly word for word. You're not changing anything; you're just bringing everything directly the way *it is"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences, UI)

*"*Plagiarism is stealing someone's original idea and making it look as if *it's actually your original work. It's* mostly common with students when they're doing their project*"*. (Female, 21 – 25 years, Law, UI)

*"*Plagiarism is a theft of another person's information, when you lift another person's information to copy it for your own use without informing the person.*"*
(Male, 26 – 30 years, Education, LCU)

Copyright infringement

As seen in Table 4, "I don't know" occurred 10 times, "using without consent" occurred 10 times, "copying someone else's work" occurred seven times, "related to plagiarism" occurred four times, "produce without authorization" occurred three times, "without permission" showed up three times.

Table 4: Word count for the perception of copyright infringement

Word	Count	Weighted %
I don't know	10	11.76
Using without consent	10	11.76
Copying someone else's work	5	5.88
Related to plagiarism	4	4.71
Produce without authorization	3	3.53
Without permission	3	3.53
Copy someone else's work	2	2.35
Intellectual right	2	2.35
Not heard of it before	2	2.35
Breaking terms of law	1	1.18
Copying without permission	1	1.18

Although almost a quarter of the students could not give their perception on copyright, many others made reasonable attempts, as shown in their responses below:

"I'm an author, and I just published a book and then someone now republishes the book without my consent. I think that's what it means, like using without the consent of the author". (Male, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

"Copyright infringement is maybe I photocopied your book, a published book, I photocopied and then went to publish it and sell or distribute without legal authority." (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, LCU)

"I just know that, like let's say somebody writes a book or makes a movie or something and then somebody else takes something out of *it without the author's permission or* the person that made the movie, that's *Copyright infringement"* (Female, 20 years and below, Science, UI)

Comprehension on cyber-ethical issues

This section investigated how well the participants understood the two cyber-ethical issues by presenting them with two scenarios: plagiarism and copyright. Each participant was asked two questions which are, 1) "Are there ethical issues in these scenarios?" and 2) "What are the ethical issues identified in the scenarios?"

Scenario one – Plagiarism
Thirty-nine responded, "Yes, there is" an ethical issue. At the same time, 11 believed there was no ethical issue in the scenario (Figure 2).

SCENARIO 1		0
AWARENESS RQ1		0
ETHICAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED		39
NO, THERE IS NOT		11
YES, THERE IS		39

Figure 2: Awareness of ethical issues in scenario 1.

The 39 students who said, "Yes, there is" an ethical issue were also able to identify the ethical issues in the scenario. Nvivo word cloud (Figure

3) shows that most participants identified photocopy pages, whole paragraphs, and plagiarism as ethical issues in the scenario.
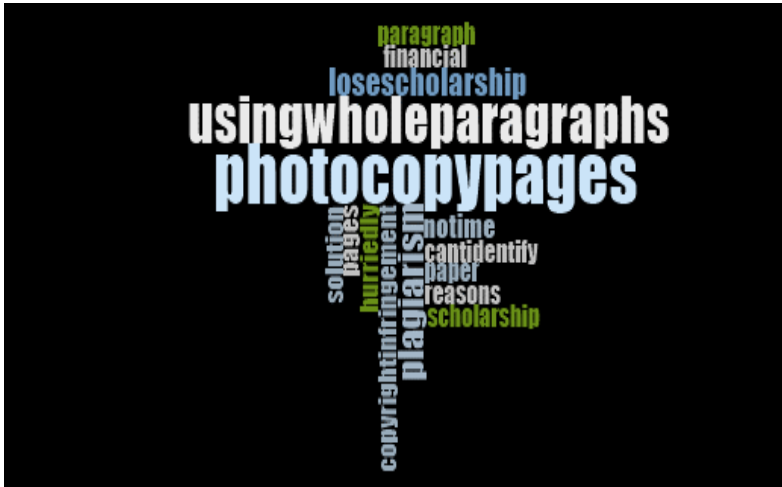

Figure 3: Word cloud for ethical issues in Scenario one.

Below are some of the responses showing the ethical issues identified by the students.

"That's Plagiarism, it said, *'*his solution is to photocopy pages from sources that deal with his topic. Then using the whole paragraphs from these texts, he hurriedly puts together his paper.*'"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, LCU)

*"*He lifted whole paragraphs, even though he acknowledged his sources, *he lifted, that's intellectual theft*! If you want to, you can just get the meanings or quote them, if you use their work, you can just replace them with your words, and then acknowledge that this person is the creator of this idea.*"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, UI)

*"*Alfred photocopied pages from sources that deal with his topic, and he put the materials directly; no editing, no reading and digesting, nothing! It's just like carrying it and putting it under his name, not like he picked something of his interest, not like he read and, you know, rephrased; he just carried it directly. I don't think he's supposed to do

that.*"* (Female, 20 years and below, Education, UI)

"Ok, the phrase I want to bring out from there is 'using whole paragraphs from the pages' and he just put everything together, and the ethical issue here is that he was not supposed to photocopy everything directly just like that. He was supposed to interpret it in his way, but he just lifted everything the way it is and just pasted it like that, that is the only ethical issue.*"* (Male, 26 – 30 years, Education, LCU)

In the case of the participants who said there was no ethical issue in the scenario, some claimed that Alfred had no other choice since the assignment was urgent and did not want to fail.

"No. I mean, he didn't have a choice, he just had less than a week to finish the assignment. If that was the only way he could actually finish the *assignment, then fine!"* (Female, 21 – 25 years, Education, LCU),

*"*No. Because I feel Alfred, okay let me say he's this kind of guy that is actually serious with his studies; he doesn't want to fail, and at the same time he's also like into something that is fetching him money, so it*'s* kind of difficult for him to balance the two.*"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

Other participants, especially those in the range of 20 years and below, believed that providing a reference list vindicated Alfred from any unethical practice.

I do not think so because Alfred added references to it from the sources *he used. I don't think there is* an issue; he did the right thing (Female, 20 years and below, Social Sciences, LCU)

"Any? The fact that he copied, ok, he made photocopies of some pages, but he also made sure that he submitted the assignment with the reference list of the sources he used; I don't think so because he made his reference list and submitted it with the assignment." (Female, 20 years and below, Law, LCU)

"I don't think so. Because even though he used people's work for his assignment, he gave references or made the lecturer know that he didn't do it on his own, that he had help from other people, he made sure those people's names were mentioned in his assignment. (Male, 20 years and below, Law, LCU)

"I don't think that it's plagiarism because he acknowledged the fact *that it wasn't his intellectual work"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences, UI).

"I don't see any ethical issue. He had the reference list with the sources he used that's why I don't see any issue. All I would say he did is that he just

copied. There is something we call copy and paste like he didn't add any of his understanding of the paper, he just copied directly from the source, but at least he was able to make a reference list." (Female, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

Scenario Two - Copyright Infringement

Thirty-seven participants responded that there is an ethical issue in the scenario. However, only 33 were able to identify the ethical issues. Thirteen respondents, however, said "No," as revealed in Figure 4.

○ SCENARIO 2		0
○ AWARENESS RQ1		0
○ ETHICAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED		33
○ NO, THERE IS NOT		13
○ YES, THERE IS		37
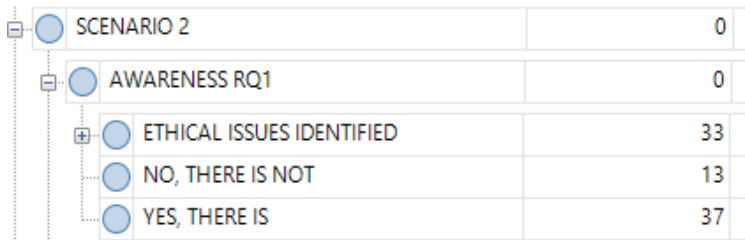
Figure 4: Awareness of ethical issues in scenario 2.

Many of the respondents who admitted that there were ethical issues believed that Alfred was wrong to have changed and added more characters (Table 5). Moreover, some representative responses below show that many of the students believed that Alfred ought to have sought the author's permission.

Table 5: Word count for comprehension of copyright infringement

Word	Count	Weighted %
Changes names of characters	13	46.67
Added more characters	9	15.00
Picks one of the plays	6	10.00
Copyright infringement	4	6.67

*"*The ethical issue I can identify from this excerpt is, one, he copied. After digesting the foreign book's content, he copied it and then changed the

names and the characters and added more. In a way, he was still building on the person's idea; the idea wasn't his own; it's already an existing idea. So I think that is a copyright infringement." (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, UI)

"The ethical issue there is copyright. Maybe because I'm quite familiar with theater production and the likes so I know that in this kind of situation, what most people do is to adapt. So, there's something called an adaptation; you adapt someone's work, but you still credit the person whose work you adapted, but it wasn't mentioned here that he did that. Obviously, this is a copyright issue. The fact that he just picked the PDF and then changed the names and characters.*"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences, UI)

*"*Yes, because why would you go and download somebody else's story and change the name of the characters without formally informing the person and letting the person know that you want to use the story*?"* (Female, 21 – 25 years, Education, LCU).

*"*Everything about this is wrong. You stole someone else's work and just changed the title. That's stealing straightforward. That's wrong. You shouldn't do something like this. This is a copyright infringement. You shouldn't just go and copy. This is stealing someone else's work because you have not published it, and I published it before you, it's my work, and you can't take it away from me.*"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, LCU)

*"*Yeah, changing the names of the characters of a book and changing the name of the book is very unethical because it's not his character, it's not his idea, it's just someone stealing *and putting his characters!"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Science, LCU)

Among students who believed that there was no ethical issue in the scenario, many expressed this as commonplace among students, not excluding themselves. At the same time, some saw this act as being smart.

"To me, there is no ethical issue because what he did was just to like; he had access to the books he purchased online, so let me say he kind of like improvised. He just changed one or two, so there's nothing wrong with that. It's what *students do. He is just smart."* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Science, UI)

"No. We all do that, most of the plays we act are not originally ours, and this was published online, he changed names and added more *characters. I don't think there is any ethical issue."* (Female, 21 – 25 years, Law, LCU)

"It's what students do. It's what I, too, can do if I'm in that kind of situation. You don't expect me to search; I'll just look for two or three novels, something like that and just improvise. If I'm in such circumstances, I'll do the same *definitely."* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

Many of the students believed there was no ethical issue in Scenario Two. They attributed this to Alfred changing the characters' names and adding more characters, making the play more enjoyable. The respondents claimed that ideas are not new, and since Alfred changed the characters' names, he did not commit any crime.

*"He changed the characters and added more characters; he added more characters which actually *means it's fine, it's really okay"* (Female, 21 – 25 years, Education, LCU)

"Well, I don't think so. To me, there is no ethical issue because what he did was just that he had access to the books he purchased online, so let me say he improvised. He just changed one or two, so there's nothing wrong with that." (Male, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

"There is really no ethical issue. I'm in the middle at this point. I'm in the middle because it's not like he carried it directly; he changed the characters, he added to the number of characters, and he made the play more interesting. Obviously, he must have added some things to the characters' parts or most of the characters' parts to make it interesting more than the other person's work. I don't think there is any ethical issue there." (Female, 20 years and below, Education, UI)

*"No, *I don't think there is any ethical* issue. Everybody is a writer. I am a writer; we always write because we have read from different sources. I *don't know if this is clear*; nobody brings a new idea; nothing is new under heaven. The things that we call new ideas are all just a combination of old ideas seen from a different perspective. He changed the characters and added more characters, and by doing so, he would have consequently added more events to make the story whole and complete. Because he changed the characters and the events, that changed the whole thing, because stories are built, and short plays and dramas are built from events and characters mostly, so if you change these and they are not the same thing as what you read, there is no unethical cond*uct."* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, UI)

Intention Toward Cyber-Ethical Practices

Respondents' intention toward cyber-ethics was explored by asking them what they would do when faced with similar circumstances as Alfred.

Scenario one – Plagiarism

The Nvivo word cloud in Figure 5 shows that more students would respond the way Alfred did. Although they know plagiarizing is a vice, some reported that they would still act as Alfred did because they did not want to fail.

"Same thing. Yes, but I know it's wrong." (Female, 20 years and below, Social Sciences, LCU)

"The thing is I will actually think about the assignment, I will think about ways to maneuver within that week and meet up. But if I can't or there is no way for me am sorry I will have to follow Alfred." (Female, 20 years and below, Science, LCU)

"If I was Alfred like I said, I'm also a student, and then no one wants to fail; I don't want to fail. If it happens that I'm taking 14 courses and I'm trying my best to do well in the 14, I'll definitely flop in one. So if I'm given an assignment, I may not have the time to go through it. Maybe I'm having an assignment for this course, and I have a test for another course I'll definitely want to prepare for the test more because I can't cheat in this test. But for the assignment, I can get help from other sources, I think I'd actually do what Alfred did, to be sincere." (Female, 20 years and below, Social Sciences, UI)

Figure 5. Word cloud of the intention of students – Plagiarism

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Many students also said that they would not do what Alfred did (Figure 4). Reasons cited included their religious belief and academic discipline. They expressed their opinion that better time management would prevent them from plagiarizing.

"As a Christian and as a law student, I won't compromise. It is just about time management and how to be smart, time yourself, arrange your timetable and have everything *done."* (Female, 20 years and below, Law, UI)

"I will honestly try my very best even if I can't get a couple of sites that deal with the topic that I am requested to write on. Personally, I *don't think it is super hard to get* points from an article and then build on those points. I think that is what I would do. *I wouldn't just copy and* paste as he did. (Female, 21 - 25 years, Science, UI)

"No, No!. I will start it earlier, and I will stop everything am doing. I *won't do this. I will go through the* material and pick some lines but make sure there are footnotes and references in it, not everything. I

Scenario Two – Copyright Infringement

As shown in Figure 6, more students reported that they would not do what Alfred did. Many expressed that they would instead develop their

mean, *I can't copy the whole paragraph".* (Female, 21 – 25 years, Law, LCU)

"There's something we call time management. You should be able to manage your time and know-how to maneuver a few things, so once you know how to manage the time, I don't think you'll have any problem. If I could not manage my time and had a little time left, I think I'd do what I know how to do best. Whatever little I know on that paper, I would just give it my best no matter how little it is and work on it. Then, I will know that whatever score I'm getting from that paper or whatever the result is, you know this thing is from my own effort, and you know when you fail it you know that you are to blame because you didn't put more effort *into that work."* (Female, 20 years and below, Education, UI)

idea even if such an idea is not as spectacular. They believed that doing otherwise shows a lack of creativity.

"I have been faced with something similar before, drafting a mock scenario for a competition. You just have to sit down and think. You use

your brain to think. You should. It *doesn't necessarily have to be as spectacular as some people's work,* because they also started from somewhere, it is a challenge for you to put in effort into what you do, you *don't just copy other people's work,* because those people did not just get those things done by sheer luck, they put in the effort and even if it is luck *pray for your luck too"*. (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, UI)

*"But I do*n't think I would actually have stolen someone's story and changed characters like Alfred did because that's lack of creativity as a writer. He should read a vast amount of books, gather ideas, and just imagine himself in a world where the people are. I wo*n't do what he did"*. (Female, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences, UI)

"If I was in his position, there was no way I wouldn't have come up with a short play being a literature student, I can draw instances, or I can draw techniques from other people's work, the settings of their movies and that will really help as a guideline.*"* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences LCU)

"I would come up with my own story because it is possible that this same thing I got online someone else has gotten it, then we end up doing the same thing, and there is a kind of controversy. I might even be *disqualified because they won't know* the exact person that copied who, so both of us might get disqualified. So I will just come up with my own idea since it is a com*petition."* (Female, 20 years and below, Science, UI)

Others expressed that they would seek permission from the book owner.

"Number one thing you should do is, ask the author for permission. If the author is dead, and as I said, it's free if it's in the public domain. But if the author is still alive, ask for permission because you might be refused permission, and in that instance, you have to look for another play to use, but if you can't ask for permission and it's something you have to pull off real quick, you should always give credit." (Male, 21 – 25 years, Law, UI)

"If I was the one I will try and reach out to the person whose work I'm trying to use and make him see whether I want to develop it into a sequel or just adapt and develop *something more."* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Social Sciences, UI)

"I'll probably contact the owner of the information online. I believe there will be contact through email or whatever. So what I will do is to contact the person and inform the person that I want to use the

information, and after that, I will state there in my play or at the end, something like 'Adapted from.'*"* (Male, 26 – 30 years, Education, LCU)

Some participants assumed that simply citing the author of the book absolves them of copyright infringement.

"I will source for materials online, and if the materials I got online suit what I want to do, then I will gather ideas from those materials. If at all I'm going to use somebody else's work, at least I'm going to make *reference to the person."* (Male, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

"Personally, I can look into somebody else's idea, maybe on a particular play, and develop something out of that, but if it's something that should be written down or a project work, I would reference the person." (Male, 21 – 25 years, Education, UI)

Figure 6: Word cloud of the intention of students – Copyright infringement.

Some participants, however, said that they would do what Alfred did. Reasons stated include limited time and difficulty of the task assigned.

*"*If the time given is limited, I have no option than to do exactly what Alfred did, but if I have enough time to write my play within the time

given, I think that will be the best option for me. But if I have limited time, I am going to do the same thing*.* " (Male, 21 – 25 years, Science, UI)

*"*Let's say I'm given a project to do if I tell the lecturer that I can't do it and then he says you must do it, then probably I would do what Alfred did." (Male, 20 years and below, Science, LCU)

"It depends on the play actually, if it's something I can relate to and something I can do, like use my creativity to do, yes I would do that myself, but if I can't really do it, yes I *would just do what he did."* (Female, 20 years and below, Science, LCU)

A respondent said he would repeat Alfred's action because he believed it did not negatively affect the original author.

"I think this one, though, his action is neither wrong nor right because it is not affecting anyone negatively in any way. It might be positive to Alfred in the sense that he gets to present something for the competition and the chances that he might win. But the original author of the foreign novel he got online, there is really nothing because he *wasn't directly importing word for* word, I think this is fair use of such,

so it's okay." (Male, 21 – 25 years, Science, UI)

Discussion and implication of findings
Results showed that many undergraduates did not have a problem explaining what copyright infringement meant. However, responses indicated that many did not understand the concept of plagiarism. A third of the respondents could not explain how they perceived plagiarism. This result contradicts Oyewole et al. (2018), which reported a high awareness of plagiarism among distant undergraduate learners of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. However, the current findings agree with Adum et al. (2019), which observed a high level of awareness on copyright laws among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria. Some respondents believed that plagiarism was all about copying a text without author attribution. On the other hand, others could not clearly distinguish between plagiarism and copyright infringement when they expressed their opinion that plagiarism is about copying another person's work without permission.

Whether or not students substantially understand what constitutes plagiarism has been a concern among information

professionals. Dawson and Overfield's (2006) findings from a Manchester Metropolitan University undergraduates study showed that students do not usually understand the boundary between plagiarism and acceptable practice. About a decade later, Permana and Santosa (2018) reported a similar finding concerning the EFL students in Singaraja, Bali. The authors reported that although the students were aware of plagiarism, they still required their teachers to explain acts that constituted plagiarism.

Likewise, Muriel-Torrado and Fernández-Molina (2015), in their survey of Spanish university students, revealed some understanding about copyright infringement, which was far below the requisite knowledge in the proper use of copyrighted materials. In this study, the participants' perception of what constitutes plagiarism is about copying an author's idea without citation. This simplistic and unrealistic insight is fragile. Many undergraduates may continue to indulge in copying and posting others' works, believing that they are not guilty of plagiarism after citing the authors.

Interestingly, more than two-thirds of the participants could identify ethical issues in both scenarios when presented with the scenarios. The majority said it was wrong for Alfred to have copied the entire pages as seen in the first scenario and using another author's book without permission as read in the second scenario. Supporting findings in the current study, an earlier study by Oyewole (2017) revealed that the level of awareness of the issues associated with computer ethics by the undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, was high. Most respondents were familiar with the subjects of fraud, hacking, child pornography, copyright, and software theft in the study. Tella and Oyeyemi (2017) also reported that most undergraduates at the University of Ilorin (Nigeria) were aware of copyright infringement to a reasonable extent. As noted earlier, these studies were carried out using quantitative approaches that might not necessarily reflect the students' comprehension of cyber-ethical practices. Notwithstanding, this current study's outcome buttresses the fact that many undergraduates can identify a cyber-ethical issue when confronted with one.

Although many of the participants were able to identify ethical issues in the scenarios, quite a number reported that they would do what Alfred did in both scenarios, especially in plagiarism. This finding clearly shows that students' comprehension of cyber-ethics does

not restrain them from committing the crime. When students engage in unethical practices, that is not always a result of an inadequate understanding of the issues involved. This finding agrees with Adum et al. (2019), which reported that undergraduates engaged in copyright infringements despite the significant level of awareness of copyright laws. Selemani, Chawinga and Dube (2018) reported that pressure for good grades was the dominant reason postgraduate students of Mzuzu University in Malawi engaged in plagiarism. Others included laziness and poor academic skills.

Although participants in the current study cited the fear of failure and inadequate time as the reasons for engaging in unethical practices, lack of adequate academic skills appears to be a subtle reason for students' unethical writing practices. In a study investigating undergraduates of an Australian university, Roberts (2008) observed that while almost 80 percent of the students claimed they possessed good academic skills required to avoid unethical practices, less than 50 percent reported confidence in their use. According to Louw (2017), students often commit unethical acts such as plagiarism due to inadequate skills needed to avoid them. Permana and Santosa (2018) reported similar findings of EFL students in Singaraja, Bali, where they admitted their lack of understanding behind their continued breach of copyright laws.

Conclusion

This study has explored the perception and comprehension of undergraduates on selected cyber-ethical issues. A key finding in the study is that participants had a better comprehension of the issues. The study also found that although many of the students had a relatively high comprehension of cyber-ethical issues, many reported that they would still engage in unethical practices, especially plagiarism. Copyright infringements appeared more comfortable to commit than plagiarism among the students.

Although this study adopted the qualitative approach, it has significantly substantiated the initial two findings of several studies. First is students' reasonable level of awareness of these unethical issues. Second is their continued engagement in plagiarism and copyright infringement, despite their awareness.

Recommendation

This study has exposed the need for more enlightenment on cyber-ethical issues for students. While instructors and administrators have a role in

creating awareness and ensuring strict adherence to ethics in online materials for academic activities, an important aspect that should be given attention is providing training on how students can avoid engaging in unethical issues. This shift in instructors' understanding of students' needs concerning their perception of cyber-ethical issues would mainly help students avoid unethical practices.

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Religious Abuse Messaging and Effects on Married Couples in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The general public is progressively using messaging apps to create awareness as platforms for freedom of expression. Abuses in domestic settings are on the rise. This study aimed to examine the effects of Whatsapp religious abuse messages on knowledge and behavioral practices of married men and women in Lagos State, one of Nigeria's 36 states. The study took a quantitative approach, using the true-experimental design to assign respondents to the experimental and control groups randomly. Some 50 married men and 50 married women formed this research sample size and were selected purposively. A self-structured questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents. Key findings revealed that women had more knowledge and understood religious abuse at the pre-intervention stage than men. They also engaged in less behavioral practices of religious abuse than men. Men's and women's knowledge and comprehension levels significantly increased at the post-intervention phase. In contrast, women engaged in behavioral practices of religious abuse than men. Therefore, one recommendation is that the media and government establish programs and laws on religious abuse in marriage. This move will create awareness, let people know when they are abused, and push for its eradication.

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Introduction

WhatsApp is an instant messaging application that permits people to relate and connect with friends, family, and strangers worldwide—established by Brian Acton and Jan Koum in 2009. The app is possibly the world's first instant messaging service. It is the most employed messaging application with over one billion monthly active users in over 180 countries (WhatsApp.com, 2018). Statista (2017) reports that 64 billion messages are sent daily on WhatsApp, and 1.6 billion photos are shared daily. Millions of online users cannot do without the social media (Amodu et al., 2020; Okorie et al., 2019; Morah & Omojola, 2018; Folaya et al., 2018; Morah, Omojola & Uzochukwu, 2016).

Rosenfeld, Sina et al. (2018) assert that it is the most widespread messaging network with the broadest user base and the most significant business support since its purchase by Facebook in 2014. Among other features, WhatsApp authorizes the establishment of groups by users, which involves an administrator adding other participants and permitting notification alerts on a particular subject matter.

The utilization of WhatsApp is concerned with communicating information on religion, social concerns, economic affairs, education, entertainment, health benefits, business enterprise, and others. In religion, WhatsApp is used to pass information to members of a particular religious institution to attend specific programs and give access to the sharing of a preacher's sermon. Hoover (2012) asserts that the rise of social media with its open and accessible features will enable a collection of religious and spiritual views to be circulated.

WhatsApp is also a platform where social concerns are publicized, examined, and deliberated on. It supported a campaign titled The 16 Days of Activism of no violence against women and children. This program provided notification alerts for subscribers to have easy access to their fellow participants and assemble them for conferences regarding the campaign (Lembethe-Xulu, 2017). This study zeroed WhatsApp as a social media

interventionist archetype in controlling social vices, particularly religious abuse.

Religious abuse has various meanings, but in this study, the phrase is a spouse's act of using their religious beliefs to govern their significant other. Such acts prevent one from practicing religious doctrines and coercing one's spouse to follow one's religious beliefs or affiliations. It also involves imposing one's religion or denominations on the spouse, using spouses' beliefs to manipulate their actions, and employing religious teachings as a defense for control or violence.

Religious abuse involves preventing individuals from partaking in their religious activities or using one's religious view to influence, dominate or control another person (Adebayo, 2013).

Jantz (2015) asserts that religious abuse is a deliberate falsification of spiritual reasons for unspiritual motives. Such motives could be covetousness, exploitation, unfairness, or animosity. In a marriage, religious abuse uses one's belief to govern his/her spouse or prevent one from practicing their

religious doctrines. It could also be ridiculing the person's beliefs, employing religious teachings or cultural tradition as a defense for violence, and denying the individual access to their place of prayer or worship. In addition, Johnson and Van Vonderen (1991) note that an individual can be a victim and perpetrator at the same time. For instance, a woman can feel mistreated or abandoned by her husband. She has a concrete view towards scriptural authority in the home and simultaneously uses the scriptures to punish her children.

Moreover, religious abuse is a form of emotional abuse that occurs within the context of belief. In this case, victims may be deceived, humiliated, blamed, terrorized, belittled, neglected, and oppressed by their spouses who control them with their personal religious beliefs (CCPAS, 2015). Oakley and Kinmond (2013) submit:

> that the "oppression and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context causes deep emotional attack like manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability,

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censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behavior, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context" (p.21).

Supporting this view, Cochrane (2016) asserts that religious abuse damages the central core of people because it strikes the foundations of their lives. Abuse affects them physically, socially, emotionally, and even spiritually. According to Miles (2016), one in every four women in the world suffer some form of emotional, physical, psychological, sexual, or religious abuse from an intimate male partner in her lifetime.

In Nigeria, religious abuse is one of the most prevalent, cruel, and damaging types of abuse. However, due to the entrenched religious standpoint of the society, it is barely recognized as abuse which may account for the seemingly low number of "official" religious abuse cases. Moreover, people may be aware of their spouses' actions as damaging because they tend to believe that the abuse is a norm, not because religious abuse has warmed its way into their psyche. Nonetheless, not recognizing what religious abuse sounds, looks, or feels like affects the mental and emotional state of the citizens and society at large.

Influence of Religion on Marriage

Like Nigeria, some husbands habit of controlling their wives in a patriarchal society based on Quran and Biblical assertions. Quranic verse Al-Baqarah 2:228 declares that women have similar rights to men, but men have a degree above them. Similarly, Ephesians 5:23 states that the husband is the head of the wife ...,' so 'Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet (1Timothy 2:11-12). However, these scriptures do not permit men to subdue, influence, or manipulate their wives based on their understanding of the holy books. Instead, each stresses the need for communal love, integrity, respect,

and obligation for stability and peace to thrive.

Call and Heaton (1997) assert that religion and family institutions emphasize related principles and hinge on each to support socialization. Goldscheider and Goldscheider (1993) state that an individual's religious practice encompasses religious services, church denominational affiliation, and belief in religious teachings and personal spirituality. Thornton and Camburn (1989) further accentuate that denominational differences in teachings and practices concerning marriage serve as a form of guide for character and marital behavior. The selection of diverse churches or denominations between married persons could reflect their religious views rather than their personal beliefs, resulting in conflict as time goes on.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (2005) establishes that commitment in marriage is to God and the spouse for Christians. Moreover, the Bible clearly states in 2Corithians 6:14 that Christians should not be "unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what partnership has

righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with *darkness?"* This verse suggests that when one decides to be attached to someone who does not walk in Christ or live according to God's will, abuse or conflict could emerge. Ojewole and Adegbenle (2017) argue that religious abuse occurs whether or not the couple shares the same beliefs. Some husbands are extremists who attack their wives in a conflict or disagreement that could cause damage.

An instance of this is Jehovah's Witness. They are known for rejecting blood transfusion based on their interpretation of Leviticus 17:12. This verse states that *'no soul* of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourners among you eat blood.' A Jehovah's Witness refuses the treatment with or without her opinion or consent based on doctrine – a possible act of hegemony intertwined with religion.

Nonetheless, Matthew Henry, a minister and Bible commentator, explains Leviticus 17:12. The minister argues that the law against eating blood was ceremonial and is no longer in force. The blood of beasts is no longer the ransom, but

Christ's blood only; therefore, there is not now the reason for abstaining there then was. The blood is now allowed for the nourishment of our bodies; it is no longer appointed to make atonement for the soul.

> Now the blood of Christ makes atonement really and effectually; therefore, we must have regard and not consider it as a common thing or treat it with indifference (biblehub.com).

Based on this submission, it is advisable for individuals to be conversant with the truth of the Bible rather than rely on their understanding. Corroborating this view is a scripture in 2Timothy 4:3-4, which declares that a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will rather follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after *myths'*.

The essence of people genuinely knowing and understanding their faiths or beliefs in order to avoid religious abuse should not be understated because it eventually becomes a norm. If not curbed, it may continue to consume the populace. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of WhatsApp religious abuse messages on knowledge and behavioral practices of married men and women in the Lagos State of Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Reports on several forms of abuse are made daily through different media channels. However, religious abuse remains rare, yet it exists with adverse effects. In recent times, the most significant marriage factors have been the social, legal, and religious aspects. Christianity and Islam are the two main religions practiced intensely by the Nigerian public. These religions have proven influential in marriage because their followers tend to understand scriptural verses as a directive from their creators. They obey by using sacred assertions as a pilot for their lifestyle. In a male-controlled society like Nigeria, dominating women in marriage is sometimes grounded on scriptural affirmations

found in Al-Baqarah 2:228, Ephesians 5:23, or 1Timothy 2:11-12.

However, these scriptures do not verify the need to suppress or impel married women. They instead accentuate the need for mutual love, reverence, and commitment so amity can reign. Due to the entrenched religiosity and patriarchal structures in Nigerian society, the misuse of religion is regarded virtually as a norm that is just and appropriate. On this premise, it is difficult not to wonder if the media, which are the key channels through which the people's voice and religious abuse victims are heard, are doing enough. Hence, this study employed WhatsApp as a vehicle that permits married men and women to be enthusiastically involved in communication on religious abuse.

Research Objectives

1. Determine married men and women's knowledge of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention.
2. Ascertain married men and women's knowledge of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention.
3. Find out married men and women's comprehension of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention.
4. Examine married men and women's comprehension of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention.
5. Establish married men and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention.
6. Discover married men and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention.

Research Questions

1. What is married men and women's knowledge of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention?
2. What is married men and women's knowledge of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention?

3. What is the extent to which married men and women comprehend religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention?

4. What is the extent to which married men and women comprehend religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention?

5. How do married men and women's behavioral practices reflect religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention?

6. How do married men and women's behavioral practices reflect religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention?

Research Hypotheses

The research has the following hypotheses:

H_1- There is a significant difference in married men and women's knowledge of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention,

H_2- There is a significant difference in married men and women's knowledge of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention,

H_3- There is a significant difference in married men and women's comprehension of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention,

H_4- There is a significant difference in married men and women's comprehension of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention,

H_5- There is a significant difference in married men and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention; and

H_6- There is a significant difference in married men and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention.

Significance of the study

Religious abuse amongst married persons is common, but due to the patriarchal system in Nigeria and its latent nature, it has attracted the least attention. This study is therefore of significance to married men and women with the same or different beliefs. It will help them be open to their spouses' religious practices to avoid abusive religious systems and other forms of abuse.

This help is essential because religious abuse could lead to other abuses like emotional, physical, or verbal abuse. Clerics will also benefit from the study. It will help them know where they are deficient in their ministrations. This study's findings should enable them to preach the truth and the actual context of scripture or God's word. In addition, the media will be enlightened about the nature of religious abuse, thereby aiding their information, education, and entertainment responsibilities in this respect. The study should further prompt the government to establish, strengthen, and expand laws defining religious abuse within marriage. This statutory responsibility would indicate socially improper actions and fortify sanctions against perpetrators.

Methodology

The true-experimental pretest-posttest design, which permits randomization in allocating respondents to different groups, was adopted in this study. This design comprises the experimental and control groups. Subjects in the experimental group are usually exposed to the intervention, while those in the control group are not. Since this was a comparative study between men and women, there were two experimental groups and two control groups: one experimental and control group for men each way. Married men and women who live in Lagos were randomly assigned to these two groups. Due to the inconsistencies of online statistics of married persons in Lagos State and the inability of marriage registries to give accurate data, the population of this study was non-finite. Nonetheless, Katz, Elmore, Wild and Lucan (2014) assert that the sample size of a non-finite population can be determined where:

$$N = \frac{(Z\alpha + Z\beta)^2 \cdot 2 \cdot p(1-p)}{(d)^2}$$

N – Sample size
$Z\alpha$ - 1.96, which is a 95% confidence level to avoid Type I error
$Z\beta$ - 0.84, which is 80% power to detect Type II error
p - 0.5, which is 50% the variance of the proportion
d^2 - 0.40 (90% - 50%) which is mean difference to be detected

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$$N = \frac{(1.96 + 0.84)^2 \cdot 2 \cdot 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{(0.40)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{(1.96 + 0.84)^2 \times 2 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.16}$$

N= 24.5_25

N= 25 subjects per group

Hence, the sample size of this study is 100 split into four groups - 25 men each in the WhatsApp experimental and control groups and 25 women each in the WhatsApp experimental and control groups. These participants were selected from Lagos State because the Domestic Violence Response Team (DSVRT) was first established to focus on intimate partner violence. According to the DSVRT coordinator, Vivour-Adeniyi (2018), amongst the twenty local government areas (LGAs) in Lagos State, Alimosho, Kosofe, Ikorodu, and Ikeja had the highest reports of abuse as of 2018.

For this reason, purposive sampling was adopted to select these four LGAs based on the high rate of abuse in the areas. In addition, the convenience sampling permitted the researcher to distribute 100 copies of the questionnaire based on the availability of married men and women in the selected LGAs. The copies were taken to random offices and houses in the LGAs to enable the researchers to keep track of respondents selected for the study.

The inclusion criteria entailed married men and women, persons who had been married at some point, owning a WhatsApp account, and using the app at least twice a week. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria involved non-residential married men and women and inactive WhatsApp account. Married persons who met these conditions were asked for their WhatsApp numbers in Section A, number six of the questionnaire. With this, the researcher added them to experimental and control groups formed for the study.

The intervention process of this study involved four stages. The first stage entailed using text, pictures, audio, and videos tapes on religious abuse. The second stage involved administering copies of the questionnaire to the experimental and control groups of the study. This step helped test their rudimentary

knowledge and understanding of religious abuse and enable the researcher to make comparisons at the post-intervention phase. Stage 3 marked the commencement of the intervention application as religious abuse messages were disseminated via WhatsApp.

The intervention was in progress for four weeks (02/11/18 to 30/11/18). Religious abuse messages were conveyed to the WhatsApp experimental groups daily but not to the control groups. Subsequently, the post-test, which was the last phase, was carried out by distributing the exact copies of the questionnaire to the experimental and control groups. The objective was to ascertain if the WhatsApp intervention affected the subjects' knowledge and behavioral practices of religious abuse.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data were retrieved from 88 participants (Men = 44; Women = 44) regarding determining the impact of WhatsApp religious abuse messages on knowledge, comprehension, and behavioral practices of married men and women in Lagos State, at pre and post-intervention.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable		Experimental Freq. (n)	Experimental %	Control f. (n)	Control %
Marital Status	Married	35	79.5	29	65.9
	Divorced	4	9.1	4	9.1
	Separated	3	6.8	6	13.6
	Widowed	2	4.5	5	11.4
	Total	**44**	**100**	**44**	**100**
Gender	Male	22	50.0	22	50.0
	Female	22	50.0	22	50.0
	Total	**44**	**100**	**44**	**100**
Social Media	WhatsApp	44	100	44	50.0

Table 1 shows that married participants dominated this study equally represented in both the experimental (male= 50%; female=50%) and control groups. (Experimental, 79.5%; Control, 65.9%). Participants' gender was All the 44 respondents in each experimental and control group

Test of Hypotheses

H$_1$- There is a significant difference in men and women's knowledge of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention

Table 2: Descriptive and inferential statistics for the test of difference in *men and women's knowledge of religious abuse before WhatsApp* **intervention**

Group	Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	Knowledge of Religious Abuse	Male	22	44.3182	8.49306	1.81073
		Female	22	57.7273	11.44004	2.43902
		T	**df**	**Sig**		**Mean Difference**
		-4.414	42	**0.000*****		-13.40909
		Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Control	Knowledge of Religious Abuse	Male	22	55.5455	8.65050	1.84429
		Female	22	54.6818	10.79412	2.30131
		T	**df**	**Sig**		**Mean Difference**
		0.293	42	0.771		0.86364

Table 2 indicates that there was a significant difference in the experimental group of men and women's knowledge of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention (t(42)= -4.414,

p<0.05). In addition, the mean score for females in the experimental group was higher (57.73) than males (44.32); implying that females had better knowledge of religious abuse than males before the WhatsApp intervention. Consequently, the hypothesis was accepted.

For the control group, on the other hand, there was no significant difference in men's and women's knowledge of religious abuse (t(42)= -0.293, p>0.05). However, the mean score shows that men (55.55) had a slightly better knowledge of religious abuse than women (54.68).

H$_2$-There is a significant difference in men's and women's knowledge of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention.

Table 3: Descriptive and inferential statistics for the test of difference in *men and women's knowledge of religious ab*use **after WhatsApp intervention.**

Group	Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experi mental	Knowledge of Religious Abuse	Male	22	63.9091	9.33967	1.99122
		Female	22	65.1818	7.17560	1.52984
		T	**df**	**Sig**	**Mean Difference**	
		-0.507	42	0.615	-1.27273	
Control	Knowledge of Religious Abuse	**Gender**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
		Male	22	55.3636	8.23781	1.75631
		Female	22	55.0000	10.69045	2.27921
		T	**df**	**Sig**	**Mean Difference**	
		0.126	42	0.900	0.36364	

Table 3 shows that there was no significant difference in the experimental group of men and women's knowledge of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention (t(42)= -0.507, p>0.05).

This report suggests that both male and female participants in the experimental group had a similar level of knowledge of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention. Therefore, the

hypothesis was rejected. Result for the control group shows that there was no significant difference in men and women's knowledge of religious abuse (t(42)= -0.126, p>0.05).

H₃- There is a significant difference in men and women's comprehension of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention

Table 4: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Test of Difference in Men *and Women's Comprehension of Religious Abuse before WhatsApp* **Intervention**

Group	Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	Comprehension of Religious Abuse	Male	22	57.8636	12.48350	2.66149
		Female	22	65.2273	5.95164	1.26889
		T	**df**	**Sig**		**Mean Difference**
		-2.497	42	**0.017***		-7.36364
		Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Control	Comprehension of Religious Abuse	Male	22	58.4545	8.19249	1.74664
		Female	22	59.0455	9.66327	2.06022
		T	**df**	**Sig**		**Mean Difference**
		-0.219	42	0.828		-.09091

Table 4 depicts that there was a significant difference in the experimental group of men and women's comprehension of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention (t(42)= -2.497, p<0.05). The mean score for females in the experimental group was higher (65.22) than males (57.86), suggesting that females had a better comprehension of religious abuse than males before the WhatsApp intervention. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted. For the control group, there was no significant difference in men's and women's comprehension

of religious abuse (t(42)= -0.219, p>0.05).

H₄- There is a significant difference in men and women's comprehension of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention

Table 5: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Test of Difference in Men *and Women's Comprehension of Religious Abuse after WhatsApp* **Intervention**

Group	Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	Comprehension of Religious Abuse	Male	22	29.0455	10.90425	2.32479
		Female	22	26.4545	7.21590	1.53844
		T	**df**	**Sig**		**Mean Difference**
		0.929	42	0.358		2.59091
		Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Control	Comprehension of Religious Abuse	Male	22	58.1818	7.75602	1.65359
		Female	22	58.2727	9.57766	2.04196
		T	**df**	**Sig**		**Mean Difference**
		-.035	42	.973		-.09091

Table 5 shows that there was no significant difference in the experimental group of men and women's comprehension of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention (t(42)= -0.358, p>0.05). This implies that both male and female participants in the experimental group had a similar level of comprehension of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected. Result for the control group shows that there was no significant difference in men and women's knowledge of religious abuse (t(42)= -0.035, p>0.05).

H₅- There is a significant difference in men's and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention.

Table 6: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Test of Difference in Men *and Women's Behavioural Practices of Religious Abuse before WhatsApp* **Intervention**

Group	Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experi mental	Behavioral Practices of Religious Abuse	Male	22	47.1818	8.41561	1.79421
		Female	22	37.0455	9.69279	2.06651
		T	**df**	**Sig**	**Mean Difference**	
		3.704	42	**0.001*****	10.13636	
		Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Control	Behavioral Practices of Religious Abuse	Male	22	35.9091	8.72822	1.86086
		Female	22	35.2727	8.28183	1.76569
		T	**df**	**Sig**	**Mean Difference**	
		0.248	42	0.805	0.63636	

Table 6 indicates that there was a significant difference in the experimental group men and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse before the WhatsApp intervention (t(42)= -3.704, p<0.05). The mean score for males in the experimental group was higher (47.18) than females (37.045), suggesting that males before the intervention were engaged in some behavioral religious abuses than females. Consequently, the hypothesis was accepted. For the control group,

there was no significant difference in men's and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse (t(42)= 0.248, p>0.05).

H₆- There is a significant difference in men's and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention.

Table 7: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics for Test of Difference in Men *and Women's Behavioural Practices of Religious Practices after WhatsApp* **Intervention**

Group	Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	Behavioral Practices of Religious Abuse	Male	22	26.5000	3.90055	0.83160
		Female	22	28.8636	2.76535	0.58958
		T	**df**	**Sig**	**Mean Difference**	
		-2.319	37.853	**0.026*****	-2.36364	
		Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Control	Behavioral Practices of Religious Abuse	Male	22	35.8182	8.16868	1.74157
		Female	22	35.5909	8.03954	1.71404
		T	**df**	**Sig**	**Mean Difference**	
		0.093	42	0.926	0.22727	

Table 7 shows that there was a significant difference in the experimental group of men and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse after the WhatsApp intervention (t(38)= -2.319, p<0.05).

The mean score for females in the experimental group was higher (28.86) than males' (26.50), suggesting that females after the intervention were engaged in some behavioral religious abuses than males. Consequently, the hypothesis was accepted. For the control group, there was no significant difference in men's and women's behavioral practices of religious abuse (t(42)= 0.248, p>0.05).

Discussion of Findings

Hypotheses 1 and 2 tested a significant difference in men's and

women's knowledge of religious abuse before and after the WhatsApp intervention. In the experimental group (pre-intervention), women had more knowledge of religious abuse than men. There was no significant difference in men's and women's knowledge of religious abuse for the control group. After the intervention, men and women in the experimental group had parallel knowledge of religious abuse because they had been exposed to information on religious abuse through the WhatsApp platform. On the other hand, male and female participants in the control group took the same stand as the pre-intervention because they were not exposed to the intervention.

At the pre-intervention stage of this study, women had more knowledge of religious abuse, likely because they were usually the victims of such abuse and were more sensitive and attentive to abusive traits. On the other hand, men are considered the main perpetrators of religious abuse based on the entrenched patriarchal and religious systems in Nigerian society. For this reason, they are not perceptive about such issues. Their low awareness

confirms the claim that the public's deeply internalized religiosity and coercion of spouses to follow partners' religious beliefs/affiliations are not religious abuses. This upshot also justifies why there are minimal reported incidences by the victims and even the media.

Omotosho (2014) agrees that Nigerians' entrenched diverse religious beliefs have led to much violence. A continuous sense of disbelief between Christians and Muslims makes them work towards dominating one another. The religious division has affected society's political, economic, and social (marital) togetherness. This situation can be minimized through sincere inter-religious communication as it safeguards the knowledge of different religious practices. This communication should be conveyed with peace and respect for diverse customs (Princen, 1992 & Smock, 2007).

Accordingly, there was a shift at the post-intervention stage as compared to the pre-intervention. This development emerged because male and female participants were exposed to religious abuse messages on WhatsApp. This aided them in

having a better knowledge of the issue—indicating that the WhatsApp intervention on religious abuse messages was effective. According to Statista (2018), WhatsApp was one of the leading social networking sites (SNS) in Nigeria as of the third quarter of 2017. The use of such SNS has become widespread. They have become an effective and standard channel for both interpersonal and public communication in Nigeria and the world (Ezeah, Asogwa, Edogor & Obiorah, 2013).

The WhatsApp intervention in this study has once again proven effective as it has the power to create and sustain interpersonal communication and sensitize the public of religious abuse and gradually curb the menace. Tracy (2003) affirms that "in the information age, knowledge is everything" (p.152). In essence, to identify a thriving phenomenon as a problem; one must have knowledge that is borne out of information. Hence, the significance of having information to impart knowledge should not be understated. The reason is that male respondents had minimal knowledge, and females

had a fair knowledge of religious abuse. This trend continued until they were exposed to information on the WhatsApp intervention, which considerably increased their knowledge.

The third and fourth hypotheses also show that male and female experimental groups had a significant difference in the comprehension of religious abuse before the intervention, as women understood religious abuse more than men. On the other hand, the men's and women's control groups depicted no significant difference in comprehension of religious abuse. Afterward, the intervention was administered to both men and women in the experimental groups, which enabled them to have a better and similar level of comprehension of religious abuse. However, the control group maintained the same position before the intervention because they were not treated.

As male respondents had minimal knowledge of religious abuse, they also had low comprehension of the issue. Hirsch (2003) asserts that knowledge is required to attain comprehension as it helps to conclude to show

understanding. In other words, knowledge needs to be acquired before comprehension can be present. While Hirsch (2003) holds this position, Tracy (2003) acknowledges that information produces knowledge, and Troedson (2009) submits that comprehension is bred from experience. These assertions support the logic behind women in this study having knowledge of religion through information and then understanding it. In contrast, men had little or no information to inform their knowledge, thereby; leading to low comprehension of religious abuse.

Furthermore, male respondents in this study were not aware of religious abuse due to a lack of information. At the same time, they did not understand the problem because of existing patriarchal and religious practices in the Nigerian state. It is safe to assume that their experience of entrenched religiosity and patriarchy shaped their experiences to perceive religious abuse as a tradition or norm. Women, on the other hand, further understood religious abuse not only because of information that imparted their knowledge but due of the

notion that they are more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse (Women's Aid, 2019). Hence the reasons they recognize religious abuse and understand it.

Adekoya, Adebayo and Ajilore (2019) argue that information can also impart comprehension as the religious abuse experiences regarded as a norm in Nigeria are latent information for people to understand when they are being abused. In summary, the underlining factor is the need for information to impart knowledge and comprehension of a phenomenon. Thus, information was the cause for an effective change in married men and women's knowledge and comprehension of religious abuse. At the pre-intervention stage, they had adequate and little knowledge and comprehension of the issue. However, after they were exposed to information through the WhatsApp intervention, they gained substantial knowledge and understanding of the problem.

Lastly, the test of hypotheses 5 and 6 indicated that men and women in the experimental group had a significant difference in their

behavioural practices of religious abuse at the pre-intervention phase. This is because men in this study were involved in some behavioral practices of religious abuse than women. Conversely, the male and female control groups showed no significant difference in behavioral practices of religious abuse. At the post-intervention phase, women in the experimental group were revealed to have engaged in some behavioral practices of religious abuse than men. In contrast, the control groups held on to their viewpoints.

Before the administration of the intervention, men displayed behavioral practices of religious abuse. This resulted from the lack of information that their knowledge and comprehension of religious abuse hindered the decoding of right and wrong actions. Adekoya et al. (2019) validate this claim by asserting that information has the power to alter future human conduct. Another reason for the initial conduct exhibited by the men in this study is the universal belief that men should dominate women. Manful, Appiah and Gyasi-Boadu (2016) note that domestic abuse in Africa is connected to anticipated gender roles and is labeled as an expression of socially recognized behavior patterns that permit men to exert power over women. In Nigeria, patriarchy and religion are so deep-rooted in the culture of the people that it has a substantial effect on their social behavior and human relations (Adekoya et al., 2019). Dyson, Cobb and Forman (1997) further state that religion is a social tradition in which people partake rather than personal search for understanding. This assertion explains why religious abuse exists as people choose to understand a particular aspect of the scripture but not thoroughly and contextually. Corroborating this view is a scripture in 2Timothy 4:3-4, which declares that "a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will rather follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths". On this premise, the actions of a person based on the nature of their belief (spirituality) are different from what a person believes in (belief) and

what (s) he is required to practice (religion). The essence of people genuinely knowing and understanding their faiths or beliefs in order to avoid religious abuse should not be understated because it eventually becomes a norm. If not curbed, it may continue to consume the populace.

At the post-intervention stage, men reduced their behavioral practices of religious abuse while women became the main perpetrators. The reduction of some men perpetrating religious abuse resulted from the intervention that permitted them to decipher right and wrong conduct and know the basics and depths of religious abuse. In addition, due to several variances in behaviors between men and women abuse, interventions based on male representations of spousal abuse are likely not practical for many women. The victimization that women have experienced from their husbands is a significant contextual factor in understanding their drive for abuse (Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Generally, this study concludes that the intervention for the control group was not adequate for knowledge, comprehension, and behavioral practices of religious abuse. The scores for knowledge of religious abuse for the experimental group at post-intervention were higher than the pre-intervention scores. This result suggests that the intervention for the experimental group for knowledge of religious abuse was effective.

Furthermore, the scores for comprehension of religious abuse for the experimental group at post-intervention were lower as expected than the pre-intervention scores, indicating that the intervention for the experimental group for comprehension of religious abuse was effective. This showed that participants' understanding of religious abuse improved after the intervention. The result for behavioral practices of religious abuse for the experimental group yielded a mean difference for the pre and post-intervention scores. This result shows that the intervention for the experimental group was effective for behavioral practices of religious abuse. This is because the behavioral

practices of religious abuse reduced after the intervention. Specifically, at the pre-intervention stage, men lacked knowledge and comprehension of religious abuse and engaged in behavioral practices of religious abuse. At the same time, women were just slightly better than men in these aspects. At the post-intervention stage, men and women had better and similar knowledge and comprehension of religious abuse. However, women turned out to engage more in behavioral practices of religious abuse than men.

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended that married men understand their scriptural verses for what they are and not what they think it means. In contrast, married women should not allow their past negative experience to guide their future behavior, leading to more abuse. Both married men and women with different beliefs should be open to their spouses' religious practices to avoid abusive religious systems and other mistreatments. This is because religious abuse could lead to other abuses such as emotional/physical/verbal abuse,

inter-denominational and inter-religion conflicts in domestic and societal settings. Clerics should also ensure they preach the truth and the actual context of scripture and stop misleading adherents with their personal opinions.

Counselors should also take their cue to provide professional supervision to religious abuse victims as they need emotional, psychological, and religious guidance. The media should further drive the abolition of religious abuse and advocate for victims' rights through information, entertainment, and education to cut across all audience types. The government should establish, strengthen, and expand laws defining religious abuse within marriage. This would indicate socially improper actions and fortify sanctions against perpetrators. Subsequently, members of society should seek information to acquire knowledge and comprehension as they are highly significant and regarded as the primary source of influence.

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