



Restructuring and socio-economic development in Nigeria: public perception in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

The subject of restructuring Nigeria remains one of the most current and heated debates in the social and political terrain of the country. However, the Federal Government of Nigeria is yet to fully consider the restructuring of some sectors of the country's economy. This study was undertaken to investigate public perception of the role of restructuring on the social and economic development of Nigeria. Three specific objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study in order to investigate public perception of the role of restructuring on the social and economic development of Nigeria. The literature review was guided by the specific objectives. Robert Dahl's theory of pluralism and Anthony Giddens' structural agency theory were utilised in the study. A cross-sectional research design was used for this study, and the Taro Yamane formula was utilised for the determination of an adequate sample size. The purposive sampling method was used in the selection of the headquarters of three senatorial districts in the study area, and one thousand two hundred and thirty-five (1,235) respondents were also purposively selected for the study. Data were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed



quantitatively using the chi-square in order to test the association between selected variables in the study. The findings reveal an association between restructuring and the social, economic and security development of Nigeria. Restructuring Nigeria has the prospect of solving the country's security challenges as well as creating social and economic development through employment, job creation and industrialisation. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the federal government should adopt restructuring as a top item on their agenda because it seems to be the practical way out of Nigeria's current socio-economic woes.

Keywords: Restructuring, Socio-economic, Development, Nigeria, Public Perception, Akwa Ibom.

Introduction

Literally, the word “restructuring” refers to the act of organising something differently (Nkwede, 2013). When it is attached to a prefix like “political restructuring”, it could generate a plethora of meaning among scholars. For instance, Lukman and Hassan (2020) referred to political restructuring as a complete overhaul of a nation's political system in order to make it operate more effectively. It involves adopting a new constitution, a new economic model, and decentralisation of powers as well as devolution of powers to the constituent units (Babalola, 2023). In another definition given by Rosenau and Cziempel (2002), political restructuring is defined as a transition from a lopsided federal political structure to a true federalism characterised by political inclusiveness, people-orientated constitutional amendments, resource control, electoral process, political representation, sharing of offices, ensuring citizens' rights, protection of lives and properties, and building of enduring political infrastructure. Based on the different definitions, political restructuring seems to have different meanings and different driven objectives, which are influenced by what the people really want. In Nigeria, the need for restructuring of the political system has a long history dating back to the 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates by Britain, the then colonial master. The three key national leaders at the time, viz., Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, saw the amalgamation as a coerced union that would only serve the interest of the colonial master. The compelling reasons for such a conclusion were that the component parts of the country have



divergent cultures and belief systems, as well as different religions (Babalola and Onapajo, 2019). In the analysis of Babalola (2023), while the Western Region believed very strongly in formal education, the North believed more in pastoralism, agriculture, and informal and largely Islamic education, and the East was and still is the home of industrialists and tradesmen. Although the then National Anthem had tried to play down these remarkable differences in the stanza “though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand”, the leader of the Northern Region, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, was the first to call for a restructure of the federation when he described the amalgamation as “the mistake of 1914” (El-Rufai, 2017).

As observed elsewhere, restructuring is not new, nor is it peculiar to Nigeria. In the explanation offered by Babalola (2023) as well as the seminal work of Rosenau and Cziempel (2002), restructuring of a country is often driven by different factors. While some restructurings took the form of splitting from a sovereign independent country into different independent sovereign countries (McNair, 1998), others involved the coming together of different independent entities or kingdoms to form a united country (Davis, 1987). Yet others have taken the part of structural reforms for the purpose of enhancing social and economic growth of the component parts for good governance (Hausman, 2011). For instance, the restructuring of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), one of the then five superpowers in the world, was triggered by the need for democratisation of the political institutions and the introduction of an open market economy. Richard (1991) referred to it as *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. While the concept of *Perestroika* refers to restructuring, *Glasnost* stands for “openness”. The launching of both policies allowed more independent actions from various ministries and introduced many market-like reforms with elements of liberal policies that enhanced efficiency and created jobs for the citizens. The introduction of liberal policies loosened centralised control of many businesses and allowed some farmers and manufacturers to decide on their line of production (Richard, 1991). It brought the end to the era of economic stagnation and individual expression of opinion in the affairs of the country (McNair, 1998). However, *Glasnost*, the policy of openness, unleashed a wave of protests and the demand for more democratisation. The outcome of the several protests resulted in the end of the USSR as a sovereign state and the emergence of fifteen constituent republics that gained full independence on 26 December 1991 (McNair, 1998).

Notwithstanding the benefits of the political arrangement in the UK, 2006 witnessed serious political dissension that threatened the political unity of Great Britain. The Scotland Labour Party that spearheaded the move had cited economic benefits. However, the then British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, had to launch a serious enlightenment campaign against it, citing cultural ties. According to him, “some 2.5



million Scots have families in England, and almost one in six Scots actually live in England, and about 400,000 full-time residents of Scotland were born in England” (D’Silva-Parker, 2022). The public enlightenment on the strong cultural ties and assimilation worked against the campaign of the Scotland Labour Party. Because of such a threat, Parliament made further reforms to improve the lives of men, women, and children in the poorest section of the country. Welfare reforms became central to the UK reforms policy in 2010. An evaluation carried out by Waters (2023) revealed that recent reforms in the UK have shown a consistent pattern of higher employment than the system they replaced.

In Nigeria, the background to restructuring started with the military rulers. In 1966, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi had dissolved the hitherto existing federal structure through his Unification Decree No. 34, thus abolishing the four regions of West, North, East, and Middle-Western. While General Yakubu Gowon did not bring back the abolished political regions, he created twelve states in the hope of assuaging the fear of the minority ethnic groups. Every subsequent military ruler had to create more states, except the Buhari/Idiagbon regime and General Abusalami Abubakar. Today, the Nigerian federal structure has 36 states, as well as the federal capital territory in Abuja. However, the socio-economic benefits of federalism in Nigeria have largely remained unrealised, as the states function more as administrative extensions of the centre than as autonomous federating units. As Kunle, Rotimi, Adigun and Heral (1998, p. 12) aptly observed, “federal restructuring initiated under the tight control of repressive governments cannot but lead to a situation in which federalism is assaulted, if not dismantled.” The provisions and practice of the 1999 Constitution render this observation particularly relevant. Although the Constitution proclaims Nigeria a federal, multi-ethnic and multi-religious state, the country operates, in practice, along largely unitary lines, characterised by entrenched ethnic and religious intolerance (Babalola, 2023). Rather than promoting development, the 1999 Constitution has constrained and weakened the developmental capacity of the states. In this context, the promotion of federal doctrine amounts to the propagation of false consciousness in the service of power (Kunle et al., 1998), presenting an illusion of divided authority that obscures the reality of highly centralised and undivided power (Ideobodo, Okolo & Eze, 2018).

Nigeria is unarguably the most populous Black nation in the world. Yet, regional economic inequality and the lopsidedness of Nigeria's political system have led to a series of protracted conflicts. The country is currently embroiled in crises similar to the tumultuous time after independence in 1960 when regional and ethnic tensions erupted in a vicious power struggle (Omeji and Ogbu, 2021). Since the end of the civil war in



1970, the desire for secession still lingered, as manifested in the formation of both the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Oduduwa Republic, the Arewa Movement, Niger-Delta militancy and other splinter groups.

The desire of the constituent parts of Nigeria to break away is blamed on the over-centralisation of political power, which distorts its political economy by encouraging consumption instead of productivity. By themselves, most of the constituent parts of the country are not economically viable, as nearly 70% of Nigeria's state revenue comes from an oil-rich region (Obidimma and Obidimma, 2015). While there are agitations from states in the south-south, south-east and the Middle Belt for restructuring with a new constitution, the northern geopolitical zone has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. The thought of restructuring tends to raise fear that change would lead to political domination and economic collapse in the region. It is heightening tension across the country. Yet the existing Nigerian Constitution is gradually becoming unpopular, especially in the southern geopolitical zones.

Regionally, questions have been asked on why the south-east region has only five (5) states, the north-west has seven (7) and all other regions have six (6) each, implying that in representative terms of democracy, the south-east has 15 senators, the north-west has 21 senators and other regions have 18 senators each. This situation clearly does not guarantee equity or equality, as minority groups may be marginalised, thereby creating fertile ground for political instability. For instance, among the 774 constitutionally recognised local government areas in Nigeria, the South-East has only 95, compared with 186 in the North-West, 113 in the North-East, 125 in the South-South, 137 in the South-West, and 112 in the North-Central. This distribution once again exposes deep-seated structural imbalances within Nigeria's political system, as regions with fewer local governments are automatically disadvantaged in revenue allocation and development planning, irrespective of the resources they contribute to the central government. In an ideal federal system, states would enjoy substantial autonomy over resource control, while structural adjustments such as the equitable creation of local governments would foster development and promote fairness and justice. However, the Nigerian federal system, as presently constituted, has created a breeding ground for internal insurgencies, violent agitations, and persistent demands for secession.

The call for political restructuring has a significant tendency to promote ethnic-regional satisfaction and unity. The current federal system which is practised in Nigeria has increasingly become a recipe for uncertainty, insecurity and instability. This is done by ethno-regional bodies such as the pan-Yoruba socio-cultural group of Western Nigeria, the pan-Igbo umbrella body of Eastern Nigeria, Ohaneze Ndi Igbo, and the



Arewa Youth Movement, all making demands for political restructuring of Nigeria as a worthy consideration for peace, unity and political stability. Restructuring is expected to be sufficient in solving Nigeria's most vexing problems, such as socio- and economic development. Social and economic development includes factors such as income, education, employment, community safety and social support (Sztompica, 2004). It is a dynamic complement designed to achieve set targets, including the overall well-being of the citizens. This study, therefore, was undertaken to assess public perception of the role of restructuring in social development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Robert Dahl's 2005 pluralism theory was utilised in this study, and it submits that people of different beliefs, backgrounds, and lifestyles can coexist in the same society and participate equally in the political process. Pluralism assumes that its practice will lead decision-makers to negotiate solutions that contribute to the common good of the entire society. Pluralism recognises that in some cases, the acceptance and integration of minority groups should be achieved and protected by legislation, such as civil rights laws and resource allocation. This theory anticipates that people with different interests, beliefs, and lifestyles will coexist peacefully and be allowed to participate in the governing process. Pluralists acknowledge that a number of competing interest groups will be allowed to share power. In this sense, pluralism is considered a key element of democracy. In the world of politics and government, it is assumed that pluralism will help achieve a compromise by helping decision-makers become aware of and fairly address several competing interests and principles. In relation to this study, the theory of pluralism acknowledges the co-existence of people from different socio-cultural backgrounds in one social space. However, cohesion can be achieved when the interests of minority groups are properly safeguarded. Therefore, restructuring happens to be the major tool that will address the level of social inequalities in Nigeria, especially among minority ethnic groups. Through restructuring, minority ethnic groups would be able to generate and control their resources, thereby bringing harmony in the country despite being a pluralistic entity.

In addition, Anthony Giddens' Structural Agency theory (2018) provides an analysis of the interrelations of agency and structure. Agency reflects intentional activities whereby individuals seek to satisfy their needs and goals, while structure refers to the already-existing rules and resources employed in such actions. Structural agency theory offers perspectives on human behaviour based on a synthesis of structure and agency effects known as the "duality of structure". Instead of describing the capacity of human action as being constrained by powerful stable societal structures

(such as educational, religious, or political institutions) or as a function of the individual expression of will (i.e., agency), Structural Agency theory acknowledges the interaction of meaning, standards and values, and power and posits a dynamic relationship between these different facets of society. Giddens argues that just as an individual's autonomy is influenced by structure, structures are maintained and adapted through the exercise of agency. The interface at which an actor meets a structure is termed “structuration”. Thus, structural agency theory attempts to understand human social behaviour by resolving the competing views of structure-agency and macro-micro perspectives. Structural agency theory takes the position that social action cannot be fully explained by the structure or agency theories alone. Instead, it recognises that actors operate within the context of rules produced by social structures, and only by acting in a compliant manner are these structures reinforced. As a result, social structures have no inherent stability outside human action because they are socially constructed. In relation to this study, the theory advocates that social structures are designed to fulfil the overall wellbeing of their members, and in any case that they fail to achieve that fundamental duty, their aim is undeniably defeated. To this end, restructuring the country has the tendency to achieve the social wellbeing of agency through its structures.

Methodology

A cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. This design involves the collection of data from different individuals or groups at a single point in time in order to analyse outcomes and draw conclusions (Thomas, 2023). It is suitable for quantitative analysis and allows for the description of relationships among variables, although it does not establish cause-and-effect relationships. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. The population comprised all residents of the state aged 18 years and above. According to the 2022 population estimate, Akwa Ibom State has a population of 4,979,400 (NPC/NBS, 2023). The sample size for the study was determined using the formula developed by Taro Yamane (1967) for calculating sample size from a known population. The formula is given as:

$$\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

- Where N - population size
n - Sample size
1 - Unity or constant factor
e - Level of error or significance

In this study, the target population is 4,979,400, and the level of tolerable error (error margin) is 3%. The level of significance (e) is:

$$\frac{3}{100} = 0.03$$

Using the formula, we will have:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{4,979,400}{1+4,979,400 (0.03)^2} \\ n &= \frac{4,979,400}{1+4,979,400 (0.0009)} \\ n &= \frac{4,979,400}{1+4,031.46} \\ n &= \frac{4,979,400}{4,032.46} \\ n &= 1,234.829 \\ n &= 1,234 \end{aligned}$$

∴ The sample size was 1,234.

A combination of sampling techniques was used in the selection of the sample. The sampling methods employed include stratified proportional sampling and purposive sampling techniques. For the stratification process, strata were established with a specific emphasis on the senatorial district. Therefore, each stratum was subjected to proportional sampling techniques. For sample size distribution, the purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample per senatorial district. In this case, each of the three local government areas, such as Ikot Ekpene, Uyo and Eket, which are considered the headquarters of the senatorial districts, was selected for the study, and respondents were drawn from civil servants and students from higher institutions of learning located in the local government areas. The justification is that these sets of people in the population are enlightened on the subject matter and can express a fairly objective perception of it.

The formula for proportional sampling is given as:

$$y = \frac{N}{TN} \times \frac{T}{I}$$

Where y = Required sample size for each senatorial district
 N = Population of each senatorial district
 TN = Population of all three senatorial districts
 T = Calculated sample size for the study

Table 1: Calculated sample size for each of the senatorial districts

Senatorial Districts	LGA	Population	Proportional Sample	Total
North-west (Ikot Ekpene)	Abak	177,500	$\frac{N}{TN} \times \frac{T}{1}$	420
	Essien Udim	246,600	$\frac{1694500}{4979400} \times \frac{1235}{1}$	
	Etim Ekpo	135,200		
	Ika	92,900		
	Ikono	168,000		
	Ikot Ekpene	180,500		
	Ini	126,400		
	Obot Akara	188,000		
	Uruk Anam	219,300		
	Ukanafun	160,100		
	Total	1,694,500		
North-east (Uyo)	Ibiono Ibom	240,600	$\frac{N}{TN} \times \frac{T}{1}$ $\frac{1728000}{4979400} \times \frac{1235}{1}$	439
	Itu	163,200		
	Uyo	390,400		
	Uruan	149,500		
	Ibesikpo Asutan	175,400		
	Nsit Ibom	137,700		
	Nsit Ubium	162,200		
	Etinan	215,400		
	Nsit Atai	93,600		
	Total	1,728,000		

Using a proportional sampling technique, 420 respondents were selected from Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District, 439 from Uyo Senatorial District, and 386 from Eket Senatorial District. The collection of data from the target population was based on a purposive sampling technique, as shown in the table below:

Table 2: Sample Allocation to Respondents across the Three Senatorial Districts.

LGAs	Strata	Sample
(a) Uyo	(i) Civil servants at Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat.	102
	(ii) Civil servants at the Federal Secretariat.	103
	(iii) Students at the University of Uyo.	103
	(iv) Civil servants at the LGA secretariat.	103
		411
(b) Ikot Ekpene	(i) Civil servants at the LGA secretariat.	206
	(ii) Students at the Akwa Ibom State Polythenic.	206
		412
(c) Eket	(i) Civil servants at the LGA secretariat.	206
	(ii) Students at Heritage Polythenic	206
		412
Total		1,235

Data were collected through the administration of a structured and open-ended questionnaire. Efforts were made to ensure that the questionnaire was administered only to civil servants and students. The study relied on the convenience sampling technique to identify respondents in their duty posts and schools in order to administer the

questionnaire. The sampling technique was used to ensure that respondents are indeed from the selected location of study. A questionnaire consisting of both a structured questionnaire and open-ended questions was used as an instrument for the study. The questionnaire was considered an appropriate instrument for data collection because the stratified sub-populations were identifiable and possessed an adequate level of literacy to respond effectively to the questionnaire items. Data were analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation to examine respondents' opinions on the perceived role of restructuring in socio-economic development.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Demographic Characteristics; (N=1,235)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	\bar{X}	S.D
Gender				
Male	648	52.47	617.5	43.13
Female	587	47.53		
Age bracket				
18-25	139	11.26	59.71	61.88
26-33	226	18.30		
34-41	196	15.87		
42-49	307	24.85		
50+	367	29.72		
State of origin				
Akwa Ibom	1163	94.71		
Cross River	17	1.38		
Abia	22	1.79		
Anambra	14	0.81		
Rivers	12	1.14		
Jigawa	07	0.98		
Religion				
Christianity	1209	97.89		
Islam	07	0.57		
ATR	19	1.54		
Occupation				
Civil servant	720	58.30		
Student	515	41.70		
Marital Status				
Single	470	38.06		
Married	617	49.96		
Divorced/Separated	71	5.75		
Widowed	77	6.23		

Highest educational qualification

FSLC	53	4.29
SSCE	534	43.24
ND/NCE	128	10.36
BSC/HND/Higher	520	42.11

Senatorial district of residence

Uyo senatorial district	411	33.28
Eket senatorial district	412	33.36
Ikot Ekpene senatorial district	412	33.36

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 is a summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. It shows that 648 respondents (52.47%) in the study were males, while 587 respondents (47.43%) were females. The ages of the respondents were categorised into five groups. The mean age of respondents was 59.71 years with a standard deviation of 61.88 years. 139 of them (11.26%) were between ages 18 and 25, 226 persons (18.30%) were between the ages of 26 and 33, while 196 respondents (15.87%) were in the age bracket of 34 and 41. In addition, the study had 307 respondents (24.85%) who were between the ages of 42 and 49 as well as 367 respondents (29.72%) who were 50 years old and above. The distribution indicated that 94.71% (1163) of participants were indigenes of Akwa Ibom State, 17 participants (1.38%) were indigenes of Cross River State, and 22 respondents (1.79%) hail from Abia State. In addition, the study featured 14 respondents (0.81%) from Anambra State, 12 respondents (1.14%) from Rivers State and only 7 respondents (0.98%) from Jigawa State. As regards religious affiliation, over 97% of respondents (1209) were adherents of Christianity, while pockets of respondents were Muslims (07) and practitioners of African Traditional Religion (19). Since the study purposively selected civil servants and students in higher institutions of learning, 720 respondents (58.30%) were civil servants, while 515 (41.70%) were students of higher institutions of learning. As regards marital status, 470 respondents (38.06%) were single, 617 respondents (49.96%) were married, 71 respondents (5.75%) were either divorced or separated and 77 respondents (6.23%) were widows/widowers. In terms of highest academic qualification, 53 respondents (4.29%) possessed the First School Leaving Certificate as their highest educational qualification, while 534 respondents (43.24%) held the SSCE certificate. In addition, the study had 128 respondents (10.36%) with a National Diploma (ND) and National Certificate on Education (NCE), while 520 respondents (42.11%) hold a BSc or its equivalent or higher. The sample size was distributed across the three senatorial district headquarters of Akwa Ibom State, and

Uyo Senatorial District received 411 respondents (33.28%), while Eket and Ikot Ekpene Senatorial Districts received 412 respondents (33.36%) apiece.

Assessment of Public Perception of the Role of Restructuring in Social Development in Nigeria

As part of the study, respondents were asked to share their perception of the role of restructuring on social development in Nigeria. Social development was operationalized to include educational development, absence of fear of domination by minority ethnic groups, employment and ethnic rivalry. The summary of respondents' ratings using a 3-point Likert scale is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Respondents' Assessment of the Role of Restructuring in Social Development in Nigeria

	Yes	No	Can't say	Mean (X̄)	Chi-Square value (X ²)
Do you understand the concept of restructuring?	1032	124	79	4.77	42.31**
Do you believe that restructuring can lead to high educational development in Nigeria?	1115	32	88	4.83	24.25*
Do you think restructuring in Nigeria can result to high employment rate?	1036	107	92	4.76	8.43**
Can restructuring end the fear of domination by some minority ethnic groups in Nigeria?	1051	111	73	4.79	35.32**
Do you believe that restructuring can reduce insecurity in Nigeria?	991	39	205	4.64	58.32*

Source: Computed from field data using SPSS, Version 25.



As shown in Table 4, 1032 respondents had a clear understanding of the concept of restructuring. It received a mean score of 4.77 and a significant chi-square value of 42.31, suggesting that the concept of restructuring is widely known to the respondents in the study area. This result is not, however, very surprising because the researcher adopted purposive sampling by intentionally selecting students of higher institutions of learning and civil servants whom the researcher believes are enlightened on the subject and can express a fair objective perception of it. Also, restructuring has the tendency to result in high educational development in Nigeria. It received a very high rating of 1135 and a mean score of 4.83 (=24.25). Fighting poor education with the wrong approaches may not yield the desired outcome. Allowing states to control their resources can largely result in high educational development. The idea that restructuring Nigeria can result in a high employment rate received a high rating of 1036 (= 4.76) and a significant chi-square value of 8.43, showing an association between restructuring and high employment in the country. Therefore, if every state is left to control their resources and revenue, there may likely be a high rate of employment in Nigeria. The proposition that restructuring can end the fear of domination by some minority ethnic groups in Nigeria received a high mean score of 4.79 and a rating of 1051 with a significant chi-square value of 35.32. This suggests that restructuring Nigeria can result in the elimination of fear of domination by some minority ethnic groups, which is ideally the hallmark function of federalism. Allowing states to gain their autonomy in terms of resource control in the ideal sense of true federalism can largely eradicate ethnic tensions and fear of minority ethnic groups. The belief that restructuring can enhance internal security in Nigeria received a high rating of 991 (= 4.64; = 58.32), indicating that restructuring and resource control are associated with security development in Nigeria. Restructuring in this study implies the freedom of federating units to create and utilise their own resources while remitting royalties to the centre. This form of resource management is capable of creating healthy competition among units, thereby resulting in diverse forms of social development in the country.

Relationship between Restructuring and Economic Development in Nigeria

As part of the study, respondents were asked to express their views on the relationship between restructuring and economic development in Nigeria. Economic development was operationalised to include employment generation, industrialisation, poverty reduction, a reduction in the cost of living, and an enhanced quality of life. A summary of respondents' ratings, measured using a three-point Likert scale, is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Respondents' Assessment of the Relationship between Restructuring and Economic Development in Nigeria

Questions	Responses			Statistical	
	Yes	No	Can't say	Mean (\bar{x})	Chi-Square value (χ^2)
Do you think that restructuring Nigeria can result in industrialization?	1033	79	123	4.74	34.33*
Do you believe that restructuring Nigeria's federalism can lead to poverty reduction in the country?	1002	15	93	4.33	23.49**
Can the restructuring Nigeria result in the reduction of the high cost of living in the country?	1080	54	101	4.79	18.66*
Can the restructuring Nigeria result in the reduction of the high cost of living in the country?	982	88	165	4.66	2.44*
Do you believe that restructuring Nigeria can enhance the quality of life of Nigerians?					

Source: Computed from field data using SPSS, Version 25.



In Table 5, the idea that restructuring Nigeria can lead to industrialisation resulted in a high response rate of 1003 (81.21%). The mean score of 4.74 indicates that restructuring Nigeria's federal system can lead to the rise of many industries in the country, thereby leading to employment and homegrown goods. The chi-square value of 34.33 shows a statistical association between restructuring Nigeria's federalism and industrialisation in the country. In addition, the belief that restructuring Nigeria's current federal system can result in poverty reduction in the country received a high response rate of 1002 (81.13%). The mean score of 4.33 indicates that restructuring Nigeria's federal system can lead to poverty reduction in Nigeria. The chi-square value of 23.49 shows a statistical association between restructuring poverty reduction in the country. Responses also indicated that restructuring can lead to a reduction in the high cost of living currently ravaging the country. It received a high and positive response rating of 1080 (87.45%). The mean score of 4.79 and statistically significant value of 18.66 indicate that restructuring Nigeria and allowing resource control by states has a huge tendency in tackling the high cost of living in the state. Moreover, restructuring can also promote the quality of life of Nigerians if states are given the autonomy to generate and control their resources. This assertion received a high response rating of 982 (79.51%). With a **score** of 4.66 and an R of 2.44, it proved that there is an association between restructuring and quality of life in Nigeria. This signifies that restructuring Nigeria can go a long way in ameliorating the poor quality of life experienced by most Nigerians in the country.

Discussions

The aim of this study was to investigate public perception of the roles of restructuring in the social and economic development of Nigeria with specific focus on the perception of Akwa Ibom State residents. The study found that restructuring is perceived to be a very strong policy that can result in the social and economic development of Nigeria. The study found that educational development can be achieved through restructuring. Allowing states to control their resources could give them enough to fund educational development in their respective domains. This finding is in consonance with that of Ebizim and Onyemere (2018), who submitted that the clamour for the funding of education in Nigeria will be a thing of the past when restructuring is implemented. The study found that restructuring and resource control by states can result in high employment rates in the country. When states are completely left in control of their resources, there is a high tendency for job creation in the area, thereby promoting employment in the system. This finding aligns with that of Nwokwu and Abah (2017), who submitted that one major way out of unemployment in Nigeria is by restructuring



the system so it allows for resource control by states. Moreover, the study found that restructuring has the tendency to end the fear of domination by minority ethnic groups in Nigeria. Through restructuring, federating units learn and adapt to operate independently, thereby leaving no reasons for conflict and rivalry. This also aligns with the findings of Yaqub (2016), who found that ethnic feud is strongly caused by the struggles for resources, and as such, restructuring can largely reduce the rivalry among ethnic nationals.

The study also established a relationship between restructuring and security in Nigeria. Restructuring can address the security problem of Nigeria through the devolution of the centralisation system of the Nigeria Police Force. Through the creation of state and community police, security presence can spread beyond the urban areas of towns and cities into the rural parts of the country, thereby ameliorating the spate of violent killings, kidnappings and general crime rates. This finding is in consonance with that of Omeji and Ogbu (2021), who also found that the devolution of the Nigeria Police Force is largely a panacea to the security problems of Nigeria. It was found that restructuring the tendency to advance the economic development of Nigeria. If the country is restructured, there is a high tendency to drive industrialisation, thereby promoting the economic development of Nigeria. This finding is in tandem with that of Unya (2018), who found that one of the key channels of industrialising Nigeria is by restructuring the country. This finding would promote healthy internal competition, industrialisation, and the creation of local goods as well as the reduction of importation of foreign goods. The study further reveals that restructuring has the potential to significantly reduce poverty in Nigeria. When states are granted full autonomy over their resources, they are better positioned to mobilise sufficient revenue to address the poverty challenges of their residents, particularly at the grassroots level. This finding aligns with Tolulope (2018), who identified the centralisation of resources and revenue as a major driver of poverty in Nigeria. Consequently, effective resource control is likely to play a critical role in poverty alleviation.

In a similar vein, the findings indicate that restructuring could also help to reduce the high cost of living in Nigeria. Through enhanced resource control, states would have the autonomy to shape economic policies suited to their local realities, which could substantially lower living costs. This result is consistent with the findings of Zakari et al. (2018), who regarded restructuring as a viable policy option for addressing Nigeria's high cost of living.

Finally, the study submits that restructuring can significantly enhance the overall quality of life of Nigerians by integrating all the socio-economic variables examined. By promoting job creation and industrial development and reducing living costs,



restructuring holds considerable promise for improving citizens' welfare. This conclusion corroborates the position of Zakari et al. (2018), who argued that Nigeria's socio-economic landscape could be fundamentally transformed through the full implementation of restructuring policies and its utilisation accordingly.

Conclusion

The study establishes a clear relationship between restructuring and Nigeria's social and economic development. The findings indicate that restructuring can foster social development by enhancing educational advancement, promoting employment and job creation, and reducing the fear of domination among minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, the implementation of restructuring is shown to stimulate economic development through increased industrialisation, reduced dependence on imports, and the growth of indigenous industries. Granting states greater control over their resources is likely to encourage healthy competition among them, thereby facilitating the localisation and expansion of industries.

The study also reveals that restructuring Nigeria's security architecture can significantly mitigate the country's security challenges. Devolving the current centralised policing system would allow for the establishment of state and community policing, thereby extending security presence beyond urban centres into rural communities. This expanded coverage has the potential to substantially deter criminal activities and improve overall security across the country.

This study has strongly brought to the fore the perception of residents in Akwa Ibom State on the need for restructuring in Nigeria. The study has shown that the current federal system as practised in Nigeria needs to be restructured in order to create room for effectiveness, flexibility, and development. Restructuring the current system would promote social developments like employment and the eradication of ethnic tensions. It would also advance economic developments like industrialisation and the creation of homegrown products. Restructuring Nigeria has a high tendency of reducing insecurity and addressing the problem of insurgencies in the country through the devolution of the current centralised security structure in Nigeria. In conclusion, Nigeria's current federal structure appears unfavourable to effective governance and therefore requires reform to reflect its true federal ideals. Practising federalism in its ideal form would foster a stronger sense of belonging among the states, thereby stimulating healthy competition and encouraging the localisation of industries across the country. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:



- i. The federal government should convene a national conference where major stakeholders in the country meet at a round table to discuss the needs and justification of restructuring the current federal system of Nigeria.
- ii. The security problem of Nigeria should form the prime focus of the government in the adoption of the restructuring of Nigeria. The devolution of the Nigeria Police Force has the tendency to spread police presence across every part of the country, thereby combatting crime in the process.

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