

EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY IN AFRICA*

Abstract

Other than children's right to express views on issues that relate to them, the United Nations frameworks have largely described children as beneficiaries. However, terrains for inclusive development recognize that, although they require special protections, children just as adults are legitimate contributors to economic growth. The extent and legitimacy of their contributions however depends on policies and legal frameworks. This study is a qualitative analysis of laws that relies on an ethnographic study of the Yoruba Customary child care system. This paper compares ILO Rules, with the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Children 1989, the UN SDG 2030, The African Union Agenda 2063 and Yoruba cultural perceptions on the economic and educational status of children. Contemporary calls for development fit with Yoruba cultural thoughts on inclusive education and the benefits of diversity in citizens' economic roles. The study concludes that Yoruba culture widely explains jurisprudence that are otherwise vague and controversial under statutes. Contrary to previous assumptions, culturally flavored pedagogies on the economic and educational capacities of children can enable self-sufficient citizens.

Keynotes: Economic Capacity, Yoruba Culture, Inclusive Development, Education, Children

1. Introduction

'The Sustainable Development Goal 2030 recognizes the role of cohesive communities and families in providing children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities¹. The African Union Agenda 2063 sets a contemporary framework similar to the SDG 2030. However, it is distinct with features that are peculiar to Africa. A prominent thought in the latter's arrangement is the zeal for nations to re-invent a Pan-African approach to development. That is, no one should be left behind in the continental aspiration towards self-sufficiency. The perception that all persons including women, youths and children are relevant for development if they are carried along also flows with the objective of the African Youth Charter 2009. According to the AYC, Nations should enable young persons' gainful employment, but protect them from economic exploitation. To eradicate poverty, the Charter provides that States must:

- a. Develop macroeconomic policies that focus on job creation particularly for youth ... then develop measures to regulate the informal economy to prevent unfair labor practices where the majority of youth work
- b. Foster greater linkages between the labour market and the education and training system to ensure that curricula are aligned to the needs of the labour market and that youth...
- c. Implement appropriately-timed career guidance for youth as part of the schooling and post-schooling education system then institute incentive schemes for employers to invest in the skills development of employed and unemployed youth
- d. Promote youth entrepreneurship by including entrepreneurship training in the school curricula, providing access to credit, business development skills training, mentorship opportunities and better information on market opportunities ;
- e. Institute national youth service programs to engender community participation and skills development for entry into the labor market

Hence, the enduring approach to inclusive growth asserts that nations would gain more from their young people, if requisite human rights (education and safe conditions of work) are in place. However, the statutory tendencies to isolate older children aged 15-18 (as youths or young persons) in economic discourse; away from their younger counterparts below ages 14 years, suggest that the latter age-group is presumed incapable of economic contributions. The dominant anti child work argument is also that, the recognition of children's economic capacity for paid employment would increase child labor. However, according to reports, despite prohibitions, this part of the young population is in reality still not exempted from exploitative family and non-familial work hazards².

As stated above, the African Youth Charter however emphasized few conditions that would ensure that youths contribute adequately to development in African Nations. These are the conditions that laws and international rules should promote;;

- a. Youths must be provided with works and given safe conditions to work
- b. There should be correlation between the impact of formal education and the needs of local industries

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¹ SDG 2030, Goal 4

² ILO and UNICEF reports on Child Labour 2016-2021 at www.ilo.org retrieved on 12th, October 2021

- c. Education systems must consist of classroom, skills acquisition and mentoring arrangements that prepare youths for the demands of labour market
- d. The curriculum for education must be timely and realistically fit to suit typical human ingenious capacity (Not postpone or delay it)
- e. Youth should have access to credit facilities that would aid their manifestations of economic capacities.

Considering the highlights above, if statutes presume that all children under a certain age are not youths, so they are unfit for paid employment, it becomes pertinent to confirm if this method in the bid to protect has reduced child economic exploitations. It is important to check if restrictions on children's economic aptitude, because adults do exploit them can enable self-sufficient citizens, especially in Africa. Also do laws that restrict children's economic practices in favor of formal education corroborate indigenous approaches to child work, and do they have positive impact on the society.

On the preference of formal education to skills acquisition, recent researches have affirmed that the future of work will not only be about hard skills and formal learning. While education remains a vital component for employment and job sustainability, employers are beginning to prefer task-oriented soft skills in manifesting technical experience. Such skills are found in people with an eye for details, creative problem-solving skills, collaborative mindsets and an ability to deal with ambiguity and complexity. Incidentally, these are especially skills that may be learnt, often through mentorship and apprenticeship programmes³. According to the Forum report (2020), emerging professions reflect the continuing importance of human interaction in the new economy, giving rise to greater demand for roles at the forefront of people and culture.⁴ In many developing countries, where educational structures are ingrained with liberal subjects that besets graduates for white collar jobs and employments, situations present more dependent forms of education than vocational, technical and other forms of entrepreneurship ones. Incidentally, in a country as Nigeria that is a signatory to the UNCRC 1989 and related ILO treaties, the rate of unemployed graduates continues to increase. The cause being that apart from the inability to self-sustain, many higher education graduates are without employable skills.⁵ According to Fakomogbo and Adedigba, the problem with the Nigerian education system especially as it relates to skill development is foundational. He acknowledged that:

The Colonial Administration did not establish university in Nigeria in 1948 to cater for the industrial and commercial needs of Nigeria. Rather than, the main objective of establishing the University College in Ibadan was mainly 'to provide administrative cadre necessary to facilitate the transfer from white colonial administrators to indigenous operators'. As a result, there were neither engineering nor technological programmes introduced at the inception of the University College in 1948. Subjects such as history, Latin, religion, European languages and so forth were introduced

Tracing the history of establishment and development of higher education in Nigeria, Virginia recalled that colonial government imported liberal forms of education which is required to occupy the total age of childhood. However, issues arise because the demand of the modern African societies has gone beyond acquiring liberal education. To be functional, liberal education should combine with ingeniously inspired skills. To the above extent, Okebukola, Sanusi, and Adebisi suggest tangible collaborations among formal academic institutions and industries, in forms of work-study programmes, expanded internship programme, introductory courses among others. In their opinion additional tutelage under industrial exposure should bridge the gap between universities and the industries in Nigeria. This suggestion seems to tally with other various conceptions on the nature of the term 'education' and how each form of education is relevant for economic growth. Article 28 of the UNCRC 1989 defines states obligations towards education. That is, compulsory primary school education and the obligation to 'encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, and make them available and accessible to every child'. Sharma also emphasized that education is more effective if learning and the world of working are better integrated. According to him, the past was focused on delivering education but now, it is predicated on learning outcomes. (S)he further argued that accumulating knowledge matters a less now as more formal education does not automatically translate better skills, ingenuity and better lives. Thus, education without working skills equals irrelevancy in the world of work.⁶ According to

³Report of the The Forum, 'Jobs for Tomorrow, 'Mapping New Opportunities in the New Economy, www.weforum.com

⁴ Why skills not degrees will shape the future, www.weforum.org 21 Sep 2020 Ravi Kumar S. President, Infosys, Steve George Global CIO, Ernst & Young

⁵Adebisi T.A. (2014) International Journal of Development and Sustainability ISSN: 2186-8662 –www.isdsnet.com/ijds Volume 3 Number 12(2014):Pages 2218-2227 ISDS Article ID: IJDS1410240

⁶Okebukola, P. (2007), 'Innovations and best practices in teacher education. In Fakomogbon, M.A. and Adebija, M.V. (2011), Higher Education and Current Issues on Skills Development in Nigeria', *Journal of Research in Education*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 195-199.

Sharma, if rapid expansion of higher education grows misalignment with workplace, the consequence of poor alignment is rising unemployment status being experienced. This is with indication that Nigeria has as many as 478 higher institutions of learning that produce graduates without relevant skills that meet the challenges and peculiarities of the modern African society. According to Sharma, there are equally acute shortage of artisans and skilled workforce as there are many unemployed graduates of higher institutions. To Fakomogbon and Adegbija, if despite the increase in number of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, students could not develop entrepreneurial skills that place emphasis on innovation that could generate wealth, If at the level of higher education, African youths lack relevant and employable skills, then it becomes impracticable for them to function effectively in the modern and local industries alike. Sharma discussed the need to link education to employment and the more important need for learners to be self-reliant, employable and productive. These require adequate training. To Aderogba, for individuals to be self-reliant or self-employed, they must have acquired the right habits, attitudes, and saleable skills, with which they can explore their environment, as well as survive in the face of unemployment. In fact, being self-reliant and self-employed cannot be possible without acquisition of relevant skills, which should be the outcome of proper training.⁷ Proper training in this regard encompasses the growth of a learner in relation to the totality of the problems that their immediate cultural environment requires that they resolve.

This paper examines international goals on sustainable education and human capital development, and then compares them with prominent philosophies in Yoruba culture especially on the contributory status of children to the society in the course of learning. This includes the processes through which children are educated and trained into Yoruba economic cultures. This study also emphasizes the parental and community roles for these manifestations. The goal is to consider how states can adjust existing childhood agenda for maximum economic development using aspects of indigenous cultures that are deep and sustainable.

2. Research Methodology

This study is a Qualitative Research on the customary law of the Yoruba People of South Western Nigeria. Contextual analysis preferred the Capacity theory to the Caretaker Perspective on child participation. The primary sources of law for the study include the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigerian Childs rights Act 2003, Nigerian Labor Act 1974, Child Laws of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos States, United Nations Conventions and Declarations on Children, African Union Treaties and Agreements relating to children, ILO Conventions that relates to children and employment, the *African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child*, the *African Youth Charter*, case laws and customary rules among others. These were complemented with secondary sources: books, journals and Internet materials. The research laid emphasis on the legislative capital cities of the six Southwestern States in Nigeria. Seventeen and Thirty-one sessions of unstructured in-depth interviews of Key informants, were held with customary courts administrators and other custodians of Yoruba customs and practices respectively. The results from the oral response were transcribed on the same day of interview, into a Micro-Soft Word Format. Thereafter they were qualitatively analyzed in themes, and presented in Tables and Percentages to complement the legal analysis in corresponding sections. The Yoruba ethnic group represents one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, a country in the Sub-Saharan part of western Africa. Laws in Nigeria are derived from three distinct laws or legal systems: customary law, Islamic law and English-style laws. Customary law is indigenous to Nigeria, with each of the various ethnic groups in the country having its own distinctive customary law.⁸Yoruba People are mostly found in the South-Western part of the country. Archaeologically, the Yoruba settlement at Ile-Ife is dated to the 4th Century BC⁹ with oral traditions that are traceable to the formally dominant Ife kingdom. Their earliest documented history however came with the rise and fall of the Oyo Empire (1100-1600) especially in the 17th Century. Yoruba people are identifiable by the peculiarity of their names, mode of dressing and their peculiar customs. The native language of the Yoruba is Yoruba Language.

⁷Sharma, Y. (2013), A focus on skills increasingly links higher education with employment. Issue No: 253, January, 2013. Retrieved 25 May, 2013 from www.universityworldnews.com/article. Aderogba, A.A. (2011), 'Identification of Entrepreneurial Skills and Competencies Needed for Sustainable Development in Higher Education in Nigeria', *Journal of Research in Education*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 1-9; Singh, S. (1992), 'Training for Employment: Some Lessons from Experience', *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, Vol.6 No. 2, pp. 33-40; *The Guardian* (2012), 'Employability: university education isn't just about developing skills', Retrieved 25 May, 2013 from www.guardian.co.uk.>Professional>HigherEducationNetwork. Virginia, A.M. (2003), A Concise History of Education in Nigeria: Issues and New Challenges, Lagos, DMMM.

⁸Abdulmumini A (2011). Oba, 'Religious and Customary Laws in Nigeria', *Emory International Law Review* 882.

⁹Johnson S.(1921), *History of the Yoruba* London 1921, Smith, R. 1988), *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, 1st ed. 1969, 3rd ed. London 1988, Law R.(1977), *The Oyo empire, c. 1600-c 1836* , also see Egu C.(2011), *Ile Ife, Nigeria(CA.500 B.C.E.-)*www.blackpast.org retrieved 5/26/2019

On the amorphous state of the Nigerian legislations on children, the Nigerian Constitution and Statutes have eradicated other jurisdictions of Yoruba Customary Law (especially criminal law). However, Yoruba family Law, including matters on welfare of children, are still left within the jurisdiction of the Customary Courts¹⁰. As explained in the research methodology, this part of the study¹¹ is informed by the oral interview of Customary Court Presidents, Traditional Rulers/Leaders, Community Leaders, Traditional and Modern Child Care Providers, Herbalists, Child Developmental Officers, Police Officer in charge of child welfare and also written anthropological texts and sociological data.

3. Childhood and Education in Human Capital Development

The nature of laws, whether customary, foreign, statutory or international influence their standards on childhood, maturity, child work, education and children's rights. While the Yoruba practice and rules on childcare are generally unwritten, its international and statutory counterparts are not. Also, while customary laws have been adjudged as contradicting and militating against formal laws, incursions into their generally unwritten nature reveals that cultural standard are nevertheless comparable. They are either complimentary or contradictory. For purposes of comparisons, contemporary statutory and international frameworks for children include United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, The African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child 1990, the African Youth Charter 2009, The Nigerian Child's Rights Act 2003, The Nigerian Labour Act 1971 and CEDAW 1979. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) childhood age is subjective. Part 1, Article 1 of the Treaty states that 'for the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. According to Articles 32, 'States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development' Notwithstanding, the Convention mentions the omnibus right of the child to survive and thrive, and the responsibility of states to ensure this. The laws also emphasize the roles of parents and their cultures in Article 5 as follows:

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention

Generally, the convention provides the right of the child to attain primary, secondary and tertiary Education. The above and provisions of the International Labour Organization especially that of the Convention on the Minimum Age of Entry into Employment 1973, constitute international categorization of childhood and the qualifications to work. Article 3 of the ILO convention of 1973 provides: 'The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which its by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18 years'. The treaty then allows state parties to determine their minimum ages. Other categories of workers under Articles 4, 5, 6 and the ILO convention are young persons aged 13-15, 14 and 16 who may work under stipulated circumstances. These varieties in conceptions of 'child' 'work' and 'age' also accommodate the provisions of the Nigerian labour Act. On its own, the Nigerian law defines a child to be anyone under the age of 12 years. Sections 59 of the Law provides that children can only be employed by their family members. Other sections of the law also distinguished children from young persons who range between ages 12-14, 15 and 16. The later can hence participate in economic activities as variously earmarked under the law.

On the other hand, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990, defines a child to be 'Anyone below the age of 18 years'. In Article 11 and 15, the treaty gives similar provisions as the UNCRC 1989 on education and child labour. It equally adopts the provisions of the ILO conventions of 1963. However, Article 31 of the AU treaty expressly stipulates that 'Every child shall have responsibilities towards his family and society, the State and other legally recognized communities and the international community'. The child, subject to his age and ability, and such limitations as may be contained in the present Charter, shall have the duty:

- (a) to work for the cohesion of the family, to respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need;
- (b) to serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;

¹⁰ Section 1 Cap M7 of the MCA LFN 2004, *Aoko v Fagbemi*

¹¹ Adegbite A. E. (2018), *The Child Care System of Yoruba People of South Western Nigeria*, University of Ibadan Nigeria, PhD Law dissertation

- (c) to preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity;
- (d) to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society;
- (e) to preserve and strengthen the independence and the integrity of his country;
- (f) to contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African Unity

While above frameworks have similar aspirations, the discrepancies in tangible concepts of age, work and child makes the application of contents on states parties cumbersome. Nonetheless the above rules have influenced the international regulations on children's maturity, capacity to work, economic independence, aptitude for formal schooling, skills and intellectual cognition. This situation hence informs the need to examine the Yoruba Customary Law on children, and compare the level of self sufficiency minus the statutory counterparts. This includes how the Yoruba culture seemingly underscores or contradicts concepts that are presumed to be strange to Africa, simply because they are in the international treaties. No doubts researchers have advised the elevation of indigenous knowledge and practice that are inclusive and sustainable.

Table 1

48 Respondents	Sources of the rules of Yoruba Child Care Practices	%
19	God	39%
8	Government Laws	16%
4	Natural Instinct	8%
9	Cultural Practices/Tradition	18%
2	Kings	4%
2	Parents	4%
2	Deities	4%
2	Unknown	4%

Sources of Yoruba Law on Child Care ¹²

Under the above cultural jurisprudence, a child is called 'Omo'. 'Omo' means the commentator's biological or personal offspring¹³. 'Omo' when used contextually attaches the child to a particular parent, caretaker or household. Each parent has individual rights and duties towards his/her own *Omo*. An *Omo* has no age limitation.¹⁴ Among the Yoruba people, no matter how old a person is, he remains a child to his/her parents. Childhood is however represented in three stages of human physiological, social and economic development. The categories are;

- a. The Fetus (*Ole inu*)-- To the Yoruba people, life begins upon conception of the child in the form of the mothers pregnancy. This is the only stage where the child's viability and life is totally dependent on the mothers welfare. Unborn children are therefore entitled to special care through their mothers. At most, the culture attributes spiritual and prophetic tendencies to pregnancies. That is, the parents and community notes economic variations in the family during a woman's pregnancy and often attach names that describe this circumstances to applicable children.
- b. The second classification is for the *Ikoko*(*infants*). This category covers all children ages 0-3years. *Ikoko* age is the most dependent stage for children and therefore relates to all that may be done to a child from birth till when he/she is weaned by the (3 years and above). This stage bother more on the physical development of the child and the introduction to its enviroment. The economic proficeincy of the child at this stage is also not ruled out as for many reasons the existence of this child can influence the family's financial status. There is for example the perspective that multiple births(twins and triplets) attract gifts and goodwill from all and sundry, thereby improving the parents socio-economic status. On the other hand a sickly child may turn the parents economic position below what existed before his or her birth.

¹²Adegbite, A. E. (2018), The Child Care System of Yoruba People of South Western Nigeria, University of Ibadan Nigeria, PhD Law dissertation

¹³The communal and extended nature of the Yoruba family set up, does not preclude the recognition of the fact that a child even upon other arrangements, primarily belongs to the biological parents. Biological parents of the child are therefore the first point of recourse on issues relating to the child spiritual and total welfare. These duties and responsibilities can only be waived or delegated if the nature of the duty to be performed permits same. In child care rituals and arrangements, it is very common to specifically request for the woman who had the blood on the child at its delivery, the person who carried the child for nine months those from whose bodies, the child came through to life.

¹⁴To achieve its purpose the questions for interviews specified the requisite age range for each issue i.e Questions were majorly about *Omokekere* (little children after their birth to the period of maturity (15 years)

- c. Lastly the general childhood identity is in the *Omode* (toddlers and little children). Unlike *Omo*, this term has a less possessive connotation. It simply includes all children from late infant age till earliest age of maturity. *Omode* describes children that are more independent than *ikoko* (infants). Attributes of *Omode* are that, they can express and feed themselves, coordinate their motor skills, walk, talk and take instructions. Every healthy adult members of the community are obliged to give every *Omode* appropriate training, guidance and protection. Within a family set up, a parent whose child has become an *omode* (at 3 years old) may decide to give birth to another one. Invariably the Yoruba believe that as soon as the child is smart enough to express himself and even run little errands at home, he becomes a participant in the home. To Oluyemi and Robert (2002)¹⁵, such errands foster the acquisition of cognitive, social, and economic competencies. The indispensable status of children in socio-economic interactions are expressed in some Yoruba Proverbs as interpreted below: ‘although a child’s hand would not reach the altar, the adult’s own cannot also enter through the gourd pot’, ‘the reknown kingdom of Ile-Ife was created by following the wise contributions of both children and adults alike’

Parental Obligations

Unlike general statutory and international regulations that earmark specific ages for entry into education, employment, and civil obligations, the status of *Omode* under Yoruba laws generally terminates at the earliest stages of maturity. Parents have the obligation to cater for their children until maturity. Under Yoruba rules, parental efforts can either be obligatory or reciprocal. To the ‘Obligation school’ every child is inherently entitled to receive parental attention and care. The parent’s duty to care for the child is therefore mandatory and not subject to the child’s reciprocity or good character. Children are simply children and not investments. This idea is expressed in Yoruba but interpreted in the following words;

- The corpse of the barren will not be eaten by dogs, whoever gives birth to children will be buried by children, and anyone who does not, will equally be buried by children.
- Children’s reliability cannot be guaranteed, only person(s) celebrated at their death by children can be regarded as a parent

On this note, children merely owe a divine obligation to make their parents happy by taking care of them and yielding to their guidance. A child who fails in his duties or responsibilities towards his parents therefore risks the wrath of God and is doomed for generational lessons from its own off springs. To those who perceive parental efforts as reciprocal, the child’s most important obligation is to take good care of his immediate family members especially her/his siblings and parents (when they become helpless or aged). The care given to an *omo* is therefore perceived as an investment for the parents’ future benefits. Parent’s dedication/efforts must therefore be appreciated and rewarded by the child at all times. Especially when the child is capable of doing so; A Yoruba proverb is interpreted as: -When the bush rats become aged, it suckles its child’s breasts. It is therefore common orientation that parent(s) that do cater their children equally set themselves to be abandoned at old age. To repay parents for their efforts, the child is generally expected to;

- a. Assist its parents with home chores and economic activities
- b. Run errands for parents without complaints
- c. respect his/her parents and immediate community
- d. constantly show acts of appreciation of its parental efforts
- e. positively represent and glorify the family’s image and reputation
- f. notify the immediate family of impending dangers or threats that he is aware of
- g. Cater for parents if they become disabled, ill and elderly

Under the Reciprocal school, its common parlance that a young child that refuses to perform its familial obligations is also not entitled to care from parents; *Eni ti ko se ko je*-He who does not work deserves not to eat

Maturity Age

Unlike statutory and international regulations that earmark specific ages for entry into education, employment, and civil obligations, the status of *Omode* under Yoruba laws generally terminates at the age of maturity. Among the Yoruba, the age of maturity varies, and may be gauged at any time depending on each child. To be considered independent, especially around 16 years old¹⁶ the child’s physical, socio-economic and mental capabilities should be well developed. Accordingly, a Yoruba proverb explains the socio-economic and political transitions of the girl child within the culture as dependent on her physical development: A young girl may be excited when her

¹⁵ Oluyomi A. Robert F.(2002), *Yoruba Toddlers’ Engagement in Errands and Cognitive Performance on the Yoruba Mental Subscale*, Sage Journals, First Published March 1, 2002

¹⁶*Okwueze v Okwueze* (1989) 5SC 186 where the court held that the age of 16 can be considered to be reasonable age below which a customary court would consider the issue of custody of children of a customary law marriage.

breasts sprouts, but she would not know that, the same development would trigger her exit from her father's house to a husband's. It is presumed that girls generally reach physical, mental and emotional maturity before boys. Also, at maturity it is assumed that children have already been fortified with appropriate education and knowledge that makes them independent socio-economic members of the society. For the girl's maturity begins not only when she starts menstruating but when by social opinion, she has the general features and attributes to withstand sexual intercourse, child bearing and marital pressure. On the part of the boy, he is mature when he becomes physically built and economically capable of taking care of himself and his family. Both the male and female child are however, to be economically empowered for survival. Nonetheless, more attention is given to the boy child consider his gender role as the husband and main financier of his marriage and subsequent home: -the major issue is not marriage, but the ability to maintain a wife woman and children. Yoruba recognize the primary responsibilities of parents to provide their children's needs for socio-economic development. This obligation is also connected to their natural instinct to procreate for self/family/communal preservation. This is expressed in prominent proverbs as interpreted: a) the child today is the adult/leader of tomorrow; b). if a child does not die, he is bound to become an adult/Elder.

Child Education

While statutes and international rules attributes of Universal Basic Education and generally formal schooling to in the socio-economic development of children, Yoruba People categorize child education into four types, which are; home training, religious education, apprenticeship and formal education¹⁷. To indigenes, the curriculum for formal education is strictly western. It means that the child must attend a school, then learn to read and write in foreign tongues in order to meet up with contemporary demands. The willingness of parents especially the father, to send their children to school is therefore usually influenced by requisite financial obligations and their optimism in the capacity of the child to compensate them after the career choice. For example, the fact that a girl child would eventually get married and move to her husband's home is a deciding factor on the need for female children to go to school.

Table 2
Education and Training¹⁸

Forms of education	Formal Education	Religious Education	Home Training	Trade Learning/apprenticeship.	All forms of training
Ranked as Preferred	11 = 22%	3 = 6%	29=60%	7=15	8 = 17%

Religious education relates to the child's exposure to divine/spiritual, denominational¹⁹ rules and mandates. It is a duty shared by parents and requisite religious institutions. It is believed that a God-fearing child loathes unholy attitude and alliances. A child is guided according to the caretaker's religious doctrines. No one can succeed without God, and all are expected to live in Gods will in order to evade eternal damnation. For example, *Ifa* as a Yoruba religion pre-supposes that parents make spiritual enquiries by checking the *Esentaiye* (forecast of the pages in the child's life time). A religious child would hence be well guided in the course of his/her life time.

Apprenticeship /Trade learning is the informal form of education. The child is taken through trades that consist of indigenous or technical enterprises or activities that are learnt outside government's regulated training curriculum. This type of training is anchored by individuals who are respected as masters of their trades. Because of its informal requisites, these forms of training, are preferred alternatives for parents with very low-income level or minimum academic exposure. On the other hand, a child who finds it difficult to cope with academic demands from public schools may be rechanneled through the less structured route. Learning a regular trade or vocation is perceived as cheaper and capable of making the child equally as successful as his formally educated peers. In the contemporary economic situation of scarcity in white collar jobs, it is believed that apart from school work, a child should also be exposed to other vocational initiatives in addition to formal education. A child's creativity, success or dexterity in non-salaried exposures is described by many as the most reliable way to unlimited financial breakthrough. This is augmented by statements as a) *skillful* and dexterous hands would not disappoint their owners; b) A job feeds the worker, while his trade makes him successful. Hence the child may be made to learn a trade if i) The parents cannot afford the cost of formal education; ii) It is believed that the child is incapable of coping with the rigors of school works; iii) Where *Ifa* predicts the child career path; and iv) Where the trade is a

¹⁷ Adegbite (2018), The Child Care System of Yoruba People of South Western Nigeria, University of Ibadan Nigeria, PhD Law dissertation

¹⁸ Adegbite (2018), The Child Care System of Yoruba People of South Western Nigeria, University of Ibadan Nigeria, PhD Law dissertation

¹⁹This can be Islamic, traditional or Christian in approach

family business. It is preferable to refer the child to a busy apprentice who is experienced and capable of impacting it rightly. After formally handling the child over to the master, the parent is expected 'hands off' in order to allow the principal to mold the child to independent artisanship. *Patience* is a basic requisite for successful apprenticeship; therefore, a child at work must learn to endure every action of the principal, since same is for the purpose of sharpening his/her skills for future performance. However, masters too are expected to treat apprentices with love and ensure that they expose them to the secrets of the trade. Masters are in loco parentis and as such are delegated with the powers to chastise the apprentices.

Home training (eko Ile), is the most preferred form of education. This is the informal education that can only be inculcated into the child from home. Home-training is described as the first and original means of instilling *iwarere*(good character) in the child. It is the most eulogized form of education amongst the Yoruba. The duty to give a child good home training starts from the mother to the father and the immediate family members; - a horse conditions its own race in line with the performance of the one in front; -A child that is accustomed to the mother's cloth should not sew wrong styles. The omission/refusal to home train a child is regarded as an inherent deficiency which is bound to expose the child's family to embarrassments within the larger community; a) Elegance and Decorations are better when in house-out; b) A child not trained at home is bound to be taught by outsiders; c) The child we refuse to train will eventually trade the house we have built away to strangers; d) An orange fruit causes its mother(tree) to be clubbed; e) An iroko tree must be trimmed in its early years before it becomes high and wild at maturity. Verse 43 of Oyeku Otua²⁰an Ifa chapter provides that;

Ex 58. If one's child is trained, such child has to be very intelligent.

Ifa divination was made for Sogbon-were, Olokun's child

An untrained child becomes less intelligent than yam

Ifa divination was made for Obawin, Ora-Nifes Child

A properly home trained child possesses the traits of an *Omoluabi*. It is strongly believed being an *Omoluabi* is the strongest foundation to sustaining other endeavors including other forms of education, career and marital life.

4. Conclusion

The Yoruba customary law is constituted by written and unwritten sources including statutes, case laws and oral traditions. Childhood represents the initial stages of human growth and existence. Among the Yoruba, childhood is in four main stages; in pregnancy, infancy, young age and pre-maturity. Due to its wider philosophical stance which includes spiritual foundations, the Yoruba believe that a child can manifest at any of the stages above. On child economic contributions, Yoruba recognize the relevance of every child in the communal order. The child may influence its family economics as soon as she/he is capable. He/she becomes relevant for household errands as soon as he/she becomes an *omode* (weaned and responsive) with the capacity to do so. Unlike what obtains under the statutes, there is no limitation on the freedom to exhibit economic ingenuity due to the fear of exploitations. Children may therefore hawk goods and assist their parent's economic viabilities. They are encouraged to use their initiatives in profit making. Child labor only happens when a child who has been productive is not given reciprocal affection or encouraging rewards for good job done. On the role of education and the impact of poverty on child development, Yoruba believe that unfavorable circumstances (poverty) in childhood cannot influence a child's turnout, if such a child is destined to succeed. Another perspective is that austerity makes the child smarter. Yoruba are also religious on the need to visit the pre-destined life chapters of their babies by consulting and *Ifa* priest to check its *Esentaiye copus*. A mature person cannot be a child. Also, children's economic dispositions of financial essence are not attached to their ages. This is unlike what obtains under the statutes. The role of children does not preclude the fact that within communal dictates, parents are obliged to cater for their children. Parental rights on children can be vested, personal or shared. Their efforts on their children may also be obligatory or reciprocal. When it is reciprocal, children are expected to repay their families efforts as at when appropriate. Children's entitlement to care from their parents is not human right based. Child care is based on other spiritual, communal, evolutionary and moral considerations, especially the natural instinct towards self preservation.

Education to the Yoruba goes beyond formal schooling. Education comes in western, religious, informal and moral forms. The most appealing form of education is that which makes the child a successful *Omoluabi*. This is achievable through home training, which is seen as the primary duty of the mother. Formal education is considered from its global relevance. Masters of trade and Foster parents are considered as persons in loco parentis. By this fact they may exercise parent related rights on the child without the permission of the parents. A reconsideration of Yoruba child care rules reiterates the essence of blending indigenous conceptions on development with existing curricula. Also, that typical family units are very relevant to the child's mental and social personality. The culture

²⁰ Ifalere O.O(2014), *Iwe Mimo Ifa:Esin Akoda Olodumare*. Lahoo Productions 2014, ISBN:978-978-52603-0-4 p 129

distinguishes the roles of the father and the mother and describes them as foundational to the child's participation in the larger society. Also, children according to their capacities should be encouraged to discover and exercise control over their own economic capacities. Education should involve programs that allow the child to interact with the community and communal economic terrains. The continuous mainstreaming of the indispensable role of formal education is necessary. Also, campaigns on what constitutes worst and detrimental of worst forms of child labor should be intensified. This is in order to curtail traditional practices that also deprive the child of her/his individuality. Cultures cannot continue to be in oblivion of the pressing incidents of globalization. However cultural and national orientation may only be subject to realistic child protections law. That is, the bid to protect children, international laws should not deprive children the benefit of genuine skills because they must attend schools. Evidence have shown that countries that disable their children's economic potentials for some adult age-based predictions rely solely on liberal and imported forms of education that are not timely. They may continue to present citizens that are formally educated but that are not dexterous in skills that would enable them navigate local industries. Its worthy to note that by virtue of the recent call for inclusive development, the consequential events of *Ajobi, Ajogbe and Asuwada*, means that the impact of children's population exits the family into the community then up into wider, national and international spaces. Not otherwise. In reality also, children practically exist at and from the foundations of economic schemes. It is unjust to presume them off.