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## Editorial

This edition of *NIU Journal of Humanities* touches on Development Administration, Social Philosophy as well as Language and Literary Studies.

One of the papers, in the last section on Language and Literary Studies, evaluates the the survival strategies and economic issues facing traditional media in the digital era. The study reveals that traditional media's financial sustainability is hampered by the decline in advertising revenues, fragmentation of audiences, high operating costs, digital competition, and shifting consumer tastes. It is suggested that greater investment in digital infrastructure, staff training, an audience-first content strategy, and privacy-preserving monetization models will help sustain the changing media landscape.

The second part of the Journal focuses on Development Administration. Using Nigeria as a case study, one of the papers in this section empirically argues that positioning a country on the path of socio-political and economic development requires a balanced understanding of religious practices by civil servants at the workplace, while law makers should formulate and implement policies that can checkmate religious practices of civil servants in the civil service system.

Papers in the last section are on Social Philosophy. One of the papers in these sections argues theoretically and demonstrates empirically that Artificial Intelligence can be viewed not as a replacement for God's creative power but as a catalyst for interdisciplinary dialogue and reflection within the academy, particularly concerning the relationship between innovation and theology, and their moral and ethical dimensions.

This issue of *NIU Journal of Humanities* features many empirical and theoretical based articles which can be of great benefit to every reader.

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# **Part One**

## **Language and Literary Studies**





## Embodied Love: Cognitive Poetics and the Somatic Imagery in E. E. Cummings' Love Poetry

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**Abstract.** The data of this research project provides an in-depth study of cognitive poetics and the mechanisms of somatic imagery and embodied love in the lyrical oeuvre of E. E. Cummings. This love poetry is historically denied by the early formalist critics either of being sentimentally conventional or just typographical eccentricities, but is here reinstated as an extremely refined phenomenological place of abstract emotional experiences made concrete through visceral body experiences. This study is based on a combination of three theories: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), Image Schema theory, and cognitive blending, and examines how Cummings evades Cartesian dualism to develop an ontology of love that is based on biological and physical reality. The cognitive frames in which linguistic disorientation calls readers to experience love as a spatial, embodied and tactile phenomenon are traced in a careful textual analysis based on canonical texts such as "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond," "i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)," and "love is thicker than forget. Cummings' typographic or syntactic aberration, the paper posits, is not simply a form of aesthetic novelty, but rather a means to conceptualize his emotionally intimate experience and one that mirrors emotional proximity. In sum, this study situates Cummings as a major player among the linguistic embodiment folks, showing that in his poetic cosmos love is not a mental state or a thing, but something that is impossible to escape, that is constantly happening, in the body.

### 1. Introduction

This Introduction to the article introduces the reader to the Cartesian Divide and its significance in the development of modernist love poetry.

Intellectual abstraction, psychological fragmentation, and a remarkable scepticism of romantic sentimentality are some of the hallmarks of twentieth century modernist poetry. E. E. Cummings found an aesthetic space apart from the dense, historical and highly cerebral works of poets such as Eliot and

Pound, who were reacting to the trauma of mechanical modernity. Cummings remained a difficult fit in modernism for some time, and traditional formalist scholarship had a long history of issues. Initial reviewers often and wrongly saw his love poems as relics of a 'Romantic' sentimentality, and his typographic quirks as frottations intended to trick the reader into thinking that he was not being didactic. This important deconstruction did not adequately acknowledge what was going on subliminally in Cummings' writing.

In the modern perspective of cognitive poetics, Cummings' love poems do not reflect Victorian romanticism but constitute a highly advanced and futuristic attempt at cognitive and linguistic challenges of mind and language. Within the field of E. E. Cummings' love poetry, this research project, Embodied Love: Cognitive Poetics and the Somatic Imagery in E. E. Cummings' Love Poetry, directly counters the historical marginalization of Cummings' thematic concerns. We believe Cummings' poetry takes us into a thorough aesthetic break down of Cartesian dualism, the Enlightenment concept that divided the thinking mind from the passive, physical body. Love in the Western literary tradition was always considered a spiritual or intellectual thing, and something abstract which would not be of the flesh. Cummings's poem plays with this idea, creating a poetic structure that sees love as completely indissoluble from the physical.

Using the use of marked syntactic dislocation, morphological inventions and highly physical imagery, Cummings' reader is forced to undergo emotional experiences as immediate sensation. In his poetry, love is not considered: it is understood as a movement in space, a weight on the hand, the new direction of the nerve, the necessity of breath. The project focuses on the biological mechanisms of human love and how Cummings uses language to connect two worlds—one abstract emotion and one physical anatomy. We argue that his stylistic innovations are not just a form of visual play, but

cognitive strategies that seem to be crafted to confound the typical reader's processing and might involve the reader in a destabilizing somatic experience of intimacy.

### 1.1 Research Gap, Questions, and Objectives

While there has been a lot of work done on modernist poetry in the last two decades, much less has been written on Cummings' love poetry that has been sustained in a cognitive-poetic vein. Most of the scholarship that has been written about his typographical experimentation focuses on visual or concrete poetics (Webster, 1995), or on his poetic signature as a whole. Embodied and somatic aspects of his love lyrics are under-theorized. Although his work has been the subject of studies based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image-schema analysis and conceptual blending, there have been relatively few studies that apply these theories and even fewer that combine these approaches in a systematic reading of a specified corpus. This study aims to fill this void by providing an integrated cognitive-poetics study of embodiment in three of Cummings' love poems.

Therefore, the following research questions were formulated: (1) What is the way in which conceptual metaphors of love are used in Cummings' love poetry as embodied and somatic (embodied and somatic) conceptual mappings and not as abstract or idealistic representations? (2) What are the image schemas that shape the spatial and bodily aspects of love in the selected poems and what is the linguistic and typographical manifestation of this? How does conceptual blending explain Cummings' more grammatically/morphologically irregular constructions? (4) How does the typographical layout of the text help to create an embodied reading experience?

The study aims to achieve four goals, that is, to find and analyse the conceptual metaphors in the selected corpus, to describe the image schemas that underlie the spatial and somatic meanings of these conceptual metaphors, to account for Cummings' linguistic innovations in terms of conceptual blending and to take into consideration the role of typographical form in the cognitive processing of these conceptual metaphors. The study aims to do this, and in so doing, aim to make a focused, methodologically explicit attempt to account for embodiment in Cummings' love poetry.

## 2. Methodology

The methodological, corpus and analytical procedures are explained below.

The method used in this study is qualitative approach, close textual analysis based on the cognitive-poetic approach. It is an interpretive rather than statistical approach, which means that it uses analytical tools from the cognitive linguistics to a small corpus purposefully selected to describe the mechanisms which enable embodied meaning to be created. It is not a comprehensive analytical study of Cummings' work, but rather a study of a few texts in greater depth.

The corpus includes three poems: "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond", "love is more thicker than forget" and "i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)". The following selection of poems has been made on the basis of three clear criteria. First of all, thematic relevance – each is generally considered a love poem, each emphasizes intimacy, attachment, or emotional surrender. Second, representativeness of technique: the three texts present the three devices which are the focus of the analysis: image-schematic spatial structuring, morphological and grammatical deviation, and parenthetical/typographical disruption. Thirdly, 'canonical visibility': all three are often anthologized and discussed, making it possible to place the current cognitive-poetics reading in relation to already existing critical readings. The standard scholarly edition (Cummings, 1991) was used to select poems for the text so that it was as reliable as possible.

The analytical process was done in three steps. In the first phase, one version of each poem was read carefully to look for candidate expressions of embodiment – lexical, grammatic, and typographical characteristics that represents emotional or abstract content as a bodily, spatial, or sensory experience. These features were analyzed in the second stage with the help of three complementary frameworks: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which was used to reconstruct underlying conceptual mappings (e.g., source and target domains); image-schema analysis, which was used to uncover recurrent spatial structures (e.g., CONTAINER, PATH, FORCE); and conceptual blending to account for constructions whose meaning could not be explained by a single conventional mapping. During the third stage, the typographical and syntactic arrangement of each passage was analysed for how it helped the reader to process the passage. Interpretive claims are linked to specific text evidence throughout and theoretical extrapolation is clearly differentiated from the description of the text.

This offers a theoretical framework in the shape of Conceptual Metaphor, Image Schemas and the Architecture of Embodiment. This provides a theoretical framework in the form of a Conceptual

Metaphor, Image Schemas and the Architecture of Embodiment.

For the purpose of disintegrating the complex mechanisms of somatic representation in Cummings' poetry, this study integrates a number of theories stemming from the basic theories of cognitive linguistics and poetics, resulting in a comprehensive framework that can be used to break down the interaction between the text, mind, and flesh.

In addition to these core resources, the following are more recent developments in cognitive poetics and embodied cognition which contribute to the present analysis. Research, which builds on Stockwell's (2002) and Tsur's (2008) work, has improved the understanding of how readers' bodily and sensorimotor experiences modulate the work's meaning and has brought the metaphor and blending analysis approach to the understanding of how readers process the text and respond to it. Especially pertinent here is recent scholarship that treats typographical and syntactic deviation as a cognitive, and not only visual phenomenon (Maurer 2023) and on the blending of the romantic and somatic (Moser 2025) in early twentieth-century American poetry. The classical frameworks mentioned above can be applied to the literature, but with a closer look at ongoing debates in literary cognition and embodiment studies, and with Cummings in this newer literature.

### **The Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Biology of Language**

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Biology of Language are analysed:

Developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their groundbreaking work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was a major shift in literary linguistics because of its insights into the use of metaphor as a basic cognitive process. CMT states that the human mind translates abstract, intangible source domains (emotions, time or spirituality etc.) into concrete, tangible target domains (the actual experience of the world in the body). The abstract idea of LOVE, for example, is received by various physical structures such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LOVE IS A NUTRIENT or LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE.

In this study, he is using CMT to illuminate Cummings's systematic attempt to displace abstract theological and philosophical definitions of romance and to situate emotion of love in the raw source domains of the body. Reading his poetry in this way

allows us to see how he expands and changes the norms of the usual cultural metaphors, thus challenging the human mind to think of emotional attachment as a lived encounter between two biological organisms.

### **3. Signs of 'Educational Failure' and the Learning Environment**

Along with CMT, Mark Johnson's (1987) theory of Image Schemas offers the tools to structure the understanding of how spatial orientation influences poetic meaning. The image schemas include reoccurring, dynamic cognition patterns that emerge from our initial movements as infants through physical space (CONTAINER, BALANCE, PATH, FORCE, UP-DOWN). The world is known to us by means of our bodies, which inhabit space, meet physical obstacles, move in paths and feel the pull of gravity.

These primitive image schemas are called into play in Cummings' love poems to materialize feeling. Rarely do the adjectives used to describe affection use the static approach of the adjective, but rather one of the following schemas: CONTAINER (one is in another's space), PATH (one is moving toward an infinite interior), and FORCE (an irresistible kinetic effect of the beloved). The project employs image-schema analysis to elucidate how Cummings produces the experience of 'body presence' and thus makes the flatness of the page into a multi-dimensional, corporeal space.

### **Cognitive Blending and Conceptual Integration**

Overall, the theory of Conceptual Blending (Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner 2002) is adopted to explain Cummings' more innovative use of language. This framework explains the processes the human mind can use to create meaning by bringing together a variety of seemingly conflicting mental spaces and creating a "blended space" that contains a new emergent logic. The blending of ungrammatical elements (e.g., a look becomes a literal hand, an adverb becomes a literal place) may be seen as a call for a complex conceptual process. This encourages the reader to shorten time in the structure of this work, to present it in more concrete physical terms, to make it more tangible and local even in the abstract, and to more immediately and concretely perceive it than to reflect on it.

The third way of movement will be called Anatomical Integration and Spatial Collapse in "i carry your heart with me (i carry it in". The third way of moving will be called Anatomical Integration and Spatial Collapse in "i carry your heart with me (i carry it in".

### A. The "visceral" subversion of the Container Schema.

As a poetic example of the cognitive dynamics of anatomical integration, there is perhaps no better twentieth-century romantic poem than Cummings's famous "i carry your heart with me(i carry it in" (1952). The first line could seem like a poetic exaggeration from an ecocritical or formalist point of view. But, if analyzed in a cognitive poetics framework, the text brings about a structural process on the CONTAINER image schema which leads to a full dissociation of the self from the other.

Cummings writes:

"i carry your heart with me, / i am always / going / with all my going; / wherever I go there goes you with my going / i cannot go anywhere / but i take you with me; / i cannot begin my journey / and leave you behind; / i cannot walk through the woods / but i take you with me; / i cannot run in my own company / but i take you with me." (Cummings, 1952/1991, p. 572).

This stanza's cognitive structure is completely based on a nested CONTAINER configuration. The human body is a bounded physical body that is self-understood as a container between the inside and outside world. But Cummings questions this evolutionary premise, by putting the beloved inside the beloved's heart ("your heart") in his heart ("my heart"). It is not a coincidence that the typographical brackets are a literal visual representation of the container; cognitively, the brackets serve as a kind of graphic representation of the container. The words are physically contained in the text, which leads the reader to focus on the words in the same way as the poetic persona is psychologically and somatically contained inside the text. The heart is no longer a symbol of emotion, but remains, because, as a physical object, it has to be physically carried, supported and safeguarded within the speaker's own thorax.

### B. Marked Syntactic Displacement and Biological interdependence

Cummings continues to disrupt the grammar in the second movement of the poem, and in doing so eliminates the sense of individual agency, instead, giving the two a common biological identity:

But 'i fear / no fate' (for you are my fate, my sweet) / 'i want / no world' (for beautiful you are my world, my true) / 'but you' are whatever a moon' has always meant' / 'whatever a sun' will always sing is you' (Cummings 1952/1991, p. 572).

Cummings places the causal clauses in parentheses next to the basic existential statements, ("i fear," "i want") causing a cognitive delay that leaves the reader with the impression that the thoughts are taking a "bigger than they appear" turn. The reader doesn't have to distinguish between the other man's individual identity and the corporeal nature of the beloved. The syntax creates a mental space which is blended with the external physical space (the "world", "moon", "sun") and this external space is condensed and taken up by the anatomy of the beloved. The universe is as big as it is in the cosmos and as local as it can get on a somatic level. The sun is not just a light, it is also an acoustic, it "sings", it needs a vocal apparatus to sing, it is anthropomorphised and physicalised as a result. In this "compression of the mind" Cummings makes love an external, emotional, and temporary relationship turn into an internal, inescapable, and permanent biological reality, and so the speaker's perception of physical spacetime is governed by his love.

### 4. Kinetic Tactility and Organic Dissolution in "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond".

#### A. Non-Contact Intimacy Somatic Agency.

Cummings' exploration of the very intricate mental discipline of feeling without touching in the text "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond" (1931). He builds a poetic space where the gaze of the beloved is psychologically present and operates with the material/kinetic force of an anatomical hand; he creates a space that is a representation of the sensation of vulnerability and maps it onto the physical body as a means of showing how cognitive poetics maps the sensation of vulnerability onto the physical body.

Let's take a look at the opening movement:

There is a place, somewhere, i never went / gladly beyond / any experience: / your eyes have their silence: / in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me, / or which i cannot touch because they are too near (Cummings, 1931/1991, p. 367).

There is a significant reorientation of one's spatial logic that needs to take place to cognitively process this stanza. The speaker makes love the theme of the JOURNEY schema ("somewhere i have never travelled"), but this is a very localised location within the stillness of the beloved's eyes. The enigma of "which i cannot touch because they are too near" is a perfect expression of the state of the mind, of psychological immersion. In physical space, something can't be so close to be touched, unless it has already crossed that boundary of the skin and become part of the self. Cummings is charting an emotional

landscape where the beloved's body has entered the body of the speaker, making touch a mechanics no longer needed.

**B. Floral Kinetics is the Somatic Metaphor used in this exercise.**

Cummings then uses a variety of conceptual blends, fusing human anatomy with the rhythms of botany, to vividly evoke the image of emotional surrender in the following stanzas:

But your look will open me with ease, / Though I have closed myself as fingers, / You open always petal by petal me, / As Spring opens, (touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose (Cummings, 1931/1991, p. 367).

In this case, the cognitive mapping is at several levels of the mind. The speaker's body is initially conceived as a locked fist ("closed myself as fingers") in universal somatic movement symbol of defensive physical isolation and somatic rigidity. The look, an optical, non-material force is accorded a level of physical power, becoming a mechanical force that prys open this fist.

Now the domain is botanical morphology: the speaker opens the rose - petal by petal - like a personified hand of Spring is opening me. This conceptual connection results in a strong feeling of 'instant tactility'. A slow deliberate unfolding of an organic body, in the head of the reader. The parentheses used around the phrase (touching skilfully, mysteriously) again create a typographic skin, a layer of the speaker's interiority, which is touched skilfully and mysteriously. The body is made porous, reactive, organically dynamic—its very opposition to the Cartesian and inanimate body.

**C. The Neurological Sublime and Absolute Somatic Scale is like a compass.**

The Neurological Sublime and Absolute Somatic Scale is similar to a compass.

The emotional and intellectual turning point of the poem is the last stanza in which Cummings declares the absolute domination of non-human, somatic mystery over all of the human mental constructs.

Nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals / the power of your intense fragility: whose texture / compels me with the colour of its countries, / rendering death and forever with each breathing (Cummings, 1931/1991, p. 367).

Cummings's "intense fragility" is a cognitive oxymoron that calls into the mind a combination of weakness and

great physical strength. This fragility is made "texture" and "colour", engaging at the same time both the tactile and the visual processing centres of the reader's brain. The abstract and frightening aspects of time, death and forever are entirely set aside in favor of the physiological process of breathing: with each breathing. Cummings's infinite and terminal nature is condensed into the rhythm of the lungs' expansion and contraction. The physical, biological preservation of life becomes the standard that defines eternity and this is the case irrespective of any transcendence of the spiritual, leaving the argument that for Cummings there is no spiritual transcendence outside of the machinery of the flesh.

**5. The Species of Nature in "love is more thicker than forget"**

**Cognitive Resistance – A. Grammatical Catachresis**

The first two poems are incredibly bodily, but the grammatical distortions in "love is more thicker than forget" (1940) highlight how Cummings can use the form of the language to evoke a sense of its somatic nature. Cummings' deviation from the conventional syntax and morphology of a poem disrupts the reader's typical cognitive processing of the poem in the abstract, automated system, and compels the reader to enter into the materiality of language at a slow, visceral level.

The first verse of the poem begins: "Love is more thicker than forget; / more thinner than recall; / more seldom than a wave is wet; / more frequent than to fail" (Cummings, 1940/1991, p. 530).

The phrase is grammatically incorrect because it is a double comparative ("more thicker") and this construction is generally only used by people who are uneducated or are in a language learning stage. But in the framework of cognitive poetics this inflation of structure has a very definite purpose: it enriches the word "thicker. The reader doesn't just skim over the word, it is a syntax barrier that is as real as its weight.

In addition, Cummings translates the mental processes of forgetting ("forget") and remembering ("recall") into a physical one of density and viscosity. Love is given a physical thickness that is greater than memory. Love is "more seldom than a wave is wet," meaning that it is indeed a feeling, but a feeling that is hard to deny, an actual, physical wetness. The abstract virtue is continually thrown back into the elemental reality of the senses.

**B. Writing is an embodiment of the spatial dialectic of the unbounded mind.**

The spatial dialectic of the unbounded mind is writing.

In the final movements of the poem, Cummings continues this dichotomy between the material and the abstract and, as a consequence, develops a topology of the mind, a place for love that is infinite, but also very corporeal.

It is most mad and moonly / and less it shall unweave / than sea oncoming swallows / only the sittest wrecks (Cummings, 1940/1991, p. 530).

Cummings creates a cognitive fusion by introducing the new word "moonly" to go with "mad" to produce a resonance between human psychological "madness," and the real, physical gravitational forces of the moon on the tides. The phrase "sea oncoming" makes its first appearance in the poem, as it devours only the "sittest wrecks. The imagery is associated with the sea, and evokes strong physical processes of immersion, erosion and destruction. Love is not offered as a gentle, internal feeling of the heart, but as a giant, environmental kind of hyper-object, a huge, unstoppable, overpowering, physical force of nature, a force that is consuming the fragile material constructions (the "wrecks") that are trying to withstand its force. The language is alliterative and the rhythmic movements are dense, reflecting the physical pounding of the waves, and bringing this sensation right to the reader's ears.

**6. Displacement of typographical elements in terms of cognitive kinesthetics: Comparative Analysis.**

In order to grasp the special qualities of Cummings' embodied poetics, the distinctive qualities of his typographical fragmentation—systematic use of the lack of capitalization, the fracturing of words across line breaks, and the inconsistent use of punctuation—must be examined. Even though the features are mostly visual, they have often been described and analyzed by traditional formalist critics as a visual art. Cognitive poetics, however, is aware that these text effects are also known as a form of cognitive kinesthetics, which is a kind of physical struggle when reading a text that is comparable to somatic experience.

If a reader is faced with a grammatically correct sentence (syntactically perfect) the brain reads and comprehends the information very quickly and automatically, functioning as if it were a disembodied intellect. Cummings breaks a line in some way, like in

this instance separating the word "l(a" and then weaving it into "a leaf falls" across multiple lines, essentially throwing out a bomb that shatters this automatic cognitive processing. The eye must dart randomly down the page; the muscles in the optical apparatus have to put in effort to make up the linguistic unit; the brain is in a condition of cognitive tension, disorientation and final resolution.

It isn't a coincidence that this is a physical connection with the text – it's a deliberate somatic recreation of love and intimacy. For Cummings, love obliterates the stifling, mechanical systems of human society, technology and habit. Cummings' use of the physical structure of the language on the page serves to highlight the destabilizing power of love, at least in this text which seems to be begging to be read in such a way that the destabilizing power of love is realized perceptually. The text no longer becomes a receptacle for ideas but can be read as a verbal surface that is active and dynamic and defies the reader's expectations.

**7. Epistemological implications: The Biology of Meaning and Biocentric Humility**

There are epistemological implications that go beyond literary aesthetics to the systematic penetration of somatic images and cognitive structures throughout Cummings' love poetry. Therefore, a continuous physical reference is provided to the "higher" human emotions and spiritual devotions of the anatomy, as breathing, touching, bleeding, looking, etc.—and these are the same that later came to be used in cognitive science and evolutionary biology in a similar way.

The idea of Western academic institutions that human dignity and intelligence is obtained by going beyond the biological was taken for granted for centuries: by making the immortal soul or the rational intellect greater than the mortal, decaying animal body. Cummings reveals this division like a "tragic life denying illusion. The poetic imagination conveys that we can love and find meaning and that we can be connected to a cosmos that transcends our bodies, yet we are still connected to them. All knowledge and transcendence is in the flesh.

It can be interpreted as a call to reengage in a new way with biocentric humility. Cummings' notion of the sovereignty of the feeling body is a deeply political and existential statement in an era in which more and more, the world is dominated by industrial war, corporate standardization, and the efficiency and coldness of technocratic states. He argues that the

systems of modern power try to purify, measure and automate human life, rendering the body a machine to produce capital. Cummings's poetry resumes what he considers the "absolutely free" and "indefinitely emotional" truths of organic anatomy, and restores the body to the status of a sacred portal of infinite emotion, the one place on earth where mechanical logic cannot operate.

### 8. The Futurity of Embodied Poetics: An account of the period of E. E. Cummings' work up to 1940.

Finally, this research shows that E. E. Cummings' love poetry is a continuous examination of the embodiment of human language and thought. His texts are a rich, foundational archive of cognitive poetics and environmental philosophy, when his historical and formalist prejudices are removed and his work read for its freshness, originality, and power.

Poetically, Cummings builds his own universe with his conceptual metaphors, image schemas, and typographical fragmentation, and, ultimately, he recovers love from the sterile environment of the realm of intellectual abstraction, bringing it back to its proper place, the living tissue of the human body. In the case of "i carry your heart with me", the physical enclosure of the heart is both a containment and a disappearance, in the case of "somewhere i have never travelled", the activity of plants is a natural movement that is also kinetic, and in the case of "love is more thicker than forget", the heart's shape is both topical and overdetermined, defying the morphologies of the body. The somatic and spatial realities of human emotion are suggested by the enclosed heart of "i carry your heart with me", the natural movement of the plants in "somewhere i have never travelled", and the overdetermined topicality of the heart's shape in "love is more thicker than forget".

His work is a timely reminder to the present-day digital world with its disembodied human interactions, mediated by artificial screens and abstracted into virtual data streams. Cummings' poetry puts forward a definite proposition: let's get back into the flesh. He reminds us that we need to respect the unpredictable, the beautiful and the fragile mechanics of our biological containers in order to survive as authentic, feeling beings. Cummings is a remarkable poet of the senses, who reminds us that love is physical; that the greatest mysteries of the universe lie not in heaven but in the hearts of the sovereign human body, in the breath, in the feeling, in the suffer.

### 8.1 Limitation, theoretical implications and future studies

There are a number of caveats to note. The study, however, is constrained to a small purposive sample of three poems and the results reflect tendencies in this sample and not specifically claims that can be made about Cummings' oeuvre as a whole. In addition to being interpretive, the analysis is also cognitive-poetic, as there is always a certain amount of analytical inference when making a reading and alternative readings are always available, even though the reading is based on the textual evidence. Lastly, the arguments presented here are not ones of experimental measurement of actual readers' responses to the texts but rather relate to the nature of what is contained in them and the processing that they call for.

In spite of these constraints, there are theoretical implications of the analysis. It argues for a cognitive motivation of typographical and grammatical variation in Cummings and shows how the three readings of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image-schema analysis and conceptual blending can be integrated in one text. It provides a specific case study to the overall research project of embodied approaches to literary cognition.

The analysis could be expanded in a number of ways in the future. These embodied patterns would be evaluated on the consistency of the body of Cummings' writings if he had a bigger corpus. Processing claims made here could be testable using empirical approaches (e.g., eye-tracking or reading-time studies). Comparative work might place Cummings alongside other modernist poets to see if the strategies that are identified are idiosyncratic or period. These extensions could contribute to the validation, qualification, and/or refinement of the findings of interpretation.

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## A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Selected Historical and Non-Historical Proverbs in Yorùbá

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**Abstract.** Existing works on Yorùbá historical proverbs submits that such proverbs are a veritable source of history which emphasises various moral and ethical values while studies on non- historical proverbs dwell on their different uses and functions ranging from role relationship in the society, morality, decency, caution and peaceful co-existence. None of the existing works has addressed a comparative analysis of historical and non-historical proverbs, the language choices and their sociolinguistic implications. This study investigates a sociolinguistic view of historical and non-historical proverbs. It analyses the genealogy of the Yorùbá proverbs from the historical and non-historical perspectives, explores the use of the proverbs in everyday discourse and how they shape the attitudes, perception and worldview of the Yorùbá people. Emphasis is placed on the social, cultural, and the linguistic contexts of the proverbs. The study also examines how the proverbs are used to articulate collective values and beliefs, and how their meanings are modified and transferred over time. This study adopts Dell Hymes (1972) ethnography of communication for its analysis. The data for this study were obtained from native speakers of Yorùbá in their towns and villages such as Òsogbo, Òyó, Ìbàdàn, Ìkìrè, Ògbómòşó, Òfà and Ìjábé. Proverb texts were also used for clarification on meaning and explanations. This study is partly a reaction to Lucas (1965) claim that proverbs are anonymous wisdom. Findings in this study show that historical proverbs are product of historians who witnessed the events that are used as references before they became proverbs. The study also argues that non-historical proverbs are products of creativity and deep thought. This study calls for a dichotomy in the acknowledgments rendered before relating the two proverbs (historical and non-historical), such that tributes given to the historians who witnessed the history and those to whom they handed them over to should differ from the creative

thinkers who through their ingenuity, invented proverbs. This study contributes to knowledge by recommending different pre-proverbs acknowledgments rendition before the historical and non-historical proverbs to show their sources.

**Keywords:** Historical Proverbs, Non-Historical Proverbs, Sociolinguistics, Historians, Creative Thinkers, Yorùbá Language.

### 1. Introduction

Proverbs are witty sayings that encapsulate truth that shows the world view, customs, traditions, culture, beliefs, history and the ways of life of a people (Adeoye, Taiwo and Adeseke 2022). Fasiku (2006:25) notes that proverbs encapsulate the worldview of a people, and serve as a means of arousing, defining, manifesting and establishing the expectations, aspirations and consciousness of a people ... proverbs serve as a linguistic confirmation of the totality of a people's worldview and the epistemic cognition of this world-view.

A proverb, according to Medier (1993) is a short, generally known sentence from the folk tradition that contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form, and which is handed down from generation to generation. Proverbs can reference historical facts or well-crafted words of wisdom from creative thinkers. Thus, Yorùbá proverbs are generally divided into historical proverbs and non-historical proverbs. The historically-induced proverbs are words of wisdom that emanated from historical events that were witnessed by ancient Yorùbá people. The rich historical antecedents of the Yorùbá people make their proverbs relate to the present, past and make projections for the future.

Historical proverbs and history are inseparable because historical events gave birth to them. Carr (1961) asserts that history is an unending dialogue between the present and the past. He explains further that historical facts and historians are intertwined and would be meaningless in the absence of each other. According to Marwick (1970), history is the body of knowledge about the past produced by historians together with everything that is involved in the production, communication of, and reaching about that knowledge. The non-historical proverbs, on the other hand, are products of insightful thoughts, keen observations and critical thinking that led to the inspirational words that are regarded as proverbs because of the deep thought, the logic in their presentations and relevance to the society. These types of proverbs may not have historical antecedents as they may not be historically induced but are borne out of the creativity and ingenuity of old folks.

The use of proverbs in day-to-day conversation and activities of the Yorùbá people such as: commerce, occupation, ceremonies, festivals and child training among others shows their relevance, in making reference to people, places and situations. Thus, the elders are regarded as the repository of the proverbs. Rumide (2013) advances that the Yorùbá people believe strongly in the tradition of proverbs, hence, they use them in their day-to-day activities. Adegboyega (2017) asserts that among the Yorùbá people, proverbs are believed to be a convention used to flavour speech, taking into consideration its cultural and moral relevance. It is important to note that a skilled person in the use Yorùbá proverbs is revered, and respected for having native education and intelligence because he/she possesses the wisdom and lore of the race. Moreover, the interjection of proverbs in conversation is considered as part of the ethics of traditional communication, since it emanates from their perception and keen observation of natural situations, human relations and animal behaviour. In the Yorùbá settings, proverb are used to rebuke, encourage, admonish, warn, enlighten, explain, and educate people.

## 2. Literature Review

There are a good number of scholarly works on Yorùbá proverbs. They include Abiodun (2018), Olaiya (2020), Akintoye, Ojo & Olatunde (2021), Adeoye, Taiwo & Adeseke (2022), among others. Abiodun (2018) examines proverbs that revere elders in Yorùbá society. He notes that the positions of elders are vital in society because they are the custodians of culture. He explains that age, beards, accomplishments, marriage, chieftaincy titles, and childbearing are some

of the qualities of elders among the Yorùbá. He explains further that elders in Yorùbá, as depicted in proverbs, are expected to possess wisdom, deep thought, patience, perseverance, experience, cheerfulness, and the ability to settle disputes. Olaiya (2020) explores proverbs that relate to security among the Yorùbá. She explains that peace and tranquility are highly valued among the Yorùbá people. She maintains that the issue of security starts from the nuclear family, extended family to the street and the entire town. She concludes that security proverbs in Yorùbá are mainly for caution and alertness. Akintoye, Ojo & Olatunde (2021) focus on proverbs that expose ethnic rivalry among the Ekiti people, and demonstrate that Ekiti people use derogatory proverbs to scorn one another and foreigners living among them. They conclude that derogatory proverbs are borne out of a deep reflection on the speech forms, occupation, history and religion of the affected people. The work of the scholars show that derogatory proverbs are forms of hate speech which have the tendency to generate disharmony in the society. Adeoye, Taiwo & Adeseke (2022) examine animal totems in Yorùbá proverbs. They establish that the philosophy of the Yorùbá people shows that animals and human beings share some characteristics in common. They explain further that the relationship between ancient Yorùbá people and animals brought about some proverbs. They claim that animal proverbs are used to reserve information for the wise and veiling information strangers for strangers. Dipak (2021) examines proverbs as sources of historical facts using selected proverbs from short stories. The study explains the interrelation between literature and history through the use of proverb. The study relates how historical events are turned to proverbs. The paper concludes that proverbs are a source of age-long facts stated in anecdotal stories. It is further established that proverbs can be meaningful by themselves yet they need stories to complement their meaning. This study only discusses historical proverbs through short stories but never compares them with non-historically derived proverbs.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

This research work deploys ethnography of communication in analysing its data. The choice of this theory is borne out of its relevance to the ethics of Yorùbá communication. The theory places premium on settings, participants, genre, and norm which are relevant ingredients to the proper explanation of proverbs. The ethnography of communication handles the communicative expressions as well as the world view of the Yorùbá through the proverbs.

### 3.1 Ethnography of Communication

Ethnography of communication was advanced by Dell Hymes (1972). The theory lends credence to communicative competence of the native speaker of language in relation to his/her language, that is, the conventional rules guiding the use of linguistic utterance. The communicative competence as stipulated by the theory entails the requisite knowledge which includes not only rules for communication and shared rules for interaction but also the cultural rules and knowledge that are the basis for context and content of communicative events and interaction process (Saville-Troike, 1989). Thus, communicative competence guides the speakers on the understanding of what to say, when to say it, how to say it, and where to say it. This portends that linguistic competence is not enough but the understanding of the socio-cultural norms and ethics of communication within the ambit of culture rules and the culturally shared knowledge as the basis for effective communication process in the society. Saville-Troike (1989:15) states that many of the functions of language are universal but the manner in which communication operates in languages or society differs. The immediate or context of situation is the

specific circumstance in which communication occurs in relation to time, place, events and other conditions. The components of situation by Dell Hymes (1972) include: setting/scene, participants, ends, act/sequence, key, instrumentalities, norm and genre. These components determine context of situation and the way utterances are used in conversation.

### 3.2 Method of Data Collection

The data for this research were sourced from informants and textbooks. The informants' recordings which forms our primary data emanated from six towns namely Òşogbo, Òyó, Ìbàdàn, Ìkirè, Ògbómòşó, Òfà and Ìjábé. The informants (who are aged people) were consulted in the six towns mentioned have sound knowledge of Yorùbá proverbs and their usage in different context. They rendered proverbs, told us their meanings, the historical facts that relate to them and their uses. The non-historical proverbs were also rendered; their meaning and usage were also elaborated. The importance of context in the use proverb was taking into consideration, as a results, the interviews were conducted in such a way that explanations were provided on the context of use of each of the proverbs.

## 4. Data presentation and Analysis

### 4.1 Historical Proverbs

Máa wí máa wí, ọba kì í p'òkòrin "Keep saying it! The king does not kill a singer"

The proverb originated during the reign of during the reign of Aláàfin Siyanbola Ladigbolu I. In Yorùbá culture, words carry power, especially in the mouth of an artist. For generations, masquerades, bards, and court poets have served as fearless voices of the people, using satire and performance to challenge even kings. This tradition is captured in the saying: Ọba kì í pa ọkòrin" — The king does not kill the singer."

This saying is linked to an incident in Òyó during the reign of Alaaafin Siyanbola Ladigbolu I (1911–1944). His royal messengers, known as ajélé, became notorious for oppression and abuse of power. The excesses became intolerable. But no who could challenge the king's messengers without risking the wrath of the palace. However, Àgbórákò, a famous Egungun (masquerade) troupe of Òyó, led by a bold oral artist known for his sharp tongue and fearless performances. Àgbórákò decided it was time to speak truth to power in the only way the people understood: through theatre.

When this news got to Aláàfin Ládìgbòlù, he was furious. He gave the immediate order to arrest Àgbórákò. The arrest was swift, but the backlash was explosive. The people of Òyó were not prepared to watch their beloved artist silenced. Within hours, a massive demonstration erupted in the streets. Thousands poured out, chanting and demanding the immediate release of the masquerade singers. At this point, elders reminded the king of an enduring principle: "Ọba kì í pa ọkòrin", a king must not kill or silence an singer/artist. Recognising this cultural boundary, the Alaaafin released them.

As Àgbórákò regained freedom, the people chanted: "Máa wí! Máa wí! Ọba kì í pa Ọkòrin!" Since then, the phrase has remained a powerful reminder that in Yorùbá society, artists have the right—and duty, to speak truth to power. This proverb is rendered to those in power that are trying to silence pressure groups or artist.

A kì í dáké á ù wí, a kì í wò sùn-ùn á dáràn “one cannot make verbal errors when silent just as one cannot get into trouble by merely watching”

This proverb has its origin in the Òyó empire during the reign of Alááfin Sàngó. Alááfin Sàngó incited disagreement between Gbònká and Tímí àgbàlé. He ordered Gbònká to travel to Èdẹ to fight with Tímí àgbàlé. On the order of Alááfin Sàngó, Gbònká travelled to Èdẹ. He fought and defeated Tímí àgbàlé, and later brought him to Òyó for Alááfin Sàngó. Despite the presence of Tímí àgbàlé at Òyó, Alááfin Sàngó was not satisfied with the outcome of the fight. He ordered that a fresh contest should be conducted at Akèsán market. The fight was reconvened but Gbònká still became victorious. He beheaded Tímí àgbàlé and threw his head at Sàngó. Gbònká after disrespecting Alááfin Sàngó by his action, told the king that he (Gbònká) should be thrown into fire for seven days. The king ordered his servants to fetch fire wood that would be used to burn Gbònká and he was thrown into fire. Gbònká was burnt in the fire for seven days but came out of the ashes. After the incidence, he gave Alááfin Sàngó five days ultimatum to vacate his throne otherwise he would use ordinary stone to kill him. When Sàngó heard this, he was silent for a moment and the Òyó mèsì inquired from him if he had something to say about what Gbònká said. Sàngó told them that he had nothing to say that he regretted his wrong decisions which had already boomeranged. He also told the Òyó mèsì that he was happy that Gbònká gave him five days to abdicate the throne. Alááfin Sàngó, after a sober reflection, told the Òyó mèsì that one could not be silent to commit blunders, and longtime of observation cannot amount to crime. It was after this incidence that the proverb became wide spread in Yorùbá land. This proverb is rendered to someone to caution his/her steps and utterances before it is too late.

Àifète méte àifèrò merò lómú ọmọ ìyá “Lack of cooperation makes six siblings to die in the same slave market”  
méfà kúsí oko ẹgbẹfà

During the reign of Alááfin Abiodun in Òyó, there lived a man named Abogunrin from Òkè Èsò. He had six children, but they were constantly in conflict with one another. Their father repeatedly warned them to end their hostility and live in unity, but they refused to heed his advice. After the death of their father, each of the six children independently borrowed ẹgbẹàá (six pence) from the same moneylender in order to finance his burial. This action contradicted the traditional practice, which required that only one sibling be chosen to take responsibility for the loan, while the others engaged in their personal occupations to assist in repayment. Instead, all six siblings worked simultaneously for the same moneylender in an effort to repay their individual debts. They labored from morning until afternoon before they could eat, leaving them with little time to attend to their personal livelihoods. As time passed, they became unable to endure the physical demands of working on the lender’s farm. Eventually, all six of them died in the process of repaying the loans they had collected. This proverb is used to promote unity and cooperation among friends, communities, groups, and towns where disunity or hostility exists. It serves as a reminder that lack of cooperation and mutual support can lead to collective failure and unnecessary suffering.

Èni tí yóò bá pé láyé ojú rẹ yóò ríbi ‘Whoever desires to live long, should be ready to witness horrible things’

History has made us to understand that Alááfin Olúàso was the sixth king who reigned in Òyó. Some historians say he lived up to four hundred years before he died. His panegyrics below confirmed that he actually lived long.

Olúàso, ọgbọgbọ ìyàwó	‘Olúàso, with many wives’
Ó ọ̀sàrẹ̀wà, ọ̀sàkín	‘He displayed beauty and bravery’
Ó gbó, gbó, gbó	‘He lived a long live’
Ó ọ̀mọ owú pa tírà sọ̀rùn	‘He used iron melting instrument to design his neck’
Ọmọ owú jẹ, jẹ, jẹ ó di abéré	‘The iron melting instrument reduced to a needle’

The panegyrics above are a testament to the fact that he lived so long that no one could determine his age. On one fateful day, his remaining grandchildren approached him, to ask about the secret of his longevity. He greeted and showered praises on them. He asked them of their parents who were his direct children, they told him that they were all dead. He told them that anyone who wants to live long must be ready to witness horrible things. This proverb is similar to another proverb that states that one cannot desire a long life and at the same be afraid of witnessing horrible events; one must choose between the two. This proverb is rendered to elderly people who see horrible things and trembled.

Ìjà olúbàdàn àti Olówu kò ní tán láíláí

‘The feud between Olúbàdàn and Olówu can never be resolved’

This proverb emanated from the feud between Olúbàdàn and Olówu in the ancient time. Olúbàdàn was a warrior and war monger. He was going to war on a particular occasion, and passed through the Ọbà-river. He pleaded with the river goddess to assist him and promised to give the river goddess n̄nkan ‘something’ after the war. On his way back home, after the war, he got to Ọbà-river and it was filled to its capacity. In order to fulfill his promise, he offered male and female slaves to the river, they were rejected. He offered money, clothes and expensive beads, they were also rejected. He consulted his Ifá for the way out. The priest informed him that he had not fulfilled his promise to the river goddess. The Ifá priest told him that his wife who happened to be Olówu’s daughter was the sacrificial lamb. He threw the wife inside the river. The news of what transpired got to Olówu and he demanded for his daughter from Olúbàdàn. This incidence led to an unresolved crisis between the two monarchs for a long time. Right from the period, the incidence became a proverb. This proverb is rendered to people who are fighting because of an unpardonable experience they shared with each other.

Àisòrò yán ọ̀rò ló pa Elénpe isáájú tó ní igbá wúwo ju àwo lọ.

‘Lack of explicitness killed the Elénpe who claimed that calabash is heavier than an earthen plate’

The proverb emanated from Ijelo kingdom where Elénpe was king. During one of his festivals, Elénpe summoned all his chiefs to his palace. He gave them drinks and during the merriment they were all drunk including the king himself. The chiefs were engaged in discussions before Elénpe cut in and told them, to pay rapt attention to what he wanted to say. He told them that he and his chief Àgòrò had divergent opinion on a particular issue for a long time and that it was time for it to be settled permanently. He informed his chiefs that whoever lied between the two of them should be beaten to death. The town people and the chiefs agreed to the term and they asked them what they were arguing about. The king said that he told Àgòrò that calabash is heavier than the earthen plate but he disagreed. The chiefs knowing full well that the king wanted to kill Àgòrò, brought dried calabash and earthen pot for the king to weigh the one that is heavier. That was the time the king remembered that he was not specific about the type of calabash that is heavier than earthen plate, but before he could open his mouth to retract his statement, the chiefs and the town people beat him to death. The chiefs knew that the King wanted to kill Àgòrò that was why he brought the argument. This proverb is rendered to caution people to be explicit in their utterance by clearly stating their terms and conditions.

A kí ni n̄jé a kí ni, afihàn n̄jé afinihàn èwo ni pèlẹ ará ìjàyè tí n kọja lójúde Ògúnmólá

‘Let the greeter remain a greeter, and an exposor remain as exposor, what is greeting Ìjàyè man going in front of Ògúnmólá’s house’

Ògúnmólá was an Ìbàdàn warrior that was captured at Ìjàyè during war and imprisoned at Kúrumí prison. ògúnmólá escaped from the prison and ran to Ibadan. After this, one Ìjàyè man who happened to be Kúrumí’s son was passing in front of Ògúnmólá’s house in Ibadan. One of Ògúnmólá’s servants who knew the man started shouting at the top his voice “the Ìjàyè man going” so that Ògúnmólá could hear. The man did not respond but it got to a time that everybody in the market focused their eyes on him. The man was furious and wanted to pick up a quarrel with the servant. The man was later taken to Ògúnmólá who the servant thought would avenge his torture on him but Ògúnmólá instead took good care of him. He gave him food and told him that he was not involved in his feud with Kúrumí. The servant who exposed the man became ashamed because his scheme did not work out. This proverb is rendered to someone who is using cunning method to expose his mate to their superior.

Bí a bá fẹ rẹniḡe ni káwí èwo ni Ọba n̄ pè ọ lỌyò

‘If cheating is the intent, let it be known, but it should not be attached to King’s summon at Oyò’

This proverb emanated from Ìlaró Kingdom. There was a stingy businessman named Okanla Alao. He was not a native of Ìlaró but had strong business exploits and achievements more than that of the natives. The indigenes were jealous of him; they cooked up a story to implicate him. They told him that he was summoned by the Aláàfin at Oyò. After a careful and thorough check of his character he discovered that he had not done anything to warrant the summon. He then told Olú of Ìlaró and his chiefs that if they wanted to cheat him, they should let him know but should not include the King’s summon at Oyò. This proverb is rendered to discourage anyone who wants to cheat another person through cunning means.

Dàda kò lè jà, ó ní àbùrò tó gbójú

“Dada cannot fight but has a brave brother”

After the demise of Ọ̀rànmíyàn, Dàda Àjùwòṅ also known as Àjàkà who was the heir to the throne was made king. He was a weakling who could not fight any war as a result all the town that were under the control of Ọ̀rànmíyàn were taken over by Olówu Ogúnjà. This made the Ọ̀yó people to dethrone Àjàkà and enthroned Sàngó his younger brother. When Sàngó became the king, he waged war against Olówu Ogúnjà and won. He took back all the towns that were under their control. This proverb is rendered when an elderly person has no power, wisdom or means to solve problems but has a younger sibling who possesses the means to do what the elder brother lacks capacity to do.

Bí Onírèsé bá kò tí ò fín gbá mó, 'If Onirese refuses to design calabash, the one he  
èyí tí ó fí sílẹ̀ kò lẹ̀ parun had produced will never perish'

Onírèsé (Elésèè) is the foremost calabash carver or designer of his time at Ọ̀yó. He was known for his dexterity in calabash carving. Thus, people from far and near normally patronised him. He was the one who shut the menace of the Nupe (Tapa) people. As a result, Aláàfin made him a king in a town that is very close to the Nupe (Tapa) people. As soon as he became king, he had no opportunities to continue in his former trade because of the new responsibility. This proverb is rendered when someone who had excelled in his field of endeavour but does not continue in the line of trade again but his antecedents remain relevant.

#### 4.2 Non- Historical Proverbs

1) Èfí ni iwà rírú ní í rú 'Character is like smoke: it fumes'

This is an observational proverb; it was created through the keen observation of an entity and the study of its reactions to certain elements over time. Yorùbá are keen observers, they noticed that smoke cannot be curbed or confined. They also noticed that smoke determines what is being cooked, because it carries the aroma of the delicacy. The Yorùbá, out of their ingenuity, likened human character to smoke which cannot be confined without taking its natural course in the life of the owner. The metaphoric use of character and smoke in the proverb shows the creativity and sense of comparative analytical minds of the Yorùbá people. This proverb simply means that character cannot be confined, over time it will show in the way of life of the owner. This proverb is rendered to someone who is pretending to be nice.

2) Àtíjọ́ tí alákan tí n sepo rẹ̀, kò tó ó se ọ̀bẹ̀ ' Since the crab has been making its  
oil, it is no ingredient for cooking'

The Yorùbá people, through their keen interest in studying the behaviour of insect, animal, living and non-living things around them, noticed that crab produces a kind of emission in its hole that looked exactly like the palm oil they use in food preparation. They also noticed that the emission cannot be used for cooking human meal because it is not the same with palm oil. The proverb has four symbolic elements: epo 'oil', akàn 'crab' se ọ̀bẹ̀ 'cook soup. The oil means resources that are produced by an entity, individual or group. The crab symbolises the person/persons or group who are asserting efforts to produce something. The negative marker kò in the proverb indicates that the product is not useful for the purpose it ought to serve in their domain. This proverb is rendered to rebuke someone who cheating or making earnings from dubious means without nothing to show for it.

3) Adiyẹ́ n láágùn, iyé ni kò jẹ́ ká mọ̀ 'The chicken's sweat is veiled by its feathers'

The ancient Yorùbá people observed that sweating is common to human beings and mammals. They also draw the inference that sweating may not be limited to human beings and mammals alone. They hypothesised that birds may also sweat but their covering feathers may not make it visible. The Yorùbá people noticed that the innermost parts of the chicken's feathers are exactly like the wool that can absorb sweat coming out of its body. There are three symbolic items in the proverb: adiyẹ́ 'fowl' is metaphorically used to represent a human being that is struggling to make a head way in life. Ilaagun 'sweat' is the efforts that the person is putting in place to make it in life while Iyẹ́ 'feathers' are the obstacles or challenges that are preventing or limiting the efforts from showing or paying off. This proverb is philosophical and as well as sociological. The society wants to see a struggling person showcasing worthwhile achievements that correlate with their efforts without having deep thought of the impediments that prevent or restrain their successes. In real-life situation, the society expects that a newly married couple should put to birth very early but there may be sicknesses which may prevent conception that might not be opened to the society. In another parlance, a man who earns good salary but could not afford basic necessities of life because he has spent his money on his children

may be seen as an unserious person without considering his expenses. This proverb is rendered when someone is still struggling without any tangible evidence of success or breakthrough.

- 4) Ààrò tí kò bá ní iná nínú ni adiyẹ́ ń yé sí                      ‘A tripod without fire is where chicken lays egg’

A typical Yorùbá tripod that is used for cooking on daily basis is always very hot as a result of constant cooking. Often times embers are left in the tripod to facilitate further cooking without stress. The heat emitted by the tripod will not allow chickens to move near it let alone laying eggs there. The observation of the Yorùbá people is that chickens normally lay eggs where it is cool. This proverb has three symbolic elements: ààrò ‘tripod’ which stands for place, domain or even human being, iná’ fire’ symbolises chaos, violence or power (physical or spiritual) and adiyẹ́ ‘symbolises an innocent person looking for where to succeed or a rude person who wants to advantage of other people. In real-life situation, it is only in peaceful environments that innocent people realise their potential, that is, peace and progress work hand in hand. However, iná’ ‘fire’ symbolises power (physical or spiritual) to resist attacks or incite violence which can prevent insults or rude behaviour from anyone who does not know their boundaries. This proverb is used to charge an individual with authority to avoid being too lenient or soft.

- 5) Aáyán fẹ́jé jọ, adiyẹ́ ni kò jẹ                      ‘The cockroach wants to dance but the chicken does not allow it’

Cockroaches are insects that dwell in the refuse or hidden parts of a house. Whenever they come out of their hiding places to look for food, their zig-zag movements resemble dance in the sight of the ancient Yorùbá people. While they are looking for food, the predator, chickens normally cut-off their journey. This proverb is philosophical and it has sociological implications. This proverb has two symbolic words: Aáyán ‘cockroach’ which is metaphorically used to mean life, existence, joy, youthfulness or strength. While, adiyẹ́ ‘chicken’ means death, old-age, sadness or sickness. In real-life situation, the cockroach has the connotations of life, existence, joy, youthfulness or strength that can be cut short by the chicken, which are sadness, sickness, death, infirmity. The Yorùbá people through their insightful thought noticed that aspirations, projections, plans, thoughts are good when time permits them, but as good as they seem to look certain things may prevent their realizations. This proverb is rendered when sad events happened, most especially when young person with bright future died unexpectedly or when bad circumstances hinder the success of an individual.

- 6) Adùn níí gbèyìn ewúro                      ‘Sweetness is the after taste of bitter leaf’

This proverb depicts the keen observation of the ancient Yorùbá people. Bitter leaf is used for different purposes, prominent among which is cooking of delicious soup. The leaves will be squeezed thoroughly with water to reduce the bitterness. The squeezed leaves are used directly as vegetable with melon or added to another soup to spice it up. After, the initial bitterness of the leaves when it is consumed, sweetness comes after it. This proverb is symbolic in the sense that ‘Ewúro’ bitter leaf can be likened to legitimate human struggles to achieve success which often times have a rough or harsh beginning but with a happy ending. Sweetness’ Adùn’ signifies the positive results of hard work. So, the proverb is rendered as an admonition to young people to be patient, that success will be the end products of their struggles. This proverb can also be rendered to encourage industrious people to persist on their trade or endeavours since it would end in joy.

- 7) Bí a bá jẹ̀kọ́ tán àá dárí jì ewé                      ‘After a meal of corn meal, the leaves are spared’

This proverb is derived from direct observation of the eating habit among the ancient and modern Yorùbá people. Most of their foods are served in calabash or plates but pap is wrapped in leaves. After eating the pap, the leaves are of no use and are thrown away. The fact that the leaves are not consumed alongside with the pap means that they are pardoned. There are two symbolic words in this proverb: èkọ́ ‘pap’ and ewé ‘leaf’. The pap as used in the proverb can be likened to someone who has no power to protect himself, thus whenever he/she misbehaves there will be stringent consequences. However, the leaf as used in the proverb indicate somebody who will be pardoned because of his/her nature. In such instances, forgiveness is automatic whether one likes it or not. This proverb is used among the Yorùbá people to advice people to forgive someone who they cannot punish or harm with their positions. It can also be rendered to seek for forgiveness from elderly people or authority after showing remorse.

- 8) Bí ajá kò bá rí kì í gbó ‘A dog does not back without a cause’

Dogs are domestic animal that have natural hunting instinct. They are used for different purposes in the ancient time as well as the present time. In the Yorùbá setting, dogs are used to hunt games, ward off thieves or miscreants. The only method used by a dog to alert its owner is barking which signals different things based on the setting. In the farm, during hunting, barking may indicate that the game is near or the dog has killed a game. At home, the barking of a dog may mean that a strange fellow is around the vicinity. The Yorùbá people also believe that dogs have supernatural vision of seeing spirits and demons, and so, bark when they feel the effect or the presence of one around their domain. Barking of a dog may also signal threat to it or show its presence. The Yorùbá believe that dogs do not bark without a cause, meaning something must have triggered its reactions. In common parlance, actions may cause counter reactions, that is, something must trigger certain reactions in an individual. For instance, in Yorùbá settings, marriage is a family matter thus the parents of both the groom and the bride must agree to the union. However, if one of the parents disagrees with the union, it is believed that the elderly folks have seen something untoward to necessitate the disapproval. This proverb is rendered to caution against an imminent danger that is not immediately visible.

- 9) Bí iná kò bá tán láṣò èjè kí tán léèkán ‘If lice are not exhausted in clothes, blood stains will never leave the nails’

This proverb is a product of the keen observation of the Yorùbá people about happenings in their immediate environment. This proverb showcases the sequence of things in life. That is, one event conditions another event. It may also be likened to the instance of cause-and-effect reactions. The proverb is a conditional statement, it presupposes [+ condition, + existence] as well as [- condition, - existence]. The proposition in the proverb is that the presence of lice necessitates the occurrences of the blood stains. This proverb is rendered to acknowledge the preponderance of one event that eventually led to another.

- 10) Ebi kì í wọ nú kí ọrọ mǐràn wọ ọ ‘Hunger distracts attention’

This is an observation proverb. It emanated from personal feeling that hunger can disrupt one’s thinking and this is buttressed by another Yorùbá adage: bí ebi bá kúrò nínú ise, ìṣé bùṣe ‘satiety assuages poverty’. One thing about hunger is that it only affects the person that is hungry. As a result, it would block his reasoning as long as the hunger persists. It is not unlikely that hunger could prevent comprehension, attention and effective listening. Thus, the only solution to an hungry man is not advice or words of encouragement but food. This proverb is rendered to prevent unwanted talks when better solutions can be provided.

### 4.3 A Sociolinguistic Overview of Historical and Non-Historical Proverbs

From the data in 4.1, it is logical to argue that historical proverbs were not originally witty sayings. They were inferences drawn from events that actually happened to people and/or communities in the past but with lessons that could be used for admonition before they became proverbs. Thus, historical proverbs serve as a means of preserving history, body of knowledge and events that happened in a particular Yorùbá kingdom that have future significance. Most of the historical proverbs depict the life style of the ancient Yorùbá, their world view, settings, perception about life and people around them. For instance, the proverb that demonstrate the virtue in silence to avoid trouble or taking unwarranted actions that will have grave implications (see 4.1, (2), (3) and (5)). It is a form of reference to the past lives of Yorùbá ancestors in their developmental stages. Historical proverbs are the aftermath of events, circumstances, situations and happenings whose bearers were entangled by circumstances. The Yorùbá people who witnessed the events at the time of occurrence used them for admonitions, allusions and illustrations. As time goes on, their use/usage for inferences became prominent and they served three purposes: àríkọgbón, ‘lessons’ àwòkọṣe ‘worthy of emulation’ and àkàwé ‘inference’ among the Yorùbá.

This present study disagrees with Lucas (1965) claims that the inventors of the proverbs are unknown. It is argued here that the person who witnessed the events, memorised what transpired and used them for admonition are the inventors of the proverbs; this implies that historians are the inventors of historical proverbs. This fact is corroborated by the sayings that: Bí ọmọde bá kọ iyán ana, àwọn àgbá a’ fi itàn balẹ ‘If a child forsakes the stale pounded yam, the elder will provide historical antecedents.’ In the opinion of the researcher, the elderly are the historians (eye witnesses) who can relate what happened to the person who did the same thing in the past. It is logical to say that if historical events that became proverbs did not occur historical proverbs may never exist. Non-historical proverbs are

products of keen observations of events/ phenomena, in-depth reasoning and creative thinking. Thus, creative thinkers are the inventors of non-historical proverbs due to their deep insight of events happening in their environment. It must be noted that without history, historical proverbs cannot be in existence. However, creative thinkers may still come up with witty sayings due to their observational adequacy and accuracy. Thus, it is also argued that references given to historians who may likely be eye witnesses of historical events that became proverbs should be different from creative thinkers. The historians witnessed the events while creative thinkers observe both events and phenomena. Although, the Yorùbá society owns the two types proverbs enumerated (see Abiodun, 2000). This study suggests that the acknowledgments below:

Àwọn àgbà ló sọ pé 'The elders say that'  
 Gégé bí òwè àwọn àgbà 'According to the proverb of the elderly'  
 Kí iyẹn maa jé ti èyin àgbà 'I give the credit to you elders'

should be used restrictively as prefaces to pay homage to elders on historical proverbs alone. However, inventors of non- historical proverbs may not be known because they are not tied to any Yorùbá kingdom. Thus, the acknowledgements:

Yorùbá bọ wọn ní 'upon reflection the Yorùbá people say ...'

should be used as a preface for the non-historical proverbs, since the witty sayings are products of keen observation of events, persons and the immediate environments of both ancient and modern Yorùbá people. It must be noted that historical proverbs differ from non-historical proverbs based on some facts. The language of historical proverbs is narrative as shown in the proverbs in 4.2 (1-10) while the choices of words in non-historical proverbs are analytic. Historical proverbs are sealed because events that led to them are not likely to exist again, since the happenings at the period shows the developmental stages of the ancient Yorùbá people. Non-historical proverbs are open ended and new events may trigger a creative thinker to formulate another one. For instance: Èni tí ò simi owó wíwá kó má fi èlẹ̀wòṅ ṣe yẹ̀yẹ̀, ìgbàkúgbà ni òrò ti è náà lè jàsi agodi 'whoever that has not stopped chasing money should not make mockery of prison inmates because at any time their fate can lead them to prison'. This proverb is a product of a creative thinker who is in tune with contemporary societies and their craving for wealth and luxury. The simple analogy that can be drawn from this witty saying is that, creative thinkers can still create new proverbs to meet the exigencies of current realities of time.

## 5. Conclusion

In this study, we have examined both historical and non-historical proverbs. It is argued that the historical proverbs are events that were not originally witty sayings but became one from the inference drawn from them to teach moral values, culture and tolerance. It is also shown that non-historical proverbs are products of creativity in the use of words through the keen observation of people, things and happenings. This study disagrees with Lucas (1965) on the inventors of proverbs, arguing that historians are the inventors of historical proverbs while creative thinkers are proponents of non-historical proverbs. This study concludes that there should be a dichotomy in the acknowledgments used to preface the two types of proverbs. This study recommends that acknowledgments should be selectively rendered, as clues to the proverbs being rendered.

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## Comparative Analysis of Divination (*Ifá*) in Yorubaland and Russian Societies

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**Abstract.** Human's existence is prone to different forms of challenges, which could be physical, emotional or spiritual. Human beings have always looked for answers to the mysteries they encounter in their lives. There is archeological evidence that a need to know and deep spiritual seeking are universal human traits, and that some form of divination has been used since the earliest times, to support this quest. Divination is a way of exploring the unknown in order to elicit answers (that is, oracles) to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding. All known peoples on earth have practiced some form of divination. Divination can be done with things, such as consecrated or significant objects, bones, shells, stones, tea leaves, or cards. This paper adopts symbolic and interpretative approaches for its analysis. *Ifá* religion is orally transmitted from one generation to another rather than scriptural. The religion believes in a Supreme Being, divinities, spirits, veneration of ancestors, and mysterious powers that have to do with magic, and traditional medicine. The religion can be found through art, rituals and festivals, beliefs and customs, names of people and places, songs and dance, proverbs, and myths. Many studies of East Slavic paganism are based on written sources. These are scant and consist mainly of brief chronicle entries, sermons, and instructions, dating from the Christian era. East Slavic written sources give a list of probable deities, and, occasionally, their attributes and functions.

**Keywords:** Divination, Ifa, Paganism, Spirits, Deities.

### 1. Introduction

Human's existence is prone to different forms of challenges. These challenges could be physical, emotional or spiritual. There are situations with tightly knit issues which require specific solutions. In such circumstances, necessary medium of guide is solicited for, to guarantee taking the right step. (O'Brien, 2007) asserts that human beings have always looked for the

answers to life's great mysteries. There is archeological evidence that a need to know and deep spiritual seeking are universal human traits, and that some form of divination has been used since the earliest times, to support this quest. Divination is also a ritual and a tradition, constituting, an ongoing dialogue with more-than-human agents. Nature is traditionally fundamental to divination, whose indigenous metaphorical roots remit to natural phenomena such as stones, water, and animal behavior (Curry, 2010:114-115).

Divination is a way of exploring the unknown in order to elicit answers (that is, oracles) to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding. All known peoples on earth have practiced some form of divination (Loewe, et.al 1981; Peek, 1991). Questions about future events, past disasters whose causes cannot be explained, things unknown hidden from sight or removed in space, appropriate conduct in critical situations, including the healing of illness, determining the times and modes of religious worship, and making choices of persons for particular tasks—all these are common subjects of divinatory inquiry. The means of divination are many, including water and crystal gazing, the casting of lots or sortilege, the reading of natural omens, the taking of hallucinogenic drugs, dreaming, and the contemplation of mystic spirals, amulets, labyrinths, mandalas and thangkas (Purce, 1974; Grossinger, 1980:107-88; Ortiz de Montellano, 1990:144-50; Shrestha and Baker, 1997; Tedlock, 2001). In some instances, the diviner undergoes physical or psychological changes so as to be able to serve as a vehicle for divinatory power, while at other times, animals, objects, and events are themselves considered signs of an external superhuman power (Morales, 1995).

Divination can be done with *things*, such as consecrated or significant objects, bones, shells, stones, tea leaves, or cards. But it can also be carried out via *bodies*, cultivated through spirit mediumship and shamanism, in which there is a communicative

prerogative to the possessed: messages come from the mouths of mediums but do not originate with them (Brown, 1999).

### 1.1 Symbolic and Interpretative Approaches

Symbolic anthropology studies symbols and the processes such as myth and ritual, by which humans assign meanings to these symbols to address fundamental questions about human social life (Spencer, 1996:535). According to Clifford Geertz, (1973a:45) humans are in need of symbolic “sources of illumination” to orient themselves with respect to the system of meaning that is any particular culture. Victor Turner, (1967:36) on the other hand, states that symbols initiate social action and are “determinable influences inclining persons and groups to action”. Geertz’s position illustrates the interpretive approach to symbolic anthropology, while Turner’s illustrates the symbolic approach.

Symbolic anthropology views culture as an independent system of meaning deciphered by interpreting key symbols and rituals (Spencer, 1996:535). There are two major premises governing symbolic anthropology. The first is that “beliefs, however unintelligible, become comprehensible when understood as part of a cultural system of meaning” (Des Chene, 1996:1274). The second major premise is that actions are guided by interpretation, allowing symbolism to aid in interpreting conceptual as well as material activities. Traditionally, symbolic anthropology has focused on religion, cosmology, ritual activity, and expressive customs such as mythology and the performing arts. Symbolic anthropologists have also studied other forms of social organization such as kinship and political organization. Studying these types of social forms allows researchers to study the role of symbols in the everyday life of a group of people (Des Chene 1996:1274).

### 1.2 Divination and Modes of Consciousness

Everywhere it occurs, divination involves complementary modes of cognition associated with primary process and secondary process thinking or knowing (Fernandez, 1991; Kracke, 1992). Diviners are specialists who use the idea of moving from a boundless to a bounded realm of existence in their practice. Compared with their peers, diviners excel in insight, imagination, fluency in language, and knowledge of cultural traditions. During a divination, they construct usable knowledge from oracular messages. To do so, they link diverse domains of representational information and symbolism with

emotional or presentational experience. In representational symbolism, specific intentional reference is paramount, the medium of expression is relatively automatized, and inductive reality is paramount. In presentational symbolism, meaning emerges as a result of an experiential immersion in the expressive patterns of the symbolic medium, which is grasped intuitively (Hunt 1995, 41-2). By combining representational with presentational symbolism within a single narrative structure, diviners provide a surplus or superabundance of understanding for their clients. During the act of divination, individual creativity operates: jumbled ideas, metaphors and symbols suggest various possible interpretations which slowly give way to an ordered sequencing and to more limited interpretations. Finally, through dialogue between the diviner and the client, these interpretations are superseded by an unambiguous classification of the causes of the situation and the material needed to respond to and change it. (Tedlock, 2001)

Links to the divine in divination vary. It can be buttressed by a cosmology of invisible entities, which an oracle mediates, such as with the orisha gods in the Yoruba cowry-shell divination (Bascom, 1969). Yet it may also be experienced as a direct configuration of the cosmos as it is, such as with the Tarot, astrology, or numerology, which animate the cosmos with extra-human causal forces, but do not necessarily rely on the existence of a single god or deity. This second category includes conceptualizations by Jungian scholars such as Marie-Louise von Franz, for whom the unconscious is a repository of collective archetypal knowledge, that is catalyzed perfectly through divination (Von Franz, 1980).

### 1.3 Ifá Divination as a Religion in Yoruba Society

When issues are raised about Yorùbá religion, *Ifá* comes into focus due to its centrality and prominence in the worship of other gods. The religion is orally transmitted from one generation to another rather than scriptural. Although, these days, studies had been done on the religion, it is still far from being scriptural like we have in the case of the Bible, the Quran and Bhagavad Gita among others (Butain, 1989). The religion believes in a Supreme Being, divinities, spirits, veneration of ancestors, and mysterious powers that have to do with magic, and traditional medicine. The role of man in the matter is to harmonize nature with the supernatural. The religion as said earlier has been passed down from one generation to another orally and can be found through art, rituals and festivals, beliefs and customs, names of people and places, songs and dance, proverbs, and myths. Information gathered revealed that it is difficult to

estimate how many people are practitioners of the religion, but the fact remained that directly or indirectly, nearly all the Yorùbá are practitioners either through their names, songs, dance, proverbs, marriage system, customs and traditions (Aduloju, 2019). Indigenous religion of the Yorùbá is the religion of the people before the coming of Islam and Christianity. However, it would be inappropriate to talk of *Ifá* in isolation of the creation stories and the role that *Òrúnmilà*, the custodian of *Ifá* played. Therefore, a look at it below,

#### 1.4 The Myths of Creation

There are at least about three or four different myths of creation as narrated by different scholars of African/Yoruba indigenous religion. According to Idowu 1962, it was Obatala who also known as Orisa nla that was given the obligation by Olodumare to create the world. However, along the way, he was drunk and couldn't complete the work. Therefore, Oduduwa took the material and created the world.

Another school of thought believed that it was the joint decision of the sixteen principal elders like *Obatala*, *Òrúnmilà*, *Gibuede*, *Ajalorun*, the witches and so on that went to request for the creation of the world which Olodumare granted their request and gave each and every one of them duties to perform (Adeoye, 1979).

Yet another school of thought like Lijadu, Ayo Salami was of the opinion that it was *Òrúnmilà* that performed the creation with instructions from Olodumare. However, whichever way or people that performed the work, what is certain is that the world was created by the divinities through the instructions from Olodumare.

#### 1.5 Morality and the Role of *Ifá* Divination as a Moral Agent in Yoruba Society

Morality is the principle concerning the distinction between what is right and what is wrong. It is about good and bad behaviour. It is conformity with self-code, doctrine or system of rules or wishes of God, or how to behave with the norms of social behaviour. Looking at this with the laws or wishes of God, we still realise that morality depends on God. According to Dostoevsky (Businessdictionary), if there is no God, then we won't be talking about right or wrong. As a result, everyone would go about doing whatever he/she like. Therefore, morality in his view depends on God.

Looking at this from the Yorùbá traditional religion's perspective, we shall realize that *Olódùmarè*, in his

words *Ifá*, through *Òrúnmilà* prescribed some natural laws to guide our behaviour and conducts toward *Olódùmarè*, divinities and fellow human beings. *Òrúnmilà* enjoined everyone to live at peace with God and fellow human beings in accordance with these laws. There, he teaches that we should all love one another. According to *Òrúnmilà*, it is through this love for fellow human beings that happiness comes when one devotes one's time to the selfless service of other members of the community or country. This implies that if one truly loves his or her fellow being, there won't be killing, cheating, seduction, embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds, stealing and some other social vices.

Out of different means of articulating the divine mystery and different paths leading to it, *Ifá* divination is one and whole indivisible source of this mystery. According to Lucas 1948, *Ifá* is the oracular deity, the most popular and most important in Yorùbáland. *Ifá* is turned to for guidance and for ascertaining the will of *Olódùmarè* as regards the matter of the past, present and the future. All important events in life is referred to *Ifá* for its guidance and advice. *Ifá* is consulted in marriage relationships, friendships, kingship, chieftaincy, economic, political and religious matters. As said earlier, this *Ifá* is neither human worship rather, as written by Salami 2008, in his word, the divine message of *Olódùmarè* to the entire world.

Although *Ifá* is in possession of knowledge of several branches as said earlier, but knowledge of this surpasses the moral and ethical teachings of *Ifá*. This evidence in most of *Ifá* is available in both major and minor *Odu*'s. Hardly do we see any chapter or verse of *Odu* that does not talk about one moral instruction or the other, directly or indirectly. Most of these moral teachings are *either* taught in proverbs, wise saying, or stories. Some of these moral teachings of *Ifá* are found in natural laws given to humanity to guide our conducts among human beings, and our relationship with the divine begins and finally with *Olódùmarè*, the Supreme Being (Bascorn, 1969). The first of such natural laws is the one that enjoined human beings to acknowledge *Olódùmarè* as the Supreme Being and father of the universe who created all things. This is evidence in many *Ifá* chapters and verses. Both divinities and mankind were advised to worship *Olódùmarè*. According to *Odu Òfún-sé* (Akintola, 1999). *Ifá* says divinities acknowledged the supremacy and headship of *Olódùmarè*. There *Ifá* says:

*Orí gbó kéké, idàndàn geere*  
*Eruku yomù awo wọn lóde òrun*  
*A difá fún gbogbo òkànlerúnwó irúnmoḽè*  
*Wọn nḽo rée gba isin nilé Olódùmarè l'óde òrun*  
*Eruku – yomì a dé ò*  
*Olódùmarè mo d'è ò*  
*Mo wá yìn ò òò.*

Ori gbo keke, Idanda geere  
 Eruku yomu the initiate in heaven  
 Ifa divination was performed for all the four hundred and one divinties  
 they were going to obtain worship at Olodumare's house in heaven  
 Erukuyomu we've arrived  
 Olodumare I'm around  
 I came to pay homage.

In the same vein, *Òrúnmilà*, the custodian of *Ifá*, also advised all mankind to direct all its worship to *Olódùmarè*. Though one may wonder why he gives such an advice it is because a lot of people, particularly people from different faiths, hope and belief that the Yorùbá and Africans in general worship idols. This assertion had been argued several times that Africans do not worship idols. Rather, these divinities or the so-called idols are just servants, errand boys and girls of the creator, *Olódùmarè*. It is undeniable in those days that people directed their worship toward the divinities, the concept that was not peculiar to the Africans alone, rather the whole world. However, the fact remains that mankind knows that both the divinities and the spirits were created by *Olódùmarè* (Idowu, 1962). They also know that they (divinities and spirits) possess some qualities and powers that mankind does not have. Thus, people tend to fear and reverence them. However, with the advice of *Òrúnmilà* through *Ifá*, mankind re-established its commitment to worship *Olódùmarè* through these divinities.

Ethical Laws of Nature on how to live at Peace with Olodumare (God in Yoruba belief) and Man as Found in *Ìká Òfún* (Somadhi, 2002)

As part of human duties is to live at peace with their creator and their fellow human so that the society would be inhabitable for all. Therefore, God the creator revealed himself to man in different forms in a way that man in each continent on earth will understand him, obey him and do his bid. This is the reason God gave to the Yoruba the ethical laws of nature as found in one of the sub *Odu* in *Ifa* divination to guide man's conducts with his fellow man and God the creator of which the Christian theologians have codified into the ten commandments of God. This is so because of the similarities found in these texts. According to *Ifá* in *Ìká Òfún*, there *Ifá* says;

*Ìká funfun*  
*Ìká ò funfun*  
*A difá fún àgbààgbà méréndínlógún*  
*Wọn nre'lé Ifè, wọn nḽo rée tọṛọ ogbó*  
*Àwọn le gbó, àwọn le tó*  
*Bí Olódùmarè ti rán wọn ni wọn dá Ifá sí*  
*Wọn ní wọn á gbó,*  
*Wọn á tó, sùgbón kí wọn pa ikilè mó*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má fi esùrú pe esùrú*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má fi esùrù pe esùrù*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má fi odidè pe òdèdè*  
*Wón ní kí wọn má fi ewe irókò pe ewé oriro*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má fi àìimòwè bá wọn dé odò*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má fi àìlókó bá wọn ké hàn-hàn*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má gba ònà èbùrú wò'lé Akálà*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má fi ikóodè nù'dí*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má sù sí epo*  
*Wọn ní kí wọn má tọ sí àfọ*  
*Wón ní kí wọn má gba òpá l'ówó afójú*

Ika is white,  
 Ika is not white,  
 Divined for sixteen elders  
 They were going to Ile Ife to ask for long life  
 Would they live long  
 As Olodumare (God decreed, was their question)  
 They said the sixteen elders would live long  
 In good health, but that they should respect and obey Ifa guiding laws  
 They advised them not to call esuru (yam species) esuru, that is,  
 not to say what they do not know  
 They advised them not to call esuru (special beads) esuru, that is,  
 not to perform anything for which they do not have the basic knowledge.  
 They advised them not to call odide (parrot) oode (bat),  
 that is, not to mislead people  
 They advised them not to say Iroko leaves are oriro leaves,  
 that is, not to deceive people  
 They advised them not to try to swim if they are ignorant  
 of swimming, that is, not to claim wisdom that they lacked  
 They advised them to be humble and never be egocentric  
 They advised them not to enter Akala's house deceitfully,  
 that is, not to be treacherous. (Akala is a title in Ifa)  
 They advised them not to use Ikoode (sacred feathers)  
 for cleaning after using the toilet, that is, not to break taboos  
 They advised them not to defecate on epo (Ifa's sacred food),  
 that is not to break taboos  
 They advised them not to urinate inside afo traditional factory  
 for epo pupa processing), that is, not to break taboos  
 They advised them not to take a walking cane from the blind, that is, to

*Wón ní kí wón má gba òpá l'ówó ogbó*  
is, to respect and be nice to the elderly  
*Wón ní kí wón má gba obìnrin Ògbóni*  
respect moral laws

*Wón ní kí wón má gba obìnrin òrẹ́*

*Wón ní kí wón má s'òrò ìmùlẹ́ l'ẹ̀hìn*  
betray trusts

*Wón ní kí wón má sán-an ibàntẹ́ awo*

*Wón dé'lé ayé tán,*

*Ohun tí wón ní kí wón má ẹ́ ni wón nẹ́...*

respect the weak, to respect the weak, feeble, and be nice to them  
They advised them not to take a walking cane from an old person, that

They (babalawo) advised them not to take Ogboni wife's, that is, to

They (babalawo) advised them not to take a friend's wife, that is, not to betray a friend; not to betray a trust

They advised them not to go behind and discuss secrets, that is, not to

They advised them not to disrespect or make love to a Babalawo's wife

When they elders got to earth,

They did all the things that they were advised not to do...

Also, there are other ethical principles that *Ifá* talked about as agents of moral behaviours among the Yoruba such as portrayal of wisdom as a basic virtue which is the application of knowledge. Wisdom as a concept is the right application of knowledge which *Ifá* forbid us displayed if we do not have it as found in the second law of *Ifá*. With this concept of wisdom, *Orúnmilá* portrays the *Ifá* corpus as a wisdom literature (Akintola, 1999:105)

Again, helpfulness and service to others as a foundation of virtue (*ríran omólàkẹ́jì l'ówó*) is one of the natural laws that says we should do unto others what we want others to do unto us also stated that we should render self-less help to others without expecting any gain or reward from such a help. This is seen in the saying of the Yorubá that goes thus: *ò fi tiẹ́ sílẹ́ gbọ́ teni ẹ̀lẹ̀ni, Olódùmarè ni í baá tiẹ́* – whosoever devotes his time for the help of others, it is God that, will help such a person to oversee his own affairs. This is found in *Ìrosùn Méjì* (Fatoosin, 2019) where *Ifá* affirms that:

*Àkùkọ́ f'ogbe lẹ̀bẹ̀lẹ̀bẹ́ ẹ̀yì*

*A dífá fún Òpilíkí*

*Tí ó fi tiẹ́ sílẹ́*

*Tí ó máá gbọ́ teni ẹ̀lẹ̀ni káyé kiri...*

Àkùkọ́ f'ogbe lẹ̀bẹ̀lẹ̀bẹ́ ẹ̀yì

Casts divination for Opiliki

Who left his affairs behind

And attends to other people's affairs

In the same manner, love is seen as ethical concept (gratefulness, kindness, goodness towards fellow-men). This is the true essence of *Olódùmarè*, the creator and is the foundation of the world. It is a selfless feeling of benevolence, affection and devotion towards God and individuals created by God. *Orúnmilá* puts love as a virtue that should be initially practiced by individual in their relationships which is anchored in *Ifá* on avoidance of wickedness to neighbors (Akintola, 1999:113).

Forgiveness is another moral virtue displayed in so many verses of *Ifá* by *Orúnmilá*. A very good example is found in *Òtúrà Méjì* (Akintola, 1999:117), where *Orúnmilá*'s friends who seduce his wife, Anipupa and later sold her to slavery as a result of fear that she would tell *Orúnmilá* about the matter when *Orunmila* comes back. When *Orunmila* came back, he heard about the issue though not from his wife Anipupa and despite that he forgave his friends for their misdeeds.

Avoidance of physical beauty to inhibit natural development (avoidance of thought-less haste and love –less-ness in marriage) is another moral agent. In *Ifá* divination, men are warned to be careful not to take physical beauty as a guarantee for fruitful and successful marriage. On this, *Ifá* cautioned in *Odù Ìwòrì-Òwónrin* (Akintola, 1999:119) that:

*Mbá jóbìnrin,*

*Àrà kan nì nbá dá*

*Mbá tòlẹ̀kẹ́ tí tí lọ́ dé bẹ̀bẹ̀rẹ́ ìdí*

*Ma fi gbogbo ara hurun*

*Títí lọ́ dé pọ̀n-pọ̀lọ itan*

*Mbá bojú wabé wò ma fẹ́rín sí*

*Ma ní ikú dẹ̀dẹ́ nbe lábẹ́ aṣọ*

*Òrìṣà tí kù jẹ́ kọ̀mọ̀kùrín ó leè tọ́jọ*

*Dífá fún Gbòngàn-Ìròkò*

*Tí Ẹ́ ẹ́ olóbò yèrèpè*

*Eyi tí nrele oko*

*Njẹ́ Gbòngàn-Ìròkò*

Were I a woman

I would have performed one feat

I would have displayed waist beads most alluringly

I would display fluffy skin hair

Right down onto my thighs

I would behold my captivating vagina with a smile

And say unmistakable death is under the cloth

The goddess that spells premature death for a young man

Casts divination for Gbongàn-Irokò

With excessively sexy vagina

Who was getting set for her betrothal

Now, Gbongàn-Irokò

*A rí ọ rẹwà nà ò  
Jé ká rí ọ rọmọ tuntun*

We have seen you are beautiful  
Let us see you with babies

Other ethical values that *Ifá* mentioned are kindness, gratefulness, perfidy-*Ilẹ̀ didà*.

## 2. Divination in Russia

Ivanits 2015, postulates that the term is often used for the interweaving of pre-Christian and Christian elements in the belief and practice of the Russian peasant is *dvoeverie*, or "double faith." "The double faith" of Christians addicted to pagan rites and superstitions is the brunt of the invective of many sermons of the first centuries of Russian Christianity. On the verge of the Soviet era the Russian peasant retained his belief in spirits of the house and farmstead and of various aspects of nature. While these personages were the clear inheritance of the pagan era, Christianity too made its contribution. In certain biblical figures and Saints, it provided the peasant with a roster of personages to ward which to direct his aspirations for a bountiful harvest and personal happiness and, in the figure of the devil, with a major culprit on which failures could be blamed. Many of these personages seem to be thinly disguised reworkings of pagan deities. In addition, most studies of East Slavic paganism have been based on written sources. These sources are scant and consist mainly of brief chronicle entries, sermons, and instructions, all dating from the Christian era and hostile to pre-Christian belief. What East Slavic written sources do give is a list of probable deities, and, occasionally, their attributes and functions. Yet, while these documents give very little information about the content of East Slavic paganism, they leave no doubt whatsoever that the broad masses clung to their ancient gods and rituals for centuries after Russia's baptism and that the lower clergy sometimes joined in these celebrations

### 2.1 The Pagan Background

But, even though the traditions and spirit world of the Russian Peasant contained reflections of ancient beliefs, one cannot make direct connections between particular notions of the nineteenth-century peasant and the pagan of tenth-century Rus'. Over the centuries ancient beliefs and rituals acquired many additional layers, and it is often difficult to determine what is a later accretion and what is truly ancient. One thing is certain: the Russian pagan and his nineteenth-century descendant were both farmers whose primary concerns were fertility and bounty. When the harvest failed, the peasant went hungry or, worse, starved. The various agricultural rituals of nineteenth-century village life provide a valuable, if circuitous, avenue to Russian paganism.

Kcenia, 2019 emphasizes that one of the best times in the year to do the fortune readings of any kind are Svyatki. It is a time period between two orthodox holidays – Birth of Christ on the 7th of January and Baptism of Christ on the 19th of January. It was believed that those weeks are a peculiar transitional period, when the last year is already gone but the next year is not yet here.

In this strange time the veil between the human world and the world of supernatural becomes thinner and magic becomes stronger.

In the old times the first week of Svyatki was called "holy", and the second one "scary". During this time, it was prohibited to work in the dark of the evening, young men and women went carolling, everyone cleaned their houses from the negative energies and malicious entities by having the water blessed and smudging the house with frankincense.

The fortune-telling rituals were generally held at night. First and foremost, the participants were supposed to be released from the protection of their gods or spiritual entities for the time of the divination. People took off their Christian crosses and other protective amulets, everybody tied knots on their clothing, let their hair down. In order not to get harmed by evil spirits, the participants could draw a circle around them before starting the ritual. The place was also chosen carefully. It should have had a certain dark energy to it, often people chose abandoned houses, sometimes even cemeteries. The places that indicated the border between the two worlds were also fitting, for example gates, crossroads, wells.

The fortune-telling could be divided in three groups: divinations about harvest, about family, and about love.

One of the ways to know whether you'll have a good harvesting season this year was to go to a crossroad on the 1st of January, after the morning service. There, one needed to draw a cross on the ground and put their ear on the mark. A person listened closely and if they heard a full wagon coming, it was a sign of abundant crops. The sound of an empty wagon – of a hungry season. Another way to predict how much harvest awaits you in the upcoming year was to use gramineous plants. People made little wisps of ears of every plant they had and left them outside for the night. The bundles that were covered in frost on the next day told which kind will grow well this year.

In order to know what the next year will bring to you and your relatives, families went out together to eavesdrop. Silently, people approached a house and tried to hear what is going on there. To hear someone having an argument indicated a stressful year ahead of you. If you heard crying, a sickness would come to your home.

A prayer, on the contrary, was the sign of a blessed year for you and your loved ones. There was also a way to learn the future of the family. Everybody could go and lay down in a place where people did the threshing, and listen intently. If one heard a knocking sound, it meant death, the ringing told you of a soon wedding, the sounds of the threshing signified wealth.

During the time of Svyatki, the love rituals were the most popular kind of divinations and the most important ones for many young men and women. There were and still are a great amount of fortune-telling rituals one can conduct in those magical nights of January. For example, on a clear night, one can take a mirror and angle it towards the sky so it reflects the moon. When a person catches it on the mirror's surface, they should stare at it intently until the image starts to blur and multiply. The number of little moons in the mirror indicates how big their family will be.

Another belief connected to the night sky states, that if a girl sees a fallen star, the direction it flies, shows the way to her future husband. Also, at night, an unmarried women could make a little bridge out of rods and put it under their pillow. Before going to bed she should say: "Whoever my betrothed is, they will lead me across the bridge". It is believed that the future lover will be seen by the girl in her dream.

## 2.2 Types of Divination in Russia

According to Chumbash (2016), there are various ancient divinations that help people for many centuries to learn the future, look into the past and correctly interpret the signs that fate sends in the present.

### Old fortune telling on items

This is a common traditional Russian divination, which you can use if you want to know your fate. Of course, you can do this in various other ways, using Tarot cards, wax, quotes from books, flowers, and so on. But this particular rite was especially popular among our ancestors.

They were sure that in order to get clear answers and things really started telling the truth, it was necessary to follow clear rules. The ritual is performed only on the full moon, exactly 12: 00 at night.

It is not conducted alone, but with other people. Everyone who came to the session should bring various items with them — it can be rings, earrings, money, buttons, bread, candy.

As soon as everyone is ready, the host puts the brought items on a large dish and covers them with a white towel. After that you need to say:

*Famous for bread, famous for salt, famous for the labor of the peasant! Tell us what to expect!*

After this, the first participant of the ceremony must get anything out of the towel. It is interpreted and put back. Next, the second participant has to pick also, without looking, get their attribute. Meaning of things:

*Rings — marriage; bread-prosperity, harvest; buttons-children; sweets — sweet life, full of joy; money — material well-being.*

#### Гадание на хлебе

Хлеб — всему голова. Он считался одним из главных продуктов, которые употребляли в пищу наши предки, поэтому к нему относились с особым почетом. При помощи хлеба также можно узнать, что произойдет завтра. Для этого необходимо купить самый свежий хлеб с хрустящей корочкой.

#### Translation:

Divination on bread

Bread tops everything. It was considered as one of the main foods that our ancestors consumed, therefore, it was treated with special respect. Bread can also be used to find out what will happen tomorrow. To do this, you need to buy the freshest crispy bread. The loaf must be very large. When you bring it home, you must not show

Буханка должна быть очень большая. Когда вы принесете ее в дом, никому показывать ее нельзя. Заверните сразу атрибут в большой кусок белого бумажного полотенца и держите под подушкой. Помните, резать, есть этот хлеб нельзя. Ровно в 12:00 ночи достаньте магический атрибут, положите на плоскую поверхность. Снимать полотенце не стоит. Возьмите большой острый нож и начните разрезать завернутый хлеб на куски. При этом спросите трижды вопрос:

*Что со мною будет завтра?*

Теперь посмотрите на то, как режется продукт.

Если отрезанный кусок остался на месте, это говорит о том, что все чтобы запланируете, случится, день будет успешным, вам улыбнется фортуна. Если ломоть все-таки упал, но некоторое время до этого продержался ровно, это говорит о том, что задуманное также исполнится, но через некоторое время. Скорее всего, все, чего вы хотите, случится через неделю после проведения данного обряда. На вашем пути будут некоторые неприятности, но не стоит особо переживать по этому поводу. Если же ломоть хлеба упал сразу, то ничего не планируйте на грядущие сутки, так как любые ваши идеи будут обречены на провал.

### **Ритуал с обувью**

На Руси этот способ гадания использовался в основном зимой. Наши предки были уверены, что это реальное предсказание, так как в нем участвуют предметы живой и неживой природы. С помощью этого ритуала можно узнать, как относится к вам любимый человек. Для этого достаточно просто выйти из дома зимой, снять с ноги ботинок за носок, сказать имя любимого и сильно бросить обувь через правую сторону.

Теперь медленно обернитесь и проследите, как приземлился атрибут. Если нос обуви указывает на вас, то вероятно взаимность в любви. Если же ботинок направлен в противоположную сторону, то это говорит о том, что парень пока к вам холоден.

### **Простой обряд на желание**

Существует масса гаданий, которые позволяют вам определить, реализуется ли ваша мечта или нет. Обряды проводятся в домашних условиях. Это не менее любопытный метод, который позволит узнать, исполнится ли ваша мечта. Для того, чтобы провести гадание, вам необходимо в позднее время суток, как только выпадет большое количество снега, выйти из дому, найти поверхность, еще нетронутую другими людьми и лечь на спину очень аккуратно и постараться не повредить свой отпечаток. Когда будете лежать на снегу,

it to anyone. Wrap the attribute immediately in a large piece of white paper towel and keep it under your pillow. Remember, you cannot cut this bread. At exactly 12:00 midnight, take out the magic attribute, put it on a flat surface. You shouldn't take off the towel. Take a large, sharp knife and start cutting the wrapped bread into pieces. At the same time, ask the question three times:

What will happen to me tomorrow?

Now look at how the product is cut.

If the cut piece remains in place, this means that everything you plan will come true, the day will be successful, fortune will smile at you. If the slice still fell, but for some time before that lasted exactly, this suggests that the plan will also come true, but after a while. Most likely, everything you want will happen a week after the ceremony. There will be some troubles on your way, but don't worry too much about it. If a slice of bread fell immediately, then do not plan anything for the coming day, since any of your ideas will be doomed to failure.

### **Translation:**

Shoe ritual

In Russia, this method of divination was used mainly in winter. Our ancestors were sure that this is a real prediction, since objects of animate and inanimate nature participate in it. With this ritual, you can find out how a loved one treats you. To do this, it is enough just to leave the house in winter, take off your shoes by the toe, say the name of your loved one and throw your shoes strongly over the right side.

Now slowly turn around and trace how the attribute landed. If the nose of the shoe points towards you, then reciprocity in love is likely. If the shoe is directed in the opposite direction, then this indicates that the guy is still cold to you.

### **Translation:**

A simple rite on desire

There are a lot of fortune-telling that will allow you to determine whether your dream comes true or not. The ceremonies are carried out at home. This is an equally curious method that will let you know if your dream will come true. In order to conduct fortune-telling, you need to leave the house at the late time of the day, as soon as a large amount of snow falls, to find a surface still untouched by other people and lie on your back very carefully and try not to damage your print. When lying in the snow, be sure to make a wish. It is now important to wait until next morning. As soon as the sun rises, you

обязательно загадайте желание. Теперь важно дождаться следующего утра. Как только солнце встанет, можете пойти и расшифровать итог. Если контур останется нетронутым, то ваша мечта точно исполнится в ближайшие сроки. Если же отпечаток был немного затоптан, то для того, чтобы реализовать свою мечту, придется приложить много усилий.

### Старинный обряд с мусором

Наши пращурь не ограничивали фантазию и придумывали самые разнообразные и любопытные методы ворожбы. Для того, чтобы провести этот ритуал, вам необходим будет сухой мусор. Это может быть бумага, нитки, лоскутки ткани, картон и т.д. Перед тем как провести ритуал, вам необходимо будет пересыпать все эти мелочи в отдельную коробку и спрятать до Святков. Содержимое нельзя кому-либо показывать или перебирать. На Святки, ровно в 12 часов ночи, когда никого не будет больше дома, достаньте коробку, высыпьте мусор посреди помещения и обойдите эту кучу трижды по часовой стрелке. При этом трижды скажите:

*В вечерний час хочу узнать, что ждет меня в году грядущем!*

А теперь заберитесь на кучу (встаньте на нее) так, чтобы окно было у вас за спиной и прислушайтесь, какие звуки будут доноситься с улицы или из-за стен. Если первое, что вы услышите, будет кашель, стоны, то, возможно, вы сильно заболите в течение года либо будете болеть часто. Если услышите мужской голос, то встретите надежного соратника. Если голос будет женским, то не исключено появление соперницы. Если послышится смех, то весь год будет благоприятным. Если услышите детский голосок, возможно появление потомства. Громкий плач или крик — неприятности, ссоры. Как гадали в старину по ветке на отношения?

Если вы хотите узнать, как к вам относятся молодой человек, то воспользуйтесь этим старым проверенным обрядом. Вам необходимо будет заранее взять сосновую веточку и маленькую елочную игрушку. В старину наши предки брали пряник или любую другую сладость. Теперь подойдите к тому месту, где проживает возлюбленный, прикрепите ветку около двери в дом, около калитки и разместите на ней игрушку. Важно сделать все так, чтобы никто не заметил вас. Ровно через сутки, в то же время, придите на это место снова. Если атрибут остался вместе с игрушкой нетронутым, то чувства не будут взаимными. Если же атрибуты исчезли, то, вполне возможно, юноша испытывает к вам теплые чувства.

can go and decipher the result. If the outline remains intact, then your dream will definitely come true in the near future. If the print has been a little trampled, then in order to realize your dream, you will have to make a lot of effort.

### Translation:

Old rite with trash

Our ancestors did not limit their imagination and came up with the most diverse and curious methods of divination. In order to perform this ritual, you will need dry trash. This can be paper, thread, scraps of fabric, cardboard, etc. Before performing the ritual, you will need to pour all these little things into a separate box and hide them until Christmas time. Content should not be shown or crawled to anyone. On Christmastide, exactly at 12 o'clock in the morning, when no one else is at home, take out the box, pour out the garbage in the middle of the room and go around this pile three times clockwise. At the same time, say three times:

In the evening hour I want to know what awaits me in the coming year!

Now climb onto the pile (stand on it) so that the window is behind you and listen to what sounds will come from the street or from behind the walls. If the first thing you hear is a cough, moans, then you may get very sick during the year or get sick often. If you hear a male voice, you will meet a reliable companion. If the voice is female, then the appearance of a rival is possible. If laughter is heard, then the whole year will be auspicious. If you hear a child's voice, offspring may appear. Loud crying or screaming - troubles, quarrels.

### Translation:

How to guess in the old days on the branch over relationships?

If you want to know how a young man treats you, then use this old proven rite. You will need to take a pine twig and a small Christmas tree decoration in advance. In the old days, our ancestors took gingerbread or any other sweetness. Now go to the place where your beloved lives, attach a branch near the door to the house, near the gate and place a toy on it. It is important to do everything so that no one notices you. Exactly one day later, at the same time, come to this place again. If the attribute remains intact with the toy, then the feelings will not be mutual. If the attributes have disappeared, then, quite possibly, the young man has warm feelings for you.

Village fortune telling on chickens, this ritual has come down to our times from the pagans. It is held on the full moon, exactly at 12:00 midnight. It is important that all

Деревенское гадание на курах Этот ритуал дошел до наших времен от язычников. Проводится он в полнолуние, ровно в 12:00 ночи. Важно, чтобы все домашние уже в этот момент спали. В помещении по сторонам ставится емкость с водой, хлебом, солью, сахаром, различными монетками и колечками. Заранее выберите курицу, которая будет принимать участие в ворожбе и занесите ее дом для того, чтобы она освоилась и не боялась. Когда наступит нужный час, занесите птицу в нужную комнату и проследите, какая вещь ей понравится больше всего. Птица не сможет пойти к вещи, которая больше блестит и привлекает ее по внешним качествам, а выберет интуитивно. Если птица выбрала соль, на вашем пути будет немало трудностей, которые нужно будет преодолеть.

Сахар — жизнь будет сладкой, все будет удаваться, фортуна будет улыбаться.

Кольца — скоро выйдете замуж.

Вода — в жизни не будет никаких особых изменений, все будет идти своим чередом.

Хлеб — богатый урожай. Монеты — прибыль, достаток.

#### Гадание на золе.

Проводится этот обряд в бане. Перед тем, как туда отправиться, необходимо заранее вооружиться горстью золы. Наберите небольшой сосуд воды, смочите в ней березовый веник и трижды по ходу часовой стрелки сделайте манипуляции над емкостью. При этом трижды произнесите слова:

*Сбудутся ли мои желания в наступающем году?*

Следом бросается горсть золы, и ваша задача дожидаться, пока она полностью не осядет на дно. Если магический атрибут распределился равномерно по всему дну емкости, то это говорит о том, что вашей мечте сбыться не суждено.

Если же она оказалась в каком-то определенном месте, это говорит о том, что все желания исполнятся. Если исход гадания показал, что вашей мечте пока не суждено сбыться, то вам следует вылить жидкость вместе с золой на улицу и сказать:

*Чтобы все плохое быстро закончилось, и на смену ему скорее пришло только хорошее.*

Эти старинные действенные ритуалы помогут вам получить ответы на многие вопросы. Воспользуйтесь мудростью наших предков, окунитесь в мир магии и соприкоснитесь со сверхъестественным. Помните, результаты подобных гаданий лишь подталкивают в нужном направлении, если вы получили негативное предсказание, то не стоит отчаиваться, ведь вы только сами можете изменить свою судьбу в лучшую сторону.

household members are already asleep at this moment. In the room, a container with water, bread, salt, sugar, various coins and rings is placed on the sides. Select in advance a chicken that will take part in the divination and bring her home so that she gets comfortable and not afraid. When the right time comes, bring the bird into the right room and see which thing she likes best. The bird will not be able to go to a thing that shines more and attracts it by its external qualities, but will choose intuitively. If the bird has chosen salt, there will be many difficulties on your way that will need to be overcome. Sugar - life will be sweet, everything will work out, and fortune will smile.

Rings - getting married soon.

Water - there will be no special changes in life, everything will go on as usual.

Bread is a rich harvest. Coins - profit, wealth.

#### Translation:

Fortune telling on ash.

This ceremony is held in the bathhouse. Before you go there, you need to arm yourself with a handful of ash. Pick up a small vessel of water, moisten a birch broom in it and manipulate the container three times clockwise. At the same time, say the words three times:

*Will my wishes come true in the coming year?*

A handful of ash is thrown next, and your task is to wait until it completely settles to the bottom. If the magic attribute is distributed evenly over the entire bottom of the container, then this indicates that your dream is not destined to come true.

If she found herself in a certain place, this suggests that all desires will come true. If the outcome of fortune-telling showed that your dream is not yet destined to come true, then you should pour the liquid along with the ash onto the street and say:

*So that all bad things end quickly, and only good ones come to replace him.*

These ancient, powerful rituals will help you get answers to many questions. Use the wisdom of our ancestors, plunge into the world of magic and get in touch with the supernatural. Remember, the results of such fortune telling only push you in the right direction, if you received a negative prediction, then you should not despair, because only you yourself can change your destiny for the better.

### Гадание на берёзе

Девушке во время недели Зелёных святков надо выбрать на берёзе три ветви, но если дерево было пышным, то разделить одну ветку на три части. Затем надо сплести косу, приговаривая: "Плетись, плетись косица красавицы берёзоньки. Берёзоньку я завью. Благослови Лелюшка, о суженом скажи". После этого надо завязать косу красной лентой и крепкой травой. Через три дня надо прийти обратно к берёзе и смотреть на заветную косу. Если ветки не завянут, коса не распустится, жених будет ладным, крепким и пригожим –желание сбудется.

Изучение особенностей различных гадательных действий позволяют нам лучше постичь образ мысли и быт наших Предков, прикоснуться к бесценному опыту поколений и, возможно, заглянуть в будущее... Гадания живут в народе, несмотря на многовековую борьбу с ними церкви и развития "цивилизованности" человечества. "Читая в великой таинственной книге природы, полной чудес, могучих и непостижимых сил, свою судьбу, свое счастье и горе, народ создал сложную систему примет, предсказывающих грядущее. Но многочисленных примет, как случайных явлений природы, недостаточно, чтобы проникнуть в тайны судьбы, в неведомую область незнаемого. Стремление раскрыть будущее и уяснить непонятные явления жизни мироздания выдвинуло особые приемы познания путем искусственного создания условий для суждения через приспособление предметов и явлений, путем общения со сверхъестественными силами, иногда внутренним ощущением и воображением, выдвинуло искусственно создаваемый новый ряд примет, истолковав которые, можно узнать свою долю. Это - гадания".

### 3. Conclusion

This paper observes that divination is a path charted as a medium of guidance to the taking of right decisions in Yorubaland and Russia. Some of the processes are common. In Yorubaland, *Ifá* is turned to for guidance and for ascertaining the matter of the past, present and the future, while Russian peasants retain their belief in spirits of the house and farmstead and of various aspects of nature. There are common matters that are resolved through divine consultations in both societies, such as: choosing a life partner, expected kind of harvest for farmers and resolving knitted issues that are beyond human comprehension. While divination in Yorubaland is basically rendered orally, in Russia, sometimes it could be oral, but generally written.

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### Translation:

#### Fortune telling on a birch

During the week of Green Saints, a girl needs to choose three branches on a birch, but if the tree was lush, then divide one branch into three parts. Then you need to weave a braid, saying: "Weave, weave the braid of the beautiful birch tree. I will curl the birch. Bless Lelyushka, tell me about your betrothed." After that, you need to tie the braid with a red ribbon and strong grass. After three days, you need to come back to the birch and look at the cherished braid.

If the branches do not wither, the braid will not bloom, the groom will be okay, strong and handsome - the wish will come true.

Studying the features of various fortune-telling actions allows us to better comprehend the way of thinking and life of our ancestors, to touch the invaluable experience of generations and, possibly, to look into the future. Fortune-telling lives among the people, despite the centuries-old struggle of the church with them and the development of humanity's "civilization". "Reading in the great mysterious book of nature, full of miracles, mighty and incomprehensible forces, their destiny, their happiness and sorrow, the people have created a complex system of signs that predict the future.

But numerous signs, as random phenomena of nature, are not enough to penetrate the secrets of fate, into the unknown realm of the unknown. The desire to reveal the future and to understand the incomprehensible phenomena of the life of the universe put forward special methods of cognition by artificially creating conditions for judgment through the adaptation of objects and phenomena, by communicating with supernatural forces, sometimes with inner sensation and imagination, put forward an artificially created new series of signs, by interpreting which, you can learn your share. This is fortune telling.

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## Reconfigurations of Trauma and Self-representation in Remi Raji's *Wanderer Cantos*

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**Abstract.** The relationship between poetry and trauma is multifaceted and significant in contemporary Nigerian literary scholarship. This implies that literature reflects different experiences that have to do with psychological trauma such as physical health conditions, political aggression, violence, economic disparities and cultural disruption. While most studies on the exploration of trauma in Nigerian poetry are focused on war, social and domestic violence, there are scant critical works on covid-induced trauma in poetry. The COVID-19 pandemic which has generated profound disruptions in human existence, producing both individual and collective trauma, demands literary documentation and interpretation. Remi Raji's *Wanderer Cantos* emerges as a poetic response to the pandemic, exploring the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of suffering and resilience. This study, therefore, investigates how traumatic experiences like loss, isolation, and fear are mediated through poetic language, and are shaped by self-representation in Raji's poetry collection, *Wanderer Cantos*. Poems were carefully selected from the second section of the poetry collection that dwells on the COVID-19 infection, and are subjected to qualitative literary analysis, showing how they explore the idea of self-portrait and trauma. This is complemented by secondary data derived from journals, articles, essays and books. The study adopts Trauma Theory as its theoretical approach, to investigate manifestations of coronavirus-induced trauma in the poems. Trauma theory becomes more relevant to this study because trauma theory in literature try to show how traumatic experiences are represented, processed and transmitted through narrative. The analysis of the poems reveals that, through a personal account, the poet recreates the traumatic experience triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. It demonstrates that poetry functions as a therapeutic tool for reimagining survival. Indices of covid trauma are identified in the poems through dissociative language, alienation, isolation, pain, suffering, hysteria, hallucination, traumatic disruption of time, psyche disruption, fragmented narrative and

disorientation. The poet's use of imagery, metaphor, paradox, personification to illustrate the painful experience of the COVID-19 infection, expose the traumatic experience of the poet and as well reflect an autobiographical account. The study concludes that *Wanderer Cantos* reconfigures trauma by transforming unspeakable suffering into aesthetic testimony.

**Keywords:** Trauma studies, Self-Representation, COVID-19 infection, Nigeria poetry, Remi Raji *Wanderer Cantos*

### 1. Introduction

As a genre of literature, poetry represents man's socioeconomic, political psychosocial and existential struggles (Uwatt, 2023:51). The statement above implies that poetry has often shown itself and responded to the struggles of man. Friday and Oghenerioborue (2022:54) declare that literary writers are conscious of the utilitarian functions of poetry in society, noting that poets imaginatively and psychologically reflect various aspects of human life. This also stresses the role of poetry as a cathartic tool employed to alleviate man from his problems in all ramifications. Thus, given the fact that the art (poetry) is saddled with these multifarious functions, it, therefore, enables it to intersect with other disciplines. Apart from its crosswalk with other academic fields, literature or poetry shares a mutually beneficial relationship with the field of psychology (trauma). Hence, Wordsworth (1805) defines poetry as a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in moments of tranquility (Preface to *Lyrical Ballad*). The definition above implies that poetry serves as a vehicle to communicate man's repressed feelings and thoughts. To this end, many poets have employed poetry as a tool to confront, handle and heal traumatic feelings. In the bible, David is a poet who uses the lyre to heal Saul once he is tormented by evil spirit to the state of insanity: 'And so, whenever the evil spirit from the Lord assailed Saul, David took up his stringed

instrument and Saul was refreshed' (1 Samuel 16:14-23). This means that Saul becomes mentally well anytime David plays the string to him.

Literature and trauma share a significant relationship in contemporary African literature. Trauma discourse into literary studies took effect from the intercession of literary scholars like Cathy Carruth, Shoshana Felman, Dominick La Capra, Kali Tai and Dori Laub. Trauma studies first developed in the 1990s and relied on Freud's theory of hysteria to develop a model that believes that suffering is unrepresentable. It made significant progress in 1996 with the publication of Carruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* and Kaji Tai's *World of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. In the African context, literary trauma refers to the emotional, psychological, and cultural impact of historical and ongoing events such as colonialism, slavery, war, and displacement on individuals and community (Lee, 2025).

Studies on the depiction of trauma in Nigerian literature have mainly focused on traumatic experiences caused by social violence. Ifowodo (2013) examines the portrayal of trauma and healing in postcolonial novels, drawn from Africa, African-American and Caribbean. Ifowodo's study shows how political aggression can lead to trauma. Ogbiede (2018) investigates the negative effects of trauma on children as represented in two plays namely Darko's *Faceless* and Unigue's *Night Dancer*. Ogbiede argues that as represented in literature, traumatised children are mentally deformed, and cannot play active roles in the society. Kekeghe and Omobowale (2025) discuss poetic response to the traumatic experiences caused by the ecological violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Kekeghe and Omobowale contend that the process of narrating trauma can lead to healing, which is in agreement with Freud's idea of talking cure or what some scholars refer to as scriptotherapy (Owonibi, 2008). The representation of trauma induced by clinical experiences in poetry has not received adequate critical attention. This study, therefore, examines depictions of COVID trauma and self-representation in Remi Raji's poetry collection, *Wanderer Cantos*.

This study adopts Trauma Theory. Literary trauma theory was founded on two models: the classical and pluralistic model. The two models dwell on the representability of trauma in literature. The classical model pioneered by Carruth believes that the traumatic event cannot be remembered or related. That is, trauma is unspeakable. In this model, trauma is viewed as an event that fragments consciousness and prevents linguistic representation. Fragmentation and

dissociation are the direct causes of trauma. The traumatic experience damages the psyche. According to Carruth (1996), trauma is not located in the simple violence or original event in the individual past but in the way it was not known in the first instance that returns to haunt the survivor. She believes that trauma victims cannot remember a traumatic experience at the time of occurrence and the way it happened but can only return through flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive thought. The model emphasises that the suffering which is external, affect internal changes to the mind of the individual and this experience fractures both language and consciousness. In this model, Carruth argues that trauma's latency and dissociation disrupt the ability to fully understand or represent a traumatic experience. Both the individual traumatic experiences and collective historical extreme events are ultimately never known directly but only through an interrupted referentiality that points to meaning of the past only as a type of reproduction or performance (Carruth, 1996:11). Kolk (1996) maintains the same view that what may complicate the capacity to communicate about trauma is that memories of trauma may have no verbal component.

The pluralistic model holds a contrary view to the traditional model. It maintains that meaning and representation of trauma is varied and can be remembered and spoken in a number of ways. It suggests that traumatic experiences expose new relationships between experience, language, and knowledge that details the social significance of trauma (Mambrol, 2018). Baleav (2012:14) explains that 'in pluralistic model, the meaning of a traumatic experience can be determined by the remembering process that is open to alteration over time by the individual's memory who continuously revises memories, including those of traumatic experiences, in each moment of remembrance'. In spite of the different view point of the two models, literary trauma is founded on both. As Carruth (1996:9) asserts, literature serves as a privilege site for bearing witness to trauma; thus, providing an avenue for literary discourse.

Poetry intersects with trauma in quite a number of ways. First, poetry serves as a form of witnessing and testimony. This implies that it provides individuals with the platform to share their traumatic experiences with others. Wenzel (2016) relays how Terri Muuss, who was a survivor of incest from her childhood by her biological father, took to writing poems on her experiences which brought about her happiness. Therefore, poetry becomes an avenue to create awareness and empathy. Again, poetry provides an

outlet for individuals to express and process their traumatic emotions. Hannah (2024) advocates for the expressive process of poetry in the collection, *The Ballad of the Bunny and other poems: The Diary of a Car Crash and Beyond*, which recounts her survival in an automobile accident. She expresses the incredible power of poetry for healing trauma. Hannah (2024) states further that poetry offers a unique method of expressing one's deepest feelings surrounding trauma and the recovery thought-process we may keep hidden even from ourselves. This shows that through poetry, people can relate their feelings, deep-thoughts and personal experiences that could also serve universal purposes. The process of telling these experiences through poetic exploration often leads to healing of the body and the mind. Akinpelu (2024) explains how Niyi Osundare in his collection of poems *City without people: The Katrina poems* expressed and processes the traumatic experiences unleashed by Hurricane Katrina through his employment of vivid use of imagery, tone, atmosphere and other poetic devices to enable the reader have a vicarious experience of the Katrina's devastating onslaught as well as heal his mind of the devastation of the hurricane. The instances above, strengthens poetry role as illuminator of the dept of suppressed emotions as well as a channel to express pain and resilience.

In situations where a person is traumatised, poetry can be a therapeutic tool for regaining healing and recovery. Mazza, (2021: para1) maintains that poetry has been proven to have positive impact on adolescents' mental health. His stand is based on research carried out by a good number of psychotherapists that discovered that the use of poetry can improve mental health in adolescents. Perez, (2024) supports this stand point when he says that reading, writing and sharing poetry can have beneficial impacts on mental health and well-being by helping to reduce anxiety, decrease stress, boost self-awareness and promote emotional expression. Again, Sivakumar (2024: para1) states that poetic therapy is an expressive art therapy that utilizes the reading and writing of poetry as a means to facilitate healing and self-exploration. He explains that this engagement can evoke emotional response. From the disposition of the scholars above, it is clear that poetry is employed in the treatment of young people with mental health issues and based on investigations, it has proven to better and restate them to normalcy. It is to this end, that Moawad (2022) states that poetry maintains an interdisciplinary relationship with neuroscience and psychoanalysis. The process of writing poetry can be a form of self-care that allows individuals to process their emotions, work through their experiences and

find a sense of closure and resolution (McGowan,2020 para 3&4).

Moawad (2022) further states that mentally fragmented or traumatised people can have psychiatric treatment through therapeutic processes of reading and writing poetry and behavioural activities. He further notes that there is an interdisciplinary relationship between neuroscience, psychoanalysis and poetry, which leads to new ways of understanding a person's self-knowledge and evaluating his relationship with the others. Similarly, (Okeke, 2023:41) remarks that emotional expression act as a cathartic response to trauma. He explains that through poetry, Igbo writers and poets have been able to illuminate the depths of suppressed emotions of the Igbo people during the Nigerian civil war and provide a cathartic outlet for the expression of pain, resilience, and collective memory. This goes to explain that expressive writing, especially poetry writing, has a way of helping people deal with loss, grief, trauma and emotional pain. The act of turning pain to words reduces the weight and burden that a person carries. Poetry as a healing tool applicable and accessible to anyone, can have a concrete impact in all areas of medicine specifically in providing innovative methods for healing both individually and holistically (Awodiya, 2024). From the above, poetry plays a curative role to the body and suits the mind when it is read or written.

The utilitarian function of poetry in the medical field has also been observed in terms of its curative role. Poetry has been used as a form of medical intervention in the case of some hospitalised children (Delamred et al, 2021). According to them, hospitalization is a form of isolation that can cause anxiety (Delamred et al, 2021). Based on the fact that children often display elated feelings whenever they listen to poem recitations, the use of poems becomes important in the treatment of children as this invariably reduces worrisome feelings in hospitalised pediatric children. Again, Heimes (2011) states that for patients, poetry provides a space to vent, to reflect and to come to terms with their respective situations. He notes that whether a patient is coping with pain, dealing with stressful situation or coming to terms with uncertainties, poetry can benefit a patient's well-being, confidence, emotional stability and quality of life (Heimes 2011). Thus, as noted above, the process of reading and writing poetry can reduce the stress which arose in patients in hospitalised condition which is a form of isolation.

Poetry has also shown its imprints in the area of memory and recovery. Odueme (2019: 149) examines how memory impacts Ojaide's poetry as he employs

the rich traditional Urhobo oral heritage to inscribe his experiences, feelings and thoughts on the contemporary realities, while living in the diaspora. This goes to say that the act of writing poetry brings to mind suppressed memories, emotions and experiences. Chris (2023) exposes the research and findings carried out by the University of Plymouth and Nottingham Trent University founded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, thus: ‘Many people who took to sharing, discussing and writing poetry as a means to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic experienced demonstrable positive impact on their well-being’ (para2). He expresses further that the findings are based on a survey of 400 people which showed that poetry helped those experiencing common mental health symptom as well as those suffering from grief.

Poetry has as well traversed with the issues of the coronavirus pandemic popularly known as COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus is a global disease that broke out in a town called Wuhan, China. Ojaide (2021) states that the coronavirus pandemic is one of man’s more recent global social existential struggles that elicited physical and psychological trauma on almost all continents of the world. The novel coronavirus pandemic devastated far away Wuhan China to Europe, especially Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom through New York state to the gradual infection of other states in the United States and other countries such as Brazil, Ecuador, India, South Africa and Russia (Ojaide, 2021). Uwat (2023) notes that as a global health crisis of the 21st century and the greatest challenge the world has experienced since the World War II, since its emergence in the far away Wuhan in Asia late in 2019. The coronavirus pandemic has spread to every continent except Antarctica assuming dimensions beyond a health crisis to an unprecedented social, economic, political and psychological vagary that have left deep and longstanding scars.

The event of the COVID-19 pandemic came with a lot of grief, pain, loss of lives and loved ones, illness, isolation and poverty (Ogliastri, 2020; Statz et al, 2022). It is upon this realisation, that Nigerian poets use their creativity to recap the ugly experience and ravages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, poets wrote pandemic poems. Okuyade and Mukoro (2024:37) define pandemic poems as poetry (oral or written) that assert the musings of poets about a pandemic disease. They register the contemplations of poets about the coronavirus, a contagious disease that spreads over a whole country or the whole world, as well as its accompanying devastations and wreckage of human psychology,

cultural norms and socio – economic and political activities. Presently, apart from Remi Raji’s *Wanderer Cantos* there exist other COVID-19 poems such as Tanure Ojaide’s *Narrow Escape*, Ismail Bala and Khalid Imam *Corona Blues*, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and a host of others that have been written to replicate the experiences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a matter of fact, these writers (poets) have written to show the generality of the characteristics and effect of the COVID-19 infectious disease. Remi Raji’s *Wanderer Cantos* dwells on his personal experience as a victim and survivor of the covid-19 Pandemic infection. Thus, it gives the yardstick to discuss the reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation in Raji’s poetry.

Though there are studies on the representation of covid-19 in literature, they do not seem to pay attention to the reconfiguration and self-representation of trauma. Existing Nigerian literary studies that treat reconfiguration of trauma are on human-induced trauma. Okuyade and Umukoro (2020) undertake a study on a new direction in contemporary Nigeria poetry using the pandemic poems of Tanure Ojaide and Kola Eke. Also, Yong and Ogbodo (2003) employ Roberts, Smitha and Adimora – Ezeigbo poetry to explore the psychoanalytic exegesis of trauma in covid-19 poetry.

By implication there have been several scholarly works on the COVID-19 pandemic poems as it results to individual and community traumas alike. They demonstrate that poetry serve as an essential medium for expressing, sharing and remembering the psychological effects of crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. Okonkwo (2023) discusses the culpability and nation-nation infractions in *Narrow Escapes: A poetic Dairy of the Coronavirus Pandemic* by Tanure Ojaide. Awodiya et al (2024) explore the therapeutic effect of poetry on youths’ mental well-being in post-covid-19 era in Nigeria. Ilechukwu and Ojaruega (2024) explore the collective trauma in selected Anglophone Covid-19 poetry, dwelling on the manifestations of collective trauma and poetry as a medium of resilience. Of all the studies on COVID-19 poetry, there is little or no existing work that combine reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation of the poet in Covid poetry. Therefore, this study aims to fill this vacuum, and contribute to existing studies on covid trauma in contemporary Nigerian literature

Reconfiguration implies redefining life after adversity. It also means finding a new path with different standards, goals and expectations (Blalock, 2023). Blalock also discuss reconfiguration from the context of child abuse and neglect as the ability to move past

surviving to thriving. The implication of reshaping is that it allows survivors of catastrophe to acquire an unbelievable flexibility to move forward with purpose. The aim of reconfiguration is to restore function and movement, relieve discomfort, and improve appearance. Relating this to literature, Carruth (1996:18) states that 'trauma causes an epistemological crises and bypasses linguistic reference'. Literature becomes a privilege site for bearing witness to trauma through innovative literary forms that mimic and transmit rather than represent the phenomenon to readers in its literality. For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs, but put in somewhat different (Carruth, 1996). Therefore, reconfiguration of trauma involves reinterpreting and reorganising one's experience and perceptions of traumatic events. According to Wrights et al (2007), survivors of trauma often pursue new meaning in their lives to be able to navigate in society. The main purpose of reconfiguration of trauma is to promote healing, reduce distress and to serve as therapy. Poets do this task by reframing their narrative, re-evaluating emotions, finding meaning and reconstructing identity and adopting the spirit of resilience.

On the other hand, the concept of self-representation, as it is viewed from psychology, refers to the way individuals perceive and depict themselves both to themselves and others (National Library of Medicine 2015). Its focus is on self-identity, self-concept and self-presentation. The proponent of this concept was Erving Goffman when he published 'The presentation of self in everyday life'. Thus, self-representation entails giving an autobiographical account of one's experience about life. Mohammed (2016: x) explains that self-identity refers to how a person perceives himself and what he chooses to identify with. It is the understanding a person has of himself. The self is the most important aspect in autobiography which is represented in written form. Autobiography depicts the life of a subject which struggles to define itself. The self has a unique quality which brings out its identity. Therefore, since the aspects of self-identity, self-concept and self-presentation must be present to compose a self-portrait of oneself, autobiography becomes self-representation.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the trauma theory to account for the reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation in selected poems in Raji's *Wanderer Cantoes*. Rene Descartes (1959) explains the relationship between disruptive emotions, the resulting fear and its enduring

effects on human interactions and behaviour in his treatise *The Passions of the Soul* Jean Martin Charcot (1980), a French neurologist and professor of Anatomical pathologist in the late 19th century, states that traumatic event is not physiological but psychological and that trauma induced hypnotic state in his patients.

Pierre (1889) identifies dissociative phenomena and traumatic memories. The earliest conceptualisation of trauma implies a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self's emotional organisation and perception of the external world. Thus, trauma can be individual or collective. The American psychological association (2025) defines trauma as an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, crime, natural disaster, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, experiencing or witnessing violence, death of loved one, war and more. This implies that trauma is an unexpected attack on an individual which could have disrupted the person's way of doing things both physically and psychologically.

Trauma studies were first developed in the 1990s and relied on Freudian theory to develop a model of trauma that imagines an extreme experience which challenges the limits of language and ruptures meaning altogether (Mambrol,2018). This traditional model was quickly followed by a pluralistic model of trauma that suggests the assumed unspeakability of trauma. The major focus of trauma theory in the first wave was on limits of language, fragments on the psyche, dissociative behaviour, concept of latency and pathology. Cathy Carruth, Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartman arose in the 1990 to examine the concept of trauma and its role in literature. Thus, Carruth postulates that traumatic experience fractures both languages and consciousness. Carruth also stated that fragmentation and dissociation are direct cause of trauma. Trauma theory in literature tries to show how traumatic experiences are represented, processed and transmitted through narrative (Balaev,2014:1, Jena & Semantry,2021:1). It looks at the psychological, emotional and cultural impact of trauma on individuals and community. It also challenges articulation. On the other hand, the pluralistic model maintains that cultural dimension of trauma and the diversity of narrative expression have effect on memory and consciousness. The model also suggest that traumatic experience uncovers new relationship between experience, language, and knowledge that detail the social significance of trauma. Therefore, trauma theory explores the narrative dissociation, fragmentation, hysteria, pains, suffering, traumatic memories, symbolic representation of pains, sufferings through the use of metaphors and imagery.

Thus, trauma theory is deployed to examine the reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation in the poetry collection, *Wanderer Cantos*, which relays the personal suffering, pains and recovery of the poet during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

### 3. Trauma and Self-Representation in Remi Raji's *Wanderer Cantos*.

The poetry collection, *Wanderer Cantos* by Remi Raji, is a testimony of the personal experience of the poet, transformed into poetic form. The poetry collection is divided into two sections. The first section relates the adventurous activities of the poet, while the second section which is titled *Corona Cantos and Monologues: My Life in the Bush of the Impossible Virus* gives details of the poet's personal experience as a victim and survivor of the corona virus at the intensive care unit of the Oyo State Infections Disease Centre, Olodo, Ibadan. The title of the collection *Wanderer Cantos*, suggests that the poet is a traveller and he contacted the virus during one of his journeys. The title also draws the attention of the reader that the information expressed in the collection depicts a single information but broken down into fragments, hence the title *Corona Cantos and Monologue*. Raji's *Wanderer Cantos* expresses the reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation of the poet.

In the poem, 'A Quiet and Lonely Place' Raji reconfigures trauma not just as a site of pain but as a space of spiritual reckoning and suspended identity. He transforms the raw experience of near-death and medical emergency into a lyrical narrative surrounded by the traumatic encounter. The poem explores the collapse of time, the fragmentation of perception and the blurred boundary between life and death. The poet's self-representation shifts between a victim and an observer. The excerpt below illustrates this:

Everything stood still: motion, breath and the clock,  
 Except voices which became bodies asking,  
 Praying,  
 Whispering.  
 They fetched me away and everything became still  
 except the sirens and the horns  
 which sliced through the rough painful journey.  
 Everything stood still  
 Everybody arrived in their expertise.  
 Astronauts in white and green and blue.  
 I do not see their faces  
 They drew my blood  
 My mother watched from a distance  
 She sat, fairer than the oil of gods,  
 Her face had not changed in a decade.  
 Everything.  
 Everybody.

Except death.  
 (p. 85)

The poet's emphasis on the idea of 'stillness' can be viewed from the lockdown measures put in place to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus disease. This is because it is very unusual for only the sound of the siren to be heard in a usual busy Nigeria road. This accounts for the amount of fear and distress the poet suffers from. The excerpt below illustrates this thus: 'except the sirens and the horns which sliced through the painful journey' (p.85). The use of stillness also represents the poet's state of illness, his helplessness and the doctors and medical expert's unfriendliness. All of these leads to the trauma which the poet suffers from. The extract above also emphasises the dissociative effects of trauma. The poet does not understand if he is in a helpless state or actually watching what the people around him were doing. His perception is shared between two positions. At some point, he is a vulnerable and an observer, which signifies the traumatic state of the poet. The idea of the dissociative effect of trauma is reflected in the lines thus; 'They fetched me away and everything became still/Astronauts in white and green and blue/ I do not see their faces'. The poem also reflects the stillness of time, which indicates the temporary disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, the few voices that showed concern to the poet's evacuation from his home by strange persons were also speaking from a respectful distance, making the poet to feel all the more traumatised. This accounts for the poet's repetition of the lines below:

Everything stood still: motion, breath and the clock,  
 except voices which became bodies  
 asking, praying,  
 and whispering (p. 85).  
 Everything stood still (p.85).

The above lines align with the ideas of trauma theorists like Cathy Carruth, who says that trauma is an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the delayed, the uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena (Carruth, 2016, p.3, 11) and Kolk, (1996) who maintains that what may complicate the capacity to communicate about traumatic experiences is that memories of trauma may have no verbal component (Kolk, 284). The idea of motion, breath and clock that ceases to function depicts the frozen moment of time. This emphasises how trauma disrupts the experience of time and narrative continuity. This also exposes how deeply traumatised the poet persona is as a result of this unusual stillness. It goes further to describe the

poet's state of being numb. This indicates a state of being between life and death. Again, the lines of the poem read thus:

Everybody arrayed in their expertise.  
Astronauts in white and green and blue.  
I do not see their faces (p. 85).

The lines of the poem above present medical images and trauma in the clinical realms. These are doctors, nurses and radiotherapist whom the poet refers to as 'Astronauts in white and green and blue'. This reference also reflects the poet's blunt view of medical experts which without doubt shows that the trauma which the poet suffers has an effect on his sense of association. Again, another distress which the poet persona suffers from is the fact that the medical personnel are faceless, making them to be alienated. This act makes the poet to feel a deep sense of isolation even though he is being cared for. The poet endeavours to elucidate the idea of spirit realm in the lines below:  
My mother watched from a distance,  
she sat fairer than the oil of gods  
her face had not changed in a decade (p.85)

The poet's vision of his mother invokes both memory and myth. The line is particularly confusing whether the mother is living or she is on hallucinatory visitation in a moment near death. This implies that the speaker is in between the physical and the spiritual world. The traumatic condition of the poet placed him in a state of trance whereby he sees the vision of his mother describing her as 'fairer than the oil of the gods'. In spite of his near-death state, he has sense of aesthetics making him appreciate his mother's beauty. Therefore, his mother's supposed appearance to him, revitalises his sense of being and this has therapeutic effect in him.

The second poem in the second section titled, 'A Different December' reflects the poet's uncontrolled anger about the December of that year. As a common tradition, December is a period of festivity and celebration. It is a time of merry-making with family and friends. Contrarily, he finds himself in an isolated place where he cannot free himself. The lines of the poem read thus:

I arrived with a petulant bag  
a screaming coldness in the heat of day,  
a simmering anger against the virus.  
I put the last line of my thought  
Into the commotion in my head  
I stood up but I sat down watching  
as I walked out of my body,  
bundle of phlegm, turbo of  
menthol and mint

the breathless hysteria of silent tempest,  
I arrived with a different rhythm  
in my blood lines (p. 86)

The lines of the poem presented above use fragmented imagery, disorientation, physical and emotional metaphors to reconfigure trauma and reconstruct the self. The use of trauma and fragmentation of self is evident in the lines thus: 'I stood up but I sat down watching / as I walked out of my body ...' (p. 86). Again, the above excerpt exemplifies dissociation which is the state of being detached from the body. The self is fragmented, making the poet persona an actor and an observer. This portrays a psychic rupture of the poet's state of mind. To buttress this, the poet says: 'I put the last line of my thought into the commotion in my head'. The poet uses these words to paint a picture of his mental state. Another significant focus on trauma is explored in the lines thus:

Bundle of phlegm, turbo of  
menthol and mint,  
the breathless hysteria of silent tempest  
(p. 86).

The lines above show image of manifestation of illness and panic. The use of phlegm and menthol symbolises relief. The use of 'Breathless hysteria' in this poem is paradoxical. Hysteria usually suggests a loud emotional reaction that can spur a person to display some sort of irrational behaviour. But in this case, the hysteria is breathless. This suggests the mute suffering of the poet. The poet is obviously filled with anger against the virus but lacks the energy to eliminate it. There is also evidence of reconfiguration of rhythms and identity in the poem. This is illustrated in the poet's declaration that 'I arrived with a different rhythm in my blood' (p.86). This line shows a post-traumatic change in the poet. The word 'Rhythms' implies a metaphor for life force, internal equilibrium or psychosocial stability. The poet's self that was in disarray has gradually come to normalcy. Hence, the arrival with a different rhythm implies a fundamental change in identity or outlook influenced by the trauma of the coronavirus. At this point, the poet has built up anger against the virus. His state of mind is to forcefully eliminate the virus and ensure it is eradicated. The poet also employs chaotic language and paradox as seen in the following line: 'A screaming coldness in the heat of the day...' (p.86) The use of 'screaming' and 'coldness' used side by side conveys internal dissonance which is suggestive of a world turned inside out. The poem also indicates that Remi Raji reconfigures trauma not only as a personal struggle but as a collective fight. The poet presents himself as a liminal figure which indicates

body and spirit, present and absent. This is illustrated in the lines thus: 'I stood up but I sat down watching/as I walk out of my body'.

The poem, 'The Pickpocket' is a meditation on the physical and psychological toll of COVID-19. The poet presents the virus as a metaphorical thief – a pickpocket, stealing time, stability and even breath. Raji uses this poem to convey the uncomfortable experience of illness and hospitalization.

The poem opens with the lines thus:

There are many captives in the different wars – all victims of the pickpocket.  
Young, old, male and female, all victims of the pickpocket.

The thief does not know character, tongue or quota.  
A window away from the ICU  
These patients are agile, unlike me, they scare me.

They play scrabble, ludo and other games.  
They speak above their voice and the noise grates my chest.  
Why they are still here I do not know.  
The coronavirus has a golden knife.  
It peels the orange for you in a moment,  
and stabs you in the arm thereafter... (p. 87)

Here, the virus is personified as a thief, violator of bodily and mental integrity. This gives account of the poet's use of the word 'Pickpocket'. The poet gives a vivid description of the virus as no respecter of age or gender. The following excerpt illustrates this thus: 'young, old, male and female, all victims of the pickpocket'. The knowledge of this alone is traumatic in itself. No wonder the poet explains that there are many captives in the ward. The word 'Captives' portray the imprisonment of the patients. First, the virus itself has made them captives. Then the isolation center is a place where there is no exit except when a patient is fully certified as free of the virus. The patients are disoriented and powerless which is a feature of trauma. Hence the poet persona says; 'The coronavirus has a golden knife/ it peels the orange for you in a moment, / and stabs you in the arm thereafter'. The unpredictability of the virus, explains why the patients live in fear. Thus, indicating the height of being traumatised. Again, the poet persona expresses fear in the midst of shared suffering. He sees himself as weaker than the other patients in the ward. This is illustrated in the lines below: 'These patients are agile, unlike me, / they scare me /They speak above their voices and their noise grates my chest' (p.8).

In the lines above, the poet's show of fear reflects isolation within shared suffering. The resilience of others becomes alienating. This also shows that the

trauma is not physiological but existential. Hence, he questions thus: 'Why they are still here I do not know'. While all the patients are caught in the same tragic situation, some appears stronger than the others in terms of physical activity. The poet says that 'They play scrabble, ludo and other games, / They speak above their voices and their noise grate my chest'. The poet questions their agility and wonders why he cannot be as active as the other patients in the ward. The poet persona feels depressed as a result of this. The poet employs the use of metaphor to reconfigure trauma thus:

The coronavirus has a golden knife.  
It peels the orange for you a moment  
and stabs you in the arms thereafter (p. 87)

The above extract reveals the unpredictability of the reaction of the virus on the patients. The 'golden Knife' suggests something attractive and pleasing but ultimately deadly. While the image of the orange peeling which symbolises hope is followed by disappointment and betrayal. This implies that the patients may appear healthy in a minute and goes into crises the next. Hence, the poet's feeling of uncertainty and fear. The poet also presents the trauma as living through the body. Here, the lines say; Black seed oil, hot tea, inhale stem, / then cold bath before breakfast (p.87). The lines above implies that the rituals induce more trauma in the patience because it does not bring about wellness but rather survival because even with all these exercises, the poet says, 'The palate is jade, and the nausea is rife'.

The idea of self-representation flows in the poem as the poet presents himself in the poem throughout. He plays the role of an observer and sufferer 'a blob of sweat and steam'. He gives detailed information on the characteristics of the virus, the spike in the temperature of the patients and the stressful and frustrating treatment of the patients. The poet describes the evening hours as most dreadful as the patients experience instability in temperature. This poet portrays the traumatic moment of the patients and the nurses thus:

The most dreadful time is when the sun goes down,  
It is cold, it is hot, the temperature spikes,  
The nurse is confused by the viral sequence  
Fluctuating, between 38.5 and 37.8 and back again  
(p.87).

In another line of the poem, the poet expresses the trauma of the medical personnel thus: 'The medical personnel work like ants.' The poem further shows the trauma which the poet faces in the last stanza of the poem when he describes the distress the virus causes

in the patient's internal body organ to the point that the patients pray for them to see the following day. This point is illustrated in the lines below:

The spike is the cruel cudgel of the virus,  
To make a mess of the vital organs.  
The coronavirus is the rough volleyball spiker.  
At night I am a blob of sweat and steam,  
Praying for the living day light to break. (p.88)

The poet persona also shows resistance and continuity in the lines below: 'Praying for the living day to break' (p.88). Finally, in the poem 'Pickpocket' the poet changes trauma into metaphor to portray disorientation, dehumanization and the quiet perseverance of life in a Covid-ward.

The idea of reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation is well explored in the poem, 'Breaking News #1'. Raji changes trauma to reconfigure a moment of physical suffering into a profound narrative of endurance, recovery and self-awareness. Trauma theory which emphasizes the embodiment of pain is deployed in the poem below:

December 18, 2020, the fourteenth hour of the day

A rumbling war broke out in my stomach  
I dragged my energy to the toilet.  
Pants rolled, ready for relief.  
Then the miraculous happened I defecated  
Defecated I. My bowels answered the call.  
Ten days of vacuous emptiness...  
To defecate is divine, to fart is human (p. 90).

In the lines above, the poet describes himself as weak giving a mental picture of a sick person lacking enough strength to walk, when he says 'I dragged my energy to the toilet'. There is much evidence of trauma embedded in the poem and the poet centers the trauma around intestinal distress. The poet's description of the way his pants rolled down and the emphasis laid on the act of defecating shows the trauma suffered by the poet. The poet's metaphoric use of the word 'war' suggests an internal conflict that is violent and consuming. This shows that the body becomes a place of crises. It implies disruptive trauma. Furthermore, Raji displays the idea of reconfiguring trauma from suffering to miracle. This idea is expressed in (Line 5) thus: 'Then the miraculous happened. /I defecated, Defecated I!' (p.90).

The lines above, exposes how the poet transforms his traumatic experience from purely destructive into a moment of transformation. The poet describes relief in exalting terms thus "Ten days of vacuous emptiness (Line 7). In another line which reads 'Then the

miraculous happened. / I defecated. Defecated I !' (5-6), the activity of defecation which is a mundane activity is elevated to the sacred. This reconfiguration reflects the psychological transition from helplessness to control. Again, line 8 of the poem says 'To defecate is divine, to fart is human.' This line exposes how the poet employs the use of humor and irony to process trauma. The play on words help to lighten the heaviness of his experience. He employed the use of humor to reclaim his dignity after a humiliating chapter of the disease. The poet represents himself not as a victim but as someone capable of narrating, reflecting and finding meaning in trauma. He presents himself as the actor of the actions through his use of the personal pronoun 'I'. hence the use of the lines 'I drag myself...' and 'I defecated'. That draws the attention of the reader to the fact that the poet narrates a life experience.

The poem 'Too many calls spoilt the solitude' reveals how the poet transforms his traumatic experience of illness and isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic into a poetic narrative that exposes his fractured selfhood and the struggle for identity amid physical and psychological disintegration.

The poem begins with a rejection of modern communication:

I avoided the mobile silver best as I could  
Too many calls like quaking sound checks  
I hated the ringtone and the many emergency videos  
From digital doctors and mythologists,  
The quick scientist of mutations and organ failures.  
There are more conspiracy peddlers  
than there are consultants in the ward.  
So I was part of the future fission,  
a mere decimal in their adverse game (p.96).

The above extract shows the poet's anxiety. The mobile phone which normally is a symbol of connection becomes a source of anxiety and over stimulation. This aversion signifies the speaker's withdrawal from overwhelming reality which is a common response in trauma survivors who fell flooded by sensory or informational input. This aligns with trauma theory as developed by Caruth that emphasizes how traumatic events can overwhelm the psyche, creating fragmented memory and temporal distortion. The poet also reconfigures reality through satirical imagery in the lines thus:

The many emergency videos from digital

Doctors and mythologists,

The quick scientists of mutations and organ failure. (p. 96)

The different informational treatment on the COVID-19 infection given by the countless online doctors gives the poet persona a feeling of discomfort as such he does not want to have a view of them. This is because the messages passed across appears to be conflicting with the poet's belief. Thus, indicating cognitive dissonance. The phrase 'mythologist' shows how trauma distorts perception. The poem also exposes the idea of identity crises and self-representation in the following lines So I was part of the future fission, /A mere decimal in their adverse game? (p.96). In the lines above, the speaker questions their own subjectivity which quickly suggest a loss of agency and selfhood. The ideas of describing oneself as 'a mere decimal' shows a sense of insignificance and dehumanization often becomes difficult because the traumatic experience shatters the continuity of self-leading to feelings of alienation and fragmentation. The poem present to the reader the physical and psychological deterioration in the extract below Days of solitude, of permanent walking /And permanent sleeping, all mixed up (p.96).

The above excerpt captures the disorientation of traumatic time, where the past, present and future collapse. The constant repetition of the image of dextrose bottles and shifting IVS indicate that the image of the body is mechanically sustained and not fully alive. That is a state between life and death. Based on this that the poet persona represent himself as a prisoner that is longing for escape in the lines below: "So irritable I needed the glucose instead of dead food/So jailed I needed freedom to fly, the energy to run..." (p. 96).

The need for glucose energy and yearning for flight suggests a desperate reclaiming of the self. The body is both literal and metamorphically prisoned. Thus, the poet expresses a deep desire to return to liveliness. The concluding line of this poem which reads thus: 'Death could be very cheap and lonely (Line 16)' represents emotional numbness and the trivialization of death. The word 'cheap' suggests the frequency of death during the Covid-19 pandemic, while the loneliness underscores the isolation trauma: that in suffering the self feels unvalued and unconnected.

Raji also explores the idea of reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation in the poem 'Pre-departure'. Viewing the poem through trauma theory reveals how the poet reconfigures his traumatic hospital experience into a narrative that negotiates mortality, isolation and identity. The poem captures a space between life and death, survivor and surrender in the lines below:

Before lunch I graduated to HDU, waiting for exit.

A single Spartan bed waiting for welcome and the company  
Of older men  
If they served wine or beer, it would smell like a three-star hotel or four.

An emergency had happened in my solitary ward.  
The new entrance female, stretched in silent alarm,  
Wheeled supine before my presence, needing oxygenation.

I watched as the doctors tested pulse and breath  
The bouncy graphs appeared slow, long and rise  
Tiny bleeps and frantic sounds on the screen. (p. 97)

The poem above begins in a clinical but emotionally charged tone. The term 'Graduated' suggests progress yet 'Waiting for exit' introduces a double meaning which could be either discharging a patient from the hospital or death. The speaker makes progress not by healing but by getting close to an unknown departure, showing how trauma reconfigures the perception of time and advancement. The poet's description of the new space as: 'A single Spartan bed waiting for welcome and the company of older men' reflects a detachment from the world. While the reference to the luxury 'three-star hotel' shows how trauma distorts perception. The final lines of this poem which reads thus: I moved into the corner of the last night /Waiting for debriefing, release and the exit fumigation (p.97) suggest a kind of reckoning and purification of the self. The lines represent the reconfiguration of trauma as ritual whereby suffering is processed into therapy.

The poem 'Denial' is a brief poem that contains a lot of information. In this poem, the poet draws the attention of the reader to exploration of the ideas of the disorientation, disempowerment and psychic rupture caused by the Covid-19 infection. The poet persona reconfigures trauma through themes of fatigue, confusion and fractured-self. He presents himself as a narrator trying to reconstruct his identity in the process of recovery from illness. Here the lines of the poem read:

Awake from a new unfamiliar bed.  
I do not have the energy to write or think,  
Or am I eager to rise.  
Still, I wonder how I got caught in the  
Unpredictable volleys of the truant virus...  
(p.98)

The poem above draws the reader's attention to the fact that the poet persona (speaker) is alienated. That is, he is not in control of his environment. According to trauma theorist like Caruth trauma often shatters one's sense of temporal stability. Thus, this unfamiliar

bed is a symbol of displacement. Again, the poem presents its reader with a collapse of agency showing the speaker's total depletion of cognitive function. This is illustrated in the extract thus: I do not have the energy to write or think, / Or am I eager to rise (p.98). The above extract reflects a deep loss of self-expression, which signals a crisis in self-representation. The lines also reveal that the poet is in a fragmented state. This exposes the confused and disrupted internal state of someone coping with trauma. Thus, the lines above mirrors what trauma theorist call narrative breakdown. That is a situation where there is no logical story telling. The poet also reconfigures trauma through reflection where he says: Still I wonder how I got caught in the /Unpredictable volleys of the truant virus... (p.98). Here, the speaker begins to engage in retrospective questioning, indicating the confused state of the poet and a key step in reconfiguring trauma. The poet's use of the phrase how I got caught conveys entrapment, suggesting that the virus struck without warning. While the word 'volleys' evoke violence – like a battlefield. The poet's reference to the virus as 'truant' metaphorically represent the unpredictability of it. This emphasises how trauma invades without clear cause or pattern.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study has shown through the analysis and discussion of the poems that contemporary Nigeria poetry, specifically Remi Raji's Wanderer Cantos, explores the idea of reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation. The examination of selected poems from the collection shows how the poet reflect trauma as a victim and survivor over the COVID-19 pandemic. The investigation exposes the features of trauma embedded in the poems that align with the poet's re-organising his covid experience into poetic composition. These include the collapse of time, dissociation, alienation, fragmentation of ideas and the text, hallucination, hysteria and use of symbolism and metaphor to describe the pains of illness, isolation and healing. The poet presents himself as both a sufferer and an observer, dead and living. The poet through the reconfiguration of trauma and self-representation presented the COVID-19 pandemic infection, not only as a personal affliction but as a collective disorientation. Again, he successfully reorganises his covid experience into a meaningful whole, replicating his first- hand experience into covid autobiographical poems.

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## Echoes of Queen Victoria: A Foucauldian Interrogation of Colonial Legacies in the Construction of the “Good Student” in Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Queen Victoria of 19<sup>th</sup>-century expansionist Britain may not have held sovereignty over an amalgamated Nigeria, yet the institutional echoes of her imperial era remain deeply embedded within the country's pedagogical system. The missionary and colonial schools that proliferated during her reign introduced a pedagogy of obedience, temporal regulation and physical decorum that survived the transition to state sovereignty. Rather than dismantling this foundation, contemporary educational governance has operationally metricised it. Through an archival-genealogical analysis of qualitative policy documents and secondary institutional indicators – specifically school codes of conduct and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) affective domain grading scales – this study examines how historical imperial imperatives are translated into modern administrative formats. Drawing on Michel Foucault's analysis of power, normalising judgement and subjectification alongside decolonial critique, the paper interrogates how these quantitative monitoring mechanisms construct the normative category of the "good student". The analysis suggests that by converting qualitative moral traits like obedience and neatness into calculable data points, modern schools function as panoptic apparatuses. This continuous tracking encourages learners to internalise inherited regimes of truth through active self-surveillance, ultimately constraining the critical independent agency required for sovereign citizenship. This study contributes to decolonial dialogues in the sociology of African education by demonstrating that disrupting colonial legacies requires a fundamental deconstruction of the administrative and statistical machinery that measures and validates student identity.

**Keywords:** Echoes of Queen Victoria; Good Student; Nigerian education; Subjectification; Queen Victoria

### 1. Introduction

Echoes of Queen Victoria of Britain's 19<sup>th</sup>-century colonial era reverberate through the school bell that rings across Nigerian primary and secondary schools each morning at precisely seven o'clock. The school bell is therefore not merely a logistical convenience. It signals punctuality, institutional submission and the subordination of the individual body to collective rhythmic discipline – values whose particular institutional expression emerged through colonial schooling rather than indigenous Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa educational systems that preceded British colonisation (Fafunwa, 1974; Taiwo, 1980). That this bell continues to ring, largely unquestioned, in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Nigerian classroom is precisely the puzzle that animates this study. It raises a disquieting question that reaches far beyond timetables and uniforms: whose conception of the educated, disciplined and morally worthy student continues to govern Nigerian schools, and through what historical mechanisms did that conception become so thoroughly naturalised as to appear self-evident? The formal education of Nigerian children began not as an indigenous project of cultural reproduction but as an instrument of imperial governance. When British missionaries established the first Western-style schools in Badagry in 1843 and later at Abeokuta, their pedagogical ambitions were inseparable from a broader civilising mission rooted in Victorian moral philosophy (Ayandele, 1966; Bude, 1983). The ideal pupil envisioned by these early institutions was obedient, literate in English, punctual, neatly dressed, morally restrained and deferential to institutional authority – a figure drawn directly from the reformist educational ideals of Victorian England, where schooling was understood as a technology for producing governable, productive and morally legible subjects (Mangan, 1988). Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901) coincided with the consolidation of British colonial authority in what would become Nigeria, and the educational infrastructure established

during this period – missionary schools, colonial ordinances, inspection regimes and examination systems – encoded Victorian ideals of discipline, morality and civilisation into the very architecture of Nigerian schooling (Ajayi, 1965).

The Colonial Education Ordinance of 1882, subsequently revised in 1887 and 1916, formalised these ideals into regulatory frameworks that defined, measured and rewarded particular forms of student conduct whilst pathologising others (Fajana, 1978; Omolewa, 1981). Missionary inspection reports from the Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Mission constructed a normative subject called the good student whose goodness was measured against Victorian standards of intellectual docility, moral purity and cultural assimilation – categories of assessment that were simultaneously pedagogical and racial (Ayandele, 1966; Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Those who resisted, spoke indigenous languages or embodied alternative cultural epistemologies were rendered deficient, uncivilised or uneducable (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Willinsky, 1998). Nigeria's political independence in 1960 did not produce a commensurate educational independence. The National Policy on Education, first issued in 1977 and subsequently revised in 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2013, retained structural and curricular continuities with the colonial system it nominally replaced (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; Obanya, 2004). The West African Examinations Council, established in 1952 under British colonial administration, has continued to function as the primary arbiter of academic worth, whilst its marking schemes, subject hierarchies and assessment philosophies have largely preserved the epistemological priorities of colonial schooling (Okonkwo, 2012). Contemporary Nigerian students sit examinations whose intellectual genealogy extends directly to the Cambridge Local Examinations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are assessed against behavioural standards embedded in school disciplinary handbooks that echo Victorian codes of moral conduct, and are taught through curricula that continue to privilege English-language literacy, Western scientific rationalism and institutional conformity as the primary markers of educational achievement (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003; Obanya, 2004).

The material consequences of these enduring constructions are neither abstract nor merely historical. Nigeria's national examination statistics reveal persistent and structured patterns of differential achievement that correlate strongly with gender, geopolitical zone and socioeconomic positioning – patterns whose genealogy cannot be adequately understood without interrogating the colonial

discursive frameworks that originally sorted Nigerian students into hierarchies of educability (Unterhalter, 2007). Girls in northern Nigerian states continue to experience disproportionate exclusion from secondary schooling, a phenomenon partly rooted in colonial-era gender ideologies that constructed the ideal educated subject as implicitly male, Protestant and southern (Bray, 1981; Unterhalter, 2007). The language of contemporary Nigerian school disciplinary codes – emphasising neatness, punctuality, obedience to authority and moral uprightness – reproduces with remarkable fidelity the behavioural lexicon of Victorian missionary inspection reports (Fajana, 1978; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986). Critically, the discursive construction of the good student is not only legible in these qualitative registers; it is also traceable and quantifiable in the statistical landscapes of Nigerian educational performance. National examination outcomes, enrolment figures and regional performance differentials reported by UNESCO (2023) and the World Bank (2024) are not neutral administrative records. They are the quantitative inscription of a colonial normative framework – statistical traces of the ongoing capacity of Victorian educational discourse to determine who counts as academically successful and who is rendered marginal, distributed along axes of gender, geography, language and class (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). In the daily lives of Nigerian students, the past is not past; it remains present, operational and largely invisible.

This invisibility is itself a function of power. As Michel Foucault argued, the most effective operations of power are those so thoroughly normalised as to require no explicit enforcement – those that become regimes of truth: frameworks so deeply embedded within institutional practice that they appear not as historical constructions but as natural, self-evident and universal facts (Foucault, 1977, 1980). The construction of the good student in Nigeria represents precisely such a regime of truth: a historically produced, politically invested and culturally particular conception of educational worth that presents itself as pedagogically neutral and educationally inevitable. To interrogate this construction is not an act of academic abstraction; it is a politically necessary intervention into the ongoing reproduction of colonial power within one of Africa's largest educational systems, serving over twelve million secondary school students across thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory (UNESCO, 2023). Scholars of postcolonial education have examined colonial continuities in Nigerian curriculum content (Obanya, 2004), language policy (Bamgbose, 2000) and gender dynamics (Unterhalter, 2007), yet none has conducted a systematic genealogical interrogation of the construction of the

good student as a discursive formation – one integrating qualitative documentary analysis with the Foucauldian reading of quantitative institutional data as co-equal sites of discursive struggle – linking Victorian colonial governance to the contemporary production of Nigerian student subjectivity (Ball, 2013; Tikly, 2004). This study addresses that gap by subjecting the echoes of Queen Victoria – persistent, mutating and institutionally reproduced ideals of the educated subject – to sustained Foucauldian scrutiny, producing an analysis that is simultaneously historical, institutional and decolonially committed.

### 1.1 Research Questions

To interrogate the potentially persistent echoes of Queen Victoria within the institutional construction of the “good student” in contemporary Nigerian schooling, the following research questions guide the study:

- How do contemporary institutional discourses of the “good student” in Nigerian education reproduce genealogical continuities that retain the echoes of Queen Victoria within post-colonial schooling?
- How do the qualitative regulations and quantitative metrics of contemporary Nigerian schools operate as Foucauldian technologies of disciplinary power that operationalise the echoes of Queen Victoria through the normalisation of student behaviour?
- How does the institutional construction of the “good student” function as a site of subjectification through which the echoes of Queen Victoria shape, regulate, and potentially constrain the identity and agency of contemporary Nigerian students?

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review for this study is organised into two complementary sections. The first examines the

theoretical frameworks that inform the study's analytical lens, while the second synthesises empirical evidence in relation to echoes of Queen Elizabeth in Nigerian education, highlighting the gap that necessitates a genealogical interrogation of the contemporary construction of the “good student”.

### 2.1 Theoretical Review of Analytical Framework

This study integrates Michel Foucault's (1977, 1982) theories of power with decolonial frameworks to evaluate the endurance of Victorian educational rationalities within the contemporary Nigerian schooling system (Mignolo, 2007; Tikly, 2004). Through a genealogical lens, the construct of the “good student” is examined not as an objective measure of scholastic capability but as a historically situated, normative category that institutionalises 19<sup>th</sup>-century British imperatives of punctuality, physical decorum and moral compliance (Ball, 2013; Fajana, 1978). This underlying discourse is operationalised through disciplinary power, where formal administrative codes and quantitative monitoring frameworks – including performance metrics, attendance logs and behavioural records – act as instruments of normalising judgement to categorise and govern student conduct against inherited institutional benchmarks (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003). Ultimately, these pervasive institutional dynamics facilitate subjectification by encouraging learners to internalise these systemic expectations through continuous routines of self-surveillance and self-regulation. Collectively, genealogy, disciplinary power and subjectification offer a coherent analytical architecture to diagnose the precise administrative and empirical networks through which the contemporary construction of student identity in Nigeria continues to be shaped by the echoes of Queen Victoria. The integrated relationship between these three theoretical movements and their shared Victorian genealogical foundation is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

*Echoes of Queen Victoria: A Foucauldian–Decolonial Analytical Schema of the Construction of the "Good Student" in Nigeria*



*Adapted from Foucault (1977, 1982), Ball (2013), Mignolo (2007) and Tikly (2004).*

**Note:** The schema maps three integrated analytical movements – genealogy, disciplinary power and subjectification – through which Victorian educational rationalities are transmitted, operationalised and internalised within the contemporary Nigerian schooling system. The foundation column represents 19<sup>th</sup>-century British imperial imperatives of punctuality, physical decorum and moral compliance institutionalised through colonial schooling. Move 1 traces the genealogical continuity of the "good student" construct from colonial ordinances through post-independence national policy. Move 2 illustrates how quantitative monitoring frameworks, affective domain grading and conduct registers function as Foucauldian technologies of normalising judgement. Move 3 demonstrates how these institutional dynamics produce subjectification through learner internalisation of colonial normative expectations. The synthesis column identifies the "good student" as a historically produced colonial subject position whose endurance reflects the structural embeddedness of Victorian educational rationalities within the contemporary Nigerian educational apparatus.

## 2.2 Empirical Review of Related Studies

Empirical literature on postcolonial Nigerian education has consistently documented the persistence of colonial structural arrangements within the national schooling system, though the mechanisms and implications of that persistence remain unevenly theorised. Obanya (2004) demonstrates that successive revisions of the National Policy on Education retained the curricular hierarchies, subject classifications and assessment orientations of the colonial system, privileging English-language literacy and Western scientific rationalism as the primary indices of educational achievement. This privileging, Obanya argues, was not incidental but reflected the enduring epistemological authority of a colonial knowledge order that post-independence policy reform addressed at the level of rhetoric without dismantling at the level of structure. Fajana (1978) corroborates this finding historically, showing that the Colonial Education Ordinances of 1882 and 1916 established examination and inspection regimes whose normative assumptions about student conduct and intellectual ability were absorbed, rather than contested, by post-independence Nigerian educational governance.

Studies focused on disciplinary practices in Nigerian schools have produced convergent findings regarding the reproduction of colonial behavioural norms. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003) document the extent to which contemporary Nigerian school disciplinary frameworks emphasise obedience, punctuality, uniform compliance and deference to teacher authority – a cluster of behavioural expectations whose genealogy, they observe, lies in missionary school culture rather than in indigenous Nigerian pedagogical traditions. Harber (2014), in a broader comparative study of schooling in Africa, identifies authoritarian pedagogy and punitive discipline as characteristic features of postcolonial African schooling systems that reflect colonial-era assumptions about the need to govern African student bodies through surveillance and correction. These findings align with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (1986) foundational argument that colonial education in Africa operated primarily as a technology of cultural subordination, producing students whose cognitive and moral self-understanding was organised around the epistemological categories of the coloniser.

Research on student identity formation in Nigerian secondary schools has begun to illuminate the subjective dimensions of this process. Unterhalter (2007) demonstrates that gender inequalities in educational access and achievement in sub-Saharan Africa are not reducible to economic or logistical barriers but are mediated by normative constructions of the ideal educated subject that carry the traces of colonial gender ideologies. Bamgbose (2000) shows that language policy in Nigerian education has systematically marginalised indigenous-language speakers by constructing English proficiency as the definitive marker of educational seriousness – a construction whose colonial origins are explicit but whose contemporary institutional authority is treated as self-evident.

Taken together, these empirical studies paint a coherent picture of a Nigerian educational system in which colonial normative frameworks continue to shape curriculum, discipline and student identity in identifiable ways. What the empirical literature does not systematically examine, however, is the discursive architecture through which these continuities are produced and reproduced – the specific mechanisms of normalisation through which Victorian constructions of the good student are institutionally stabilised, rendered invisible as constructions and experienced by students, teachers and policymakers as natural educational common sense. Nor does existing scholarship adequately interrogate the processes of subject formation through which Nigerian students come to evaluate their own educational worth against a normative template whose historical conditions of production remain largely unexamined. It is precisely this analytical gap – between describing what persists and theorising how it persists and with what effects on subjectivity – that the theoretical framework addresses.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant, genealogical-archival research design situated within a post-structuralist critical paradigm to conduct a rigorous Foucauldian interrogation of the echoes of Queen Victoria in the construction of the good student in Nigeria. Rather than a passive review of literature, the design constitutes an active, theoretically driven excavation of a bifurcated secondary archive. This database comprises a qualitative corpus of colonial education ordinances, missionary reports, national policies and school codes of conduct alongside a quantitative corpus containing WAEC and NECO examination metrics, institutional disciplinary registers and national performance statistics. Consistent with Foucault's archival methods in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), these textual and statistical materials are treated not as neutral repositories but as discursive artefacts and monuments of power through which Victorian ideals of bodily docility, morality and civilisation were operationalised. The operational architecture of this pipeline is structured into three discrete, interrelated procedural columns in Figure 1, tracing the analytical trajectory from raw historical documentation to critical interpretation.

Figure 2

*Methodological Framework: Echoes of Queen Victoria—A Historical-Cultural Approach to Leadership and Governance*



*Adapted from Foucault (1977), Mignolo (2007) and Tikly (2004).*

**Note:** Figure 2 presents the study's methodological architecture across three columns: the bifurcated archival corpus (Corpus 1: primary historical sources; Corpus 2: secondary historical sources), the three analytical movements (Movement 1: Historical Reconstruction; Movement 2: Integrative Analysis; Movement 3: Contemporary Application) and the synthesised outputs oriented toward ethical leadership, responsible governance, societal well-being and enduring legacy.

#### 4. Results

The archival-genealogical analysis of the qualitative policy corpus and secondary quantitative indicators reveals a structural and procedural continuity between colonial educational architectures and contemporary Nigerian schooling practices. This section presents the descriptive findings across three domains: discursive continuity in policy language, quantitative instruments of behavioural regulation and the institutional production of student subjectivity.

##### 4.1 Discursive Continuity in Policy Language

A comparative reading of historical and contemporary policy texts reveals a systematic translation of institutional objectives across the colonial and post-colonial periods. The moral and imperial vocabulary inscribed within the Colonial Education Ordinances of 1882 and 1916 remains structurally legible within the modern directives of Nigerian educational governance, though its surface terminology has been substantially updated. Fajana (1978) documents that the foundational objective of colonial formal schooling in Nigeria was organised around explicitly moral and imperial criteria, with missionary inspection frameworks prioritising Christian conduct, bodily discipline and deference to institutional and imperial authority as the primary measures of educational worth. These expectations were not peripheral to the curriculum; they were its organising rationality. Omolewa (1981) corroborates this, demonstrating that colonial school inspection reports consistently evaluated Nigerian pupils against behavioural and moral criteria derived from Victorian Protestant norms, recording compliance and deviance in administrative registers that functioned simultaneously as educational assessments and instruments of racial governance.

In the contemporary policy corpus, these functional expectations are present but linguistically recoded. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) frames student development in terms of civic responsibility, character formation, national consciousness and moral uprightness – a cluster of normative categories whose structural function, the archival comparison suggests, maps directly onto the colonial demand for moral discipline and institutional compliance. The theological register of the colonial documents has been replaced by the secular civic language of the post-colonial developmental state, yet the underlying behavioural template – the student who is obedient, morally regulated, institutionally conformist and properly self-governing – remains substantively intact (Obanya, 2004). Similarly, the colonial emphasis on industrial habit and disciplined labour, which Fajana (1978) identifies as central to the economic rationale of colonial schooling, reappears in the contemporary policy archive as vocational competency and workforce readiness – categories that update the linguistic framework whilst preserving the instrumental orientation toward producing productive, governable subjects. This pattern of linguistic updating without substantive normative transformation constitutes the first descriptive finding: the contemporary language of Nigerian educational policy functions as a recoded continuation of colonial moral discourse rather than a departure from it.

#### 4.2 Quantitative Instruments of Behavioural Regulation

Beyond policy rhetoric, the structural mechanics of contemporary Nigerian schooling translate behavioural expectations into calculable institutional data. Secondary institutional sources – school codes of conduct, institutional handbooks and the administrative parameters of West African Examinations Council (WAEC) assessment frameworks – suggest that schools function as systematic tracking networks in which everyday physical and behavioural habits are monitored, recorded and evaluated against normative standards. The evaluation architecture of contemporary Nigerian secondary schools divides the student profile into two interrelated domains: the cognitive domain, comprising standardised academic test scores, and the affective domain, comprising institutional ratings for personal behaviour structured around variables including punctuality, obedience, neatness, cooperation and reliability (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The genealogical relationship between these contemporary variables and the behavioural criteria of Victorian colonial inspection is visible in the archival record (Fajana, 1978; Omolewa, 1981). Table 1 maps these specific quantitative indicators against their historical antecedents and the Foucauldian mechanisms of power through which they operate.

**Table 1:** Operationalisation of Historical Disciplinary Focus through Modern Quantitative Proxies

Historical Disciplinary Focus (Victorian)	Modern Quantitative Proxy (Nigerian Schools)	Institutional Mechanism of Power
Bodily docility and physical restraint	Uniform and haircut compliance metrics	Hierarchical observation
Temporal regulation and punctuality	Lateness logs and attendance gating	Micro-penalty of time
Moral puritanism and spiritual obedience	Affective domain grading scales	Normalising judgement

*Note:* Source: Adapted from Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003), Federal Ministry of Education (2024), and Fajana (1978).

The quantitative dimension of the disciplinary technology finding is further substantiated by national performance trends. Table 2 presents the national percentage of candidates achieving a minimum of five credits, including the core gateway subjects of English Language and Mathematics, over a ten-year period.

**Table 2:** WAEC WASSCE Nigeria: Percentage of Candidates Obtaining Credits and Above in Minimum Five Subjects Including English Language and Mathematics, 2014–2023

Year	% Candidates (5 Credits incl. English & Mathematics)
2014	31.28
2015	38.68
2016	52.97
2017	59.22
2018	49.98
2019	64.18
2020	65.24
2021	81.70
2022	76.36
2023	79.81

*Note:* Data compiled from annual WAEC WASSCE results press briefings, Nigeria National Office, 2014–2023. The metric reflects candidates achieving credit passes (grades A1–C6) in a minimum of five subjects, with English Language and Mathematics compulsorily included.

The figures in Table 2 reveal a broadly upward trajectory in overall WASSCE performance across the decade, rising from 31.28% in 2014 to a peak of 81.70% in 2021 before settling at 79.81% in 2023. Crucially, the metric against which all Nigerian secondary students are institutionally evaluated requires simultaneous competence in English Language and Mathematics – the two subjects whose genealogical privileging within Nigerian education is most directly traceable to the colonial academic hierarchy established under Victorian schooling (Fajana, 1978; Omolewa, 1981). The non-negotiable co-requirement of English Language in this benchmark is not educationally neutral; it structurally reproduces the colonial construction of English-language literacy as the definitive credential of the educated Nigerian subject, rendering students who may excel in other domains institutionally deficient if they cannot simultaneously demonstrate mastery of this colonial linguistic inheritance. The sustained institutional architecture of this assessment regime – unchanged in its fundamental structure since the WAEC's establishment under British colonial administration in 1952 – constitutes a quantitative instrument of normalising judgement whose disciplinary genealogy the foregoing analysis has traced.

Secondary institutional archives suggest that individual behavioural non-conformity is similarly tracked through demerit logs and attendance registers, with reductions in affective domain scores formally embedded within the student's cumulative institutional evaluation – a structural configuration whose formal origins are traceable to the colonial conduct-register culture that Victorian missionary schooling established (Fajana, 1978; Omolewa, 1981).

### 4.3 The Institutional Production of Student Subjectivity

The third descriptive finding concerns not what the institutional archive prescribes but what it produces: a particular kind of student subject whose self-understanding, aspirational framework and sense of educational worth are organised around the normative template that the colonial and post-colonial archive has consistently reproduced. This finding emerges from the synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative corpus. The normative language of Nigerian school

codes of conduct, as evidenced across the secondary institutional archive, consistently describes the ideal student in terms of self-regulation, deference, diligence and moral propriety – a subject position that demands not merely outward compliance but the internalisation of institutional norms as expressions of personal virtue (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; Obanya, 2004). This demand for internalisation is structurally significant. Where punitive discipline requires only surface compliance, normalising judgement operates by making the norm the standard against which individuals evaluate themselves (Foucault, 1977). The affective domain grading system institutionalises this demand by rendering self-governance quantitatively legible and permanently recorded within the student's cumulative institutional file.

Secondary institutional sources suggest that students whose behavioural profiles deviate from the normative template – through linguistic non-conformity, resistance to uniform regulations or irregular attendance – accumulate institutional records of deficiency that bear upon their cumulative educational standing rather than being treated as isolated infractions. The student who speaks an indigenous language in a formally English-medium environment, who presents a hairstyle deemed non-regulation or whose attendance is disrupted by socioeconomic constraints is not merely penalised for a specific act; they are institutionally constituted as a deficient subject whose deviation from the norm becomes a traceable feature of their educational record (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Unterhalter, 2007). The convergence of the qualitative policy archive and the quantitative conduct data in producing this normative subject position constitutes the third descriptive finding: the contemporary Nigerian school functions as a site of subjectification in which the administrative machinery of assessment and discipline actively constitutes the good student – and its institutional opposite – in terms whose genealogical relationship to Victorian colonial governance the foregoing analysis has documented. The interpretive and theoretical implications of these three findings are addressed in the discussion that follows.

## 5. Discussion

The descriptive findings provide empirical support for an archival-genealogical reading of contemporary Nigerian education, demonstrating that 19<sup>th</sup>-century imperial rationalities remain embedded within the modern school apparatus. By separating the explicit text from its institutional function, the results illustrate how the administrative machinery of schooling

continues to organise student identity. The linguistic transitions documented between the colonial ordinances and contemporary frameworks clearly illustrate this process of genealogical translation. Rather than experiencing a structural break at political independence, the institutional definition of the "good student" has undergone a rhetorical shift. The transition from the explicit imperial vocabulary of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the modern civic terminology of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) indicates what Foucault (1977) describes as the adaptation of a discursive formation. By framing student worth through the lens of "character training" and "institutional compliance", contemporary policies preserve the passive behavioural profile originally valued by missionary and colonial administrations (Fajana, 1978; Omolewa, 1981). The preferred student remains one who does not disrupt the established institutional order. This continuity validates the contentions of decolonial theorists that the formal end of empire does not automatically dissolve the institutional structures of coloniality (Mignolo, 2007; Tikly, 2004). The discourse of national development has been overlaid onto an existing colonial foundation, ensuring that schools continue to prioritise obedience and conformity under the guise of civic virtue.

The operationalisation of these policy discourses is directly achieved through the quantitative regulatory mechanisms identified in the affective domain grading systems and the macro-level WAEC performance data. The results indicate that the modern Nigerian school functions as a classic Foucauldian disciplinary apparatus (Foucault, 1977). By translating qualitative moral virtues – such as neatness and obedience – into countable, recorded data points, the institution executes what Foucault terms "normalising judgement." Table 1 demonstrates that the micro-penalties of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century classroom have not vanished; rather, they have been metricised. This metricisation is mirrored at the macro-level by the totalising baseline established within national examination performance data (Table 2). The upward trajectory in candidate success rates – moving from 31.28% in 2014 to a peak of 81.70% in 2021 before settling at 79.81% in 2023 – is structurally governed by a dual-disciplinary requirement: the simultaneous achievement of credit passes in both English Language and Mathematics.

The examination, as Foucault (1977) notes, is a normalising gaze that establishes over individuals a visibility through which they are differentiated, classified and judged. Within the contemporary Nigerian context, this compulsory benchmark is far

from educationally neutral. By positioning English proficiency as an absolute prerequisite for institutional validity, the modern state directly re-operationalises the colonial construction of literacy, where mastery of the imperial tongue was the definitive passport to administrative legitimacy (Omolewa, 1981). The structural retention of this assessment framework – unbroken in its foundational logic since the Council's establishment under British colonial authority in 1952 – demonstrates how a quantitative apparatus can obscure an ideological filter under the guise of an objective, developmental standard. The reliance on statistical tracking mechanisms re-inscribes an imported Eurocentric baseline, treating student performance as a measurable commodity that must be continuously corrected to fit the institutional norm.

The ultimate consequence of this interlocking grid of policy language and metric monitoring is the regulation of student subjectivity. The analytical shift from external discipline to internalised self-regulation marks the completion of Foucauldian subjectification (Foucault, 1982). The findings indicate that the continuous pressure of affective domain tracking and behavioural codes encourages students to construct their academic identities around institutional compliance. When learners equate absolute deference with intelligence and silence with virtue, they are actively participating in their own subjectification. As Ball (2013) observes, the power of educational metrics lies in their capacity to make individuals remodel themselves to fit the criteria of evaluation. The quantitative distribution of affective and academic scores formalises this reality: the student who resists uniform regulations or exhibits linguistic non-conformity by using indigenous languages is institutionally constituted as a deficient subject (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986).

This self-regulation produces an institutional paradox. While modern educational frameworks explicitly claim to foster innovation, critical thinking and sovereign democratic citizenship, the underlying disciplinary machinery systematically penalises divergence. By forcing students to continuously police their own conduct to align with inherited colonial standards, the administrative and statistical structures of schooling recreate the compliant, non-disruptive subject originally designed to serve the bureaucratic needs of the colonial state (Obanya, 2004). This internalised docility remains a major, unaddressed structural barrier to true decolonial educational reform.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that 19<sup>th</sup>-century Victorian educational rationalities persist within contemporary Nigerian schooling, structurally preserved through modern administrative and metricised frameworks. By tracing the genealogical trajectory from colonial ordinances to modern policy texts, the analysis reveals that the institutional definition of the "good student" has not been dismantled, but rather linguistically updated and operationally metricised. The transition from explicit imperial demands for obedience to technocratic terms like "character training" and "institutional compliance" illustrates how durable discursive formations adapt to survive major political transitions. Ultimately, the affective domain grading system functions as a core technology of normalising judgement, converting qualitative expectations of bodily docility and deference into calculable data points. This continuous tracking drives a process of subjectification that encourages students to internalise these inherited regimes of truth through active self-surveillance, ultimately constraining the critical, independent agency required for true national sovereignty. Achieving meaningful decolonial educational reform therefore requires moving beyond surface-level curricular revisions to fundamentally disrupt this underlying panoptic machinery. First, the Federal Ministry of Education and regional examination bodies, such as WAEC, must systematically restructure the affective domain grading matrix. Evaluation metrics that reward passivity, quietude, and absolute obedience should be replaced with indicators that validate critical inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and active democratic participation. Altering the mathematical weight of these institutional records shifts the focus of evaluation from behavioural docility to critical agency, transforming student tracking into a tool that supports decolonial subject formation.

Simultaneously, national and state-level teacher training programmes must integrate critical policy sociology and decolonial pedagogies into their core frameworks. Educating teachers to recognise the historical roots of contemporary school disciplinary technologies will allow them to replace rigid, imported regulatory mechanisms with relational accountability models drawn from indigenous African educational philosophies. Finally, national civic education directives must be revised to decouple "character training" from institutional submissiveness. Policy language should explicitly frame the ideal graduate as an active, analytical citizen capable of structural critique. Decoupling these administrative and statistical mechanisms from their historically inherited

baselines is an essential prerequisite to fostering genuine intellectual sovereignty within the contemporary Nigerian classroom by dismantling the echoes of Queen Victoria.

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## Traditional Media in the Digital Age: Survival Strategies and Economic Challenges

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**Abstract.** This research looks at the survival strategies and economic issues facing traditional media in the digital era. The internet, artificial intelligence, social media and mobile connections have revolutionized how people consume media, and the traditional revenue models of newspapers, radio and television stations are now under threat. The study examines the economic challenges traditional media are currently facing, how well adaptation strategies are working, and how data privacy laws and concepts of “free news” affect digital monetization, using a desk-based qualitative research methodology based on the analysis of secondary data from published scholarly articles, reports and industry publications. The research is based on the Technological Determinism Theory that states that technology has revolutionized media production, distribution and audience engagement. The analysis shows that traditional media's financial sustainability is hampered by the decline in advertising revenues, fragmentation of audiences, high operating costs, digital competition, and shifting consumer tastes. The study also reveals numerous companies are adopting digital transformation tactics like subscription models, sponsored content, integration of social media, streaming, platforms-first and audience engagement strategies. But, barriers like lack of digital infrastructure, skills, and rigid data privacy regulations remain in the way of successful monetization. The study's findings indicate that traditional media's future is contingent upon constant innovation, diversified revenue streams, strategic digital investments and a long-term commitment among traditional media to credible journalism. It makes recommendations for greater investment in digital infrastructure, staff training, an audience-first content strategy, and

privacy-preserving monetization models that will help sustain in the changing media landscape.

### 1. Introduction

Along with Artificial Intelligence and mobile connectivity, the internet has played a significant role in the transformation of the 21st century's media economy. The digital revolution has changed how the industry generates revenue, and the digital technologies platforms are where it's happening now, rather than in traditional venues. Such innovations have changed the established revenue structure of media houses. Media companies are pushing for new models of revenue generation and new structures to survive (Chen, 2024). The way people consume news has changed drastically (Mugil & Kenzie, 2025). This is compelling traditional media outlets such as magazines and television to keep up with the changes quickly. Citizen journalists now cover 30% of news stories, and they are responsible for 82% of viral materials, Oji (2024) said. The 40% of traditional media that still uses social media distribution with these structural shifts, are not without conflict with the severe economic headwinds described by Farid (2023). For traditional media, regulatory frameworks, operational costs, and the quest for demographics and ad revenue are the three legs of the stool that stand up for them to survive, according to Adams (2024). But as the internet captured the reader's interest, print circulation is taking a hit. According to Alzubi (2023), this is the same trend that is destroying the huge, consolidated audiences which TV and radio once has. Consumers are looking for content right now, whether it's on their phones or using via social media and news aggregators (Kemp, 2023). The change has taken a toll

on the print media and to a lesser extent, radio and television. The reason physical circulation has been declining is because of the massive number of free online news that is increasing, especially for national dailies, says Adelabu and Benson (2022). However, it's not all about money. The transition to digital has also compelled journalists to do a complete makeover of their jobs. Tuncan (2020) further adds that the over-dependency of social media has become a huge challenge for the industry to Nigerian readers.

The digital socialization process has also led to a zero-cost content, which represents a significant structural obstacle for legacy channels who try to monetize even high-quality reportage (News Media Association 2015:3). It's a "free-to-access" change, which puts traditional outlets in a decentralized fight. The competition has embraced industry giants, niche blogs and independent social creators, according to Al-Quran (2022). In this attention-overloaded landscape, acquiring attention is becoming more difficult and time-consuming (Chen 2024:12). In addition, there is a deep fiscal divide: those business models that are digital-first are built on agility with low overheads, while the legacy media are stuck to the spiraling material cost of the physical production – ink, paper, logistics etc. – as their traditional readership base is declining. As traditional advertising tactics fall short and become a penny-on-the-dollar proposition in the digital sphere, Santiago (2024) suggests a new approach: marketing through the lens of trust. Most media companies face a challenge finding the optimal balance between paywall and ads. Olagoke and Israel (2025) call this a huge loss to the main source of survival of the industry – that is, advertisement revenue. The results of the data reflect where the funds are being spent. Traditional income is declining, but digital is growing. Digital video revenue rose 19.2% to \$62.1 billion while social media ad revenue rebounded 36.7% to \$88.8 billion, per the IAB/PwC Internet Advertising Revenue Report (2025). Understanding and segmenting digital audiences is crucial for targeted advertising and content personalization. But the changing laws surrounding data privacy, such as GDPR, and the upcoming 'cookieless world' create difficulties for media companies to effectively collect and use user data (Team EMB, 2024; Oksanen, 2022; Aliagan, Suleiman & Babatunde, 2023). The industry, in turn, is pushing for brands to adopt first-party data strategies, contextual targeting, and privacy-safe solutions to overcome signal loss, seeing these as not only the compliance must, but also the most competitive advantage (IAB / PwC Internet Advertising Revenue Report 2025).

This study charts the financial turmoil of the traditional media institutions. It transcends the eye-in-the-sky approach to problems to examine the pivots that these organisations are making to make a difference to their survival in order to secure their longevity. The book dissects the obstacles and adjustments, providing a clear understanding of how stalwarts are not only remaining relevant but also financially stable.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study will be guided by the following objectives:

- To Evaluate the economic challenges confronting traditional media organizations in the digital age
- To Assess how effective traditional media outlets are in ensuring their financial sustainability in the digital age
- To Examine the extent to which evolving data privacy regulations and the free news mentality, stimulate the ability of traditional media to monetize digital content and engage audiences

## 2. The Economic Challenges Confronting Traditional Media Organizations in the Digital Age

The digital age has transformed the media industry in many ways, and has introduced significant financial divisions for traditional media. Print and broadcast media are no longer in the business business but now in the fight for existence. Research on the evolution of ICTs in education has shown that the most significant challenge has been the emergence of digital alternatives (Mugil & Kenzie, 2025). The internet has revolutionized the way that people look at the marketplace and the old media is no longer the king. For instance, Hassan et al. (2021) offer a relevant case study of newspapers. Building on a literature review, the authors sketch the precarity of the sector, in implicit terms, with reference to theories of technological disruption and media convergence. They see a set of problems: dwindling readership, print-related overheads, and an audience that wants to be updated for free and at their instant. Technology is not just a threat, it's also a lifeline, Hassan says. The main message is that newspapers need to strategically pivot to digital platforms for delivering trusted journalism if they are to stand up to such competition.

Notably, Namata (2025) examines the revenue tactics Ugandan media use to survive in the digital terrain. The work is based on a qualitative case study and a

theory, such as Disruptive Innovation, and demonstrates how digital disruption has challenged the financial bases of traditional advertising. The study indicates that traditional banner advertising is a waste of efforts. Instead, companies have moved to a blend of sponsored content, events, live streaming and monetization of archives. Namata advised that in order to remain relevant today, creativity is a key.

Furthermore, Olagoke and Israel (2025) explored the digital transformations that are affecting the print media landscape in Nigeria. Olagoke and Israel uncovered the particular obstacles that have been plaguing this transition based on a survey inquiry, which include a unique abilities gap, the infamous power issues in the country and the shortage of funds for fashionable tools. Despite these challenges, the authors say the industry is making good progress in breaking free from the challenges of physical printing. The study recommendation is that media houses must go digital especially on mobile platforms, with analytics and with data security to survive. Faustino & Ribeiro (2016) discuss specific issues related to media companies' management in a converging digital world. Results showed a decrease in profitability and that traditional business models were not sustainable because of the harsh economic climate and heavy competition from digital and Internet based companies. The paper argues that the move to dematerialized content means that monetising is challenging, for this kind of publicity may result in free distribution, due to the 'public good' nature of information. To sustain the future, Faustino & Ribeiro suggest that a much deeper diversification of revenues and a rethink of cost structures are needed.

Likewise, a research conducted by Patil (2020) focused on the traditional media (print, TV, radio) and the new media (digital). Online platforms are taking over audiences and advertising revenue as they evolve with a technological determinism framework. The study, however, defends a complete separation of the two. Rather it demands a "symbiotic" merging. The paper says traditional media must end their digital "war" and embrace the competition as a part of the business. In the study on rise of digital ad and woes of traditional advertising, Odun and Utulu (2015) both explored the rise of digital advertising and the stress it has been putting on traditional advertising outlets. By employing a snowball sampling technique, they discovered that new media has acquired a global love due to its cost reduction, and breaking the time and space barriers. In developing parts of the world, however, the study says the improvement is stunted by unreliable power, poor internet connections and high prices for the common man to access. For that reason,

the authors propose a truce. They contend that a unique fusion of the experience and strength of traditional and digital media is needed to weather the storm of a changing worldwide media landscape.

Cornia and Kalogeropoulos (2016) have researched the challenges and opportunities to news media and journalism. The results reveal how much competition there is in the market for the attention of traditional media outlets as well as for their ad revenue, despite their investments and increasing reach in the digital world. Thanks to technology and the huge transfer of advertisers, the authors say that this is a shift threatening the solvency of serious journalism. Moreover, it threatens to constrict the diversity of media voices. The study suggested that newsrooms can't stand pat to weather this squeeze, but they do have to double down on digital tools and try new revenue models. As a result, Onyenankeya (2021) explored the indigenous language newspapers and the digital media conundrum in Africa. The study adopted a qualitative method to explore the implications of the digitalization of media in Africa and to look at the potential for sustainability in the context of the theories of technological determinism and alternative media. The analysis shows that indigenous newspapers are facing competition from traditional and social media as well as poor funding and a reduction in patronage. It concludes that the future of indigenous language newspapers in the fast changing and technology driven world can only be achieved if they embrace the digital revolution and look at a business model that will be futuristic yet practical.

Onwe (2024) used Technological Determinism Theory to target 94 journalists, who are not internet literate, in Ebonyi State. The current study explored the professional reality of these journalists and examined their perceptions of themselves in the news industry, as well as the mechanisms they employ to survive without digital fluency. The study revealed that these journalists faced challenges in news collection, news writing, editing and news filing. Onwe noted that poor pay and lack of training in reporting with ICTs were among the causes of the problem and recommended that changes be made to the curriculum of journalism institutions to incorporate ICTs pertinent to the current practice of journalism.

It is found in other literatures that traditional revenue and audience engagement have generally been decreasing as a result of free and immediate online content. There are still challenges such as the operational costs and infrastructure restrictions, but strategic change is essential. Strategies that have proven to be successful include diversification of revenue streams from the traditional advertising model

to include sponsored content, subscriptions, and events. A great investment in digital infrastructure and skills development is essential. In the end, traditional media must accept the digital transformation, rethink their business models, and incorporate technology to effectively provide trusted media content in a rapidly changing media environment.

### **3. Effectiveness of Traditional Media Outlets Ensuring Their Financial Sustainability in The Digital Age**

The media industry faced a dilemma in that time period of technological and economic volatility that swept the media market around the world in the early two thousand years, and that media organizations must start generating revenues from alternative sources to traditional advertising revenues. As the digital revolution has created financial difficulties for traditional media, it has forced media companies to rethink their financial sustainability strategies. Albadri (2023), for instance, conducted a qualitative study to examine how TM has adapted to DC, focusing on six outlets in Jordan and interviewing their executives and technicians. Focusing on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, changes such as digital archiving, application development, web site implementation, and social media profile were identified. The results indicate that the convergence of traditional and digital media is important to keep the influence and to respond to the changing needs of the audience.

According to Pratama and Saragih (2022), old-school media's future is in a combination of e-papers, streaming, and social outreach. The problem, however, is that with the amount of "fake news" and a lack of public confidence, it is very difficult to maintain an audience. The authors make a good argument that technology is not the panacea. Rather, it's about a "best of both worlds" strategy: maintaining those same hard-earned journalistic ideals and moving faster in the digital space. This is a crowded market and that reputation for accuracy is their advantage. For example, Sultan & Amir (2023) discussed the "many facets" of the challenges and opportunities of the modern journalism in digital space. The findings were based on a wide range of academic sources and industry knowledge, and uncovered that many traditional outlets have trouble making a profit from digital media, and are competing with tech giants for advertising dollars. The paper ends by arguing that the sustainability of traditional journalism will depend on its ability to make the shift to profitable online business models. The paper also draws a conclusion that audience engagement and interactivity, achieved through the use of social media and commentaries, can be useful in the creation of community and trust. The

paper calls for the promotion of media literacy as a way to enable audiences to understand the information terrain.

In this digital world, Sultan & Amir (2023) discussed the various pressures and opportunities for journalism today. Based on a wide range of academic research and market research, it was found that a lot of the traditional outlets are not able to monetize digital content and are severely competitive against tech giants for advertising revenue. Conclusions: Journalism must have a working business model in the online world if it is to survive. However, it is not just a financial solution. The authors also advocate for a "community-first" approach, noting that to restore the public's trust, it is essential to engage with the community through the use of social media and comments. The paper concludes that the only way to help audiences "navigate the infoweb jungle" is to improve media literacy. Vara-Miguel (2021) has carried out an evaluation of the Spanish media landscape that shows that there is a significant difference between the financial sustainability of digital-native and legacy media outlets. Success wasn't necessarily correlated with digital-first start-ups—traditional and niche country platforms had a more advanced and innovative revenue model. Digital newsrooms, whether regional or general interest, have a distinct vulnerability: They need to access a diverse range of funding sources, but this is not available as a result of the absence of a structural established parent company. Vara-Miguel says a multi-faceted fiscal approach is crucial to the continued success of digital journalism as the standard advertising model languishes. It means going far from the "adonly" mentality and implementing a bunch of different income streams, such as sponsored storytelling, tiered memberships, e-commerce and high-priced consulting services.

Likewise, Nhedzi (2018) asked about the preference of traditional media and digital media. Using a uses and gratifications perspective of the use of media, the results showed differential patterns of use, most frequently along demographical lines, for different media (traditional media and digital media). The paper concludes that accurate audience measurement remains difficult because consumers of the media are mobile and there is a huge diversity in the media landscape. But the result can serve as a benchmark for media planners and advertising agencies for planning a target audience to be reached at the right time and right place. The relationship between motives of news consumption, perceived importance of news and willingness to pay for news was explored by Tandoc (2024). Using public goods and uses and gratifications

theories, the analysis was conducted on Singapore's national online survey and revealed that an individual's perception of the importance of news to him is positively correlated with his willingness to pay for news. The findings of the study challenge some common beliefs about the factors influencing news subscriptions, and offer a fundamental understanding of why news organisations need to find alternative revenue streams as the media landscape evolves.

The economic instability of the digital age then pushed media to seek out a variety of new revenue streams, other than advertising. Digital adaptation has been proven to be very important: outlets are going with apps, websites and social media. The future is dependent on the combination of trusted journalism and efficient digital delivery, as well as generating revenue from subscriptions and events. In this changing environment, audience engagement and media literacy are essential to being profitable. The recent rapid advancements in technology have created a host of significant shifts in the media landscape, not least in the way and who produces and delivers news and information, but also in terms of how it is consumed. Data privacy and 'Free News' have had a profound impact on traditional media's digital landscape in recent years – both in terms of how and who produces and delivers news and information, but also in terms of its consumption. With the top Internet companies making headlines for data privacy scandals, the issue has garnered greater public attention. One of the biggest and most prevalent issues is the changing regulations around data privacy and the “free news” philosophy that many consumers have. The current study by Obudho (2024) explores the far-reaching implications of international data privacy laws such as GDPR, CCPA, APPI, LGPD, and POPIA on digital marketing practices. Obudho discovered that such rules require a move towards more ethical and transparent data management, which results in greater compliance expenses, but also better consumer trust and engagement.

Abubakar et al. (2025) examined the effect of the new data protection regulations in Nigeria on PR, advertising, and journalism. The investigation, which was conducted on the basis of in-depth interviews, uncovers that the Data Protection Act (NDPA) undermines the industry's dependence on personal data for targeted messaging. The authors spotlight two types of difficulties: the risk of restricting investigative reporting and an increase in compliance conflict. They believe that this regulatory change demands a rebalancing of the ethics involved with that, as it directly impacts the way old media will be able to turn content into revenue through data powered ads and personalization. Kanuri and Pattabhiramaiah (2022)

explored current models of digital news revenue, including those based on scarcity, like paywalls and freemiums. Their study revealed that these approaches are under tremendous strain within the U.S. news industry, while others that are not scarce such as reader-focused fundraising events have enjoyed greater revenue growth. The paper considers the social impact of scarcity-driven models, and how they affect various demographic groups, as well as the omnipresent "free mentality", and makes speculations on the profitability conditions for scarcity-driven strategies.

In addition, Oriola, Akase, Akilla and Agbele (2019) discuss the multifaceted issues on privacy protection in the new era of the media, especially in the context of journalistic practices in Nigeria. Their research results indicate that new media technologies make the person more vulnerable to invasion of his or her privacy. The findings of the study show that new media need to pay attention to the reliability of data to adapt messages to the audience; and, by implication, when it comes to revenue models, digital monetization needs to be considered in relation to this possible gap, if traditional media are to be economically sustainable. As a result, traditional media is entering a complicated and complex economic crisis caused by digital disruption. The key for survival and growth is in strategic innovation within the content delivery, revenue generation, and business models—along with a continued dedication to quality, trusted journalism and emerging digital and regulatory realities.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

The study is basically based on Technological Determinism which suggests that technology, in particular its development, is one of the fundamental forces that influences society and its development path (Morah and Okunna, 2020). This viewpoint looks in a systematic way at the influence of technological factors on human thinking, behaviour and social organisation to a profound extent. Technological determinism can be traced back to Karl Marx who claimed that technological development, especially in the productive forces, has a fundamental impact on human social relations (Asemah et al., 2016). In this view, which holds that social relations and cultural practices are totally determined by the technological and economic base of a society, technology is seen as a force that affects historical and cultural development. Further developing this notion, Marshall McLuhan (1964) famously stated that "the medium is the message," that is, technology has a self-propelling ability to shape human communication and create meaningful social impacts.

The concepts underpinning technological determinism are especially relevant in the examination of new media's potential and the enduring difficulties faced by traditional media in the current digital era (Morah & Brown, 2024). Digital media technologies have certainly changed the traditional media environment, and this has caused a lot of difficulties for the traditional media. In this digital paradigm, technology is accessible to everyone and is allowing people to be content producers and distributors, which is a challenge to the long-standing gatekeeping role of traditional media (Nathan et al., 2024). Content can be easily produced and shared on platforms like YouTube, blogs, and podcasts, creating a plethora of different perspectives and stories. As this explosion of digital media also puts traditional media organisations under threat, it requires new business models and alternative revenue streams. As the audience increasingly shifts towards digital consumption, traditional media companies are constantly trying to evolve and find any new path to sustainable monetization.

In this background, the concept of technological determinism will help to explain the role of technological changes in societal and cultural changes, especially those accelerated by digital media platforms. While highlighting the pivotal role of technology in the culture of consumption, it is also important to recognise that media uses are shaped by the complex dynamics of techno-socio-cultural contexts. For this reason, this theory is used as a basic lens through which to review the complex relationships between technological development and the state of new and old media in the digital era.

## 5. Research Methodology

In this study a desk-based research methodology was used, in which only the systematic review and synthesis of secondary data using existing scholarly literature was relied upon. It was because of this methodological decision that this research enabled a holistic examination of the opportunities and threats of new media and of the traditional media facing the digital era, which was based on a wide variety of existing academic knowledge.

Data collection was mostly done through an exhaustive literature search, mainly using academic databases (Google Scholar). Various combinations of these and other terms were used in the search process, such as: "new media prospects," "old media problems," "digital age media," "traditional media challenges," "media monetisation strategies," "digital disruption media," and "media consumption patterns.

The intent of this systematic literature search was to find a wide and relevant range of published research. Literature was chosen on the basis of its direct relevance to the study's goals and its contribution to the understanding of the various aspects of the process of media transformation. Sources included academic journal articles, scholarly books, trusted conference papers and authoritative industry reports. The identified literature was critically analysed to highlight relevant findings, theories and empirical evidence on the economic, social and technological effects of the digital age on new and traditional media.

Then, the obtained data were synthesized and analysed by a thematic method. It included examining recurring patterns, themes and critical issues with the promise of new media and concerns for old media. This approach was a secondary data-driven evaluation, which ensured that the evaluation was well-informed, evidence-based, and reflected the current academic discourse on media transformation in the digital era, without requiring primary data collection.

## 6. Discussion of Findings

This study presents a thematic analysis of the literature reviewed, structured around the study's core research questions. The synthesis of findings from various scholarly sources provides a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of traditional media in the digital age, highlighting both the systemic challenges and the adaptive strategies employed for survival and financial viability.

### *RQ1: Economic Challenges Confronting Traditional Media Organisations*

Financial Losses due to reduced advertising revenue: One of the major reasons for the financial bleeding is the rapid decline in the traditional advertising revenue (Olagoke & Israel, 2025; Santiago, 2024). This erosion is due to advertisers shifting money to digital channels, which provide better targeting accuracy and provide measurable data (IAB / PwC Internet Advertising Revenue Report 2025).

The current reality of Legacy media is a harsh one characterised by the audience being split into a myriad of consumption habits. Today's harsh reality for Legacy media is one of audience fragmentation, with traditional audiences effectively split into a thousand pieces (Alzubi, 2023; Kemp, 2023). Modern news consumers have acquired a unique and possibly insatiable appetite for "snackable," mobile-friendly content that flows through a decentralized social feed. The change has led to a gradual decline in print sales

of newspapers and, more significantly, the collapse of the old broadcast measurement system that had historically supported the newspaper industry (Adelabu & Benson, 2022; Tunçan, 2020).

The second economic obstacle is the well-established “Free News” mentality within society: The societal belief that digital information should be free (News Media Association, 2015; Al-Quran, 2022). That “gratis” attitude has become an institutional hurdle; and while legacy outlets can, and do, create good investigative reporting, getting readers to purchase a subscription is an uphill climb. The public has been primed over the years to think of quality news as a public good, and that’s a hard thing to monetize without turning around significantly.

The Walled Garden is Gone and the Rise of Domination Downstream: In today’s media environment, things are no longer as simple as a walled garden, but more like a saturated and sometimes chaotic marketplace. But it’s not only the digital natives and streaming services that are vying for our attention; it’s also the flood of niche blogs and decentralized content creators (Al-Quran, 2022; Chen, 2024). A fundamental change in the dynamics of the information world is underway, one that moves toward “downstream domination,” with the real power and profit generated at the ‘information pipes’ held by the IT intermediaries. That is a recipe for traditional content producers to lose even a fraction of their audience in a space that they can no longer dominate (Simon & Bogdanowicz, 2012).

A “double-burden” is an important aspect of digital transition: digital transition is frequently presented as a cost-saving initiative, but for many companies it is actually a “double-burden”. As the income continues to decline from traditional print media, print organizations are still grappling with huge operational costs, including paper, ink, and physical distribution (Aliagan, Suleiman & Babatunde, 2023). It’s a fiscal paradox, that is, keeping the old world alive is more costly now than the new world can pay for it.

***RQ 2: Strategies for Financial Sustainability in the Digital Age***

The economic pressures have driven traditional media organisations to take a range of measures, many of which are different from and have been less effective than others, to ensure they are economically sustainable.

**Diversification of Revenue Models:** This is one way to achieve diversification of revenue models, as

described by Vara-Miguel (2021) and Faustino & Ribeiro (2016). This includes exploring and implementing:

In addition, a number of outlets are using subscription and Paywall Models to secure direct reader monetary (Namata, 2025; Tandoc, 2024). This concept can, however, encounter dead ends because of the “free news” culture (Tandoc 2024) and difficult to achieve success by appealing to its social relevance.

**Sponsored Content and Native Advertising:** These new solutions are helping advertisers generate revenue where traditional ads are falling short, by seamlessly blending in advertiser messages with editorial content (Vara-Miguel, 2021; Namata, 2025).

**Events and E-commerce:** Activities such as hosting events and carrying out e-commerce activities are becoming other sources of income, taking advantage of existing audiences (Vara-Miguel, 2021; Namata, 2025).

**Partnerships and Grants:** It has been identified that collaborations with technology companies, social media and non-profit organizations are of great importance for sustainability in terms of access to new technologies, distribution and alternative funding (Odun & Utulu, 2015; Onyenakyea, 2021).

**Targeted Digital Pivots:** Traditional media is making strategic investments and adaptation in digital. This needs capital injection into web platforms and mobile apps, and the deployment of streaming to spread content (Albadri, 2023; Pratama & Saragih, 2022). The goal is to be in sync with digital beat, maintain weight while meeting smooth audience needs for instant, custom-made interaction (Patil, 2020).

Recalibrating operational costs is a consensus of the industry, along with an increase in engagement – the Cost Structure Re-evaluation and Audience Engagement. The assumption that building community and trust is the foundation of the survival of the long haul has become a norm (Faustino & Ribeiro, 2016; Sultan & Amir, 2023).

**Persistent Challenges:** However, the staffing challenges of having a workforce with certain talent gaps, coupled with the physical constraints of infrastructure in some zones (Olagoke & Israel, 2025; Odun & Utulu, 2015), present further challenges.

***RQ 3: Impact of Data Privacy Regulations and the "Free News" Mentality on Digital Monetisation and Audience Engagement***

Two related issues play a major role in the way traditional media can monetize and advertising digital content and capture audiences: changing data privacy laws and the "free news" attitude.

**Consumers' "free news" mentality** is a major obstacle to digital news monetization (Kanuri & Pattabhiramaiah, 2022). This implicit assumption that all information should be available for free online makes it harder to implement a subscription or paywall. Some research has indicated that people's perceived importance of the news influences the willingness to pay, yet the prevailing resistance to paying for online news continues, which has led to an exploration of alternative revenue streams (Tandoc, 2024; Kanuri & Pattabhiramaiah, 2022).

**The other challenge is evolving Data Privacy Regulations:** GDPR, NDPA of Nigeria and the not too distant 'cookieless world' (Obudho, 2024). The rules create huge challenges for media organisations to effectively gather and utilise user data for targeted advertising and personalised content. Although they add compliance costs, they also require a change in attitude towards handling data with greater ethical and transparency (Abubakar et al., 2025).

**Effect on Data-Driven Advertising:** The regulatory landscape directly affects the viability of data-driven advertising models, a cornerstone of digital revenue. Media companies are increasingly turning to first-party data strategies and privacy-safe solutions to cope with signal loss, viewing privacy-first advertising as a competitive advantage, not a compliance mandate (IAB / PwC Internet Advertising Revenue Report, 2025).

Restriction of personal data can affect the ability to create the appropriate messages and the freedom to investigate, thus creating challenges for journalistic practices (Oriola et al., 2019): 4. In conclusion, effective digital monetization must not only tackle privacy concerns but also engage consumers in meaningful ways while gaining their trust.

**7. Conclusion**

The present study investigated the complex economic constraints that are choking legacy media, and provided a critical analysis of the different survivalist strategies embraced by such media. Digital disruption, characterised by the decline of advertising revenue, fragmented audiences and an entrenched "gratis"

cultural mindset, is threatening the viability and editorial integrity of traditional news outlets. However, the data indicates that such "legacy" players are far from passive victims; in fact, they're aggressively moving toward digital-first infrastructures. Incorporating e-newspaper formats, decentralized social distribution, and a "basket" of income streams, ranging from sponsored storytelling to tiered membership and live events, companies are trying to ride out the disruption. Of particular interest, the research demonstrates that new global data privacy regulations have been impacting traditional targeted advertising in ways that are driving a difficult but necessary shift towards privacy-focused monetization. The question of their long-term sustainability, however, hinges on a paradox: they need to continuously reinvent themselves in how they deliver and yet they need to be extremely loyal to the old-world ethics of high-accuracy journalism.

**8. Recommendations**

From the results and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested for traditional media companies in the digital era:

- Traditional media companies need to invest in digital infrastructure, such as mobile-first platforms, content management systems, and advanced analytics tools, in a strategic way.
- Media companies should diversify their revenue sources by pursuing and expanding subscription programmes (such as paywalls and freemium), sponsored content, native advertising, event management, e-commerce opportunities and grant applications/donations as well as possible, as well as dealing with the ongoing diminishing of traditional advertising.
- Media companies should leverage first-party data strategies, privacy-friendly solutions to deliver personalised content and advertising experiences.
- Continuous training on digital tools, data analytics and modern journalistic practices is needed to overcome the skills gap between media practitioners and the emerging demands of the technology.
- Traditional media must not only look for collaborations with tech companies and social media but also non-profit organisations.
- As information spreads like wildfire and people begin to distrust information, the most valuable asset of traditional media is its

commitment to accurate, verified and deep reporting.

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## Strategies in Real Time: Unconscious Strategy Use in Consecutive Interpreting

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**Abstract.** This article investigates the largely unconscious use of interpretative strategies in consecutive interpreting within high level diplomatic settings, drawing on the author's experience as a language consultant in the Nigeria–China strategic partnership. Grounded in equivalence-based translation theory and the Interpretive Theory of Translation, it conceptualizes consecutive interpreting as a real time, sense-oriented process comprising comprehension, de verbalization, and reformulation, in which interpreters rely on cognitive representations rather than surface linguistic forms. Adopting Li's (2015) taxonomy of knowledge, language, meaning and delivery-based strategies, the study identifies how anticipation, paraphrasing, compression, omission, text expansion, and other techniques are mobilised, often implicitly, to manage cognitive load and communicative goals alongside core note taking principles of economy, instantaneous seizability, and individuality. The discussion further examines practical challenges—time management, abbreviations, uniformity of reaction, professional jargon, numbering systems, and shifts between professional and casual registers—and illustrates how these factors affect message fidelity and rapport in diplomatic encounters. The article argues that while many strategies emerge from deep seated linguistic competence and situational awareness rather than explicit training, systematically foregrounding strategy awareness and sense-oriented processing in interpreter education can enhance accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and communicative effectiveness in complex cross-cultural negotiations.

**Keywords:** Interpretation, Consecutive Interpretation, Strategies, Time Management.

### 1. Introduction

Catford (1965) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (source language SL) by equivalent textual material in another language

(target language TL). Sager (1993) points out that this definition is centred around the importance of maintaining some kind of 'equivalence' between SL and TL. Nida and Taber (1982) translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.

More recently, translation has been defined as a "re-contextualisation" process that reconstructs the source text within a new linguistic and cultural framework (House 2021). Interpretation on the other hand, is studied as a distinct discipline focusing on auditory processing, memory retention, and real-time linguistic decision-making. Interpreting is an oral rendition in the target language of an oral message in the source language (Dollerup et.al., 2015).

Interpretation and translation are distinct yet closely related language transfer processes, differentiated primarily by their medium—spoken versus written—and their cognitive and temporal demands. Interpretation refers to the immediate, oral rendition of spoken language from a source to a target language, typically performed in real time during conversations, conferences, or legal proceedings. There are mainly two types of interpretation: (a) consecutive interpreting, in which the interlingua transmission takes place after the 'whole' text has been delivered in the source language, and (b) simultaneous interpreting, in which the target language rendition takes place at the same time as the delivery of the 'original message' in the source language (Dollerup et.al., 2015). The form of interpretation referred to in this work is consecutive interpretation. The data used and experience cited in this work are those of the language consultant with the Nigerian presidency in the Nigeria- China strategic partnership, during a year-long interpretation in high end meetings and diplomatic negotiation. All examples used in the work are references from real consecutive translation done

during the course of the job as a consultant. The research addresses the unconscious use of interpretative strategies, while the other strategies mentioned are the essential strategies that help with challenges faced during consecutive interpretation.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This work used the Interpretive Theory of Translation developed by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer. Interpretive theory, or the Interpretive Theory of Translation, was developed by Danica Seleskovitch and later elaborated by Marianne Lederer at the *École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT)* in Paris (Seleskovitch, 1975/1978; Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1984). This theory views translation and interpreting as a sense oriented, three phase process comprising comprehension, de verbalization, and reformulation, in which the message is first understood in context, then detached from the surface form of the source language into a language neutral mental representation, and finally expressed naturally in the target language (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1984; Lederer, 1994). The model emphasizes that language is a vehicle of meaning and that true equivalence lies at the level of cognitive content rather than at the level of verbal structure (Seleskovitch, 1977; Lederer, 1994).

In this work, interpretive theory is adopted to frame consecutive interpreting as a real time, meaning driven process in which the interpreter grasps the sense of the source language message, stores it in a cognitive representation, and then renders it in the target language without merely reproducing source language forms. The discussion of strategies such as anticipation, paraphrasing, text expansion, and omission aligns with the interpretive emphasis on de verbalization and re formulation, positioning them as manifestations of sense-oriented processing rather than as deviations from the source text (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1984; Lederer, 2003). By linking phenomena such as abbreviation handling, uniformity of reaction, and numbering systems to cognitive sense reconstruction, this work situates empirical data within the interpretive framework and proposes that interpreter training should foreground this sense-oriented perspective rather than purely formal equivalence. The analysis also connects the theory to note taking, showing how notes function as prompts for sense rather than verbatim records, reflecting the language neutral or meaning oriented approach central to the interpretive model.

## 3. Consecutive Interpretation

Consecutive interpretation is usually used in business meetings, formal dinners and formal occasions. Consecutive interpretation involves languages that are inherently termed “planned” or “unplanned” discourse (Ochs 1979). Planned discourse refers discourse that is thought out and organized, usually a written speech or read manuscript while unplanned discourse is not forethought or organized mainly freestyle conversations.

In interpretation, unlike translation where task involves writing, encoding and decoding, all of which are carried out separately—interpretation processes are carried out in the same space and time. The process involved in interpretation includes deliver, rendition and reception that is the speaker’s delivery, the interpreter’s rendition and the listener’s reception all present at the same time. This gives no room for review, editing or hesitation, and the interpreter is saddle with the responsibility of relying solely on linguistic skills and knowledge of the language. However, interpreters make use of strategies to help ease the task. These strategies make it easier for researchers to describe the process of interpreting, and reveal the decisions made in a given situation to reach a communicative goal (Riccardi 2005: 753). Kader and Seubert (2015) argue that interpreting strategies should be an important component of interpreter training because the cognitive constraints imposed by the interpreting task require the use of strategies to solve or avoid problems in comprehension and production.

Li (2015) categorized the 27 strategies used during interpretation into four groups- knowledge-based strategies, language-based strategies, meaning-based strategies, delivery-based strategies. Regarding the strategies, Li noted that they are deliberate, can be applied consciously and multiple strategies can be used at the same time by interpreters and can ultimately have effect on the message being conveyed. This implies that strategies already known or learned by an interpreter so much so that it becomes an unconscious act. However, this work posits that even without prior knowledge of the strategies, an interpreter can equally unconsciously make use of the strategies. Moreover, citing from experience, the aforementioned strategies alone is not, by themselves alone, enough to enable a successful interpretation process. It needs to be in addition to other techniques like note-taking and a mastery of the 3-phase process of interpretation.

The strategies listed for consecutive interpretation includes: Anticipation, Compression, Omission/ellipsis, Text expansion, Stalling, Approximation, Paraphrasing, Morpho-syntactic transformation, Décalage, Transcodage, Parallel reformulation, Restructuring, Inference, Repair, Evasion, Visualization, No repair, Reproduction, Transfer, Resorting to world knowledge, adaptation, Personal involvement, Monitoring, Repetition, Pause distribution, Intonation. Only Chunking/segmentation is not grouped for consecutive translation.

While some of the strategies are overlapping and redundant, and some are very relevant. In retrospect, all the relevant strategies were used during the language consultancy. However, some were used in variation from the original. Anticipation for example was mostly used in two forms- Pre-interpretation and During-interpretation anticipation. The pre-interpretation anticipation is carried out when the interpreter knows and is able to gather information about the event to take place. Some of the information includes name, professions of the parties involved as well as the theme of discourse. The interpreter will then be able to anticipate the jargon and key words that will most probably be used during the work. For instance, if interpretation is to take place between an electricity generation company and a government agency, the interpreter can anticipate the use of words like kilowatt, electricity generation, distribution. During interpretation, lexical collocation or set phrases can also be anticipated.

Omission is an important strategy often used to truncate interpretation difficulties, eliminate redundancy, and remove unimportant utterances, repetitions and superfluous expressions. Li (2015) argues that omission can also be used for untranslatable or unacceptable expressions. However, in real life consecutive translation nothing can be treated as “untranslatable”, since the interpreter has all participants at the table waiting to hear the translated version of the speech. Therefore, a consecutive interpreter (CI) cannot declare an expression untranslatable during interpretation. What was mostly done instead is to add an additional explanation to convey the SL meaning into the TL. In such situation, Text expansion should be employed rather than omission.

Morpho-syntactic transformation and décalage was not used as a strategy, but as skills possess professional interpretation. Décalage entails the narrowing of the ear-voice-span while Morpho-syntactic transformation involves expressing a meaning using the syntactic structure different from that of the SL. A

CI should have a good knowledge of the morphological and syntactic structure of both the Target and Source Languages; morpho-syntactic transformation from SL to TL occur naturally. Wikan .H (2019) states that an interpreter is required to have good listening skills, extensive knowledge, a good understanding of meaning, strong language skills in both source language and target language, and the ability to articulate speech clearly. All skills possessed commencement of interpretation.

Visualization, as described by Jones (2002) , is referred to as a knowledge-based technique, it involves a mental imagery of the source language content for comprehension in descriptive messages. While this can be considered a useful technique for assimilation, it cannot readily be treated as a strategy for interpretation. An interpreter, in addition to having language skills, should be fluent in both SL and TL. Therefore, if the interpreter does not rely on visualization in everyday language use, it is unlikely that the skill would be needed during interpretation. Morpho-syntactic transformation, Décalage and Visualization all fall within the fundamental knowledge and skill base expected of a CI before they take on the job, which indicates that they should not be strategies that help an interpreter navigate a difficult position.

There are three phase process taken during interpretation: understanding the source language speech, de verbalizing key points into a mental schema, and then reformulating the message in the target language with necessary adjustments for clarity. Morpho-syntactic transformation, Décalage and Visualization all belong to the first phase and second phase, which if not successful, an interpreter cannot proceed to the third phase. The first two phases can be achieved without a formal training, by a novice during interpretation, however the third phase mostly needs a more refined knowledge of the TL.

During the consultancy role as a novice on the various interpretation strategies, there were constant use of the strategies stated unconsciously. It is, therefore, argued that interpreters often rely on strategies that correspond to the aforementioned. However, in addition to the aforementioned strategies there is one strategy that is of significant importance in achieving phase two of the delivery process in interpretation-- Note-taking.

#### 4. Note-taking

Note-taking is a critical skill used in consecutive interpreting to help keep track of information. It functions as a kind of supporting technique, developed

by practitioners for practitioners, to aid the retrieval of part of the source text understanding from memory (Kohn, et al 2021). Note-taking also involves its own set of techniques used during the act of interpretation. Due to time sensitive nature of the Consecutive interpreter's work, practitioners generally apply certain strategies in note-taking, commonly referred to as principles (Kurt et al. 2021): The principle of economy, instantaneous seizability, and individuality. The principle of economy ensures minimal effort in notation allowing notes to be as sparse and brief as possible. Because of limited time available for notations, CIs employ this principle and write as briefly and as little as time permits. Instantaneous seizability requires that the interpreter be able to instantaneously read the note at a glance, so as to retrace the line of thought. This helps relieve the strain on memory and enables the interpreter to recall key points instantly. The principle of Individuality iterates that note-taking has no obligatory rule. It is entirely dependent on the interpreter's personal ability and training.

When discussing of Note-taking, two prominent arguments can be identified: the Text-as-Object approach (Seleskovitch & ledeere 1989) and the Language-neutral approach (Matyssek 1989). The Text-As-Object approach refer to note-taking annotates the SL's text meaning as a de-verbalised entity, since successful interpretation depends on an extensive comprehension of the SL text. Language-neutral approach argues that an interpreter's note should be language-neutral devoid of features from both languages, in order to detach from SL's surface structure. In reality, note-taking is highly dependent on the individuality principle; therefore, in most cases, the language-neutral approach is difficult to apply.

Appendix A presents a real notation of a consecutive interpretation. It records an hour-long consecutive interpretation from Chinese to English and vice-versa in a formal setting. Unlike the language-neutral approach, the notation contains words from both languages involved. It conforms with all three principles of note-taking. There are no full sentences in the note, which reflects the limitation of time and the necessity for economy of words. The notation will not be comprehensible to anyone else except the interpreter; by "comprehensibility" it implies the ability to understand the contexts in which they used and to explain the points associated with the economized words. This aligns with the principle of Instantaneous seizability and individuality. It is apparent that both languages- Chinese and English- are reflected in the notation.

Despite the accurate use of strategies, whether consciously or unconsciously, there are significant aspects of interpretation and language use that still pose a considerable number of obstacles in consecutive interpretation. These aspects of language use ensure the success of the third process of interpretation it can differentiate between a novice and a professional. They ensure the success or failure of the interpretative process.

If these obstacles are not properly managed, interpretation can become exceptionally difficult. These obstacles range from time management, abbreviations, uniformity in reaction, use of Jargons and numbering.

### 5. Time Management

Time management is a problem frequently encountered as a result of the higher cognitive load required for interpretation, generally due to strict time constraint and the absence of opportunities for revision, iterative refinement or editorial oversight. Time management has to do with the management of the interval between the input and the output, where the input corresponds to the SL while, and the output to the translated utterance produced by the interpreter in the TL. There is need to be conscious of this temporal relationship. For instance, in the source language, the speaker takes a total of one minute to deliver a statement, the TL rendition is not expected to exceed that one-minute span. However, expectation often defies reality, there are times or situations in which the interpreter ends up using more time than the speaker did in the SL.

At the point of interpreting, what is paramount is mutual comprehension: Speaker A have to understand everything speaker B intends to convey. Time management in practice often becomes inconsistent, especially the SL includes proverbs, and the interpreter senses that there is no direct equivalent proverb in the TL; in such case, further explanations may be necessary to enhance comprehension. In this situation, it becomes the interpreter's responsibility to manage the time spent on the delivery of message in the TL, balancing explicatory clarity with temporal economy. Abbreviations constitute a major use of language that affects time management, and an abbreviation in the SL can significantly influence the time required to deliver the message in the TL. For example, if there is an abbreviation in the SL whose expanded form is very long or whose TL equivalent exists in a different form, it is the interpreter's task to identify either an abbreviated version or an equivalent structure in the TL. A typical encounter in English to Chinese

interpretation is the abbreviation “NRDC” (National Development and Reform Commission). When interpreting this into Chinese, the interpreter has two options:

- Explain the function of the abbreviated term-  
- that is, clarify what the institution or expression does or what domain it covers.
- Find the equivalent term in the TL.

Instead of spending time explaining each component of the abbreviation, the CI can identification of the TL equivalent and then use its abbreviated form to manage time. In the case of “NRDC” if the full term is expanded in Chinese, it would be “Guójiā Fāzhǎn hé Gǎigé Wěiyuánhui” a much longer sequence that would consume considerable delivery time. However, if the abbreviated equivalent “fa gai wei” (发改委) is used Chinese, the TL rendition will take essentially the same amount of time as the SL abbreviation. This also applies to company names, set phrases and similar expressions. If such TL equivalents are not used there is a risk that the thread of thought or the flow of the conversation may be disrupted while the interpreter struggles to unpack the full meaning of the abbreviation.

### 6. Abbreviation in Interpretation

While time management in speech discussed, it is clear that, when discussing time management, abbreviations must be taken into consideration. Time management and abbreviation are closely interwoven, and the relationship between them is such that abbreviation constitute a major endurance test for time management in consecutive interpretation. Therefore, when talking about time management, one cannot but also talk about abbreviations, as they affect time immensely.

Speakers in consecutive interpretation, especially in formal settings, usually deliver speech in a controlled but somewhat free-flowing manner. It is therefore, the Consecutive interpreter’s (CI) responsibility to work faster than normal discourse when an abbreviation occurs in the SL. This is where pre- interpretation anticipation strategy becomes particularly useful, preparing in advance for likely abbreviations and their equivalents in the TL.

If the CI does not use an abbreviated form in the TL, as previously mentioned, interpreting will encroach on the delivery time, because there is a very short window within which the interpretation must be delivered in the TL in consecutive translation. Therefore, the need for a continuous update of target language knowledge

in order to identify the shortest, most effective way of enhancing understanding is recognized.

Another situation encountered was such whereby the SL speaker uses only part of the full word or phrase instead of giving an outright abbreviation. In such cases, the core function or a salient element of the word or phrase serves as a substitute for the whole. For instance, the speaker may say “China Harbour” instead of “China Harbour Engineering Company” or the abbreviation- “CHEC”. In such instance, reliance on world knowledge and contextual awareness applied to interpretation was of utmost use.

### 7. Uniformity in Reaction

Uniformity in reaction is a challenge that is difficult to navigate in interpretation generally. Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (Nida and Taber 1982). The same principle can be applied to interpretation: in the course of interpretation, it is imperative that an interpreter is able to elicit the same reaction in the TL as in the SL, that is, the target language audience’s responses should match those of the SL speakers. The CI must therefore strive to achieve the same reaction in the TL, especially when interpreting to a group. A joke in SL should be rendered in such a way that it produces a similar response in the TL. If the CI fails to achieve a comparable reaction, it may cause a misunderstanding or conflict, as one side might think they are being made fun of. A CI thus has to mitigate against confusion by acting as a performer in both languages at the specific moment of delivery. The effects of non-uniformity in reaction include: A breakdown in communication; The perception among TL speakers that they are being ridiculed, which may lead to conflict; the emergence of suspicion among participants, which can undermine trust and collaboration.

### 8. Explanation of Terms

This problem is especially noticeable when SL has mentioned the names of the places, objects, or practices that are traditional or local. It is therefore pertinent for the interpreter to explain such terms beyond the immediate content, using the elaboration strategy to provide further clarification in the TL and enhance comprehension. A situation occurred, in interpreting from Nigerian English to Chinese, the SL mentioned a place in Nigeria – Mambila, “in the the Mambila project”, by simply rendering “Manila” into the TL would be very confusing for Chinese-speaking

participants if no further explanation is provided. Manila is a name of a location associated with a prominent hydroelectric project in Nigeria. In such situation, there was need to go further – yet quickly- and explain, outside the immediate context, the meaning of Mambila and the nature of the Mambila projects.

### 8.1 Professional Jargons

Professional Jargon, as the term implies, refers to words and expressions that are professional in nature and usually specific to different professions fields. When formal gathering concerns the electricity sector, the CI is essentially obligated to learn the vocabulary associated with electricity in order to interpret efficiently. Unlike a translator that has time to consult references, revise, and modify, the text, an interpreter works under severe time constraint. Therefore, the pre-interpretation anticipation strategy, involving background research in line with the theme of discussion, is essential before the interpreting session. Since professional jargon is typically present in both the SL and the TL, the interpreter must acquire familiarity with such terms in both languages to ensure accurate and rapid rendition.

### 8.2 Numbering

The interpretation of number from one language to another is often one of the most challenging aspects of consecutive interpretation, even though it seems and sound relatively easy. At the point of interpreting, the task can become highly demanding, especially when the SL and TL employ different numerical scales and cultural conventions. For example, numbering in Japanese has cultural specificity, and the Chinese numbering system has its own particular structure. It is not as straightforward easy as the English language, because the underlying cultural and linguistic nuances must be taken into account. In Chinese, after thousands, the scale proceeds to ten thousand then hundred thousand, which can easily lead to misinterpretation if the CI is not fully familiar with the pattern. An adequate and deep understanding of the numbering system in both SL and TL to ensure accuracy came in very handy.

### 9. The borderline between Professional and Regular conversation

During roundtable or formal discussions, there is often an interception between the professional and casual conversation. There are interjections such as jokes, sarcasm, or culturally specific asides that are not directly relevant to the main topic. The CI must

therefore be attentive to these shifts in register. The Omission or message abandonment strategy are used to avoid rendering elements that are judged to be redundant or potentially disruptive to the main line of discussion. This is especially important because what may be appropriate or acceptable in one language may not be equally appropriate in the other, and rendering such elements could cause misunderstanding or conflict. In this way, the CI functions as a mediator between the two, helping to ensure smooth communication and eliminate the risk of friction. However, jokes or remarks that generate a strong reaction among SL speakers should usually not be omitted, since leaving them out may create a sense of exclusion or suspicion on the part of the TL participants and thus increase the risk of conflict.

The aforementioned language use are used in the second and third phase of process that in the de verbalizing key points into a mental schema, and the reformulating of message in the target language with necessary adjustments for clarity. By linking phenomena such as jargon, proverbs, cultural nuance, abbreviation handling, uniformity of reaction, and numbering systems to cognitive sense processing, it is proposed that interpreter either possess a formal training or not will foreground an interpreter's ability to deliver.

### 10. Conclusion

This study has shown that consecutive interpreting in high level diplomatic settings is fundamentally a sense oriented, real-time process in which interpreters unconsciously mobilize a wide range of strategies to manage cognitive load, time pressure, and interactional demands. By demonstrating how anticipation, text expansion, abbreviation handling, management of professional jargon, numbering, and uniformity of reaction all operate within the three phase interpretive model of comprehension, de verbalization, and reformulation, the paper repositions these practices as manifestations of interpretive competence rather than mere compensatory tactics, shaped by deep seated linguistic competence and situational awareness rather than explicit methodological training. At the same time, the analysis argues that making these largely unconscious strategies explicit—through focused work on abbreviations, time management, register shifts, cultural nuance, numerical systems, and note taking—can strengthen interpreter education by anchoring it in a coherent cognitive model and foregrounding sense oriented processing, world knowledge, and contextual sensitivity over strict formal correspondence. By situating empirical data from Nigeria–China

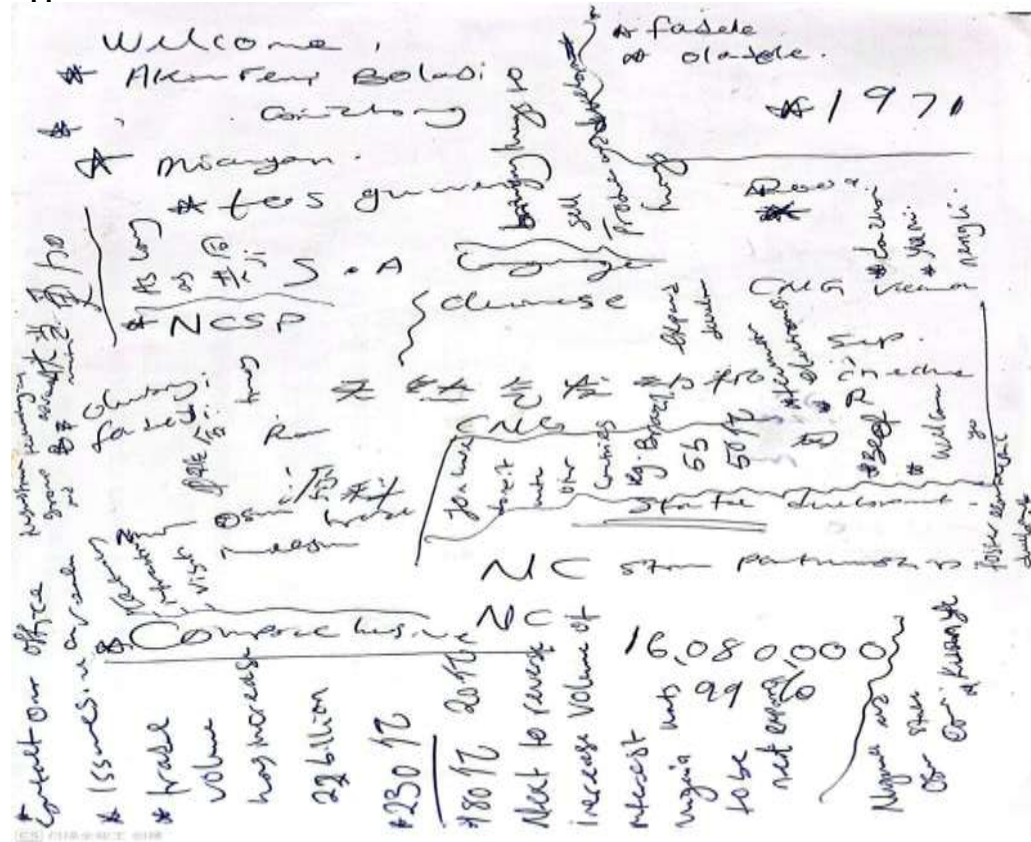
diplomatic encounters within the interpretive paradigm, the work thus contributes both to theoretical reflection on interpreting and to the practical development of interpreters operating in complex, cross cultural negotiation environments, ultimately enhancing accuracy, rapport, and communicative effectiveness.

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Appendix A



# **Part Two**

## **Development Administration**





## Pesticides Waste Disposal Pattern among Users in Floriculture Gardens in Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** The study examined Pesticides waste disposal pattern among users in floriculture gardens in Benin Metropolis, Edo State, Nigeria. The study described socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, identified their pesticides disposal pattern, perception on disposal pattern, types of pesticides practices in floriculture gardens in study area, and challenges they faced in pesticides disposal. A multistage sampling techniques were used to select respondents (66) in the study while frequency count, means, and percentages descriptive and Pearson product movement correlation were used in this study. The mean age of respondents was 14.8 years, male respondents were higher (63.6%). Most (94.0%) of them had formal education background, higher (78.8%) number of the respondents disposed their pesticides waste into waste bins and reasonable number ( $m = 4.64$ ) of them do not perceive that proper pesticide waste disposal to be of great importance. Respondents commonly used Attack” brand of pesticide while lack of adequate information on pesticide waste disposal and lack of training/ expertise were some of the challenges respondents were facing while inferential statistic result showed that empty pesticide waste disposal ( $r = -0.613$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and pouring/burying pesticide waste ( $r = -0.421$ ;  $p < 0.030$ ) were negatively correlated while flushing drainage/sewages ( $r = 0.417$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) was positively correlated with respondents’ perception of pesticides waste disposal at 0.01 and 0.05% levels of significance. The study recommends that government should create agencies that would regulate the disposal of pesticide wastes; Extension agents should be mobilized to train floriculturists on the proper ways to dispose pesticide waste and to also sensitize the gardeners on the effects of improper pesticide waste disposal; and none chemical pesticide control method alternatives should be considered to minimize and reduce pesticide wastes.

**Keywords:** Pesticides, Users, Waste Disposal, Floriculture Gardens, Benin Metropolis.

### 1. Introduction

Insects, weeds, fungi, and other undesired species can be controlled or eradicated with the application of pesticides, which are chemical or biological agents. Their goal is to avoid or control these organisms’ harmful impacts in order to save public health, animals, and crops. A vast variety of compounds, including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and rodenticides, are classified as pesticides and are used to address certain pest management issues (FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization, 2018).

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act of 2012 (FIFRA) defines a pesticide as “any substance or mixture of substances intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant or desiccant, and any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any insects, rodents, nematodes, fungi, or weeds, or any other forms of life declared to be pests.”

Any material or substance containing pesticide that cannot or will not be used and needs to be disposed of is referred to as “Pesticide Waste”. According to Nisheim and Fishel (2005) and Damalas et al. (2008), pesticide wastes include excess spray solutions, pesticide residue that is left in application equipment after use, pesticide-contaminated water from cleaning the equipment or from rinsing empty pesticide containers, pesticide-contaminated materials from cleaning up spilled pesticides, empty (unrinsed) pesticide containers, and outdated pesticide products.

Since ancient times, people have utilized flowers as a representation of perfection, beauty, and purity in both religious and social contexts. Producing flowers of this caliber demands careful attention to detail (Newman, 2019). Nonetheless, pests—particularly fungus and insects—often target flower harvests, and pesticides are frequently employed to stop output losses (Mengistie et al., 2017).

The increased use of pesticides in flower crops is primarily linked to genetic modifications in plants, which frequently lead to the elimination of the wild gene that supports natural defences (Tripp and Van der Heide, 1996) and the demand from the global market for high-quality products that are pathogen-free (Peres and Moreira, 2007).

A great deal of jobs was produced by the labor-intensive sector of floristry. The negative consequences of pesticides are a topic of discussion despite their substantial contribution to the national economy (Kassa, 2017; Tizazu, 2018). While peri-urban areas frequently encounter a blend of urban and rural influences, altering floricultural practices, urban floricultural gardens contribute to green spaces within cities, offering aesthetic value and recreational opportunities (Dunnett et al., 2019; Hassan, 2019). The selling of flowers, decorative plants, and related goods, horticulture in peri-urban and urban regions can boost local economies (Serrat, 2018).

Waste disposal refers to the organized and environmentally responsible management of different kinds of waste, making sure that they are safely contained, treated, recycled, or disposed of in a way that does not endanger the environment or public health (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2020). Additionally, pesticides (such as herbicides, insecticides, and rodenticides) may be among these wastes.

Some pesticide waste disposal patterns include: landfill disposal, recycling, return to retailers, incineration, chemical neutralization, household trash, etc., to mention a few. However, if these patterns are not well handled, they can cause environmental pollutions and health hazards, and so on. (Burgess, 2018; Surigan & Unsworth, 2019). Inadequate disposal of pesticide waste can cause issues and put people and the environment at large at serious danger (Aligbokhan, 2018; Ojo et al., 2020).

According to Carvalho (2017) and Pimentel et al. (2018), inappropriate disposal of pesticide waste can lead to a number of issues, including soil contamination, water pollution, harm to non-target species, and the possible emergence of Pests resistant to pesticides. Furthermore, inappropriate disposal techniques may cause volatile organic compounds to be released, which would increase air pollution (Cox et al., 2019). These problems persist because of users' ignorance and inappropriate waste management techniques, which highlights the necessity for an extensive investigation to solve and lessen the effects on the ecosystem and human health.

The broad objective of this study was to assess pesticide wastes disposal pattern among users in floricultural gardens in peri-urban and urban areas of Edo State, Nigeria, while the specific objectives were to: describe the socioeconomic characteristics of pesticide users in floricultural gardens; examine the patterns of pesticide wastes disposal adopted by pesticide users in floricultural gardens; examine the perception of pesticide users on pesticide waste disposal patterns; identify the pesticides used in the floricultural gardens; determine the challenges facing pesticide waste disposal among users in floricultural gardens in Benin metropolis.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study was conducted in Egor and Ovia North-East Local Government Areas of Edo State, Nigeria. Egor Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the 18 LGAs in Edo State, Nigeria. It is located in the southern part of the state and has its headquarters in the town of Uselu. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents in this study. The first stage was a purposive selection of Egor and Ovia North-East local government areas because these areas have the characteristics needed for this study, i.e., these areas had available and functioning floricultural gardens. The second stage involved the snowballing sampling method for the selection of floricultural gardens in the selected local government areas.

The third stage involved the use of a simple random sampling method to select workers/owners (the respondents) from the located floricultural gardens. Since the population of the respondents was below the considered number of respondents, a census was carried out (i.e., the entire population was sampled). Questionnaire was used for data collection though 71 respondents were interviewed only 66 copies of the questionnaire were analysable representing 93% response. data was found available represent a 93%response

Analysis of data collected was done using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables, mean, and percentages among others, while inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient were also used to analyze the perception of pesticide users and the patterns affecting pesticide waste disposal in floricultural gardens. Where:  
 $r$  = Coefficient,  
 $n$  = Number of observations  
 $x$  = Quantitative value of the first set of observation

A null hypothesis stated for study is , there is no significant relationship between respondents' perception of pesticides and their usage.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 1:** Socio-Economic characteristic of respondents

Variable	Freq	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	42	63.6		
Female	24	36.4		
<b>Age (in years)</b>				
20,00-30,00	30	45.5		
31.00-40.00	11	16.7		
41.00-50.00	11	16.7	37.82	14.76
51.00-67.00	14	21.2		
<b>Household size</b>				
1-5	52	78.8		
6-10	14	21.2	4.13	1.54
11-15				
16-20				
20				
<b>Educational qualification</b>				
Non-formal education	4	6.1		
Primary education	1	1.5		
Secondary education	30	45.5		
OND/NCE	10	15.2		
HND/BSC	19	28.8		
Others specify (Masters)	2	3.0		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	34	51.5		
Married	32	48.5		
<b>Major occupation</b>				
Business	2	3.0		
Gardener	53	80.3		
Potter	1	1.5		
Student	10	15.2		
<b>Pesticide use experience (in years)</b>				
1,00-5,00	20	30.3		
5.01-10.00	16	24.2		
10.01-15.00	8	12.1	15.00	4.48
15.01-55.00	22	33.3		
<b>Floricultural garden experience (in years)</b>				
1.00-5.00	26	39.4		
6.00-10.00	15	22.7		
11.00-15.00	4	6.1	12.36	1.39
16.00-43.00	21	31.8		
<b>Access to pesticides waste disposal agencies</b>	2	3.0		
<b>If yes, does your access affect your method of pesticide disposal</b>	2	3.0		
<b>Other occupations</b>				
Gardener	9	13.6		
Gardner/forex trader	2	3.0		
Potter-flower pots	1	1.5		
Supply agricultural implements, landscape	3	4.5		
Research /gardener	2	3.0		
Tiling	3	4.5		
Farming/Agriculture	46	69.7		
<b>Estimated annual wages (in naira)</b>				
20,000-50,000	6	9.1		
50,000-100,000	14	21.2		
100,001-200,000	11	16.7		
200,001-300,000	11	16.7	511,584.39	128612
300,001-400,000	5	7.6		
400,001-500,000	9	13.6		
500,001-10,000,000	10	15.2		

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

Table 1 indicates that there is a male predominance in the floriculture industry, with 63.6% of respondents in the research area being male and 36.4% being female. This was consistent with the findings of Sosan et al. (2020), for management and disposal of pesticides waste. A higher proportion (45.5%). A higher proportion (45.5%) of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30 years, with a mean age of 38 years. This indicates that the majority of gardeners and florists in Benin's urban areas were between the ages of 20 and 30, with a mean age of about 38. This demonstrates that younger people are more engaged in gardening and floriculture. The present study's result that the average age of respondents, including floriculturists, was 38 years is in line with the findings of Nchanji et al (2018). for Cameroun. From Table 1, 78.8% of the respondent had household between 1-5 persons. Iheke and Igbokwe (2021) finding for floriculture garden operators in south East Nigeria.

The Table also reveals that 45.5% had completed secondary school education. Given that the majority of gardeners received at least a primary education, this suggests that the majority of them are literate. Olajide et al. (2018) also discovered that the majority of floriculturists had formal, higher education levels, for Oyo state, Nigeria, which may have been linked to their improved access to technology and knowledge and, consequently, to their success in running their gardens. As at the time of this study, 51.5% of the respondents were married, meaning that the majority of respondents were married. These outcomes corroborated Jande's (2002) findings, for Benue State, Nigeria.

Most (80.3%) students of respondent were garden business owners. This indicates that the vast majority of responses work primary in floriculture and are self-employed. These results were consistent with those of Falusi and Adeleye (2002), who found that 75% of people in most developing nations work primarily in agriculture, which includes floriculture.

In addition, the Table 1 reveals that 33.3% of respondents had used pesticides for between 16 and 20 years, with an average of 15.00 years, hence the respondent should be experience in pesticide usage and waste disposal pattern. However, a higher proportion (39.4%) of the respondent for between one and five years, with an average of twelve years in floriculture garden, with a standard deviation of 1.39, is an indication that very minimal variation of statistical difference exist in the various interval groups. As majority (69.7%) of the respondents did not work in any other field. This merely suggests that the majority of respondents don't have any other side jobs and are exclusively engaged in gardening.

With an average yearly wage of 511,584.39 naira, this suggests that the majority of gardeners and floriculturists make at least 500,000 naira a year. Olajide-Taiwo (2010)N claims that depending on variables including geography, work experience, and type of employment, floriculturists' pay in Nigeria fluctuates greatly. According to the survey, some floriculturists earn less than N30,000 annually, while others bring in more over N200,000. These findings negate the present result.

### 3.2 Methods of Pesticide Wastes Disposal Adopted by Pesticide Users in Floricultural Gardens

**Table 2:** Methods of Pesticides Disposal used by Users

Method of disposal	Freq	%
Disposing empty pesticide containers/waste in trash cans	52	78.8
Puncture pesticide containers to prevent reuse	31	47.0
Pour pesticide waste down the drain/sewage	27	40.9
Burn pesticide can after use	15	22.7
Pour and bury pesticide in the ground	9	13.6

\*\*Multiple responses obtained

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

From Table 2 results, majority (78.8%) of the respondents said they disposed of waste or empty pesticide containers in trashcans, and 47.0% said they disposed of them by puncturing them to avoid repurposing. Only 22.7% and 13.6% of respondents said they burned pesticide cans after using them, while 40.9% said they put pesticide waste down the sink or sewage, respectively. This indicates that each respondent may have multiple ways of disposing pesticide waste. According to Sosan et al. (2020) study, some farmers dispose of empty pesticide containers by burning, burying, or putting them in the trash or on the farm. It is, however, in conflict with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2010 document that outlines guidelines for the proper disposal of pesticide waste, which emphasizes that pesticides should never be disposed of in regular trash cans or drains and stresses the significance of adhering to the proper disposal methods to protect human health and the environment.

### 3.3 Perception of Pesticide Users on Pesticide Waste Disposal Patterns

**Table 3:** Perception of Pesticide Users on Waste Disposal Methods

Perception	Mean	Std.Dev
Do you believe that proper pesticide waste disposal is of great importance	4.65	0.57
Do you believe that pesticide waste disposal should be regulated by the government	3.86	0.68
Do you think the pattern of pesticide waste disposal affects the environment	4.32	0.61
Do you think your perception of pesticide waste disposal is shared by others	3.17	0.60

\*Mean  $\geq 3.0$  = positive perception

*Source:* Field survey, 2024

Based on the fact that every respondent had a grand mean of greater than 3.0, it was possible to infer that they all had a favourable attitude toward the way pesticide users perceived the usage of pesticide waste disposal techniques (Table 3). For example, a large number of people do think that proper disposal of pesticide waste is very important (mean = 4.65), that government regulation of waste disposal is important (mean = 3.86), that waste disposal patterns have an impact on the environment (mean = 4.32), and that people should share their opinions about waste disposal with others (mean = 3.17). According to this, the majority of respondents think that properly disposing of pesticide waste is extremely important. This is consistent with the findings of the study conducted in 2021 by Amujo and Osinem, which also showed that most floriculturists understood the significance of properly disposing of pesticide waste in order to protect human health and the environment.

### 3.4 Pesticides used in the floricultural gardens

**Table 4:** Pesticide used

Pesticide uses **	Freq.	%
Attack	50	75.8
Lara force	39	59.1
DD force	41	62.1
Perfect killer	48	72.7
Ultracide	62	93.9
Snipper	37	56.1
Dime force	47	71.2

\*\*Multiple responses obtained

*Source:* Field survey, 2024

An analysis of the different pesticides used by the respondents revealed that 75.8% used Attack, 59.1% used Lara force, 62.1% used DD force, 72.7% used Perfect Killer, 93.9% used Ultracide, 56.1% used Sniper, and 71.2% used Dime force (Table 4). This suggests that most respondents preferred to use Ultracide pesticides, maybe it is due to the fact that majority of the people are using it in the area, and its perceived efficacy among its users.

### 3.5 Challenges Facing Pesticide Waste Disposal Among Pesticide Users in Floricultural Gardens.

**Table 5:** Challenges of pesticides waste disposal

Challenges	Mean	Std. Dev.
Poor access to safe pesticide waste disposal	4.42	0.98
Transportation	3.62	1.31
Cost	3.50	1.04
Lack of adequate information of pesticide waste disposal	4.79	0.54
Language barrier	3.14	1.35
Lack of training/expertise	4.56	0.88

\*Mean  $> 3.0$  = Serious challenges

*Source:* Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the challenges faced in disposing of pesticide waste is presented in Table 5. It was noted that respondents had significant difficulties getting rid of pesticide waste, even though their grand mean was 3.0 for all of them. A language barrier (mean = 3.14), insufficient access to safe ways to dispose of pesticide waste (mean = 4.42), problems with transportation (mean = 3.62), cost (mean = 3.50), inadequate information (mean = 4.79), and a lack of training or experience (mean = 4.56) were among the observations made about the respondents. All this finding shows is that the respondents had different difficulties getting rid of their pesticide waste. Consistent with the conclusions of Sosan et al. (2020), farmers including those in the floriculture industry have reported challenges when it comes to

getting rid of chemical waste. These issues can be linked to insufficient waste management infrastructure as well as a lack of awareness and information about appropriate disposal methods for pesticide waste.

### 3.6 Hypothesis

#### Perception of the pesticide users and their pesticide wastes disposal patterns

**Table 6:** Correlation between perception of pesticide users and their disposal methods

Variable	Correlation Coeff. (r)	P-value	Decision
Disposing empty pesticide containers/waste in trash cans	-0.613**	0.001	S
Puncture pesticide containers to prevent reuse	0.183	0.152	NS
Poor pesticide waste down the drain/sewage	0.417*	0.050	S
Burn pesticide can after use	0.091	0.271	NS
Pour and bury pesticide in the ground	-0.421*	0.030	S

\*Sign at 0.05 level; \*\* Sign. at 0.01 level

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Results of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlations indicates that empty disposal of containers in trash ( $r = - 0.613$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and pouring/burying pesticide waste in the ground ( $r = - 0.421$ ;  $p < 0.030$ ) were negatively correlated while pouring down the drainage or sewage ( $r = 0.417$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) was positively correlated with how the respondents’ perceived pesticides waste disposal at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance respectively as presented in Table 6. This suggests that, at the 1% and 5% level of significance, there is a substantial correlation between the perceptions of pesticide users and the practices of throwing away pesticide containers in the trash, flushing pesticide waste down the drain, and burying or pouring pesticide underground.

The correlation between pesticide users' perceptions and disposal practices found in this study is consistent with the findings of Ntow et al. (2014), which found that many farmers, including floriculturists, dispose of pesticide waste in regular trash due to a lack of knowledge regarding proper waste management. The findings of the study demonstrate a negative association ( $r = - 0.613$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) between the quantity of pesticide waste and empty containers disposed of in trash cans and the perception of pesticide users. Sosan et al. (2020) have shown a correlation between the perception of pesticide users and their practice of disposing of pesticide waste by either pouring it into the ground or burying it.

Numerous factors, including the users' degree of knowledge, their awareness of the risks involved, the availability of waste management services, and their general comprehension of the potential drawbacks coming from improper disposal practices, influence this link. The negative correlation ( $r = - 0.421$ ;  $p < 0.050$ ) also indicates that as the frequency or amount of pesticide waste poured or buried in the

ground increases, the value of the perception of the pesticide users decreases, and vice versa.

Ntow et al.'s (2014) research highlights the need to raise awareness and educate pesticide users on proper disposal practices to improve their perception of pesticide waste management. Werf van der (1996) research also implies that if pesticide users perceive pouring waste down the drainage or sewage as a cost-effective, efficient, or low-risk method, their perception may be positively correlated with this disposal practice. The positive correlation indicates that respondents' perceptions of pesticide waste disposal become more accepted or favourable as the amount of waste dumped into the drainage or sewage increases, and vice versa.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded from this study that majority of the respondents were aware of the various methods of pesticide waste disposal available and also aware of some pesticide practices put to use in floricultural gardens. It was also observed that most of the respondents face quite a number of challenges to dispose pesticide waste and all the respondents had positive disposition to the perception of pesticide users on pesticide waste disposal patterns.

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made:

- The government should create agencies that would regulate the disposal of pesticide wastes.
- Extension agents should be mobilized to train floriculturists on the proper ways to dispose pesticide waste and to also sensitize the gardeners on the effects of improper pesticide waste disposal.

- Non chemical pesticide control method alternatives should be considered to minimize and reduce pesticide wastes.

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## **Impediments To Acceptance of Covid-19 Vaccine in Ifon Town, Ose Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract.** This study sought to investigate impediments to acceptance of Covid-19 vaccine in Ifon town, Ose local government, Ondo State. One research question was raised to guide the study. Descriptive research design was used for this study. The population of this study consists of 11,985 all males and females above eighteen (18) years old representing fifty-one percent (51%) of the whole population of Ifon town. The sample size used for this study consisted of three hundred and ten (310) unvaccinated respondents. The research instrument for data collection that used for this study was a structured closed ended survey questionnaire tagged "Questionnaire on Impediments to Acceptance of COVID-19 Vaccine" and was in two sections. Completed copies of the questionnaire was collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage to explain the research questions raised and Chi-square inferential statistics was used to test the formulated hypotheses at a significant level of 0.05. Majority of the respondents cited concerns about vaccine safety, the vaccine not being properly tested, fear of rumors against the vaccine, and the belief that they cannot contract COVID-19 as reasons for their reluctance. Additionally, many participants expressed skepticism about the necessity of the vaccine, viewing the COVID-19 issue as mere propaganda or suggesting that reported cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria are fabricated lies. Concerns about potential side effects, fear of the unknown, and discomfort with injections were also prevalent among the respondents. Age was found to have a significant influence on several impediments to vaccine acceptance, including uncertainty about where to get vaccinated, belief in personal invulnerability to COVID-19, fear of social repercussions such as neighbors laughing or parents scolding, concerns about the vaccine's effects on men. It was recommended that given the diverse concerns identified among different demographic groups, targeted and tailored public health education

campaigns should be developed to address specific misconceptions and concerns. These campaigns should address vaccine safety, efficacy, and the importance of vaccination in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

One of the most significant historical public health achievements is discovery of vaccines which have resulted in reduction and eradication of so many vaccine-preventable infectious diseases burden globally by providing active immunity against infectious diseases. Vaccine coverage is an essential determinant that has helped in achieving reduction in those vaccine preventable diseases, hence widespread vaccine acceptance is crucial for achieving sufficient vaccination coverage. Vaccination is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against infectious diseases, before they come into contact with the causative Organism. Vaccination coverage is highly influenced by its acceptability and the overall perception of its benefit and safety profile leading to good utilization. Increasing access to COVID-19 vaccines is key to reaching the World Health Organization's goals of getting 40% of the world's population vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines by the end of 2021 and 70% vaccinated by mid-2022 (Centre for Disease Control and prevention, 2022).

As of today, vaccine is the most economical and effective intervention for preventing and controlling infectious diseases such as Coronavirus disease but unfortunately, vaccine hesitancy is a contributing factor to low acceptance of vaccination coverage. A survey conducted to explore the intention to accept COVID-19 among doctors in Nigeria reported that only about 38 per cent of respondents were willing to

accept the COVID-19 vaccination (Nomhwange, Wariri, Nkereuwem, Olarewaju, Nwosu, Adamu et al. 2022). From the report above, the remaining 62% doctors that are not willing to accept the vaccine may be as a result of so many factors including newness of the vaccine because from history, there is always a kind of hesitancy towards new vaccine, not that those doctors did not know the importance of the vaccine.

The risk associated with COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need for an effective vaccine and vaccination process. Therefore, an understanding of impediment that contributes to vaccination hesitancy is essential. Many factors such as misconceptions surrounding any vaccine, safety of the vaccine, fear of possible side effects, belief of the people etc can negatively influence the intentions and implementation of vaccination campaigns/exercises, which can have devastating effects not only on the health of individuals but also on society as a whole. Since the emergence of this new corona virus, numerous organizations around the globe have conducted substantial research in an effort to create a vaccine that will protect people from this deadly new virus in a safe and efficient manner (Thartwat, Nassar, Nassar, Saad & Hamdy, 2022). COVID-19 vaccination was launched in Nigeria 5th March, 2021 following an outbreak of COVID-19 infection. COVID-19 is a global issue that has affected almost all sectors and every country in the world, it started just like play in Wuhan China towards the end of 2019, by 30th January, 2020 it was declared a disease of Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) with 7700 confirmed cases and 170 death in China and additional 82 cases in 18 countries (Pan American Health Organization, 2020). On 11th March, 2020, as a result of rapid increase in the number of covid-19 cases outside China, the World Health Organization Director-General announced that the outbreak could be characterized as a pandemic by then more than 118,000 cases had been reported in 114 countries, and 4,291 deaths had been recorded (World Health Organization, 2020).

Nigeria recorded the first case of COVID-19 on 27th February, 2020 and as at 30th January, 2023, there have been 266,463 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 3,155 deaths in Nigeria (World Health Organization, 2023). Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is highly infectious, globally as of 3rd February, 2023, there have been 754,018,841 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,817,478 deaths (World Health Organization, 2023). Covid-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, by direct contact with infected people and indirect contact with surfaces in the immediate

environment or with objects used on the infected person. It has caused a serious threat to human globally, it has effect on almost all facets of life, it affected both rich and poor, old and young, caused enormous public health crisis globally with increased mortality and serious economic and social impact, in fact the tension and devastation created by the virus can never be forgotten in history of Nigeria and international world.

Several preventive and therapeutic measures was attempted such as regular hand washing, wearing of face mask, social distancing to partial and total lockdown. In addition, the Nigeria government provided the necessary logistics and regulations to curb the spread of COVID-19, such as the provision of isolation centres and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to health workers, mandatory 14-day quarantine of travellers arriving the country and contacts tracing of infected people but little can be done in it prevention with all these measures, the start of COVID-19 vaccination was a beacon of hope for normal activities to return.

Covid-19 vaccines are considered a means of protection that will help to curb the spread of COVID-19 and reducing its related hospitalization, mortality and other devastating effects. To achieve this, vaccination coverage is a defining factor for successful herd immunity. According to Donard (2021), the herd immunity threshold (HIT) for coronaviruses is tagged at about 60% to 70% by some experts. To achieve herd immunity against COVID-19, Nigeria had made available COVID-19 vaccines free of charge and set an ambitious goal of vaccinating 40 per cent of its over 200 million population before the end of 2021 and 70 per cent by the mid of 2022. However, availability of vaccines does not necessarily translate to its acceptance because there are many factors that may serve as impediments to acceptance of vaccination and some of these are well documented in literature.

Nawas, Zeidan, Edwards & De-Soky, (2022) identified lack of knowledge, fear, accessibility, mistrust in the healthcare system, and systemic and operational obstacles as an Impediments. To some extent religion play a vital role in acceptance of vaccine, that is why in the actual sense whenever there is any vaccination program religious leaders are always being carried along. When it comes to decision making some aspects of religion and culture gave men (husbands) power over women (wives) so wives opinion does not matter and this can also influence the decision of any woman when it comes to accepting the vaccine. Age can also influence the decision of accepting Covid-19 vaccine because the younger age may likely want to show a kind of non-challant attitude

towards the vaccine than the matured adult who assumed more responsibility. Accessibility to right information about Covid-19 as disease and its vaccine may also be an impediment since right information are more opened to the literate than the illiterate. Farah, Hala, Abdul, Unaiza, Mohammed, Najeeb et al (2021) conducted a study in United State "where we can tagged 'the center of COVID-19" and documented that; Several factors were identified as leading to low vaccine acceptance: From the 65 studies, sex was mentioned in 22 surveys, race in 31, age in 16, education level in 19, and income status in 4. The study went further to identify other factors that contributed to vaccine hesitancy which include: uncertainty about the vaccine safety and side effects entailing after its administration, religious reasons and lack of trust in the healthcare system. Other identified impediments are vaccine effectiveness, booster dose, attitude towards the disease and its vaccine etc.

In Nigeria just like other countries where vaccine hesitant are recorded due to some impediments statistically, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency could not meet up with the targeted 70% of herd immunity that was set to achieved at the mid of 2022 probably due to some impediments, therefore it is important to investigate and understand the impediments that predict vaccine hesitancy among the people due to the inability of not being able to achieve the targeted vaccination coverage despite the availability and affordability of the vaccines.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Covid-19 is a newly emerged disease in 2019 that have set almost all the countries in the world on their toes it affects about 225 Countries with global estimate of 754,018,841 confirmed cases and 6,817,478 number of deaths as of 3rd February, 2023 and in Nigeria 266,463 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 3,155 deaths as at 30th January, 2023 (World Health Organization, 2023). It paralyzed each country economically in which Nigeria was not exempted, it has rendered many jobless, turns many husbands to widowers and many wives to widows, affect the academic calendar of students and many more damages. Many measures had been put in place to reduce the transmissibility of the disease; vaccine is the current key intervention with the motives of increasing level of herd immunity in each person in the community and the global world through Covid-19 vaccination of eligible individual. In view of the above the Nigeria National Primary Health care development agency (NPHCDA) joined the race of achieving 70%

held immunity set by WHO to be achieved towards the mid of 2022.

Statistically, globally as of 15th January, 2023 about 66% of the world had been fully vaccinated, percentage varying from country to country, In Africa, while vaccine supplies have been on the rise, the rate of vaccination remains low, with just 46.5% of the continent's population fully vaccinated (Africa Centre for Disease Control COVID-19 Vaccine, 2023). In Nigeria as of 9th January, 2023 only about 55.3% have been full vaccinated and this falls below the goal of World Health Organization of getting 70% vaccinated by the end of 2022 despite all the efforts. The achievement thus far, keeps the researcher working by asking several questions. Why the low vaccination? Are there factors militating against vaccination? It was on this background that the researcher wants to embark on this study to determine impediments to COVID-19 vaccine among eligible individual in Ifon, Ose Local Government. This is so important because it will help to validate if the factors that impede COVID-19 in literature are also peculiar to the ones in Ondo State. Therefore, the need for the study.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research question was raised to guide the study:

- What are the impediments to acceptance of COVID-19 vaccine?

### 1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was conducted to investigate impediments to acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination in Ifon town, Ose Local Government, Ondo State.

## 2. Research Methodology

Descriptive research design was used for this study. This research design was adopted because it helps the researcher to elicit information without manipulation from the respondents on some identified variables on impediments to COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in Ifon, Ose local government, Ondo state.

### 2.1 Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of 11,985 all males and females above eighteen (18) years old representing fifty-one percent (51%) of the whole population of Ifon town (Source: National primary

health care triangulated population census, 2016; Oludare, 2024).

## 2.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size used for this study consisted of three hundred and ten (310) unvaccinated respondents. Firstly, simple random sampling techniques was used to select name of location where respondents were surveyed, that is sixteen streets was randomly selected out of the 38 streets in the study area. Secondly on getting to the selected streets, systematic random sampling technique was used to select those who actually participated in the study. On entering each house, the researcher assistant will assign number to the people as they are coming out while the research explained to them the purpose of the survey after which the instrument was applied on every 1st, 3rd, 5th etc (as it may be applicable) member of the family that are above eighteen years who gave their consent.

## 2.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument for data collection that was used for this study is a structured closed ended survey questionnaire tagged "Questionnaire on Impediments to Acceptance of COVID-19 Vaccine" and it was in two (2) sections. Section A consisted of six (6) items designed to elicit information on the demographic variables of age, gender, marital status, religion

affiliation, educational level and employment status. Section B which is divided into three parts consisted of thirty-five (35) items based on the variables identified in the literature as an impediment against acceptance of COVID-19 Vaccine.

## 2.4 Validity of the Instrument

Three experts did validity of the instrument from the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, university of Benin for construct and content validity, while the reliability was established using the test-re-test method of reliability. The instrument was first administered to twenty (20) participants who were not part of the study. The instrument was later re-administered to same group of people after interval of two weeks. Scores obtained from the first and second administration of the instrument was subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) and coefficient of 0.85 was obtained.

The researchers personally administered the instrument alongside two trained assistants who were trained for the purpose. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants gave their consent before the application of the instrument. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage to explain the research question.

## 3. Result

**Research Question:** What are the impediments to acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination?

**Table One:** Frequency and percentage on impediments to acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination

s/n	Items	Agree	Disagree
1	I am not sure of the vaccine safety	194(62.4%)	116(37.4%)
2	the vaccine was not properly tested.	164(52.9%)	146(47.1%)
3	The vaccine is said to have a short time protection against the disease.	144(46.5%)	166(53.5%)
4	They said I can still contract the disease despite being vaccinated.	118(38.1%)	192(61.9%)
5	I am scared of those rumours against the vaccine.	200(64.5%)	110(35.5%)
6	I can contract COVID-19 from the vaccine.	85(27.4%)	225(72.6%)
7	I don't know where to get the jab.	56(18.1%)	254(81.9%)
8	I don't even know If I can take since I did not have the disease.	122(39.4%)	188(60.6%)
9	I don't know much about the vaccine.	150(48.4%)	160(51.6%)
10	I believe I cannot contract COVID-19.	189(61.0%)	121(39.0%)
11	I believed my immune system as a Nigerian is too strong for any COVID-19 to penetrate.	129(41.6%)	181(58.4%)
12	I don't see any need for it.	164(52.9%)	146(47.1%)
13	My neighbour will laugh at me.	47(15.2%)	263(84.8%)
14	I believed COVID-19 issue is nothing but a mere 'propaganda'	157(50.6%)	153(49.4%)
15	To say the fact those cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria are fabricated lie.	168(54.2%)	142(45.8%)
16	My parents will scold me.	23(7.4%)	287(92.6%)
17	I am too small/ too old to receive the vaccine.	37(11.9%)	273(88.1%)
18	I don't know if it will affect me as a man.	48(15.5%)	262(84.5%)
19	My partner (opposite) has me not to take the vaccine.	50(16.1%)	260(83.9%)
20	My religion affiliation did not permit me to take the vaccine.	30(9.7%)	280(90.3%)
21	My faith will not protect me from COVID-19.	125(40.3%)	185(59.7%)
22	It is only compulsory for government workers not for me.	59(19.0%)	251(81.0%)
23	I am scared of possible side effects.	218(70.3%)	92(29.7%)
24	I am scared of needle.	121(39.0%)	189(61.0%)

25	My friend/relative experienced COVID-19 side effect.	109(35.2%)	201(64.8%)
26	Of fear of unknown.	192(61.9%)	118(38.1%)
27	Vaccination centre is far from my house.	84(27.1%)	226(72.9%)
28	I don't like being picked with injection many times	163(52.6%)	147(47.4%)
29	I am scared of traditional arrow.	95(30.6%)	215(69.4%)

The table one showed the frequency and percentage on impediments to acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination. It can be observed that majority of the respondents agreed that the following are impediment to their acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination: vaccine safety (62.4%), the vaccine was not properly tested (52.9%), scared of those rumours against the vaccine (64.5%), believe they cannot contract COVID-19 (61.0%), don't see any need for it (52.9%), believed COVID-19 issue is nothing but a mere 'propaganda' (50.6%), to say the fact those cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria are fabricated lie (54.2%), they are scared of possible side effects (70.3%), of fear of unknown (61.9%) and don't like being picked with injection many times (52.6%). But majority of the respondent disagreed that the following are impediments to acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccination: scared of traditional arrow (69.4%), the vaccine is said to have a short time protection against the disease (53.4%), they said they can still contract the disease despite being vaccinated (61.9%), they can contract COVID-19 from the vaccine (72.6%), they don't know where to get the jab (81.9%), they don't even know If they can take since they did not have the disease (60.6%), they don't know much about the vaccine (51.6%), they believed their immune system as a Nigerian is too strong for any COVID-19 to penetrate (58.4%), their neighbour will laugh at them(84.8%), their parents will scold them (92.6%), they are too small/ too old to receive the vaccine (88.1%), they don't know if it will affect them as a man (84.5%), their partner (opposite) ask them not to take the vaccine (83.9%), their religion affiliation did not permit them to take the vaccine (90.3%), their faith will not protect them from COVID-19 (57.9%), it is only compulsory for government workers not for them (81.0%), they are scared of needle (61.0%), their friend/relative experienced COVID-19 side effect (64.8%) and vaccination centre is far from their house (72.9%).

#### 4. Discussion of findings

The main purpose of the study was to investigate Impediments to Acceptance of COVID-19 Vaccine in Ifon town, Ose Local Government, Ondo State. It was discovered that majority of the respondents agreed that the following are their impediments to their acceptance of COVID-19 vaccine: vaccine safety, the vaccine was not properly tested , scared of those rumours against the vaccine, believe that they cannot contract COVID-19, don't see any need for it,

believed COVID-19 issue is nothing but a mere 'propaganda', to say the fact those cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria are fabricated lie, they are scared of possible side effects, of fear of unknown and don't like being picked with injection many times. This is supported by Olu-Abiodun, Abiodun and Okafor (2022) who revealed that the factors that were reported for non-acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine were disbelief, lack of trust in the government, conspiracy theories, vaccine side effects COVID-19 fear of the unknown. The hesitancy rate was said to be high in a study conducted in one of Nigeria universities as follows 42.98% (150/349) of the respondents were not willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine while 22.06% (77/349) were undecided, thus yielding a hesitancy rate of 65.04% despite the fact almost everybody has heard about the vaccine 97.3% (339/349).

#### 5. Conclusion

The study conducted to assess the factors influencing the acceptance of COVID-19 vaccine among respondents revealed several significant impediments to vaccine acceptance. Majority of the respondents cited concerns about vaccine safety, the vaccine not being properly tested, fear of rumors against the vaccine, and the belief that they cannot contract COVID-19 as reasons for their reluctance. Additionally, many participants expressed skepticism about the necessity of the vaccine, viewing the COVID-19 issue as mere propaganda or suggesting that reported cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria are fabricated lies. Concerns about potential side effects, fear of the unknown, and discomfort with injections were also prevalent among the respondents.

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## Establishment of the West African Frontier Force: A Historical Overview of the Recruitment, Training and Organization of the Force (1897-1900)

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**Abstract.** This paper examines the establishment of the West African Frontier Force, an imperial force, in 1897 with particular focus on military recruitment exercises, training and organization of the force. The amalgamation processes of all West African Forces of British colonies of Nigeria, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Sierra-Leone and the Gambia Frontier Police are well discussed in this paper. Essentially, these forces were brought together as formidable force to checkmate French and German incursion on the territories already occupied by the British. Another reason was to subjugate local opposition to British occupation and rule by carrying out punitive expeditions and campaigns as contribution to British imperial defence. Primary sources in form of archival materials, documents, hand written and official letters, and secondary sources in form of books and journals were used in the course of this research. This paper contributes to studies on Military History and serves as a research material for students and researchers of Military History around the globe.

**Keywords:** Recruitment, Training, Organization, West African Frontier Force, Imperial forces, Amalgamation.

### 1. Introduction

In 1897, Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State of this period, decided that a military force be formed in order to have adequate number of soldiers to particularly defend British territories as well as fight wars against the French during the critical period of the Anglo-French rivalry on the Niger. In fact, the political situation in West Africa at this period as asserted by Shaibu (2023) had called for more military exertions on the part of the colonial office and the war office since the Royal Niger Company Constabularies were quite inefficient in the performance of their military duties they were confronted with the inability to check the imperialistic devices of the French incursion on the Niger, in Borgu and in Sokoto areas. The colonial office was therefore; concerned about the

inadequacy of the Royal Niger Company Constabularies in protecting the British sphere of influence on the Niger

Consequently, Joseph Chamberlain the then Secretary of State for colonies, decided to negotiate with the French from a position of strength and as such decided that a military force capable of dealing with the situation be created. Thus, the West African Frontier Force was established in 1897, though it was still referred to vaguely at its period of inception as West African Force, it was later conferred with the title Royal in 1928 by King George V. The West African Frontier Force was a regular Military Force, recruited from a nucleus of officers and men of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary Supplemented by Regular Army Officers and newly enlisted Hausa, Nupe, and Yoruba. They were organized, trained and disciplined as military army officers.

In essence, the West African Frontiers, Force embraced all the forces in British colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia Frontier Police which were subsequently amalgamated. In line with this, the colonial office paper of June 1899, puts it thus: "The question of the responsibility of the Imperial Government in connection with Niger Territory and the necessity for the relinquishment by the Royal Niger Company of the administration of those territories became apparent and necessary to form the nucleus of a new military force for imperialistic purposes on the Niger. According to Haywood and Clark (1964) this was chosen as a convenient moment to consider as a whole the position of the military forces of the crown under the control of the colonial office throughout West Africa. In order to make their forces mutually self-supporting, it was considered necessary that the various constabularies and newly raised West African Frontiers Force should be amalgamated into one organization and bear a military name. Ekoko (1979) points out that, though, not in direct control of the colonial armies of the British Empire, the War Office had an implicit duty to

advise the Colonial Office on how to ensure that these scattered armies achieved a certain level of efficiency in organization and performance. The War Office was also keen on the attainment of standardization of equipment, arms, and ammunitions among the various colonial forces.

To implement the principles laid down in the above colonial office paper a committee was set up, the Inter-Departmental Committee on amalgamation of forces in West Africa, under the chairmanship of Lord Selborne, the then Under Secretary of State for colonies. Officers and British Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were seconded from their British regiments for short periods. The first Commandant of the West African Frontier Force was Colonel Frederick Lugard. Lugard, was admirably suited for the task of commanding the new force because of the training he had at the popular Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, (RMAS), Great Britain and also his wealth of experience as a distinguished soldier, explorer and colonial administrator. He was born in India in 1858 and commissioned as an officer in the East Norfolk Regiment in 1878 at the age of 20. There followed some ten years of campaigning in Burma, Sudan and East Africa, after which he led a memorable expedition force stalling the French occupation of Borgu in 1894-5. In 1897 he was appointed Commissioner for the Nigerian and Lagos Hinterland as well as the first Commandant of the West African Frontier Force which he raised. He carried out the difficult and delicate task of deploying this force so as to check the French advances in the Niger Valley. From 1900-06 he was High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria, Governor of Hong Kong, 1907-12, Governor of both Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1912-1913, Governor General of Nigeria, 1914-19. His work in pacifying, developing and consolidating the Niger territories was remarkably outstanding.

Lugard's work was primarily concerned with the organization of the forces but the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers were selected, organized and sent ahead of Lugard to recruit and train the African soldiers. There was no provision for training of Africans as officers and this policy persisted till few years to the end of colonial rule.

At the establishment of the regiment, each regiment had its Commandant. The Governor of Northern Nigeria, Lord Lugard ensured that recruitment was carried out effectively, not only for the battalions and batteries of the amalgamated WAFF quartered within his government, but also for the other battalions quartered elsewhere. Fifty percent (50%) of each battalion should, if possible be composed of Hausa

speaking people and the rest of the battalion be composed according to the locality of men of other war like tribes.

The Hausa were considered the best material for military service in West Africa as stated in the Colonial Office Paper No. C.0588 (June, 1899) and already, before the end of the nineteenth century the word "*Hausa*" had come to mean soldier just like "Sepoy" in India rather "*Hausa Militia*". Prefixed by the name of the government it served, for example the Gold Coast Hausa, the Lagos constabulary Hausa or the Royal Niger Company Constabulary Hausa etc. This was because Hausa language was commonly spoken by the recruits, it was actually made the Lingua Franca in order to enhance easy interpretation when communicating with the recruits.

The most successful, however in recruiting Hausa was the opportunity of recruiting directly from the Hausa country in which it had established trading posts. But even among the Royal Niger Company Constabulary and its subsequent conversion to the West African Frontier Force, the Hausa were less than a half of the total number of men, some of the men who had enlisted claimed to be Hausa. They were actually known to have originated from the Middle belt; these comprised the Tiv, Jukun, Igala, Nupe, Berom among others who were great warriors. The Middle Belt at this period, were under the control of Northern protectorate Vandeleur (1898). After the recruitment processes, the Hausa did good service at Lagos and later some of them served in the Gold Coast during the Ashante war of 1873-4. At the end of this war part of the Lagos force were left behind to form the nucleus of the Gold Coast Constabulary. The military charisma of the Hausa soldier is quite evident during this period.

Ukpabi (1964) was of the view that the Colonial Office raised two infantry battalions, the 1 and 2 battalions, Special Service Corps Battalions, and three Batteries West African Frontier Force. Each battalion had twenty-nine Commissioned officers and forty-four Non-Commissioned British Officers while two thousand and four hundred Africans were recruited locally as Non-Commissioned Officers. Lt. Col. James Willcocks was appointed as Assistant Commandant of the forces on 27th September, 1897 and granted local rank 1898 of Colonel on first September. Lt. Col. T.O. Pilcher had already been appointed the Commanding officer of the first Battalion and Lt. Col. H.S. Fitzgerald as Commander of the second battalion. The first Battalion was formed under Lt. Col. T.O. Pilcher, who was then Deputy Adjutant-General, he commanded the first Battalion which was situated at

Lokoja. Pilcher was assigned the duty of recruiting and training of Africans. In his report on WAFF, Pilcher gave an account of the activities of the first Battalion and of how it took over in Lagos with one hundred and fifty Hausa recruits who were enlisted for the Lagos Constabulary. He further reported that three hundred and fifty Yoruba, Hausa and Nupe enlisted for the WAFF by the Royal Niger Constabulary officers at Lokoja were also observed. In early February, 1890, the officers and four hundred and fifty men that were enlisted in Ibadan for the battalion left for Lokoja via Lagos and the Niger.

The second battalion was formed in March, 1898, with Lt. Col. Fitzgerald as its Commander. On 10th March, 1898, ten officers and eleven Non-Commissioned Officers proceeded from Lagos up to Epe through Ijebu Ode and finally arrived Ibadan on 16th March. They took over Yoruba recruits that numbered four hundred and twenty-eight from the detachment First Battalion WAFF which were formed into three companies as follows:

- 'A' or Capt. Hon. R. Somersets company.
- 'B' or Capt. Guy Fremantel's company.
- 'C' or Capt. P.G. Rigby's company.

Ukpabi (1987) asserts that in the home front Chamberlain's plans for raising a new force in West Africa did not pass without ripples in the Parliament. In February, 1898, he was assailed in the House of Commons for adopting an aggressive policy towards the French and for trying to create a public opinion favourable to his policy in the Niger hinterland especially with regard to the creation of the W.A.F.F. In his defence Chamberlain explained why it was necessary to raise this new force: We have thought it necessary to raise what has been called a Frontier Force. The present forces on the Gold Coast and Lagos are almost entirely required for the mere policing of the coast districts, and if we are to occupy, as evidently it is necessary that we should occupy, these territories over which we have assumed a protectorate, we must have a force capable of that duty. Accordingly, it has been decided to create and establish such a force, which on the Lagos side, will be under the command of Colonel Lugard... The creation of that force was necessary and will be necessary whether the differences with the French arranged satisfactorily or not, because our obligations are reciprocal. When we make a treaty with a native state we accord it our protection. At the same time, we are bound as a civilized power to accompany that with certain conditions. We expect, for instance, that the practice of slave raiding, and the observance of these fetish superstitions, which has caused so much bloodshed in

Africa, and which, slave raiding especially, has desolated the country, and has destroyed for centuries the possibilities of trade, we expect that these practices will be given up.

Chamberlain in Ukpabi (1987) stresses further that "In return we have to guarantee the security and the order and peace of these districts if they are threatened from outside. We are bound to preserve peace and order as between the different tribes... I believe that this force besides being, as I have said, a necessity and an advantage to the district, will also prove in the long run to be a most economical force. It is impossible in dealing with these native territories that we can always avoid difficulties and expeditions, from time to time, will have to take place... Now if this force of which I have been speaking is established, and if it answers the expectations, we have formed with regard to it, we believe we shall be able to carry out whatever expeditions.

Frederick Lugard, while he was the Commissioner of Northern Protectorate between 1900 and 1906 (NAK, Colonial Annual Report for Lagos 1980, No.32(6563) also asserts that the military was established basically for humanitarian role. He argued that the military was the instrument through which the British Government would end slavery, bribery, oppression extortion, and bloodshed in Nigeria, and would ensure peace and good order throughout the country.

This aspect of the role of the military has been given added dimension by the fact that on numerous occasions many British Officers in Nigeria whose policies and treaties were resisted by the African Chiefs were of the defence that they were compelled to go to war in order to eliminate those aspects of the people's ways of life which they considered uncivilized or abhorrent by the British government. Meanwhile, the African natives were not devoid of military qualities, they actually resisted the presence of the colonialists. But the superiority of the weapons of warfare and ammunitions on the part of the colonial forces superseded the weapons of the African traditional soldiers such as bows and arrows, spears and slings. As such they were eventually defeated by the colonial forces.

## 2. Organization of the West African Frontier Force

The West African Frontier Force at its period of inception, 1897, was not only faced with the problem of recruitment and enlistment of men into the military, but it had numerous problems in connection with organizing the force. The selection of officers and

N.C.O.s. for the WAFF caused dissatisfaction between the war office and the colonial office. The war officer, with the approval of the colonial office, was responsible for the selection of men to serve in West Africa, but Lugard objected such enlistment of men and opted on choosing the men to ensure that suitable men were enlisted into the force in order to avoid the initial incidence of unselected form of enlistment of men into the Niger Coast Constabulary which had a devastating effect on the organization of the force.

Eventually, Lugard was permitted to have his way, and apart from the officers and N.C.O.s of the 1st Battalion already appointed by the war office, he was authorized to select his men from a list of volunteers submitted by the war office CO 445/1. Report of the Commission of Inquiry convened at Lokoja, (1898.) Other problems that confronted the WAFF at its initial stage were that of providing suitable arms and ammunition, clothing (both for the African troops and British servicemen), camp equipment, provisions, stationery, Engineers, workshops, hospitals and medical supplies, veterinary medicine, emergency rations and materials for putting up temporary huts for British personnel. The choice of suitable artillery was governed by the nature of the area of operation and the available mode of transport. British officers believed that horses could not be used in tsetse fly infested forest of the Niger basin. Therefore, the guns had to be carried from place to place by porters. Such guns must not be too heavy and must be easily assemble. With the aid of a Royal Artillery office from the War office and a representative of the maxim gun maker, Lugard chose 7- pounder of the light pattern, and proposed to have two affiliated batteries of four 7- pounder each and a reserve battery of six 12 pounder.

The Royal Artillery unit was placed under the command of Major Robinson, R.A (who personally commanded the reserve battery). No.1 Battery was commanded by Captain Armitage and No.2 by Lt. Robertson. Major Robinson as the C.R.A was responsible for all artillery and ordinance stores and the training of the artillery corps. The guns ordered by Lugard did not arrive until the later half of 1898; and even when they did arrive, it was discovered that some parts were losing, due to faulty packing while others were rendered in-operative as a result of missing or ill-fitting screws, consequently, the guns used for training the men were borrowed from the Royal Niger Company.

Furthermore, Lugard organized the medical department. He set up two field hospitals (manned by one senior and junior medical officers, one hospital sergeant, one clerk and three female nurses). The war

office offered a salary of £400 to each medical officer excluding allowances. Lugard rejected this offer and later persuaded both the Colonial office and the war office to approve an award of £680 a year to senior medical officers and £450 a year to junior medical officers. On the issue of provisions Lugard proposed that all Europeans should have true rations, which amounted to three shillings a day, as against the colonial office offer for one shilling and six pence a day per person. Lugard's rate was later approved, and the total cost of establishing the new force came to a little over of £100,000. See Lugard's Diary, 96 (1898).

On 13 November, 1897, the first batch of British personnel for the first battalion (comprising six officers and nine N.C.O.s) left Liverpool for the west coast; and on 27 November the remaining officers and (consisting of seventeen officers and twenty three N.C.O.s and Drs. Ensor and Rock), all under the command of Lt, Col. Pilcher, left Liverpool for Lagos in December 1893.

Their arrival meant that a group of British military personnel forming the nucleus of the 1st Battalion was then on the spot to organize the Africa recruits into companies and to begin their training for the proposed action in Borgu. With the arrival of the first batch of the British personnel, the headquarters of the 1st Battalion was set up at Lokoja which was the first Northern Nigeria capital, while that of the 2nd Battalion was established at Ibadan in March 1898 and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel H.S Fitzgerald. Very little could be done in the form of training and recruitment of enough men to bring the strength of each battalion to the projected 1200 men until the end Borgu crisis in June 1898. After this time, efforts were made to reorganize the battalions. Several detachments were quartered in parts of Borgu which had recently come under British control while other units were used to garrison frontier districts. The Headquarters of the WAFF was moved from Lokoja to Jebba then to Zungeru and finally to Kaduna during the subsequent years. In December 1898, the strength of the force was at the range of 907 other ranks for the 1 Battalion while 800 other ranks for the 2 Battalion (Shaibu, 2023)

Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War, therefore, proposed to reorganize these local forces into two corps, one infantry and the other artillery. British officers were supplied, under the same terms as with the Egyptian army, to re organize and officer these corps. Provisions were made for African N.C.O. to be sent to England annually for training. Proposals were made concerning the need for the amalgamation

of the military forces in West Africa. The war office therefore asked Chamberlain to consider the proposals and if its approved then both the war office and the colonial office would set up a joint committee to discuss the matter.

On 20th June 1898, Selborne, the colonial under-Secretary, proposed a memorandum on the military force in West Africa and the proposed amalgamation copies were sent, for their comments to the governments of Sierra Leone, Lagos and the Gold coast, to Salisbury (the Prime Minister as well as the Foreign Minister Sir George Goldie, Lugard, Landsdowne through the Foreign office to Sir R. Moor, the administrator of the Niger Coast Protectorate.

Selborne proposed that the separate Military force on the west coast should be abolished and amalgamated as the WAFF: that there should be four divisions of this force, one division each to be stationed in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Lagos and the Niger territories, that each unit should have its own headquarters depot, and commanding officer, that an inspecting officer (of a General Officer rank) should be sent out annually to inspect these units that all the officers should have military titles, and that any officer of the regular army who had served for more than 7 years should join the force on permanent bases, that uniform, armament, pay and conditions of service both for officers and men, should be the same in all the units, that in the case of any expedition being undertaken in any colony the other colonies could be invited to contribute contingents.

Finally, in his memorandum, Selborne made some distinction between Lugard's force and the older constabularies, and pointed out that even after the amalgamation it might be necessary to maintain Lugard's force at a higher establishment and in a more fully equipped condition than the other units. Selborne also proposed that the pay of African NCO's and men should be the same as that which was obtained in the Gold Coast and Lagos constabularies, and that the pay of the officers should be based on that of the officers that served in the constabularies at that particular period and that their allowances should be different.

In the case of British NCOs, the payment of allowances was similar to that of the British NCOs serving in the Egyptian army. Selborne's memorandum became an issue of deliberation between the military men and the Governors of West African Colonies, on the one hand and the Colonial Office on the other.

McCallum, the Governor of Lagos, in approving the proposals in principle though that the suggestion to extend the period of seconding officers to 7 years was excessive. He considered that each officer should be free to decide after his third tour (that is, after 3 years' service) whether he wished to join the WAFF permanently or to return to his own regiment. He also recommended that, for Lagos, if the officer after a stay of 2 years could not pass the lower standard in the Yoruba language, then he should at once return to his regiment. He also proposed that the proportion of British officers and NCOs in the WAFF should be increased to cater for the number that might be absent on leave at any one time.

Sir. F. Cardew, the Governor of Sierra Leone, wondered whether there would not arise great difficulty when it came to amalgamating purely military forces such as the two battalions of the WAFF with police forces such as the Sierra Leone Frontier Police, trained to carry out police as well as military duties. He suggested further that some form of independent force, for purely police duties, should be maintained on the West Coast. He also suggested that there should be a resident General Officer Commanding in West Africa with his headquarters at free town, rather than sending a General Officer for inspection annually. With regard to the enlistment of African recruits, he suggested that the first period of enlistment should be for 6 years, as it was obtained in the Sierra Leone Frontier Police.

Governor Denton of Lagos, on the other hand, approved the scheme of amalgamation and supported the idea of annual reliefs. But he was very concerned with the authority of the governors of each colony over the troops. On 12 November 1898, R. Moor, the British Consul-General and the administrator, of the Niger Coast Protectorate, in his memorandum, argued that only the best officers should be seconded to the force. He believed that the opportunities offered for promotion would out-weigh all other considerations and would make the force popular with officers. The period of service for such officers joining the force should be arbitrarily fixed at 5 years at least, in order to render the native of Africa an efficient disciplined soldier.

F.M. Hodgson, the Governor of the Gold Coast was of a different view, though he did not object to the idea of amalgamation, but was doubtful on how effective its achievements would be. He recommended the uniformity of pay, uniform, armament, equipment and conditions of service, but he particularly objected to a more closely knitted and centralized amalgamation. A

military body working entirely on military lines, for purely military purposes, could not according to Hodgson, work in the Gold Coast. His greatest objection to the scheme was that it would withdraw from the hands of the Governor (as the Commander-in-Chief powers which he had acquired with regards to the movement and disposition of the forces quartered in the colony which he administered. He argued that it was unwise to curtail the powers of the governor over the constabulary or his position towards them. Only the governor, he stressed, could tell whether a force was required in a particular district or whether the garrison in any station should be strengthened. If therefore the governor had to act in consultation with an officer placed in supreme command, the delay would at times not be conducive to quick action as the occasion might demand. The Gold Coast Constabulary, he maintained, did both police and military duties and, except when they were needed for expeditions, they were under normal circumstances a police establishment.

Economically, Hodgson argued that the Gold Coast colony could not afford to maintain a separate force employed purely on military service that having an officer in supreme command would only involve the colonies in extra expense, whereas the local commanding officer in each colony could very easily deal with all the problems for which a supreme commander was derived. He was not in support of the system of relief proposed by Lugard. Hodgson believed that this system would be too expensive and out of all proposition to the benefits to be derived therefore.

Lugard believed that the scheme of amalgamation would be both practicable and beneficial. It would considerably increase the efficiency of the force and would make possible, for the first time, a concerted action against a foreign power. Lugard's idea of amalgamation was the creation on the West Coast of a centralized and homogeneous force, run on the lines of the Indian Army, of which he had some experience. He encouraged hard work and dedication to duty amongst the officers he insisted that in order to make the WAFF a 'crack corps' every effort should be made to attract only the best officers (preferably those with Indian experience or Egyptian experience). The colonial secretary used these comments as a guide in preparing the brief for the representatives of the colonial office in the interdepartmental committee which were charged with the duty of working with the details about amalgamation (C O Niger ( WAFF) File No.260, 1899, National Archives Kaduna, Nigeria) .

Although the idea of having a unified command in British West Africa was broached at the end of 1897, yet it was not taken up in earnest until February 1899 when the war office appointed Major General the Hon. Neville. C. Littleton, as assistant military secretary at the war office; Major E. Altham, of the military intelligence division, and. Higgins, as Assistant accountant general to represent the war Department. The colonial office appointed the Earl of Selborne (as chairman of the committee) and R.L. Antrobus, Assistant under secretary, Lord Ampthill and A.J. Reade to represent the colonial office. In order to assist the committee in its deliberations, the intelligence Division of the war Department was called upon to prepare a paper on the military responsibilities of the West African Colonies. (C.O African (West), 1899 No. 577, War Office to Colonial Office) This was necessary in order that the committee might have a clearer idea of the strength of the force to be established in each colony. This intelligence survey therefore covered both external and internal security problems.

Maj. Altham of the military intelligence division recommended that the following forces should be stationed in different colonies: Sierra Leone - one battalion; the Gold Coast- one and a half battalion, Lagos one-half battalion; Northern Nigeria three battalions of infantry and three batteries of artillery; Niger Delta-one-half battalion Presumably this would give the West Coast a colonial force of about 6,700 men, as against 6,161 which was then the aggregate of the existing troops.

The inter-Departmental committee made some recommendations in order to enhance an effective organization of the force:

- The establishment in each colony, and the names by which the portions of the forces in the different colonies should be distinguished;
- The best method of appointing officers, the qualifications to be insisted upon, the manner in which a list of officers for the whole force would be kept, the question of the relative seniority of officers of the regular army and militia serving in the force, the numbers and pay of each rank, and, in particular, whether more pay should be given to regular officers than to militia officers;
- The employment of European N.C.Os. Whether this was necessary and, if so, what their terms of service would be with regard to pay, allowances, leave, uniform, and horses;
- With regards to African N.CO.s and recruits, from what ethnic groups should they be

enlisted, and to what extent should, for instance, the Yoruba and Hausa be combined in the same division or company. It also considered the question of training accoutrements, pay and allowances for African troop

- The composition of the force- the proportion of each arm (infantry, artillery, engineers, transport and supply, medical).
- Discipline: the question of a General ordinance for the enforcement of military law, and the formulation of General Regulations for the force, standing orders, dress regulations etc.
- Inspection the appointment of an inspecting officer, the location of his office and his relationship to the governors and the local commanding officers; and
- The question of financial control and supply. In this respect the committee was asked to consider if each colony should be treated as a single unit or how best such control or supply should be carried out.

The inter-Departmental committee completed its work and submitted its findings in June, 1899. A great deal of its work was done by sub- committees, and the military establishment which it recommended for the West Coast was governed by the amount of money that the colonial office was prepared to spend on these forces. Thus, one finds that by the old arrangement it cost the colonies £251,966.17s.6p. to maintain the various units but the committee recommended a total

establishment of 282 Europeans and 6,179.8s.4p. (excluding the cost of maintaining an additional inspecting officer at a cost of £1,400 a year) (CO African (West) No.588,(1899) Amalgamation of Military Forces. Report of the Interdepartmental Committee).

The recommendations of the committee were then sent to the war office, the Foreign office, the governors and administrators on the West coast and their commanding officers, for their comments. Lugard deprecated the failure of the committee to approve the proposed increase in the number of European personnel. After stressing that the proposition of British officers and N.C.O.'s in each company should be increased in order to cater for the number that might be absent on leave at any given time.

Lugard verged that in order to attract the best regular officers, other inducements in addition to high pay should be given such inducements should include:

- Prospects of active service with a liberal distribution of honours and medals to compensate for the dangers in the field be readily dispatched... to meet sudden emergencies.

In 1901, the amalgamation of the colonial forces in British West Africa took place and before the end of the year much progress was made in the recruitment of Africans into the force whose strength stood at 6,208 other ranks made up as follows:

**Table 1:** The Amalgamation of the Colonial Forces

REGIMENT	BN	NO OF CY.	BATTERIES/ GUNS	OFFICERS	OTHER RANKS
Northern Nigerian Regiment	No 1 Bn	8	2 75mm	27	1200
	No 2 Bn	8	-	27	1200
Southern Nigerian Regiment	1 Bn	8	2 75mm	38	1250
Gold Coast-Regiment	1½ 1Bn	12	2 75mm	35	1657
Sierra-Leone	1 Bn	6	-	17	498
Lagos Bn	1 Bn	3	-	15	503
Gambia	-	-	-	-	-

**Source:** Ukpabi, S.C.; *The Origin of the Nigerian Army* (Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1987., 85).

Thus, a unified command was established after the amalgamation of the British West African Frontier Forces. The table below indicates the division and allocation of arms by 1902 among the various forces and the heavy death toll due to "harsh" climate

**Table 2:** The Division and Allocation of Arms by 1902

FORMATION	ARTILLERY BATTALION	INFANTRY BN	MOUNTED INFANTRY
Gold Coast Regiment	(1)2.guns 2.95inches	1 bn of 8 coys	-
Sierra Leone Regiment	-	1 bn of 6 coys	-
Gambia	-	1 coy	-
TOTAL	12 GUNS	6 Bn of 45 coys	1 Bn of 3 coys

**Source:** Colonel A Haywood and Brigadier F.A.S. Clarke, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force* (London, Gale and Polden,1964), 89.

- granting of local, as opposed to temporary, ranks to officers, with occasional substantive promotion to those who, after two years' service, wished to continue to serve on the West Coast and were accepted as valuable officers.
- granting of liberal terms of leave of absence and adequate medical facilities in each battalion headquarters and good publicity for the work in which the force was engaged

There also ensued series of letters between the governors and the colonial office over Lugard objections to various articles in the recommendations and his suggestions were eventually accepted and embodied in the Regulation of the WAFF. The normal establishment for a company was fixed at one captain (commanding), three lieutenants, one colour sergeant, one pay clerk, four servants, eight corporals, and 150 privates.

A battalion, consisting of the former Gold Coast constabulary was to be established in the Gold Coast. In Sierra Leone, a three-company battalion, consisting men of the Sierra Leone Frontier police was to be established. Two battalions were to be established in Northern Nigeria (these were the 1 and 2 battalion which were made up of the units already raised by Lugard alongside with the elements of the Royal Niger Constabulary). The 3 and 4 battalion to be established in Southern Nigeria, would consist men of the Niger Coast Protectorate Constabulary and those of the Royal Niger Constabulary already serving in the Southern territories, while a three company battalion was established in Lagos.

The Constabulary of the Royal Niger Company quartered in Northern Nigeria was on 1 January 1900, transferred to the WAFF after the revocation of the Royal Niger Company charter leaving about three hundred in Southern Nigeria. The total number transferred was six hundred, fifty of which were found unfit while another fifty enlisted into the civil police. The balance of five hundred was incorporated into WAFF bringing its total strength to two thousand, seven, hundred and forty-six. The one, two and three

Battalions became Northern Nigeria Regiment which also included the Mounted Infantry battalion. Lugard had received an approval from the colonial office in 1898 for the creation of the third Niger Battalion WAFF with its headquarters in Calabar. This Battalion incorporated the Niger Coast Protectorate force and a portion of the Royal Niger became the Third Battalion of WAFF and then the Southern Nigeria Regiment. The Lagos Constabulary became the Lagos battalion. according to Brigadier General G.V. Kemball the Inspector-General of the WAFF: Nigeria cannot be safeguarded against its internal and external foes with a force distributed in garrisons hundreds of miles apart, mostly unconnected by telegraphs, unless very substantial reserves are kept in hand at one or two centres from which columns can be obtained, in essence the amalgamation of all forces in West Africa into one formidable force as West African Frontier Force could collectively defend British occupied territories and checkmate any form of incursion by the French and Germans during the crucial period of Anglo-French and Anglo-German rivalry.

### 3. Conclusion

The establishment of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) in 1897, essentially brought together all forces of British West African countries of Nigeria, Sierra-Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana) and the Gambia Police. These forces were amalgamated in 1900 as a formidable force in order to checkmate against French and German incursion on the territories already occupied by the British during the crucial period of Anglo-French rivalry along the Niger and Borgu shortly after the scramble and partitioning of Africa. The WAFF was also established in order to subjugate local opposition to colonial occupation and rule. The amalgamation of the military formations in Nigeria and other parts of British West African countries became the final re-organization of the WAFF prior to World War I, in 1914. The West African Frontier Force therefore, comprised all the forces in British colonies of Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. They all had their various headquarters, depot and commanding officer in their various locations. With regards to Nigerian

perspective of the West African Frontier Force, the headquarters of the WAFF was first located at Lokoja, but was later transferred to Jebba, then Zungeru and subsequently to Kaduna, Northern Protectorate which became the Headquarters of the Nigerian Regiment of the WAFF. All the Battalions (1 and 2 Battalion in the North and 3 and 4 in the South) were amalgamated and designated the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). The Nigeria Regiment thus came under a unified command under Col Lord Frederick Lugard, who later became the Governor-General of Nigeria in 1914 after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates as one entity Nigeria. This then set the precedence for the maintenance of a well-organized military system. Kaduna which became the capital of Northern Nigeria also became the headquarters of the Nigeria Regiment (WAFF). This regiment at this period consisted 4,977 African Soldiers and 440 non-carriers). The cost of maintaining the regiment came to about £280,000 a year. The conditions of Service in either part of the country were harmonized. In essence, the amalgamation of the WAFF was not only to provide a strong and formidable force against the French as well as the German rivals but was West African contribution to British Imperial Defence during this period.

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## Change and Continuity in Women's Work in Colonial Benin Society, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** The paper examines the nature and changes women's work underwent during the colonial period, and also the place of women in the pre-colonial Benin kingdom. The paper discusses the traditional roles that pertain to women in society as presented in various institutions, as well as traditions that exist in traditional Benin society. The incursion of the European and the emerging influences arising from that contact, such as new economic opportunities arising from Western economic policies, affected their industry, agriculture, trade, and entrepreneurial activities. The evolution of the Benin woman from the traditional society to the modern society is recognizable. The skillful adaptation of Benin women in this period of change exhibited their capacity to engage in the process of transformation without completely losing their identity. It is within this context that the paper seeks the transformational history of the Benin woman as one of change and continuity.

**Keywords:** Benin Woman, Colonial Period, Change, Continuity, Agriculture, Crafts, and Industry.

### 1. Introduction

The European foothold became solidified in Benin by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and all the political and administrative structures necessary for the effective exploitation of the human and material resources of the conquered territory were created. It was a new philosophy of life to the people, and their indigenous institutions were suppressed but not eliminated. The establishment of colonial rule followed the abolition of the slave trade and its replacement by legitimate trade. The intrusion of the white into the land in the later part of the nineteenth century was a new experience for the people. By 1901, colonial rule was established in Benin after various towns had been conquered at different times by the British expeditionary force (Osagie, 2000, 24).

The expenditure in Benin in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was one of the most significant steps taken by the British government of the Niger Coast Protectorate in its drive to gain the political and economic control of the hinterland of what later became the Central and Eastern Provinces of Southern Nigeria. The immediate concern of the British Officers at this period was the exploitation of the economic potentials, the natural resources, and the forest wealth of the "natives" (Igbafe, 1979, 221).

Benin society was rich in forest resources, and the only way the British could get their demand was the use of force and sometimes subtle persuasion to bring the indigenous people to accept the loss of sovereignty. At the initial stage, the British government struggled to show itself as an advocate of peaceful methods. This was because they were instructed by the motherland to do everything in their power to avoid collision with the "natives" and establish friendly relations; at the same time, convincing them by a determined attitude that the government was firmly established and that its order must be obeyed or certain punishment would follow. At the end of the day, it was the only force the British officials could use. Since the Benin people were seen as primitive, the only way they could stop their barbaric practice was through the use of force and the use of their advanced weaponry. In doing this, roads were constructed to facilitate the movement of the raw materials to the motherland. The coming of the European influences was not imposed on the people without opposition; the apparent inevitability of the process of colonial conquest, the defeat which sooner or later overwhelmed all who sought to stem the tide, did not mean that colonialism once established remained unchallenged. How it was challenged was through a different number of local rising. The traditional rulers and their subjects initially did not give the colonial authority breathing space. The women were also part of it. According to informants, when the Europeans came, the natives were happy and at the same time amazed to see some white footless

semi-gods, who had no toes because they were always in shoes, which were strange to the people, coupled with the fact that they were also carried by the black men who accompanied them from the Niger Delta.

They saw the presence of the white men in Benin as a sign of an evil omen on their land, because their presence prevented them from carrying out some of their norms, such as sacrifices, which the white men regarded as barbaric and a total display of their cultural backwardness and primitiveness.

The policy of the British administrators was not in the best interest of the natives. The policy of the British administrators was to be seen in their attitudes and treatment of the natives during the period when they had gained a stronghold on the people.

## **2. Data Sources and Research Methodology**

The data collected for this work was mainly through secondary sources using the historical research methodology. This involved reading extant literature on the role of woman in the colonial economy of Benin and how they were able to excite positive influence that helped to shape and develop their kingdom. The data comprised articles in journals, chapters in edited books and dissertation. The secondary sources were critically analyzed for women's roles in historical narratives. The works of Odejide (1998), Boserup (1970), Denzer (1989) and Mabogunje (1961) were particularly significant for examining the dual economic status of women in Nigerian societies in which women possessed economic power in the development of their societies.

Primary data were collected through oral interview with selected informants who are knowledgeable about the decades of colonial rule in Benin Kingdom and the involvement of women in their economic activities. The collection of oral information was vital to gain useful insights as not all the information was available in written sources. Oral information also helped in corroborating and validating information from written sources. Other sources of primary data were the Federal Government census of Western Region of Nigeria and archival reports. The oral sources provided useful information that complemented the extant literature. The secondary sources complemented with oral information to present an authentic account of the change and continuity in women's work in colonial Benin Kingdom of Nigeria. Secondary and primary sources were analyzed to obtain their validity and perception as regard change and continuity.

## **3. European Economic Policy in Benin Society Nigeria**

The geographical location of Benin society to a large extent determined the occupational pursuit of the people. The land was fertile, forested and suitable for agriculture. There was no poverty nor was there any considerable wealth among the natives. The natives were easily satisfied. If "he" required food, he makes farm, if he required clothing, he plants cotton and when it is grown, it is woven into clothes. If he needs cash, he climbs an oil palm tree and gathered its fruits. The oil and kernels obtained from the oil palm would be taken to the nearest trading market and exchanged for cash (Ishan Intelligent Report, 1925). While some engaged themselves in the production of cash produce like cotton, rubber and other cash produce. Rubber was one of the major raw materials that was in high demand in Europe and was in abundance in Benin.

The first definite steps in the post expedition British economic policy in Benin were concerned with the opening up of roads, the establishment of market. During the very early months when British rule in Benin was being consolidated, the overriding economic interests in the new territories were submerged by political and military consideration. With the exile and deportation of the Oba in September 1897, the fiscal frontiers on which a good deal of the customs and tolls that were collected in the pre-British era were abolished and a systematic policy of economic change oriented to European requirement was embarked upon. In this connection attention was focused on rubber which from the European point of view was the most valuable product of the Benin forest. Efforts were directed at the preservation of the rubber forests, general control of the processing, transportation and marketing of rubber and the development of rubber industry. In this regard, attempts were made to check the activities of hundreds of migrants from the colony of Lagos, who inundated the forest of Benin particularly in the Usen region (N.A.I, B.D., 1897).

After the capture of Benin, the activities of these invaders who were mainly in Benin to collect rubber and indulge in the adulteration of forest produce were foiled by the enactment of detailed regulations under the Africa-Order-In-Council 1889 which came into force on 3 June 1897. Under the regulation inspectors were empowered to confiscate or order the destruction of any produce suspected to be adulterated, a penalty of £50 fine or six months imprisonment was prescribed for those convicted. The tapping of rubber in a style to damage the tree permanently or affect the future productivity was prohibited (N.A.I, B.D.,

1897). The earliest assignment for the rubber-inspectors was to visit all villages, explaining these regulations and taking practical steps to ensure their observance. Some of the steps taken included the training of boys in each village by the forestry inspector who would in turn train others on the methods of tapping and processing rubber. The idea was that in this way, the circle of trained people in the process of rubber would get ever wider till all villages were eventually covered. All foreigners were required to pay a 20 per cent tax on rubber worked in Benin; 10 percent of this was to be paid to the owners of the land, the remaining 10 percent was to be credited to government revenue (N.I.A., Benin Division, 1898). The appointment of indigenous rubber inspectors was another positive step for the colonial authority. These

inspectors were people with a thorough knowledge of rubber trees and preparation of rubber. They travelled on inspection tour around the area allotted to them, checking improper tapping and supervising the processing of latex to ensure the finished product.

By 1903, efforts exerted in the direction of developing the rubber industry began to yield encouraging dividends. By the end of March 1903 about 15,694 rubber plants had been cultivated in thirty-three plantations and along a few roads. Before the end of the year, one hundred and twenty-six villages had been convinced of the necessity for rubber plantations and they had transplanted about 145,000 rubber plants from their nurseries.

**1903 Season Plantations (Igbafe, 1979, 343)**

Locations	Number of Villages with Plantation	Total Number of Plants in all Plantation
Siluko Road	29	26,800
Asaba Road	8	6,400
Utesi Road	17	49,000
Gilli Gilli Road	5	5,600
Sapoba Road	27	31,442
Yira Road	16	8,040
Igieduma Road	5	6,400
Isi Road	19	11,400

Men and women were involved in the cultivation of rubber was very cumbersome, by 1912, tapping knives and rubber sheet rolling machines were introduced into Benin land which made the tapping of rubber less cumbersome (Osagie, 2000, 17). In addition to rubber, timber was comparatively one of the most important natural products of the Benin forests. From the period of British rule in Benin, it was recognised that the timber industry had a bright future in the area.

The basis for this optimistic hope lay in the abundance of mahogany and other valuable timber in the Benin forests. It was recognized however that for a successful timber industry, a good system of land transport was a pre-requisite except along rivers and waterways where it was possible to float logs. Like the very early attempt to exploit the rubber resources of Benin, numerous applications flooded the Consul-General's office between 1895 and 1899 seeking authority to carry on timber work soon after the overthrow of Benin. The policy that evolved at this stage was that foreigners could only deal with the product of the country under government regulations as well as with the consent of an agreement by the indigenes of the area. The granting of timber concessions necessary for large-scale timber exploitation grew out of this policy. By 1900, the Europeans were displaying tremendous energy in taking out timber concessions and arranging for their effective exploitation. At a time when stringent regulations were coming into force for

the working of rubber, and at a time when the imposition of the prohibited dry season for working rubber was being enforced, there was a steady increase in the amount of timber exploited in Benin District (Igbafe, 1979, 350). The new industry absorbs some of the labourers and people previously engaged in rubber exploitation. To avoid the prospect of wholesale deforestation a rule was made fixing the minimum girth of trees to be felled at twelve feet (Igbafe). The effect of the new timber rules drew attention to the danger of forest exhaustion in Benin and the need for conservation through constitution of forest reserve. This situation led to the new timber and rubber rules of 1905, which among other things, provided for the first steps towards the regeneration and conservation of the Benin forests into the face of a very rapid rate of forest exhaustion due to over exploitation (Igbafe).

While a forestry policy was being vigorously pursued and leading to a clash of interests between the Benin People and the British in the early and late twenties of this century, another British economic policy in the area was the encouragement of the development of palm plantations, which did not become very significant till the early thirties. In 1931, the encouragement of palm plantation, palm groves owned by indigenous Benin and all activities tending to enhance the productivity of oil palms were seriously taken in hand by British administration through the

department of Agriculture. Chiefs and farmers were actively encouraged to plant and improve their groves. There was a favourable response from the people generally and application for the grant of land for the purpose became numerous within a short time. A major difficulty encountered by the Department of Agriculture at this early stage in the promotion of oil palm cultivation was the opposition of the Oba of Benin (Igbafe, 1979, 358). The Oba's main objection was that the grant of large number of plots indiscriminately would be taken as granting permanent permission to the ownership of the land whereas all land in Benin was communal and granted annually for farming purpose by the chiefs of a town at their discretion. The land for palm plot would thus become separated from that for general distribution, and there would develop a tendency to regard it as privately owned. The future effects of permanent crops on Benin land tenure were to bear out the Oba's fear. It was for this reason that the Oba refused to grant Chief Ezomo's application for further land in Ekenwan District in 1932, because the Oba's contention was that Ekenwan land was very good for yam and should be reserved for Ekenwan people (Igbafe).

The Department of Agriculture worked out a policy of developing palm plantation. This include giving guidance in planting up small plantations, improving existing palm groves and maintaining central nurseries in different planting districts. By June 1932, nearly 2,000 self-fertilize palm seedlings were distributed to farmers, in July that same year over 36 acres were laid out for planting and over 91 acres were actually planted (Igbafe). One way to sustain the people's interest in palm plantation and also taking sting out of the Oba's objections was to encourage the communal ownership of palm plot which could be placed under control of the Native Administration. There was a decline in the standard of maintenance of old plantations by many farmers who militated against experiments of communal ownership partly because the cultivation of palm trees was a long-term investment or because of the Oba's oppositions. It was a situation whereby only a few saw the need for cultivating oil palm under controlled methods of the Department of Agriculture (Igbafe, 1979, 361).

Benin did not turn out to be a cocoa-producing area like the Yoruba areas of Nigeria, the British made effort at the early stage to develop the cultivation of cocoa, they hoped that cocoa would in a few years play an important part in the revenue of Benin District but this hope did not materialise. By 1909 the growing of cocoa had been introduced, by February 1915 cocoa nurseries were started to ensure availability of young

trees. A cocoa plantation was prepared at the Ikpoba river ground, labour mainly supplied by the prisoners (N.I.A. Benin Division, 1915). to improve the cultivation in Benin District, thirty sites were selected for plantations and the owners were specially taught how to lay them out.

The development of the coca industry continued through 1916 with the maintenance of the model plots on Ikpoba Hill along Agbor Road and the distribution of 2,438 cocoa plants to farmer (N.I.A. Benin Division, 1916). Chief Ine set a good example for the people of Siluko by beginning a cocoa farm there. Most of the people with cocoa plots near Benin City were encouraged to replant in the places of failures of seedlings and to extend their farms. In the beginning of 1920, communal cocoa plantation like communal rubber plantations had started in Benin especially at Egor. The Native Administration paid a few labourers to look after these, by 1921, excellent cocoa was already being produced all over the district (N.I.A., Benin Division, 1916) ensure that the farmers maintained a high standard of production the Department of Agriculture took a number of steps which include the erection of fermentations in Benin under a cooperative cocoa fermenting scheme where the farmers were taught principles of cooperative fermenting with all its advantages over individual efforts. The Oba's council was brought into the scheme so that Native Administration and the Agricultural Department could share the cost of building ferment Aries. Only a few farmers preserved in the face of poor prices offered for cocoa. Because of the poor prospects of sales, many planters did not consider it worthwhile to produce large quantities this led to the decline of cocoa production and cultivation. However, cocoa did not develop into an economic crop during British rule in Benin (N.I.A., Benin Division, 1916)

Before British rule in Benin, the farmers had been used to cultivating cotton under mixed cropping to produce a limited supply for the hard-spinning and hand-weaving industries otherwise known as indigenous industry. The emphasis after 1902 was on the growth of American or Egyptian cotton seed to improve quality. The farmers were taught the importance of not mixing indigenous seed cotton with the introduced variety. In spite of the activities of the British Cotton Growing Association and the Colonial regime, the cotton growing industries like that of cocoa and palm plantation did not achieve notable success in Benin. With much control prices attracted at the purchasing centres at Ologbo and Illushi were never good enough to encourage the farmers. The great deal of deforesting large areas and keeping it clear for cotton cultivation

acted as a deterrent to extensive cultivation (Igbafe, 1979, 365-366)

### 3.1 Introduction of British Currency in Benin Society Nigeria

British rule in Benin introduced a noteworthy change affecting the economic life of the people. This was in the means of exchange which was complementary to all the other economic changes that colonial rule introduced into Benin territories. The introduction of a money economy was the bases of all other economic changes in Benin (Igbafe, 1979, 368). Before colonial rule, the people possessed a well establish currency system which consisted of brass-rod, manilas, copper wires and cowries. Guns were accepted as a medium of exchange, as in the case of Niger Delta, they were usually valued in terms of manilas. Slaves were also used as unit of account but not as means of exchange. As early as 1522 manila was already in use in Benin (Igbafe). To enhance the exploitation of colonial Nigeria by British, it was necessary for the British to control the monetary system of the colony. The demonetisation of the local currencies was the first step. They replaced “barter” with coin. The local currencies were referred to as “trade good” rather than currencies. The British insisted that all payments should be made in British currency. The people could not get goods without the currency (Falola, 1987, 72).

To make the introduction of British currency effective, they ban the importation of manilas, brass rods and other traditional currencies; and also withdraw the existing traditional currencies already in circulation. As the area of acceptance of British currency broadened and the local currencies circulated within narrower limits, the cowries circulated as a subsidiary currency for the small buying needs for the population was driven out of circulation by British Government through the introduction of British coins in the denomination of 1d, ½d and ¼d to replace cowries. To give the new subsidiary coinage a fighting chance of replacing cowries, it was thought necessary as in the case of manilas and brass rods, to restrict the supply of the shell currency by prohibiting all further imports of this monetary medium. This was accomplished through the importation of Cowries Prohibition Proclamation No. 6 of 1904 (Falola). Paper money in the denomination of £1, 10s, 2s, and 1s, was introduced as part of the colonial currency changes. British currency was meant to complement British trade in the colony in order to enhance their exploitation.

### 3.2 Women in Agriculture

Women in Benin played major roles in the economy as farmers, food processors, and in petty occupations, which they had pursued before the advent of colonial rule. In addition, many women engaged in various crafts, including weaving, dyeing, pottery, mat making, embroidery, bead making, and local industries such as soap making and salt production. Some of them had the calling for midwifery and herbal medicine (Denzer, 1989, 14). During the pre-colonial period, the Benin people were not only self-sufficient in food production but also had a surplus to exchange for other products. The introduction of cash crops such as rubber, timber, and oil palm into the agricultural life of the people seriously affected the production of food crops. The farmers, especially the men, began to embark on the cultivation of cash crops. Consequently, the men relegated the production of food crops to the background. This led to the scarcity of crops produced by men, such as yams (Helleiner, 1966, 66).

Women developed cassava agriculture. It was introduced from Latin America by the Portuguese to the Nigerian coastal towns to provide easily storable food for their slave ships. Its use as a storable crop began to spread after the seventeenth century throughout Southern Nigeria. Cassava was considered a woman's crop, subordinated to the yam cultivated by men (Denzer, 1989, 16). As the British discovered that the cultivation of cassava did not in any way close down the production of cash crops like palm, they did nothing to discourage its cultivation. In 1944 they introduced five varieties of hybrid “mosaic disease-resistant cassava” (Osagie, 2000, 24). Due to the encouraging results, cassava stems were distributed. It was from this channel that the disease-resistant hybrid cassava found its way into farms. In the 1940s, women were massively cultivating cassava on separate farms. Cassava was successfully cultivated alongside the production of oil palm produce because its cultivation was not labor-intensive.

To meet the high demand for garri, women stopped production, especially those in the rural areas, and processing by adopting a form of specialization in different aspects of production. While some devoted themselves to cultivation, others specialized in its processing (Osagie, 2000, 24). By the end of the colonial era, women farmers, processors, and traders had firmly established garri as one of the most important food items throughout southern Nigeria. The workload of women in rural areas increased due to the increase in labour demands, resulting in the expansion of cash crops (Denzer, 1989, 16).

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the introduction of legitimate trade in Africa, there was a great demand for palm oil, which was used as a lubricant for machines and for making soaps and candles. Palm produce (oil and kernel) was one of the major Nigerian exports to

Europe. Duke concluded that:

With the increasing population at the time of the Industrial Revolution in Britain came changes in social and industrial requirements, as the British people's demand for soap rose considerably, and palm oil was the chief constituent in the manufacture. The substitution of metal for wooden machinery and the development of railways caused a rise in the use of oil as a lubricant. West Africa's palm oil was found to satisfy these needs (Dike, 1956).

Palm kernel was also demanded in Europe for its use in the manufacture of margarine, candles, and pharmaceutical products, while the residual cake was a valuable livestock feed. Due to the high demand for palm oil and palm kernel in Europe, there were concerted efforts by British officials and merchants to ensure increased production in Nigeria. The oil palm produce exported from Benin in the early decades of

colonial rule was that obtained from palm groves that grew wildly and luxuriantly in the forest. The quantity of palm produce obtained at this time depended largely on the oil palm harvested from the forest. The men did the climbing of the trees and cutting of palm fruits. From the collection and extraction of oil to the cracking of kernels was done by women. This is why it has been asserted that traditional oil extractions were and still are a woman's industry (Onimode, 1983, 43). After collecting the fruit from the forest, the woman began processing by first having them cooked. The soft fruits were then poured into a large wooden vat and mashed with their feet. After the fruit had been thoroughly mashed, water was poured into the vat, bringing the raw oil to the surface while the nuts and shafts remained at the bottom of the vat. The oil was then collected into a large pot and boiled over the fire until the water had evaporated, leaving only the oil, which was then skimmed off, leaving the palm nuts. The nuts were collected and kept in the sun to dry before they were cracked to remove the kernels. This cracking of the palm nuts and picking of the kernels from the shell were solely done by women and children. The expansion of trade with Europe in palm products after 1950 greatly affected women's workload in the production of palm oil.

**Palm oil production estimates, palm oil and palm kernel exports, Nigeria, 1900-1944 (tons)**

YEAR	Total Production Estimated Palm Oil	Nigeria 1900-44 Exports Palm Oil	Palm Kernel
1900-4	117,358	53,729	120,778
1905-9	115,770	65,177	130,241
1910-14	154,876	77,771	174,236
1915-19	164,060	80,485	184,567
1920-4	180,463	90,352	203,021
1920-9	227,084	124,716	255,469
1930-4	244,070	122,302	274,584
1935-9	296,889	139,000	334,000
1940-4	248,889	134,377	320,613

**Source:** *Nigerian Handbook 1936, and Nigeria Trade Reports 1939-45.* Lagos Government Printers (Ekundare, 1973, 167).

Rubber was also one of the major raw materials in high demand in Europe, which was in abundance in Benin. The high demand was a result of the transport revolution in the late nineteenth century in Europe, which had profound effects on the demand for natural rubber from Nigeria. The high demand for rubber in Europe accentuated the need for natural rubber growing widely in large quantities in Benin. With the introduction of para rubber into Benin, both men and women were to engage in its cultivation and tapping. It was not cultivated as a sole crop on any farm; the seedlings were transplanted into yam and cassava farms in the last years of cultivation before the farms were abandoned in the rotational shifting cultivation system. The farmers, men and women, continued to maintain the farm along with other crops until all the crops were harvested, leaving only the rubber trees.

The farmers were left with clearing the bush around the rubber trees till they were mature for tapping. Indeed, several women participated in the development of rubber plantations, but not all women participated in its tapping. The women who were involved in the tapping of rubber during this period were found around the Usen areas of Benin (Osagie, 2000, 18).

As the demand for rubber increased, women not only tapped rubber owned by their husbands, they also rented plantations on which they paid rentage fees on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis. Some prominent women in Benin even bought plantations from the proceeds, which they realized from their trading activities. These plantations were, in some cases, rented out, while in others, the women employed

tappers (men and women) to tap them. Some other women bought rubber sheet rolling machines, which they rented out to big and small rubber tappers at prescribed fees (Okhionkpamwonyi, 2021).

### 3.3 Women in Craft and Industry

In the sphere of craft and industry, Benin women made and sold a range of craft goods. The most important were clay pottery and soap, followed by weaving and dyeing of cotton, basket mats, and beads. Textiles used for clothing and as ceremonial objects had profound cultural meaning. Different patterns and types were used for particular purposes (rituals). The most symbolically important kind of weaving was done only by women. Clothing could also represent a group or identity; women's associations commonly appeared in public wearing similar clothes or head-ties. Cotton had traditionally been grown in small batches by individual families for their own use and local sale. After the bolls were picked, cleared, and spun, the thread was woven into cloth. If the cloth was to be coloured, either the thread or the woven cloth would be dyed with indigenous materials (Okhionkpamwonyi, 2021).

During the colonial period, indigenous handicrafts faced increasing competition from factory-made goods. Initially, wares were first imported from Britain, but later were also produced in Nigerian factories. In some cases, craftswomen responded by experimenting with new techniques that enabled them to produce their items more quickly and efficiently, but those changes were not enough. Many craftswomen were less able to hold their own crafts as the colonial period passed (Mantogh, 2009, 164). The growing availability of assorted white soap put most traditional soap makers out of business while potters faced equivalent problems as containers made of enamelware and plastic became available in local markets (Mantogh, 2009). Some weavers began to use imported European threads, which were already coloured rather than employing local dyes. Conversely, some dyers bought white European clothes to colour. Craft women at first profited from their ability to access thread, cloth, and credit from foreign trading firms, becoming independent producers of their tie-dyed cloth called "adire," which was popular throughout Nigeria and along the West African Coast. A survey of Abeokuta in 1926 listed 1,064 adire makers and 1,094 dyers. But from the 1920s onward, the adire industry suffered a steep decline due to falling commodity prices. The export price for Nigerian cloth in 1932 was only one-third of its value in 1920. Whereas European traders and merchants were able to use privileges based on class,

gender, and authority of the colonial state to protect their own economic positions, while African women were vulnerable (Mantogh, 2009, 166-167).

Most colonial policies in Nigeria seemed to have been gender-blind, as no role was envisaged for women in the agricultural or industrial sectors. The assumption must have been that whatever benefits accrued to the male household head would 'bide down' to its female members (Boserup, 1970, 133). While it is true that women's role in the industry under colonial rule has declined, some studies of women's economic and social history in Nigeria show that they made some substantial gains in economic opportunities under colonialism. How much gains were made depended on the nature of the pre-colonial society in which they lived, as well as their intellectual and economic capacity to take advantage of new opportunities (Odejide, 1998, 124). As Etienne and Leacock observed in their collection of cross-cultural studies, the impact of colonialism depended on "the precise strategies of exploitation employed by the colonisers and the strategies of accommodation or resistance adopted by the colonized" (Etienne, 1980, 122).

The interest of the British government during colonialism was mainly to exploit materials as well as develop new sources of raw materials for the 'home' industries. This system only favoured a few middlemen, while traditional industries like crafts, cloth dyeing, and soap making suffered. The change in consumption patterns could also be responsible for the decline. Access to more remunerative occupations seemed to have also accounted for the decline in some indigenous industries. (Tunji, 1992, 20). Tunji corroborates this trend in Ekiti North, where he observed that pottery, soap making, basketry, and mat weaving also declined in the face of competition from imported commodities from Europe and later from locally manufactured goods. Enamelware, metal pots and plates proved far more durable than pottery or baskets, while those who could afford the higher cost of linoleum and carpets preferred them to mats. Nevertheless, these women's industries, though reduced in scale, still serve a sizeable market up till today.

### 3.4 Women and Trade under Colonial Rule

Throughout the colonial period, trading continued to be the most important economic activity for women, even though most women remained petty traders selling small quantities of foodstuffs or other goods at very low-price margins. Some well-to-do women took advantage of the practical credit system introduced by colonial rule and offered by the European firms that

had established shops in the main commercial streets of the towns to boost their trade (Mabogunje, 1961, 14).

In the southern part of Nigeria, Benin precisely, the expansion of trade with Europe in palm products after the 1850s greatly affected women's workloads, for in these areas, men owned the palm fruits and the oil made from them, but their wives processed oil, head-loaded it to the market, and sold it. Throughout this period, women in Benin continued to play an important part in the economy as farmers, processors of food products, traders, and skilled craftswomen. They exploited new opportunities in wholesale and long-distance trade. Whatever their occupation, they made calculated choices about their careers based on their perceptions of what new opportunities offered in terms of their needs and objectives as well as their prospect. Many women changed their line of work or extended it into other areas, taking into account cultural codes of acceptable behavior, their family responsibilities, their skills, education, their finances, and new techniques (Odejide, 1998, 125).

In addition, (Odunlami, 1989, 15) found that in the 1940s, women refused to continue to process cotton, cocoa, or take jobs as porters, because of the low profit and low pay offered. Instead, they turned to more remunerative activities such as trade. Mothers urged their daughters to take up trading instead of weaving because it was more lucrative (Elisha, 1990, 6), especially for their daughters who were not educated. There is no doubt that trading became an increasingly attractive proposition for women throughout the colonial period, especially in the urban areas.

**Women in Trading in the Southern Provinces 1952-1953**  
(Source: Census of Western Region, 1952)

Western Province	Region	Trading	Percentage
Abekuta		53,835	16.8
Benin		33,399	7.3
Colony		55,100	22.9
Delta		23,724	7.8
Ibadan		127,451	15.6
Ijebu		30,249	16.7
Ondo		66,360	13.7
Oyo		63,110	15.9

The table above shows the activities of women in trade during the colonial period. The new British laws and regulations introduced far-reaching changes in customary marriage patterns by allowing women more freedom and choices of mobility. In the course of colonial rule, Benin women became the main producers of palm oil, kernels, and foodstuffs, which

were in high demand during this period. Although one would have expected that this high demand would attract high prices, this was not the case, as European traders and firms continued to buy the commodities at prices not commensurate with the labour of these women. Colonial government unilaterally fixed prices for foodstuffs without taking into consideration the cost of agricultural inputs and labour expended by women in the cultivation and processing. This attempt was abandoned because it drove foodstuffs out of the market (Osawaru, 2021).

The proportion of women (wives) in the labour force increased by half from 1940 to 1944, marking the beginning of a remarkable reorganization of women's life patterns. In fact, 75 percent of the women were wives (Moen, 1992, 11). Surprisingly, there was no mass exodus to the kitchen; there was a brief turnaround. These changes in women's activities during the colonial period did not significantly alter the primacy of women's family roles. The family work of child care, husband care, housework, and emotional 'work' still preoccupies and restricts women's lives. Most women in Britain were active in all these areas only after their children were of age. So long as their children were young, women's principal functions continued to be caretakers and homemakers (Moen, 1992, 12).

It is well known that African women were farmers, traders, and crafts producers in different parts of the continent. It is equally well documented that their economic roles were both public and private. Women worked outside the home to meet the responsibilities placed upon them in their roles as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, members of guilds, or citizens. In the economic sphere, more than in any other, it is easy to show that women's activities were complementary to those of men, and those women producers and traders were not subordinate to men. In most African societies, as elsewhere, the division of labour along sexual lines promoted reciprocity of effort. If men were farmers, women were food processors and traders. Where women and men were engaged in the same productive activity (such as farming and weaving), they produced different items. Among the Ibo, females and males grew different crops; among the Yoruba, the female and male weavers produced different types of cloth on different looms. Where both females and males traded, there was usually a sexual bifurcation along the commodity line (Sudarkasa, 1989, 34-35). In the management and disposal of their incomes, the activities of African women and men were also separated but coordinated. With the conjugal family unit, women and men had different responsibilities that were met from the proceeds of

their separate economic pursuits. A husband might be primarily responsible for the construction and upkeep of the home and the provision of staple foods, while the wife (or more probably wives) assumed responsibility for non-staple foods and the daily needs of the children (Sudarkasa). The separate management of the "family purse" definitely appeared to be a response to situations in which the members of conjugal units had independent obligations to persons outside these groups. Women played "neutral" complementary; rather than subordination/superordination; it more accurately describes the relationship between certain female and male roles in various pre-colonial African societies (Sudarkasa, 1989, 36). In considering women and work, we might wonder what sorts of influences are responsible not only for inhibitions in work but also for good functioning (Applegarth, 1989, 227). The new economic order that came with colonial rule introduced a monetary system of exchange, which influenced women's thoughts about work.

In the past, market women had sold household necessities, but a type of modern entrepreneur stepped forth to contribute to the consumer revolution. Colonial rule also revolutionized the nature of the market structures and the kind of goods the women traded due to the demand of customers. The idea of having an abundance of goods took shape gradually among the middle and working classes, who had previously thought in terms of restraint and even scarcity. As consumption became more demanding, given the array of goods and the time entailed in moving from one part of the city to another, women increased their consumer activity (Smith, 1989, 328-329). This constituted a natural extension of domestic activity, but one that moved women outside the home. This situation also changed the lives of rural women. Many peasant women added trade to their agricultural activities, which they were used to, though they lacked the financial means necessary to keep up with the urban women. The word 'New women' (Smith, 330) emanated from this situation.

Working women in the nineteenth century had a complex view of themselves and of their activities. She is a good worker and occupies herself with her household. Women who had work and motherhood in common formed neighbouring groups united by their shared experiences. Socializing occurred in public places rather than in small urban areas (Smith, 165). The negative view of working women and their exploitation led to social investigations, which in turn supported charges of immorality. The new woman was closely connected with modernism. Her singular nearness jolted middle-class sensibilities the way

modern art did, and she participated in modernism's formation. Not all middle-class women followed the prescribed norms scrupulously. Many who made names for themselves did so partly because they broke the social codes governing women's conduct (Smith, 200).

#### 4. Conclusion

Despite the British colonial policy that was unfavourable to the women, a considerable number of Benin women derived significant economic benefits from their participation in the colonial economy. Some of them were able to raise enough capital from the processing and production of foodstuffs as well as from the production of cash crops. Such proceeds were used in establishing businesses and the buying and selling of locally produced and imported goods (Osagie, 2000, 27). This new economic prosperity allowed women to contribute financially to the well-being of their immediate and extended families and the community as a whole. Unlike in the past (pre-colonial period), when women totally depended on their husbands economically. Many Benin women, especially those in urban areas, gained economic independence during this period. Some of them built houses while others acquired landed properties. All this was not possible before the Benin woman during the pre-colonial period, as her custom would not allow her own properties, but rather she could only access farm land through her husband. The situation changed as many of them had to break that cultural code and became what is known as the "New Women". The period revolutionaries, women in terms of education, as well as many of these women who became traders and farmers, were able to send their female children to school, which was not possible before the colonial period. While the men were interested in sending their male children to school because they believed that the male children would be the ones to stay and remain with the family, as the females were betrothed at infancy, leaving them to another family and as such, they saw the female education as waste of time and resources, as education will make them disrespectful to their parents.

The women (mothers) began sending their daughters to school from the money they realized from their participation in the colonial economy, to send them to school to learn viable trades, such as seamstresses. The new system liberated women in Benin as they no longer needed permission from their husbands before they sent their daughters to school, since they are financially stable enough to pay fees for their daughters if their fathers are not willing to support the education of their daughters. It should be noted that

European influence and cultural suppression did not eliminate the African traditional institution, but a new philosophy of life that came to stay and liberated the human mind. As women got exposed to education, their worldview was affected. With the gradual exposure of women to and subsequent urbanization, things began to change. In order to educate their female children, many of the women move from villages to urban centres so as to embrace modern civilization. The trading patterns were also transformed as they were involved in both internal and international trade. A standard marketplace was built. In Benin, two main markets were built: the Agbado and Oba markets and both were in Benin City (N.A.I, Ben Prof, 1952, 57). The Introduction of motor vehicles, which is very fundamental to trade, has reduced the burden of carrying bulky goods from one village to another as well as from one town to another. The induction of portable currency, which replaced traditional forms of exchange, was a uniform currency, easy to carry, it was a faster means of exchange and to the people, and it was a new form of economic orientation and a method of wealth determination (Ekundare, 1973, 84). The economy became a monetized economy. A larger number of women got attracted to this new currency. The new form of wealth brought about trading competitions among women. It is interesting to note that trading from one place to the other made Benin women very influential because, through the process, they interacted with people from all walks of life, thereby creating friendly relations.

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## **Civilian's Contributions and the Management of Health-Related Issues in the Nigerian Military during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970**

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**Abstract.** This work looks at the Nigerian federal military government's medical outsourcing during the Nigerian Civil War as a way to complement its medically challenged logistics. Thus, it pays attention to civilians' contributions on health-related issues during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, which contributed to winning the war strategy. Salient aspect put forward by the paper includes services of paid and volunteer health workers from the Medical School of the University of Ibadan, who diagnose, cure and rehabilitate injured and sick soldiers to complement the overwhelmed medical corps of the Nigerian Army. The paper utilises historical and analytical methods to interpret primary and secondary sources. By implication, it posits that the civilian services sustained the war for it prolong period, most especially interrupted civilian blood donation and transfusion to the injured soldiers on the front lines. Such civilian services were motivated by international organisations such as the Nigerian Red Cross, which assisted Military Hospitals, visiting the wounded soldiers, holding prayer sessions with victims and distributing gifts of biscuits and other provisions to the wounded soldiers. Nigerians offer spiritual therapy coordinated by Gideon International Organisation; The Jama'atul Nasril Islam under the Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria and Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, augment and complement the health logistics of the Nigerian military, which improves its combat effectiveness. It gives hope to the wounded and sick veterans as they feel some people are there for them and improve their spiritual, psychological and emotional well-being. It contributes to scholarship on Nigeria's Civil War Win-the War efforts.

**Keywords:** Win-the-War, Spiritual therapy, War Support and war pharmaceutical

### **1. Introduction**

Wars are destructive in their nature and leave in their wake casualties in high death tolls, spread of diseases, and disabled, wounded and physically, emotionally and psychological victims with long lasting scars on their minds and bodies. This led to the demand on medical practitioners and philanthropic contribution to complement the efforts of states and militaries in order to mitigate the pains and effect of wars on the victims and their families very necessary. For instance, during the Battle of Solferino (1859), the Swizz business man, Henrich Dunant, was shocked by the number and pains of the thousands of wounded soldiers unattended in the battle ground that he took to humanitarian cause that culminated in the establishment of the International Committee of the Red Cross (Henri, 1862). During the Nigerian Civil War, there was the wide spread of medical emergencies among the wounded, disabled and sick soldiers on both sides which naturally overwhelmed the logistics and medical capacity of the Federal Military Government and Biafra. However, there is no serious writing on the management of such health crisis. This research is a study of how the medical response shortcoming was complemented by Nigerian civilians and expatriates through the donation of medical equipment, blood, beverages etc to the wounded and sick soldiers while others volunteering their medical services. Using archived newspapers, oral interview, unpublished thesis and other secondary sources such as books and journal articles, the paper identifies that such important area in the medical and Civil War history of from the Nigerian perspective is yet to be investigated which impedes our understanding of the complexity of the Nigerian Civil War and medical history in Nigeria.

## 2. Conceptual Clarification

### 2.1 Civil War

This is a politically motivated large scale, sustained, intense and destructive physical violent conflict that occurs within a country mostly among large important factions of its citizens over the monopoly of physical force within the state in order to secede, change governmental policies or change a given administration (Gersovitz & Kriger, 2013). According to scholars two important factors caused the civil war, which are the greed based and the grief based. The greed based is explain in a certain way that a given group wish to hijack power to accumulate wealth or monopolises state resources while the grief base tends to look at how frustrations, marginalization and injustice lead a certain group to engaged the government in a violent conflict (Anyawu, 2002).

### 2.2 Health Related Issues

In the context of this paper means sickness, disability, physical, emotional and psychological wounds or injuries as well as hygiene and spiritual disturbance incurred by soldiers during or after a battle.

### 2.3 Health Management

This means the preventing, controlling, curing as well as rehabilitating of patience and potential patience of sickness, injuries (both physical and psychological) through the use of drugs, surgery, physical and psychological therapy, spirituality, diets, stipulated exercise among other techniques deployed by the physician.

### 2.4 Background to Medical Contributions in the Management of Healthcare in Wars

Warfare is injury and disease generic because troop's congestion and its devastating effect severe health problems to troops, civilians and attendants such as infectious disease, malnutrition, fatigue, psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) injuries and death. This is more so in modern Industrial Warfare starting from the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century where the automation of war by the use of assault and automatic rifles, heavy artillery, armor and chemical, nuclear and biological weapons made it more devastating when it comes to casualties (Khorram-Manesh, Krzysztof, Burkle, & Yohan, 2022); the large number of casualties made it difficult for the easy treatment and evacuation which affected the hygiene of camps causing dysentery, trench fever, infections etc for example during the

First World War, about 40000 Britons lost a limb (BBC, 2004).

To assuage this, many mechanisms have been made in order to attend to and confront such health issues. This includes the employment of health workers, the creation of medical corps/unit, medical hospitals etc in order to rehabilitate and cure the sick and injured soldiers. In the case where soldiers suffer from PTSD psychological therapy is applied to deal with it. In order to complement this effort, philanthropists, organizations (profit and nonprofit) and private individuals also voluntarily contribute on humanitarian ground to the curing of sick and (physically/psychologically) injured soldiers.

For example, during the Crimean War in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Florence Nightingale, a British nurse known as "the lady with the lamp", served with her team of nurses to help the wounded soldiers in Constantinople as well improving camp hygiene etc which reduced casualties drastically (Hugh, 2017). Another case study was the activities of the Swizz business tycoon, Henry Dunant (1828-1910), that served the wounded soldiers during the Battle of Solferino (1859) in northern Italy (Henri, 1862). Dunant was passing through the fields of Solferino immediately after the battle on 24th June 1859 and was shocked by the state of the neglected dying and wounded soldiers on the battle ground, Dunant mobilized and organized the village people to provide free treatment for the agonizing soldiers. He also used his money to buy medical supplies and build makeshift hospitals for the healing and comfort of the injured soldiers after which he pursued the establishment of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). He later won the first Nobel Prize for Peace in 1901 (ICRC, 2025).

## 3. The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970

The Nigerian Civil war was a large-scale conflict fought between the secessionist state of Biafra (former south eastern Region of Nigeria) headed by Lt. Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and the Federal Military Government of Nigeria under General Yakubu Gowon. The war started on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1967 and ended on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1970 after 30 months of bloody encounter. Biafra land and its fringes on the Nigerian side were the battle theatre, the war caused the death an physical and psychological of thousands of troops, civilians (Obinna, Chine, Ugochukwu, & Omonijo, 2011) and wanton destruction of properties worth billions of Naira from both sides, it also led to displacement of about 2 million Nigerians and the creation of massive IDPs, at the end of the war the federal government was able to terminate the existence

of the Biafran Republic and reintegrate the region into larger Nigeria (Philip, Nigeria and Biafra : My story,, 2003).

There was no single causation for the war so to say but rather they interplay in consortium. Causes ranging from the arbitrary 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria by Lord Deltry Lugard; accusation of marginalization by the Igbos; fear of Northern hegemony; the January, 15, 1966 coup (Operation Damisa) and the July counter coup; the failure of the Aburi Accord in Ghana to settle the dispute; the oil politics and the declaration of the state of Biafra by Ojukwu. All these causes are being explained by scholars as immediate and remote causes that led to the war (Udida, 2008; Terhema, 1980). However, it is out of the focus of this work to delve into such long arguments.

The war was fought in three theatres. In the Northern Sector, the 1 infantry division of the Nigerian Army took charge. On July 5<sup>th</sup> 1967, General Gowon gave orders to the 1 Area Command, later 1 Division, under the leadership of LT. Col. Muhammad Shuwa to launch a “police action” in order to arrest Ojukwu at Enugu for sedition. On July 12 1967, 2, 20 and 23 battalion captured Ogoja town and by July 14 after intense battle the University Town of Nsukka was captured by the Federal Troops of the 1 Division (Ntukogu, 2019). Meanwhile, the federal troops continued their offensive and marched towards Enugu on 12<sup>th</sup>, September, 1967, setting a chain of reaction that would lead to relocation of Biafran capitals from Enugu to Umuahia and Owerri in the course of the war (Okorie, 2015).

On the western sector with places such important places such as Benin, Asaba and Onitsha across the River Niger, the war here was characterised by the contest for the Midwestern cities of Benin and Asaba, “Niger crossing” debacle, and Onitsha (Osakwe, 2014; Yusuf, 2020). Overwhelmed from the Northern and the Southern sectors of the war, the Biafran 101 Division under Col. Victor Banjo with about 3,000 invaded the Midwest on 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 1967. The move was calculated to run over Asaba, Benin, Ore, Ibadan and then to capture Lagos, the capital of Nigeria as of then (Alexander, 1980). The troops were able to reach Ore (present day Ondo state). This transformed the course of the war from police action to total war on the federal site (Orji, 2014).

In response, the federal government created the 2 Division of Nigerian Army under Col. Murtala Muhammad (Obi-Ani & Ambrose, 2022). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division took back the Midwest including the towns of Benin and Asaba (resulting in the controversial Asaba Massacre) (Elizabeth, Bird, & Frazer, 2017) on

the bank of the River Niger in September 1967 and was ordered to proceed to capture Onitsha. The federal troops, had two choices; either to cross through Idah or Asaba. The headquarters favoured the former but Murtala stubbornly chose the latter despite enamous casualties (Osackwe, 2014). Murtala made successive unsuccessful attempts to cross the Niger which all ended in futility and scandalous disaster, he later followed the long Idah route connecting with the 1 Division and capturing Onitsha at the cost of another disaster in Abagana.

The Atlantic theatre of the war was the littoral sector with the Bight of Biafra (Gulf of Guinea) on the Atlantic Ocean; its terrain is coastal, riverine, creeks, mangroves and muddy areas in the extreme south. Dictated by its terrain, it is most suitable for amphibious landing and as littoral warfare deployed by the 3 Marine Commando. Added to this, it was the only theatre that had the Nigerian Navy performing a joint operation along with the army and air force demanding more cooperation and communication for success (Laurence, 2015). Fighting here was also intense for economic and strategic reasons as it was the host of oil fields and installation, Biafra’s sea bounded gateway, hence the economic blockade, and lastly, the location of the last hold of Biafra, Owerri. (Olusegun, 1980; Okpara, 2019; Itiri, 2019). After many campaigns in Port Harcourt, Bonny and Calabar, the 3 Marine Commando linked up with 1 division at Umuahia and entered Owerri on 9<sup>th</sup>/1/1970. Lt. Col. Ojukwu fled Biafra after handing over the command to his deputy General Philip Effiong who surrendered to Col. Obasanjo of the Third Marine Commando on 12<sup>th</sup>/1/1970 at Amichi. On 15/1/1970 Effiong, leading Biafra’s delegation, read the surrender speech at a ceremony by hosted by the Head of state, General Gowon, at Dordan Barracks in Lagos formally ending the 30 months war with “No Victor, Nor Vanquish” (Philip, 2011).

### **3.1 Health Related Issues and the Call for Contributions for its Management during the Civil War**

The war witnessed massive destruction and casualties on both sides. The massive mobilization of troops (Nigeria had 250, 000 soldiers at the end of the war as against the 10,000 soldiers before the war) (Doron, 2025), use of airplanes, ships, modern assault rifles, armored vehicles, explosives, tanks, improvised weapons such as Ojukwu Bucket, ogbunigwe etc and the long duration of the war (30 months) in swampy, littoral and thick forest region made destruction and causality very high among both belligerents. Among the Federal troops, which is the case study of this

paper, there were victims of reptiles and insects, diseases as well as gun and explosive wounds. Retired Lance Corporal Mustafa Bulama, a veteran of the 82nd Infantry Battalion of the 1 Division, Nigerian Army, is a living victim of bomb explosives in Battle of Ezekulesi (Lance Corporal M Bulama (retired), personal communication, 7/8/2023). There were also the cases of trauma and PTSD among others (Obinna, Chine, Ugochukwu, & Omonijo, 2011). Though the military use some of its healthcare facilities in Lagos, Ibadan, Kano and Kaduna (the 44 Military Reference Hospital Kaduna) and teaching hospitals available in Lagos, Ibadan and Zaria, (Otu, 2019), however, the enormous demand place by sick and wounded soldiers being daily evacuated from the front overwhelmed the modest health logistics available to the medical corps.

This pressure led the military to start requesting for donations and contributions from Nigerians in medical practitioners, volunteers, blood, surgicals, drugs, antibiotics, dressings etc to take care of the wounded and sick soldiers. To achieve this, the federal military government used many strategies. One of such strategies was the use of the media to plea for medical contributions and logistics from Nigerians as well as other non-supports such as prayers, food, vehicles, etc. this was both published in local languages such as Hausa and English on newspapers such as Daily Times, New Nigerian, Morning Post etc or announced in Radio Nigeria, Kaduna (Now Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Kaduna Zonal Office) (Nuhu, 2021).

The Federal Military Government also used traditional rulers to appeal to people for support because of their peculiar importance in the eyes of their people (Daily Times, 14/8/1967; (Daily Times, 18/8/1967). There were also organized tours by State governors and administrators (Daily Times, 22/8/1967) or pleas and goading for support and contributions by highly placed officials and individuals in the society (New-Nigeria, 16/9/67).

### **3.2 The Response of Nigerians to Health Care Outsourcing During the Civil War**

In other to complement the effort of the Nigerian military medical corps, individuals, organizations,

business, professional organizations, religious groups, professionals etc contributed in managing the health of the injured and sick soldiers as a result of the Nigerian Civil War from 1967-1970. These contributions include surgical of various sizes and purpose, drugs, injection worth thousands of pounds, religious books and prayer pamphlets, professional services for free, blood, beverages etc. Most of the contributions were made through the auspices of the “Troops Comfort Funds”, a coordinated arrangement of receiving financial, medical, food and other donations to the Nigerian troops during the Civil War (New Nigerian, 27/7/1967).

#### **3.2.1 Material Donations**

In this regard many private individuals, businesses, professional bodies donated drugs, dressings surgical etc to wounded and sick soldiers. For instance, Tutu Chemist, which was the sole subsidiary of Soviet Pharmaceuticals in Nigeria as of 1967, gave £500 worth of drugs and surgical dressings as donation to the injured and sick federal troops as a result of the war. Similarly, the Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria donated drug and dressing materials worth £500; more ever, the African Apostle of Church of Nigeria donated drugs worth £285. The Drug House Nigeria Limited, Lagos, donated drugs, surgical and dressings worth £200 (New Nigerian, 4/9/1967); similarly, Niger City Chemist Lagos donated drugs and medical supplies worth £250 for the troops (Morning Post, 6/10/1967). The Medical School of the University College, Ibadan also sent money for medical supplies from its Medical Relief Fund to the troops (New Nigerian, 23/4/1968), Similarly, the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria gave dressings, antibiotics and drugs to the troops valued £700 (New Nigerian, 2/10/1967); Sara Trading Coy, Kaduna, donated 72 packages of pensics (New Nigerian, 27/7/1967). At another level, Western Chemist Opticians Limited, Ibadan distributed eye glasses and pharmaceuticals to affected soldiers (Morning Post, 23/8/1967). Similarly, Drug Houe (Nigerian) Limited donated drugs, surgical and dressings worth 200 pounds, first aid kits among others (Morning Post, 23/8/1967).

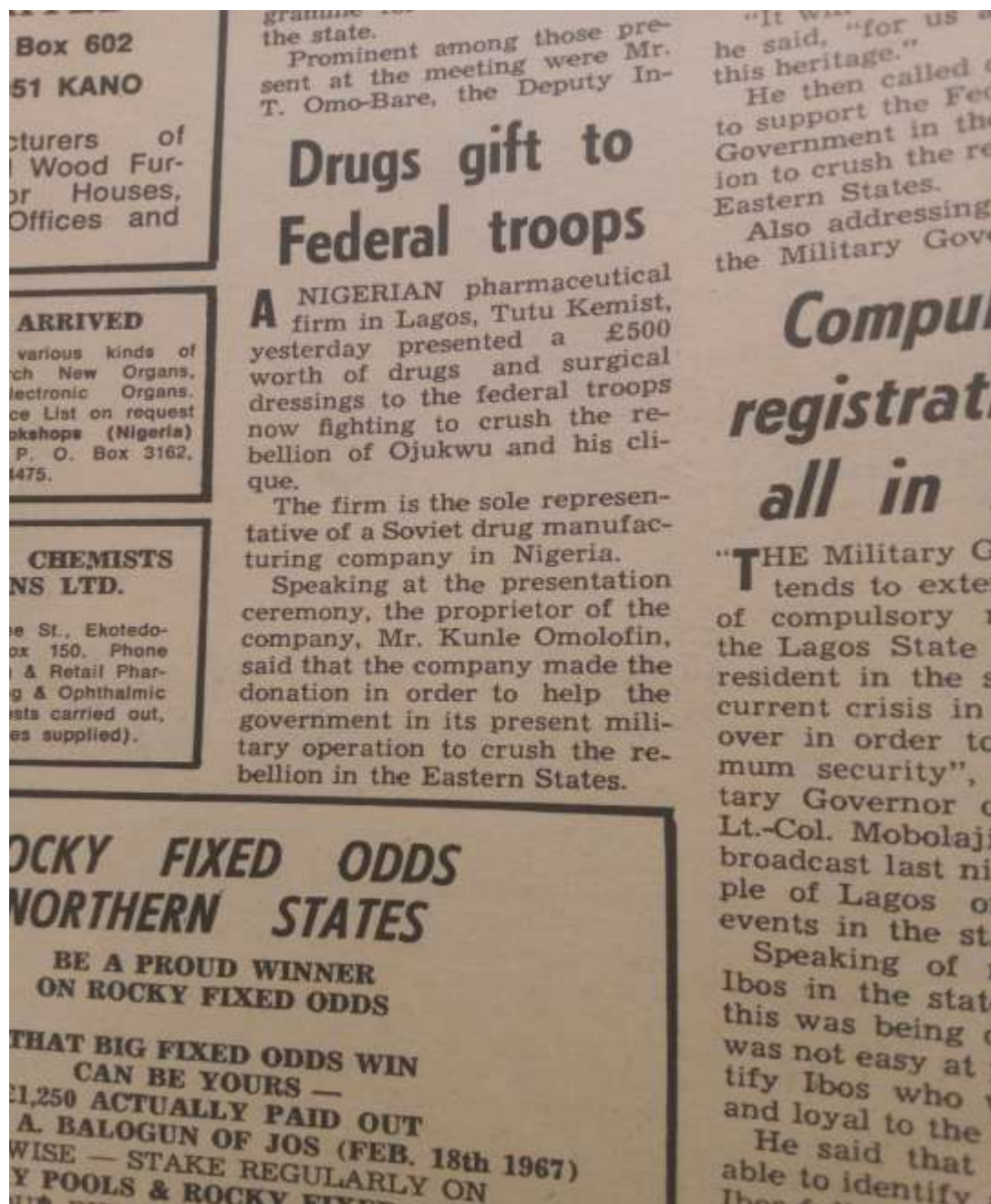


Fig.1: An Archived News Paper from 1967 reporting medical donations during the Nigerian Civil War, Source: *New Nigerian*, 1967

### 3.2.2 Health Workers

The Medical School of the University of Ibadan sent 26 doctors and 6 trained nurses to the war front to diagnose, cure and rehabilitate injured and sick soldiers in order to complement the overwhelmed medical corps of the Nigerian Army. Similarly, other health practitioners in the university hospital volunteered their night shifts and weekends to attend the wounded soldiers admitted the facility (New Nigerian, 23/4/1968).

### 3.2.3 Blood Donation

As bomb and other explosives along with ammunitions kept injuring soldiers on the front line daily and a lot of blood was being loose from the bleeding soldiers, there was the need for instant blood transfusion on some of the wounded soldiers in other to salvage their lives, the demand for blood overwhelmed whatsoever arrangement was already in place. The enormous cost of the war would make buying blood a very difficult arrangement as according to the Federal Commissioner for Finance, Cheif Obafemi Awolowo the financial burden of executing the war was £980, 000 per day (Zderek, 1972), the military plea for blood donation by Nigerians (Mornig Post, 15/8/1967). To this effect, Nigerians responded positively with blood donations. For instance, Rivers State youth in Lagos donated blood to be used in the treatment of the “sick, wounded and disabled soldiers who are fighting on the side of the federal military government” (Morning Post, 12/8/1967). At another level, the Nigerian Morning Post reported that another five hundred Mid-westerners residing in Lagos volunteered to donate blood (Morning Post, 22/8/1967). When the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) pledged to donate blood for the wounded and sick soldiers admitted to the University Teaching Hospital, Idi-Araba, Lagos, about youths 5000 volunteered (Morning Post, 29/8/1967).

### 3.2.4 The Nigerian Red Cross

The Nigerian Red Cross also provided for assistance e in the Military Hospital Kaduna by visiting the wounded soldiers, holding prayers session with them and distributing gifts of biscuit, and other provisions to the wounded soldiers which was heartily received by the commander (Morning Post, 1/10/1967). They also provided humanitarian assistance to wounded soldiers in both divides and mobilised 3000 relief workers apart from the gift of the sum of £5000 for the health of the wounded soldiers and war victims (Morning Post, 29/9/1967).

### 3.2.4 Spiritual Therapy

Many Nigerians offered special prayers to wounded death, sick, disabled and wounded soldiers which reduce their pains psychologically, spiritually and physically. They also present them with religious books, prayer pamphlets, sermons food and beverages etc to uplift their hope and increase their chance of overcoming the illness. This gave them encouragement and serve as spiritual therapy in their healing process. For instance, The Gideon International Organization, Lagos Chapter, presented 500 copies of the New Testament to the troops in order to improve their spirituality (Morning Post, 23/8/1967). The Jama’atul Nasril Islam under the Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria, Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi donated Juz’uAmma (a portion of the Quran) to wounded soldiers at Armed forces Hospital in Kaduna and Kano as received by Lt. A. Rimi who was in charge of the armed forces hospitals (New Nigerian, 3/12/1969).



**Fig.2:** A Newspaper report from 1967 showing Jam’atul Nasril Islam members presenting gifts of the portion of the Holy Quran to wounded soldiers at a military hospital in Kaduna. Source: New Nigerian, 1967.

### 3.2.5 Beverages and Recreational

Many Nigerians also presented milk, sugar, beer, bread, chicken, egg, vegetables etc to the wounded soldiers in a move to improve their chances of recuperation. For instance, the Nigerian Air Force Officers Wives Association (NAFOWA), Kaduna branch, presented such goods to wounded soldiers in Armed Forces Hospital, Kaduna as depicted in the newspaper report below.



**Fig.3:** An Archived Newspaper showing the Wife of the Commander Nigerian Air force Kaduna, Mrs Obada presenting a Carton of Bear Captain Opileye at a Military Hospital. Sources”: New Nigerian, 1967.

#### 4. Impact of Medical Contributions to Troops Health Management

The medical contributions by Nigerians helped in no small way to assuage the pain and improve the health and nourishment of the disabled, sick and wounded soldiers. It also augmented and complement the health logistics of the Nigerian military which improve its combat effectiveness. It gives hope to the wounded and sick veterans as they felt some people are there for them and improve their spiritual, psychological and emotional wellbeing.

#### 5. Conclusion

This work looks at the Nigerian federal military government medical outsourcing during the Nigerian Civil War as a way to complement its medically challenged logistics. The work finds out that Nigerians in response contributed to the war effort through the troops comfort fund and other individual and non-individual initiatives by donating blood, dressings, drugs and surgical worth thousands of pounds for the treatment of the wounded and sick soldiers. The research concludes that the medical contributions by Nigerians complement the efforts of the Nigerian

Federal Military government in attending to the sick and wounded soldiers and play a part in Nigeria’s overall success in the war.

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## Religion, Civil Service System and Economic Development in Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Political, social and economic development is impossible without a functional and efficient civil service system. This is because the civil service system is one of the key drivers of policies and programs of government in any nation of the world. However, in recent times, there has been noticeable decline of the quality of civil service in Nigeria occasioned by the influence of some religious practices on the civil service system. The economic losses accruing from such religious practices are inestimable and portend a serious danger to the overall development of the country. Therefore, this paper examines the nexus between religious practices of civil servants and the current decline in quality of civil service system in Nigeria. In particular, the paper investigates how Christians' and Muslims' religious practices particularly prayers at the workplace can potentially inhibit socio-political and economic development in the country. Using the methodologies of desk research and critical discussion, the paper underscores the fact that a nation in which civil service system is characterized by religious practices like Nigeria definitely risks socio-political and economic development. The entire paper is hinged on the views of Max Weber's Spirit of Capitalism, secularization theory, and institutional theory while also incorporating insights from Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Sriya Iyer. Overall, the paper argues that to position Nigeria on the path of socio-political and economic development requires a balanced understanding of religious practices by civil servants at the workplace, while law makers should formulate and implement policies that can checkmate religious practices of civil servants in the civil service system.

**Keywords:** Religion, Civil Service System, Civil Servants, Development and Nigeria.

### 1. Introduction

The intractable socio-economic and political malady confronting the Nigerian state today requires decisive and holistic approach to address. One dominant approach amongst scholars in Nigeria has been the call for the federal government to diversify the economy from oil-based to technology and agricultural-based economy. Those who hold strongly to this school of thought believe that by simply diversifying the economy from oil-based to agriculture and technology-based, all socio-economic problems of the country will be addressed and the country positioned on the path of irreversible socio-economic and political growth. However, this may not be the case if the supposed diversification is understood in such a restrictive sense without inclusion of urgent reforms of some major governmental establishments like the civil service system in Nigeria. This is because the civil service system plays a vital role in the development of a nation.

Regrettably, as crucial as the civil service system is, in recent decades there has been gradual decline of the central role which the civil service plays in the socio-economic and political development of the state. Some civil service researchers like Raadschelders, Toonen, & van der Meer (2007) attribute this to a number of external and internal factors like increased citizens' education, increased awareness of the impact of decision centers on the societal and governmental level, rapid exchange of information, and effects of globalization. Moreover, other scholars like Smalskys & Urbanovic, (2017) observe that the problem confronting the civil service system is even worst in developing African countries underscoring that since after gaining independence, these countries have been bedeviled by lack of adequate administrative potential and are overwhelmed by corruption and tribalism. Notably, they enlist the challenges confronting the civil service system in Africa to include aging

population, personnel selection, moral degradation, namely: widespread nepotism, irresponsible public financial management, self-discrediting public procurement, and problem of replacement of civil servants. Similarly, Brol (2011) underscores that the major reasons for the inefficiency of the public sector in African countries are corruption, ineffective bureaucracy, diversion of public resources for private interests, tribalism, favoritism and nepotism, and lack of transparency and democratic procedures.

Suffice it to state that while these authors are in order in their respective observations, on the contrary, they fail to underscore the fact that religion, especially religious prayers of Christians and Muslims also constitute a complex problem for the civil service system. In Nigeria in particular, the indiscriminate Christians and Muslims' religious activities in the civil service particularly during working hours significantly undermine the quality of services offered by the civil service system in Nigeria. Granted that the right to profess and practice one's religion whether in public or private is a constitutional right of all citizens enshrined in Chapter IV, Sub-section 38 (1) of the 1999 Constitution as amended, the very fact that the limits of such a right is not clearly defined by the same Constitution constitutes a problem in itself. Therefore, it is arguable that such a right to profess or practice one's religion should not be allowed in whichever guise to override national or public interest. Unfortunately, in Nigeria today, some Christians and Muslims' prayer activities in the civil service sector appear to override the country's overall public or economic interest thereby adding to the list of problems confronting the civil service system. It is against this backdrop that the paper seeks to critically examine the economic cost of Christians and Muslims' prayers in the civil service system in Nigeria. The central argument in this paper is that amongst the problems confronting the civil service system in Nigeria today, religion especially Christians and Muslims' prayers constitute one of the most intractable challenges. Also, unlike the past, current reforms in the civil service system in Nigeria should include the significant role of religious prayers in eroding the quality of civil service system.

## 2. Conceptual Clarifications

For clarity and understanding, there is need to explain the key concepts that are central to the discussion, namely religion, civil service system, and economic development. Clarifying these concepts could help establish the conceptual boundaries within which the relationship between religion, public administration, and economic productivity in Nigeria is examined.

### 2.1 Religion

Religion is a complex social phenomenon that encompasses beliefs, practices, rituals, and moral values centered on the understanding of the sacred or the transcendent. Scholars have offered different definitions depending on disciplinary perspectives. Durkheim (1912/1995) defines religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things which unite adherents into a moral community. In a similar vein, Berger (1967) views religion as a human enterprise that establishes a sacred canopy through which individuals interpret and give meaning to social reality. Within many societies, religion functions not only as a spiritual framework but also as a moral and cultural institution that shapes social norms, human behavior and economic activities (Koko, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). In Nigeria, religion occupies a prominent position in public and private life, with Christianity and Islam being the two dominant faith traditions. These religions significantly influence individual lifestyles, communal interactions, and even institutional practices (Falola & Heaton, 2008). While religion can positively influence ethical conduct, its pervasive presence within social institutions may also create tensions between religious obligations and professional responsibilities.

Religion in public institutions refers to the presence and influence of religious beliefs, practices, or expressions within state organizations such as schools, courts, and government offices. In modern democratic societies, the relationship between religion and public institutions is often shaped by the principle of secularism, which seeks to maintain institutional neutrality toward religious beliefs while protecting individual freedom of worship (Casanova, 1994). In Nigeria, although the constitution guarantees religious freedom, the interaction between religion and public institutions is complex due to the deeply religious nature of society. Religious expressions frequently occur in public spaces, including workplaces within the civil service. While such practices reflect the religious identity of individuals, they may raise concerns when they interfere with official responsibilities and institutional productivity. In this study, therefore, the concept of religion in public institutions is examined in relation to how religious practices within the Nigerian civil service during official working hours may affect administrative efficiency and, by extension, economic development.

### 2.2 Civil Service System

Generally, the word "civil service" according to the United Kingdom Civil Service (2019) document is a

collective term for a sector of government composed mainly of career civil servants employed rather than appointed or elected, whose institutional tenure typically survives transitions of political leadership. Page, Chapman & Briggs (2023) note that civil service is a body of government officials who are employed in civil occupation that is neither political nor judicial. They also underscore that in most countries, the term may refer to employees selected and promoted on the basis of a merit and seniority system, which may include taking examinations. Moreover, the notion of civil service involves civil servants and their activity while implementing the assigned functions and decisions made by politicians. In this light, the civil service is a system of civil servants who perform the assigned functions of a public administration ((Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017). Consequently, Ginsberg (2006) refers to the civil service simply as a paid non-military service in non-elective office in the executive arm of government. This means that a civil servant is a person employed in the public sector by a government department or agency to carry out specific public sector functions, particularly administrative ones (Koko & Oko, 2025). In this sense, civil service plays an important role in the state and drawing from this understanding, Ayida (1990) describes it as one vital instrument of government responsible for the provision of quality and abundant services to the people. It is also responsible for mediating the creation, delivery and sustenance of services to the public and as such plays an important role in the processes of policy formulation and execution through which services are provided to the people.

Stressing on this central role of the civil service system in the state, civil service researchers like Demmke (2010) and Smalskys & Urbanovic (2017) identify a number of reasons why efficient civil service system is indispensable for the socio-economic and political development of the state. In the first place, it is the civil service that provides the enabling environment for implementation of the assigned functions and decisions made by politicians. Hence, the effectiveness of the civil service of the state to a large extent determines the quality of implemented public policy decisions and thus the quality of life in the state. Also, the very fact that the civil service system is a key component of the system of government of the state makes it vital. Thus, it could be argued that the government of any nation may be incomplete without a competent and viable civil service system (Koko & Oko, 2025). But much more than that, the civil service is important because of the role it plays in protecting public interest as well as standing as intermediaries or negotiators between a wide range of non-profit and private stakeholders. It is against the backdrop of these

tasks and duties that the establishment of a viable and effective civil service in all countries of the world becomes imperative.

Basically, there are two dominant models of civil service system which Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017 have identified. One is the career system which is also called the closed system. This model is dominant in continental Europe, with the prevalence of traditional-hierarchical public administration, rational bureaucracy, and formalized operational rules. The other is the position system which is also known as the open system and dominant in Anglo-Saxon countries, with the prevalence of managerial principles, pragmatic administration, and charismatic leadership. Suffice it to state that there is no completely pure model; instead, what is common in almost all countries is a mixed/hybrid of both models. It should also be said that the concept and scope of civil service in a particular country depend on the legal framework, which defines the areas of public and private sectors and their relationship. Certainly, Nigeria's civil service system aligns more with the career system but also has some elements of the position system (Koko & Oko, 2025). Thus, it could be seen as belonging to the mixed model system.

Furthermore, civil service researchers have also argued that in some countries, the boundaries between the two sectors are not distinct. In some countries, civil service includes state and local administration; other countries have only administration. However, there are countries where civil service is a broader concept and covers not only central and local government officials who perform administrative functions but also public sector employees who provide public services, such as employees of educational and health institutions, etc. (Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017). Nevertheless, all countries are characterized by the fact that the purpose of civil service, regardless of the political situation and changes of governments, is to ensure efficient, professional, transparent, and politically neutral implementation of the objectives of the state. Given the above therefore, every state must ensure that there is high quality of performance of employees who come to work in the civil service and be sure that only qualified civil servants are accepted to the civil service through a thorough selection process, competition, or appointment (Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017).

Page, Chapman and Briggs (2023) emphasize that the standards placed upon a civil servant's conduct are partly those to be expected of any loyal, competent, and obedient employee and partly those enjoined upon a public employee. Hence, the civil servant should be

above any suspicion of partiality and should not let personal sympathies, loyalties, or interests affect the performance of duties. For instance, a civil servant is obliged to be circumspect in private financial dealings. Moreover, as a general rule, a civil servant is not allowed to engage directly or indirectly in any trade or business and may engage in social or charitable organizations only if these have no direct bearing with his or her official duties. Although in the 19<sup>th</sup> century civil services were normally restricted to maintaining law and order and minor economic regulations such as those concerning weights and measures and factory laws. This means that there are always strict limit on a civil servant's right to engage in other socio-economic activities that may conflict with his or her official duties.

Similarly, Salisu (2009:3-4) adds that in the exercise of its powers, the civil service is expected to operate by certain guiding principles, norms and standards of professionalism, neutrality and within constitutional boundaries. Moreover, Ayeni (1990; 1994) emphasizes that as a management institution, the civil service requires effective and efficient organization and utilization of human, material and financial resources to enhance capacity and productivity of the commission. Unfortunately, in the Nigerian situation, the system of civil service has been hijacked by the political class and their cronies who see appointive positions under their jurisdiction as political prizes to be distributed among influential and faithful supporters. Scholars like Yamamoto (2003), Etuk (1992), and Balawa (1994) all see bureaucracy as one major problem confronting the civil service in Nigeria. What they ignored however, in their analyses is the fact that religion is also a major problem why the civil service in Nigeria has practically been in comatose.

Therefore, the civil service system refers to the body of permanent government officials responsible for implementing public policies and administering government programs. It represents the administrative machinery through which the state delivers services and executes governmental decisions. According to Weber (1978), the modern civil service is characterized by bureaucratic principles such as hierarchical authority, specialization of duties, adherence to formal rules, and impersonal administration. In the Nigerian context, the civil service plays a vital role in governance and national development by facilitating policy implementation, maintaining administrative continuity, and ensuring public service delivery. However, scholars have noted that the Nigerian civil service often faces challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiency, weak institutional discipline, and administrative delays (Olowu &

Adamolekun, 2015). These challenges can undermine the ability of government institutions to function effectively and contribute to economic development.

### 2.3 Economic Development

Economic development refers to a sustained process of improving the economic well-being and quality of life of a population. Unlike mere economic growth, which focuses primarily on increases in national income or output, economic development encompasses broader structural transformations such as improvements in productivity, institutional efficiency, employment opportunities, and living standards (Todaro & Smith, 2020; Koko, 2020c). It involves the effective functioning of institutions that facilitate economic activities and ensure the efficient allocation of resources. Strong institutions are widely recognized as fundamental drivers of economic development. North (1990) argues that institutional efficiency reduces transaction costs, enhances productivity, and promotes sustainable economic growth. Consequently, when public institutions such as the civil service operate inefficiently, they may create administrative bottlenecks that slow down economic transactions and hinder development.

### 3. Theoretical Framework on the Nexus between Religion, Civil Service and Economic Development

No research is carried out in a vacuum. Thus, this study is hinged on three main theories namely: Max Weber's theory of the Protestant ethic, secularization theory, and institutional theory while also incorporating insights from Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Sriya Iyer. These theoretical perspectives collectively illuminate how religious beliefs and practices shape social behavior, institutional norms, and economic outcomes.

The first theory which this current research builds upon is Max Weber's analysis of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* which remains one of the most influential frameworks for understanding the relationship between religion and economic behavior. Weber (2002) argued that certain religious doctrines particularly those within Protestantism, cultivated values such as discipline, hard work, punctuality, and a sense of vocation (*Beruf*). These values contributed to the development of rational economic activity and modern capitalism. Weber further emphasized that modern bureaucratic institutions depend on rational organization, strict adherence to rules, and time discipline (Weber, 1978). Within such systems, the efficient use of working hours is essential for

administrative effectiveness. In the context of the Nigerian civil service, Weber's framework suggests that while religion can promote moral discipline and ethical conduct, the interruption of official duties for religious observances may undermine the rational and time-bound structure required for bureaucratic efficiency (Koko & Oko, 2025).

Complementing Weber's perspective is secularization theory, which examines the evolving relationship between religion and modern institutions. Early proponents such as Peter Berger (1967) argued that modernization leads to a gradual decline in the influence of religion in public institutions. However, later scholars have refined this argument. Casanova (1994), for example, contends that secularization is better understood as the differentiation of social spheres, whereby religion, politics, and economics operate as distinct yet interacting domains. In pluralistic societies like Nigeria, this differentiation implies that while religion remains influential in personal and communal life, public institutions such as the civil service are expected to operate according to secular administrative principles (Koko & Oko, 2025). From this perspective, the presence of religious practices during official working hours raises important questions about the appropriate boundary between private religious devotion and public institutional responsibility.

The functionalist perspectives of Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons further illuminate the social role of religion. Durkheim (1912/1995) viewed religion as a fundamental social institution that fosters social cohesion, collective identity, and moral regulation. Religious practices strengthen communal bonds and reinforce shared values within society. Similarly, Parsons (1951) argued that religion contributes to the maintenance of social order by providing moral guidelines that shape individual behavior and social integration. Within the workplace, these moral frameworks can encourage virtues such as honesty, diligence, and responsibility (Oko & Koko, 2024). Nevertheless, while religion can support ethical conduct among public officials, Durkheimian and Parsonian perspectives also imply that social institutions must function harmoniously within a broader social system. When religious activities disrupt organizational routines or administrative processes, they may unintentionally undermine institutional stability and efficiency.

Finally, Sriya Iyer's economic analysis of religion provides a contemporary perspective on the interaction between religion and economic development. Iyer (2016) argues that religion can

influence economic outcomes by shaping social norms, trust, and patterns of behavior within societies. Moreover, it can also shape economic development (Koko, 2020c; Koko & Oko, 2024). Religious institutions may contribute positively to development by promoting ethical values and social capital. However, the economic implications of religion depend on how religious practices interact with formal institutional structures.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the interaction between religion and the Nigerian civil service system. Weber's theory highlights the importance of work discipline and bureaucratic rationality, secularization theory emphasizes the differentiation between religious and state institutions, Durkheim and Parsons underscore the moral and integrative functions of religion, and Iyer demonstrates the broader economic implications of religious behavior. Combined, these perspectives help explain how religious practices within the civil service may simultaneously promote moral values while also creating institutional challenges that affect administrative efficiency and economic development.

#### **4. Structures, Roles, Reforms and Problems of the Civil Service System in Nigeria**

Historically, the civil service system in Nigeria roots its existence in a number of constitutional and administrative reforms which started in 1954 (Adedire, 2014). Its component organs consist of the Federal Civil Service, the 36 autonomous state civil services, and all the 774 local authorities, but excluding other federal agencies and state-owned enterprises like the military, legislative and judicial arms (Salisu, 2009). Furthermore, the federal and state civil services are organized around government ministries and extra-ministerial departments headed by ministers/commissioners who are appointed by the president/governors, respectively. These appoint-tees represent the political heads of their respective departments and are primarily responsible for policy matters. The administrative heads of the ministries are the permanent secretaries, responsible primarily for policy implementation under their respective jurisdictions. At the local government level, the political establishment is made up of the elected Chairman and councilors. The secretary and departmental heads constitute the civil service echelon at the local government (Salisu, 2009). In all, responsibility for the regulation of the three civil service systems - federal, State, and local governments rests with corresponding three commissions namely: the Federal Civil Service Commission, the State Civil

Service Commissions and the Local Government Service Commissions. These commissions are generally given the powers to appoint or dismiss any person for or from office in the services as well as exercise disciplinary control measures over persons holding positions in the services (Salisu, 2009).

Since its establishment, the civil service system as some researchers observe has gone through several reforms which can be divided into five different historical stages. Globally, issues bordering on reforms of the civil service system are not alien. For reforms of the civil service have taken place in many countries of the world. These reforms were necessary because traditionally civil service was a hierarchical, vertically integrated, and closed corporation. This conservative structure was based on loyalty to the central state institutions, service, and immediate superiors and only thereafter to the citizens as users of the administrative services. However, with the liberalization of Western societies and the beginning of globalization, this model of civil service did not meet modern requirements. Thus, it was necessary to reform and change civil service into something more effective, results-oriented, and transparent to the public (Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017).

In Nigeria, the first historical reform is the one that started in 1954 and lasted till 1966 under the influence of colonial civil service. A significant development during this period is that with the advent of independence in 1960, the federal civil service commission was created and granted full powers to appoint, promote, dismiss, and discipline civil servants of all categories (Salisu, 2003). In addition to the federal civil service commission, there were three other civil services, one each for the Northern, Eastern and Western regions of the country (Olowu, Otobo and Okotoni, 1997).

Like the first reforms, the second major reforms took place during the military regimes which started in 1966 and lasted till 1979. Most significant thing during this period is that the higher civil service especially its corps of Permanent Secretaries in policy- and decision making gained further momentum at the federal level during this period (Salisu, 2009; Koko & Oko, 2025)). Ayida (1990) adds that it was during this period that the politicization of civil service which in turn resulted to loss of its political neutrality, anonymity and impartiality took place. This development to a great extent destroyed the cherished values of stability of tenure and retirement honours associated with the civil service (Salisu, 2009). The implication is that the military regimes in Nigeria brought about gradual decline of the cherished values of the civil service

system in Nigeria. This continued till the third historical period which spanned from 1979 to 1983 when the civilian administration came to office on October 1, 1979 and made the civil service more politicized than ever before.

The fourth reforms began in 1983 and ended in May 1999. Olowu, Otobo and Okotoni (1997) record, that the period was characterized by the unified grading and salary structures covering all established posts in the civil services. States were also allowed to establish their own salary structures on the basis of their individual ability to pay. However, the most significant reforms during this period was the fact that the position of Head of Civil Service was abolished resulting into a situation in which ministers/commissioners became the chief executive and accounting officers of their respective ministries. The danger with this was that it paved way for financial recklessness and outrageous corruption to take place (Salisu, 200:7). The last historical period which started from 1999 and continues till date has also witnessed several other reforms. One significant thing worthy of mention during this period however, is the proliferation of special advisers which in a sense appears to usurp the relevance of higher civil servants in advising government on policy matters. The practice of appointing civil servants as caretakers of local government has further exacerbated the phenomenon of politicization of civil service in Nigeria (Salisu, 2009:8).

Despite these reforms, the civil service system is also characterized by serious challenges. The civil service system whether career or position, plays a central role in the governance of the state and socio-economic development of society by providing the enabling environment for implementation of policies of government as well as protecting public interest. Unfortunately, in recent times, this central role of civil servants in the political-administrative and societal systems is fast eroding as Raadschelders, Toonen, & van der Meer, (2007) rightly observe. Generally, civil service researchers attribute this gradual decline of the quality of services or supposed monopoly of civil servants worldwide to a number of internal and external factors which promote changes in the system. On a global scale, some of these internal and external factors include citizens' increase education and awareness of societal problems and possible solutions required to address them which they are now increasingly demanding a voice; increase awareness of the impact of decision centers on the societal and governmental levels; rapid information exchange; globalization and its attendant effects, transnational economic and demographic movements; and issues on

how to control cross border movement and constrain (Raadschelders, Toonen, & van der Meer, 2007; Farazmand & Pinkowski, 2006; Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017).

In developing African countries, scholars also pinpoint that the problems confronting the civil service system are quite many and hydra-headed. Most notable of these problems however which scholars have identified include inadequate administrative potential or professionalism, corruption, tribalism, ineffective bureaucracy, favoritism and nepotism, lack of transparency, poor democratic procedures, diversion of public resources for private interests, lack of efficient information technologies, prolong absence of good governance, politicization of the civil service system, poor recruitment processes, etc. (Smalskys & Urbanovic, 2017; Brol, 2011).

The situation is not different in Nigeria where the civil service system has been particularly plagued by a number of challenges like tribalism, nepotism, endemic corruption, institutional failure, poor recruitment processes, and politicization of the civil service, amongst others (Ayeni, 1990; Etuk, 1992; and Olowu, Otobo & Okotoni, 1997). Of particular interest is that Salisu (2009) has registered five of the challenges which he considered as most daunting in the civil service in Nigeria today. These include inefficiency, that is, the inability of the civil service in Nigeria to function as a pivotal instrument for transformation; self-orientation which he defined as the tendency of civil servants to seek personal satisfaction of their own personal desires at the expense of other citizens of the country; incompetence of civil servants in setting out policy frameworks and standards as well as bring their experience, technical knowledge, and behavioural qualities to bear in the process of policy making; lack of training and retraining programs; and eroding values of integrity and trust. These are all problems confronting the civil service system in Nigeria.

Suffice it to state that while these problems persist, one area of particular reform that is urgently needed is to critically look into how religion - Christians and Muslims' prayer in the civil service constitute a problem to the smooth operations of the civil service system in Nigeria and the potential economic lost accruing from it. In the next section, this particular concern will be examined with particular reference to the Nigerian situation.

## **5. Religious Prayers in the Civil Service and their Implications for Economic Development in Nigeria**

Religion occupies a central position in Nigerian society and significantly shapes the moral outlook, social behavior, and daily practices of its citizens (Koko, 2019). Both Christianity and Islam exert profound influence on personal and collective life, including political and administrative institutions. While religion can contribute positively to ethical conduct, discipline, and social cohesion, its manifestation within the Nigerian civil service system sometimes raises questions regarding efficiency, accountability, and economic productivity. In particular, the frequent observance of religious prayers during official working hours by both Christian and Muslim civil servants constitutes grave concerns about its potential implications for governance and economic development (Koko, 2020a).

The Nigerian civil service constitutes the administrative backbone of the state and plays a crucial role in policy implementation, service delivery, and national development. Ideally, public servants are expected to devote official working hours to performing duties that advance governmental objectives and public welfare. However, in many government offices across Nigeria, religious practices such as attending church services, participating in fellowship meetings, or leaving offices for Islamic midday prayers often occur during official working hours (Koko & Oko, 2025). While these practices are rooted in deeply held religious convictions, they sometimes disrupt administrative routines and delay the processing of public services.

From an economic perspective, time management and productivity are essential components of efficient governance. Economic development is closely linked to the capacity of institutions to function effectively and deliver services without unnecessary delays. Scholars of development economics emphasize that weak institutions and bureaucratic inefficiency often undermine economic growth by increasing transaction costs and discouraging investment (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; North, 1990). When civil servants frequently suspend official duties to engage in religious activities during working hours, the cumulative effect can be significant delays in administrative procedures such as processing licenses, approving documents, or responding to citizens' requests. These delays not only inconvenience citizens but also reduce the overall efficiency of public institutions.

In Nigeria, anecdotal and observational evidence suggests that many government offices temporarily halt operations during certain periods of the day due to religious observances. Muslim civil servants often leave their offices for congregational prayers at mosques, particularly during the midday prayer (Salat al-Zuhr or Jumu'ah on Fridays), while some Christian civil servants attend prayer meetings, fellowship gatherings, or church services organized during working hours. Although these practices are not universally observed by all civil servants, their prevalence in some offices contributes to the perception that public service delivery is frequently interrupted by religious commitments. The implications of such interruptions extend beyond administrative inconvenience to broader economic consequences. Inefficiencies in the civil service can slow down economic transactions and hinder business activities. For example, delays in processing permits, tax documentation, or regulatory approvals can discourage entrepreneurial activity and reduce investor confidence. According to the World Bank (2020), bureaucratic inefficiency and administrative delays are among the institutional factors that constrain economic growth in many developing countries. When public institutions fail to operate consistently during official hours; the cost of doing business increases, thereby affecting economic productivity and national development.

Furthermore, the normalization of religious activities during official work hours may reinforce a culture of laxity within the civil service. Organizational behavior scholars argue that workplace norms significantly shape employee performance and institutional effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2017). If the institutional environment permits frequent interruptions for non-official activities, employees may gradually develop *attitudes that prioritize personal commitments over professional responsibilities*. In such contexts, religious practices may inadvertently contribute to a broader pattern of absenteeism, lateness, and reduced accountability within the public sector. This situation also raises important questions about the relationship between religion and the secular character of the state. Nigeria is constitutionally a secular state that guarantees freedom of religion while maintaining neutrality in matters of faith. In principle, religious freedom allows individuals to practice their faith without interference. However, when religious observances interfere with official responsibilities in public institutions, tensions may arise between personal religious rights and professional obligations. Some scholars argue that maintaining a clear boundary between religious practice and public administration is essential for

ensuring institutional efficiency and fairness in pluralistic societies (Berger, 1999; Casanova, 1994).

It is important to emphasize that the argument here is not that religion itself is detrimental to economic development. On the contrary, religion has historically contributed to the formation of ethical values such as honesty, diligence, and social responsibility. Max Weber's classic analysis of the Protestant ethic, for instance, highlights how religious ideas can encourage disciplined work habits and economic productivity (Weber, 2002). In the Nigerian context, religious teachings within both Christianity and Islam often promote moral integrity and discourage corruption—values that are essential for effective governance. Nevertheless, the challenge arises when the practice of religion during official working hours conflicts with the operational demands of public institutions. In such cases, the issue becomes one of institutional management rather than religious belief itself. Public administration systems require clear rules regarding working hours, attendance, and accountability. If religious practices are allowed to disrupt these structures without appropriate regulation, the efficiency of the civil service may be compromised. A balanced approach may therefore be necessary - one that respects religious freedom while safeguarding institutional productivity. Some countries address similar issues by establishing structured break periods that accommodate personal needs without disrupting official duties. Such arrangements ensure that employees can observe religious obligations while maintaining professional discipline. In the Nigerian civil service, clearer administrative guidelines and workplace policies could help create a balance between religious expression and effective service delivery.

In all it is necessary to state that while religion remains an integral part of Nigerian social life and can positively shape moral character, its manifestation within the civil service during official working hours may have unintended consequences for institutional efficiency and economic development. Frequent interruptions for religious activities can contribute to delays in public service delivery, reinforce a culture of administrative laxity, and increase the cost of economic transactions. Addressing this issue requires thoughtful policy measures that respect religious freedom while emphasizing professionalism, accountability, and the efficient use of official working time within the civil service system. What then should be the way forward?

## 6. Toward a Balanced Framework: Religion, Work Ethics, and Public Accountability

The interaction between religion, work ethics, and public accountability in the Nigerian civil service calls for a balanced framework that recognizes the legitimacy of religious expression while safeguarding institutional efficiency and national development. Given the deeply religious nature of Nigerian society, attempts to exclude religion entirely from public life may be impractical. However, unregulated religious practices within official working hours can undermine the principles of professionalism, accountability, and effective service delivery. A balanced approach is therefore necessary to harmonize these competing concerns. Religion, as earlier noted, plays a significant role in shaping moral values and ethical conduct. Both Christianity and Islam emphasize virtues such as honesty, diligence, integrity, and service to others. These values align closely with the principles of public service ethics and can contribute positively to the performance of civil servants. Weber (2002) underscores the importance of disciplined work habits and a sense of vocation in fostering productivity and economic development. Similarly, Parsons (1951) highlights the role of shared moral values in maintaining social order and guiding individual behavior. When these values are properly integrated, religious ethics can reinforce a culture of responsibility and commitment within the civil service.

However, the challenge lies in ensuring that religious practices do not conflict with the operational requirements of public institutions. Public accountability demands that civil servants utilize official working hours efficiently and prioritize their responsibilities to citizens. Bovens (2007) defines public accountability as the obligation of public officials to explain and justify their actions in relation to established standards and expectations. Frequent interruptions of work for religious activities, particularly when unregulated, may weaken this accountability framework and reduce institutional effectiveness. A balanced framework therefore requires the establishment of clear institutional guidelines that regulate the expression of religion within the workplace. Such guidelines should recognize the right of individuals to practice their faith while ensuring that these practices do not disrupt official duties. For instance, structured break periods can be designated for personal activities, including prayer, without interfering with core working hours. This approach aligns with institutional theory, which emphasizes the importance of formal rules and norms

in shaping organizational behavior and maintaining efficiency (North, 1990).

In addition, strengthening work ethics within the civil service is essential for achieving this balance. Organizational culture plays a critical role in determining employee behavior, and a culture that prioritizes professionalism, punctuality, and accountability can mitigate the negative effects of workplace disruptions (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Training programs and ethical reorientation initiatives can help reinforce the importance of time management and public responsibility among civil servants. Furthermore, the principle of secularism, understood as the differentiation of institutional spheres, provides a useful framework for managing the relationship between religion and public administration. Casanova (1994) argues that modern societies function effectively when religious and state institutions operate within their respective domains while maintaining mutual respect. Applying this principle in the Nigerian context would involve ensuring that religious practices remain largely within the private sphere during official working hours, without infringing on individual rights.

In all, achieving a balance between religion, work ethics, and public accountability in the Nigerian civil service requires a pragmatic and context-sensitive approach. By integrating ethical values derived from religion with clear institutional regulations and a strong culture of professionalism, it is possible to respect religious freedom while promoting administrative efficiency and national development.

## 7. Conclusion

This study has examined the complex relationship between religion, the civil service system, and economic development in Nigeria, with particular attention to the implications of religious practices during official working hours. While religion remains a vital force in shaping moral values, social cohesion, and individual behavior, its manifestation within public institutions presents both opportunities and challenges. The analysis has shown that although religious ethics can promote virtues such as honesty, diligence, and accountability, the unregulated observance of religious practices during working hours may undermine bureaucratic efficiency, disrupt service delivery, and weaken public trust in government institutions. The Nigerian civil service, as the administrative engine of the state, is central to national development. Its effectiveness depends on discipline, time management, and adherence to institutional rules. When these principles are

compromised, the consequences extend beyond administrative inconvenience to broader economic implications, including increased transaction costs, reduced productivity, and diminished investor confidence. In this context, the intersection of religion and public administration must be carefully managed to ensure that personal freedoms do not conflict with collective developmental goals. A key insight from this study is the need for a balanced and context-sensitive framework that accommodates religious expression while prioritizing professionalism and accountability. This requires the establishment of clear institutional guidelines that regulate workplace practices, the promotion of strong work ethics among civil servants, and a renewed commitment to the principles of secular governance. Ultimately, sustainable economic development in Nigeria depends not only on policy formulation but also on the efficiency and integrity of the institutions responsible for implementation. Ensuring that the civil service operates with discipline, neutrality, and a strong sense of public responsibility is therefore indispensable for achieving national progress.

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## Race and Territory in the Pan-Africanist Thought of Kwame Nkrumah

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**Abstract.** This study examines the relationship between race and territory in Pan-Africanist thought, with a particular focus on the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah. It aims to clarify whether Pan-Africanism developed as a single evolving tradition or as distinct but overlapping frameworks shaped by different historical conditions. The study adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodology, relying on textual analysis of Nkrumah's major writings and speeches, alongside a critical engagement with existing scholarship on Pan-Africanism. The findings show that Pan-Africanism manifested in both racial and territorial forms. While its early development in the diaspora was grounded in racial solidarity and the struggle against discrimination, its later articulation in Africa responded to the demands of colonial rule, political independence, and state formation. Rather than representing a simple transition, these forms coexisted and addressed different concerns. Nkrumah's thought illustrates this dynamic, as he rejected racialism as a guiding principle while advancing a territorially grounded vision of African unity and political organization. The study contributes to ongoing debates by offering a clearer distinction between racial and territorial Pan-Africanism and by situating Nkrumah within this framework. It is relevant to scholarship on African political thought, decolonization, and the intellectual history of Pan-Africanism.

**Keywords:** Pan-Africanist thought, Kwame Nkrumah, race and territory, anti-racialism, continentalism, African unity, political organization

### 1. Introduction

Pan-Africanism, both as an intellectual tradition and a political movement, emerged as a response to the systemic racial discrimination experienced by people of African descent in the Americas and the Caribbean. In these societies, Black populations were marginalized and denied full recognition as individuals with rights, despite formal legal measures such as the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth

century. By the early twentieth century, European imperial expansion had extended these dynamics of subjugation to the African continent through colonization. Consequently, Pan-Africanism evolved into a broader movement aimed at resisting Black oppression globally and advancing the emancipation of African peoples. Over time, the movement underwent a significant transformation, shifting from a primarily racial framework to one increasingly defined by territorial and continental concerns (Browning & Oliveira, 2017; McEachrane, 2020). It thus became anchored in Africa, where it articulated demands for decolonization and political independence (Allen, 1976). This transformation raises important conceptual questions regarding the nature and trajectory of Pan-Africanist thought. Specifically, it invites clarification of the distinction between "racial Pan-Africanism" and "territorial Pan-Africanism," as well as an examination of whether these orientations developed independently or represent phases within a continuous ideological evolution.

Within this discourse, Kwame Nkrumah occupies a central position. His political activities from the 1940s through Ghana's independence in 1957, and his subsequent efforts to promote the liberation of remaining colonized African territories and the political unification of the continent, underscore his enduring influence. In light of ongoing debates on race and territory in Pan-Africanist thought, a critical examination of Nkrumah's ideas is warranted, particularly given his association with the emergence of continentalism within the movement (Osemwengie & Omon, 2025). Key questions arise concerning the extent to which his early thought was grounded in racial consciousness, whether elements of territoriality were already present, and how these dimensions interacted over time. It is also necessary to determine the point at which his conception of Pan-Africanism assumed a distinctly continental orientation.

Addressing these issues requires a systematic analysis of Nkrumah's evolving ideological framework within

the broader context of Pan-African discourse. His advocacy of immediate continental unity, rather than gradual integration, distinguished him within the movement and reflected his conviction that political unity was essential to safeguarding African states from external domination. For Nkrumah, Pan-Africanism constituted fundamentally a political project through which self-governance, economic autonomy, and a unified African identity could be realized.

## 2. Competing Interpretations Between Race and Territory in the Pan-Africanist Discourse

Racial Pan-Africanism is most commonly associated with the struggle for the emancipation of people of African descent globally, particularly in the United States and the Caribbean. It developed largely within the diaspora, where Black intellectuals and activists confronted systems of racial exclusion and sought recognition, dignity, and inclusion within societies structured by white dominance. In this context, race functioned as a political identity, shaped by shared experiences of marginalization and articulated through appeals to solidarity among people of African descent. Territorial Pan-Africanism, by contrast, places Africa at the center of its analysis. It conceives of the continent as a political and geographic space requiring liberation, unity, and sovereign control. Here, territory is not merely spatial but political, tied to questions of statehood, sovereignty, and Africa's position in the international system. While this strand was largely advanced by African nationalists on the continent, it also drew support from diaspora figures such as George Padmore.

The distinction between these two orientations raises an important question: are they successive phases within a single evolving tradition, or do they represent distinct responses to different historical conditions? Scholars are divided on this issue. One group, including Jon Woronoff (1970, 24-35) and Ali Mazrui (1973) interprets Pan-Africanism as developing through a process of transition. In this view, an earlier emphasis on racial solidarity in the diaspora gradually gave way to a more territorially grounded movement centered on Africa. Similarly, David Apter and James Coleman (1976, 84-90) identify a progression from racial Pan-Africanism to nationalist movements and, eventually, to efforts at continental political unity. While these interpretations recognize important shifts in emphasis, they do not fully explain the mechanisms through which such transitions occurred.

A second group of scholars challenges this linear reading. Ifidon (2008), for instance, argues that what

are often described as "racial" and "territorial" Pan-Africanism are better understood as historically distinct traditions shaped by different material conditions. Earlier Pan-Africanism emerged within the diaspora, where the central struggle was for civil rights, recognition, and inclusion in societies where political power was largely inaccessible. By contrast, the Pan-Africanism that gained prominence in the 1950s and 1960s developed in response to the concrete challenges of colonial rule in Africa, where the primary concern was the control of land, political authority, and the reorganization of society after colonial disruption. Colin Legum (1965, 38) similarly observes that although Pan-Africanism drew on racial ideas, it was never entirely defined by them, and its later territorial expression reflected a shift in priorities rather than a simple extension of earlier thought.

This article aligns more closely with the latter position. It argues that racial and territorial Pan-Africanism are best understood as overlapping but historically distinct frameworks, each shaped by different socio-political contexts and constituencies. While they share certain ideological elements, particularly an underlying consciousness of Black identity, they emerged in response to different problems and cannot be reduced to stages within a single, continuous trajectory. This distinction is further clarified by considering the scope and inclusiveness of each framework. Racial Pan-Africanism, especially in its early formulations, was primarily concerned with the experiences of Black populations in the diaspora and did not consistently incorporate non-Black Arabs of North Africa into its vision (Du Bois, 1897; Baulin, 1962). In contrast, mid-twentieth-century Pan-Africanism, shaped by the realities of decolonization, increasingly defined Africa in territorial terms and sought to include all regions of the continent, regardless of racial composition (Nkrumah, 1963). As Imanuel Geiss (1974, 4) suggests, Pan-Africanism can be understood in terms of three overlapping ideas: a shared racial identity, the regeneration of Africa, and the pursuit of political unity on the continent. While the first reflects a racial orientation, the latter two are more clearly territorial, underscoring the shift in emphasis that accompanied the rise of African nationalism.

Differences in leadership and focus further reinforce this distinction. Racial Pan-Africanism was largely led by diaspora figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, whose concerns were shaped by the conditions of Black life outside Africa. Territorial Pan-Africanism, on the other hand, was driven by African leaders including Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Jomo Kenyatta, whose political agendas were rooted in the struggle against

colonial rule and the quest for state sovereignty. That said, the two traditions were not entirely isolated from one another. Elements of territorial thinking can be identified within racial Pan-Africanism, as seen in Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement (Jacques-Garvey, 1980), while early African nationalism retained traces of racial consciousness influenced by diaspora thought (see Azikiwe, 1968, 7). This overlap reflects the circulation of ideas and individuals across the Atlantic world.

Kwame Nkrumah is particularly significant in this regard. His intellectual formation in the diaspora exposed him to racial Pan-Africanist ideas, while his political career in Africa was defined by a commitment to territorial unity and continental liberation. His thought therefore occupies a critical position at the intersection of these two traditions. It is within this tension—between race as a basis for global solidarity and territory as the foundation for political organization—that Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism must be situated.

### 3. Race and Anti-Racialism in the Thought of Kwame Nkrumah

Although Pan-Africanism emerged as a response to racial oppression in the Americas, Kwame Nkrumah consistently rejected the idea that racial identity should serve as the primary organizing principle of the movement. He described doctrines of racial superiority and inferiority as intellectually untenable and morally indefensible, arguing that racialism in all its forms should be treated as a social ill (Nkrumah, 1958; Nkrumah, 1967, 114). This position was evident in his public statements, including his address at the 1958 Accra Conference of Independent African States, where he unequivocally condemned racialism as both destructive to its victims and corrosive to those who uphold it.

We repudiate and condemn all forms of racialism, for racialism not only injures those against whom it is used, but wraps and perverts the very people who preach and project it (Nkrumah, 1969).

At first glance, this stance appears to place Nkrumah at odds with the historical foundations of Pan-Africanism, which had been rooted in the shared racial experience of Black people. However, his political practice suggests a more complex position. In 1945, he worked closely with George Padmore in organizing the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, an event that marked a turning point in the movement's orientation towards anti-colonial struggle. At this congress, Nkrumah played a key role in advancing

demands for immediate independence and is connected with the drafting of the "Declaration to the Colonial Peoples of the World," which called for unity among colonized populations against imperial domination (Sherwood, 2010).

Following the congress, Nkrumah co-founded the West African National Secretariat (WANS), serving as its Secretary-General. The organization aimed to promote unity among West African territories as a basis for achieving independence (Sherwood, 2019). Its emphasis on regional solidarity—captured in the slogan "West Africa is One Country: Peoples of West Africa Unite!"—suggests that Nkrumah's early political thought was oriented more toward territorial organization than toward a purely racial framework. His own reflections in *Towards Colonial Freedom* reinforce this point, where he acknowledged that his conception of unity at the time was largely confined to West Africa rather than the continent as a whole (Nkrumah, 1963, x).

Even so, the racial dimension of his thought cannot be entirely dismissed. His focus on West Africa reflected, in part, earlier assumptions—shared by some African and diaspora thinkers—that the region represented a core location of "African" identity (see Hayford, 1911). In this sense, elements of racial consciousness persisted, even where his immediate political objectives were territorially defined. This places Nkrumah in a position that does not fit neatly into either racial or territorial Pan-Africanism as rigid categories.

Nkrumah's relative lack of emphasis on the condition of African-Americans and Caribbean populations further illustrates this shift in priority. Despite his own experiences of racial discrimination during his time abroad, his writings and political activities were primarily concerned with colonial rule in Africa and the structures that sustained it. His analysis of colonialism focused on political control, economic exploitation, and the transformation of social institutions, particularly education. These concerns point to a framework in which the central problem was not race alone, but the broader system of imperial domination.

Nevertheless, Nkrumah did not entirely abandon the language or symbolism of race. In *The Scepter of Black Power*, he invoked the idea of "Black Power," acknowledging the racial origins of Pan-Africanism while simultaneously expanding its scope (Nkrumah, 1968). On this, he had this to say:

*For although the outward forms of our struggle may change, it remains in essence the same, a fight to the*

*death against oppression, racism and exploitation... (Nkrumah, 1968).*

For him, the struggle against racial oppression was part of a wider global movement against exploitation and domination. In this formulation, race remained significant, but it was no longer exclusive; it became one element within a broader political project.

This position is further clarified in *Africa Must Unite*, where Nkrumah argued that the ultimate goal of Pan-Africanism would be realized through the political unity of the African continent.

But it is only when full political unity has been achieved that we will be able to declare the triumphant end of the pan-African struggle and the African liberation movements (Nkrumah 1963, 160).

His suggestion that such unity would mark the culmination of the Pan-African struggle raises important questions about the scope of that struggle. If its “end” is defined in terms of African unity, then Pan-Africanism, in this context, appears primarily territorial. At the same time, this does not imply that the concerns of the diaspora had been resolved, but rather that they were no longer the central focus of his political project.

Nkrumah’s attempt to connect racial and territorial dimensions is evident in his broader conception of “Black Power” as part of a global movement of oppressed peoples. So,

*Black power is part of the world rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, of the exploited against the exploiter... it is linked with the Pan-African struggle for unity on the African continent and with all those who strive to establish a socialist society... Black power gives the African-American an entirely new dimension. It is a vanguard movement of black people, but it opens the way for all oppressed masses (Nkrumah, 1968).*

He linked the struggle of people of African descent in the diaspora with the political unification of Africa, suggesting that the latter would have transformative implications for the former. Nkrumah reiterated a related statement in 1969 when he declared emphatically that,

Real black freedom will only come when Africa is politically united. It is only then that the black man will be free to breathe the air of freedom, which is his to breathe, in any part of the world (Nkrumah 1969, 8).

However, he did not fully explain the mechanisms through which a unified Africa would directly address

the specific conditions of racial discrimination experienced outside the continent.

From the arguments above, it is evident that Nkrumah did not abandon racial Pan-Africanism but redefined its significance within a territorially grounded political project. In this respect, Nkrumah’s thought reflects an important tension. On the one hand, he rejected racialism as an organizing principle and reoriented Pan-Africanism toward territorial unity and political sovereignty. On the other hand, he continued to draw on racial language and symbolism, acknowledging the historical foundations of the movement. His position therefore suggests not a simple transition from racial to territorial Pan-Africanism, but an attempt to reconcile the two within a broader framework of anti-imperial struggle. Thus, it is this unresolved tension between racial history and territorial politics that defines Nkrumah’s Pan-Africanist thought.

#### 4. Territorial Unity in the Thinking of Kwame Nkrumah

This section argues that Nkrumah conceptualized Pan-Africanism as a territorially grounded political mission in which unity, sovereignty, and control of political space became the central organizing principles. While he acknowledged the racial origins of the movement, he developed this thought and redefined Pan-Africanism in terms of the political organization of Africa as a continent. In *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah (1963) traces the development of Pan-Africanism through a series of conferences, beginning with the 1900 meeting convened by Henry Sylvester Williams and culminating in the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in 1945. He identifies the Manchester Congress as a decisive turning point, noting that for the first time since 1900, “the necessity for well-organised, firmly-knit movements as a primary condition for the success of the national liberation struggle in Africa was stressed (Nkrumah, 1963, 134).” This moment marked a shift from a loosely defined, diaspora-driven movement to one oriented towards structured political action within Africa.

For Nkrumah, this transition signaled the emergence of a territorial dimension in Pan-Africanism. Although initially expressed through regional initiatives rather than a fully articulated continental framework, it represented a movement away from a primarily racial focus towards a political conception of African unity. As he observed:

instead of a rather nebulous movement, concerned vaguely with black nationalism, the Pan-African

movement had become an expression of African nationalism (Nkrumah, 1963, 135).

In making this distinction, Nkrumah differentiated between Black nationalism, associated largely with diasporic struggles, and African nationalism, which he understood as the collective political consciousness of the continent.

Nkrumah's early political activities reflected this orientation. He regarded regional unity as a practical starting point for broader continental integration and therefore supported the idea of a united West Africa as a preliminary stage. He argued that:

The political situation in Africa today is heartening and at the same time disturbing. It is heartening to see so many new flags hosted in place of the old; it is disturbing to see so many countries of varying sizes and at different levels of development weak and in some cases almost helpless. If this terrible state of fragmentation is allowed to continue it may be disastrous for us all (Nkrumah, 1961, xiii).

These statements reflect his conviction that territorial unity was essential to securing political independence and resisting external domination. At the same time, he consistently warned against the dangers of fragmentation. Thus, "so long as we remain balkanized, regionally or territorially, we shall be at the mercy of colonialism and imperialism" (Nkrumah, 1963, 218).

The apparent tension between his critique of fragmentation and his support for regional initiatives can be understood in strategic terms. His advocacy for a United West Africa, as well as his involvement in the Ghana–Guinea Union and later the Ghana–Guinea–Mali Union, was intended as a means to an end rather than an alternative to continental unity. These arrangements functioned as transitional mechanisms — what Nkrumah described as a "lever" — for the eventual realization of a United States of Africa. Territoriality in this sense did not imply fragmentation but rather the consolidation of political units capable of sustaining wider integration.

A major step in advancing this territorial vision was the 1958 Conference of Independent African States held in Accra. This conference marked a significant departure from earlier Pan-African gatherings, both in its location and in its scope. It was the first major Pan-African meeting to be held on African soil and included participation from all independent African states, including those in North Africa (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco). Nkrumah described the occasion in the following terms:

When, on 15 April 1958, I welcomed the representation to the conference, I felt that at last Pan-Africanism had moved to the African continent where it really belonged. It was an historic occasion. Free Africans were actually meeting together *in Africa*, to examine and consider African affairs. Here was a signal departure from established custom, a jar to the arrogant assumption of non-African nations that African Affairs were solely the concern of states outside our continent. The African personality was making itself known (Nkrumah, 1963, 136).

This development redefined Africa as a territorial and political entity rather than a purely racial construct, extending the scope of Pan-Africanism to include the entire continent. Following this, Nkrumah intensified his efforts towards continental political union. Initiatives such as the Ghana–Guinea Union, later expanded into the Ghana–Guinea–Mali Union, and the formation of the Community of Independent African States were conceived as foundational steps toward a broader African federation (Nkrumah, 1963, 141–42). These efforts reflected his commitment to building political structures that could support continental unity, even though they operated initially at a sub-continental level.

By the early 1960s, Nkrumah had moved beyond earlier federalist proposals and began to advocate more strongly for the immediate political union of Africa. He argued that gradual approaches, particularly those emphasizing economic and social integration, would leave African states vulnerable to continued external influence. This position placed him in opposition to leaders such as Julius Nyerere, who favored a more incremental path to unity (Agyeman, 1975). The resulting divergence contributed to the formation of ideological groupings within Africa, including the Casablanca and Monrovia blocs, which differed primarily in their approaches to the timing and structure of continental integration. These divisions revealed the practical and political limits of territorial Pan-Africanism, even as they underscored its central importance. Despite these challenges, the establishment of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 represented a significant, if partial, realization of Nkrumah's vision. Although it fell short of the immediate political union he advocated, it institutionalized the principle of continental cooperation and affirmed the idea of Africa as a shared political space.

At the core of Nkrumah's territorial Pan-Africanism was the concept of Africa as a single political community. His articulation of the "African personality" formed part of this broader framework,

redefining African identity in territorial terms. In this formulation, to be African was not determined solely by race but by one's relationship to the continent and participation in its political future. Nkrumah's territorialism therefore did not simply replace the racial foundations of Pan-Africanism; rather, it redefined the basis of political community within the movement by shifting emphasis from shared racial identity to collective political organization and continental unity.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Pan-Africanism has found expression in both racial and territorial terms, each shaped by distinct historical contexts and political demands. As it developed in the diaspora, Pan-Africanism was primarily racial in orientation, grounded in the shared experiences of Black populations confronting exclusion and discrimination. In contrast, its articulation on the African continent reflected the imperatives of colonial rule, political sovereignty, and the reorganization of society. These two strands did not simply follow one another in a linear sequence; rather, they coexisted and, at times, overlapped, even as they addressed different problems.

Although Pan-Africanism emerged as a movement concerned with the emancipation of people of African descent, it did not remain confined to a strictly racial framework. As Colin Legum (1965, 41) observed, it was never entirely "racially exclusive." Its later development in Africa expanded its scope beyond questions of race to encompass broader political and territorial concerns. In this context, earlier emphases on Black solidarity gave way to a conception of Africa as a political community defined not only by shared identity but also by common historical experiences, particularly colonial domination. Territorial Pan-Africanism thus advanced a vision of African unity grounded in the continent itself. It extended beyond the idea of a global Black community to include all peoples within Africa, regardless of racial classification, and placed emphasis on liberation, statehood, and continental integration. This shift did not represent a complete break from earlier forms of Pan-Africanism but rather a redefinition of its central objectives. The goal of unity remained, but its basis moved from race to territory, from shared identity to shared political destiny.

The thought of Kwame Nkrumah illustrates this reconfiguration. While he acknowledged the racial origins of Pan-Africanism, he rejected racialism as an organizing principle and instead advanced a territorially grounded vision centered on African unity

and sovereignty. In doing so, he did not abandon the earlier emphasis on solidarity among people of African descent; rather, he incorporated it into a broader framework that prioritized the political unification of the continent. Nkrumah's contribution, therefore, lies not in effecting a simple transition from racial to territorial Pan-Africanism, but in redefining the movement as a political mission rooted in Africa while retaining awareness of its diasporic origins.

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## Crossing Currents: The Role of the Niger River in Shaping Inter-Ethnic Relations among the Okun, Nupe and Igala in Nigeria Since Antiquity

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**Abstract.** The Niger River has historically served as a lifeline for West Africa, shaping the economic, political, and cultural relations of the Okun, Nupe and Igala peoples. In the pre-colonial period, the river functioned as a vital trade artery, facilitating barter exchanges, political alliances, and cultural integration. Canoe transportation enabled the movement of goods and ideas, while disputes over fishing rights and trade routes emphasised its strategic significance. Colonial rule disrupted these dynamics by imposing artificial boundaries, introducing a currency economy, and restructuring indigenous political systems, thereby altering inter-group relations. Despite these disruptions, the communities adapted, participating in colonial and post-colonial economies while preserving traditional networks. Post-independence, infrastructural projects such as Niger bridges in Lokoja and Onitcha reshaped trade and regional development, even as they displaced communities. The rivers also fostered cultural exchange, with shared languages, festivals, and religious practices reinforcing inter-ethnic identity. Today, environmental degradation, economic inequality, and modernisation pose new challenges, yet the Niger remains central to the resilience and integration of these communities. This study reinforces the enduring significance of the river in understanding inter-ethnic relations and regional history in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Niger River, inter-ethnic relations, colonial disruption, cultural integration, Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

Rivers have long shaped human history, serving as sources of water and food, corridors for migration and trade, and catalysts for cultural and societal development (Hopkins, 1973; Holl, 2009). In Africa, the Niger River stands out for its historical and contemporary significance. Stretching over 4,180 kilometers through Guinea, Mali, Niger, Benin, and Nigeria, it unites diverse ecological zones and cultural

traditions, while supporting agriculture, fishing, and settlement (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Insoll, 2003). The Niger's floodplains have sustained human life for millennia, shaping political organisation and cultural interaction (Ilfiffe, 1995; Ajayi, 1989)

This study examines the Niger as both a physical and cultural force, highlighting its role in the rise of early states, inter-group relations, and contemporary communities, particularly the Okun, Igala, and Nupe peoples. The paper explores the intertwined economic, social and political dynamics that the Niger nurtured, considering historical transformations under colonialism and postcolonial changes, as well as modern challenges such as environmental degradation, inequality, and globalisation.

Archaeological evidence shows that by the Neolithic period, communities along the Niger had advanced food production, water management, and social organisation (McIntosh & McIntosh, 1981; Holl, 2009). Sites like Jenné-jeno in Mali demonstrate agriculture, fishing, craft specialisation, and trade networks connecting the Niger Valley to North Africa as early as the third millennium BCE (D'Andrea, 2007; Insoll, 2003). The river's fertile floodplains facilitated population density, social stratification, and the emergence of empires such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, which relied on the Niger for commerce, cultural unity, and political authority (Barry, 1998; Levtzion & Hopkins, 1981; Ajayi, 1989). The Niger River, therefore, was not merely a backdrop to early African civilisation but a catalyst for settlement, trade, and enduring cultural transformation, long before colonial influence.

While a lot of studies have been done on transportation and its early forms and transformations, adequate attention has not been paid to the River Niger. This study therefore examines the contribution of the River-Niger to national development etching out its colonial, post-colonial histories, challenges and significances.

By examining this, the study contributes to transport history, economic history and economic history.

## 2. Literature Review

There have been a growing number of studies on water transport in globally. Lubinda (2019) finds that Inland Water Transport in Zambia, particularly in the Barotse Sub-Basin, has been largely neglected despite its importance to rural livelihoods. The study finds that it supports employment, tourism, recreation, and affordable cargo movement, but faces challenges such as high costs, unsafe vessels, and poorly maintained waterways. Usage varies by season, with motorised vessels dominating the dry season and non-motorised ones in the wet season. It recommends improved maintenance, subsidies, and stronger policy regulation. UNECE (2022) advances that water transport offers significant benefits, including improved safety and reliability, reduced congestion, and enhanced environmental performance, while its comparative advantages lie in its sustainability and cost-efficiency, reflected in lower overall transport costs, reduced energy consumption per ton-kilometre, and a relatively low rate of accidents. Mutiani et al (2022) notes that transportation extends beyond the movement of people to include the distribution of goods, making it a central component of socio-economic development. Within this context, water transportation plays a significant role in sustaining livelihoods, particularly in riverine communities where it contributes to household income stability. They furthered that while attention has been given to traditional river transport systems such as *klotok*, which has remained in use for over six decades as a reliable mode of local mobility. Using qualitative approaches, studies generate descriptive insights into how such transport systems operate and adapt over time, with efforts made to ensure data validity through expert verification and alignment with official administrative records. Their Findings indicate that river transportation systems are vital to both service providers and users, highlighting a mutually dependent relationship that underpins local economies. However, maintaining this relationship requires active government involvement, particularly in establishing legal frameworks and operational policies that regulate the sector. The study underscores the importance of transparency in evaluating whether existing operational mechanisms enhance the welfare of transport operators.

Osoja (2019) examines the complementary role of water transport for commuters travelling between Ikorodu and Lagos Island within the Lagos metropolis. It focuses on how water transport infrastructure affects

mobility, whether improvements have encouraged a shift from road to water travel, and how patronage can be further enhanced. Using regression analysis to test its hypotheses, the study finds that while infrastructure improvements and management contribute to attracting commuters to water transport, overall mobility and travel comfort remain constrained by infrastructural inadequacies. The research concludes that the underdevelopment of inland waterways in the study area is largely due to insufficient funding, poor infrastructure provision, and inadequate maintenance, all of which limit the system's effectiveness and appeal to commuters. Chukwuma et al (2024) posits that Nigeria's industrial sector, despite its potential to reduce unemployment and drive wealth creation, has underperformed and contributed less to economic growth than expected. This gap reflects structural challenges within the sector, even with various policy efforts to stimulate development. The study examines how different transport modes influence industrial growth using data from the Central Bank of Nigeria and finds that inefficient road transport hinders productivity due to poor infrastructure and high logistics costs, while air and water transport contribute positively by supporting trade and efficient movement of goods. The paper recommends targeted improvements across all transport systems. It urges the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing to prioritize road rehabilitation, while agencies like Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, and Nigerian Ports Authority should enhance airport and port infrastructure. Strengthening these transport networks is essential for boosting industrial productivity and achieving sustainable economic growth. Adenuga (2024) stresses that Waterways are increasingly recognized as vital economic assets, and Nigeria has significant untapped potential in this sector. In Lagos, inland water transport offers a cost-effective, efficient alternative to congested roads, improving mobility, trade, and productivity. It supports job creation, connects remote areas, and boosts agriculture, industry, and tourism. He however stated that challenges such as poor infrastructure, weak connectivity, and safety concerns persist and that addressing these through investment, policy support, and stakeholder collaboration is essential to unlock sustainable economic growth.

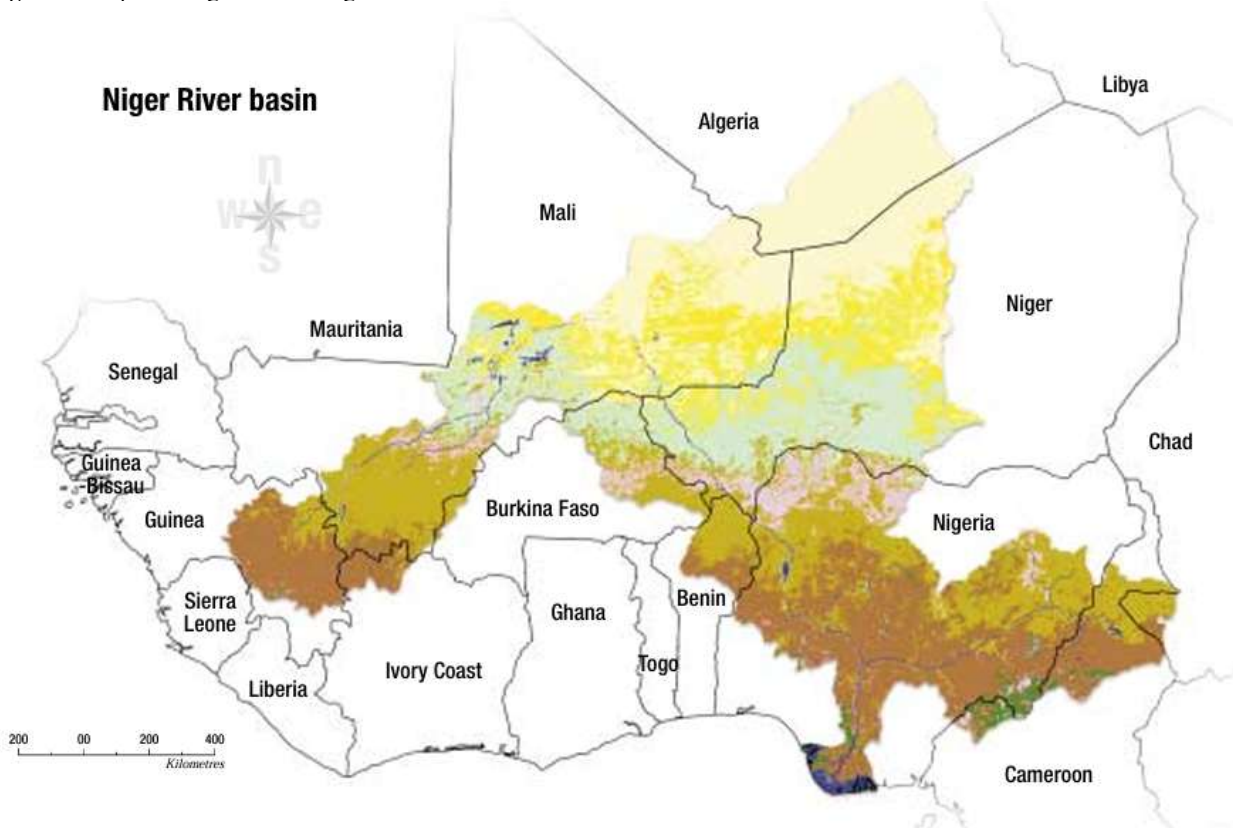
### 2.1 The Niger and Ethnic Groups in Present-day Nigeria: Okun, Igala, and Nupe

In present-day Nigeria, the Niger River has profoundly influenced the development and identity of communities such as the Okun, Igala, and Nupe. Each group maintained close ties to the river's ecology, trade networks, and political systems, shaping their

economic and social organisations. The Okun, a Yoruba subgroup in Kogi State, occupied fertile lands near the Niger-Benue confluence. Their economy relied on yam and cassava cultivation, fishing, and

crafts, with women playing central roles in local markets and trade networks connecting neighbouring communities (Lewu, 1996; Falola, 2008).

**Figure 1:** Map showing the River Niger Stretch across West Africa



**Source:** WWF International (nd)

The Igala, centered around Idah, became a dominant riverine kingdom between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, using the Niger as both a defensive barrier and a trade highway. The Attah of Igala derived political legitimacy through spiritual ties to the river (Boston, 1991; Okpoh, 2007). The Nupe, controlling the middle Niger, built a centralised state leveraging riverine trade in kola nuts, salt, and slaves, with ironworking and weaving further consolidating wealth and influence (Nadel, 1965; Mason, 1967; Isichei, 1976).

**Figure 2:** Niger River Basin: Areas and rainfall by country

Country	Total area of the country (km <sup>2</sup> )	Area of the country within the basin (km <sup>2</sup> )	As % of total area of basin (%)	As % of total area of country (%)	Average annual rainfall in the basin area		
					(mm)		
					min.	max.	mean
Guinea	245857	96880	4.5	39.4	1240	2180	1635
Côte d'Ivoire	322462	23770	1.0	7.4	1316	1615	1466
Mali	1240190	578850	25.5	46.7	45	1500	440
Burkina Faso	274000	76621	3.4	28.0	370	1280	655
Algeria	2381740	193449	8.5	8.1	0	140	20
Benin	112620	46384	2.0	41.2	735	1255	1055
Niger	1267000	564211	24.8	44.5	0	880	280
Chad	284000	20339	0.9	1.6	865	1195	975
Cameroon	440	89249	3.9	18.8	830	2365	1330
Nigeria	770	584193	25.7	63.2	535	2845	1185
For Niger basin		2273946	100.0		0	2845	690

Source FAO (nd)

Interactions among the Okun, Igala, and Nupe extended beyond economics, involving intermarriage, linguistic borrowing, and religious exchange. These connections illustrate the Niger's role not only as a boundary but as a corridor fostering multiethnic cooperation and cultural synthesis (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

## 2.2 Precolonial Trade, Politics, and Social Systems

In precolonial times, the Niger served as a vital artery of commerce, communication, and cultural integration. It linked the Okun, Igala, and Nupe, sustaining economic interdependence and political engagement. Agricultural produce, crafts, and livestock were exchanged across ethnic lines, with canoes facilitating bulk transport along the river (Akinwumi, 2003; Falola & Heaton, 2008). Market systems, regulated by customary laws and overseen by chiefs or women leaders, acted as centers of trade and social interaction, circulating news, technology, and religious ideas (Ajayi & Crowder, 1985; Mason, 1967). River-based trade often generated political alliances and rivalries. The Igala kingdom, under the Attah, controlled trade routes and collected tribute, while the Nupe monitored river crossings to dominate commerce (Boston, 1991; Nadel, 1965). Conflicts over markets and fishing rights were frequent, though diplomacy and intermarriage among elites helped stabilise relations (Okpeh, 2007).

Culturally, the Niger facilitated the diffusion of languages, religions, and artistic traditions. The Nupe adoption of Islam enabled trade with Hausa and Bornu merchants, influencing Igala and Okun societies (Isichei, 1976). Social institutions such as age grades and women's associations ensured that commerce also reinforced community cohesion and identity (Falola, 2008).

Thus, the Niger River in precolonial Nigeria functioned as both a unifier and divider, fostering trade, cultural exchange, and political integration, while simultaneously generating competition over its strategic resources.

## 3. Colonial Impact: Disruption and Adaptation along the Niger River

The arrival of British colonialism in the late nineteenth century reshaped the Niger River region, disrupting traditional economic, political, and social systems among the Okun, Igala, and Nupe peoples. The river, once a shared corridor of commerce and culture, was integrated into a global capitalist system favoring European interests.

### 3.1 Economic Transformation

Colonial policies prioritised resource extraction and cash crop production, replacing subsistence and barter economies with monetised systems focused on cocoa, palm oil, cotton, and groundnuts (Berry, 1975; Falola & Heaton, 2008). The Niger increasingly served as a transport route for export, while taxation and colonial currency undermined precolonial trade networks, compelling local populations to engage in wage labor or cash crop farming (Mabogunje,

1968; Watts, 1983). According to a worker, “Despite these pressures, some Okun communities continued traditional trading practices across the Niger, such as weaving and local market exchange”<sup>1</sup>

### **3.2 Political Restructuring**

Colonial administration also transformed indigenous political systems through the policy of indirect rule. In theory, this system sought to govern through existing rulers, but in practice it often distorted traditional authority structures. Among the Igala, the *Attah* was elevated and empowered by British recognition as a paramount ruler, consolidating his authority beyond traditional limits (Boston 88). By contrast, in Okun communities there was decentralised governance organised in small autonomous communities; the British appointed warrant chiefs who lacked legitimacy among the people (Afigbo 1972).

For the Nupe, whose centralised system was already well established, indirect rule reinforced the Emirate’s authority, but also made rulers accountable to colonial officials rather than their subjects (Nadel 1942). This dual loyalty frequently generated tensions within communities, as rulers were pressured to enforce unpopular policies such as taxation and labour requisition.

### **3.3 Social and Cultural Disruption**

Colonialism reshaped social structures through missionary education, Christianisation, and gendered reordering of authority. Women, were previously central to market regulation but they lost influence as men were favoured in political and economic hierarchies (Ayandele, 1966; Mba, 1982).

## **4. Local Adaptations and Resistance in Post-Colonial Era**

Communities demonstrated resilience by negotiating colonial pressures, some leveraging positions for wealth and prestige, others resisting via tax revolts or preserving traditions under colonial oversight (Falola, 2008; Okpeh, 2005). Following Nigeria’s independence in 1960, the Niger continued to support livelihoods but under new state-driven policies. Agricultural modernisation, infrastructural projects such as the Kainji Dam (1968), and hydroelectric initiatives transformed the river’s role, displacing thousands and altering fishing and farming economies (Ekundare, 1973; Hogben, 1975). The 1970s oil boom further shifted economic focus from agriculture to petroleum, affecting regional development (Watts, 1983).

### **4.1 Political and Administrative Reconfigurations**

Post-independence state creation redefined ethnic and political alignments. The Okun’s integration into Kogi State fostered both cooperation and competition with the Igala, while the Nupe faced heightened inter-ethnic competition in Niger State (Ochonu, 2006). Traditional rulers retained cultural authority but operated increasingly as intermediaries, linking local populations to the modern state and dependent on state patronage (Osaghae, 1991).

### **4.2 Cultural Continuity and Economic Transformation**

Despite the pressures of modernisation and religious change, the Niger River remained a stronghold of cultural identity. Among the Igala, river deities such as Idakpaja continued to receive veneration, illustrating the resilience of indigenous cosmologies in the face of Christianity and Islam (Idowu, 1989). Annual festivals linked to fertility, fishing, and river spirits preserved collective memory and reinforced intergenerational bonds. Among the Nupe, crafts such as weaving, dyeing, and blacksmithing survived but adapted to modern markets, blending tradition with innovation. The Okun maintained vibrant masquerade traditions and oral performances, many of which symbolically referenced the river as a source of life and continuity. Thus, while Western education and global religions reshaped belief systems, the Niger River remained embedded in cultural practices, rituals, and community identity.

### **4.3 Emerging Challenges and Opportunities**

From the late twentieth century onward, the Niger River basin began to face serious environmental and socio-economic pressures. Deforestation, industrial pollution, and the cumulative effects of damming disrupted ecological balance, threatening fish stocks and water quality (Akinyele n.d.). Population growth increased demand on farmlands, leading to periodic conflicts over access to riverine resources. Yet, the river also presented opportunities for

innovation. Irrigation schemes expanded food production, while improved transport networks connected once-isolated riverine communities to regional markets. Civil society groups and local associations began to advocate for more equitable resource management, linking environmental conservation to cultural survival.

In this sense, the Niger River in the post-colonial era embodied both continuity and change: it remained a source of livelihood, spirituality, and identity for its peoples, but its role was continuously reshaped by state policies, economic shifts, and global environmental challenges

#### 4.4 Contemporary Significance of the Niger River

In the twenty-first century, the Niger River remains one of West Africa’s most important natural and cultural landmarks. For the Okun, Igala, and Nupe peoples, it is not only a physical resource but also a marker of identity and continuity. However, rapid socio-economic changes, environmental degradation, and shifting political dynamics have redefined its role in contemporary Nigerian society.

### 5. Economic Opportunities and Challenges

Despite these challenges, the Niger River continues to serve as an engine of economic activity. Fishing, irrigation farming, and riverine transport remain critical livelihoods for thousands of households. With renewed state interest in agricultural diversification, especially after the oil price crashes of the 2010s, the Niger’s fertile floodplains have gained attention for rice and vegetable cultivation (Olayemi 1988). River ports and local trade hubs connect communities to regional markets, ensuring that the Niger retains its role as a corridor of exchange.

**Table 1:** Irrigation potential in the Niger River basin in Nigeria according to the NWRMP

Region in Niger River Basin	Potential of Public Schemes (ha)	Potential of Fadama Development (ha)	Total Irrigation Potential (ha)
Niger North	146,590	299,000	445,590
Niger Central	183,140	34,000	217,140
Upper Benue	435,430	320,000	755,430
Lower Benue	61,230	140,000	201,230
Niger South	59,120	0	59,120
TOTAL	885,510	793,000	1,678,510

Source FAO (nd)

Table 1 illustrates how the northern geo-political zones benefit from the River Niger through irrigation, significantly enhancing agricultural productivity and food security. Although about 275,000 hectares of public irrigation schemes have been proposed within existing water infrastructure, only 40,540 hectares have been completed and are currently in use.

Traditionally, crop production in fadama areas has relied on rainfall during the wet season and on residual soil moisture after flood recession in the dry season. Fadama is derived from a Hausa term for low-lying or floodplain land and supported by World Bank-assisted projects in Nigeria—covers about 79,000 hectares In locations where shallow groundwater or surface water is readily accessible, simple water-lifting technologies are used for irrigation. The formal Fadama system. In addition, approximately 550,000 hectares of residual fadama cultivation exist within the Niger Basin (Food and Agriculture Organization, n.d.).

At the same time, the push for modern development projects, such as hydroelectric expansion, large-scale irrigation, and dredging, has generated tensions between national economic priorities and local livelihoods. Communities displaced by such projects often receive inadequate compensation, leading to grievances and activism.

#### 5.1 Political and Social Dynamics

The Niger River continues to influence local and national politics. In Kogi State, the Okun and Igala peoples navigate complex relationships over political representation, often invoking cultural ties to the Niger in struggles for recognition and resource allocation. Similarly, in Niger State, the Nupe retain symbolic authority over the middle belt’s riverine corridor but contend with demographic pressures and administrative restructuring. Historically, it facilitated the rise of empires like Mali and Songhai, while modernly it enables regional cooperation through the

Niger Basin Authority (NBA) and provides critical infrastructure like the Kainji Dam

Civil society groups, including youth associations and women's cooperatives, increasingly use the Niger as a rallying point for advocacy, whether against environmental degradation, for improved fishing rights, or for equitable state development policies. These grassroots movements illustrate how the river remains central not only to livelihoods but also to collective political consciousness.

## 5.2 Environmental Pressures and Climate Change

Climate change has had profound effects on the Niger River basin. Erratic rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and prolonged dry seasons have disrupted traditional farming and fishing cycles (Adesina, 1977). Water levels in parts of the river fluctuate unpredictably, leading to seasonal flooding in some communities and drought-like conditions in others. These changes threaten food security and increase competition over scarce resources. Pollution from industrial waste, oil exploration, and agricultural runoff further compromises water quality, reducing fish stocks and exposing riparian populations to health hazards (Nwankwo, n.d.). Climate change has also affected the River Niger and this has led to constant flooding which has caused loss of lives, displacements and loss of livelihood. In 2024, more than 1,200 people were killed and 1.2 million displaced in at least 31 out of Nigeria's 36 states, making it one of the country's worst floods in decades. It was also reported that flash floods that ripped through parts of central Nigeria's state of Niger killed at 115, people an emergency services official said on Friday, saying the toll is expected to rise. Ibrahim Audu Hussein, Niger SEMA spokesman said, "We have so far recovered 115 bodies and more are expected to be recovered because the flood came from far distance and washed people into the River Niger. Downstream, bodies are still being recovered" (Adewole and Agency Reporter, 2025).

## 5.3 Cultural Resilience and Transformation

Culturally, the Niger continues to inspire rituals, festivals, and oral traditions. Igala river-based festivals, Nupe boat regattas, and Okun masquerades highlight the deep symbolic ties between water, fertility, and community life. Even in urbanised contexts, the river features prominently in local memory, songs, and proverbs, serving as a reminder of heritage.

At the same time, modern influences, Christianity, Islam, education, migration, and digital media, re-reshaping these traditions. Younger generations reinterpret river symbolism within contemporary identities, blending ancestral reverence with global religious and cultural practices.

## 5.4 Regional and International Dimensions

Beyond Nigeria, the Niger River is part of a wider West African system governed by multinational cooperation through the Niger Basin Authority (NBA). Nigeria's participation in the NBA reflects the river's importance for regional integration, environmental management, and peacebuilding among riparian states. However, competing national interests, weak enforcement mechanisms, and resource pressures often limit the effectiveness of such efforts (Okonkwo n. d.).

## 6. Conclusion

In the twenty-first century, the Niger River remains a space of paradox. It is simultaneously threatened and resilient, exploited yet nurturing, localised yet global in significance. For the Okun, Igala, and Nupe peoples, the river is not merely a geographical feature but a historical companion whose meaning evolves with each era. From precolonial corridors of trade to colonial disruption, from postcolonial modernisation to contemporary struggles with climate and globalisation, the Niger embodies the intersection of continuity and change in Nigerian history.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Adebola, A. S. (2025, oral interview). Personal communication on Okun trading practices.

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**Part Three**  
**Social Philosophy**





## Wasambo Were and the Impetus of Context-Smashing: Assessing Changing Patterns of African Performance Aesthetics

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**Abstract.** The paper investigates the changing patterns of African performance aesthetics using terms deployed to evaluate the encrustations to which African performances have been exposed and the corrosive factors that now characterize performance in the African setting. Particular attention has been paid to Wasambo Were and other seminal contributions to the preservation and rejuvenation of indigenous artistic sources that Africa can rely on for contemporary artistic creation and production in theatre and film. Within the vortex of this proposed discourse, on one side are what constitute an African performance, elements and patterns like folkism, polycentrism, curve-linear and other patterns; on the other side are the postmodern, globalizing, consumerist and postcolonial factors which have exerted their influences on the artistic space that now determine the dominant artistic expressions within the continent. At this point, a perspective which emerges when a normative scenario of creative operation is established, bringing with it all its negative encumbrances. If some individuals take this challenge to the hilt to protect what is pristine and progressive to the continent, then a context is being smashed.

**Keywords:** Context, Patterns, Performance Aesthetics.

### 1. Introduction

The context of discourse in this paper is within the ambit of African Performance Aesthetics, which for years has been subjected to and rendered vulnerable to the foray of imperial and hegemonic manoeuvring by the West. Despite the degree of enlightenment of the peoples of Africa, they have not come to terms with the deliberate efforts to exert their influence and pressure to supplant indigenous cultural practices with those of the West and, now, other nations, especially China and India.

Aldous Huxley (1931) made a revealing statement years back in *Brave New World Revisited* that:

If the first half of the twentieth century was the era of the technical engineers, the second half may well be the era of the social engineers, and the twenty-first century, I suppose, will be the era of World Controllers, the scientific caste system, and Brave New World. The prophecies made in 1931 are coming true much sooner than I thought they would. The night of total organization has emerged from the safe, remote future and now awaits us just around the corner.

This was a shocking analysis of what was to colour the 21st century, more than two decades into it already, what humanity has spent, and what cultures and traditions have faced with their unique and unprecedented dimensions. By "World Controllers" and the infusion of a "scientific caste system," we would assume that globalization is what is being tersely, and to some extent glibly, described by Huxley above, thereby setting a context for African cultural studies. What comes to mind and has become central in postcolonial discourse is the issue of hegemony that the West has held Africa down with, therefore making it hamstrung to de-robe itself from the connections of control and dominance in the aspects of the tradition (with the performative aspects at the centre), economy, religion, and development.

Wasambo, among others, has realized that Africa's residual traditions must be safeguarded to open new creative vistas that can healthily herald competitive artistic production in a rapidly changing creative landscape. This is not possible by allowing the continuous erosion of what is left to sustain Africa's quest for uniqueness in its artistic development. Africa cannot fully realize its true artistic potential without taking iconoclastic steps to rescue the residual aspects of its traditions and exhuming those long buried to support the people's collective memory.

Were is shifting African artistic intellectualism from the erstwhile reflection to mediation and intervention, as rightly captured by Raymond Williams in Marxism

and Literature. Accordingly, Williams cautions that by projecting and alienating this material process to 'reflection', the social and material world, which was at once 'material' and 'imaginative', was challenged by the idea of 'mediation'.

Through mediation, the dominant context of analysis and experience undergoes an unprecedented process of reinvigoration and revitalization of what remains to be rescued. The process becomes that of new interpretation, reconciliation, and intercession. Others have set the pace in Kenyan theatre and cultural studies by researching the Bukusu's traditional heritage to uncover the processes by which particular existential values and knowledge of resilience are imparted among initiates and people of the Bukusu land of the Luyha people. To the Bukusu people, a person's life from birth to death is a series of concatenations that bring them closer to the purpose of their lives, which is to engender cosmic harmony between physicality and meta-physicality, rather than to create a tragic void that would bring hardship, striving, and unease among mortals. Wasambo Were understood to be a process of education through adherence to strict rituals and customs that bring the spirits of the Bukusu people together as a precursor to cosmic harmony. This is unique among Kenya's ethnic nationalities.

Despite the abundance of performative traditions in Africa, as represented by the Bukusu people, they find themselves in the vortex of three possible directions in contemporary discourse, and the dilemma that comes with being African from the late Twentieth Century to the early Twenty-First century. One of the directions indicated in the foregoing is the possibility of the total absorption of other people's civilisation through the total neglect of indigenous civilisation; by this, I mean the residual traditions of the Bukusu people. Secondly, the possibility of going backward to unearth to save substantial parts of Africa's traditions. This, of course, is motivated by nostalgic cravings among souls disgusted by the groundlessness of what Western modernity has brought to sub-Saharan Africa, supplanting indigenous traditions. The third is the direction represented by the Bukusu people in this chapter. The possibilities that contemporary trends in culture and artistic creation, in which global development trends exert their power, cannot be found among the Bukusu people. This would imply taking advantage of globalization and other artistic trends(patterns) in this postmodern epoch for their artistic credo and creation.

Chiweizu (2004), in his seminal article titled 'Prodigals, Come Home', gets agitated about cultural servitude masquerading as cultural modernity replete with European sensibility. This kind of cultural servitude comes with a veneer of civilization that eats deep into the fabric of any tradition that is a veritable aspect of a viable culture, not merely a vibrant one.

In the same manner, Soyinka, in *The Fourth Stage: Ogun/Origin of Yoruba Tragedy*, draws a profound dichotomy between African drama, using Yoruba mythic tragedy with its idiosyncratic elements, and European modes. According to Soyinka, the elements are harnessed from archetypal reserves, suggesting the form presented to people for them to master. No matter how European techniques are deployed in our presentations or representations, it is not analogous to European modes. Moreover, until these elements, which are different forms, are identified in their original bases whether they are embedded in some highly ritualistic traditions or festivals, like Wasambo Were has done with the Bukusu tradition, or some less ritualistic customary engagement of the people of Africa, it is in those practices that the uniqueness of the drama and theatre of a people showcase itself. That was the existential challenge that Chinua Achebe and Soyinka shouldered to counter the wholly false impression that early Western novelists such as Joseph Conrad, John Buchan, and others had spread about Africa. The drive towards the restoration or projection of Africa's authentic cultures has continued despite their misrepresentation by the West. Today, many dramatic works and films are deliberately written to obscure Africa's indigenous artistic heritage. This is partly because the West began writing before Africans, and, sadly, the art of writing has been prioritized over rich, authentic heritage that exists in oral form and is highly performative.

## 2. Definitions of Some Critical Terms: Context, Performance, Aesthetics

### 2.1 Context

Wikipedia defines context as those objects or entities that surround a focal event, of some kind. This is with reference to the popular fields of anthropology, semiotics, linguistics, and sociology. The words "objects" and "entities" mentioned in the definition apply aptly to the discourse on performance aesthetics and to Wasambo Were's engagement with the revered tradition of the Bukusu of Kenya. The objects mentioned are neither emblematic nor merely nominal in their appearance or in the role they play in a given ritualistic performance. Examples include circumcision, blood, and dance, and the specific

activities in the general process of socialization can be likened to Richard Schechner's complex chain of activities that form the web and fan in his performance theory (1988).

## 2.2 Performance

Performance in the context of this Chapter refers to all the ritualistic, entertaining, pulsating, and transformative activities that draw closer cosmic and profane aspects of the African being and existence into a robust moment of socialization. These activities include make-belief, but are not limited to, the liminal and the visceral; they can be subjunctive (Schechner, 1988) and go beyond the threshold of make-belief.

## 2.3 Aesthetics

Aesthetics is a collection of tenets and principles that deal with the nature and appreciation of beauty. This also deals with the philosophy or the nature of thinking that comes with it. This is rooted in the simple assumption that the same object of beauty can be viewed from different standpoints. It is only naivety that makes someone believe that what is seen as beautiful in one region of the world must be seen in the same way in another region.

## 3. The Context of Wasambo Were's Attempts and Postcolonial Theory

Some discomfort and unease toward the ruins and damages of colonialism presumably influenced Wasambo. This is particularly dysfunctional to a progressive African who knows how people, a country, a continent that is bound by many common denominators, is supposed to operate, basically, on its terms and its plans for its socio-political, traditional, and cultural developments. These call for action and inquiry in several ways to salvage this situation. This is because no sentient cum conscientious African should be comfortable with the palpable realities of Africa. The need for intellectual and scholarly inquiry into the epistemological strongholds of an African being has become imperative in the 20th and 21st centuries. These imperatives are condensed in the general objectives of post-colonial theory.

Mark Fortier (1997) argues that postcolonialism is an attempt to describe the contemporary situation and its culture, this time by focusing on the effects of Western imperialism, which has dominated the world since the Sixteenth century. He posits that postcolonialism is both a situation coming after colonialism and a situation in the heritage or aftermath of colonialism, both an ongoing liberation and an ongoing oppression.

This realization of duty to the continent of Africa has been summarized in the ideological distillation by Fanon (1986), Cesaire (2000), Bhabha (1994), Barber (1995), Spivak (2014), Gikandi (2017), Wa Thiong'o (2014), Soyinka (1976), among others. Their efforts and attempts are not different from Were's exploration of the educational duties and pedagogy of Imbalu ritualistic practices of the Bukusu of Western Kenya. Every scholar pays attention to what they deem relevant to the objective of their inquiry. We have established the preponderance of drama in the imbalu ritual of imitation and have further ascertained that this practice is also an instrument of education for the Bukusu people of Western Kenya.

Before Were's seminal work, Opiyo John Mumma (1994) had studied the possibility of applying the concepts and understanding of educational drama in a Kenyan setting. Were and Mumma have not added anything new to what is contained in Kenya's orature or the performative heritage of Kenya. However, they have succeeded in exposing the larger world to the profound presence of traditional drama in Kenya. It may not be written, but it exists in abundance, even before the Europeans or Arabs, referring to the incursions of Arabs around the Mombasa region.

Postcolonial theory calls on scholars in Africa to work towards de-robing Africa of the remaining vestiges of imperialism. Part of this duty is to identify the riches in Africa's artistic heritage and place it in its rightful place.

## 4. Assessing the Changing Patterns of African Performance Aesthetics

The essence of smashing an uncomfortable context that people have accepted lies in exploring new possibilities embedded in Africa's cultural heritage. Every continent whose countries share the same experiences of imperialism from the years preceding the present moment has been grappling to unearth the great potential of its indigenous performative resources.

Aesthetics, whether as a collection of principles or as a philosophy (Obidah, 2022), has come to mean a kind of judgement, attitude, experience, and value accorded to works of art that distil beauty, lending themselves to a variety of interpretations and meanings. It is this understanding of aesthetics that projects the objective of an article like this.

For these principles that accompany works of art in the form of judgement, attitude, experience, and value determine what is called aesthetics; it comes in a

pattern(s) that are identifiable when close attention is paid to works of art from Africa. As identified by Mofefi Kete Asante (1996), in his article titled, 'Aspects of Afrocentric inquiry'. These identified patterns are infused into creative production amid the prevailing situation of globalization, with its attendant trappings, such as consumerism, nameless pastiche, and eclecticism. The implication is that the terrain is replete with patterns and trends that clash, overlap, and intermix to coexist, giving rise to new synthetic patterns.

Wasambo Were, driven by his intention to present the traditional ritual ceremony of the Bukusu people of Kenya as some form of edu-drama, invariably highlights the unique patterns of the performative and plastic aspects of that tradition, consciously or otherwise. His work exposes the Bukusu Imbalu as a folk art.

This is why folkism is the first pattern to be given attention in this paper. It is a tradition shared and practised by a community. Folkism was coined by Sam Ukala (1993) to refer to an indigenous dramatic aesthetic principle possibly derived from the theatre of folk linguistic, structural, and performance styles. It also manifests a deep connection to folktales. It refers to a tendency to base literary plays on indigenous history and culture and to perform them in accordance with the aesthetics of African folktales, including their composition and performance, drawing on the music, dances, speeches, and instruments used during Imbalu. They also denote the tradition of a particular people doing these activities in unity, whether in a pure atmosphere or in their liminal aura. It is therefore folkish when older men and women offer their teenage sons to be circumcised and initiated into adulthood, marking the beginning of an age grade.

The change that is preponderant in the incursion of what used to be pristine, practiced by a community that has now been affected by influences from the West. Others would include the deliberate penchant for hybridizing most works of art to satisfy the fastidious tastes of contemporary audiences. This implies that practitioners of the Imbalu and other performance forms are altering performance patterns. The question to ask is: Are the movements in Imbalu dances the same over the years? Are the costumes or regalia used during the ritual ceremony still the same? How about the music and other key performance aesthetics? If none of these are the same as they used to be, it is simply because they have been affected by modernity, colonialism, and, now, globalization.

Peter Nazareth (1978), in his paper, 'East African Drama', while citing David Rubadiri, refers to the experience of East African dramatists who were greatly influenced by colonial masters, who made sure that they abandoned their indigenous cultural forms only to face dramatic ideals which were "totally alien and not the best and relevant that Europe had to offer". Colonialism was a generally sad phenomenon in Africa, but it exerted more negative impact on East Africa than on West Africa, as pointed out by Rubadiri.

Another pattern/aesthetic/element is polyrhythm, which refers to several rhythms emanating from different instruments and performers in a performance. The Bukusu Imbalu consists of different stages of the initiation practice. The initiate of the Bukusu Imbalu is expected to dance from his paternal uncle's house to the river. He dances to music; this music is polyrhythmic because it is not just an accompanying song that serves as embellishment to the performance, but an instrument central to the ritual practice of the Bukusu people. It has a deep connection to their ancestors, who descend to dwell with their people at the festival in the world of the living. Music is a determining force in such a performance because, without it, the circumcision or initiation itself would not hold for the young initiates who are transiting to adulthood.

Polycentricism, as pointed out by Welsh-Asante, implies the presence of several colours in a painting or the abundance of several movements in a dancer's body occurring in the context of a presentation. The initiate cannot deviate from the indigenous dance patterns the Bukusu people are accustomed to during Imbalu initiation. This dance always aligns with general African dance patterns emanating from several concentric points. It is a community asset; it distinguishes them from those of other ethnic groups within Kenya, but the general African dance position cannot be separated from that of the Bukusu people of Western Kenya, though with its own peculiarities.

Curvilinear refers to the lines that are curved in art, dance, music, poetry, among others, which are normally known as indirection in the spoken or written form (Asante, 1994). This also applies to both the plastic and performative aspects of the initiation or circumcision process of the Bukusu. This is if we are operating within the context of Wasambo Were's work, which has served as a reference point in this discourse.

Other aesthetics, including, but not limited to, dimensional, repetition, epic memory, and wholism, as

identified by Welsh-Asante (1994), are the true qualities of Afrocentrism. To look at these remaining aesthetics glibly, in order to assess their intersections with prevailing phenomena in the entertainment industry globally, is imperative. Dimensional being is the spatial relationship that shows depth and energy. This is conspicuous in performances and also in plastic arts. Repetition implies the constant occurrence of a theme in a presentation. This runs through a festival or an indigenous practice, such as the Imbalu of the Bukusu. Epic memory refers to the idea that indigenous works or performances bear the imprint of the historical memory of the people who own the traditions being practiced (Obidah, 2022). Wholism implies the organic unity of all the collective parts of an artwork. This is despite the art's unique aspects. Wholism is identified when all other aesthetics or qualities mentioned unite to give a synthetic, complete work.

##### **5. Intersections of Globalization, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, and African Performance Aesthetics**

“I do not want my home to be walled in all sides and its windows to be stuffed. I want cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. However, I refuse to be blown off my feet by any” (Mahatma Gandhi, cited by Ruston Bharucha, 1993).

This quote about Gandhi is a suitable opening to this section of the chapter, as it indicates the world's drive toward the interconnectedness of cultures and peoples. However, Gandhi demonstrates his refusal to succumb to the hegemony of any foreign culture. The world has been pulled together by the winds of globalization, which have exerted far-reaching negative consequences on smaller and weaker nations and their cultures. This brings to mind the famous statement by Roland Robertson that “Global cohesion does not imply global consensus”. This sets the tone of the interplay of the aforementioned phenomena within the vortex of African socio-cultural, political, and economic discourse.

If one takes postmodernism to the hilt as a starting point, one finds a disruption to what used to be a state of orderliness. The phenomena that characterize postmodernism are not easily acceptable to conservative minds, whether as scholars or artists at whatever level, because of the unprecedented and radical changes to what one might call the normal. This is why Fredric Jameson (1984) calls postmodernism a force field, in the sense that several other phenomena come to play on it. In the age of globalization, characterized by strong elements of late

capitalism, several aesthetic persuasions come to play as a result of the compelling drive toward consumerism and profit-making.

We will not mistake postmodernism as “another stage in the West's Crisis of consciousness” as Dennis Ekpo (2004) would put it. However, a calculated attempt to have Africa, with all the richness of its cultural and performative heritage, enmeshed in the hazy terrain of globalization and the trappings that accompany it. This is why Wasambo Were (2014), in the realization of the need to preserve and protect the artistic and educative reserves of the Bukusu people with Imbalu at the forefront, says:

African education aimed to preserve the heritage of the Bukusu people, encompassing beliefs, opinions, practices, religion, and customs. This conversation was at the clan and ethnic levels. (73)

It should be realized that as crucial as this conservation obligation is to a contemporary cultural scholar like Were, the effort must transcend over it to the stage of utilization in other forms of art within an era of uncertainty and consumerism where normless pastiche, bricolage, aporia among other forces that have exerted their dominance and have become part of the artistic credo of most artists.

Smashing the context of style that is alien and heavily ideological would imply, beyond conservation of cultural heritage, the extrapolation of artistic materials for the pitching of other products, be it in contemporary drama, film, music, dance, plastic arts, digital arts, skits, and all the other performing arts. African artistic production spaces are beginning to be diffused and saturated with local content alongside foreign and global styles and patterns. This seems to many as a positive indication that the continent is on the right track toward cultural independence and supremacy.

In the chapter written by Mboya Kivai and Wasambo Were (2012) in *African Drama and Theatre: A Criticism* edited by John Mugubi and Charles Kebaya, the pair makes a profound statement about African aesthetics, thus:

Africa has diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, so it would be wrong to imagine it as a homogeneous entity. Despite that, certain standards of beauty and correctness are manifest in artistic expressions and upheld among African people.

From the quote above, one realizes the continent's enormous artistic heritage, which is diverse yet shares many similarities. This assertion of commonalities in

African cultures and languages can be ascertained through traditional drama/theatre, dances, linguistic elements, and other art forms. This assertion can further be buttressed by even the ritual practices of such people, like the circumcision of candidates for the initiation festival in terms of the removal of the foreskins of the genitals of the initiates, the spilling of blood, among other common aspects of the practices in Africa. Africa may be heterogeneous in terms of culture (performative) and language, but the trajectory of our history of hegemony and oppression is the same.

In discussing traditional drama, Kivia and Were (2012) identify the theatrical aesthetics of worship, traditional ceremonies, dance, music, oral narration, masks, puppetry, poetry, acrobatic display, incantation, mime, and pantomime as those that characterize the uniqueness of traditional African drama and theatre. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2012), in his book, 'Gloablectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing', argues that even though the drive toward a global appeal of literature stands out as an expectation of most works of art, writers carry with them strong elements of their local experience and culture and idiosyncratic aspects of such elements. The implication is that the form may be global, but the content ought to be local. Attributing or appropriating this understanding to African performance aesthetics, one would say that artists in Africa, particularly in East Africa, with Kenya on our minds, must be swift in extrapolating this rich traditional aesthetics from those socio-ritualistic bases that may look sacrosanct to contemporary artistic and frequently functional art forms like music, dances, films, drama, theatre, poetry, among others. By this deliberate act, we would say. A new one is created in which traditional, familiar content is transformed by the artists into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility, thereby smashing context. A new one is created in which the artists transform traditional, familiar contents into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility. A new one is created in which traditional, familiar content is transformed by the artist into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility, smashing the context. A new one is created in which the artists transform traditional, familiar contents into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility. A new one is created in which traditional, familiar content is transformed by the artist into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility, smashing the context. A new one is created in which the artists transform traditional, familiar contents into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility. A new one is created in which traditional, familiar content is transformed by the artist into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility, smashing the context. A new one is created in which the artists transform traditional, familiar contents into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility. A new one is created in which traditional, familiar content is transformed by the artist into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility, smashing the

context. A new one is created in which the artists transform traditional, familiar contents into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility. A new one is created in which traditional, familiar content is transformed by the artists into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility, thereby smashing context. A new one is created in which the artists transform traditional, familiar contents into the realm of the unknown and continuous utility. This means that when the audience watches a dramatic performance in Kenya or a film, they are confronted with strange yet spectacular content woven into a story that brings them closer to home and addresses their existential issues. African artists must be able to liberate their imagination to a profound level. Their products of art must bear contents whose thematic preoccupations may be easily known, but the distillation or presentation should carry something unfamiliar. People should wonder where the artists got the dance steps, the conflict at the nucleus of film and theatre, the strange verse in music, etc. Such an approach will be part of Africa's artistic genius. While analysing Lamming's Aesthetic of Decolonisation, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (2014) draws our attention to the fact that: Imagination is the supreme sovereign (sic) for it is not bound by time and space and authority. No authority can enforce a command: Do not imagine. Do not do a dream. In that sense, even within an oppressive system, they can still exercise the sovereignty of their imagination to dream of new worlds. The artist and the worker are allies in the quest for freedom.

If freedom of imagination is sequestered from the artist, art will die, the tree of life will blight. Humans will roam in the abyss of groundlessness, forlorn. We will not be able to stare into the depths of the abyss confidently and generate renewed substance of vitality and further existence. The artist from Bukusu land should be able to draw on some aspects of the Imbalu for contemporary use. One cannot be the driver of such imagination and creativity. Such an artist must be able to imagine for himself/herself what to take from such a heritage, and how to deploy it in his/her artwork.

## 6. Conclusion

The first step in engaging a scholar who seeks to expose the rich cultural heritage that offers strong aesthetic appeal to contemporary artists has been taken by Wasambo Were. What is therefore left is the deliberate exploration of this rich heritage by audacious artists who understand the performative trends of today's entertainment world. Exposing the deep processes of the Imbalu initiation ceremony, in itself, upends the context ascribed solely to the Bukusu people. Going further to extrapolate the materials into

a contemporary creative production of art is another step toward smashing the context of original performance aesthetics of the people with one of broader scope, acceptance, and recognition.

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## Locke's Atomic Theory of Ideas: Implications for Human Understanding

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**Abstract.** This paper examines Locke's atomic theory of ideas and its implications for human understanding. The question "how is objective knowledge possible?" marked the dividing line between rationalism and empiricism in the modern period of philosophy. Rationalism on the one hand upholds the doctrine of innate ideas which claims that man possesses certain natural intellectual properties that exist prior to experience and provides privileged access to reality. Empiricism on the other hand countered with the opposing thesis that all genuine knowledge is derived from sense experience. As the chief speaker of the empiricists, Locke presents an atomic theory of ideas which holds that there are no such things as ideas before experience. He maintains that all ideas are products of experience and serve as building blocks of human knowledge. By so doing, Locke reduces the entirety of human knowledge structure to a collection of ideas derived from sense experience. Locke's position has far reaching implications for human understanding as it addresses the foundation, structure and extent of human knowledge. In view of this, this paper through the use of philosophical methods of analysis and criticism examines Locke's theory of ideas and its implications for human understanding.

**Keywords:** Rationalism, Empiricism, Mind, Innate Ideas and Sense Experience

### 1. Introduction

In the history of philosophy, the "notion of ideas" has evolved from describing objective, transcendence realities to subjective, psychological representations. This intellectual journey maps the core of western epistemology and metaphysics, transitioning from the atomists' ideation, Platonic forms to modern consciousness. Hence, the term "idea" is historically traceable to the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus who stressed the origin of ideation in sense images. This usage of the term is continued by Epicurus. From these philosophers, the emphasis on ideas in connection to sense images continues throughout the

empirical tradition of western philosophy. In classical philosophy, Plato, used the word "idea" synonymously with *eidos* an ancient Greek term that translate literally to "form," "shape," or "appearance" depending on the context. For him, ideas are not "appearances" as comparable to the Atomists sense images but it refers to the structural elements of things. Sensation may provide an initial clue to ideation, but ideas are thought not sensed. In order to clarify this point, Plato introduced the Greek term *idein*, "to see" to refer not to mental thoughts, but to objective, eternal and immutable essences or archetypes. Thus, in Plato's thinking, true knowledge is achieved through the intellect (not the senses) grasping these perfect Forms (ideas), which exist in a transcendence realm. In Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, the Atomists and Platonists approaches are both utilized. Here, thought begins with sense datum or *fantasma* (from the Greek word *fantasma*-meaning image) and by abstraction, the former element is separated from it. For this reason, Aristotle rejected Plato's separation of Forms from physical objects. For Aristotle, ideas or "forms" are immanent, that is, they exist independently within matter, defining the essence of the actual things we experience in the world. In the medieval synthesis, ideas are situated in the mind of God. Here, medieval Christian philosophers merged Platonic and Aristotelian concepts with theology. They argued that "ideas" are eternal exemplars or blueprints residing within the mind of God. Human reason works by participating in or "illuminating" these divine ideas to understand truth. This explains why in St. Augustine's thought, the term idea, took a divine dimension as the eternal forms (ideas) are associated with the mind of God and are compared to the presence of designs in the mind of the artist. In the modern period of philosophy, that is, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the concept of an idea shifted radically from a cosmic reality to a strictly psychological, mental construct. In line with this thinking, Thomas Hobbes associated ideas closely with sense images. By idea, he seems to mean a *fantasma* or appearance in the brain resulting from the impression of an external body on a sense

organ. The continental rationalists of the 17th century following Plato make ideation the judge of sense data rather than the other way around. Consequently, the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas became the cornerstone of their view. The chief speaker of rationalism Rene Descartes separated ideas into three (3) types namely; innate, adventitious and factitious. It is based on this that Descartes's criterion of truth in terms of clear and distinct ideas are established. Thus, the history of ideas is, fundamentally, the history of how humanity understands its relationship to truth, reality and consciousness.

It is in response to the above tradition of the term idea that Locke seeks to establish his theory of ideas to correct what he sees as a dogmatic acceptance of innate ideas by suggesting that our ideas derived from objects of perception are the building blocks of knowledge, thereby grounding all our knowledge in sense-experience. This paper therefore seeks to examine Locke's atomic theory of knowledge and its implications for human understanding.

### 1.1 What is Idea?

Etymologically, the term "idea" is traceable to the ancient Greek word *idein* meaning "form", "pattern" or "the look of a thing" An idea is a foundational mental construct, thought, or image that exists in the mind. It is a concept, thought, opinion or belief. It is a mental representation of something or a plan of action in the mind. That is, it is a mental notion or image, a concept or archetype, it is a formulated thought expected to guide a course of action. Ideas are the starting point for all human creativity, innovation and problem-solving. Thus, ideas are the blue print for reality. Every physical product, artistic masterpiece, scientific breakthrough, and organizational structure began as a mere thought in someone's mind before being developed and brought to life

## 2. Locke's Rejection of Innate Ideas

In his attempt to answer that question "how is knowledge possible?" Locke begins on a negative note; a lengthy indictment of any theory of innate ideas. (Miller, 232). This to him is a necessary step to take in order to make a valid argument for his empirical analysis of knowledge. Locke felt that it is important to begin this task by clearing the ground in order to build a solid foundation for his epistemological theory. He therefore embarks on a mission to renew the epistemological project by clearing away the debris of unintelligible terms and useless systems of thought. These debris, according to Locke, are obstacles that stand in the way to

knowledge and for this reason must be swept away. The rubbish or debris he most wanted to sweep away was the doctrine of innate ideas. This refers to "ideas that are inborn and not the product of experience" (Blackburn, 186). The doctrine asserts that some kinds of ideas, principles, or knowledge are not acquired through experience, but are built into the mind itself. These ideas are clear, distinct, self-evident and innate in the sense that they are "born with us," as Descartes said, they are imprinted upon the soul. Example of such innate ideas are the ideas of substance, cause, God and the principles of logic. (Lavine, 141) This doctrine was a standard thesis of the rationalistic tradition from Plato to Leibniz, but Locke raises a number of fundamental objections to it. He describes the doctrine of innate ideas as follows:

It is an established opinion amongst some men, that there are in the understanding certain INNATE PRINCIPLES; some primary notions, KOINAI ENNOIAI (Greek: universal idea), characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man; which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world with it. (1)

Being an apostle of sense experience as the source of our knowledge, Locke vehemently denied the truthfulness of the doctrine of innate ideas. He argues that the claim that we have certain naturally inbuilt innate principles is false, unreasonable and contrary to how we come to know things around us. He pointed out that the use of our natural faculties of the five senses to access information about the world around us shows the falseness of the doctrine of innate ideas. According to him:

For I imagine anyone will easily grant that it would be impertinent to suppose the idea of colors innate in a creature to whom God hath give sight, and a power to receive them by the eyes from external objects: and no less unreasonable would it be to attribute several truths to the impressions of nature, and innate characters, when we may observe in ourselves faculties fit to attain as easy and certain knowledge of them as if they were originally imprinted on the mind. (1)

The point Locke is trying to make in the above quotation is that in the absence of the faculty of the senses, how do we justify our knowledge of things externally located to us? Also, in view of the fact that we take for granted the role of the senses, we assume or it appears to us that the knowledge of external objects has always been with us from birth. This according to Locke, is an erroneous presupposition as all we know and are capable of knowing are basically based on experience.

Locke's line of attack on the doctrine of innate ideas is clear. It is by way of the questions; how do we know that these ideas are innate in all human beings? What data of experience, what sensory observations, and what empirical evidence can we offer in support of this claim? Can we show by pointing to the data that all humans from infancy on, possess these ideas? The idea of innate ideas falls short of these fundamental questions. By implication, Locke concludes that the doctrine is worthless rubbish. The mind is not a closet which is filled at birth with such innate ideas. The mind is an empty closet only filled with information from sense experience. Changing the metaphor, Locke argues that the mind is a blank tablet, blank white paper, on which experience writes, and this writing by experience is all the mind can know.

### 3. Locke's Atomic Theory of Ideas

In the book II of his work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke defines ideas as "the object of thinking" (44) Accordingly, he argues that when a man is conscious of his thinking, that which is the object of his thinking or what his mind is applied about when thinking is the "ideas" therein. It is an undeniable fact that men have in their minds several ideas which constitutes the object of thinking. These includes such ideas expressed as whiteness, hardness, sweetness, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness and many more. But since the mind is at birth a tabula rasa; a clean and empty slate, how then do we come by these several ideas that are the object of thinking? To this, Locke assumes that knowledge could be explained by discovering the raw materials out of which it was made. (Stumpf, 250) For this reason, Locke says:

Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the MATERIALS of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. (44)

From the above, it is clear that Locke holds experience as the source of all our knowledge as well as its foundation. Experience as explained by Locke is limited to sense experience, that is, whatever we come to be aware of through the use of our five senses; sight, touch, smell, taste and sound. In Locke's view, man is naturally endowed with the faculty of the senses to receive information from the objects in such a way that such information would seem to have been with us from birth. (Ibrahim, 157) Thus, all our ideas about the

world come to us through experience. Locke identified two sorts of experience which are: sensation and reflection. He explains these two as follows:

This great source of most of the ideas we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived by them to the understanding, I call sensation... the perception of the operations of our own mind within us, as it is employed about the ideas it has got... I call this SENSATION. These two, I say, viz, external material things, and the operations of our own minds within, as the objects of REFLECTION, are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings. (45)

To follow Locke's argument logically, it implies that we have no direct knowledge of things themselves but only of our ideas about them. Since according to him, things impress (or impose) themselves on our minds, leaving in them their images or copies which are therefore representations of things (Omeregbe, 58). Locke went further to distinguish two kinds of ideas namely: Simple and Complex ideas. Simple ideas are the impressions that things make on our minds; they are copies or representations which things leave in our minds when they impress themselves on them. Simple ideas are therefore directly caused by things and those ideas resemble their causes and correspond to them. For this reason, Locke holds that there is correspondence or resemblance between simple ideas in our minds and the things they represent. Complex ideas, according to Locke, are combinations of simple ideas. When two or more simple ideas are combined into one, we have a complex idea. This shows that complex ideas are derived from simple ideas by combination and reflection and also by abstraction. (Scruton, 85). That is, the mind makes complex ideas out of simple ideas by repeating, comparing and uniting them however these complex ideas do not and cannot correspond to anything outside the mind because they are constructed out of the raw materials (simple ideas) received from sense experience. Thus, "the mind is passive in respect of the acquisition of simple ideas, but active in the making of complex ones" (Uzgalis, 25). In this sense, simple ideas are the building blocks of knowledge as Locke indicates that simple ideas are the atoms while complex ideas are the molecules in his attempt to distinguish between our situation in the material world and our mental world. Locke explains this distinction as follows:

For simple ideas are all from things themselves, and of these, the mind can have no more, no other than what are suggested to it. It can have no other ideas of sensible qualities, than what come from without senses, nor any idea of other kind of operations of a thinking substance, than what it finds in itself; but when it has once got these simple ideas, it is confined

barely to observation, and what offer itself from without; it can by its own power, put together those ideas, it has, and make new complex ones, which it never received so united. (164)

From Locke's analysis above, it is clear that Locke sees simple ideas as atomic units or building blocks of knowledge as the mind actively compounds, compares and abstracts them to form all complex concepts. This shows that our understanding is actively constructed rather than divinely preloaded. In the final analysis, ideas are simply the representation of objects in our mind which also double as the object of thinking. In effect, we cannot know what things are in themselves, we can only know the impressions they leave in our minds, that is, our ideas about them. Thus, all human knowledge, according to Locke, is built from the indivisible atomic ideas derived from sense perception and reflection. This is because when two or more simple ideas are combined into one, we have a complex idea. For this reason, all ideas we have and all that we may ever have without any exception are all derived from and limited to sense experience.

#### **4. Implications of Locke's Atomic Theory of Ideas for Human Understanding**

A careful look into Locke's conception of ideas shows that it seeks to capture idea within the limit of what our senses could provide to us in experience. It avoids creating a transcendental notion of idea like that of Plato, Descartes or Leibniz, where idea is transformed into some sort of intangible essence of things. In this way, Locke tries to be careful of not going outside sense experience in order to remain within what the senses could provide. This is actually in line with the central teachings of the empirical school of thought he belongs to and projects his philosophical motto: "our business here is not to know all thing, but those which concern our conduct" (Lawhead, 292). This is why he claim that there are no such things as innate ideas or ideas before experience. All our ideas in the past, present and future are all products of sense experience. There is nothing in the mind that was not initially in the senses. (Ibrahim, Essentials, 72) It is therefore important to say that Locke's conception of ideas remains within the bound of empiricism and the teachings of common sense.

It is however necessary to show that Locke's notion of ideas have some challenges within it. For instance, the claim that simple ideas are nothing but impressions caused by external factors and resemble same brings some issues. In the first place, if this point is taken, it follows that simple ideas are nothing but copies or representation of external objects in our minds. This

means that we do not have any independent idea except what comes from the object. In this way, how do we differentiate between what an object is in itself and what we think it is in our mind. Another problem here is; do we really have knowledge of things at all, if knowledge indicates the state of awareness of things and what we know, according to Locke, are simply ideas or copies of things but not things in themselves. In this way, Locke draws a huge line of demarcation between the knower and the known. This is because Locke gives no room of direct connection between the subject and the object of knowledge.

Lastly, Locke's conception of idea as argued by Ibrahim (101) drops into the pit of egocentric predicament. This argument holds that if all we know is nothing but our own ideas, then how could we ever know the correspondence between our ideas and the things "out there"? Is there any way for us to get out of our experience to check this correspondence? This makes Locke's theory of ideas problematic as it is a self-centered notion of idea detached from the true state of things. In view of the forgoing, it is clear that Locke's atomic theory of ideas has far reaching implications for human understanding. These Implications are as follows:

Locke's theory of ideas reveals that human mind is a blank slate without any content but always in a state of potency. By arguing that we possess no innate, pre-installed ideas (such as inherent moral truths or concepts of God), Locke elevated the role of experience. Consequently, we are entirely shaped by our environment, sensations, and education. This implies that the mind is fundamentally malleable, differences in human understanding and capabilities are a result of our individual life experiences rather than predetermined cognitive traits.

Locke's suggestion that simple ideas are passively received from external objects shows that simple ideas such as colour red, the sensation of cold, or the taste of sweetness act as the fundamental "atoms." When experiencing this, the human mind is purely passive, that is, it acts as a receiver. This implies that at the most fundamental level, all human knowledge is tethered directly to our physical interactions with the world.

Locke's analysis of ideas presents the mind as an active engine that constructs complex ideas. While the mind is passive in simply receiving inputs, it becomes highly active when processing them. Through three mental operations which are compounding (grouping simple ideas together), comparing (evaluating relationships), and abstracting (separating specific traits to form general concepts) the mind creates

complex ideas. This implies that much of our so-called advanced reasoning is merely the cognitive “gluing together” of basic sensory building blocks.

Locke’s atomic theory of ideas separates the mind from reality. In this sense, we only directly observe our own ideas (mental representations) rather than the physical world itself. This necessitates a gap between internal understanding and external reality. This implies that our understanding of reality is largely subjective. The world we perceive is a mental construction shaped by our perceptual apparatus as by the physical objects themselves.

On the limits of human knowledge, Locke’s theory of ideas categorically emphasizes that our knowledge is limited to what is discernable within sense experience. This is because all knowledge is ultimately built out of atomic simple ideas, we cannot know anything that goes beyond our capacity to experience. If the mind thinks of what is beyond sense experience, human understanding of such an object of thought hits an absolute rock. This implies that our grasp of God or the universe is inherently limited, prompting a call for intellectual humility regarding things beyond our capacity to comprehend.

## 5. Conclusion

This work started by providing a short consideration of the views of major philosophers on the notion of ideas. Stressing the origin in the term "ideation" in sense images. Dominant in these views is the Atomists in ancient Greek philosophy to its rationalist usage in Plato, Descartes and Leibniz. It shows that Locke's analysis of idea is a response to the dogmatic postulation of innate ideas associated with Descartes' theory of knowledge. It is argued that Locke rejected innate ideas in order to clear the way for his atomic theory of ideas. This is to enable him situate the process of knowledge acquisition within the possibility of what the senses could provide. Locke's theory of ideas is said to be situated on the five senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste and feeling as a mark of an advocate and father of modern empiricism. Furthermore, the paper presents an in-depth analysis of Locke's notion of ideas as he sees it as “building blocks of knowledge” and "objects of thinking”. It captures his classification of experience into sensation and reflection as well as the distinction between simple and complex ideas. Also, it gives a critical assessment of Locke's atomic theory of ideas as well as draws out its implications for human understanding.

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## Counselling Education as a Tool for Liberation and Sustainable Development among Secondary School Students in Ibadan

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**Abstract.** Secondary school students' education for emancipation and sustainable development is greatly aided by counselling education. The development of students' critical thinking, self-awareness, autonomy, and capacity for making wise choices that release them from social, psychological, and intellectual constraints is a key component of education for liberation. In contrast, the goal of sustainable development in education is to provide students with lifetime skills that promote economic productivity, social responsibility, and personal development. In order to improve liberation-oriented learning and sustainable development among secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria, this research looked at counselling education. The study design used was a descriptive survey. Secondary school pupils from a few Ibadan public schools made up the population. A multistage sampling procedure was used to choose a sample of 200 students. A standardised questionnaire called the "Counselling Education, Liberation and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (CELSDQ)" was used to gather data. Experts in educational psychology and guidance and counselling validated the instrument, and Cronbach Alpha was used to determine its reliability. The results showed that students' self-awareness (78%), decision-making skills (72%), academic engagement (75%), and career consciousness (82%) are all considerably improved by counselling education. Additionally, study shown that counselling services lower maladaptive behaviours that impede sustainable growth (68%) and increase emotional stability (70%). Additionally, it was shown that counselling education equips students with life skills that facilitate future productivity (74%) and social adjustment (80%). The research came to the conclusion that counselling education is a crucial tool for attaining education for sustainable development and emancipation in secondary schools. To improve student empowerment and development, it was suggested that the government and school officials

bolster counselling services, hire more trained counsellors, and include counselling programs into school curriculum.

**Keywords:** Secondary school students, self-awareness, decision-making, education for liberation, counselling education, sustainable development, and Ibadan

### 1. Introduction

It is often acknowledged that education is a potent tool for emancipation and sustained growth. It is a transformational mechanism that enables people to critically analyse themselves, their surroundings, and society at large in addition to being a process of knowledge transfer. In addition to gaining academic information, secondary school students are expected to develop the critical thinking abilities, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and life skills essential for both individual and social advancement. The development of the full person must be included in authentic education, according to modern educational viewpoints, which go beyond memorisation and test achievement. This encompasses moral, social, emotional, and cognitive aspects that help students thrive in a world that is changing quickly. When education fulfils this all-encompassing goal, it becomes a liberation instrument that helps people overcome societal constraints, ignorance, and reliance.

In schools, counselling education acts as a systematic support system that helps students overcome obstacles in their academic, emotional, social, and professional lives. It offers a methodical framework for giving students advice on career preparation, behavioural adjustment, academic decisions, and personal growth. Because they remove obstacles to learning and growth, counselling services in schools are becoming more widely acknowledged as crucial elements of

successful educational systems. According to recent research, counselling education fosters psychosocial adjustment, increases motivation, and improves students' academic lucidity (Isah & Abdullah, 2023). Furthermore, Adeyemo (2022) found that schools with effective counselling units had higher academic engagement, better student discipline, and fewer instances of maladaptive behaviour. This illustrates that counselling education is an essential tool for fostering successful learning outcomes and general student development rather than a supplemental service.

By encouraging students' freedom in thought, self-awareness, and decision-making, counselling education advances emancipation. It assists students in overcoming social and psychological barriers such as identity uncertainty, peer pressure, academic anxiety, and poor self-esteem. Students are encouraged to examine their strengths, recognise their shortcomings, and make well-informed choices that impact their academic and personal life via counselling interventions. The idea that education should free people from societal and mental constraints is consistent with this process of self-discovery and empowerment. School therapy improves psychological resilience and emotional stability, which are critical for independent functioning, according to Green and Lloyd (2021). In a similar vein, Ojo (2023) observed that counselling treatments greatly enhance students' self-concept, self-confidence, and decision-making skills in Nigerian secondary schools. In order to achieve real educational emancipation, students who are psychologically empowered are better equipped to take charge of their education and life decisions.

Additionally, by giving students lifetime qualities like resilience, flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and responsible citizenship, counselling education makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development in education. The goal of sustainable development in education is to equip students to fulfil current demands without sacrificing their capacity to handle problems in the future. This calls for social responsibility, emotional stability, and ethical thinking in addition to intellectual proficiency. According to Bettman and Digiacomio (2022), school counselling is essential for managing teenage mental health issues, which have a direct impact on students' long-term growth and academic achievement. According to Kamalov et al. (2023), including counselling services into educational institutions promotes inclusivity and sustainable learning results. According to Adeyemo (2022), there is a clear correlation between the provision of good counselling services that serve

students' academic and emotional requirements and sustained educational growth in Nigeria.

Additional empirical data demonstrates that counselling services greatly enhance students' social conduct, emotional stability, and academic performance. Pupils that get sufficient counselling help are more likely to exhibit better study habits, increased focus, and greater academic achievement. According to Köse (2023), school therapy is essential for treating teenage emotional challenges and fostering mental health awareness and emotional control in educational settings. In secondary school, emotional stability is especially crucial since it affects pupils' capacity to handle social and academic pressures. Students are more likely to participate constructively in class activities, uphold discipline, and form strong peer connections when they are emotionally balanced. These results support both individual achievement and the system's overall efficacy.

Additionally, counselling education is essential for future preparation and job growth. Students in secondary schools are at a crucial phase of identity construction and career discovery. Many students make poor career decisions without adequate coaching, which may result in unhappiness and unemployment later in life. According to Maree and Che Judea (2023), life design counselling enhances students' capacity for career adaptation, curiosity, and decision-making, allowing them to make more practical and knowledgeable career decisions. According to Eze (2024), career counselling greatly lowers career indecision and improves occupational knowledge among secondary school students in Nigeria. This is especially crucial in emerging economies, where youth empowerment and national growth depend on matching education to the demands of the job market.

Students in Ibadan secondary schools still deal with a variety of difficulties, including emotional instability, social pressure, poor career orientation, test anxiety, academic stress, and family-related problems. If these issues are not appropriately handled, they often impede their academic achievement and general growth. Due to limited access to therapy services, many students suffer in silence from emotional and psychological issues. This circumstance emphasises how critical it is for schools to provide organised counselling instruction in order to promote kids' mental health, academic achievement, and personal growth. Students may suffer from low motivation, subpar academic results, and behavioural issues that

impede their future success in the absence of successful therapy solutions.

Furthermore, in order to thrive in a world that is becoming more technologically advanced and competitive, kids must acquire excellent self-regulated learning abilities. The capacity to organise, track, and assess one's own learning processes is a prerequisite for self-regulated learning. By educating students goal-setting, time management, emotional control, and efficient study techniques, counselling education significantly contributes to the development of these abilities. According to Swiecki et al. (2024), students who get structured assistance exhibit greater levels of academic success, engagement, and self-regulation than those who do not. This highlights the value of counselling education as a strategy for enhancing learning efficacy and guaranteeing sustained academic achievement. Counselling education is a transformational educational tool that fosters emancipation, empowerment, and sustained growth rather than just being a supporting service. By guaranteeing that students have sufficient assistance to realise their full potential, it closes the gap between academic education and personal growth.

### 1.1 Research Questions

- How does counselling education promote education for liberation among secondary school students in Ibadan?
- What is the influence of counselling education on students' sustainable development?
- What challenges hinder effective counselling education in secondary schools?
- What strategies can improve counselling education for better student outcomes?

## 2. Literature Review

In order to help students' academic, personal, social, and professional growth, counselling education is an essential part of the educational system. It is designed to provide students a better awareness of themselves, their skills, interests, and limits so they can make realistic and well-informed decisions about their education and future professions. Additionally, counselling education offers pupils emotional and psychological assistance that improves their capacity to handle developmental obstacles and academic pressure. According to Egbo (2021), kids who get guidance and counselling services are better able to adapt academically and make better decisions. Similarly, Afolabi (2023) observed that successful school counselling fosters students' self-awareness

and improves their capacity to establish reasonable academic and professional objectives.

Additionally, by helping students acquire critical life skills including communication, problem-solving, emotional control, and interpersonal relationships, counselling education makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development. These skills are essential for efficient operation in the classroom and in society. Additionally, counselling services improve emotional intelligence, which helps kids comprehend and control their emotions in positive and healthy ways. According to Oladele (2022), school therapy greatly reduces emotional discomfort and enhances pupils' behavioural adjustment. In a similar vein, Nwachukwu (2024) discovered that counselling treatments in secondary schools enhance social interaction, decrease indiscipline, and boost academic participation among teenagers.

From a liberating standpoint, counselling education enables students to get over obstacles that impede their academic and personal development, both internal and external. Students are often prevented from reaching their full potential by internal obstacles including low self-esteem, fear of failing, lack of confidence, and a negative self-concept. Peer pressure, familial difficulties, poverty, and a lack of professional knowledge are examples of external obstacles that impede their growth. Counselling services improve students' self-efficacy and freedom in making decisions, according to Ezeani (2021). Similarly, Okwu (2023) found that school counselling programs in secondary schools in Nigeria greatly boost students' self-esteem and encourage self-directed learning, both of which are essential components of educational emancipation.

Sustainable development in education also entails giving students skills that guarantee their long-term social, economic, and personal well-being. It places a strong emphasis on the acquisition of values and abilities that allow people to both find personal fulfilment and make significant contributions to society. By encouraging students' resilience, flexibility, and good academic conduct, counselling education plays a crucial part in accomplishing this aim. Counselling services improve kids' coping mechanisms and academic perseverance, according to Okeke (2022). Additionally, Nwosu (2024) observed that by improving kids' capacity to adjust to social expectations and academic hurdles, effective school counselling fosters sustainable learning results.

### 3. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research approach was used in the study. Because it enables the researcher to methodically gather data from a large population in order to characterise current circumstances, viewpoints, and correlations among variables without changing them, this approach was deemed acceptable. It is especially appropriate for educational research that aims to investigate attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions as they naturally arise in educational environments. Additionally, the design allows the researcher to get a genuine image of how counselling education affects Ibadan secondary school students' emancipation and sustainable growth. Additionally, the use of standardised instruments is supported by the descriptive survey methodology, which enables the generalisation of results across comparable educational environments.

All secondary school pupils in Ibadan, Nigeria's Oyo State, made up the study's population. Ibadan is a significant educational center in Nigeria with a variety of public and private secondary institutions, which is why this population was chosen. It is a perfect environment for researching counselling education results because of the variety in student characteristics, socioeconomic background, and school ownership. In order to ensure that developmental disparities across age and class levels were sufficiently represented in the research, the group included both male and female students from Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS). Stratified random selection was used to choose a sample of 200 students for the research. This approach was used to guarantee that important demographic groupings were represented proportionately. Gender, class level, and school type (public vs private) were the initial factors used to stratify the population. Respondents were chosen at random from each stratum to maintain equity and minimise sampling bias. This method made sure that a variety of student experiences with counselling education were recorded, which increased the sample's representativeness and the results' dependability.

A systematic questionnaire known as the Counselling Education, Liberation and Sustainable Development

Questionnaire (CELSAQ) was used as the data gathering tool. Based on the study's goals and a review of the literature, the questionnaire was meticulously created. It was divided into four sections: Section C measured liberation outcomes like self-awareness, independence, self-confidence, and decision-making ability; Section D evaluated sustainable development indicators like emotional stability, academic engagement, behavioural adjustment, and career awareness; and Section A covered demographic data like age, gender, and class level; Section B concentrated on counselling education practices in schools, including availability and accessibility of counselling services. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

Experts in educational psychology and guidance and counselling validated the instrument's face and content to make sure the items were adequate, relevant, and clear. Before being administered, their expert input was used to clarify unclear sentences and enhance the instrument's general quality. This procedure guaranteed that the device measured the required variables with accuracy.

Following a pilot test on a small sample of students outside the research region who were not involved in the main study, the instrument's reliability was determined using the Cronbach Alpha technique. The outcome produced a reliability value of 0.82, demonstrating the instrument's high degree of internal consistency and stability. This suggests that the questionnaire's questions were sufficiently trustworthy to assess the concepts of counselling education, emancipation, and sustainable development.

Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, mean scores, and percentages were used to analyse the data. The opinions of respondents about each study topic were collected and analysed using these statistical techniques. Any mean score of 2.50 or more was considered agreement, while any score below 2.50 was considered disagreement since the decision rule was based on a mean benchmark of 2.50. This method allowed for a clear interpretation of the degree to which counselling education influences students' emancipation and sustainable development results.

4. Result

**Research Question 1:** How does counselling education promote education for liberation among secondary school students in Ibadan?

**Table 1:** Counselling Education and Students' Liberation Outcomes

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Self-awareness development	42%	36%	14%	8%	78%
Independent decision-making	38%	34%	18%	10%	72%
Confidence building	45%	35%	12%	8%	80%
Reduction of peer pressure influence	40%	33%	17%	10%	73%
Improved self-concept	44%	32%	15%	9%	76%

Table 1's results demonstrate that counselling education significantly improves secondary school students' liberation-related outcomes. There is a significant degree of agreement among responders, as seen by the overall favourable answer, which varies from 72% to 80%. The most favourable reaction (80%) was for confidence development, indicating that counselling services greatly improve students' emotional fortitude and sense of self. Counselling helps students better grasp their identity, strengths, and shortcomings, as shown by the growth of self-awareness (78%) and enhanced self-concept (76%). Additionally, the outcome for autonomous decision-making (72%) shows that counselling education helps students make academic and personal decisions free from excessive outside influence. Counselling shields students from harmful social pressures, as seen by the inclusion of peer pressure reduction (73%). Overall, the statistics show that by giving students psychological, social, and emotional empowerment, counselling education significantly advances educational emancipation.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of counselling education on students' sustainable development?

**Table 2:** Counselling Education and Sustainable Development Indicators

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Academic improvement	40%	35%	15%	10%	75%
Emotional stability	36%	34%	18%	12%	70%
Career awareness	48%	34%	10%	8%	82%
Behavioural improvement	42%	33%	15%	10%	75%
School engagement	39%	36%	14%	11%	75%

Table 2's findings demonstrate how counselling education greatly improves students' sustainable development metrics. The most favourable answer (82%) was for career knowledge, suggesting that counselling is quite successful in helping students make well-informed professional decisions and prepare for the future. Counselling seems to be associated with improved academic performance and good school participation, as seen by the equal positive answers of 75% for academic progress, behavioural improvement, and school engagement. Counselling aids students in managing stress, anxiety, and emotional imbalance, according to emotional stability (70%). Overall, the results show that counselling education enhances students' academic performance, mental health, job preparedness, and behavioural adjustment, all of which contribute to sustainable growth.

**Research Question 3:** What challenges hinder effective counselling education in secondary schools?

**Table 3:** Challenges Affecting Counselling Education in Schools

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Lack of qualified counsellors	38%	30%	20%	12%	68%
Poor funding of counselling services	45%	29%	16%	10%	74%
Low awareness among students	34%	31%	22%	13%	65%
Inadequate counselling facilities	37%	28%	20%	15%	65%
Limited administrative support	32%	30%	23%	15%	62%

Table 3's results highlight a number of obstacles that prevent effective counselling instruction in secondary schools. Financial limitations have a major impact on the provision of counselling services, as shown by the fact that inadequate finance is the most pressing issue (74%). Another major issue is the understaffing of counselling departments in many schools, as seen by the 68% lack of certified counsellors. Inadequate facilities (65%) and low student knowledge

(65%) further imply that counselling services are not completely available or used. Even though little administrative assistance had the lowest grade (62%), there is still a significant institutional gap. All things considered, these difficulties draw attention to structural flaws that impede the successful use of counselling education.

**Research Question 4:** What strategies can improve counselling education for better student outcomes?

**Table 4:** Strategies for Enhancing Counselling Education in Schools

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Positive (%)
Recruitment of more counselors	50%	35%	10%	5%	85%
Increased government funding	55%	33%	8%	4%	88%
Integration of counselling into curriculum	44%	36%	12%	8%	80%
Regular training for counselors	42%	34%	14%	10%	76%
Awareness programmes for students	40%	32%	18%	10%	72%

Strong agreement on methods to enhance counselling education is shown by Table 4's findings. Financial assistance is seen to be the most important component for enhancing counselling services, as shown by the greatest favourable reaction (88%) to increased government funding. The need to solve the staffing shortfall in schools is reflected in the high priority given to recruiting additional counsellors (85%). Counselling integration into the curriculum (80%) indicates that respondents are in favour of making counselling a fundamental component of education. The need for capacity enhancement and increased student participation is also indicated by regular counsellor training (76%) and student awareness programs (72%). Overall, the results demonstrate that increasing institutional integration, staffing, and finance will greatly increase the efficacy of counselling education.

### 5. Discussion of Findings

The results of this research showed that counselling education had a significant and reliable impact on students' emancipation and long-term growth in Ibadan secondary schools. Respondents generally agreed that counselling education improves students' self-awareness, confidence, capacity to make decisions, academic success, emotional stability, and career awareness across all study topics. This implies that counselling education serves as a transformational educational support system that significantly advances students' social, intellectual, and psychological growth.

The first study question's results demonstrated that counselling education encourages secondary school students' liberty. It was clear that counselling services help students become more self-aware, self-assured, and capable of making their own decisions. This validates Ojo's (2023) assertion that counselling therapies enhance secondary school pupils' self-concept and personal autonomy. In a similar vein,

Green and Lloyd (2021) highlighted that counselling education helps students overcome internal obstacles including poor self-esteem and fear of failing and builds psychological resilience. This suggests that counselling education helps students become more independent and capable of making wise life choices free from unwanted outside influence.

According to the results of the second study question, students' sustainable growth is greatly aided by counselling education. Counselling services have been shown to enhance career awareness, emotional stability, and academic achievement. This is consistent with the findings of Bettman and Digiacomio (2022), who said that school therapy is essential for resolving teenage emotional issues and enhancing academic performance. Similarly, Köse (2023) discovered that therapy sessions improve emotional control and lessen behavioural issues in teenagers. Additionally, Maree and Che Judea (2023) stressed that counselling promotes future preparedness and job flexibility, both of which are crucial elements of sustainable growth in schooling. These results imply that counselling education gives students the lifetime skills needed for both individual and society growth.

Additionally, the results on difficulties showed that a number of institutional and structural limitations impede counselling education. Major obstacles were limited awareness, a lack of skilled therapists, and inadequate money. This is in line with Adeyemo's (2022) finding that the efficacy of counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools is limited by a lack of resources and counselling staff. In a similar vein, Ezeani (2021) observed that students' lack of understanding lowers their use of counselling services, which lessens its influence. These difficulties show that, despite the value of counselling education, many educational environments still do not adequately apply it.

Strong agreement was found in the improvement plans results on the need for greater government assistance, hiring more counsellors, and including counselling into the curriculum. This validates Nwosu's (2024) assertion that strong institutional support and policy support are necessary for sustained counselling services. Additionally, Swiecki et al. (2024) observed that organised educational advising enhances learning results and student involvement, underscoring the need of incorporating counselling within the official school system. These results imply that government, school officials, and educational stakeholders must work together to improve counselling education.

## 6. Conclusion

For secondary school pupils to get education for emancipation and sustainable development, counselling education is an essential and crucial instrument. It acts as an organised support system that helps students identify their potential, get a deeper understanding of themselves, and make wise choices about their academic and personal lives. Effective counselling services help students develop critical thinking abilities, emotional stability, independence, and self-confidence—all of which are necessary for both educational emancipation and personal development. The research found that counselling education promotes students' behavioural development and psychosocial adjustment in addition to their academic success. In addition to tackling external factors like social pressure and environmental distractions, it assists students in overcoming internal obstacles including poor self-esteem, anxiety, and lack of ambition. By doing this, counselling education fosters an atmosphere that allows students to completely participate in their education and make the most of their learning possibilities. Additionally, by giving students lifetime qualities like resilience, flexibility, career awareness, and problem-solving abilities, counselling education makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development. These skills equip pupils for future social duties, such as work, citizenship, and personal fulfilment, in addition to their current academic accomplishment. In this sense, counselling education ensures continuity in individual and social development by serving as a link between education and real-life experiences.

## 7. Recommendations

- The government need to hire more certified school counsellors.
- Curricula in schools must to completely include counselling education.
- Counselling services should be well funded.

- Programs for raising awareness among parents and students should be developed.
- School counsellors should get regular training.

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## A Theological Interrogation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Face of God's Creative Power

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**Abstract.** Artificial Intelligence is playing an increasingly transformative role in knowledge creation, learning spaces and international innovation, and challenges the nature and limits of human creativity in profound theological and philosophical ways. In this paper, I am asking for an interdisciplinary analysis of this question: Is Artificial Intelligence a successful competition with God's creative powers, or is it simply the extension of human ingenuity within the parameters set by God? The study utilises classical theological teachings and concepts, including *creatio ex nihilo*, *Imago Dei* and divine sovereignty, to analyse the ontological, divine and ethical aspects of artificial creativity. This paper situates itself within the broader context of innovation and sustainability in higher education and examines changes in human identity, consciousness, and the role of the divine in the age of artificial intelligence. It distinguishes between divine creation, which has intentionality, soul-bearing life and moral agency, and artificial creation, which is based on algorithms, data, and human design. It defies technocentric hope and theological hesitation, suggesting a way forward for theological reflection on human vocation, moral boundaries, and stewardship through Artificial Intelligence. In conclusion, this paper suggests that Artificial Intelligence can be viewed not as a replacement for God's creative power but as a catalyst for interdisciplinary dialogue and reflection within the academy, particularly concerning the relationship between innovation and theology, and their moral and ethical dimensions. It promotes an educationally sustainable approach that respects human dignity, spiritual understanding and moral duty while dealing with the challenges of ongoing technological change.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Ethical Innovation, Theology and Technology, Divine Creativity

### 1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a game-changer in the journey of human progress in the 21st century. It has emerged as a catalyst, revolutionizing higher education, global innovation, self-driving vehicles, machine learning algorithms, and so much more. Artificial Intelligence is changing the way we relate to knowledge, experience reality and to each other. Modern Artificial Intelligence systems not only act on data, they are also generative, as Russell and Norvig (2020) point out. However, as it is a remarkable achievement, there are some theological questions to be raised.

Theologians from around the world ask themselves, whether Artificial Intelligence is a creative mimicry or an existential challenge to divine creativity, such as John H. Evans (2011). Does Artificial Intelligence challenge or mimic God's creative power? African theologians like Okoronkwo, Dike and Onyeukaziri, however, combine global discourse with their own African theological sensibilities, leading us to ask, can man-made intelligence ever compete with the creative power of God, or is it merely a sub-creative reflection within God's creative boundaries? The most significant question is: What should be the position of faith communities in the face of the creation of human made intelligence? This paper is an attempt to theologially and ethically reflect on these questions rather than denounce Artificial Intelligence, but as a thoughtfully consideration of its significance in a Divinely ordered cosmos.

#### 1.1 Artificial Intelligence and Human Creativity: A Historical Overview

This chapter examines the evolution and theory of the field of Artificial Intelligence and creativity, giving an overview of the nature of the "offshoot" of the creative

power of God and human beings. First, Artificial Intelligence has developed from a desire to imagine making some machines 'think' like humans. These intelligent systems can be traced back to Alan Turing's (1950) seminal paper *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*, which lays the groundwork for this inquiry with his first asked and provoking question, 'Can machines think? This question set the paradigm for how artificial intelligence should be done, providing the inspiration for the famous Turing Test which proposed to test machine intelligence using imitation.

Turing's focus was not on consciousness or understanding itself, but at the equivalent of human response (behavioural equivalence), the ability of a machine to match human response successfully. From the expert systems of the 1970s to today's deep learning networks and large language models (LLM), AI has evolved into a development that has played a pivotal role in the convergence of Artificial Intelligence and creativity. This junction has sparked a deep philosophical, technological, and theological discussion. The overarching theme of this talk is the question of whether machines can really be creative or whether they are only imitating human creativity?

As the field evolved, technological advances brought in a new era of the development of Artificial Intelligence. The use of Artificial Intelligence is no longer solely about rules-based programming; Artificial Intelligence systems are now powered by machine learning and deep learning architectures that can analyse the data, learn from patterns, and generate new and unique content. These systems can be used to accomplish tasks once thought to be the exclusive province of human thought: making art, writing music, and writing literature, according to Russell and Norvig (2020). The abilities here discussed, a kind of creative ability of machines, give rise not only to excitement, but to a philosophical, theological and ethical reaction.

Theological and metaphysical scholars, however, are not so convinced of the real creativity of Artificial Intelligence. The creation from nothing - *creatio ex nihilo* as it is known in theological terminology, is a key aspect of true creativity, according to Evans (2011), and that is a power which belongs solely to God, and not to us. The human being, created in the likeness of God, is involved in a derivative mode of creativity that is manifested through the concept of free will and intentionality, which in turn are based on the concept of divine inspiration. Torrance (2013) agrees, arguing that Artificial Intelligence can mimic some aspects of creative activity but not have the

ontological basis to engage in creative activity in a true sense.

This critique is enriched by cultural-theological specifics. In Nigeria, Olatunji (2022) investigates Artificial Intelligence's ascent using African Christian perspectives. He suggests that AI-driven innovation should be embedded in a theology of sub-creation, recognizing that humans are God's co-creators in His universe. This vision calls for human creativity to be used responsibly, in humility, acknowledging our reliance on God. It is therefore dangerous to give creative autonomy to machines, both theologically and ethically.

Today, human creativity is not confined to the domain of the human species, but now has an interesting parallel in systems that can create music, create essays, and diagnose disease. These are awe-inspiring, but also raise metaphysical questions about creativity and consciousness, between the natural and the synthetic. Omoregbe (2005), in a reactionary submission to this, affirms that human creativity is motivated by rationality and spiritual awareness, which are not only functional but ontological aspects of humanity's being and living. So, when the use of artificial systems is compared to human creativity, theological analysis is needed.

The topic of Artificial Intelligence and creativity also poses questions of philosophy of mind and cognitive science. Creativity is not newness, it is not complexity, it is intentionality, it is emotion and it is meaning-making. Machines can create new combinations of data, but they are devoid of consciousness, self-awareness and goals. Their "creativity" is thus a product of statistical calculations, not of inspiration or insight.

This overview notes that although Artificial Intelligence (AI) has come a long way towards being convincing in many creative endeavours, it remains an exercise in simulation rather than participation in creativity. There are theological and philosophical objections to identifying machine production with human creativity. While Artificial Intelligence continues to be a part of our creative landscape, it is essential to draw a line between what's created by a tool and what's created by a human with a calling to create for God's glory and with reverence.

## 2. Theological Foundations: *Creatio Ex Nihilo, Imago Dei, and Divine Sovereignty*

Theological reflection has a special role to play in articulating the issues of development and

implications of the artificial intelligence (AI) moving into human society. The theological and artificial intelligence (AI) intersection poses a host of questions about the nature of creation, the uniqueness of human beings, and the limits of technology. In the same way that Artificial Intelligence can mimic human ideas and creativity, Christian theological concepts, which may exist in other religious beliefs, can guide us in assessing the potential and boundaries of such technologies. This section explores the three core theological principles *creatio ex nihilo*, *imago Dei* and divine sovereignty as lenses through which to interpret and judge the role of Artificial Intelligence in society.

### 2.1 *Creatio Ex Nihilo*: Creation from Nothing

The *creatio ex nihilo* - creation out of nothing, is a doctrine that only God has or can have the power to create something from nothing. This is an important doctrine in Christianity that supports the notion of the transcendence of God and His unconditioned agency. This act is not only sovereign, but non-contingent. That is, God's creative will is not dependent upon any prior matter or force. Divine creation is unique in that it is totally original and the authoritative source of all things (Gunton 1993). Gunton (2002) also emphasizes that in this divine sense, creation is not just "shaping of matter" but "radical act of originating being itself". On the other hand, AI systems are heavily dependent on extensive collections of existing data. Their productions are not independent but are extensions of information curated by humans. For example, Artificial Intelligence systems operate by algorithms that are trained on huge amounts of data; they cannot create content without existing material. It's thusly considered a *sub-creative* innovation as opposed to a *Divine* one.

So, in a better sense, Artificial Intelligence is involved in *sub-creation*, not in creation, in a theological sense. The theological literature popularized the term "sub-creation," and technology scholars echoed it, meaning that man can create something from something else. However, as Walton (2008) reminds us, all human and technological creativity depends on what has already been created, is based on the manipulation of pre-existing conditions, and is categorically different from acts of divine creation. Theologians Achar and Awasthi (2025) also detail that AI-created content seems to be new, yet it is not created by itself, but instead is algorithmically recombined. To this, Asaju (2014) reminds that technology is something good, but it has to be limited to human finitude and human humility. He calls for a theological ethic of sub-creation, in which man's innovations recognize their dependence and their accountability to God

This seems to be not just a difference in language but a difference in being, as Creator and creature. The idea of Artificial Intelligence as a "creator" is a theological and technological deception that can lead to the machines having the same power as God and is also theologically and ethically problematic.

### 2.2 *Imago Dei*: The Uniqueness of Human Identity

The second theological pillar is the idea of '*Imago Dei*'. This is a belief that humans are created in the likeness of God and this is the very foundation of Christian anthropology. Theologians have traditionally found this image to be a reference to the human powers of reason, moral judgment, spiritual capacity, relationship and communion with the divine. These characteristics are not only what makes man different from other creatures, including machines, but they are also what makes him different from God. Plantinga (2002) observes the *imago Dei* is not only functional but theological, referring to attributes of the human person that are relational love, conscience, repentance, and worship.

While Artificial Intelligence delivers language abilities, advanced computation and the creation of art or music, it has no purpose, moral responsibility or spiritual power. According to Okoye (2020, pp. 43 - 45), Artificial Intelligence is a "soulless intelligence." It is an impressive system, but there is a lack of reflection, repentance, worship or love within it. These are not just capacities that can be programmed or calculated, but they are part of the human soul.

These spiritual and moral capacities are beyond the capabilities of even the most powerful Artificial Intelligence models, like those based on GPT. Such models can simulate conversation or even produce human-like text, but they are without interiority, volition and a relationship to God. Okoronkwo and Dike (2025) note that moral reasoning, particularly in the form of guilt, remorse, or transformation, is not a program that can be taught, but rather is a product of an "aware self" capable of "relationality" with God and others. Likewise, Onyeukaziri (2023) maintains that no machine, no matter how sophisticated, can worship or even act with any real spiritual intent.

This distinction validates the theological differences between man and machine. Humanity is not distinguished by intelligence, but by the ability to be engaged morally and spiritually by God. This goes further to the capacity of taking responsibility for an action. Thus, the concept of Artificial Intelligence as being human is an error in the theological perspective

of what it is to be human. Such equivalence may result in "dehumanisation," in which human value is determined by only their productivity and intelligence, as opposed to the image of God that they bear, as religion ethicists warn.

### 3. Divine Sovereignty and Technological Ethics

Divine sovereignty is the third “theological” basis. The Bible teaches us that God is the King of all creation: “Our God is in heaven; he does what he wants.” (Psalm 115:3, NIV). This sovereignty is over all human activities, including technological innovations. So, the creation and application of AI should be done with both awe, moral consideration and theological responsibility.

In an age of technological progress without a moral compass, MacIntyre (2010) cautions, "unintended consequences" can follow, such as the loss of virtue and community. This is referred to by Adeyemo (2016, pp. 101 - 104) as “technological imperialism.” It is an ideology that prioritises innovation, and that that leaves out of consideration divine wisdom and ethics. If not tempered by theological and moral reflection, the development of Artificial Intelligence can result in social alienation, injustice and spiritual confusion, he warns. Innovation is not a contradiction to faith; however, the direction and purpose of innovation must be continually evaluated through Divine Oversight. A key point raised by Niemandt (2024, pp. 5 - 8) is the need for humility in the creation of AI, which means humility in the presence of God and an awareness that one is not “playing God.”

The use of Artificial Intelligence can therefore be a great enabler for human flourishing but it can never go beyond the moral limits set by God's will. Humans are a part of God's world, and we are expected to create, but we are required to do it in the parameters and context of what God intends and wants.

In light of the Christian theology, it is necessary to have a humility, stewardship, and accountability approach to Artificial Intelligence. Technological tools aren't themselves bad, they can be used as a means to human flourishing. However, they must be sought with prudence, always in keeping with the moral and spiritual principles laid out in the scriptures.

#### 3.1 Contrasting Divine and Artificial Creation

Aspect	Divine Creation	Artificial Creation
Origin	Ex nihilo (From nothing)	Data and algorithms
Intentionality	Moral, relational, covenantal	Efficiency, performance
Ontological depth	Soul, spirit	Code, simulation

Authority	Sovereign, eternal	Dependent, temporary
Purpose	Communion, stewardship	Utility, productivity, innovation

God’s creation involves life-giving breath (ruach), imparting soul and moral agency (Gen. 2:7). Artificial Intelligence does not have the breath, spirit, or capacity to enter into a covenant relationship. Onwuka (2018) says that Artificial Intelligence can duplicate human production but cannot engage in the divine communion that is at the core of biblical creation. This must start with upholding the categorical separation between the Creator and human creators when engaging with artificial intelligence in a theological way. It's not just a difference in size, it's a difference in life. Originality, relationship, spirituality, eternity are all characteristics of divine creation. Artificial creation is derivative, mechanical and temporal. Onwuka (2018) cautions that mixing up the wonderful deliverance of the AI with that of God could lead to misinterpretation of theology and ethics. Emmanuel (2020) and Westhelle (2024) did not miss the opportunity to remind us that it is not wise to be metaphorical about the comparison or to become technologically ambitious and try to equate the two (divine creation and artificial intelligence) without first considering the matter theologically and ethically. If one thinks that a man-made creation is a creation, one thinks that creation is a creation, and creation is God's. If one thinks that a man-made creation is a creation, one thinks that creation is a creation, and creation is God's. Custodians of religious traditions are tasked to interact with technology, not as producers in a divine way, but as stewards, wise, humble, accountable to the One who is the giver of life.

#### 3.2 Ontological Implications: What is Humanity in an AI Age?

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is not just a technological change but an ontological transition. It confronts our basic beliefs about ourselves, our nature, and our purpose. Christian theology, which is based on the *imago Dei*, provides a strong platform for addressing these developments.

#### 3.3 Personhood and Consciousness

Perhaps one of the most crucial issues when discussing the innovation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is personhood. In 1980, philosopher John Searle put his case forward that computers could simulate language, but not understand it. His Chinese Room argument proved that syntax does not equate to semantics; that is, machines can process symbols but do not have consciousness or meaning. Searle (2002) shows in a lengthy argument that simulation is not

comprehension. There is a possibility that the Artificial Intelligence may react to language without really comprehending it.

Gbadegesin (2008), a Nigerian philosopher, theologian, and Onyeukaziri (2023) further the argument and argue that artificial intelligence has no qualia, or subjective first-person experiences, defining consciousness. He had previously stated that in the Yoruba philosophy, that personhood cannot be defined by cognitive ability. True personhood involves moral sensitivity, spiritual involvement and relatedness to community. In Artificial Intelligence, these elements will not be present, as an Artificial Intelligence cannot feel remorse, express love, or pursue virtue. This idea, Onyeukaziri had advanced, arguing that self-awareness and moral introspection are essential to being a person, and that it is not something that can be replicated by algorithms.

### 3.4 Identity and the *Imago Dei* – the Image of God

With an increasingly functional culture, we can fall into the trap of dehumanizing human worth. Artificial intelligence (AI) is capable of doing things that would normally require people to do can change the cultural perception of value. When machines can do as well as or better than humans at a functional task, what is the human element? From a Christian perspective, the theology of religion gives a clear answer to the question: but human dignity has nothing to do with utility it has to do with being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

If the Christian anthropology is to avoid the reduction of the worth of man to productivity, Oladipo (2009) contends that it must be resisted. He believes that all humans have inherent dignity and not based on performance or efficiency. Here he claims the *imago Dei* suggests an unmeasurable value that is based on the divine purpose, rather than on productivity or efficiency. The value of human beings is something which is inborn and cannot be replicated or replaced by any algorithm. Plantinga (2002) agreed and noted that theological anthropology is non utilitarian in its conception, making it a claim that humans are spiritual, moral and relational beings.

Ethical Reflections on Artificial Creativity

### 3.5 Moral Agency and Accountability

While Artificial Intelligence algorithms can mimic decision-making, they are not the same as having moral responsibility. However, moral agency requires intention, freedom, and accountability, which are not attributes of Artificial Intelligence. While Artificial Intelligence can be programmed to adhere to ethical

guidelines, it cannot be held responsible for or be held to a moral standard. Moral action requires a deliberate, free, and responsible response. MacIntyre (2010, pp. 67-69) believes that there are two different types of ethical behaviour; one that is “ethical by design” and the other that comes from a source of “virtue or moral reasoning.” That is, a self-driving car can obey traffic regulations, but it does not "decide" to do good.

Adeboye challenges the notion of ‘ethical machines’ and the moralization of artificial intelligence. He cautions against delegating morality to non-conscious entities. He writes: “Morality cannot be explained as programmed preferences, without transcendent foundations.” While he says that ethical algorithms are useful, he believes that they don't replace moral responsibility based on personhood. To him, programming ethics is not synonymous with having a conscience (Adeboye, 2021, p. 45).

*Justice, Power and Control*

The impact of Artificial Intelligence use poses a threat to widening inequality. As Ojo (2019) states, algorithmic decision-making, if not monitored properly, can only further perpetuate systemic biases. Artificial Intelligence is not neutral. Development and deployment embody underlying power relations. Artificial Intelligence is being integrated into various sectors in Nigeria, such as healthcare, agriculture, and finance, with a growing concern about its usage and enforcement of ethical standards or equity. Thus, Ojo (2019) cautions that artificial intelligence (AI) could further deepen the inequality if it is not guided by theological ethics of justice. He calls for an ethic of justice that is grounded in a theology which brings the marginalised into the design, implementation and distribution of Artificial Intelligence tools. The call to stewardship in the Bible should be met by inclusive technologies that do not reinforce existing hierarchies, but benefit the ones who are left behind.

The Nigerian Religious Coalition (2025) also wants Artificial Intelligence systems to be fair, inclusive and transparent. They highlighted the importance of community oversight and theological consultation in the policy making process in their merged statement.

## 4. Reimagining Human Vocation in the World of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

### 4.1 Stewardship in a Digital Age

Genesis 2:15 brings a reminder to mankind that they are called to “tend and keep” creation. This calling can carry over into the digital realm, where artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool, rather than a rival, to God's purposes. Nolan Olatunji (2022, p. 54–57) believes

that if Artificial Intelligence is understood in the context of the theology of stewardship, it is essentially a tool to help people carry out, not replace, God's mandate to care for God's world. The care and maintenance of the garden is a metaphor for care, creativity, and stewardship. Artificial intelligence (AI) can help with this vocation by boosting our ability to help solve social and ecological problems. So, artificial intelligence can be co-created, writes Olutunji, and "faith" should "not run away in fear" but "should stand up in wisdom to influence the technology futures." Theological reflection can help ensure that the use of AI is connected to God's purposes.

#### 4.2 Education and Interdisciplinarity Formation

Theology and technology can no longer be kept in different boxes. Technological literacy of higher learning institutions through their agencies of religious and theological education should be promoted in order to responsibly use artificial intelligence (AI). Obaje (2020) recommended that theological curricula ought to incorporate courses in digital ethics, programming basics and theological reflections on technology. He also urges curricula in African universities to be theological-oriented and contextual. It is important to raise the next generation to understand that the machines they build are for a society, and to ask what kind of society they are for (Obaje, 2020, p. 30-33). In the same way, Evans (2011) argues that theological and philosophical leaders should be prepared to enter the age of artificial intelligence, and that they will need to become "trilingual" in the arts of theology, philosophy, and technology (p. 50–52). To respond faithfully to artificial intelligence (AI), integrated education is needed, integrating biblical wisdom, ethics, and digital literacy.

Theological Responses to Technocentrism and Conservatism

#### 4.3 Between Optimism and Fatalism: A Balanced Perspective

There are times when it is appropriate to be optimistic, and there are times when it is appropriate to be fatalistic – and a balanced outlook lies in between.

In theological reactions to Artificial Intelligence, there are two extremes. Such extreme conditions should be prevented. That is, techno-centrism, the fealty to AI without question; and reactionary conservatism, the over-rejection of innovation. The theology of the Christians provides a middle ground, a way of discerning. Mbiti (1969) indicated that relationality is a characteristic feature of African theology. That

Artificial Intelligence (AI) should not single any person out but, strengthen the community. He also advocates a "third way" based on discernment, which strives to bring innovation to the testing of community, scripture, and tradition (Mbiti, 1969, pp. 82–85). Religious institution has a responsibility in influencing the impact of AI on family, culture and spirituality. Ethos of humility in theological engagement, with recognition of potential and limitations of AI, is added by Niemandt (2024).

### 5. Toward a Sustainable Theological Framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI)

#### 5.1 Guiding Principles

**Dignity:** Humans must never be treated as disposable. They cannot be replaced by AI, regardless of efficiency (Oladipo, 2009)

**Transparency:** Artificial Intelligence systems should be explainable and open to ethical scrutiny and critique (Effoduh, 2024)

**Justice:** Technology must prioritise the poor, serve the vulnerable and marginalised, not entrench inequality (Ojo, 2019)

**Stewardship:** Technological care must echo our responsibility to care for creation (Obaje, 2020)

**Humility:** Human innovation must respect divine boundaries and the Creator-creature distinction. It must recognise human limits and the mystery of divine sovereignty. (Niemandt, 2024)

Recommendations for Theological Education

**Curricular Integration:** Religious departments of higher learning institutions and Seminaries should introduce modules on AI, ethics, and theology.

**Research Hubs:** Universities must facilitate interdisciplinary centres combining theologians, ethicists, and technologists.

**Contextual Theologies:** Scholars should publish African-oriented theological frameworks for artificial intelligence (AI).

**Public Forums:** Encourage accessible dialogue through religious centres, hosted town halls and interfaith AI ethics conferences.

### 6. Conclusion

Though Artificial Intelligence is extraordinary, it cannot surpass God's creative power! It's not a spiritual agent, it's an instrumental part of human sub-creativity. Theology must instead embrace Artificial Intelligence, not out of fear or admiration, but as a way to consider its use and implications, to understand what it teaches us about our calling, our boundaries, our hopes, and a wise use of it. By doing this, the religious and academy institutions can reaffirm human dignity, vocation and

divine purpose in the tech-driven age. In this battle, there is a great opportunity: to cling to techno-nostalgia or to embrace technology without any critical examination, but to rethink creation, humanity, and the presence of God in a world increasingly driven by artificial systems. The message is clear: the challenge for religious leaders, scholars of religions and educators is to lead and shape a sustainable, ethical and responsibly spiritual relationship with artificial intelligence (AI) that is respectful towards God's sovereign rule and human creative ability.

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## A Feminist Reconstruction of the Doctrine of Sin: A Sociology of Religion Perspective

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**Abstract.** The doctrine of sin occupies a central place in Christian theology, yet its historical formulations have often been shaped by androcentric assumptions that obscure or marginalise women's experiences. This paper undertakes a feminist reconstruction of the doctrine of sin, critically examining how traditional interpretations have perpetuated hierarchical structures and legitimised gender oppression. Drawing on feminist theological discourse, hermeneutical strategies, and socio-ethical critique, the study redefines sin not merely as personal moral transgression but as a complex reality manifested in systemic injustice, relational disintegration, and institutionalised violence—particularly against women. By interrogating patriarchal readings of scripture and doctrine, this work demonstrates how feminist perspectives unveil sin as both individual and structural, exposing complicity in sustaining oppressive power dynamics. The reconstructed doctrine proposed here affirms the lived realities of women, reorients the understanding of sin towards liberation and justice, and contributes to a more holistic theological anthropology. In doing so, it advances a framework in which resistance to domination and the pursuit of mutuality become integral dimensions of Christian discipleship. This study examines the concept of sin within Christian theology through a feminist lens, challenging traditional interpretations that have often reinforced patriarchal structures and marginalized women's experiences. By engaging with classical theologians and feminist scholars, this paper reconstructs sin as both personal and structural, emphasizing injustice, oppression, and broken relationships. The study proposes a liberative understanding of sin that prioritizes injustice, equality and the full humanity of all persons.

**Keywords:** Sin, Oppression, Patriarchy, Gender Justice, Christian Theology.

### 1. Introduction

Sin is one of the most enduring and contested categories in Christian theology. From the early Church fathers through the Reformers and into contemporary theology, sin has been described as humanity's rebellion against God, the distortion of creation's harmony, and the root of alienation between persons and communities (Johnson, 1982).

Yet the doctrine of sin as traditionally formulated has often reflected androcentric assumptions, universalising male experience while minimizing or misrepresenting the lived realities of women. The result has been a theological framework that, rather than liberating, has frequently reinforced patriarchal domination, legitimized gender inequality, and perpetuated the silencing of women's voices within both church and society (Townes et al., 2006)

The meaning of human evil or Sin can only be fully grasped in terms of the true purpose of human existence. We have been created by God for himself, and in nothing short of the possession of God will the desire of our immortal souls find their ultimate satisfaction. But the possession of God is so utterly beyond the capacity of our created human nature that such a glorious goal would be unthinkable without a special grace from God which would transform it into a super-nature, making us God-like so that we could become sharers in his divinity (Daly, 1973). We know that this indeed is our true destiny, for the real Son of God became man, so that men could become sons of God by adoption (Heyword, 1999). He deigned to become sharers in our humanity, so that we could become sharers of his divinity. And this is effected by the Sacrament of baptism, which enables us to partake of the fruits of the redemption (Johnson, 1982).

Feminist theology emerges as a critical and reconstructive lens through which to revisit the

doctrine of Sin. Rather than reducing sin to personal moral failure, feminist thought insists on attending to the structural, relational, and systemic dimensions of brokenness that affect women disproportionately. Issues such as sexism, gender-based violence, economic exploitation, and cultural erasure are not merely "social problems" but theological realities that unveil Sin in its most concrete and devastating forms (Plaskow, 1983). By interrogating patriarchal interpretations of scripture and tradition, feminist theology exposes how theological constructions of Sin can themselves participate in Sin, sustaining cycles of domination and exclusion (Pagels, 1978).

This study therefore seeks to reconstruct the doctrine of Sin from a feminist view. It argues that any credible theology of sin must affirm women's full humanity, account for the complexity of relational and systemic oppression, and reorient the conversation toward liberation and justice. Reconstructing sin in this way not only broadens theological anthropology but also deepens Christian discipleship by calling both women and men to resist domination and embody communities of equality, mutuality and healing (Pagels, 1978).

## 2. We are all Sinners

Humanity, in its entirety, bears the mark of sin (Genesis 3). Both men and women share equally in this condition, for as Scripture testifies: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Sin is therefore a universal reality, not confined to any particular gender. However, in many contemporary contexts, women are often disproportionately portrayed as the embodiment of SIN while men are subtly or openly exonerated (Augustine). This distorted perception is deeply rooted in patriarchal cultural and social systems that fail to recognize the shared sinful condition of all humanity.

According to Catholic doctrine, even after baptism, *fomes peccati*—the inclination of sin remains within the soul, a reminder of humanity's wounded nature resulting from original sin and its susceptibility to actual sins (Congar, 2004). To single out women as the exclusive bearer of sin as we see in some cultures is not only theologically inaccurate but also a grave injustice that undermines the universal scope of divine grace offered through Christ (Ratzinger, 2004). Such tendency blinds humanity to divine realities and diminishes the redemptive work of Christ, who came for all sinners without distinction. However, to single out women as the sole bearers of sin is not only unjust but a profound distortion of moral responsibility. Such a claim imposes a disproportionate burden on women,

absolving others of accountability and reinforcing structures of inequality. In any society that aspires to justice, fairness must be grounded in the recognition of shared human agency and fallibility. Moreover, to isolate women as uniquely culpable is therefore both ethically indefensible and socially corrosive. An idea that ought to be firmly rejected in any culture committed to truth, dignity, and equality.

The Vatican Council further illuminated this truth by affirming that the human condition is marked by an inner division: "man is split within himself." Thus, every human life—whether male or female, individual or collective—is characterized by a dramatic struggle between good and evil, light and darkness. Recognizing this "shared struggle" is essential for a proper theological anthropology of sin and remains faithful to the inclusive scope of salvation (Ratzinger, 2004).

### 2.1 The Bible, Church, Sin, and Women

Scholarly engagement with the Bible, particularly from Feminist perspectives, has highlighted the complex ways in which women are represented in scripture and within the life of the church. Certain Gospel narratives have raised questions regarding their fairness towards women. For instance, in the account of the feeding of the five thousand, the text explicitly mentions the number of men but makes little or no reference to women and children (Schussler, 1983). This omission has been interpreted as reflecting the patriarchal context of ancient Jewish society, in which women were often rendered less visible in public records. Such a literary choice invites reflection on how cultural norms shaped the recording of biblical events and how these narratives continue to be read within the church today (Phyllis, 1984).

Similarly, the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) illustrates a pattern in which women are more prominently associated with sin. While the woman is brought forward for judgement, the man involved is not mentioned. This imbalance suggests the influence of social and legal conventions of the time, which often treated men and women differently in matters of morality. Although Jesus' response in the passage emphasizes compassion and challenges the accusers' self-righteousness, the initial framing of the event raises important questions about gender treatment in biblical narratives (Letty, 1974).

These examples underscore broader concerns regarding the perception of women in relation to sin and moral accountability. They do not necessarily imply that women are more sinful than men, but they

reflect cultural and historical contexts in which gender roles influenced how stories were recorded and transmitted (Letty, 1974). Contemporary scholarship, particularly within feminist theology, continues to explore these tensions with the aim of fostering more balanced interpretations that acknowledge both the historical background of the texts and their enduring theological significance.

### 3. Fundamentalists' Projection of Evil onto Eve and Women

The narrative of the talking serpent in Genesis, when read through literalist and fundamentalist interpretations, has often served as a symbolic projection of male anxieties and shadow attributes onto both God and women (Pagels, 1978). This approach reflects a form of psychological and theological transference, wherein male vindictiveness and suspicion are externalized upon the divine and subsequently upon the female gender (Tertullian, 1994).

The *imago Dei*, which affirms that both man and woman are created in the image and likeness of God, has historically been distorted. Instead of mutual equality, men arrogated divine likeness exclusively to themselves while denying its fullness in women. This distortion is well exemplified in the writings of Augustine and Tertullian. Augustine argued that God created the male first, and the female from his side, as a symbolic indicator of superiority and subordination, an interpretation that justified hierarchical gender roles both physically and socially (Augustine, 1991).

Such theological reasoning, rooted in patriarchal exegesis, continues to shape Christian thought and ecclesiastical structures. The notions of women's inferiority and heightened susceptibility to sin, derived from Eve's role in the fall, remains deeply embedded in Christian consciousness and institutional practice, even into the late twentieth century (Fiorenza, 1983). On the other hand, Eve's role in the fall of Adam is unmistakable; yet, it is equally evident that Adam, as a moral agent, had the capacity and responsibility to exercise self-control and resist her persuasion. To lay the entire blame at Eve's feet is therefore unjust. Adam could have asserted his autonomy and upheld his conviction by refusing that invitation. The failure, then, is not hers alone, but a shared lapse in judgment and responsibility.

The result has been a persistent reinforcement of women's subordination, perpetuated by Church authorities who maintain these doctrinal positions despite the liberative message of the Christ event

(Ruether, 1983). Thus, the projection of evil onto Eve and women, institutionalized through theology and culture, reveals not only a misinterpretation of the scripture but also a longstanding mechanism of patriarchal control within Christianity.

### 4. Patriarchal and Neo-Modernist Misconceptions about Sin

In contemporary theological debates, the concept of Sin has become a contested subject, particularly in relation to gender. The patriarchal system, both within and outside the Christian Church, has historically employed the category of sin in ways that disproportionately implicate women. From Eve's portrayal in the Genesis narrative to the persistent association of women with temptation and moral weakness, patriarchal theology has often constructed sin as a gendered reality (Townes, 2006). This tendency has fostered an organized ideological campaign that subtly seeks to retain patriarchal dominance while simultaneously downplaying the broader theological implications of sin (Trible, 1984). While it may be argued that men's tendency to shift blame solely onto women reflects a deeper pattern of irresponsibility, this paper contends that culpability must be understood as mutual rather than unilateral. The narrative of blame, when disproportionately placed on women, reveals not only amoral imbalance but also a cultural habit of evasion, one that absolves men of accountability while reinforcing gendered stereotypes.

This tendency mirrors a broader social disposition in which failure is feminized and success is masculinized; when outcomes are negative, responsibility is projected onto women; when outcomes are favourable, men readily claim the credit. Such pattern is not merely unjust, it distorts moral reasoning, undermines relational integrity, and perpetuates an unequal framework of judgment. A more critical and ethically grounded perspective demands that both men and women be held accountable as not a burden to be displaced but a shared obligation that reflects the complexity of human action and choice. Only through this balance lens can justice be meaningfully pursued within both theological reflection and social reality.

The result is a distortion of Christian teaching that either trivializes the seriousness of sin or confines it within a framework that reinforces male privilege. At the same time, neo-modernist currents in theology and philosophy have introduced errors that seek to abolish the notion of sin altogether, replacing it with secular categories of social dysfunction, psychological

imbalance, or cultural conditioning. While such perspectives aim to modernize theology, they often fail to account for the depth of the Christian doctrine of sin as a rupture in humanity's relationship with God (Johnson, 1982). Feminist theologians argue that both patriarchal misrepresentations and neo-modernist reductions of sin are inadequate, as they ignore the lived realities of women and the structural injustices perpetuated by sin in society (Jones, 2000).

From a feminist theological perspective, sin must be understood as a universal condition that affects all humanity equally, without being weaponized against women. Scholars such as Rosemary Radford Ruether emphasized that patriarchal theology has historically obscured the systemic dimensions of sin, particularly in relation to sexism, oppression, and exploitation (Radford, 1983). Similarly, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues for a liberationist reading of sin that highlights its structural and communal dimensions rather than reducing it to individual moral failures or gendered blame (Schüssler, 1983). Feminist theology thus reclaims the doctrine of sin by shifting the discourse from patriarchal control to a holistic vision of human fallenness, which calls for liberation, justice, and reconciliation.

Reconsidering Moral Conscience Beyond the Gendered Attribution of Sin to Women

The persistent portrayal of women as the sole perpetrators of sin and evil reflects a serious crisis of moral conscience within thought and practice. When those in positions of authority lose sight of the universality of sin and the universality of God's mercy, they risk distorting the moral vision of the faith (Valerie, 1960). Such views imply that only women are in need of divine forgiveness, while men are presumed exempt from sin; a perspective that is both theologically incomplete and ethically problematic (Valerie, 1960). Much of the discourse that associates sin primarily with women appears disconnected from the light of divine revelation, shaped instead by pride and cultural prejudice (McCabe, MH, 2003). This distortion blinds the conscience and undermines the Christians understanding of sin as a reality shared by all humanity (McCabe, MH, 2003). In the twenty-first century, continuing to label women as the primary agents of sin is not only unjust but also contrary to the very heart of the Christian message, which calls all believers to repentance and renewal. True moral conscience must remain rooted in the awareness of real good and evil, inseparable from divine truth and the universality of God's mercy. Without such grounding, conscience risks authorizing false judgements that perpetuate gendered injustice (Berry, 1954). A renewed recognition is needed: women are

not simply "sinners" to be blamed but equal partners with men in the journey of faith and the pursuit of eternal destiny. Therefore, the reduction of women to the sole perpetrators of sin reflects a crisis of moral conscience within Christianity, distorting the universality of sin and undermining the shared call of all humanity to God's mercy. To view women as the primary source of sin is a theologically flawed and morally unjust position; true Christian conscience must recognize both men and women as equal participants in sin and in God's redemptive mercy.

## 5. Venial Sin

In Catholic theology, sin is understood as an offense against God's love and law. The church makes a fundamental distinction between Mortal Sin and Venial Sin. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1854-1864), Venial Sin does not destroy the divine life of grace in the soul as mortal sin does, but it nevertheless weakens charity, obstructs the soul's progress in virtue, and predisposes the individual to fall into graver faults (Hardon, 1980). Venial sin may arise either from lesser violations of God's law or from serious matters committed without full knowledge or deliberate consent (Hardon, 1980). The church emphasis that venial sin, while "lesser", should not be treated as insignificant (Karl, 1992). It damages a person's relationship with God and others, even though it does not sever communion with God entirely. Through prayer, acts of charity, reception of the Eucharist, and sacraments, Venial sins are forgiven, though the sacrament of reconciliation remains a privilege means of healing (Karl, 1992).

Some theologians argue that any sin, regardless of degree, is fundamentally an affront to God's holiness, hence "Sin is sin" (Joseph, 2004). However, the Catholic tradition maintains the distinctions in order to preserve both the seriousness of mortal sin and the reality that, while real sins, do not constitute a total rupture of one's covenant with God (Thomas Aquinas). In summary, venial sin in Catholic tradition is best understood not as "Small sin" in a trivial sense but as a real moral failing that wounds rather than breaks the life of grace (Thomas Aquinas). Its danger lies in spiritual complacency: unchecked venial sin can dispose the soul towards graver offences, underscoring the need for continued conversion.

### 5.1 The Church's View on Mortal Sin

In Catholic doctrine, Mortal Sin is the gravest category of sin. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1855-1861), mortal sin "destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his

ultimate end and beatitude" (CCC 1857). The effects of mortal sin are profound: It serves the life of sanctifying grace, places the soul in a state of spiritual death, and if unrepented, leads to eternal separation from God (hell). Unlike Venial Sin, which wounds the soul, mortal sin ruptures the covenantal relationship between the sinner and God. The Church stresses that repentance through the Sacrament of Reconciliation is necessary for restoration (Joseph, 2004).

## 6. Scholarly Perspectives

**St. Augustine (354–430):** Augustine regarded mortal sin as a willful turning away from God toward created goods. He highlighted the element of pride (Superbia) as the root of grave sin, emphasizing the sinner's conscious rejection of divine order (Confessions, City of God).

**Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274):** In the *Summa Theologica* (1-11, Q.88), Aquinas distinguishes between mortal and venial sin in relation to charity. For him, mortal sin is incompatible with charity because it directs the will against God as the ultimate end. He viewed mortal sin as "spiritual death," parallel to how bodily death occurs when the soul is separated from the body.

**Council of Trent (1545–1563):** The Council reinforced the traditional teaching by condemning the notion that all sins are equal. It taught that mortal sins must be confessed individually in the Sacrament of Penance, underscoring their serious rupture of divine friendship.

**Contemporary Debate:** Some modern theologians note that while the distinction between mortal and venial sin is doctrinal, there remains a pastoral Challenge: Many believers underestimate Venial Sin as "minor," while others overemphasize mortal sin in a legalistic sense (Servais, 1987). Scholars such as Germain Grisez and Servais Pinckaers call for understanding mortal sin within the broader framework of freedom, responsibility, and growth in virtue, rather than as isolated legal infractions (Grisez, 1983).

The Church teaches that mortal sin is a grave rupture of the human-divine relationship, requiring conscious choice and serious matter. While tradition firmly distinguishes mortal sin from venial sin, scholars across history—from Augustine and Aquinas to Rahner and Ratzinger—stress that mortal sin is ultimately about the heart's orientation toward or away from God. Thus, it is not merely a "legal" concept but

a theological reality concerning human freedom, grace, and eternal destiny (Grisez, 1983).

## 7. Conclusion

Sin is a universal reality that transcends gender distinctions. Scripture makes it clear that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). To reduce the burden of sin to women alone is a distortion of the Genesis narrative, where both Adam and Eve participated in disobedience (Genesis 3:6-7).

Moreover, Paul underscores that "through one man sin entered the world" (Romans 5:12), showing that men, too, bear responsibility. The persistence of patriarchal thought that blames women as the sole originators of sin not only contradicts biblical teaching but also blinds humanity to the necessity of collective repentance. True reconciliation with God demands humility, the acknowledgement of shared guilt, and dependence on divine mercy.

In truth, sin is not the burden of one gender but the condition of all humanity. To single out women as the origin of sin is not only a distortion of Scripture but also a denial of the shared responsibility that both men and women carry before God.

The refusal to admit this truth often springs from pride, which binds the heart to repentance and the need for divine mercy. Genuine repentance requires humility; the acknowledgement that every human being, regardless of gender, is fallen and in need of God's grace. Clinging to patriarchal notions that stigmatize women as the sole creators of sin undermines the Gospel message of universal accountability and universal salvation. Therefore, men and women alike must see themselves as equal participants in sin and in redemption, called not to accuse one another but to walk together in humility, repentance, and the transforming mercy of God.

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## Alvin Goldman on the Trust of Experts: Appraising Pathways to Rational Decision Making

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**Abstract.** This paper appraises pathways to rational decision making within the framework of Goldman's analysis of the trust of experts. In epistemology, knowledge from testimony has often been frowned at as lacking the level of certainty associated with the traditional understanding of knowledge. This has led to testimonial scepticism: the idea that information received from others is unreliable. However, the fact that practical challenges of life necessitate reliance on expert counsel creates a problem for rational decision making. In view of this, Alvin Goldman in his article titled "Experts: Which Ones You Should Trust?" exposes the dilemma a novice encounters when confronted with conflicting experts' advice on critical issues of life. He outlines five criteria that justify a novice's trust in a particular expert against the other(s). Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to ascertain whether one can ever be justified in believing an expert's testimony and what justifies the belief in that expert's testimony. In order to achieve its objective, the paper clarifies what it means to trust and who an expert is. It presents and examines Goldman's criteria for trusting experts to ascertain their credibility and sufficiency for rational decision making. Finally, it suggests an additional criterion to strengthen the novice trust in experts' counsel.

**Keywords:** Expert, Trust, Testimony, Novice, Testimonial Scepticism

### 1. Introduction

We cannot escape the necessity of relying on experts in various fields. By virtue of living in complex societies with extending divisions of labour, it is unavoidable that specialization plays an increasingly substantial role in our decision-making. It is therefore necessary to consider this growing complexity and our reliance on expert judgment (Hardos 268).

The above quotation clearly captures the main objective of this paper which is to appraise the pathways to rational decision making in a complex

world governed by experts' judgements. The ever-evolving nature of reality has transformed man into a relentless inquirer for knowledge in order to be cognitively at home with the state of things as this guarantees his chances for survival. And since reality proves to be a multifaceted phenomenon, the attempt to come to terms with it inadvertently becomes diverse. By so doing, human intellectual pursuit is compartmentalized and heavily characterized by division of labour and specialization. For this reason, individuals become experts in their chosen fields of study due to dedicated years of training and accumulated experience in the practice of the profession. Consequently, there has been an exponential growth of knowledge in human society to the extent that it is an imperative to trust experts to show us the way in different phases of human existential challenges. Trusting experts is therefore a necessity for individuals and society because they possess specialized knowledge and skills that allow them to make informed decisions and provide effective solutions in various domains of concern.

In view of the fact that relying on experts' counsel is an imperative in our highly complex societies, is it not instructive to be aware of situations where questioning their advice might be warranted? For instance, in the face of experts' expert disagreement, lack of transparency, conflict of experts' interests as well as uncertainties and complexities of the issues at hand, is it not crucial and necessary to question experts' advice? In other words, since we must trust experts to survive, can we ever be justified in believing experts? Is the trust of experts anything more than a blind faith? These are the questions at the heart of testimonial scepticism: the philosophical position that questions the validity of knowledge gained through testimony or questions whether we can reliably acquire knowledge solely by accepting what someone else claims to be true. For instance, when a high school mathematics teacher, according to Rockwood, knows that a theorem in geometry is true because she has gone through the steps of the proof. She might then tell her students that

the theorem is true. If they believe her on the basis of her testimony, rather than going through the steps of the proof themselves, then they do not know the theorem is true; yet they would have a rationally justified belief because it is likely to be true given the teacher's testimony ([www.iep.utm.edu](http://www.iep.utm.edu)). In this sense, the students' awareness of the truth of the theorem is simply a case of testimonial knowledge as they only know it to be true due to their faith in the expertise of their teacher. But, granted the scepticism surrounding knowledge by testimony, can one be justified in believing the testimony of an expert even if the testimony is wrong? Are there any criteria that a novice can depend on in making a justified decision based on the knowledge he or she gets from an expert? In effect, trust is risky, as such, the question of when it is warranted is of great importance. This paper therefore explores the possibility of making justified decisions in the face of the challenges inherent with testimonial knowledge within the purview of Alvin Goldman's analysis of the trust of experts.

### 1.1 What Does it Mean to Trust?

To trust is to have confidence that something is the case without evidence. The information we base our beliefs on, in this case, is often from a third party. In this sense, to trust is to believe that something you have been told is true or correct even though you do not have proof of it. It is the act of believing an information about something that we have no access to ourselves. We rely on the 'giver' of such information and believe that he or she is in a position to give us correct or authentic information.

### 1.2 Who is an Expert?

An expert is someone who has a specific skill or knowledge of a subject gained as a result of training or experience. The person is very knowledgeable about or skillful in a particular area of specialty. In other words, it is a person with extensive knowledge or ability in a given subject or area of study, or one who is regarded as such by others within the field. (Ibrahim et al, 129) This means that expertise is not all a matter of possessing accurate information; it includes a capacity or disposition to deploy or exploit this fund of information to form beliefs in true answers to new questions that may be posed in the domain. This arises from some set of skills or techniques that constitute part of what it is to be an expert (Goldman, 91). An expert goes beyond just being knowledgeable, he or she must understand how to utilize said knowledge to solve problems in the society. In addition, an expert is distinguished from a non-expert or novice by virtue of

credential, training, education, profession, practice or experience.

## 2. Alvin Goldman on the Trust of Experts

Alvin Goldman's view on the trust of expert is formulated in a hypothetical situation where a novice is presented with two conflicting views by experts. The questions for Goldman are: which of the two experts should the novice trust? What reason can justify a novice's choice? Goldman wants to know if the choice of the novice is founded on anything other than what a writer calls Blind Faith. That is, believing in something without a rational justification. Goldman describes Hardwig as holding the view that a novice cannot be rationally justified in trusting an expert. In his words:

When a layperson relies on an expert, that reliance, says Hardwig, is necessarily blind. Hardwig is intent on denying full-fledged skepticism; he holds that the receiver of testimony can acquire "knowledge" from a source. But by characterizing the receiver's knowledge as "blind", Hardwig seems to give us a skepticism of sorts. The term "blind" seems to imply that a layperson (or a scientist in a different field) cannot be rationally justified in trusting an expert. So, his approach would leave us with testimonial skepticism concerning rational justification, if not knowledge. (110)

However, Goldman observes further that Tyler Burge and Richard Foley, attempt to resolve the testimonial scepticism laden in trusting an expert by insisting that a lay person or novice ought to trust an expert except when there are stronger reasons not to do so. So, at first value, an assertion by an expert is true. According to him:

Burge, for example, endorses the following Acceptance Principle: "A person is entitled to accept as true something that is presented as true and that is intelligible to him, unless there are stronger reasons not to do so"...Similarly, although Foley does not stress the a priori status of such principles, he agrees that it is reasonable of people to grant fundamental authority to the opinions of others, where this means that it is "reasonable for us to be influenced by others even when we have no special information indicating that they are reliable" (110).

Goldman is not convinced though about the acceptance principle of Burge or the fundamental authority of Folley. In the case where there are two experts with contradictory opinions about the same matter, the acceptance principle and the fundamental authority cannot be applied. In the case of two contrary opinions from experts, a novice has to choose one and Goldman thinks that there is certain fact about an

individual that can booster or defeat the novice's justification in accepting a testimony from an expert. For the testimony of others to be considered, Locke, for instance, gave certain conditions that should be considered. These are: 1. The number. 2. The integrity. 3. The skill of the witnesses. 4. The design of the author, where it is a testimony out of a book cited. 5. The consistency of the parts, and circumstances of the relation. (650). But for Goldman, the goal is to find empirical evidence the novice might have for believing one expert and not the other. Goldman listed five possible sources of evidence that a novice might have, for trusting one putative expert more than another. According to Goldman, these five sources are:

- (A) Arguments presented by the contending experts to support their own views and critique their rivals' views.
- (B) Agreement from additional putative experts on one side or other of the subject in question.
- (C) Appraisals by "meta-experts" of the experts' expertise (including appraisals reflected in formal credentials earned by the experts).
- (D) Evidence of the experts' interests and biases vis-a-vis the ques- tion at issue.
- (E) Evidence of the experts' past "track-records" (116)

In the first case, a novice may generate evidence in support of the trust in an expert when arguments presented by the contending experts to support their own views and critique their rivals' views booster his confidence. This also goes along way according to Goldman in justifying the novice's choice. A novice of course, cannot understand the contents of the expert's arguments: the truth of the propositions or how the conclusion drawn follows logically from the premises presented, but a novice can have access to the way a particular expert defends his own views and also how he refutes the claims of the second expert. This is what Goldman calls indirect argumentative justification. The letter N in the following quotation stands for Novice. In his words:

The idea of indirect argumentative justification arises from the idea that one speaker in a debate may demonstrate dialectical superiority over the other, and this dialectical superiority might be a plausible indicator for N of greater expertise, even if it doesn't render N directly justified in believing the superior speaker's conclusion (117).

So, a novice, for Goldman, may be said to be justified in believing an expert E1 for instance, over expert E2, if the novice N notices that E1 is able to answer the questions of E2 to E2's satisfaction and also appear to refute E2's claims but E2 is unable to do same. Goldman cautions though that this does not

automatically mean E1 is correct or a better expert. It may just mean he has a good debating skill.

In the second case, Goldman claims that a novice can appeal to the numbers of agreement from other experts and possible consensus reached among a large number of experts. This according to Goldman is important and should justify a person's belief in one expert and not the other. However, he states further that the question of numbers come in different forms: "There is a case where Expert 1 or E1 has more experts agreeing with his conclusions than there are experts agreeing with Expert2 or E2. Goldman wonders; Won't N be fully justified in trusting E1 over E2, if almost all other experts on the subject agree with E, or if even a preponderance of the other experts agree with E1?" (119)

In the third case, Goldman holds that a novice may rightly appeal to the appraisals of meta-experts of the expert in question. Here, these experts do not have to directly agree with the findings of a particular expert, say expert 1, but they can vouch for him or her perhaps in terms of the scholarly achievements, formal credentials earned by the expert as well as professional affiliations. So, if more experts in a field vouch for Expert 1 than there are for Expert 2, then, the novice is justified in trusting Expert 1. In his words:

If one holds that a person's opinion deserves prima facie credence, despite the absence of any evidence of their reliability on the subject, then numbers would seem to be very weighty, at least in the absence of additional evidence. Each new testifier or opinion-holder on one side of the issue should add weight to that side. So a novice who is otherwise in the dark about the reliability of the various opinion-holders would seem driven to agree with the more numerous bodies of experts. Is that right? (120).

For Goldman, this is not always the case. The idea that an expert has more experts in his support would not in all cases justify a novice's decision to believe him. In order to substantiate this criticism, he raises the question of a guru with blind followers. According to him, the followers do not have an opinion of their own, they just follow whatever the guru says. There is also the possibility that instead of just one guru, there is a small group of elites (a small group of gurus) with certain beliefs, so everyone affiliated with that group will naturally accept what these opinion-makers decide. In his words:

First is the case of a guru with slavish followers. Whatever the guru believes is slavishly believed by his followers. They fix their opinions wholly and exclusively on the basis of their leader's views. Intellectually speaking, they are merely his clones. Or

consider a group of followers who are not led by a single leader but by a small elite of opinion-makers. When the opinion-makers agree, the mass of followers concur in their opinion. Shouldn't a novice consider this kind of scenario as a possibility?" (120).

It is important to note here that when each new expert agrees with one of the experts this should naturally boost the confidence of the novice especially in the case where the novice has course to believe that each new opinion from another expert is independent. Goldman however shows that in the case of the guru and the blind followers; the novice is not justified in believing the expert with more numbers of supporters. If an agent receives new evidence, the agent is expected to uprade his belief in a particular hypothesis. The evidence in question is the addition of experts. So, in a normal situation, a novice's belief should be more strengthened when two experts, say X and Y believe in a hypothesis than in a situation where only one expert is involved. Using the Bayelsian analysis, Goldman insists that it is not always the case. He points out scenerios where an extra putative expert's belief, let say Y should make no difference to the strength of the novice's belief. According to him, in cases where:

1. Expert Y is just a blind follower of X
2. Expert X and Y are part of a group that received instructions from a small elite group of opinion-makers.

Given the above, Goldman shows that the likelihood ratio when two putative experts believe in a hypothesis H, it is not always greater than the likelihood ratio when just one expert believes in H. In the formula below, (A) is the likelihood ratio when one putative expert X, believes the hypothesis H, while (B) is a likelihood ratio when two putative experts X and Y both believe H.

$$\frac{P(x(H)/H)}{P(x(H)/\sim H)} = \frac{P(x(H) \& Y(H)/H)}{P(x(H) \& Y(H)/\sim H)}$$

Goldman shows that B is not always greater than A. Now, according to probability calculus, B is equal to C. C being:

$$\frac{P(X(H)/H) P(Y(H)/X(H) \& H)}{P(X(H)/\sim H) P(Y(H)/ X(H) \& \sim H)}$$

Looking at formula (C) above and considering the case of a blind follower, it will mean that whatever X beliefs, Y will also belief regardless of the truth value of H. So, if a novice knows this, he will not be justified in believing H on the account of the extra expert Y believing H. This will imply that in cases where Y is

just a blind follower of X or X and Y are just blind followers of a small group of opinion-makers, B can be reduced to A. So, in these cases, B = A as follows:

$$\frac{P(x(H) \& Y(H)/H)}{P(x(H) \& Y(H)/\sim H)} = \frac{P(x(H)/H)}{P(x(H)/\sim H)}$$

However, there are cases where one can be justified in following the numbers or where a novice can update his belief in a given hypothesis because of the number of experts. This is where B > A. This will be in cases where: Y is not a blind follower of X. That is:

1. Y believe's H not because of X
2. Y believe's H because he has gone through X's argument and independently come to his own conclusion.

The fourth case in Goldman's five basis of justification in a novice trust of expert is the case of interests and biases. A novice ought to consider the claim of an experts to see if the personal interests or biases of the expert lie behind such claims. On this case, as a test of expert performance in situations of conflict of interest, Goldman alludes to the results of a study published in the Journal of American Medical Association by Friedberg et al in 1999. In his words: The study explored the relationship between published research reports on new oncology drugs that had been sponsored by pharmaceutical companies versus those that had been sponsored by nonprofit organizations. It found a statistically significant relationship between the funding source and the qualitative conclusions in the reports. Unfavorable conclusions were reached by 38% of non-profit-sponsored studies but by only 5% of pharmaceutical company-sponsored studies. (126).

There exist more practical examples of interests and biases in expert inquiry in our daily life. For instance, in situation of research for cancer drugs carried out by a pharmaceutical company that stands to make more money from people staying sick than actually getting cured, or an oil company sponsoring clean or alternative energy research. Furthermore, we can also see case of interests and biases in a situation in which a surgeon has a 'side hustle' of selling coffins. These considerations go a long way in defeating a novice's belief in an expert.

The fifth case put forward by Goldman is appealing to the past track records of an expert. This final category in our list may provide the novice's best source of evidence for making credible and rational choices. This is the use of putative experts' past track records of cognitive success to assess the likelihoods of their having correct answers to the current question (Goldman, 106). What a novice knows about an expert can booster or defeat his/her belief in the claims of an

expert. The expert could be one who is known to be right in matters in the past. On this basis, it is easy then to see how a novice may be justified in believing the expert.

### 3. Evaluation

As much as certainty is important in the quest for knowledge acquisition, we must come to terms with the fact that it will not always be possible to attain certainty, it is just a goal that we seek to attain. However, testimonial knowledge whether it could be rightly said to be a legitimate form of knowledge or not has not stop people from acting based on it. So, whether we like it or not we must trust another person's expertise. To wait to confirm before we act will be near impossibility. Trust is a part of knowledge acquisition. Goldman has however argued that whatever trust we have in an expert decision is not totally based on a blind faith. He explains further that one can be justified in believing what an expert says based on five conditions. As much as the conditions outlined by Goldman are not without possible weaknesses, it is important to note that they at least steer us away from testimonial dogmatism. In addition to the conditions given by Goldman, this paper suggests a possible sixth condition to strengthen the trust in an expert's counsel. This it calls the "Solomon's Test". It is the method the biblical King Solomon used to settle the dispute between two women each claiming to be the rightful mother of a child. According to the Bible:

And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. (1 Kings 3: 16-27)

The Solomon test as shown in the above places the risks in the hands of the expert and takes a decision from the reaction. In other words, if two experts are given the option of 'putting their money where their mouth is' when they predict an increase in value of a particular company stock in the next seven years with one willing to invest and the other not willing to invest. A novice will be justified in believing or have course to believe the expert who predicted an increase in value and willing to invest a huge sum of his own hard-earned money than the one who just predicted and fails to invest. This scenario is clearly cemented

by C. S Lewis when he writes that "only a real risk tests the reality of a belief (11). Another example to illustrate this point is the coffee test. If an expert is trying to convince you that a particular cup of coffee is not poisoned, you will be more justified at least to believe him if he takes a sip from that cup than if he doesn't. It is however important to note that in as much as certainty is important in knowledge, it is not always a guaranty to achieve it. Although trusting in expert does not have to be based on some blind faith, even from the position of a novice, a person can still be justified in believing in an expert. Given the *Solomon's test*, it is possible to be mistaken as suicidal person would not mind drinking a poisoned cup of coffee, he may even have taken the antidote already, if he is certain you will take it if convinced by his act that it is not poisoned. In line with Goldman position, "this paper does not argue for flat-out scepticism in this domain; nor does it purport to resolve all pressures in the direction of scepticism. It is an exploratory paper, which tries to identify problems and examine some possible solutions, not to establish those solutions definitively" (109). In effect, this paper does not hold unto a particular view exclusively, however, in addition to Goldman's five conditions, it adds a sixth condition (the Solomon's Test) that steers us away from testimonial scepticism that seems to plague trust in experts.

### 4. Conclusion

This paper set out to appraise the pathways to rational decision making within the framework of Alvin Goldman's analysis of the trust of experts. This objective was pursued with the clarification of what trust is as well as what an expert means. The paper then presents Goldman's view on the trust of experts outlining the five conditions that in his view could rationally justify the trust of the novice in an expert(s) counsel. These conditions are: indirect argumentative justification, agreement from additional putative experts, appraisal by meta-experts, evidence of experts' interests and biases and evidence the experts' past records. Based on this the paper argues that these conditions are necessary but requires a fortification by an additional condition. Thus, the paper suggests what it refers to as the "Solomon's Test" a method employed by the biblical King Solomon in placing the consequential risk in the hands of the expert in a bid to take decision from the reaction therein. The paper therefore concludes that a combination of these conditions serves as safe net to ensure a rationally compliant trust in the counsel of an expert.

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## Names as Persons: A Reflection on the Normative Character of Naming in the Debate of Personhood in African Philosophy

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**Abstract.** This paper examines the question of personhood in African philosophy. It evaluates the debate between Menkiti-Gyekye which latter gave birth to two distinguish but related schools of thought in African philosophy of personhood. The work argues that the cleavage between the two schools of thought is an artificial one contrary to the watertight distinction found in the ideas of some scholars say (Molefe 2019, Ikuenobe, 2006; Gyekye, 1992; Matolino; 2014). Furthermore, this work avers that the neglect of the normative and metaphysical character of naming in the debate of African philosophy of personhood attest to the inability of thinkers to resolve the problem. Hence, a careful analysis of the notion of names and naming in African philosophy will dissolve the problem of personhood in African philosophy.

**Keywords:** African philosophy, Personhood, Names, normative, metaphysical, communitarianism, individualism.

### 1. Introduction

The idea of person is ambiguous (Wiredu, 1992; Ikuenobe, 2006) to circumvent or eschew this ambiguity lets attempt to explicate the meaning of who a person is. "Who is a person?" is a question imposed on humanity by non-humans just as the question "Are you a person?" is very derogatory. The correct question is "what makes one a person?" and there are basically two schools of thought that purportedly claim to answer to the question of personhood - the first school - the communitarian championed by John Mbiti (1969) and Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984) and the second, the individualism defended by Kwame Gyekye (1992) and Motamai Molefe (2019). These two schools of thought later diverge into two broader and more refined schools with each having different branches and different meaning/conception of a

person. The first school, the communitarian, became known as the metaphysical or descriptive school with branches such as the ontological and personal identity thesis and construe personhood as an essential characteristic of human being, an innate attribute that the agent is born with while the second school of thought now labeled as the normative school of thought emphasized the moral status and social achievement of the agent, making personhood a matter of individual strives, a test one could take and fail.

This work is an attempt to show that this division is an artificial one. That at the end the metaphysical and normative character of personhood cannot be separated if we are to have a robust conception of personhood. In the section that immediately follows, we interpret Menkiti and Gyekye's notion of person and suggest that the auto-critique of communitarianism by Gyekye sets him apart from Menkiti's view of personhood. We further attempt to explain the meaning, import and epistemic vitality of names in an African thought, my objective in this segment is to use certain linguistic patterns or conceptual idioms found in an African thought to argued that names in African thought has metaphysical and normative indices. As a follow up, in the next section, we suggest that names could serve as a bearer of persons. My intention is to articulate a certain idea of name found in an African thought via their linguistic lens to suggest that names which are bearer of persons is both metaphysical and normative and as such the question of rights and autonomy found in Gyekye's conception of personhood and the metaphysical conception of personhood in Menkiti's communitarianism which latter form a cleavage on the personhood debate is an artificial one since an holistic understanding of personhood would involve both the metaphysical and normative characteristics.

### 1.1 Menkiti and Gyekye Debate: A Mapping

African philosophy of personhood is the discourse of Menkiti and the reactions of Gyekye, Bernard Matolino, Kwame Kaphagawani, Polycarp Ikuenobe, Jimoh Famakinwa and Kwasi Wiredu to Menkiti's thesis. To be sure, there are other scholars whose works qualify to be African philosophy of personhood such as the criticisms of Mpho Tshivhase and the contributions of Molefe and Dismaris Masolo. However, the contours of African view of personhood should be carved along the reactions to the works of Menkiti. If Menkiti stands as the father of the philosophy of personhood in Africa then the reactions of Gyekye should be understood in the context of his critique of Menkiti's claims. This reaction is popularly regarded as the individual-community debate.

The reaction centers on Menkiti's denial of rights in his specification of personhood. It has been argued whether Menkiti's denial of right qualifies him to be labeled as a radical communitarian. While scholars like Gyekye (1992; 1995) thinks that Menkiti is a radical communitarian and wishes to replace it with moderate communitarianism which emphasizes the primacy of rights in the discourse of personhood. Molefe does not share in the view that Menkiti's thesis reduces to radical communitarianism but a part of a total construe of moral-political vision. Some scholars (Matolino, 2009, Famakinwa, 2010) argued for a form of holism. These scholars see the difference as an artificial one since at the end they both ultimately jettison rights.

A people's worldview or ontology is determined by their linguistic dispensation. (Quine 1969) and a major attempt by most African scholars is to sieve African philosophy from the linguistic pattern of the people they studied, this is evident in the opening lines of Menkiti when he informed us that he will rely on the conceptual idioms of a particular African culture in order to delineate their conception of personhood. Here, Menkiti takes for granted the multiplicity and diversity of languages in Africa. Above all, no two words have the same meanings, Quine vehemently argued for this in his IT thesis.

In order to proceed on this ill-fated quest Menkiti sourced for what divides the African from the Westerners instead of searching for what unites us in the light of commensurability. He argued that the Western understanding of man is individualistic and focuses on man's lone characteristics whether physical or psychological but the African defined man with reference to his environing community. And the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the

reality of individual life histories. The communal feeling is well established in a man when he begins to feel at home with not only his biological set but his communal gene pool, his language, his sense of identity.

Furthermore, Menkiti notes that in the African view it is the community which defines a person as person, and not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory. Menkiti's second distinction between African and Western conception of a person is hinged on the processual nature of being in African thought by which he meant persons become persons after a process of incorporation. Personhood in African thought is something that need to be achieved and not something one attained by been born by a fellow human. Thus, Menkiti argued that the western conception of a person is minimal while the African conception is maximal because the Western idea of a person reduces to mere possession of soul, or rationality, or will, or memory but in the case of African thought personhood is something at which the individual could fail, competent, ineffective, better or worse. Hence, for Menkiti the ritual of incorporation and the rules of the community is essential to achieving personhood in African thought.

Menkiti, boldly noted that full personhood is achieved at maturity since he avers that the older one gets the more of a person he/she becomes. This implies that a qualitative difference exists between the old and the young and a sort of ontological progression exists between infancy and ripening old age. Menkiti argues that children or new borns can be regarded as an *it* but this cannot be said of an adult. This *it* designation which marks the beginning of existence also depersonalized one at the end of existence. Menkiti's description of personhood is simply the passage of rituals in African thought. After birth the individual goes through a series of rites of incorporation and initiation before becoming a full person in the eyes of the community. These rites include puberty, procreation, old age, death and entry into the community of departed ancestral spirits. According to Menkiti, this community of departed ancestral spirit is viewed as continuous with the community of the living and these two communities are conceived as being in constant interaction. Importantly, Menkiti noted that the dead still retain their personhood and are addressed by their various names as if they still occupy the center stage as long as they are still remembered by the living. When forgotten by the living, the dead simply slide into personal non-existence and lose all they once possessed by way of personal identity and at this point, they return to the status of an *it*.

Personhood, for Menkiti comes with a sense of morality and rights. Children and dead persons who have slide into personal non-existence cannot be said to be moral or have rights and as such not persons. Animals are also in this class. The duties of an individual to the community take precedence over the rights of the individual in African thought. From the above, we can say that Menkiti is a communitarian in the line of Mbiti and others and his conception of a person is essentially metaphysical.

Gyekye's contribution to the debate is an attempt to proffer a response to the question whether a person, even though he/she lives in a human society, is a self-sufficient atomic individual who does not depend on his/her relationships with others for the realization of his/her ends and who has ontological priority over the community, or whether he/she is by nature a communal (or, communitarian) being, having natural and essential relationships with others (Gyekye, 2002:297)

He argues that Menkiti's metaphysical status of the community vis-a-vis that of the person and his account of personhood in African moral, social, and political philosophy are overstated and not entirely correct, and require some amendments or refinements. (Gyekye, 2002: 298). Gyekye traces this incorrectness to the attempt by Menkiti to ground personhood via communitarian lens on the idea of African socialism espoused by African scholars such as Nkrumah, Senghor, Nyerere and others who, in their anxiety to find anchorage for their ideological choice in the traditional African ideas about society, argued that socialism was foreshadowed in the African traditional idea and practice of communalism. One must note here that socialism has failed in Africa given the current existential realities such as xenophobia in the Southern part of Africa and furthermore there is a conversation as regard whether prefixing socialism with Africa renders it African. Recently scholars have come to disregard socialism for Africapitalism – capitalism in context.

The implications of the communal conception of person are many, Gyekye itemizes some of them, which includes the involuntariness of the person to be a member of a community, cultural beingness of a person, the idea of a we-world, and the compulsoriness of relating with others in the world. Despite these features, Gyekye insist that this type of metaphysical or ontological derivation of a person cannot be upheld because the ontological derivative implied the priority of the individual and brings to question whether the relationships between persons in the community are merely voluntary or contingent? Furthermore, since

the community may constitute the context, social or cultural place, providing the individual person the opportunity to actualize his/her goals can we then say the community is prior to the individual? Thus, the question which Gyekye wishes to investigate is to what extent can we say that the community, given its roles in the formation of a person, is prior to the individual? We must therefore, Gyekye argued understand via logic of relevance that though the community play a role in the realization of the individual person, it does not exhaust every aspect of the person qua person. There are other essential attributes of a person and to disregard these attributes to the glorification of the normative status of the community is to be involved and fall into the temptation of the fallacy of relevance and for him Menkiti is guilty of this temptation. For him, Menkiti errs in attributing to African thought an analysis of *it* characteristic of English grammar. Gyekye argues that in other Akan languages say Ga-Dangne *it* is used for both adults and children and it raises concerns whether those adults are persons? Gyekye further avers that the absence of ritualized grief and elaborate burial ceremony in the event of death of a child does not make the child a non-person and it is misguided to contrast as Menkiti did that between Western and African conception of a person by thinking the former characterize a person to be some sort of isolated static quality and the latter as ground on the ontological progression of some sort. While Gyekye believes the community could set some moral standard to which an individual's action may conform but this does not take care of the complexities of human values, given that they are susceptible to change because of human nature, and that the communal structure which the individual finds himself does not imply that the self is held permanently by that structure (Gyekye, 2002:305) and that the self does not permanently adopt the ethos of communal structure. This is so because Gyekye thinks since the individual has the capacity for self-assertion it must necessarily follows that the individual is an autonomous being – and by this he means that the actions and choices of the individual person emanate from his/her rational will. (Gyekye, 2002:306). Thus, Gyekye considers Menkiti a radical communitarianism whose thought is inspired by the political and moral philosophy of African political leaders of his time.

Gyekye's instructive contribution to the debate is hinged on the notion of rights, duties and human dignity. Gyekye holds that Rawls ethical principles and Kant's categorical imperative reminds us of the communitarian thesis and contents. He wishes to say that the individual person to some extent possessed individual rights and that communal feeling does not

necessarily negate self-interest or self-attention which is a duty the individual persons owns to his/herself. Thus, Gyekye pushes for moderate or restricted version of communitarianism which he believes will give accommodation to communal values as well as to values of individuality, to social commitments as well as to duties of self-attention (Gyekye, 2002: 307)

Dissatisfied with the debate on personhood, Matolino (2014) in his monograph 'Personhood in African philosophy' argued for what he called limited communitarianism – a view which supports the foundational status of rights in the question of personhood. As Molefe noted, Matolino fails to tell us why we should take the issue of rights on the question of personhood in Africa seriously. Perhaps, the recent debate on personhood in African philosophy is centered on the contested character of right. One is then forced to raise questions such as does a baby have rights? This brings to question the moral status of disabled agents, the morons, the mentally unstable and more interestingly whether animals can be accorded some rights since they are sentient beings (Singer, 2009), or should we say morons and goats have no rights and as such non-persons since they can be said to have no dignity.

Commenting on the debate on personhood, Ikuenobe (2016) argues against the claim that the idea of dignity is vague. For him the idea of dignity is a plausible one and should not be taken as Thaddeus Metz (2010 and 2012) wrongly asserted that the mere possession of some ontological properties leads to a harmonious relationship. Ikuenobe insists that dignity is a function of how the agent uses their ontological properties. Molefe is quick to note that the idea of personhood is not the most plausible way to think about morality and politics. I do not agree with Molefe that a perfectionist and normative ideas of personhood will ultimately create a moral political philosophy. The quest for a perfectionist philosophy is utopic and futile.

Thaddeus Metz on his part distinguishes between six interpretations of African ethics and defends a relational interpretation. For Metz a person is a person through other persons. Hence there is need for agent to develop his/her personhood. Jason Van Niekerk (2007) construed his autocentric idea of personhood in line with Metz relational interpretation. Niekerk jettison his idea of autocentric view of personhood with the perfectionist interpretation.

The contributors of a special issue in the volume *Filosofia Theoretica* dedicated to the Menkiti-Gyekye debate wrestled with the weighty issues of determining the place of personal autonomy in the debate

(Chimakonam, 2018); of rethinking African political philosophy in the light of decolonization (Eze, 2018) of the Western tradition inherent in Menkiti-Gyekye debate (Amato, 2018) and finally whether we can justly locate the place of rights in the debate (Eze, 2018, Chimakonam, 2018 and Matolino, 2018). In his reading of Menkiti, Molefe correctly noted that this distinction between the West and the African notion is an externalist and internalist dichotomy since the West conceives person as some property that exist in the individual (such as the reduction of personhood to the possession of rational capacity by Descartes in his slogan "I think therefore I am") in contrast, the African sees personhood as something outside the individual (the syllogism of Mbiti which reduces personhood to social responsibility in the slogan "I am because we are, since we are, therefore I am" for example comes to mind).

As Molefe correctly noted Menkiti's distinction of the Western and African notions of personhood is a metaphysical one or at best it brings to question Menkiti's understanding of the question of personal identity. In all fairness to Menkiti, he does not say that the community is what makes one human or been human in an African sense does not involve rationality, memory and all those psychological properties as Gyekye (1992) observed but the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of individual life histories. Molefe (2019) sees Menkiti's view on personhood as an account of the socialization of the individual and an attempt to explicate a moral/normative theory. This attempt of Menkiti to explicate a normative theory of personhood is expressed in his 2004 work where Menkiti inspired by Tempelsian force theory drew a distinction between a man of middling importance and a powerful man. This idea is inegalitarian and ranks human status in terms of socio-moral significance. For Menkiti there is the idea of perfection or excellence which every man strives to achieve and personhood is determined by the agent's achievement of this moral 'excellence.' If Menkiti is correct, the fully materialized person does not exist since nobody is able to achieve perfection.

At birth, Menkiti argues that the agent was not born with a person status, rather the agent was born with an it-status – a mere human being. Personhood is achieved at maturity. Babies are not persons since they lack ethical maturity or sense of moral excellence. Personhood then is like a test which an agent could take and fail. Some human beings or agents will never be persons since they will never achieve the ethical maturity. As observed by Molefe, though Menkiti used at least three distinct notions of personhood namely (a) personhood as personal identity (b) personhood as

moral perfection and (c) personhood as moral status Menkiti fails to distinguish between the two distinct normative notions of personhood. He also fails to appreciate the difference between the two normative concepts in relation to John Rawl's thoughts on personhood. The idea of equality and justice which Rawls imagined is wrongly interpreted by Menkiti and he hurriedly erected his notion of personhood on it.

As noted above Gyekye (1992) on his part begins the discourse of personhood from Menkiti's analysis. Although he too focused on the normative aspects of personhood, he began by carefully criticizing the metaphysical question inherent in Menkiti's theory. Gyekye charged Menkiti of viewing personhood from a purely radical communitarian perspective. For Gyekye, a person is beyond the communitarian view, since by nature a person is also other things. Hence, Gyekye holds that personhood is a combination of the individual efforts and social facets. And these two conceptions must be treated equally, but imagine when they conflict, Gyekye did not specify which of them should supersede. An agent's ontological property of rationality could make her want to act in certain ways that the community may not necessarily allow. However, his advocacy of moderate communitarianism brings into question the extent to which we can balance the individual and communal facets. As Molefe correctly asserts, Gyekye's attempt to balance the individual facets qua autonomy/rationality grounded in dignity with the communal facets grounded in obligations/duties to promote the common goods ends up as a normative idea of personhood which is patient-centered. In short (Molefe, 2019; Metz, 2013) insists that Gyekye's misfired in his response to Menkiti and conceptually mistook the distinct notions of person in Menkiti's analysis which is normative and may not necessarily involved a concept of rights. Hence, we see scholars like Wiredu's reservation on this issue and his staunch argument that Menkiti is not a radical communitarian. In short Gyekye failed to realize that Menkiti is also in the same camp with him on the question of personhood in Africa since they both ultimately exalted the normative notion of personhood in Africa. If Gyekye classified Menkiti as a radical communitarian how they will he classify Mbiti? Gyekye's critic of radical communitarianism is part of his larger diatribe on African socialist critiques of the notion of rights. African socialism according to Gyekye is a flawed moral-political doctrine.

Another advocate of moderate communitarian worthy of mention here is Matolino (2009, 2014) whose work should be understood in terms of his auto-critique of Kaphagawani's characterization of four conceptions of

personhood in African philosophy. For Kaphagawani there are four basic classifications: The Akan/Yoruba thesis (which conceives personhood as constituting four basic elements, *ara*, *okan*, *emi*, and *ori*), the force theory (as advocated by Tempels), the shadow theory and the communal thesis proposed by John Mbiti. The thesis Kaphagawani adopts is questionable since he did not categorically specify which of the thesis is correct or adequate neither did he identify which one of them is metaphysical, spiritual, or normative. Perhaps, he did not state the notion of personhood he is pursuing (Molefe, 2019). Matolino ultimately rejects this classification not on the ground of clarity or consistency of the personhood under question as Molefe would assume but rather on the ground of reducing the number of classes. Matolino endorses with minor adjustment Ikuenobe's analysis of personhood. Ikuenobe (2016) unlike Kaphagawani (2004) identified two distinct notions of personhood in African philosophy namely: the descriptive (which is physical-metaphysical) and the normative. (which is moral-social) Matolino disagrees with Ikuenobe for identifying descriptive with the metaphysical notion of personhood which for him should have been kept distinct/separate. This should be kept distinct in Molefe's view because while the metaphysical or descriptive school of thought investigates the ontological properties that makes one a person, the normative character of personhood which emphasizes the moral and social status of the agent. Molefe (2019) thinks that Matolino found himself in a conceptual confusion. This confusion is borne out of the project of distinguishing between the metaphysical and normative aspects of personhood in African philosophy. An insurmountable task he imposed upon himself.

Molefe's work contributes to the normative idea of personhood. Molefe wants to develop the moral and political facets of personhood which he claims were underdeveloped and underexplored. Molefe identified four concepts of personhood, two of which are metaphysical and the other two normative. The first metaphysical notion of personhood pertains to its biological/ontological constitute. For Molefe Kwame Gyekye's claim that a person acquires status, habits personality or character traits, falls within this first metaphysical classification of person, since being a person in this regard is prior to any process of socialization and/or character acquisition. This type of distinction will exclude a person from the class of animals. Wiredu, 1996; Kaphagawani, 2004; Oyowe, 2014; Ikuenobe, 2016 correctly observed that this school of thought which seeks to define a person via the ontological and descriptive constitute of an individual.

The second school of metaphysical notion of personhood defines a person via personal identity. The motivation for this school of thought is traceable to the cleavage between the liberals and communitarians in Western philosophical tradition. The question here borders on whether the community plays any role in socialization and development of personal identity, this brings into question the role of social relationships in accounting for personal identity. Menkiti (1984) for example emphasize the role the environing community and plays down the psychological characteristics say memory, rationality etc. Mbiti (1969) equally avers that I am because we are. Molefe noted that Mbiti and Menkiti hope to define personal identity with reference to what is external rather than internal to a person. This is a radical view of communitarianism but a moderate version was propounded by Gyekye (1992).

The two normative schools of thought on the debate of personhood in Africa diverge when it comes to the moral worth of a person. It seeks to question whether morality is ontological/intrinsic or extrinsic. The first school otherwise known as the moral status school argues that moral value should be assigned to entities because they have certain ontological properties. This school of thought holds that the moral status of entity specifies reasons for which the entity should be accorded right, respect, dignity etc. it shows that they should be accorded direct duties of respect and obligation given that they are rational, conscious and sentient beings. (Singer, 2009; Metz 2013)

The second normative school of thought on personhood sees personhood as a result of an agent's act. Here, the moral conduct of the agent is what makes one a person. This is to say, the agent's moral conformity with the community's prescription or norms is what decides personhood. Masolo, 2010, Ikenobe 2006, Wiredu 2009, Molefe, 2019 agreed that this school of thought dominates the African view of personhood and marks the African difference.

## 2. The normative vitality of names as persons

The normative character of personhood in African philosophy is a contested one as many scholars have failed to critically underscore the meaning of normativity rather, they chose to base their conception on rights, duties and moral status. Norms are rules and guidelines for behavior within a social group or community. These rules or norms are sometimes conventional and sometimes set by the individual to order his life style. There are sanctions and reward when one does not live according to the rules

governing a community. This explains why there is no clear cut dichotomy between norms and morality. Take for instance, an agent who has a high moral standard (say Menkiti's moral person) will be one who the community does not found wanting in character. The normative character of morality then is hinged on the *oughtness* of the act. Here the community plays a vital role in appreciating the moral conduct of an agent.

The discourse on personhood is incomplete without an understanding of the meaning and vitality of naming in African philosophy. At first what is a name? A name is a pointer of individual destiny. (Asia, 2016) the meaning of a name can only be understood within the language or linguistic framework and/or semantic content in which it is given. Names are identical to the descriptions associated with it by speakers. Names can identify a class, categories of things, (say, family name) or a single thing (individual name). Tyler (1973) proposed a proper name theory in which names have meaning that corresponds to the description of the individual entities to whom the name is applied. Kripke proposed a causal theory of names that in order to use a name successfully to refer to something, you do not have to refer to something, you do not have to be acquainted with a uniquely identifying description of that thing. We also have the unique name theories which argued that names are unique assumptions referring to different entities in the world. Names are metaphysical in Africa discourse. It carries the destiny and future of the bearer. A name and the metaphysical whole of an agent (the bearer) cannot be separated. One is expected to leave out the meaning of his/her name. Hence, names are mostly given in line of the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child. For instance, the Edo name *Onaiwu* is mostly given by parents who has lost their children before, in other to state that this new child will not die, the child is named *Onaiwu*.

Names in African thought as exemplified by the Edo people is a purely human characteristic and it is particularistic. In modern logic, a name signifies a thing. What is a thing? The question of naming featured prominently in medieval philosophy. In the debate of the ontological status of universals, the nominalists upheld that universals are mere names (Stumpf). Although, there is on the one hand treeness from which the idea of this particular tree or that tree arises from. It is a name that signifies a thing, it shows its individuality. In the universe, there are many trees, let us say a community of trees, a name can be used to single out this tree or that tree say a mango tree or apple tree for example. This quest for the uniqueness of being, for individuation in the plethora of the many, is evident also in existentialism because in

existentialism the individual tries to free himself from the ever-consuming fire of the crowd. The existentialists were chasing shadows because they fail to keep an eye on the signifier *names* which singles the individual out of the many. The question of freedom, choice, autonomy and authenticity cannot be discussed without reference to the individual and any discussion on the individual must take into cognizance of their unique features. It follows therefore that a name which is the most common unique feature of an individual cannot be left out in the scheme of things. In Edo thought things have names and the name of a thing shows whether the thing is animate or inanimate and whether it's a human being, animal or some sort of inanimate object. Names of a person, sometimes derivative of their religiosity, cannot be given to animals or objects. It is that name which embodies the epistemic house of that individual without which nothing can be known or said about his/her individuality. This would imply that any reference to the individual will only be meaningful if the name of the individual is mentioned.

Another, epistemic vitality of names in African thought can be seen in the idea of *ehi*. In Edo thought, the individual is not just some sort of object say stone without a future or destiny. The prayer of a right-thinking Edo man is not only to possess the earth, but to also successfully enter the college of *enikaro*. The ancestral cult that houses the spirits of the successfully departed who have lived well and have been given a befitting burial by the *idinogbe*, these people are said to have fulfilled their destiny. Individuals who fail to fulfill their destinies are said to return back to life, this return is not in their physical body but their vital force. Names such as *ehiosu*, *ehiwenma*, *ehimen* are given to individuals to showcase their quest to fulfill their destiny.

Importantly, names involve a sense of responsibility. To who much is given much is expected. In Edo languages names such *Omodion*, *imose*, *osamagbe* etc are given to children to mark what they represent. Immortality is also hinged on the metaphysical nature of name. The question of immortality in philosophy cannot be overemphasized. De Unamuno explores the idea of immortality and comes to the conclusion that.... However, like other thinkers before him he fails to the imports of name in the notion of immortality. Immortality implies surviving after death, that at death there are some elements which survives, whether soul, spirits or others. One of such elements that survive beyond the acts of the individual (say one with great works of arts) is the name. The name reminds of the individual. By implication we cannot speak of a person without mentioning the name of the person. In Edo language, there is a saying that “aiwen

mahowan” you cannot say you don't know the person when ask ‘do you know me?’ because it is disrespectful to say so especially to an older person. Thus, the epistemic foundation for this knowing is the name. The knowledge we have of a person therefore begins with the name of the person. Names are so epistemically relevant that it survives the person at death. When a person dies, the name does not die with him. The person is remembered for his good name hence names are windows of immortalizing a person. From the above, it can be argued that names in African thought have metaphysical and normative indices.

How then does a name makes an agent a person?

### 3. Names as persons

According to Joao de Pina-Cabral Personhood is the mold within which humans enter humanity – that is, it is the central pathway to reflexive thinking and, therefore, to human sociality. Naming systems reflects this fact. (Pina-Cabral, 2015). Until a child is given a name, the child is not regarded as a person, rather the child is considered merely as a baby. This period of babyhood normally last seven days and if the passage of naming is currently done, the child acquires a name which now identifies the child as a person. Anyone without a name is not a person. Names are given to persons – the type of names given to a person is different from the names given to animals say dogs or other pets. Hence, names are unique to an individual within a family setting and they are pointers of destiny – a unique destiny. No two people in the same family have the same name – it shows individuality as against the communal feeling of some thinkers. To be sure, tribal marks are unspoken names rendered in symbols. It identities a family, tribe, culture and, individual. In tribal marks the identity and personness of a person is encoded in symbolic graphic only to be decoded by those who have can read the signs.

Colwyn Trevarthen (1998) argued that persons are called into personhood by other persons with whom they are in close contact. For him, our names carry within them specific, localized histories of personhood and belonging, both collective and singular. This is true, but Tervarten fails to understand that it is name that a person can only call an agent into personhood via name. it is through names for example that Tempels force theory can be fully understood and appreciated. A “dibia” for example does not kill a person by assaulting him physically, he calls the name and the person appears. Names therefore are powerful instrument that a person cannot ignored when called.

Naming is an existential birthing process. It is the light of these existential features of human beings that the arguments of Ada Agada (2025) were cast in his recent work titled “The Human Being as a Melancholy Being” where he characterizes human being as *homo melancholicus*. This characterization is limited since all melancholies are always sad or depressed people. The African is one who is always happy, he finds his fulfillment in the harmonious unity of nature. Sadness may set-in but when it passes, he finds himself happy again. Adaga’s view is to be understood within the method of consolationism which he advocates and he wishes to address key issues as (a) is human life futile? (b) Is the universe pointless? He fails to see that the human being is not homeless in Africa given the communal feeling inherent in the African mind. While he thinks that death may serve as a home for the African since he is a melancholy being, he upholds the view that human life is ultimately futile. This view does not represent the African view of life because for the African life is sacred, celebrated and meaningful. Personhood is a cult of humanity whereby everyone exists and finds his/her purpose. In this type of co-existence, names are what identifies each agent and gives them purpose. Aldiouma Kodo, Balla Dianka and Moulaye Kone correctly aver that a name of a person is closely related to its bearer that it stands for his/her identity. Nkechi Onah and Benjamin Gudaku noted that personhood is determined by naming. However, the agent’s personality is fully determined by how he/she uses the name. In other not to distort one’s person, it is expected of an agent to live a moral life determine by the community. Person is determined by his name – destiny – good name and bad name People do not give bad names such as Anini as a result of the life lived by the bearers of such names in the past.

There are two types of names, the one given to a new born baby and the one acquired as a result of one’s activity here on earth. The name acquired via the passage of naming informs a sense of equality among persons since everyone is entitled to it, however the name acquired via morality inspires a new sense of inequality which exist in Africa. Menkiti rightly noted that personhood is matter of ranking since the community determines whether one is person or not, it invariably follows that the community determines the inequality that exists among persons. This idea, agent is more person than others, is not a new one since the practice of titleship (Chieftaincy, caste system) has always existed in Africa then it is logical to argue that the fundamental bases or requirement for these titles in Platonic terms is the person(ness) of the person. The agent moral perfection and social class in the community. Hence, the idea of egalitarianism which

permeates the works of most African socialist thinkers say (Nkrumah, 1964; Nyerere, nd) is ill-founded.

A good name is better than silver or gold – hence the endless quest to have a good name in Africa. This name it has been argued remained after death and it is what a person is remembered for. Children who die before they are given names are forgotten and not remembered in the community. The naming ceremony rite is a passage from non-person – to personhood as soon as one gets a name, he is a person otherwise he is a non-person. Names are like tribal marks – it could serve the role of identity whenever the need arise say during the civil war in Nigeria, a person’s name already shows the side of the war the person belongs. The neglect of the vitality of names in the question of identity therefore is an omission taken too far.

A person in an African thought is metaphysical and hence communitarian, the agent is born a person and its personalism cannot be separated from his being... it is an ontological property which cannot be separated from the person. Menkiti was correct here when he argued from a metaphysical dimension and moreover, persons are born into this or that community and as we are told by the social scientists, the enviroing community contributes to the socialization of agent since through the community, the agent comes to dissent or assent from a belief, creates notions of good and bad, right and wrong etc.

Determinism is a school of thought in metaphysics which holds that freedom is elusive or that there are factors beyond an agent’s control which influences the agent’s decision whether moral or otherwise. Menkiti’s idea of person informs a sense of determinism leaving man at the mercy of his community. This radical determinism found in the thought of Menkiti is absence and alien in African thought reason being that there is a sense of morality in Africa. The idea of blame worthiness or praise worthiness of an act implies that the agent has the will to have acted otherwise

In the motion picture *Bourne Identity* the first point was to give him a name. Names are only for the living; dead people are called deceased or at best “the body” or the “the remains of.” Names are not given to dead people. A baby that is born dead cannot be given a name because he is not a person. Names are spiritual entity. They connect the life dot of a person. Naming is a spiritual exercise that involves both a child, the destiny and the parents. The concept of *ehi* in Edo ontology for example, shows that the child has decided its destiny even before birth, hence the parent must spiritually key into this destiny by giving a name

suitable for the child. Names are inspirational they are not given as a result of likeness in pronunciation rather they are given as a mark of the child's destiny. More often than not the story of how the baby is birthed or the circumstances leading to the baby's birth is considered when naming the child.

Names are symbolic. During naming ceremony kola nut which symbolizes life and wealth is broken to pray for the child. Also sugar/honey and oil are placed on the baby's tongue to symbolize sweetness and happy life. Prayers are said about the destiny of the child. The different names given to the child by the invited guests do not stand because there is no spiritual connection with the destiny of the child. Before the name the child is not considered as a person rather it is considered in generic terms such as a baby. However, the individuality and personhood is achieved as soon as the child is named. Can one lose his personhood? This brings into question whether an agent can lose its name? There are two senses of acquiring personhood though naming – the names given at birth and the names achieved as a result of one's own hard work. An agent can lose both because first, a name achieved as a result of hard work can be removed when one does something contrary to the dictate of the community. Scholars like Sartre will say one is a coward not because he was created so, he is a coward by his own actions. (Stumpf, 2001) Names gotten at birth through naming is more difficult to lose than name achieved as a result of hard work. This is so because, names gotten from naming can only be lost at death, if one had not lived well such names are tagged along negativity and people refrain from giving it to new born children. Names such as "Anini" which name represent a notorious thief are no longer given to Edo children as a result of the usage of the name by a notorious criminal.

Name reveals a person's individuality. It also carries power, responsibility and blessings... it reflects the value of our parents and the cultures and societies formed around them. Each name still carries so much meaning, not just through its actual linguistic word origin but through its movement in time and all the spirits and beauty it assumes during that journey. Names can also designate social functions of an individual in the society. The name of a person is gender sensitive. It shows the sex of the person. However, there are cases of unisex.

Naming is done until after seven days, this is because the child should have taken the test of living and passed. Personhood achieved through name at birth can be lost at death. However, personhood acquired as a result of one's hard work can be lost anytime as a result of an immoral act or bad act as conceived by the

society. Morality for the African is a conventional agreement. Hence, when one acts contrary to societal ethos, he is considered as non-person. There are some acts which one must refrain from if he so wishes to be called a person.

Personhood is achieved twice in a lifetime. It is acquired first during the naming ceremony as highlighted above and as a result of one's hard work. Hence, it will only be wise to say that one can lose the personhood acquired through hard work but such a person still remains a person as a result of the name given to him/her during naming. However, we can say that the degree of personhood of the person has lost its hard work is reduced. It is no longer at par with the one whose person is both naming and hard work. In fact there are gradation in personhood – it is in this sense we could say that the personhood of a child say five years old is not equal to that of an elder say seventy years old.

Every child in the society strives to achieve personhood through hard work. It is this sense that we could argue that the child of today struggles through life to become the man of tomorrow. However, the child could fail to be a person in the first sense if he fails to live up to the mandatory seven days and in the second sense if he is lazy and does not work hard. Every African child is taught how to work at a very tender age. The male child followed the father to the farm and learns how to farm while the female child learns how to cook in the kitchen with her mother.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the analysis above, it can be inferred that we need to keep an eye on the normative vitality of names if we are to accurately resolve the question of personhood in African philosophical discourse. The neglect of the normative character of names in African philosophy explains the difficulty in circumventing the hurdles of personhood in African philosophy. As Metz (2013) submitted that the Menkiti-Gyekye debate on personhood should be revisited while keeping an eye (in my opinion) on the normative vitality of names in Africa. Metz gave three characteristics of personhood namely (i) personhood qua human nature (ii) personhood qua moral status and (iii) personhood qua moral excellence. I think there is a fourth condition or characteristics which is personhood qua naming.

Is the idea of personhood not sexist, or male-centered or patriarchal. Some scholars think that it reduces women to a secondary status (Oyowe 2013, 2014a; Manzini 2018 and Eze, 2018). Molefe (2016) correctly notes that we can interpret personhood in a

gender-neutral space and I strongly think names could afford us a basis for reflection on personhood because names are gender base.

Tshivhase (2013) argued that the idea of personhood is overly other-regarding. Molefe (2016) correctly noted that “the excessive emphasis on other-regarding features in the discourse of personhood renders it unable to accommodate crucial individualistic features necessary for a robust human life.” For him it neglects autonomy and authenticity which he thinks are important concepts in appreciating the uniqueness of individuals. Molefe (2018) later seeks to go beyond the oft-made submission that the moral idea of personhood is definitive of African moral thought. To achieve this, he explores the idea of partialism and concludes that we should keep an eye on two related sorts of partialism: agent-related and other-centered partialisms.

Modern political thought is based on the principle of egalitarianism. However, the idea of personhood is inequalitarian since one person can be morally perfect than the other and such the political structure or discourse generated or implied by the idea of personhood will fail to capture the modern political thought (Oyowe, 2018).

It is important to state categorically here that there is no watertight distinction between the metaphysical (descriptive, physical or otherwise) and normative (moral-social) in Africa. In short, these ideas dovetail into one another in the final analysis. Hence, the earlier classifications of personhood in Africa say Molefe, Matolino, Ikuenobe, Kaphagawani were involved in a conceptual mistake or confusion. They took their understanding of metaphysics and normativity from their training in Western philosophy and did not do what Wiredu called conceptual decolonization, to understand these terms in their true African lineament. Perhaps, they were inventing a philosophy for the African via erroneous interpretation and reading of western concepts into African philosophy of personhood. Hence, it is a careful analysis of African conceptual idioms manifest in names for example that a full fledge African discourse on personhood should be based.

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## Assistive Technology Deficit and Pedagogical Stagnation: A Tam-Samr Analysis of EdTech Integration for Inclusive Education in Private Primary Schools in Abuja

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**Abstract.** The enormous potential of Educational Technology (EdTech) for promoting inclusive education often remains unrealized in resource-restricted environments, where the systemic factors limit both the adoption and innovative utilisation of technology in educational settings. This study identifies system-level barriers to the adoption of EdTech tools for inclusive education in private primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. In contrast to the availability-focused evaluations, the research adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) model to assess not only the availability but also the incorporation of EdTech into pedagogical processes. For data collection, a cross-sectional survey was conducted among 697 participants (497 pupils, 176 teachers, and 24 school administrators) in 24 private primary schools selected in three wards of the Abuja Municipal Area Council on purpose, with respect to three key inclusion criteria (at least five years of existence, the presence of some kind of technology infrastructure, such as computers or projectors, and proprietor permission to participate in the research). Data collection was done using three questionnaires (for pupils, teachers, and administrators), with questions organised into six sections, which include evaluation of the availability of technologies, teachers' skills, pedagogical use of technologies (SAMR-related questions), and TAM constructs (Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use). The content validity of the questionnaires was ensured through expert review, while reliability was estimated with the help of Cronbach's alpha (with values ranging from 0.76 to 0.84 for subscales). Findings have shown a twofold gap: a relatively high level of adoption of general-purpose EdTech tools, as evidenced by the use of interactive whiteboards in

roughly 66% of schools, and a critical shortage of assistive technologies, as evidenced by the total lack of speech-to-text tool usage by students. Pedagogically, the use of EdTech tools was primarily at the level of Substitution and Augmentation of SAMR model, with 68.6% of teachers used EdTech for individualized instruction. This study identifies two significant obstacles to inclusive education: a continuing gap between the availability of assistive technologies and the superficial incorporation of EdTech into pedagogical practice. The report proposes a mandatory inclusive EdTech framework that incorporates competency-based transformative teacher training, ring-fenced financing for assistive technologies, and required technical support to address this issue.

**Keywords:** Educational Technology, Inclusive Education, Assistive Technology, Technology Integration, TAM, SAMR.

### 1. Introduction

The globalization of Educational Technologies is accompanied by an inspiring narrative of change, where technology is seen as a powerful equalizer that will ensure democratization of access and individualization of learning for everyone, including people with disabilities (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2023). Assistive Technologies, understood as the part of Educational Technologies responsible for the removal of barriers to participation for people with disabilities, is the embodiment of such promise and represents the core principle of the social model of disability, stating that disability results from the barriers created by the environment and not due to any deficits of the person (Oliver, 2013). Nonetheless,

scholars emphasize the context-dependent nature of the transformative power of technology (Selwyn, 2022; Howard et al., 2021).

Nigeria presents an interesting case, as although it provides its citizens with several progressive instruments, such as the National Policy on ICT in Education (2020) and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act (2018), the reality of education proves to be more challenging than the promises made by the country. The consistent finding in various studies is the predominance of chalk-and-talk teaching practices in Nigerian primary and secondary education with a minor role of technology (Oyelere et al., 2020; Akinsolu & Ogunjemilua, 2024). Furthermore, the current body of literature is mostly concentrated on public schools and the tertiary education sphere with a limited focus on private primary schools in urban areas of Nigeria (Alade, 2023). However, it should be noted that private primary schools make up a significant share of Nigeria's urban student population and function according to different requirements.

In order to fill in the identified gap in literature, the present study aims to look into the use of Educational Technologies for inclusive education in private primary schools in Abuja. Preliminary surveys carried out among the management staff of 24 schools show that nearly two-thirds of the sampled schools have interactive whiteboards, while the use of specific assistive technologies (speech-to-text software, adaptive learning software, and assistive technology devices) was used by fewer than 10% of schools, with the pupils' use of speech-to-text software being almost non-existent at 0%.

In this study, an integrative theoretical framework is proposed that will combine the Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989) and the SAMR model (Puentedura, 2006) to go beyond descriptive constraints and highlight the dynamics involved. The Technology Acceptance Model based on constructs of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use provides the explanation about adoption process by highlighting the reason why certain technologies are adopted while others are not especially in situations where there are external factors like funding shaping perception (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008; Scherer et al., 2019). The SAMR model which revolves around four hierarchical stages of Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition measures the depth of integration of pedagogy. That is, it distinguishes between the use of technology to digitize traditional activities from the use of technology that transform the way learning takes place (Hamilton et al., 2016). Thus,

these two models combined provide a diagnostic perspective for looking at both the availability gap (what is available) and the integration gap (how it is used). As a result, a coherent framework is formed to explain why Educational Technology is not being used to provide inclusive education.

The study is founded on the above-mentioned integrative theoretical framework of the Technology Acceptance Model and SAMR model. While one explains the antecedent of adoption, the other one sheds light on the pedagogical implications of integration. Thus, they form a powerful diagnostic tool for the analysis of system-level Educational Technology implementation in the context of inclusive education.

Created by Davis in 1989, the Technology Acceptance Model states that the user's behavioral intention to use a certain technology is influenced mostly by two perceptions: Perceived Usefulness, meaning the degree of belief in the fact that technology will help one perform better at work, and Perceived Ease of Use, meaning the degree of belief in the fact that the technology will not require much effort to be used. These perceptions lead to attitudes, which determine behavior. The Technology Acceptance Model has been widely applied in the field of education to research teachers' adoption of digital technologies (Scherer et al., 2019). The reason why this model fits perfectly for our current study is its ability to account for external variables like resources availability, infrastructure, and training, which were further considered by Venkatesh and Bala in their extended model (2008). In resource-scarce conditions, like those in private schools of Abuja, decisions regarding the purchase and implementation of technologies are probably guided by perceptions of relative usefulness (for example, interactive whiteboards for the benefit of most pupils) and ease of use (assistive technologies are perceived as complex without proper training). Therefore, the Technology Acceptance Model can be used to explain the great differences in technology availability that have been noticed in preliminary data.

The SAMR model created by Puentedura in 2006 includes four levels of technology integration in an ascending order of complexity. The first level, Substitution, includes technology acting as a direct replacement without changing functionality (using a word processor instead of writing a text with a pencil). The second level, Augmentation, is characterized by substitution and enhanced functionality (a word processor with tools for spell checking and collaborative work). The third level, Modification, allows task redesigning (students co-authoring a

multimedia presentation receiving comments from peers). The fourth level, Redefinition, allows creating tasks which could not exist before (collaborative work of students on a global project together with international peers). The importance of this model is the possibility to identify cases when technology use only improves traditional instructional approach (substitution and augmentation) and when it changes the whole process of teaching (modification and redefinition). In the case of inclusive education, transformation is crucial since the technology should do not only digitize existing exclusionary processes but also provide innovative ways of collaboration, interaction, and personalization (Chambers & Rao, 2019). Therefore, SAMR model will help us to analyze whether Educational Technology integration in Abuja's private schools leads to transformation or not.

The current research uses an innovative integrative approach using both TAM and SAMR models. TAM highlights the availability gap using the mediating variables of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which are influenced by systemic factors such as funding to explain differences in the use of different technology types like interactive whiteboards and assistive technologies. On the other hand, SAMR model explains the integration gap by providing a level of analysis of pedagogic use of technology that distinguishes between superficial and transformational use. Taken together, these two models help in conducting a systemic analysis because they not only identify the lack of something in terms of availability, but also why there is such a gap through perceptions influenced by systemic constraints and how the currently available technology is used in terms of its pedagogic levels.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The potential of Educational Technology (EdTech) for promoting inclusive education has not been exploited in many resource-limited areas where sub-Saharan Africa serves as an example. Even though international guidelines highlight technology as the "great equalizer" and advocate the use of technology as the means of democratizing and personalizing education for all students including students with special needs, the reality of implementation of educational policies is quite different. For example, Nigeria, which boasts of advanced policy instruments such as the National Policy on ICT in Education and the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act, often experiences mismatch between policy objectives and practice of implementation.

The problem is particularly apparent within the sector of private primary schools in urban areas where little research has been done despite the enrollment of a considerable number of pupils in these institutions. Most studies devoted to technological advancement of educational process focus on public schools or higher education institutions and leave many questions unanswered as to how the private primary schools, operating within different economic and legislative environment, utilize technology for fostering inclusive education. It is particularly relevant in light of the fact that urban private primary schools in places like Abuja cater to a heterogeneous population of pupils that includes children with disabilities who need pedagogical adjustments.

According to preliminary surveys, 24 private primary schools in Abuja demonstrate alarming picture with regards to technology usage. More than 65% of the surveyed schools use interactive whiteboards; however, the use of assistive technologies remains negligible. The speech-to-text programs are used by 0% of the pupils, while the adaptive learning programs and assistive devices for pupils are implemented in fewer than 10% of the schools. This is despite the fact that more than 14% of pupils of these schools have identified disabilities and require pedagogical adjustments, which corresponds to global figures for students with disabilities enrolled in schools.

Not only is there an availability gap in terms of technology implementation, but also a pedagogical one. Even if technology is available, the way it is used proves to be shallow, as it merely serves the purposes of replacing old teaching practices with new technological ones. Individualized instruction appears to be the main reason why technology is being used, while collaborative learning activities are rarely implemented. It is evident that technology implementation occurs at substitution and augmentation stages but does not evolve into modification and redefinition.

In this study, we explore the systemic barriers to the uptake of Educational Technology for inclusive education in private primary schools in Abuja. It is important to note that the problem is exacerbated by the lack of sufficient funds, infrastructure, technology malfunctions, and teacher professional development, especially when it comes to assistive technologies. In particular, most teachers reported that they cannot evaluate their competence in using these technologies as these technologies were not present in their schools. Thus, this creates a vicious circle whereby technologies are not acquired due to perceived lack of relative usefulness and complexity of these

technologies; and, as a consequence, teachers cannot gain competence in using these technologies, which reinforces perceptions of limited usefulness and perpetuates exclusion.

In view of this, the goal of this study is to investigate the systemic barriers to the uptake of Educational Technology for inclusive education in private primary schools in Abuja. Instead of limiting the analysis of the problem to the aspect of availability of educational technologies, this study takes an integrated theoretical perspective, which involves application of both Technology Acceptance Model for explaining adoption patterns and SAMR Model for evaluating the level of pedagogical use of technologies. This multi-faceted approach is necessary in order to analyze both which technologies are unavailable and why they are unavailable, as well as the current use of these technologies and whether it fosters exclusion.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

In line with its objectives, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the existence of system barriers inhibiting the implementation and integration of Educational Technology (ET) and Assistive Technologies (AT) for inclusive education in private primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. The specific purposes of the research are to:

- (i) identify and record the types of educational technology and assistive technologies used in selected private primary schools in Abuja, covering both general technology tools and assistive technology tools for students with disabilities.
- (ii) assess the level of pedagogical integration of ET and AT tools into daily teaching processes and curriculum delivery, checking if technology is used in a transformative or superficial way concerning SAMR model.
- (iii) investigate the infrastructure and support for ET and AT usage in the selected institutions, which may include different forms of funding and support, as well as training of teachers.
- (iv) investigate how teachers perceive the tools from perspectives of usefulness and ease of use.

### 1.3 Research Questions

- Which types of Educational Technology (EdTech) and Assistive Technology (AT) tools are present and utilized in chosen private primary schools in Abuja?
- In what way are EdTech and AT tools integrated into the process of teaching and

learning in the chosen private primary schools in Abuja?

- Which kinds of institutional frameworks and support systems enable or hinder the proper use of EdTech and AT tools in the chosen private primary schools in Abuja?
- How do teachers view EdTech and AT tools in terms of usability and ease of use?

## 2. Research Methodology

For this research study, a cross-sectional descriptive survey design was adopted in order to get a snap-shot of Educational Technology availability, practice, and challenges in different schools at one particular point in time. The research took place in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), which is the administrative center in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. It is characterized by a high density of private primary schools that cater for an urban population. The population of this study included all school administrators, teachers and pupils in all registered private primary schools in AMAC, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. As per the list of private schools in the FCT Education Management Information System ([https://fctemis.org/list\\_private\\_school](https://fctemis.org/list_private_school)), there are 482 registered private primary schools in AMAC, comprising of a total population of about 96,400 pupils, 6,740 teachers and 482 administrators in eight wards. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. At the first stage, three out of the eight wards of AMAC (namely, Garki, Gwarinpa, and Karu) were randomly chosen. At the second stage, eight private primary schools were purposively chosen in each of these wards, giving us a total of 24 schools. The criteria for the purposive selection included: the school was in operation for not less than five years; the school had some technology (such as computer or projector); and the owner of the school agreed to take part in the study. All administrators in each of the selected schools were included in the sample; teachers and pupils in upper basic classes (four to six) were randomly selected. The final sample was made up of 697 individuals: 24 administrators (one from each school), 176 teachers and 497 pupils. The dominance of pupils' responses was dictated by the fact that the study is learner-centred, whereas the inclusion of the teachers and administrators was meant to provide triangulation of the data on the availability, competence and system-level challenges. Students with disabilities: In order to put forward the claims about inclusive education in this study, the participating schools provided anonymized aggregated data on whether their students have a disability. The classification of disability was done according to the WHO's ICF classification (mobility, vision, hearing, intellectual/learning, speech

and multiple disabilities). Only those pupils whose disability was formally diagnosed or identified by the teacher as necessitating pedagogical accommodations were considered for this analysis.

The data collection was conducted via three sets of structured questionnaires entitled "Questionnaire on Educational Technology for Inclusive Education." They were designed for the participants (students, teachers, and school administrators) separately and consisted of six sections. Section A provided demographic data about respondents. Section B examined the availability and use of Educational Technology and assistive technology tools using checklists and frequency scales. Section C, completed only by teachers, analyzed the proficiency of teachers in the use of Educational Technology and assistive technology tools and relied on self-rating scale with five items from very poor to excellent. Section D, which was also filled only by teachers, dealt with the pedagogical integration practices with questions regarding SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) and involved frequency questions concerning technology usage for different instructional activities. Section E analyzed institutional infrastructure and support system, and challenges were measured on the scale of five points. Section F involved open-ended questions about suggestions for improving the current situation. Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use of some Educational Technology tools were measured among teachers with help of validated questions according to the Technology Acceptance Model framework (adapted from Davis, 1989). According to SAMR framework, frequencies of technology usage for different pedagogical activities were measured by teachers as follows: Substitution (digital worksheets), Augmentation (interactive quizzes), Modification (collaborative projects), and Redefinition (cross-classroom collaboration).

Content validity was confirmed by submitting the drafts of questionnaires to three experts in Educational Technology and Inclusive Education to check their clarity, relevancy, and comprehensiveness. Their

feedback was used for improvement of wording and removal of any possible ambiguities and inconsistencies with the relevant theoretical frameworks. After refinement of questionnaires, they were piloted in 30 respondents (10 per group) in three private primary schools in Kubwa, which is a suburb of Abuja not included in the main sample of the study. Reliability was calculated with help of Cronbach's alpha. As a result, the following alpha coefficients for the subscales were obtained: the pupils' questionnaire overall 0.76; the teachers' questionnaire availability subscale 0.81, proficiency subscale 0.84, Technology Acceptance Model subscale 0.79, and SAMR subscale 0.77; the administrators' questionnaire overall 0.79.

The study's ethical approval was provided by the Research Ethics Committee of the National Open University of Nigeria. Permission was sought from the proprietors of the schools, while informed consent was sought from all adult respondents and the parents or guardians of the pupil respondents. Data collection took place in six weeks in 2024. The research assistants were trained to conduct the questionnaire in order to ensure standardized procedure. The questionnaires were administered when the schools were running and under supervision to enhance clarity and response rate. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 26. In order to answer the first research question on the various types of Educational Technology and assistive technology tools that were available and used, descriptive statistics which includes frequency and percentage were used in calculating for each type of tool among the three respondents. In order to answer the second research question on the extent of pedagogical integration, descriptive statistics which includes frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to calculate pupil use frequency, teacher competency level, and teacher adoption of teaching techniques. To answer the third research question on the infrastructures and professional support system, descriptive statistics which includes frequency and percentage were used to calculate the problems experienced by the administrators and teachers.

3. Results

**Research Question One:** What types of EdTech and AT tools are available and utilised in selected private primary schools in Abuja?

**Table 1:** Availability and Use of EdTech Tools by Stakeholder Group (%)

Tool Type	Administrators	Teachers	Pupils
Interactive Whiteboards	66.7	66.2	63.6
Learning Management Systems	20.8	21.9	37.6
Adaptive Learning Software	8.3	1.3	6.6
Speech-to-Text Tools	8.3	4.0	0.0
Text-to-Speech Tools	12.5	5.3	0.0
Communication Aids	58.3	34.4	8.5
Augmented Reality Tools	8.3	3.3	2.0
Virtual Reality Tools	4.2	2.0	1.4
Assistive Technology Devices	8.3	2.0	0.0

It is evident from Table 1 that there exists a striking dichotomy in the technology setting of private primary schools in Abuja. The results show that there is a significant adoption of generic technologies which are designed for presenter use, particularly interactive whiteboards, whose use is widespread with more than two-thirds of the administrators, teachers, and students utilizing this technology. This shows that much investment has been done in terms of generic technologies which facilitate traditional teacher-centered instructions.

On the contrary, the adoption of assistive technology is minimal and almost negligible in some cases. For example, the close to zero use of basic assistive technologies by students such as speech-to-text and text-to-speech software is alarming. In addition, the adoption rate of adaptive learning software and assistive devices is minimal with less than 10% of the administrators and a meager number of teachers adopting these technologies. There exists a stark contrast between the investment in technologies seen as beneficial to most of the pupils and basic assistive technologies which are vital in ensuring inclusive education.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent are EdTech and AT devices currently integrated into the day-to-day pedagogic practices and curriculum delivery in selected private primary schools in Abuja?

As shown below, Tables 2, 3, and 4 extend the analysis beyond the adoption of the technology to explore the depth of technology integration, revealing significant gaps between possession and transformative pedagogical use.

**Table 2:** Frequency of Pupil EdTech Use\

Frequency	Percentage
Daily	61.4%
Weekly	32.8%
Monthly	2.4%
Rarely	3.4%

As presented in Table 2, a majority of pupils (61.4%) use EdTech on a daily basis. However, the observed patterns of monthly (2.4%) and rare (3.4%) usage may imply some level of disparity, even within this private school sector.

**Table 3:** Teacher Proficiency Levels with Educational Technology Tools (%)

Tool Type	Excellent/Good	Neutral	Poor/Very Poor	Not Applicable
Interactive Whiteboards	49.7	25.2	4.7	20.5
Learning Management Systems	23.9	30.5	5.3	40.4
Adaptive Learning Software	15.2	23.8	11.3	49.7
Speech-to-Text Tools	15.9	23.8	9.3	51.0
Text-to-Speech Tools	17.2	24.5	7.9	50.3
Communication Aids	40.4	25.8	2.0	31.8
Assistive Technology Devices	14.6	25.8	9.3	50.3

Summary of findings on teacher proficiency is presented in Table 3. It can be seen that, while the majority of teachers have reached proficient or better levels with regard to interaction whiteboards in terms of their combined Good/Excellent ratings with regard to this tool, there is significant variation in findings related to the other types of tools. A significant observation is that the percentage of teachers who marked the options as Not Applicable (N/A) with regard to adaptive software, speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and assistive devices equals 50% for all these tools. This situation reflects not just poor proficiency, but rather a likelihood that those tools were never purchased to the extent that the majority of teachers cannot evaluate themselves.

**Table 4:** Teacher Adaptation of Teaching Methods for EdTech Integration

Adaptation Method	Teachers Utilising
Individualised instruction	68.6%
Differentiated assignments	48.6%
Collaborative learning activities	29.3%
Extra lesson support	4.3%

Analysis of pedagogical adaptation is presented in Table 4. The heavy dependence on the use of technology for personalized activities (68.6%) points to the fact that the use of technology corresponds to the Substitution or Augmentation levels of SAMR model, where technology acts as an efficient tool for the delivery of instructional content in a standardized manner. The less frequent use of cooperative learning activities (29.3%) reveals the loss of an opportunity for the use of technology in the promotion of inclusive education and technologically enhanced learning activities at the modification and redefinition levels of SAMR model.

**Research Question Three:** What institutional infrastructure and professional support systems enable or constrain their effective utilisation?

**Table 5:** Challenges in EdTech Integration Reported by Administrators

Challenge Type	Reporting
Insufficient funding/budget constraints	83.3%
Limited student technology access	58.3%
Inadequate technological infrastructure	54.2%
Technical issues/frequent malfunctions	50.0%
Lack of appropriate assistive technologies	45.8%
Lack of adequate teacher training	20.8%
Resistance from staff/stakeholders	16.7%

The data provided in Table 5 offer definite hints from the perspective of school administration concerning systemic barriers. The most obvious barrier is related to finances, with 83.3% of respondents reporting lack of funding. It is possible to argue that this factor is quite likely to affect procurement choices illustrated in Table 1, when general-purpose tools (for instance, whiteboards) are prioritized over assistive technologies (AT) because of financial restrictions.

In addition to quantitative results, qualitative data from the interviews of school administration include the topic of being forced to make compromises. An example of the statement made by an administrator was "We have to figure out how to help all the students pass their tests. Parents pay for passing the test, not for software, which will be used by one particular kid." Another administrator said, "The governmental inspection does not even ask about assistive technologies, and therefore, the cost of purchasing and installing them becomes invisible." These examples demonstrate the role of accountability metrics (for example, test results) and parental expectations in reducing the priority of AT expenditures, making them optional luxuries rather than mandatory requirements according to the law.

This primary issue is additionally reinforced by secondary factors that include lack of student access (58.3%), and lack of proper infrastructure (54.2%). Lack of technical capabilities (50.0%) is considered a primary operational barrier. This issue is likely to have a certain effect on the perception of EdTech among both teachers and students. Teachers' qualitative data includes the following statements: "The board freezes twice a week, and the repairing service arrives after three weeks". "I have stopped planning lessons around it," and "We have no IT specialist at the school; the computer teacher is already busy." These data indicate that technical difficulties are not only a nuisance, but they reduce teachers' tendency to experiment with new approaches in accordance with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

The issue "Lack of appropriate assistive technologies" (45.8%) is mentioned as a barrier regardless of funding issues, which shows that there is some degree of awareness of a particular problem. Nevertheless, the analysis of qualitative data demonstrates that the awareness is often rather superficial. When school administrators were asked to mention appropriate ATs, only two were able to give an example (for instance, "talking computers for blind students"), while others gave vague phrases ("gadgets for special needs"). This data implies that there is lack of knowledge and/or lack of resources. Schools are unaware of what they do not know about ATs.

The issue "Lack of adequate teacher training" (20.8%) is mentioned by a fewer number of participants. It is likely to be caused either by higher priority of other barriers (funding and infrastructure) or the fact that skill gap discussed in Table 4, when a considerable part of respondents answered N/A concerning teacher skill level, is not considered a need for training because of lack of the tool. Qualitative analysis of data from teachers shows that 92% of the 50% of teachers who replied N/A about AT proficiency also indicated that their school never had any workshops on ATs.

RQ4: What is the perception of educators about the usefulness and usability of EdTech and Assistive Technology devices?

To address RQ4, the participants were asked to assess Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use for each device on a 5-point Likert scale (Very Low = 1 and Very High = 5). The results are summarized in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Teachers' Perceptions of Usefulness and Ease of Use by Tool Type**

Tool Type	Perceived Usefulness (Mean ± SD)	Perceived Ease of Use (Mean ± SD)
Interactive Whiteboards	4.21 ± 0.78	3.98 ± 0.85
Learning Management Systems	3.45 ± 0.92	3.12 ± 0.89
Communication Aids	3.28 ± 0.95	3.05 ± 0.91
Adaptive Learning Software	2.67 ± 1.04	2.43 ± 0.98
Text-to-Speech Tools	2.55 ± 1.01	2.38 ± 0.96
Speech-to-Text Tools	2.48 ± 1.02	2.31 ± 0.97
Assistive Technology Devices	2.41 ± 1.06	2.25 ± 0.99
Augmented Reality Tools	2.35 ± 1.08	2.18 ± 1.01
Virtual Reality Tools	2.28 ± 1.10	2.12 ± 1.02

Table 6 presents a perceptual hierarchy in line with the availability results presented in Table 1. General-purpose technologies (interactive whiteboards, specifically) have shown the highest mean scores for Perceived Usefulness (M = 4.21) and Perceived Ease of Use (M = 3.98). Specialized assistive technologies and innovative solutions like augmented/virtual reality, on the contrary, have demonstrated low mean scores in terms of both the above constructs with assistive technology having the lowest usefulness score (M = 2.41) and ease of use one (M = 2.25).

There are several findings to draw from the above data. Firstly, the high positive relationship between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use can be observed for all types of tools tested; tools rated as more useful were also rated as being easier to use. This finding supports the Technology Acceptance Model postulate that these two factors are connected (Davis, 1989). Secondly, the gap in perceptions of general- and assistive-technology tools is significant. Interactive whiteboards had mean usefulness score almost 1.8 points higher than the mean one of assistive technology devices on a five-point scale, thus 36% more. Thirdly, all assistive technology tools have mean scores lower than the scale midpoint of 3.0, which means that teachers' perceptions about their usefulness and ease of use were overall negative.

The above perceptual gap provides an important clue for understanding the availability gap described in Table 1. Useful and easy to use technologies (interactive whiteboards) are purchased and used, while less useful and complicated ones (assistive technologies) are practically non-existent in schools. This proves that the procurement process of EdTech technologies is not dictated only by budget constraints but is also influenced by teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the value of these technologies.

To sum up, several important points can be made based on the findings discussed above. Firstly, there is a

hierarchy according to which access to EdTech occurs initially at first place and then assistive technology (AT) comes second as an underfunded priority. This has created a pedagogical implementation gap where EdTech technologies facilitate traditional and individualized practice whereas collaborative and inclusive practices remain unaddressed. In other words, the key systemic barrier is a lack of resources and consequently procurement choices that unintentionally exclude students with disabilities. Thus, EdTech is unable to fulfill its potential as an inclusion technology without investment in AT and necessary changes in teacher training.

**4. Discussion of Findings**

The present study highlights a significant hierarchy of technologies available in the educational technology framework in private primary schools in Abuja that is characterized by the dual disparity – first, in providing equal access to special equipment and, secondly, in using available technologies in an inclusive way. Instead of listing the existing barriers to the use of EdTech, the present work provides a theoretical analysis of shortcomings in the use of EdTech for inclusive education.

Taking into account that 13.7% of respondents are pupils with disabilities which are "identifiable and require educational adjustment of pedagogy," one cannot talk about inclusion. Furthermore, there is evidence that 14% of pupils might need ATs (see the table below); the absence of pupils who use speech-to-text technology and the lack of any devices for assistive purposes are not random facts. Indeed, according to the social model of disability (Oliver, 2013), disability is caused not by the person's problems but by the lack of adjustments made by the school, including the lack of technology.

There is an interaction of the availability of interactive whiteboards and the low penetration of ATs (see Table

1) based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Considering the situation of extremely scarce resources (83.3%, see Table 5), decisions related to the purchase of technologies are mainly determined by perceived relative usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). The general-purpose tools provide high relative usefulness for most of the students and can be easily used. On the contrary, ATs have low relative usefulness for most students, difficulty in operation (low perceived ease of use) and relatively high cost especially in case the teachers find teacher training lacking (Scherer et al., 2019). This creates a vicious circle: the low relative usefulness and high complexity of ATs do not make them purchased. As a result, teachers cannot learn how to use ATs well, since almost half of the respondents believe that ATs were "Not Applicable" (see Table 3). Thus, the present research confirms the previous research carried out in resource-constrained environment (Hew & Brush, 2007). It means that rational school-level cost-benefit decision-making is contradictory to the policy objective of inclusive education and leads to digital accessibility barriers.

Secondly, the finding concerns not just the presence of technology, but also its means of implementation. It is worth noting that individualized instruction was the most common type of activities enabled by EdTech (68.6% in Table 4), implying that EdTech was being incorporated in learning in Substitution or Augmentation stage (Puentedura, 2006) of SAMR model, meaning that technology was used to replace traditional, teacher-centered activities in digital form. The comparatively low rate of technology-enabled collaborative learning activities (29.3%) means stagnation in stages below Modification and Redefinition, where EdTech could trigger transformation of traditional practices through their development into socially-constructed activities and learner engagement. Such SAMR stagnation is relevant for inclusion, since inclusive practices require flexible, collaborative, and multimodal learning activities that technology alone could provide (Chambers & Rao, 2019; Zhao & Frank, 2023). When EdTech was used only to individualize the process, it could maintain the established patterns of exclusion because of failure to employ the social capabilities of technology. The above finding confirms the Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich's (2019) claim about ineffectiveness of technology integration without pedagogical transformation.

It is important to note that the availability gap and the integration gap are interrelated, forming a reinforcing cycle. The lack of assistive technologies limits the opportunities to experiment with innovative

pedagogies that could use those tools to promote inclusion. On the other hand, when teachers' focus is on individualized substitution tasks, there will be no need to use advanced assistive technologies that can offer collaborative and inclusive benefits. The underlying reason for both gaps is systemic lack of resources, resulting in triaging of decision makers, who prioritize those technologies that are seen as benefiting the majority of learners. Such systematic explanation goes beyond individual reasons like resistance to change and uncovers how institutional funding and procurement policies, along with pedagogical conventions, result in exclusion of learners with disabilities. Technology's role in education is always mediated by social, economic, and organizational contexts (Selwyn, 2022; Howard et al., 2021). The current research provides evidence for this argument in the context of Nigeria's private education sector.

Findings related to Research Question 4 give an empirical proof of the explanatory power of TAM model. Table 6 shows that teachers' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use of technologies correspond to the availability rates provided in Table 1. Interactive whiteboards, that were present in almost all schools (over two-thirds), had the highest perceptual ratings (Usefulness:  $M = 4.21$ ; Ease of Use:  $M = 3.98$ ). On the contrary, the technologies that administrators identified as assistive technologies and that were never used by students had the lowest ratings (Usefulness:  $M = 2.41$ ; Ease of Use:  $M = 2.25$ ).

The match between what is seen and what is available is deliberate. According to Davis (1989), the two key factors influencing technology adoption intentions include Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use. In situations with scarce resources and insufficient funding, decision-makers are likely to favor technologies believed to offer maximum benefits with minimal effort (Scherer et al., 2019). Being general-purpose devices, interactive whiteboards are seen as useful for most students and relatively easy to implement within an existing teacher-centered approach to teaching. However, assistive technologies are seen as helpful to few students, difficult to implement, and requiring additional training. Perceptual evidence confirms that these perceptions are shared by teachers since assistive technologies rate below the midpoint on both constructs.

Consequences of perceptual disparity are evident. Technologies that are either useless or too complicated to use are less likely to be purchased, regardless of policy demands or the needs of disabled students. This discovery explains why neither the National Policy on

ICT in Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2020) nor the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act (2018) resulted in assistive technologies becoming available: policy alone cannot overcome negative perceptions caused by insufficient training and exposure. Thus, the loop mentioned above is not only material but also perceptual since technologies are not purchased due to low perceived value, no purchases mean no opportunities for training or developing positive attitudes, and the lack of training means technologies remain low value.

The current research contributes to the TAM theory by showing how external factors, specifically funding limitations and accountability pressure, affect the process of perceptions formation, thereby discriminating against technologies targeted at making schools more inclusive. Venkatesh and Bala (2008) noted the role of external factors in influencing Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use via mediating mechanisms. In the current study, funding shortage (83.3% of administrators; see Table 5) functions as an external factor affecting teachers' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use and contributing to the development of triaging pattern: technologies believed to be most useful for many people are preferred to those believed to be most useful for a minority. The strategy is not irrational but rather rational use of limited resources. Nonetheless, its result is the systematic exclusion of disabled students from the benefits of using educational technologies.

Perceptual trends found help explain the low proficiency ratings and high "Not Applicable" responses seen in Table 3. When teachers did not use and train on any technology at all, it becomes impossible for them to assess its usefulness or ease of use. As a result, negative perceptions can be caused not by any intrinsic features of technologies but rather by insufficient training and exposure to them. Thus, it seems that some perception modification strategies (demonstrations, training sessions, sharing successful experiences) might positively affect the perceptual landscape and create demand for assistive technologies.

Additionally, perceptual data provide insight into the reason for technology integration being stalled at the Substitution and Augmentation levels of the SAMR framework. When teachers consider technology as a means of instruction delivery to individuals (as is the case with interactive whiteboards), they do not explore possibilities of using it for new kinds of activities. Low perceptions of assistive technologies which could unlock new ways of participating in learning activities

also limit possibilities of Redefinition level integration. This means that the solution to the problem of integration should start from the solution to the problem of perceptions.

#### 4.1 Study Implications and Contribution

Through this study, a contextually relevant benchmark is developed that shifts the discussion from a general problem of inadequate ICT availability to the particular issue of unequal distribution and improper pedagogical use of these technologies. The methodological innovation of the research is in the application of the Technology Acceptance Model combined with the SAMR model in analyzing the problem under consideration to develop a theory that can be applied to other situations. The results suggest that for the development of equitable ICT-based education it is necessary to undertake two simultaneous actions: to change perceptions and priorities in ICT acquisition and to enhance the pedagogical innovativeness.

#### 5. Conclusion

It was aimed to diagnose the systemic barriers to the integration and adoption of Educational Technology (EdTech) for inclusive education in private primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. In order to go beyond the assessment of availability, the study used an integrative theoretical framework combining TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) and SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition).

According to the results, two distinct gaps have been revealed: the gap in terms of the availability of resources, which has become evident through the inequality in the provision of assistive technologies, and the gap in terms of integration due to the pedagogical stagnation at Substitution and Augmentation stages. Almost the complete absence of assistive technology tools, when speech-to-text and text-to-speech programs were barely used by the children, represents not just a resource shortage, but a critical problem of inclusive education, especially because almost fourteen percent of the sample students have disabilities. In addition, the fact that the usage of the technology mostly remained at the superficial level, being just another way to implement traditional practices of exclusion, raises serious concerns as well. The key thing is that these gaps work together in a mutually reinforcing manner: the limited availability of assistive technologies restricts the possibility for pedagogical change, while the focus on individualized

substitution activities does not foster any demand for inclusive pedagogy.

Overall, the study made the following contributions. It created the context-specific benchmark for discussion that would shift the focus of the problem from general concerns about the insufficiency of ICT to inequity in its provision and pedagogical usage. Combination of TAM and SAMR can be used in similar studies in resource-limited environments. Besides, the empirical evidence supports the statement that the impact of technology on education is shaped by the social, economic, and organizational context.

To conclude, the potential of EdTech as a facilitator of inclusive education remains unrealized in private primary schools in Abuja. First of all, the gaps described above are supported by the negative attitudes of teachers towards the assistive technologies (M=2.41 for usefulness and M=2.25 for ease of use). These gaps act as perceptual barriers to the procurement and integration of technology. Therefore, the systemic interventions are required to promote procurement of assistive technologies and change in pedagogy.

## 6. Recommendations

In light of the current research findings, the following recommendations can be made:

First, for the enhancement of inclusion in private primary schools in Abuja, focus should be placed on the availability of assistive technologies. The policymakers and proprietors of private primary schools in Abuja should devise ring-fenced funding systems for the acquisition of assistive technologies. It is important because in doing so, the acquisition of assistive technologies will become a part of developing infrastructure for inclusion, hence making assistive technologies appear as an indispensable expenditure rather than a low-priority one in view of the external factor of “resource availability” in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Indeed, it is needed taking into account that teachers considered assistive technologies least useful (M = 2.41) and least easy to use (M = 2.25), which corresponds with the scarcity of these technologies in the schools under review.

Second, the current study highlights the need for differentiated and continuous teacher training to ensure inclusion. The research results indicate considerable deficiencies in teachers' competencies, especially in terms of using assistive and adaptive technologies. Therefore, the continued and

differentiated professional development of the educators should not only consist in the enhancement of their general skills of using information technologies but also in the tool-specific training aimed at using these technologies to promote inclusion. It is believed that the training is going to help address the problem of low-perceived easiness of using technologies (M = 2.25) experienced by the teachers since hands-on training helps to increase both competency and positive attitudes towards technologies.

Third, the schools should create a framework for the use of assistive technology. The latter is meant to refer to the development of procedures concerning identification of the needs of the students, selection of proper technologies, as well as monitoring of the selected technology and its impact. In particular, this could be achieved with the help of development of the technology assessment and implementation pathway.

Fourth, due to the high frequency of technology failures, it is necessary to devise a system of technical support and maintenance of the technology in the schools. The latter is associated with the introduction of a technical support system and involving technical experts in the school environment. It will increase the use of technology in the process of teaching and learning.

Fifth, the auditing of the use of technology (EdTech and assistive technologies [AT]) should be institutionalized. The introduction of the audit system will contribute to monitoring of technology use and increasing dependence on the technology in the educational process.

Future Research: Although this cross-sectional research highlighted the need for longitudinal studies, further investigation should focus on the changing factors of technology use in the process of integrating the inclusion agenda in the schools.

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