



EXPLORING MORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND ENGAGING WAYS OF TEACHING INTERNATIONAL LAW IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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International law as an academic discipline exposes learners to the knowledge of the developments in international scene. It also exposes learners on how the law governs diplomacy, international institutions and protects the rights of global citizens. However, arguably in Nigeria, government agencies are reluctant in partnering with Nigerian Universities in facilitating the teaching of international law. Furthermore, the teaching of international law as an elective is also not helpful. These developments are affecting the quality of teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities. In response to these concerns, this paper proposes the reliance on more progressive approaches to the teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities. This paper argues that several international and national institutions located in Nigeria do not offer externship or partnership opportunities for Universities in Nigeria. This work employed doctrinal research, drawing on statutes, case law, reports, group studies, books and articles in journals. The aim of this paper is to inspire policy formulation, contribute to knowledge and advance more engaging ways of teaching international law in Nigerian Universities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

International law as an academic discipline is wide and versatile area. It requires multidisciplinary approach cutting across social sciences politics, diplomacy, advanced technology and experiential teaching. Thus, teaching requires a hybrid of both practical and theoretical approaches. One of the principal institutions responsible for teaching international law includes the Nigerian Universities. Thus, the question of interest to this paper is, how are Nigerian Universities faring in the teaching of international law? The University Global Ranking 2023 puts the best Nigerian University, University of Ibadan among the 401, while University of Lagos ranked at 501.¹ From these statistics, it is contended that many universities in Nigeria are not meeting international standards or best practices. But is there any correlation between effective teaching on international law by Nigerian Universities and global ranking of universities? ² Arguably, the answer to this question is in the affirmative. There is a relationship between how cosmopolitan a university is, and its global ranking. This is because one of the indices for ranking Universities includes the reputational and international factors.

The reputational factor deals with international image the University can create in the space of global education. It deals with the impacts of that University in the theatre of global education. Thus, how much research has that University carried out that is of global impact within a particular year? What is the global visibility of that University within a given year? How much scientific research which were carried out by Nigerian Universities have global recognition? How many Nigerian Universities' law journals and academic publications on international law are recognized globally? The more globally visible and impacting a university

1.Suleiman Qosim, "Ranking: Two Nigerian Institutions Make Top 1,000 List of Global Universities", The Premium Times, September 28, 2023 @ <https://www.premiumtimes.ng><accessed on November 7, 2023>

2.The indices for University Rankings as outlined by Q S World University Ranking, See, IDP Nigeria, " QS World University Rankings -2025"@<https://www.idp.com> accessed 10 January 2026 include: (a) Academic Reputation (40%) (b) Employer Reputation (10%) (c) Faculty/Student Ratio (20%) (d) Citations Per Faculty (20%) (e) International Faculty (5%) and (f) International Student Ratio (5%)

is, the higher the likelihood of it being ranked among the highest. Thus, this paper contends that international law is one of the vehicles that can push Nigerian Universities to global visibility, if properly taught. The question that now follows is, how effective is the teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities?

The aim of this paper is to first, examine the legal status of international law as an academic discipline under the Nigerian University Curriculum. The second part is to examine the pedagogical approaches adopted for teaching international law by Nigerian Universities. Here, the effectiveness of each of these methods of teaching international law will be analysed. The third part of this paper is to examine the challenges facing the effective teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities. The paper concludes with recommendations for addressing the challenges of teaching international law in Nigerian Universities.

2. THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE TEACHING INTERNATIONAL LAW IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

The study of international law as an academic discipline is anchored under two institutional frameworks in Nigeria. These are the National University Commission and the Council of Legal Education. The National University Commission is a regulatory body that controls and approves the operation of Universities in Nigeria. It does so by accreditation of the courses to be taught in Nigerian Universities. It also sets a minimum standard that every university is expected to have. Thus, section 10 (1) of The Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institution) Act³ empowers the National University Commission to lay a minimum standard for all courses of learning in Nigerian Universities. By this law, the National University Commission (NUC) is obligated to prescribe courses that will be taught in the Nigerian Universities. Also, this law enjoined the NUC to be instrumental in the development of the academic curriculum of Nigerian Universities. The existence and establishment of good academic curriculum is a precondition for the approval of any course of study by the National University

3.CAP E3,LFN,2004.

Commission.⁴ As such, the National University Commission Act empowers the National University Commission to prescribe courses which Universities should teach.⁵

Also, it is based on this authority, that the National University Commission developed the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS). Consequently, based on the provisions of the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (hereinafter referred to as CCMAS, 2022) international law is recognized as part of the teaching curriculum of Nigerian Universities.⁶ It is one of the suggested courses for teaching in faculties of law across Nigeria. This provision serves as a legal and policy framework for teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities.

Also, the Legal Education (Consolidation, etc., Act)⁷ provides for the power of the Council to determine the standard of knowledge and skill of legal education in Nigeria, including accreditation. This standard of knowledge includes the approval of the qualifications of people seeking to become legal practitioners. How does the Council of Legal Education regulate the practice and teaching of international law? It does that in two ways. The first way is the admission of foreign students who want to practice as lawyers in Nigeria or identify with their domestic jurisdiction as requirements for international practice as lawyers.⁸ The second reason is that it helps to complement the requirement for regional practices at

4. Section 14 (1) of the National University Commission Act, CAP. N.18. LFN, 2004 defines accreditation as, “ system for recognizing educational institutions and programmes offered in these institutions for a level of performance , integrity and quality which entitles them to the confidence of the educational community, the public they serve and the employer of the labour.”

5 Generally, see Eti B. Herbert and Ngozi C. Ole, ‘A binate regulatory framework for the accreditation of law faculties in Nigerian universities: a necessity or overkill?’ (2023) 57 (4) The Law Teacher 422-436.

6 See NUC, Standards (CCMAS) For Nigerian Universities < <https://www.ICC.GuidelinesForApplicants.ENG>> accessed 3 April 2026
7 CAP.L.10 LFN, 2004

8 For example, the requirements for one to practice as an international lawyer includes expertise and competence in International law. See “Guidelines for Applicants to the ICC List of Counsel and Assistants to Counsel” P. 5@https://www.ICC_GuideForApplicants_ENG<accessed on November 19, 2023> This shows the imperative of international law as prerequisite for global practice of law.

African Courts and other sub-regional courts, where knowledge of regional and international institutions are needed.⁹

Furthermore, the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Act regulates the study of international law.¹⁰ It enjoins the institute to collaborate with universities to encourage explorative research on any branch of law, including international law. It is for this reason that, the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, provides information, supervision, guidance and advice to post-graduate students or researchers.¹¹

Therefore, having examined the legal and policy framework establishing the requirements for teaching international law, the next line of engagement is to examine how Nigerian Universities are promoting the teaching of international laws. What learning strategies and approaches are Nigerian Universities adopting in teaching international law? How constructive and productive are those approaches adopted by the Nigerian Universities in Teaching International law? The answer to these questions will take us to the next part of this work- Pedagogical Approaches adopted by Nigerian Universities in Teaching International Law.

3. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES ADOPTED BY NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES IN TEACHING INTERNATIONAL LAW

Pedagogy is the art of teaching. It is a process of intellectual interaction between learners and their instructors aimed at imparting the knowledge and skills required for professional development. Pedagogy has five core

⁹ The law requires that to practice in African Court one must first qualify as a lawyer from his domestic jurisdiction. For example, to practice in ECOWAS and African Court of Human Rights. See, ECOWAS COMMUNITY JUSTICE, “ CCJ Official website| Legal Officer P2 P3: Academic Qualifications And Experience” @ <https://www.courtecowas.org>legal-...<accessed on November 20,2023>> See also African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, “ Vacancy Senior Legal officer(AFCHPR):Academic Requirements and Relevant Experience”@<https://www.african-court.org/wpafc/vacancy-senior<accessed on November 20,2023>>

¹⁰ CAP.N.18, L.F.N, 2004

¹¹.Section 4 Ibid

methodologies which are the constructive, collaborative, reflective, integrative and the inquiry-based approach.¹²

The constructive approach of teaching believes that students become more learned when they are actively involved in the learning process, as opposed to merely passing of information.¹³ Collaborative approach deals with grouping of two or more people for the purpose of understanding and learning.¹⁴ The inquiry-based approach is a teaching method that deals with abstract interrogations such as asking questions and posing of hypothetical problems for students to resolve. It seeks to engage the reasoning capacity of students in solving abstract questions.¹⁵ The integrative approach is the practical steps that make students make connections across curricula.¹⁶ It exceeds the curriculum of a particular course. This includes inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches. Under this method, the teachers have the task of aligning the core topic with other related disciplines. It is integrative because it aims to combine other disciplines with the topic being taught to facilitate easy learning. Reflective teaching is a process where teachers think over their teaching practices, analysing their methods of teaching and assessing how that method of teaching could be improved.

Flowing from the above analyses on the concepts of pedagogy, the one that fits into the context of this paper is the reflective approach. This is because what the teacher of international law does is to review and analyse their methodology of teaching, and how best it can be improved. Thus, the pertinent question to ask is which of these approaches of pedagogy aptly fit into the teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities? While the approaches of pedagogy as constructive, collaborative and integrative approaches could be good and effective in the practical teaching

12.Value Education Pedagogy For Z- Learners, "5 Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching"@<https://www.dlsud.edu.ph>>...{PDF}<accessed on November 7, 2022>

13.Arthur Guil-an, "5 Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching"@<https://academia.edu>>5-Peda..<accessed on November7, 2023>

14Ibid

15 Ibid

16 Ibid

of international law; the inquiry-based and the reflective approaches could be well fitted in teaching of theories.

The teaching of international law via a constructive, collaborative, and integrative approach enjoins teachers and Universities, to create ways through which students could access international institutions to witness how proceedings in international courts or tribunals (for example, the ECOWAS Court of Justice) in those institutions are conducted. This of course, is a herculean task in teaching international law in Nigeria. With this challenge, how then can we teach international law effectively in Nigerian Universities? The answer to this question leads us to the next arm of this discourse: Explorative and Engaging Ways of Teaching International Law in Nigerian Universities.

4. EXPLORATIVE AND ENGAGING WAYS OF TEACHING INTERNATIONAL LAW IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

To facilitate better ways of teaching international law in Nigeria, it is pertinent to explore other alternatives to the traditional ways of teaching international law. Thus, some of the explorative ways that international law could be effectively taught in Nigerian Universities include: (a) concretizing abstract concepts (b) partnerships with institutional affiliations (c) linking local contents with international law (d) promoting multilingualism in teaching of international law (e) excursions (f) thoroughly revisiting the concept of dualism under Nigerian law (g) continuous training of judges on basic training on international law, (h) engaging emerging fields of law such as Artificial Intelligence and International law, and (i) mentorship programs.

(a) Concretizing Abstract Concepts

This notion implies that concepts which are too remote and distant for students' understanding should be simplified. The simplicity should be done via practical analogy, cogent illustrations and demonstrations. For example, teaching laws of treaties, students should be able to have access to a draft copy of some of the treaties that Nigeria is a signatory to.

Libraries should be able to have some of the copies of the treaties ratified by Nigeria. This will serve as teaching guides or materials for students.

(b) Partnership With Institutional Affiliations

There is a need to partner with institutions to effectively teach international law. These institutions include both national and international. In this regard Nigerian Universities can partner with other institutions (foreign and national) to promote the study of international law. For example, Nigerian Universities can partner with the International Space Agency (ISA) and National Space Research Development Agency (NASRDA) to promote the teaching of space law. The same approach should be adopted in promoting sports' law. Recently, only few universities teach Space Law and Sports Law in Nigeria.¹⁷ It should be noted that Sports Law also contains international governance and arbitration dimensions which also has relevance in the Nigerian context.

Further, at the national level, students of international law should be able to visit institutions responsible for the domestication of international treaties, before the end of their curriculum. Here, the role of the National Assembly, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Houses of Assembly should be instrumental in learning. For example, universities close to Abuja (in Nigeria) should be able to utilize this approach.

(c) Linking Local Contents with International law

Teaching of international law should be able to link local contents with international laws. This implies that teachers should be able to widen the minds of students towards the possible link between the municipal laws with international law. The teacher should be able to inspire the students

17. Akinkunmi Testimony, 'Opportunities in Space Law for Nigerian Students' *SabiLaw*, March 2, 2022@<https://sabilaw.org>>opportunities-i..<accessed on November 19, 2023> See also, Unini Chioma, "Niger-Delta University Faculty of Law, introduces Space Law into Her Curriculum" *TheNigerinLawyer*, May 14, 2017@<https://thenigerianlawyer.com>>niger..<accessed on November 20,2023>See Sporting Tribune, "Lawyer calls for study of sports law in Nigerian Universities"@<https://sportingtribune.com>>lawyer..<accessed on November 20, 2023>

to see the correlations between the municipal law and its international contents. For example, while teaching Health Law, the teacher should be able to prompt the student to learn about international health law- where references could be made to sub-regional, regional and international laws regulating global health issues. It is from this ground that the laws and institutions governing global health authorities become relevant. In the same vein, teaching of corporate law, environmental law and labour law should be able to have global appeal to students. For example in teaching labour law, teachers should be able to align it with the international labour laws such as the various conventions enacted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), exposing the minds of the students on the nexus between labour law and immigrant workers, labour law and diplomatic and consular staff as well as labour law and international civil services. Linking national contents with international topics like this, will give the students different impression about labour, as a course that is beyond industrial actions and employment.¹⁸ Thus, law teachers in Nigeria should stop restricting certain topics as only applicable to municipal laws or localising topics solely to the Nigerian context.

(d) Excursions

This is a practical teaching methodology that involves participation and connections with the subject of study. It is a means of connecting the subjects taught at the classroom with its geographical locations. Students of International law have heard of various international courts or tribunals including the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court and international Chamber of Commerce. But many never went to those places.¹⁹

Perhaps, it could be rationalized that the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court are far away from Nigeria. Then what

18. Some post-graduate course outlines in Nigeria, still have labour law as courses for post-graduate studies. The contents of this course are sometimes, the repeat of similar contents with the curriculum of undergraduate. There is no improvement or addition to include courses such as International labour law, international civil service and the status of migrant workers under international laws.

19 Legal Magnetes International, 'Law Excursions' @<https://legalmagnetes.com>>law-exc..<accessed on January 10, 2025>

about regional and sub-regional institutions such as ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, and the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights? Such institutions should be utilized for excursions and internship to students of international law. This will bolster the teaching of international law in Nigerian Universities.²⁰ Hence, like what operates in several universities in Europe and several parts of Africa, Nigerian universities should arrange visits to some regional and sub-regional institutions in Africa especially those located in Nigeria including the ECOWAS Court of Justice (in Abuja Nigeria).

(e) Imperative of Multilingualism in Teaching of International law

International law is a global profession that cuts across different cultures of the world. Thus, there is the need for individuals to be multilingual or bilingual. Multilingualism should focus on the five major international languages such as French, English, Greek, Arabic and Mandarin as well as other evolving international languages such as Portuguese, Spanish and Hindi.²¹ Speaking at least one of these languages should be an added advantage to international law scholar and students aspiring for career in international law. In today's world, knowledge of multiple international languages is an added advantage to international (law) education.²² Thus, faculties of law in Nigeria should encourage teaching of one international language apart from English or French.

(f) Revisiting the Concepts of Dualism Under Nigerian Municipal Law

The concept of dualism in Nigeria has been subject to some misconstructions. This is based on the constitutional authority

20..Dewhurts Elaine, Higgins Noelle and Watkins, "Field Trips as Short Term Experiential Learning Activities in Legal Education", July 2012, Researchgate@<https://www.researchgate.net><accessed on January 10, 2025>

21.Blank Federico, "Most Spoken Language in the World in 2023", *Lingua*, April 23,2023,@<https://lingua.edu>>the most-spoke..<https://lingua.edu><accessed on November 20, 2023>

22. Smith-Stein Kathleen, "The Role of Multilingualism in Effectively Addressing Global Issues: The Sustainable Development Goals and Beyond" 2016 6(12) *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 2257 [Reserachgate@https://www.researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)>311...<accesssed on January 10, 2025>

establishing dualism under section 12 of the 1999 Constitution.²³ This section out rightly prohibits the application of any international treaty unless it is enacted by the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly. Because of its constitutional origin, many law students, lawyers and judges conclude that section 12 is an absolute law. However, it is subject to certain exceptions such as pre-160 treaties and Received English laws.

The status of Pre-1960 treaties as an exception to section 12 of the Constitution is given judicial recognition is in the case of *J.F.S Inv. LTD. V Brawal Line LTD*.²⁴ In this case one of the issues for determination was whether the Hague Rules of 1924 (which deals with carriage of goods by sea), must be enacted as dictated by section 12(1) of the 1979 constitution before it shall become applicable in Nigeria. The Supreme Court held Per Adekeye, J.S.C @ Page 535 Paras. D-H as follows:

The reason being that by October 1st, 1960 at the Nigeria Independence the Government of the Federation assumed all obligations and responsibilities of the colonial regime of the government which arose from valid international instruments such as Hague Rules, 1924. Nigeria became a party through changing of letters between Hague, the United Kingdom and Nigeria on 1st October, 1960. The Hague Rules 1924 was extended to Nigeria as a legislation which formed part of our laws before independence and was received as our laws after independence. It does not require any further ratification as stipulated in section 12 of the 1979 Constitution before it can be applicable. In other words, Hague Rules 1924, having assumed the force of law in Nigeria-thereby an existing law must be deemed to be an Act of the National Assembly by virtue of sections 274 (1) and 277 of the 1979 Constitution.

The above dictum of Supreme Court was censured by some Nigerian scholars to the effect that , the Apex Court of Nigeria eroded the institutional confidence in the legislature as the law- making body.²⁵ To

23 Generally, Amos O. Enabulele, 'Implementation of Treaties in Nigeria and the Status Question: Whither Nigerian Courts?' (2009) 17 (2) African Journal of International and Comparative Law 326-341.

24 (2010) 18 NWLR Pt .1225

25 Also, see Amos O. Enabulele and Faith O. Osadolor, 'The Status in Nigeria of Treaties

them, by stating that legislature has no power under section 12 of the 1999 Constitution Nigeria is undermining the principle of separation of powers. However, this writer elects to stick with the reasoning of the Supreme Court because the pre-1960 treaties were not made by Nigeria, but by British Colonial administration. As such based on the doctrine of state succession of treaties, Nigeria is obliged to continue with the treaties earlier signed by the colonial master.²⁶ Also, by the definition of ‘existing laws’ under section 315 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, colonial laws such as all Received English Laws are part of Nigerian Legislation. The status of all Received English laws as a special law that is not subject to section 12 of the 1999 Constitution is given judicial approval in the case of *Ibidapo V Lufthansa Airlines*.²⁷ In this case there was a contention on whether the Carriage By Air (Colonies, Protectorates and Trust Territories) Order, 1953 is an existing law, making the Warsaw Convention applicable by virtue of sections 274 (1) of the 1979 Constitution.²⁸ The Court held Per Wali JSC that:

So from 1960 till date, all the received English Laws, multilateral and bilateral agreements concluded and extended to Nigeria, unless expressly repealed or declared invalid by a court of law or tribunal established by law, remain in force. The 1953 Order making the Warsaw Convention as part of the existing law still subsists, since it has neither been repealed nor declared invalid.

The import of the above exposition is that the legal history of a nation also impacted the effectiveness of the implementation of international treaty. Thus, treaties may be signed in the past, which is its history, it can still be

Predating the 1979 Constitution: Reflections on *JFS v. Brawal Line Ltd*’ (2020) 12 (3-4) African Journal of Legal Studies 335-359; Pontian Okoli, ‘Ensuring the Effectiveness of Treaties in Africa-Case Studies of South Africa and Nigeria’ (2024) Cornell Int’l LJ 57 487.

26 This is known as principle of Continuity of Treaties under international law. Nigeria has recognised this doctrine in the case of Green Tree Agreement between Nigeria and Cameroon designated as *Cameroon v Nigeria; Equatorial Guinea Intervening*) Judgement, I.C.J. Reports 303. See also Dakas CJ Dakas, *International Law on Trial: Bakkassi and the Eurocentricity of International Law*, (Stephen INC. Bookhouse, 2001) 177-179 261997) 4 N.W.L.R Pt 498

27..Section 274(1) of the 1979 Constitution is in *pari materia* with section 315 of the 1999 Constitution which deals with existing laws.

implemented in the future.²⁹ This concept of ‘front-loaded’ implementation of treaty is one of the areas that scholars need to engage when teaching international law to show how historical treaties are relevant in contemporary contexts.

(g) Continuous Training of Nigerian Judges on the dynamics of International Law

Nigeria judges sometimes are too rigid to accommodate any interface between international law and municipal law. They are inspired by the fact that for such treaty to be applicable, it must be enacted in accordance with the provisions of section 12 of the 1999 Constitution. However, they may not have adverted to the exceptions relating to section 12 earlier discussed. One peculiar and common instance is in cases involving fundamental rights enforcement procedure.

In Nigeria under the Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure) Rules, 2009, any international laws, whether Nigeria is a signatory to or not, can be deployed in protecting and advancing the fundamental rights of Nigerian citizens. This means that the existence of any international treaty, conventions, bills, and agreements can be deployed in cases of fundamental rights. This position is succinctly captured in Paragraph 3(b) of the Preamble to the Fundamental Rights (Enforcement) Procedure, Rules, 2009 are as follows:

3. The overriding objectives of these Rules are as follows:

(b) For the purpose of advancing but never for the purpose of restricting the applicant’s rights and freedom, the court shall respect municipal, regional and international bills of rights cited to it or brought to its attention or of which the Court is aware, whether these bills constitute instruments in themselves or form part of larger documents. Such bills include:

(i) The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and other instruments

29 Pontian Okoli, ‘Ensuring the Effectiveness of Treaties in Africa -Case Studies of South Africa and Nigeria’ (2025) 57 (4) Cornell international law Journal 487-523

(including protocols) in the African regional human rights system.

(ii) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments (including protocols) in the United Nations human rights system.

The paragraph 3 (b) (i) and (ii) of the Preamble to the constitution further specifies certain international instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Right and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with their protocols. This exception to section 12 of the constitution became more apposite because the Universal Declaration of Human Right is not enacted as legislation in Nigeria. In Nigeria, one of the protocols and instruments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1945 that is given judicial recognition despite not been domesticated, is United Nation 1979 Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.³⁰

Scholars including Sanni and Eyongndi are of the view that certain aspects of the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Rules, gives primacy to international treaties that are not enacted by Nigerian parliament.³¹ For example, Sanni is of the view, that emphasis should be on the legislative enactment of such treaties before they can be enforced. Thus, provisions of Paragraph 3 of the Preamble of the Fundamental rights Enforcement Rules, 2009 can be further strengthened when section 12 of the 1999 is amended.³² Arguably, the application of international law through Fundamental Rules Enforcement Procedure made by the Chief Justice of

30 (2008) 17 NWLR PT .1117

31 David T. Enyongdi, Foluke Abimbola, and Adeyemi Oluwadamilare 'The Propriety of Locus Standi Provision in Nigeria's Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure Rules), 2009' (2024) 8 (2) Mizan Law Review 457-474; Abiola Sanni, 'Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure Rules, 2009 as a Tool for the Enforcement of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in Nigeria: The Need for Far-reaching Reform', (2011) 11 (2) African Human Rights Journal 511-531

32 Abiola Sanni, 'Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure Rules, 2009 as a Tool for the Enforcement of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in Nigeria: The Need for Far-reaching Reform', (2011) 11 (2) African Human Rights Journal 511-531

Nigeria, negates legislative supremacy and doctrine of separation of power.

On his part, Enyongndi et al maintained that there is the need for public interest litigation should be encouraged in enforcing access to justice.³³ This is very imperative considering the facts that access to justice requires funding. Therefore, by liberalising the concept of *locus standi* stakeholders will be able to assist the indigent in enforcing fundamental rights.³⁴

(h) International Law and Artificial Intelligence

International law is assuming a revolutionizing posture in the 21st Century.³⁵ The scope of the subjects of international law are continuously proliferating from state actor to non-state actors; from sub-state actors to multinational entities, and now from natural persons to artificial intelligence. In its functional acts, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is substituting human beings in the labour market. Thus, the question at this juncture: how will the evolution of AI impact on our understanding of legal personality at both national and international levels? Incidentally, Robot Sofia has assumed the status of virtual or natural citizenship of Saudi Arabia.³⁶ Robot Sofia is an artificial citizen of Saudi Arabia. It was manufactured by Hanson Robotic. In 2018, Robot Sofia became the first artificial citizens in history to be awarded citizenship by Saudi Arabia.³⁷

33 David T. Enyongdi, Foluke Abimbola, and Adeyemi Oluwadamilare 'The Propriety of Locus Standi Provision in Nigeria's Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure Rules), 2009' (2024) 8 (2) *Mizan Law Review* 457-474. Also, see Ufuoma G. Oyibodoro, Jenigho Philip Esavwede, and Micheal O. Ifeanyi Nwabuoku. 'Rethinking Locus Standi in Nigeria: A Path to Environmental Justice' (2025) 4 (3) *African Journal of Law and Justice System* 5-25

34 David T. Enyongdi, Foluke Abimbola, and Adeyemi Oluwadamilare 'The Propriety of Locus Standi Provision in Nigeria's Fundamental Rights (Enforcement Procedure Rules), 2009' (2024) 8 (2) *Mizan Law Review* 457-474

35 De Souza Talita and Sagoo Rashmin, " AI Governance in The Age of Uncertainty: International Law as a Starting Point", January 2024 *Just Security*@www.justsecurity.org <accessed on January 10, 2024>

36 Emily Reynolds, "The Agony of Sophia, the World's first robot citizen condemned to a lifeless career in marketing", *WIRED*, November 7, 2017 @ [https : www . wired. co. uk](https://www.wired.co.uk) <accessed on November 20, 2023>

37 World Economic Forum, 'A Robot Has Just Been Granted Citizenship of Saudi Arabia" WEC, October 27, 2017@<https://www.weforum.org><accessed on April 2, 2026>

The citizenship granted to Robot Sonia has prompted a lot of legal concerns relating to the subjects of international law.³⁸ These has raised a lot of concerns whether Robots could be granted citizens automatically there are created by their manufacturers.³⁹ There are other concerns as to whether, AI Robots can be recognised by international law in the same way it recognizes human citizens. In the Nigerian context, teaching of international law and allied courses in universities should also integrate the study of contemporary themes such as AI and how technology is expanding the frontiers of international law should be engaged. Thus, students studying international law in Nigerian universities should be exposed to current or contemporary themes in their study of international law.

(i) Mentorship

Mentorship is very instrumental in facilitating effective learning. Mentorship endears students to their teachers and fosters aspirations to be like them. Teachers of international law should be able to mentor students in the field. In doing so, the teacher must be cosmopolitan rather than provincial in their ways of life. Teachers should inspire students of international law to be able to tolerate and accommodate people from different walks of life, irrespective of cultural, religious, philosophical and sexual worldviews. Teachers should also make personal commitments to ensure that their students realise their aspirations towards international law.

38O. O. Ikubbanni O.A. Oyebanji and A. A. Oyeade, 'Legal Aspects of Granting Subjectivity to Artificial Intelligence: Prospects of Using Robots in Legal Practice in Nigeria' (2024) 2 (4) Journal of Digital Technologies and Law 835 - 856

39 P. L. Sundar, 'Developing an International Framework for AI Citizenship After the UN'S a Moratorium' Berkely Journal of International Law Blog (13 October 2021) <https://www.berkeleyjournalofinternationallaw.com/post/developing-an-international-framework-for-ai-citizenship-after-the-un-s-ai-moratorium> . See also , the British Council, 'Should Robot Be Citizens?', Brish Council, @<https://www.britishcouncil.org><accessed on April 3, 2026>

5. CHALLENGES OF TEACHING INTERNATIONAL LAW IN NIGERIA

Some of the challenges affecting the teaching of international law are examined below as follows:

- (a) **Understaffing of lecturers:** This affects the teaching of international law in two ways. Firstly, by abandoning the teaching of international law as a course, and secondly, having non-experts teaching international law. This may in turn affects effective learning of international law.⁴⁰ Thus, lecturers teaching international law in Nigerian universities should also be researching and publishing on international law and related areas.
- (b) **Poor working conditions of lecturers:** In Nigeria, university lecturers are poorly remunerated for their services. This has led to many lecturers and academics leaving Nigerian universities for greener pastures abroad. This is against the backdrop of the neglect of the government towards public sector education in Nigeria, thereby discouraging many people from becoming law lecturers and led to exodus of several academic staff in Nigerian universities. Thus, encouraging the *Japa* syndrome, a situation in Nigeria where the elite and educated class leave the country for greener pastures abroad.⁴¹ *Japa* is a Nigerian parlance which means leaving Nigeria to other countries where quality of life is better. It refers to a situation of leaving the country to secure better alternative jobs in a foreign country.⁴² This trend is becoming a trend considering the weak institutions and poor working conditions of workers in the university system.
- (c) **Industrial Actions:** The series of industrial actions in Nigerian universities (especially public-owned or government funded

37 Niyi Ogunde J., Jegede Deborah and Musa Abubakar, "Problems Facing Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities and the Way Forward," (2021) 1 (1) International Journal on Integrated Education 2Researchgate@<https://www.researchgate.net><accessed on January 10, 2025>

38.Ibid

42 Ibid

institutions) affected and is affecting the teaching of international law. Here, both the lecturers and students are victims as the gaps created by lack of consistency in the art of teaching affect the flows of education and learning. The lecturer has the onerous tasks of repeating such topics again after strike is called off, while the student must revisit the learning process again. This in turn have negative effects on teaching of international law.⁴³

- (d) **Poor Teaching Environment:** This cuts across poor facilities, lack of funding, neglects, poor budgeting towards education, lack of updated books on international law and amongst other institutional challenges. Public libraries, and some University libraries, rarely have updated books on international laws. Most of the editions were old ones. Most libraries have outdated books on international law.⁴⁴
- (e) **Eurocentric nature of curriculum on international law:** Most topics on international law are Eurocentric in nature.⁴⁵ From the preliminary issues of international law, sources of international laws, objects and subjects of international law etc. African contributions are rarely acknowledged.⁴⁶ Even colonial treaties entered between some African Kingdoms are not given recognition. This imbalance scholarship is another major setback to the study of international law in Nigeria.⁴⁷ It is from this prism that African scholars are currently been mandated to engage in pedagogical tasks that will portray the

40. .Egwu Sarah, "Strike Action on Qualitative Education in Tertiary Institutions", World Applied Sciences Journal 36 (9):P.1040@<https://www.idosi.org>>5.PDF<accessed on November 20, 2023>

44 Niyi Ogunode J., Jegede Deborah and Musa Abubakar, (n 37).

45 Babatunde Fagbayibo 'A Critical Approach to International Legal Education in Africa: Some Pivotal Considerations' 2019 12 Third World Approaches to International Law, Review. PDF<accessed on March 8, 2026> Also, see Eghosa O. Ekhatior, Chidebe M. Nwankwo and Joycelin C. Eze-Okubuiro, 'Situating Legal history in the Decolonisation of the Teaching of International Law in Nigeria' (2024) Working paper. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5550404>

46 Generally, see Eghosa O. Ekhatior, Chidebe M. Nwankwo and Joycelin C. Eze-Okubuiro, 'Situating Legal history in the Decolonisation of the Teaching of International Law in Nigeria' (2024) Working paper. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5550404>

47 Doma-Kutigi Halima, 'Towards a Responsive Approach to Teaching International law in Nigerian Universities' Carnellian JL & Pol. 3, 184@carnellianjournal.com<accessed on April 2, 2026>

role of African development in international law.⁴⁸ This will help to change the narrative that international law is not only Eurocentric, but a collective global concept that evolved with the contribution of every race and civilisation. International Law in Nigeria should be taught in such a way that also reflects how Africa, Europe, Asia and other civilisations played vital roles in the development of international law and related subject areas.

- (f) **Lack of Support by Universities towards Students Activities relating to international law:** Practical activities that promote effective appreciation of international law are not encouraged by Universities in Nigeria. For example, competitions involving moot, mock and simulations on various areas of international law are not encouraged via sponsorship by Nigerian Universities and the relevant stakeholders.⁴⁹
- (g) **Unilingual Nature of Nigeria International Law Scholars:** This is another major setback. This is because international law requires not only good communication skills in English Language, but also knowledge of some international languages such as French, Portuguese, Arabic, Greek, Latin and Mandarin.⁵⁰ Lawyers in Nigeria should strive to be multi-lingual to compete with the dynamics of the world as a global village with more than one language for social interaction.
- (h) **Visa challenges for Excursions and Conferences:** The barriers or challenges in obtaining visas by Nigerian students and Nigerian-based lecturers or academics to attend foreign international law programmes/events has been one of the major issues to Nigerian universities regarding knowledge exchange activities. Accessing the

48 Eghosa O. Ekhator, Chidebe Matthew Nwankwo and Joycelin C. Eze-Okubuiro, 'Situating Legal History in the Decolonisation of Teaching International Law in Nigeria' (October 26, 2024) Pp.6 -9@<https://ssrn.com/abstract=4511111><accessed on April 2, 2026>. See also, Owie, U.N., Teacher, Don't Teach Me Nonsense!: A Personal Reflection on Teaching International Law in Nigeria: , In *Teaching International Law : Reflections on Pedagogical Practice in Context*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2024, (Pp.201-203)@<https://www.routledge.com/9781032111111><accessed on April 2, 2026>

49 Generally, see Owie *ibid*

50 Smith-Stein Kathleen, Loc.Cit.

visa of some countries is a herculean task.⁵¹ Instances abound where scholars and students will prepare for international conferences, send papers, registered for conferences and only to be discouraged by refusal to grant of visa by the host country.⁵² Such experiences are frustrating.

- (i) **Funding:** Teaching international law is capital intensive. Publications, research and attending international conferences by teachers requires money. The buying of textbooks and excursion by students also requires money. Visiting international institutions in and outside Nigeria is also capital intensive. Thus, Nigeria government should encourage the strong funding for Nigerian Universities to enhance effective teaching of international law.

6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

To foster effective teaching of international law, this paper recommended certain steps. These recommended measures are highlighted below:

- (a) There should be emphasis on teaching of regional laws (including African Union Law, ECOWAS and other regional international law frameworks) as specie of international law in Nigerian universities. This point accords with the fact that regional bodies are recognized under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, 1945.
- (b) Equally, scholars teaching international law in Nigeria should integrate national laws with international laws in their teaching strategies and topics. In the globalized world we live, topics related to municipal law should be taught in a manner that it will be able to correlate with its international element. For example, in the teaching

51 Trpkovic Dejan, 'Negative effects in international Education: Are Stricter Policies Worth The Cost?', September 30, 2024, *prodirektgroup* @ [https : // prodirektgroup . com>inter...](https://prodirektgroup.com/inter...)<accessed on January 10, 2025>

52 Gautam Chetanath, Lowery Charles, Chance Mays, and Durant Dayan, 'Challenges for Global Learners: A Qualitative Study of the Concerns and Difficulties of international Students' 2016 *Journal of International Students* 501@[Researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311111111)<accessed on January 10, 2025> see also Kanal Jeevan and Gaulee Utam, 'Challenges of International Students from Pre-departure to Post-study: A Literature Review' 2019 9(2) *Journal of International Students* P56-570 @[researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311111111).<accessed on January 10, 2025>

of employment laws in Nigeria, students should be exposed to some level of awareness in the role of International Labour Organization in promoting the welfare of workers globally.

- (c) The Nigerian Law School should start the teaching of International Law as a compulsory academic course. Thus, in the Nigerian context, restricting legal teaching curriculum to civil litigation, criminal litigation, corporate law, property law, and ethics, are not good enough to breed a 21st century lawyer. The Nigerian law student (at the Faculties of Law and the Nigerian Law School) should be exposed to modern day law topics especially in international law.
- (d) Professional Associations like ILA (International Law Association-Nigerian Branch), Nigerian Bar Association, and FIDA, should encourage the study of international law through debates, essay competitions, and symposiums.⁵³ The legal contents of Continuous Legal Education programs of Nigerian Bar Association, (from the experience of this writer) are too municipal; both at the National and the State level. They focus more on national legal content.
- (e) Entertainment learning: there is the need for law teachers to adopt entertainment learning method in teaching international law. Law should be taught with some flair of recreation and leisure. Thus, recreational learning strategy should be encouraged to facilitate learning. This may help in easy understanding of certain concepts. In international law, there are audio-visual teaching materials that are helpful.⁵⁴ Also, watching documentaries, the Movies, like 'Rules of Engagement' starring Samuel Jackson, "Behind the Enemy Line"

53 It should be noted that in the last few years the International Law Association (Nigerian Branch) and its various committees have been in the forefront of organising various activities including conferences, webinars and capacity building events for Nigerian students and lecturers and other relevant stakeholders in Nigeria.

54 Singhal Arvind and Rogers Everret M., 'Entertainment-Education: A Communication Strategy For Social Change' 1999 Routeledge 8-9 Researchgate @ [https:// www.researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)<accessed on January 10, 2025>

starring Owen Wilson will be helpful as teaching guides in international law.⁵⁵

7. CONCLUSION

The teaching of international law in the 21st century needs dynamism to adapt to the contemporary realities. This is because as the world evolves, it comes with social changes that requires adaptability. That is why the methodology of teaching international law should not be static, but dynamic and innovative. For this reason, the Nigerian Universities and other stakeholders must collaborate to ensure that international law is well taught to students in a manner that accords with the contemporary realities of this age. This will make learning interesting, engaging and impacting in the minds of the learners. Stakeholders should encourage and support practical aspect of teaching international law. This will make it less abstract and bookish. Practical teaching of international facilitated by excursions, moot courts, exchange programme and internship, will help in bridging the gap between the theory and practice of international law. It is the conclusion of this paper that doing so will make the teaching of international law interesting, producing top-notch international lawyers from Nigerian Universities.

55 Comarty Edward, Young Alice Mary and Elias Simione, 'The Use of Film to Motivate Interest In Students with Learning Differences Through Imagination and Diverse Thinking in Higher Education' 2023 7(3) Journal of Research Initiatives 7-9, Fayetteville Sate University @<https://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu>>...<accessed on January 10, 2025>