

Nigeria's Population Politics and Its Janus-Headed Implications: A Critical Analysis

Mary Chinelo Ubabudu

Associate Professor

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences.

Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Kaduna, Nigeria

Adekola Raheem Bakare

Major General, Nigerian Army Welfare and Logistics Group (NAWLG) Abuja.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijbmr.2013/vol11n53956>

Published June 10, 2023

Citation: Ubabudu M.C. and Bakare A.R. (2023) Nigeria's Population Politics and Its Janus-Headed Implications: A Critical Analysis, *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, Vol.11, No.5, pp.39-56

ABSTRACT: *The strength of a country is measured through certain indices, some of which are military strength, economy, geography, and population. However, the population can become a tricky indicator because of the possibility of its Janus-headed manifestations. This context is most relevant in countries experiencing population explosion without the natural and material resources to cope with it. The trend is particularly evident in Africa, particularly the Nigerian situation, where attempts at addressing the explosion through policy have failed, which further proves that the Nigerian population explosion is a typical Janus-headed scenario. There is no known research on this discourse as scholars either focussed on the factors that promote population growth or how it affects the economy, without examining the Janus-headed tricky indicator of population explosion which prompted this discourse. In this context, the research paper evaluates the Nigerian population explosion politics as a Janus-headed dilemma and seeks an answer to this question: "Does Nigeria's population provide opportunities or challenges"?*

KEYWORDS; Nigeria, population, population explosion, Janus-headed dilemma

INTRODUCTION

The population is one of the most important indices for measuring the relevance of a country in the comity of nations. Among other indices are military strength, technological advancement, economic visibility, and geographic potential. A nation's population is measured by the number of people living within its borders. It is also a critical aspect in determining how well a government's socio-economic and political processes, such as education, good road network,

transportation system, hospitals, electricity, and pipe-borne water function for people to live comfortably and productively. Countries with rapid population growth without the attendant social infrastructure are always adversely affected negatively. Because of the delayed social and economic development, these countries are poorly equipped to mitigate or adapt to environmental threats (UNDESA, 2021). Countries, where the population is growing rapidly, tend to have high levels of poverty and hunger and are faced with other serious challenges that affect their progress (Adewole, 2012).

Development cannot be achieved without eradicating poverty since poverty is a major attribute of underdevelopment. No nation in the 20th century made considerable progress in moving from “developing” to “developed” status until it first regulated its population density (Ryerson (2010), “since in most circumstances, population growth leads to greater population density” (Kolawole, 2011); as such, growth rate needs to be managed to achieve developmental goals (Dominic, Oluwatoyin & Fagbeminiyi, 2016).

Shreds of evidence from Nigeria show that the number of people in poverty rose from 27 percent to 46 percent in 1985, before the introduction of a population control policy, based on four-child per woman, by Ibrahim Babangida’s administration. The population decreased to 42 percent in 1992 sequel to the enactment of the policy but rose significantly to 67 percent in 1996. By the end of 1999, it was estimated that more than 70 percent of Nigerians lived in abject poverty (Ogwumike, 2000).

Omohan and Malaki (2017) admit nothing was achieved through the policy, blaming the failure on decision-makers to appreciate the difficulties associated with attempts at changing traditional and internalized attitudes, habits, beliefs, and behavior of people. Their position was supported by Renne (1996) who traced the failure of the policy to distrust fueled by local suspicion from broader political and economic concerns. Dickson, Nuralga, and Oluwagbamila (2020); Dominic, et.al (2016) affirm that the rapid resultant population expansion made it difficult the provision efficient personnel, facilities, and financial resources for the maintenance of standard health services. Campbell (2018), former chairman of the National Population Commission (NPC) blamed Nigeria’s inability to evolve a workable population strategy that could limit births, on the lack of a workable strategy.

Conceptual clarifications

Population

Frejka (1973) defines the population of an area as the total number of all individuals alive at a particular point in time. Hornby (2010) sees population as the total number of people who live in a particular area, city, or country. For this paper, the population is a sum of people living within a territory over a particular time and space. But in addition to this simple definition, it is pertinent to

stress that population is a spatial element as much as it is also an economic, political, and social phenomenon.

The literature on population is interesting but it can also easily leave one depressed. Nigel Williams wrote about the “population bomb” in 2008. The same year, *Science* has a small box piece entitled “Return of the population bomb” (*Science*, 2008: 655). This was about 40 years after the biologist, Paul Ehrlich, wrote a book with the same title. In 2010 Goldstone wrote about "The New Population Bomb" (Goldstone, 2010). The fears of global overpopulation persist, and Africa has of course not been left out, as the continent's population is feared to reach 2.5 billion in 2050 (Leithead and Onyiego, 2017). This perhaps informs Jurczynska and Kuang (2017) to affirm that, the world's population growth in the coming decades will be predominantly in urban Asia and Africa. World Bank (2016) noted that the world average is 2.5 with almost all of the increase coming from Africa and Asia.

Statement of the problem

This paper analyzes Nigeria’s population growth and its implications. This is because Nigeria’s unrivaled population growth is not only alarming but also of concern given that more people would be added to the already bloated population by 2050. This is the crux of the matter, and population explosion should no longer be treated with a kid’s glove because of its Janus -headed dilemma in determining whether the population is a blessing or a curse.

Public Policy and the Nigerian exploding population

Public policy is at the heart of popular democracy as how the government upholds order or responds to the needs of its population by its constitution and cannot be downplayed. For a country to be termed democratic, policy decisions must be exercised by the people (Dahl, 1998), and not exclusively by the ruling elite, as is the case with Nigerian democracy. This might have accounted for the failure of the former military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida’s attempted to impose a population policy of one woman, and four children on the nation in 1988.

Nigeria does not have any strong guiding policies or national planning as it is obtainable elsewhere (Israel, China, India, Sweden, and Finland to mention a few) to curtail such a frightening issue. The Olusegun Obasanjo administration introduced a new policy in 2003 called “Nigeria policy on population for sustainable development”, despite these attempts, Nigeria’s population continues to expand, demonstrating that the country’s policies are weak and puerile. Iheonu and Urama (2019) opine that it was a clear indication of the ineffectiveness of these policies and programs, which is attributable to corruption, high-level inequality in income distribution, low literacy rate, poor skill set, political instability, and poor leadership.

Nigeria

Nigeria with an estimated population of 217,862 million (World Meter, 2022), is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa with an area of 923,765 km². The growth rate is 2.53, the birth rate is 34.19, the fertility rate is 4.62, and the projection for 2050 is 390 million people (World Meter, 2022). It is a country with over 500 ethnic groups and numerous languages. It gained independence from Britain on October 1, 1960. In the 62 years and a few months that Nigeria has existed, numerous censuses have been undertaken. Censuses were taken in a limited area of Lagos Island, and part of the mainland in 1866, 1871, and 1896. In 1911 and 1921, many towns and cities were counted. Regarding the 1931 census, the Northern and Southern protectorates varied. However, both were largely based on estimates (NPC, 1998).

As the Second World War raged, no effort was made to take a census in 1941. The census was conducted in 1952/53 which was detailed but probably underestimated Nigeria's population. As part of the celebrations of the first of October 1960 independence of Nigeria, the 1962 census was conducted (Iro, 1987). As a result of the nullification of the 1962 census, another one was conducted in 1963 (Ekanem, 1972). A similar situation occurred in 1973 when the census results were unsatisfactory (NPC, 1998). Nigeria conducted a census and a post-enumeration survey in 1991. According to the post-enumeration survey, Nigeria's population was over 89 million people at the time of the 1991 census, with a growth rate of 2.82 and a fertility rate of 5.89 percent. Following the 1991 census, the national population census in 2006 revealed a total of 140,003,542 million people, which the United Nations assessed to be 151,030,400 people in 2009, according to a computation by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2009. Based on a 3.02 percent annual growth rate, the population of Nigeria will double in less than 22 years. The project provided detailed socio-economic and demographic information for both social and economic planning. Information gathered in a population census is critical for national planning and policymaking, as a census almost always involves a complete enumeration of the population (UNDESA, 2021).

The Nigerian population increased from 19 million in 1931 to 45.1 million in 1960, 54.7 million in 1969, 162.2 Million in 2016, 195.9 million in 2018, and 216.746,934 million in 2022. Sasu (2022) affirms that Nigeria's population was estimated at around 216.7 million individuals and demographic projections show that the Nigerian population might experience a constant increase in the next decades that perhaps informs the population estimate from U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base (IDB), to estimate Nigeria population to 219 million people. But population growth will make it difficult for the masses to improve the quality of their health, education, and living standards (Dominic et.al. 2016).

Sola, Komolafe, Olawale, and Luminous (2019) believe that most Nigerians would slip into extreme poverty when the country's population grows to 2100 million, outpacing economic development by 0.63 percent. As it is rising extreme poverty in Nigeria is rising by six people

every moment while poverty in India is declining. (Editor of the Guardian Newspaper online 2019 cited, Brookings Institution of United States of America).

This figure is outrageously high when compared to the population of the United Kingdom, which handed Nigeria independence in 1960 and which the country normally wishes to imitate. It's worth noting that Britain's population grew from 52 million in 1960 to 68 million in 2021, implying that they only added 16 million people. Their population is just expected to reach 73 million by 2041. It is clear that Nigeria's population needs and deserves urgent attention due to its alarming and unprecedented growth rate, along with the fact that the population is gaining strength and power (Kolawole, 2011). The ability of a country to reap the benefits of a youthful population is highly dependent on its ability to promote young people's health and well-being, provide them with chances for quality education and good work, and remove barriers that hinder them from participating in society (United Nations, 2018; Kharas, McArthur, & Ohno, 2020).

According to the UNFPA (2019), Nigerians have the highest population age dispersion, with 54 percent of the population falling within the age bracket of 15-64 years, 44 percent falling within the age distribution of 0-14, 32 percent falling between 10 and 24 years and only 3 percent falling 65 and above (UNFPA, 2019). Most of the industrialized world, on the other hand, experiences population implosion because the birth rate is below the replacement rate. Europe has a birth rate of 1.5, Japan 1.4, China 1.6, India 2.4, and the United States 1.9. Aside from this, World Bank's (2020) Human Capital Index indicates that Nigeria was ranked 150 out of 157 countries in human capital development and the country will continue to contend with developmental problems if its economy is based on oil and is not diversified. Furthermore, Nigeria ranked 161st out of 189 countries in the 2022 index signifying that Nigeria lacks the productive working population to reap a demographic dividend. Nigeria was placed 157th out of 174 developing countries in United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) for 2017 and among the world's 25 poorest countries. In 2018, Nigeria was named the world's poverty capital with 86.9 million in severe poverty, or 50% of the population thereby overtaking India which has 73 million people (Panchal, 2020).

The daily wage of most Nigerians is less than \$1.25 (N381.25) and a significant population growth rate of 3.2 percent per year whereas the global population growth is 1.05 per year. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report about poverty and inequality from September 2018 to October 2019, affirms that 40% of Nigerians (83 million people) lived below the poverty line of 137.430 nairas (\$381.75) per year while another 25% (53 million) were vulnerable. This is in contrast with one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to end extreme poverty by 2050. The number of Nigerians living below the international poverty line is expected to rise by 12 million in 2019-23 (World Bank Group, 2021).

Statement of the problem

This paper analyzes Nigeria's population growth and its implications. This is because Nigeria's unrivaled population growth is not only alarming but also of concern given that more people would be added to the already bloated population by 2050. This is the crux of the matter, and population explosion should no longer be treated with a kid's glove because of its Janus-headed dilemma in determining whether the population is a blessing or a curse.

Research Questions

Based on the conceptualization of the Janus-headed implications highlights in the previous section as the organization of consent (Simon, 1982p.21) through the production and diffusion of ideologies, this study will respond to the following research questions:

1. What accounts for the uncontrolled population explosion in Nigeria?
2. What are the implications of an unmitigated population explosion in Nigeria?
3. Is there a remedy yet?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Schultz's (1960 and 1961) human capital formation and development which placed a strong emphasis on the use of education as a veritable instrument for building human capital, as well as the Gompertz Model, which has aided nation-states in national planning. Human capital development, through education, training, and skills, is thought to aid the country in managing and sustaining its population, whereas Gompertz Model is thought to aid in planning and implementing population census, as well as developing effective population policies, which are lacking in Nigeria. For proper guidance, maintenance, and sustainability, the Gompertz model was also adopted because it has the capability of analyzing the population pyramids, characteristics, and structures for the immediate and future plan, which is very important in any country. Gompertz's model has assisted many nation-states in the national planning of their country and Nigeria will not be an exception in this regard.

Schultz, 1961; Adeyemi and Ogunsola, 2016 categorized and developed human resources into six categories: (a) health facilities and services; which involves all expenditure that affects life expectancy, strength, stamina, and vigor and vitality of the people (b) on-the-job training which includes old type apprenticeship organized by firms (c) Formally organized education at elementary, secondary school and higher level (d) Study programs for adults that are not in agriculture (e) it involves migration of individual and families to adjust changing job opportunity (factor mobility), (f) Finally, transfer or importation of technical assistance, expertise, and consultants. Human capital development is imperative because Nigeria's high fertility rate, fast population growth, terrorism, banditry, unemployment, and kidnapping, as well as chronic underinvestment in health and education. These all have serious implications for worldwide pandemics, migration, and conflict hence the need to manage them through functional education. Since what looks like a strong correlation between fertility decline and changing age composition

as well as economic growth seems to be education-triggered (Meyerhoff, 2014 cited Lutz,2010). Investing in human capital development is therefore critical as it is targeted at ensuring that the nation's human resources endowment is knowledgeable, skilled, productive, and healthy to enable the optimal exploitation of other resources to produce growth and development Lutz and his team (2010) found that on the average, uneducated Malian women gave birth to almost seven children while the better-educated, the number was about four (Murray, 2015). After all, human capital enhancement through quality education is a critical factor responsible for the massive economic growth and development in East Africa, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). Therefore, expanding educational opportunities, especially for girls and women, can also help to ease demographic pressures related to high fertility and rapid growth (Kim, 2016; Snopkowski and others, 2016; Liu and Raftery, 2020). As educational attainment becomes more and more critical for securing, full and productive employment, and decent work in a competitive global marketplace, ensuring high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education and schooling for all, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, particularly in low-income and lower-middle-income countries with rapidly growing school-age populations (UNDESA,2021).

However, using this human capital development model connotes, that the Nigerian government fulfills the 26 percent budgetary allocation to education as approved by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to close the linkages in the educational system and improve the quality of education in the country, which will translate to the welfare of the citizenry and socio-economic growth of the country. Since economic prosperity is not driven by population size but rather by how a country invests in its human capital and manages its resources (Melesse, 2012). Hence, reaping the maximum potential of this "demographic dividend" requires sufficient improvements in education, health, and gender equality and in access to productive employment and decent work.

It is the sum of a population's health, skills, knowledge, experience, and habits that forms the basis for individual and societal well-being (World Bank, 2018). It enables people to realize their full potential and is the primary factor driving nations' economic growth (World Bank, 2018). There is evidence that low human capital development, wherever it occurs, leads to: "Widespread poverty, corruption, inadequate resources, poorly trained labor supplies, wars and other forms of civil strife such as ethnic cleansing, pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, tribal tensions, and ruinous economic policies which have led to problems of such scope and dimension that it is only governments, African and international, that can mobilize the necessary capital to begin to make headway on these enormous issues." (Roy, 2010:49). Adekoya (2018) and Iheonu and Urama (2019) have shown in their different research studies the implications of human resource underdevelopment to poverty in Nigeria.

Scholars such as Ragan and Lipsey (2005), Behbudi, Mamipour, and Karami (2010); Todaro and Smith (2012); Sarwar, Fakher; Ali and Mudassar, (2013) and Iheonu and Urama (2019) argued that poor human capital levels in sub-Saharan countries including Nigeria have led to several socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment. With human capital development through quality education vis a vis improvement of health facilities, Nigeria will be able to manage its explosive population growth. It is through education that the mindsets, culture, and religious dogmatism of the people are changed and cured for good quality of life so that they will be useful to themselves and contribute to the socio-economic development of the polity. Especially when the goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction, and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system that impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes, and values (Agi & Yellowe,2013). The people will be better informed and sensitized on the importance of education, early marriage and the rate of fertility amongst women and girl children will be reduced drastically and the citizenry will enjoy the dividends of democracy. It can be concluded that an increase in education also results in an improvement in health conditions, as being educated and healthy enables responsible behavior and enhances productivity.

METHODOLOGY

Theory and context come together in the writing of an interpretive claim (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002p.211). Thus, the literature discussed in previous sections provides the context and framework for interpreting the findings of this study and explaining the Janus dilemma of the Nigeria population explosion. Other contextual literature related to the Nigerian government population policy vis a vis global practices were also useful for the interpretation.

2.0. Nigeria Population Explosion: Holistically Assessment

Defining Population explosion is a sudden sharp increase in the number of human beings or species inhabiting a particular country or territory at any point in time with or without adequate resources as well as provisions to cater to their well-being. It is a term used to describe a sudden increase above the current average expansion of the population over time and is usually associated with a cause or causes to change the conditions that determine the current expansion (Robert white 2017 Quora Search Engine). According to Kashyap (2018), a population explosion is a phenomenon when there is a sudden rise in the number of populations in a particular country or region while Obueh (2015) opines that a population explosion happens when there is a dramatic decline in death rates, dramatic rise in birth rates and a consequent sharp increase in the average life expectance. Population explosion has been a major source of concern to demographers, development planners, and even government agents (Ottong, Ering, & Akpanm, 2012) that needs to be addressed to avert its adverse effects.

Nigeria has a limited number of resources to support and sustain its population. The unemployment, joblessness, and poverty levels as well as corruption and vices are massive among over 218 million Nigerian inhabitants, so how much more will it be among 401,315, million?

Although, the Nigerian federal government established and implemented several reforms and programs such as the agricultural transformation action plans, millennium development goals, poverty eradication programs, and sustainable development goals to cushion the effect of poverty and unemployment consequences accruing from population growth but to no avail. To illustrate, between 1972 and 1973 through to 2017 the Federal Government enacted some measures to end poverty and unemployment, including Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); the Green Revolution, the Structural Adjustment Programme, the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFP) and the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) enshrined in the National Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) of 2017 – 2020 among others, but poverty and unemployment persisted unabated. Nigerians live with poverty and unemployment to such an extent that it has become difficult for the government to eradicate it (Adejuwon & Tijani, 2012). Poverty and unemployment are high and, on the rise, affecting communities and workers (Olabode, Adeigbe, Kayode & Owonibi, 2014; IMF, 2014).

Analysis

There is no denying that Nigeria is during a population explosion, with the resultant effects of poverty, unemployment, corruption, religious bigotry, terrorism, banditry, and bad governance. The Independent Newspaper of February 1, 2022, in a write-up by Nyekaa (2022) asserts that “the House of Representatives urged the Federal Government to urgently control population growth with policies necessary to secure a better world, but nothing has been done as the population continues to surge.” Ibrahim (2021) asserts that the popular belief that “Nigeria’s population is a strength that provides a demographic dividend is false,” and that population can only be a strength if the citizenry is educated and healthy, the economy employs them, and households have enough money to buy goods and services produced by businesses. Kazeem (2018) concurs that under some circumstances, a country’s population could be regarded as a strength “but when, as in Nigeria’s case, population growth outpaces public infrastructure and development by far, then it’s a huge red flag.” This is necessary because now, an estimated 90.8 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty of less than \$1.25 (N381.25) a day.

It is on record that above 13 million Nigerian primary school children are not in school (UNESCO, 2018; World Bank, 2018). The United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) findings cited by Iheonu and Urama, (2019) give credence to the claim that about 10.5 million of the country’s children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Most of these children are in Nigeria’s northern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, where Boko Haram insecurity has disrupted academic activities. This is partly a result of rapid population growth among the poorest, which have the lowest access to education (UNESCO 2018 and World Bank 2018). This is despite the sustainable development goal of the “No child should be left behind” campaign.

Currently, Nigeria's population outnumbers the country's resources and necessities of life, such as food, security, water, transportation, schools, and visible projects to meet their demands such as power. Nigeria has an estimated population of over 200 million and an estimated population growth of 402 million people by 2050 and 728 million before the end of this century. However, according to the World Bank (2019), more people will be added to the population by 2050, leaving Nigerians at the crossroads of the population Janus-headed dilemma that prompted this study.

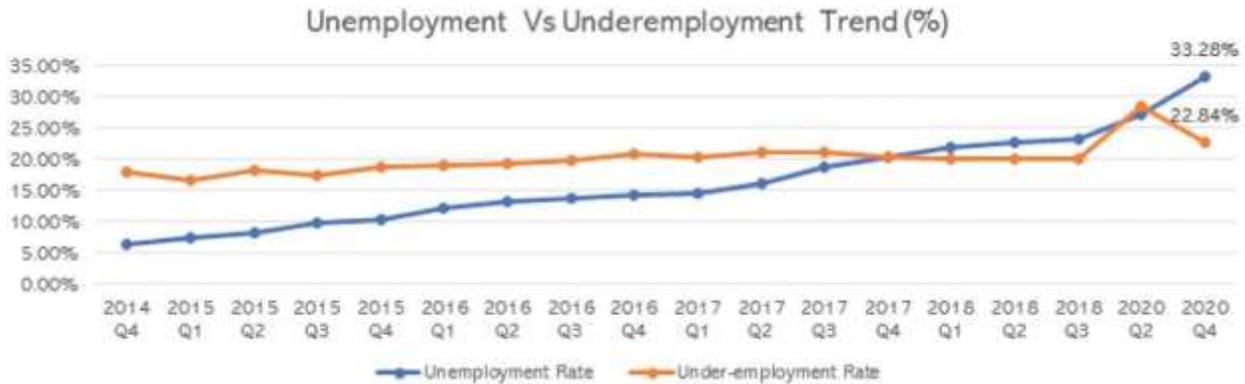
Service delivery is limited in densely populated urban and rural regions, this is at the heart of the problem; in 2015, 30 percent of Nigerians lacked access to potable water, and 70 percent lacked access to basic sanitation facilities (World Bank, 2019). By late 2020s an estimated 33 percent of Nigeria's labor force, including 43 percent of those aged 15-31, was unemployed making it one of the highest unemployment rates in the world (NBS, Labor Force Statistics Quarter 4,2021). Furthermore, with an estimated 90 million people without access to electricity as of 2019, Nigeria tops the World Bank's list of nations with the greatest populations without electricity; the gap has worsened in recent years as population growth has outpaced electrification efforts (World Bank, 2021).

Nigeria's education budget distribution is an embarrassment because of the inadequate human capital development, which adds to the country's population explosion. In 2016, the federal government budgetary allocation was 7.92 percent of GDP, up from 7.40 percent in 2017 and barely 7.04 percent in 2018, much too small to account for the rewards accruing from that sector if managed and supported properly. This contrasts with the 26 percent budgetary allocation to education for sustainable development approved by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Nigeria ranks 58 in Nigeria's Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF), which aims at saving money for future generations and providing stabilization of funds to defend the economy against commodity (oil) price shocks and provide financing for badly needed infrastructures, according to Nyiekaa (2022). Nigeria's ranking is concerning because it is below Angola, an oil-producing African country with a population of 32.8 million and 3.2 billion in assets as of March 2021 whereas Nigeria has a future Generations Fund of only \$2.5 billion and has spent over N1.8 trillion on debts servicing in the first five months of the year 2021, representing approximately 98% of the total revenue generated in the same period.

Nigeria's yearly GDP growth rate is 1.9 percent, while its population growth rate is 2.6 percent per year, with a negative per capita income, a far cry from the 0% rate recommended by renowned academic Thomas Malthus (1798-1823). The rate of population growth in Nigeria defies Thomas Malthus's 1789 paper on the principle of population growth, in which he stated that population increased in geometric progression while food production increased in arithmetic progression. He notes that unless humans can limit reproduction voluntarily through self-restraint, the population would be reduced by catastrophic events such as diseases, starvation, misery, and wars.

Figure 1. Nigeria: Unemployment Vs Underemployment Trend



Source: (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020, p.18).

Between 2014 and 2020, the unemployment rate increased from 7% to 33%. In contrast, the World Bank, 2014; Oladeji, 2014; IMF, 2018; Varrella, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics, 2018 show that poverty and unemployment levels have been steadily rising from 21% and 29.1% respectively from 2000 to 35% and 33.7% in 2014 to 36% and 35.2% in 2016 to 40.1% and 43.1% in 2019. Unemployment in Nigeria has been caused by a large increase in population and a low level of employment, which leaves many unemployed (Akeju & Olanipekun, 2014).

Mittal and Mittal (2013) affirm that the effect of population explosion on the environment could be as striking as seen by changes in Greenhouse gas emissions, rates of soil erosion, and the extinction of species. The threat is that eventually, the ecosystem will become overheated or overused since the limited resources won't be able to support the dramatic growth in population. Other implications include land-space constraints, strain in the environment, extreme poverty, mass unemployment, security problems, hunger, mutinies, civil wars, scarcity, and lack of viable projects / essential basic needs like water, food, shelter as well as a rapid increase in vices amongst others which cannot augur well for any country.

Nigeria's Janus-headed Dilemma

Janus is a mythical Greek god with two faces: one for good or peace, and the other for bad or war. Nigeria's population of above 200 million is Janus-headed because it can be for good or for bad. As far back as 2018, the World Economic Forum's noted that 77 people are added to the population of Lagos State of Nigeria every hour (Muggah & Hill, 2018). Nigeria's population is thus projected to reach about 402 million in 2050, making it the third-largest country in the world after China, and India. Nigeria is currently the seventh most populous country in the world. Indeed, this is a frightening prediction if there is no economic backbone the 402 million people can rely on.

The Positives and Potentialities

One major advantage of the huge population of Nigeria is that the country has one of the biggest markets in the world. The population is currently about 200 million and which is attractive to businesses and investors. Nigeria's massive population remains an attractive market like China, India, and Indonesia among others. Nigeria's population is also one of the country's elements of soft power. Soft power is a non-military power that a country can use to influence other state and non-state actors in the international system. With such a population, Nigeria can negotiate with its neighbours or other countries. Though this has not been the case, Nigeria can use this to protect its national interests. This can be handy in preventing the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa, given that many South African companies – MTN, DSTV, and Shoprite – generate profits from Nigeria's huge market.

Logically, Nigeria's huge population also means that it has a huge labour force. Unlike many countries where there is a challenge replacing many of the working population, Nigeria's population is youthful and capable of satisfying the country's manpower needs.

Negatives and threats

A huge population that is living in poverty and penury, which is not highly educated or ready to take up responsibilities, cannot augur well for the country. The study by Umana (2019) shows that among the negative effects of the population explosion in Nigeria are low education, low living standards, increased cost of living, increased crime rate, overcrowding, anxiety, malnutrition, and health complications. There is a wide difference between quality population and quantity population. A quality population is one that may or may not be huge but one that can function and move the country forward. Israel has a small population but it has a population that imagines and does things that even more populated countries cannot do.

Another challenge with the Nigerian population is that the large number means that there are scarcities. The various institutions and vacancies are minimal and can only cater to a few. It is interesting to stress that sometimes when an organization places an advert for an available job the numbers of people that apply are often far more than expected.

Nigeria's large population has come with its own threats. One of which is pollution. This is why Oramah (2006) submits that an increase in human population over a given geographical area (like that of Nigeria) will lead to human congestion or high population density and air pollution in most cities. Again, when the economic capacity of a country does not match up with its population growth, there is an inherent threat of conflict, resulting in 'the survival of the fittest.' in a jungle! Nigeria is experiencing different dimensions of conflict already. There are bandits and farmers' killings, which is more frequent in recent years.

Anomalies in national planning, early marriages, multiple marriages, the mindsets of the people, denial of rights, including denial of education for the girl child, as well as religious and cultural

dogmatism coherently made Nigeria a dumping ground for products even from developing countries.

Recommendations

1. **First is the prioritization of education:** Without giving education a top priority, Nigeria would remain impoverished with an overburdened population that is disabled. Education is the key to a nation's growth and development, and Nigeria will not be an exception. progress. Many unsuccessful developmental projects including the Ajaokuta Steel Complex, and the Aluminium Smelting Complex, have been attributed to poor management training and inept people in charge of technology transfer programs. Nigeria is the sixth largest crude producer in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (hereafter, OPEC); despite having three public refineries at Warri, Eleme, and Kaduna, it still imports gasoline from other countries to meet domestic demand. Poor educational practices are held responsible for these failures.
2. **Good governance and development at all levels:** Although, economically prosperous nations did not start out with "good governance capabilities". They possessed "growth-creating" governing skills that made it possible for them to maintain and sustain growth. Finding the essential growth-enhancing capabilities thus becomes a task. Nigerians need to start thinking beyond the box and realize that the people they elect to office will determine the nation's future.
Given the pace of population growth, urbanization, climate change, and the coming onstream of petroleum, gas, and other mineral resources — together with achieving structural economic transformation — will require more effective, legal-based, and accountable governments (Richard, 2013).
3. **The third is imperative for long-term plans:** No matter how excellent the State and Federal governments are, they are only able to serve two terms of four years each. In total, eight years. Nigerians must now put in place a strong structure that will be sustainable and efficient if they are to be ready for the future when population growth may have further exacerbated the existing issue. Just as many future-focused generations and nations start to consider the future.
4. **Fourth, there is the need for a comprehensive census in Nigeria:** This time around, there is a need for the country to know the precise number of people living within its borders, as well as their age distribution and vocations, for accurate record-keeping and government supply of social services. This will allow for a review of the outmoded population policies of 1988 and 2003, which are long overdue for revision and replacement to have an effective and workable population policy.

5. **Fifth, there is the need for open and honest mobilization against unregulated births:** There is a pressing need to have an open and honest debate with individuals about the exploding population. At present, family planning is a difficult topic to discuss, but there is a need to kick-start modalities for national discourse on birth regulation to slow down the population.

CONCLUSION

This discourse has looked at Nigeria's population and population explosion from the prism of positive and negative aspects vis a vis the experiences of developed nations. To forge ahead as a nation-state geared up for development, the current uncontrolled population must be reviewed.

REFERENCES

- Abdullahi , M.S. (2019) Three things Nigeria must do to end extreme poverty. World Economic Forum Commissioner (sub-national Minister), Ministry of Budget and National Planning of Nigeria <https://www.weforum.org/agenda> things Nigeria must do to end extreme poverty.
- Adebayo, A. A. (2013). Youths' unemployment and crime in Nigeria: A nexus and implications for national development. Academic journal
- Adejuwon , K. and Tijani, A. (2012). Poverty reduction and the attainment of millennium development goals in Nigeria; Problems and prospects. *International Journal of Research in social sciences*,2, 53-74. Google Scholar.
- Adewole, A. O. (2012). Effect of population on economic development in Nigeria.: A Quotative assessment. *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences* <http://www.ijmra.us>.
- Adeyemi, P.A. and Ogunsola, A.J. (2016). The impact of human Capital Development on EconomicGrowth in Nigeria: ARDL Approach. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (I)SR_JHSS*). Volume 21, Issue 3, Ver. IV (March). Pp.01-07. e-ISSN:2279-0837, ISSN: 2279-0845.www.iosrjournals.org
- Aduwa, J. (2020). Population Explosion in Nigeria: Causes, Its effects on Educational sector and the ways forward.
- African Development Bank. (2018, March 7). *Africa's population explosion is a ticking time bomb - African Development Bank Governors*. Retrieved March 21, 2022 <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/africas-population-explosion>.
- Afzal, M., (2009) cited in Oguleye and Owolabi (2018). Population Growth and Development in Pakistan, *The Open Demography Journal*, 2: 1-7.
- Akeju, K.F. and Olanipekun, D.B. (2014). Unemployment and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 5(4), pp.138–144.

- Alimi,O.Y; Fagbohun, C. A. and Abubakar , M. (2021). Is population an asset or a liability to Nigeria's economic growth? Evidence from FM-OLS and ARDL approach to cointegration. *Future Business Journal volume 7*, Article number: 20.
- Agi, U.K.and Yellowe, N.A. (2013). Management Strategies for Regenerating Secondary Education for National Development and Self-Reliance. *Journal of Teacher Perspective (JOTEP) 7(2)*. Association of Nigerian Teachers (ASSONT) Calabar.
- Bavel, V.I. (2013). The world population explosion: causes, backgrounds and projections for the future. *Facts Views Vis Obgyn. 2013; 5(4): 281–291*. Accessed online 25thMarch, 2022.PMCID: PMC3987379. PMID: 24753956
- Behbudi, D., Mamipour, S. and Karami, A., 2010. Natural resource abundance, human capital and economic growth in the petroleum exporting countries. *Journal of Economic Development, 35(3)*, p.81.
- Bish, J. J. (2016). Population growth in Africa: grasping the scale of the challenge. The Guardian International. Director of Issue Advocacy at the Population Media Center
Follow @GuardianGDP on Twitter
- Boserup E (1965) *The conditions of agricultural growth: the economics of agrarian change under population pressure*. Aldine, Chicago. Google scholar
- Campbell,J. (2018). *Nigeria faces a crippling population boom*. Retrieved on 30 March 2022. [https://www.cfr.org/blogs.nigeria.nigeria-faces-crippling-population-boom](https://www.cfr.org/blogs/nigeria/nigeria-faces-crippling-population-boom)
- Dovers,S. and Butler,C. (2015). Population and environment: a global challenge. Austrian Academy of Science.
- Dowrick, S. (2004). Title: Ideas and Education: Level or Growth Effects and Their Implications for Australia. <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c10743.pdf>
- Dickson,C.N and Ayeni, E.O . (2020). Population Growth and the increasing trend of poverty in Nigeria.
- Ekanem, I. (1972). *A critical Appraisal of1963 Census*. Benin city; Ethiope Publishing Corporation.
- Fan, F. A. and Besong, B. J. (2010). Implications of population growth for Nigeria's development sophid.*An African Journal of Philosophy, 13(1)*.
- Dominic ,A;Oluwatoyin, M. and Faniyi F. (2016). The Determinants of Population Growth in Nigeria: A Co-Integration Approach. *The International Journal of humanities & social studies.Vol.4 Issue 11. (PDF) research gate .net. www.theijhss.com*
- Fasan,O (2021). Scary! Nigeria's population is exploding as its economy risks imploding <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/07/>
- Frejka, T. (1973): *The Future of population growth: Alternative Paths to Equilibrium A*. Wiley Inter science publication New York.
- Goldstone, J. A. (2010). The new population bomb: The four megatrends that will change the world. *Foreign Affairs, 89 (1)*, 31-43
- Hornby, A.S. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English*. 8thEd. Oxford University Press

- Ibrahim, J. (2021). Nigeria's demographic time bomb. Premium times. Premium timesng.com
- Iheonu, C., & Urama (2019). Addressing Poverty challenges in Nigeria. AfriHealth Policy Brief No.21. July International Labor Organization, 2021. ILO Data Explorer. International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2014) *World Economic Outlook Database April 2014*. Available at: <<https://www.imf.org/>> Accessed online 10 February, 2022.
- International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2019). *World Economic Outlook Databases*. [online] IMF. Available at: <<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/SPROLLs/>> [Accessed 3 Aug. 2020].
- Iro, M. I. (1987). *The Population Censuses of Nigeria from colonial Times*. Lagos: Okigwe Press, pp 99.
- Isiugo-Abanihe (2020). Why Nigeria can't fix its development agenda October 25. University of Ibadan. The Conversation Africa
- Kazeem, Y., (2020). Nigeria's economy is making a comeback *Quartz*. [online] Feb. Available at: <<https://qz.com/africa/1807355/>> Accessed 22 March, 2021.\
- Kazeem, Y. (2018). Nigeria's population problem is the result of poor policy implementation—and it'll only get worse. <https://qz.com/africa/>
- Jurczynska, K. and Bernice Kuang, B. (2017). Population Growth. *In International Encyclopedia of Public Health (Second Edition)*. Science direct
- Kharas, H., J. McArthur, and I. Ohno, eds. (2020). *Leave No One Behind: Time for Specifics on the Sustainable Development Goals*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Kolankiewicz, L. (2013). Overpopulation and Overcrowding. Californians for population Stabilization.
- Kolawole, O.E. (2011). Implications of a rapidly growing Nigerian population; A review of Literature. Department of Demography and sSocial Statistics. Joseph Ayo Babalola University Ikeji. Osun State, Nigeria.
- Kim, J. (2016). Female education and its impact on fertility. *IZA World of Labor*, vol. 228, pp.1-10.
- Lutz, (2010) W. Global Demographic Challenges and the Role of Education. Presented at the Club of Rome International Conference on Concerted Strategies for International Development in the 21st Century, Bern, Switzerland, 17 November 2010; p. 2.
- Liu, D.H., and A.E. Raftery (2020). How do education and family planning accelerate fertility decline? *Population and Development Review*, vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 409-441.
- Malthus, T. (1798). A summary view of the principle of population in on population. Three Essays New York. New American Library pp-13-59.
- Muggah, R., and Hill, K. (2018, June 27). *African cities will double in population by 2050*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/> Retrieved June 21, 2021
- Murray, S. (2015). The World Economic Forum COVID Action Platform How education can moderate population growth. Journalist, Financial Times/Economist Group . July *GE LookAhead*. July 12. *REUTERS/Stringer (JAPAN)*. World Economic

Forum articles

- Mittal, R. and Mittal, C. G. (2013). Impact of population explosion on environment. *The National Journal* Volume -1 | 2013 | ISBN 978-1-62840-737-2.
- Nyiekaa, T. (2022). Repeals caution FG. over population explosion. February .1 Independent Newspaper. *Health Survey 1999*. Calverton, Maryland: National Population Commission
- National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria], (2004). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2003*. Calverton, Maryland: National Population Commission and ORC/Macro.
- National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ORC Macro, (2009). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2008*. Calverton, Maryland: National Population Commission and ORC Macro.
- Obueh, H.O. (2015). Introduction to population studies, Benin: Rain bow house publishers.
- Oguntegbe, K.F; Okoruwa, V.O; Obi-Egbedi, O. O. and Olagunju, K.O. (2018). Population growth problems and food security in Nigeria <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>
- Ogundipe, S. and Obinna, C. (2018). Nigeria's population to hit 235m in 2022 if . Vangaurd Newspaper online July 10.
- Ogunniyi A., Olagunju, K.O., Salman K.K. and Ogundipe Adeyemi (2016). Social Crisis, Terrorism and Food Poverty Dynamics: Evidence from Northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 2016, 6(4), 1865-1872.
- Ogunleye, O.O; Owolabi, O.A. and Mubarak, M. (2018). Population Growth and **Economic** Growth in Nigeria: An Appraisal. *International Journal of Management, Accounting and Economics*. Vol. 5 (5). May. 282-299. PDF. ISSN 2383- 2126 (Online).
- Okechi, O. S (2017) Population and Environmental Policies in Nigeria: A Part of the Whole of the Global Environmental and Population Challenges. *J Res Development* 6: 158. doi: 10.4172/2311-3278.1000158.
- Olabode, K.T., Adeigbe, Y., Kayode, Z.Y.H. and Owonibi, E., 2014. Millennium development goals (MDGs) in Nigeria: issues and problems. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Contemporary social problems in Nigerias*. Pp517-534. UniLAG Press *Sociology & Culture*, 14(5).
- Olaniyan D. A and Okemakinde T. (2008). Human capital theory; implications for educational development. *European Journal of scientific research* 24 (2) 157-162
- Olusegun, A.D. and Eke, G.F. (2019) Nigeria's Population Explosion and Its Underdevelopment Imperatives. *American International Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* Vol. 1, No. 2; 2019 ISSN 2643-0061 E-ISSN 2643-010X.
- Oraham I. T. (2006). The Effects of Population Growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Sciences* Volume 6 (6): 1332-1337.
- Oyefara, J.L and Kunnuji, M. (2017). Population growth and dynamics in Nigeria, .
- Ragan, C. and Lipsey, R.G., 2005. *Economics, Eleventh Canadian Edition: Instructor's Resource CD-ROM*. Canada: Pearson Education Canada
- Richard, J, (2013). Cited Mustaq, K.) Is Good Governance Necessary for Economic Progress in Africa

- Roy, D. A. (2010) Trends in Global Corporate Social Responsibility Practices. The Case of Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Civil Society Law*, Washington & Lee School, 8(3)m July, pp. 48-64.
- Sarwar, F. Fakher, A; Ali. S. and Mudassar, K. (2013). Human Capital, Population and Economic growth; A cointegration Approach. *Universal Journal of Management and Social Sciences*. Vol.3. No.10. October. Research gate.net/publication
- Sasu,D.D. (2022). Population of Nigeria 1950-2022. Statista Accounts. Online ; [ttps://www.statista.com](https://www.statista.com). March 10
- Savage S (2004) Nigeria adopts new population policy to improve quality of life
Science. (2008). Return of the population bomb. *Science*, 322 (5902), 655.
- Schultz, T.W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *American Economic Review*. Nashville: *American Economic Association*. Vol.51, No.1. March pp.1-17.
- Schultz, T.W. (1960). Capital formation by education. *Journal of political Economy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Vol.68. p.571.
- Simon J.L (1981). *The Ultimate Resource*. NJ. Princeton University Press
- Todaro and Smith, (2012) *Economic Development 11th Edition*. [online] Available at: [content/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/us/en/higher-education/product.html](https://content.one-dot-com/one-dot-com/us/en/higher-education/product.html)> [Accessed 20 March,2022.
- Umana, K.920190. Causes and effects of population explosion in Nigeria. Retrieved April 4,2022. [https://researchcyber.com>causes-e](https://researchcyber.com/causes-e).
- UNESCO (2013). Financing education in Sub-Saharan Africa: meeting the challenges of expansion, equity and quality. UNESCO institute of statistics, Montreal Quebec H3c, 3J7. Canada.
- United Nations. International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD]. 1994.Report of the International Conference on Population and Development Cairo, 5-13 September. New York, New York, United Nations
- UNESCO (2013). Financing education in Sub-Saharan Africa: meeting the challenges of expansion, equity, and quality. UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Montreal Quebec H3c, 317.
- World meter (2019) African countries by population. Accessed from <https://www.worldometers>.
-