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# the quint

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## EDITORIAL

Once again, it is September. Once again, the frost has been delayed, and the leaves are slow to turn color this year. The sandhill cranes have come and gone. The geese have yet to arrive. As the weather cools, our thoughts turn to Africa. This, the quint's forty eighth issue showcases the excellence and diversity of Nigerian scholars. We begin with Bashiru Olaitan Ibrahim's revealing examination of the pandemic in "‘ELEYI TU LE JU FAA—INDEED! THIS IS BEYOND US’: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN’S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN ILORIN, NIGERIA." Justus Adim Nzemeka’s fascinating "PROSTITUTION IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA: A CASE OF DESPERATE JOURNEY, 1900-2000" outlines the history of Nigeria's flesh trade and investigates the rise in human trafficking during the 1980s and 1990s in South-South Nigeria. Next, in "Assessment of Rehabilitation Effectiveness in a Digital World: Case of the Nigerian Prisons Service" by Adeniyi John Ogunwale examines the types of vocational training facilities that are available in Nigerian prisons and concludes that these facilities are grossly inadequate. Festus Prosper Olise and John Ndubuisi Bardi's "PERCEIVED LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE OF MEDIA AUDIENCE TOWARDS ACTUALISATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN NIGERIA " follows, using data generated by convenience and simple random sampling techniques to determine that the awareness level of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is relatively low the attitude of respondents is positive, especially among the youths within the age range of 18-33 years.

Then, in a challenging examination, Isreal Babatunde Awe and Adekunle Ajasin Thompson O. Ewata's "ICT Psychomotor Teaching Strategy in Oral English Class in Akure, Nigeria" demonstrates that although there is no significant difference between the learning achievements of students in rural and urban schools taught oral English using either ICT tools or chalk and talk strategy, using ICT tools as a psychomotor strategy for teaching and learning stimulated learning and promoted better understanding of oral English among secondary school students. Following, Nwagbo Pat Obi's "A Theatre

Practice and Festivals in Nigeria: A Focus on a Theatre Festival of Barclays Ayakoroma's Plays" examines the backdrop for and issues involved in theatre festivals held to celebrate a Nigerian playwright and his plays, using the example of Barclays Ayakoroma and the Festival of his plays produced by Arojah Royal Theatre in Abuja. Then Ogbonna Anyanwu and Kevin Egbo's "A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Male Youth Slang in the Nenwe-Igbo Speech Community of Enugu State, Nigeria" considers the phenomenon of male youth slang usage in Igbo speech communities with special focus on the Nenwe-Igbo speech community located in Enugu State, Nigeria., and how this slang is a part of the process of creating a distinct group identity and the platform for the creation of a youth sub-culture. Following, in "WHEN RELIGION THREATENS A NATION: ISLAMISATION AGENDA AND THE HIJAB CRISES IN NIGERIA A.S. Afolabi, M.A.Y. Lew and O. O. Thompson investigate the tensions in Nigeria created by the Hijab. Their study reveals that the rejection of the Hijab in public institutions and spaces in Christian populated South is a contemporary issue triggered by the suspicion of an Islamic agenda in a secular state.

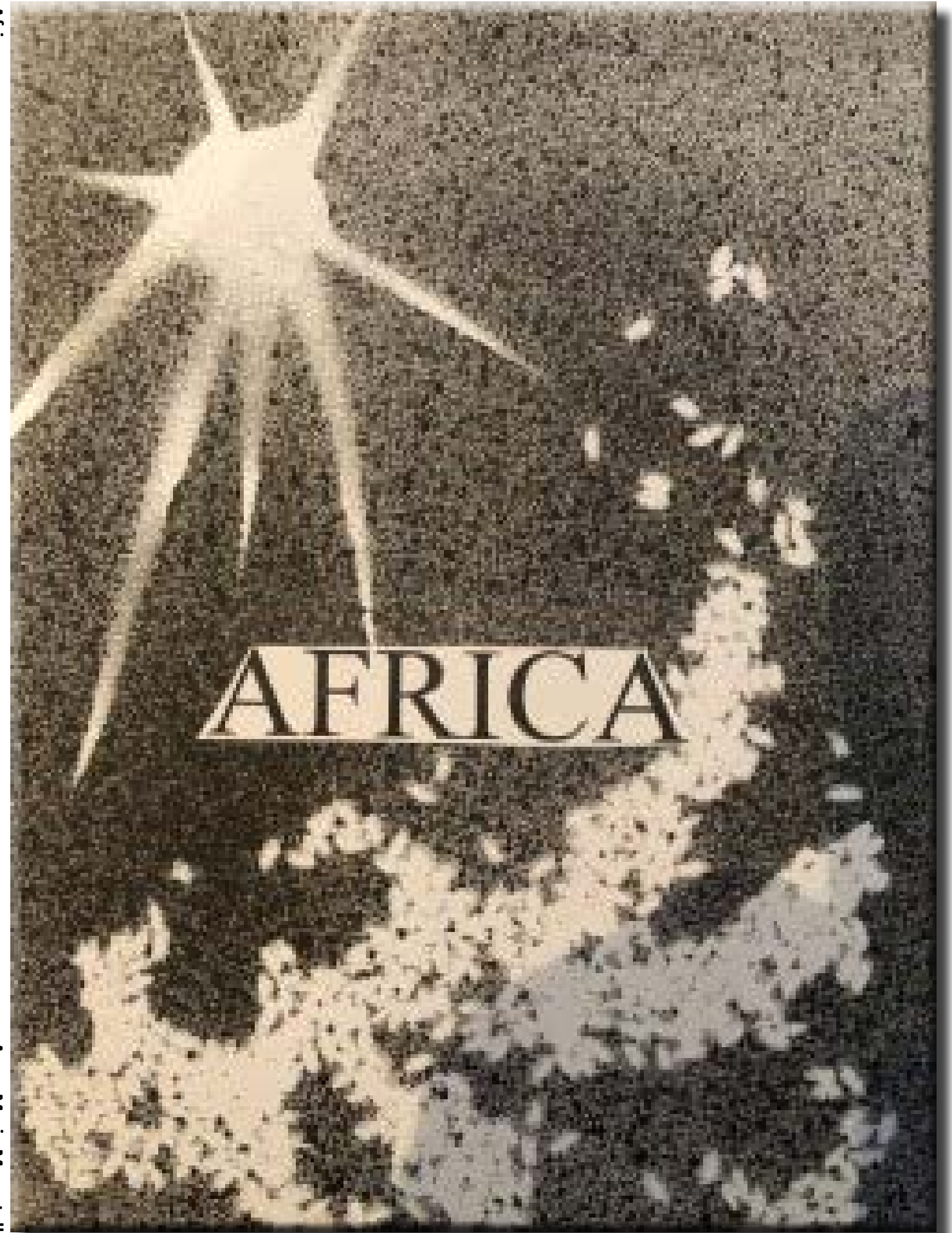
This issue's film reviews start with Süleyman Bölükbaş' "*The Night, Angel and Our Gang* ny Atif Yilmaz" finds Yilmaz's treatments of complicated sexuality and queer subjects remain relevant and reveal a layer of modern Turkey generally not seen in in Turkish drama. Orsolya Karacsony's "Cruel Cure in a Russian Metropolis: A Review of Trigger" argues that the Russian TV show's suspense, gradual transmission of information, skillful crafting of its protagonist and curious cases, and portrayal of Moscow as an ideal place for cosmopolitans demonstrate the series's potential on the international entertainment market. Finally, Julia Anna Makkai's "Investigating Fame in Mark Lewis's *Don't F\*\*k With Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer*" is a thoughtful and balanced examination of the critique of uncontrolled social media content and activity in Mark Lewis's *Don't F\*\*k With Cats: Hunting for an Internet Killer* which reconstructs the true story of the infamous animal abuser and murderer Luka Magnotta who, in 2014, was convicted to life imprisonment for his hideous (online and offline) crimes.

No *quint* is complete without its creative component. This issue is honored to

present a selection of the stunningly beautiful poems and images found in Anne-Marie Moscatelli's *Africa*, a collection of seven illustrated poems inspired by her two-year teaching stay in Benin, West Africa. Moscatelli observes that "[l]es illustrations originales qui accompagnent les poèmes ont été créées par l'auteur à l'encre de chine sur papier dessin. Ces images floues qui semblent sortir d'un rêve sont bien fidèles aux souvenirs qui les ont fait naître / The illustrations which accompany each poem are mine and original, in pen and ink. These blurry images which seem to come out of a dream are quite faithful to the memories which created them." Dedicated to dedicated to Moscatelli's African friends, these The poems and images in Africa are for "all of you who crossed my path and taught me to appreciate life: to you my African friends, to thank you for your welcoming and disinterested hospitality, and for the love with which your laughter, your songs, your valiantly endured suffering filled my heart. I will never forget you. A Houanu Ka Ka (Thank you in the Benin Fon dialect )." Completing our travels around the world, Rebecca Matheson's micro-study of weathered wood returns us home, anticipating winter by examining the effects of the elements in northern Manitoba.

Here's to warm drinks and interesting reading and viewing as the weather continues to cool. *the quint* will return with more interesting and insightful pieces in time for Christmas. Until then, do stay safe and healthy in these unsettled and uncertain times.

**Sue Matheson**  
**Editor**



## **Petite marchande de bananes**

### **Petite marchande de bananes**

**Tu es haute comme trois pommes**

Et déjà tu gagnes ta vie.

Tu te lèves avec le soleil

Et dors avec la lune

Quand tes pieds fatigués

S'arrêtent de marcher.

Tu aimerais courir et jouer

Comme les autres enfants ;

Tu aimerais poser le fardeau

Qui alourdit ta tête pleine de papillons

Et danser

Quand le tam-tam t'appelle...

Mais il y a tant d'espérance

Dans ce plateau de bananes

Qui courbe tes épaules,

Allongeant ton chemin

Qui commence à l'aurore

Et meurt avec la nuit,

Petite marchande de bananes

Haute comme trois pommes.

—*Anne-Marie Moscatelli*

# ***‘ELEYI TU LE JU FAA—INDEED! THIS IS BEYOND US’: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN’S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN ILORIN, NIGERIA***

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## **Abstract**

The Corona Virus (COVID-19) has had enormous impact on every sphere of society ,from political, culture, social and even to the global economy. One group which appears to have been neglected in recent studies of the pandemic are women. This study investigates the impact of the pandemic on Women with emphasis on Ilorin Market Women as well as those areas where such impacts are most felt. Primary and secondary sources of data collection were adopted using observation and interviews. The study design is a field study. The study's findings revealed that in spite of early interventions from the government, the pandemic has left many market women who were already struggling before the pandemic to experience more hardship. This situaton indeed has implications for a gender and inclusive policy formulation.

**Keywords:** Breadwinners, Facemask, Corona Virus (COVID-19), Market Women, Ilorin, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

The Corona Virus (COVID 19), which was first reported in Wuhan City, China, as an epidemic in late 2019 (WHMC 2020) has spread to every part of the world by the beginning of 2020. By January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared it a global health issue, and in March, it was declared as a global pandemic. Since its emergence, it has had an enormous impact on all spheres of the society, non -state actors, including groups. One group that has been very affected by the impact of the pandemic is the vulnerable, prominent among which are sub-groups of women, children, and the elderly. The focus of this study is on the women's sub-group.

Women play important roles in the development of the society. In fact, the development of any society is always as a result of the combined effort of both sexes, however history has not been fair to the female folk. As Bessieres & Niedzwiecki (1991) puts it, “The histories written by men often hide women in dark folds, erase them, or are unaware of their presence.” In Africa, many scholars more often than not focus their research on socio-economic and political phenomena, but very few have cast their dragnet into women studies. Paradoxically, the roles women play on the continent over the years have been described as phenomenal (Awe 1977; Mba 1978; Johnson 1982), though they remain at the receiving end of conflict (Rehn & Sirleaf 2002; Froerer 2007; Arieff 2010; UN Women 2017; Goyol, 2019)

Focusing on Ilorin, a town established in the nineteenth century from the old Oyo Empire (Danmole & Falola 1993; O’Hear 1983), this study examines the impact of the pandemic on Ilorin market women amid the government response to the disease as



well as the areas where these impacts are most felt. Women have played very important role in the development of Ilorin through their market enterprise since precolonial era (Ibrahim, 2017). They have been involved in series of economic activities, such as trade and commerce, manufacturing in various forms, agriculture, bead making, cloth weaving and dyeing, pottery, craft works, iron smelting, etc. (Raji, Olumoh & Abejide, 2013: 45). This paper's focus on Ilorin not only enables a thorough study of the work. Ilorin was also selected because it s a melting point, a place of harmony where the major ethnic groups in Nigeria converge.

**Figure 1: Map showing Ilorin, Kwara State**



Source: Fagbemi (2015) Group cautions CAN against divisive politics in Kwara” The Guardian Newspaper, 13 March. At <https://guardian.ng/news/group-cautions-can-against-divisive-politics-in-kwara/>

This study is qualitative, and the design is field study. The markets selected were Oja Oba, Ipata Market and Yoruba Markets. These markets are all located within the city, and its traders are comprised of not just the three major tribes in the country but also other ethnic groups such as Efik, Igbira, Isoko, Urhobo, etc. The data collection technique employs a mixed method with observation and interviews methods adopted. The interviews were transcribed, and a content analysis was done. The researcher spoke native language to the indigenes and pidgin English to the non-Yoruba or non-indigene during the field work. The field work was done from 12 April up till 13 May 2020. All safety protocols proposed by the World Health Organisation and the State government were adhered to by the researcher. The Ethical Committee of the Department of History and International Studies issued the ethical approval for the study.

### **Women in African Economy**

Watts (1984) in her study on the food processing and trading of eko (corn cake) industry among Ilorin Women in Ilorin observed that most of the women in rural West Africa ,make a direct contribution to household expenses and are at least financially independent of their husbands. In Ilorin, women, she also observed that most of them were involved in one form of trading or commerce as compared to the few who were full time housewives. It is not surprising that Denzer (1994) opined that Yoruba women occupied a prominent place in the pre-colonial socio-economic, political organisation, religion, family life, and the economy. Denzer went further to state that while some studies revealed that women’s status was reduced during colonial rule, it was obvious that contrary was the case, especially in the areas of legal rights and economic opportunities (1994: 15). Muritala

(2014/2015) in a study of Women and Urban experiences in Colonial Lagos observed that while women were involved in different trades during the eve of colonialism, contact with British Colonial administration further expanded their social and economic as well as their legal rights.

McIntosh (2009) in her study of Yoruba women, described their contributions to the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence eras in which women took part in both domestic affairs as wives and in the affairs of the State. She, however, confirmed that most of the women were engaged in trading, farming, nursing, teaching, and other activities to sustain themselves and their children all through the period under review. Similarly, Crebo-Rediker, Fordham, Buitter & Rahbari (2015) revealed that though women make up the vast majority in the informal economy as compared to the formal economy, their venture into formal economy usually affected their activities and positions in the informal sector. They further observed that though government cannot drive the economic growth alone through its policies (as there are no silver bullet), there is a silver lining which lies in women being given greater opportunity to participate equally in the labor force and serve as growth accelerators. They concluded that this is true for both advanced and emerging world (2015:10-11).

As Ben-Ari (2014) puts it, daily, millions of women in Africa are engaged in one form of trade or another, either within their countries or across national borders. They buy and sell everything, from agricultural produce to manufactured products. The International Trade Centre (2015) has posited that women's participation in trade provides an additional boost to the growth potential of openness and to the sustainability of that growth. Fofack (2015) observed that the contribution of women to Africa's development

goes beyond the fight for freedom and equality during the colonial and apartheid era, however. It is much broader and a part of a long historical process going back several centuries, including the precolonial and colonial periods (110-113). He also noted that countries that have imbibed and engendered women's equality in terms of female labour, forcing participation and narrowing wage gaps, are better off than those that had not keyed into issues concerning gender mainstreaming (114). Other scholars have also supported the need for trade liberalisation so that women as well as the economy can thrive (Kiratu & Roy 2010). With this in mind, it is little wonder that Milazzo and van de Walle (2015) found that households which have women as breadwinners are increasing and helping to reduce poverty on the continent.

However, despite some women now emerging as breadwinners in the traditional roles which used to be common among the male folks (Akanle Adesina & Nwaobiala 2018; Parry 2014; Parry & Segalo 2017; Eboiyehi, Muoghalu, & Bankole, 2016), many women face challenges while pursuing economic independence, sustainability, empowerment, and stability. Ikpe (2009) remarked that one of the challenges that women faced over time results from the patriarchal nature of the society in which they find themselves. Other scholars have traced some of the challenges of African economy to its environment. Green (2016) stated that African environment was in many ways more hostile than that of other continents. He identified two factors responsible for this, citing the generally thin soils, and animal diseases and crop pests. He also identified other limiting factors which included diseases and pests, restricted what animals could be kept, and what crops could be grown. Ben-Ari (2014) went further, stating that Economies that depend on a single commodity are vulnerable to external shocks, which in turn

affect women. UNCTAD points out that oil-producing countries have not diversified their economies. For instance, Angola's economy, which is primarily extractive, has not created enough jobs to absorb the female work force. According to the UN trade agency, a lack of progress in diversifying the Angolan economy has confined women to low-productivity jobs.

Brenton, Gamberoni & Sear (2015) in their work stated that though women contribute to intra-Africa trade, their achievements are overlooked because of the lack of data and awareness, lack of analysis, and lack of representation in trade policy discussions. He went further to state that women are limited in trading by the following: a lack of transparency and awareness of rules, difficulties in obtaining required documents, access to trade information and trader networks, and poor conditions and harassment when crossing borders. Nwankwo (2017) in her study of Market Women in Lagos, with emphasis on Oke Arin Women traders in Lagos observed that while a few successful women traders, through adept deployment of their social capital, are able to protect and enhance their accumulation, most of the Oke Arin women traders lack such buffers and have not yet recognised and acted on the need for collective action. She further found that the opaque and devious governance processes of the market and government institutions are contributing factors to widespread social mistrust which reduces the desire for collective action and collaterally, undermines the women's economic empowerment.

While war, economy, and the patriarchal nature of societies have been identified in the literature as possible factors that negatively affect these women, pandemics, particularly the recent outbreak of the COVID-19, have not been given adequate attention. Focusing on Ilorin market women, this study addresses this gap in and contributes to this body of

knowledge.

## **Economic Activities of Ilorin market women before COVID 19**

A Market is a place where people gather in order to transact goods and services for money or another legal tenders. Markets are rotated between different villages and in some cases the markets are organised on neutral land between the villages. Though markets are open on daily basis, from as early as 6am till 10pm, they also have their special days (Ojo Oja) during which many marketers and traders came from all parts of Ilorin and its environs with their wares. Most of the goods are pepper, provisions and beverages, food stuffs, etc. Women who are involved in food production, textile making, hair styling, etc. also make up the market women's community.

Most of these women, particularly the middle earners or poor traders, survive on loans taken from thrift collector (Alajo). At times, some of these women also borrow from formal banking sector with the promise of paying via a flexible plan that can be weekly, monthly, or fortnightly as long as the lender is satisfied with the borrower. Some of these women in order to make up for these loans also contribute money among themselves rotationally in which there is a collector for each round. In fact, some of the women are the bread winners in their homes. As one woman puts it, "*Awa kan wa to je wipe A ni oko sile bi eni ti oni, awa kan opo. Olorun lo n toju wa ati iranlowo ebi ati ara. Sugbon oja wa yi ni a gbojule faa*" ---Some of us have irresponsible husbands who even rely on us for survival and some of us are widows. It is God that is taking care of us, together with some of our relatives. But more importantly we rely on our trade (Key Informant, Iya Moriamo, Trader at Oja Oba, 19 May 2020).

**Figure 2: Market Women at Oja Oba (King's Market) Ilorin before the Pandemic**



Source: Google Image.

Aside from the trading, the market is also a social ground where most of the women discuss matters that affect the State and their communities, and at times even personal issues are discussed. The market is also a forum for religious interactions. In fact, most women live their lives in the market. Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19, pandemic, trading was considered to be generally slow (Informants, Yoruba Market, 12-16 May 2020) As one woman from Ipata market remarked, “*Oja ko saka ko to di igba Koro. Awon omo ile iwe gan se n wole. Pupo ninu wa ko ri owo taja sugbon nise la gba gbo wipe ti o ba di osu keta, nkan a lo dada*” (Interview, Mrs Kajola, Pepper seller, 14 May 2020)---Trading was dull before the emergence of the Corona Virus. Students were just resuming. Most of us

could not get money to trade but we believed that by March, things would prop up.

It was generally thought that because most people had spent most of their earnings for Christmas or had travelled to the village and not returned that the business in the market would return to peak, as usual, in March. However, the advent of the noble Corona Virus proved to have an enormous impact on the aspirations of these women.

**Figure 3: Market women at the Ipata Market before the Pandemic**



Source: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=155937032591914&id=102489514603333](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=155937032591914&id=102489514603333)

Most women traders in Ilorin usually record enough sales on Fridays (Jimoh prayers), because of social events, such as parties, that take place when educational institutions are in session. Some traders, for example, also sell Islamic ornaments, regalia, and accessories such as Hijab, Holy Quran, Mats, Praying Kettle, Stick (*Age*) flyers, Rosaries (*Tesbau*), etc. One woman her children to different mosques across the Ilorin in **order** to sell these Islamic accessories and wares. She stated that she makes about N15,000-N25,000 in some days (Key Informant, Mrs AbdulMalik Muminat, 48years, Oke Odo, 3 May 2020). This is because the students usually patronise the markets to buy most of their goods. Even those who do not reside in Ilorin prefer to come to the town to buy their foodstuffs and other needs instead of bringing it from their homes (Key informants, Undergraduates University of Ilorin, via WhatsApp, 12 April - 13 May 2020). Parties and religious gatherings (among others) require those involved to buy things for such events, and this forces the participants to patronise the women traders.

### **COVID 19 and Its Impact on Ilorin Women**

Nigeria recorded its first COVID-19 case in February, and the Federal Government declared that travel should be restricted in some states. These states were Ogun, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT Abuja). The Federal Government followed this up by sending food items and money as palliative measures to curtail the economic impact of the pandemic in these zones, so that it would not spread to other parts of the country. However, other states also began to report cases of the disease. Kwara State announced its first index case in April after the return of a London traveller who was treated at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.

Although the Kwara State Government stated that the State had not recorded any cases of the Virus, it immediately announced a lockdown of the State on 22 March 2020. The government stated that the measures were taken to prevent anyone that may be infected with COVID-19 from spreading the disease to others. It further held that an exponential spread of COVID-19 in the community could be catastrophic because the State could have thousands of its citizens sick at the same time. Hence the government ordered the closure of all public and private nurseries, primary, secondary, and state owned Tertiary institutions, and ordered that aside from Ministry of Health and essential workers, all civil servants were to work from home and that all gatherings of more than 25 people were prohibited until further notice (*Channels TV News* 2020).

After two weeks of restricted movements in the town, the cases were increasing, and the government announced another two-week lockdown on April 11 2020. Knowing that this lockdown would take its toll on the informal sector of the State, the government gave out conditional cash transfers ranging from N5000-N10,000 to youths and to those employed in the transport sector which involved mostly males and to the aged (*owo arugbo*) (Ajakaye 2020). Women, however, were never considered. At the Yoruba market, some women who sold agricultural products lamented the high cost of transportation and raw materials or farm products, which consumers hardly bought at cost price. As one informant stated, “*Ki Olorun gba wa. Ki Olorun ba wa le ogun Koro lo. Ati lo gbe agbado ni oko, owo n la ni, nitoripe awon awoko ti gbe owo le owo ori ati owo eru---*May God help us. May God heal the land of this Corona Virus Pandemic. To transport maize from the farm is now expensive as transporters have added to the transportation fare. (Mama Jamiu, Yoruba Market, 3 May 2020). When some of the drivers were asked why

they had to hike the fare, many of them stated that since government asked them to carry only three passengers for a journey they usually carried six passengers, they had to increase the cost to compensate for the shortage (Informants, taxi drivers at Tanke garage, 11-13 May 2020). Another woman who sold roast corn at the Yoruba market lamented the poor patronage since the citizens of the states were only allowed to go out on certain days. She further stated that even on the days when the lockdowns are lifted, the few people who come to the market negotiate without headway (Interview, Mrs Mufutau, 57years, 9 May 2020).

A non-indigene who sells beverages also complained that since most of their products are brought in from Lagos, most of their suppliers are complaining that they can not get easy access to Ilorin as a result of the travel restrictions in other States. She further held that such conditions have led to the scarcity of some products and to the eventual hike in cost (Mrs Okoh, 54years, 8 May 2020). Other women who sell clothes and second-hand clothes raised similar issues. Most of their products are imported or brought from Lagos, and have become scarce. It should be noted that the cloth used to make these garments has become one of the most consumed products among the masses (Ibrahim 2020). Additionally, they complained that ban on social gatherings has made sales almost non-existence (Interviews, Adire clothes sellers/Secondhand Clothing sellers, 1-8 May 2020). To be sure, some people who usually patronise the secondhand sellers confirmed that money earned is used to buy foodstuff and pay other bills rather than to buy clothes, since there are no social events that warrant new garments. As one woman put it: “Aso ke! Se aso ni a fe je? Ani ki a ri owo jeun lo se koko ni asiko yi--- Clothes!

Is cloth meant for eating? We are trying to survive here so clothes are out of it. (Key

informant, Mrs Adebayo Funmilola, 46 years, Oja Oba, 29 May 2020)

**Figure 4: A Secondhand Cloth Seller at Oja Oba (King’s Market) during the Pandemic**



Source: Taken by the Researcher on 31 May 2020

The picture above shows a usually busy and surrounded secondhand cloth sellers idle and waiting for customers to patronise them.

**Figure 5: Ipata Market during the Pandemic**



Source: Taken by the Researcher on 31 May 2020

The figure above is instructive about the women in the market during the pandemic. While government has mandated all citizens to put on face masks and maintain social distancing, one can see from the image above that this is not strictly adhered to. When some of the women were asked why they did not put on their facial masks, most of them stated that they were not used to it and that it was affecting their breathing (Key

Informants at Ipata Markets, 30 May 2020). Another factor noted was that most of them did not believe that the COVID-19 was not a real threat. As one woman said, puts it. *“Aisan Koro ko ni mu w ani Ola Oluwa. Olorun mo wipe talaka ni wa faa”*---This COVID-19 will not affect us, as God knows that we are the poor. (Key informant, Mrs Abdulsalam, Anike, 56 years, Ipata Market, 31 May 2020).

**Figure 5: Ipata Market Women during the Pandemic**



Source: Taken by the Researcher on 31 May 2020.

The image above also shows that the women at another part of the market are not maintaining social distancing and not putting on their facial masks in order to stop the spread of the virus. More so, a cursory look at the shops behind the women on the

road showed that the shops were locked. Further study showed that most of the shop owners did not come to open their shops, because sales was low, and sometimes, they had to borrow money to transport themselves back home in the evening (Interview, Mrs Pero Bolajoko, Tanke, 31 May 2020). One market women stated that she had borrowed money from her cooperative in order to stock her shop thinking she would sell school bags, shoes, and other goods prior to the pandemic, but the pandemic has driven her into more debt because schools were locked down as well (Key informant, Mrs Kanu Rosemary, 33 years, Ipata Market, 31 May 2020). One woman summed up the situation saying: “*aisan yi tu le ju faa, ki n se wipe a beru re, sugbon o n mu ebi, aisan ati are ati ise ba awa obinrin*”--- This COVID-19 is indeed beyond us. It is not as if we are afraid of it, but it has brought about untold hardship, sicknesses, idleness, and hunger on we the market women (Mrs Rafiat Gbadegesin, Ipata Market, 31 May 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Women, particularly market women, have indeed been affected by COVID-19 in Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria. The extent of the impact of this disease was in part due to the measures that government initiated to curb the spread of the menace via the restriction of travel. These measures have necessitated that most women, particularly the market women, who saw the market as an opportunity for economic and social interactions, a political avenue to discuss the economy and the government, and a place to share their concerns about their domestic fronts, have had to navigate the restrictions of the lockdown.

The lockdown has affected the market women were in the following areas: the

cost of goods, the cost of transportation, the need to work with the face mask, social distancing, and the other rules or measures which the women believe are not necessary. Although the government intervened and supported some of its citizens during the lockdown, the market women did not benefit as such from the largesse.

This study recommends that the government while instituting policies should make sure that all of its citizenry, regardless of gender, is carried along. In the case of the market this is vital, because the literature demonstrates that an empowered woman will lead to reduction of poverty and sustainable economy. Because women folk are vulnerable, being most affected in war, government needs to include them in policies which protect other vulnerable groups during the pandemic.



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## Little banana seller

Little banana seller

No taller than a little peanut,

You already earn a living.

You get up with the sunrise

And sleep as the moon shines,

When your tired feet

Stop walking on...

You would like to run and play

As do other children...

You would like to put down the load

That weighs down your head

Filled with dreamy butterflies,

And danse,

When the tom tom calls you...

But there is so much hope  
In this banana tray  
Which curves your frail shoulders  
and lengthens your path  
Which starts at daybreak  
And dies with the night,  
Little banana seller  
No taller than a little peanut

—*Anne-Marie Moscatelli*



# PROSTITUTION IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA: A CASE OF DESPERATE JOURNEY, 1900-2000

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines the history of prostitution in South-South Nigeria. During the last decade, research in this area has mainly dwelt on the prostitution of 'Edo-Bini women in Europe,' and excluded the other states in South-South Nigeria and calls for a more holistic investigation of prostitution in South-South Nigeria since the pre-colonial period. This paper emphasizes that prostitution, in existence in the region since ancient times, has assumed a greater dimension in the 1980s and 90s as a result of economic hardship in the country. To understand this phenomenon, we draw on the experiences of deportee female sex-workers, as well as primary and secondary sources to explain the pattern of recruitment and organisation of prostitution in modern times, and the challenges of combating it. Our findings reveal that government's effort at eradicating the illicit trade have not yielded desired result because of the complex network and strategies of local agents and their international collaborators. In their regions, returnee sex-workers from Europe were highly respected by friends and families who see them as agents of change. Thus international prostitution is associated with wealth accumulation and changes in

gender relations between men and women in the region. This paper concludes that the eradication of prostitution in Nigeria can only be achieved through job creation, gender mainstreaming, and free education for the girl-child.

**Keywords:** Gender, desperate-journey, wealth-accumulation, network, prostitution

## INTRODUCTION

The history of prostitution in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial period when it was localised and unattractive. The trade in sex became popular with the introduction of guilds and associations similar to those in craft and industry, trade and market. This development was intended to protect the trade from being an all-comers affair, and at the same time to elevate the perception of prostitutes in the eyes of the public. For instance, in the Hausa kingdom of Maradi<sup>1</sup> and n parts of West Africa, prostitution was organised and directed by women, who acted as heads and representatives of the guilds and associations for the profits they offered. The *Holy Bible* also provides us with an example of one Rahab, a prostitute who saved the spies sent by the people of Israel many centuries ago.<sup>2</sup> This goes to show that prostitution is one of the oldest professions in recorded history; with tis in mind, there is little wonder that attempts at eradicating the illicit trade have proved to be difficult.

The negative effects of prostitution on society cannot be overemphasised. Apart from contributing to moral decadence, the degradation of womanhood, and the insult to men and women, prostitution has also proven to be an avenue for the spread of

1. Lucy Mair, *African Kingdoms* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 50-51.

2. *The Holy Bible*, (KJV) Joshua, 2:1-22.

venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS. This is why it has become a part of the debate by religious groups, social and political activists who believe that commercial sex-labour is not an ideal vocation in the twenty-first century. Since time immemorial, the purpose of prostitution has been to accumulate wealth and property and satisfy the desire to make ends meet at all costs. Some women, however, see it as a dangerous pursuit that cannot justify the economic benefit.<sup>3</sup>

Situated in the larger context of gender and migration, prostitution in South-South Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon in the region and was not limited to Edo-Bini women but a characteristic of some women in the region. The history of the Niger Delta region now known as South-South Nigeria reveals that women's prostitution has been in existence before the coming of the British. Geographically, the region, located on the lower and upper Niger River and south of the Bight of Benin and Biafra, included Benin, Brass, Bonny, Opobo, Ibibio, Kalabari, Asaba, Henshaw town, Aboh, Warri, Nembe and other places. Economically, by the 1850s, the Delta area surpassed all other towns in the palm-oil trade, with 'Bonny as its richest port.'<sup>4</sup> By the second half of the nineteenth century, most city states in the region had established trade contact with Europeans. Some of the companies included the Royal Niger Company, Messrs Alexander Miller Brothers and Company of Glasgow, James Pinnock and Company of Liverpool, West Africa of Manchester, and the Central African Trading Company of London. These trading companies later merged to become the United African Company in 1879.<sup>5</sup> It was the

involvement of women in trade that brought them in close contact with the European

3. Interview with Christy Ochai, 70 yrs., Lagos, 2 February 2019.

4. Rex Akpofure and Michael Crowder, *Nigeria, A Modern History for Schools* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 120.

5. J.G. Nkem Onyekpe, "Western Influence on Nigeria in the Era of New Imperialism" in Akinjide Osuntokun and Ayodeji Olukoju (ed.), *Nigerian Peoples and Cultures* (Ibadan: Davidson Press, 1997), 219-244, specifically, 221.

supercargoes.<sup>6</sup> As the interaction between these women and Europeans became active, some of the women began to indulge in prostitution. Others fell for precious items, such as alcoholic spirits, ornaments, umbrellas, bracelets, mirrors, and tobacco.<sup>7</sup> The coming of the British increased the activity of women's prostitution in the region. As well as the rapid economic development of the region, another factor that promoted prostitution during the period was the carefree lifestyle of some European traders,

Consequently, most of the cities became home to prostitutes from Cameroun, Calabar, Urhobo, Aboh, Ukwani and other places.<sup>8</sup> During this period, prostitution neither contributed to the economy and nor conferred power and influence on women as it did in modern times when prostitutes owned estates and landed property in high-brow areas of Nigeria. The prostitution of women in the Niger Delta region also increased in the years of the British gunboat diplomacy during which many men were killed and other men were imprisoned. Notable examples affected in this way by British conquest and trade blockade were the Ebrohimi, Opobo, Calabar, and Nembe towns.<sup>9</sup>

The disruption and distortion of trading activities in the punitive expedition of 1896 also integrated the women of Brass, Okrika, and Itsekiri into commercial sex-labour to make ends meet.<sup>10</sup> The same is true of the women of West Niger Igbo who suffered British bombardment of their communities in 1898 as a result of local resistance known

6. Supercargoes were those responsible in British merchant ships for buying and selling goods.

7. Interview with Ekele Ejiro, 80yrs, Uyo, 21 February, 2019.

8. Interview with Nmanma Akpan, 87yrs, Uyo, 21 February, 2019.

9. The 2,000 people reported to have submitted after the fall of Ebrohimi included, women, children and other non-combatant personnel. Details see Obaro Ikime, "Nigeria-Ebrohimi," in Michael Crowder, *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation* (London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd, 1971), 205-232.

10. The Brassmen raid and the punitive measure of the British in 1895, See Akpofure and Crowder, *Nigeria: A Modern History for Schools*, 167-168.

as the 'Ekumeku Uprising'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, colonial adventurism in most parts of the country, as Helen Callaway has pointed out increased opportunities for women's prostitution with British officers.<sup>12</sup>

Then, following the industrial development of cities in colonial Nigeria, some women from the Niger Delta migrated to Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Ibadan, and Lagos to take advantage of further opportunities for prostitutes.<sup>13</sup> The mobility of labour to major cities in colonial period is corroborated by Akin Mobogunje in the following lines, "The estimated migrant population of Nigeria in 1952/3 is put at 1,378, 172. According to this estimate, only 214, 832 or about 16 per cent of the migrant population lived in the southwest while 66 per cent and 16 per cent live in the northern and the eastern states respectively,"<sup>14</sup> showing how widespread the mobility of labour was in colonial period and that prostitutes needed urban cities to ply their trade.

## Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Framework

The existing literature on prostitution includes work by Osiki, 2015<sup>15</sup>; Aderinto,

2016<sup>16</sup>; Alobo and Ndifon, 2014<sup>17</sup>; Iziengbe, 2017<sup>18</sup>; Lawal, 2013<sup>19</sup>; and Kara, 2010,<sup>20</sup> to mention but a few commentators. While Osiki looks at the nexus between commercial sex-trade and tourism, Alobo and Ndifo examine the issues, problems, and prospects of prostitution. Their efforts give us a real insight into the gains and challenges of the trade. Majority of the scholars trace the origins of prostitution to the pre-colonial society and also confirm that there has been continuity and change in organisation of prostitution in both colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. Most relevant to this study are the works of Lawal and Omoregie. Lawal's study underscores the origins of human trafficking in Benin-City and concluded that parents see nothing wrong in the export of their daughters to the trafficking ring because of wealth. Omoregie, on the other hand, established a web of connections in the business of prostitution in the local and international arenas, especially in the role of the *Purray Boys* in the lives of Edo-Bini prostitutes. The contributions of these scholars, however, do not investigate the wider perspective of women prostitution in South-South Nigeria in which the Edo-Bini women are only a segment in the distribution chain.

For many, the essential questions are: what does the law say about prostitution in Nigeria? What is sex-labour or prostitution? And to what extent is prostitution a desperate

11. Details see Philip Igbafe, "Western Ibo Society and Its Resistance To British Rule: The Ekumeku Movement 1898-1911", *Journal of African History* XII, 3 (1971), 441- 459.

12. Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire, European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (Oxford London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1987), 48-50.

13. R. K. Udo, "Implications of the Drift of Population to the South-West of Nigeria," Being the Presidential Address to the Annual Conference of the Nigerian Geographical Association, University of Ife, March 1977, 1-15.

14. Mobogunje, quoted in R. K. Udo, "Implications, 1.

15. Omon Merry Osiki, "Commercial Sex Activities and Tourism in Africa: A Historical Exploration," in Kenneth C. Nwoko and Omon M. Osiki, ed., *Dynamics of Culture and Tourism in Africa, Perspectives on Africa's Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Illishan-Remo: Babcock University Press, 2015), 181-200.

16. Saheed Aderinto, "Pleasure for Sale: Prostitution in Colonial Africa, 1880-1960s," in Frank Jacob (ed.) *A Companion to Mankind* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2016), 469-480.

17. E.E. Alobo and Rita Ndifon, "Addressing Prostitution Concerns in Nigeria: Issue, Problem and Prospects," *European Scientific Journal* 10, no.14 (May 2014), 36-47.

18. Omoregie Pat Iziengbe, "The Economy of International Prostitution in Benin and the Place of the Purray Boys," *Infra- Nigeria Working Papers Series* 34 (July 26, 2017), 1-21.

19. A.A. Lawal, "Human Trafficking in Edo State (Nigeria): A Socio-Economic Study" *Lagos Historical Review* 13, (2013), 17-30.

20. Siddhartha Kara, *Sex Trafficking, Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

journey in South-South Nigeria? First, available literature shows that “no law directly bans prostitution in Nigeria.”<sup>21</sup> As Joseph Felix has rightly noted, “There is no general law against prostitution in Nigeria. Issues like prostitution, indecent dressing and sexual assaults do not necessarily need a law.... You may not try them for prostitution but you may try them for illegal assembly,”<sup>22</sup> Felix's observation neatly summarises the challenges faced by the police and other law enforcement agents in the arrest and detention of prostitutes in Nigeria. For this reason, the prohibition of prostitution has become a herculean task with little or no remedy.

Here it should be noted that the terms prostitution and sex-labour are interchangeably used in this study, and that occasional use of sex-trade also points to prostitution and sex-labour in the same way other scholars have used commercial sex-activities to refer to prostitution. Prostitution is a voluntary method of trading sex for economic reasons. It is also the “commodification of casual sex.”<sup>23</sup> Over the years most feminists have viewed the selling of sex as immoral, and a lowering of womanhood. As a result, image(s) of African prostitutes have remained unfavourable because most people believe that sex-labour is not a profession, as rendered in a popular tune in Nigeria “Ashawo no bi work.” Thus, prostitutes and brothels are continuously raided by the Nigerian police, the army and civil defence personnel to deter women from ‘selling their bodies’.

The term ‘desperate’ used in this study refers to the excitement and intrigue associated with the recruitment, rituals and wealth by prospective prostitutes to Europe and their

21. See <http://www.nigeriaports.gov.ng/> Nike Adebawale, May 10, 2010.

22. Joseph Felix, A Jos-based lawyer, quoted in <http://www.nigeriaports.gov.ng/>

23. Emmanuel Akyeampong, “Sexuality and Prostitution among the Akan of the Gold Coast c. 1650-1950,” *Past and Present* 156, (August, 1997), 145.

agents without a second look at the trade itself. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines ‘desperate’ as “willing to do anything to change a very bad situation and not caring about danger.”<sup>24</sup> It is believed that the ritual and oath-taking ceremonies by prospective prostitutes travelling to Europe were cruel enough to dampen the courage of a strong man. Also, the harrowing experiences on the Sahara Desert, coupled with the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, to say the least, were ‘desperate journeys’ similar to the “middle passage” of the Atlantic Slave trade.

Utilised by this study to explain the drive for prostitution, the ‘individualistic theory’ argues that the decision to migrate is made at the individual level in response to existing and emerging labour markets.<sup>25</sup> Its germaness is dictated by individual case histories and perhaps constraints.<sup>26</sup> As Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant point out, “while there may be some organization of prostitutes at the level of International hotels on a basis similar to the Southeast Asian trade, many of the African women who sell sexual services work on their own account.”<sup>27</sup> Corroborating this view, Christiana Okojie observes that econometric models of labour migration are based on the assumption that the potential migrant is a rational decision-maker who moves mainly for economic reasons.<sup>28</sup> Such rational decision-making is also associated with the “Demand theory.” According to Lawal,

Demand theory classifies demand for prostitutes into three categories:

Users and purchasers of sex, profiteers from selling sex, and socio-cultural

24. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, New Edition, (Edinburgh, England: Pearson Education Ltd, 2009), 459.

25. Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant, *Women in the Third World: Gender Issues in Rural and Urban Areas*, (Aldershot: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 1993), 122.

26. *Ibid.*, 122.

27. Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant, “*Women in the Third World*,” 128.

28. Christiana E. E. Okojie, “Female Migrants in the Urban Labour Market: Benin-City, Nigeria,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 18, 3 (1984), 548.

attitudes towards sex. Users and purchasers of sex are those who pay for prostitutes for sexual services; brothel owners and pimps are profiteers from selling sex, while academics and media reporting and writing about sex workers constitute part of the socio-cultural attitudes toward sex.<sup>29</sup>

When we compare the arguments of Brydon, Chant, Okojie, and Lawal about the 'individualistic and the demand theories', it is safe to argue that the position of prostitutes are clearly situated in the demand and supply chain. First, it is at the discretion of any individual to engage in sex-services as against external compulsion, and because of the forces of demand and supply, the demand theory seems plausible because for every trade there is demand and supply.

As well, the structural-functional paradigm, as outlined by Brydon and Chant, explains "how traditional societies reacted and adapted to labour migration, and labour migration in itself was seen as a positive force, a force for development, beneficial both to those who migrated to and lived in the cities and, eventually, to those in rural areas."<sup>30</sup> AS Brydon and Chant imply, "migrants were seen as innovators, entrepreneurs, somehow 'developed' or 'modern' than those who did not move and assumed that they would act as purveyors of 'modern' society to the 'traditional' rural areas, thus enabling the rural areas to develop."<sup>31</sup>

From the above, migration is an individual affair and often motivated by economic or social consideration. Migration is also functional in the sense that migrants were perceived as catalyst for change in their respective communities. The term 'madam' or agent

29. A.A. Lawal, "Human Trafficking in Edo State", 18-19.

30. Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant, "Women in the Third World," 123.

31. Ibid.

represents a facilitator or patroness of prostitutes. Managed by a 'madam,' prostitution then is a cartel of individuals with wide network at home and abroad.

### **Patterns of Prostitution in Colonial Niger Delta**

The history of mobility of labour began during the construction of the railway line from Northern Nigeria to Southern Nigeria in 1896.<sup>32</sup> In those years, some of the men accumulated savings which they ploughed into trade. However, with the retrenchment of workers after the railway project, some ventured into full-scale trade, and this produced buying within and outside the country.<sup>33</sup> As the years progressed the Igbo began to engage in cross-border trade with the people of Niger Delta region with whom they had earlier established trade contacts.

As Elizabeth Isichei observes, "[t]he pattern of Diaspora spread beyond the boundaries of Nigeria. Some went as traders or craftsmen to other West African countries of Gold Coast, Gabon, Fernando Po".<sup>34</sup> On settling down, some of the men began to invite their female relations to the informal economy, while others integrated into the sex-industry. Trans-national prostitution began in colonial Nigeria following the migration of this group to Fernando-Po, Gabon, Rio Muni and other African countries.<sup>35</sup> Others left for Cameroun and Sao Tome and Principe where they engaged in cross-border activities. However, the precise date prostitution assumed an export industry cannot be ascertained with precision. This is because prostitution had long been in the hands of influential

32. Ayodeji Olukoju, "Transportation in Colonial West Africa", in G.O. Ogunremi and E.K. Faluyi, *An Economic History of West Africa Since 1750* (Ibadan: Rex Charles Publication, 1996), 151-174.

33. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of the Igbo People* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1977), 209-210.

34. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History the Igbo People*, 211.

35. S.O. Osoba, "The Phenomenon of Labour Migration in the Era of British Colonial Rule: A Neglected Aspect of Nigeria's Social History," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* IV, 4 (June 1969), 518-520.



women and the agents who promoted the trade.<sup>36</sup> The migration of the Igbo to different parts of the country and beyond also opened a space for other ethnic groups to take part in the business.<sup>37</sup> In successive years, more women joined the migrants to Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe on the pretext of engaging in trade only to succumb to prostitution.

The histories of Nembe and Opobo women of the period were characterised by migration to the Gulf of Guinea for sex-labour. And by the 1930s, Opobo had become a recruiting centre for prostitutes bound for major cities along the Atlantic coast of Africa, and more than fifty women in the area were said to practice prostitution during the period.<sup>38</sup>

The diasporic relationship among prostitutes in colonial period helped in repatriating funds to families. Occasional visits of these prostitutes to their homeland also revealed that their lots were much better in foreign countries; consequently, other women joined the sex-labour trade. Among the challenges of prostitution in colonial Fernando Po (Equatorial Guinea), Sao Tome and Principe were those of language, the repatriation of funds, colonial policy, and the hostility of indigenous people. Consequently, most of the Nigerian prostitutes transferred themselves to the sex-market in the Gold Coast region of Kumasi, Sekondi, Takoradi, and Accra. Additionally, the economic woes of the inter-war years, conjoined with those of the Great Depression, increased the flow of prostitutes from Idoma, Calabar, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ogoja, and Igbo-West of the Niger

36. Lucy Mair, *African Kingdoms*, 50-51.

37. There was the motivation of some Igbo to seek paid labour outside the country, some to Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.

38. Omon Osiki, "Commercial Sex Activities and Tourism in Africa: A Historical Exploration," in Kenneth C. Nwoko and Omon M. Osiki ed., *Dynamics of Culture and Tourism*, 192.

(South-South), and others to the Gold Coast region. Writing on prostitution among Idoma Women, Ochefu notes:

Through interaction with Ibo prostitutes, some of them [Idoma women] began to slowly turn to prostitution because of higher returns on 'investments' and/or 'labour'.... The cost of one round of sex in 1940 was between 2d and 3d.<sup>38</sup> Because of the high demand, the average prostitute working full-time could daily make between 1/- and 2/-. Compared to the figure of an average of 2/- she stood to make a week from selling foodstuff, or beverages, prostitution, was extremely profitable.<sup>39</sup>

The above statement demonstrates that prostitution in colonial Nigeria was motivated by social and economic deprivation. Social and economic deprivations have remained significant factors for women entering prostitution even in modern times.

The official correspondence from the Labour Department, Kumasi, to The Colonial Secretary, dated May 8, 1940, reported that "[t]he immigrant prostitutes seem to come mainly from Calabar and Togoland...the influx from Calabar dates from the time when the Gold Coast Regiment returned from the campaign in the Cameroons and that not so many women come to this country as formerly."<sup>40</sup> Then, by the turn of the 1940s remittances from Nigerian prostitutes in Gold Coast region began to arrive home with unexpected gains.

Surprisingly, parents and guardians became the channel of recruitment for prostitutes to the Gold Coast region. The involvement of this group in prostitution indicates the sex-

39. Yakubu Aboki Ochefu, Paper Presented at a Conference on the Impact of Colonialism on Nigerian Women, 16-18 October, 1989, at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

40. NAI, CSO, 592/L.13/1940/4. "From J. R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour, Kumasi to The Honourable Secretary Victoriaborg, Accra, dated May 8, 1940."

trade had become a lucrative venture. In the Gold Coast region, prostitution thrived after the independence among women in South-South Nigeria lead to the acquisition of hotels, estates and landed property. The increased networks and organisation of the trade is revealed in the official correspondence: From the Labour Department Kumasi, to The Colonial Secretary, dated May 8, 1940, one learns that “[t]he girls come to the Gold Coast with the full knowledge and consent of their parents and guardians. The girls interrogated looked upon their profession as ordinary work undertaken with a view to earning money which they intended to take back to Nigeria as savings or in finery.”<sup>41</sup>

Added to this evidence are there over 500 Obubra prostitutes who sent home monies and items from the Gold Coast in the 1940s to their Nigerian kith and kin.<sup>42</sup> Apart from the consent of parents and guardians, there was also the collaboration of husbands indicated in the official correspondence, ‘From J.R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour to The Colonial Secretary, Accra’, dated May 8, 1940, one finds:

With few exceptions almost every one of them has a husband in their homeland. The husbands raise loans to pay their passages to Secondi (A popular town in the Gold Coast known to the Calabars). These girls on arrival in Gold Coast undertake the life of prostitution. The rule is that each wife is to send to the husband not less than 10/- every month....They are generally known as AKUNA KUNA<sup>43</sup>

Comparatively, while it is true that in colonial Nigeria there was husbands’ consent, colonial Kenya offered a different scenario. Janet Bujra points out that there are stories

41. NAI, CSO, 592/L.13/1940/4. “From J. R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour, Kumasi to The Honourable Secretary Victoriaborg, Accra, dated May 8, 1940.”

42. Omon Osiki, “Commercial Sex Activities and Tourism in Africa,” 193.

43. NAI, CSO 592/L.13/1940/4. “From J. R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour, Kumasi to The Honourable Secretary Victoriaborg, Accra, dated May 8, 1940.”

of women who left their homes in rural Kenya for prostitution due to spousal abuse and sometimes to escape forced marriages. A good number of women were also abandoned by the women whom they accompanied to urban Kenya, and thus resorted to prostitution.<sup>44</sup> As Burja indicates, the organisation of prostitutes in colonial Nigeria was complex just as modern times. These prostitutes also appear to have had a chain of network among themselves and a uniform rate of charges and in some towns there was a recognised head [of the] prostitutes.<sup>45</sup> Archival evidence further suggests that some elderly women from Nigeria resident in Accra, known to be involved in petty trading, were actually retired prostitutes travelled frequently to Nigeria to bring young girls to Kenya on the pretext of marriage or to learn trade and domestic work but these journeys ended in prostitution.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, this malaise drew the attention of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in the Gold Coast who wrote to the Colonial Government in Nigeria requesting for an inquiry into the migrant flow of prostitutes from Nigeria to the Gold Coast regions with a view to eradicating the ‘desperate trade’. More worrisome to the report of the NYM was the idea that when these women arrived the Gold Coast, they lived under false names which made it difficult for security officials to track down such madams.<sup>47</sup> An investigation was undertaken by the Nigeria Police to attempt to arrest a patroness, one madam Avbovbegba of Owhia (Jeremi) in Urhobo Division of Warri Province, who was believed to be one of the masterminds in the export of Nigerian prostitutes to Gold

44. F.M. Muchomba, Colonial Policies and the Rise of Transactional Sex in Kenya, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 15 (2), 80-93.

45. National Archives Ibadan (NAI), CSO 592/L.13/1940/4. “From J. R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour, Kumasi to The Honourable Secretary, dated May 8, 1940.”

46. NAI, CSO 950/Case 220/1/39. “From E.C. Nottingham, Commissioner, to The Honourable Colonial Secretary, Accra, dated May 15, 1940.”

47. NAI, CSO, “Statement of a Witness, Prince Eikineh, President, Gold Coast Branch, Nigerian Youth Movement to Gold Coast Police, HQ CID Station, November 23, 1939.”

Coast. In the end, however, the police's lead proved unsuccessful because of the secrecy and rituals surrounding the trade.

Part of the ritual ceremonies stipulated that one week before the girls departed to the regions of Gold Coast, they had to travel to a place called *Ono-Ago* to meet a native doctor who provided them with a concoction known as “Calabar Beans or Sash Wood.” Why did women have to drink this concoction? It was commonly believed that the mixture would immunize them from the attack of venereal diseases and hostility of dangerous men. Then, on the expiration of their trade in Gold Coast, the girls had to return to the native doctor who prescribed a course of retreat and ablution before they resumed sexual contact with their real husbands.<sup>48</sup> With this in mind, it seems that the concoction given to prostitutes had a hidden potent force other than the prevention of venereal diseases. The fact that prostitutes must return to the native doctors on the expiration of sex-labour was indeed for total cleansing of the womb and a restoration of fertility since they could not be pregnant on the job. The treatment also signified a detachment from the powers of the spirit which emboldened them to extort money from male customers.

## Patterns of Prostitution after Independence

The migration of prostitutes in colonial Nigeria to the Gold Coast regions of Accra, Takoradi and Sekondi<sup>49</sup> raises questions about the nature of continuity and change in

48. NAI, CSO 592/L.13/1940/4. “From J. R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour, Kumasi to The Honourable Secretary, dated May 8, 1940”. NAI, CSO 592/L.13/1940/4. “From J. R. Dickinson, Chief Inspector of Labour, Kumasi to The Honourable Secretary, dated May 8, 1940.”

49. NAI, CSO No. W. P. 17963/6. “From the Secretary’s Office, Western Province, Traffic in Girls to the Gold Coast.” To The Honourable, The Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, dated September 11, 1939.”

commercial sex-trade after independence. Were there change and continuity in women prostitution in the Niger Delta after colonial period? What was the pattern of recruitment and organisation? How did international prostitution impact on South-South Nigeria after independence? And why has government efforts at combating prostitution not yielded desired result in the last decades?

As presently constituted, the peoples of the Niger Delta have belonged to South-South Nigeria since Independence. South-South Nigeria derives its name from the division of the country into different geopolitical zones and has remained the economic hub of the nation similar to its status in colonial period. After Independence, there was continuity and change in women's prostitution in South-South Nigeria. The continuity may be attributed to prostitution being a profession of great antiquity, its astronomical increase to the economic hardship and unemployment in the country. In particular, the introduction of international prostitution to Europe for immediate wealth brought with it change and transformation in the patterns, organisation, and modes of security in the sex trade.

The migration of prostitutes from South-South Nigeria to Europe after the Nigerian Civil War was gradual, and could be described as the second wave of sex-trade across Nigeria having begun in colonial years. At this time, many people were ignorant of the trade and its remittances as they were of the sex-trade in colonial India,<sup>50</sup> South Asia and East Asia.<sup>51</sup> According to Rosanna Paradiso:

50. Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (Psychology Press, 2003), 96-7.

51. Siddhartha Kara, *Sex Trafficking, Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, 92.

The trafficking of Nigerians to Italy was originally facilitated by commercial ties forged between the two countries in the 1970s when Italian oil companies descended on Nigeria to grab their piece of the bounty. Civil war raged during this period, resulting in the deaths of over one million Nigerians and the displacement of millions more.<sup>52</sup>

Why one may want to agree in part with the above statement that construction engineers came to South-South Nigeria after the Civil War and perhaps lived with Edo-Bini people during the turn-around maintenance of key national assets contributed to human trafficking in Nigeria, this cannot be ascertained with precision as the beginning of migration to Italy for sex-labour.

Indeed, evidence abounds that a number of Edo-women had already established a network of sex-trade in Italy before the Nigerian Civil War.<sup>53</sup> This group of women are said to have initially worked in the plantation economy of Italy where they engaged in the cultivation and harvesting of citrus, tomatoes and apple. It was from this economic sector that they migrated to the 'brothel trade' having had contacts with the Mexicans and Indians, the first-comers in the ex-trade.<sup>54</sup> And it was this group that popularised Italian products and shoes in Nigerian markets in the 1970s, when the exchange rate of the Naira against the Italian Lira was high. The selling of these Italian products was also a method of repatriating their funds home for further projects.

The third wave of migrant prostitutes, to the best of our knowledge, is illustrated by Rosanna Paradiso. The marriage of some of these women to the Italians is attributed

52. Rosanna Paradiso, quoted in Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 89-90.

53. Interview with Dora Iheaguna, 70years, former Madam, Benin, 2/2/2019.

54. Interview with Ruth Okoduwa, 80+, trader, Benin City, 30/ 4/ 2019.

in part to the effect of a two and half year war in Nigeria which impoverished South-South Nigeria. It should also be mentioned that the area was the epicentre of the Civil War because of its economic and strategic importance. On the expiration of European projects in Nigeria in the 1970s, some of these women accompanied their husbands for good. The first-hand knowledge of this group involved in human trafficking and the prospects for wealth compelled them to provide financial support for other migrants to Italy.<sup>55</sup> They were the first generation of prostitutes to graduate from being "sex-slaves to being 'madams' by trafficking young female siblings to Italy."<sup>56</sup>

Since the 1980s, the migration of prostitutes from South-South Nigeria to Europe for immediate enrichment has created another twist in the mobility of labour. Prostitution developed as an industry in 1986 following the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the defunct military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd). The SAP was regarded as the antidote to the country's ailing economy.<sup>57</sup> Contrary to expectations of the government, Nigeria's economy deteriorated further, leading to unemployment, artificial scarcity of goods, and fluctuation of the Naira against the major currencies of the world. Violent crime spread to Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Enugu, Warri, and Port Harcourt. The economic and financial policies that worked successfully in most developed nations through the advice of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) proved not be the antidote to the economic disequilibrium of African nations and some developing economies. These countries needed to look inward

55. A.A. Lawal, "Human Trafficking in Edo State (Nigeria): A Socio-Economic Study," *Lagos Historical Review* 13, (2013), 22, 17-30.

56. Lawal, "Human Trafficking in Edo State," 22.

57. Onome Osifo -Whiskey and Stephen Agwudagwu, "All You Ever Wanted to Know About SAP," *The Quality Magazine* (Lagos), 1, 2, July, 1987, 20. Onome Osifo -Whiskey and Stephen Agwudagwu, "All You Ever Wanted to Know About SAP," *The Quality Magazine* (Lagos), 1, 2, July, 1987, 20.

for indigenous solutions to their economic woes. When *The Punch Newspaper* dated, May 6, 2008, published “Prostitution takes on new garb on our campuses”<sup>58</sup> many did not express any shock because most parents were groaning under the yoke of government austerity measure and job losses. The same *Newspaper* wrote: “Take home pay per night of undergraduate prostitutes’ rises to N50, 000 per night.”<sup>59</sup> It was against this backdrop that a Vice-Chancellor in one of the foremost Universities in the country confirmed the involvement of some of his students in campus prostitution and added that their practice and operation had changed overtime.<sup>60</sup> In successive years, more revelations emerged with overwhelming statistics and alarming digits about the migration of female sex-labourers across the Mediterranean Sea. At this juncture, one State Governor’s wife said that over 600,000 Nigerians had been victims of human trafficking.<sup>61</sup> This period could indeed be described as the golden age of prostitution to Europe because it was no longer an isolated trade.

### **Patterns of Recruitment and Organisation**

In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a chain of organised groups in the recruitment of prostitutes to Europe. The involvement of Bini, Calabar, Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw women, and others in the commercial sex economy of Italy was no longer strange to many people. It is not surprising that scholars described this sex-trade industry as the return of modern-day slavery. The industry introduced an aggressive marketing strategy to lure young women into prostitution. Its system consisted of a web of networks, co-ordination,

and traditional oaths and rituals. Notable actors in the sex industry to Europe included the pimps, agents, or ‘madams,’ parents, and foreign coordinators. In their advertisements and publicity, beautiful and good-looking female undergraduates, female school drop-outs, divorced and separated women were their targets. Between 1986 and 1990, an “informal system” of recruitment was employed by some of the traffickers who utilized the services of pimps.<sup>62</sup> The duties of pimps were wide ranging, including negotiating and consolidating agreements and promises of good employment, better living standards, and quality education abroad.

The recruitment of prostitutes was also made possible through ‘family arrangements.’ This system involved the granting of approval by the parents of prospective migrants, whose intention, among others, was making money and changes in their social standings. It was reported in *The Guardian Newspaper* that: “[i]n Edo state of Nigeria, two men foolishly raped a young girl of 17 years. This act was co-ordinated by her father who claimed that his daughter was too weak, naive, and inexperienced for the task of seeking financial breakthrough for the family with which her ‘gender has destined her.’”<sup>63</sup>

Family arrangements have been in operation since the 1990s following the bitter lessons of some madams/agents who lost their investments in the transportation of prostitutes to Europe. In this type of understanding, it was the parents and members of the family who endorsed the agreement and other relevant documents for their daughters and their agents. The contractual agreements offered the ‘madam’ assurance that her money would be paid, and in the event of a default, the ‘agent or madam’ had a good

58. *The Punch Newspaper*, May 6, 2008, 37.

59. *The Punch Newspaper*, May 6, 2008, 37.

60. Ibid.

61. *This Day Newspaper*, August 9, 2007, 8.

62. Interview with Salami Grace, 65, ex-prostitute, Ikeja, Lagos 09/05/19

63. Damola Awoyokun, “Women, Prostitution and Human Trafficking,” *The Guardian Newspaper*, November 19, 2002, 75.

case against the parents of those trafficked. Sometimes, however, parents ignored the services of agents by selling their landed property, the proceeds of which were used to sponsor their female daughters to Italy for prostitution. In this kind of transaction, the prostitute was not under obligation to work for anyone in Europe except the parents. However, the disadvantage in this kind of arrangement was that the prostitute would not easily integrate into the sex-trade of Europe since she had no agent to license her. She was bound therefore to face molestation for intruding into the sex-industry similar to that experienced in the pre-colonial Hausa kingdom of Maradi.

Closely related to the family arrangement was that of the involvement of firms and organisations in the export of prostitutes. The firms became facilitators, writing letters of invitation and providing statement of accounts on behalf of the trafficked as a requirement for the issuance of visas to Europe. Also in Europe, these firms facilitated the necessary logistics and accommodation before the prostitute's absorption into the sex-market.<sup>64</sup> Following the success of most of the firms and agencies in the freighting of prostitutes to Europe, sex-trade became an all-comers affair. Added to this was that some well-known musicians, cultural troupes, and acclaimed entertainers that embarked on frequent tour abroad also enrolled migrant prostitutes to Europe as members of their troupes with a view to making profits.

Some protocol officers of reputable organisations and multi-national companies falsified names in their nominal rolls, including names of migrant prostitutes as staff and manager trainees nominated for short courses and workshops abroad. Through this network, Nigerian girls spread all over Italy, Ukraine, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands

64. Oluseto Ogunmakin, "Halting Trafficking in Women," *The Punch Newspaper*, November 2, 1999, 35-36.

and Saudi Arabia where they traded in sex.<sup>65</sup>

## Rituals and Oath

Trafficking of prostitutes to Europe is a business of trust, cooperation, and collaboration between the trafficker, the trafficked, and her parents. This is because most of the traffickers have had a history of violating agreements which invariably placed the madam or her agents at risk. The personal recollections of deportees show that it was not only the 'madams' that suffered exploitation but the prostitutes themselves, who sometimes were forced to serve the madam beyond the stipulated number of years. For this reason, prospective prostitutes were compelled to undergo initiation and rituals, sign legal documents, and provide reputable guarantors, particularly, parents or guardians, before the agent released the international passport and visa for the trafficked's trip overseas.

Rituals and oath-taking between the trafficker and the trafficked also became a necessary condition for sponsoring female prostitutes in South-South Nigeria. According to the *NEWAGE Newspaper*, dated January 31, 2005: "Edo women swear to repay debts and never to discuss their situation with anyone. Because the spiritual hold is so strong, the debt obligations are exorbitant – sometimes up to fifty thousand Euros, or five to ten times the debt of obligations imposed on slaves from other countries."<sup>66</sup> Oaths and rituals became the mechanism to restore confidence and prompt payment of expenses incurred in the planning, execution and transportation of prostitutes overseas. The account of a

65. *The Punch Newspaper*, November 2, 1999, 35.

66. See Moh'd Kayode Makanjuola, "Ritual Oath in Human Trafficking" in *The NEW AGE Newspaper*, January 31, 2005, 10.

victim of human trafficking published in the *NEWAGE Newspaper* also reveals that:

Young women especially between ages 16 and 22 are made to go through bizarre rituals like taking off their panties, brassiere, and asked to wait until they menstruate, the blood-soaked sanitary pads used for the menstruation are harvested along with the hairs under their armpits, finger nails, etc. These are used to prepare charms and amulets and totems of enslavement.”<sup>67</sup>

Other deportees noted that they were forced to dance naked before the gods, chanting esoteric songs that they would be faithful to the agreement with the madam or her agents who co-ordinated the sex-trade. As Rose Egosa explains:

Few weeks after I completed my secondary education in Ekha, Benin City, Edo State, a distant aunt came to inform my parents that she had plans for me. She told my parents that she was going to plan for my education abroad and my parents believed. On the eve of departure, I was taken to an herbalist...according to my aunt, this was to protect me from the dangers of the world and quench the fiery darts of the wicked. However, in the end I was trafficked to Italy for prostitution.<sup>68</sup>

The National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) also confirms that:

Young women especially between ages 16 and 22 were made to go through bizarre rituals like taking off their panties, brassiere, and asked to wait until they menstruated, the blood-soaked sanitary pads used for the menstruation were harvested along with the hairs under their arm pits, finger nails etc. These were used to prepare charms and amulets and totems of enslavement. Some were photographed in the nude to blackmail them into submission. Many went through crude rituals of eating raw heart of dead [sacred]

67. Moh'd. Kayode Makanjuola, Ritual Oath in Human Trafficking, *The NEW AGE Newspaper*, January 31, 2005, 10.

68. Stella Sawyerr, “Reducing Tears of Migration” *TELL Magazine*, June 28, 2010, 55.

animals and drink acrid smelling concoctions unmindful of deadly bacteria they were exposed to.<sup>69</sup>

The above account demonstrates the desperation involved in human trafficking and export of prostitutes to Europe. In one of its enlightenment programmes, NAPTIP posted an article on its Websites entitled “How traffickers gag their victims with supernatural powers.” This site displayed horrifying pictures, including the menstrual tissues[,] photographs of victims, diaries, charms, horse tail, and other items seized from juju priests whose shrines were raided by the Agency.”<sup>70</sup> On interrogation, it was discovered that the traffickers subjected their victims to appalling conditions to avoid betrayal exposing them to law enforcement agencies. Such actions are why traffickers and their agents have remained while conducting their operations.

Records have shown that ritual sacrifice never ended with the departure of prostitutes to Italy. After settling down to business, the agents initiated their victims into another round of supernatural orgies. This time, the prostitute was tutored how to use a powdery substance to hypnotise their male customers or make them harmless. This substance is similar to that of the “Calabar Beans” used in colonial period during the Gold-Coast sex-trade. This diabolical system was designed to help the prostitutes pay off their debts in good order. Occasionally, the madam would use juju on prostitutes so they would not die but live to pay what they owed her, because “the death of a prostitute is a bad debt.”

Back home in Nigeria, parents of the prostitutes were concerned about the safety and well-being of their daughters in Europe and approached traditional herbalists for

69. *The NEW AGE Newspaper* (Lagos), January 31, 2005, 10.  
70. See [www.naptip.gov.ng](http://www.naptip.gov.ng) (accessed January 30, 2019); Also see Siddhartha Kara, *Sex Trafficking, Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 90.

charms to protect their daughters. Sometimes ‘desperate’ parents also procured devilish powers to incapacitate the agent/madam (via insanity or death). so that whatever income their daughters made remained with them. Thus to prevent the prospect of magical or fetish fair from all parties concerned, there was an agreement for oath-taking (life security) to guarantee the lives of all.

## **Migrants’ Remittances and Investments**

In 2007, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIT), and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) confirmed that 600,000 Nigerians have been trafficked since the 1980s.<sup>71</sup> It was also discovered that the flesh trade received a boost as a result of the depreciation of the Naira against major currencies of the world, making foreign exchange attractive to Nigerian migrants and international sex vendors. Reports have it that Nigerians living in different parts of the world sent an estimated \$5.4bn (N702bn) home in 2006.<sup>72</sup>

Another study by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Inter-American Development Bank reported that migrants working mostly in industrialised countries sent more than \$300bn to developing countries in the same year.<sup>73</sup> In addition, IFAD’s Assistant President, Kevin Cleaver said, “The 2006 remittances were generated by about 150 million migrants with each sending between \$100 and \$300 at a time. It also puts the annual average remittances per migrant at \$1,358,” making Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular, second in the table of remittances. These

71. *THISDAY Newspaper*, August 9, 2007, 8.

72. *The Punch Newspaper*, October 30, 2007, 3.

73. *Ibid.*

remittances were used for basic necessities such as food, clothing and medicines.<sup>74</sup> The World Bank has also noted that each year, migrant workers living mostly in Europe and North America sent more than \$230bn to their families in their home countries. The bank had frequently judged Nigeria to be the destination of the biggest portion of the global remittances flowing in to Sub-Saharan Africa in the last decade. The report concludes that remittances to Nigeria have outstripped foreign direct investment.<sup>75</sup>

In a recent survey by the US-based pollster, the Pew Research Centre acknowledged that at least three out of every 10 Nigerians receive money from abroad. In Nigeria, 38% of people receive money from relatives abroad. The Pew survey discovered that an overwhelming majority acknowledged that people emigrated in pursuit of job opportunities. The transfer of remittances from Europe to South-South Nigeria especially, Benin City, was invested in stocks, real estates, and transportation. For instance, the families of prostitutes in Europe smiled at the banks every month as remittances through ‘Money Gram’ popularly called The “*Western Money Transfer*” were received by them. This facility which signs in the names of donors from Europe and beneficiaries in Nigeria without any delay contrasts sharply with the experiences of the colonial era when Nigerian prostitutes in Fernando Po, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea could repatriate and recoup their proceeds in Nigeria only by purchasing durable goods for resale. Parents began to assist their female prostitutes to invest their proceeds in worthwhile ventures. Those who entrusted their remittances to prospective husbands in Nigeria also had stories to tell as monies sent to them were covetously used.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*



In high-brow areas of Benin City, Warri and Calabar, prostitutes' investments helped reshape the urban centres, especially in the areas of hospitality business and estate development. A good number of prostitutes in Italy, popularly called *Italo*, facilitated the migration of their siblings to different parts of Europe.

### **Challenges of Combating Prostitution**

Questions have been raised over the efforts of government at combating prostitution in Nigeria. To many, the involvement of Nigerian girls in international sex-industry amidst the country's rating in global oil production is embarrassing. Indeed, the contributions of government and non-governmental organisations to the eradication of prostitution and human trafficking across frontier in the past decades cannot be overlooked. On the part of the government, this prostitution is an unhealthy situation, affecting the image of the nation and its core values. The Nigerian government established a law prohibiting human trafficking to curb the menace. It also approved the restructuring of the nation's border posts with a view to providing a more efficient security operation and controlling travel across the border. It also introduced electronic passports and a data base of Nigerians abroad.<sup>76</sup> However, these efforts have not yielded the desired results. The National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP), established in 2004 to arrest human traffickers both within and outside the country, has observed that Nigeria has been dubbed as a source, transit, and destination country of prostitutes.

Prior to the establishment of NAPTIP, Nigeria was placed on Tier2 watch list in the

Annual World Trafficking in Persons Report by the US Department of State.<sup>77</sup> As part of its effort, in December, 2003, NAPTIP, in conjunction with the Nigerian Immigration Service and UNICEF Nigeria, repatriated 169 children engaged in exploitative activities. It is also noted that NAPTIP has also been actively involved in organising seminars, workshops, and sensitization programmes for youth and media practitioners. Since the last decade, the Agency has collaborated with other international agencies, such as The United Nation International Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), Transcrime, a non-governmental organization, and Direzione Nazionale Antimafia, based in Italy.

The other agency that has played active role in the eradication of human trafficking in Nigeria is the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) established by the former first lady, Amina Titi Abubakar, the wife of the former Vice-President of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar. This organisation has begun to "mobilise awareness and community action against the trafficking of persons, child labour, and abuse as well as the related problems of the spread of HIV/AIDS. WOTCLEF recently presented to the public a simplified version of the "Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003" (as amended in 2005), which has also been referred to as the Anti-Trafficking Law.<sup>78</sup>

The challenges faced by the Nigerian government regarding the eradication of human trafficking include the lack of employment, falling standards of living, the absence of political will to improve education, and the training of the girl-child. In the same vein, the trafficked have always found it difficult to disclose the identity of the traffickers

76. *THISDAY*, September 3, 2007, 17.

77. *THISDAY*, 20 August, 2007, 24.

78. *Daily Independent Newspaper*, September 6, 2007, 3.

because some of them were relations of victims, and traffickers also had the consent of parents and guardians. The reluctance to identify human traffickers was compounded by the fact that some of the victims were bound by oaths of secrecy and the fear of tradition.

## CONCLUSION

This consideration demonstrates that women's prostitution in South-South Nigeria is a phenomenon not limited to Bini-women. Prostitution began in South-South region in the pre-colonial period and continued in both colonial and post-colonial periods. The coming of Italian engineers, contracted to fix the refineries' (and other critical) infrastructure after the Nigerian Civil War, may be considered a turning point in this history. In the 1980s and 1990s, the continuing migration of prostitutes to Europe assumed a worrisome dimension, following Babangida's Structural Adjustment Programmes, a policy aimed at solving the country's economic quagmire which deepened the nation's economic woes. Organised into a complex network and system of logistics in Nigeria and Europe, the business of prostitution is a trade characterised by rituals and oaths to secure the assurances of parties involved. This study discovered that the migration of prostitutes to Europe is propelled by individual's desire for gain and a functional paradigm. Most of the trafficked in South-South Nigeria had foreknowledge of the illicit trade and were supported by parents and guardians. Prospective migrants were also willing to surrender to ritual and initiation ceremonies.

To curb this illicit trade, this study suggests the following: government needs to provide quality education, free and compulsory at all levels for girl-children, because

traffickers prey on their victims' desires for education and better living standards. Also, moral education and enlightenment campaign need be intensified in primary and secondary schools since this would help in character building and youth development. Returnee and deportee prostitutes should be integrated as resource persons in such a drive for information, knowledge, and campaign programmes.

With this in mind, this study recommends the following: the Nigerian government needs to create employment opportunities for its people and a level playing field for youths to showcase their talents. Additionally, the government's poverty alleviation programmes need be accessible to women and youth in both rural and urban areas and operators of the scheme must design products that address the peculiar needs of Nigerian environment.

## Douce maman d'Afrique

Douce maman d'Afrique, un enfant sur le dos,  
Un autre dans le ventre, tant d'autres dans le cœur...

Tu es née pour aimer  
Pour donner cet amour  
Qui te remplit les mains  
S'agite dans ton corps  
Et chante sur ta bouche,  
Tu es née pour semer tout au long de ta vie

Des visages d'enfants  
Riant sous les palmiers  
Tu es née pour donner à l'homme qui t'a prise

Ce qu'il attend de toi  
Quand il veut bien le prendre  
Et autant qu'il le veut.

Douce maman d'Afrique,  
Quand tes yeux qui riaient dans ceux de cet enfant  
Qui te suçait le sein,  
Auront vu bien des jours  
Et bien d'autres encore,  
Quand tu seras trop vieille pour engendrer la vie,

Sans un bruit, doucement  
Tu te retireras dans un coin de la case  
et croiseras les mains,  
Ces mains lisses d'avoir brassé tant de petits.

—*Anne-Marie Moscatelli*



# Assessment of Rehabilitation Effectiveness in a Digital World: Case of the Nigerian Prisons Service

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## Abstract

Rehabilitation of offenders is a major goal of the correctional institution. Rehabilitation is also a serious social issue. Offenders are expected to be appropriately rehabilitated in our digitally-advanced society. This article presents analysis of data collected from a study on offenders' perceptions of the rehabilitation effectiveness of the Nigerian Prisons Service. It examines the types of vocational training facilities available and how adequate they are; how well offenders gain access to the available facilities; how offenders evaluate prison officers' knowledge of the vocational training; offenders' views on the general condition of the prison and finally, how well offenders feel the vocational training prepares them for reintegration. The main thrust of the study is to gain information directly from the principal subjects which are the offenders, unlike most previous studies that relied on information from prison officers and administrators. Questionnaires were administered to over 300 convicted offenders in two purposively selected medium

security prisons (Keffi in Nasarawa state and Kuje in the Federal Capital Territory). Data analyzed using frequency distributions percentages and presented in bar charts show the types of vocational training facilities that are available in Nigerian prisons and that these facilities are grossly inadequate. Unfortunately, most offenders do not gain regular access to vocational training facilities. Offenders had negative perceptions of the knowledge of the prison officers concerning vocational training. Overall, the general condition of the prison is not conducive to training and rehabilitation. The majority of the offenders feel the vocational training they receive does not prepare them for reintegration. One very important aspect that the survey revealed is the lack of technological training which is required by offenders to fit into a highly-digitized world. In most cases, offenders found it difficult, if not impossible, to find employment on their release, and this results in a greater tendency towards re-offending. It is therefore recommended that the government of Nigeria ensure proper reformation via the prison system by providing adequate and contemporary training, most especially digital training facilities, employ competent officers, and make available amenities to make the prison environment more conducive to training and rehabilitation.

## INTRODUCTION

Prisons are the major correctional institutions in Nigeria. They purport to be an apparatus for transforming the individual criminal into a normal and law-abiding citizen. Ideally, prisons are established to transform the individual criminal's attitude to work, moral attitude, state of mind, moral conduct while providing physical training. Prisons have the fundamental responsibility of taking care of offenders so as to make them fit back into the society (Dambazau, 1999; King, 2000). A sociological analogy of society as an organism tends to equate the role of the prisons to that of the organs that fight diseases

in the body excretory system. Just as the kidney helps to quarantine and process uric acid, retaining what is good for the body and expelling what is poisonous, so do prisons in society. By taking felons into custody, the society is saved from their activities, even if only temporarily; by processing these inmates and taking the crime out of their dispositions, the prisons not only make felons useful both to themselves and the society but also save the society, on a more or less permanent basis, from their distasteful conduct (Ogundipe, 2008).

However, prisons throughout Africa are characterised by dehumanization, disease, and idleness. While prison systems often subscribe officially to the idea of rehabilitation, little is being done to provide education, skills training, counselling, or other remedial opportunities for prisoners (Sarkin, 2009; Obioha, 2011). The Nigerian Prisons Service has ever been criticized as been particularly ineffective in rehabilitating offenders (Ehowa, 1993; Oduyela, 2003; Orakwe, 2010). The prison system in Nigeria has not been able to ensure that offenders acquire vocational skills that would allow them to readily fit back into society on the completion of their jail terms. In most cases, it is observed that discharged offenders are unable to find a place in the larger society on release and find life outside the walls of the prison unbearable. Most find it difficult, if not totally impossible, to find post-prison employment. The major resultant effect of this is the tendency of such discharged offenders to return to crime and eventually return to prison.

It is asserted that the policy of reformation is no more than a public disguise for modernizing while in practice and that nothing has changed from the inherited colonial penal system that was geared towards the punishment, incapacitation and deprivation of

incarcerated offenders (Alemika, 1987). Evidently, the colonial stance on imprisonment is essentially punitive as punishment is held to be a passionate reaction of graduated intensity that society exercises through the medium of a body acting upon those of the members who have violated certain rules of conduct. It thus implies that punishment serves a function for the general good of the society. The theories of justification for punishment posit that offenders get the punishment they deserve, that is, punishment is retribution and serves to deter others, being an ideal based on utilitarianism, the pleasure-pain principle and the concept of free-will (Grupp, 1971).

The former Controller General of the Nigerian Prisons Service stated that the goal of modern imprisonment is to reverse offending behaviour in convicts through strategic intervention. He, however, included that most prisons in Nigeria lack the essential and modern facilities and equipment for training offenders, and the existing ones are either grossly inadequate and/or obsolete. He further noted that most of those who come to the prisons do not have skills on which they could depend to earn a living. Consequently, through the instrumentality of the prison farms and workshops, it is expected that they are trained so that on discharge, some of them can get paid employment (Ogundipe, 2010).

Unfortunately, the major problem of lack of facilities for rehabilitation of offenders in the Nigerian prisons leads to correctional institutions being described as mainly human cages with no facilities for correction, reformation and vocational training (Okunola, Aderinto & Atere, 2002).

Furthermore, findings from previous studies have revealed that the Nigerian Prisons

Service has not been effective in discharging its constitutionally assigned responsibilities, especially in the area of rehabilitation of offenders. Regarding the issue of offenders' access to the available vocational training facilities, Asokhia and Agbonluae (2013) noted that convicted criminals are sentenced to prison for the purpose of rehabilitation and for any meaningful rehabilitation to take place in the prison system, rehabilitation services must first be improved upon; that adequate training facilities must be provided and these facilities must be accessible to the inmates. Offenders having regular access to vocational training facilities is considered an important aspect that requires serious attention if effective rehabilitation is to be realised by the Nigerian Prisons Service.

Also, the general condition of prisons in Nigeria is another area of concern as the prison environment is held to have huge effects on rehabilitation efforts. Olajide (2014) in his work noted that most of the nation's prisons are older than the nation, that is, they are colonial institutions. The facilities are not upgraded yet, and the inmates sent there are far greater in population than the facilities were designed to accommodate. Inmates are crammed into the spaces available, sanitary facilities are simply inhuman, diseases are frequently communicated, yet more inmates are daily brought in to compound what is already a bad situation.

Though the problem of congestion confronting the Nigerian prisons has always been acknowledged by writers, it is, however, disheartening to note that the congestion we talk about in the Nigerian prisons is mostly produced by those who have not been convicted, that is, of prisoners on remand (the Awaiting Trial Persons). Evidently, the practical intervention in the lives of offenders is threatened by the dominance of pre-

trial detainees in our prisons. Ogundipe (2010) at the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) 44<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in Abuja noted that the type of congestion that is experienced in Nigeria is not the type of congestion wherein the prisoners' strength outruns the installed capacity; rather it is congestion caused by a huge number of pre-trial detainees.

Records show that as of February 2012,<sup>1</sup> the total population of inmates in the Nigerian prisons was 50,601. Out of this population, the total convicted was 13,667 while the total Awaiting Trial was 36,934. The statistics show that 73% of offenders in the Nigerian prisons are detainees awaiting trial. Some have been pre-trial detainees for more than 10 years. About 90% of them await trial for very serious offences, such as armed robbery, murder, arson, and treasonable felony. The major reason for this congestion is the slow dispensing of justice. Orakwe (2010) asserts that the problem of prison congestion in the Nigeria prisons is actually judicial congestion.

The statistics of the awaiting trial persons by implication reveals the extent to which prison facilities are seriously overstretched and the prison environment is not conducive to the effective rehabilitation of convicted offenders. Under the new penal ideology, i.e the postcolonial version, the person sent to prison will surely come back to the society one day. If such person is not properly treated while in custody, there is the tendency on release, that the former convict will act in a way that will not only threaten social peace but will also create a climate that will not be conducive to any meaningful social development.

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1. Source of the statistics on inmates' population: <https://www.prisons.gov.ng/resources/downloads.php>

The empirical focal point of this study is to assess the perceptions of offenders about the rehabilitation effectiveness of the Nigerian Prisons Service with emphasis on the vocational training administered to them. This study holds that if appropriate measures are to be proffered to ensure the effective rehabilitation of offenders, it is imperative to ascertain the specific types of vocational training facilities available in the Nigerian prisons in order to know the suitability of the skills acquired from such facilities in the contemporary digitized world.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Rehabilitation of Offenders

Rehabilitation is said to be the result of any planned intervention that reduces an offender's further criminality. Rehabilitation is noted to have been accomplished when offender's criminal patterns of thought and behaviour have been replaced by his or her allegiance to society's values. The foci of rehabilitation are therefore on medical and psychological treatments as well as on social skills training, all being designed to correct the problems that led the individual to crime (Ogundipe, 2010).

Rehabilitation also involves working with individual offenders to stop them from continuing to commit crimes. It is an attempt to prevent crime by changing the personality of the offender. Rehabilitation is the process whereby offenders are offered different kinds of training that are geared towards making them self-reliant on their discharge from prison. Rehabilitation programs can be effective in reducing recidivism (Dambazau, 1999; Howell & Day, 1999).

The Nigerian Prison Services is empowered to keep convicted offenders in safe custody, to keep prisoners on remand in custody, to punish offenders as instructed by the law courts, to reform the convicted prisoners, and to rehabilitate and re-integrate prisoners who have completed their sentences in the prison (Obioha, 2011). Also, according to Chukwudi (2012), the main aim of establishing the prison institution in all parts of the world including Nigeria is to provide rehabilitation and correctional facilities for those who violated the rules and regulations of their society. Rehabilitation is to be taken as the core role of the prison as an institution, because if offenders do not acquire any skills they could depend on for their livelihood on release, the likelihood of reoffending is high. Thus, in order to neutralise the dissocializing potential of prisons, a civilised society is forced into rehabilitative undertakings. These undertakings become an essential ingredient of its correctional system taken as a whole. A correctional system with no interest in treatment means dehumanisation and regression (Gendreau, 1996).

Rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons aim to increase the educational and vocational skills of inmates and their chances of success upon release. To accomplish these goals, inmates are encouraged to participate in rehabilitation programmes made available to them. This is crucial as many of them are assumed to have entered the prisons socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged. The key success in a free society for many of these disadvantaged inmates is rehabilitation. There is no better way to help prison inmates re-enter the larger society successfully than to provide them with skills that they need to succeed in the outside world. For rehabilitation services to help the inmates develop social and vocational skills, keep them meaningfully busy, change their

attitudes and behaviours, and have better understanding of themselves and the society, their felt needs must be addressed to enable them to find employment and advance more educationally after serving their terms (Asokhia and Agbonluae, 2013).

Here, it is worth noting that reintegration is the sub-goal of rehabilitation. Reintegrating the offender in the community means making the offender a productive member of society, that is, one who contributes to the general well-being of the whole. It is expected that adequate suitable rehabilitation facilities should be provided in prisons together with effective and well trained trainers. Effective rehabilitation programs are said to reduce the likelihood of re-offense and recidivism. Such programmes are characterised by three principles:

- (i) **The risk principle** – the risk factors for reoffending include age at first offense, number of prior offenses, level of family and personal problems in childhood, and other historical factors, along with level of current needs related to offending. Longitudinal studies intentionally reveal that those individuals who had many personal and family problems in childhood (particularly 19 and more) started offending before puberty, committed multiple priors, and are more likely to reoffend in future. So, more hours of rehabilitation should be provided for people with known offense risk factors.
- (ii) **The needs principle** – this addresses the problems and needs that have a proven causal link to offending. In support of the needs principle, programs that specifically target criminogenic needs (causal needs and problems) bring about considerable reduction in reoffending.



- (iii) **The responsivity principle** – this implies the use of cognitive-behavioural approaches. And in support of this principle, there is also reasonable reduction in reoffending after participating in programmes that use cognitive-behavioural methods to bring about changes in behaviour.

When these three principles are effectively applied, there would be a very considerable reduction in tendency to reoffending. Providing rehabilitation to people at lower risk of reoffending results in a 3% reduction in reoffending, while providing rehabilitation to people with a high risk of reoffending is three times as effective, resulting in a 10% reduction in subsequent offending (Frase, 2000).

## **B. Statutory Provisions on Rehabilitation of Offenders**

The Nigeria Prison system operates within certain rehabilitative theories which are:

- a. Offenders should as far as possible be employed in vocational work. Their work in prison should teach them new skills or increase existing skills so as to enhance their productive and earning power on release.
- b. Work on a prison farm is of great vocational value to offenders who have been farmers. They can be taught improved methods of farming.
- c. If work of vocational value to the offenders cannot be found, then offenders should be employed on government or Local Authority Development Scheme such as road construction and land use enterprises.

According to Fayeye (2000), application of these principles led to the provision of

the following prison standing orders:

- **Order 199 (a)** which provides for an earning scheme for prisoners and states that “there shall be four stages namely: first stage, second stage, third stage and the special stage”. Promotion from stage to stage shall depend upon good conduct and industry and length of service in each state.
- **Order 199 (b)** makes it obligatory for each prisoner receiving cash payment under the scheme to save half of such payment to assist him on discharge.
- **Order 361** dwells on education and libraries, it makes attendance at school for young prisoners compulsory.
- **Order 369** poses that private study by prisoners will be encouraged and assisted in every possible way by the prison officers.

The principle of ‘work’ as emphasised in the offenders’ rehabilitation process can be taken to be premised on the popular saying that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. Dambazau (1994) viewed work not as an addition to imprisonment, but as a part of it, for it is conceived as necessarily accompanying it. Though the researcher observed while conducting this survey that offenders are most times idle, usually waiting for instructions on what to do from prison officers. The unfortunate part is that such instructions might not come in weeks or months some times.

More so, critically assessing the rehabilitative principles of the Nigerian Prisons Service, the researcher also observed the problem of classification in the prisons. In most cases, offenders’ existing skills and areas of interest are not taken into consideration.

Vocational trainings are rather assigned to offenders randomly. This can also hinder effective rehabilitation.

Source: (NPS) February, 2012.<sup>2</sup>

The researcher also observed that the prison standing orders are mere reflections on paper because these orders are not implemented. For instance, inmates do not earn, so they cannot save any amount to assist them on discharge. The prisons' libraries and computer rooms are poorly equipped, and most offenders are not put through process of acquiring any form of educational skills. Very few offenders were seen studying for high school examinations on their own.

**Table 1: Prison Capacity and Population in selected Nigerian Prisons**

Zones	Prisons	Capacity	Offenders' Population		Total
			Convicted	Unconvicted	
A	Medium Security Kirikiri	704	164	2,143	2,307
B	Kaduna	548	251	478	729
C	Bauchi	500	140	550	690
D	Kuje	320	106	456	562
E	Umuahia	400	41	713	754
F	Agodi	294	69	772	841
G	Benin (old)	230	184	340	524
H	Keffi	130	171	272	443

### C. Research Method

The study adopted the survey design to collect data from the respondents in the locations of the study. Survey design was considered appropriate for this study because it involves collecting data from the field. The choice of the research design was also informed by its ability to elicit information from a large population and to as well generate certain primary information from their original sources. Data used for the purpose of this study were derived from primary and secondary sources.

The main instrument used for collection of data was a questionnaire. This instrument contains questions constructed in simple manner such that respondents were provided options to select from as answers and respondents were also afforded the opportunity of providing additional information. The items on the questionnaire were specifically drawn so as to gain insight as to the different types of vocational training facilities that are available in the prisons and to be able to assess offenders' perception of the impacts of such facilities. The questions were grouped into three sections: Section A contains questions on the offenders' socio-economic attributes such as gender, age, marital status, religion, educational qualification, and employment status before conviction. Section B dwells on the offenders' general views on imprisonment with questions relating to offenders' length of time spent in prison, the nature of offence, the number of times in prison, what offenders like about the prison, offenders' general views about imprisonment and the effect of imprisonment on offenders. Section C contains questions pertaining

2. Source of prison capacity and population in Nigeria: <http://www.nigerianprisonservice.com>

to offenders' perceptions of the custodial vocational training which includes offenders' opinions about the types of vocational training facilities that are available, the adequacy of the training facilities, access to these facilities, the mode of training, how well offenders feel the administered vocational training prepares them for reintegration, offenders' evaluation of prison officers' knowledge of the administered training, offenders' views on the general condition of prison environment, the major problems confronting the prisons, and suggestions for better prison administration.

The research population for this study was the total number of convicted offenders in the selected prisons at the period the survey, 319 at that time, composed of (106) in Keffi prison and (213) in Kuje prison. The entire population for this study were male, and most of them were single. Majority of the offenders were young adults of between ages of 18 and 47, and they possessed high school certificates as their highest educational qualification. Most of the offenders were also either unemployed or self-employed before arriving at the prison and were first timer offenders convicted for various offences ranging from burglary/larceny, auto-theft, armed robbery, vandalism, and forcible rape to aggravated assault and attempted murder/manslaughter.

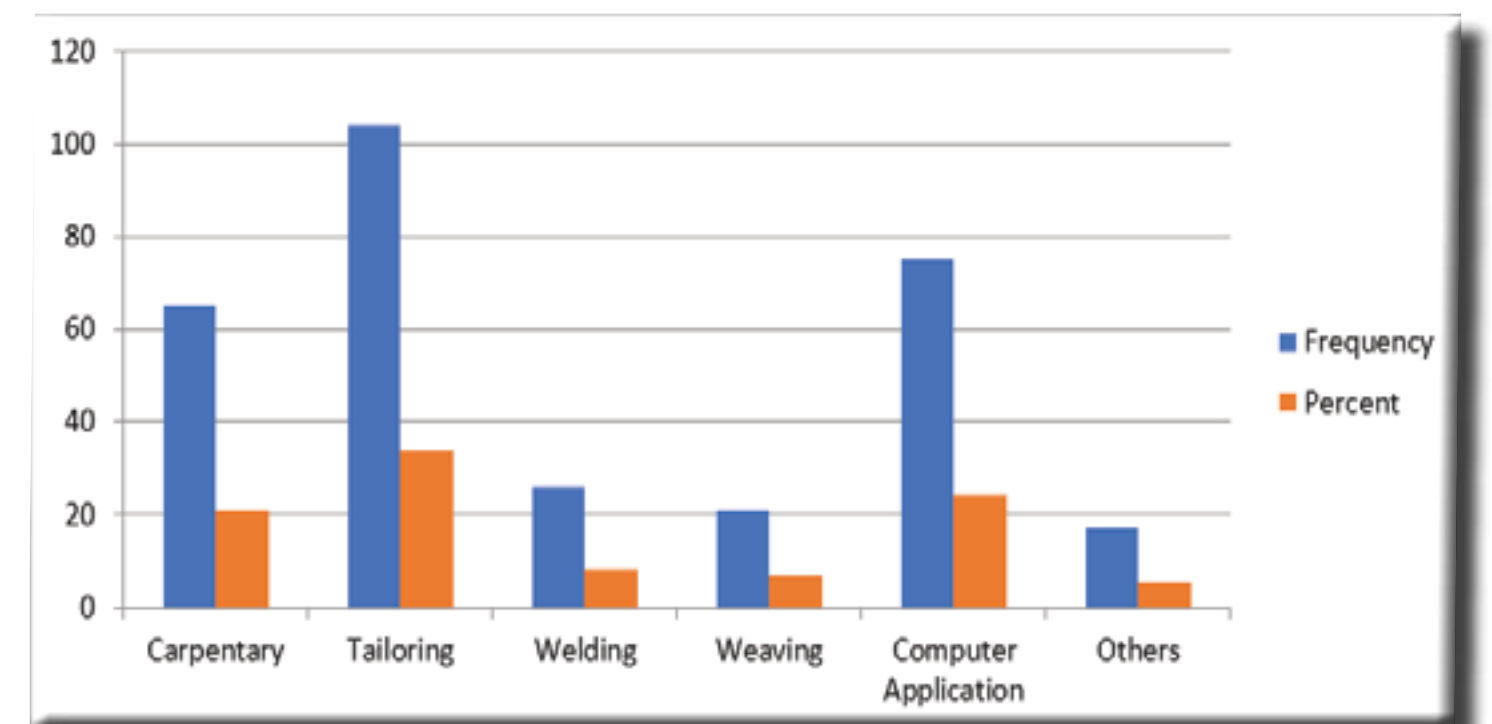
A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the two prisons, and this was informed by the researcher's pre-survey knowledge of available convicted offenders and vocational training facilities in the selected prisons. All the convicted offenders were already undergoing vocational training in the selected prisons.

Questionnaires were successfully administered after approval was granted by the Controller of Prisons, Federal Capital Territory Command, and subsequently, the

questionnaire was also perused by respective officers-in-charge. The questionnaire was in English language. The prison administrators also facilitated access to the convicted offenders as prison officers were detailed to assist in the administration of the questionnaires. A total of four prison officers assisted in administering the questionnaires to offenders from one cell to another. Some questionnaires were administered in the training workshops as well as to some offenders gathered in the open space within the prison yard. The researcher was present at all venues where the questionnaires were administered. The percentage return from fieldwork was 96.55, i.e  $308/319 \times 100\%$ . Therefore, analysis of data was based on three hundred and eight (308) respondents. Collected data were analyzed using simple frequency distributions percentages and are presented below in bar charts.

#### D. Data Presentation and Analysis

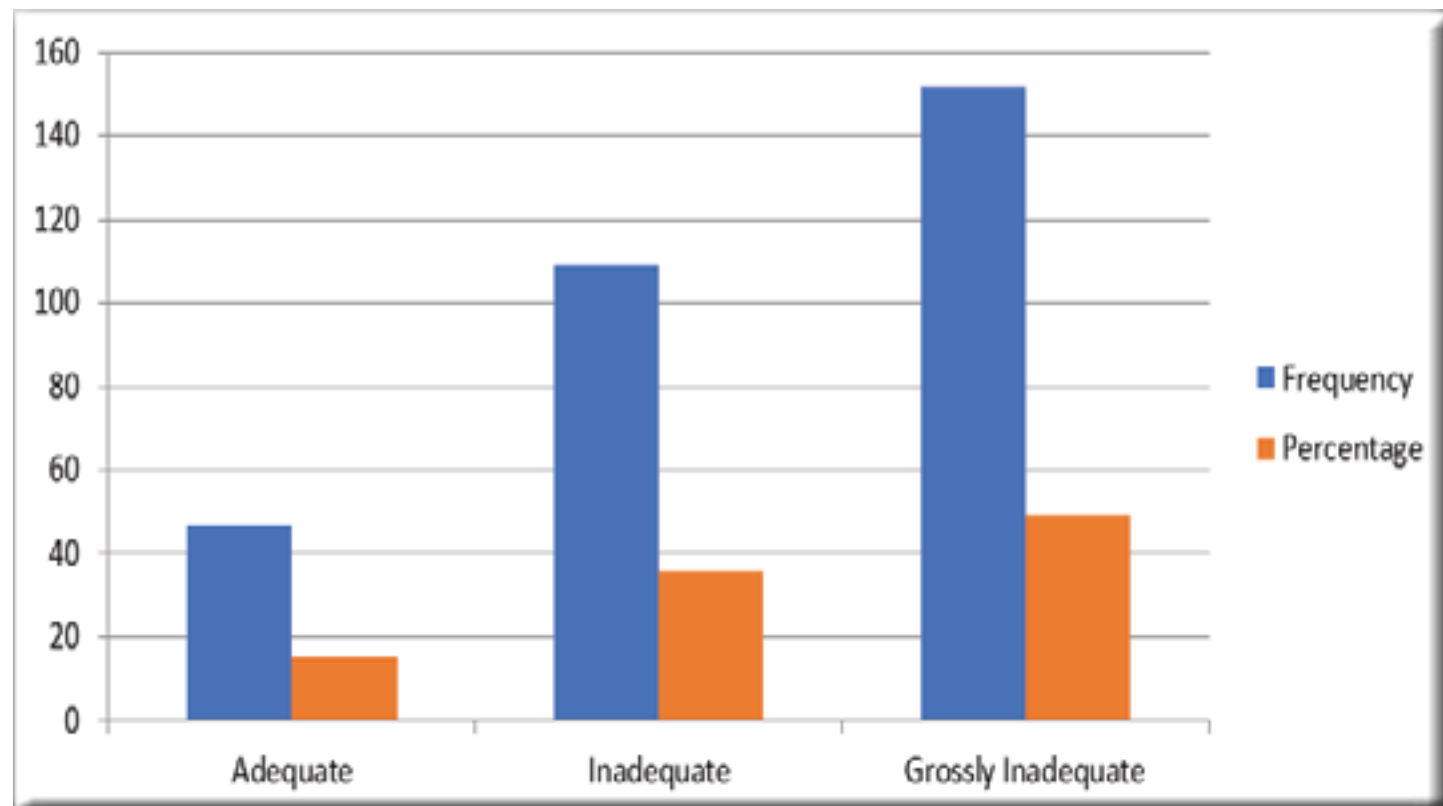
**Figure 1(a): Types of Vocational Training Facilities Available**



Prison Survey, 2015

Figure 1(a) shows that majority 33.8% (104) of the offenders put through learning tailoring, 24.4% (75) of the offenders were learning computer applications, 21.1% (65) were undergoing training in carpentry, 8.4% (26) were into welding, 6.8% (21) were engaged in training in weaving while 5.5% (17) were into some other kinds of vocational trainings such as laundry services, barbering, and soap making.

**Figure 1(b): Offenders' Views on Adequacy of Available Vocational Training Facilities**

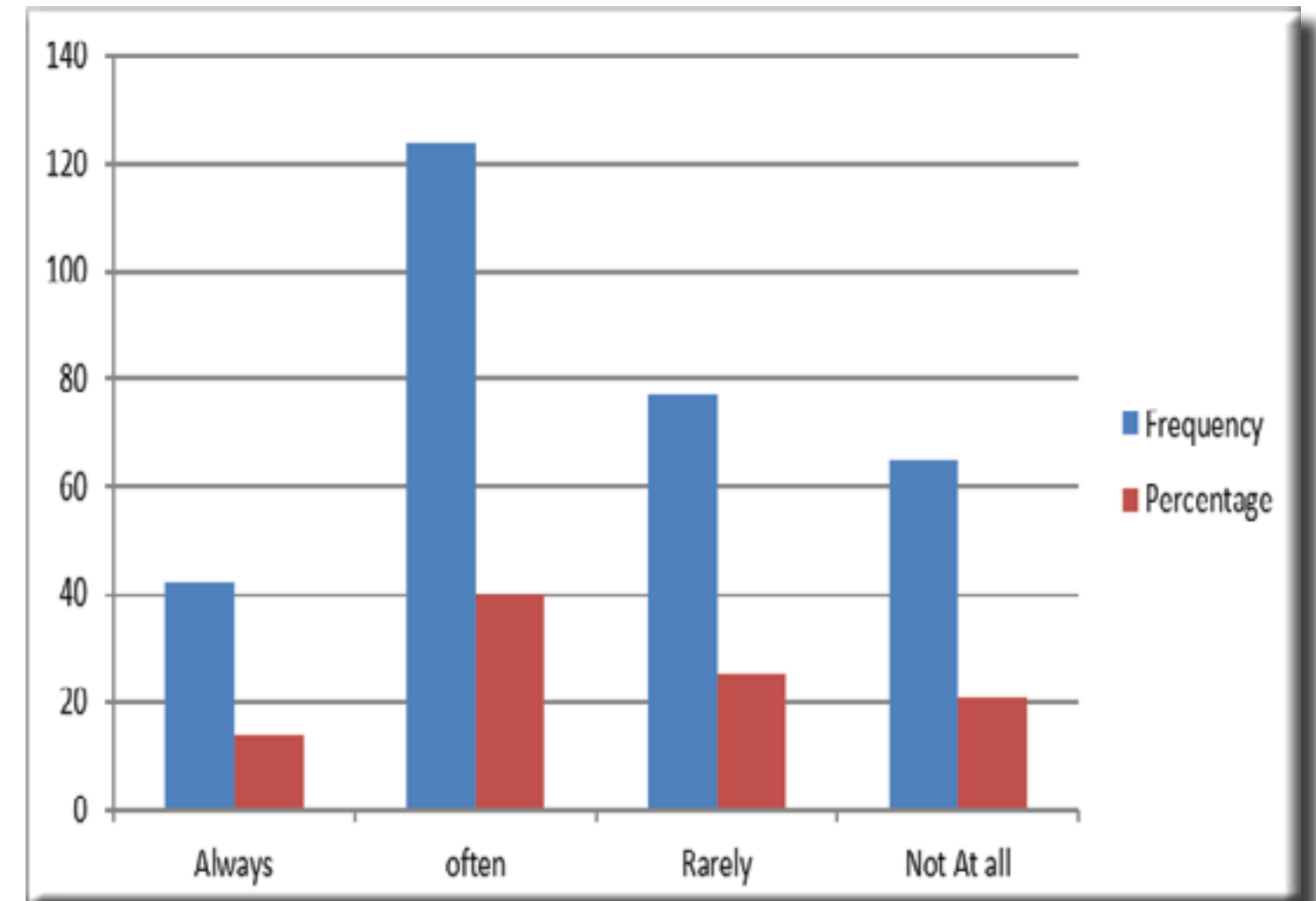


Prison Survey, 2015

Figure 1(b) shows that majority 49.4% (152) of the offenders were of the opinion that the available vocational training facilities are grossly inadequate, a good proportion 35.4% (109) of the offenders responded that the available vocational training facilities are inadequate, while 15.2% (47) of the total offenders gave that the available vocational

training facilities are adequate.

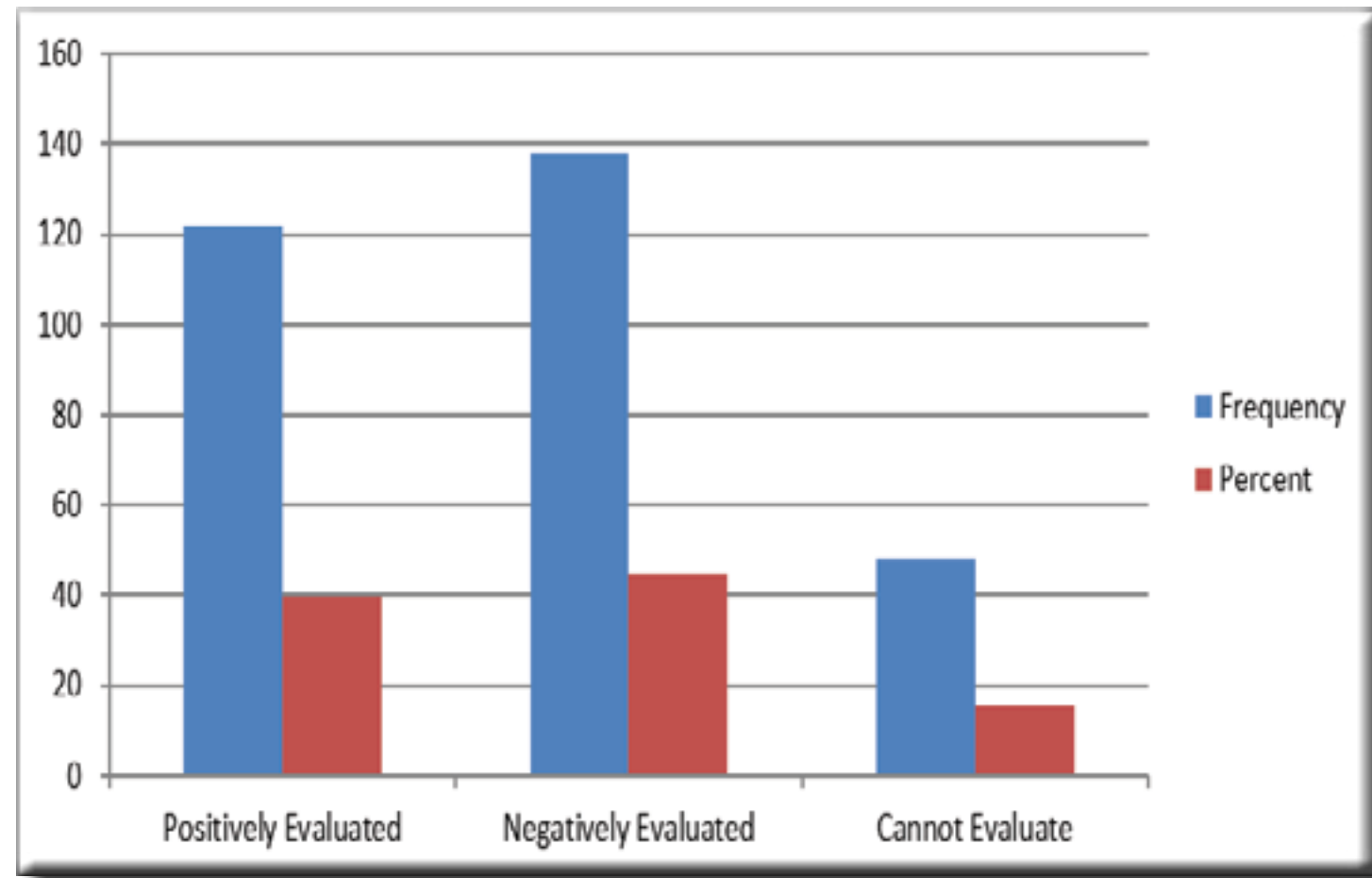
**Figure 2: Offenders' Access to Training Facilities**



Prison Survey, 2015

From Figure 2, majority 40.3% (124) of the offenders responded that they often gain access to the available training facilities, 25% (77) gave that they rarely gain access to the available training facilities, 21.1% (65) noted that they do not gain access to the training facilities at all, while just a few 13.6% (42) responded that they always gain access to the available training facilities.

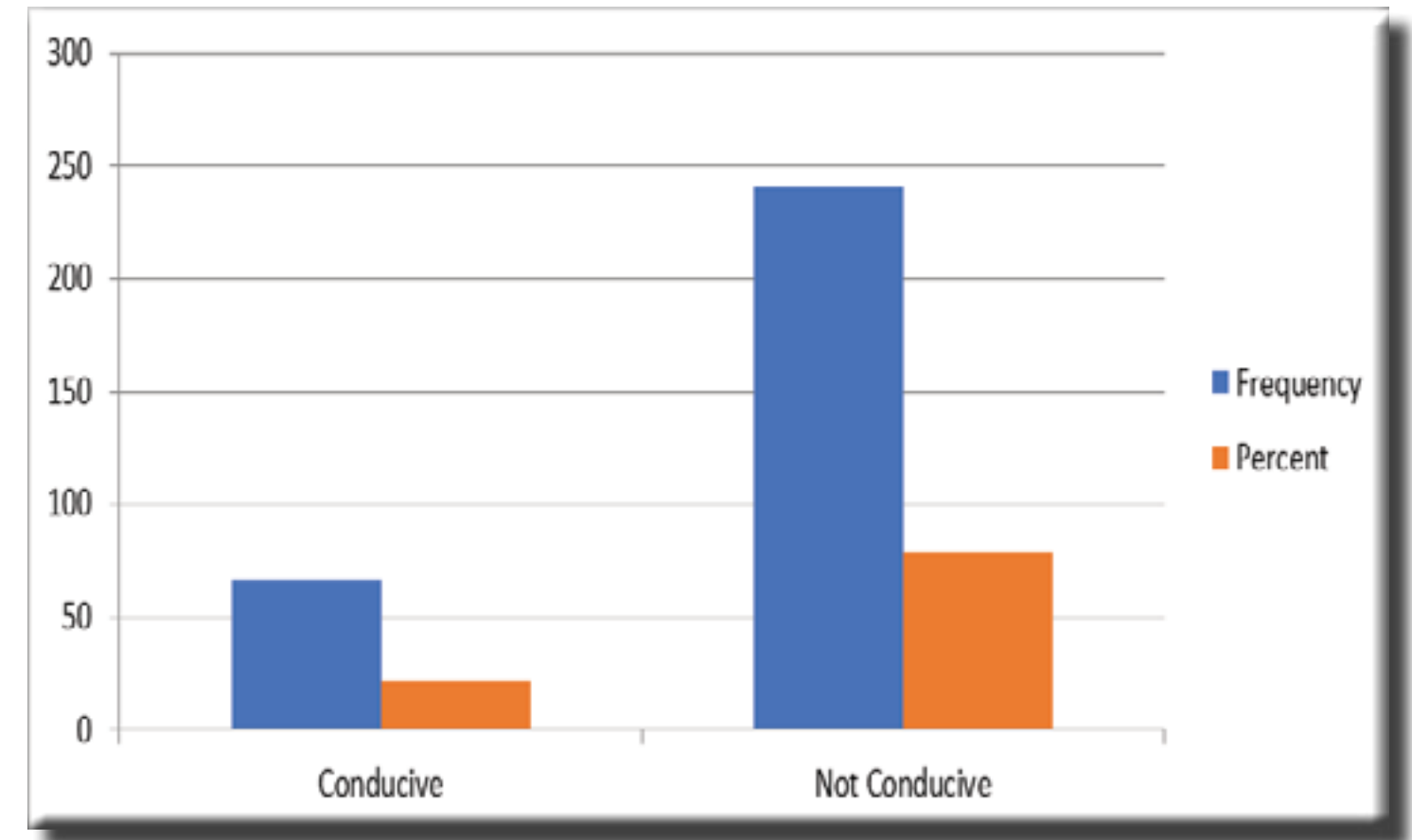
**Figure 3: Offenders' Evaluation of Prison Officers' Knowledge of the Administered Vocational Training**



Prison Survey, 2015

Figure 3 shows that the majority 44.8% (138) of the offenders negatively evaluated prison officers' knowledge of the administered vocational training, a good proportion 39.6 % (122) of the offenders positively evaluated the prison officers' knowledge of the administered vocational training, while few 15.6% (48) of the offenders could not evaluate prison officers' knowledge of the administered vocational training.

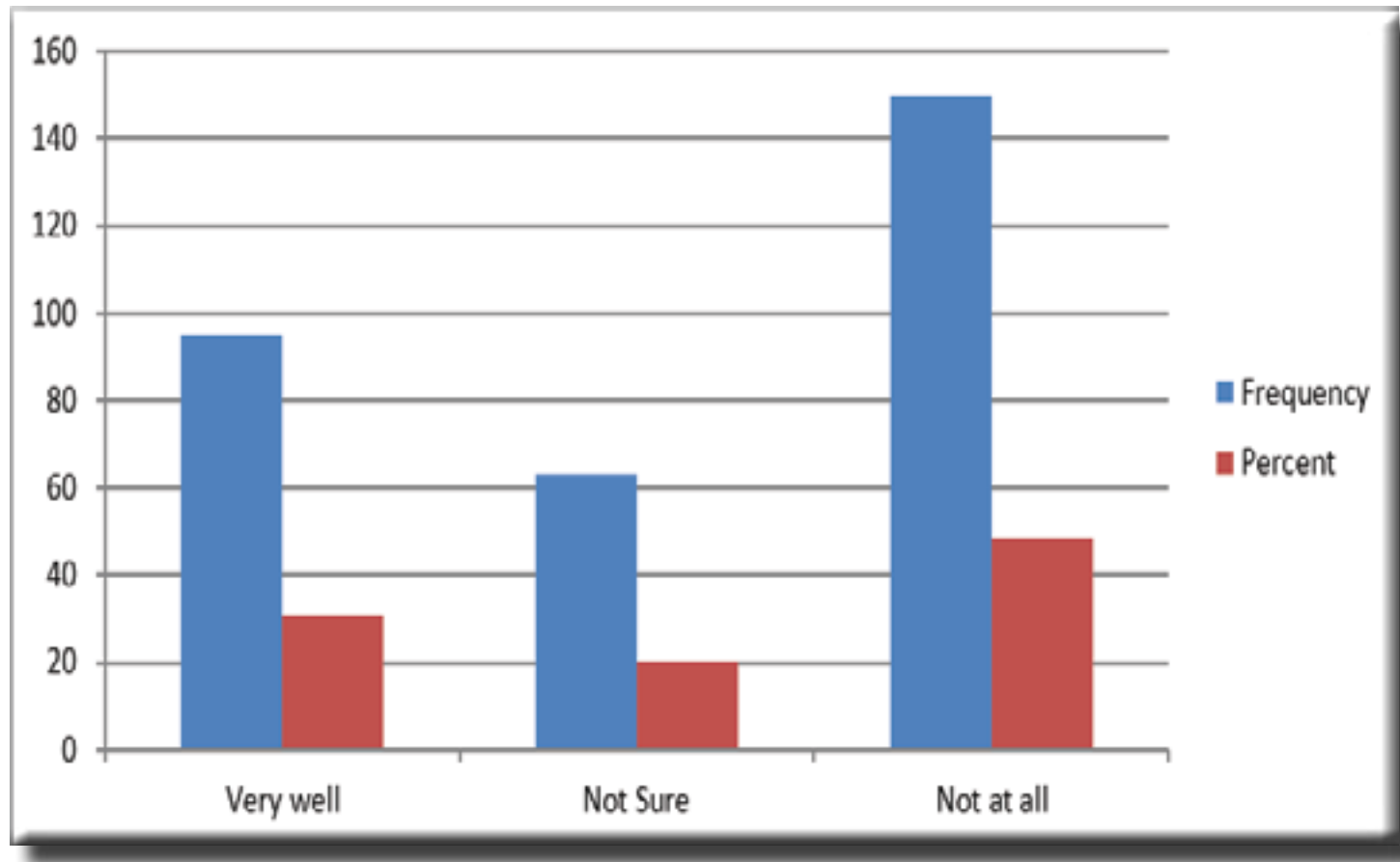
**Figure 4: Offenders' Views on the General Condition of the Prison**



Prison Survey, 2015

Figure 4 shows that a significantly large proportion 78.2% (241) of the offenders are of the opinion that the general condition of the prison is not conducive, while 21.8% (67) of the offenders gave that the general condition of the prison is conducive.

**Figure 5: Offenders' Perception of Rehabilitation Effectiveness**



Prison Survey, 2015

From Figure 5, the majority 48.7% (150) of the offenders responded that the vocational training they are being put through does not prepare them for reintegration at all, 30.8% (95) feel the administered vocational training prepare them very well for integration, while 20.5% (63) are not sure if the administered vocational training prepare them for reintegration or not.

### E. Discussion of Findings

This study ascertained that the vocational training facilities, available in the selected prisons, include carpentry, tailoring, barbering, welding, weaving, computer applications, laundry services and soap making. From the findings of this study, these

vocational training facilities are held to be inadequate, as 49.4% of the offenders noted that the available vocational training facilities are grossly inadequate, while 35.4% of the offenders responded that the available vocational training facilities are inadequate. This finding agrees with the outcome of Asokhia and Agbonluac (2013) in their study on the Assessment of Rehabilitation Services in Nigerian prison in Edo state which revealed that the provisions for rehabilitation services were still neglected and not in compliance with international best practices. They asserted that for any meaningful rehabilitation to take place, rehabilitation facilities must be adequate and improved on.

Findings of this study also show that most offenders do not gain regular access to the available vocational training facilities, as 40.3% of the offenders noted that they often (probably once in a month) gain access to the vocational training facilities, 25% responded that they rarely (probably once in two to three months) gain access to the available vocational training facilities, while 21.1% of the offenders responded that they do not gain access to the vocational training facilities at all. The implication of this is that if offenders do not regularly gain access to vocational training facilities, it will be quite difficult to acquire the vocational skills that are supposed to get them equipped for reintegration. This aligns with the findings of Achu, Owan and Ekok (2013) from their *ex-post facto* study on the Impact of Prison Reforms on the Welfare of Inmates at Afokang prison in Calabar. Their study revealed that recidivism among ex-convicts is high because inmates were not well trained in any particular trade, because they lack access to training facilities, hence on discharge, they become frustrated and despondent.

Aside the fact that the vocational training facilities are inadequate, and offenders

do not gain regular access to the vocational training facilities as expected, most of the available vocational training facilities were also observed to be in a very poor state and outdated. Considering the obsolete status of the training facilities, it will be difficult for offenders to acquire the required contemporary skills that will make them fit well into society upon completion of their jail terms. It is evident from the observed situation in the studied prisons that offenders will not be able to compete with what is available in terms of contemporary vocational skills in the larger society.

Findings from this study also show that while 44.8% of the offenders negatively evaluated prisons officers' knowledge of the administered vocational training, 15.6% of the offenders could not assess the prisons officers in that regards. The researcher holds that this stance of offenders poses great concern, because if the person that is expected to impart knowledge is perceived not to be knowledgeable about what is to be imparted, the trainees most likely would not learn anything reasonable.

Another major finding of this study is the affirmation of the poor condition of the Nigerian prisons. A significantly large proportion of the offenders, that is 78.2%, responded that the general condition of the prisons is not conducive to rehabilitation. This shows that prison conditions are harsh and that the treatment by prison authorities is often dehumanizing, demeaning, and radically disempowering. The findings of this study align with the assertion of the findings of Achu, Owan and Ekok (2013) in their study at Afokang prison that Nigerian prisons are a 'living hell'...dungeons and represent inhumanity to man.

The researcher, in the course of the survey observed that prison environment is full

,of constraints and suppression and therefore asserts that too many constraints are liable to make the assimilation of whatever vocational skills impossible. Offenders live in fear in the prison environment and prison officers and are not free to express themselves. In this type of environment, learning of whatever skill will definitely be very difficult.

More so, findings from this study revealed that most offenders do not feel the administered vocational training facilities prepare them for reintegration. Indeed, 48.7% of the offenders responded that the vocational training administered to them does not prepare them for reintegration at all, while 20.5% of them were not sure if the administered vocational training prepares them for reintegration or not. This is largely because while modern training facilities are employed in the larger society, the prisons are still using poor and obsolete facilities in the training of offenders. The researcher opines that offenders' awareness of the status of the types of vocational training administered to them in the prison (as compared to what is obtainable in the larger society) should also be considered responsible for the negative perception held by the offenders.

## CONCLUSION

On a general note based on the findings of this study, it is revealed that the prison system in Nigeria still lags behind other countries in the discharge of its saddled responsibilities, especially in its rehabilitation function. It is observed that the prison system's emphasis is still on its custodial function which merely keeps offenders away from the society and cages them somewhere for some time. It is ascertained by the study that the general condition of the Nigerian prisons is poor and that the prisons are not

equipped with adequate and contemporary vocational training facilities that are essential for the transformation of the offenders into social beings who will eventually fit into the society. These findings, to an extent, agree with the position of Ladan (1998) as he noted that prison facilities are severely strained, causing prison conditions to get progressively worse. He also noted that while prisons in Nigeria seem to have performed very well in their custodial functions, their record has been poor in their treatment, reformatory and rehabilitative responsibilities. This is because they are not humanly and materially well-equipped to reform and socially rehabilitate their inmates. Meanwhile, the major finding of this study which generally revealed the incapability of the Nigerian Prisons Service to effectively rehabilitate offenders because of the lack of essential, suitable vocational training facilities, offenders not gaining required access to the vocational training facilities, and the general poor conditions of the prison. Considering all these we therefore conclude that that prison system in Nigeria has been and is inadequate and dysfunctional.

Furthermore, it is observed that despite global emphasis on rehabilitation of offenders, the prison system in Nigeria still lags behind in this aspect. Based on the findings of this study, it is established that the social structure in prison has vital roles to play if modern prison principles are to be realized. The conclusion is therefore reached that government should empower the prison institution with contemporary and digital-driven vocational training facilities, such as modern carpentry/ furniture making, fashion designing/tailoring and embroidery with modern machines, computer software installation, hardware repairs, web design, online marketing, digital enterprises, photography, modern laundry services, barbing services, electronic repairs/installations,

electronic fencing, computerized automobile repairs, generating set repairs, fishery, poultry, piggery, tiling, block/interlocking block making, concrete electric poles making, concrete waterways channels making, road construction skills, modern roofing techniques, modern welding/construction and installation of modern gates, burglary proofs, iron doors, and window frames. With these types of vocational training facilities in place, the means of administration will be more effective and offenders, to a large extent, will be more confident of reintegration because they will be sure of competing favorably with others in the larger society on their release. It is also very important for offenders to gain regular access to the available vocational training facilities as this would enhance chances of speedy and intense acquisition of vocational skills that makes reintegration easier. Competent vocational trainers and professionals should be employed to train the offenders, and there should be periodic re-training of such trainers so as to be updated on the administered skills.

More important, prison administration should ensure a more conducive prison environment by providing basic amenities such as improved healthcare systems, electricity, clean and spacious prison cells, quality food, portable water, and recreational facilities. The decongestion of the prison to a large extent would also make the prison environment more conducive to rehabilitation, as facilities would not be over stretched. It is also suggested that prison management as a matter of fact should acknowledge that offenders are members of society, and they will return to society one day. Therefore, offenders that do not constitute serious threat to the society can be allowed to interact with the immediate community. The researcher submits that it is high time the Nigerian Prisons



Service experiments with a community prisons system whereby offenders are attached to different recognized and approved establishments within the community to put to practice and refine the vocational skills acquired in the prison. The Federal Government should also partner with private entrepreneurs in different vocations to serve as post-release centres, and there should be synergy among the post-release centres/private owned vocational skills acquisition centres and government technical schools. These to a large extent will enhance the proper rehabilitation and reintegration of discharged offenders.

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## Les Piroguiers

Les piroguiers plongent la rame

Dans l'eau noire du lac

Où naissent des étoiles.

Ils lancent leurs filets

Où s'engouffrent en dansant,

Ecailles de diamants

Les poissons rutilants.

Le vent emporte au loin

Leur chant

Et la pirogue glisse

Sur le lac au front lisse

Tout doucement

—Anne-Marie Moscatelli

# PERCEIVED LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE OF MEDIA AUDIENCE TOWARDS ACTUALISATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

On September 25, 2015, at the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, every member State of the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The Agenda has a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets aimed at achieving a peaceful, equitable and inclusive world for the well being of the people in every nation. Thus, it became imperative to empirically ascertain the awareness level and attitudes of every member of a given state like Nigeria, towards the actualisation of the SDGs. In view of this, 600 media audiences were surveyed with the aid of a well-structured and tested questionnaire. Using convenience and simple random sampling

techniques, the 600 media audiences were selected from six (6) States that represented and reflected the 6 geo-political zones in Nigeria, Data generated were analyzed and presented using SPSS software with the aids of frequency Tables, cross tabulations, Chi-Square, ordinal regression analysis, and mean scores. The study found that the awareness level of SDGs among the participants was relatively low as most of the respondents were not aware of the efforts being put in place by Nigerian government. New media like Facebook and conventional media like television stations were found to be the means that highly exposed the participants to the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria. The study also discovered that the attitude of the respondents towards the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria was positive, especially among the youths within the age range of 18-33 years. The positive attitude among the youths was found to be more among the male respondents. Also, it was discovered that the respondents' attitudes towards the actualization of SDGs in Nigeria was directly influenced by their perceived level of awareness of SDGs. It was therefore concluded that no matter what the attitudes of every member State of UN or their perceived level of awareness were, SDGs would continue to serve as the bedrock for measuring sustainable developments in every nation. Thus, it was recommended among other things that SDGs should be incorporated into the educational curriculum especially at the secondary and post-secondary levels in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Development, Media Audience, Nigeria, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

## **Introduction**

With the expiration of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became the new universal set goals that United Nations (UN) members' state would use as a framework for making agendas, programmes, and policies across the globe. The SDGs, also known as "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", follow and expand on the MDGs, which were

agreed upon by governments in 2001. The new set of SDGs' 17 goals are to make up for some of the failures and inadequacies of the MDGs (United Nations, 2015). The MDGs, for instance, did not take into consideration the root causes of poverty and also issues surrounding gender inequality as well as the holistic nature of development. The goals made no mention of human rights and did not specifically address economic development. Ford (2015) notes that while the MDGs, in theory, applied to all countries, in reality they were considered targets for poor countries to achieve, with financing from wealthy states.

In many countries like Nigeria, it can be argued that many people still live in poverty, below \$1 a day, some with practically no food to eat, that the rights of women still trampled upon, and that the number of women who die during childbirth are still very high despite Nigerian government commitment towards the MDGs. It was therefore very imperative for a new set of goals to expand and correct the inadequacies of the MDGs to ameliorate some of the challenges that were associated with them (Oleribe and Taylor-Robinson, 2016). It is believed that using the 17 goals of SDGs, countries globally would achieve economic, political, and overall development. More so, the manner in which the SDGs' goals were set brings hope to the hearts of many. Barclay, Dattler, Abdelrhim & Feeney (2015); and Ford (2015) found that the SDGs goals, unlike those of the MDGs, were not set by a group of men in the basement of UN headquarters. The SDGs were created after the UN conducted the largest consultation programme in its history to gauge what the SDGs should include.

Since adopting the SDGs, Nigeria has continued to demonstrate its commitment to them through its leadership and ownership of the implementation process (Akinloye,

2018; United Nations Development Programme, 2019). A number of agencies and organizations, like the UNDP, UN, and WHO, have been working together with the Nigerian government to promote SDGs, increase awareness about them among Nigerians, and provide technical and financial support for their actualization in Nigeria. Very little, however, is known about the level of awareness and involvement of the people in the actualization of SDGs in Nigeria. Notably, the level of any nation's development is based on the level of involvement of the people. Because no nation can develop without the cooperation of its citizens, the people's input is necessary for progress to take place and the overall prosperity and well being of the people goals to be accomplished (Mendelson, 2018).

SDGs are also concerned with the future development and prosperity of the people. Speaking to this, Sherinian (2016) argues that people must know about the global goals before they can embrace them as their own. Accordingly, the 17 goals of the SDGs which came into effect in January 2016, with their 169 targets, form the core of the 2030 Agenda. They balance the economic, social, and ecological dimensions of sustainable development, and place the fight against poverty and sustainable development on the same agenda for the first time with the well being of the masses.

How are the people of Nigeria aware about SDGs and committed to the course? The media are channels for information dissemination and agenda setting. The media has a vital role to play in creating awareness of SDGs among the masses and encouraging audiencesto to embrace SDGs for sustainable development in Nigeria. The United Nation Development Programme (2019) advises that the first path in the roadmap for localizing and implementing SDGs is creating public awareness which does not only

involves getting the people to know about SDGs but also empowers them to participate in achieving SDGs.

The UN SDGs Group (2016) observes that the different media are playing a major role in changing the narrative about progress in the developing countries and shining the spotlight on the people who are often left out of the conversation of SDGs. This notwithstanding, little or no studies have provided empirical evidence on the level media audience as to who are aware of SDGs and their attitudes towards these well set and globally accepted SDGs. It therefore is imperative to determine the level of awareness and the attitude of the media audience towards the actualization of SDGs in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent are media audiences aware of the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria?
2. What are the different media that expose audience to the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria?]
3. What are media audience attitude towards the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria?
4. What is the relationship between media audiences' demographic variables and their perceived attitudes towards the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria?
5. What is the relationship between media audience demographic variable and their perceived level of awareness of the SDGs' actualization in Nigeria?

### **Hypothesis**

Ho1: Media Audience level of awareness of SDGs is not related to their attitudes towards SDGs in Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

The United Nations Development Programme (2019) reported that Africa made significant progress on the MDGs, including enrolling more children in primary school, particularly girls, increasing the representation of women in national parliaments, and reducing child and maternal deaths and the proportion of people infected with HIV. Building on these advances, the Nigerian government is taking steps to translate the ambitions articulated in the 2030 Agenda into tangible outcomes for its people. These begin with integrating the SDGs into national visions and plans.

SDGs were articulated by World leaders under the platform of United Nations. United Nations (2015) after rigorous deliberations provided 17 goals for sustainable development all over the world. In light of this, Babasanya, Oseni & Subair (2018) argue that the 17 goals were tactically and carefully chosen so that the attainment of one goal enhances the chance of achieving the others. The 17 goals encapsulated in the SDGs are as follows: (1) End poverty in all its forms everywhere; (2) End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; (3) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, (4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; (5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; (6) Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; (7) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; (8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; (9) Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;

(10) Reduce inequality within and among countries. Others are: (11) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; (12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; (13) Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; (14) Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; (15) Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss; (16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and finally, (17) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Each of these goals have targets. For instance, for Goal 3, the targets are: reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030, ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases by 2030, ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes and to achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all. Each of these targets is to be accomplished by 2030. Designed for developing countries and developed nations, these SDGS encourage every nation to work towards actualizing them.

Creating awareness among priority communities is a major step for fulfilling SDGs. For successful implementation of SDGs by 2030, Barclay (2015) advises, among

other things, that nations should start a public awareness campaign about SDGs that demonstrates how the public would benefit for them. This would have tremendous effect on their attitudes towards SDGs.

## **Methodology**

This study employed the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey design allowed for an objective and systematic collection of data for this study from a large heterogeneous and without definite population figure. In essence, rather than working with an unknown population figure that is not definite nor specific and may also be too large to cover, a representative sample that is definite and specific which descriptive survey design advocates, becomes most applicable for this study. Moreover, media audiences are heterogeneous and are spread all throughout the nation. Thus, it is nearly impossible to know who and how many media audiences comprise the target population of a study of this nature. Available records show that the exact number of media audiences in Nigeria unarguably is not documented anywhere. However, since several experts like Camrey and Lee (1992) in Wimmer & Dominick (2011) and House, Weil, & McClure (cited in Hernon & Altman, 1998, p. 121), argue that a sample size of 100 may be suitable for small population and from 300 to 500 and above for larger population, 600 media audience were deemed suitable as the sample size for this study. For the purposes of achieving balance in data distribution among media audiences in Nigeria, the 600 media audiences, which constituted the sample of this study, was spread across the major towns/cities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, and five other states representing the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

Thus, this study elicited responses from 600 media audiences selected using convenience, simple random and purposive sampling techniques from the six (6) geo-political zones of Nigeria. The questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection and hence determining the internal consistency of the questionnaire became imperative. Thus, 50 copies of the questionnaire distributed in Benin-city, Edo State, was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was yielded, which is considered an acceptable indicator for this research. Hence, the 600 copies of the questionnaire were administered to media audience in the major towns/cities through the help of six research assistants. One hundred copies of the questionnaire each were distributed in the capital city of FCT, Abuja, Adamawa, Kaduna, Enugu, Delta and Lagos states which represented the six geo-political zones in the country. However, a total of 596 copies of the questionnaire were considered valid as some copies were not properly filled. Data generated were analysed with the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 20 using simple percentages, cross-tabulations, Chi-Square test, ordinal regression analysis and mean scores.

## Analysis/Results

**Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Variables (n=596)**

Variables	Frequency	Percent	
Age	18-25 years	120	20.1
	26-33 years	155	26.0
	34-41 years	42	7.0
	42-49 years	239	40.1
	50 years and above	40	6.7

<b>Gender</b>	Male	363	60.9
	Female	233	39.1
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>	Primary School leaving certification	3	.5
	WAEC/NECE/GCE	18	3.0
	Diploma/OND	8	1.3
	B.sc/B.Ed/B.A/HND	490	82.2
	M.A/MSc/M.Ed etc	27	4.5
	PhD	50	8.4
	<b>Economic Status</b>	Student	170
Civil/Public servant		323	54.2
Pensioner/Retired		7	1.2
Unemployed		96	16.1

Table 1 shows the demographic variables of the 596 respondents carefully selected for this study. Age of respondents is one vital variable necessary for understanding the disposition of respondents towards SDGs. To a large extent age defines the level of maturity of respondents. A large number of the respondents in this study were within the age bracket of 42-49 years, which is 239 (40.1%) respondents. These respondents were of a legal age for performing civic responsibility towards the actualization of SDGs. Gender of respondents' is another variable investigated and is of utmost importance especially in a country like Nigeria where gender matters. There was a preponderance of male respondents that is 363 (60.9%). This suggests that more men were willing to fill the copies of the questionnaire or were more interested in the concept of SDGs.

Furthermore, Table 1 displayed the educational qualifications and economic status

of respondents as these variables could be a major determinant of respondents' awareness level and attitude towards the actualization of SDGs in the nation. This is because a person's educational qualifications and occupation (economic status) have a way of affecting the person's views about social and economic phenomenon. Thus, in this study, it was found that majority of the respondents were B.sc/B.Ed/B.A/HND (490, 82.2%) and basically civil/public servant (323, 54.2%).

**Table 2: Relationship between the demographic variables of Respondents and How often they are exposed to SDGs (n=596)**

Variables		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Age in Years	18-25 years	36	3	7	74
		30.0%	2.5%	5.8%	61.7%
	26-33 years	0	0	105	50
		0.0%	0.0%	67.7%	32.3%
	34-41 years	0	0	24	18
		0.0%	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%
42-49 years	20	15	103	101	
	8.4%	6.3%	43.1%	42.3%	
50 years and above	0	3	0	37	
Gender of Respondents	Male	55	3	156	149
		15.2%	.8%	43.0%	41.0%
	Female	1	18	83	131
		.4%	7.7%	35.6%	56.2%
Economic status	Student	36	3	37	94
		21.2%	1.8%	21.8%	55.3%
	Civil / Public Servant	20	14	190	99
		6.2%	4.3%	58.8%	30.7%
	Business/ Entrepreneur	0	0	5	2

		0.0%	0.0%	71.4%	28.6%
	Pensioner / Retired	0	4	7	85
		0.0%	4.2%	7.3%	88.5%
Highest Educational Qualification	Primary school leaving certificate	0	0	0	3
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	WAEC/NECE/ GCE	16	0	2	16
		11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	88.9%
	Diploma/OND etc	0	0	0	8
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	BSc/Bed/B.A/ HND etc	25	18	219	228
		5.1%	3.7%	44.7%	46.5%
	M.A/MSc/Med etc	0	0	14	13
		0.0%	0.0%	51.9%	48.1%
Ph.D.	12	3	6	29	
	24.0%	6.0%	12.0%	58.0%	
Total		56	21	239	280
		9.4%	3.5%	40.1%	47.0%

Respondents, in this part of the survey, were requested to fill only one option on how often they get exposed to SDGs' actualization information. A large number of respondents, 280 (47.0%), have never been exposed to the SDGs' related information. Meanwhile, majority of those who were exposed to SDGs related information were only exposed to SDGs on a monthly basis which is 239 (40.1%) of the 596 respondents surveyed. Interestingly, out of the 56 respondents who were exposed to SDGs related information on a daily basis, 24% of them were Ph.d. holders, 11.1% were WAEC/NECO/GCE holders, while 5.1% were B.sc/B.Ed holders.



**Table 3: Respondents' Awareness of SDGs Actualisation in Nigeria. (n=596)**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
You are aware of the appointment of a Senior special Assistant to the President on SDGs	2.25	1.209	Not aware
You are aware of the establishment of a "National Social Register" for the poor and vulnerable household whereby N5000 is given to such homes every month	2.32	.826	Not aware

**Aggregate mean=2.28**

Two items were analyzed to ascertain respondents' awareness of SDGs' actualization process in Nigeria. With an aggregate mean of 2.28, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents are not aware of the appointment of a senior special assistant to the president on SDGs ( $\bar{x} = 2.25$ , std. D = 1.209) and the establishment of a National social Register for the poor and vulnerable households whereby N5000 is given to such homes every month ( $\bar{x} = 2.22$ , std. D = 826).

**Table 4: Different media that expose audience to SDGs actualization in Nigeria (n=596)**

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Television	3.03	1.052	Agree

Radio	2.61	1.072	Disagree
Newspaper	2.60	1.059	Disagree
Facebook	3.23	1.044	Agree
Twitter	2.57	1.048	Disagree
YouTube	2.58	1.041	Disagree
Instagram	2.59	1.050	Disagree
Magazines	2.56	1.062	Disagree
WhatsApp	2.57	1.055	Disagree
Internet	2.58	1.052	Disagree
Posters / Banners	2.50	1.044	Disagree

**Criterion mean=3.00**

Evidently, not all the media listed in Table 4 exposes audiences to SDGs' actualization information in Nigeria. The media that exposed their audiences to SDGs were television and Facebook as both had agreement levels of 3.03.

**Table 5: Relationship between the demographic variables of Respondents' and their Attitude towards SDGs actualisation in Nigeria (n=596)**

Attitudes	Demographic variables	Mean	X <sup>2</sup>	Df	P-value	Phi-Cramer V
You would like to learn more about SDGs	Age	3.40	577.281 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000	.568
SDGs should be taught in schools	Age	3.30	655.790 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000	.606

You consider SDGs actualisation as dead on arrival mission	Age	1.18	103.208 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000	.240
You perceive SDGs actualisation as the way out of challenges confronting Nigeria	Age	3.96	35.735 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000	.173
You like to get involved in the actualisation of SDGs	Age	3.84	97.339 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000	.233
You would like to learn more about SDGs	Gender	3.40	394.243 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	.813
SDGs should be taught in schools	Gender	3.30	465.556 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	.884
You consider SDGs actualisation as dead on arrival mission	Gender	1.18	26.987 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	.213
You perceive SDGs actualisation as the way out of challenges confronting Nigeria	Gender	3.96	10.181 <sup>a</sup>	2	.006	.131

You like to get involved in the actualisation of SDGs	Gender	3.84	58.184 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000	.312
You would like to learn more about SDGs	Educational qualification	3.40	68.393 <sup>a</sup>	15	.000	.186
SDGs should be taught in schools	Educational qualification	3.30	62.086 <sup>a</sup>	15	.000	.299
You consider SDGs actualisation as dead on arrival mission	Educational qualification	1.18	159.543 <sup>a</sup>	15	.000	.066
You perceive SDGs actualisation as the way out of challenges confronting Nigeria	Educational qualification	3.96	5.175 <sup>a</sup>	10	.879	.077
You like to get involved in the actualisation of SDGs	Educational qualification	3.84	10.624 <sup>a</sup>	15	.779	.134

P. Value is significant at 0.05

A Chi-Square test of contingencies was used to determine the relationship between demographic variables of respondents and their attitudes towards SDGs' attainment in the country. The phi-Cramer's Value was used to ascertain the level or

strength of relationship between the demographics and attitudes. A statistical significant relationship was found between demographics and respondents attitudes towards SDGs' attainment in Nigeria. However, no significant relationship was found between educational qualification of respondents and beliefs that SDGs' actualization is the way out of challenges confronting Nigeria as well as respondents desire to be involved in the actualization of SDGs in the country. Furthermore, since Phi-Cramer's value of greater than 0.25 was considered very strong, a very strong association is found between some demographics and attitudes towards SDGs. It is also imperative to note that respondents did not consider SDGs actualization as dead on arrival mission ( $\chi^2=1.18$ ). Thus, findings have revealed that the younger respondents, aged 18-33 years, were more likely to have more positive attitudes towards SDGs. Male respondents showed more positive attitudes towards SDGs' attainments in the country than their female counterparts. Nigerians with lower educational qualifications felt more positive towards SDGs than those with higher educational qualifications.

### Testing of Hypothesis

**Ho1: Media Audience level of awareness of SDGs is not related to their attitudes towards SDGs in Nigeria**

**Table 6: Relationship between media audience level of awareness and their attitudes towards SDGs actualization in Nigeria**

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	528.080			
General	247.451 <sup>b</sup>	280.629 <sup>c</sup>	24	.000

Significant Level = 0.05

An ordinal regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between awareness and their attitude towards SDGs' actualization in Nigeria. A statistical significant relationship was found [ $\chi^2 = 280.629$ , DF=24;  $p=.000$ ]. This shows audience attitudes was based on their level of awareness. Those that knew less about SDGs were more likely to have more positive attitudes towards SDGs actualization process which depicts a kind of adverse reaction. For instance, 61.7% of the younger respondents aged 18-26 years have never heard of SDGs, yet they had more positive attitude towards SDGs more than the 8.4% of respondents aged 42-49 years who are exposed to SDGs on a daily basis. Could it be that what those that knew more about SDGs' actualization process in Nigeria are less optimistic towards the attainment of SDGs in Nigeria because they have some information at the disposal that discourages them?

### Discussion of Findings

This study sought to determine the perceived level of awareness and attitude of media audience towards the actualisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. It was discovered that quite a number of media audiences in Nigeria (47%) have never been exposed to the SDGs' related information. Whereas those who were exposed to the SDGs' related information, were exposed on a monthly basis. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Okunlola, Oluwaniyi & Oyedapo (2018) study. For instance, it was observed in this study that the respondents were not exposed to SDGs 'actualisation processes in Nigeria. Whereas, the respondents in Okunlola et al (2018)

study agreed that they were aware of the SDGs but are not conversant with the details and modalities for the actualisation of the SDGs in Nigeria; nor were they familiar with the main contents of the SDGs.

Furthermore, it was discovered in this study that media audiences were not aware of the appointment of a Special Assistant to the President on SDGs and the establishment of a National Social Register for the poor and vulnerable household whereby ₦5,000:00 is given to each household every month in Nigeria by the government. The awareness level about this gesture was expected to be high since the masses, in this case, media audiences, are the beneficiaries. It, however, was found that majority of the respondents of this study were not even aware of the national social register scheme. This finding affirms the findings in Shehu & Shehu's 2018 study. It was discovered in Shehu & Shehu 'sstudy that very few people had knowledge of SDGs. This finding agrees with the findings of an earlier study conducted by Omisore, Babarinda, Bakare & Asekun-Olarinmoye (2017) which ascertained that only 42% of their respondents had good knowledge of SDGs in Nigeria. Accordingly, Omisore et al (2017) argue that increasing the level of awareness of SDGs to 100% is necessary to promote and enhance the commitment of Nigerians towards the actualisation of them. There is also the possibility that high level of awareness may also lead to a positive attitude towards SDGs' actualisation in Nigeria. The current imbalance in the awareness level about SDGs among media audiences in Nigeria can be improved upon by conventional media, like radio, television stations, newspaper and magazines, and new media, like the Internet, social media platforms like Facebook.

With regards to the different media, it was found that television and Facebook were the active media that expose the respondents to SDGs in Nigeria. This finding corroborates

the claim made by many government and private establishments and ministries like the Ministry of Budget and National Planning that they have an active social media presence especially on Facebook while they regularly relay information via conventional media like television. This practice of increasing the awareness level of SDGs among the people was earlier advocated by Barclay, Dattler, Abdelrhim, Marshall & Feeney (2015) who stated that nations should start global positive awareness campaigns about SDGs and explain how the people would benefit from them. Because only two media platforms were found in this study to be the actively receiving information about SDGs in Nigeria, there is more media platforms need to be used to spread information. Irrespective of type, the media remains formidable platforms for the dissemination of information of te contents and details of SDGs to the world.

Following Omisore et al's findings (2017) that the attitudes and levels of awareness of people of a given phenomenon are products of their demography, it was also discovered that respondents had a positive attitude towards SDGs. They did not agree that SDGs 'actualisation is a 'dead on arrival mission' in Nigeria. This study's findings further revealed that younger-aged respondents, 18-33 years, exhibited the most positive attitudes toward SDGs. In addition, male respondents evidenced more positive responses towards SDGs' attainment in Nigeria than their female counterparts. Respondents with lower educational qualifications were also found to feel more positive towards SDGs actualisation in Nigeria than those with more education. This finding largely re-affirms part of the findings in Omisore et al (2017) study which revealed that having a positive attitude towards SDGs was associated with the demographic variables of academic attainment and age group of the participants in any given study. This study's findings suggest that having higher

educational qualification does not necessarily translates into positive attitudes towards the SDGs' actualisation. However, there is a strong relationship between the respondent's age category and the attitude exhibited towards SDGs' actualisation in Nigeria. Those within the age category of 18-33, who are usually considered youths, are likely to have positive attitude towards the actualisation of SDGs in Nigeria as this study revealed.

## **Conclusion**

Evidently, awareness level of the SDGs' actualization process in Nigeria is relatively low despite the fact that most respondents have positive attitudes towards their actualization in the country. This low level of awareness was mainly associated with the younger female respondents, 18-33 years, pensioners/retired Nigerians, and Diploma/OND degree holders. This is disheartening because for SDGs to be attained, everyone, regardless of age, gender, educational qualifications, and economic status, must support the programme. Interestingly, since most of the respondents who had positive attitudes towards SDGs are the young, they are more likely to contribute positively towards the attainment of SDGs in the country if properly informed. With this in mind, government and world organizations involved in the implementation of SDGs can find the findings of this study useful for actualizing SDGs in Nigeria by 2030. SDGs will continue to serve as the bedrock for measuring sustainable development in every nation despite the attitudes or awareness level of people about them, but it is imperative that Nigerians are more optimistic about a better Nigeria while the Nigerian government constantly improves on the nation's well being with practical and visible developments.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. For the attainment of SDGs by 2030, the Nigerian mass media should create awareness programmes on their platforms on a daily basis.
2. SDGs should be embedded into the educational curriculum especially at secondary and post secondary levels.
3. Youths should be involved in the SDGs actualization processes in Nigeria.
4. SDGs campaigns should be organized by Nigerian government in rural areas.
5. More women should be placed in strategic political positions on SDGs related matters to motivate them to get involved with and develop a more positive attitudes towards SDGs.

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## The dugout (boatmen) men

The fishermen sink their oar  
 Into the black lagoon waters  
 Where stars come to life

They throw their nets  
 In which gleaming fish  
 With diamond-like scales  
 Rush forth, dashing.

The wind carries away  
 Their song  
 And the pirogue slides  
 On the liquid surface  
 Effortlessly

—Anne-Marie Moscatelli

# ICT Psychomotor Teaching Strategy in Oral English

## Class in Akure, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Teaching oral English in an ESL environment is a complex exercise which requires appropriate instructional aids and methods and a conducive learning environment, as well as teacher competence. The requirement for teaching oral English can be guaranteed by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This study examines the effects of ICT learning on students' academic performance in oral English in a quasi-experimental design involving experimental and control groups with 200 male and female students from four purposively sampled secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. An Oral English Achievement Test (OEAT) was developed, validated and used for data collection administered as a pre-test: before

the treatment and as post-test. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses were tested at  $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance. The data collected were computed using t-test statistics. Our findings revealed that there was no significant difference between the learning achievements of students in rural and urban schools taught oral English using either ICT tools or chalk-and-talk strategy. It also showed that using ICT tools as a psychomotor strategy for teaching and learning stimulated learning and promoted better understanding of oral English among secondary school students. This study recommends that ICT facilities be made available for the teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools and that teachers should be adequately trained to effectively use ICT facilities.

**Keywords:** psychomotor strategy, oral English, ICT, achievement test, quasi-experiment

### Introduction

Teaching and learning English in a second language environment, such as Nigeria, is a complex exercise, because the structural patterns of the target language and the learners' and the teachers' first language are markedly different. The difference is so much pronounced in the phonological aspect of the two languages (Lado, 1957; Fatusin, 2007; Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011) because of phonological *fossilization*: – “(in second or foreign language learning) a process which sometimes occurs in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks or writes a language” (Richards & Schmidt, 2013).

English is a second language in Nigeria. Because it is taught in schools after the acquisition of the first language, students' linguistic habits have already formed, and many



errors become fossilized in the new language. This leads to the problem of interference for teachers to surmount. During the 21st century, the growth and application of technology, particularly that of Information and Communication Technology (hence, ICT), which has become so pervasive that the world has become a global village. Governments, school administrators, parents and learners have and are continuing to invest greatly in ICT, making it a critical part of the learning process in schools everywhere (Basri, Alandejani & Almadani, 2018). However, despite the benefits of the ICT, Nigeria has not fully embraced its use in our educational system.

Using the computer (part of the ICT infrastructure or facility) facilitates exploration in the psychomotor domain of learning, creating excitement and sustaining interest in learning activities. It is a skilful departure from the traditional chalk-and-talk instructional strategy situated in the purview of cognitive learning which can be boring for both students and teachers. With this in mind, Ewata (2020) finds restricting learning to a formal physical structure or location with the teacher being the leader of the pact no longer realistic. It is no longer necessary to restrict learning to the confines of a school or a physical location. As Thomas and Brown (2011) point out, learning “is not taking place in a classroom – at least not in today’s classroom. Rather, it is happening all around us, everywhere, and it is powerful. We call this phenomenon the *new culture of learning*”. This *new culture of learning* is fuelled by the excitement of independent learning found in the hands-on feeling that occurs when students manipulate the computer.

Such independent learning enhances efficient learning. Learning how to use a computer falls into the psychomotor domain of learning which entails doing, operating,

and physical involvement. As Simpson (1972) observes, the psychomotor domain of learning, which uses using sensory cues to guide physical activity, focuses the mastery of a skill from observation to invention. In its earliest stage, learning to use ICT is a physical activity involving imitation and trial and error before some level of proficiency is attained. Once students and their teachers are able to manipulate ICT facilities, they are ready to perform and learn any complex task or concept with a minimum wasted effort and time. This use of ICT is what Simpson (1972) refers to as “complex overt response”. With ICT tools in a language laboratory, students do not have to totally depend on their teachers to act as models of correct pronunciation as they can use their computers and do some self-teaching.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Because English is important to every aspect of our national, social and personal lives, it is surprising that so little has been done to develop an acceptable standard of use for the language. “To say that the English of Nigerians is appalling is to state the obvious. This is so because over the years, attention has not been paid to the teaching of the speech sounds of English in schools...” (Iyiola, 2010, p. 2). As second language speakers of English, Nigerians may find it difficult to achieve native-like proficiency, especially in the phonological aspect (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams). As Bamisaye (2001) and Awe (2013) observe, the structural differences between the phonology of the L1 and L2 account for the pitfalls learners often encounter in oral English (p. 33; p. 20). There is no gainsaying the fact that at both the grammatical and at the phonological levels of language use we need acceptable level of competence for us to fit successfully into

the commonwealth of English language speakers in the world. This is why Ukwuegbu, Okoro, Idris, Okebukola, Owokade and Okebukola (2002, p.185) state that “beyond learning oral English for the purpose of passing your examination, you need it to be a better listener and communicator”.

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. to examine if there is any difference in the pre-test and post-test performances of students before and after being taught oral English using either ICT tools or the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy;
2. to examine if the use of ICT tools as a form of psychomotor domain of learning stimulates learning and promotes better understanding of oral English among secondary school students than the chalk-and-talk strategy;
3. to examine if there is any difference in the learning achievements of students in rural and urban schools taught oral English using either ICT tools or the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy.

To realise these objectives, the study raises the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between the learning achievements of the post-test performance of the experimental group and the control group?
2. Is there a difference between the learning achievements of the experimental group and the control group?

3. Is there a difference between the learning achievements of students in rural and urban schools taught oral English using ICT tools or the traditional chalk and talk strategy?

Based on the study’s objectives, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the outcomes of this research:

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference between the pre-test performances of the experimental group (students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English) and the control group (students exposed to the traditional chalk and talk strategy).

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant difference between the learning achievements (post-test performances) of the experimental group (students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English) and the control group (students exposed to the traditional chalk and talk strategy).

$H_{03}$ : There is no significant difference between the learning achievements of students in rural and urban schools taught oral English using either ICT tools or chalk and talk strategy.

### **ICT and the Digital Classroom**

Progressive thinking countries, institutions, and organisations throughout the world have factored ICT into their educational programmes' action plans. UNESCO particularly “guides international efforts to help countries understand the role such technology can play to accelerate progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 4 (<https://en.unesco.org/sdgs/goal4>).

org/themes/ict-education). “Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world’s greatest problems” (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>) - a vision captured in the Qingdao Declaration, 2015: Seize Digital Opportunities, Lead Education Transformation.

Although Nigeria has not been left behind in this global drive toward the use of ICT, she has not come to the full realization of ICT's potential. The best the Nigerian government has done is formulate policies, which unfortunately, are not supported by strategic actions. The government, at the local, state and federal levels pays lip service to the need for integrating ICT into the country’s educational systems. This is evident in the reform policies in education contained in the Federal Government policy document, National Policy on Computer Education (FME, 1988), which aims at integrating the use of ICT in the Nigerian school system (Yusuf and Yusuf, 2009), without any tangible success. It must however be stressed that educational institutions at all levels of the country are making efforts towards using ICT in their teaching and learning environments.

ICT, in its widest understanding, is the application of computer resources and other associated electronic devices to the studying of concepts, skills, and processes and to problem-solving. UNESCO (2019) stresses that “ICT can complement, enrich and transform education for the better”. Some ICT tools used in schools (for teaching and learning) include desktops and laptops, projectors, digital cameras, printers, photocopiers, popplet, pen drive, Ipods, I pads, webboards, scanners, microphones, interactive white

board, DVDs and CDs, flash discs, video games (keynote.com); smartphones and tablet apps, and Web 2.0 Apps– “the term means such internet applications which allow sharing and collaboration opportunities to people and help them to express themselves online”. Some Web 2.0 Apps examples include “hosted services (Google Maps), Web applications ( Google Docs, Flickr), Video sharing sites (YouTube), wikis (MediaWiki), blogs (WordPress), social networking (Facebook), folksonomies (Delicious), Microblogging (Twitter), podcasting (Podcast Alley) & content hosting services and many more” (ZNetLive Blog, 2016).

With the inclusion of ICT, the conventional classroom has become a “learning space”: “[t]he dedicated place (real or virtual), purposefully designed by the instructor, in which learners are invited to meet and engage in knowledge creation. Through its design and affordances, the instructor suggests and encourages learners to create their own unique learning environment for optimal learning. (Starr-Glass, 2016, p. 118).

Also, with the ICT introduced into learning and teaching, the concept of the classroom has both expanded and evolved. Virtual space has taken its place alongside physical space (Brown, (2005) producing an emphasis on creating teaching spaces that promote flexibility and social space and offer information technology-rich environments (Atkinson, 2013). Coupled with this development in IT and ICT that has been harnessed to education is a new generation of learners, the Net Generation of students –learners who have “grown up using computers and other networked devices”. They “are social and team oriented, comfortable with multitasking, and generally positive in their outlook, and have a hands-on, “let’s build it” approach – all encouraged by the IT resources at

their disposal (Brown, p. 12.2).

ICT offers an alternative to the traditional teacher-centred classroom, the opportunity to “remould the existing unitary teacher-centred pattern of language teaching by introducing a variety of new language tasks” (Xiong, Chen and Huang. 2011, p.42). Considering the introduction of ICT facilities to the classroom. Jolayemi (2013) stresses remarks that:

The dreary phonology class, with its esoteric symbols and technical rules that often lead to rote learning rather than note learning dissolves into a class of happiness. Coupled with techno-maniac tendency of our students, nowadays, the digitized classroom is now a haven for our active and restless students who desire explorations and innovations in the computers.

### **Teaching and Learning Oral English in an ESL Environment**

Using ICT tools in language teaching is an integral part of language education. Oral English is a “science-based” aspect of language studies, the handling of which requires scientific approach for greater results. In the traditional classroom where oral English is taught without the ICT tools, the students depend exclusively on the teacher who must multi-task as a facilitator while being an efficient model of correct pronunciation. Teachers also have their own problems of language interference as well as a lack of adequate exposure to global trend in teaching methodology. The above factor, coupled with the poor working conditions and a lack of teaching aids do not encourage teachers to be at their best. Such a class without appropriate teaching aids is teacher-centred.

Teaching oral English in Nigeria, an ESL environment places many tasks on the teacher. It is interesting to note that using ICT is among them, because a greater percentage of the ‘the Net Generation’, “the cohort of young people born since around 1982 who have grown up in an environment in which Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has become an integral part of daily life” (Sandars, and Morrison, 2007). Today, the non-technologically inclined teacher is confronted with the challenge of responding appropriately to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century students who grew up with technology being a part of their lives.

Up to 70% of the schools in Nigerian rural communities, and even some in the urban areas, do not have ICT facilities (Oruje, 2014). Though some schools can boast of makeshift ICT centres, these are bedevilled with challenges which often force them to close down. Oruje (2014) identifies some of the challenges as the erratic power supply to the schools, caused by the lack of funds to buy generator or to fuel it if there is one. In addition, teachers are not trained to effectively use the ICT facilities, the security of the facilities cannot be guaranteed, and teachers’ and the system’s perceptions of ICT use are misguided. Again, poor funding or meagre budgetary allocations to the educational sector are to blame. Only students in some elite/private schools and the Federal Government Colleges have the opportunity of being taught oral English in digital classrooms. Even then, less than 50 percent of the schools in this category have taken full advantage of the potential of ICT (Oruje, 2014).

Critiquing the teacher factor in the challenges of digital classrooms in Nigeria, Taiwo (2013, p. 6) questions whether Nigerian teachers are “aware of the new technologies

available for teaching these core levels of language”, and whether they apply “these new technologies in their teaching”. Considering the role of technology in language teaching, Jolayemi (p. 17) remarks “to explore the greatness of the programme, this new teaching method has, no doubt, placed a lot of responsibilities on the shoulders of the teachers.” For any professional teachers to keep up with the rapid pace of challenges and development, they must avail themselves of the opportunities offered by ICT.

### **Theoretical Considerations**

The theoretical framework for this study is social learning theory (Bandura and Walters [1963]) which links behaviourist and cognitive theories of learning. It involves attention, memory, and motivation. Its core principle is that the best way learning can be achieved is by creating an opportunity for observation, imitation, and modelling. It is a theory of learning predicated on the understanding that people learn new things by observing or paying attention to the crucial details of other people or a model’s behaviour (Abonyi, 2014, p. 43). Most human behaviour is learnt observationally. Through modelling, from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for one’s actions (Bandura & Walters). Via the modelling process, the attention of learners needs be sustained. This can only be achieved by creating interesting models that will catch learners’ full attention. What is interesting to learners encourages their retention and enables the reproduction of learnt behaviour. And when understanding is achieved, learners feel motivated to learn more. Apart from the processes in modelling, Bandura & Walters observe that learners’ mental states (intrinsic reinforcement) are also very

important to learning. Intrinsic reinforcement acts as a form of external reward whether it be pride, satisfaction, or the sense of accomplishment (Abonyi, p.45).

Learning through computer creates some excitement that facilitates learners’ positive interaction with their peers within or outside their locality that engenders better understanding. The use of the modelling environment of the ICT allows learners to develop a very deep sense of satisfaction and fulfilment which leads to and reinforces their understanding of the concept being learnt (Jonassen, 2002). The “social learning theory [also looks] at learning as a form of human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences” (David, 2019). Environmental influences, motivating learners in the learning environment, include ICT facilities. In an ICT facilitated language classroom, learning by doing leads to building self-efficacy. This process begins with the teacher modelling for the students using ICT facilities. This demonstration excites the students and encourages them to learn. In the process of modelling, guided participation of learners encourages them to learn in a group and on their own. With ICT facilities, self-teaching is possible.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test and a post-test non-randomized research design. The experimental and control groups were used, and the subjects were not randomized. Two schools were used as experimental group (one in an urban area and one in a rural area), and two schools were also used as a control group (one in an urban area and one in a rural area). The population of the study comprised SS 1 students

in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State. Stratified sampling techniques were used in selecting the needed samples which consisted of 50 students selected from each of the 4 sampled secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State. An Oral English Achievement Test (OEAT) was developed, validated and used for data collection.

The test which was 20 graded words to be pronounced by each of the students was based on the area covered in the teaching. Two strategies of instruction were used: the first was the use of ICT tools in teaching oral English; the other was the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy of instruction. The students were taught all the sounds in the English language with a special focus on the unusual sound segments (i.e. sounds not found in their indigenous languages). At the beginning of the experiment, the students in both experimental and control groups were given the pre-test in oral English. After the pre-test, the oral English teachers, coordinated by one of the researchers, began the treatments in their respective schools. After three weeks of teaching, the post-test, which consisted of the same 20 graded words earlier administered on both groups, was administered again. The scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were compared and subjected to inferential statistics. The reason for comparing the pre-instruction and the post-instruction tests scores of the two experimental groups with the two control groups was to determine how well each of the groups understood oral English before teaching them with the different strategies, and the effect that each strategy had on them afterwards. To determine if the location of the schools (rural or urban) had any effect on their performances in oral English, the scores of the two schools in the rural areas and

two in the urban areas were statistically analysed: a t-test statistic was used to test the three hypotheses at an alpha of 0.05 level of significance.

## Presentation and Analysis of the Data

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the pre-test performance of the experimental group (students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English) and the control group (students exposed to the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy).

**Table 1: t-test analysis of the pre-test performances of the experimental group and control group**

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	t <sub>(cal)</sub>	t <sub>(tab)</sub>	Decision
Experimental	102	26.23	4.964	198	1.57	1.98	NS
Control	98	27.53	4.584				

P<0.05 level of significance

NS = Not Significant

From Table 1 above, the mean performance of students in experimental group (students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English) for the pre-test is (26.23) which is less than the mean of the pre-test performance of students in the control group (27.53) with a marginal mean difference of (1.3). The measure of variability (standard deviation) has a difference of (0.38). The t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (1.57) was less than the critical value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there was no significant difference between the pre-test performance of the experimental group (students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English) and the control group (students exposed to the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy). Hence, the null

hypothesis was upheld. By implication, the students in both the experimental group and the control group were at the same cognitive level before the treatment was applied. This result supports the unbiased nature of the study.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the learning achievements (post-test performances) of the experimental group and the control group.

**Table 2: t-test analysis of the learning achievements (post-test performances) of the experimental and control groups**

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t <sub>(cal)</sub>	t <sub>(tab)</sub>	Decision
Experimental	102	29.07	4.584	198	3.17	1.98	S
Control	98	26.53	6.796				

P<0.05 level of significance

S = Significant

From Table 2 above, the post-test mean performance (29.07) of students in the experimental group (students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English) is higher than the post-test mean performance (26.53) of students in the control group with a mean difference of 2.54. The measure of variability (standard deviation) indicates a difference of 2.21. The t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (3.17) was higher than the critical value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. This demonstrates a significant difference between the post-test performance of the experimental group and the control group. Hence, the null hypothesis was not upheld.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the learning achievements of students in rural and urban schools taught oral English using either ICT tools or chalk-

and-talk strategy.

**Table 3: t-test analysis of difference between the learning achievements of students exposed to the different teaching strategies in oral English in the rural and urban schools.**

Location	N	Mean	SD	Df	t <sub>(cal)</sub>	t <sub>(tab)</sub>	Decision
Urban	100	25.28	5.005	198	1.46	1.98	NS
Rural	100	29.99	4.955				

P<0.05 level of significance.

NS = Not Significant

From Table 3 above, the mean performance of students in urban location within Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State is (25.28), is less than the mean performance (29.99) of students in rural locations with a mean difference of (4.71). The measure of variability (standard deviation) has a difference of (0.05) which is very marginal. The t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (1.46) is less than the critical value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. This demonstrates that there is no significant difference between the performances of students exposed to the different teaching strategies in the rural and urban schools in oral English. Hence, the null hypothesis is upheld. By implication, the locations of the schools do not influence the performance of the students being exposed to ICT and the chalk-and-talk method.

## Discussion

This study reveals, on the basis of data collected and analysed, that ICT is an effective

form of psychomotor strategy for the teaching and learning of oral English, and therefore, it is the way to go. This finding concurs with that of the World Bank study (2003) which posits that “ICT can enhance learning by doing, and increase the information available to learners”. This view is also upheld by Alkameland Chouthaiwale (2018; p.80) who finds ICT positively affects students’ attitudes towards learning a language.

Table 1 which shows the pre-test performances of the experimental and control groups clearly reveals that both groups of students were on almost the same cognitive level in oral English before the teaching commenced, establishing that the impact of the different strategies of teaching were not connected with the level of the understanding of the students in oral English.

In Table 2, the analysis of the post-test scores shows a significant difference between the two groups in favour of the experimental group. The mean of students’ performance (29.07) in experimental group was higher than the mean of students’ performance (26.53) in control group. By implication, the exposure of students in experimental group to ICT teaching strategy gave them an edge over their counterparts in the control group who were taught with the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy.

This study is in agreement with Xiong, Chen and Huang (2011) who confirm the fact that ICT is a viable alternative to the traditional teacher-centred classroom. It also supports the assertion of Jolayemi (2013) that:

The dreary phonology class, with its esoteric symbols and technical rules that often lead to rote learning rather than rote learning dissolves into a class of happiness.

Coupled with techno-maniac tendency of our students, nowadays, the digitized classroom is now a haven for our active and restless students who desire explorations and innovations in the computers.

In Table 3, the t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (1.46) is less than the critical value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. This demonstrates that there was no significant difference between the performances of students exposed to the different teaching strategies in the rural and urban schools in oral English. The locations of the schools did not influence the performance of the students when they were exposed to ICT and chalk-and-talk method of teaching. Irrespective of the teaching strategies students in both rural and urban schools in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State were exposed to, there was homogeneity in their performances. This data concurs with the findings of earlier studies: Ajayi (1999) and Yusuf and Adigun (2010) also determined that the location of a school is not one of the factors influences student learning. Zimmerman (2000) also found that students’ academic performances do not, in any way, depend on location of the school, but on a number of inter-related factors such as school funding, school monitoring and supervision, motivated teachers, teaching methodology, and the learning facilities or materials available.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study examined whether the use of ICT tools as a form of psychomotor domain of learning stimulates learning and promotes better understanding of oral English among secondary school students than the chalk-and-talk strategy. It also sought to compare



the differences in the learning achievements of students exposed to ICT strategy of instruction in oral English and students taught oral English using the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy in rural and urban areas. The sample for the study was comprised of 200 SS 1 students from 4 sampled secondary schools in Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State. An achievement test centred on ICT as tools in teaching oral English and the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy of instruction was used to collect data for the study.

The inferential analysis of the data collected from the pre-test scores shows that the performances of students in experimental group and the control group were on the same cognitive level in oral English, indicating that there was no bias before the treatment. It was shown that there were significant differences between the learning achievements of the students exposed to the ICT strategy of instruction in oral English and the traditional chalk-and-talk strategy. That is the experimental group performed better in the achievement/post-test than the control group. The t-test statistical analysis further revealed that there was no significant difference between the performances of students in the rural and urban schools in oral English taught with similar strategies. The location of school (whether in the rural area or urban area) was seen not to have any significant effect on the students' performance in the oral English achievement test, although the instructional materials available and strategies deployed by the teacher matter.

## **Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications**

One fundamental question this study has answered is whether the use of ICT

tools facilitates effective teaching and learning of oral English in Nigeria, in an ESL environment or not. The answer is yes. Second, the study has revealed that the location of a school (whether in the rural or urban area) does not have any serious implications for students' effective learning of oral English when the ICT strategy of instruction is used. From both theoretical and empirical standpoints, integrating ICT tools into the teaching and learning of oral English is the way to go. It is in line with global best practices. Integrating ICT tools into the teaching and learning of oral English stimulates and sustains students' interest in classroom activities, and facilitates better understanding. As Xiong, Chen and Huang (2011) point out, "teachers have to remould the existing unitary teacher-centred pattern of language teaching by introducing a variety of new language tasks." Simply put, we cannot continue to do the same thing the same way all the time and expect to have a different result. There is a necessity for paradigm shifts predicated upon needs assessments and targets. Jolayemi (1999, p.121) suggests that "speech training must not leave the students to fumble their way through". In line with the call for a shift in teaching methodology, schools should take full advantage of the ICT facilities. All the challenges confronting the use of ICT in teaching oral English earlier enumerated earlier should be urgently and critically examined. More important, government at all levels in Nigeria should improve on the poor budgetary allocations to the education sector and ensure that the English language teachers are well trained to work in the proposed oral English digital classroom.

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## Le Paysan

Il marche, le paysan

Devance le soleil qu'il salue en passant.

**Son coupe-coupe sur l'épaule,**

**Un chapeau sur la tête**

**Il traîne derrière lui l'odeur de son corps nu.**

**Il se courbe bientôt sur un champ de millet**

**Dont le vent échevèle les cimes argentées.**

**Il travaille en chantant sous le ciel de midi**

**Qui cuit sa peau d'ébène où roule la sueur.**

**Quand il rentre le soir, tout pesant de fatigue,**

Sa route est bien plus longue

qu'elle n'était le matin.

Mais pour l'accompagner lorsque tombe la nuit,

premières étoiles dansent sur son chemin.

—*Anne-Marie Moscatelli*



# Theatre Practice and Festivals in Nigeria: A Focus on a Theatre Festival of Barclays Ayakoroma's Plays

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## **Abstract**

Theatre practice is promoted in cultural, religious, and social festivals worldwide, via drama, dance, music, and other performances. Such festivals showcase both performers and playwrights. Theatre festivals also promote theatre practice but in a more straightforward manner. They may feature Greek theatre, made to honour Dionysus; medieval mystery plays which celebrate Christian feasts; the total theatre which takes place in National Festivals; a season of plays performed by student bodies and the department of theatre arts in the Universities; plays by amateur and professional theatre groups, as well as government theatre troupes and arts councils. Taking as its example the Festival of Barclays Ayakoroma's Plays (FESTIBAP) produced by the Arojah Royal Theatre in Abuja, this study examines a theatre festival held to celebrate a Nigerian playwright. Examining the multicultural aesthetics of Nigerian theatre and using theories of African Performance, this study finds that theatre festivals in Nigeria, even those with international reputations, often lack the wherewithal to sustain their practices and that there have been security challenges to consider since the FESTIBAP organizer, Jerry Adesewo was kidnapped by ritual killers.

## **Introduction**

Festivals and theatre are unavoidably related. Festivals harness various aspects of theatre and its practitioners and promote theatre practices, just the resources of the theatre enhance the beauty of festivals. To put on a festival, to emphasize aspects of religion, culture, and society in dance or music or drama or a combination of them, the resources of total theatre are needed. Theatre Practice, which delivers the resources of total theatre is a complete training programme for theatre production and live performance arts. Specifically in theatre education, Theatre Practice is a specialist discipline comprised of Costume Construction, Design for the Stage, Performance Arts, Prop Making, Puppetry, Scenic Art, Scenic Construction, Stage Management, Technical and Production Management, Theatre Lighting Design, and Theatre Sound. It focuses on developing reflective theatre practitioners through the specialist expertise required by today's theatre and performance industries.

Because there is also the opportunity to work with acting, applied theatre, movement, voice, dramaturgy and writing students, encountering many different models of theatre and performance practice, Theatre Practice develops students with highly advanced skills geared towards interdisciplinary collaboration. (<http://www.cssd.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/ba-hons-theatre-practice>). Femi Osofisan remarks in *Insidious treasons: drama in a post-colonial state* that

It is true indeed that, in the theatre, playing is our business. By jesting, beating drums, singing songs, we theatre artists seek exquisitely to please.

Out of instruments of winds and wood, of stone and string, we weave melodies of enchantment. And sometimes too, we adorn ourselves in costume and mask, paint our faces, and decorate our bodies in sumptuous patterns. Then, through the effects of special lighting, we turn an empty space into a magic circle in order to help you realize the fantasy of your dream. In many ways and through several methods of artifice and ingenuity, we teach and practice the arts of *awada* of leading audiences to the province of sheer delectation (102).

### **Theatre Practice, Festival and Theatre Festival**

Theatre festivals have also been among the earliest types of festivals. Classical Greek theatre was associated with religious festivals dedicated to Dionysus. The medieval mystery plays were presented at the major Christian feasts. In recent years, theatre festivals have been established to promote various types of theatre, such as the works of William Shakespeare and George Shaw. Many festivals, such as those in the fringe theatre movement, promote the work of beginning playwrights and performers.

As J.P. Clark remarks, the two broad traditions of Nigerian theatre and drama (traditional and modern) have always had an inseparable relationship with festival. In Nigeria, a festival (or ceremony) is usually a meaningful event in the life of the people. During festival ceremonies, the gods are said to be present either as observers or performers (Ugolo 42). Tejumola Olaniyan, Ato Quayson, Chidiebere Ekweariri, and Kelechi Ogbonna all have noted that festivals are organized around certain deities or spirits, or

mark generational transitions or the passage of the seasons. In the "Introduction" to *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, Olaniyan points out that whether festivals are held to celebrate the climate or agricultural production, they are sprawling multi-media occasions – "incorporating diverse forms such as singing, chanting, drama, drumming, masking, mining, costuming, puppetry, with episodes of theatrical enactments ranging from the sacred and the secretive to the secular and public...[and] each festival dramatizes a story or myth-or related sets of stories or myths"(135).

Although they differ from culture to culture, such festivals are held at set times of the year generally fall into three categories. First there are the harvest festivals, which include the new yam festivals of the eastern states of Nigeria, one example being, the Iwaji festival. Second, there are commemorative festivals like the Uda festival of Esan people of Edo state. Third, there are the festivals for the gods, such as the Ogun and Sango festivals of the Yoruba of Nigeria (Iye and Aluede 225).

### **Intercultural versus Intracultural in Nigerian Theatre**

As Desmond Obasa and Jumoke Adebule remark in 'The Challenges of Higher Education in Growing Dialogue Culture and Understanding Cultural Pluralism', the contemporary world is increasingly multicultural, and Nigeria is a plural society in terms of its multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature—of all the federal democracies in the world, only India can match Nigeria's cultural complexity. Aptly, Nigerian theatre is a conglomeration of many experimental theatres. Its complicated diversity is compounded as most of these experimental theatres celebrate the richness of the Nigerian multicultural aesthetics (Adeoye v). Ahmed Yerima, who is exponent of demythologisation,

factionalisation, and multicultural theatre, has noted that interculturalism, Brecht being its ideological product with Soyinka in support, is a liberating power. Helping to chart a positive, relevant future direction for theatrical development, interculturalism, he avers has three major characteristics: (1) the exploitation of other cultures; (2) the celebratory process of discovering the diverse cultures and art forms of the world; (3) the enrichment of literary and theatrical experiences by “borrowing”, “stealing”, and “exchanging ideas” to contextual and aesthetic developments of the works of art which emerge from different societies (73).

Nigerian theatre evidences what Patrice Pavis terms the ‘confluence of intercultural theatre’ in *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (19). Arguing that Nigeria's intercultural theatre is syncretic in its blending of different cultural practices from different cultural traditions to produce ‘qualitatively new forms’, Kennedy Chinyowa finds theatre practitioners engaged in performances that Bjorn Rasmussen and Anna-Lena Ostern call ‘playing between and betwixt sameness and difference’ (212). In such an ‘intercultural’ paradigm, however, the specificities of local cultures are often ignored by the adoption of an essentialist view of the Other, as Rustom Bharucha argues in *Theatre and the World: Performances and the Politics of Culture*. According to Bharucha, there is an ‘intracultural’ paradigm which entails interaction and exchange between local cultures, ‘within, between and across regions within the larger framework of the nation’ (159). Bharucha’s argument tends to further ‘localise’ national cultures in an increasingly ‘globalised’ world. As Allan and Carmen Luke have argued in ‘A situated perspective on cultural globalization’ that ‘globalisation has generated new kinds of identity, new forms of intercultural communication and new forms of community’ (282). In terms of applied drama and

theatre, an intercultural theatre paradigm respects cultural specificity, reciprocity, and diversity. As David George points out in ‘Reorientations: The Sound of Two Hands Clapping’, ‘reciprocity is as much a political and ethical priority as an aesthetic choice’ (22).

### **Performance Theories, Experimental Theatres and Festivals in Nigeria: a Discourse**

According to Professor Charles E. Nnolim in *Issues in African Literature*, ‘the task facing all of us in the 1980’s...[is] to build up carefully and painstakingly a poetics, a theory of African literature. We need a scholar or a group of scholars with the synthesizing mind of an Aristotle to build for us a poetics of African literature whose uniqueness is no longer a matter for debate, whose vital juices are fed with uniquely African orature’ (155). Contributing to this poetics, Sam Ukala noted that “[a]part from the Africa folktale’s capacity for clear communication and its popularity among the folk, there are other reasons why it should provide a matrix for folkism’ (in Eregare 141). Ultimately realized in performance, the folktale and the literary play are narratives that are largely secular—unlike most African ritual and festival performances—and also temporal, mimetic, interpretative, and synthetic. Perhaps, to validate Ukala’s concern for the folktale in African theatre, one has to mention that certain other scholars of the African theatre share in the sensibility of operating a literary drama institution that carries the entirety of the people along (see unit 5, the new Nigerian playwrights, National Open University of Nigeria course code: Eng211, course title: Introduction to Nigerian literature ii, 194-204).

In his pioneering study of Yoruba theatre, Adedeji traced its origins to the masquerade of the Egun. The traditional Egun rite, which is controlled exclusively by men, culminates in a masquerade in which ancestors return to the world of the living to visit their descendants. Aláàrìnjó theatrical tradition sprang from the Egun masquerade. The Aláàrìnjó performers created satirical skits by drawing on a number of established stereotypical characters and incorporating mime, music, and acrobatics. In turn, the Aláàrìnjó tradition deeply influenced the Yoruba traveling theatre, which, from the 1950s to the 1980s, was the most prevalent and highly developed form of theatre in Nigeria.

‘Total theatre’ also developed in Nigeria in the 1950s and was characterized by surrealist physical imagery, non-naturalistic idioms, and linguistic flexibility. Later playwrights writing in the mid 1970’s valued ‘total theater’ but included “a radical appreciation of the problems of society”. Major figures in contemporary Nigerian theatre continue to be deeply influenced by traditional performance modes; Chief Hubert Ogunde, sometimes referred to as the “father of contemporary Yoruban theatre,” produced drama that was informed by the Aláàrìnjó tradition and Egun masquerades. Wole Soyinka, who is “generally recognized as Africa’s greatest living playwright” gives Egun a complex metaphysical significance in his work. Anticipating Nnolim’s view that “the task facing all of us in the 80’s to build up carefully and painstakingly a poetics, a theory of African literature,” theatre practitioners and dramatic theorists were contributing to theory and theoretical paradigms about African literature before the 1980s.

Notable Nigerian dramatists have also played significant roles in the Nigerian experimental theatre which celebrates the richness of the nation’s multicultural aesthetics. Chief among the works that have been staged in the last fifty years, are Ogunde’s operatic

theatre experiments; Soyinka’s supposed ritual theatre which is abundantly theorized in “The Fourth Stage”; J.P. Clark’s African neo-classicism and ritual hypothesis; Rotimian festival theatre (a model for theatre-in-the-round); Adelugba’s Daoduisim – a password for excellence in theatre directing; Osofisan’s “fabulous”, “malleable” and “theatre of poverty” in the Grotowskian mode; Obafemi’s socialist reformation’s contextual aesthetics, Kofoworola’s unity integrative model; Steve Abba’s popular theatre style; Ukala’s folkism; Nasiru’s Marxist symphony with total theatre idiom; Segun Oyekunle and Tunde Fatunde’s theatre on the wheel of pidgin – a motif for the aesthetics of mass appeal; Ayo Akinwale’s new cyclical festival theatre aesthetics; Yerima’s demythologisation, factionalisation, and multicultural theatre; Sunday Ododo’s *facekuerade* theatre – a new experimental model that expands and celebrates the masklessness of the masquerade theatre aesthetics; Inih Ebong’s cosmo-human theatre, and Effiong Johnson’s theatre of poverty (Adeoye).

Most dramatic theorists not only propound their theories, they also put them to the test to underscore their authenticity in theatrical practice. Ukala has written several plays in which his theory of folkism is put to practice. In *The Slave Wife*, *Akpakaland*, *The Log in your Eyes*, and *The placenta of Death*, he exhibits what he himself terms folkism: “the tendency to base literary plays on the history, culture, and concerns of the folk... and to compose and perform them in accordance with African conventions for composing and performing the folktale” (<https://guardian.ng/art/sam-ukala-the-folklorist-as-dramatist-70/#:~:text=In%20giving%20a%20defining%20character,composing%20and%20performing%20the%20folktale%E2%80%9D>). Ukala’s theoretical framework has been most notable, in *Akpakaland*, which negotiated a high rating for the playwright among



African scholars, putting him in the exclusive league of literary theorists who have carved out a new authentic aesthetic identity for African literature ((see unit 5, the new Nigerian playwrights, National Open University of Nigeria course code: Eng211, course title: Introduction to Nigerian literature ii, 194-204).

In an interview with Dapo Adelugba, Ola Rotimi commented on his relationship with experimental drama, his directorial style, and approach to actor training with emphasis on performance, saying,

I am trying to find an African identity for our kind of contemporary production...through an introduction of certain theatrical features that derive from our African traditional modes of performance. It is a conscious, deliberate experiment... First is my preoccupation with theatre-in-the-round style of production, which undeniably has bearing on our traditional form of production. It is a contrast to proscenium legacy of the British Colonial Culture. Secondly, I shy away from intermissions because, again an intermission to my mind helps to give this...impression of artificiality to the audience. Intermissions are unusual in traditional African performances. You might have stages in a traditional performance or festivity. True. But each stage runs a full which in itself makes complete ritual or entertainment sense. You watch it for a time; you have a break; the community disperses for their homes or retire to some place else. They may come back but much later and for a new ritual or festive phase. A kind of episodic turn outs that have full, individual meaning within their respective temporal ambience.

That's what you will find in traditional or theatrical fare. In that context, intermissions are unheard of. My productions attempt to do away with intermissions. (in Bassey 64-65)

In another interview with Effio Uwatt Bassey, Rotimi himself posited that he was a strong exponent and practitioner of total theatre, “a dramatic experience in which music, dance, song, mime etc. are integrated into the plot of the play.” According to Rotimi, music is his inspiration to write a play, let alone stage one. Accordingly, he articulated his dramatic formulations through music. Neither songs nor dance are done out of context (137).

A theatre scholar, critic and director, Adelugba has also speculated about his experiments with directing, having received the “high pass mark, during FESTAC 77” (Dasyuva 124). Speaking to Ademola Dasyuva, Adelugba observed, “The way I approached both *Langbodo* and *A Dance of the Forests*, and *Kiriji* before it, was to have worked out a set of visual images, choreographic images, musical images, using the resources of the Annual Festival of the Festival of Arts of the 60s and 70s, and I really spent several weeks just watching all the old tapes, all the old video-tapes, and trying to come to terms with which particular aspect of the dance culture, of the music culture, of the dramatic culture, I wanted to zero in on at different times in the dramatic action, but perhaps that is a task that would yield more dividends in future productions (124-125).

### **Theatre Festival in the Theatre: Festival of Plays and its Trends in Nigeria**

Using Aristotle's *Poetics* as a yardstick to measure the theatrical elements of festi-

vals, Ekweariri and Ogbonna point out in 'Understanding Carnivals and Festivals in the Context of Theatre' that festivals, like dramatic theatre, have story structures, messages, characters, and spectators. To further address this question, we must detach ourselves from western theories of drama and approach African drama on its own merits when determining its conception, articulation, and artistic development, Carnivals and festivals are highly theatrical events using live performers, sound, and properties in ways that are like multimedia stage presentations (136-137). Also analyzing the cultural phenomenon of the indigenous or traditional festival theatre, J.N. Amankulor observes that the association of the traditional drama with festivity is very vital because no real festival can scarcely be conceived unless "the ingredient of the play...has entered into it" and festival's concepts, like death and love, touches on their whole experience. Real festivity is accompanied by singing, music, dancing, and other visible forms of celebration (91-92).

The beginnings of festival theatre in Nigeria can be traced to traditional Nigerian's attempts to seek knowledge, control the universe, and meet both material and spiritual needs and preserve them for following generations. These needs later developed into ceremonial rites honouring the ancestors, spirits and gods, and expressing the religious beliefs of traditional Nigerian man. The evolution of these rites were embedded in folklore, history, myths and selected legends of the people. At elected periods or seasons of the year, ritual celebrations constituted the various festivals of the community (Asagba 211). African Traditional Theatre houses indigenous performances of Africa – festivals, masque dramaturgy, storytelling performances, puppetry, dances, and comedies. These are performances or cultural activities of people who have resisted the onslaught of western civilization. Such theatre recognizes the progress and development of an entire society, its

aspirations and fears, its belief system, and moral and social ethics. Its social concerns are expressed through the creative medium of dance, pantomime, costume, space, gestures, and other verbal codes. These performances are referred to by scholars as being theatre and drama (Gbilekaa ix).

### **A Survey of Theatre Troupes in Nigeria**

Across Nigeria, many theatre troupes, whether they are peopled by professionals, amateur or student actors, engage in festivals. Ajo Production Company, a theatre company established by a lawyer, Fred Agbeyegbe, organized the Ajo Festival of Plays, popularly called, AJOFEST. Helping to intellectualise the theatre, Agbeyegbe wrote many striking plays with sociological backgrounds relevant to Nigeria, among them, *The King Must Dance Naked* and *Budiso*. PEC Repertory Theatre, a professional theatre company founded by Professor JP Clark and his wife, Professor Ebun Clark, staged productions from April to September took place every weekend on Saturdays and Sundays every year, when Ajo went on vacation from October to December. January to March was the period for the rehearsals of all the plays lined up for the theatre season.

Jos Repertory Theatre (JRT), a theatre troupe under the directorship of Patrick-Jude Oteh, came on board in November 1997, and began its programmes in 2000. Since then, its programmes which have sustained theatre practice in Nigeria through include the yearly Jos Festival of Plays (Ayakoroma 21, 22, 23). Demonstrating how committed Theatre Companies are to the festivals, Sumaila Umaisha noted of JRT that

[d]espite the curfew imposed on the city of Jos, Plateau State, by the state

government following the November 2008 sectarian violence, the Jos Repertory Theatre, JRT, still managed to make the best out of the tight situation, successfully holding its annual theatre festival - the Jos Festival of Theatre. (<http://everythinginliterature.jos-festival-of-theatre-holds-in-face.html>)

Founded by the DayoLiadiIjodee Dance Centre, the Ijodee Dance Company organizes an annual festival, the Truth and Reconciliation Festival of Africa (TRUFESTA), which focuses strictly on Solo and Duo Dances and includes adults and children dance workshops. The National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN) has an Experimental Play Festival, tagged EXPLAFEST in addition to continuing play performances. There are also the University Performing Companies. In the 1970s and 1980s, the University of Ibadan set up the Unibadan Performing Company (UPC), the University of Calabar Performing Company (UCPC) held sway in Cross River State, University of Port Harcourt Theatre. The Ajon Players is a theatre company founded by Olu Obafemi in 1981 at the University of Ilorin. The Samaru Theatre Project is Community Theatre started in 1976 at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Ayakoroma 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19).

The university theatres are a powerhouse of theatrical activity, because for most aspiring theatre artists, training begins on the firm ground of a University liberal arts education. Of the 42 universities that offer courses in theatre arts, close to 35 have full-fledged theatre arts programmes. Typically, university theatre departments have auditoria for performing their productions, be it classical, original, contemporary or experimental works (Awodiya 9-10). The universities have a period for a season of plays either as a final year directing project or Certificate in Theatre Arts (CTA) practical project or Diplo-

ma in Theatre Arts Practical presentation. For instance, the University of Port Harcourt presents a festival of plays presented by the year-one practical theatre course, while the final year directing students plays are presented as final year project. Benue State University Theatre Arts also has practical productions as do Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the University of Abuja Theatre Arts. There are practical productions of plays by all year-one to final year students enrolled in the Performing Arts Department of Ahmadu Bello University.

At the level of professional bodies, the Dance Guild of Nigeria (GOND) organizes the Festival of Dance (FEDA). There is the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Festival in Lagos. The National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), an umbrella body for theatre arts professionals in Nigeria, organizes the Festival of Nigerian plays (FESTINA), which first took place in 1999 and then again in 2001 before becoming dormant in 2005. FESTINA was resuscitated in 2011. The essence of this festival of plays is to make practitioners feel the beauty of their profession. This is why plays like *The Wives* by Ahmed Yerima, *The Golden Fleas* by Segun Adefila, *The Waiting Room* by Wole Oguntokun, and *Nigeria The Beautiful* by Odia Ofeimun will be celebrated this year. Their performances will not only dwell on the total beauty of the Nigerian situation, they also draw attention to Nigeria's social problems. In *The Nation*, the festival's organizers explained that “[t]his is why we have chosen to forge ahead in this new era in our annual theatrical feast (<http://www.thenationonlineng.net/2011/sunday-magazine/arts-life/-festival-of-nigerian-plays-hits-the-stage.html>).

The Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Association, began in 1981, introduced the Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Festival (NUTAF) as a one in which students of all

the Departments of Theatre Arts in Nigerian Universities come together each with a play written by a student or students. In reference to Ademiju-Bepo, Ayakoroma avers that in its eight years of pioneering activity, some 80 new plays were presented at NUTAF (Ademiju-Bepo<sup>104</sup> cited in Ayakoroma). NUTAF fulfils what Oloyode describes as the university campus being a locus of intercultural exchange (1), because the participating Universities enter plays of varying cultures in Nigeria.

### **Theatre Practice in Abuja and Arojah Royal Theatre**

Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria and is located in the centre of Nigeria, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). As a planned city, Abuja was built mainly in the 1980s and officially replaced Lagos as Nigeria's capital on 12 December 1991. As in any other part of Nigeria, theatre practice in Abuja presents traditional and contemporary productions from state or private, educational, amateur, and professional theatre companies. Some theatre and performance groups in Abuja include; the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Council for Arts and Culture, Abuja, the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, University Abuja, which mostly produces Departmental Workshop Productions for year-one to final-year students as a season of plays. The National Institute of Cultural Orientation Cultural Troupe (NICUT) came up with its maiden performance of *Dance on His Grave*, 2012 as well as staged, a playlet, "Back To Peace," during the NICO Conference with the theme, Culture, Peace and National Security in Nigeria: The Role of Local Government Chairmen and Traditional Rulers (one of many the troupe has staged during the Institute's programmes). The Abuja Royal Theatre came on board in 2011 with its production of Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo* to celebrate the 51st Independence

anniversary of Nigeria, directed by Professor OjoBakare. The AfriDance Theatre, with its focus on dance only, is Abuja's foremost private dance company. Summit Theatre of The Summit Bible Church has done two notable stage productions, *The Rift* and *Irajami*, in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The Tehila Company is one of Nigeria's foremost professional gospel theatre company operated by the Family Worship Centre. The Basement Theatre owned by ChidiUkwu's Flint Production is known for its radio drama series 'GbaganGbagan' extracted from a production of Ola Rotimi's *Ovanranmen Nogbaisi* in 2009 done by The Basement Theatre. Since then, the group has focused on radio and television productions. Other groups like the Arojah Royal Theatre (ART), the Bazik Theatre, Abuja, Black Bone, Nike Art Gallery, and Progress Cultural Group (Nka-ufo) have also participated

Apart from the theatre productions from these resident theatre companies, there are also those staged by visiting theatre companies that come to Abuja. For instance, the National Troupe of Nigeria (NTN) often brings theatre productions to Abuja when there are events like World Culture Day or other government functions. During the Abuja Carnival, all the 36 states in Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory gather and parade along the streets showcasing different aspects of their culture through dance, dance-drama, music, costumes, and masquerades. In 1984, Enekwe directed *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, by Ngugiwa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo, as a convocation play for the University of Nigeria, backed by the then Vice-Chancellor, Prof. F.N. Ndili and Alhaji Ali Mungono, the then Pro-Chancellor. Oak Theatre Productions, Enekwe's troupe was given full financial and logistic support. Enekwe then took the play to other higher institutions of learning, including the University of Benin, Obafemi Awolowo University,

Ile-Ife, the University of Ibadan, the University of Lagos, and the University of Port-Harcourt. Apart from the tour to the universities, he also took the production to Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) at the request of Minister for FCT, the late General Mamman Vatsa. During this junket, the production of *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* became the first modern theatre production in Abuja:

In his remarks, Gen. Vatsa said that the production would assure Nigerians of the reality of Abuja Capital Territory. In a report of the Sub- Department of Dramatic Arts to the Justice Robert Okara led visitation panel, the then Coordinator of the Sub-Department, Dr Amankulor, stated: In 1983/84 session, our production of the play, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, directed by Dr Onuora Ossie Enekwe hit the headlines within the country and abroad as a very successful and meaningful African drama. Its positive lessons in patriotism and nationalism were widely acknowledged, as well as its artistic excellence. Before the exodus of talented theatre scholars and practitioners, such as late Prof. J.N Amankulor, Mr KaluUka (now Professor Uka), Dr.ChimalumNwankwo, EsiabaIrobi, Eni-Jones Umuko and OsyOkagbue, etc., the Sub-Department was a beehive, presenting a wide variety. (Enekwe 33-34).

ART was known from its beginning as the Jesad Royal Theatre, but it later changed its name to the Arojah Royal Theatre in 2009. With a rich repertory of African and contemporary dances, plays and campaign dramas, ART has a stable of 35 actors, actresses,

dancers, singers and instrumentalists categorized as Resident Artists and Artists in Residence. One of its objectives is to use the theatre medium, in collaboration with other organizations committed to a better society, to forge a better tomorrow for our world. *ART* seeks to produce theatre of the highest standard that consistently illuminates, entertains, and challenges. It is committed to engagement between the imagination of its productions and its audiences and the development of the theatrical form. ART has carried out professional theatre productions and commissioned projects, staging four major productions between November 2010 and December 2011. They are Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo's *The Killing Swamp* (November 2010), directed by ChidiUkwu and assisted by Jerry Adesewo; Ben Tomoloju's *We Only Went In Search Of Happiness* (February 18th and 19th, 2011), directed by Adesewo Fayaman Bay and Jerry Adesewo to celebrate the 2011 Black History month at the French Cultural Centre in Abuja; Barclays Ayakoroma's *Dance On His Grave* (March 27, 2011), directed by Jubril Ahmed and SeunOdukoya for the celebration of International Theatre Day; Wale Ogunyemi's *The Divorce* (December 2011), sponsored by EXXONMOBIL, and directed by Jubril Ahmed.

### **Barclays Ayakoroma**

Barclays Ayakoroma, a scholar who proceeded from the theatre and film sector to join the culture sector holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A), Master of Arts (M.A) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Theatre Arts from the Universities of Calabar, Ibadan, and Port-Harcourt respectively, with specialization in Directing, Theatre Management, and Film Studies. A versatile professional, he has had a distinguished career in the theatre,

media and culture sector. Ayakoroma was a member of Prof. J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's PEC Repertory Theatre, Lagos, where he worked with Richard Mofe-Damijo, Phillip Isi Igetei, Augustine Onohwosa between 1984 and early 1985. He has written, directed and acted in many plays on stage and television under direction of renowned theatre icons like Ola Rotimi. He was also a member of the Anansa Playhouse founded by the late Bassey Effiong in 1984. As well as being the Assistant Director at Anansa, he acted in many plays like Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, Efua Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Moliere's *That Scoundrel Scapin*, Effiong's *The Fault is not in our Stars*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (adapted for stage), Bertolt Brecht's *Man is Man*, and Femi Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers*. As a playwright, he wrote *Dance on his Grave*, *A Chance to Survive and other plays*, *Castles in the Air*, *Once Upon a Dream*, and *A Scar for life*. He was a consultant on Community Theatre with Living Earth Nigeria Foundation (LENF), and pioneered the Bayelsa Programme. His collaboration with Arikpo of LENS produced three collections: *All for a Canoe & other Plays*, *Inebhar and other plays*, and *Our Forest, Our Future and other plays*. He was also active in RSTV Channel 22 UHF, Port Harcourt (1986-1992), where he held various positions such as Operations Supervisor, Head of Programmes, and Head of News and Current Affairs. He has published in academic journals and is a member of many academic and social associations like the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), Conference of Chief Executives of Arts and Culture of Oil Producing States (CCEACOPS), and Chief Executives of Culture (CEC) of the Federation. As a prolific writer and Author, he belongs to the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). As an aca-

dem, Dr. Ayakoroma was a lecturer in the Department of Creative Arts, the University of Port-Harcourt between 1992-2000. He is a visiting Senior Lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State. At the moment Ayakoroma is the Executive Secretary of National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), a parastatal in the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation, having been the Executive Director of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture from the year 2000 to 2009, when he was appointed the helmsman of NICO by the Federal Government. Emmanuel S. Dandaura remarks that

Ayakoroma is really a man whose place in the theatre and culture cannot be ignored. He is a committed theatre administrator. I have worked with him. He deploys any opportunity he has in the promotion of theatre and culture in Nigeria (<http://www.nico.gov.ng/news>)

### **Theatre Practice and Arojah Royal Theatre Festival of Barclays Ayakoroma (FESTIBAP)**

For his robust contributions to theatre practice in Nigeria, the renowned playwright, theatre actor/director, film scholar, and astute cultural administrator, Dr. Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, the Executive Secretary of National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), was celebrated by Arojah Royal Theatre in Abuja, in what that organisation termed, "Festival of Barclays Ayakoroma Plays (FESTIBAP).

Jerry Adesewo, the director of ART, prepared the general public about the festival, informing them that event, which started with an opening ceremony on Tuesday,

12<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, at the French Cultural Centre, Abuja, and a guest lecture by Professor Emmanuel Dandaura, Head, Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, was to be followed by performances of three of the creative works, between June 12 and 16, 2012, when the Arojah Royal Theatre presented *Castles in the Air* and *Beyond the Camp* and the NICO Cultural Troupe staged *Dance on His Grave*.

Listing Ayakoroma's achievements, Adesewo observed, "Dr. Ayakoroma has contributed immensely to theatre practice as a playwright, director, actor and scholar. He has written so many plays, which include, *Dance on His Grave*, *A Matter of Honour*, *Castles in the Air*, *A Chance to Survive*, *Beyond the Camp*, *The Rejected Ones*, *Once Upon A Dream*, *A Scar for Life*, *All for A Canoe and Other Plays*, *The Golden Goose and Other Plays*, and *Our Future and other Plays*." The unpublished works by Ayakoroma include: "Strangers in the Land," "The Chief Engineer," "A Night Out," "One Wife Two Husbands," and "The Odi Saga;" in addition screen plays, such as, "Master in the House," "Hidden Agenda," "No Hiding Place," "Ikemefuna," and "From Grace to Grass." Ayakoroma had engaged in many theatrical activities and his plays, *A Matter of Honour* and *Dance on His Grave*, are texts in the Junior Secondary Schools Syllabus in Bayelsa State, just as his play, *The Rejected Ones*, took the Second Price in the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) J.P. Clark Prize for Drama in 2003. You can agree with me that a man who has achieved all these is worth celebrating. So, out of his numerous plays, we have chosen some to stage as part of our contribution to theatre development in Nigeria, which he has been in its vanguard. There is no better time to do this than now. You can agree with me that through his contribution in Nigeria, the world theatre is feeling Ayakoroma's impact'

(<https://nico.gov.ng/arojah-theatre-feasts-on-barclays-ayakoromas-plays/>).

The 4-day Festival (June 12 - June 16 2012) took place at the French Cultural Centre, Wuse II, Abuja, where the national President of Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), Professor Emmanuel Dandaura and HOD, the Department of Theatre Arts, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, delivered a paper, titled "The Theatre and Dramaturgy of Barclays Ayakoroma," at the opening ceremony and NICUT presented a dance. The dance was followed by the performance of *Castle in the Air*, which was directed by Matthew Adebayo Adesewo. A satirical comedy, *Castle in The Air* is an adaptation of Kuldeep Sondhi's *With Strings*, which written from the point of view of the Izon cultural milieu dramatizes the traditional prejudices about inter-tribal marriages between various ethnic groups in Nigeria using characters who build their own castles in the air.

As the play's events unfold, the dreams of the future of Alhaji Mustapha (Degri Emmanuel), a successful businessman, change in a few seconds because of a short letter from his brother-in-law. If his son, Aminu (Oluwatoba Oyewale) were to marry and father a son within twelve months, the family would get ten million naira. Aminu has to be married before it was too late or the money would be lost. To Aminu, however, the situation was an opportunity to quickly marry his heartthrob, Stella (Nita Byack-George). Unfortunately, his choice does not meet the approval of his parents and Chief Emotari (Zeb John), Stella's Uncle who prefer him to wed Hajia Binta (Elizabeth).

A total theatre experiment was achieved from the beginning of the festival via through this full length play and the dance. In Total Theatre practice, the musicians and singers may be dancers at the same time while dancers may also play role of musicians/singers. The dancer in the traditional context is a total performer. In the traditional

African Festival performance, there is a very good conceptualization and realization of the totality of our art forms. The typical African festival harnesses the best of individual creativity, talents, and initiative through the communal creative process (Ugolo 42, 163).

The same play was repeated on the second day of the festival; *Beyond The Camp* was presented on the third day. Directed by Seun Odukoya, *Beyond The Camp* dramatizes the insecurity of friendship where Sani (Samuel Akawo) finds out that Bayo (Pius Oshogwemoh), his friend, is having an affair with Ngozi (EguriaseUfuoma) with whom he is in love. Sani even relies on Bayo to convince Ngozi of this because of his timidity. Feeling betrayed, Sani reverts to Aisha (Okonkwo Uche).

*Dance on His Grave* directed by Jibrin Ahmed was staged on the 4<sup>th</sup> day by (NICUT). It is the story of the women of Toru-Ama who insist on the resolution of the war looming between Toru-Ama and Angiama, because it is senseless. The women are hell-bent on stopping the war through dialogue with the men, because war should not begin just because a daughter of Toru-Ama had been abducted by the Angiama people, who are also encroaching on the territorial waters of Toru-Ama people to fish. In a meeting, Alaere (Chinye Mauryn Umogo), the *Amananarau*, is explicit about the plight of the women and that they must tell their husbands with one voice that they either stop war or fight another war with their families. After the men refuse, the women decide to be stubborn at home. They refuse to sleep with their husbands by closing their legs, *Kpamkpamramkpaam*. As the intra-family war worsens, King Olotu (Francis Iba) killing himself, because Alaere taunts him that he is not the real father of Beke (Duru Ugochi Susan), their only child.

create the festival. Dandaura posits that Members of National Assembly to consider the messages in the plays of Ayakoroma, as part of what will be used to promote good governance in the Nigerian polity. The themes in Ayakoroma's plays emphasize the need to develop human capital and education, and to eliminate and corruption, in Nigerian society. Presenting these very different plays, FESTIBAP celebrated the beauty of the diversity of Nigerian culture.

In his lecture during the festival, Dandaura remarked that "in those days we all made efforts to organize theatre festival in Abuja, but there were a lot of challenges. But Arojah Royal Theatre has kick-started it in Abuja. ART has really taken a good initiative. To sustain this, the culture of live theatre needs to be encouraged through Theatre Festivals. There are challenges facing live theatre in Nigeria, ranging from finance to insecurity. They have also made the right choice in Dr. Ayakoroma. I am happy that Senator Suleiman Adokwe was in attendance as he, Adokwe, is in a position to take the messages in the plays to the National Assembly" (<http://www.nico.gov.ng/news>).

The challenges of live theatre are well known, with security issues and funding matters as the leading concerns. The Jos Theatre festival's (JRT) the ten-day event featured seven plays, staged under tight schedules to beat the 9 pm curfew deadline. Instead of the usual 7 pm opening, each show began at about 5 pm and ended at 8 pm daily. Due to the curfew, the venue of the festival was also changed from the Crest Hotel, Old Airport Road, to the Alliance Francaise to make it easier for people to get back home on time after the show. In fact, the choice of the plays for the festival was equally influenced by the crisis and its aftermath. From Athol Fugard's *Woza Albert*, directed by Tunde Awosanmi, to Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero*, directed by Austin Efe Okonkwo, the plays'



focus is on the need for tolerance and peaceful co-existence irrespective of religious, ethnic, or political differences. Even new plays like Spencer Okoroafor's *Visa to Nowhere* and Phillip Begho's *Smallie* are outstanding statements about the Jos experience.

Dedicated to the Jos crisis and at the same time a celebration of the Nigerian theatre and theatre practitioners, FESTINA was rested for a long time because of the many challenging problems confronting NANTAP, which could not get the necessary support from the relevant corporate organizations to sponsor and support its festivals. When FESTINA was brought back life, it was to stage plays by Nigerian artistes whose works have been outstanding. Fred Agbeyegbe who wrote plays and had them performed in his Ajofest became the focus of a festival of plays out of them was a benefactor of the theatre industry. Among his plays featured in the festival were *The King Must Dance Naked*, *Woe unto Death*, *The Last Omen*, and *BUDISO*. Uncle Fred also kick-started the careers of many stars in the theatre, who eventually moved over to what is known as Nollywood today (<http://isokoland.blogspot.com/2011/07/agbeyegbe-at-76-theatre-community-pays.html>).

There was also a new security problem that festivals have had to face. FESTIBAP's Jerry Adesewo had a blood-chilling encounter with ritualists after the festival had ended. The ugly incident which saw him spend four days in the hands of kidnappers after he entered the front seat of a cab to travel from Federal Secretariat to Wuse Zone 3, Abuja, where the cast and crew were waiting for him. The driver told him that he would put on the AC for him to enjoy though he did not agree to pay the N500 it would cost. The next he knew himself was that he was chained, hands and legs, mouth gagged and eyes blindfolded. The money N840, 000.00, he had was collected from him. As they brought

more people there and killed them, Adesewo was spared. God delivered him after spending four nights in the ritualists' den.

Despite all of the challenges, the Arojah Roytal Theatre announced that "[w]ith the success made of the *Festival of Barclays Ayakoroma's Plays* featuring *Castle in the Air*, *Beyond the Camp* and *Dance on His Grave*, even without adequate funding" (<https://dailytrust.com/festival-of-ayakoromas-plays-to-open-in-abuja>). In 2012, the Arojah Royal Theatre planned to stage Abuja's first ever International Theatre Festival. FESTIBAP was used as a template. ABUFEST was to feature a minimum of 7 plays of which four would be entered by interested theatre companies from across the nation, ART would stage three plays, one African play (by, on or about Ghaninian, South African or any other African origin plays), one international play (Spanish, Swedish, Polish, French or an American play etc as would be later decided) and the last play will be the winner of a proposed Playwriting competition for students of theatre arts in Nigeria. Other activities of the festival will include workshops and seminars for practitioners, acting clinic for children, writing competition, presentation of awards to deserving theatre practitioners among other activities to be decided (<https://dailytrust.com/festival-of-ayakoromas-plays-to-open-in-abuja>). According to Jerry Adesewo, ABUFEST, the first of its kind in Abuja, will contribute to the development of live theatre in Nigeria by honouring the country's distinguished theatre practitioners. With this trend of theatre practice in Abuja, the international dimensions of theatre festival promise to set a global theatre agenda for Nigeria.

Today, ABUFEST continues to be an annual theatrical event that celebrates the

best of theatre and is an international platform where artists from all over the world to share artistic excellence, innovation and explore the intersections between various theatrical genres.

### Conclusion

Despite the security challenges and lack of funding and other supports, ABUFEST has demonstrated that festivals of plays in the theatre should be sustained. The government, through the MDAs should recognize the potential of live theatre in Abuja as the FCT and show more interest in sponsoring live theatre performances. An International Theatre Festival will help the government's campaign against the state of insecurity in the country and also be an important tourist attraction. As well, theatre practitioners should interface with the media for adequate publicity, which no doubt would boost the credibility of their productions.

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## **The farmer**

He walks, the farmer  
Gets ahead of the sun he salutes on the way  
Matchet on his shoulder,  
A straw hat on his head  
He drags behind him the scent  
of his naked body

He soon bends over millet crops  
Whose silvery tops the wind ruffles  
He sings while toiling under the midday sun  
Which burns his ebony skin  
drenched in sweat

When he returns at night,  
heavy with weariness

His road has grown longer  
Than it was this morning,  
But, escorting him as the night falls,  
The first stars dance on his way home.

—*Anne-Marie Moscatelli*

**A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Male Youth Slang in  
the Nenwe-Igbo Speech Community of Enugu State,  
Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the phenomenon of male youth slang usage in Igbo speech communities with special focus on the Nenwe-Igbo speech community located in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study specifically investigates the sociolinguistic nature of the youth slang which is a linguistic habit outside the established traditional linguistic order within the speech community that has formed part of everyday language use among the youth. The data for this study were collected through oral interviews and participant observation in certain domains of language use from sixty male youth and twenty (male

and female) adults. The domains of language use where the data were collected included playgrounds, town hall meetings, schools, streets, traditional marriage ceremonies, new yam festivals, chieftaincy ceremonies, etc. The findings from the study reveal that most of the youth slang expressions are semantically metaphorical which encapsulates the experience of one kind of situation in terms of another, thereby creating a new meaning. The youth slang expression in Nenwe-Igbo, in terms of code make-up, is a mixture of the linguistic inputs from the Igbo language, English language and the Nigerian Pidgin. Also incorporated as part of the youth's slang, are the youth's individual's sociolects. They form part of the youth's social linguistic repertoire with which they engage other members of the community. The youth's distinct linguistic behaviour which they exhibit and manifest in their slang usage, is part of the process of creating for themselves a distinct group identity, group solidarity, group integration and group independent linguistic emancipation which have provided the platform for the creation of a youth sub-culture within the community.

## **Introduction**

Kerswill (1996) has observed that youth is the stage in life in which language change is most clearly visible. The orthodox linguistic convention of the community is usually distorted or manipulated by the youth to create an entirely new meaning or widen an existing one. This is why Eckert (1997) maintains that youths are the linguistic movers and shakers of the society and prime sources of information about linguistic change which they can initiate through the use of slang language. Youth slang linguistic practice with its different forms is a global phenomenon, from the traditional medium like the whistled speech to that of the contemporary media depending on the complexity of each society. Bardill (2014, p.178) observes that "youth are the ones who make their languages

relevant, leading other language users to the future through their forms and models, such as text messaging and other technological applications". Thus, youth slang is sustained through youth culture which is constantly renewing itself. Studies on youth slang in speech communities in Nigeria have not identified any youth slang with a recognized status like in other parts of Africa. In Nairobi (Kenya), Sheng has been raised to the status of urban youth slang. In Dakar (Senegal), Wolof has been developed as a sophisticated form of communication among the city youth. In Cameroon, there is Camfraglaise and in Ethiopia there is Rastaferi. The absence of research interest in youth slang in Nigeria has been summarized by Beck (2010, p.29): it is noticeable that there are also cities that have not developed any urban youth slang of their own. This is true of not only Lagos - actually, the Nigerian cities in general are hardly ever mentioned in the literature on the subject.

We agree with Beck that there is no identified established youth slang in Nigeria but it must however be stated that there exists a microcosm of youth slang which is effectively differentiated from town to town or village to village and which is adapted for valuable traditional and modern uses by young people. A case in point is Mensah's (2012) study of the language of Agaba Boys in Calabar South, Cross River State, Nigeria, which highlights how the youth in the area reinforce their marginal or deviant status through the creative use of language. The present study aims to extend the literature on youth slang in Nigeria to cover the situation in Nenwe Community in Enugu State, South-Eastern Nigeria, by examining the nature of the youth slang especially in terms of its linguistic features. This study will be significant in many ways. It will contribute

to the existing literature on youth multilingualism and creativity in language use. It will deepen understanding of how youth use language to construct and conceptualize identity and solidarity. It will provide insights on how the youth utilize language to define their social orientation such as their disdain for some safety practices. It will contribute more information on how the social, cultural, and psychological make-up of young people can be understood through language.

Nenwe town is the second largest community in Aninri Local Government Area (L.G.A.) in Enugu State, Nigeria second only to Oduma L.G.A. Nenwe is situated in the tropical rain forest of the South Eastern Igbo plain in the present Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. It is bounded to the North by Mgbowo community in the Awgu Local Government Area and to the East by the Nome community in Nkanu East Local Government Area, to the South by the Oduma and Ndiabo communities both in Aninri Local Government Area. Nenwe Community comprises four villages which are: Uhueze, Emudo, Amorji and Agbada. The four villages that make up Nenwe have similar customs and traditions. The Nenwe people believe in Chukwu (Supreme Deity) as well as lesser deities such as 'Ala' (mother earth), 'ofo na ogu' (god of equity). The Nenwe people engage in recreational activities like the village boxing (*mgba obodo*), cultural festivals (*oriri-ala*), and the *ikoro odabara* and *akpakora* music and dancing. The Nenwe people uphold good moral ethics and sanction whoever goes against the laws of the land and commits 'nso ala' (sacrilege). For instance, during the 'oriri-ala' festival, a woman suspected to be unfaithful to her husband is commanded by the chiefs to cook for her husband with no foot wear so that she would have direct contact with

the 'ala' (mother earth) that will either acquit her or condemn her. If the woman is guilty, her tongue will gradually pull out until she confesses and then dies. But if she is innocent, she will be compensated and celebrated along with her friends and well wishers at the *Orie-agu* (market square) accompanied with dancing and merriment. The Nenwe tradition prohibits incest, bestiality, murder and stealing. Such acts are regarded as 'aruru ala' (taboo against the mother earth), and warrant total banishment from the entire community (Chukwubuike, 1984). Not until recently, an average Nenwe man was a polygamist. Nenwe men believe in marrying more than one wife because having many children will help them in the family's work which will improve their economic conditions. Before the arrival of the British to Nigeria, the Village Council was the highest political unit in Nenwe. The Village council administration consisted of the Council of elders which was the executive and judicial authority of the village assembly which was open to all adult males. The council of elders was made up of individuals of the most senior age grades who usually met at the 'obodo' (village square) at regular intervals and during emergencies to discuss matters affecting the community socially and judicially. Oftentimes, the ('Ali' oracle) shrine and the oracle cult were the sources for which judicial authorities were vetted.

The linguistic situation within the Nenwe speech community is not different from what is obtainable from Enugu State, Nigeria as whole except that Nenwe-Igbo is the variety of Igbo that is largely and homogenously spoken. However, the standard Igbo language serves a number of social, educational, economic, and political functions within the community. For instance, it is the language of campaigns and dissemination



of information. The Igbo language is also one of the languages of curriculum within the area as it is studied and taught at both the primary and secondary school levels where literacy materials in the language are used. The Igbo language dominates the commercial space in the area. Most transactions are negotiated in Igbo between buyers and sellers. The language is also mainly used in commercial advertising, mass media and public sensitization.

The English language also enjoys its official status, and it is mainly used for official transactions especially within government circles. It is also a compulsory subject of the curriculum in schools. The English language is used in religious functions as some churches in the area conduct their worship and services in English and Igbo as well. The Nigerian Pidgin (a hybrid language) is another code or medium used in Nene. This language form mainly serves the function of bridging the communication gap between Igbo speakers and non Igbo speakers who may not be proficient in the English or the Igbo language.

This paper is organized in different sections: section 1 is the introduction while section 2 provides a background literature on slang. Section 3 provides an overview on the youth in the Nene community while section 4 discusses the methodology of data collection and analysis. Section 5 focuses on data presentation, description, and analysis of youth slang in the Nene community while section 6 summarizes and concludes the study.

## 2. Slang Language

Slang is a style category within language use which occupies an extreme position on the spectrum of formality. Slang is the end of the line that lies beyond mere informality or colloquialism where language is considered too racy, raffish, novel, or unsavoury for use in conversation (Thorne, 1995, p.1). Slang has been identified as a special genre of language mostly used by a group of young people (Ukpong, 2010). It is used as a mark of intimacy and performs other social functions such as the exclusion of children and adults from the intimate circle by using forms of language through which speakers function within social sub-groups.

In her study of slang expressions in Ibibio, Ukpong (2010) maintains that slang expressions are used to induce humour, introduce informality, and showcase style. She claims that there is a transition from slang to idiomatic expressions and that this shows that slang expressions are constantly self-reviewing. McCrindle (2012) argues that slang may be characterized as an informal language variety that includes new and impolite words and meanings, usually used among particular groups of people such as youths, teenagers, and professional groups. He cites examples of slang usage as shown below from the British English perspective:

kiddie fiddler	-	a paedophile
knocking shop	-	a brothel
kooky	-	strange (crazy), eccentric

It is evident that even though the above words and expressions may be part of the words or expressions in the English language, they have acquired new meanings which are based on metaphors and metonymies. Slang expressions are generally words and expressions outside conventional use that is unique to a particular social group. Gonzalez (1994, p.201) maintains that slang is an area of lexis in a permanent state of flux consisting of colourful words and phrases which characterize various social and professional groups, especially when these terms are used in in-group communication. Slang provides and reinforces social identity but it is also used in society at large to achieve an air of informality and relaxation. He further notes that of all social groups, young people are the most active group in the use and renovation of slang and unconventional language. He further adds that young people exhibit great social dynamism and are receptive to changes in fashion, music, sports, and speech. They have little political power but they may use slang as a counter-cultural tool.

Okon (2004) has undertaken a study of slang among students of higher institutions in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. She maintains that slang language use is very creative and yet constantly changing based on emerging trends within the students' social universe. Since young people are the drivers of the innovative use of language in any particular social environments, she concludes that it is obvious that the university campuses are veritable sites for the development of slang expressions. McCrindle (2012, p.53) is of the opinion that young people's choice of slang expressions is quite often an extension of a particular youth subculture to which they belong or identify. While certain new words can be identified with each generation, young people often adopt terms and

concepts to exclude others from their social space. Sometimes, young people change the meanings, spelling, and pronunciation of words and expressions. They mix slang up and personalize it. McCrindle (2012, p.57) further identifies the following characteristics of youth slang:

- i) Blended words, which comprise of single words derived from the parts of two words e.g. *chillax* – chill out and relax, *wiggard*, a white male who acts like a black male.
- ii) Virtual words, which involve computer words: *cyberslacking*, surfing the internet during work time, *blogosphere*, part of the internet dominated by blogs.
- iii) Analogous words, which are used to refer to things that bear some sort of resemblance to the things or actions they denote, for instance, *ice* refers to stone jewellery, particularly diamond because of its close resemblance to frozen water.
- iv) Onomatopoeic words, which imitate sounds associated with the object or action it denotes doof-doof for electronically generated music, bling-bling for jewellery, bang-bang for sustained violent sex.
- v) Gender-specific words, which are used by members of one sex group or addressed to members of a particular sex group.

From the above examples, it is clear that youth slang is therefore deliberately created to exclude people outside the group. It is notorious for baffling parents and is a tongue reserved for peer-on-peer communication. The youth construct special languages to facilitate communication among themselves as part of their socialization process. This language which is basically slang may be vulgar and unintelligent with some level of

informality.

Youth slang is basically creative and innovative. Creativity is a useful concept for establishing the potentiality of particular linguistic patterns. A number of word formation strategies, such as borrowing, blending, calquing, code-mixing, and reduplication, may be employed to ensure the creativity of youth slang. They combine a mixture of languages in addition to their own sociolect which are internally resourceful. In describing the creativity of youth slang, Albrecht (1993) points out that the fertility of specific lexical fields, abundance of expressive speech, use of non-standard word-formation phenomena, and borrowing from English and other language resources are attributed to the homogenizing influence of global youth culture.

Closely related to creativity is the notion of exclusion as a feature of youth slang. This is also known as the boundary-marking function of language, where the youth utilize language as a tool of exclusion. Bogopa (1996) argues that the youth use language to communicate in whatever socialization process – the idea being to exclude young children and adults. In most cases, other youth who are not integrated into mainstream subculture are also excluded from understanding their linguistic repertoire and ideologies (Mensah, 2012).

Generally, this kind of exclusion fits into Halliday's (1976) conceptualization of youth slang as an anti-language or Androutsopoulos' (2000) idea of underworld argots in which effective communication depends on exchanging meanings which are not accessible to the ordinary person. Another important feature of youth slang is its deviance from the established linguistic order of the society. This deviant language use may encompass

the free use of insults, taboo expressions, swearwords, and curses. This kind of language use is directly linked to aggressive behaviour, considering that language affects thought and perception. This brazen use of language by the youth does not confirm to the social perception of the society. Some youth have knowledge of language that is more tolerable to the society, yet they refuse to employ it in order to identify their individuality and collectivism as well as to express solidarity and fight established norms (Mensah, 2012).

Youth slang is highly dynamic and self-renewing. Mashiri (1999) maintains that the metaphors found in youth slang are not static. They keep on renewing, fading away gradually or begin to acquire new meanings. Some slang expressions are very ephemeral or short-lived. Their use depends on a given temporal space that is time bound. Importantly, youth slang is group-oriented, and is fashioned particularly to satisfy the linguistic needs of the group.

Nelsen and Rosenbaum (1972, p. 273) have asserted that the study of slang is a starting point to clarify the role of unconventional language in socialization which situates it within distinct subcultures. The study of youth slang in an urban-rural setting like the Nenwe community has not been documented in the literature and no research has been undertaken to shed light on youth slang in Nenwe which is growing as part of the identity formation indices in the community. The slang of youth serves to identify the youth as culturally distinct, to transmit values and norms, to express approval, hostility and other attitudes, and to reinforce the selective perception and categorization of the social environment.

### 3. The Youth in Nenwe Community

In Nenwe Community, the concept of youth was fluid. The local culture varied as to what was viewed as proper point of transition from one group to another. However, with the establishment of the age grade system, the categorization of youth is taken to be from 13-39 years. The age group system in Nenwe is a social group which consists of males of similar or close age ranges with common identity and close ties over a long period of time. Each age group is referred to as 'age grade'. The females of the same age group as their male counterparts are not members of the age grade system. The age grade is exclusively for the males. Each age grade elects its leader and undertakes communal duties such as clearing the road, maintaining the streams and markets and also donating to the overall development of the community. It is mandatory for every male member of the Nenwe community to belong to an age-grade. The age grade classification in the community is as follows:

1. Uke Ovu - 1<sup>st</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 90- upwards
2. Uke Eboo - 2<sup>nd</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 80-89
3. Uke Eto - 3<sup>rd</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 70-79
4. Uke Elo - 4<sup>th</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 60-69
5. Uke Ise - 5<sup>th</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 50-59
6. Uke Ishii - 6<sup>th</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 40-49
7. Uke Assa - 7<sup>th</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 30-39
8. Uke Asato - 8<sup>th</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 20-29
9. Uke Itolu - 9<sup>th</sup> Age-grade of males between the age of 13-19

Since this research is centered on youth slang, we have examined the language of the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> age grades (13-39) which fall within the age range of the youth in Nenwe Community. Apart from the first age grade, every other age grade is subject to review every ten years for the upgrading and promotion of its members to a senior grade, hence there is predictable transition and rites of passage from one age grade to another.

The youth culture in Nenwe is highly hybridized. It combines the traditional masquerade society with a number of performative genres. There is a common goal that unites all the youth subcultures, specifically the quest for collectivism and individualism (cf. Pojular, 2008). There is the sharing of a common set of objectives; special language, unique style, distinctive values, norms and a sense of belonging (cf. Mensah, 2012). In the community, youth also show great enthusiasm and interest in music (Nigerian hip hop culture), dance style, dressing sense (wearing sagged jeans) home movies, football especially the English premier league and mobile phone (testing and pinging) (cf. Batan, 2005).

Since the community is a semi-urban area, the majority of them are traders and farmers who generate their own income and empower themselves economically. As a result of the peculiar socio-historical trajectory that informs youth sub-cultures there is usually a clash of interest with the orthodox members of the community. The Nenwe youth use language and other social interests to protest against societal inequalities that do not favour their situation.

#### 4. Methodology of Data Collection and Analysis

This study utilizes qualitative sociolinguistic methods of data collection which made use of oral interviews and participant observation. Interviews were arranged with male respondents from the three age grades to elicit information on why they use slang, the motivation for such language use, how meanings of the slang expressions are construed as well as what the youth think are the perceptions of older members of the society towards the youth slang. Responses from the subjects were tape recorded and transcribed in a field note. The sociolinguistic domains where the data were collected included playgrounds, market places, new yam festival ceremonies, village square meetings, homes, traditional marriage ceremonies, and farmlands. In this way, natural data were recorded from respondents. The participant observation part of the data collection method was done with the initial consent of the respondents, but they might not have been aware of how and when the data were elicited from them using this method. The descriptive method of analysis has been employed in the analysis and interpretation of data obtained for this study. This method is effective in providing a detailed description of language use by the Nenwe youth and also in documenting the effect and perceptions of such language use. The method also allows for the reporting of the various linguistic processes found in youth slang formation in Nenwe Community.

Twenty male respondents were selected from three age grades: 7<sup>th</sup> age grade (*uke asaa*, 30-39 years), 8<sup>th</sup> age grade (*uke asato*, 20-29 years) and the 9<sup>th</sup> age grade (*uke itolu*, 13-19 years). Another twenty respondents (10 males and 10 females) from the ages of 65 to 80 years were also selected. The socio-biographical data obtained from the

respondents reflected their age, occupation, education, the number of languages spoken, and religion. These demographic variables reflect the linguistic nature of the youth slang. The variables as they relate to the number of sampled respondents were calculated based on simple statistical percentage analysis. The percentage of respondents' age is shown in Table 1 which reveals that 20 respondents were selected from each group constituting 25% of all the age grades.

**Table 1: Age of Respondents**

Age	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
13-19	20	25
20-29	20	25
30-39	20	25
65-80	20	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Occupation of Respondents**

Occupation	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Student	28	35
Civil Servant	15	18.7
Artisan	20	25
Farmer	17	21.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Educational Background of Respondents**

Educational Attainment	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
M.Sc/Ph.D (postgraduate)	6	7.5
BA/B.Sc (first degree holders)	12	15

NCE	15	18.7
WASC	25	31.3
First School Leaving Certificate	16	20
No Formal Educational Training	6	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Multilingual Statuses of Respondents**

Competence in a Number of Languages	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
5	9	11.2
4	41	51.2
3	15	18.8
2	15	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5: Religious Background of Respondents**

Religion	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Christianity	40	50
African Traditional Religion	17	21.2
Non-religious	23	28.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the occupation of the respondents and demonstrates that students were the highest of the sampled population with 35% followed by artisans with 25%. Farmers and civil servants constituted 21.3% and 18.7% respectively of the study population. Table 3 shows the literacy level of the respondents, and it indicates that holders of West African School Certificate (WASC) constituted 31.3% of the respondents followed by holders of First School Certificate with 20%. The other qualifications of first degree,

National Certificate of Education, postgraduate degree and people with no formal educational attainment are 15%, 18.7%, 7.5% and 20%. respectively. Table 4 shows the linguistic codes in the repertoire of the respondents. These include Igbo, English and the Nigerian Pidgin. However, two respondents showed competence in two other languages, Ibibio and Urhobo. Table 4 further reveals that respondents who are competent in four codes (51.2%) constituted the highest population of the sampled respondents. This is followed by respondents with three and two codes with 18.8% each and respondents with five codes (11.2%). Table 5, shows that 40 respondents (50%) who are Christians, constituted the highest number of the studied population. 17 respondents constituting 21.2% were worshippers of African traditional religions while 23 respondents (28.8%) said they were not of any religious inclination.

## 5. Data Presentation, Description and Analysis

In the following sections, we have categorized and analyzed the youth slang expressions in the Nenwe community on the basis of their semantic imports. The youth slang in this community also exhibit high degree of linguistic strategies which results in the creation of new lexical items or the extension of the meanings of already existing lexical items. Based on such strategies, we have highlighted some of the linguistic processes involved. These are examined below.

### A. Address Slang Expressions

In Nenwe community slang expressions are used to fill a niche in everyday language, occupying a middle ground between standard and informal expressions. Among the

youth of this community, slang affects many subjects, for example sex, abortion, drugs, crime, violence and cohabitation and is specific to particular social contexts as shown below:

- (a) old show – ‘someone with a good talent’
- (b) ónyéńké ányí – ‘someone that belongs to a group’
- (c) **éze ńzū** – ‘a rich person ‘
- (d) óbátá ósú – ‘a rough person, trouble maker’
- (e) nwókē ikē – ‘a gallant male fighter’
- (f) irish potatoe – ‘a young woman’
- (g) tomato Jos – ‘a beautiful woman or girl’
- (h) ekelebe – ‘police’
- (i) maga – ‘paymaster ‘
- (l) paale – ‘father’
- (m) maale – ‘mother’

The data in (a-m) represents various address terms used by the youth in the community. These are specially constructed terms which are only accessible to the youth. They demonstrate local realizations of the linguistic needs and aspirations of these youth. In (a) for instance, the slang *old show* is metaphorically used to refer to someone who is greatly talented. The everyday expression for such a gifted person in Igbo is *ónyéńka* ‘a

talented person’. The expression *old show* implies that the person is an ‘old hand’ talented in what he or she does. In b the expression *onyenkeanyi* represents a ‘member of a group’ metaphorically but literally means ‘our person’.. This suggests that new meaning has been achieved through a mapping from the concrete source domain to the abstract target domain in the conceptual system (Tsang, 2009). In (c) *Éze ńzū*, ‘rich person’, is used by the youth to refer to a rich person who is generous in the distribution of his resources. Similarly, *óbátá ósú* ‘a rough person’ (d) is a slang expression for a ‘trouble maker’. The expression connotes the idea of situations changing at the entrance of someone. In every day Igbo usage, such a person is called *onye* ‘di aghara’ but the youth have been able to establish a relationship between the source domain in standard Igbo and the target domain in youth sociolect, hence, there is the creation of new lexical item and meaning. The reference to a young beautiful girl or woman as *Irish potatoes or tomatoes Jos* in (f) and (g) is direct metaphorical reference within a particular space and time. The freshness of these food items (potatoes and tomatoes) and their colours are conceptually linked to typify the beauty of a girl/woman. In this way, metaphors extend the lexical resources of the prevailing linguistic resources to adjust the change of the conceptual system.

Another domain of slang use among Nenwe youth are lexical items which are mainly borrowed from Nigerian Pidgin. These forms are used mainly in general conversation among the youth as shown below:

**(a) Nouns**

- i. swag – ‘style, mode of operation ‘

- ii. babe - 'a beautiful girl'
- iii. Boko Haram - 'a Hausa person'
- iv. canopy - 'head gear'
- v. show - 'girl friend'
- vi. ókpéké - 'showy young woman'
- vii. ómó Kirikri - 'incriminating material in exam'

**(b) Verbs**

- i. ginger - 'to encourage'
- ii. chill down - 'to relax or wait'
- iii. arrange - 'source for money'
- iv. maintain - 'clam down'
- v. fuck up - 'disappoint, fail'
- vi. shun - 'forget about (something)'

**(c) Adjectives**

- i. smoli - 'slim (mature) girl'
- ii. bad - 'extreme, nice'
- iii. whorsky - 'terrible'

- iv. jamblastic - 'excellent'
- v. swagerlicious - 'modern, contemporary'

Based on our findings, these general slang expressions are mainly nouns, verbs and adjectives. They involve widening of the application of meaning of lexical items in Nigerian Pidgin or the creation of new lexical items, which helps in enriching youth slang vocabulary and expanding its internal resourcefulness and functionality. The form *Boko Haram*, for instance, is a religious sect which is mainly responsible for the insurgency in Northern Nigeria but the meaning has been expanded to cover every person from the North. This is a case of semantic widening. The form *Òkpéké* is borrowed from the *Keggite* language, a socio-cultural palm wine drinkers club that operates in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The use of English regular verbs, like *ginger*, *maintain*, *arrange*, and *shun*, in the language of Nenwe youth demonstrates the metaphorical relationship between source domain and target domain. New meanings are acquired by these forms thereby representing new expectations.

**B. Severity Slang Expressions**

Severe, strong or taboo slang expressions refer to language forms that relate to sex or seem to diminish one's personality. They are generally forbidden for the by social norms in every context. However, youth in Nenwe seem to use these kinds of strong language as slang expressions freely with no form of finesse or recourse to social ethics guiding the use of such words and expression. We have discussed sexual metaphorical slang expressions, insulting slang expressions, curse slang expressions, and swear slang



expressions as the different kinds of severe slang expression elicited from the respondents.

### C. Sexual Metaphorical Slang

Metaphors provide vivid images that make communication more effective. Sexual insinuations are natural part of everyday discourse. Nenwe youth use sexual metaphors to construct their sexual orientation, enhance intimacy, and express their thoughts about safe sexual practices. Most times, this verbal behaviour is used to negotiate power relations, especially hegemonic masculinity. Here are examples of sexual metaphors:

- (a) ókpòntù - 'a good sexual performer'
- (b) itā atiri - '(chewing artery) – having sex'
- (c) ókpù útù ákpū égò - 'one who has regular erection without money'
- (d) **ńrińwā** nono - 'large breasts'
- (e) **òròbókibò** - 'a fat lazy girl'
- (f) **éléwé úkwù égbòu éwū** - 'a lady with large hips'
- (g) la cream / **ásā** - 'a beautiful young girl'

Sexual metaphors are important component of cultural communication among the Nenwe youth where conventional forms and expressions are semantically recreated to carry vulgarized meanings. Contextually, these metaphors are used to perform certain functions as the expressions below show:

- (a) Fisherman no day wear raincoat - A fisherman does not wear a raincoat.

- (b) Enwehu onye na eri ule na mkpo ya - No one eats banana with the peels

The expressions above are used to demonstrate the youth disdain for the use of condoms. In (a), the metaphorical interpretation is that if the fisherman could dare the river or ocean by swimming with bare body, the rain should not pose a threat and he can always defy the rain. In the same vein, the use of condom should not stand on their way of maximum sexual pleasure. In (b), the act of using condom is metaphorically conceptualized as eating banana with peels. Respondents argue that the peels inhibit the optimal taste of the banana the way condoms can obstruct maximum bodily contact and sexual pleasure.

### D. Insulting Slang Expressions

Insulting slang expressions are forms that are degrading and affect the psyche of the insulted party. These forms are deliberately intended to be rude and may be accompanied by offensive words. Insulting slang expressions among Nenwe youth include:

- (a) álù bula idù - 'bushman'
- (b) ézi - 'pig'
- (c) **ńkitā árā** - 'mad dog'
- (d) éwú - 'goat'
- (e) jaki - 'donkey'
- (f) ákpá - 'drunkard'
- (g) **ńwamgbékē** - 'ugly girl'

From our findings, most times, the people these insults are directed to do not need to do anything particularly offensive to merit these insults. Our findings also reveal that such insults are used to communicate emotion like anger or frustration more readily. These are commonplace occurrences which positively correlate with hostility and aggression.

### E. Curse Slang Expressions

Another component of youth slang that is popular in Nenwe community and is also part of the severe use of slang is the indiscriminate use of curses. The curse expressions are used by the youth to express wishes that adversity or misfortune befalls a person, group of people, animals or objects. Through curse expressions, the youth conjure supernatural powers to cast spell on their potential addresses. Curse words and expressions which have become common place among Nenwe youth slang include:

8. (a) Ódúkwawū vem - 'May it not be well with you'
- (b) Ódúkwawū ka ahuikere gbara idu gbaa okopia - 'May it be to you as worthless as groundnut peels'
- (c) Dabàkwā la yóyó Obulorum - 'May you fall in the 'public toilet of Obulorum clan'
- (d) Ájónwà alá èhé lā Ikpèré ákā - 'A totally condemned person'
- (e) Èkwékē Ikpùrū ényā - 'An expression used to curse a flirting sexually attractive young girl'

- (f) Àli Nenwe tigbuo wu - 'May Nenwe deity strike you dead'

The curse expressions as shown in (8) are degrading slang to whomever they are addressed. They are used to diminish one's personality. The slang expressions produce the effect of a deliberate disrespect, lack of politeness, and ultimately wounding the emotion of others. In (c) for instance, Obulorum clan is the only one in the Nenwe community that still uses open and public toilets and the reference to it in cursing someone is a protest and disdain by the youth against the practice. In (f) where the name of a deity is invoked, it helps to add force or solemnity to the curses.

### F. Swear Words/Expressions

Another characteristic feature of Nenwe youth slang is the use of swear expressions. These are profane or obscene expressions of strong feeling evoked by anger or surprise. Swear words are mostly used when one needs to convince others about the truth of what had been said. Mensah (2012) maintains that swear words constitute one of the communicative styles used in the creation and maintenance of group identity. The Nenwe youth slang invokes the name of gods and ancestors while swearing. Some of such swear expressions are:

- (a) Makà Òlúwā - 'Because of God'
- (b) Évùm áji ádú kwahuya - 'There is no hair in my armpit'
- (c) Nnàm la ényi ágbàhūkwā mgbá - 'My father and an elephant have never wrestled'

(d) Olumgbuom - 'May I not survive an oath'

Some of these swear expressions appear to be proverbial in nature, example (b) and (c), demonstrate this. Lakoff and Turner's (1989) theory of the ethnography of proverbs treats them as species of metaphor from cognitive and performance-based perspectives. Their theory maintains that proverbs use arises in a context of 'cultural specifics' from which it can be abstracted (cf. Mensah, 2013). In (b), the expression connotes that one's hands are clean: one does not bear any ill feelings or grudges towards another. In (c), the expression implies that there is no relationship between the speaker and the addressee that would cause the speaker to hate or be vindictive towards the addressee. Proverbs in this sense have been used as a metaphorical extension of meaning and thought. This is why Gibb (1994, p.309) maintains that "proverbs appear as special cases of the more general process of metaphorical understanding". The expressions in (a) and (d) involve supernatural forces which are believed to possess the power to bless or destroy. Reverence to the gods or an ancestor is an important factor in Igbo worldview, culture and spirituality. They are regarded as the bridge between the living and the dead and are regarded as psychologically superior to living beings (Abunaku, 1999). Using these supernatural forces in swear slang expressions reinforce reverence and solemnity to superior powers.

## F. Linguistic Processes in Nenwe Youth Slang

Youth slang is generally said to be creative and innovative because of the construction of new lexical items, the widening of semantic domains, and collocation of forms. In this

section, we discuss some of the linguistic processes involved in the creation of Nenwe youth slang. These include linguistic strategies such as compounding, borrowing, code-mixing and reduplication.

## G. Compounding

Compounding is a process whereby two or more lexemes constitute a stem. Among Nenwe youth slang, the following exocentric and endocentric compound expressions were observed.

- (a) Éwú Hausa (goat + Hausa) - 'a fool'.
- (b) Òji-Úgwo (holder + debt) - 'debtor'
- (c) Ónyé-órū (person + work) - 'organizer'
- (d) Ónyé – Mmemmé (person - activity) - 'entertainer'

It should be noted that (a) is an instance of exocentric compound because none of the lexemes can function as a head. In other words, there is absence of semantic transparency between the two lexemes that form the compound. There is no correlation between ewu 'goat' and Hausa that would lead to the derivation of a fool. From the standpoint of conceptual metaphor, Ewu Hausa, Hausa's goat' is the source domain that is signified whereas a fool is the target domain that is the signifier. Hence, a conceptual parameter has been established through cross-domain mapping which is motivated by some semantic considerations. The examples in (b) to (d) are instances of endocentric compounds which are headed and semantically transparent. It is also easy to predict

the overall meaning of the resulting word from the meaning of the individual lexemes that constitute it. However, it is important to note that since these forms are specially created with new meanings by the youth as a form of their social practice, they all involve metaphorical reading and understanding.

## H. Code-Mixing/Switching

Code-mixing or code-switching is an inevitable sociolinguistic behaviour of Nenwe youth slang. As bilingual performers, they use this device not in filling conceptual gaps or as random interference process as it were but as a deliberate strategy for the manipulation, improvisation and distortion of the normal course of language to promote identity and foster integration. Instances of forms and expressions that are code-mixed in Nenwe youth slang include:

- (a) áká gum (gummy hands) - a greedy / stingy person
- (b) nwa guy - a guy
- (c) ásā baby - a fine girl
- (d) ónyé show - an entertainer
- (e) olee way? - where is the road?
- (f) àtú down - coming back home

We agree with Viey-Wild (2009:697) that “linguistic manipulation through code switching, mixing or creating hybrid expressions is a widespread phenomenon that forms an intrinsic part of contemporary youth culture in Africa”. The general pattern of code-

mixing in the data is Igbo-English, where the code boundary is distinct and functionally operating in the context of use. The examples in also involve the cross domain mapping within the utterance from a concrete source to an abstract target domain where a new meaning is processed in the conceptual system. For instance, in(a), *aka gum (gummy hands)* is metaphorically conceptualized as a *stingy person* given the transfer of meaning to create a new expectation.

## I. Borrowing

Closely related to the phenomenon of code-mixing is borrowing, which is also as a result of language contact. The repertoire of Nenwe youth slang is found to display some degree of borrowing from languages like English, Ibibio, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin though Igbo is evidently the lexifier language. Instances of borrowing are furnished in Table 6. All the borrowed items in the repertoire of Nenwe youth slang are content words which carry what Barker (2002, p. 23) calls “the descriptive payload of the sentence or the ‘meat’ of the message”. The study discovers that borrowing is a productive strategy for expanding slang expressions among the Nenwe youth. One reason for borrowing from a number of languages is to utilize the social characteristics associated with the forms and integrate same into their own lexicon. Therefore borrowing among Nenwe youth is a linguistic necessity.

## J. Reduplication

Reduplication is “a morphological process in which some part of a base is repeated to the left or the right or occasionally in the middle” (Spencer, 1991, p. 13). In the

repertoire of Nenwe youth slang, only complete reduplication has been observed as we can see in the data below:

12. (a) wé wé - us  
 (b) yori yori - young girl  
 (c) zubu zubu - eating well  
 (d) kai kai - locally distilled gin  
 (e) sam sam - very correct  
 (f) nkiti nkiti - silent

Mensah (2011) refers to this kind of reduplication as frozen reduplication, which is basically non-derived. In other words, each of the constituents does not have a meaning in isolation, but meaning is obtained when they are combined. It is noted that the phenomenon of reduplication is not a productive mechanism among Nenwe youth in enriching their slang vocabulary.

**Table 6: Evidence of Borrowing in Nenwe Youth Slang**

Lexical Source	Borrowed Item	Literary Meaning	Metaphorical Meaning
Ibibio	kop no mi	listen to me	love portion
	kwat nkpe	Scratch and pay	prostitute
	nwatawat	i have not driven	commercial cyclist
Hausa	aboki	friend	
	Boko Haram	insurgency sect.	a Hausa person

	Adamu	a name	a foolish person
Yoruba	okada	-	commercial cyclist
	tokunbo	a name	fairly used goods
	ashawo	-	prostitute
English	pale	pal	friend
	popsy	dad	dad
	maintain	uphold	be calm
N i g e r i a n Pidgin	fuck	-	sexual intercourse
	misyarn	misinform	lie
	yabbis	-	joke
	kasale	-	problem

### K. Semantic Extension

Semantic extension arises when words with fixed coded meanings evolve to other meanings or contain other semantic substances. This is why Shindo (2009:1) maintains that the interpretation of meaning is essentially a psychological and communicative activity. Among Nenwe youth, where there is observable semantic change, there is cognitive transfer that arises in their attempt to conceptualize entities and represent them linguistically. Instances of semantic extensions in Nenwe youth slang include:

- (a) crier - handset  
 (b) maim - to beat  
 (c) production - money  
 (d) bottle - beer

- (e) waist - vagina
- (f) cowbell - large breasts
- (g) machine - (new) car
- (h) lick pepper - eat
- (i) tanker - heavy drinker

The expression *crier* in (a) is one who goes about to disseminate information, usually from the king's palace to the entire community. Given the advancement in mobile telecommunication technology, the duties of a town crier have been largely redefined as people mostly get information affecting the welfare and well-being of the community through their mobile phones. The youth have therefore extended the meaning of the traditional town crier to cover that of the handset phone from a metaphorical point of view.

In (b), the meaning of the form *maim* has been delimited to the act of *beating*, *maiming* is therefore conceptualized with a different experience which is *beating*. Nenwe youth refer to money as *production*. This follows from the idea that it is what is manufactured or produced that is sold to earn money. In this way, a more abstract domain is used to represent a concrete domain from a cognitive perspective. The meaning of *beer* is derived from that of a *bottle*; hence, *bottle* is extended to cover all kinds of *liquor*. In this way, a word has been used to describe something it does not literally denote. McGlone (2007, p.109) refers to this kind of connection as “unconscious metaphoric correspondence that structure human concepts.

The conceptualization of *vagina* as waist (e) in Nenwe youth slang is another form of conceptual contrast whose essence is to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another (Romero and Soria 2003). Similarly, the reconceptualization of human breasts as ‘branded powdered milk’ follows from the regularity of contrast given that human breast also produces milk (for babies). There is therefore the mapping of meaning between the source domain (cowbell branded milk) and the target domain (human breasts) which are neighbouring domains of experience. The representation of a new car in (g) as machine is also a form of semantic extension. Before now, the term *machine* was basically used to refer to factory equipment and later to *motor bikes* given their effectiveness in minimizing manual/human labour and maximizing speed and efficiency. The experience of machine has therefore been processed in terms of a new car which is expected to be maximally efficient. The act of ‘licking pepper’ in (h) is a form of semantic extension given that it is a part of the general process of eating but youth in Nenwe use this expression to conceptualize the general act of eating. In other words, the act of licking pepper (a part of food) has been extended in meaning to cover the act of eating generally. A *tanker* in (i) is said to be a heavy duty vehicle usually used in conveying liquid such as water, kerosene, and petrol. The form has been hiked metaphorically to a person who drinks excessively. The quantum of the content a tanker carries is mapped to the quantity of alcohol consumed by a drinker, thus, creating a new meaning on the basis of parallel equivalence.

## L. Nominalization

This is the process in which other word classes are converted to nouns. In other

words, nouns are derived from categories such as verbs and adjectives. From the data, we found instances of nominalizations in the repertoire of Nenwe youth slang.

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>
(a) wak – eat	wakis – food
(b) Yab – insult	yabis – insult
(c) winch – a witch	winching – (bad) luck

The source language for the forms in (a) is the Nigerian pidgin which does not manifest traces of affixation. We therefore conclude that given the social expansion of Nigerian pidgin, it is gradually being creolized and showing features that result from its remarkable contact with its lexifier language, which is English. It is however important to note that nominalization is not a productive word formation process among Nenwe youth slang.

### M. The Use of Phrasal Verbs

Nenwe youth slang consists of phrasal verbs (a verb and a particle which co-occur to form a single semantic verbal unit). Examples include the following:

(a) shutdown – sleep
(b) ball out – go out
(c) show background – come to the house
(d) no send – be unconcerned

(e) free me – stop talking (what I do not like)
(f) jazz down – lie/kneel down
(g) pull over – stay aside
(h) park well – be careful
(i) fall hand – mess up
(j) buy market – be in trouble
(k) dey bam – calm down
(l) fall mugu – act foolishly

The meaning of the phrasal verbs is non-compositional and unpredictable. The meaning of each phrasal verb is metaphorical. For instance, the phrasal verbs, *ball out*, *jazz down* and *pull over* (b, f & g), each is a combination of a verb with prepositions which not only resulted in creating a new word unit; the new unit also acquired a meaning different from the two separate words that formed it.

### N. Irregular Meaning Correspondence

In the repertoire of Nenwe youth slang, it is also observed that certain English words are metaphorically assigned completely different meaning from their meanings. In other words, there is no regularity in meaning correspondence. Such forms include:

<b>Form (English)</b>	<b>Literal meaning</b>	<b>Metaphorical meaning</b>
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(a)	menstruation	period	lack of money	(e)	owuite	hunger	lack of money
(b)	fling	throw away	sell (illegally)	(f)	oringo	one who takes bribe	enjoyment
(c)	weed	unwanted grass	Indian hemp	(g)	okpoali	dame gun	sophisticated gun
(d)	firewood	source of energy	money	(h)	mkpara	gun	sophisticated gun
(e)	physical	structure of human body	money	(i)	ajirija	stone	bullet
(f)	cast	throw	being loquacious				
(g)	link	connect	see				

The conventional meaning associated with these forms in (a-g) became frozen and acquires new meanings in the context of Nenwe youth slang, a phenomenon known as semantic decomposition. The actual quality described by the source domain (literal meaning) for each English form has been mapped unto the target domain (metaphorical meaning). The target domain is understood in terms of the source domain. There are instances where indigenous Igbo words are used in this sense as shown below.

<b>Form (Igbo)</b>	<b>Literal meaning</b>	<b>Metaphoricalm meaning</b>
(a) akpuruka	strong person	scavenger
(b) chere kam bia	wait I am coming	cheap product
(c) chere were	wait and take	cheap product
(d) onwero	nothing is there	nothing is happening

The examples above further reveal how conceptual parameters have been established through cross-domain mapping. The choice terms from the source domain to the target domain are not random but motivated by semantic considerations, among others (Baider and Gesuato 2003). For instance, referring to *a scavenger* metaphorically as *a strong person* shows the link in which meaning is transferred from an abstract domain (of strength) to the physical domain (of human object). This is a social practice which embodies the metaphor in question in some way.

Certain slang used by Nenwe youth are sourced from other youth subcultures, for example, the Nigerian popular music and home videos. These include:

(a)	titrate	-	to urinate
(b)	odeshi	-	protective medicine
(c)	twang	-	police cell
(d)	ekelebe	-	police
(e)	gobe	-	buttocks (of a woman)



- (f) otonto - locally brewed gin
- (g) combine - local gin and Indian hemp
- (h) awuf - free food, money or drink
- (i) moral - power
- (j) gbedu - dance
- (k) mala - eat
- (l) shakis - liquor

The kinds of meaning relation above do not reflect similarity-based extension of meaning but involve a reconceptualization of the whole area of experience in terms of another. This is because seemingly unrelated features of one concept are associated with another concept.

### **O. The Perception of Youth Slang in Nenwe**

Results from the field reveal that certain aspects of Nenwe youth slang, especially the severity slang expressions (taboo, sexual metaphors, insults, and swear words) do not conform to the social norm of the community. Some respondents refer to such language as absolutely appalling and horrifying while others view it degrading which can thus, can affect the decency and sensitivities of the community. Still, others argue that there are no bad languages but only bad intentions. Ugorji (2009) argues that politeness constitutes a vital part of the norms of linguistic communication which is crucial in the building and maintenance of social relationships. The conservative members of the Nenwe Community

maintain that youth slang operates at the very edge of what is acceptable and since language affects thought and perception, 'bad' language can be a major cause of offence to the public. It is believed that the linguistic behaviour of youth merely conforms to their already established anti-social behaviour. Youth slang is generally seen as a linguistic threat to children in the community because of the fear of what is regarded as corrupt linguistic influence. The general perception here is that speaking such a language may signal the beginning of truancy, which in turn may lead to other anti-social vices (cf. Mensah, 2012). For those who perceive Nenwe youth slang in positive light, they argue that such a language use should be seen as a part of the normal vocabulary of everyday colloquial language. The youth like to gather new experiences and exhibit a differing social dynamism which are usually against existing convention or established authority. The slang language therefore, provides a platform for them to articulate their subculture in addition to music, sports, dress sense, movies, and other interests.

The youth slang in Nenwe is a part of the adaptation process to the changing socio-political environment in which the youth find themselves. The use of the slang language is a reaction to the perceived ill-treatment that society offers its youth. We therefore agree with Mensah's (2012) assertion that the existence of youth subculture is universal but in a society where there are no expanding employment opportunities, one can see this economic factor pushing youth into deviant behaviour and the use of deviant language. It is important to note that the youth slang in Nenwe does not affect the intergenerational transfer of the Igbo language, rather, it encourages the youth to acquire the resources of more than one language and such a potential for bilingualism encourages youth slang

creativity.

## Summary and Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the sociolinguistic dynamics of youth slang in Nenwe Community in Enugu State, Nigeria. We have observed that the youth use a specially constructed language to create their identity and foster group solidarity. The study has observed that the youth slang is highly creative and innovative and is used to express a wide range of semantic implications. A number of linguistic strategies, such as compounding, borrowing, code-mixing, and reduplication, are employed to create this unique language slang and style. Most times, the normal course of language is manipulated, improvised, and distorted to construct this special language in an attempt to sustain the group's identity and promote its social dynamics. It has also been noted that the Nenwe youth slang is deeply rooted in metaphorical interpretation, a phenomenon which portrays how the youth slang (metaphorical messages) are transmitted from one cognitive domain (source) to the other (target). This reveals that the Nenwe youth slang has enormous socio-cultural embodiments and can be used as a window to understanding the youth's worldview and behavioural patterns.

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## A une petite fille

Petite fille aux mille tresses,  
Tu portes déjà des colliers,  
De boutons et de coquillages,  
Et des bagues aux doigts...  
Tu voudrais ressembler  
Aux femmes que tu vois,  
Que tu croises sur le chemin  
Du marigot, quand l'eau danse  
  
Dans la bassine qui te coiffe la tête.  
Tu voudrais tout comme elles  
Avoir de vrais bijoux,  
Des pagnes aux cent couleurs,  
Et des sandales aux pieds.  
Tu aimerais te maquiller  
Comme font tes aînées

Mais tu n'es encore  
qu'une petite fille aux mille tresses,  
Qui couronnent ta tête,  
Petite fille aux pieds nus... .

—*Anne-Marie Moscatelli*

# WHEN RELIGION THREATENS A NATION: ISLAMISATION AGENDA AND THE HIJAB CRISES IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

Religion plays a huge role in conflicts in Africa. One religious issue, which has lately generated many tensions in Nigeria, is the *hijab*—a mandatory veil for female believers of Islam. Its use in certain public institutions has led to discrimination, abuse, and human

rights violations. Against this backdrop, this study examines the contentious issue of the Hijab and the perceived Islamisation agenda in Nigeria, especially in the southern part of the country. Qualitative research methodology was adopted. The study revealed that the rejection of the *hijab* in public institutions and spaces in Christian-populated South is a contemporary issue triggered by suspicions of an Islamic agenda in a secular state.

**Keywords:** CAN, Sharia, Hijab, Islamisation, Buhari, Missionary Schools, Arabic, Boko Haram

## **Introduction**

Religion continues to be the source of peace, humanitarian concern, and pacifism (2003:180). There appear to be divergent views about the concept of religion from various disciplines. Religious studies cannot agree on a common definition of its subject matter (Bergunder 2014). As Greil (2009) puts it: “It seems safe to assert that no consensus on a definition of religion has been reached and that no consensus is likely to be reached in the foreseeable future” (2009: 136). This study proposes that religion is grounded in the belief in a god or Supreme Being. There are three major religions in Nigeria: Islam, Christianity, and Indigenous/ African Traditional Religion (IR/ATR).<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of the Nigerian population is associated with Islam or Christianity (Falola and Heaton 2008: 4). The palpable sentiment (below) of many Christians in Southern Nigeria is a prime example of adherents of a spiritual concept actively apply their beliefs to political goals, the mixing of religion and political ideology that Rourke (2003: 180) notes is found in many religions:

        The way Muslims support most of the policies and appointments of

1. Indigenous or African Traditional Religion may be used interchangeably in the study.

President Muhammadu Buhari government, and the approval of the use of Hijab in some of our schools are evidences that there are Islamisation and Northernization agendas ongoing. For example, Muslims and Northerners are in charge of every aspect of our nation's security and ministerial appointments. If you allow them a step, they will take a jump.<sup>2</sup>

Although religion has not been proven as a root cause of conflict on the African Continent, there is no doubt that it plays a huge role in conflict, especially in specific cases in Nigeria and Somalia (Love 2006; Basedau, Strüver, Vüllers, and Wegenast 2011:9). Moller states that:

Even though one might have thought that with modernity and globalization religion would recede into the background as far as politics and conflicts are concerned, we seem to be witnessing the exact opposite (2006:8).

Of course, the prevalence of conflict arising from religion and religious extremism is not new in Africa. Although it has been given adequate attention (Kung 2005; UNDP 2017), little or no space has, however, been devoted to the issue of religious symbol, such as the Hijab—a veil mandatory for female believers of the Islamic faiths.

Lately, the *hijab* has become a source of incessant conflict, especially in Nigeria—a country with a population of more than 190 million people, evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. Muslims in Nigeria include Sufis, Izalas, women's organisations, student organisations, emirate traditions, and ordinary people, as well as Boko Haram extremists. In Nigeria, Christians range from Catholics to mainstream Protestants to Evangelicals to Pentecostals to African syncretists (Paden 2015). This study examines

2. Oral Interview, Mrs Ukoh 55years, Trader, Christian, at Somorin Street, Obantoko, Abeokuta. Ogun State 13 December 2018.

the issue of the Islamisation of the country, which has arisen from government action and inaction; the right to the *hijab*, especially in missionary schools taken over by the government; and how the Nigerian state has responded to these issues.

This study is instructive for the following reasons; first, it exposes nature of the crises. Second, it helps to navigate the issue of religion in Africa in general and Nigeria, a secular and multi-ethnic country in particular. Third, it also helps our understanding of State response to these issues, especially with a leadership, widely believed by most Christians as nursing a Northernisation and Islamist agenda.

### **Islamisation of Nigeria: History and Growing Suspicion**

The birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is generally believed to be the early stage of a new religion, which later came to be known as Islam. During the early days of Islam, the prophet was believed to have sent a group of his early followers to Ethiopia when life in Mecca became unbearable as a result of persecution in the hand of Quraysh Oligarchy (Ali 1972 in Bello 2018). The arrival of the refugees marked the earliest contact between nascent Islam and Ethiopia, and this stands as a significant milestone and point of departure for the history of Islam in African continent.

By AD640 after the settlement of the Prophet and his followers in Ethiopia, the next nation to be conquered was Egypt (Bello 2018: 27). It is instructive to note that while Ethiopia accepted Islam through pacification, a violent strategy was adopted in Egypt. Indeed, Bello defines Islamisation as the process by which the people of North Africa were converted to Islam and became Muslims (2018: 27). Indeed, the Islamic religion has spread to regions throughout Africa where it is now predominant in places such



as Niger, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Nigeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Chad, and Somalia, and to other areas where there exist sizable minority populations such as Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, and Ghana (Hunwick 2005 in Clarke 2005: 6-7).

Islam was the first imported religion in Nigeria. It is widely claimed to have been brought into the country during the trans-Saharan trade in the seventh and eighth centuries. During this trade, the Berbers maintained trading routes used for this trade until later when the Arabs subsequently joined. Other ethnic groups such as the Fulani pastoralists, who had along the way, adopted Islam, also joined. With the influx of these foreigners into West Africa and Northern Nigeria, they mixed with the indigenous groups mainly dominated by the Hausas. However, by the nineteenth century, there was a jihad, spearheaded by Uthman Dan Fodio in 1804. It was dominated by the Fulbe, an originally pastoral people that had converted to Islam a long time before. Since that period, Islam became not just a State religion (Santén), but also a cultural ideology and movement. Dan Fodio is generally believed to have spread the Islamic religion and doctrines through violence. From Sokoto, Islam was spread down south. This proselytisation, though violently instilled, is generally understood as the origin of the Islamisation agenda.

This suspicion of an Islamic agenda is as old as the era of nationalism. During this era, the regional leaders, who fought against British colonialism were suspicious of one another because of their fear of domination. For instance, during one of the campaigns of the Action Group (AG) of Obafemi Awolowo in 1959, Awolowo accused the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, of not allowing his party, the AG, to gain access to the Northern Region for fear that he would win over the hearts of his people

(Awolowo, 1987:1-8) Such suspicions continued till after independence when the first coup occurred, a coup that was generally perceived by the Northern *elite* as an Ibo coup. This act has continued to divide the polity to the extent that any policy that is perceived as possessing some religious fragment is usually understood as that of another group brewing a religious agenda. Although suspicions of religious agendas have been arisen over the years, the election of President Muhammadu Buhari resurrected and heightened such suspicions. It is instructive to note that these sorts of beliefs are palpable because of President Buhari's antecedent, who is widely believed in the south to have affinity and preference for Islamism and an inclination towards a Northern agenda over the years.<sup>3</sup>

Asemota (2016) argues that Islamism is different from Islam. He observes that while Islam is a religion that is practiced by the majority in the North and some in the South West, Islamism is not just a religion but also a political ideology that demands that only Islamists and not any other religious affiliates should partake in the political space. He submits that "Islamism comes with discrimination on the basis of religion, intolerance of non-Islamists (including Muslims that are not Islamists), destruction of lives and properties and gross violation of human rights". As Asemota points out, Islamism, no doubt, has fueled the prevalence of religious conflicts in Africa.

### **Religious Conflicts and Hijab Identity Crises in Africa**

Conflict is a struggle between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. It connotes the incompatibility of subject positions (Diez, Stetter, & Albert 2006: 565). Some scholars regard conflict from an economic perspective. For instance, Coser (1998) views conflict as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power,

3. The appointment of his cabinet ministers and security details has been widely condemned as favouring the North. In fact, when the recent Inspector general of Police retired, Easterners thought he would pick an Ibo officer.

and resources in which the aim of the conflicting parties are to injure or eliminate their rivals. Conflicts can be internal or external; they can also take on political, economic, social, ethnic, religious, and even ideological views. While ethnic and resource conflicts seem to be prevalent, religiosity or religion also plays vital roles in most conflicts on the continent.

Religion, therefore, is a double-edged sword. It is not surprising that McBride and Richardson (2011) note that religion engenders conflict and cooperation. Basedau in an interview granted to Gwendolin Hilse also observes that although conflicts that have a religious dimension are becoming common worldwide and sub-Saharan Africa is no exception, but there is no conflict based purely on religion (Made of Minds 2017). Other scholars are of the view that armed conflict with religious and ethnic differences have proliferated in the sub-Saharan region (Kung 2005: 253; UNDP 2017:44-53).

The African landscape is replete with some of the most obstinate conflicts, most of which are constructed from differences in religious and ethnic identities (çanci and Odukoya 2016). Aguwa (1997) notes that at the very start of its nationhood, Nigeria, like many other African countries, had to contend with ethnic, regional and religious divisions, offshoots of nation building processes (p. 335). Identity could be divided along markers of class, education, ethnicity, and religion – of which the *hijab* is a common symbol in Islam. In the multi-cultural societies in the West and Africa, the *hijab* in public places is gaining ground, albeit with some resentment from other religious groups, especially Christianity. Such resentment is usually due to its use by Islamist/fundamentalists and extremists in acts of terrorism (Noor 2011). Be that as it may, the *hijab*, remains a form of religious or social identity.

Identity, of course, is characterised by several features, such as an ‘emotive tie to a group’, ‘love and belief for a group’, a ‘pledge to a cause’, and ‘commitments and duties to a group’ with which a person identifies (Smyth and Robinson 2001:7–11; çanci and Odukoya 2016:89). Social identities are associated with normative standards for thought and action, profoundly influencing the behavioral choices of individual group members (Hirsh and Kang 2016). When these cohesion or identities are challenged, then, conflict often arises. Most proponents of Islam view resentments towards the *hijab* as a rejection of their social identity and an invasion of their private space. Accordingly, Kulenovic (2012) perceives the *hijab* as an Islamic-shaped identity.

Yet, the issue of Hijab has become a volatile subject in the Western World. This is because while Muslim women claim right to wear the Hijab in accordance with their religious beliefs, most of the Western World views the Hijab as a symbol of oppression, patriarchy and tool for terror (Osman 2014; Janson 2011).

Here it should be noted that the *hijab* is a religious symbol, which has different connotations, especially in multiethnic and secular states like those in Africa. Villalón and Tidjani-Alou (2012), in a study of three Francophone countries, argue that such incorporation of religiosity or religion into academic programmes has encouraged parents and pupils to seek western education. Some have refuted claims that education aims to remove all forms of dependence, either forced or voluntary. For instance, Laborde (2006) submits that the banning of the headscarf or *hijab* in schools on the basis of removing all forms of dependence only creates more problems than it is meant to solve.

## The Hijab Crises: Origin and Manifestations in Nigeria

After the Nigerian Civil War, suspicion among the major ethnic groups increased. Suspicion became even more potent between the Hausa and Fulani against the Igbo. It is instructive to note that after the Nigerian Civil War, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools that were destroyed as a result of the war fell into the hands of the Federal Military Government (FRN 1972). The issue at hand was basically that of reconstruction and reintegration, hence, issues of religion like the *hijab* were not on the table. However, the issue of the compulsory symbol in public schools, especially in Southern Nigeria, is now contentious. Mahdi (2009) has noted that “Up to 1975, hardly any woman in Northern Nigeria wore the Hijab, while today one could not miss the growing number of women who wear it” (p. 2).

This was also a period when there were disparities between the Christians and Muslims. To ensure that pupils were not denied access to basic education, government revoked the licenses of most of the Missionary Schools. Hence, the military government led by General Olusegun Obasanjo encouraged the state governments to take over schools and hospitals owned by religious organisations in order to reduce inequalities, especially the educational gap between Muslims and Christians (Nolte, Danjibo and Oladeji 2009: 13). With this act, Christian Missionary orientations such as praying only in Christian ways, among other issues, ceased and schools became more secularized. In fact, some schools stopped teaching either Christian Religious Studies or Islamic Religious Studies/Knowledge,<sup>4</sup> and while in other converted schools, the two subjects were introduced for the sake of equity. Then, the Western Nigeria government began to take over schools in

4. A good example is Mayflower private school, Ikenne Remo. Even after government took over, the school neither thought IRK nor CRK.

conformity with the Federal Military Government decrees. But before the government began its take-over, Chief T.A Odutola voluntarily gave up his Odutola College to the government, being the first private individual to do so in November 1975.

In September 1976, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced to provide education for children from six years old to access primary education. Parents who disallowed their wards from attending school were sanctioned, and in 1977, the National Policy on Education recommended free education up to Junior Secondary school. During this time, the wearing of the Hijab in these Missionary schools was not an issue.

With the transition to civilian rule in 1999, the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo, introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, which made primary to junior secondary education compulsory for the Nigerian child on 30 September 1999 (Anaduaka and Okafor 2011:154; Yusuf and Ajere nd). State governments were also instructed to return the converted schools (Missionary or private) to their original owners. This was because most of the state schools were owned by private individuals and Missionaries. On their part, most State governments vacillated because they felt that doing so would strip them off their long time investments in these institutions as well as reduce the total number of government owned schools since most of the state governments did not make attempts to build new schools. The UBE Act passed until in 2004 is defined as:

early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programmes and the education special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl-child and

women, almajiri, street children and disabled groups.

The implication of this policy was that Christians and Muslims children should attend public schools without any formalized religious dress codes as part of recommended uniforms. But with the rising propaganda for Muslim girls to be educated, practice their religions, and fulfil the principles of a true Muslim, some people began to advocate, and in fact, started wearing the *hijab* to these schools—most of which had Missionary backgrounds. This clash of two interests crystalised and morphed into the Hijab Crises. Interestingly, the first place of manifestation was Osun State.

In 2004, the government of Olagunsoye Oyinlola, introduced a document, “Guidelines on Administration and Discipline in Osun State Public Schools.” It stated that:

the use of hijab by female Muslim students shall be allowed in Muslim public schools with proviso that it shall not be made compulsory, especially for non-Muslim students in such schools (OSG 2004: Article 8.2 [V]).

Although the document recommended against the wearing of hijab in Christian schools, that recommendation was never enforced by any administration because there were many Christian schools with a majority of Muslims in their student populations. Hence, the wearing of the *hijab* by female Muslim students continued unabated in Muslim and Missionary schools throughout the state.

The emergence of *Ogbeni* Rauf Aregbesola, a Muslim, as the governor of the state was widely celebrated by the people after retrieving his mandate at the Supreme Court in 2010. In order to improve the quality of education of the state, he did a consolidation

programme wherein schools were unified. Unfortunately, the backgrounds and orientations of these schools were not considered during this reclassification exercise. Hence, some members of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Christian leaders, especially the Baptist Mission in the state, protested. Their protest was basically against the wearing of the Hijab and the overwhelming population of the Muslim students who comprised about 70% of the total population of the consolidated schools.

Then, in 2013, a female Muslim student wore her Hijab to the Baptist High School (BHS), Iwo, and when the principal stopped her, some unidentified persons attacked her. The school, however, remained resolute on not allowing the wearing of the *hijab*. Eventually, when it seemed no solution was at hand, a case was instituted to challenge the action of these Missionary schools in *Sheikh Salaudeen & Ors V. The Governor of Osun & Ors in 2013*.<sup>5</sup> The presiding judge of the Court was convinced that the case contained a human rights issue, which was not to be toyed with in the legal parlance. He further agreed with the applicant’s counsel that the Constitution was superior to any other laws of the land. saying,

It is also declared that acts of molestation, harassment, torture, embarrassment and humiliation which Muslim Female students in Public Primary and Secondary Schools in Osun State are subjected to in the hands of the agents

5. Sheikh Salaudeen Ade Olayiwola; Incorporated Trustees of Osun State Muslim Community; Incorporated Trustees of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria Applicants and Alhaji Sadiq Bola Bello (For and on Behalf of Female Muslim Students in Public Primary and Secondary Schools in Osun State V. The Governor Of Osun State; The Attorney General And Commissioner For Justice; Commissioner For Education, Osun State, Mrs. Olagunju (For Herself And On Behalf Of All Principals Of Public Primary And Secondary Schools In Osun State); Alhaja Sadiat Oladapo (For Herself And On Behalf of all other Head Teachers of Public Primary Schools In Osun State); Christian Association Of Nigeria Respondents; Superior Evangelist Aladeseye (Chairman, Christian Association Of Nigeria, Osun State Chapter); Rev. Kunle Adeyemo 1 St Vice Chairman (Christian Association Of Nigeria, Osun State Chapter) and Rev. Father Ajayi Secretary Christian Association Of Nigeria, Osun State Chapter (For Themselves And On Behalf Of All Members, Christian Association Of Nigeria, Osun State Chapter).

of the 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Respondents especially the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Respondents constitute a clear infringement on the fundamental right of the said Muslim female Students to religion, conscience and thought as well as their fundamental right to dignity of human person and right against torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.<sup>6</sup>

Many parents saw this judgement as a victory for their religion. While the Christians and Missionary Schools were not satisfied with the judgement, some female Muslim students started wearing their *hijabs* to school. At an emergency meeting headed by the CAN chairman, Elisha Ogundiya, and heads of Churches in Oshogbo on 7 June 2016, a resolution was reached:

Where the Osun State is inclined to implementing the judgement, Christian students in all public schools founded by Christians with the toil and sweat of our forefathers in the faith will have no choice but to start wearing Christian garments and vestments as part of their school uniform for the propagation of our own faith given the justice Saka Oyejide Falola declared right of Muslim Female Students to do same as what as what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander as well (Oluwole 2016).

By 13 June 2016, about 261 female Muslim students wore their hijabs to school, while 92 Christian students (male and female) wore various robes, including choir outfits, revealing their religious affiliations (Akinaso 2016).

**Fig 1: Students in different Religious attire in Osun School**



**Source: John Oluwole, “Osun Hijab Crisis: Students attend schools in church garments”**

A similar scenario was played out in Lagos State in 2013 when the state government banned the wearing of the *hijab* in public primary and secondary schools (Abdulhamid and Mohammed 2013: 7-26) after a Court in Lagos ruled in favour of the use of the Hijab. The judgement in favor of enforcement on the ban of wearing the Hijab by female students was appealed, and on 21 July, 2016, the panel on the appeal, which was headed by Justice A. B. Gumel<sup>7</sup>, overruled the previous judgment of the Justice Onyeabor’s Lagos High Court on the basis that the lower court erred in law and that the use of the *Hijab* is a religious right, which is enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Lagos State government went on to appeal the judgement at the Supreme

6. Judgement of 3 June, 2016, 52

7. Other members are Justices M. Fasanmi; A. Jauro; J.S. Ikyegh and I. Jombo Ofor.

Court.

However, the state government in a circular titled, “Re: The Use of Hijab in Lagos State Public Schools”, based on the outcome of a panel constituted by the state on the use of the Hijab, observed that since the case on the use of the *hijab* was still pending in the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the status quo should be maintained in order not to be guilty of contempt of the court. In other words, students were to be allowed to wear their *hijabs* with their school uniforms. However, the *hijab* same must be short, smart, neat and in the same colour with the uniform (skirt). The circular further directed that: “No students should be discriminated against in any form on the basis of religion. All principals and teachers must be sensitized to comply accordingly and... enjoined to adhere strictly to these recommendations” (LAGS 2018).

On 12 December 2017, a law graduate, Firdaus Amasa, was not called to the bar, because she donned the *hijab* at the law school graduating ceremony at Abuja. Although the Council of Legal Education has a prescription of what graduates should wear for the “Call to Bar” Ceremony, the *hijab* was not a part of it. The Council recommended punishment for her disobedience stating that “(i) Offenders shall be escorted out of or refused entry into the Lecture hall/classrooms. In addition, he/she shall be reprimanded. (ii) A second or subsequent offender shall be rusticated” (Part B, Rule 3, p.5). However, Amasa’s act was met with mixed reactions. While some described the action of the body of benchers as unconstitutional and archaic in the twenty-first century, others described the lady’s action as scripted and part of the Islamisation agenda.<sup>8</sup>



**Fig 2: Snapshot of the Video by Falz ‘This is Nigeria’ Depicting Girls Dancing in Hijab**

video with dancing with the *hijab* on.<sup>9</sup> The video gathered millions of views on the internet within days of release. However, in June 2018, a group named Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) demanded that Falz should take down the video within seven days or face legal action. Some of the reasons given by the group were that the video was dangerous as it depicted hate; and that it was capable of causing religious crisis of unprecedented dimension, if not taken down. The Group called the video an assault on

Meanwhile, in May 2018, a popular Musician, Folarin Falana [Falz] released a  
8. The case was resolved after the intervention of the national Assembly. She has been called to bar.

9. The video depicts the socio-political and economic lifestyle of the country. Although, some of the messages are being exaggerated. Video can be watched at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW\\_xEqCWrm0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW_xEqCWrm0)

the self-dignity of every Muslim and freedom of Expression gone haywire, calling the attention of security agencies to the video which it deemed hateful (Ilowolagba 2018).

On 12 November 2018, there was palpable tension at the International School, Ibadan (ISI), Oyo State, a school that was established by a German-British man, Kurt Hahn, on the premises of the University of Ibadan in October 1963. The funding for this School comes mainly from United States International Agency for Development and Ford Foundation. Its morning Assembly was suspended following the appearance of some pupils in the *hijab*, backed by the ISI Muslim Parents Forum. The wearing of the *hijab* is contrary to the school's dress code. While pressure was mounted on whether to or not to allow pupils wear the *hijab* in order to avoid further break down of law, the school was temporarily closed down for a week.

The Students Christian Movement of Nigeria, SCM, Osun/Oyo Sector, in a statement by its president, Dr. Adebayo Kolade, condemned the intent and timing of wearing of the *hijab* by some female students of the school. While the Chairman of Board of Governors of ISI, who also doubles as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), University of Ibadan, Professor Abideen Aderinto, frowned at the act of some of these parents, he maintained that the school stand was not in favour of the *hijab* (Ajayi 2018).

Some parents of the Muslim students sued the school authority for disallowing their children from donning the *hijab* with their school uniforms. However, Justice Laniran Akintola of the Oyo State High Court, Ibadan, advised the parties in the ban of Hijab in school to seek court settlement (*Punch*, 2019). Similarly, another such case also reared its head at the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) International School, Ogbomosho, when about 50 female (Muslim) pupils wore their *hijabs* to school

on 14 January, 2019. Although the pupils were locked outside the school gate and asked to remove their *hijabs* because wearing them did not conform to the prescribed school uniform, no legal suit was recorded (Babalola 2019).<sup>10</sup>

The issue of wearing the *hijab* in school also surfaced in Ogun State where a nine-year-old pupil, Aisha AbdulAleem, sued the Ogun State government and the principal of Gateway Junior Secondary School for allegedly violating her fundamental human rights to use the *hijab* in school.

### **Adoption of Hijab in School: Sufficient Rationale for Suspicion of Islamisation Agenda?**

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) is clear on the religious orientation of the State. It states that: "The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion" (FRN 1999: Chapter 10). It also warns that: "Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited." (*Ibid*, Section 15 (2)). It further stipulates that every citizen shall have equality or rights, obligations and opportunities before the law (*Ibid*: Chapter 17 (2)(a)). And the whole of Chapter IV is dedicated to Fundamental Rights, which is also a condiment of International Human Rights law.

Religion, however, remains a controversial issue in Nigeria's political history. Differences have led to series of conflicts among the Christians/Muslims, Muslims/

10. Although some parents made a request to the School Governing Council to allow Female Muslims wear the Hijab in 2011.

Indigenous and Christian/Indigenous religions.<sup>11</sup> The most prevalent are the Muslim/Christian conflicts (Yusuf 2007; Paden 2015). For instance, in the *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*—'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad' which took the name, Boko Haram, western education is forbidden (Thompson and Aduradola 2016:4). Lately, a former president, Goodluck Jonathan, revealed that one of the conditions given by the group to lay down their weapons and embrace peace when he was president was for him to embrace Islam (Jonathan 2018).

The wanton killing of Christian farmers by the suspected Muslim Herdsmen (Ojo 2017; Paden 2015: 8-9) have also increased suspicions about an Islamic agenda. Many people also believe that the Boko Haram group enjoys the patronage of President Buhari and the Nigeria Army. Significantly, therefore, the fear or suspicion of the Christian population has been founded on the silence and the actions (or inaction) of the Federal Government. Christians could be allowed to wear religious symbols in the Northern part of the country or in schools established under Islamic Missions—but on the other hand, such a gesture should not be extended to Muslims in South-western Nigeria where the adoption of such headscarfs by some girls in the schools would distort uniformity.

Conclusively, the study found that the use of the *hijab* is indeed a cultural, social, and human rights issue. However, the way the government have gone about taking over Christian/Missionary schools and imposing new orientation is questionable, and leaves room for suspicion. We suggest that government should make inclusive policies and that the various religions and members should also tolerate one another, respect cultural, religious differences and beliefs of one another so as to foster sustainable peace. Since the

denial or stereotyping of a particular person or persons of their fundamental rights may lead to inferiority complexes and even suicide, schools, be they Christian or Muslim, should make policies that tolerate other religious groups and eschew any form of discrimination on any basis, be it religion, class, ethnicity, or race. Finally, stakeholders on religion in Africa and beyond should promote open, inclusive and equal opportunities for all, not minding whether one is a Muslim, Christian or Traditional Religion worshipper.

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11. For example, there was a religious crisis in Ikenne Remo, Ogun state involving the Muslims and ATR followers in 2014 when the ATR followers were observing their annual *Isemo* festival, where women are not allowed outside. The Muslims brought in some women for their Ramadan festival from neighbouring village.



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Africa #6



Anne-Marie Moscatelli

## ***FILM REVIEW:***

### ***The Night, Angel and Our Gang* by Atif Yilmaz**

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“It is as if I were to become a man if they cut my hair off”

Fulya, in *The Night, Angel and our Gang* (01:02:14).

*The Night, Angel and our Gang* (*Gece Melekve Bizim Çocuklar* in the original language) is a Turkish drama directed by Atif Yılmaz in 1994. It stars Derya Arbaş as Serap, a sex worker, Deniz Türkali as Melek, an ex-sex worker, Deniz Atamtürk as Arif/Fulya, a transgender woman and sex worker, and Uzay Heparı as Hakan, Serap’s love interest and “pimp” who has complicated sexuality. The film narrates the story of how these people’s lives intersect one another in Beyoğlu, an area of Istanbul that is filled with trans-people, sex workers, and many other “illegal” life-styles.

Director Atif Yılmaz has engaged with feminist ideology since the 1980s, thanks to his partner, actress and activist Deniz Türkali. Many of his movies explore feminist themes as well as the lives of marginalized people such as sex-workers and transgender women (Akser, 3).<sup>1</sup> In *The Night, Angel and our Gang*, Yılmaz manages to capture the real sense of Beyoğlu Street—which has been the “queer”<sup>2</sup> center of Istanbul despite its dangers—and what it means to be a queer subject during the 1990s in Turkey. Characters use a lot of words and phrases making up the slang developed by queer individuals in Turkey, known as “lubunca.”<sup>3</sup> Not only that, transgender women that were disowned by their families came to Beyoğlu in order to find some means for survival, along with prostitutes and trans-people (right after the film’s beginning, we observe Fulya’s leaving her small hometown for Beyoğlu to do sex work in order to save enough money for her gender reassignment surgery).

On the other hand, the 1990s were a challenging era for queer subjects in Turkey, especially those that lived in Beyoğlu, as a result of the brutality enforced by chief police officer Süleyman Ulusoy—also known as “Hose Süleyman”—who subjected trans people to torture with a hose of their choice among many of different shapes and colors. Sex workers and transgender people had a hard time under his regime:

In 1991, Süleyman Ulusoy, the chief of Beyoğlu Police Department ...

1. Atif Yılmaz is known for movies narrating stories of women. Instead of portraying women as objects, he treats them as subjects and attempts to discuss their position in terms of gender roles (Hıdıroğlu and Kotan, 56). Among his most significant movies are: *Selvi Boylum Al Yazmalım* (1977), *Adı Vasfiye* (1985), *Asiye Nasıl Kurtulur* (1986) and *Egreti Gelin* (2004).

2. I use the term “queer” to refer those who do not fit into the heteronormative gender and sexuality codes as explained by Nikki Sullivan: “queer is a positionality rather than identity ... it ... can be taken up by anyone who feels marginalized as a result of their sexual practices” (Sullivan, 44).

3. For detailed information see: Nicholas Kontovas, “Lubunca: The historical development of Istanbul’s queer slang and a social-functional approach to diachronic processes in language.” MA Diss. Indiana University, 2012.

started to organize operations especially against trans women who do sex work around Taksim. In the 1990s, police brutality towards trans women and gay men significantly increased and symbolic torture practices such as forced hair cuttings, forced strips, and forced display of genitals in front of the press were used to intimidate and silence them (Çalışkan, 25).

Yılmaz explicitly represents police brutality throughout the movie, especially through the characters of Serap and Fulya. Indeed, the film begins with the former coming back from the police station where she was taken with other sex workers. Subsequently, in spite of her attention for fear of police raids on the streets, Fulya has to endure one of the symbolic violent practices aforementioned: her hair is forcibly cut down by the police officers.

In the 1990s the general public partially supported the marginalization and exclusion of queer subjects (Cingöz and Gürsu, 16). The way Yılmaz juxtaposes the visibility of queer subjectivities—such as gay men and trans-women—to their invisibility is heavily striking in this sense. Queer people were either marginalized or they were ignored. And with such a daring topic, the movie depicts many different sexualities and genders other than cis-heterosexuality being articulated openly. However, viewers never get to witness the actualization of those sexualities. For instance, many scenes explicitly show straight couples making love, whereas other queer subjects do never perform their sexualities in front of the camera in the movie, not even a singular kiss, except for a few cuddling scenes. The lack of kisses is particularly significant, for the act of kissing is the very first step to eroticism and its

legalization, as pointed out by John M. Clum: “Everyone knows that sex between men happens, but the sight of two men kissing is often seen as transgression of the gender order, taken by many to be ‘natural.’ A kiss is a sign of affection, of love, not merely lust. A kiss ... isn’t just a kiss” (11). Although Clum is discussing modern drama in this passage, his words can be applied to Yılmaz’s movie as well. *The Night, Angel and our Gang* makes sure that the audience is aware of “transgressive” sexualities and gender identities (like male homosexuality and trans-women) do exist and engage in sexual acts, but it never depicts them explicitly. As long as they do not challenge the heteronormative codes, those dwelling on the backstreets of Beyoğlu are not acknowledged or simply ignored by Turkish society. The lack of actualization of their sexualities in the film underlines it.

Yılmaz’s film does not only actualize those subjects, but, simultaneously, it also make them real by representing their invisibility in the eyes of a homophobic and transphobic society that would probably harass them, should they not remain hidden in the “darkness.” This could be read as an auto-censorship at first glance. However, considering the director’s political stance and “brave” theme of the film, this seems to be a deliberate choice to acknowledge those people’s unseen lives. Despite the lack of representation of sexual acts, the queer subjects keep expressing their sexual and gender identities throughout the movie. Additionally, some scenes offer disturbing instances about the life in Beyoğlu: Serap faces dangers from her clients (one of them, for instance, refuses to pay her), Hakan displays homophobia and transphobia to cover his relationship with a man, and Melek is raped. With the representation of

such issues, *The Night, Angel and our Gang* may probably achieve its goal: to show a dangerous part and darker side of Istanbul to its audience. The Istanbulites used to refuse to see the struggle for survival going on in the backstreets of Beyoğlu. With this movie, Yılmaz explicitly shows this to the spectators, whether they like to acknowledge it or not.

While doing that, the director uses the dialogues and the mise en scène to show this reality explicitly. The characters' lines always include some terms from the gay slang of queer individuals in Turkey, such as "koli," the word used for client and for casual sex partner.<sup>4</sup> Many aspects of the night-life are continually depicted: girls inside bars, drunk men and women on the streets, women getting raped are but a few examples. Beginning with images of transgender women, sex workers, and many others in the opening credits accompanied by the scream of a woman, the film thus creates the gloomy atmosphere and lifestyle of those streets. Furthermore, thanks to the frequent changes of camera angles (from close-ups to wide shots), the audience becomes a part of the story by sneaking in and out of the scenes and the places depicted. By having the spectators face these disturbing images, the director manages to make them part of the film, to feel its reality, and subvert the prejudices against the protagonists, if not break them altogether.

Overall, Yılmaz shows that queer subjects can be despised, but they simultaneously lead a battle that the rest of Istanbul is unaware of. Being among the few films dealing with this topic, *The Night, Angel and our Gang* preserves its cult and significant place, not only for queer people in Turkey but also in Turkish

4. Koli literally means "box" in Turkish, but it is used for casual sex partners and clients in gay slang.

cinema history.<sup>5</sup> With the ongoing struggle of queer people and the lack of queer representations in contemporary Turkish media, the film still remains relevant and reveals a different layer of modern Turkey. Instead of portraying these characters purely as vulnerable victims, it provides insight into their personalities, treating them as subjects whose singular lives are treated as journeys in search of an individual own's way.

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5. Other movies that focus on queer people in Turkish cinema are: *Dönersen Islık Çal* (1992), *Lola + Bilidikid* (1999), *Anlat Istanbul* (2005) and *Teslimiyet* (2010).

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Old Eagle



Rebecca Matheson

## *FILM REVIEW:*

# **Cruel Cure in a Russian Metropolis: A Review of *Trigger***

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Artyom Streletskiy (Maksim Matveev), the protagonist in the Russian TV show *Trigger* (2018) is not an ordinary psychologist.<sup>1</sup> His method to treat people who turn to him for help is the so-called “provocative therapy”, which focuses on encouraging the patients to confront their deepest fears and biggest weaknesses. The treatment is basically a process of self-discovery as well as a mental and emotional rebirth. Nevertheless, provocative therapy is not a new phenomenon in psychology. In 1974 Frank Farrelly published a book with the same title which created a sensation at that time, and its influence on the area can be felt ever since. Despite its long-lasting effect, the film industry has apparently ignored the potential in portraying an assertive and indiscreet mental health practitioner intruding upon the private lives of his/her patients—invited but with an unexpected

1. The show was co-written by Andrey Zolotarev, whose most famous work has been the 2019 remake of *How I Became Russian* (2015), and Leo Murzenko who has written one short film (*Ludmila*, 2019) apart from *Trigger* so far.

vehemence. According to Farrelly, the therapist is the “Devil’s Advocate”. He or she “sides with and (if successful) becomes the negative half of the client’s ambivalence toward himself, significant others, and his life’s goals and values” (67). As a result, the patients have to recognize not only *the need* for a change in their lives and behaviors, but also the manner in which this metamorphosis shall be realized. Indeed, as Jeffrey M. Brandsma writes in the preface of the book, “[p]rovocative therapy brings out and emphasizes a more sociological, interpersonal perspective of a man, a perspective more attuned to individuals enmeshed in our society’s current problems and realities” (v).

Attractive and arresting Artyom, portrayed convincingly by Matveev from the very first minute, is the ideal candidate to act as the devil’s advocate. He resorts to a variety of techniques to bring those memories and personality traits to the surface that the clients are the most ashamed of, and these techniques range from merely shouting at the patients to provoking fist fights and setting fire to a barn with the patient locked inside it. However, his character portrayal would not be complete without drawing attention to the fact that he also has his own demons to tackle. In the opening scene of the first episode he is being released from prison where he spent years for reportedly persuading one of his clients to commit suicide. His long-term mission is to vindicate himself while solving issues with his family and ex-wife in the meantime.

The series, which has one season with sixteen episodes so far, was commissioned by Channel One Russia with 250 million viewers worldwide and was produced by Sreda, also known for creating *Silver Spoon* (2014), the first Russian series ever sold to Netflix. The two of them left nothing to chance. Artyom is an obvious reminder of Sherlock



Holmes, one of the most beloved fictional detectives ever, whose modern-day variants often become permanent reference points in contemporary popular culture as is the case of BBC's *Sherlock* (2010-17) and *House M.D.* (2004-12). Artyom, similarly to all Sherlocks, is capable of reading those signs that are invisible to everyone except for him, but once he reveals them, they become obvious and inevitable to take into consideration. He is brutally honest, not willing to play by the rules when communicating with others and devoid of any inhibitions when it comes to reaching his goal, that is, curing the patient. His therapeutic method, which is more like an approach to life than a simple way of treatment, makes his character original enough to arouse interest, yet the combination of self-confidence and vulnerability in his personality is sufficiently recognizable to foster the audience's identification with him.

Another reason why *Trigger* is worth watching is the setting. Artyom himself as well as his clients belong to a Russian lower- and upper-middle class that was nonexistent in the socialist era, and thus it has rarely been represented in Eastern European arthouse cinema. The characters inhabit a clean and polished Moscow with a modern public transport system and high-rise office buildings. The series is a special mixture of drama and thriller and the metropolis is an ideal environment for both. On the one hand, its impersonal nature tends to alienate people who consequently develop a variety of exciting mental health issues. On the other hand, the congestion and monotony lead to dullness and boredom. In accordance with G. K. Chesterton, Martin Rubin writes that the thriller is "a response to this modern world" which can be characterized "under normal circumstances to be fundamentally not thrilling" (15). The thriller needs therefore

to "redeem the nonadventurous modern world with a spirit of old-fashioned adventure" (15). Eventually, such a genre "gives us a double world, which is both extraordinary and ordinary, adventurous and nonadventurous, and it remains to a significant extent suspended between those two contrasting sides" (18). This dichotomy is exemplified by the relationship between Artyom and his patients. The latter are ordinary people who try their best to conceal their problems and live their lives inconspicuously. However, once the therapist launches his first attack, their facade vanishes, and their dark past as well as their present insecurities are unveiled.

*Trigger's* ability to create and maintain suspense, the withholding and gradual transmission of information, the skillfully crafted character of the protagonist, the curious cases, and Moscow portrayed as an ideal place for cosmopolitans prove that this TV series has potential on the international entertainment market. As Christian Gockel, EVP of international sales and acquisitions at Beta Film—who is also the distributor of the series outside its country of origin—has said in a press release, "Russian content is highly competitive in the global arena" (qtd. in Lang, 7); we can count on Russia as a "new but reliable supplier" which "despite political volatility", is "consistent with the rest of the world" (8). As *Trigger* premiered with a delay in Europe (in Hungary, for example, the first episode had originally been scheduled for November 2019 and was broadcast this May only), we are yet to see whether the feedback will be favorable enough to inspire a second season.

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Splitsville



Rebecca Matheson

## ***FILM REVIEW:***

### **Investigating Fame in Mark Lewis's *Don't F\*\*k With Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer***

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Uncontrolled social media content and activity—together with the rapidly emerging industry of misinformation—is one of the main characteristics of our current media world. In this broad context, Mark Lewis's<sup>1</sup> *Don't F\*\*k With Cats: Hunting for an Internet Killer* reconstructs the true story of the infamous animal abuser and murderer Luka Magnotta who, in 2014, was convicted to life imprisonment for his hideous (online and offline) crimes.

Without doubt, the proliferation of fake news and bogus online content are among the biggest concerns of a twenty-first-century society. As the rich array of reception studies and audience research scholarship often highlight, contemporary media consumption is

1. Mark Lewis is known for his drama documentaries, which are based on thorough research and/or discuss actual contemporary stories, such as *D-Day: The Ultimate Conflict* (2004), *Surviving Disaster* (2009) and *Silk Road: Drugs, Death and the Dark Web* (2017). The latter also investigates online crimes.

characterized by the fandom or fame phenomenon as performed in the online digital media environment (Sandvoss, 2002; Booth, 2010; Hills, 2015; Click, 2019). Such a technical and psychological phenomenon is discussed in the *RAW* TV-produced and *Netflix*-distributed *Don't F\*\*k With Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer*. Realistically, the real crime documentary series tries to de- and reconstruct the side-effects of the internet, while also pinpointing the actual social affects that accompany the misuse of the (dark) web.

The three hour-long documentary focuses on two American internet investigators, Deanna Thompson (:Baudi Moovan") and John Green, who come across a kitten-torturing Video on *YouTube*. Like real detectives, they become obsessed with chasing down the unknown animal torturer, eventually, for a period of four years. The juxtaposition of interviews, archive footages and social images creates a suspenseful, fact-based representation of the story's development, starting from the online research of the detectives via the investigation of the authorities, up to the capture of the murderer.

Magnotta's first cat-killing video on *YouTube* received significant outrage online. Despite the common anger of the online community (or especially because of that), "1 boy 2 kittens" was followed by other cat-torturing videos, in which an unknown, hooded man drowns and suffocates two small cats. Without the intervention of law enforcement agencies, Baudi Moovan and John Green, decide to create a *Facebook* group (Find The Kitten Vacuumer...For Great Justice) and gather any available information about the torturer. Thanks to this online group, which slowly grows into an international community, the two main investigators succeed in finding some clues that might lead

to the perpetrator. One of the most chilling scenes in the series is when they reveal the identity of the kitten-torturer, whose *Facebook* profile contains a significant amount of fake photos, which capture him travelling and living a luxurious life around the world. His photoshopped images portray famous locations, celebrities, and luxurious events. It slowly becomes clear that the narcissistic perpetrator wants fame, which he tries to achieve via fake profiles and identities, and a fan group that adores him—all of which, of course, have been created by him.

Magnotta maintained the attention of internet investigators by confusing them with misleading digital traces and posts of cruel videos. His attention-seeking eventually escalated from animal-torture to homicide and postings of dismembered body parts to different political parties. After a four-year chase, Magnotta was finally captured in Berlin in an internet café where sarcastically he wanted to check himself on the Interpol's website.

*Don't F\*\*ck with Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer* is a real contemporary true-crime documentary in which a twenty-first-century murderer embeds himself in the grid of social media and the digital technology-dominated mediascape. Lewis successfully shows the side-effects of the internet by intensively focusing on the responsibility of media consumerism. He intentionally grabs the viewer's attention by demonstrating that the internet is not the place where you can act without any adverse results. The danger of the digital landscape, together with heavy elements from the info-communication technology strengthens the shocking message of the series: the internet is the new playground for violent perpetrators. The series' retrospective structure, containing images and archival

footage, as well as *Facebook* and *YouTube* videos, is effectively composed together with the interviews, which all create an all-encompassing image of how easy it is to do away with crime when it is done in the virtual world. Such a message is emphasized in the establishing shots. Deanna Thompson, an "internet detective" draws attention to the dangers of producing and uploading unlimited content to the internet. In her words, content of any kind is usually posted without any consequences: "you can post porn, violence, somebody getting pushed down stairs, religious statues being defamed, cruelty to the elderly, a street fight, bum fights, defamatory images of the Statue of Liberty, and nobody gives a crap." An exception, however is the "rule zero" ("Don't f\*\*k with cats"), which means that the most popular and beloved internet contents are about cats, and cats above all should not be harmed in any way.

The story actually begins with Deanna discovering the kitten-torturing video and her "investigation" of the person who uploaded it. Interestingly, as a civil person with a full-time job, she passionately delves into the subject and works nights to find out about the personality of the perpetrator. The documentary-series alternately displays interviews with two internet investigators, in which the story is told from their perspectives. The viewer of the series may soon get the impression that Deanna and John, work with striking determination, a kind of ridiculous ambition and perseverance. In this way, while they are definitely isolated from the actual world, the virtual space brings them together, and it also creates a space for connection. Social media thus functions as not only an evil space for animal-torturing videos, but also as a realm of communication when it comes to similar personalities and one common goal. This biased world accompanies the whole

series and also gives some hope that the postmodern, post-humanist *Zeitgeist* we live in has also positive features and not only Luka-Magnotta videos.

Another critical topic which is highlighted at a very early point is the issue of fame. The perpetrator very soon turns out to be a troubled attention-hungry personality. After several unsuccessful attempts to become a well-known media personality, he creates his own fake context of celebrity, with fake fan pages and pictures. A significant turning point in the series—which also functions as the peak of the story—is when Deanna realizes that Luka knows that he is being followed online. Throughout the series, we rightly pose the question: in this all-round process, who is the real perpetrator? Is it Luka Magnotta, the unknown animal torturer, is it the civil investigators or the viewers of the series who, by watching the documentary, contribute to what the perpetrator has always wanted: fame?

Structurally, the film is based on a powerful mixture of intermedial references. The series is brimming with the analysis of CCTV footages as well as extradiegetic commentaries that help reconstruct the whole story. The most important reference, however, is the filmic background of Luka's obsession, which is closely intertwined with well-known movie stars and movie scenes. Luka practically reproduces the murder scene of *Basic Instinct* (Verhoeven, 1992) in his video, "1 Lunatic 1 Ice Pick." His fictional detainee named Manny Lopez is also a character "borrowed" from this film. The protagonist of *Catch Me If You Can* (Spielberg, 2002) inspired Luka to embark on an "escape race" with the police, and the vain serial killer protagonist of *American Psycho* (Harron, 2000) was an ideal to him. Also in *Casablanca* (Curtiz, 1942), Humphrey Bogart mentions Paris to

Ingrid Bergman, which is Luka's next chosen location for escape. The filmic references point towards another problematic issue: how do narrative stories and filmic images affect a narcissistic personality?

The only shortcoming of the enjoyable series is the absence of interviews with the family of Luka's victim, Jun Lin. We learn almost nothing about the young man's background and why he walked into the perpetrator's trap. Despite this missing point, the narrative coherence is built in a tension-raising and exciting way. Given the rising number of similar works on *Netflix*—such as *Making a Murderer* (Ricciardi, 2015; Demos, 2018), *The Keepers* (White, 2017), and *The Fear of 13* (Sington, 2015)—Mark Lewis' series might attract worldwide attention, while also posing significant questions about today's media consumption. Who is the real perpetrator after all: the media, its consumers or the social media that gave space for all these crimes?

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Light Waves



Rebecca Matheson

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## *call for papers*

The *quint's* forty sixth issue is issuing a call for theoretically informed and historically grounded submissions of scholarly interest—as well as creative writing, original art, interviews, and reviews of books and films. The deadline for this call is the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2021—but please note that we accept manu/digi-scripts at any time.

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