# EKSU

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# The Intellectual Value of the Humanities: A Critical Exploration

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**Abstract**

*This scholarly article aims to defend the humanities against the perceived assault from science by highlighting their intrinsic value and contribution to society. The main focus is the intellectual their intellectual significance. While science and technology have undeniably transformed the world in profound ways, the humanities play an essential role in shaping individuals' intellectual abilities. This paper comprehensively analyses the humanities' significance in fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, cultural awareness, and holistic intellectual development. Through the exploration of various scholarly works, research studies, and empirical evidence, this paper argues for the enduring importance of the humanities in shaping well-rounded individuals and contributing to a flourishing society and, therefore, presents a compelling case for their continued relevance and importance in an increasingly technologically driven society.*

**Keywords:** Humanities, Critical thinking, Intellectual development, Nussabaum

## Introduction

The humanities, encompassing disciplines such as literature, philosophy, history, and the arts, are integral to human intellectual and cultural heritage. They offer a unique lens through which individuals perceive and interpret the world, p rovidinginsights into the complexities of human existence, values, and aspirations. The intellectual value of the humanities lies in their ability to foster critical thinking, ethical reasoning, cultural awareness, and holistic intellectual development. This paper aims to critically examine and highlight the enduring importance of the humanities in shaping well-rounded individuals and contributing to a flourishing society. The humanities have a rich historical legacy that stretches back to ancient civilizations, where philosophical inquiries, epic poetry, and artistic expressions f lourished. From the l i terary masterpieces of ancient Greece to the philosophical t reatises of the Enlightenment, the humanities have played a pivotal role in shaping intellectual discourse, cultural identity, and societal norms. Through the study of literature, individuals encounter diverse narratives, explore the human condition, and gain insights into universal themes of love, loss, resilience, and the search for meaning. Philosophical inquiries prompt individuals to question assumptions, engage in rigorous reasoning, and grapple with existential and ethical dilemmas. Historical analysis provides a lens through which individuals can understand the forces that shape societies, appreciate the complexities of human progress, and learn from past mistakes.

Fundamentally, the intellectual value of the humanities lies in their capacity to cultivate critical thinking skills. Through close engagement with texts, artworks, and historical records, individuals develop the ability to analyze, interpret, and evaluate diverse forms of human expression. The humanities encourage individuals to question assumptions, challenge established beliefs, and examine multiple perspectives. Individuals develop their analytical faculties by engaging with complex ideas and grappling with ambiguity, thereby enhancing their capacity to make well-informed judgments. The humanities foster intellectual curiosity, a spirit of inquiry, and the ability to construct coherent arguments based on evidence and reasoning. This paper is divided into three sections. The first section conceptualizes the humanities and explores its core concerns. The second section engages the quest for value and utility that defines contemporary educational concerns. It also critically engages the assault on the humanities. The third section takes a critical look at the value of the humanities, focusing majorly on their intellectual values.

**Conceptualising the Humanities**

Going through the literature reveals there is more on defending the humanities by showing their value than defining the discipline itself. This may be the reason why Proctor says "No one today knows what the humanities are" (1998:xxiii). Proctor accused the National Endowment for the Humanities of merely listing the disciplines the government empowered them to fund without defining and conceptualizing the humanities. This critical deficiency is also found in the 1980 report of the Commission on the Humanities, *The American Life,* which merely calls for support for the humanities without also defining what they are. It seems evident, therefore, that "there is little tradition of careful and comprehensive discussion of the nature of the humanities" (Berndtson, 1964:228). This, for me, is critical because, without it, there will be no clear delineation of what we are dealing with.

Humanities has its root in the Latin word "humanitas," which itself is derived from "humanus." In Latin, "humanus" is an adjective that pertains to human beings or relates to human nature. The concept of humanitas in ancient Rome encompassed various qualities and attributes associated with being human. It encompassed intellectual, moral, and cultural aspects of human life, emphasizing education, refinement, and the development of character. "Humanitas" was closely linked to the ideal of the "humanus homo" or the "complete human being" who embodied these qualities. It was often contrasted with the concept of "barbarism," which represented qualities perceived as uncivilized or lacking in culture. The concept of "humanitas" was further shaped by the Roman orator and philosopher Cicero (106-43 BCE). Cicero regarded humanitas as the essence of human culture and education, and he emphasized its importance in the formation of a well-rounded individual. For Cicero, "humanitas" involved not only the pursuit of knowledge but also the cultivation of virtue, eloquence, and ethicalconduct. During the Renaissance period, the term " humanitas" was revived and reinterpreted, emphasizing the study of classical literature, philosophy, and history. Scholars of the Renaissance sought to revive the humanistic values of ancient Greece and Rome, focusing on human achievements, individual potential, and the pursuit of knowledge. Over time, the term "humanities" evolved to encompass a broader range of academic disciplines that explore human culture, expression, and creativity. Today, the humanities generally refer to disciplines such as literature, philosophy, history, art, music, theatre, linguistics, cultural studies, and other areas that examine human experiences, values, and expressions throughout history and across different societies.

The definition of the humanities is multifaceted and dynamic, reflecting the evolving nature of human inquiry and scholarship. It encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including literature, history, philosophy, art, music, languages, anthropology, and cultural studies. Although there are differences in content and methodology among the various humanities disciplines, as well as within each discipline itself, all of this diversity is tied together by a common set of themes and issues, or more specifically, the challenge of how to live honourably as a rational animal in a world of unpredictable events. Its topics are as broad as life itself, but are studied with a reflection and rigour that life itself rarely reaches. These topics include human vulnerability and need, terror and cruelty, as well as pleasure and vision (Nussbaum, 2002). Together, these fields explore the richness and diversity of human cultures, past and present, and provide insights into the multifarious dimensions of the human condition.

At the core of the humanities is a profound appreciation for human creativity, intellectual exploration, and critical inquiry. It is through the humanities that we strive to comprehend the human experience in all its intricacy, grappling with fundamental questions about our origins, values, aspirations, and the nature of our existence. By examining the cultural artefacts, texts, and ideas that have shaped societies throughout history, the humanities shed light on how individuals and communities have soughtmeaning, confronted challenges, and expressed their aspirations and identities. The humanities also foster a deep sense of connection and dialogue across time and space. They allow us to engage with diverse voices, perspectives, and cultural traditions, expanding our horizons beyond our own immediate experiences. Through the study of literature, for example, we can explore the narratives and worldviews of different societies, gaining empathy and understanding for the struggles, triumphs, and complexities of individuals who have come before us or whose experiences differ from our own. Moreover, the humanities play a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills and nurturing ethical inquiry. They encourage us to question assumptions, challenge prevailing norms and power structures, and engage in thoughtful reflection on ethical dilemmas. By exploring the complexities of historical events, philosophical arguments, or artistic expressions, the humanities equip us with the tools to navigate the moral complexities of our world and engage in informed and thoughtful decision-making.

In this paper, we will delve deeper into the definition and core concerns of the humanities by examining the perspectives of influential scholars who have contributed to the ongoing discourse. By exploring the viewpoints of authors such as Matthew Arnold, Martha Nussbaum, and Jacques Derrida, we will gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of the humanities and their significance in comprehending and appreciating the diverse tapestry of human experiences, expressions, and interpretations.

The study of the humanities is a

testament to our innate curiosity about the human condition and our desire to make sense of the world and our place within it. It acknowledges that human life is not solely governed by scientific laws and equations but also shaped by narratives, beliefs, values, and the myriad ways in which we express our thoughts and emotions. The humanities provide a rich tapestry of knowledge and methodologies through which we can explore the intricacies of human existence. Literature allows us to delve into the depths of human imagination, empathy, and storytelling, uncovering universal themes and examining the human experience from various perspectives. History offers a window into the past, enabling us to understand the forces that have shaped societies, nations, and civilizations and appreciate the complexities of human progress and struggle. Philosophy engages us in profound reflection on fundamental questions of truth, knowledge, ethics, and the nature of reality, challenging us to examine our beliefs and assumptions. Art, music, and other creative forms of expression provide avenues for exploring aesthetics, emotion, and the power of symbolism, inviting us to contemplate the beauty and complexity of the human spirit.

While the humanities encompass a diverse range of disciplines, they share common concerns that lie at their core. One fundamental concern is the exploration of human experience and identity. Through the humanities, we seek to understand what it means to be human, to grapple with the joys and sorrows, triumphs and failures, and the myriad emotions and aspirations that shape our lives. By engaging with diverse cultural expressions and narratives, the humanities foster empathy, compassion, and a deeper appreciation for the shared humanity that connects us all.

Interpretation and meaning are also central to the humanities. The study of literature, art, and other forms of cultural production invites us to decipher symbolism, unravel subtexts, and delve into the layers of meaning embedded within these creative works. Whetheranalyzing a poem, deciphering a painting, or interpreting a philosophical treatise, the humanities teach us that meaning is not always fixed or universal but can be shaped by historical, cultural, and individual contexts. The humanities equip us with tools such as hermeneutics and semiotics to critically engage with texts, artefacts, and cultural practices, unveiling deeper understandings and challenging prevailing interpretations.

**Humanities and the Question of Value**

In recent years, the humanities have found themselves embroiled in a crisis of value, as the practicality and economic viability of pursuing degrees in fields such as philosophy, literature, history, and art have come under scrutiny. The relentless emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields has led to a perceived devaluation of the humanities, with many questioning their relevance and significance in our rapidly evolving world. However, it is crucial to recognize that the humanities offer unique perspectives, critical thinking skills, and a deeper understanding of the human experience that are indispensable for addressing complex societal challenges. To address this crisis, we must reframe our perspective and reassert the value of the humanities in shaping a well-rounded and empathetic society.

The crisis of value in the humanities arises from a prevailing perception that these fields do not directly contribute to economic growth or offer lucrative career opportunities. This mindset is fueled by the prevalent notion that higher education should focus solely on job prospects and financial returns, often overshadowing the intrinsic value of studying and engaging with the humanities. However, reducing education to a mere means to secure employment neglects the broader purpose of education – to foster critical thinking, cultivate intellectual curiosity, and develop a deep understanding of the human condition.

The view above is a product of utilitarian thinking about education. Utilitarianism is a moral and philosophical theory that focuses on the greatest overall happiness or utility for the greatest number of people. In the context of the attack on the humanities, utilitarian arguments assert that educational resources and funding should primarily be directed towards fields that have direct and quantifiable economic or practical applications, such as science, t echnology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Proponents of this attack argue that the humanities do not provide immediate and tangible benefits, and therefore, investments in humanities education and research are wasteful or frivolous. They claim that society's resources should be allocated towards disciplines that are more likely to produce specific technological advancements, economic growth, or measurable outcomes that directly benefit society.

Criticisms directed at the humanities from a utilitarian perspective often revolve around concerns of economic efficiency, practical applicability, research impact, and return on investment. These critiques assert that the humanities lack direct contributions to economic productivity and job creation, in contrast to fields like engineering and computer science that are perceived as more economically viable. Firstly, the economic irrelevance critique posits that the humanities do not directly contribute to economic growth or job creation. Critics argue that funding allocated to humanities programs could be redirected towards disciplines with more immediate economic benefits.

For instance, investment in STEM fields is often justified by the direct correlation between such disciplines and technological innovation or industrial development (Schwartz, 2020). However, this perspective overlooks the broader socio-economic contributions of the humanities, which include fostering critical thinking, enhancing cultural literacy, and promoting informed citizenship—qualities that underpin a well-functioning society and, by extension, a stable economy.

The critique regarding the lack of practical skills in the humanities emphasizes that these disciplines do not provide training in technical skills readily applicable in the job market. While it is true that humanities education may not offer specific vocational training, it cultivates transferable skills such as analytical reasoning, communication, and ethical judgment. These skills are increasingly recognized as valuable in diverse professional contexts, including business, law, and public policy. Thus, while the humanities may not offer technical expertise, they contribute to the development of a versatile skill set that is beneficial across various sectors.

The limited research impact argument suggests that humanities research does not yield the same tangible advancements as research in STEM fields. This view fails to acknowledge the significant societal impacts of humanities research, which include enhancing our understanding of human experience, societal values, and cultural heritage. For example, historical research can inform contemporary policy decisions, while literary studies can offer insights into social dynamics and human behaviour. The impact of humanities research is often more subtle and diffuse compared to the immediate technological breakthroughs seen in STEM fields, yet it plays a crucial role in shaping societal norms and values (Grafton, 2019). The return on investment criticism argues that financial resources might be better allocated to areas with higher returns, such as medical research or engineering. While it is crucial to consider the cost-effectiveness of educational investments, this viewpoint may undervalue the intrinsic and societal benefits of the humanities. Investment in the humanities fosters a more inclusive and reflective society, contributing to intellectual diversity and ethical deliberation, which are essential for addressing complex global challenges (Fukuyama, 2018).

However, it is important to note that this utilitarian attack on the humanities has been met with considerable criticism and counterarguments. Advocates for the humanities emphasize their intrinsic value in fostering critical thinking, cultural understanding, ethical reasoning, and empathy. They contend that the humanities contribute to a well-rounded education, promote civic engagement, and provide insights into the human experience, enhancing society in ways that may not be immediately quantifiable but are nonetheless significant. Additionally, they argue that the humanities can indirectly contribute to societal progress by fostering creativity, innovation, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Part of the challenge that the humanities have has to do with the change in how capital is generated, or what Falola (2015) called the replacement of cultural capital with internet capital. As Keen notes, "The digital revolution has manifested itself in a range of cultural changes that are in many ways far more radical than the ones unleashed by the invention of the printing press over five hundred years ago, and they have made their presence felt far more swiftly." (2014:) Another reason why the value of the humanities is queried has to do with the prevailing culture of consumerism which according to Ikpe (2015) has led to the unhealthy desire for experiences that titillate the senses at the expense of the desire for things intellectual. Steve Miles (1998) defines consumerism as an interaction between an individual and the social structure in terms of consumption. It refers to the excessive consumption of consumer goods without regard to the disastrous impact they could have on people and the planet (Dauvergne, 2008). Consumerism, as a cultural phenomenon, underpins a developing consumer society in which human values are commodified and individuals interact as economic participants in the marketplace rather than as citizens and social and political actors. De Graaf et al. (2001) equate it to a deadly virus: "a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety and waste resulting from the pursuit of more" (2001: 2). Falola thinks that due to the prevalence of this culture globally, the fields of the humanities such as history, philosophy, religious studies and classics suffer marginalisation. He writes:

> *These fields are marginalized and/or eliminated for failing the expectation of the culture of consumerism, where value is measured by the instant financial returns that the field generates (Falola, 2016: 96-97)*

These assaults and queries have had a negative consequential impact on the humanities because government, parents and students deride the humanities and seem to want to have nothing to do with them. Globally, different governments have cut down on funding the humanities and parents also do not want their children to go for the humanities. In a *reductio ad absurdum* manner, Falola rightly opines that " in a cash-and-carry mentality, a mother can tell his daughter not to be a school teacher at Ijebu-Igbo because the pay is small but to go into prostitution in Italy where the pay is bigger" (2016: 87). This clearly expresses the challenge of the time we are with regards to the perception of the humanities.

In an attempt to defend the humanities against the attack launched at them, Small itemized five reasons why the humanities can maintain their relevance (Small, 2013: 174-175). The first is that they perform a unique sort of job, preserve and advance unique kinds of knowing (generally, qualitative understanding of the culture's process of meaning construction), and have a unique relationship to the notion that knowledge is inextricably linked to human subjectivity. Secondly, Small thinks that they train students who go on to a wide range of practical activities, and their study topics and methods have a variety of positive effects on a culture far beyond that of the university itself. Their work is beneficial to society because it helps to preserve and curate the culture and develop the skills for interpreting and reinterpreting that culture to meet the needs and interests of the present. In addition, the humanities may make a significant contribution to individual happiness as well as group happiness. This approach to valuing the humanities has strong origins in Western philosophy; it provides a broader and more accurate description of pleasure than most contemporary psychological work on the issue. Furthermore, the humanities can play a significant role in the upkeep and well-being of democracy. Their function as centres for the advanced study and application of critical thinking, debating, and concept evaluation abilities that are "the core practices of a democracy" underpins this contribution. Lastly, Small thinks that the value of the objects and cultural practices the humanities study and the kinds of scholarship they cultivate have value "for their own sake" — that they are good in themselves.' Our focus in the rest of this paper is to examine the intellectual value of the humanities

## The Intellectual Value of the Humanities

At the core of the humanities lies a commitment to critical thinking, interpretation, and analysis. Through the meticulous examination of texts, artistic creations, historical events, and cultural artefacts, individuals engaged in the humanities develop the capacity to question assumptions, challenge established ideas, and critically evaluate complex concepts. The cultivation of critical thinking skills enables individuals to navigate the vast landscape of human knowledge, fostering intellectual autonomy and contributing to the advancement of understanding. In addition, the humanities place a strong emphasis on empathy and cultural understanding. By engaging with literature, art, and historical narratives, individuals gain insights into the diverse range of human experiences, values, and perspectives. This empathic engagement nurtures an appreciation for the richness and multiplicity of human cultures, challenging ethnocentrism and fostering intercultural dialogue. Through the humanities, individuals develop the ability to empathize with and comprehend the lived experiences of others, leading to greater social cohesion, inclusivity, and a deeper interconnectedness among people.

Ethical reasoning and moral reflection are also central to the intellectual values of the humanities. Engaging with philosophical inquiries, ethical theories, and the moral dimensions of human existence, individuals in the humanities develop a heightened awareness of moral values and ethical frameworks.The humanities encourage individuals to critically examine ethical assumptions and engage in reflective decision-making processes. By fostering ethical reasoning, the humanities play a vital role in shaping individuals who can navigate complex moral challenges and contribute to the development of an ethically conscious society. Moreover, the humanities provide a lens through which human experiences can be contextualized and understood. Through the study of literature, history, and philosophy, individuals gain a deeper comprehension of the human condition across different periods, cultures, and societies. The humanities illuminate the historical, social, and cultural forces that shape human behaviour, institutions, and belief systems. By delving into the narratives and contexts that shape human experiences, the humanities enable individuals to reflect upon their own lives, situate themselves within broader historical and cultural narratives, and develop a more nuanced understanding of their place in the world.

Creativity, expression, and aesthetics also hold significant value within the humanities. Literature, art, music, and other forms of creative expression are celebrated for their capacity to evoke emotions, challenge conventions, and inspire societal change. The humanities foster the development of imagination and creativity, encouraging individuals to explore alternative perspectives, challenge existing paradigms, and contribute to cultural and intellectual innovations.

Furthermore, the intellectual values of the humanities extend beyond the confines of academic discourse, as they have practical implications for addressing contemporary challenges. The interdisciplinary nature of the humanities allows for insights into complex societal issues such as climate change, social inequality, and technologicaladvancements. Humanistic perspectives foster interdisciplinary collaboration, enabling the generation of nuanced approaches to pressing problems. The humanities play a pivotal role in fostering civic engagement, ethical leadership, and the development of sustainable solutions to the multifaceted issues of our time.

The intellectual values of the humanities, including critical thinking, empathy, cultural understanding, ethical reasoning, and creativity, are essential for the cultivation of well-rounded individuals and the advancement of human knowledge. The humanities provide a human-centred lens that complements other academic disciplines, fostering a holistic understanding of the human experience and enriching our collective intellectual pursuits. Embracing and nurturing the intellectual values of the humanities is crucial for fostering intellectual growth, cultural appreciation, and the pursuit of knowledge that encompasses both the empirical and the humanistic aspects of our complex world. Let us examine Nussbaum's view of the intellectual value of the humanities.

Martha Nussbaum, a prominent philosopher and scholar, has made significant contributions to the field of ethics and political philosophy. Her views on the intellectual value of the humanities, as expressed in her work (1997, 2010), emphasize the importance of cultivating human capabilities, fostering critical thinking, and promoting a just and democratic society (Nussbaum, 2010:7). She thinks that excessive focus is placed on economic growth at the expense of teaching students how to think critically and become knowledgeable and sympathetic citizens. Nussbaum also argues against the instrumentalist view of education, which sees the humanities as less valuable than fields focused on vocational or technical skills. She believes that reducing education to mere job training neglects the broader purpose of education, which is to foster engaged and informed citizens. Nussbaum contends that the humanities provide individuals with the intellectual tools necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern world and make sense of their experiences, contributing to a richer and more meaningful life. Nussbaum criticizes the prioritization of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education at the expense of the humanities. While acknowledging the importance of STEM disciplines, she argues that an education solely focused on technical skills neglects the development of critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural understanding. Nussbaum advocates for a well-rounded education that integrates the humanities with STEM fields, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary learning and the ability to apply humanistic perspectives to scientific and technological advancements.

Nussbaum argues that the humanities play a crucial role in education and the development of well-rounded individuals. According to her, the humanities provide us with the necessary tools to engage with the complexities of the human experience, enabling us to understand and empathize with others. She believes that the study of literature, art, philosophy, history, and other humanities disciplines enhances our capacity for imagination and empathy, ultimately leading to a more compassionate and inclusive society. One of Nussbaum's key arguments is that the humanities help cultivate critical thinking and the ability to question dominant norms and ideologies. Through the study of literature, for example, individuals are exposed to diverse perspectives, challenging their preconceived notions and opening their minds to alternative ways of thinking. Nussbaum believes that critical thinking is essential for democratic citizenship, as it enables individuals to analyze political rhetoric, detect manipulation, and engage in informed public discourse. Moreover, Nussbaum emphasizes that the humanities contribute to the development of essential human capabilities. She draws on the idea of the "capabilities approach," which suggests that a just society should aim to promote a broad range of capabilities that enable individuals to lead fulfilling lives. According to Nussbaum, the humanities contribute to the cultivation of capabilities such as imagination, critical reflection, emotional intelligence, and moral reasoning. These capabilities are essential for personal growth, social cohesion, and ethical decision-making. Nussbaum believes that the humanities not only contribute to personal development but also have a significant societal impact. She argues that a well-functioning democracy relies on citizens who are capable of critical thinking, empathy, and understanding. By engaging with the humanities, individuals are exposed to diverse perspectives, cultures, and historical contexts, which broadens their understanding of the world and fosters a sense of global citizenship.

In addition, Nussbaum contends that the humanities help us grapple with moral and ethical questions. Through the study of philosophy, literature, and history, individuals are confronted with complex ethical dilemmas and differing moral frameworks. This exposure encourages reflection and introspection, allowing individuals to develop their moral compass and make informed decisions. Nussbaum asserts that the humanities provide a fertile ground for exploring and debating ethical issues, contributing to the development of a more just and compassionate society.

Furthermore, Nussbaum highlights the importance of narrative and storytelling in the humanities. She suggests that human beings are fundamentally shaped by stories and narratives, which help us make sense of the world and our place in it. The study of literature, for instance, exposes individuals to different narratives, perspectives, and experiences, fostering empathy and understanding. Nussbaum argues that the humanities offer a unique opportunity to engage with diverse narratives, enabling us to challenge stereotypes, confront biases, and build bridges between different communities. In practical terms, Nussbaum advocates for the inclusion of humanities education at all levels, from primary schools to universities. She stresses the need for a balanced curriculum that integrates humanities subjects alongside scientific and technical disciplines. Nussbaum also emphasizes the importance of accessible and inclusive humanities education, ensuring that it is available toindividuals from diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses.

Nussbaum also emphasizes the importance of critical engagement with the humanities. She suggests that the humanities encourage individuals to question existing power structures, challenge social norms, and seek social and political transformation. By critically analyzing literary texts, historical events, and philosophical ideas, individuals develop the ability to recognize injustice and work towards positive change. Nussbaum believes that the humanities have the potential to inspire individuals to become active participants in shaping a more just and equitable society.

Furthermore, Nussbaum emphasizes the role of the humanities in fostering a robust democratic society. She argues that democratic citizenship requires individuals who possess critical thinking skills, cultural understanding, and the ability to engage in respectful and informed dialogue. The humanities play a crucial role in cultivating these democratic virtues by exposing individuals to diverse perspectives, teaching them how to engage with different ideas, and fostering the skills necessary for effective communication and collaboration. Nussbaum contends that a strong foundation in the humanities is essential for active and responsible democratic participation.

Nussbaum advocates for increased investment in humanities education and research. She believes that the humanities should receive adequate funding and support to ensure their continued vitality and relevance. Nussbaum also stresses the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, encouraging collaboration between the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to address complex societal challenges and promote holistic understanding. Nussbaum's view on the intellectual value of the humanities emphasizes their capacity to cultivate moral imagination, empathy, critical thinking, and democratic citizenship. She highlights the role of the humanities in navigating the complexities of life, fostering social and political transformation, and promoting a more inclusive and just society. Nussbaum's perspective underscores the significance of the humanities in personal and societal development, urging for their continued support and integration into education and public discourse.

**Summary, Conclusion and Future Directions**

The humanities have long been regarded as the cornerstone of intellectual and cultural development, offering a rich tapestry of knowledge and perspectives that complement the advancements of science and technology. This article has provided a critical exploration of the enduring intellectual value of the humanities, compelling us to recognize their crucial role in shaping well- rounded individuals and contributing to a flourishing society. The humanities' ability to foster critical thinking, ethical reasoning, cultural awareness, and holistic intellectual development is a testament to their indispensable value. By engaging with diverse narratives, philosophical inquiries, and historical analyses, individuals develop the capacity to challenge assumptions, evaluate complex ideas, and construct coherent arguments. This cultivates intellectual autonomy and the skills necessary to navigate the intricacies of the modern world. Moreover, the humanities' emphasis on empathy and cultural understanding is particularly crucial in an increasingly interconnected global society. By immersing themselves in the study of literature, art, and other forms of cultural expression, individuals gain insights into the lived experiences of diverse communities, challenging ethnocentrism and promoting social cohesion. This empathic engagement is a vital component in the development of compassionate and informed citizens, capable of navigating complex moral dilemmas and contributing to a more just and equitable society.

The intellectual value of the humanities is further exemplified in their capacity to foster ethical reasoning and moral reflection. By engaging with philosophical inquiries and the moral dimensions of human existence, individuals develop a heightened awareness of ethical frameworks and the ability to make informed decisions in the face of moral challenges. This ethical development is essential for shaping leaders and decision-makers who can navigate the complexities of the modern world and contribute to the betterment of society. The humanities' role in contextualizing human experiences and illuminating the historical, social, and cultural forces that shape our world is also of immense intellectual significance. By delving into the narratives and contexts that have shaped human societies, individuals gain a more nuanced understanding of their place in the world, enabling them to situate themselves within broader historical and cultural trajectories. This contextual awareness is crucial for informed decision-making, cultural preservation, and the pursuit of knowledge that encompasses both the empirical and humanistic aspects of our existence.

By the same token, the intellectual value of the humanities extends to their contribution to creativity, expression, and aesthetics. By fostering the development of imagination and challenging conventional norms, the humanities inspire societal change and contribute to cultural and intellectual innovations. This creative dimension is essential for addressing the complex challenges facing our world, as it encouragesinterdisciplinary collaboration and the generation of novel, holistic solutions. While the assault on the humanities, driven by a prevailing focus on STEM disciplines and concerns over economic viability, has posed significant challenges, this paper has presented a compelling case for the continued relevance and importance of the humanities. Scholars like Nussbaum have eloquently articulated the crucial role of the humanities in cultivating moral imagination, empathy, critical thinking, and democratic citizenship – all of which are essential for personal growth and societal well-being. As we move forward, it is crucial to heed Nussbaum's call for increased investment in humanities education and research, ensuring that these disciplines receive the necessary support and recognition they deserve. Interdisciplinary collaboration and the integration of humanistic perspectives across various fields should be actively encouraged, as they offer a more holistic understanding of the human experience and its relationship with scientificand technological advancements. Moreover, the humanities should be accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses, fostering an inclusive educational landscape that empowers all citizens to engage in critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural appreciation. By promoting inclusive and equitable access to the humanities, we can cultivate a more just and democratically engaged society, where individuals are equipped with the intellectual tools necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

As the intellectual landscape continues to evolve, the future directions of the humanities must be carefully considered to ensure their continued relevance and impact. A critical examination of the key areas that require attention is essential for the humanities to maintain their position as a vital contributor to our collective understanding and progress. One crucial aspect is the need for deeper integration and collaboration between the humanities and other academic disciplines, including the natural and social sciences. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and research, the humanities can offer unique perspectives and methodologies that can enhance our ability to address complex societal challenges. This cross-pollination of ideas and approaches can lead to the generation of novel solutions, fostering a more holistic comprehension of the human experience and its relationship with the broader ecosystem of knowledge. The advent of technological innovations presents both opportunities and challenges for the humanities. The digital revolution has transformed various aspects of our lives, and the humanities must explore ways to harness these advancements to enhance learning,research, and the disseminationofhumanistic knowledge. The integration of digital humanities, virtual and augmented r eality,and other emerging technologies can expand the reach and impact of the humanities, making them more accessible and engaging for contemporary audiences. Furthermore, the humanities must strive to become more diverse, inclusive, and r epresentativeofthe global community. This imperative calls for the active promotion of the voices and perspectives of marginalized groups, the decolonization of curricula, and the creation of an environment that celebrates cultural, racial, and gender diversity. By embracing this diversity, the humanities can contribute to a more equitableandrepresentative understanding of the human experience, fostering empathy, social cohesion, and a deeper appreciation for the richness of our shared humanity.

Adaptability and relevance are also crucial considerations for the future of the humanities. As society grapples with evolving needs and concerns, the humanities must continuously adapt, developing new interdisciplinary fields, exploring emerging social and ethical issues, and reframing traditional disciplines to address the pressing challenges of our time. This flexibility and responsiveness will ensure that the humanities remain relevant and capable of providing meaningful insights and solutions to the complex problems facing our world. The humanities should also enhance their public engagement efforts, fostering dialogues with policymakers, community organizations, and the general public. By advocating for increased funding and support, demonstrating the tangible societal impact of humanistic inquiry, and shaping public discourse on issues of cultural, ethical, and intellectual significance, the humanities can solidify their position as indispensable contributors to the well-being of our societies. Pedagogical innovations should also be a focal point for the future of the humanities. By exploring innovative teaching methods, leveraging technology, embracing experiential learning, and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, the humanities can captivate and inspire the next generation of thinkers, creators, and leaders. This commitment to adapting and enhancing educational approaches will ensure that the humanities remain engaging, relevant, and impactful for learners of all backgrounds.

Finally, the humanities should cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset, identifying and creating new avenues for the application of humanistic skills and knowledge in the professional sphere. This may involve the development of humanities-based career pathways, the fostering of entrepreneurial initiatives, and the promotion of the transferable skills acquired through humanistic education. By embracing this entrepreneurial spirit, the humanities can demonstrate their versatility and value in the evolving job market, strengthening their position as indispensable contributors to personal and societal growth. As the humanities navigate the challenges and opportunities of the future, a critical and comprehensive approach to these key areas will be essential. By embracing interdisciplinary integration, technological innovations, diversification and inclusivity, adaptability and relevance, public engagement and advocacy, pedagogical innovations, and an entrepreneurial mindset, the humanities can solidify their place as a vital pillar of intellectual and cultural advancement, thereby shaping a more equitable, sustainable, and informed global society.

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# Understanding the Relationship Between Esau and Jacob: Its Implications on Christian Family Unity

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**Abstract**

*This study explores the negative effects of favouritism on family unity, drawing insights from Genesis 25:28, where Isaac's favouritism towards Esau over Jacob led to sibling rivalry and familial division. Similarly, contemporary Christian homes often face the consequences of favouritism, where individual interests succeed family bonding, leading to disintegration and destruction. Humans are social beings that live to carry family identity. Family is the oldest organisation that usually based on the sexual relations of the husband and wife and maintains its existence through the production and rearing of children. "Family is the natural and essential group unit of society and the smallest union of the environment which is entitled to protection by society and the State". Through a qualitative analysis of biblical teaching and real-life cases, this study reveals disturbing impact of favouritism on family relationships, mental health, and spiritual growth. The findings highlight the need for Christian families to recognise the importance of God's words, prayer, faith, love and cooperate decision of parents as mandated by biblical teachings. By addressing the effects of relationship between Esau and Jacob, Christian families can restore their foundation, strengthen their bonds, and reflect the divine love and unity that God intends for them.*

**Key words: Favouritism, Family, Christian Home, Biblical Principles, Rivalry**

## Introduction

The family unit is the cornerstone of society, profoundly influencing individuals' emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. For contemporary Christians, maintaining family unity is crucial yet challenging as they strive to apply biblical principles in their daily lives while steering modern complexities and upholding traditional values. However, favouritism poses a significant threat to family unity, causing emotional distancing, poor communication, and separate lives under one roof. This can lead to devastating consequences, including emotional struggles like feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Physical health problems such as sleep disorders and weakened immune systems can also arise. Furthermore, favouritism can lead to spiritual disconnection and faith crises, ultimately resulting in the disintegration of family relationships and social bonds. In contrast, biblical teachings emphasise the importance of family unity, highlighting God's desire for believers to live in harmony, as seen in John 17:21-23 and Romans 12:16. Jesus' prayer for unity among believers serves as a powerful reminder of family unity's essential role in reflecting God's love. Favouritism is defined as the practice of giving special treatment to a person or group, and it can take many forms or the state of being treated as a favourite. Some common forms of favouritism include:

- Nepotism: Favouring family members, often by granting them advantages or opportunities based on their relationship rather than merit.

- Cronyism: Favouring friends and associates, often in business or professional settings.

- Partisanship: Favouring those with similar interests or affiliations.

- Service Favouritism: Favoring those with connections to the organization or service.

- Clientalism: Favouring those who provide benefits or support.

Research has shown that favouritism can be influenced by social identity threat, trust-related emotions, and in-group and out-group evaluations. When a group's value or distinctiveness is threatened, favouritism can lead to out-group derogation and intergroup differentiation. By understanding the causes and effects of favouritism, contemporary Christians can work towards building stronger, more harmonious family relationships that reflect God's love.

**Concept of Family**

The concept of family has been defined in various ways by scholars. According to the United Nations (2001), family is "the natural and fundamental group unit of society" that deserves protection from society and the state. Similarly, Arnold (2010) views family as an institutionalised social group responsible for population replacement, so therefore, family is a social group characterised by common abode, monetary co-operation and reproduction. It consists of two mature adults a male and female, at least two of whom maintain a socially-approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, that live together. According to Kendall (2019), the traditional definition of family has changed over time to involve diverse and multicultural perspectives. Modern families now include a range of living arrangements and relationships, such as single-parent households, unmarried cohabiting couples, domestic partnerships of LGBTQ+ couples, and multigenerational households with grandparents, parents, and children living together. Kendall (2019) defines the modern family as "...relationships in which people live together with commitment, form an economic unit, care for any young, and consider the group critical to their identity." This revised definition acknowledges the complexity and diversity of contemporary family structures

**Concept of Favouritism**

Favouritism has been defined in various ways by scholars. Adler (2012): Linked societal and organisational features to individual perceptions of favouritism, defining it as perceived workplace favouritism. Ozkanan and Erdem (2014) identified forms of favouritism, including nepotism, which involves favouring family members, cronyism, which involves favouring friends and associates, partisanship, which involves favouring those with similar interests or affiliations, service favouritism, which involves favouring those with connections to the organisation or service, and clientalism, which involves favouring those who provide benefits or support. Their work is likely published in an academic journal or book on organisational behaviour or public administration. Similarly, Fernando (2017) views favouritism as a social interaction process that can lead to unfair treatment, where individuals or groups receive benefits or advantages due to their social connections. This concept is further expanded by Idalberto (2009), who describes favouritism as involving the passing of information to influence individuals, often resulting in unequal treatment. Fonseca (2013) also sees favouritism as a quality of human interaction that can lead to unfair treatment, highlighting its complex and multifaceted nature.

In broader contexts, Jolita and Rita (2021), Research the connection between organisational climate, nepotism, and favouritism, highlighting the negative impact on organisational climate. Spranger et al. (2012), Suggest that some organisations can function successfully with a certain level of nepotism. Jones and Stout (2015), Argue that social connections in some crony relationships and apparently nepotistic ones may add considerable value to organisations. while Horak (2018), Finds that social connections can be beneficial in the context of employment favouritism has been linked to social inequality. 'Albertos *(2006), refers to favouritism as the practice of treating certain individuals or groups better than others, often due to personal biases or relationships rather than merit or qualifications. Some scholars also define favouritism as:*

*Giving preferential treatment: Favouritism involves showing partiality towards specific individuals or groups, often based on personal connections or group membership.*

*In-group bias: Favouritism can manifest as in-group favouritism, where individuals prioritise those within their own group over others.*

*Passionate patronage: Another definition describes favouritism as passionate patronage of favourites, often leading to appointments or benefits without regard for qualifications or experience.* These definitions collectively highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of nepotism or favouritism, emphasising its potential to create unequal treatment and social disparities.

Family favouritism refers to the unfair or preferential treatment of one family member over others, often by parents or caregivers. This can manifest in various ways, such as unequal attention and affection, disparate discipline and expectations, favourable treatment in decision-making, and unequal access to resources and opportunities. Family favouritism can occur due to factors like birth order, gender, personality traits or interests, achievement or success, and special needs or circumstances. The effects of family favouritism can be profound, leading to resentment and jealousy among non-favoured siblings, low self-esteem and confidence, difficulty forming healthy relationships, increased conflict and tension, unhealthy competition among siblings, and emotional distress and anxiety.

There are different types of family favouritism, including implicit favouritism, which is unconscious or unintentional, explicit favouritism, which is intentional and overt, and situational favouritism, which depends on specific circumstances. Recognising and addressing family favouritism requires acknowledging and accepting feelings,encouraging open communication, establishing clear rules and expectations, promoting empathy and understanding, and seeking professional help when needed.

Parental favouritism can have lasting impacts on sibling relationships and individual well-being. Studies suggest that parents' unfair treatment can affect children's self-perception, social skills, and emotional development. This paper explores the complex issue of favouritism within contemporary Christian families, examining biblical teachings on family unity and God's design for relationships, expert views from psychology, sociology, and theology, and case studies illustrating Favouritism's manifestations and consequences. Additionally, it discusses practical strategies for cultivating togetherness and restoring family unity. By recognising segregation's manifestations and consequences, we can take proactive steps to eradicate it. Through a deeper understanding of biblical principles and expert insights, we can foster open communication and emotional intelligence, promote peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation, encourage shared activities and meaningful interactions, and cultivate a sense of belonging and identity. Ultimately, this research aims to empower contemporary Christian families to reflect God's love, unity, and compassion, promoting a culture of harmony and togetherness that transcends generations.

**The Unhealthy Relationship between Esau and Jacob**

The biblical account of Esau and Jacob's relationship (Genesis 25-36) reveals a complex web of sibling rivalry, parental favouritism, and divine intervention. The stormy relationship between the couple is a warning tale of parental favouritism. The account of Esau and Jacob serves as a powerful cautionary about the distressing consequences of parental favouritism. Isaac and Rebecca's unequal treatment of their sons created a toxic environment, promoting hostility and disunity within their household. Isaac's preference for Esau, the elder son, and Rebecca's partiality towards Jacob, the younger son, sowed seeds of discord. This favouritism fueled a deep-seated rivalry between the brothers, ultimately leading to an essential and regrettable exchange.

When Esau, weary and famished, sought sustenance from Jacob, Jacob seized the opportunity to exploit his brother's vulnerability. He demanded Esau's birthright in exchange for a meal, stubbornly insisting on an oath to seal the deal. Esau's desperate pleas fell on deaf ears, as Jacob's calculating actions revealed the destructive harvest of their parents' favouritism. This distressing incident climaxes the perilous consequences of segregation:

1. Eroding trust and encouraging bitterness
2. Undermining family unity and harmony
3. Cultivating a spirit of hatred and rivalry among siblings
4. Producing an environment conducive to manipulation and exploitation

The story of Esau and Jacob serves as a timeless reminder to parents treat each child with equal love, respect, and attention, avoid comparisons, and favouritism to promote an environment of mutual support and understanding and also to encourage sibling unity and harmony. By learning from this biblical account, one can strive to create healthier, more loving relationships within one owns families.

**The Roles of Rebecca and Isaac**

Rebecca, preferring Jacob, manipulated Isaac to secure the birthright for her younger son. Isaac, loving Esau more, intended to bless him. Their actions fueled the conflict between Esau and Jacob. In Genesis 27:1-3, the family dynamics of Isaac, Rebecca, Esau, and Jacob starkly illustrate the effects of parental favouritism. Isaac's partiality towards Esau created a competitive atmosphere, pitting his sons against each other. He planned to bestow his blessing upon Esau, disregarding Jacob's potential.

Rebecca, approving Jacob, overheard Isaac's plan and schemed to deceive him. She orchestrated a ruse, instructing Jacob to disguise himself as Esau and present a meal to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob instead. When Esau returned, Isaac had already been deceived, and the blessing couldn't be retracted. This manipulation fuelled sibling rivalry and tension, creating lasting resentment between Esau and Jacob. Its undermined family unity and trust, highlighting the destructive consequences of parental favouritism and sibling competition.

The actions of Isaac and Rebecca serve as cautionary tales for parents. Favouritism manipulation, and deception can have far-reaching consequences, damaging relationships and promoting an environment of resentment. To promote healthy family dynamics, parents should strive to avoid favouritism, treating each child with equal love, understanding and respect, to promote a supportive environment, encouraging sibling unity, refrain from manipulation, promoting open communication instead and recognise and address potential sibling rivalry proactively. By means of learning from this biblical narrative, parents can cultivate a harmonious and loving home environment, where every child feels valued and respected.

**Motivations Behind Rebecca's Actions**

The key factors that contribute to the family segregation according to Rebecca's actions in Genesis 25-27, need to be examine in other to know what her motives was and the biblical context and possible underlying factors and debate among scholars:

I. God's Plan: Rebecca received a divine revelation about her twins, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:23). God said the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). This prophecy may have influenced Rebecca's actions.

ii. Personal Preference: Rebecca's affection for Jacob (Genesis 25:28) might have stemmed from his character, personality, or spiritual inclination.

iii. Selfish Interest: Some interpret Rebecca' actions as driven by self-interest or a desire for power within the family.

iv. Spiritual Conviction: Rebecca's faith and understanding of God's plan may have led her to favour Jacob which may make her feel she's doing the right thing.

v. Personality Differences: Esau's impulsive nature (Genesis 25:29-34) and Jacob's more reserved character might have influenced Rebecca's preferences.

vi. Family Dynamics: Isaac's favouritism towards Esau (Genesis 25:28) could have created tension, leading Rebecca to counterbalance with her own favoritism.

These drawn factors (incident at birth, family crises, lack of parental care, unequal benefits, physical challenges, and academic performance) provide valuable insights into addressing family Favouritism. Understanding the complexities of family relationships and addressing fundamental factors, one can work towards healing and unity.

**Lessons from Esau and Jacob's Story**

Family or parental favouritism can have distressing consequences and can have effects on children's emotional, social, academic, and physical well-being. This can lead to sibling rivalry, conflict, and long-lasting resentment. Inadequate guidance, negative tendencies in children. And also, effective communication is crucial for positive outcomes in families. The story of Esau and Jacob provides valuable insights into the consequences of favouritism in families. The following are the consequences one could draw out from this lesson:

1. Anxiety and Depression: Children exposed to family segregation may struggle with emotional regulation, leading to anxiety, depression, or mood swings.
2. Negative Self-Image: Family segregation can impact self-esteem, leading to negative self-image and low confidence.
3. Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms: Children may develop unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as aggression, substance abuse, or social isolation.
4. Impulsiveness and Anger: Family stress can contribute to impulsiveness, anger, and disobedience.
5. Hindered Academic Performance: Family segregation can hinder academic performance due to emotional and psychological challenges.
6. Underachievement: Children from segregated families may underachieve academically due to emotional distress.
7. Limited Access to Resources: Lack of financial support can limit access to essential learning resources.

8. Communication Breakdown: Family segregation can lead to communication breakdown and social isolation.
9. Difficulty Building Relationships: Children from segregated families may struggle with building and maintaining healthy relationships.
10. Destructive Consequences of Favouritism: Parental favoritism can have destructive consequences, as seen in biblical examples (Genesis 4, 25, 27).
11. Promoting Unity: Avoiding favouritism and promoting unity is crucial for healthy family dynamics.

The story of Esau and Jacob in the Bible offers valuable lessons on the dangers of favouritism within families. In Genesis 25:28, we see how Isaac's preference for Esau and Rebekah's preference for Jacob creates a deep-seated division that ultimately leads to conflict and disaster, impacting future generations. This biblical account highlights the destructive effects of family division, where favouritism can lead to sibling rivalry and conflict. Jesus himself warns against division in Mark 3:24-25, emphasizing the importance of unity. By understanding the consequences of favouritism, families can work towards building stronger, more harmonious relationships. As Aristotle said, "Equals should be treated equally and unequals unequally." Favouritism undermines fairness and can lead to negative outcomes in personal and professional settings.

In the context of family relationships, favouritism can have long-lasting and far-reaching consequences. By recognising the importance of unity and fairness, families can take steps to prevent division and promote a more loving and supportive environment.

**Types of Favouritism:**

i. Social Class Favouritism: Showing preference based on social standing
ii. Racial and Ethnic Favouritism: Discriminating based on race or ethnicity
iii. Family Favouritism: Preferring one family member over another
iv. Spiritual Gift Favouritism: Valuing certain spiritual gifts over others
v. Leadership Favouritism: Showing unfair preference to those in leadership positions

The United Nations also stresses the importance of family unity and equality, noting that family favouritism is a widespread issue affecting families globally, regardless of culture, continent, or socio- economic background. It is important to know that favouritism can lead to long-lasting conflict and division, equality and impartiality are essential in families and also, relationships and unity is crucial for building strong, healthy relationships

**Favouritism among Contemporary Christians**

Contemporary Christians have been guilty of favouritism, contradicting biblical teachings of equality and impartiality. Examples include social class, racial and ethnic, family, spiritual gift, and leadership favouritism. The biblical account of Genesis 25:28 places interest on the destructive effects of family segregation, where Isaac's favouritism towards Esau and Rebecca's towards Jacob led to sibling contention and conflict. Jesus warns against division in Mark 3:24-25. Family favouritism is a general issue affecting families universally, regardless of culture, continent, or socio-economic background. The United Nations emphasises the importance of family unity and equality. Psychologists attribute feelings of inferiority in neglected environments to awareness of social status differences, increased by imposed favouritism. This affects self-evaluation,aspirations, and opportunities for achievement.

Sociologists have studied the effects of favouritism on mainstream and underground groups, offering various opinions based on four lines of evidence: child studies, clinical studies, superior facilities, and inequalities in homogeneous groups. Scientific research conducted in 1900's found that environmental factors, not innate racial differences, contribute to intellectual disparities. The National Education Association's Educational Policies Commission emphasised the need for inclusive and equitable education. The effects of favouritism include hatred, conflict, resentment, and even murder among siblings, prolonged suffering and sorrow, erosion of peace within families, low self-esteem, depression, entitlement, siblings' rivalry, stress, social anxiety, and negative attitudes towards parents. Favouritism, or partiality, persists in contemporary Christian communities despite biblical teachings emphasising equality and impartiality. This issue manifests in various forms, undermining the principles of unity and fairness.

In the church, favouritism can take many forms. For instance, social class favouritism creates divisions and marginalises lower-income members, yet also encourages philanthropy and outreach programs. Additional one, is racial and ethnic favouritism promotes segregation but can also lead to increased diversity initiatives. Furthermore, family favouritism undermines credibility but demonstrates unity among family members. More so, spiritual gift favouritism marginalises those without prominent gifts yet encourages spiritual growth. And leadership favouritism also, suppresses dissenting voices but allows for efficient decision-making. The reasons behind favouritism are complex. They include inherent biases, cultural influences, power dynamics, lack of accountability, and spiritual immaturity.

To address favouritism, Christians must prioritise biblical education, emphasising impartiality and equality. Establishing diverse leadership, promoting inclusive environments, practicing self- reflection, and encouraging grace and forgiveness are essential steps. By acknowledging and addressing favouritism, contemporary Christians can strive towards a more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate community. This requires recognising the harmful effects of favouritism and actively working to create an environment where all individuals feel valued and respected. Through self-reflection, open communication, and a commitment to biblical teachings, Christians can overcome favouritism and build a more unified and loving community. By doing so, they can reflect the teachings of Jesus and promote a more just and compassionate society.

**Favouritism among Believers in the Church**

In many churches, leadership positions are often filled based on family ties, friendships, financial contributions, influence, or loyalty, rather than merits, good track records, and spiritual qualifications. This act, motivated by a desire to concentrate power within specific families or circles or to reward loyal supporters, contradicts the ideals of servant leadership and equitable selection. Consequently, it can lead to division among church members, as some may feel cheated or unfairly treated, and discourage qualified candidates.

Furthermore, favouritism can also be observed in the distribution of resources among church members. Those in charge may allocate resources unfairly, favouring a particular group based on gender, ethnicity, demographics, or culture. This unequal treatment causes tensions among different church members, leading to conflict and division.

Church roles, such as worship leaders, preachers, and event coordinators, are often reserved for individuals deemed more talented or charismatic, neglecting others with equal potential. This bias stems from personal preferences, appealing quality of service, expertise, and knowledge. While it may lead to reduced output from neglected individuals, it can also enhance the overall quality of church programs.

Church leaders sometimes exhibit bias during conflict resolution by siding with influential or close associates without thorough investigation. This is driven by a desire to maintain loyalty and support from favoured individuals, who may be family members, major financial contributors, high-class citizens, or loyal followers. Such partiality can promote long-term grievances, erode trust in leadership, and create divisions.

Additionally, churches often give special treatment to wealthier or more influential members, including special recognition, exclusive roles, and tiered groups. This preferential treatment aims to maintain good relationships with key financial contributors. While it may contribute to the church's growth and financial stability, it also perpetuates favouritism and neglects the economically disadvantaged. For instance, assigning financial roles to wealthy and financially stable individuals can improve the church's finances, secure funds, and manage resources effectively.

**Addressing Favouritism in Christian Societies**

Favouritism, a pervasive issue in society, also affects Christian communities. Despite sharing a common faith, Christians often divide along racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural lines. This fragmentation hinders the church's witness and undermines its mission to demonstrate God's love to a broken world. Jesus' prayer in John 17:21-23 emphasises unity among believers, saying, "May they be brought to complete unity... so that the world may know You sent Me." Addressing favouritism requires a complex approach, involving individual reflection, community e ngagement, and societal transformation. Favouritism, a universal issue in society, affects Christians and non-Christians alike, dividing communities along racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural lines.

To address favouritism in the society most especially among Christians which I will refer to as a call to action for Christians by taking the following steps:

1. Show Love and Affirmation: Display genuine love and affection to marginalised individuals, making them feel valued and relevant.
2. Counseling and Support: Provide counseling services to re-orientate societal attitudes and offer positive support to those affected.
3. Celebrate Diversity: Recognise and appreciate individual differences, identifying potential challenges and promoting understanding.
4. Promote Inclusivity: Treat everyone equally, promoting a s enseof belonging ande ncouraging open comm2unication.
5. Public Awareness: Organise public awareness campaigns through various mediums (social

media, events, workshops) to educate and eradicate family favouritisim.

6. Community Engagement: Collaborate with community organisations and churches to promote unity and inclusivity and also support policies and initiatives addressing Favouritism.
7. Biblical Foundation: Emphasise biblical teachings on unity, love, and equality (e.g., Galatians 3:28, John 17:21-23).

By implementing these approaches, Christians will be able to create a supportive environment for affected individuals, promote a favouritism-free society and demonstrate Christ's love and unity to the world. To join the movement to break down barriers and build inclusive communities and together we can make a difference.

**Recommendations**

To promote family unity and social cohesion, we recommend the following strategies:

1. Education and Awareness: Conduct workshops and training programs to highlight the importance of family unity and the negative effects of favouritism.
2. Support Services: Provide counseling, support groups, and therapy sessions to address family conflicts and develop healthy relationships.
3. Mentorship Programs: Pair experienced families with those needing guidance on building strong relationships.
4. Family Engagement: Encourage regular family meetings and activities that promote unity and bonding.
5. Conflict Resolution: Foster a culture of forgiveness, apologies, and healthy conflict resolution.
6. Spiritual Foundation: Encourage family prayer, devotions, and community service to strengthen family bonds.
7. Emotional Support: Promote love, appreciation, and support for each family member, especially in single-parent households.
8. Community Engagement: Collaborate with media and advocate for family-friendly policies to promote positive family images.

By working together with families, communities, and stakeholders, we can build strong, united families that reflect God's love and desire for unity.

**Conclusion**

The family is the fundamental building block of society, playing a vital role in shaping individuals' emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. As the smallest social unit, the family binds individuals into cooperative groups, typically comprising relatives living together. However, enforced segregation within families undermines this critical institution, exacerbating social status differences and feelings of inferiority.

Recognisingtheeffects and consequences of favouritism, including emotionaldistancing, poor communication, and disintegration of relationships, is crucial. By understanding these dynamics, we can take proactive steps to eradicate favouritism and cultivate togetherness, promoting open communication, emotional intelligence, peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation within families. Biblical teachings on family unity and God's design for relationships offervaluable insights for contemporary Christian families. By applying these principles, families can reflect God's love, unity, and compassion. Promoting harmonious family relationships requires acknowledging the significance of familyunity, understanding favouritism's manifestations and consequences, and encouraging shared activities, meaningful interactions, and emotional intelligence. Prioritising family unity empowers future generations with values of love, respect, and compassion, promotes resilient and supportive communities, encourages social cohesion and stability, and reflects God's love and unity in our families and society. By embracing the transformative power of family unity, we can shape individuals, communities, and society as a whole, building stronger, more loving families.

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# Barriers to Exclusive Breastfeeding and the Associated Factors among Nursing Mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

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**Abstract**

*Despite the numerous benefits of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF), many mothers do not practice it. This study therefore determined the barriers to EBF among nursing mothers in Ekiti State. The descriptive research design was adopted in this study. Three hundred and sixty nursing mothers, selected from 15 health facilities in Ekiti State constituted the sample for this study. A semi-structured, validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the research questions while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to determine relationships at 0.05 level of significance. Majority of the nursing mothers (92.2%) are aware of EBF, health talk was the major source of information (=0.87). 86.1% of the nursing mothers have good knowledge of EBF, majority (92.5%) have a high level of practice of EBF and the level of barrier to EBF was low among majority (92.2%) of them. Knowledge of EBF had a negative non-significant relationship with barrier (r= -0.036, p=.491), but a significant positive relationship with practice (r=0.195, p=0.000). Barrier had a negative significant relationship with practice (r= -0.483, p=0.000) It is therefore recommended that information about EBF should continually be disseminated at ante/post natal clinics so as to enhance the practice of EBF.*

**Keywords:** Exclusive breastfeeding, barriers, nursing mothers, practice, factors

## Introduction

Adequate nutrition during the first 2 years of life is very important as this protects children against childhood infection and enhances child growth and development (Jama et al., 2020).

Over the ages, breastfeeding has been feeding that supplies a child with all the required nutrients (Oche et al., 2011). Breastfeeding is a method of feeding that entails feeding a baby with the milk that comes from the breast of the mother (NIH, 2017). It provides the baby with all the needed energy and an age long best, healthiest, least costly, and the simplest method of child

nutrients required for the first months of life, continues to provide up to half or more of the nutritional needs of the baby during the second half of the first year, and also provides up to one third of the energy and nutrients needed during the second year of life (World Health Organization (WHO), 2022).

In order to ensure children meet their nutritional needs during the first 2 years of life, WHO (2023) and United Nations Children Emergency Funds recommend early initiation of breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life; and introduction of nutritionally-adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months together with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or above.

Exclusive breastfeeding is a feeding method which entails feeding the baby with breast milk only with no other liquids, except drops or syrups with vitamins, mineral supplements or medicines until the baby is 6 months and continuing to give breast-milk in addition to safe and nutritional adequate complementary foods until the baby is 2years or above (Oche et al, 2011; WHO, 2022). Exclusive breastfeeding also entails, not giving pre-lacteal fluids, early initiation of breastfeeding (within 1 hour of delivery), breastfeeding on demand (as many times as the child wants both day and night) and not giving the baby additional food or drink not even water except medically necessary (WHO, 2022).

The benefits of exclusive breastfeeding are enormous. Exclusive breastfeeding reduces the prevalence of morbidity and mortality in children, provides low cost, and complete nutrition for the infant. Breast-feeding protects against diarrhea and other childhood illnesses such as pneumonia (WHO, 2023), protects infants against infections, and increases birth spacing through its effects on lactation amenorrhoea.

Despite the advantages of exclusive breastfeeding, it unfortunate that many nursing mothers do not practice it. Studies have shown that although many women worldwide accept, appreciate and practice breastfeeding, only few practice exclusive breastfeeding. The case is not different in Nigeria, has it has been reported that the practice of exclusive breastfeeding is low with only 29% of children younger than six months being exclusively breastfed (Nigeria Demography and Health Survey, 2019).

Many factors acts as barrier to the practice of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers. Some of these factors include: mother related factors such as breast-milk production (Nguyen et al., 2021), cracked or sore nipples (Thomas, 2016), breast pain and engorgement, inadequate family support and encouragement for the nursing mothers, lack of knowledge about exclusive breast-feeding, poor attitude to exclusive breast-feeding, perceived stress associated with exclusive breast-feeding, short maternity leave periods (Thomas, 2016), the stress associated with combining exclusive breast-feeding with other maternal responsibilities (Quebu et al., 2023), baby-related factors such as large appetite of babies, baby refusing breast milk, ill health of babies (Quebu et al., 2023) and other factors too numerous to mention. According to Picolo et al., (2022), insufficient milk production is a significant barrier to breastfeeding and health education to improve mothers' milk production, will go a long way in overcoming this barrier.

One of the ways by which nursing mothers can overcome the barriers to exclusive breast-feeding, is by having adequate knowledge about exclusive breast-feeding. The most commonly reported and the best medium to get the appropriate information about exclusive breast-feeding is the healthcare facilities (Abasiattai et al., 2014; Dukuzumuremyi et al., 2020) especially during health talks in antenatal or post-natal clinics. Other sources of information reported by previous studies include: mass media, formal lectures, family and friends, seminars and workshops.

A lot of benefits could be derived from having the appropriate knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding. These include but not limited to being intimated with what constitutes exclusive breast-feeding, having one's knowledge of the benefits of exclusive breast-feeding enhanced (Bankole et al., 2019), and receiving guidance on how to overcome the barriers a ssociated with exclusive breastfeeding (WHO, 2013), thereby reducing the level of barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers.In addition to the aforementioned benefits of having adequate knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding, other benefits include, enhancing the attitude and practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers (Bankole et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2019).

Although there have been several studies reporting barriers of exclusive breast-feeding in this study area, only very few of the studies are current and there is the need to obtain current information on such an issue of public health relevance such as exclusive breast-feeding. It is on this premise that this study was carried out to determine the barriers to exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State.

**Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the barriers to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State. Specifically, this study determined the:

1. percentage of nursing mothers in Ekiti State that are aware of exclusive breast-feeding
2. sources of information about

exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State

3. level of knowledge of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State
4. percentage of nursing mothers who practice exclusive breast-feeding
5. level of barrier to exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State
6. barriers to exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State
7. relationship between knowledge and barrier to exclusive breast-feeding
8. relationship between knowledge and practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State
9. relationship between barrier and practice of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti Sate

## Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What percentage of nursing mothers in Ekiti State are aware of exclusive breastfeeding?
2. What are the sources of information of exclusive breast-feeding nursing mothers?
3. What is the level of knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?
4. What is the level of practice exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers?
5. What is the level of barrier to exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers?
6. What are the barriers to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

1. Thereis no significant relationship between knowledge and barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State

2. Thereis no significant relationship between knowledge and the practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State
3. Thereis no significant relationship between barrier and practice of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State

## Materials and Methods

The descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The sample size for the study consisted of three hundred and sixty (360) nursing mothers, having children between the ages of one and twenty four months. These were selected from 15 health facilities (3 tertiary and 12 primary) within the 3 senatorial districts in Ekiti State in Nigeria using multi-stage sampling procedure. First two Local Government areas (LGA), one from urban and the other from rural LGA were selected from each of the senatorial districts making a total of six LGAs. using simple random sampling technique. Secondly, one tertiary and two primary health facilities were selected from each of the LGA headquarters of each senatorial district and two primary health facilities were selected from other towns within each senatorial district making a total of 15 health facilities (three tertiary and 12 primary) using simple random sampling technique. Thirdly, purposive sampling technique was used to select nursing mothers having babies between 1month and 24months from the selected health facilities. In the fourth stage, 60 nursing mothers were selected from each of the 3 tertiary health facilities and 15 nursing mothers from each of the 12 primary health facilities to make a total of 360.

The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire consisting of six sections. Section A of the questionnaire was used to obtain information on the socio-demographic attributes of the respondents. Section B consists of a single item having a Yes or No response format to assess the awareness of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers in Ekiti State. Section C consists of 15 items with a reliability coefficient of 0.89 having a 'Yes (coded as 2), No (coded as 1) or I don't Know (coded as 0) response format to assess the respondents' knowledge of exclusive breast-feeding. Based on the responses, and a total score of 30, respondents were categorised into having poor (score between 0-14 representing less than 50% of the total score) or fair (score between 15-20 representing between 50-69% of the total score) or good knowledge (score between 21-30 representing 70% and above of the total score). Section D of the instrument consists of 6 multiple choice items to assess the practice of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers. Correct options were coded 1, while wrong options were coded as 0. Based on the total score of 6, respondents were classified into having low (score between 0-2 representing less than 50% of the total score), or moderate (score between 3-4, representing between 50-69% % of the total score) or high level of practice (score between 5-6, representing 70% and above of the total score). Section E of the instrument consists of a check list of sources of information about exclusive breast-feeding. Respondents were required to check the boxes corresponding to their sources of information on exclusive breast-feeding. Section F of the instrument consist of 13 items having a Yes (coded as 1) or No (coded as 0) response format to assess the barriers to exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers. . Based on the total score of 13, respondents were classified into having low level (score between 0-6 representing less than 50% of the total score), or moderate level (score between 7-9, representing between 50-69% % of the total score) or high level of barrier (score between 10-13, representing 70% and above of the total score). The questionnaire was administered to the mothers by four trained research assistants. On the spot method of collection of instrument was adopted.

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship among variables. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### What percentage of nursing mothers have heard about exclusive breastfeeding?

Table 1: Percentage of Nursing Mothers who are aware of Exclusive Breast-Feeding (EBF)

| Aware of EBF? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| No | 28 | 7.8 |
| Yes | 332 | 92.2 |

Table 1 shows that 92.2%, which

constitute the majority of the nursing mothers, are aware of exclusive breastfeeding

### What are the sources of information about exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?

Table 2: Sources of Information about Exclusive Breastfeeding

| Sources of information | No (%) | Yes (%) | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ante/postnatal- clinic | 47 (13.1) | 313 (86.9) | 0.87 |
| Health campaign | 239 (66.4) | 121 (33.6) | 0.34 |
| Health care practitioners | 213 (59.2) | 147 (40.8) | 0.41 |
| Family and friends | 274 (76.1) | 86 (23.9) | 0.24 |
| Social media | 290 (80.6) | 70 (19.4) | 0.19 |
| Mass media | 284 (78.9) | 76 (21.1) | 0.21 |

Table 2 shows that the antenatal clinic is the most common source of informationabout exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers.

### What is the level of knowledge exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?

Table 3: Level of Knowledge Exclusive Breastfeeding among Nursing Mothers (n=360)

| Variable | Levels | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge | Poor (0 1-4 ) | | 5.0 |
| | Fair (15 20) | 18 | 8.9 |
| | Good (21 3-0 ) | | 86.1 |
| | | 32 | |
| | | 310 | |

Table 3 shows that majority {86.1%) of the respondents have good knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding

**What is the level of practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?**

Table 4: Level of Practice of Exclusive Breastfeeding among Nursing Mothers (n=360)

| Variable | Levels | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Practice | Low (0-2) | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Moderate (3-4) | 27 | 7.5 |
| | High (5-6) | 333 | 92.5 |

Table 4 shows that majority {92.5%) of the respondents have a high level of practice of exclusive breastfeeding

**What is the level of barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?**

Table 5: Level of barrier to exclusive breastfeeding

| Level of barrier | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Low (0-6) | 332 | 92.2 |
| Moderate (7-9) | 17 | 4.7 |
| High (10-13) | 11 | 3.1 |

Table 5 above shows that majority (92.2%) of the nursing mothers have low level of barrier to exclusive breastfeeding which indicates that majority of the nursing mothers were able to practice exclusive breastfeeding without constraints

**What are the barriers to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers?**

Table 6: Barriers to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers

| **Barriers** | **No (%)** | **Yes (%)** | **Mean** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Short maternity leave period | 311 (86.4) | 49 (13.6) | 0.14 |
| Baby's crèche too far from mother's place of work | 340 (94.4) | 20 (5.6) | 0.06 |
| Unavailability of Creche in mother's working place | 336 (93.3) | 24 (6.7) | 0.07 |
| Baby not satisfied with breast milk alone | 336 (93.3) | 24 (6.7) | 0.07 |
| Fear that baby might not take any other food | 345 (95.8) | 15 (4.2) | 0.04 |
| Lack of time to express breast milk | 344 (95.6) | 16 (4.4) | 0.04 |
| Low support from family | 350 (97.2) | 10 (2.8) | 0.03 |
| Lack of belief in exclusive breastfeeding | 340 (94.4) | 20 (5.6) | 0.06 |
| Mother having health challenges | 345 (95.8) | 15 (4.2) | 0.04 |
| Sore nipples | 353 (99.1) | 7 (0.9) | 0.07 |
| Exclusive breastfeeding not convenient | 339 (94.2) | 21 (5.8) | 0.06 |
| I don't want my breast to be flat | 348 (96.7) | 12 (3.4) | 0.04 |
| Insufficient milk production | 344 (95.6) | 16 (4.5) | 0.05 |

Table 6 shows the various barriers to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers. Short maternity leave period is the most common barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among working mothers.

**There is no significant relationship between knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding and barrier against exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers**

Table 7: Relationship between knowledge and barrier against exclusive breastfeeding

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | r | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge | 360 | 25.686 | 5.94 | -0.036 | 0.491 |
| Barrier | 360 | .711 | 2.05 | | |

Table 7 shows that knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding has a negative non-significant correlation with barrier against exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers. This indicates that the higher the knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers, the lower the barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among them although the result was not significant

**There is no significant relationship between knowledge and practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers**

Table 8: Relationship between Knowledge and Practice of Exclusive Breastfeeding (n=360)

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | r | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge | 360 | 25.686 | 5.94 | 0.195 | 0.000 |
| Practice | 360 | 10.542 | 1.23 | | |

Table 8 shows that having knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding has a significant positive correlation with the practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers. This is an indication that nursing mothers with higher knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding practiced exclusive breastfeeding significantly better than those with lower knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding.

**There is no significant relationship between barrier and practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers**

Table 9: Relationship between Barrier and Practice of Exclusive Breastfeeding (n=360)

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | r | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barrier | 360 | .711 | 2.05 | -0.483 | 0.000 |
| Practice | 360 | 10.542 | 1.23 | | |

Table 9 shows that barrier against exclusive breastfeeding has a negative significant correlation with the practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers. This indicates that the lower the barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers, the better the practice of exclusive breastfeeding among them, and the result was significant.

**Discussion**

This study was carried out to determine the barriers to exclusive breastfeeding and the associated factors among nursing mothers in Ekiti State. The findings of this study like that of Ain et al., (2023) showed that a large percentage of the nursing mothers sampled for this study, were aware of exclusive breastfeeding. Also, majority of the nursing mothers have a high level of knowledge of exclusive breast-feeding in addition to their being aware of exclusive breastfeeding. This is somewhat similar to the findings of Akera-Adegboyega et al., (2022), who also reported a high level of awareness and a high level of knowledge of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers. It is not enough to be aware that a phenomenon exists, a detailed and more comprehensive knowledge of such phenomenon is necessary for proper actions to be taken.

The findings of this study shows that the major source of information about exclusive breastfeeding, was the antenatal or postnatal clinic. This f inding is similar to that of Dukuzumuremyi et al., (2020) who also reported that a significant percentage of the nursing mothers sampled have heard about exclusive breastfeeding and that the major source of information was the health institution. The reason for a high level of awareness and knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding reported among nursing mothers in this study may likely be as a result of increased patronage of women to antenatal and post natal clinics during the periods of pregnancy and after child birth respectively. Interestingly, many of the nursing mothers sampled in this study, reported that they obtained the information about exclusive breastfeeding from such clinics. One of the things that characterised antenatal and post-natal clinics, is health talk on various issues relating to maternal and child health. Hence regular attendance of antenatal and post-natal clinic will afford nursing mothers the opportunity of getting professional guidance on how to take care of themselves and their babies.

The findings of this study also showed that the level of barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers is low. This may likely have been influenced by the high level of awareness of exclusive breastfeeding reported among these mothers and this also might be the reason behind the high level of the practice of exclusive breastfeeding reported among the nursing mothers.

The most common barriers to exclusive breastfeeding reported in this study are mother-related factors such as short maternity leave period, unavailability of crèche close to mothers' place of work, sore nipples and insufficient breast-milk production. The finding of this study on insufficient milk production being one of the barriers to exclusive breastfeeding, is similar to that reported by Nguyen et al (2021). This may likely be as a result of maternal malnutrition, low frequency of breastfeeding of babies, and inadequate maternal fluid intake.

The findings of this study like that of Yakubu et al., (2023), showed that majority of the respondents practiced exclusive breastfeeding. This is likely due to the high level of knowledge and low level of barrier to exclusive breastfeeding among these nursing mothers.

The findings of this study showed that there is a non- significant inverse relationship between knowledge and barrier to exclusive breast-feeding. The implication of this finding is that having a high level of knowledge of exclusive breast-feeding is associated with a low level of barrier to exclusive breast-feeding. This finding is in support of the fact that having knowledge of a phenomenon, gives understanding of such phenomenon and in turn reduces barriers to its practice. While having understanding of a phenomenon builds confidence and provides the necessary knowledge and skills for its practice, limited knowledge or a lack of understanding on the other hand, creates significant obstacles which hinder the adoption and implementation of such practice.

The findings of this study showed that there is a significant inverse relationship between barriers and the practice of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers. This implies that the lower the barrier encountered in the course of exclusive breast-feeding, the better or higher the practice of exclusive breast-feeding among these respondents. This finding is an attestation to the fact that the presence or perception of barriers in the course of action, has the potential to hinder the implementation and success of such a practice in the real sense. Hence, to ensure a sustained practice of exclusive breast-feeding among nursing mothers, all identified and perceived barriers must be removed.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that nursing mothers in Ekiti have a high level of awareness knowledge and practice of exclusive breast-feeding and a low level of barrier to exclusive breast-feeding.

## Recommendations

1. Health workers should continue to embark on health education in both ante and post natal clinics to enhance mothers' knowledge and practice of exclusive breast-feeding.
2. Sensitization programmes and campaigns in favour of exclusive breastfeeding should be intensified to ensure that all and sundry get intimated with exclusive breast-feeding
3. Working mothers should be given at least 4 months for maternity leave to enable them b reastfeedtheir babies exclusively
4. Government, private and non-governmental establishments should make adequate provision for crèche within the establishment, so as to allow nursing mothers to breast-feed their babies exclusively even after they resume maternity leave.

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# INFLUENCE OF RELIGION AND INSTITUTION TYPE ON KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF UNIVERSTY STUDENTS TOWARDS ELECTION IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*This study examined the influence of religion and institution type on knowledge and attitude of university students towards elections in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The population consisted of 70,042 students in three public universities. The sample for the study consisted of 600 students using multistage sampling procedure. The instrument used in collecting data was a Questionnaire titled "Knowledge and Attitude of Students towards election". The instrument was validated by specialists in Social Studies and Test and measurement. Test-re-test method of reliability was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that university students have the knowledge of election. It also shows that the University students have negative attitude towards election. The study further revealed that there was a relationship between knowledge and attitude of university students towards election. The findings further revealed that there was influence of religion on university students' knowledge towards election. There was influence of religion on university students' attitude towards election. Based on the findings, it is recommended that: University students should be guided on the principles governing the conduct of election.*

**Keywords:** Religion, University, Election, Knowledge, Attitude

## Introduction

Elections are vital to democratic system because they allow the citizens to choose those who are to lead and govern them. They are essential for a smooth transition of authority from one government to another. The leaders who will shape the destiny of the society are chosen by the people to serve as representatives. Elections give citizens the opportunity to elect people to shape government policies and, in turn, their own destinies, which is the reason why citizens of any country including Nigeria are so powerful. The citizens of a country have the authority, power and the right to determine who is to govern them at a particular time through election. Most people have misunderstood the meaning of election to mean only the totality of what happens during the election day. However, elections are "a complex set of activities with different variables that feed on one another" (Aniekwe and Kushie 2011). The word "election" encompasses all the events that happened before, during a]nd after election day-including the campaign period and announcement of the election results. It covers all of the election-related activities as well as everything that happened after the election. (Aniekwe and Kushie 2011).

When elections are deemed to be an invalid method of choosing a government, a person is free to carry out any action they see fit, including coups d'états, revolutions, insurrections, and bush wars to assert their claim to power. According to Abdu-Raheem (2018), Social Studies is a comprehensive study of people that aims to address pressing issues affecting both individuals and society as a whole.

An election involves the complete statutory and constitutional electoral structure, party registration, party campaigns, and funding of security personnel and the ruling government. The voters' register authenticity and veracity, as well as its independence—or lack thereof--are included. In addition, it has to do with the independence of the electoral bodies that make decisions and the liberalism or conservatism of the political system in a certain nation. An election is one of the cardinal features of democracy. It is the process through which "individuals are openly and methodically chosen to represent a body or community in a larger entity or government" (Nnadozie 2007).

According to Iyayi (2004), an election is defined as "a formal act of collective decision that occurs in a stream of connected antecedents and subsequent behaviour". It means that without elections one cannot really talk of representative democracy in any modern country.

Political knowledge was defined by Pastarmadzhieva (2015) as a series of recent political facts that are long-term retained. He contended that more knowledgeable voters are more inclined to become involved in politics, take part in a variety of activities, uphold democratic ideals, express their opinions, and be effective. They noted that democratic processes are the best means of political education. It is also possible to learn about politics through the agents of socialization such as family, institution of learning, peer group, media, pressure groups and political parties. Nevertheless, Alodat, Al-Qora'n, and Abu Hamoud (2023) noted that social media as an agent of socialization significantly enhance participation of youth in politics by providing spaces for engagement, information, dissemination and mobilization.

In addition, in any democratic society, the active participation of citizens in electoral processes is the basis of good governanceand sustainable development. However, conviction and fulfilment with democratic governance are indispensable for political engagement. Quaranta, Cancela, Martin and Tsirbas (2021) explained that economic disasters can discourage young citizens from having trust and satisfactionwithdemocratic government, which can result in disengagement and division. In Nigeria, where democracy continues to evolve within socio- political complexities, the role of education, particularly university education cannot be underestimated. Universities are not merely centers for academic excellence; they are critical breeding place of civic consciousness, political awareness, and democratic values.

As Nigeria's youth population multiplies, university students represent a significant and increasingly influential demographic in shaping voting results. Atime (2020) posited that the importance of youth leadership in Nigeria's democratic consolidation cannot be overemphasized as he stressed that engaging youth in governance could solve problem of unemployment and political apathy. Their knowledge of electoral systems, understanding of democratic rights, and attitudes toward political participation can have considerate implications for the nation's democratic upcoming. Nevertheless, in a context often marked by electoral inconsequence, misrepresentation, and suspicion in political organizations, it becomes essential to examine how university education shapes students' political alignments (Abdu-Raheem and Bamgbade 2023)]

Some universities are owned by the federal government frequently regarded as Nigeria most prominent universities. These universities were established by the federal government of Nigeria and placed in strategic places of the nation to increase access to the tertiary education. Federal universities are being established in every state across the nation. The universities are governed by the Federal Ministry of Education and frequently receive greater funding than state universities. All federal universities in Nigeria have the President of Nigeria as a visitor, even though he is typically not involved in the running of the Universities.

Another type of university are the universities owned by the State government. These universities were founded by the various states of the country, and they answer to the State's Ministry of Education. The visitor is the State Governor. For instance, Ekiti State University is one of the state universities in Nigeria and it is owned by Ekiti State Government. However, the type of university- whether federal or state may influence university students' knowledge and attitudes toward election.

Religion continues to play a pivotal role in updating values, guiding ethical reasoning, and influencing civic behaviour of university students. In the context of democratic participation, particularly elections, the impact of religious beliefs and affiliations becomes even more pronounced. As students grapple with political information, evaluate candidates, and consider the broader implications of their votes, their religious orientation often provides a moral framework that shapes both their understanding of the electoral process and their attitudes toward participation. (Bamgbade, 2021)

In many societies, religious institutions do more than offer spiritual guidance; they act as centers for community education, political mobilization, and cultural transmission. For university students piloting the complex structure of political principles, social justice, and national identity, religion can serve either as a bridge to greater political engagement, equally, as a barrier shaped by doctrine or official bias. The relationship between religious values and democratic principles becomes particularly significant during elections, when students are called upon not just as voters but as informed citizens expected to make decisions that impact the future of their nations.

Again, religions have been perceived to have a tremendous influence on voting pattern during an election. There seems to be a serious aggressive influence of religion on Nigeria elections. The religious' leaders seem to influence their members by encouraging them to vote alongside with the candidate of their religious body in order to benefit more from the government as individuals and as a religious body. Falana (2010) observed that religion does not determine people of favourable and unfavourable character.

Lawal and Momoh (2019) noted that the negative effects of vote-buying on electoral veracity is noteworthy as it corrodes voters' confidence in democratic institutions. Bamgbade (2021) posited that religion is used as a tool for oppression and cheating during elections.

In addition, Mikidadi ( 2017 ) investigated the impact of religion on voting behaviour in Tanzania using data from the general elections of 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010. In Morogoro Municipality elections, where 34.6 percent of voters participated—less than half of the national turnout of 42.8 percent in the 2010 General Elections—the study looked at the importance of voting for religious voters. Data were collected utilizing a cross-section research idea, multi-stage sampling techniques, and the computer-aided personal interview platform [CAPI] from four randomly selected wards of Morogoro urban in Morogoro. A questionnaire was used to gather the survey data. 14 statements on a Likert scale in total were used to analyze voter opinions. Cross tabulation was used to link religion to other factors. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis and data analysis. The results showed that the mean and standard deviations of the Total Attitudinal Scores were 39.0 and 56.0, with a mean of 44.2 and a standard deviation of 4.01. According to the study's findings, 60% of respondents had a negative attitude toward elections and scored lower than 44.2, while 40% had a good attitude and scored higher than 44.2. The current study and the ones before are related since both looked at voters' religious affiliations and views about elections. Although their designs and locations were different—the earlier study used a cross-sectional design and multistage sampling, whereas the current study u seda descriptive research methodology—both studies analyzed data using Percentage Frequency Count Mean and Standard Deviation statistical methods. However, the earlier study was conducted in Tanzania, whereas the present study was conducted in Southwest Nigeria.

Nigeria's higher education system is notably diverse, encompassing federal, state, and private institutions, each with distinct curricula, campus cultures, and levels of political participation. In addition, religion plays a vital role in shaping social and political values, often interconnecting with institutional identity. However, the extent to which these variables influence university students' electoral knowledge and attitudes remains under-researched.

**Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that despite the critical role youth play in democratic processes, particularly in emerging like Nigeria, persistent challenges undermine their effective participation in elections. Among university students, who are expected to be the most enlightened and active members of the society, knowledge and attitudes towards elections remain irregular and often poorly understood. Existing studies have highlighted factors such as political apathy, misinformation, and electoral violence as key barriers to election participation (Abdu-Raheem and Bamgbade 2023)

It has been observed that causes of the decline in terms of voters turn out may largely be as a result of harsh and abusive campaigns, length of times in queue,poor political party performance, inadequate civic and voter education, lack of information, and a long distance to polling places are all contributing factors. Failure of political leaders to live up to public expectations, parental influence on children's voting behaviour, loyalty to political parties, the claim that voters believe their one vote is meaningless and has no significance to bring about development in their local setting, and a negative view of elections in the community are all contributing factors. It appears that a lot of youths including University students are involved in obtaining gratification from politicians in exchange for their votes and conscience; this may be motivated by the unstable economy of the nation, the large number of people who are starving to death in communities, and the repeated occurrence of this throughout previous elections.

This study therefore investigated the extent to which university education influences students' knowledge of the electoral process and their attitude t owardvoting and political participation. The study also explores the nuanced influence of religion on both the knowledge students possess about electoral processes and the attitude they hold toward political participation. It also evaluated whether academic experience, critical thinking skills, and campus-based political connections and religion contribute to a more knowledgeable and active voters among Nigerian students. However, this study did not only highlight the transformative influence of higher education but also stressed its credibility to deepen democratic principles in Nigeria.

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant contribution of religion to university students' knowledge towards election in Ekiti State.
2. There is no significant influence of religion on university students' attitude towards election in Ekiti State.
3. There is no significant difference in the knowledge of university students in State and Federal Universities towards election
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of university students in State and Federal Universities towards election

**Materials and Methods**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of students from the three public universities in Ekiti State, one federal and two state with universities. These include Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti with 36,819 students, Federal University Oye-Ekiti with 24,023 students and Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere –Ekiti, Ekiti State which has the total population of 2,400 students as obtained from the University E stablishment and Record Management. A total of 600 students were selected as sample for this study, using multistage sampling procedure. Stage one involved the selection of a state and federal university using stratified sampling technique to take care of institution type. The second stage was the selection of one faculty each from the three universities using simple random sampling technique, and the third stage is the selection of two departments from each of the selected faculties using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a questionnaire titled "Knowledge and Attitude of Students towards Election Questionnaire (KASTEQ)". The Instrument was divided into two sub sections A and B. Section A consists of respondents' Bio-data while section B contains 40 items on the Knowledge and Attitude of university students towards Election in Nigeria. The items were structured Likert type on four points rating scale of Strongly agree (4) agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) on knowledge and attitude of students towards election. The validity of the instrument was ensured by experts in Social Studies and Test Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was ensured through test-re-test method. The instrument was administered on the students on two occasions within an interval of two weeks. The scores of the two tests were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis. The reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The instrument was administered on the respondents by the researchers with the help of trained research assistants. The completed instruments (questionnaire) were c ollectedimmediately after completion. The hypotheses were tested, using inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results and Discussion:**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of religion on university students' knowledge towards election in Ekiti State

**Table 1: Analysis of Variance on the Influence of Religion on University Students' Knowledge of University Students towards Election in Ekiti State**

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | Df | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Between Groups** | 44926.357 | 22463.179 | 2 | | |
| **Within Groups** | 133334.361 | 223.341 | 597 | 100.57 * | 0.000 |
| **Total** | 178260.718 | | 599 | | |

$p<0.05$

Table 1 shows that F = 100.578. P =0.000 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected this implies that there is a significant influence of religion on university students' knowledge towards election in Ekiti State.

To further proof the significant influence of religion on university students' knowledge towards election in Ekiti State, a Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis was presented in table 9.

**Table 2: Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis on the influence of religion on university students' knowledge towards election in Ekiti State**

| | | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **N** | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Others** | 136 | 21.5000 | | |
| **Muslim** | 189 | | 28.6931 | |
| **Christian** | 275 | | | 42.2400 |
| **Sig.** | | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |

Means for groups in homogeneous subjects are displayed

The mean is apparently higher on the knowledge of Christian students towards election in Ekiti State, followed by that of their Muslim counterparts and those in other religions

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of religion on university students' attitude towards election in Ekiti State

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance on the Influence of Religion on University Students' Attitude towards Election in Ekiti State**

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | df | $F_{cal}$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Between Groups** | 7583.715 | 3791.857 | 2 | | |
| **Within Groups** | 102521.619 | 171.728 | 597 | 22.081* | 0.000 |
| **Total** | 110105.333 | | 599 | | |

$p<0.05$

Table 3 shows that the $F_{cal}$ =22.081, p is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected this implies that there is a significant influence of religion on university students' attitude towards election in Ekiti State.

To further proof the significant influence of religion on university students' attitude towards election in Ekiti State, a Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis was presented in table 11.

**Table 4: Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis on the Influence of Religion on University Students' Attitude towards Election in Ekiti State**

| | | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **N** | 1 | 2 |
| **Others** | 136 | 22.6073 | |
| **Muslim** | 189 | | 29.5132 |
| **Christian** | 275 | | 30.0368 |
| **Sig.** | | 1.000 | .929 |

Means for groups in homogeneous subjects are displayed

The mean is apparently higher on the attitude of Christian students towards election in Ekiti State, followed by that of their Muslim counterparts.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the knowledge of university students in state and federal universities towards election.

**Table 5: t-test showing the significant difference in the Knowledge of University Students in State and Federal Universities towards Election**

| School Type | N | Mean | S.D | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Federal** | 258 | 42.13 | 16.29 | | |
| **State** | 342 | 26.59 | 14.78 | 12.195* | 0.000 |

p<0.05 (Significant Result)

Table 5 shows that the t =12.195, p < 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected this implies that there is a significant difference in the knowledge of university students in State and Federal universities towards election.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference in the attitude of university students in state and federal universities towards election

**Table 6: t-test showing the significant difference in the Attitude of University Students in State and Federal Universities towards Election**

| School Type | N | Mean | S.D | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Federal** | 258 | 23.06 | 9.25 | | |
| **State** | 342 | 29.03 | 15.59 | 5.457* | 0.000 |

p<0.05 (Significant Result)

Table 6 shows that the T= 5.457, t < 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected, this implies that there is a significant difference in the attitude of university students in state and federal universities towards election.

**Discussion**

The finding of this study revealed that there was a significant influence of religion on university students' knowledge towards election in Ekiti State. This finding is in contrast to the finding of Bamgbade (2021) whose findings revealed that there is no difference between influence of religion on Christian denominations and Muslim faithful among university undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria. The differences may result from the scope of the research which was carried out on Ekiti state while the scope of the other research extended to the whole Southwest, Nigeria.

Similarly, the result of this study also revealed that there was a significant influence of religion on university students' attitude towards election in Ekiti State. This finding is in line with that of Onapajo (2016), who contended that given the significant influence religion has on Northern Nigeria's social structure, it is frequently used to influence voting behaviour there. The finding was in contradiction with that of Agbor (2019) who found that religious inclination tends not to have a significant influence on the voting pattern. The finding is also in contrary to that of Bamgbade (2021) who posited that there was no significant influence of religion on university undergraduates' attitude towards election in Southwest, Nigeria.

Again, the finding of this study further revealed that there was a significant difference in the knowledge of university students in State and Federal universities towards election. The study contradicted that of Abdu-Raheem and Bamgbade (2023). They posited that there was no significant relationship between university undergraduates' perception towards election based on location. The scholars noted that the location of university undergraduates does not influence or determine their perception towards election.

In addition, the finding of the study also revealed that there was a significant difference in the attitude of university students in state and federal universities towards election. The finding of the study is against that of Abdu-Raheem and Bamgbade (2023) who found that there was no significant difference in the university undergraduates' perception of electoral malpractice based on location. They observed that both undergraduates who are electorates from rural and urban locations have the same perceptions towards election in Southwest, Nigeria.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that University students' have adequate knowledge of election and possess negative attitude towards election and this is evidenced in their religion and institution type. It was also concluded that there was a relationship between knowledge and attitude of university students in Ekiti State towards election.

## Recommendations.

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore recommended that:

1. University students should be guided on the principles governing the conduct of election.
2. University students should be encouraged to develop positive attitude towards election.
3. Students should be enlightened on the need to develop positive attitude towards election, regardless of their religion
4. Issues relating to election should be addressed in all the institutions, both public and private
5. Issues relating to election should be addressed without bias in Federal and State Universities

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# Educational Management Strategies to Enhance Vocational Education's Contribution to National Economic Competitiveness and Democratic Value

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**Abstract**

*This position paper explored educational management strategies that can amplify the impact of vocational education on national economic competitiveness and democratic values. With the evolving demands of the global economy, vocational education plays a pivotal role in equipping the workforce with specialized skills necessary for economic growth. Effective educational management, including curriculum alignment with industry needs, partnerships between educational institutions and businesses, and continuous professional development for educators, is essential to enhancing this impact. Moreover, vocational education fosters democratic values by promoting inclusivity, social equity, and active citizenship through skill-based empowerment. The paper argues that strategic management in vocational education can bridge the gap between education and employment, thereby contributing significantly to national economic competitiveness. By integrating democratic principles within vocational training, educational management can also ensure that the workforce is not only skilled but also socially responsible, ultimately supporting both economic and democratic stability.*

**Keywords:** Educational management, strategies, vocational education, national economic competitiveness, democratic values

## Introduction

Vocational education is increasingly recognized as a vital component of national development, contributing significantly to both economic competitiveness and the promotion of democratic values (Zhao, Stoyanets, Cui, & Li, 2022). Vocational education is essential for fostering social fairness, growing the economy, and assisting people in acquiring employable skills. Strong systems of vocational education tend to make a nation more competitive and productive worldwide (Stochita et al., 2019). Vocational education helps level the playing field and promotes a better society by offering chances for people who might otherwise be left behind (Terziev, 2003). Effective management of vocational education becomes increasingly crucial as nations work to offer fair opportunities for all and build their economies (Terziev & Lyubcheva, 2022).

Vocational education, which offers practical skill training for particular jobs, is an essential component of any nation's educational system. Still, there are several issues that make it less successful (Bano, Yang, & Alam, 2022). Outdated curriculum, little funding, and access issues keep vocational education from playing its full part, particularly in emerging nations. Furthermore, little study has been done on efficient management techniques for vocational education that would enhance society's economy and general well-being (Terziev, 2003; Vasyl et al., 2022). Various researches have discussed the topic of vocational education and its management. Still, there is a great deal to learn about how to run vocational education in a way that boosts the economy and advances social justice (Shchypska, 2022). To close that gap, this study will look at existing literature as well as real-world experiences to find workable solutions for managing vocational education better. The goal is to provide governments and schools with actionable strategies to enhance the effectiveness of vocational education for all stakeholders (Vaishali & Thakurb ,2023; Gunherani, 2023).

Ultimately, the findings from these papers can contribute to strengthening economies and promoting fairness in societies. Considering these insights, c ountriescan work towards strengthening their economies while also promoting fairness in their societies.

**Aligning vocational education with industry needs**

Aligning vocational education with industry needs is a complex endeavour that necessitates collaboration among various stakeholders and the adoption of innovative approaches. One effective strategy is the formation of academia-industry partnerships, exemplified by initiatives like the Demola Portugal Initiative. This programmme bridges the gap between education and the business world by fostering collaboration between students, universities, and companies.

Through such partnerships, students engage in real-world projects that not only enhance their skills but also drive innovation, making them more attuned to the needs of the industry (Amante & Fernandes, 2023). Additionally, involving students in research and project work directly related to their fields of study enables them to build essential business networks and facilitates career interactions with potential employers (Gil, 2022). This hands-on experience not only enhances their practical knowledge but also makes them more attractive to the job market, thereby strengthening the connection between vocational education and industry requirements.

Moreover, a synergetic governance approach is vital for reducing the gap between the supply of vocational graduates and the demand for skilled workers in the market Jing et al. (2022).

By integrating resources from educationalinstitutions,the marketplace, society, and both public and private organizations, this approach ensures that vocational education programme are more aligned with industry needs (Wu & Sarker, 2022). Regular updates of curricula in higher education programme are also crucial for keeping pace with the rapidly evolving requirements of industries. For example, a study comparing Australian Information Systems programs between 2016 and 2022 highlights the importance of continuously revising educational content to reflect current industry trends and technological advancements (Hol et al., 2023). Together, these strategies contribute to creating a more dynamic and responsive vocational education system that effectively prepares students for the demands of the modern workforce, ensuring that they possess the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in their chosen careers.

**The Contribution of Vocational Education to Democratic Values**

Vocational education plays a crucial role in fostering democratic values by providing students with practical experiences that mirror real-world power dynamics, particularly during workplace learning (Venelin & Marusya, 2022). Through these experiences, students gain firsthand exposure to the complexities of power relations, which can deepen their understanding of democratic rights and responsibilities. This experiential learning allows them to reflect on and navigate the balance of power in professional settings, thus cultivating a more nuanced appreciation of democratic principles. Rönnlund and Rosvall (2021) emphasize that such educational contexts enable students to critically engage with concepts of authority, equality, and participation, which are fundamental to democratic societies.

Moreover, vocational students often exhibit the ability to grapple with competing democratic values, especially when faced with complex issues that require adaptive thinking. This capacity to hold layered views, as noted by Vaessen et al. (2021), reflects a mature understanding of democracy as a dynamic and evolving system. European mobility programme within vocational education further aim to enhance students' intercultural competence and civic values, though the extent to which these programme effectively promote active citizenship is still under-researched (Fernández-Corbacho & Cores-Bilbao, 2022). In regions like Indonesia, vocational education is strategically positioned to strengthen human capital and national competitiveness, with a particular emphasis on collaboration between government, industry, and educational institutions (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021). These diverse perspectives underscore the multifaceted role of vocational education in not only equipping students with technical skills but also in preparing them to be active, informed participants in democratic processes.

**Key components of educational management that enhances the economic impact of vocational education**

Educational management plays a pivotal role in maximizing the economic potential of vocational education by ensuring that key components such as administration, teacher quality, and curriculum design are effectively aligned with industry needs. Effective administration is particularly vital, as it provides the necessary infrastructure and support systems that enable vocational education to thrive. Post-pandemic financial assistance is especially crucial, as highlighted by Alzadjali et al. (2022), to ensure that vocational programs continue to contribute to economic growth by equipping students with the skills required in a rapidly changing job market. This administrative support not only sustains the programs but also enhances their reach and quality, ensuring that vocational education remains a viable pathway for economic development.

Teacher quality management is another critical aspect that directly influences student performance and, by extension, economic outcomes. According to Qingyan et al. (2023), effective classroom management, along with continuous professional development and appropriate qualifications, are key factors that determine the quality of education students receive. This is particularly important in vocational education, where the content delivered by educators must be both practical and relevant to current industry demands. Ebrahimi et al. (2022) further emphasize that high-quality education iscrucial for economically empowering marginalized groups, such as rural women, thereby broadening the economic impact of vocational training. Additionally, the alignment of university curricula with industry requirements and the provision of meaningful internship opportunities, as noted by Kim et al. (2022), are essential for enhancing graduates' employability. By managing these elements effectively, educational institutions can produce industry-ready individuals who are well-equipped to contribute to economic growth, underscoring the importance of robust educational management in the success of vocational education.

**Challenge in Aligning Vocational Education with National Economic and Democratic Goals**

One of the challenges in aligning vocational education with national economic and democratic goals is the persistent gap between the educational content provided and the actual needs of the industry. This misalignment often results in a workforce that lacks the necessary skills to meet the demands of key economic sectors, leading to a shortage of qualified workers for crucial projects (Bano et al., 2022). To bridge this gap, it is essentialto foster stronger collaboration between educational institutions and the workplace. This can be achieved through formal agreements that outline clear expectations, regular dialogues to keep both parties informed of evolving needs, and joint planning of student placements to ensure that practical training aligns with industry standards (Hiim, 2022). By closing the gap between education and industry needs, vocational training can produce a more competent workforce, thereby enhancing its contribution to economic development.

Another critical challenge is the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into vocational training, which is necessary for contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Incorporating sustainability into vocational curricula requires innovative approaches, such as the use of blended learning platforms that combine online and in-person instruction, and the adaptation of sustainability criteria into various courses and training modules (Lambini et al., 2021). Moreover, vocational education must not only prepare students for the workforce but also equip them to address broader societal challenges like rising inequality and political instability. This can be accomplished by remaining vocational education as a means of fostering democratic values and civic engagement, as suggested by Apple et al. (2022). Community colleges and technical/vocational institutions face challenges in aligning with national economic and democratic goals, including high costs, low completion rates, and reputation as second-tier institutions Legusov et al. (2021). By addressing these societal challenges and embedding sustainability into vocational training, education systems can better align with national goals, making vocational education more relevant and effective in promoting both economic and democratic development.

## Materials and Methods

The methodology for this position paper involves a comprehensive literature review and qualitative analysis aimed at identifying effective educational management strategies that enhance vocational education's contribution to national economic competitiveness and democratic values.

The first step is an extensive literature review. This will involve examining existing research, policy documents, and case studies related to vocational education, educational management, and their impact on economic competitiveness and democratic values. The review will focus on analyzing global and national best practices in vocational education management, particularly in areas such as curriculum development, industry partnerships, and professional development.

Next, a qualitative analysis will be conducted to gather insights from educators, industry leaders, and policymakers. This will be done through interviews and focus group discussions, providing valuable perspectives on current vocational education management practices. Thematic analysis will then be employed to identify key strategies and challenges in aligning vocational education with national economic and democratic goals.

The methodology also includes an examination of specific case studies from countries or regions where vocational education has successfully contributed to economic growth and democratic stability. These case studies will offer lessons that can be applied to other contexts, providing practical examples of effective management strategies.

Finally, the findings from the literature review, qualitative analysis, and case studies will be synthesized to develop recommendations for educational management strategies that can enhance vocational education's role in national development. These strategies will be validated through consultations with experts and stakeholders to ensure their relevance and applicability across different educational contexts.

This approach ensures a thorough understanding of how educational management can strengthen vocational education's impact on both economic competitiveness and democratic values at the national level.

**Discussion**

The findings of the study reveal several key insights into educational management strategies for enhancing vocational education's contribution to national economic competitiveness and democratic values. These include the importance of stakeholder collaboration, the need for curriculum alignment with industry demands, the role of technology in enhancing learning outcomes, and the promotion of inclusivity and diversity within vocational education institutions.

Stakeholder collaboration emerged as a critical factor in driving effective educational management practices. The study found that partnerships between educational institutions, policymakers, industry leaders, and community stakeholders are essential for aligning vocational education programme with economic needs and ensuring their relevance and effectiveness.

Curriculum alignment was identified as

another crucial aspect of educational management. The study highlighted the importance of updating vocational education curricula to reflect evolving industry trends and technological advancements. By incorporating industry-relevant skills and competencies, vocational education programs can better prepare students for the demands of the labor market.

The role of technology in vocational education was also emphasized in the discussion. The study revealed the potential of technology-enhanced learning tools and platforms in improving student engagement, facilitating personalized learning experiences, and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Furthermore, the study underscored the significance of promoting inclusivity and diversity within vocational education institutions. By ensuring equal access to quality education and opportunities for all segments of society, vocational education can contribute to social equity and democratic values.

## Conclusion

The implementation of effective educational management strategies is crucial for enhancing the contribution of vocational education to national economic competitiveness and democratic values. Effective strategies such as aligning curriculum with industry demands and fostering partnerships between educational institutions and businesses are essential for maximizing the economic impact of vocational education. Additionally, the promotion of democratic values through inclusivity and skill-based empowerment highlights the broader societal benefits of vocational training. Addressing challenges like limited collaboration between educators and industry leaders is crucial for aligning vocational education with both economic and democratic goals. By understanding and implementing these strategies, educational management can play a pivotal role in advancing vocational education as a driving force for national development. Fostering stakeholder collaboration, aligning curricula with industry needs, leveraging technology, and promoting inclusivity, vocational education institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping a skilled workforce and fostering social mobility. However, successful implementation requires concerted efforts from policymakers, educational leaders, industry stakeholders, and the broader community to create an enabling environment for innovation and excellence in vocational education. Through continued research, collaboration, and strategic planning, vocational education can realize its full potential as a driver of economic growth and social development.

## Recommendations

To enhance the contribution of vocational education to national economic competitiveness and democratic values, a collaborative approach to curriculum development and industry engagement is essential. Educational institutions should actively partner with industry stakeholders to create curricula that reflect current labor market needs. By integrating practical insights from employers, vocational training programs can ensure that students acquire the relevant skills and knowledge necessary for successful employment. This alignment not only enhances the employability of graduates but also strengthens the overall competitiveness of the workforce, thereby benefiting the national economy.

Continuous professional development for educators is equally vital to maintaining the quality of vocational education. Institutions must provide ongoing training opportunities that equip educators with knowledge of emerging industry trends, innovative teaching methodologies, and the latest technological advancements. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning among educators, institutions can ensure that they are well-prepared to deliver effective training that meets the evolving needs of both students and employers. This focus on professional development will enhance the learning experience and ensure that graduates are equipped with both technical and soft skills required in the modern workplace.

Additionally, promoting inclusivity and accessibility in vocational education is crucial for fostering social equity and democratic values. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives that make vocational training accessible to diverse d emographics, particularly marginalized groups. Implementing financial support systems, outreach programs, and flexible learning options will help create equitable opportunities for all individuals to gain skills and participate in the economy. By ensuring that vocational education serves as a pathway for social mobility, educators can cultivate a more inclusive workforce that not only drives economic growth but also upholds the principles of democracy and social responsibility.

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# Navigating the Digital Path from 4IR to 5IR: Strategies for Educational Institutions in Africa

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**Abstract**

*African educational institutions increasingly recognize the importance of applying the technologies of the Fourth and fifth industrial revolutions into their curriculum as a way to remain competitive internationally and address local challenges. This paper examines the prospects and obstacles connected with the manoeuvring of the 4IR and 5IR digital routes and explores how to correctly prioritize and strategize to maximize the positive effects of these innovations while dealing with resource constraints. As Africa advances on the digital trajectory, educational institutions play a significant role in deciding the future of the African continent. The study recommends that African institutions should address systemic issues, including scarce resources, digital inequalities, and fragmented research initiatives, and relevant stakeholders must work together to create inclusive ecosystems that support 5IR's goal of sustainability.*

***Keywords**: Digital Integration, Industrial Revolution, Innovation, Development*

## Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) represents a transformative era marked by rapid technological advancements—including artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and digitalization—that have profoundly reshaped global economies and societal frameworks. In the African context, this revolution presents both significant opportunities and critical challenges, particularly within the education sector. As the continent prepares to engage with the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR), which emphasizes the harmonious integration of technological innovation and human-centred values, there is a pressing need to explore the strategic approaches that educational institutions can adopt to navigate this transition effectively.

Central to this shift is the purposeful utilization of technology to create innovative and adaptive learning environments. According to Zulu, Pretorius, & Van Der Lingen (2022), technology adoption is fundamental to achieving the goals of the 5IR in education. Similarly, Olaitan, Vijayalekshmi, & Kumar (2024) argue that institutions must develop comprehensive s t rategies for integrating these technologies into their pedagogical models to improve learning outcomes. This article explores such strategies and examines their potential implications for transforming African education systems in the era of 5IR.

**Overview of the 4th Industrial R evolution and Emerging Technologies**

The term "Industrial Revolution" (IR) describes the changes that occurred in the British financial and social structures as factory mechanization began to replace household manual labour (Costa, Martinez-Galán & Leandro, 2022; Klečina, Krešimir & Ljudevit, 2024). The first industrial revolution was sparked by the steam engine and mechanical systems (Ally & Wark, 2020). The two primary forces behind the Second Industrial Revolution were the separation of labour and the introduction of e lectricity to facilitate mass manufacturing (Sharma, 2019). The third revolution was linked to computerization and automation (Hussin, 2018; Das & Pistrui, 2020). The term "4th Industrial Revolution" refers to the continuous change of conventional manufacturing and industrial processes with the integration of digital technology and other innovations. It was founded on the inventions of the Third Industrial Revolution (Quyet, 2020). Industry 4.0 isn't described by a single technological advancement. Tools, creativity, and several systems are all smoothly interwoven. The 4IR involves the a ccompanying four centre classifications of problematic innovations: high-level designing (including 3-D printing, renewable energy, and nanoparticles); human-machine interaction (mechanical technology, mechanization, and virtual and expanded reality); examination and knowledge (including computerized reasoning, AI, and sensors); and network, information, and handling limit (including distributed computing, the Web, blockchains, and sensors) (Ally & Wark, 2020). It aims to enhance the versatility, output, and efficiency of both production and distribution activities while promoting more deliberate decision-making and personalization.

This revolution has had both beneficial and bad consequences on Africa; a lthoughit has highlighted technological gaps and the need for skill development, it has also brought opportunities for innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development

(Banga & Te Velde, 2018). A major factor propelling the Fourth Industrial Revolution ahead is the development of modern technologies. According to Alsulaimani & Islam (2022), these technologies have the power to transform businesses and educational institutions, develop novel business models, increase productivity, and raise living standards. This paper discusses the prospects and challenges of manoeuvring the 4IR and 5IR digital routes, it also explores the strategies to prioritize and maximize the positive effects of these innovations as we take cognizance of the limited resources available within the African continent. It concludes by exploring the expected roles of African educational institutions.

**The transition towards the 5th Industrial Revolution and its implications**

Novel approaches and further developments in current technology are hallmarks of the shift towards the era of the fifth industrial revolution. It is anticipated that this subsequent stage of industrial development will expand on the groundwork established by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and push the frontiers of innovation even beyond (Li, Ji, Q & Zhang, 2020). It is incorrect to think about Industry 5.0 as a historical continuation of the current Industry 4.0 paradigm or as a replacement for it. It is the outcome of an outlook that frames how business and new societal demands and trends will coexist and align (Penttilä, Ravald, Dahl & Björk, 2020). Hence, to meet the new requirements, Industry 5.0 expands and enhances the elements of Industry 4.0. Significant changes in labour, economics, society, and the environmentare among the implications of the shift towards the 5th Industrial Revolution (Ziatdinov, Atteraya & Nabiyev, 2024). It is expected to tip over established sectors, opens up fresh doors for creativity and entrepreneurship, reshape job descriptions and skill needs, and bring up moral, legal, and societal issues (Cimini, Pinto, Pezzotta, & Gaiardelli, 2017).

The ramifications of this paradigm shift areextensive. According to Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014), the nature of occupations in the workforce will change as automation takes care of monotonous activities and humans concentrate on managing AI-driven systems and solving creative problems. By facilitating highly specific production, decentralized manufacturing, and smarter supply networks, Industry 5.0 will economically transform industries (Kagermann et al., 2013). Although this creates opportunities for innovation, if access to technology continues to be unequal, it also runs the risk of increasing economic inequality (Ford, 2015). Companies that prioritise sustainability and human welfare are likely to prosper, while those that are slow to adapt may struggle to compete in a rapidly changing market (Porter & Heppelmann, 2015).

**The Importance of Education in Navigating These Industrial Revolutions**

To meet local needs and stay competitive in the global marketplace, African educational institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of incorporating technology from the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions into their curricula (Mbithi, Mbau, Muthama, Inyega & Kalai, 2021). Programs such as digital literacy campaigns, STEM courses, and coding boot camps are being introduced to equip students with the skills necessary for the digital economy (Vegas, Hansen & Fowler, 2021). In addition, research partnerships are driving innovation in areas like renewable energy, healthcare, and agriculture, while collaborations with industry leaders help build relevant, employable skills (Kazim, Al Ghamdi, Lytras, & Alsaywid, 2024).

Despite infrastructural limitations and disparities in access to technology, initiatives like mobile learning, community innovation centres, and government investment in digital infrastructure are helping to democratize access to education and foster a culture of innovation (Murungu, 2024). These efforts are crucial for ensuring that education reaches all learners, regardless of their geographic or socio-economic status. In an age where technology permeates all aspects of society, educational institutions need to adopt a proactive and forward-looking approach. By doing so, they can cultivate a workforce that is both skilled and adaptable, stimulate innovation, and support the sustainable development of local and regional communities. Additionally, it is important to nurture ethical decision-making and responsible innovation, ensuring that technology is harnessed for the greater good. Education plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals to drive innovation, navigate the complexities of the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions, and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future. The following discussion focuses on the challenges and strategies that African educational institutions can explore to maximize the opportunities presented by this technological transformation.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Navigating the technology of the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions presents several obstacles for African educational institutions. Even if issues like financing shortages, the digital divide, and resource limits impede the development of emerging technologies, there are many chances to overcome these issues via creative thinking, teamwork, and global collaboration.

One of the challenges hampering

research and development initiatives is the lack of funds and resources, especially in developing technologies where expenditures are essential for progress and innovation (Edeh & Acedo, 2021; Arman, Iammarino, Ibarra-Olivo, & Lee, 2022). Innovative financing strategies can assist get over resource limitations and raise money for ground-breaking projects (Tula, Daraojimba, Eyo-Udo, Egbokhaebho, Ofonagoro, Ogunjobi & Banso, 2023). Examples of these strategies include crowdsourcing websites, venture capital investments, and public-private partnerships (Logue, & Grimes, 2022; Ochinanwata, Ezepue, Nwankwo, Ochinanwata, & Igwe, 2021)). Government budgets should prioritize financing for research and development (R&D), and grants, tax breaks, and other financial incentives should be used to encourage private-sector investment and promote economic growth.

Another is the digital divide and equitable access. By restricting access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital resources, the digital divide, especially in impoverished areas and emerging nations, exacerbates inequality (Helsper, 2021; Inegbedion, 2021). The digital gap may be closed by making investments in digital infrastructure, such as public Wi-Fi hotspots, mobile connections, and broadband networks. By putting in place community centres, educational programmes, and digital literacy efforts, marginalized groups may be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to take part in the digital economy (Mishi & Anakpo, 2022). It is possible to increase internet access to underserved communities and rural places by utilising cutting-edge technology like satellite internet, inexpensive devices, and mobile applications.

In addition, research and innovation silos can restrict cross-border information, skill, and resource sharing, impeding the advancement of innovative technologies worldwide (Tay, Zamborsky, & Ingrst, 2021; Chang, Iakovou, & Shi, 2020). Researchers, organisations, and governments may pool resources, exchange best practices, and work together to address global concerns through international collaborations and partnerships (Voller, Schellenberg, Chi, & Thorogood, 2022). To create lasting solutions, addressing these issues calls for an integrated strategy that takes into account the particular circumstances of each African nation and incorporates players from many industries.

Technology from the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions can revolutionize education, but there are obstacles to overcome. The requirement for modern infrastructure, such as high-speed internet and compatible devices, frequently results in resource limitations. Furthermore, funding these expenditures might be difficult to come by, particularly for public organizations with tight budgets. However innovative approaches like grant applications or public- private collaborations can aid in closing the gap (Zhang & Leiringer, 2023; Agarwal, Kim, & Moeen, 2021). Educational institutions must manage resource constraints while maximising the benefits of these breakthroughs by efficiently prioritising and strategizing.

**Strategies for Digital Integration by African Educational Institutions**

To successfully transition from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) to the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR), African educational institutions must prioritize the integration of emerging technologies into their curricula. Early exposure to disciplines such as data science, artificial intelligence, robotics, quantum computing and computational thinking—beginning at the primary and secondary education levels—can equip students with foundational digital skills essential for advanced learning (Xing & Marwala, 2017). In addition to technical content, curricula should emphasize real- world applications and project-based learning to strengthen theoretical knowledge and foster practical competence. Experiential learning, particularly at the tertiary level, enables students to develop versatility, critical thinking, and the adaptive skills necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving digital landscape (Kolb, 2014). Furthermore, curriculum design must not only reflect the realities of the 4IR but also anticipate the human-centred and ethically grounded trends of the 5 IR. This involves adopting interdisciplinary and experiential teaching approaches that promote collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving (Masinde & Roux, 2020).Importantly, ethical considerations should be integrated alongside technical training to address the broader societal implications of emerging technologies (Nafukho, El Mansour, & Van, 2024). Inclusive curriculum development is also essential to bridge educational disparities and ensure that marginalized voices are represented in both the content and delivery of learning. Such an approach will help mitigate exclusionary challenges and prepare a diverse student population for meaningful participation in the digital future (Ojetende, 2024)

Additionally, by fusing STEM disciplines with the humanities, social sciences, and arts, an interdisciplinary approach to education can improve students' comprehension of 4IR and 5IR technologies. By adopting a comprehensive viewpoint, students will be able to comprehend the moral, social, and environmental ramifications of new technologies, encouraging responsible innovation and tackling difficult societal issues that are unique to the African setting (Moyle, 2010, Sharma, 2019).

Interdisciplinary learning and creativity may be fostered through projects and assignments that ask students to explain answers to difficult issues or analyse how technology is affecting society.

The creation of innovation hubs, maker spaces, and collaborative learning environments is another approach that provides students with resources, tools, and mentoring as they study and experiment with 4IR and 5IR

technologies (Adjei, 2023). Students'

creativity, problem-solving skills, and cooperation abilities improve as they work on real-world projects in data science, AI, robotics, and other emerging businesses (Yalazi-Dawani, 2023; George, 2023). These spaces can serve as incubators for student-led businesses, innovation challenges, hackathons, and collaborative research projects. Helping kids present their ideas through exhibits, contests, and seminars helps build confidence, network with peers and professionals, and win recognition for their efforts.

Another strategy is to foster a Culture of Lifelong Learning. Developing a culture of lifelong learning begins with acknowledging the speed at which technology is changing. Rapid technological advancement makes new talents necessary while rendering others outdated. To be relevant in their respective sectors, organizations, innovations, and disruptions. Comprehending the effects of technological advancements on various sectors, occupations, and communities enables people to predict future skill requirements and make appropriate preparations (Mawas and Muntean, 2018). How instructors teach and students learn is also changing as a result of the quick speed of technological advancement in education. Virtual reality classes and AI-powered tutoring programmes are

just two examples of how technology is

people, and educational institutions must stay up to date on current trends, transforming education to make it more entertaining, individualized, and accessible (Denga & Denga, 2024).

Upskilling/Reskilling is a significant step towards technological advancement. African educational institutions need to encourage a culture of lifelong learning by providing chances for professionals and students to reskill and upskill as well as continuing education programmes. Employers, training providers, and educational institutions may work together to create online courses, seminars, certification programmes, and flexible learning pathways that are suited to the demands of the business today. Governments and organizations may help people pursue lifelong learning programmes by offering grants, tax breaks, scholarships, and financial aid. The development of soft skills like critical thinking, communication, and flexibility as well as in-demand abilities like programming, data analysis, cybersecurity, and digital literacy should be the main goals of upskilling and reskilling initiatives (Stavrou & Piki, 2024; Li, 2022). This strategy will guarantee that people stay competitive and relevant in the changing labour market, allowing them to quickly adjust to new positions and technology.

Aggressive Research and development (R&D) is a very crucial step that African institutions need. R&D institutions should support the creation of contextual solutions as Africa moves from the 4IR to the 5IR digital route. Additionally, investments in R&D, industry-academia cooperation, and the global knowledge economy are critical for promoting innovation, economic development, and societal advancement in a world that is becoming more linked and competitive and this must be improved upon.

Modern R&D facilities are essential for stimulating creativity and drawing in top personnel. Innovative research solutions and ground- breaking experiments may be carried out by researchers thanks to the state-of-the-art infrastructure, research centres, and labs. Attracting and keeping bright scientists, engineers, and innovators requires fostering an atmosphere that values cooperation, innovation, and multidisciplinary research. Providing competitive pay, fellowships, research grants, and career development possibilities encourages the brightest minds on the planet to work on R&D projects. To further enhance the R&D ecosystem, partnerships may be established with academic institutions, government agencies, and industrial partners to improve access to resources, knowledge, and financing (Reed & Langford, 2021). African academic establishments can investigate the limits of nascent technologies and create customised programmes that address the distinct obstacles and prospects inherent in the African environment.

To foster innovation and convert research results into useful applications, industry-academia partnerships as promoted by the Triple Helix model, are essential for fostering innovation. Partnerships between industry and academics help close the knowledge, skill, and resource gaps that exist between theoretical research and practical implementations. Academic researchers and industry personnel can collaborate on joint research initiatives, collaboration funding, and technology transfer agreements to solve challenging problems and create economically viable products and services. Academic institutions receive financing, possibilities for technological commercialization, and practical insights, while industry partners gain access to cutting-edge research, expertise, and intellectual property (Hansen, 2021; Marijan & Gotlieb, 2021; Poddar, Bhati, & Dubey, 2022).

Through the integration of the complementing skills of both sectors, these collaborations hold promise in tackling some of the most critical issues confronting mankind.

Investing in digital infrastructure and resources is crucial to creating a strong digital infrastructure that facilitates technology-enabled learning, encourages innovation, and offers possibilities for lifelong learning to everyone. High-speed internet access, cloud computing capabilities, and state-of-the-art technology and software should be given top priority by African educational institutions (Trucano, 2016). These are now the main components of the contemporary digital infrastructure, completely changing how people and companies use technology. To facilitate easy access to digital materials, online learningenvironments, and collaboration tools, high-speed internet connectivity is necessary. For educational institutions, cloud computing services offer scalable storage, processing capacity, and software applications via the Internet, resulting in cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and flexibility. Educational institutions can adopt data-driven solutions for individualized learning experiences, simplify administrative procedures, and introduce digital learning materials by utilizing cloud-based platforms (Manzoor, 2024; Mourtzis, Panopoulos & Angelopoulos, 2023, Ibrahim, Susanto, Haghi, & Setiana, 2020). Innovative ways to education are provided by emerging technologies including artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), and gamification, which increase learning immersion, interactivity, and engagement(Lampropoulos, Keramopoulos, Diamantaras & Evangelidis, 2022; Lampropoulos, 2023). Modern gear, including virtual reality (VR) headsets, tablets, PCs, and interactive whiteboards improves technology-enhanced learning opportunities and student engagement. Digital tools, simulations, and educational software programmes facilitate interactive information delivery, accommodate a variety of learning preferences, and offer individualised learning paths (Pozzi, Asensio-Perez, Ceregini, Dagnino, Dimitriadis & Earp, 2020; Schmidt & Tang, 2020). Using artificial intelligence and algorithms, adaptive learning systems will analyse student performance, customise training, and offer immediate feedback to enhance learning results (Gligorea, Cioca, Oancea, Gorski, Gorski, & Tudorache, 2023; Kabudi, Pappas & Olsen, 2021).

**Ethical and Responsible Development**

Crucial to ensuring that emergent technologies are created and applied in ways that minimize harm and uphold ethical values include critical thinking and ethics courses, responsible technological advancement, ethical decision-making, and responsible innovation. African educational establishments may support moral decision-making in the creation and use of new technologies by doing the following. Curricula that incorporate critical thinking and ethics courses guarantee that students have the information and abilities needed to resolve moral conundrums and reach well-informed conclusions (Caruana, 2021; Coldwell, Venter & Nkomo, 2020). Topics including privacy, security, fairness, bias, accountability, transparency, and the influence of technology on society can all be covered in ethics courses.

People with critical thinking abilities can analyse the possible hazards and rewards, take into account other viewpoints, and assess the ethical implications of technical advancements (Tursunbayeva, Pagliari, Di Lauro & Antonelli, 2022; Berglund, 2020; Schulte, Streit, Sheriff, Delclos, Felknor, Tamers & Sala, 2020). Multidisciplinary approaches that integrate STEM and ethics enable responsible innovation and a comprehensive grasp of the ethical implications of technology (van Grunsven, Stone & Marin, 2024; Jongsma, & Bredenoord, 2020). Educational institutions can help develop reliable and human-centred AI systems that cater to the particular needs and principles of African societies by giving students a solid ethical foundation and an awareness of the possible risks and difficulties associated with emerging technologies.

Encouraging responsible innovation entails proactively addressing ethical, social, and environmental problems as well as taking into account the larger societal ramifications of technology breakthroughs (Li, Yigitcanlar, Browne, & Nili, 2023; Scherer & Voegtlin, 2020). Organisations can create ethical frameworks and principles for the responsible design, development, and use of technology with the aid of industry standards, guidelines, and best practices (Weber-Lewerenz, 2021; Peters, Vold, Robinson & Calvo, 2020). Including stakeholders in the decision-making process may guarantee that different viewpoints are taken into account and that technology advances society. Stakeholders include legislators, regulators, members of the public, and civil society organisations. To guarantee that the advantages of technology advancements are spread fairly, it can be helpful to foresee and prevent any potential negative effects using the use of risk evaluations, scenario planning, and ethical impact assessments. Institutions may also make sure that technology improvements are in line with society's values by encouraging responsible innovation methods. This can help solve concerns like privacy, prejudice, and environmental sustainability in the African setting.

To promote moral decision-making, organizations and academic institutions must develop a culture of honesty, openness, and responsibility. A common understanding of ethical principles and the development of ethical decision-making processes are fostered when researchers, engineers, designers, and policymakers are encouraged to engage in open discourse and ethical contemplation. People who get guidance and assistance in making moral decisions are better able to identify moral conundrums, negotiate difficult moral decisions, and put moral precepts into practice. According to Fukuda-Parr & Gibbons, 2021 and Yarborough, (2021), putting in place structures for ethical oversight— like ethics committees, review boards, and ethical guidelines—helps guarantee that developing technologies are created and applied in a way that respects human rights and upholds ethical norms. African educational institutions may help to develop a workforce that is both morally sound and aware of the various ways that developing technologies are affecting society by putting these methods into practice.

## Conclusion

African educational institutions face both opportunities and challenges as a result of the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions (4IR and 5IR), which call for a strategic reorganization of governance, infrastructure, and teaching methodologies. While 4IR introduced cutting-edge technology like artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and robots, 5IR demands that these advancements be in line with sustainable objectives and human-centred values. To prosper, African education must embrace a balanced strategy that integrates technology with sociocultural relevance. This involves addressing problems including fragmented research systems, digital inequity, and few resources. To bridge skill gaps and increase access to digital resources, educational reforms should prioritize multidisciplinary curricula that integrate STEM and the humanities, as well as encourage lifelong learning and establish solid public- private partnerships.

To guarantee that technology meets social demands, educators must take the lead in creating moral frameworks and open policies. To facilitate regional answers to global issues, institutions must also make investments in innovation hubs and digital infrastructure. Governments, academic institutions, businesses, and civil society must work together to create inclusive ecosystems that maximize 4IR's potential while promoting 5IR's objectives of sustainability and equity. African educational institutions can equip the next generation to lead a tech-driven, human values-based society if they act quickly and creatively.

## Recommendations

Education institutions are vital to determining the future of Africa as they navigate the digital transition from the 4IR to the 5IR. African educational institutions can give societies the skills and knowledge they need to prosper in the quickly changing technological landscape by emphasizing ethical and responsible development, promoting collaborations, investing in R&D, transforming curricula, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

By accepting their position as change agents, African educational institutions may foster innovation, help solve complicated social issues specific to the continent, and help build a workforce that is knowledgeable and flexible. Utilizing multidisciplinary partnerships, information exchange, and a dedication to sustainable development, these establishments may set the stage for a future in which technology functions as an instrument for social advancement and human empowerment throughout the continent.

Furthermore, strong regulatory frameworks will be necessary to guarantee that technology benefits mankind rather than dictating it.

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# Impact of Monetary Policy Shock on Output and Price Dynamics in Nigeria

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## Abstract

*The investigation of the effects of monetary policy shocks on- output and prices is necessary to assist policymakers, businesses, and investors in formulating and implementing monetary policies. Therefore, this study examines the effects of monetary policy shocks on output and price dynamics in Nigeria from 1981 to 2021 with the Johansen techniques and VEC model, The study finds a percent increase in money supply resulting into a long-run increase in output and prices. Additionally, the study revealed that a percent increase in interest rates caused a price increase and a reduction in output in the long run. The innovation accounting results revealed that money supply shock had an insignificant effect on output but significantly increased prices by approximately 8% above the steady state. Conversely, an interest rate shock significantly raised prices by about 3% above the steady state but output declinde by roughly 3%.. The Granger causality test revealed that money supply causes price in the short run without feedback but both causes each other in the long run. The Nigerian monetary authority is thus advised to formulate policies to optimally regulate money in circulation to, control price fluctuations and adopt interest rate targeting to maintain growth-driven interest rates.*

***Keywords***: Monetary policy; Output effects, Dynamics, Price, VECM.

***JEL Classification***: P240, E500, E300, E51, E52, E58, E59, O55

## Introduction

In recent times, there have been extensive arguments concerning the advantages of moving away from the conventional discretionary monetary policies towards approaches that prioritize maintaining price stability and integrating into the global economy. These alternative approaches include strategies like dollarization, inflation targeting, and monetary unions, one advantage of discretionary policies lies in the flexibility they offer to monetary authorities. They can employ various policy tools to counter adverse shocks to the economy. For instance, when the performance of a economy is below its potential, the central bank of that country can implement an expansionary policy by reducing policy-controlled interest rate. This, in turn, can lower commercial interest rates, stimulating overall spending. Additionally, the central bank can ensure its liquidity and stability of the banking system, aiming to encourage increased bank lending and, consequently, greater spending.

Alternatively, a monetary expansion can be adopted to achieve a decrease in the real exchange rate can enhance the competitive advantages of a country's products in both domestic and global markets, thereby increasing the nation's output. In theory, it's possible to implement countercyclical monetary policies even within the framework of inflation targeting. However, there is need to note that such policies would need to be flexible rather than rigid, as argued by Ghironi and Rebucci, (2000) and Mishkin, (2002). Nonetheless, it's worth acknowledging that non-traditional policy regimes may impose controls on monetary authorities to ensure policies are used effectively to mitigate fluctuations in output.

An effective utilization of monetary policy to influence its short-term economic output remains a subject of ongoing debate in monetary economics (ref). In the United States, there is a consensus based on research, such as that by Christiano et al. (1999), which suggests a reduction in interest rates controlled by the Federal Reserve tends to stimulate economic output more in the immediate between two to three years. However, this effect tends to diminish over time, ultimately affecting prices more than outputs in the long run. Debates persist regarding the precise factors responsible for this real effect. The primary contenders include factors like sticky prices and wages, and imperfect competition (Walsh, 2003; Grilli & Roubini, 1996).

The observation of real effects in a developed economy like the United States is that monetary policy can be employed to counteract aggregate economic shocks. However, the situation is less clear in other economies, particularly developing ones such as Nigeria. In nations marked by high inflation or persistent labour market slack, prices and wages are likely not to exhibit stickiness. Consequently, changes in monetary policy easily pass through to prices with l imited real effects, as demonstrated by Gagnon and Ihrig, (2004). Furthermore, economists like Barro and Gordon, (1983) and Kydland and Prescott (1977) argue that if monetary policy lacks credibility, the public' s understanding of the government's motivations in enacting monetary surprises could undermine the effectiveness of such measures in boosting output, potentially leading to higher average inflation. Additionally, globalization of financial markets may reduce the ability of smaller or open economies to independently determine the rates of interests, further diminishing the potential benefits of pursuing independent monetary policies (Dornbusch, 2001; Frankel et al., 2004).

Giventhe ongoing debates surrounding how monetary policy influences short-term output and long-term prices in developing nations, a crucial challenge highlighted in the literature is the need for a clarification of how monetary policy impacts the changes in economic growth, especially in Nigeria. This calls for active participation in both academic and policy discussions to provide answers to these unresolved questions.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that existing research on the economic role of money in the long-term has primarily centered on developed countries. However, findings from these studies may not be directly applicable to African nations like Nigeria due to distinct financial dynamics. For instance, a significant portion of the monetary base in African countries doesn't flow through the traditional banking sector (Asongu, 2014). Therefore, it's imperative to conduct research and analysis that considers the unique monetary policy dynamics of countries like Nigeria to draw relevant conclusions for policy and scholarship in this context.

Despite the ongoing consensus in the literature that monetary policy may have a significant impact on the short-term economic growth and prices, its long-term effects may also be limited to influencing prices alone. However, there is an ongoing and substantial discourse pertaining to the mechanisms through which monetary policy shocks are conveyed. Divergent viewpoints exist regarding the importance assigned to various factors such as money, credit, asset prices , interest rates, exchange rates, and the roles played by commercial banks and other financial institutions (Taylor, 1995). These disparities are also present even in studies relating to developed nations for an extended period (Kamin, Turner, & Van't dack, 1998). In lower-income countries like Nigeria, the process is even seemed more ambiguous

(Montiel,1991). Since the establishment of the Central Bank Act in 1958, it has taken on the crucial role of designing and executing monetary policy to boost economic growth and ensure price stability. The activity of the apex bank led to the development of money market within the country, which has helped in balancing liquidity in the market (Bordo, 2007). In response to the global financial crisis that originated in the U.S.A in 2007, the CBN largely embraced a policy of monetary easing meant to tackle issues of liquidity shortages among the commercial banks. The easing policy started from September 2008 to September 2010 (CBN). After restoring stability and ensuring that there is surplus liquidity within the banking system, the CBN then adopted the tightening monetary policy stance from September 2010 to December 2011. Initially, the measures adopted was easing monetary policy and fixing substantial fiscal expansion. However, the policies showed a significant pressure on external reserves, exchange rates, and inflation. In response to these challenges, the CBN changed its monetary policy stance from easing to tightening from September 2010 to December 2011, as reported by the CBN. However, despite the growth recorded, some concerns were raised about the sustainability and whether the growth is inclusive. This is owing to the level of poverty among the population despite the various efforts undertaken (African Union Summit, 2023). Based on this, this study shall try to provide relevant answers to the following questions: What is the effect of money supply shocks on price dynamics in Nigeria? What is the effect of interest rate shock on price dynamics in Nigeria? What is the impact of money supply shock on output in Nigeria?

The remaining part of the paper is organized as follows: section two discusses the literature review; the conceptual literature, the theoretical literature, and the empirical literature. Sectionthree discusses the methodology which includes the theoretical f ramework, model specification, data source, and estimation techniques for the study. Section Four discusses the empirical results obtained from the data analysis based on the methodology proposed in section three. Section five summarizes, concludes, and provides policy recommendations based on the study.

**Literature Review**

A theory that can be used to explain the effect of monetary policy shocks on output and price is the Quantity Theory of Money developed by Fisher (1911), The theory expresses that a functional relationship exists between the supply of money in an economy, the general price level and output. This theory is mainly based on the assumption that; the velocity of money is relatively stable over time, which implies that changes in the money supply will lead to a proportionate change in the nominal GDP (P*Y); in this case, the long-run changes matter most, this is because the short-term fluctuations in velocity and real output can overshadow the relationship between money supply and price level; the economy operates at full employment which implies that the real output (Y) is at its potential level. Based on these assumptions, the quantity theory of money suggests that changes in the money supply will directly affect the price level. If the money supply increases while the velocity of money and real output remain constant, the price level will rise. Conversely, if the money supply decreases, it will lead to a fall in the price level. The New Keynesian Theory was also developed by Fischer (1977) as an advancement to the existing theories, the new Keynesian theory is a set of macroeconomic models that combine the Keynesian insights with the modern economic theory, particularly microeconomic foundations. These models are used in explaining the relationships between money, output, and prices, with a focus on short-run fluctuations. The theory assumes that households and firms have rational expectations. Also, the new Keynesian theory assumes that there is imperfect competition in price and wage settings to help explain why prices and wages can become sticky, which means they do not adjust instantaneously to changes in economic conditions. Wage and price stickiness, and the other market failures present in New Keynesian models, imply that the economy may fail to attain full employment. Therefore, New Keynesians argue that macroeconomic stabilization by the government (using fiscal policy) and the central bank (using monetary policy) can lead to a more efficient macroeconomic outcome than a laissez-faire policy would. The basic tenet of New Keynesian theory is that market imperfections, particularly price and wage stickiness, along with rational expectations, are crucial for explaining short-run economic fluctuations. This theory emphasizes the role of monetary policy in managing these fluctuations and considers the impact of policy actions on output, inflation, and employment in the short term.

Despite these criticisms, the new Keynesian models provide a framework for understanding and explaining short-run economic fluctuations, such as recessions and economic booms. In addition, these models help central banks assess the potential impact of changes in interest rates and other policy instruments on inflation, output, and employment in the short run. (The two theories- Quantity Theory of Money and New Keynesian Theory- discussed here should sequential)

**Empirical Literature**

Several investigations have been conducted on the effect of monetary policy shock over the years and with structural econometric approaches. Using quarterly data collected from the G5 countries (US, Euro area, Japan, UK and Canada), Sousa and Zaghini. (2007) investigated the impact of monetary policy shock has on inflation and output by employing the Structural VAR (SVAR). The study used data on the real GDP, monetary aggregate, consumer price index, average short-term interest rate, and commodities price index over the period from 1980Q1to 2001Q4 and the methodology was employed as the econometrics tools of analysis. The study revealed a decline in output temporarily after a monetary policy shock and the downward effect reached a peak within the second year. However, the price level rose permanently as a result of monetary policy shocks.

Ngalawa and Viegi (2011) examined the impact of monetary policy shocks in Malawi. Monthly historical data from 1988M1 to 2005M12 on real output, exchange rates, consumer price level, bank rate, commercial bank lending rate, aggregate money supply, and reserve money was used in estimating technique of Amisano and Gianini (1997) type of Structural VAR (SVAR) model in the empirical analysis. The study showed that output responded inversely to monetary policy shock and interest rate but the effect switched over the medium run. Monetary policy shocks also caused the consumer price to permanently rise above the steady state.

Similarly, Olayiwola and Ogun (2018), investigated the impact of monetary policy shocks on output and prices in Nigeria. They used the quarterly time series data from 1986Q1 to 2016Q4, which included variables such as real GDP, inflation rate, interest rates, money supply, investment, and real effective exchange rate. The study employed the two-step Autoregressive Distributive Lag (ARDL) model to assess whether monetary policy actions had differing effects on output and prices in Nigeria under varying economic conditions, they segmented the data into recession and boom periods. This segmentation was based on identifying business cycle components, with the boom period characterized by positive growth in output and prices, and the recession period marked by negative growth in output and prices. The findings indicated that in the long run, monetary policy shocks positively impacted output during boom periods with a negative impact during recession periods. However, the significant effect observed during boom periods outweighed the effect during recession periods. Additionally, the study revealed that monetary policy shocks had a more pronounced impact on prices during recession periods compared to boom periods.

Papadamou et al. (2019) investigated

the effects of the unconventional monetary policy on output and inflation. The study utilized meta-analysis techniques, compiling a set of sixteen published studies that investigated the impact of expansionary non- conventional Quantitative Easing (QE) shocks on output and inflation, as well as the extent of variability attributable to various moderators. Furthermore, their selection specifically concentrated on empirical studies that utilized Vector AutoRegression (VAR) models. Their findings showed that studies that employed Factor-Augmented VAR (FAVAR) specifications, the impact of a monetary policy shock was consistent in raising output across all timeframes, but with a short-term increase in prices.

However, in studies conducted in European countries and those that utilized sign-identified SVAR models, monetary policy shocks were found to decrease output. In contrast, price levels decreased in studies employing recursive-identified SVAR models.

Also in Australia, Bucker (2020) studied the effects of monetary policy shocks on inflation, unemployment and output covering the periods 1994Q1 to 2018Q4. The study used data on the cash rate, unemployment rate, consumer price index, and real GDP and the Jordà (2005) identification approach was used in estimating a Structural Vector AutoRegressive (SVAR) model. The outcome of the study revealed that a monetary policy shock to the cash rate reduces inflation and output growth, and raises the unemployment rate.

Deheri (2021) examined the effects of monetary policy on output and inflation in India. The study made use of time series data on the Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), CPI, and Call Money Rate (CMR) that covered the periods from January 2001 to March 2020. Following the approach of Primiceri (2005), the study estimated a Time- Varying Parameter Vector AutoRegressive (TVP-VAR) model and revealed that output responds negatively to monetary policy shocks whereas the consumer price index first rises but declines after reaching a peak and hence decline negatively in the longer horizon.

Herwartz et al. (2022), in the US analyzed the effect of monetary policy shock on interest rates, output and inflation. The study utilized the quarterly time series data from 1965Q1 until 2008Q3. The GDP deflator was used to proxy the inflation rate while the one-year government bond represented the interest rate. Using the Smets and Wouters (2007) methodology for identification, they employed a proxy Structural VAR (SVAR) model. The results also indicated that between 1973 and 1979, monetary policy, on average, had an impact of approximately 2.2 to 2.4 percent on annual inflation.

Additionally, during the Volcker disinflation period that began in 1979Q4, the benchmark structural model reveals that the Federal Reserve's policy measures effectively reduced the GDP deflator by -12.26 percentage points within three years, specifically until 1982Q3. Furthermore, apart from the initial quarter following the shock, it was observed that the identified monetary policy shock contributed less than 10% of the forecast error variance of the output gap.

Toriola et al. (2022), analyzed the relationship between monetary policy shock and economic growth from 1986 to 2918 in Nigeria with an annual data on money supply, inflation, interest rate, and real GDP by utilizing the Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model. Their study indicated that monetary policy shock to money supply raised output permanently above the normal level and inflation rate rise on the impact but the effect declined negatively over the horizon Olayiwola and Ogun (2018) adopted a linear-based model which doesn't conform to the standard literature on studies related to shocks. Moreover, separating the time frame into regimes and adopting the ARDL model in their study is inappropriate; models such as the regime-switching models are designed to handle this nature of the problem.

Toriola (2022), employed the inflation rate is alongside GDP, money supply, and interest rate and this would have made the result of the study unreliable. The CPI should have been used instead since inflation is generated from it and since GDP, money supply, and interest rate are not stationary variables. Cointegration analysis should have helped to shape the analysis by revealing if the variables (GDP, money supply, and interest rate) should be transformed into stationary states like the inflation rate. In this study, however, a Vector Error Correction (VEC) model is employed to resolve this problem; the long-run vector in the VEC model accommodates the variables in their level form while the short-run adjustment part of the model combines both the level and the difference form of the variables in the system.

Moreover, most of the studies such as Sousa & Zaghini (2007), Bucker (2020), and Herwartz et al. (2022) were carried out in advanced countries and their choice of structural identification may not fit in developing countries like Nigeria. Lags in decision-making in countries with developed financial markets will differ to some extent from those with sluggish growth. Instead of adopting these identification approaches, this study employed the generalized impulse response function in factorizing the distinct response of the output and price to the monetary policy shock in Nigeria; this approach disregards the arrangement of the variables in the system and gives a clearer picture of impulse response analysis.

## Materials and Methods

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the neoclassical theory of money, originally developed by Pigou, (1943) and subsequently modified by economists such as Patinkin, (1954), Friedman, (1956), and recently modified by Brunner and Meltzer, (1968). This theory is also referred to as the monetary transmission mechanism, which illustrates the pathway that monetary policy influences overall spending and real economic output. Conversely, this theory establishes that the instruments of monetary policy, such as the money supply and interest rates, can impact real economic variables like inflation, unemployment, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through a transmission channel. The mathematical representation of this theoretical framework, as originally presented by Patinkin, (1954), is depicted with four equations labelled as 3.1-3.4.

$$Y_0 = F\left(Y_0, \frac{M}{P}, r\right) \quad \textit{commodity equilibrium} \tag{3.1}$$

$$N^d\left(Y_0, \frac{W}{P},\right) = N^s\left(\frac{W}{P}\right) \quad \textit{labour equilibrium} \tag{3.2}$$

$$B^d\left(Y_0, \frac{M}{P}, r\right) = B^s\left(Y_0, \frac{M}{P}, r\right) \quad \textit{bond equilibrium} \tag{3.3}$$

$$PL\left(Y_0, \frac{M}{P}, r\right) = M_0 \quad \textit{money equilibrium} \tag{3.4}$$

In the system, F is full employment, $Y_0$ is real output or income, M/P is the real money balance, P is price level, r stands for interest rate, $N^d$ is labour demand, $N^S$ is labour supply, $B^d$ is the demand for a bond, $B^s$ is supply of bonds, PL is money demand or liquidity preference, and $M_0$ is money supply. The uniqueness of this theory from the quantity theory of money is the major variables involved in the monetary policy action, money supply (*M*) and interest rate ®, thereby making it free from the criticisms that the quantity theory of money was subjected to. Therefore, this theory will be used as the theoretical underpinning of this study.

## Model specification

The model that was utilized for this study was derived from the theoretical model stated above, with modification. This study will make use of the four-variable vector error-correction (VEC) model of money supply, real output, price, and the interest rate, as shown in equation 3.5, to analyze the effectiveness of the monetary policy on inflation and output growth.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \Delta\log(Y_t) \\ \Delta\log(P_t) \\ \Delta\log(M_t) \\ \Delta\log(r_t) \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \\ a_{31} & a_{32} \\ a_{41} & a_{42} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & \beta_{13} & \beta_{14} \\ 0 & 1 & \beta_{23} & \beta_{24} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \log(Y_{t-1}) \\ \log(P_{t-1}) \\ \log(M_{t-1}) \\ \log(r_{t-1}) \end{bmatrix} + \sum_{i=1}^{p} \Gamma_i \Delta Z_{t-i} + v_t \qquad (3.5$$

In equation 3.5, *Y* is the gross domestic product, *P* represents the consumer price index, *M* is the broad money supply, and *r* is the interest rate. The left-hand side vector also contains the change in the log of variables which represents their growth form since a change in the log of variables implies the growth of that variable. Therefore, $\Delta$ log ($Y_t$) is the output growth, $\Delta$ log

($P_t$) is the inflation rate,

$\Delta$ log ($M_t$) is the money supply growth rate, and $\Delta$ log ($r_t$) is the interest rate returns. It can be noticed there are that two cointegrating vectors in the beta matrix; the first row depicts GDP as a function of money supply and interest rate in the long run while the second row depicts price as a function of money supply and interest rate in the long run respectively. The alpha matrix is the vector of error-correction terms that clearly explains the short-run adjustment of the variables in the system.

**Data Source**

This study used annual data that covered the period of 41 years (1981-2021). The data on money supply (M2) and GDP (GDP at 2010 constant price) were sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin while data on interest rate (lending rate) and consumer price index (CPI) were directly collected from the World Bank Development Index (WDI).

**Estimation Techniques**

**Unit Root Test**

Unit root tests are performed to determine whether a time series variable is non-stationary or possesses a unit root. Non-stationary time series data can create challenges in statistical analysis and modelling, and unit root tests are essential for several reasons such as avoiding spuriosity results, accurate forecasting, and long-run relationships. There are several types of this test but this study used the augmented dickey fuller and the Phillips-Perron types.

**Cointegration Test**

The Johansen approach to testing for cointegration is employed in this study. This is a more comprehensive approach that allows for the testing of multiple variables simultaneously and estimates the number of cointegrating vectors. It's more flexible and widely used for multivariate time series data.

**Innovation Accounting**

In literature, innovation accounting includes the impulse response, the forecast error variance decomposition, and the historical decomposition analyses (Rao, 2012). Moreover, compute innovation accounting can be computed in different ways such as structural identification, Cholesky factorization, diagonal, and the generalized approach. However, the generalized impulse response approach of innovation accounting was utilized in this study because its outcome remains unaltered irrespective of how the variables were arranged in the model (Lanne & Nyberg, 2016).

**Granger Causality Test**

In the literature, the relevance of employing the Granger causality test is not to establish a definitive cause-and-effect relationship but to identify statistical associations and to assess whether one variable provides additional predictive information about another time series variable (Lutkepohl & Kratzig, 2004). Therefore, this study employed the VEC-based Granger causality test to examine the direction of the causality between money supply and price in Nigeria.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 4.1** ***Descriptive statistics***

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | C.V | Max | Min |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y | 37710.5 | 20309.8 | 0.54 | 72393.7 | 16048.3 |
| P | 74.47 | 92.14 | 1.24 | 354.3 | 0.49 |
| M | 8126.4 | 11875.7 | 1.46 | 40318.3 | 14.47 |
| r | 17.45 | 4.81 | 0.28 | 31.65 | 8.92 |

Table 4.1 depicts the descriptive statistics for log of GDP, log of price, log of money supply, and the log of interest rate. It can be seen from the result that the variables are averagely greater than zero. Also, the money supply for over four decades is far less than the total GDP on average. The coefficient of variation statistics revealed that GDP has more variation than the price and reflects that there are occurrences of inflation more often than there is the business cycle in the economy. Also, the money supply is shown to have more variation than the interest rate with a value of 1.46 greater than 0.28; this implies that the monetary authority employed the money supply as a tool than the interest rate in policy analysis.

## Unit Root Test

**Table 4.2:** *Unit-root test results*

| Variable | term | ADF level | ADF diff. | Phillips-Perron level | Phillips-Perron diff. | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| log(Y) | c | -0.951 | -3.979*** | 0.442 | -3.979*** | I(1) |
| | c & t | -1.891 | -3.877** | -3.021 | -3.735** | I(1) |
| log(P) | c | -1.627 | -3.690*** | -1.684 | -2.920* | I(1) |
| | c & t | -0.985 | -4.002** | -0.885 | -2.974 | I(1) |
| log(M) | c | -1.059 | -4.089*** | -0.883 | -4.059*** | I(1) |
| | c & t | -0.089 | -4.214*** | -0.800 | -4.178** | I(1) |
| log(r) | c | -2.154 | -5.765*** | -2.229 | -5.800*** | I(1) |
| | c & t | -1.684 | -6.286*** | -1.677 | -6.287*** | I(1) |

****$p < 0.01$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.1$*

Table 4.2, depicts the unit root test results. Two different assumptions were taken into consideration while conducting the tests. The first assumption is that only constant is present in the variables while the second assumption holds that trend and constant are present in the testing procedure. It can be seen from Table 4.2 that results from both the ADF and the Phillips Perron test revealed that the variables are not stationary but become stationary after the first difference. Therefore, the study can proceed tio test for cointegration among the variables from the implication of these results; in this study, the Johansen approach is adopted to conduct the analysis.

### Lag selection

**Table 4.3:** *Summary of lag order selection criteria results*

| Endogenous | Exogenous | LR | FPE | AIC | SC | HQ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| log(G), log(E), log(P), log(T) | Constant | 2* | 2* | 2* | 1* | 2* |

* Indicates lag order selected by the criterion

The outcome of the Johansen cointegration test is dependent on the lag length choice used in the testing procedure; hence several statistical decision criteria (Likelihood ratio, final prediction error, Akaike information criterion, Schwarz criterion, and Hannan Quinn) are used to optimally select the choice of lag. This is performed on several level VAR models and the choice of lag selected is therefore used in performing the cointegration test. The summary of the lag selection criteria results is also

presented in Table 4.3. It can be deduced from the result in Table 4.3 that the selection criteria, except the Schwarz information criterion which selects lag 1, agree on lag 2 as the optimal lag. This implies that a VEC model with lag 1 is more appropriate in the testing procedure and estimation; it

is likely to fit the data generation process better than when lag zero is used.

### Johansen Cointegration Test

**Table 4.4:** *Cointegration tests summary*

| Test type | Data trend; | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | None | Linear | Linear | Quadratic |
| const. | no | yes | Yes | yes | yes |
| trend | no | no | No | yes | yes |
| Trace | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Max-Eig. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

The Johansen cointegration test can be conducted with assumptions involving solely the intercept, exclusively a trend, or a combination of both within the cointegration space. The results of the test based on all these assumptions are summarized in Table 4.4. shows that there is enough evidence for the null hypotheses of no cointegration are rejected.

### Long-run and Short-run Adjustment Analysis

**Table 4.5:** *Long-run and adjustment coefficients estimate*

| Matrice | log(Y) | log(P) | log(M) | log(r) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *B* | 1 | | -0.266*** | 0.423*** |
| | | | (0.018) | (0.162) |
| | | 1 | -0.505*** | -2.740*** |
| | | | (0.054) | (0.501) |
| ??' | -0.254*** | -0.043 | -0.213 | 0.249 |
| | (0.047) | (0.132) | (0.140) | (0.186) |
| | -0.058*** | -0.114*** | -0.125*** | 0.050 |
| | (0.013) | (0.125) | (0.039) | (0.052) |

*Note*: () contains the t-stat

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

Table 4.5 shows the long-run coefficient estimates and the adjustment coefficient estimates from the VEC model. The result showed that money supply and interest rate significantly impacted output and price in the long run respectively. All things being equal, a percent rise in money

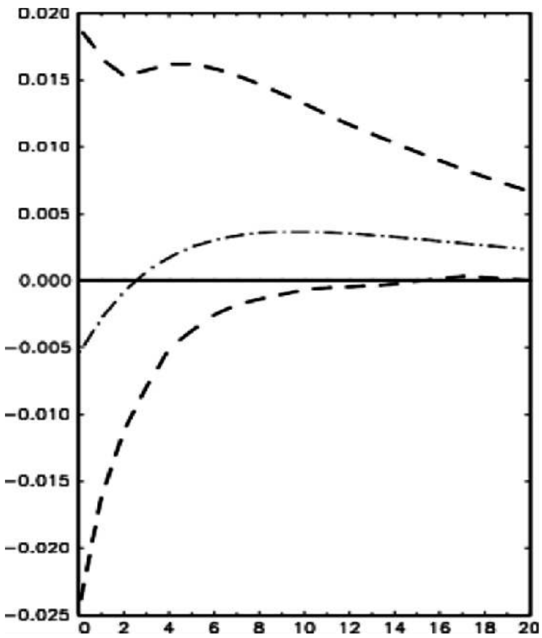
supply by one percent resulted into

0.27% increase in output in the long

possibility of long- run relationship(s) among the variables, the results of the Trace and the Maximum-Eigen statistics agreed. In other words, the run. Also, it is also evident that if the interest rate increases by a percent, the output will fall on average by about 0.42% in the long run. From the second long-run vector, it showed that if money supply increases by one percent, the price level will consequently rise by about 0.51% in the long run. A percent rise in the interest rate is shown to result in a 2.7% rise in the price level in the long run.The alpha coefficient illustrates how long-run relationships contribute significantly to the short-run output movement. The result revealed that about 64.4% of disequilibrium in output is corrected within a year in the good market when GDP falls bellows its steady state (normal level) and about 5.8% is corrected if the price also falls below its normal level in the money market. Also, the result showed that about 11% disequilibrium in price level is corrected within a year when it falls below its normal level.

**Innovation Accounting Analysis**

**Figure 4.1:** ***Response of output to monetary policy shock to money supply and interest rate***



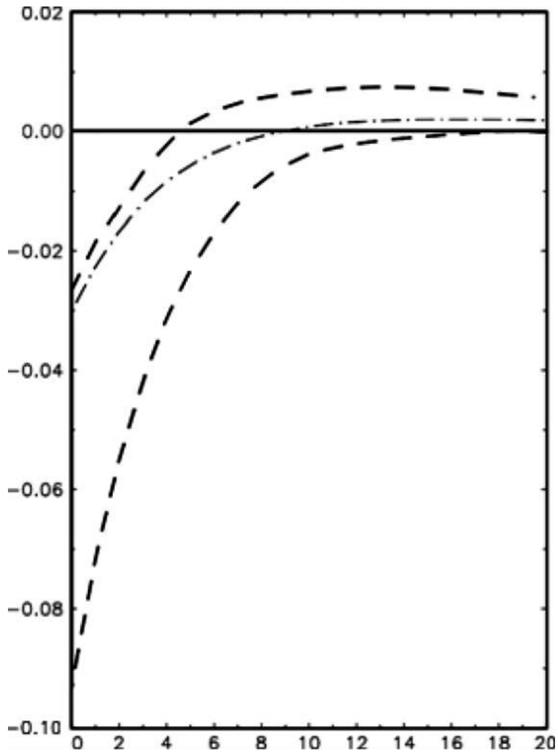
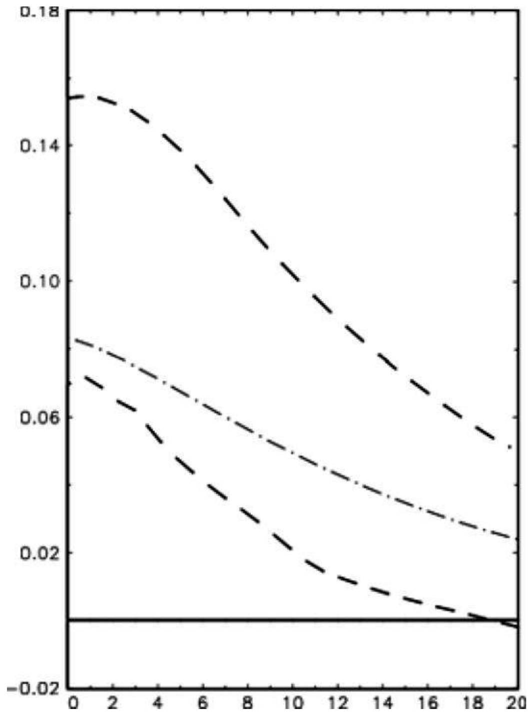




Figure 4.1 depicts the response of output to monetary policy shock to money supply and interest rate respectively. It can be seen that monetary shock to money supply has an insignificant effect on output; however, in line with the study of Ngalawa and Viegi (2011), Bucker (2021), and Deheri (2021), monetary policy shock to interest rate caused output to fall by about 3% below its steady state on the impact and the effect gradually decline but later becomes insignificant before the fifth period.

**Figure 4.2:** ***Response of price to monetary policy shock to money supply and interest rate***



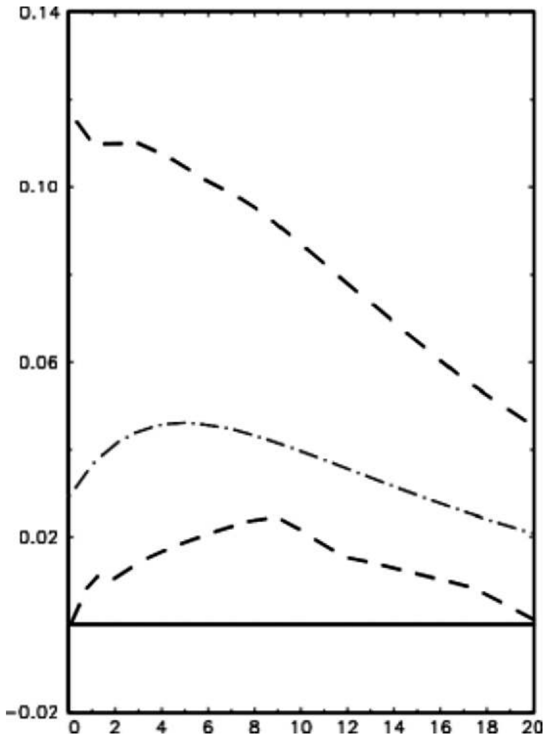




Figure 4.2 depicts the response of price level to monetary policy shock, to money supply and interest rate respectively. The graphs show how the response of monetary shock, to money supply and interest rate has an s ignificanteffect on price. Contemporaneously, monetary policy shock to the money supply (i.e., expansionary monetary policy) caused the price to rise by about 8% above its normal level and the effect gradually vanished. This result is consistent with the findings in the studies of Souza and Zaghini, (2007) and Toriola et al., (2022). Also, monetary policy shock to interest rate (contractionary monetary policy) caused the price to rise by 3% above its normal level on the impact and the effect further rose until reaching a peak of about 4.6% and gradually declined towards the steady state. This result corroborates with studies like, Ngalawa and Viegi (2011) and Toriola et al. (2022) but is contrary to that of Bucker (2020).

## Causality Analysis

**Table 4.6:** *Causality test results summary*

| Null hypothesis | Short-run | | Long-run | | Joint | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Chi-sq | Prob. | Chi-sq | Prob. | Chi-sq | Prob. |
| M does not Granger Cause P | 4.400 | 0.036 | 3.036 | 0.081 | 6.422 | 0.040 |
| P does not Granger Cause M | 2.135 | 0.144 | 4.357 | 0.037 | 5.417 | 0.067 |

***Note*:** The null hypothesis is rejected with a lower probability value

Table 4.6 shows the summary of the causality test result between money supply and price. It can be deduced from the result that there is a unidirectional causality between money supply and price in the short-run; money supply is shown to granger cause price in the short run. however, in the long run, there is a bidirectional causality between the variables. Moreover, the result of the joint test revealed strong evidence that money supply and price can predict each other's direction but money supply has the strongest evidence.

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations.

This study examined the impact of monetary policy shocks on output and price dynamics in Nigeria from 1981 to 2021. Specifically, the study examined the effect of money supply and interest rate shocks on output and price dynamics respectively. Some theories and some related empirical studies are discussed in the literature reviews section. This study is anchored on the neoclassical theory of money of according to Pigou (1943) and the model specification for the study is built upon it with modification. To achieve the objectives set for this study, a four-variable VEC model of money supply, output, price, money supply, and interest rate was employed as an econometric tool of analysis after using the Johansen technique with an appropriate lag to test for the long-run relationship among the variables in the model. The study showed that a percentage rise in money supply raised output and price by 0.27% and 0.51% in the long run. Also, the result revealed that a percentage rise in interest rate raised prices by 2.74% but reduced output by 0.42% in the long run respectively. The innovation accounting result showed that money supply shock insignificantly impacted output but raised prices significantly by about 8% above the steady state. On the other hand, the interest rate shock significantly raised prices by about 3% above the steady state but caused output to decline by about 3% on the impact. Moreover, the Granger causality test result showed that the money supply granger cause price in the short run but both are bio-directional in the long run.

Based on the empirical findings, this study, arrived at the following conclusion; First, positive long-run relationship exists between output and money supply and an indirect long-run relationship between output (GDP) and interest rate in Nigeria. Also, this study concludes that there is a positive long-run relationship between price, money supply, and interest rate in Nigeria. Further, expansionary monetary policy shock to money supply had a significant impact on price but not output in Nigeria. In addition, expansionary monetary policy shock to interest rate caused output (GDP) to fall and prices to rise in Nigeria. Lastly, monetary policy actions on money supply can predict short-run and long-run inflation occurrences in Nigeria.

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

The two monetary variables, the money supply and the interest rate, are shown to significantly influence price dynamics. Therefore, the monetary authority should formulate policies to optimally regulate money in circulation to abate price fluctuations and maintain growth-driven interest rates. In other words, both the interest rate and money supply should be properly managed to ensure internal balance. There is a need for the central bank to set an appropriate interest rate to work in line with the situation of the country. By adjusting this rate, the central bank can influence the short-term interest rates in the economy. When the central bank lowers the interest rate, it becomes more attractive to borrow money, leading to lower interest rates in the broader financial system. Therefore, by lowering the policy rate which stimulates borrowing and spending, the aggregate output will rise. Also, the Nigerian monetary authority can use forward guidance to manage expectations in financial markets by indicating the likely path of monetary policy over an extended period to reduce the uncertainty and volatility impacts on the economy. Moreover, there is a need for policy coordination to be adopted by the policymakers in Nigeria. The complementation of fiscal policyand monetary policy coordination between central banks and other fiscal authorities can help to mitigate varying impact of monetary policy shocks. For instance, employing fiscal stimulus measures during economic downturns to offset the negative effects of monetary tightening. By implementing these guidelines and policies, central banks and regulatory authorities can better manage and mitigate the potential negative effects of monetary policy shocks on financial markets and the broader economy.

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