

NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES (NJAS)

**VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1, MAY 2024
ISSN: 2734-3146**

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Copyright © NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1, MAY 2024

ISSN: 2734-3146

Published by:
African and Asian Studies,
Department of Chinese Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Printed by:
Academic Online Journals
Phone: 07031048438

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief:

Prof. Ifeanyi Sunny Odinye
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Editor:

Rev. Dr. Kenechukwu N. Afunugo
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Editorial Advisory

Prof. Alvan-Ikoku Nwamara
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Prof. Duro Oni
University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria

Prof. Alex Asigbo
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Prof. Nkechi Nwokoye
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Prof. Nneka Osakwe
Albany State University, USA

Prof. Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, O.S.A.
Tansian University, Umunya, Nigeria

EDITORIAL NOTES

Nigerian Journal of African Studies (NJAS) is an interdisciplinary and a multidisciplinary journal dedicated to scholarship and research in African studies. It aims at publishing high quality original manuscripts in African languages, literatures, religions, politics, economy, history, culture, anthropology, societies, science, technology and many more. NJAS is a peer reviewed open access journal. The scope of the journal includes all areas of studies on Africa. Nigerian Journal of African Studies (NJAS) is an Open Access journal. Abstract and full texts of all articles published in this journal are freely accessible to everyone after publication without any form of restriction. All articles published under open access can be accessed by anyone with internet connection. NJAS is indexed on Google Scholar.

GUIDELINES TO AUTHOR

The journal follows a yearly publishing schedule and welcomes original research articles in African and English languages. An article can be sent at any time of the year in Microsoft Word format to officialnjas@gmail.com. An article must not exceed 10 pages (5000 words) in a single spacing with 12-point Time New Roman font and any current referencing style. Submission of articles must be original, must not have been submitted elsewhere for publication, and author(s) must agree to grant the first editing/publishing rights to the journal upon acceptance. No withdrawal of article after submission. An article should include a cover page with the title, name of the author(s), institution/address, phone number and email address. The editor makes every effort in editing and correction to ensure the accuracy of the work. However, the editor and publisher are not responsible for any errors or omissions that may be found in the any article. Any views expressed in this publication are the views of the author(s) and the editor or publisher is not responsible for any error, mistake and plagiarism in any article.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ableist Violence: Impoliteness Strategies in The Dramatic Discourse of Ola Rotimi's <i>Hopes of the Living Dead</i> Udoh Chinwe & Vivian Kaoaisochukwu Ejiaso	1-8
Issues in French Language Teaching in Nigeria: The Case of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Domitila Onyinye Ubajaka & Ozioma Siddharta Omedobi Anyawuike	9-12
Critical Discourse Analysis of Gubernatorial Debates in Abia State 2015 and 2019 Elections Ifunanya Laurencia Ebekue	13-21
Language and Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian National Anthem Onyeachulam, Sylvanus C & Okoye, Michael Maduka	22-27
The Salvific Role of Rahab in the Conquest Narratives (Joshua 2-6): A Model for African Christian Women Leaders Ogbonnaya, Joshua I.; Ndubuwa, Ohaeri N.; Joseph Ode Alagi; & Idialu, Akhijemen I.	28-34
The Media, Elections and the deployment of ICT in Nigeria's Fourth Republic Olajide Olufunsho Ayobolu	35-42
Christian Response to Widowhood Practices in Anioma, Delta State: The Anglican Example Prof. O. O. C. Uche & Okojih, Peter Onyemaechi O.	43-46
Language and Meaning in Gabriel Okara's <i>The Voice</i> Chilenwa Ignatius Metu	47-52
Effect of reward management on performance of hotels in Anambra and Delta States of Nigeria ISEH, Gloria Nndidi & Prof. L. I. Ifegbu	53-61
Yoruba Traditional Medicine: A Panacea to Challenges of Global Pandemic (Covid-19) Akinlabi, A. Williams	62-66
Images of Subjugation and Echoes of Resistance in Selected Poems of Agostinho Neto Amuche Grace Nweke & Adaobi Olivia Ihueze	67-75
An Overview of the Trend of Befitting Burial among the Present-Day Igbo Speaking People-Societies of Nigeria Chidiobi, Okechukwu Christian & Ibekwe, Juliet Chinenye	76-87
Influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child among the Igbo in Imo state Ofor Obianuju Rita	88-94
Audience Perception of Public Affairs Programme on Nigeria Democracy: A Case Study of <i>Politics Today</i> on Channels Television Ekhatu, Emmanuel Zelinjo	95-106

Ableist Violence: Impoliteness Strategies in The Dramatic Discourse of Ola Rotimi's *Hopes of the Living Dead*

Udoh Chinwe, PhD

Department of English and Literature,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
vc.udoh@unizik.edu.ng

&

Vivian Kaoaisochukwu Ejiaso

Coal City University, Emene
vivian@gouni.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examines face threatening comments on persons with disability as violence. It investigates the impoliteness strategies in dialogic discourses of characters in the play, *Hopes of the Living Dead* by Ola Rotimi. The study argues that persons with disability are face threatened and attacked in their language exchanges with able characters in the play. The qualitative and quantitative analysis are adopted for the study. Ten sentence extracts were purposively sampled for analysis. Adopting Jonathan Culpeper's impoliteness theoretical framework, the findings reveal that five impoliteness super-strategies: bald on record impoliteness super-strategy, positive impoliteness super-strategy, negative impoliteness super-strategy, withhold impoliteness strategy and sarcasm impoliteness super-strategy are deployed in the violence against persons with disability in the play. The researchers recommend that regardless of people's embodiment, "face" should be saved and not threatened to maintain the integrity of their humanity. The study, therefore, concludes that the play is a critique of the violating impoliteness in discourses with and about people with disability.

Keywords: impoliteness strategies, discourse, face, disability, face attack, face threat

Introduction

Violence manifests both in tangible and intangible forms. On the aspect of tangible forms of violence, its manifestation is seen in physical ways such as physical injuries, whereas intangible forms include all forms of violence that are non-physical. It could be emotional, psychological, oral/linguistic and so on.

In human society, *homo sapiens* are known to possess interactional trait; as such, they live by interacting with one another. In such oral/linguistic interaction, people are bound to 'threaten' or 'save' the other in such discursive situations. In cases where to "threaten" the other/hearer is obtainable, the 'speaker' employs certain strategies that harms 'face' such that the hearer interprets such utterance or act as threatening. Impoliteness strategies are tools employed for the realization of threats or harms in interactional situations. Most form of human communication medium is language. That is why Ricoeur (1974, p.34) asserts that "language as speech is such that it is the place where violence reaches expression...". Thus, one could say that impoliteness could be seen as a form of violence meted to another person through linguistic acts. Impoliteness is seen as interactional strategies employed by interlocutor(s) to cause harm or threaten another's face resulting to friction and crisis. Language as a form of violence, Olorunsogo (2020) as cited in Udoh and Ejiaso (2022) "involves emotional consequences for the target [victim]". For Taiwo (2020: 122), impoliteness "attacks somebody's identity or rights, thereby causing specific emotional reactions (e.g. hurt, anger)".

Over the years, scholars have investigated impoliteness strategies use in certain contexts to ascertain its usage and impacts. Anyanwu and Udoh (2021) investigated the use of impoliteness strategies in cyber-bullying utterances on social media; Ononye, Ikenwa and Ugwuagbo (2021) studied the impoliteness in online reaction on media reports on 2019 Nigerian presidential election victory declaration and Igwebuikwe and Eburuaja (2020) examined the use of impoliteness strategies in the satirical song of Falz, 'This is Nigeria'.

The play, *Hopes of the Living Dead* by Ola Rotimi depicts various ways 'able' characters go violent on 'disabled' ones, here they are lepers, by deploying the use of impoliteness strategies in their communicative interactions. Little or no studies have been done on this play using pragmatic research framework. Thus, the researchers' objectives to investigate the forms of impoliteness strategies, which are viewed as violent, that 'able' characters use on 'disabled' ones.

The Concept of Impoliteness

Impoliteness refers to the act of using face-attacking linguistic strategies to harm another person. For Culpeper, impoliteness means communicative strategies that are used to attack face, thereby cause social conflict and disharmony (2016). It is the use of strategies that are designed to have opposite effect – social disruption or

disharmony and these strategies are oriented towards attacking face (Goffman, 1967; Brown & Levinson, 1987, as cited in Culpeper 1996). The act of being impolite results in disharmony of interaction. This could be seen when a particular interlocutor, a speaker, for instance, who intentionally employs certain communicative strategies to harm either the positive or negative face of another interlocutor, say a hearer, in a particular discursive context. Interestingly, both participants in interaction, say a speaker and hearer, have the tendency to infer that a particular utterance made is said with the intention to hurt or harm face (of the hearer), invariably creating friction or discontinuance of interaction. At times impolite utterances which more or less could impact on the 'victim' emotionally or psychologically, could also lead to physical fight. Because of this understanding of politeness from this dimension, Culpeper revised the definition of impoliteness. For him, "impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or construes behaviour as intentionally face-threatening, or a combination of (1) and (2)," (2005: 38).

The direct conversationalists, an addressee, perceives if an utterance from a speaker, direct conversationalist, is face-threatening. Thus, could react in order to express feeling from the impact of such utterance that is made by a speaker. However, it is quite unclear what the reaction of direct addressee (Conversationalist A) could be when an impolite utterance made by a speaker (Conversationalist B) to him (Conversationalist A) is not seen as impolite but a third interlocutor, an indirect hearer, (Conversationalist C) perceives such as face-threatening. This creates room for further researches.

Types of Impoliteness

According to Culpeper, three forms of impoliteness exist: coercive, affective and entertaining impoliteness.

1. **Coercive Impoliteness:** is a type of impoliteness seen when a particular interlocutor gains power through the use of language. This could be seen in acts such as commands or orders. For example, "Stand still!", "Shut the door!"
2. **Affective Impoliteness:** is seen in a speaker's expressions of anger towards the other interlocutor/hearer and consequently creates negative atmosphere for them.
3. **Entertaining Impoliteness:** a type of impoliteness that creates amusement from the victim's feelings of hurt. That is to say that it occurs when the speaker makes fun of the hearer and utilizes the target's feelings to cause laughter.

Face

Face refers to self-image or social value one has created for oneself in interaction, which could be tampered with by either protecting or damaging it. For Udoh and Ejiaso (2022), "face could be lost or damaged if it is threatened". Face is saved by respecting or protecting it. For every individual, there are two faces: positive and negative in their possession, just like a two-faced coin. One's negative face demands non-imposition, non-interference nor intrusion into one's privacy. It demands respect and shows independence. Udoh and Ejiaso (2022) refers to negative face as face independence or non-interference on somebody's face. Positive face demands acceptance, agreement and solidarity.

These faces could be threatened as well as saved. Either of this could result to disharmony or conflict and harmony or successful conversational situations. Power, social distance and rank or size of imposition of acts are major ways faces could be affected.

For each of these faces lies certain 'wants' they need, which protecting such wants, that means saving face, whereas, harming such face means depriving the face its wants. Positive face wants seeks for acceptance, agreement, friendship/relationship and solidarity whereas negative face wants seeks for non-imposition nor intrusion. It demands avoidance and utmost respect.

Power

Power as a force of dominance and authority exist in every society. In human society, for instance, power exists imbalanced in that certain individuals or groups enjoy "force of dominance" through their different channels of authorities, whereas others, 'ordinary people' are left with no power. Power changes in certain situations. For instance, in a classroom, teacher has power over student. The same teacher could be less powerful in another context. For instance, in the church, a pastor/priest has power over the teacher who is a church member. The person, who is powerful, tends to control discourses and navigate its direction.

Impoliteness has greater chances of occurrence where there is asymmetrical existence of power relations between interlocutors. That is not to say that where there is symmetrical power relations or intimate relationships between interlocutors, that there is no use of impoliteness because intimacy or people that like themselves, naturally, show concern for each other's face. Even insults are likely not to be taken seriously, because they could be seen as "banter when directed at targets liked by the speaker (Culpeper, 1996: 353). For Culpeper, "in a familiar relationship, one has more scope for impoliteness: one may know which aspects of face are particularly sensitive to attack, and one may be able to better predict and/or cope with retaliation that may ensue (1996:354)

A. The Synopsis of the play, *Hope of the Living Dead* by Ola Rotimi

The play *Hope of the Living Dead* by Ola Rotimi, depicts the life of struggle littered with enormous challenges that persons with disability, those with leprosy disease, face especially in the hands of able characters. The play which is based in Nigeria spotlights the rebellion. Ikoli Harcourt Whyte, who is at the center of the play, and having been made leader by the group, fights the British administration that include the senior medical officer, the superintendent of police, the matron and many others in the administration.

After Dr. Fergusson's departure to London, the leprosy patients have their hope of being cured declining by day because the doctor has brought them to use as experiment in bringing the medicine to cure them. Harcourt Whyte, infected with skin leprosy, fights for the rights of the other inmates by approaching the authority with their current and future plights. At the end, the Senior Medical Officer, SMO, brought hope to the inmates that they (the inmates) were to be moved to Uzuakoli, their 'promise land' according to the dictates of authority. Upon this, Harcourt Whyte maintains that they are going to do things themselves henceforth and be ready to face and combat any challenges that may come their way as against what they saw in the hands of the authority after Dr. Fergusson left for London earlier in the play. He made the other inmates seek for independence because their dependence on the authority harms them.

Theoretical Framework:

The Jonathan Culpepper's impoliteness pragmatic theoretical framework is adopted in this study.

Impoliteness has strategies of their output which show the realizations of face-attack in utterances of speakers.

Impoliteness Strategies

Impoliteness strategies are acts that are used to face threaten or face-attack others. They are communicative forms that are concerned with attacking or harming face. There are five impoliteness strategies: bald-on-record, positive, negative, sarcasm or mock politeness and withhold politeness.

On the aspect of Bald on-record impoliteness, it involves a situation where a face-threatening act is performed in the most conspicuous, direct, brief and unambiguous way where face is relevant or maximized. Much face is at stake here and the speaker intentionally employs this strategy to attack the face of the hearer. In this strategy, cooperative principle "must be adhered to" (Culpepper, 2016, 42) he further added that "to be impolite, one still needs to cooperate in the exchange of information, i.e. uphold the cooperative principle at some level, in order to get one's impoliteness message across" (42).

Positive impoliteness super strategy refers to communicative strategies that are employed to attack and damage the addressees' or hearers' positive faces wants. Such positive impoliteness output strategies, as proposed by Culpepper, include: ignore/snub the other; exclude the other from activity; disassociate from the other; be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic; use inappropriate identity markers; use obscure or secretive language; seek disagreement by selecting a sensitive topic; make the other feel uncomfortable; use taboo or profane words; call the other names etc.

On the aspect of negative impoliteness, it involves the use of interactional strategies to damage the addressee's negative face wants. Negative impoliteness output strategies include: frighten/instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur; condescend, scorn or ridicule; do not treat the other seriously; invade the other's space; explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect; put the other's indebtedness on record; violate the structure of conversation/interrupt conversation etc.

In sarcasm or mock politeness or banter here, the speaker performs FTA by using politeness strategies that are insincere and thus its meaning is deduced only from superficial realization. No deep meaning is given to it because in the context where it is used, given the clues of politeness strategies employed, the hearer deduces that such utterances is untrue as used in that context. For Culpepper (2005) "banter or mock impoliteness remains on the surface, because it is understood in particular context not to be true" (37). Sarcasm impoliteness or banter is interpreted as with no intention to cause offence (Culpepper, 1996: 352) rather amusement and fun. Through this, one could say that impoliteness is entertaining as it creates light and fun-filled atmosphere.

Withhold politeness involves the non-use of politeness strategies in contexts where they are expected to be employed. For example, failing to appreciate someone for a favor done for one or failing to thank someone for a present. These failures are withheld politeness thus could be taken as a deliberate impoliteness.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative and descriptive research designs. This is considered appropriate given the samples of data collected from a literary masterpiece, a play, in order to uncover forms of impoliteness used by able characters on disabled characters which are seen as violence, as it goes with emotional results on the hearer(s).

Ten instances of conversations are purposively extracted from the play so as to examine impoliteness strategies employed by able characters in their language exchanges to face threaten and attack the face of persons with disability.

The Data and Analysis

Tabular Presentation of the Data and Location in the Text

S/n	1	2	3	4	5	Frequency
Positive Impoliteness Strategies	“No one is seeking your opinion” (p.6)	... “that while your festivity lasts, there might be other patients- I mean <i>regular</i> patients....” (p.11)	... “the order from the Department of Health that all patients in Wards G and H vacate the hospital premises by 5 a.m. tomorrow, is in the interest of the public health.” (p.43)	“Gentlemen, let me ask a question would you like a leprosy epidemic in the land?” (p. 44)	“You are talking of catfish, croaker, mudskippers – still in the waters!- (p.75)	Five (5)times
Bald on Record Impoliteness	“As you were! ...Don’t move. I say!” ... (p.4)					Once (1 time)
Negative Impoliteness Strategies	“Gentlemen, let me ask a question would you like a leprosy epidemic in the land?” (p. 44)	... “People like you!” ... (p.69)	“Trust? H-a-r-c-o-u-r-t! you- my teacher! Just when I’m becoming an expert in your ‘trust nobody’ philosophy, my own teacher is ...” ... (p.93)			Three (3) times
Sarcasm or Banter (Impoliteness)	‘Well. Just to show you much the people appreciate our work with you’ (p.12)					Once (1 time)
Withhold Impoliteness	... “since when did you become the spokesman for the ...” (p.6)					Once (1 time)

Positive Impoliteness Strategies

Excerpt 1

(A Part of Conversation where the Matron is addressing Catechist in Happenings I)

CAT: You asked a simple question, and he gave you a simple answer.

Matron: **No one is seeking your opinion.** (*turns again to the Editor*) In the first place, I was addressing him...

Analysis

In excerpt 1, the Matron uses positive impoliteness output strategy of disassociation to exclude the Catechist. She employed this strategy in order to hurt his positive face wants. This act of exclusion could be credited to the position of power or authority she enjoys in the hospital. Because of the bilateral power relationship that exists between the 'disabled' inmates and the Matron, who is a representative of the British administration, she more or less gives little or no care to the kinds of utterances she made to the inmates and it is worthy to note that such power she wields gives her the privilege to want to hurt the 'face' of the inmates every now and then.

Excerpt 2

(A Part of Conversation Where the SMO, addressing the inmates in wards D and G)

Hannah: We were only... trying to keep ourselves happy. That's all.

SMO: It wasn't curfew time, and you were entertaining yourselves. Fair enough. But have you ever – this is a general question everybody; have you tried to think for a second, **that while your festivity lasts, there might be other patients – I mean, regular patients,** who are being disturbed?

Editor: those 'regular' patients, as you call them, sir – they receive regular visitors. Daily. Wives visit them, bringing food; husbands stop by, bringing fruits. Friends cheer them; children hug them. We are, well, you know...

SMO: That's no reason why your pleasures should disturb their peace when they need it.

Analysis

Here, the disabled characters are excluded from the rest of the patient's in the General hospital by the SMO's use of address term, 'regular patients' for 'able' patients. The SMO's use of 'regular' address term for the able inmates further shows the exclusivist approach of the 'authority' on leprosy inmates, which denies the inmate's positive face wants, that seeks for solidarity and acceptance. One could also see that the position of authority which gives him the power he controls, gave him the right to care less about the 'other'. The asymmetrical power relation between the SMO and the inmates resulted in the inappropriate terms used on the inmates, because, obviously, the inmates cannot do anything regarding what they are addressed as. Through this avenue, the SMO creates a marginalized atmosphere that relegates and degrades the 'disabled' characters. This marginalization is an aspect of violence that restricts, as such has negative impacts on the victims.

Excerpt 3

(A Conversation between the SMO, HW, Nweke, Superintendent of Police, SUPT. in the office of the SMO in Happenings III)

SUPT.: ... **The order from the Department of Health that all patients in Wards G and H vacate the hospital premises by 5 p.m. tomorrow, is in the interest of public health.** And that order is final. Having made that clear, I need to add that we do sympathize with your situation. No doubts about that. All the same, we trust, you too will understand that personal sentiments have no place in the exigencies of service to the people. That is all...

Analysis

In excerpt 3, the positive face wants of the inmates are attacked by the superintendent's use of positive impoliteness strategy of being disinterested and unconcerned. Through the superintendent's address to the leprosy inmates at the hospital, we could see that the 'interest' of the leprosy inmates, who are disabled by their various physical impediments, are not considered. The government showed that 'they' are not part of the public even their health status. Thus, are ordered to vacate the General Hospital where they were being given medical treatment but halted after Dr. Fergusson left.

Excerpt 4

(A Part of Conversation where the SMO, interrogates, HW and Nweke, in Happenings III)

SMO: Just to clear any misconceptions... (*addressing Harcourt Whyte and Nweke*) **Gentlemen, let me ask a question would you like a leprosy epidemic in the land?**

NWEKE: The Heavens forbid!

Harcourt Whyte shakes his head.

Analysis

Here, the positive face wants of Nweke and Harcourt Whyte are attacked by the SMO's use of positive and negative impoliteness strategies; seek disagreement by selecting a sensitive topic and frighten (instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur). On the aspect of positive impoliteness strategy, the SMO's selection of a sensitive topic as 'leprosy epidemic' if the 'disabled' inmates do not leave the general hospital kicks against the request of Harcourt Whyte and his fellows, who seeks to stay back and be accepted.

Excerpt 5

(Conversation between HW and the SUPT. In Happenings VI)

HW: And what about the others: Nweke, Hannah, Court Clerks, Mallam, Editor Catechist –

SUPT.: My dear fellow, our talk is about you. Your well-being. The crayfish is in your basket now. **You are talking of catfish, croakers, mudskippers – still in the waters!** Anyway...

Analysis:

In Excerpt 5, the positive face want of Harcourt Whyte is denied him by the superintendent's use of derogatory terms equating to animals on human beings. The superintendent's calling the other friends and family of Harcourt Whyte in the hospital as 'catfish', 'croakers' and 'mudskippers', expresses the way he actually sees the 'disabled' inmates at the hospital. Such derogatory terms used harms the acceptance and agreement code of positive face that Harcourt Whyte wants. Thus, violence manifestation which invariably contributes to HW bad feels and continuous degradation of their personalities by those in power.

Bald on-Record Impoliteness Strategy

Excerpt 6

(Matron of the General Hospital addressing the inmates'/leprosy patients in Happenings I)

Matron: **As you were!** Everybody. **Don't move. I say!** Hannah// that's it. now, **as you were...**// Hands under the mattress, Miss Hannah; head turned to the dancer- **as you were!**

Analysis

In this excerpt, the Matron of the General Hospital, who is an able character in the play and also enjoys a position of power as seen in her title 'matron' gives orders to the inmates in Wards H and H, who are leprosy patients, as such 'disabled' characters. These orders clearly and blatantly damage the face wants of the inmates. These orders as instantiated in the Matron's response, such as "Don't move!", "As you were!" are short, concise and direct way of attacking the faces of the inmates that are at stake. Further on in the utterance, the Matron, specifically orders Miss Hannah, who is one of the inmates at the hospital, to 'hands under the mattress'. It could be interpreted that the speaker, who has asymmetrical power relations with the 'others', uses such powerful disposition to order and face-attack the inmates, who are at their mercy. Thus, such is impoliteness is considered violent on the addressees as the deployed impolite utterances of the speaker invariably results in impacting both on the psychological and emotional beings of the addressees.

Negative Impoliteness Strategies:

Excerpt 7

(A Part of Conversation where the SMO, interrogates, HW and Nweke, in Happenings III)

SMO: Just to clear any misconceptions... (*addressing Harcourt Whyte and Nweke*) **Gentlemen, let me ask a question would you like a leprosy epidemic in the land?**

NWEKE: The Heavens forbid!

Harcourt Whyte shakes his head.

Analysis

Here, the negative face wants of Nweke and Harcourt Whyte are attacked by the SMO's use of positive and negative impoliteness strategies; seek disagreement by selecting a sensitive topic and frighten (instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur). The negative impoliteness strategy of frightening used by the SMO to instill fear into Harcourt Whyte and Nweke that their staying back could lead to an epidemic of leprosy, which their reactions showed that they would not want such. Such frightening damaged their negative face want of not to receive any form of imposition on their personalities.

Excerpt 8

(A Conversation between CC, HW and Superintendent in Happenings VI)

CC: We are right like this, sir.

SUPT.: ... Government is proposing to build a hospital for people ... **people like you.** That's what I've been discussing with SMO. They had a meeting on the matter last night. Now, in the meantime, the decision is that you remain in Port Harcourt. (pause). Well, not in the General Hospital, of course – your present wards are needed for regular patients.

Analysis

Here, the face of the inmates' representatives Court Clerk and Harcourt Whyte are attacked by the superintendent's use of negative impoliteness output strategy; explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect by use of pronoun 'you'. This strategy stands as a reminder that the 'disabled' inmates are not part of the general people and needs a separate medical establishment far from that of 'regular patients'. This further shows the marginalization violence experienced by the 'disabled' hospital inmates, which come to light through the language use punctuated by impoliteness strategies.

Excerpt 9

(A Conversation between HW, SMO and SUPT. In Happenings VIII)

SMO: Besides you never asked for such explanation, did you?

HW: (*fatigued*) No ... I ... I trusted too much.

Supt.: (*mock astonishment*) **Trust? H-a-r-c-o-u-r-t! you- my teacher! Just when I'm becoming an expert in your "trust nobody" philosophy, my own teacher is ... (*forlornly*) A-a-a-h-h!**

Analysis:

In Excerpt 9, the negative face of Harcourt Whyte is face attacked through a negative impoliteness output strategy-scorn, or ridicule. The officers, Senior Medical Officer and the Superintendent of Police, ridicule Harcourt Whyte over his unfortunate reality that resulted in his asking no questions about the offers given to them to move to IDH at Uzuakoli. the Superintendent makes mockery of Harcourt Whyte's situation and pokes fun at his letting his trust guard down as well as blames him for his sad reality.

Sarcasm or Banter Impoliteness Strategy:

Excerpt 10

(A Part of Conversation Between the Senior Medical Officer, SMO, and the leprosy inmates e.g. Editor, Court Clerk, CC, Hannah etc. in Happenings I)

SMO: Rubbish, yes! If what we'll be getting from you is ingratitude and impertinence. From the public, we get disgust and reproach. Daily. It all means that our experiment with you is all rubbish. You know what the public calls the Doctor, don't you? The mad Scotsman!

Editor: Jesus wept!

CC: Please – don't!

SMO: **Well. Just to show you how much the people appreciate our work with you!**

Analysis

In excerpt 10, the Senior Medical Officer used a positive politeness strategy that the people' appreciate the hospital's work on the 'disabled' inmates, but it is obviously insincere and on the surface, thus considered a banter or sarcasm impoliteness. The SMO's employment of this strategy is as irony, which he meant the opposite of it. Thus, the sentence stretch 'well. Just to show how much the people appreciate our work with you' is a sarcasm, and his intended meaning, which his interlocutors are to infer is that the 'people' do not appreciate the inmates' presence at the hospital.

Withhold Impoliteness Strategy:

Excerpt 11

(A Part of Conversation with the Hospital Matron and 'Disabled' Inmates, Catechist and Editor)

Matron: ... **Since when did you become the spokesman for the...** (restrains herself from describing the group) or who do you think you are?

CAT: Another question.

Editor: Leper, madam. I am a leper – like the rest ... of them... (with a sweep of the arm taking in the entire inmates) Lepers, lepers all – at the mercy of the hospital authorities.

Analysis

In excerpt 11, the Matron used Withhold impoliteness strategy to face attack the face of leprosy inmates. In addressing the hospital patients, the Matron withheld uttering an address term, which is inferred as hurtful if used in that context, and the Editor, whom she is directly addressing, completed the elliptic part by saying "Leper, madam. I am a leper – like the rest....." this impoliteness is considered violent as it negatively impacts on the feelings of the inmates who feel inferior and unaccepted.

Discussion of Findings

From the analysis above, this study has shown that impoliteness strategies are used in the text. From the ten data excerpts the researchers sampled for the analysis, the results of frequency of the different types of impoliteness strategies that are used are: Positive impoliteness output strategies are used more than the others (five times), negative impoliteness (three times), sarcasm/banter (once), bald on-record impoliteness strategy (once) and withheld impoliteness strategy (once), by powerful participants in their linguistic exchanges with less powerful/less privileged participants/interlocutors. These impoliteness outputs strategies are used to hurt/damage the 'face' of the less privileged discourse participants. In excerpts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, the powerful participants (such as Senior Medical Officer, Superintendent of Police, Matron etc.) employ positive impoliteness strategy outputs to damage the positive face (wants) of the inmates with disability. In Excerpts 7, 8 and 9, the discursal participants in the position of authority face threatens the negative face of the inmates, thus interfering in their privacies. Banter or sarcasm (impoliteness) is evidenced in excerpt 10, while bald on-record impoliteness that is employed to directly

face attack an addressee is used in excerpt six (6). Excerpt 11 manifests the use of withhold impoliteness by certain well-placed participants in the society.

The able characters, who enjoy position of authority as such privileged to control the direction or pattern of flow of their conversations with the 'disabled' characters. Through their use of impoliteness output strategies in their conversation with 'disabled' characters (leprosy inmates), the atmosphere of marginalization and inequality is created and strengthened. And the silence given off by the society/ public towards this unfair treatment to the 'disabled' characters as seen in the play, shows how the less privileged, say people with disability, for instance, in the society, are mistreated and poorly addressed in their linguistic exchanges with 'able' persons. This negative treatment and the use of impoliteness strategies on persons with disability are considered violence, as it causes great consequences on the emotional, psychological and even physical beings of the victims. On the emotional and psychological aspect, the 'victim' could develop a feeling of inferiority and also an ideology of not being accepted by the society and negative thought pattern of relating with others in the society, thus could resort to living a life a solitude. The victim could, because of the gravity the impoliteness strategy that he/she has received may injure himself/herself physically, in an extreme case commit suicide.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The forms of impoliteness super strategies used on disabled characters by able characters are the five impoliteness strategies according to Culpeper; bald on-record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or banter and withhold impoliteness strategies. These impoliteness strategies are considered form of violence meted on the 'disabled' characters, which results in consequences manifesting on the emotional, psychological and physical being of the victims.

Hopes of the Living Dead by Ola Rotimi depicts how the human society, Nigeria as the setting of the play, view these set of persons with disability. This negative treatment fosters as well as widens the gap of inequality or marginalization, which hinders socio-economic and political growth of the economy.

It is recommended that every Tom, Dick and Harry, more specifically those in power, to always checkmate and censor their language use on people with disability so as to break and narrow down the inequality gap that exists in the State. Again, government should establish edifices where people with disability would be given proper treatment as well as given therapy to help them find more meaning in living. This will enhance inclusiveness in the society and further increase peace and harmony.

References

- Anyanwu, E. & Udoh, C. V. (2021). Impoliteness in Language Use: An Investigation into Cyber Bullying in Nigeria, *International Network Organization for Scientific Research, INOSRANTS & Humanities* 7 (1): 1 - 6
- Culpeper, Jonathan. (1996). Towards the anatomy of impoliteness, *Journal of Pragmatics* 25(1996) 349-367
- Culpeper, Jonathan. (2005). Impoliteness and Entertainment in the Television Quiz Show: The Weakest Link, *Journal of Politeness Research* 1, pp. 35-72. 1612-5681/03/001-0035
- Culpeper, Jonathan. (2016). Impoliteness Strategies. *Doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-126/6-6_16*
- Igwebuke, E & Eburuaja, C. (2020). Impoliteness Strategy in Falz' Satirical Song 'This Is Nigeria', In: *Applied Linguistic, Linguistic Variations and English Usage in the Nigerian Context: A Festschrift for Moses Alo*, Ibadan: University Press PLC. Pp.335-346
- Ononye, C., Ikenwa, S. & Ugwuagbo, W. (2021). Impoliteness in Online Reactions on Media Reports of the 2019 Nigeria Presidency Election Victory Declaration, *GADAU Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 4, No. 1.
- Ricoeur, P. (1974). Violence and language, *Political and Social Essays*, pp.32-41.
- Taiwo, R. (2020). Linguistic Impoliteness in Computer-Mediated Discourse. Eds: Mbisike et al. in *Trends in Semantics and Pragmatics*, Lagos State University Press, pp. 119-136.
- Udoh, V. C. & Ejiaso, V. K. (2022). Evaluation of the Variables of Paralinguistic/Sociolinguistics that Leads to the Use of Politeness Forms in Interactional/Conversational English of Undergraduates Among Undergraduates of Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, *IAA Journal of Management* 9(1):1-9.
- Udoh, V. C & Ejiaso, V. K. (2022). Politeness and Impolite Strategies in the Language Use Among the Undergraduates of Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, *IAA Journal of Social Sciences (IAA-JSS)* 8 (1):34-41

Issues in French Language Teaching in Nigeria: The Case of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Domitila Onyinye Ubajaka

Department of French Language
Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe
Email: ubajakaonyinye@gmail.com

&

Ozioma Siddharta Omedobi Anyawuike, PhD

Department of Modern European Languages
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka
Email: oso.anyawuike@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper compares the issues faced in French language teaching between Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Nigeria. Both institutions play a crucial role in imparting French language education to students, and this comparative analysis seeks to identify and examine the challenges they encounter in this process. The demand for French language instruction has increased, but the availability of proficient instructors remains limited, impacting the quality of language learning for students in both schools. The lack of appropriate instructional materials and resources hinders effective language teaching as both institutions struggle to access tailored textbooks, workbooks, and audiovisual aids, making it difficult to provide comprehensive language learning experiences that align with the needs of Nigerian students. The lack of necessary infrastructure and resources restricts the comprehensive incorporation of technology in language classrooms, limiting the potential benefits it can offer in enhancing language acquisition. However, despite these shared challenges, there may be some institution-specific issues unique to each university. Factors such as institutional policies, funding, and teaching methodologies could vary and contribute to discrepancies in the French language learning experience for students. This paper aims to provide valuable insights into the issues faced in French language teaching in Nigeria, specifically within Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University. By identifying these challenges, this paper will contribute to the development of targeted strategies and interventions that can be implemented to improve the quality of French language education in both institutions and, by extension, across the country. Ultimately, addressing these issues will lead to a more proficient and culturally enriched generation of French speakers in Nigeria. This paper employs a comparative research methodology to analyze the issues faced in French language teaching between Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Nigeria. Drawing upon a theoretical framework grounded in educational psychology and language acquisition theories, the study aims to identify and examine the challenges encountered in imparting French language education to students in these institutions. By utilizing qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including interviews, surveys, and document analysis, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the quality of French language instruction. The theoretical framework guides the interpretation of findings, allowing for a deeper exploration of the underlying reasons behind the identified challenges. Through this research approach, the paper aims to contribute valuable insights into the issues faced in French language teaching in Nigeria, paving the way for targeted strategies and interventions to enhance the quality of language education in both institutions and foster a more proficient generation of French speakers in the country.

Keywords: Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, French language, Nigeria, Education

Introduction

The teaching of French as a foreign language holds significant importance in the context of Nigeria, where linguistic diversity is a hallmark of the nation. French, being one of the world's widely spoken languages, plays a vital role not only in international diplomacy but also in fostering economic and cultural ties. Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, two prominent educational institutions in Nigeria, have been at the forefront of offering French language programs to cater to the growing demand for French proficiency. This comparative analysis aims to delve into the myriad challenges faced by these institutions in their pursuit of effective French language teaching. It is a critical examination of the strategies, curriculum, resources, and overall quality of French language education at Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The analysis will take into account the specific challenges faced by each institution, whether they pertain to resource constraints, student engagement, or the broader national context of language education policies. As Nigeria continues to engage in international discourse and trade, the need for proficient French speakers grows, making

the effectiveness of French language programs in these institutions of paramount importance. This comparative analysis aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding language education in Nigeria.

History of French language at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University

French was introduced as a language of study at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in the early 1990s. The department of French was established in 1997 to meet the growing demand for French language education. The department offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programs in French. The undergraduate program leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree in French, while the postgraduate program leads to a Postgraduate Diploma, Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degree in French. Nnamdi Azikiwe University offers a number of French language courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate courses include French language, French literature, and French civilization and translation, while postgraduate courses include French linguistics, French literature, African literature and translation. The department also offers language laboratory and translation courses. ("Department of French," n.d.).

Brief history of French language at Nwafor Orizu college of education

The college began offering French language courses in the early 2000s. In the years since, the college has expanded its offerings to include a range of French courses, including French language, French literature, and French civilization. The college also has a language laboratory and translation courses. The French language program at Nwafor orizu college of education is comprehensive and well-rounded. The program offers courses at various levels, including certificate, diploma, and degree. The college has a team of qualified and experienced French language instructors who are dedicated to helping students achieve their goals. The language laboratory at the college is well-equipped and provides students with the opportunity to practice their language skills. The translation courses offered by the college are designed to meet the needs of students and professionals. (Nwafor orizu college of education, n.d.). Let us delve into the issues faced by these institutions.

Curriculum Disparities

One significant concern lies in the disparity between the curricula adopted by these two institutions. To illustrate, Nwafor Orizu College of Education places emphasis on grammar and vocabulary acquisition, but the curriculum lacks the necessary resources to effectively enhance these skills. A report from the Department of Languages and Linguistics at the College underscores the curriculum-related challenges. The report highlights that "The curriculum did not provide enough oral and aural practice for the students. There was a lack of suitable teaching materials, especially recommended textbooks and recordings, laboratory facilities, and teaching aids" (Department of Languages and Linguistics, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, p. 13). These shortcomings contribute to the difficulties faced by students in acquiring practical language skills. Conversely, Nnamdi Azikiwe University prioritizes cultural studies and conversation skills. The Journal of Language and Culture has pointed out that "The French curriculum does not reflect the current educational needs of the students and the demands of the modern society" (p. 80). This disconnect can have adverse consequences on students' ability to apply French in real-world scenarios. Consequently, these disparities can lead to inconsistencies in the levels of language proficiency among students.

Limited Qualified Instructors

Both institutions, as highlighted in a study by Ezeilo & Ndubuisi in 2022, face a pressing issue concerning the shortage of qualified French language instructors. The study reveals that "One of the most pressing problems facing French language teaching... is the lack of qualified teachers. ... a significant number of lecturers at both institutions were not trained in French language teaching, and that many lacked the necessary qualifications and experience to effectively teach the language" (Ezeilo & Ndubuisi, 2022, p. 5). This lack of expertise can significantly hinder students' progress. Nonye Stella Umunna also emphasizes this challenge, stating that "One of the major challenges facing French language teaching in Nigerian higher education institutions is the lack of qualified teachers". According to her "Many teachers do not have the required qualifications or training in French language teaching" (Umunna, 7). This issue further underscores the critical need for qualified instructors in both institutions and the broader context of French language education in Nigeria.

Resource Constraints

Insufficiency of resources presents a widespread challenge within French language programs. At Nwafor Orizu College of Education, students encounter obstacles due to outdated textbooks and limited access to digital resources, which negatively impact their learning experiences. As Obioma (2015) aptly observes, "The French program at Nwafor Orizu College of Education faces many challenges, including ... a lack of adequate resources. The program is in need of more funding and support from the government to ensure that students have access to the resources they need to learn effectively" (p. 54).

Similarly, at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, a shortage of language labs and multimedia materials significantly restricts practical language exposure. In line with these concerns, Chidinma, J. N., Uche, D. S., & Nwadiuto, O. O. (2018) note, "Another problem is the lack of audio-visual aids in teaching French in Nigerian universities, including Nnamdi Azikiwe University. This makes teaching and learning of French difficult because learners cannot hear the actual sounds of the language nor see the lip movements and body language of the native speakers" (p. 8). These resource limitations at both institutions hinder the effective teaching and learning of the French language.

Inadequate Language Immersion

Language immersion is crucial for effective language learning, but both institutions fall short in providing such opportunities. For example, Nwafor Orizu College of Education do not offer study abroad programs or cultural exchange initiatives, limiting students' exposure to authentic French language and culture. Anyaso and Obiwuru in their article, opine that "The major problem facing the teaching of French language in Nwafor Orizu College of Education is the inability of the institution to organize exchange programmes for teachers and students to enhance their language acquisition." (p. 18). On the other hand, Nnamdi Azikiwe University do not prioritize extracurricular activities that encourage language immersion. Eze and Esimone agree with this by stating that "Nnamdi Azikiwe University did not attach the requisite importance to extracurricular activities that will aid the learning of French." (p. 28). Ezenwu & Ijioma also points out that "The teachers' lack of exposure to the norms of French-speaking countries made them unable to provide their students with adequate background knowledge about the culture and norms of the French people." (p. 86).

Assessment and Certification Challenges

Both institutions struggle with assessing students' language proficiency accurately. For instance, Nwafor Orizu College of Education lacks standardized tests, making it challenging to measure progress consistently. Nwadinobi, O., & Iloanusi, M. O. state that "The school lacks standardized tests to measure the progress and level of achievement of its students, making it difficult to determine the teaching and learning performances of the students." (p. 14). Nnamdi Azikiwe University face issues obtaining internationally recognized French language certifications for its students, limiting their competitiveness in the job market. Chukwunweike, I. C., & Nwokorie, O. N. in their article state, "The major challenges of international certifications faced by students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University include, among others, lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities in French department of the Faculty of Arts, and inadequate materials for the study of French as a foreign language." (p. 45).

Limited Career Opportunities

Graduates from these institutions often encounter challenges in finding suitable job opportunities that align with their French language skills. Imoniana, F. I., and Anyawu, M. C. in their work *Universities and the Employability of Graduates: The Case of Nigerian Graduates* state that "The problems encountered by many graduates, particularly those from less reputed universities like Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, often go beyond lack of jobs and include lack of relevant jobs." (P. 3). For instance, a student from Nwafor Orizu College of Education with a strong foundation in French struggle to secure a job that requires advanced language proficiency. According to Mohammed in his work *An Assessment of the Challenges of Teaching French as a Foreign Language in Nigerian Schools* "It was deduced that graduates from the Nwafor Orizu College of Education with a background in French were at a disadvantage when seeking employment in the competitive Nigerian job market." (P.215). Similarly, a graduate from Nnamdi Azikiwe University face difficulties in finding a position that utilizes their cultural knowledge of the Francophone world. Odu & Ajanaku, state that "It can be deduced from the results that a large percentage of the graduates do not acquire any professional skill or knowledge that can be used in a work environment. This was a result of the inadequate or complete absence of professional training while in the university." (P. 27).

Conclusion

In summary, Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University are confronted with numerous critical challenges within their French language teaching programs. These challenges encompass a spectrum of issues ranging from curriculum misalignments, a dearth of proficient instructors, constraints in resources, inadequate exposure to language immersion, complexities in assessment methodologies, to limited career pathways for graduates.

Addressing these hurdles is paramount for both institutions and the broader Nigerian educational framework. It necessitates a concerted effort towards standardizing curricula to ensure consistency, investing substantially in the training and development of competent language instructors, bolstering resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning, fostering immersive language experiences to enhance proficiency, instituting recognized language

proficiency assessments for benchmarking, and expanding employment prospects for graduates proficient in French.

These measures collectively form the foundation for enhancing the quality of French language education in Nigeria. By undertaking these strategic initiatives, not only can the proficiency levels of students from these institutions be elevated, but they can also be better equipped to compete proficiently on the global stage. Such advancements not only serve the immediate needs of students and educators but also contribute to the broader socio-economic development and international competitiveness of Nigeria.

References

- Ezeilo, O. O., & Ndubuisi, M. E. (2022). A Comparative Study of the Perception of French Language Lecturers on the Problems of Teaching French in Nwafor Orizu College of Education and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research and Innovations*, 12(1), 4-18. Retrieved from <http://www.ijeri.org/vol12.1/no12-1-28.pdf>
- Obioma, G. O. (2015). The State of French Studies in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Nigeria. *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*, 8(5), 53-59. Retrieved from <http://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol8no5/8.5obioma.pdf>.
- Umunna, Nonye Stella. "French Language Teaching in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions: Challenges and Opportunities." *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 3, no. 6, 2021, pp. 6-16. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/26321015.
- Chidinma, J. N., Uche, D. S., & Nwadiuto, O. O. (2018). An Evaluation of the Teaching and Learning of French Language in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 8(2), 1-14.
- Nwafor Orizu College of Education. (2014). Assessment of French Programmes in Colleges of Education in Nigeria: A Case Study of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State. Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State. Retrieved from <http://nocen.edu.ng/pdfs/pdf3.pdf>.
- Odu, O., & Ajanaku, G. A. (2016). Professional Profile of French Graduates from Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, 4(3), 27-37.
- Mohammed, A. A. (2016). An Assessment of the Challenges of Teaching French as a Foreign Language in Nigerian Schools. *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, 4(4), 213-222.
- Nwadinobi, O., & Iloanusi, M. O. (2015). An Assessment of the Teaching and Learning of French in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. *Journal of International Social Research*, 8(33), 13-22. doi:10.17719/jisr.2015100083.
- Imoniana, F. I., & Anyawu, M. C. (2017). Universities and the Employability of Graduates: The Case of Nigerian Graduates. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(2), 3-13.
- Chukwunweike, I. C., & Nwokorie, O. N. (2018). Addressing French as a Foreign Language in Tertiary Institutions: A Case of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research*, 1(2), 43-53. doi:10.32628/ijsser.2018.02.05
- Anyaso, U., & Obiwuru, S. (2019). Investigation of the Factors Militating Against the Effective Teaching and Learning of French Language in Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, Anambra State. *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science*, 3(3), 19-28.
- Ezenwu, I. C., & Ijioma, B. (2017). A Descriptive Assessment of the Learning and Teaching of French in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. *International Journal of Research in Educational Sciences*, 3(1), 85-98.
- Anyaso, U., & Obiwuru, S. (2019). A Descriptive Assessment of the Learning and Teaching of French in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State. *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science*, 3(3), 17-30.
- Eze, C. C., & Esimone, C. O. (2018). An Investigation into the Learning and Teaching of French in Nigerian Universities: A Case of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 2(1), 27-39.
- Department of French, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Accessed 7 October, 2023. www.unizik.edu.ng/faculty/faculty-of-arts/departments-of-french/.
- Department of French, Nwafor orizu college of education, Accessed 7 October, 2023. www.nocen.edu.ng/french.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Gubernatorial Debates in Abia State 2015 and 2019 Elections

Ifunanya Laurencia Ebekue, PhD

Directorate of Information and Communication Technology (Hardware Services)

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

li.ebekue@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that views language as a powerful means through which specific ideologies, identities, and culture become dominant in a society. This is captured in the debates of gubernatorial candidates in Abia State 2015 and 2019 elections. The study examines language use, politics, the relationship between language and politics and ideologies employed by the candidates. The study uses tripartite theoretical framework in analysing the data for the study. The tripartite theories are Fairclough's Three Dimensional Theory, van Dijk Socio-cognitive Theory and Systemic Functional Theory. The choice of this framework is to ensure that every aspect of the debates is not neglected. The analytical tools are applied to gubernatorial debates in Abia State held in 2015 and 2019 elections. The study uses multi-method approach. The findings reveal that the gubernatorial debates encode power and dominance with ideological undertone. Also that power of dominance is achieved through the use of pronominal selection which allows the speaker to enforce his views on others. The study concludes that the text produced in 2015 and 2019 gubernatorial electioneering debates in Abia State, not only promote unequal power relations, rather they also produced, reproduced, legitimized and maintained social structures that sustain domination.

Keywords: Discourse, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, political discourse

Introduction

Discourse is a practice and a form of language use. As a practice, it does not just represent the world but signifies, constitutes and constructs the world in meaning. Simply put, discourse brings out a particular domain of practice from a particular perspective. Discourse Analysis (DA) is the analytical framework which was created for studying actual text and talk in the communicative context while Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. CDA views language as a powerful means through which specific ideologies, identities, and culture become dominant in a society. CDA scholars believe that the choice of language interlocutors make reflects their intentions, ideology, and thought. This is an effective means for polarizing power in the society (van Dijk cited in Rahimi and Rasati, 2011). Distinctively, critical discourse analysis wants to know the role of discourse in the production and challenge of power and dominance; how language is used and abused by the elite class and their discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality; how language can be an instrument of persuasion and impression, justification, propaganda, oppression and suppression, manipulation and misrepresentation.

This study is classified under political discourse since it has to do with politics. Political discourse is a distinctive discourse token that replicates the dynamicity of its environment. Political discourse according to Wilson "is concerned with formal and informal political contexts and political actors, politicians, political institutions, governments, political media, and political supporters operating in political environments to achieve political goal" (2003:398). This means that political discourse involves all aspect of human endeavour. This present study, therefore, arises from the need to address the important features of the language of political debates in Abia State from the perspective of discourse patterns taking into consideration the ideological and power patterns encoded in the texts. Again, the linguistic features and discursive strategies used by the candidates in the debates are explored to show the role of language in establishing, creating and sustaining power relations, inequalities as well as ideological structures of society within the framework of CDA.

Literature Review

There are different concepts discussed under the conceptual framework of this study. They are discourse, text, critical discourse analysis and political discourse. Speaking in a layman's language, when we talk of discourse we see discourse as what we get when language is used in communication between people. In linguistics, discourse is used to describe an extended stretch of language beyond the boundaries of the sentence. The implication is that as in a sentence, there is internal structure (subject, verb, object, or complement), elements beyond the sentence which also contain similar structures. According to Ricoeur (qtd in Akwanya, 2002), discourse has five characteristics that the semantics of ordinary language must take account of. They are: that discourse is an act, it unites sense and reference, it identifies and predicates, it is simultaneously event and meaning and it is anchored in the present. Texts and discourse are intertwined. Fairclough(2001b) highlights a text as the product of a process in which discourse is closely related to social structures in its production and interpretation. Not minding the knit

between text and discourse, there is a difference between the two. Stubbs (1983) differentiates between written and spoken languages in terms of text and discourse respectively. Whereas text is written and non-spoken monologue, discourse is spoken and interactive dialogue. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is another concept discussed in the study. Different scholars gave different definition of CDA.

Summarily, CDA sees language as an action. Its main duty is to elaborate relationship of power, dominance, and inequality produced in discourse. A critical discourse analysis of language seems as a critical factor as the embodiment of particular power. A text produced particular ideology. The development of critical discourse analysis creates various theories and approach which are also used in the research field. Political discourse is also a concept that featured in the study. Political discourse is an umbrella term for various political talks made at different political forums such as political campaign rallies, party manifestoes, inaugural speeches, bills among others. Schaffer (1996) sees political discourse, as a sub-category of discourse in general, which can be based on two criteria: functional and thematic. Political discourse is a result of politics and it is historically and culturally determined. It fulfills different functions due to different political activities. It is thematic because its topics are primarily related to politics such as political activities, political ideas and political relations (qtd in Ebekue, 2023).

Empirical Studies

The empirical studies of this study looked at different studies by scholars to buttress the study. There are few scholarly studies on debate discourse in Nigeria. Other studies on Nigerian political discourse and CDA are also reviewed to boost this study. A review on Political discourse on debate is first reviewed. Bayram (2010) in the work titled: *Ideology and Political Discourse: An Analysis of Erdogan's Political Speech* analyses the ideological component and linguistic background enshrined in the Turkish Prime Ministers' speech during a debate. Fairclough's assumptions in CDA was used in doing the analysis. The result aligned with Fairclough's notion of ideology residing in text and that "ideology invests language in various ways at various levels". Importance is attached to our attitudes to language. Our perceptions of the characteristics of a person or social group may be influenced by these attitudes. This study did not cover aspects of power relations in the form of liberalism, manipulation and domination which is the pivot of the present study. This study unmasked the discursive strategies of Erdogan during a debate within the context of his ideological, cultural and linguistic background and it tried to affirm the assertion that ideology is both "property of structures and of events". Also the account of linguistic items drawn from members' resources according to Fairclough is omitted. Their data are entirely different from each other. Another review shows the investigation of two authors, Khoirunisa and Indah (2017) investigate the argumentative statements of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during the debates. The study made use of two theories; van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Toulmin's model of argument. The main purpose of the study is to expose how various ideologies are expressed in the structure of arguments. Toulmin's model was used to analyze the structures of argumentation during the debates which consists of six elements (claim, data, warrant, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal). Van Dijk's framework was used to analyze the reproduction of racism, manipulation, and Islamophobia. The framework covers three levels of discourse structure (the meaning, the argumentation and the rhetoric). The result shown the difference in the way they use argumentative statements, the way they formulate their arguments and the way they present some various ideologies during the presidential debates. The findings revealed that the discourse of the candidates contributes the reproduction of manipulation by focusing on the positive self-presentation of "us" (civilized) and negative other-presentation of "them" (terrorists) as a mind control of the audience. This study is ideologically driven likewise the present study but are different from each other in methodology, nature of data and institutional framework.

Reviews on other aspect of political speeches such as campaign/inaugural/victory/manifestoes are stated below. An attempt by Oni (2010) examines how language encodes power in some selected speeches of former President Olusegun Obasanjo within the framework of CDA. The framework for the study is based on Fairclough's 2001 members' resources and Halliday's (1970) system of mood and modality. The results showed that Obasanjo deployed language as a strategy of suppression by exploiting lexical items with negative expressive values to stifle oppositions as well as make them unpopular. From the findings, the study revealed that the use of power as strategy of domination is mainly achieved through imperatives which allow the speaker to impose his opinion on others. The study used declaratives to neutralize the asymmetrical power relation that exists between Obasanjo and the Nigerian Labour Congress and this has the consequence of dipping the authority of Obasanjo. The present study is different from Oni's study in data usage. While this study provides verifiable empirical evidence on how linguistic expressions encode power and unequal power relations, the present study examines power relations and ideological projections encoded in the 2015 and 2019 gubernatorial debates in Abia State. It also adopts van Dijk's approach of CDA to account for mental representation of individuals.

Another scholar Ezeifeke (2013) discusses the interpersonal meaning in two inaugural political speeches of Nigerian past leaders-President Olusegun Obasanjo's "The New Dawn" (1999) and Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979).

The result showed that there is a high prevalence of finite temporal operators (be, have, do). This gives the speeches their propositional structure-that of exchange of information. These gave rise to a high prevalence of propositions as against proposals exchange of goods and services- expressed by modal operators (must, will). This conclusion was further illustrated by the high prevalence of declarative clauses. The choices in the lexicogrammar can be instruments by the politicians in dominating the masses. As a result of this, the dominated accept the status quo as legitimate. The implication of this study is that the language use among the power elite should not be deceitful rather it should gear towards transparency. The present study uses three theories and this makes it different from the previous study. Also nature of data is different.

Theoretical Framework

The study made use of tripartite framework. They are Fairclough's three-dimensional framework plus members' resources, van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework (all within CDA); and Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) model. The choice of the usage of two CDA approach is to ensure that no aspect of the data suffer negligence. Fairclough's model helps in analyzing the ideological implication and hidden agenda in the work; van Dijk's assists in discovering the distortion of realities in the process of discourse production. Fairclough's method tries to make explicit the ideological and power patterns in texts. He provided three-dimensional framework for text analysis which is widely used today in the field of CDA. The three dimensions are:

- (i) Description: This is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text.
- (ii) Interpretation: This is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.
- (iii) Explanation: This is concerned with the relationship between interpretation and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and social effects. (Fairclough, 1989).

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model is based on the assumption that cognition mediates between "society" and "discourse". He argues that the semantic macro structure (global meaning) and semantic micro structure (local meanings) are mentally organized by language users (van Dijk, 2004). In analyzing power in discourse, he states that attention should be given to the description and explanation of how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized (van Dijk, 2004). Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is adopted as the study's grammatical approach. SFG is a system of meaning. As a system of meaning it makes it a relevant grammatical model for this study since the 'grammar' of the language which the speaker selects within this system is not in a vacuum but in the context of speech situations. It sees language as a social activity. The two fundamental aspects of these functions have been categorized as reflection and action (Halliday 1978); language as a means of reflecting on things (ideational) and language as a means of activity on things (interpersonal). Halliday's interpersonal function is relevant to the study of power in speeches. The interpersonal component is concerned with the expression of the speaker's angle: his attitude and judgement, his encoding of the relationships in the situation, and his motive in saying anything at all. This functional component is represented by mood and modality. The notions of transitivity, mood/modality and theme realize respectively these meaning potentials at the lexicogrammatical level and these are also related respectively to the contextual dimensions of field, tenor and mode. (Eggins, 2004 and Halliday 1978). Interpersonal meaning is expressed in the lexicogrammar by the features of Mood and Modality while textual functions are covered by the features of register.

Methodology

This study adopts qualitative research design which is based on the qualitative interpretation of the data obtained from debate speeches in Abia State 2015 and 2019 elections. They are nine aspirants (four in 2015 and five in 2019)involved in the debates. The aspirants' speeches are purposely selected. The debates are transcribed and analyzed to show how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed and reproduced through words. The textual orientations of SFG which is discursive in nature and contains relevant analytical categories are used to explain the features and meanings of the significant expressions of the aspirants. The systemic functional grammar is used to analyze the internal structures of the utterances in the debates while CDA is used to uncover the hidden agenda in the study and to identify the power structures and ideologies/strategies evident in the debates. Halliday's system of mood and modality is used to emphasize meaning as exchange of information, goods and services between interactants and functions of the clauses as propositions or proposals.

Data analysis

The basic principles of CDA and SFG are applied to analyze selected utterances with a view to providing workable and more in-depth interpretation of the utterances. The utterances presented answered the research questions presented in this study.

1. What mood and modality choices are prevalent in the gubernatorial debates selected for the study

2. How do these mood and modality choices position the candidates as modally responsible agents to their propositions and proposals?
3. What register choices are deployed by these candidates to persuade their electorates and win/manufacture consents?
4. What power structures are exploited by these linguistic choices in the debates by each candidate?
5. What ideologies/strategies are evident in these linguistic choices?
6. What are the implications of these ideologies/strategies and power structures for critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness?

Mood and Modality Structure of the Debates: The mood and modality choices are prevalent in the Abia State gubernatorial debates. The data is presented in table form to show the utterances, mood and modality types and modal values extracted. Five utterances are selected from the debates to accommodate all the candidates that participated in the debates and to cover both propositions and proposals made by the candidates. From the data gotten, it shows that the aspirants used more of propositions than the proposals in order to impress the voters with their achievements. The propositions are three in number while the proposal are two in number which featured the two types of mood types- declarative and interrogative. The declarative mood type is more in number than the interrogative because more of statements are used in the debates. Medial modal value occurred more than other modal values. Below is sample of the data:

S/N	Utterances	Mood Types	Modality Types	Modal Values
1	Abia has been serially subchanged by the successive government. (Emeka Uwakolam, Accord aspirant)	Declarative	Proposition	Median
2	Our intervention in Aba road is legendary. (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)	Declarative	Proposition	Median
3	Are we talking of the roads? (Blessing Nwagba, SDP aspirant)	Interrogative	Proposition	Median
4	I offered myself in 2015 for this position. The election was won by me but the mandate was stolen. (Alex Otti, APGA aspirant)	Declarative	Proposal	High
5	I will make my contributions and others will make their contributions. (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)	Declarative	Proposal	Median

Mood and Modality Structure of the Debates as Modally Responsible Agents: The focus of this is to see how the candidates are positioned as modally responsible agents to their propositions and proposals. The extracts from the utterances show that the speaker is positioned in Subject positions as the modally-responsible agent in the role relationships of the debates. There are four functions of the Subject; as Speaker (I), as Speaker + (we), as addressee (you) and as non interactant subjects (others). The speaker takes full responsibility of his actions when he uses the personal pronoun "I". In other words, it functions as modally-responsible agent. There is a deliberate shift in the use of "I" to "We" and "my" to "our" as seen in the second row. This is so to suit the opinion of the speakers. The usage of "we" shifts modal responsibility away from the speakers. In the third row, the usage of "you" in the Subject position shifts the modal responsibility to the addressee, the speakers and other participants. The last row describes non interactant in the Subject position. The non interactants take modal responsibility of the claim in the utterance. This is so because the speakers tried to avoid being linked to in case of failure. The table below captures the analysis.

S/N	Utterances	Mood	Function
1.	I have done the best roads in Abia.(Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)	Subject	"Speaker" (I, my government/ administration)
1.	We must handover this state to God. (Emeka Uwakolam, Accord aspirant)		"Speaker +" (we, our government/administration)
1	You know the economic works on consumption and expenditure. (Alex Otti, APGA aspirant)		"addressee(you)"
1.	Abia is one of the smallest state in land area. (Blessing Nwagba, SDP aspirant)		Non interactant subjects (others)

Register choices and power structures: The implications of ideologies/strategies and power structures in the debates

There are register choices used in the debates. These are selected using the field of discourse. The field of discourse has five headings; introduction, employment/human development, infrastructure/economy/agriculture, education and security. Under each heading, there are words peculiar to it. The register choices are selected and placed based on the headings. For example in the heading; employment/human development as a field of discourse has its peculiarity such as accessibility to government programme, revitalize alien industries, human resources, creative and skilled etc. Coming to power structures, three power structure types are identified in the debates. They are power as dominion, power as manipulation/mind control and power as liberalism. In power as dominion, the aspirant used the strategy to show authority and control as seen in the extract below.

700,000 jobs will be created. With what we are doing with oil palm and cassava I am sure that very very soon the problem of unemployment in Abia will truly be a thing of the past". (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant- AED- 2015)

The lexical item "created" shows power and authority. The speaker sees himself as the provider of jobs thereby equating himself with God who does all things. The second power structure is Power as manipulation/mind control. The speaker deploys this strategy to influence the thought of the masses. This strategy works hand in hand with the ideologies mentioned in the debates. The third strategy is power as liberalism. In this strategy the speaker presents his opinions as suggestions. It does not impose his suggestions on the audience as seen in this extract: "As a governor if I am elected, I will look at other ways of generating internal revenue. We have a lot of ways"(Blessing Nwagba, SDP aspirant). The audience are free to make their choices. Looking at the ideologies/strategies evident in the debates, two ideologies are identified and three strategies. They are ideologies of positive self-representation of "us" and negative other representation of "them" ideology of isolation/personality profiling, strategy of self-glorification, strategy as a weapon of negotiation and strategy as a weapon of persuasion and pleading. These ideologies/strategies are used by the speakers to present themselves in different ways. The extract below is a sample of ideology of isolation/personality profiling where the speaker presents his ability to govern the people.

My commitment is to serve God and humanity. Therefore, I am driven by a strong determination to achieve results. I am propelled by the fundamental needs of our people. I believe that to successfully achieve this, there is need to consult and involve a wide spectrum of our society

There are implications of these ideologies/strategies and power structures for critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness. Base on the study, they are eight in number which covers the ideologies, strategies and power structures. The implication of positive self and negative other is self worth. That of isolation/personality profiling is self-confidence. The implication for strategy of self-glorification is egocentric while that of weapon as negotiation is compassion. That of weapon of persuasion and pleading is manipulation. Implication for power as dominion is capability, hopefulness for that of power as manipulation/mind control and essentiality for that of power as liberalism. The table below explains further.

S/ N	Utterances	Ideology/Strategy types	Power structures	Implication
1	We know in 2013, the time we are picking AK47 in the streets of Abia. Since 2015 till now there is no single case of bank robbery in Abia state to the glory of God. (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)	Positive self representation of "us" and negative other representation of them		Self-worth
2	I am a sociologist by training. I have a doctorate degree in sociology. I have over the years played politics. (Blessing Nwagba, SDP aspirant)	Isolation/personality profiling		Self-confidence
3	I am one Abia that is very passionate about Abia. That really believes that Abia should go forward. (Emeka Uwakolam, Accord aspirant)	Self-glorification		Egocentric
4	20 years is a long time for even a child to begin to grow up. Abia state has not started the journey of development so I am passionate about developing my state of Abia	Weapon of negotiation		Compassion

	and that is why I am offering myself and a lot of things that we can do. (Alex Otti, APGA aspirant)			
5	I was interacting with the keke people, you take N60 when they are going and coming back. At the end of the day they pay more than N1000 and the roads through which it's passing is not built. (Emeka Uwakolam, Accord aspirant)	Weapon of persuasion and pleading		Manipulation
6	The second reason I am offering myself is to lift Abia people from suffering. (Alex Otti, APGA aspirant)		Power of dominion	Capability
7	No past administration in the state built any road that lasted up to 10 years. I have built roads that would outlive my administration. I have done the best roads in Abia. (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)		Power as manipulation/mind control	Hopefulness
8	This is the first time we are running on what we have done or doing and we think the essence of this debate is to say what we have done in the past and how we intend to put to bare on what we will do in Abia. (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)		Power as liberalism	Essentiality

Discussion of findings

The mood and modality system specify the interpersonal structure of the clauses inherent in mood: clause as exchange of information and clause as exchange of goods and services as seen in the data. Two operators are prevalent according to the data; finite temporal operators (be, have, do) and modal operators (must, will, can). There is a high occurrence of finite temporal operators more than the modal operators. These finite operators give the debates their propositional structure- that of exchange of information hence a high occurrence of propositions as against proposals-exchange of goods and services. There are two mood types used in the debates; declarative and interrogative. The declarative mood type was in high occurrence. The modal values show that median modal value is on the high side more than low and high modal values.

In the debates, there are uses of personal pronouns (I, we, you) and possessive (my/our government). These are in potential Subject positions of the clauses. They are seen as ideologically motivated. The Subject in the Mood and modality structures specify the responsible element in the proposition or proposal as stated in the review of literature. The result shows that majority of sampled clauses position the speakers in Subject positions as the modally-responsible agent in the role relationships of the debates. There was a shift in the use of "I" and "we", "my" and "our" in potential Subject positions. This shift is intentional to fit the view of the speakers. In interpreting the shift, we could say it is purposeful manipulation by the speakers which is designed at either claiming or disclaiming responsibility depending on the matter at stake. The speaker made use of "I" when the speaker is confident and wants to claim responsibility for positive achievement. Nevertheless, "we" is used when the speaker is in doubt of the verifiability or acceptability of the proposition or proposal. This is so in other not to hold the speaker modally responsible for the claim in case of any failure. Explaining further to the shift in the use of singular and plural personal pronouns in Subject position, it could be that "I" is used when the speakers want to adopt what Yule calls a "face threatening act". This is done when the speakers want to affirm authority as those in charge. However, the speakers change to face-preserving acts by the use of plural "we" when they need the comradeship of their audience, to identify with them and win their consent as well as carry their hegemonies.

Also there is the use of "you" and some instances of "we" in subject positions in the debates. This usage tried to place the burden of modal responsibility on the addressee (the electorates) and the Speakers plus other participants (masses) even when the speech-functional import of such propositions are questionable. They leave the addressee with no option for acknowledgement or denial of the proposition. The data as well showed low occurrence of non-interactant Subjects with finite temporal operators in declarative clauses. These non-interactants totally remove modal responsibility away from the speaker's persona. The register choices inherent in the debates are

showcased. This is done based on the field of discourse which were stated into five. Register choices suitable to the field of discourse are placed accordingly across the debates chosen for the study. For instance, the introduction as a field of discourse has its characteristics such as greetings, brief introduction of the aspirant and educational background.

Power structures used in the debates are not left out. In analysing the various dimensions of the relations of power and language, two levels of micro and macro levels showcase by van Dijk are looked into. The analysis captures discourse structures that have implications of power and unequal power relations in terms of power as strategies of domination, mind control/ manipulation and liberalism. Power as Domination is a strategy used by the political aspirants to show power, authority and supremacy, especially supremacy of a particular view or belief over that of others. For instance in the example below: “700,000 jobs will be created... (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant-AED-2015). The lexical item “create” in the above extract shows dominance and supremacy. The speaker draws attention to himself as the great provider (equating himself with God) of jobs.

The asymmetrical power relation between the speaker and the audience is best revealed in the lexical item “create”. This by implication means that he is all-powerful governor aspirant who is in charge and wants the less privileged to see things in the light of his view, as the messiah who has come to salvage their plight. Power as manipulation/mind control, a strategy positioned to sway the thought of the masses is used in the debates to win the electorates through the formation of biased mental models and social representation. The strategy is not just used but in one way or the other uses the ideologies inherent in the debates to drive home its message. In other words, power as manipulation/mind control does not work in isolation but work hand in hand with the ideologies mentioned in the debates. Implicitly, this strategy awakens the consciousness and sub-consciousness of the people to activities around them. The text producer admits that the people have the command to choose who becomes the next governor and as a result of this, he uses mental model to work on their psyche. Coming to power as liberalism we see it as an endeavour by a speaker to bridge the gap between him and the electorate. A speaker uses power to liberalise when he or she does not impose any constraint on the audience. With this common identity between the speaker and his audience, the speaker only presents his opinions as suggestions.

In the debates, there are uses of ideologies/strategies. The study identifies two ideologies and three strategies that are prevalent in the debates. The ideologies are ideology of positive self-representation of “us” and negative other representation of “them” and ideology of isolation/personality profiling. In ideology of positive self-representation of “us” and negative other representation of “them”, the candidates presented themselves and their groups in positive terms and other groups in negative terms. In achieving this, they selected some socially shared mental model with a negative connotation in the text and the essence of doing this is to capture different ideological positions. For instance, in the following example: “Your inability to sack the management of parastatals for their poor performance shows that you are not competent.” (Emeka Uwakolam, Accord aspirant). The Accord candidate for the election attacked the incumbent governor and tried tarnishing his image by presenting him as incompetent. The aim of this fact-giving strategy is to make the audience reject their opponent and accept the speaker(s). The background information recalled by the speaker is a prejudiced platform to project his own ideology. Ideology of isolation/personality profiling brings out the belief of the masses that personality is the key thing in politics not the political affiliation one belongs to. The speaker using this ideology believes that his profile paves way more than the political party he/she belongs to. It is under this ideology that Members’ Recourses is at work. A candidate is eligible to get the people’s vote based on his personality, contributions and involvement in the society and not simply because of his/her affiliation (party). What this ideology implies is that the candidate is seen as the right person to be elected because of his/her achievements, involvement in state affairs and personality. This is time when political party one belongs does not count rather the person’s personality and achievement. The study identified three strategies. Strategy of self-glorification is related to positive self representation of “us” and negative other representation of “them”. But this strategy is a bit different from the ideology because it anchors on personal achievement without the help of the party. For instance, in the example below:

No past administration in the state built any road that lasted up to 10 years. I have built roads that would outlive my administration. I have done the best roads in Abia (Okezie Ikpeazu, PDP aspirant)

The extract indulged clearly in self-glorification. The speaker projects himself as the capable person for the job. The expression: “I have built roads that would outlive my administration” establish his reliability to deliver. “I have done the best roads in Abia” is an implicit way of spurring the electorates’ minds in believing in his capability. This assertion may not be right in reality but to win people’s vote he used it gain their votes. This type of opaque ideological representation is a veritable tool in the hands of Nigerian politicians to deceive unsuspecting electorates. The essence of the expressions to the masses is to appeal to their minds and consciences in seeing the candidate as the “Saviour”. Another strategy that is seen in the debates is strategy as a weapon of negotiation.

Here the speaker(s) align with the thoughts of the masses in his statements. In so doing he is seen that have the interest of the masses at heart. Again, strategy as a weapon of persuasion and pleading in engaged by the candidates to appeal to the ideological common sense that stems from the candidates' background knowledge of the important position the masses occupy in the country, hence, the assertion, "for any meaningful progress to be made, you have to put the people first." The expressions are used implicitly to gain the support of the people. The ideologies and strategies are not used in isolation. They are either positioned as a device to manipulate people and control their mind or as a device to convince the listeners. The implications of these ideologies/strategies and power structures for critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness congeal the analysis. The ideologies/strategies do not work in isolation but work hand in hand with the power structures as seen in the extract below.

I am a sociologist by training. I have a doctorate degree in sociology. I have over the years played politics. (Blessing Nwagba, SDP aspirant).

The speaker deployed the ideology of isolation/personality profiling in the above extract. By so doing, the candidate indulged in power structure of manipulation/mind control to win the vote of the masses. Looking at the analysis, it shows political debates that are skilfully constructed to manipulate, deceive and dominate the masses, consequently, to gain the votes of the electorates. Their sole aim is to get their target which is the votes of the electorates. Whether the promises made are fulfilled is secondary so far they hit their target. The politicians mostly make snooty promises to gain the support of the people and this is the main purpose of the debates.

Conclusion

This study, having examined the gubernatorial debates in Abia State 2015 and 2019 elections, looked at the linguistic choices implored by the candidates. The paper revealed also that a critical discourse analysis of the elections was done. From the discovery, it was observed that the candidates made use of register, mood and modality choices to gain their votes from the electorates. The deployment of the linguistic elements was seen as genuine instruments of the power elite in manipulating, propagating, deceiving and denying of the basic subsistence of the less dominant to the point that they accept the existing conditions as justifiable. In conclusion, Abia State candidates made use of their debates as tool for establishing, maintaining, sustaining power and unequal power relations in the elections.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that politicians should refrain from offensive words that assail the individuality of their opponents. By doing so, they will be seen as reliable and sustainable leaders who are mature and emotionally balanced. Again, it will portray them as capable leaders that concern themselves with national values rather than frivolities and character assassination. They should be more frank in making statements either to present themselves as 'saints' and others as 'evil' by self-glorification and personality profiling. Our leaders should be compliant and imitate the qualities of humility in their dealings with their opponents.

Works cited

- Abia Gubernatorial Debate (2015, March 21). www.channelstv.com on 3rd March 2020.
- Abia State Governorship Debate (2019, January 22). www.channelstv.com on 3rd March 2020.
- Akwanya, N. A. (2002). *Semantics and discourse: Theories of meaning and textual analysis*. Enugu: ACENA.
- Bayram, F. (2010). Ideology and political discourse: A critical discourse analysis of Erdogan's political speech. *ARECLS*,(7) 23-40.
- Brown, G. and Yule, G.(1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ebekue, I. (2023) A critical discourse analysis of gubernatorial debates in southeast Nigeria: 2015-2019 elections. *Unpublished PhD dissertation. Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.*
- Egins, S.(2004). *An introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. New York: Continuum.
- Ezeifeke, C. (2013) Critical discourse analysis of interpersonal meaning and power relations in selected inaugural political speeches in Nigeria. *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, PP 46-65. doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v14i2.3.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power* Ed. England: Pearson Education.
- _____ (2001b). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Social Scientific Research. In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* London: Sage, PP. 121-138.
- Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as social semiotics: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.

- Ike-Nwafor, N.G. (2015). *Critical discourse analysis of selected political campaign speeches of gubernatorial candidates in south-western Nigeria 2007-2014*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Department of English/Literary Studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Khoirunisa, A and Indah, R (2017) Argumentative statements in the 2016 presidential debates of the U.S: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies* 4(2): 27-45. Doi:10.30762/jeels.v4i2.347.
- Oni, J.F. (2010). Lexicalization and discursive expression of power in Olusegun Obasanjo's speeches. A *Seminar Paper Presented to the Department of English and Literary Studies*, University of Ibadan.
- Rahimi, F. and Riasati, M. (2011) Critical discourse analysis: Scrutinizing ideologically-driven discourses". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(16); November 2011 on Jan 2021.
- Schaffner, C. (1996). Editorial: political speeches and discourse analysis. *Current issues in Language and Society*.
- Stubbs, M. (1983). *Discourse analysis: The sociolinguistic analysis of natural language*. Chicago: UP.
- Van Dijk, T.A.(1977) *Text and context*. London: Longman.
- _____. (2004). *Politics, ideology and discourse*. Retrieved from <http://www.Discourse-in-Society.org/teun.html> on May 15 2018.
- Wilson, J. (2003). Political discourse. In: D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen and H.E Hamilton (Eds) *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, PP. 398–415.

Language and Ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian National Anthem

Onyeachulam, Sylvanus C. (PhD)

Department of English Language & Literature,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
E-mail: sc.onyeachulam@unizik.edu.ng

&

Okoye, Michael Maduka

Department of Languages
The Federal Polytechnic, Offa
Email: mikhaelokoye@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper is a critical discourse analysis of Nigerian national anthem with the view to finding out the ideologies in the text and how they are enacted through the use of words. The data for analyses were obtained from the current Nigerian national anthem as composed and adopted in 1978. The study investigates the lines of the anthem to uncover the ideological imports of the Nigerian National Anthem using critical discourse analysis. The concern of the analysis is to ascertain how language can be used as a tool for social restructuring in the society. The study adopts qualitative approach to show the interconnectedness between language and ideology. The analysis reveals that language of the text does the social work of mind-reconstruction, cultivating patriotism, faith and unity; and that the phrasing of the text is appropriate and aptly embodies the ideologies of Nigeria as a country. The use of CDA shows how equality, fairness, unity and patriotism can be mediated through language. It concludes that language is not simply a neutral medium for generating subject knowledge, but a form of social practice that acts to constitute as much as reflect social realities. The study recommends critical discourse analysis as a means of textual analysis that unravels the unsaid said of a speaker.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, ideology, national anthem, Nigeria and language.

Introduction

One of the paradoxes of life is that some of the things that are closest to us in time, space, significance and importance remain among those things that cannot be exhaustively described or properly understood; and human language is one of those things. The study of language is generally to unravel its workings and foster understanding of the complex phenomenon which human language has remained. In discourse analysis, some of the most interesting observations are made in the study of language, but in terms of the way language is used. In the view of Brown and Yule (2010), the analysis of discourse is necessarily the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purpose or functions which those forms are designed to serve in human affairs (p. 1). The major difference between linguists and discourse analysts is in their approach to analysis of language. While the linguist's preoccupation is on determining the formal properties or elements of a language, a discourse analyst is committed to an investigation of what that language is used for. To the discourse analysts, language is loaded with direct and indirect meanings (factual and contextual). These are two perspectives behind a single utterance.

The argument of Brown and Yule (2010) is that it would be very unlikely that, on any occasion, a natural language utterance would be used to fulfill only one function out of the two functions (factual and contextual) of language to the total exclusion of the other. The function which language serves in the expression of linguistic content, according to Brown and Yule (2010) is transactional; while the function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitude or ideology is described as interactional. These functions are given different names by different scholars. They are transactional and interactional (Brown & Yule, 2010), representative and expressive (Buhler, 1934), referential and emotive (Jakobson, 1960), ideational and interpersonal (Halliday, 1970), and descriptive and social-expression (Lyons, 1977).

Language as a way of social expression is also ideological. Ideology is fundamentally a set of ideas that dictates or guides the decision and action of a people in a context. It is the belief, creed, dogma, philosophy, or principle on which a political or economic system is based. In the discourse, language is not simply a neutral medium for generating subject knowledge, but a form of social practices that acts to constitute as much as reflect social realities. Language per se is not powerful and ideological but gains power and ideology through people who by using it infuse messages to the society. According to Lemke (2002), language and ideology are inseparable because language is the carrier of ideology (p.40).

The thrust of this work is to investigate the language of the Nigerian national anthem with the view to extracting their ideological implications as opposed to the factual or propositional information. The inquiry into the relationship between language and ideology definitely will confront us with a lot of implications both on the nature of the text and the nature of the reading. This is because, in discourse analysis, a text is not only studied ideationally but also interpersonally. The interpersonal aspect of a text analysis is what reveals the ideologies of the text as encapsulated by language. Lemke (2002) expresses that “language functions ideologically not only by enabling us to make meanings that maintain the dominance of one group over another, but also by providing ways of challenging the dominance” (p. 40). To use language, therefore, is to use it ideologically as no utterance is ideologically neutral. The relationship between ideology and meaning is rooted in the question of language. When the message and ideology of a nation’s creed is not well understood, the effect is always enormous – it leads to lack of patriotism. This is one of the numerous challenges facing Nigeria – the fact that the intents and ideas of her national anthem are not well comprehended. Meanings are achieved not just through linguistic variables but also through socio-cultural setting of a work. This socio-cultural knowledge of the Nigerian anthem is lacking as attention is only given to the wording of the anthem.

In what follows, we shall study some excerpts to unravel how the ideological imports of the speaker are enacted into language and communicated to all Nigerians.

About Nigerian National Anthem

National anthems are the official songs of nations that are sung on special occasions. Nigerian anthem “Arise, O Compatriots” became the nation’s anthem in 1978, after the old anthem “Nigeria We Hail Thee” was replaced. Due to the criticisms against the first national anthem and the agitation to have it changed, a national competition was held with the purpose of choosing one. A committee was created to that effect to choose the best anthem from all entries and they did a good job acceptable by the people. The anthem was drawn from five best entries and the music was by Nigerian Police Band under the directorship of Benedict Odiase. It is an anthem of two stanzas of nine lines each. The first stanza is a call on the citizens of Nigeria; while the second stanza is a prayer unto God – the “creator of Nigeria and all therein”. In some formal occasions, the second stanza is said as Nigerian official prayer at the commencement or at the end of an official programme.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical orientation of this work is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It is a proven knowledge through discourse analysis and pragmatics that we sometimes mean more than what we say, less than it, or even something completely different from it. CDA is a critical theory concerned with the processes by which systems of social discrimination are shaped and retained. Power asymmetry is so common in society that inequality is no longer visible but principally obscure. This is due to ideological progressions that make inequality appears to be accepted situation of human social systems. Fairclough (1995, 2006) and Van Dijk (1993) are two major players in this orientation who advocate the approach called “critical discourse analysis” (Wardhaugh, 2010; Chilwa, 2013).

CDA is a theory which took off from a functional perspective and explains language as a meaning carrier. It is a common place knowledge through discourse analysis and pragmatics that we sometimes mean more than what we say, less than it, or even something completely different from it. From time immemorial, humans have appreciated the directness in speech communication. The effectiveness of CDA in language analysis is based on the fact that it is context sensitive. According to Nogaard et al. quoted in Kamalu (2018), CDA is “a term used to refer to stylistic work investigating the ways in which social meanings are manifested through language” (p.27). This definition, by extension means that CDA is an approach that uncovers how social meanings, such as power and ideology are enacted through language, which in this respect, can impact on the way we perceive the world. Remilinger (1999), in line with the above-mentioned point, explains that one way of enacting power is to control the context of speech situation (p.1). CDA, in the view of Wodak and Meyer (2008), takes particular interest in the relationship between language and power (p.1).

Bloomaert (2005) asserts that CDA is ideological and judgemental; it is a source for people who are battling against domination and oppression as shown in linguistic forms (p.25). CDA does not only reveal the social magnitude of language use, it is also an object of moral and political evaluation since questioning them would have effects in society, such as authorizing the powerless, giving voice to the voiceless, uncovering power abuse and rallying people to remedy social wrongs. According to Kamalu (2018), “every text can be read as carrying on an implicit dialogue with other social voices that may stand in alliance with or opposition to it” (p. 574). Eco (1979) contends that it is the duty of a reader to find out what in the text is ideologically presupposed. In the words of Van Dijk (2002), CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (p.353).

Kamalu (2011) explains that CDA researchers do not merely appeal to context to explain what is written or said or how it is interpreted; rather, they have come to see language as a form of social practice (p. 352). CDA not only

deals with shrouded ideologies, but also tells how selection of words is utilized in grooming those ideologies. Critical research on discourse needs to satisfy a number of requirements in order to effectively realize its aims. A very insightful explanation of CDA is the one given by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) with the following words: CDA sees discourse - language use in speech and writing - as a form of social practices. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institutions(s) and social structure(s), which frame it. The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned - it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects, that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (p.258)

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarize these terms of CDA as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse reflects society and culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social motion.

The adoption of CDA in this work is based on the fact that CDA is context sensitive and ideological; and our analysis is on the ideological import of Nigerian national anthem.

Methodology

The data for analyses were obtained from the current Nigeria national anthem as composed and adopted in 1978. The study adopts the qualitative approach to analyse the ideological imports of the lines of the Nigerian national anthem using critical discourse analysis framework. All the lines of the text were purposefully identified and analyzed to explore how ideologies can be enacted through language.

Discussion and Findings

The argument of Brown and Yule (2010) is that a natural language utterance fulfills two functions – factual function and contextual function; and that it will be very unlikely that there will be any occasion where one function will be fulfilled at the exclusion of the other. The contextual function also known as interactional or interpersonal function expresses social relation and personal attitude. This function reveals how social structure and order are enacted through language. The concern in this work is to carry out an interpersonal analysis of Nigerian national anthem to see how the phrasing encodes Nigerian ideology, encourages patriotism, promotes “Nigerianess” of the Nigerian country, and reveals Nigeria’s only trust in God. The first stanza of the anthem opens with:

Excerpt 1: Arise, O Compatriots

First, the line above is a sentence – an imperative sentence. It can roughly be paraphrased as “Arise, Nigerians.” or even just “Arise.” which is a verb sentence. Syntactically speaking, a verb sentence is an imperative or a call to an action. The sentence is a call for togetherness towards fighting for the country’s common interest. It will be of interest to know that this call came when the unity and the peace of the country was greatly threatened. There was a civil war – Nigerian-Biafra war which started in 1967 and ended 1970. The eastern Nigeria-predominantly Igbos had wanted to secede to become a sovereign state called “Republic of Biafra”. The Republic that lasted just about three years was forced back to Nigeria after being over-powered by the Nigerian force. Spirits were weak and interest in Nigeria very low. The first line of Nigerian national anthem was motivated by this observation, thereby, the call for all to arise and build a strong and egalitarian society where everyone will be actively involved in the process.

According to Kamalu (2018), the concern of CDA is to study how texts and talks are used to enact social relations in a community (p. 190). The idea in the line above is that of clarion call for all to arise towards the rebuilding of the country. It is a call for patriotism to all especially to those who had lost interest in Nigeria particularly during the secession tragedy of 1967 – 1970. This shows that a text does a rehabilitation work in a community. It is used to soothen the heart of those who are offended. Wodak (2001) sees a text, from CDA perspective, as “analysing people as well as transparent structural relations of dominance, discrimination, power

and control as manifested in language” (p. 2). Through the sentence “Arise, O Compatriots”, the idea of equality has also been enacted. The belief that all citizens of Nigeria, the different positions notwithstanding, are compatriots shows that language can be used to promote equality and symmetrical power. The fact that everyone recites the anthem, including the president, using the word “compatriots” shows the need that equality must be entrenched in the country’s system before there can be any significant growth. The word compatriot is often used to suggest an automatic sense of friendship. It is a word devoid of class and sentiments

The linguistic structure of the sentence also shows that the call is a very urgent one. The placement of the verb “arise” before “compatriots” shows that the verb is thematised or emphasised. The linguistic formation of excerpt 1 places the process (material process) before the actor. Insights from Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics remind us that though a sentence naturally starts with a nominal group followed by the verbal group and the goal, it can, however, still be reordered based on the function of such a sentence. This choice of linguistic structure which places the verb before its subject is not just a style but also ideological. The focalization of the verb carries the ideology of action and urgency to “serve” Nigeria. We can extract from the above excerpt the need for urgency in standing to serve Nigeria. The ideology which is not categorically stated but can be extracted is the belief that everyone – all compatriots must arise and stand together before Nigeria can move forward. The ideological aspect of language does not lie in the linguistic system, which is autonomous, but in the use of language which is not. The persona, through the above excerpt, seeks to influence and propel all to action through ideology of equality hidden in language use. From this first line of Nigerian national anthem, we can therefore deduce that language is ideological and carries the belief system of a society. As Allison and Chanen (2011) note, it is usually language which is the chief signal of both permanent and transient aspects of our social identity beliefs, values, ideologies and identities (P.87).

Excerpt: 2

Nigeria’s call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain

The excerpt two reveals what the clarion call is all about Nigeria – to obey Nigeria’s call. The call for patriotism is a call to serve one’s fatherland with all love, strength and faith. The voice in the anthem is not necessarily the voice of the composer. The persona can be seen as representing the country, thus the use of the adjective “our”. The phrase “with love and strength and faith” as seen in line four is very apt. The unity and peace of the nation had been threatened and people, thereafter, showed no love, strength, and faith in serving the country. The call is, therefore, timely for all citizens to show love towards serving the country and achieving greater heights. The service cannot be productive if it is not done with all strength and faith. This, by extension, means that all citizens of Nigeria should have faith in Nigeria as no person can serve Nigeria with faith if the person does not have faith in Nigeria. Faith in Nigeria is the belief that Nigeria will work. It is selfless service rendered with love and strength towards making Nigeria work. It is the patriotism needed in discharging social responsibilities.

Lines five and six further reveal the threatened unity of the country which is the main reason for the clarion call. The reason, according to the persona is to ensure that the labour (efforts) of the fallen heroes who founded Nigeria shall not be in vain. If Nigeria was to be disintegrated, it means that the efforts of Nigerian nationalists towards Nigerian independence would be in vain. The ideology here is that of togetherness through which the unity of the country can be sustained and made stronger. It can be deduced from these lines that the anthem does the social work of addressing the country’s social problem. A critical analysis of the excerpt above will reveal how ideology can be enacted through language. First, the persona’s use of the inclusive adjective ‘our’ is an ideological marker. It underscores the speaker’s ideology of inclusiveness, equality, and unity in achieving any political and economic success. The use of this all-inclusive adjective ‘our’ which appears in many lines of the anthem is ideological. It means that a country that is divided into economic and political classes cannot make any headway. This is the ideology enacted through the use of the adjective ‘our’. The persona overtly stated that fundamental issues such as illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, lack of health facilities, and lack of standard educational institutions must be addressed before any meaningful development in Nigeria. The use of the adjective ‘our’, however, means that the challenging issues cannot be solved if Nigerians, despite their class differences, are not united as compatriots. Again, the reference to Nigerian Independence heroes is also a pointer to the ideology of synergy, respect and continuity. Nigerian independence heroes fought tirelessly as patriots to secure our political freedom. The persona, by making reference to them, believes also that we need the same amount of zeal as our Independence heroes, their passion, patriotism and dedication to make progress. This is because the memory of Nigeria’s Independence heroes is synonymous or always identified with commitment, patriotism, and sacrifice. This means that there is,

in this excerpt, an intertextuality of ideology between Nigerian Independence heroes and the persona on areas of political commitment, sacrifices and patriotism. The persona still shares the ideology and dreams of Nigerian Independence heroes, but also adds what must be done in order to have visible actualization of the dreams.

Excerpt: 3

To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom
Peace and unity

The lines above reveal the fact that the ideology behind the Nigerian national anthem is that of unity. It is based on the desire to enthrone a unified country (one nation). The fact that the secession movement of 1967 through 1970 contributed to the ideology of this work cannot be denied. What the anthem is meant to achieve is to reconcile all and to make all see Nigeria as “one country” that is bound in freedom, peace, and unity. It can be argued that the intent of anthem is to soothen the upset and amend the cracks in Nigerian foundation. This is what only patriotism can restore. It is the only way unity can be restored. When this is done, the citizens can thereafter make bold to serve Nigeria with love, strength, faith and might towards achieving a prosperous Nigeria.

Though the Nigerian national anthem has two verses, only the first verse is usually sung. On some occasions, the second verse is recited as “The National Prayer”. The second stanza of the anthem is built on the belief and ideology that God factor cannot be divorced from the desired unity needed in building an egalitarian Nigeria. This belief is rooted in many African countries and Nigeria in particular that God has a role in Nigerian affairs. The second stanza, therefore, is a prayer to God.

Excerpt: 4

O God of creation
Direct our noble cause
Guide our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know

These lines reveal the ideology that nothing will work if not committed to the God who “created” or founded Nigeria as a nation. Lines two through four of the above lines are a prayer that God directs the noble cause – the cause that Nigeria should be a united nation. The line three of the stanza reflects the fact that the activities and decisions of Nigerian leaders have immense contribution in the unity of the country and the faith of the citizen. This prayer is necessary because the action of the leaders can jeopardize the unity of the country, which in turn affects the faith of the people. The prayer for the Youth to know the truth stems from the belief that knowledge is powerful and a prerequisite for any meaningful contribution by the youth to the society. A youth who has not gained or acquired knowledge is not fit to be drafted into leadership in any form. This can be explained as one of the problems of Nigeria today where people with no knowledge of truth are at the helm of Nigerian affairs.

The importance of Nigerian unity justifies this strong recognition and prayers to God. The Nigerian motto is “unity and faith, peace and progress”. The motto gives insights to the ideology of the anthem and the emphasis on unity. It means that for progress to be felt and achieved there must be peace. There cannot be peace if the citizens have lost faith in the entity called Nigeria; and there will be no faith if there is no unity. It, therefore, has a trickle-down effect where the level of unity in the country determines the amount or quality of the citizens’ faith; and the faith determine the peace while the peace determines the progress of the country.

Excerpt: 5

In love and honesty to grow
And living just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation
Where peace and justice shall reign

These lines above show that the unity and growth prayed for must be in a rancour free nation where love and honesty are worthwhile virtues. Through these lines, the persona aligns with political agenda of Nigeria that is committed to challenging the disunity and growing faithlessness amongst the citizens. The idea is to promote social tolerance, ethnic and religious equality, love, progress, peace, faith, and lasting unity in the country. To make this possible, the persona recognizes the roles of citizens in achieving the desired unity and also the God factor. When the above listed virtues are in place, then the country will attain “great lofty heights”.

This study has revealed that language is not simply a neutral medium for generating subject knowledge, but a form of social practice that acts to constitute as much as reflect social realities. The phrasing of the anthem helps it to gain ideology and power in the social restructuring of the country. The ideology is that all citizens (compatriots) must arise, despite the differences in tribe and religion, to build a nation where peace and justice shall reign. It is also found out that the use of “compatriots” and the adjective “our” show the spirit of equality where everyone, positions notwithstanding, is seen as being equal. The anthem buttresses the fact that every text does the social work of reconstructing the social attitude of a country, in this case, in orders to restore patriotism and unity.

Conclusion

This study reveals that language is an embodiment of ideologies which can be recovered through a critical study of a text. The ideology here is that of patriotism towards building a united nation. The language of the text reveals the belief that some citizens are dissatisfied with the country, thus the call to arise and build a nation of progress, peace, faith and unity. The anthem generally puts across the roles to be played in restoring the spirit of patriotism and unity; and also recognizes the need to have God in the process. The use of CDA has given the platform for this ideological analysis to show how equality, fairness, unity and patriotism are mediated through language. CDA therefore seeks to empower subjects by raising awareness on how language is used in public sphere.

References

- Brown, G. & Yule, G (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eco, U. (1979). *The roles of the reader: Exploration in the semiotics of text*. London: Hutchinson.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). *Critical discourse analysis*. In T. Van Dijk (Ed), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (Vol. 2 pp. 258 – 284) London: Sage Publications.
- Kamalu, I. (2011). Ideology and intertextuality: A critical linguistic analysis of BenOkri’s an African elegy and mental fight. In C. Nwahunanya (eds.), *From boom to doom: Protest and conflict resolution in the literature of Niger Delta*. Nwahunanya, C. (ed.) Owerri: Springfield Publishers Ltd.
- Kamalu, I. (2018). *Stylistics: theory & practice*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Lemke, J.L. (2002). Ideology, intertextuality and communication of science. In H.F. Peter, et al (eds.), *Relations and functions within and around language*. London: Continuum.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. The handbook of discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D Tanner, & H.E. Hamilton. (Eds). *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp 352 – 371) Victoria Blackwell Publishing.
- Wodak, R. & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London: Sage Publication.

Appendix

Nigerian National Anthem

Arise, O Compatriots
Nigeria’s call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom
Peace and unity

O God of creation
Direct our noble cause
Guide our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And living just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation
Where peace and justice shall reign

The Salvific Role of Rahab in the Conquest Narratives (Joshua 2-6): A Model for African Christian Women Leaders

Ogbonnaya, Joshua Isaac, PhD

Department of Religion and Human Relations
Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
E-mail: ji.ogbonnaya@unizik.edu.ng

&

Ndubuwa, Ohaeri Nnaemeka, PhD

Department of Theology, College of Arts, Wesley University Ondo, Nigeria
E-mail: ohaerinnaemeka@gmail.com
ohaeri.ndubuwa@gmail.com

&

Joseph Ode Alagi, PhD

Department of Theology, College of Arts, Wesley University Ondo, Nigeria
Email: alagijoseph@gmail.com

&

Idialu, Akhijemen Idialu, PhD

Department of Theology, College of Arts, Wesley University Ondo, Nigeria
E-mail: idualuraphael@gmail.com

Abstract

Salvation is the hallmark of Christianity which should be extended to others. God is the orchestrator of this salvation but human beings are the recipients and catalysts which also includes the women. The word salvific in its etymological meaning from the Latin word *salvificus* meaning salvation, is being able or intending to provide salvation or redemption. Therefore, this paper examined the salvific role of Rahab in the conquest narratives of the Israelites in Jericho. Historical critical method and exegetical approach were adopted in this study; these methods have helped in deciphering the world behind the text in the African context. A close reading of the text showed that the salvific role of Rahab was indeed apparent in the conquest narratives. She was catalyzed by God's universal plan of salvation, God's tool of deliverance, and the fulfillment of God's promise to the Israelites' ancestors, and she was portrayed as a patroness of salvation. The role Rahab played in working out her salvation, the spies and her entire family, made her and her entire family members become members of the Israelites' covenant community, enlisted her in their genealogy and was naturally recognized as a rare Heroine of faith and salvation. The study thus recommended that African Christian women leaders should prioritize the salvation of others in their various ecclesiastical positions of leadership beginning with their families, as this would enhance the better future of Christianity in Africa.

Keywords: Salvific, Model, Rahab, Christian Women Leaders, Africa

1. Introduction

The liberation role played by Rehab in sparing the life of the spies and that of her family has not been given an adequate place in scholarship; rather, existing studies focused more on her personality and the expression of her faith in the God of Israel. The author of Hebrews (11:31) says that "by faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient." Many Church Fathers emphasized this faith which Rahab displayed¹. Chrysostom, in response to the type of faith Rahab displayed, argues that Rahab could have said to herself: "And how can they that are captives and exiles, and refugees, and live the life of vagabond tribes, get the better of us who have a city, and walls, and towers?" As a matter of fact, these were indeed the type of questions which were asked by the forefathers of these spies. When they saw the tall men, they questioned the manner of victory, and eventually, all of them perished, without battle or array. Chrysostom then uses these accounts to highlight the pit of unbelief versus the wall of faith.

Chrysostom also opines that when she heard what the men had related, she immediately believed. She did not argue that she would be with her many friends. And if Rahab managed to believe, it is a disgrace for us to appear to be more faithless than even a harlot².

However, Malachy Theophilus examines in a general term the role of Rahab in the conquest story of Joshua. He asserts that the continuity of, and progression in, the outworking of the salvation purposes of God, as canonically proclaimed, provide the matrix within which the three meaning-freighted references to Rahab in the New

¹H.P Stander, 2006. The Greek Church Fathers and Rahab. Pretoria: Acta Patristica et Byzantina, 39.

²H.P Stander, 2006. The Greek Church Fathers and Rahab. Pretoria: Acta Patristica et Byzantina, 39

Testament Scriptures find their warrant as ancestress to the Messiah. He also pointed out that even though Rahab was depicted as “other” and a woman of loose virtue, the focus of the episode swings onto Rahab and evaluates her positively as a woman of wisdom and faith, and God’s tool of deliverance; thereby showing that despite her “otherness” she still has a place in God’s global plan of salvation³.

We cannot rule out the salvific role of Rahab in the conquest narratives; her reaction and dialogue with the spies’ centers on salvation which is very key to Christian ministry. This is the crux of this paper. The study does not argue for the inclusion of women in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and position of leadership, this is because many denominations have seen the need for women’s ordination and have given them recognitions in the church. For example, the Methodist Church Nigeria started women’s ordination over a decade ago⁴; but the effectiveness of women in such ecclesiastical positions in engendering salvation of others is the focus of this work. This is more so because the gospel of salvation seems to have been reduced to and substituted for prosperity messages and materialism by many denominations. Therefore, there is a need for African Christian women leaders to prioritize the ministry of salvation in their various ecclesiastical positions as this will enhance the future of Christian ministry in Africa.

2. The Personality of Rahab?

Who was Rahab? Rahab was a Canaanite foreigner who sojourned in Jericho, the Amorite City. According to rabbinic tradition, Rahab was one of the four most beautiful women in the world and an ancestress of eight prophets, including Jeremiah and a prophetess⁵. The Septuagint and the New Testament use the name Rahab when they refer to the harlot of Jericho. In the genealogy of Matthew (Mt. 1:5) it is read that the name of the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz is Rachab. This has gingered the interest of many scholars to write a lot of articles on the identity of this woman. Some scholars argue that Rahab and Rachab are not the same woman.

Brown, on the other hand, argued that the woman in Matthew’s genealogy is indeed the harlot of Jericho. Brown substantiates his point of view with various arguments. He contends, for instance, that every other name in the first two sections of Matthew’s genealogy is the name of an identifiable figure in the Greek Bible, even if it is peculiarly spelled. He also argues that in that genealogy, Rachab’s name occurs in approximately the place where the Biblical Rahab would have to appear were she included. Furthermore, Brown points out that various names in the Matthean account are spelled differently when one compares them with the names in the Septuagint⁶. Above all, there is still a point of convergence on the identity of Rahab that she is truly the Rahab of Jericho whose profession was innkeeper, that is, harlot.

3. The Salvific Role of Rahab (Joshua 2&6)

a. Historical Context

The book of Joshua opens with a divine speech calling Joshua to lead Israel forward to receive the land that Yahweh swore to their ancestors to give them (1:6). In the same vein as it were, God charges Joshua to embrace holistic fidelity to the Law of Moses, establishing an important connection between faith and obedience that continues throughout the book⁷.

The book presents the Late Bronze situation in very similar terms. Cities in Canaan sometimes cooperate militarily as in Joshua 10: 1-6 and sometimes stand alone, just as Jericho. Israel destroys only a few cities – Jericho, Ai, and Hazor; so that no widespread destruction occurs. Israel’s population often melds with the indigenous Canaanite population so that cultural and archaeological traces are often indistinct (Jos. 13: 13, 15:63, 17:13, 23:7,12)⁸.

Historically, the conquest was in the first place for Israel and against the Canaanites. Theologically, Yahweh’s gift of the land to Israel presents that process as an important precursor to God’s ultimate, eschatological salvation and judgment in and through the work of his son⁹. Let us now examine the text closely as we highlight the role of Rahab.

³ M.U Theophilus. The Role of Rahab in the Conquest story of Joshua: Towards an Igwebuiké Theology. OSA Santa Maria University of Theology, San Francisco, US.A Accessed: 4-4-2022. 40&41.

⁴ Ogba Okey, 2002. *Womn for ordination*, Ibadan: Day Star Press. 20

⁵ J.F. Ross, 1962. “Rahab” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. New York: Abingdon Press.

⁶ R.E Brown. 1982. “Rachab in Matt 1:5 probably is Rahab of Jericho” in *Biblica*, 63.1, 79-80

⁷ M.V. Van Pelt (Edt). 2016. *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, Weaton: Crossway, 162

⁸⁸ M.V. Van Pelt (Edt). 2016. *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, Weaton: Crossway, 161

⁹⁹ M.V. Van Pelt (Edt). 2016. 163

b. The rendering of key verses of Joshua 2 and 6

2:1 וַלֵּלְכוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר הִזְכִּירְתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֵאמֹר
2:4 וַתִּקְחָהּ אֲשֶׁר הָאֵת שְׂגִיָּה הַגִּזְיָא שִׁמְשֵׁת צַדִּיקִים וְנֹתְמָא מְרִירָא וְכֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר הִזְכִּירְתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֵאמֹר
2:6 וְהִיא הִעֲלָמְתָם הַגִּזְיָא וְנֹתְמָא מְרִירָא בְּפִשְׁתֵּי הָעֵץ הָעֹרֵךְ כֹּתֵלָה עַל-הַגִּגַּיִם
2:12 וְעַתָּה הִשָּׁבְעוּ-לִי יְהוָה הִכִּי-עֲשִׂיתִי עִמָּכֶם כְּכֹדְעֵי שִׂימְתֶּם-לִּי אֶת-עַמִּי בְּיַדְכֶם וְנֹתְמָא מְרִירָא אֲתִּיבְתֶּם לִּי
2:13 וְהִחַיְתֶם אֶת-אָבִי וְאֶת-אִמִּי וְאֶת-אֶחָיו וְאֶת-אֶחָיוֹתַי וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לְהִלְחָמְתֶּם אֶת-נַפְשֵׁי תִינוֹמְתֶּם
2:15 וְתוֹרַדְתֶּם מִבְּקַעַדְתֶּם לְוֶן יְבִיתְהֶם בְּקִירָהּ חֹמְתָהּ וְהִבְחִירְתֶּם אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת
6:22 וְלִשְׁנֵי הַנְּעָרִים הַמְרַגְּלִים אֶת-הָאֶרֶץ לְאֶמְרֵי הוֹשֵׁעַ עַבְדְּאֵי יְהוָה הַזֶּה וְהִגִּידוּ לָהּ אֵת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
6:23 וַיָּבֹאוּ הַנְּעָרִים הַמְרַגְּלִים יְצִיאָהוּ אֶת-רַחָב וְאֶת-אָבִיהָ וְאֶת-אִמָּהּ וְאֶת-אֶחָיו וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לָהּ וְאֶת-כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַתִּיהָ וְהִצִּיאוּם מִתְּהוֹמֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וְיָשְׁבוּ אֶל-

Translations

Joshua 2:1... And they went, and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.

2:4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them; and she said, "True, men came to me, but I did not know where they came from...

2:6 But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof.

2:12 Now then, swear to me by the LORD that as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign,

2:13 And save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death."

2:15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she dwelt in the wall.

6:22 And Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the harlot's house, and bring out from it the woman, and all who belong to her, as you swore to her."

6:23 So the young men who had been spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her; and they brought all her kindred, and set them outside the camp of Israel.

Rahab and Prostitution in Ancient Near East Jericho

Rahab was a Canaanite who lived in Jericho. Her culture was in every way the opposite to the nation of ancient Israel. Whereas Israel could be described as “conservative” regarding sexual ethics and practice, Canaanite culture was “liberal.” Within Canaanite society, prostitution was acceptable. It was actually deeply associated with their religious practices. It is worthy to note that we can’t know if Rahab was a cultic prostitute. Some scholars think she was but the text just doesn’t tell us. Either way, prostitution didn’t carry the same taboos that it does for some of us today or as it did for the nation of ancient Israel. The scripture told us that Rahab had her own house. She had living family. Her father and mother were still alive. She had brothers and sisters. She even had people “who belonged to her.” There is no hint that she was a prostitute because of a series of bad circumstances. She wasn’t widowed or orphaned and pushed into this vocation. It’s quite the opposite. The text presents her as an affluent person with a full life. Prostitution is merely presented as her vocation. She could be called an empowered woman. Her career wasn’t frowned upon in her city. It was perfectly acceptable. And if she was actually a cultic prostitute, her career would have even put her in a place of influence.

c. Exegetical analysis and summary of the text

The text engages us with the first part of the conquest narratives which commences fully with chapter two. Our interest in this narrative is the role of Rahab as reflected in the key verses above. Joshua the son of Nun sent two spies to Jericho who lodged with Rahab the gate-keeper. When they were being searched for by the King’s messengers, Rahab hid them under drying stalks of flax on the roof. The pursuers were sent off on a false trail and then Rahab made terms with her lodgers. She knew that Jericho must fall to the servants of Yahweh and so she

asked for protection and deliverance for herself and her family. The spies escaped from a window, with her help. When Jericho was destroyed the family was saved and Rahab joined up with the Israelites¹⁰.

Some key words from the narratives need to be closely examined. First, the spies were accepted by Rahab in such a strange land. As the text indicates, they lodged there- שָׁכַב. This word means to lie down, **qal**: perfect, that is to lie in safety. It could be contended that every act of hospitality, directly or indirectly is an act of saving life. Salvation in its original meaning is an act of deliverance from danger.

Another key phrase here is, “to hid” הִסְתִּיר (Joshua 2:4). She hid them for safety, to save their lives from the death that would have come upon them by the King. This is a remarkable role she has played in the narrative. This word hidden is also repeated in the same chapter 2:6 probably to emphasize the importance of this very act of salvation; “*But she had brought them up to the roof, and hid them with the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof.* Probably, it seems she had already prepared the roof for them having sensed such danger ahead.

In chapter 2: 12, she committed the spies to an oath by Yahweh that as she has dealt kindly with them, they too would deal kindly “with my father's house” וְהָיָה אִתִּי וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ and she demanded a sure sign. Her attention was shifted from herself to her father's house which means that she prioritizes the salvation and deliverance of her family members. In chapter 2:13, at this time, she mentions in a superior gender order those members of his family that would be preserved as remnants of Jericho, “And save alive- וְהָיָה אִתִּי וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver וְהָיָה אִתִּי וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ our lives from death.” The terms “save alive” (*chayah*) and deliver of snatch (*nasal*- hiphil), all connote acts of salvation and preservation.

The saving role of Rahab towards the spies was consummated in letting them down by the rope through the window in verse 15 of chapter two. By this, Rahab herself acts as a catalyst for the destruction of the Amorite city as well as the fulfillment of the promise of the land by Yahweh to the Patriarchs; which is a pointer to universal redemption. It was indeed a shadow of what was to come.

In chapter 6:22 to 23, it is now time for the expectations of Rahab to be met and the fulfillment of the oath taken by the spies to be established. Since Joshua has been informed of the whole scenario, he said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the harlot's house, and bring out from it the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her. “And the young men went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her; and they brought all her kindred, and set them outside the camp of Israel. This liberation disposition by Rahab is similar to the role Noah played in saving his immediate family members from the flood. Although there is no evidence from the text that Rahab in any way preached to her family members, it could be deduced that this was born out of her belief in the God of Israel as indicated in chapter 2: 9. Having tested and confirmed that the God of Israel was the only God in heavens and on earth, she needed to extend this saving grace to her family members as well.

There are different scholarly positions as regards the role of Rahab in the narrative which do not only center on her saving act. For example, the Church Fathers often praised her for the hospitality which she had shown to these spies¹¹. Gregory of Nazianzus says that both good and bad people can show hospitality. Lot, the Sodomite, is an example of a righteous person who showed hospitality, while Rahab the harlot is an example of a sinner who showed hospitality. Because of her hospitality, Rahab received salvation which was later extended to her family members. In this narrative, her hospitality is also linked with the salvation of the spies. There is a possibility that we are meant to understand that Rahab immediately pushed them into a temporary hiding place before later taking them up onto the roof.

Clement, the Bishop of Rome in the first century, said that Rahab was not only an example because of her faith, but “there was also prophecy in the woman”. Though Rahab herself was not a prophetess, she served as a “prophetess” when she hung out a scarlet thread from her house. Clement interpreted this as foreshadowing that all who believe in God shall have redemption through the blood of Christ. Justin elaborates on this theme and says that Rahab's scarlet thread is a symbol to show that all those who were at one time harlots and unrighteous now have the promise of salvation¹². Irenaeus also mentions that Rahab was preserved through faith in the scarlet sign, and he, too, sees this as a foreshadowing of the blood of Christ which is efficacious and capable of saving¹³.

¹⁰Moore, S. R. (2016). Rahab the Prostitute . In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham BibleDictionary* . Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.)

¹¹see 1 Clement 12.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 4.17.

¹²*Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* 111

¹³*Against Heresies* 4.20

Chrysostom asserts that Rahab is called a “patroness of salvation” since she displays what is necessary to obtain salvation¹⁴. Rahab did not receive salvation merely because she received the spies in peace. Chrysostom makes it clear that any hostess would do the same without being saved. But Rahab’s hospitality proceeded from her faith and her “attitude towards God. Rahab had faith in God for her salvation, while the spies fixed their hope on Rahab for their salvation¹⁵.

In a nutshell, Rahab proclaimed in a brothel what Israel denied in the desert. God told Israel that there is no other god but the God who is in heaven above, and on the earth below. Israel had witnessed the acts of God, yet they asked Aaron to make a calf for them, and they then praised man-made gods for leading them out of Egypt. Rahab, the harlot, did not experience the miraculous events in the desert, yet she proclaimed in the brothel: “We know what your God has done to the Egyptians.” On this note, Chrysostom contrasts the Jews who said to idols “These are your gods who led you out of Egypt”, while the harlot assigned their salvation to God¹⁶.

4. The Salvific Role of Rahab as a Model for African Christian Women Leaders

The Word of God teaches us that we should rescue one another from danger and evil. And this is not only the task of men. Women too have the task of rescuing others from sin, evil, and danger as is seen in the role of Rahab. Let us look at how her role and salvation experience serve as a model for African Christian Women.

1. A Model of Hospitality

Rahab’s hospitality was the bedrock for the salvation experience for her, the Spies, and her family members. The question of whether Rahab was a harlot or an innkeeper has been a major concern for scholars. D.J Wiseman proposes that the meaning of the word here and in other Old Testament contexts may suggest “one who conducts friendly dealings with the alien person.” He also draws a comparison between the role of Old Babylonian *sabitu*, “one who gives drink,” and various laws regarding inns from earlier law codes.¹⁷

However, the lexical form of רַחַב is the verb רָחַב which is used predominantly in the Old Testament as a broad term for sexual misconduct of many sorts, including adultery, fornication and prostitution. In addition, when רַחַב is used as a participle and preceded by אִשָּׁה - woman, it refers unequivocally to a woman of prostitution. Thus, Rahab was indeed a prostitute. Be it as it may, we must not forget that most at times harlots play dual roles, as sex for money and innkeepers; their major concerns are not the kind of services they render at times but the money or gain attached to them. Thus, here Rahab rendered a hospitality service that bent towards the preservation of lives. Her brothel is here regarded as a house of hospitality.

In the ministry of the church, the ministers’ manses should serve as a house of hospitality for both the members and non-members of the church. In this way, it becomes an avenue for the ministers to extend the love of Christ to such people. However, most of the time, the attitudes of the ministers’ wives or the female ministers towards strangers are not welcoming. This always generates questions of doubt about the salvation of such women, at the same time, debarring those souls that would have been won through their hospitality. The attitude of Rahab therefore should be a challenge and a model for such Christian women leaders.

2. Rahab was a Patroness of Salvation

What caught my attention in this narrative is that Rahab prioritizes salvation over every other thing. Although many biblical scholars are motivated by her faith in the God of Israel rather than her emphasis on salvation; however, this faith in Yahweh is a step toward salvation. Having worked out her salvation as evidenced in her confession of faith in the God of Israel, she wants this salvation for her entire family. Even though she was into prostitution, she did not demand money or material things in returns for saving the lives of the spies. But her interest was in the salvation of her “father, mother, brothers, sisters and all those that belong to them”. This is credible. If she had asked for any other things besides from the salvation of herself and her family members, they too might have been destroyed with the rest of the Canaanites. She did not merely request for protection from the spies in return as some people may think, she was working the salvation of her people as well; this is seen in the use of the phrase *chayah*- save alive. This word has the same meaning as *yesuah*- salvation.

¹⁴Chrysostom, *On Repentance* MPG 49.330

¹⁵Origen, *Selections on Joshua* MPG 12.820

¹⁶Chrysostom, *On penitence* MPG 49.330

¹⁷ D.J Wiseman, 1964. Rahab of Jericho,” TynB 14 8-11

The era we are now is the era of prosperity messages by many ministers of the gospel and church leaders. Attention is being shifted from the haul mark of the church which is the salvation of souls. Fame and materialism have either taken away or dominated the ministry of many ministers and thus the ministry of the church is suffering stagnation in spiritual growth particularly in African churches.

Therefore, this is a challenge for African Christian women ministers and leaders to model their ministries after the saved Rahab whose priority was in the salvation of her souls and family members. They must begin their ministries of salvation from their families. It is a pity that many Christian women's homes are in disarray simply because their immediate family members are yet to be saved, while they are busy going about in the name of ministry. Believers are to first of all work towards the salvation of their immediate families before they can extend it to others.

3. A Woman of Great Honour

The salvific role of Rahab brought her a great honour in Israel. First, after the destruction of Jericho, Rahab and her entire family integrated with the Israelites. Having become the member of the covenant community of Israel, she married a Jewish man named Salmon, one of the two spies she had sheltered in her home. In time, she gave birth to Boaz, who married Ruth, who gave birth to Obed, the father of Jesse; the father of David, through whose lineage Jesus was born. Thus she became King David's and Jesus' great, great, grandmother. She is one of the only women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ¹⁸.

It should be noted that this woman was not remembered or honoured for her many material possessions neither was she not honoured for her profession as a harlot but she was honoured for her act of salvation and redemption. Rahab has the intention to bring salvation to others and she did. The word salvific in its etymological meaning is being able or intending to provide salvation or redemption; it is from the Latin word *salvificus* meaning saving. Thus while Rahab might not have the ability to save, she provides salvation and redemption. This a model worth emulating. African Christian women should note that the earthly material acquisitions at the expense of the essence of Christian ministry will not bring them honour and lasting remembrance, but their attitudes of ensuring that a true gospel of salvation is preached to the unreached.

Conclusion

Although; Rahab was not in any position of leadership, she has the quality of a good leader at the same time; she played the role of a good leader; which justifies the fact that women tend to do well in leadership positions. It is also pertinent to note that God can use any individual to accomplish His purpose on earth. No one should be written off or condemned of not being worthy of the mercy of God. If God can use a prostitute to accomplish His will in the life of His people, and such individual became a heroine of faith, anybody can become something in the hands of God.

The narrative of Rahab was very popular amongst the Fathers of the Church. Though they continued to refer to her as Rahab, the harlot, they always used her story in a positive sense. Her previous questionable profession never counted against her. Rahab is used *inter alia*, as a patroness of salvation, an example of faith, and hospitality, and of repentance, and as a model of the Church, and as proof of God's love for man. She was the catalyst of the conquest of Jericho who was admitted into the covenant community of Israelites by adoption and marriage and became a heroine in the genealogy of Israel; this serves as an encouragement to people who may be in a hopeless situation to remain courageous and focused in God. There is hope for every living soul in God.

Recommendations

Having examined the salvific role of Rahab in the conquest narrative as a model for African Christian women, the study comes up with the following recommendations.

1. African Christian women leaders should prioritize salvation of others including their immediate family members in their various ecclesiastical positions as this will enhance the future of Christian ministry in Africa in this era of insecurity in the nations of the world that people need succor and a sense of belonging; and at this time when the gospel of materialism and prosperity are placed above the true gospel of salvation, the Christian women leaders should act fast like Rahab in snatching the souls that are perishing, knowing fully that the mandate is for both men and women. It was such role that brought

¹⁸Moore, S. R. (2016). Rahab the Prostitute . In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* . Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.)

Rahab to the limelight. As pointed out by Theophilus, despite her “otherness” she still has a place in God’s global plan of salvation.¹⁹

2. The women should make it as a point of duty to support the mission of God and the ministry of the church by encouraging and supporting the missionaries who are out there for mission work in a strange land just as Rahab did for the Spies in Jericho. Such support can come in form of cash and kind. Food stuff could be arranged and sent to such missionaries where identified.
3. The women should care for the needies in their various ministries. This is because caring is part of the christian ministry as demonstrated by Rahab.
4. They should ensure that their immediate family members are saved through their ministries by preaching, caring, and mentoring them spiritually and morally.

¹⁹ M.U Theophilus. The Role of Rahab in the Conquest story of Joshua: Towards an Igwebuiké Theology. OSA Santa Maria University of Theology, San Francisco, US.A Accessed: 4-4-2022. 40&41.

The Media, Elections and the deployment of ICT in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Olajide Olufunsho Ayobolu

Doctoral Student of Federal University of Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria
ooayobolu@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examined the role of the media in different climes especially Nigeria, during elections including the diverse intervening variables that shape the performance of the media. The article looked at the emerging role of the social media and citizen journalism, as well as appraised the pros and cons viz-a-viz the deployment of ICT. The challenges of the media were discussed and solutions proffered for all the encumbrances encountered in the line of duty. It is the descriptive and narrative method that was adopted using the secondary data. The theoretical framework used centered on media social responsibility theory. Traditional media and social media as good as they are, can be put to bad use, by devious political gladiators, particularly in this part of the world and, which can have deleterious consequences on the polity as evidently pointed out in the article and the article recommended amongst other things that there is the need to regulate the social media in the overriding interest of democracy and humanity.

Introduction

The thrust of this article is to critically examine the relationship between elections and ICT, zeroing in on the role of the media in disseminating crystal clear information in the process. In other words, in what ways does ICT help in shaping the electoral process through confidence-building and transparency, so that people do not just vote for the sake of voting but that each vote may count and precisely locate the role of the press in all of this?

To this end, this article will want to know to what extent the media are independent. How informed and properly trained the media are, to perform the duties and responsibilities expected of them. Does the media have the requisite technological know-how? Can the media read between the lines at critical moments during an election on ICT issues and make meticulous interventions that can positively impact the electoral process. What is the meeting point between the traditional and the new media? What are their areas of strength and the challenges they are confronted with? This article will similarly delve into the concept of citizen journalism with the availability and proliferation of androids phones, smartphones, tablets, digital cameras, spy cameras and phones, electorates, can actively participate in covering and reporting events as they corroborate or disprove the traditional media. Therefore, is media an all-comers affair or a specialised profession that handles election reportage with dexterity?

The role of the media with regards to the deployment of ICT in elections

The importance of the media in elections cannot be overemphasised, in fact, media, particularly new media, is part and parcel of ICT. With the consistent use of Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, google chat, telegram, WhatsApp messenger, YouTube, WeChat, Quora, Qzone, Weibo Tumblr, Tiktok, Reddit, Baidu, Tieda, Linkedin, Pinterest, Viber, Facebook messenger and so many other platforms on a global scale. It goes without saying, therefore, that it will be pretty difficult for elections to be manipulated, this is because even before the official results are announced, the results are in the public space/domain. Hence, the combination of the traditional media and the new media have helped immensely in improving the integrity of the electoral process leading to general acceptability of election results by the people.

Election without the media is unimaginable because by doing so elections will be shrouded in secrecy where the process can easily be manipulated and the will of the people subverted. Hence, democracy will be called some other form of government other than what it is and elections will be meaningless or inconsequential. So important is the media according to Inuwa that "the media is referred to as the fourth estate of the realm, i.e. The fourth pillar in support of the essential tripod of government; the Executive, the Legislative and the judiciary. The two broad categories of media –

- (a) The Print media comprises Newspapers, Magazines, Journals and periodicals and
- (b) The Electronic media includes the Radio, Television and all related modern means of communication such as the computer and the Internet". (Inuwa 2007)

According to Haruna, "the media's role of informing, educating and entertaining the public takes different forms in different societies. This role is largely determined by the nature of the social and political forces in society. The role falls into two broad categories, namely the libertarian and the authoritarian. In the libertarian role, the media is free, at least in theory, of state or government ownership and control. The media in the Western World falls into this category. The authoritarian role is the opposite of the libertarian i.e., the media is owned and/or controlled by the state or government. The media in the old Soviet Union, present-day China, the Russian Republic and Cuba

and many of the Third World countries fall into this category. In many other Third World countries, however, there is a mix of the two, i.e. private media sitting side by side with state or government-controlled media. Nigeria is an example of this admixture. The theory of the libertarian media assumes that man is a rational being who can decide wisely for himself, provided he has accurate and adequate information. The mass media, in this case, is obliged by convention, if not by law, to provide fair, balanced and accurate information that will enable their readers and listeners to make sensible decisions".(Haruna 2007).

The media naturally should serve only public interest, what determines public interest may be amorphous, but safety and security are principal elements of communal interest. The security of the nation and its people can be said to be a staple of *shared* interests. Therefore, national interest is a subset of public interest. To serve the public interest is to preserve the nation's interest and security. (The Cable.ng 11th July, 2021).

Furthermore, it has been argued that the Nigerian media is one that is somewhat politically governed. Some media organizations are owned by politically exposed persons who are in different political parties. Those media organizations are sometimes deployed to fight political battles, compromising the sanctity of information, whose interest will these agencies naturally serve; their patrons or Nigeria? This is the dilemma. (The cable.ng).

It is very clear, therefore, that the role of the media is to inform, educate, entertain as well as set an agenda. The media has a watchdog role as well as a gatekeeper function. The media can aid public involvement through advocating issues and transferring knowledge, skills and technologies to the people. Inuwa (2007) pointed out some factors that *restrains* the functions of the media which includes draconian and obnoxious laws, lack of adequate remuneration, corruption and lack of self-censorship.

According to Aghamelu (2014)," the role of the media in any democratic society is to educate, to inform and entertain people however, they have to be vigilant watchdogs of public interest and under no special circumstances should they demean themselves into acting as lapdogs for establishment. Even in very normal and placid times, the media is expected to be a keen observer, alert and concerned even though non-intruding and non-partisan in governance".

Fatoba (2012), argued that the duties of the mass media extend to the following:

1. The press keeps the people and government informed.
2. The press provides a means of communication among the people.
3. The press serves as watchdog on the activities of government, government officials and members of the public in general.
4. The press provides a voice for the people by giving the strong, weak, rich, poor, young, and old the right to express their views irrespective of how primitive, sensible or irrational the view may be.
5. The press is a trend setter as a medium for socialization and social engineering.
6. The press is a market for the presentation of ideas and opinion.
7. The press is a vehicle for change.
8. The press is a medium of enormous influence on people's views, attitudes, judgments, lifestyles and values.
9. The press is a means of entertainment and relaxation.
10. The press helps the people in the making of an informed decision.

It is important to note that the internet has produced several means of communication that perform vital tasks in disseminating news and information to the global audience, the social media has the power to alter messages and convey messages to achieve a particular end. The role of social media in which almost everybody participates in elections and politics have become ubiquitous and public knowledge in which everybody participates and expresses an opinion, that is why public perception is also very important in election results and outcomes. However, it is imperative to underscore the fact that Candidates and Parties have an explicit right to provide the electorate information regarding their attributes, political agendas, and proposed plans. Besides meeting directly with members of the electorate, candidates and parties accomplish this task through campaigns via media. It is paramount to democratic electoral processes therefore, that all candidates and parties are provided equal access to media for this endeavour.

Candidates and parties use the mass media for campaigning through sponsored direct access spots, paid political advertising, televised debates, use of social media, and other mechanisms. They also hope the media will voluntarily cover them because of the newsworthiness of their campaign activities. Political parties expend vast human and financial resources on planning and executing mass media campaigns. The NDI Political Campaign Planning Manual gives an idea of the extent of organisation involved. The media have several roles in realising contestants' right to campaign: To create a level playing field is the first role. This entails equal access to state broadcasters and other state resources: Among the most effective, but least analyzed, means of autocratic survival is an uneven playing field. In countries like Botswana, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Malawi, Mozambique,

Senegal, Singapore, Tanzania, and Venezuela, democratic competition is undermined less by electoral fraud or repression than by unequal access to state institutions, resources, and the media. An uneven playing field is less evident to outside observers than is electoral fraud or repression, but it can have a devastating impact on democratic competition. Levelling the campaign playing field is one of the main justifications for regulation of media during elections. (<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me>).

Theoretical framework

Generally, the philosophy of social responsibility of the media is an extension of libertarian philosophy in that the media recognise their responsibility to resolve conflicts through discussion and to promote public opinion, private rights, and important social interests. Social responsibility is majorly premised on the ground that freedom carries concomitant obligations. While a responsible journalistic practice is a bulwark to societal progress, the press still carries the burden to ensure that their activities are guided by ethical requirements at all times. But the snag lies with the subjective interpretation and the obsession by the government as to what constitutes social responsibility of the press. To the government, the press is socially responsible when it nurtures their comfort zones; when it reports on issues that make them feel at ease rather than a form of reportage that rattles and keeps them on toes. Obagwu P.U & Kabiru M.I (2019)

From the notion of Social responsibility, Melisande (2009) posits that the press is accountable in four ways:

- To the audiences, to whom they own correct news reportage, analysis and editorializing.
- To the government to which they owe constructive criticism, a relay of popular opinion and adequate feedback from the populace;
- To the owner, to whom they owe the survival of the media organization as a business venture as well as a veritable source of education, enlightenment and entertainment;
- To themselves, to whom they owe fulfillment in their calling, satisfaction and an entire success story

Melisande (2009:4) identifies five guidelines for a socially responsible press the Commission came up with in its report titled; A Free and Responsible Press:

- A truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which give them meaning;
- A forum for the exchange of comments and criticisms;
- The projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society;
- The presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society;
- Full access to the day's intelligence.

It is very clear therefore that it is a media that can genuinely uphold the ethics of the profession, by genuinely being a watchdog and a gatekeeper is the one that can be socially responsible. Thus, during elections, the media is expected to be as objective as possible; and their reportage should not be tainted by emotions, sentiments and unfounded allegations. Events and situations must be reported just as it is without any form or iota of colourations.

Role of the media in elections using ICT tools from around the world

According to Dzisah "Facebook and Twitter are noted to be the two most popular social media platforms according to Pew Research Center. Lately, the importance of social media has been predominantly emphasised in politics, due to the fact that the use of social networking sites (Facebook) and microblogging services (Twitter) are thought to have the propensity to positively induce political participation. The Obama presidential campaign sought to create a whole new political constituency online, raising about half a billion dollars through online platforms such as Facebook. The campaign, which was run on 15 social media sites, produced 2,000 official videos which were viewed 80 million times on YouTube alone and generated about 244,000 unofficial video responses. What is even more intriguing is that the 2008 United States presidential elections remain in history for the unparalleled use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube". (Dzisah 2018)

Furthermore, Elchahabi (2015) harped on the fact that "Free media have long been recognized as a cornerstone of democracy and play an important role in influencing political discourse during elections. When free and balanced, traditional media (print and broadcast) foster transparency and the dissemination of important electoral information. The rise of new media – such as social media sites, blogs, email and other new media platforms – provides further avenues and possibilities for participatory citizenship, information and knowledge sharing, and inclusion and empowerment. Both traditional and new media can play a vital watchdog role and serve as a campaign platform, a forum for public debate and as a public educator, ultimately strengthening democracy. Recognizing the evolving role of media in elections, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has increasingly employed new media in its programming to support credible and transparent elections".

In a related development, Elchahabi (2015) stressed that “according to a 2014 Pew Research Centre Survey, 16 per cent of registered American voters used social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to get political information and follow election news during the 2014 U.S. midterm elections, more than doubling the number of registered voters who used social media for the same purpose in 2010. Additionally, more and more Americans are also using cell phones to follow political news, with 28 per cent of registered voters having done so in 2014”. Moreover, Elchahabi (2015) observed that “When Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister of India on May 26, 2014, he was the second most “liked” politician on Facebook in the world, trailing only President Obama. We saw a trend, we read this trend, where the youth of the country were embracing social media as their first tool when they started using the Internet, and we made sure our presence was there, said Arvind Guptahead, head of the social media campaign for Modi’s party. In Nigeria’s recent general elections, both major presidential candidates and their parties maintained active Twitter and Facebook accounts and the Independent National Electoral Commission proactively engaged with citizens on social media to address inquiries related to the electoral process. Social media is widely credited with playing a major role in promoting transparency ahead of the vote that led to the first election of an opposition candidate for president in Nigeria’s 2015 election. According to Sumandep (2016), “social media has influenced many aspects of our life be it education, culture, administration, marketing, business or politics. The technology revolution which is known as internet has changed the world by connecting people across the globe. Today youth is increasingly using number of social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Blog and LinkedIn as platforms for communicating with friends, family and colleagues. Social media’s quick development shows its influence on society. It is a crucial part of the advancement of information and communication technologies. Social media has been able to make profound impact by means of news, interaction, learning and marketing. Various news channels and tweet provide updates on significant happenings all over the world. The news quickly gets passed around the networks in ways never experienced before. People in different cities, countries and continents can keep in touch effortlessly and social media creates an opportunity to experience different cultures and exchange opinions. It has become a significant part of modern civilisation. It is changing existing information behaviour by giving users access to real-time online information channels without the constraints of time and space”.

According to Ayeni (2019) Social media in Nigeria has become a prominent and a powerful forum for voter enlightenment, political activism and fastest means of information dissemination. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube help to activate citizens’ engagement in political life. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) saddled with the responsibility of educating voters on their electoral roles and responsibilities unfortunately doesn’t have a pronounced presence in the social space. The importance of this position is that the media can be positively deployed in such a way that it will help to creditably shape the outcome of an election in such a way that it will foster peace, common sense of belongingness and legitimacy in any given social milieu or formation, thereby contributing immensely and positively to the integrity of the electoral process.

The flip side of the media in relation to ICT and elections with concrete examples

It is imperative to underscore the fact that the media can be manipulated to play a negative role in the electoral process, which raises the question of how independent or free the media is or can be. While government-owned media might be the mouthpiece of the government in power, as he who pays the piper dictates the tune, thereby promoting the power of incumbency, privately-owned media outfits can equally be constrained by the vested interest of the ownership structure who may have more than a passing curiosity or concern in the political cum electoral goings-on. These positions deviate from the traditional role of the media to accurately inform, educate and entertain the generality of the public. It calls to question the watchdog, gatekeeper and knowledge incubator roles of the media.

It is exactly the point Elchahabi (2015) was making when he explained that “the media can also play a dramatically negative role in the electoral process. Many observers often point to the role media played during the 2007 Kenyan presidential election and the subsequent outbreak of violence, which led to 1,133 people killed and more than 600,000 Kenyans driven from their homes, as a prominent example of the negative effects media can have during elections. A private or biased media can shape elections and issue coverage to support corporate interests or provide propaganda for authoritarian regimes, subverting important democratic principles like freedom of speech and the press”.

These assertions are further corroborated by Olaniran and Williams (2020) when they explained that “social media platforms have become fertile ground for fake news and propaganda as evidenced in the 2016 US presidential election. BuzzFeed found that false election stories from hoax sites and hyper-partisan blogs generated more engagement than content from real news sites during the last three months of the election and post-election. Users shared false stories such as that Pope Francis endorsed Donald Trump and/or that Hillary Clinton sold weapons

to ISIS. These stories and others were shared (e.g. retweeted) hundreds of thousands of times. More importantly, another report found that users were not interested in any news that disagreed or deviated from their accepted premises. Subsequently, people continued to actively seek and present false information as long as it supported their respective viewpoints”.

In addition, Olaniran and Williams posited that “Twitter, for example, has increasingly been used in political elections of nation-states and in the spread of ideologies such as displayed in the Brexit movement and the 2016 US presidential election. Additionally, web-based botnets represent a significant number of Twitter traffic. To this end, propaganda and misinformation appear to be the norm in social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook. *Social media bots* (i.e., botnets, bots) are designed to manipulate the passage, transfer, and volume of the social narrative, which makes them ideal for the spread of homogeneity, as opposed to diversity, within their message. This inherent functionality is why bots are frequently used to spread beliefs (e.g., populism) and computational propaganda. Message distribution via botnets is popular due to the fanaticism of select users who demonstrate an insatiable desire to consume and redistribute information despite the source. Many of these messages carry divisive narratives that tend to transform civic engagement into dichotomies, pitting one group of people against another without allowing for consensus or compromise. Furthermore, fake news websites and bots attract traffic and drive engagement. Collectively, they aim to influence conversations and demobilize opposition through false support”. (Olaniran and Williams 2020).

Fake news is a problem, like it is in every part of the world. I think that we have a particular problem in Nigeria because of a deep-seated mistrust for the government or indeed any form of authority. This mistrust has been cultivated over decades of being lied to and bullied by authority figures for many years. Nigerian media was controlled by government and still is to a large degree. The media served as a propaganda tool for different governments, from the military era to of course, the now seemingly democratic era. Its still used as a major form of control. (The Cable.ng 1st May, 2021). If not for the private print media that is, newspapers, magazines, Nigerians would all have become zombies. (The Cable.ng 24th July 2021).

In a related vein, Stuart (2019) argued that there are myriad benefits from social media, like its use during the revolutions of the Arab Spring to put pressure on governments and spread truth in the face of propaganda. But there are three primary problems: misleading or inaccurate stories used to influence elections, misleading or inaccurate stories used to foment violence, and the more tangential effect on violence that results when people with extreme views find amplification and validation of those views on social media.

Therefore, Reisach (2021) reckons that “influences of viral disinformation are reported from Brazil, Pakistan and Mexico. In the “Global South”, WhatsApp plays a huge role in political campaigning. This messenger App is frequently used in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia because it is free of charge and seemingly “personal”. For rural areas without WiFi but a telephone network, WhatsApp offers a chance to communicate, and for (political) advertisers is a formidable tool, because voters can be reached through their telephone numbers. In less developed countries, telephone numbers can be purchased and sold, by telecommunication providers or by advertisers, event managers, local associations, groups, influencers and private persons. Telecoms offer their services for free (called “zero-rating”) if users exclusively use Facebook or WhatsApp. This facilitates the targeted dissemination of “state-sponsored WhatsApp content” as well as propaganda in large groups. The circumstances in Africa, Brazil and India do not raise hope for a well-informed usage and electoral decision-making”.

However, the point must be made that today, the Nigerian Communications Commission estimates that there are almost 150 million internet users in Nigeria. Active social media users – excluding about 90 million WhatsApp users – are estimated at approximately 32 million as of January 2022, based on data compiled by DataReportal, an online reference library. This includes about 26 million Facebook users, 9 million on Instagram, 6 million on LinkedIn, and 9.5 million on Snapchat. The potential audience Twitter says their ads can reach in Nigeria is 4.25 million. More significantly, compared with the rest of the world, the average Nigerian social media denizen spends a lot more time on social media – about 4 hours daily. With more than a third of the voting population spending copious amounts of time on social media, it is only logical that politicians take their messaging to where the people are. (<https://ng.boell.org/en/2022/10/26/bots-and-biases-role-social-media-nigerias-elections>).

Similarly, Citizens use social media platforms to give daily reports and updates regarding election circumstances. In recent times, ordinary Nigerians have monitored electoral situations in real-time across the country. They have tagged relevant bodies such as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, news channels, international organisations, etc. via social media platforms to take action. A good example is the recent 2022 Osun State gubernatorial election. INEC, security agencies and other relevant organisations were instantly responding to queries made by ordinary citizens on social media platforms. This has positioned social media as

an important instrument in the hands of citizens to ensure electoral integrity in the country. (<https://ng.boell.org/en/2022/10/26/bots-and-biases-role-social-media-nigerias-elections>). However, it has also been suggested that currently, the number of active social media users in Nigeria has risen from 27 million in 2019, to 36 million ahead of the 2023 elections. Given the challenge of prevailing misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms, and the way such disinformation can permeate into the media more generally, greater access to online information does not necessarily create more informed citizens. (Premium Times February, 2023). In a related development, it has been said that the 2023 general election in Nigeria saw a new dimension different from the usual, due to the active role of social media. According to the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), Nigeria has registered about 156 million active internet subscribers in February 2023 representing over half of the country's population. This implies that a good number of Nigerians have now tapped into different social media platforms. The media platforms have been identified as a key factor that has changed the way politics and elections used to be, bringing everyone together to participate and share their opinion freely. (Businessday April, 9th, 2023).

Therefore, social media if not properly managed and regulated can be more of a curse than blessing, as vividly shown above. In the same vein, it can be a veritable means of deepening democracy, enhancing integrity of the electoral process and evolving a formidable electoral participation process.

Media Performance during Elections in Nigeria

One critical factor that influences the performance of the media has to do with funding for survival. Currently, there are only two models of survival in the media industry in Nigeria. First, by depending on government's subvention and secondly relying on advertisers to survive. And going by the dynamics of new information and communication technologies, things are completely changing. Things are no longer the same, the more they fail, the media organizations appear recharged and desperate. This will definitely reflect in the quality of media production and content. (The Guardian 2nd May, 2021). To survive in the market place the press has to satisfy the preferences of its customers. Precisely speaking the press gives its readers only what wants (Ahakare 2019). A report of the (EU) Election Observation Mission in respect of the 2003 general elections noted that media performance during the Nigerian elections was flawed, as it failed to provide unbiased, fair and informative coverage of political parties and candidates contesting the elections. Federal and State owned media were biased in favour of parties and candidates in power.

On the 2007 elections, it was noted that the Nigerian Press does have a code of conduct that would be expected to guide news media editorial policy at all times including election season. Decision about code of conduct should be made in conjunction with the press. However, in a press conference held in early January 2007, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) the Director General (DG) added directives that the media have interpreted as "warnings" rather than guidelines to facilitate public understanding of issues at stake in the 2007 elections. But it is unclear how NBC proposes to enforce the listed warnings. (<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4753d3ce0.pdf>).

Oboh (2016) pointed out that the editorial position of the Nigerian mass media on the credibility of the results of the 2007 elections was capable of creating conflict in the Nigerian polity. The study noted that the Nigerian newspapers spent more time reporting on the crises that occurred during the elections without any attempt to suggest the possible ways to solve the problem of electoral irregularities in the Nigerian polity. This development tends to contradict the tenets of the social responsibility press theory that imposes on the media the commitment to social responsibility being the aftermath of the review of the concept of a free press.

In the case of the 2015 general elections, Olowojolu (2016) argued that the 2015 general elections were adjudged to have been successful by local and international observers. Going forward, this paper is of the view that institutions such as the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Nigerian Press Council (NPC) and Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) should become more proactive in the censorship of the political campaigns of politicians. These agencies can engage aspiring candidates and political parties by training and re-orientating them on democratic values. Additionally, the leadership of the political parties should ensure that there is internal party discipline that will curb the excesses of party members that sponsor hate campaigns.

Sule (2020) said one of the significant achievements of the 2019 General Election is the fair play process in the preparation and campaign process for both the ruling and opposition parties. Although, there were some outcries on the side-lining of the opposition from the public-owned media outlet, still the reports from domestic and international observers revealed that a fair play process is enabled which gave advantage for the parties to sell their manifestoes adequately. The private and independent media both printed and electronic were not meddled with or prevented from providing a space for all parties and contestants to air their views, criticisms and campaign

finances. This fate has been a dilemma in the 2015 General Election in which both the public and private media outlets were impeded from opening up for the opposition to sell their manifestoes and reach the voters. This is commendable in the 2019 Election and it should be improved in the future.

Beyond the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, beyond the election cycle, beyond the winners and losers, beyond the political pundits, how do we fare in the years before and after the elections? Within the ambit of these posers is where this paper is situated. The question that is hardly asked in the Nigerian polity is whether democracy is just the period of electioneering campaigns and slogans or whether in the interregnum, the four-year period of governance is irrelevant to the entire democratic process.

In seeking answers to these questions, in the pursuit of good governance, accountability, citizen participation, and other related democratic nuances, especially beyond the electoral cycle where the media makes an entrance. The media is a powerful compass. A knowledge and moral compass, a directional and opinion compass. All over the world the media is and will remain a veritable mirror that “strives to show us the bare truth and harsh realities of life. (Daily Trust 25th December, 2022).

The Nigerian media code of election coverage as put forward by INEC entails the following. The responsibility of media organisations

- A media organisation shall ensure accurate and impartial voter education on parties, candidates, registration, verification, voting centres, voting procedures, complaint procedures, etc as provided by relevant agencies;
- A media organisation shall disseminate voter education in indigenous languages and through messages that target under-represented groups including women, youths and People Living with Disabilities;
- A media organisation shall uphold the right of the people to free expression by providing opportunity for ordinary citizens to express their views during electoral processes. (<https://inecnigeria.org>).

But the question is, to what extent have the different media organizations complied with these standing orders? And what has INEC done to deal with erring media organizations and put in place a robust mechanism to make these codes implementable with infractions?

Conclusion

ICT is very important to enhance electoral integrity but there are inherent limitations that have been highlighted above, and the variegated dynamics as well as the role, importance and task that the media can play, both positive and negative have equally been noted. Social media is here to stay, with its dangers as well as benefits. These problems must be addressed by social media sites and by the government, but with care not to destroy the freedom of speech that social media epitomizes. The government must not be high-handed in trying to sanitize the conduct and practice of social media and neither must the government put in place draconian or obnoxious laws as they would defeat democratic ethos and the very purpose of democratic system of government.

Today in Nigeria, the traditional media has been compromised because of poor remuneration and political disposition of the ownership structure as well as the quantum of advertisement made available or given to media houses. Hence, the objectivity of their reportage is subject to and determined by where they get constant inflow of funds from, to oil and fund their daily operations. Hence, there is the need for emphasises to be placed on having credible, independent and well-trained people to be able to discharge their responsibility particularly during election periods. In our clime too, many journalists are not savvy or adept in digital journalism and this has elicited their inability to deploy ICT essential tools appropriately to give correct reportage. Therefore, there is the need to train and retrain media practitioners to be able to carry out their duties without let or hindrances.

References

- Aghameli F. C (2014), The Role of Mass Media in the Nigeria Electoral Process, UJAH: UNIZIK Journal Of Arts & Humanities 14(2):154. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v4i2.8>
- Ahakare C.O, (2019), Media Censorship and the Government. GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory & Praxis, Vol. 2 (1). ISSN ONLINE: 2714-2485
- Ayeni T.P. (2019), The Role of Social Media in Voters Education in Nigeria, Scientific Journal of Research and Reviews ISSN: 2687-8097.
- Dzisah W. S. (2018), Social media and elections in Ghana: Enhancing democratic participation. African Journalism Studies, 39:1, 27-47, DOI: 10:1080/23743670: 2018.1452774.
- Elchahabi .S. (2015), “The evolving role of media in election”. ifes.org

Fatoba, W.O. (2012). Media Law and Ethics in Nigeria, A Comparative Analysis, Second Edition, ISBN 978-32781-8-5.

Haruna .M. (2007), The media and the Fourth Republic: The watchdog that dozed on its watch. Being text of speech on “The role of the Media in Consolidating Democratic rule in Nigeria”, during the 2007 Annual Week of Northern States Chapter of Political Science Student’s Association of Nigeria, ABU, Zaria.

Inuwa I. M. (2007), Role of the media in National Development, a paper presented at a workshop On the 27th Youth Leadership programme organised by LEAP Africa, at British Council, Kano, Nigeria.

<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me>

<https://inecnigeria.org>

<https://ng.boell.org/en/2022/10/26/bots-and-biases-role-social-media-nigerias-elections>

<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4753d3ce0.pdf>

Melisanda, M. (2009) Social Responsibility in the Media, Oxford: Centre for International Media Ethnics CIME

Obagwu P. U, & Kabiru M. I, (2019), Social Responsibility Theory of the Press: A Critique of its Application and Constraints, International Journal of Innovative Research and Development, Vol. 8, Issue 12. ISSN 2278-0211

Oboh, G. E (2016), Reflecting on the Nigeria Media, Elections & the African Democracy, SAGE Open, July-September 2016: 1-10. DOI: 10.1177/2158244016666886

Olaniran .B. & Williams. I. (2020), Social Media Effects: Hijacking and Civility in Civil Engagement in Platform, in Protests and the Challenge of Networked Democracy, Nature Publishing Group retrieved from http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7343248/#_ffn_sectitle

Reisach. U. (2021), The Responsibility of Social Media in Times of Societal and Political Manipulation, European Journal of Operational Research, Vol. 291, Issue 3, pgs. 906- 917

Stuart. A. H, (2019), Social Media, Manipulation and Violence. South Carolina Journal of International law and Business, Volume 15, Issue 2 Spring, Article 7.

Sule B, Adamu U & Sambo U, (2020), The 2019 General Election in Nigeria: Examining the Issues, Challenges, Successes and Lessons for Future General Elections, International Journal of Social Sciences Perspective, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 100-113. ISSN: 2577-7750. DOI: 10.33094/7.2017.2020.62.100.113

Sumandeep K. P. (2016), Social Media: Political Campaigns & Elections, Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Science, Vol. 21, Issue 2

Newspapers

The Cable.ng 1st May, 2021

The Guardian 2nd May, 2021

The Cable.ng 11th July, 2021

The Cable.ng 24th July, 2021

Daily Trust 25th December, 2022

Premium Times 17th February, 2023

Businessday 9th April, 2023

Christian Response to Widowhood Practices in Anioma, Delta State: The Anglican Example

Prof. O. O. C. Uche

Department of Religion and Human Relations
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ucheooc@unizik.edu.ng

&

Okojih, Peter Onyemaechi O.

Department of Religion and Human Relations
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: revpeterokojih@gmail.com

Abstract

Widows and not widowers are the more affected group of people especially in Igboland and Africa in general when it comes to mourning their dead husbands. They are often forgotten even by their closest relatives immediately after the burial of their husbands and most Church to a large extent, do not have an existing structure or budget plan that covers the welfare of the widows floating the church. This has constantly been a wound in the hearts of these widows when departing the church premises to the cold shell of their homes to fight loneliness. Widowhood is often covered in myth and its processes left to the governance of whatever social or cultural system a bereaved person finds him/herself in. It is often felt that cultural traditions constitute the best guide to be followed or authority in widowhood. Recent societal experiences on widowhood and adjustment process however, question this position. It is clear that a more critical understanding of the widowhood process within traditional cultural, legal and psychological contexts need to emerge. The researchers adopted the historical and culture area approach with analytical method of data analysis in synthesizing the data collected for the study

Introduction

The church is supposed to be a home that shelters these group of people from sufferings but most times the reverse is the case. Widows rather than being sympathized with and assisted are subjected to near in-human treatment in certain traditional ritual rites and practices such as solitary confinement, defacement, disinheritance and a relatively long mourning period. The most obvious effects are deepening poverty, acute stress and depression, loss of identity and self-esteem. Anioma widows as part of the widows in Nigeria, face varying degrees of difficulties and untold hardships even though they tend to suffer in silence, in most cases, the challenges ranges from obnoxious legislation which subdue women under male dominance to cultural practices and disinheritance which aggravate the poverty and social dis-empowerment of the widows. A widow remains an appendage of her husband's family. Her loss is unenviable, especially if she is young and childless, for she has no one of her own to turn to and her life is spent almost as an unpaid servant within the family. Typically, widows are not well treated in Africa and Anioma in particular as compared to the widowers. This led to the study on widowhood and its challenges in Anioma culture area.

In a very precise way, the findings of this study will be significant to the Anglican Diocese of Asaba in that the challenges experienced by the Anioma widows will spur them into action. The action of attending to the needs of the vulnerable widows. The cultural subjugation and marginalization experienced by the Anioma widows should be the concern of the church also. The challenges associated with some of the widowhood practices have agitated the minds of the Anioma people over the years but little or nothing has been done to address the challenges. However, as a way to break even with the challenges created by these widowhood practices, this study has delved into the problem in order to reach a logical conclusion and to also compliment the efforts of other researchers whose lacuna this study intends to fill.

Widowhood Practice as a Concept

There are several milestones in the life of a woman which are referred to as adult passages. According to Lamana & Riedman (1991), these include marriage, the birth of a first child, wedding anniversary, the arrival of the first grandchild, and widowhood among others widow is a woman whose husband is dead and does not remarry. She can equally be referred to as a woman who has become single because her husband died and she remains unmarried. A woman becomes a widow when the man with whom she had planned the present and future life is no longer available to share, shape the hopes and the dreams of years ahead. She becomes helpless as she commences a lone journey full of uncertainties of life. She is seen as a liability, powerless, voiceless, and vulnerable. Boulding (2009) noted that a widow is like a melancholy bird that sits wailing all night, increasing her distress without redeeming features. She can also be seen as a woman who is done with her wedding affirmation of "till death do us part". This situation gives birth to widowhood. Hence widowhood can be described as a by-product of every enduring marriage which ends with a spousal (husband) bereavement. Again a widow according

to the Encyclopedia of Death and Dying (2008), is a woman (young or old) who formally contracted her marriage under the Customary Marriage Act or any religious Act and lost her husband to death but did not re-marry. Following such a tragedy in most African societies, the woman resigns into a group of marginalized, powerless and voiceless invisible beings called widows (Nnodim, 2012).

The concept of widowhood is the state or period of being a widow. Oreh (2006) observed that widowhood involves a physical break in the family relationship and it is ranked by widows as the most stressful and devastating event in life. This is because widowhood does not only involve the loss of a person most supportive of the woman, the person who has played central role in the woman's life, the father of her children, the family breadwinner and the companion of the woman, the transition from widowhood to a widow happens so suddenly and swiftly that in one minute a woman who is a wife transits to a widow. It is at this moment that she starts to experience all the widowhood practices under discussion.

Some Widowhood Practices in Anioma

Some widowhood practices in Anioma culture area are considered obnoxious because of the dehumanizing and Psychological Trauma Associated with the Practice. Widowhood has appeared to be the beginning of life-long oppression and misery for women of Anioma. The dehumanizing cultural practices entails the observance of certain rites by widows which infringe on their fundamental human rights and it appears that people sees nothing wrong in it. In order words, some traditions appear as the means to an end instead of an end to itself. The reason Uzoho claimed is because the Igbo people have not deeply embraced their culture as an enduring tradition and way of life but rather as a means of solving problems. They understood culture in the sense that it must be capable of proffering solutions to life's expectations otherwise one would look for some alternatives in a way of emulating other cultures (ie culture variations and culture assimilation). Uzoho is however worried that if the people's mindset is not corrected on what culture really stands for, some vital elements of Igbo will be eroded by the adulterated cultural traditions

The Role of the Anglican Diocese of Asaba in Alleviating the Plight of Widows

The widows of Anioma are not fully supported, defended and protected by the church. So far the much the Anglican Diocese of Asaba has done is not encouraging. There is every need for the Diocese to double up efforts in combating the widowhood practices that are inimical, obnoxious, dehumanizing, and barbaric so as to be reduced to the barest minimum if not completely wiped away.

There are archaic and backward customs that need to be revisited to protect the widow. The Igbo/Anioma customary law has therefore not done much to help the widows, in fact its applications have affected widows negatively. The law as espoused in Section 34 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011 as amended, clearly states that "every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person..." and goes on to say in sub-section (a) that "no person shall be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment". From the foregoing, it is clear that the ground norm that is the Constitution, which is a set of laws must bow to, enshrines the fundamental right to dignity for any Nigerian, including widows. It is unlawful therefore for a widow to be treated in an inhuman way that diminishes her person and strips her of her dignity. Therefore, the Anglican Diocese of Asaba shall take up the responsibility to protect the Anioma widows.

Expanding Employment and Entrepreneurial Opportunities for the Widows

One of the major ways to ameliorate the plights of the widows is through employment and entrepreneurial skills. Due to the high rate of unemployment in the country, the people devises different means available to survive. The teaming population of Nigerians especially the young population have so much been affected by the high rate of unemployment that majority of them have considered relocating from rural to urban areas as the only way forward. However, owing the mass exodus of youths to urban centers, it has further heightened the rate of unemployment following an increased rate of rural/urban migration. The Igbo youths who are seemingly becoming lazy in the recent years are mostly university graduates who are in wanton search for unavailable white collar jobs. Even those who have reached the highest academic echelon, are hopeless, helpless, jobless, and at times homeless. This has a matter of fact increased the fraudulent activities ravaging the Igbo region and Nigerian nation. Following this development, however, there is an enormous need for the church and the government to inculcate the entrepreneurial zeal among the people. There is no doubt that most evil practices including the obnoxious widowhood practices are promoted by unemployment. It is hoped that such evil practices can be changed for good and the perpetrators of the heinous crimes in the society can be motivated to play some significant role in economic activities. A lot still needs to be put in place to achieve the desired and required growth among the Anioma/Igbo people. Even the widows can be can be empowered to be self-reliant. This is because the strength of any individual cannot be isolated from his/her economic/financial prowess. Such financial motivation remains a hope for the future. It is expected that the church and the government should rise to the challenge of catalyzing the Anioma

widows into acts of self-reliance and sustainability. The purpose of this research is to explore strategies for inculcating into the widows the zeal for hard work which will spur them towards their liberation from the shackles of poverty, obscurity and shame through entrepreneurial skills.

Christian Response to Widowhood Practices in the Light of the Bible

The Greek word for widow in the Bible is pronounced like “khay-rah”. It means deprived, cut-off, stripped bare, or abandoned. In the Bible, a widow is a woman bereft of the full provision or flourishing that could be provided by a husband or a family. Although the denotation of widow referred to a woman whose husband had died, because of the social context the word quickly acquired the connotation of a person living in a marginal existence in extreme poverty.

There are specific examples of widows in the Bible. Anna for example served God in Luke 2:36. “And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband for seven years age from her virginity, and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years (eighty four), which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day.” Anna, well up in years, has become a reference point to the position of widows in the Judaeo-Palestinian history. She was well accommodated in the temple and was enabled to serve God. She was not intimidated or underestimated because she was a widow.

The Role of the Church in Ameliorating the Plights of the Widows in Aniomia

The very heart and core of a Christian life is summed up in James 1:27, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world”. In the sixth Chapter of Acts, the early New Testament church was faced with a situation that resulted in the selection of Deacons for God’s church. Notice in the beginning in verse 1, “And in those days, when the number of the disciple was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren look you out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word...” This passage above shows how the church cared for the need of the widows. It was in the need to serve widows that the office of Deacon was actually inspired.

In 1 Timothy 5:4, said thus, “But if any widow has children or nephews, should learn first to show piety and offer support/help for their parents who are widows”. Yes, this is another biblical illustration that states that the relatives of the widow would be the first to extend love and care and some have neglected this. Notice in Deuteronomy 14:28, “At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year (the third year), and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; and the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest”. It is clear from the above passages that God is interested in the affairs of the widows and assures His blessings to those who would support the widows, fatherless and those who have a need. The Bible specifically give many illustrations in the lives of the widows. These examples show that widows are dearest to God and any one that victimizes them attracts the wrath of God.

Generally, in the Old Testament widows were not left uncared for. God assumed the responsibility of taking care of the widows that lost their bread winners. For instance, the biblical widows like Ruth, the widow of Zerephath, the widow of Nain and Dorcas were taken care of by God. He did not only care for the widows but also defended their course (Exodus 22:22). The Yahweh provided for the widows by instructing the people of Israel to make sure there was “left over” after the harvest and widows were permitted to partake in the religious feasts and offerings (Deuteronomy 10:18, Lev 19:9-10, Deut.24:19-21, Deut. 26:12). Again, the Israelites were warned not to persecute and exploit the widows (Nwaudo, 2012, Kunhiyop, 2008). Therefore, God showed that He is a God of justice who protected the vulnerable widows from inhuman treatment, degradation, injustice, deprivation of human rights and accorded them dignity. In the Mosaic Law, the relatives and the eldest son were charged with the responsibility of caring for the widows. The levirate marriage ensured that a childless widow remarried to the brother or close relative of her deceased husband who take care of her (Deut. 25:5).

Also in the New Testament, widows were not abandoned. The early Christians quickly responded to the murmurings of the Grecians that complained that their widows were neglected in the sharing of food which led the church to appoint the seven deacons (Acts 6:1). But, the apostolic dispensation witnessed a tremendous decline in the caring of the widows. In that era, heads of families, declined in providing for the widows in their families. This situation prompted Paul to write a letter to Timothy admonishing Christian men that any man who fails to

take care of the widow in his family has denied the faith (Anathema) (1Timothy 5:8). The church filled the gap created by families by providing relief for the elderly widows that had no relations that would take care of them (James 1:27, 1Timothy 5:9). The relief contributed a lot in alleviating the plight of widows in the New Testament period.

Conclusion

In all, the strategies to be adopted in combating the problems of widowhood subjugation and male dominance in Igbo culture cannot be achieved through separation (turning roles so that men will now be oppressed as the women have been). In the welfare of humanity, men need women, just as women need men. The women do not seek the over turning of roles so that men will now be the oppressed as the women have been, by the oppressive exploitative system of the world economy. As a practical solution, women/widows have not dealt with widowhood oppression in a confrontational manner either. They have dealt with it by seeking to constructively remain engaged in the society. In searching for a solution, it is important that a healthy link between men and women be maintained so as to avoid the risk of impairing the preservation of society. Verbal protests have been used. Strikes and punishment also. Political agitation has continually been employed. The quest for knowledge and economic independence has remained the target of the majority of women. The fight is within, not without the system.

References

- Alutu, K.P. (1995). *Widowhood marginalization and subjugation in Igboland*. Awka:SCOA.
- Amalu, R.K. (2013). *The pitfalls of African culture and traditions*. London: Longman.
- Arinze, K.O. and Anyaogu B.S. (2011). *Man-made hardship mated on the widows of Africa*. Ibadan: Daystar.
- Barrett, A.I. (1970). *The vulnerability of widowhood in Africa*. Ibadan:Daystar.
- Boulding, K.L. (2009). *Widows and Widowers in Igbo cosmology*. London: Longman.
- Dying, I.C. (2008). *The discrimination, trauma and stigma associated with widowhood Practice: Owerri: Assumpta*.
- Genyi, J.K. (2013). *The primitive life of the rural dwellers: The major cause of obnoxious Cultural practices in Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- Green, N.K. (2018). *African cultural dynamism*. London: Heinemann.
- Laimaida, A.G. and Riedman, K.O. (1991). *The challenges widowhood in Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- Ndiokwere, D.K. (1955). *Women liberation in Africa*. London: Longman.
- Nmah, P.E (2008). *African Christian Theology: Its application and adaptation in African Culture*. Onitsha:Gucks.
- Nnachi. B.O.(2011). *Consensus and conflict in African society: An introduction To Sociology*. London: Longman.
- Nnodim, A.E. (2012). *The indigenous political system of the Igbo*.Oxford: University Press.
- Nwadinobi, E.C. (2001). *Traditional values, beliefs and reliance amongst the people of the south- Eastern Nigeria*. York: Oxford University Press.
- Nwando, S.O. (2012). *African's unique expression of culture*. Enugu: Snaap.
- Odunze, B.C. (2005). *Continuity and discontinuity in Igbo traditional religion*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Okoye, K.P. (1995). *African's cravings for foreign cultures and traditions*. Onitsha: Africana.
- Onuogu, A.U. (2007). *The sociological and adaptational elements of human culture*. Oxford University press.
- Oreh, A. U. (2006). *The prevalence of obnoxious cultures in most African societies*. Ibadan: Daystar.
- Pobee, U.K. (2012). *The perspectives of African worldview on The concept of widowhood*. London: Macmillan.
- Ruther, J.O. & Bay K.Y. (2008). *Africans have assimilated foreign cultures*. New York: Macqmillan.
- Uzoho, J.K. (2014). *Challenges to women liberation in Nigeria*. New York: Davis.

Language and Meaning in Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*

Chilenwa Ignatius Metu

Department of Humanities,

School of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State.

Email: meetchileonline@gmail.com

Abstract

Relationships and interrelationships form the foundation of human society, and language is essential to both human nature and societal existence. Our societal view and the artistic expressions of our humanity are fundamentally shaped by the dynamics of language. Through his odd linguistic experiment, Gabriel Okara cleverly captures the living imagery of African speech patterns in *The Voice*. Through a process of interference, he modifies English language resources to precisely suit the requirements of his creative vision. Traditional African speech patterns are translated into English using their rhythms, visuals, nuances, and metaphors, which have the effect of making them more acceptable in society. This paper therefore, looks at language and meaning with a view to revealing the distinctiveness of the indigenous use of language as a medium of communication in Okara's *The Voice*. To achieve this purpose, linguistic benchmarks were applied to the literary work. The descriptive system of data analysis, primary and secondary data collection and analysis method and the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were employed. Additionally, this essay emphasizes and raises awareness of this crucial literary art technique that uses a foreign language to successfully accomplish Nigeria's socio-cultural reformation in all respects.

Keywords: Language, Literary arts, Social milieu, Social-cultural reformation, Pragmatics

Introduction

Language trends and social dynamics have always affected Nigerian prose fiction. Unequivocally, literary art devoid of sociolinguistics is inconsequential. The relationship between both is on the sense that the structure of a society determines the trend of language use. Language like the society, is dynamic manifesting divergent opportunities and distinctive impulses. Language is mankind's most unique possession being the medium by which the culture and collective experiences of a people are transmitted from generation to generation. The major bond between language and literature is in arts enhanced by the science of linguistics. Finegan (2012:5) observes "the fundamental function of every language system is to link meaning and expression to provide verbal expression for thought and feelings, for that expression to be comprehensible to others". The ability of a reader or a hearer to decipher the interaction of the speaker or writer and group information as intended by the latter, defines his expertise in drawing feasible meaning out of the given language situation. Literature cannot be divorced from the evidenced reality of the society and the artist himself. To this end, Ngugi (1986) asserts:

The socio-political and economic dynamics of a given society give literature its shape, direction, and even its area of concern. It does not emerge or develop in a vacuum. Every writer reacts to the constantly shifting social context with all of his personality. As a type of sensitive needle, he picks up on the tensions and conflicts in his evolving civilization to varied degrees of success and precision (15).

Language is the means by which a people's culture and collective experiences are passed down from one generation to the next. It is language that can interpret this experienced knowledge by giving it a sense of meaning. This inflames interactional relationships which allow them to perform as acts of meaning:

In this sense, the world of semiosis penetrates and coexists with the corporeal world. Language's capacity to evoke strong emotions stems from its ongoing assertion of its relationship to the material world; the notion of metafunction enables us to decipher the context in which and how these connections are being formed (Halliday 2003: 249).

It is the sine-qua-non of communication and mankind's most unique possession. Language is a creation of the society and an instrument of interactive communication while literature uses language to communicate, ideas and experiences of human situations (Orisawayi 2004:68). Ndimele (1999:11) opines, "the nature of the human language is essentially a communication system in the sense that it associates meaning (i.e. the message) with a set of signs (i.e. the sounds or symbols). Therefore, language does not only mean the words but a man's entire world view-social, cultural, economic and political." The visional reality of a work of art can only be functionally assessed through the language because, the human community portrayed in a literary text reflects the linguistics realities of the artist's society.

Language could be classified as a tool box at the disposal of a literary artist which avails him the various instruments of need for unlocking and assembling significant parts of his creative mind. The artist's ingenuity

enables him to apply the tools to the best of use of his purpose and vision. Language is unique to mankind, representing man's efforts at inter-relationships in a conflict-ridden and economically precarious society. Through language, man's retrospection and introspection are given substance and vent for articulation and appreciation. Language is dynamic and "manipulatable" and that gives a writer, the latitude to make appropriate situational applications of it as desired. This quality of language such as English is what justified the experiment by Okara in *The Voice*. It is language that manifests and defines every human quality and identity that gives meaning to our communal existence.

Regarding language's significance to humankind, Osoba (2006) believes that:

If the majority of linguists concur that language is not instinctive and that a kid raised outside of the human community cannot use language unless he learns it, then it is possible that language's origins are linked to the beginnings of the human society. This assumes that if two people live together, their language will inevitably develop if they haven't already or haven't had any contact. (1)

The sentence above implies that language is a part of human nature or that language is human. Language is the most widely utilized form of human communication out of all available means. The one element that enables the existence of all human communities and organizations is the ability for man to talk.

According to Daramola (2006:356), who defines language:

Language functions in the context of situation and culture and is a process by which at least two people produce meaning. It can be spoken or written.

In this definition, Daramola provides an explanation for the emphasis on meaning and his claim that it is the most significant word—meaning is the manifestation of ideas through language. Another way to look at language is as a dynamic collection of sensory symbols for communication and the tools to work with them. The utilization of such systems as a general occurrence can likewise be described by language. Humans are thought to be the only animals that can communicate through language. Animals cannot use every trait used by linguists to categorize language, even though it is true that other animals may communicate with one another and that this type of communication is sometimes referred to as "animal language."

According to Vajda Edward's Wikipedia entry on language:

Language has traditionally been identified with reason in western philosophy, which is also a uniquely human use of symbols. The Greek word *logos* was used to refer to both language and speech in ancient Greek philosophy. Thomas Hobbes, a philosopher, extended this meaning to the English word 'speech' to include reason. But more often than not, the English word 'language', which is originally derived from the Latin word 'lingual', which means 'tongue', only refers to rational utterances that other people can understand, most plainly through speaking (Wikipedia, 2009: 12).

As a general phenomena, language endures, travels, and evolves across time. Languages are classified as dead when they stop evolving or changing. On the other hand, a language is referred to as living or current if it is always changing. "Each live language is continually changing as people easily adapt it to new conditions," as also noted in Wikipedia (2009: 1).

Human beings are known to be creative animals and language serves as the most important tool for this creativity. Commenting on the significance of language to human beings, Ezeigbo (2008:2) states that:

The capacity for language, or the ability to communicate and use it, is the most significant gift that God bestowed upon humans over all other species. All other creatures were forbidden the ability to speak, with the exception of humans. Words are a powerful tool. Writers employ language in inventive ways. Phrases have power. Words are an effective weapon in a writer's literary toolbox.

It is clear from the aforementioned claims that language is the primary literary device. Both literary critics and creative artists use it as a powerful tool for creativity.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a thread of analyses to discourse, which include frameworks and theories that directs its searchlight on the social inequalities that are hidden in language use. Ezeifeke (2018) states that "CDA is therefore a socially and morally committed linguistic resource for people struggling against domination and oppression in their linguistic forms". CDA emphasizes texts produced by elites and powerful institutions; the

aim is to reveal discourses buried in language used to maintain power and sustain existing social relations. Bouvier and Machin (2018) opine that CDA see “language as a form of social practice that is used to legitimize, maintain, and naturalize forms of social power and inequality” and that power and inequality are seen in institutions and organizations such as schools, businesses, and media where the use of language in said organizations “reflect the interests of those in power and create a kind of 'consent' that is taken as common sense and best for all”. Upon that premise, CDA tries to analyze texts to find out how ideology is revealed and how these dominant operations are sustained. Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis is employed in this study to describe, interpret and explain the data for this research. The domain of CDA inquiry includes but is not limited to political discourse, ideology, institutional discourse and institutionalized power. Owing to the fact that ideology requires analysis, it perpetually continues to be an important subject in CDA

The Voice: Synopsis of the Plot

The protagonist Okolo hails from Amatu. He embarks on a quest for what he chooses to refer to as “it.” This quest was seen as an affront to the existing socio-psychological reality manifested in individuality, egoism and selfishness which characterized the socio-political status-quo. He argues that the ruling class and its followership were in dispossession of the “it”: the consciousness of the human essence and values of conscience. This quest evoked serious discord and created discomfort among the political class as epitomized by Chief Izongo of Amatu, Abadi and others. Izongo, Abadi and their cohorts, conspired with the people to muzzle out Okolo. Though he was defiant, but they succeeded ultimately and banished him from Amatu to Sologa. At Sologa, his deal of confronting the powers and the corrupt society continued. His frustration and rejection at Sologa under the “Big one” worsened, until he had to return to Amatu. His return is seen as his determination to proselytize his message and get whatever punishment that comes his way. He returned to the height of antagonism which resulted in his execution but, his message had already been passed to the society.

Language and Meaning in The Voice

One of the most important aspects of being human is language. It is a communication medium that provides context-based meaning. Noting that meaning does not exist in a vacuum is also important. Instead, it manifests itself in the words we choose to use. In African traditional civilization, language serves as the foundation for the development of interpersonal connections. In this sense, the words used and the meaning they evoke reveal something about the moral beliefs of both the individual and the societal context. African systems lay a strong emphasis on the ideas of character and language, which are derived from the African language system. According to Ozumba (2001:21), ambiguity in language always alters the meaning that is intended. That is to say, our ethical conceptions are impacted when language is misused. Given that language is the means by which meaning is developed and communicated, this statement is obviously true. For the 2003 Nwigwe et al.

Language is central in our thinking... The objects of experience do not exist separately from concepts we have of them. For this obvious reason, words enter into the very structure of our experience. The way we perceive the world ... is a function of our linguistic apparatus. What this means is that... the mind is made up of conceptual schemes with which we think. These conceptual schemes constitute... the categories of the mind. It is through language alone that we achieve forms... which are phenomenologically derived from material realities (1).

The importance of language to our thought processes is emphasized in the excerpt above. Meaning concepts begin in the mind and are subsequently expressed or made clear through language. The ideational function of language is helpful in this situation. The speech act concept also has an ethical component. Language has an effect on man as a moral agent. Language is a crucial factor in human thought processes. Thus, to ask if reality is comprehensible is to ask about the link between thought and reality.

Extensive analysis of the lexical sets reveals that they capture this behavior. As a result, the author's selection of lexemes is appropriately informed by their semantic importance with respect to the function of the text. Sets such as "materialism," "corruption and moral decay," and "honesty" fall under the category of Darkness, whereas "truth and integrity" go under the category of Light. Nevertheless, vocabulary sets like "education," "time," and "location" make up the material and social environments that both forces—that is, light and darkness—are using to further their opposing agendas. Instructively, Okolo, the conscience (voice) of society, works with Tuere and is aided by the cripple Ukule to promote the agenda of "light" and social reform, while Chief Izongo, the elders, the white superintendent of the "listeners" in Sologa, and the "Listeners" pursue the agenda of "darkness."

The meaning of Okara's *The Voice* is largely dependent on the context of the passage. This is a crucial facet of social conversation. For example, lexical choices only make sense when we apply what we know about the text's common environment. This explains why phrases like "search with all his insides" (p. 23), "His head is not correct" (p. 27), and "Okolo had no chest" (p. 23) only make sense when taken into account in the context of the

sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic language in which the work is set. Additionally, we discover that common vocabulary words like "women," "money," "vehicle," "cloth," and "concrete dwellings" don't have any negative connotations because, as humans, we all require them for everyday living and can obtain them by honorable and legal means. However, the text's universe alerts us to its potentially corrupt implications. Once more, nothing would reveal the hypocrisy of statements like "we are all church people" (p.30) or "we are all know-God people" (p.32) if they are not placed in a clear and practical context. However, we are able to understand them correctly because we are aware of the ongoing struggle between the agents of Satan and the Angels of Light in the book. The primary idea is that each character in this text has an individual perception of life and attitude toward it, so meaning in this text is based on the user's pragmatic motivation. As a result, Chief Izongo blatantly calls Okolo, the truth-and-integrity ambassador, a "stinking creature" or a "crazy guy" (p.72). This dynamic generates the text's latent conflict. It is obvious that there is a conflict of interest, which leads to a conflict of character and attitude, which in turn creates a conflict of meaning and language. When Obododinma (1989) refers to "doing battle with words... the conflict is a battle of meaning," he properly depicts this issue. Indeed, according to Okolo, every person has a unique purpose in life. And that could be the source of the dispute (p.111).

Basic linguistic components including morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences define every speech. The idea is that discourse is made up of a series of sentences, and sentences are made up of words. Even a single content word considered in isolation can provide important hints about the text's meaning, as demonstrated in Okara's *The Voice*. As a result of the aforementioned, in addition to paradigmatic relations like antonyms, synonyms, and hyponyms and syntagmatic interactions like collocations, which are all made up of lexical items, we can also infer the text's theme from individual words. Words like "locked-up" and "groping," for example, imply darkness, but words like "plain" and "open," which we have categorized under Light, reflect truth and honesty. Words like "money" and "cars" imply materialism, whereas terms like "stinking," "smelling," "drinking," "spoil," and "foul" indicate moral degeneration. All of these terms fall under the category of Darkness. One important point is that the author purposefully uses these lexical repetitions to ensure his point is made across the entire article.

Repetition of the same lexical items inside a text is known as lexical reiteration. This, it seems, both reinforces cohesiveness and highlights the semantic significance of lexical choices. However, cohesion implies "...connectedness of meaning, the impression that anything is a text and not a random group of phrases or utterances," according to McCarthy and Carter (1988). Therefore, authors intentionally employ lexical coherence as a technique to bring a text's meaning together.

Tuere, Okolo's soulmate, and Abadi convince Chief Izongo to be patient with them so that they can let out their wrath. The repetition highlights that they would ultimately crush or truncate the two people's (Tuere and Okolo) hopes of moral and spiritual advancement since they are a more powerful force. The phrase "If an egg rolls against a stone, the egg cracks and if a stone rolls against an egg, the egg breaks" perfectly captures this. So let's chat. We're an egg (P. 121).

With her choice of words, Tuere emphasizes the message's recurring theme of fear: "...we fear not the elders." The audience heard Tuere's voice clearly. "We have no fear of anyone." They are afraid of us. They dread the straight thing because they fear us. Page 121–122. Chief Izongo and his elders are the topic of discussion here, and Tuere is the speaker. The word "fear" appears frequently in the text, highlighting its underlying significance because Okolo's "it" (truth) is what sparks the struggle and ultimately results in the greatest catastrophe (the death of Okolo).

According to Chief Izongo, "therefore whether you agree or disagree does nothing to me since someone who believes their brain is incorrect never admits that they are wrong" (p. 38). Here, he says he doesn't need Okolo's permission to think the latter is mentally ill and to search for "it" in a "turned world." It demonstrates how desperate Chief Izongo acts throughout the narrative. Understanding this quality is essential since it provides a semantic hint about his general manner and misbehavior in the text.

The most common general or superlative noun in Okara's *The Voice* is "it," which appears repeatedly as the goal of Okolo's quest. The text's central idea is "it," a little yet intriguing term that serves as the framework for the whole meaning. In the text, Okolo gives his life in pursuit of this goal. As a result, it represents honesty and moral rectitude as well as sanity, moral rectitude, and spiritual rebirth—all of which may be considered co-hyponyms under the umbrella term. Actually, "it," a pronoun that serves as an abstract noun, is a remarkable inclusion term that refers to every aspect of Light that is mentioned in the passage. On the other side, its ability to bind the text may be seen in that the adversaries in the narrative are frantically trying to overcome it. It sounds "like a mosquito's voice, driving even sleep from their eyes" (p. 19). It is significant to note that the word "it" is derived from the Ijaw word "Iye," which signifies "anything." Therefore, it is the "thing" that sets Okolo's "meaning of existence"

(P.111) apart from Chief Izongo and his associates'. This allows for a clear development of the text's conflict, which is essential to understanding Okara's novel as a whole.

A detailed examination of the text reveals additional lexical linkages that exist within the framework of lexical meanings. These ties combine to form a very cohesive and successful sentence-level pattern of meaning for the text. Among other things, Dijk (1977) alludes to this situation:

The examination of the connections among sentences in a discourse demonstrates how the meaning and references of a sequence's component sentences determine the sequence's meaning and references.

The following excerpt provides more evidence of this phenomena by examining lexical linkages including the use of structural words, references, repetition, and presupposition:

You know time finishes. Yet when my father's time finished and he went away, you people put it on my head. And when the time of my mother finished and she went away, you said I killed her with witchcraft. Whose time finishes not? Whose time finishes not? Our time is finishing just as the time of some of your relations (p.30)

In the passage above, we find that various lexical items are implicitly dependent on one another for an effective transmission of the contextual meaning. We find that the pronoun "he" in the second sentence refers to "father" while "she" refers to "mother". This is an example of anaphoric reference.

The language used by the Ijaw locals and its equivalents in Standard British English Expression are also shown to us. This encapsulates the meaning that words evoke when employed in a certain situation. It is evident from examining the language use and applied meaning that are drawn from the linguistic context below that meaning is obtained from contextual usage as well as from the socio-linguistic qualities that the language possesses that are relevant to its surroundings.

One whose head is not correct (p. 22)	A lunatic
Search with all his inside (p. 23)	Zealously
Fall from our jobs (p. 25)	Lose our jobs
Search with all his shadow (p. 23)	Spiritedly
His eyes were not right (p. 23)	Insane
Okolo has no chest (p. 23)	Lacks courage
Day's eye (p. 61)	Weather
Take the canoe to the ground (p. 53)	Ashore
Hunger held him (p. 52)	He was hungry
Tell me the bottom of it (p. 40)	rationale
Entered our ears (p. 51)	Heard
Put a law (p. 51)	Make or enact a law
Bad head (p. 68)	ill-fated
When Okolo came to know himself (p.80)	Regained consciousness

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how language, namely the English language, may convey meaning within the sociolinguistic milieu in which it is used. By examining the many lexico-semantic resources that indicate the hybrid character of language, the study has specifically established that Gabriel Okara's *The Voice* is a bilingual work in the sense that it renders the sociolinguistic aspects of the writer's lingua franca and its form. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that the author's linguistic "transliteration" is a legitimate and pertinent reaction to the dual nature of language in African literature, which is significant. This phenomenon implies that many socio-cultural and even historical factors play a role in the creation of an African literary text because, in the words of Adegunle (1987:1), "additional knowledge of the sociocultural variables present in the context of situation" is necessary for the effective communication of textual meaning. Therefore, the study's conclusion is that, in order to completely understand Gabriel Okara's *The Voice* and other African literary writings, one must place them in the appropriate sociolinguistic context.

References

- Bouvier, G. and Machin, D. (2008). *Critical Discourse Analysis and the Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media: Review of Communication*: 18:3, 178-192. Retrieved from doi: 10.1080/15358593.2018.1479881 on November 21, 2023.
- Daramola, A. (2006). "Defining Language and or Communication" in Ayodele, S, Osoba, G and Mabekoje, O (eds). *Aspects of Language and Literature: A Text for Tertiary Institutions*. Ibadan: Olu-Akin Printers, pp.348-360.
- Dijk, V. (1977). *Text & Context: Explorations in the Semantics & Pragmatics of Discourse*. London. Longman Group Ltd.
- Ezeifeke, C. (2018). *Discourse Analysis: Concepts and Approaches*. Awka: Patrobas.
- Finnegan, E. (2012) *Language: Its Structure and Use*. Boston: Wadworth Language Learning.
- Halliday, et al (1964); *The Linguistic Theory of Translation*. London: Longman.
- McCarthy and Carter (1988). *Vocabulary and Language Teaching*. London: Longman Group Ltd.
- Ndimele, O. (1997). *Semantics and the Frontiers of Communication*. Port Harcourt U.P.P
- Nwigwe, B. et al (2003). *Ethics and Corruption of Language: Perspective in the Philosophy of Language*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Okara, G. (1964). *The Voice*. London. Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Ozumba, O.(2001). *A Course Text on Ethics*. Lagos: Obaroh & Ogbinaka Publishers Limited.
- Orisawayi, D. (2004). "Language, Literature, Politics and Social Change: Implication for the African Renaissance in the 2st Century." *Journal of Nigerian English and Literature* Pp 20- 31.
- Wa Thiongo, N. (1986). *Language and literature*, In Emenyonu E.(Ed.). *Literature and Society*. Oguta: Zim Pan Africa. Pp. 84-90.

Effect of reward management on performance of hotels in Anambra and Delta States of Nigeria

ISEH, Gloria Ndidi

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Studies,
Admiralty University of Nigeria, Ibusa, Delta State, Nigeria
Email: isehgloria2@gmail.com

&

Prof. L. I. Ifegbu

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management,
Faculty of Management Sciences,
Imo State University, Owerri

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the effect of reward management on performance of hotels in Anambra State and Delta States of Nigeria. The specific objective of the study was to examine the extent to which reward management affect sales volume, cost control and labour turnover. The method employed for this research was a survey. A multi stage sampling technique was used in selecting 321 respondents for the study. Descriptive statistics such as mean value, standard deviation, simple percentage and frequency were used to achieve the objective. Inferential statistic (Correlation coefficient) was used to indicate the nature of statistical relationship that exists among variable in order to validate or reject the stated hypothesis. The findings of the study provided valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of the hotel industry in Anambra State and Delta States, particularly reward management training, sales volume, cost control, and labour turnover. The comprehensive analysis of these factors has yielded several important conclusions the result showed that well-structured reward systems, including competitive salaries and incentives, have a substantial influence on sales volume, cost control, and labor turnover. Proper rewards enhance employee's motivation, loyalty, and satisfaction which contribute to business success. Based on the findings of this study it is therefore recommended that hotels should design and implement competitive reward systems that recognize and appreciate employees' efforts. This can include performance bonuses, recognition programs, and other non-monetary incentives.

Introduction

The hospitality industry, of which hotels make up a large portion, is a service-oriented sector of the economy and as such, values human resources highly. Due to a growing understanding of the crucial role that employees play in the success of all businesses, a number of important human resource activities, including the company, job opportunities, relationship, knowledge, management, staffing, managing performance, development of human resources, reward management, and employee relations, are implemented by various hospitality organizations in Anambra State and Delta State of Nigeria.

A well-thought-out recruitment process determines the availability of a skilled and productive workforce. Accordingly, Vikrant and Siddharth (2021) have found that competitive advantages based on product markets are insufficient to guarantee business success in the hospitality sector. It is also important to acknowledge that hotel products are based on offering customers a variety of mental and physiological products (Ofobruku, 2013).

A company's ability to succeed depends on its employees' ability to perform effectively, which is attained through efficient human resource management activities (Shahzad, Bajwa, SiddaiAhmid & Sultani 2016). Workers are widely recognized as an important driver of competitive advantage for enterprises (Armstrong and Murlis 2017). The reward management system is one aspect that can be taken into account when conducting human resources operations in hotels. Reward management systems have an impact on the performance of certain hotels in Lagos, according to Odunayo (2022). Anything offered to an employee in order to promote desired behaviour is a reward. According to Ogwudire (2013), a reward is anything material or immaterial, physical or ethereal, that encourages employees to stop engaging in unwanted behaviour and start acting in a desired manner. Benefits offered to employees by the organization just for their status as workers are known as employee benefits (Spisakova, 2019). The benefits that employees receive can be divided into three basic categories (Strenitzerova, 2015). Social rewards (corporate retirement benefits, life assurance, commercial loans and guarantees for loans, etc.); work-related rewards (foods, employee discounts on company products, language tutoring, etc.); and position-related rewards (official cars for managers, free accommodation, allowances for clothing and other expenses representation of companies, corporate apartment, etc.). Generally, employee benefits are not tied to employee performance. Occasionally, however, they depend on the status of the employee within the company, his merits, and the length of time he spent there.

Organizations can get a competitive edge over their rivals in the labour market by implementing an engaging compensation plan and offering a broad and varied array of employee benefits. Held (2016) concurred and suggested that an engaging employee reward program in conjunction with an appropriate compensation plan enhances the organization's reputation and competitiveness in the labor market. In addition, Held (2016) highlighted the significance of fringe benefits in attracting, retaining, and boosting employee engagement (Held, 2016 and Stalmasekova, 2017). For example, (Ndu and Obiora, 2020) observed that a number of problems, such as inadequate staff management manifested in the form of underpaid pay and withheld incentives, have contributed to the decline of certain hotels in Nigeria. It is important to note that accurate information regarding labor turnover rates and expenses in Nigerian hotels has not been published. Furthermore, it has been determined that the degree to which Nigerian hotel companies, in particular, influence staff cost control and sales through their incentive programs has not been determined (Muchiri, 2016). One of the most notable aspects of the hotel sector is its high labour turnover combined with labour intensity (Birdir, 2012; Brien, 2014). The causes of this high turnover are up for debate, although certain hypotheses include low-skilled, low-paying jobs, unsociable work hours, low job satisfaction, and little opportunities for career growth within each organization (Hinkin and Tracey, 2010). A declining labour force exacerbates turnover (Coy, 2016). As noted in Iverson and Deery (2017), a turnover culture has been created and reinforced within the hospitality industry. Hotels generally regard high turnover as part of the work-group norm and employees frequently hold the belief that they are entering jobs with limited career development opportunities.

In any organization, human resource activity is essential to the success of the hotel. Therefore, in order to maximize business performance, hotels must assess their operations and make necessary modifications (Heung, 2008). In recent years, Nigeria's hotel industry has experienced significant expansion and competition, particularly in the states of Anambra and Delta. As hotels strive to raise the bar on service while keeping a competitive edge, effective management of employee incentives and rewards has become a critical area of concern.

The hotel sector is going through a period of significant labour turnover and high sales volume worldwide. One crucial thing to think about would be how poorly hotel business employees are treated (Faldetta, Fasone & Provenzano 2013). For example, in contrast to other industries, the hotel industry is characterized by irregular working hours, with staff members putting in twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, a great deal of workers endure unfavorable working conditions, including low pay, unstable jobs, inadequate benefits, little opportunity for professional advancement, and little opportunity for personal development (Ebrahim, 2015). The country's economic circumstances have a negative effect on the hotel industry. The hotel industry experienced financial difficulties as a result of a decline in tourism. Managers were therefore forced to take away benefits from workers in order to lessen the financial problem. Employees were forced to labour without rewards due to the danger of layoffs (Mfinanga, 2018). This resulted in a lack of job happiness, which impacted worker productivity and hotel cost management. The nation's economic activity accelerated the industry's rate of labour turnover (Mfinanga, 2018). From this perspective, hotel employees' departures can be attributed to inadequate compensation and unappealing incentive schemes. In the context of impact factors, employee performance and a reward system are crucial. It is impossible to undervalue the consequences of not giving hotel staff the right kind of recognition (Daniel, 2019). It might significantly affect staff performance, which directly affects how visitors feel about the place. Hotels rely heavily on their employees to give their customers outstanding service (Kattara, Weheba, and Ahmed, 2015). Reviewing and comprehending the degree to which reward systems affect worker performance is necessary. This knowledge would emphasize the extent to which reward systems and hotel performance (selling volume, cost control, and labor turnover) are impacted. This disparity raises important questions about the strategies hotels use to develop and administer reward programs, their effectiveness, and how effectively these strategies mesh with the unique cultural, social, and economic dynamics of the area. It is against this background that this study seeks to be guided with the following objectives.

The contributions of human resources and performances of most hotels in Delta and Anambra States are yet to be ascertained in visible documentation for reference purposes. The study has been designed with proposed operational frame work (Figure 1) to bridge the existing gaps in the literatures and issues facing human resources activities such as reward management, and performances in the hotel industries such as sales volume, cost control and labour turn over.

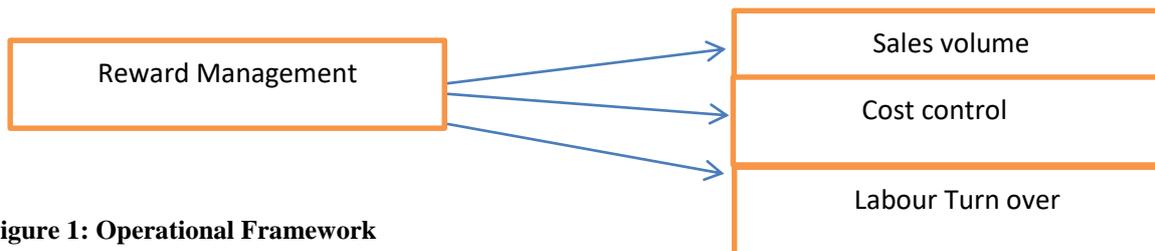


Figure 1: Operational Framework

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the effect of reward management on performance of hotels in Anambra and Delta States of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the extent to which reward management affect sales volume
- ii. investigate the extent reward management affect's cost control
- iii. examine the extent to which reward management affect labour turnover.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn in conformity with the stated objectives.

- i. To what extent does reward management affect sales volume?
- ii. What effect does reward management have on cost control?
- iii. How significantly does reward management affect labour turnover?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses are derived in conformity with the stated objectives above.

- Ho₁: Reward management does not significantly affect sales volume
- Ho₂: Reward management has no significant effect on cost control
- Ho₃: Reward management does not have any link with labour turnover

Methodology

The study area is Anambra and Delta States of Nigeria. The method employed for this research takes the form of a survey study which allows samples to be selected. A multi stage sampling technique was used for the study. First a purposive sampling of two states (Delta and Anambra State) from the 36 states in Nigeria and purposive selection of seventeen (30) functional hotels from the study location. Second stage involved simple random sampling of employees from each of the hotels purposively selected. A simple random sampling of size N is the probability sampling design for which a fixed number of N units are selected from a population of N units without replacement such that every possible sample of N units has equal probability of being selected. A resulting sample is called a simple random sample.

The simple random sampling technique adopted in selecting the populations for this study gives every member an equal chance of being selected or chosen.

To administer the questionnaire, Ukabuilu's (2013) formula employed is stated as followed:

$$R = F(Y, I, C)$$

Where:

Y = years of experience

I = People index knowledge

C = Class of staff

Thirty hotels from Delta and Anambra States were selected for the study. Five departments from the hotel were selected, and each having an average of fifteen (15) workers in the thirty hotels gave a total population of two thousand, two hundred and fifty (2,250). The departments include the housekeeping department, front office department, food and beverages department, maintenance and engineering department, and security department.

Taro Yamens formula employed in determining the sample size and the formula is given as:

$$\text{Taro Yamens formula: } n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample Size

N = Population

e = Level of significance (0.05)

$$n = \frac{2250}{1 + 2250(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2250}{1 + 2250(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2250}{1 + \frac{2250(0.0025)}{6}}$$

$$n = \frac{2250}{1 + 6}$$

$$n = \frac{2250}{7}$$

n= 321

For the purpose of this research work, the sample size chosen from the population of 2250 using Taro Yamens formula was 321 fulltime staff of hotels in Delta and Anambra State.

Primary source of data were obtained from the respondents in the field, and questionnaire was the instrument used in eliciting the view and opinion of the respondents. Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedure were used. The descriptive statistics used includes diagrams (tables and figures), mean value, standard deviation, simple percentage and frequency counts to achieve the objectives. Inferential statistic (Correlation coefficient) was used to indicate the nature of statistical relationship that exists among variable in order to validate or reject the stated hypothesis. The analysis was carried out using statistical scientific package for social sciences (SPSS) version 17 software.

The pearson product correlation was used to achieve the hypotheses shown in the formula below:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

Where

Y = Dependent variables or variable to predict

X = Independent variables or the predictor variable for:

n = Sample size

Results and Discussion

Table 4.1 revealed the demographic information of the respondents. The result showed that majority 167(53.0) of the respondents are females while male constituted 148(47.0%). Also, 54(17.1%) of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 18 – 27 years, 144(45.7) falls within 28 – 37 years, 86(27.3%) falls within 38 – 47 years while those above 48 years constituted 31(9.8). the result indicated that majority 180(57.1%) of the respondents are single while 135(42.9%) are married. The result showed that 32(10.2%) of the respondents had SSCE/GCE/NECO qualification, 83(26.3%) had NCE/OND qualification, 157(49.8%) had HND/BSC qualification while 43 (13.7%) had completed MBA/M.MSC degree. The result revealed that 64(20.3%) of the respondents are in Housekeeping department, 74(23.5%) work in Front office department, 104(33.0%) work in Food and beverages department while 31(9.8%) work in Maintenance and engineering department and those that work in Security department constituted 42(13.3%). The result obtained demonstrated that majority of the respondents 148(47.0%) work for 10 hours, 94(29.8%) work for 12 hours while 73(23.2%) work for 24 hours.

Table 4.1 Demographic information of the respondents

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	148	47.0
Female	167	53.0
Age		
18 – 27	54	17.1
28 – 37	144	45.7
38 – 47	86	27.3
> 48	31	9.8
Marital Status		
Married	135	42.9
Single	180	57.1
Educational qualification		
SSCE/GCE/NECO	32	10.2
NCE/OND	83	26.3
HND / B.SC	157	49.8

MBA/M.MSC	43	13.7
Department		
Housekeeping department	64	20.3
Front office department	74	23.5
Food and beverages department	104	33.0
Maintenance and engineering department	31	9.8
Security department	42	13.3
Number of hours spent on the job		
10 hours	148	47.0
12 hours	94	29.8
24 hours	73	23.2

Source: Field survey, (2023)

Effect of Reward management on sales volume in the selected hotels

The correlation result showed that reward management has significant ($p < 0.01$) effect on sales volume in the hotels in Anambra and delta States. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Babakus et al. (2008) define reward as the outside advantages given to employees in return for their work. Thus, it encompasses salary, bonuses, incentives, profit-sharing, items or events that employees receive in exchange for a job well done, as well as payments for overtime (Byars and Rue, 2008). The findings corroborated those of Prabhakar (2019) for African hotel workers. Less than half of the respondents (16%) said that their hotel's existing incentive program encouraged them and improved sales results (Prabhakar, 2019). This finding also supported the findings of Prabhakar (2019), who found that low sales rates occur during off-peak seasons, when staff members of small- to medium-sized hotels may see a pay reduction or receive payment in installments. According to Yeswa and Ombui (2019), paying hotel staff overtime, bonuses, salary, and holiday allowances increases sales. The outcome is also consistent with the findings of Muse et al. (2008), who stated that staff perks and rewards are thought to have a major impact on worker performance and enhance employer-employee relations. According to Wei Nan and Wei (2020), funding for employee welfare initiatives has a favorable impact on both corporate sales and personnel' capacity for innovation. According to Ben-Nasr and Ghouma (2018), incentive plans that are in line with employee requirements are more likely to increase sales productivity, strengthen shareholder engagement, deter expensive strikes, and improve the company's reputation in the marketplace.

Table 4.2 Effect of Reward management on sales volume in the selected hotels

Correlations		Reward management	Sales volume
Reward management	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	217.663	217.663
	Covariance	.693	.693
	N	315	315
Sales volume	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	217.663	217.663
	Covariance	.693	.693
	N	315	315

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.3 Effect of Reward management on cost control in selected hotels

The result showed that reward management has a significant and positive effect on cost control ($p < 0.01$) in hotels in Anambra and Delta State. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

When used properly in hotels, reward management is essential for maximizing cost-control strategies. Hotels can encourage staff members to increase their performance and productivity levels by providing rewarding programs that are competitive and well-structured. Employee satisfaction and motivation are more likely to increase productivity and responsibility, which reduces operational waste and inefficiencies (Vatankah et al., 2017). Additionally, a motivated workforce often exhibits higher job satisfaction, which lowers turnover rates and related

expenses for recruitment and training. This productive workplace, supported by effective reward management systems, encourages employee loyalty and staff retention, resulting in a knowledgeable and experienced workforce. As a result, hotels can improve overall cost control, reduce training costs, and streamline operations, all of which have a favorable effect on the hotel's bottom line. This study supports the findings of Mohsin (2015), who found that employees' optimistic assessments of their prospects for progress and career development in cost control are probably related to the anticipated rise in reward management. Additionally, Frenkel and Bednall (2016) noted that rewarded and promoted staff members will demonstrate favorable cost control. Workers who believe they are being fairly compensated and appreciated feel obligated to give back by making extra efforts to support an organization's objectives (Bysted and Jespersen, 2014). Rewards encourage workers to voluntarily go above and beyond to complete assigned tasks and make the best use of the resources available (Janssen, 2000). It has been claimed that 580 customer-facing employees in 29 hotels in Malaysia exhibit cost- and service-oriented citizenship behaviors in response to rewards (Nasurdin, Ahmad and Tan, 2014). Benefit packages improve corporate citizenship, which encourages employees to make wise decisions about cost control (Lin, Chen, and Chen, 2016). This study outcome is consistent with the findings of Carlson et al. (2006), who demonstrated a favourable relationship between employee reward and cost management because most employees are willing to reduce expenses in exchange for higher rewards.

Table 4.3 Effect of Reward management on cost control in selected hotels Correlations

		Reward management	Cost control
Reward management	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	274.730	274.730
	Covariance	.875	.875
	N	315	315
Cost control	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	274.730	274.730
	Covariance	.875	.875
	N	315	315

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4 Effect of reward management on labour turnover in selected hotels

The correlation result shows that reward management has a strong and positive link with labour turnover ($p < 0.01$) in hotels in Anambra State and Delta State. Reward management in hotels establishes a robust and positive correlation with labour turnover by directly influencing employee satisfaction and retention. When hotels implement effective reward systems, such as competitive salaries, performance bonuses, and recognition programs, employees feel valued and motivated to stay with the organization. These rewards not only serve as incentives but also foster a sense of loyalty and job security among the staff. As a result, employees are more likely to remain committed to their jobs, reducing turnover rates. A satisfied workforce, appreciative of the rewards they receive, is less inclined to seek employment elsewhere, leading to a stable and experienced team in the hotel industry. This stability minimizes the costs associated with recruitment, training, and onboarding of new employees, contributing to significant savings and creating a positive cycle where well-implemented reward management strategies consistently lower labour turnover rates in hotels. The result agreed with Rajapaksha (2015) who stated that employee turnover significantly affected to the role of an organization in apparel industries. In order to maintain a high retention rate, businesses are currently searching for new ways to support their workers in being more productive and content in their workplaces. Pay level factor is more correlated with intention to leave than other characteristics, such as affective commitment, according to A'yuninnisa and Saptoto (2015). The findings of A'yuninnisa and Saptoto (2015) suggested that salary levels have a greater influence on employee turnover than other factors when it comes to their desire to leave the company and pursue other opportunities. According to Naeem et al., (2016), turnover intention affects pay level satisfaction both directly and indirectly. The study also found that raising the pay structure level can decrease turnover intention. Naeem et al. (2016) also emphasized that an employee's decision to leave the company may depend on whether they feel that their remuneration is insufficient to keep up with the current economic climate. According to Mohammad et al. (2014), employee turnover across various age groups is strongly correlated with monetary incentives. Even though the

age groups are different, it's crucial to have appropriate incentive programs in place to support workers who intend to stay in their existing positions. Additionally, Babangida et al. (2014) noted that depending on the age groups, a well-balanced reward type is more crucial.

Table 4.4 Effect of reward management on labour turnover in selected hotels
Correlations

		Reward management	Labour turnover
Reward management	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	203.600	203.600
	Covariance	.648	.648
	N	315	315
Labour turnover	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	203.600	203.600
	Covariance	.648	.648
	N	315	315

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

The study's conclusion offers insightful information about the complex dynamics of the Anambra and Delta States hotel industries, notably with regard to labour turnover, sales volume, cost control, and reward management system. The thorough examination of these variables produced a number of significant findings, one of which was that competitive pay and incentives, along with well-designed reward systems, significantly impact worker turnover, cost control, and sales volume. Appropriate incentives boost worker happiness, loyalty, and motivation, all of which support hotel performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study it is therefore recommended that hotels should design and implement competitive reward systems that recognize and appreciate employees' efforts. This can include performance bonuses, recognition programs, and other non-monetary incentives.

References

- Armstrong M and Murlis (2017). Reward management. A handbook on remuneration strategy and practice. Kogan page publishers
- A'yunnisa, R. N., and Saptoto, R. (2015). The effects of pay satisfaction and affective commitment on turnover intention. *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology*, 4(2), 57-70.
- Babakus, E., Yavas, U. and Karatepe, O. M. (2008). The effects of job demands, job resources and intrinsic motivation on emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions: A study in the Turkish hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, 9, 384-404.
- Babangida M. M., Ibrahim A. and Abubakar B. (2014). Effect of Motivational Incentives on Staff Turnover in Hotel. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 16(3), 36-42.
- Ben-Nasr, H., andGhouma, H. (2018). Employee welfare and stock price crash risk. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 48, 700-725.
- Birdir, K. (2012). General Manager turnover and root causes", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 43-47.
- Brien, A. (2014), "The New Zealand hotel industry: vacancies increase while applicant numbers and calibre decrease", *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 87-103.
- Bysted, R., and Jespersen, K. (2014). Exploring managerial mechanism that influence innovative work behaviour: *Comparing private and public employees. Public Management Review*, 16 (2), 271-241.
- Coy, J. (2016), Shrinking Labour Force is Top Challenge for Global Hospitality, Tourism and *Service Industries, ISHS Top 10 Issues 2006, ISHC*, Cave Creek AZ, U.S.
- Ebrahim, S. 2015. The causes of high staff turnover within selected hotels in Cape Town, South Africa. Thesis. Master of Technology: Tourism and Hospitality Management. Cape Peninsula University of Technology.
- Ejike, A., Okafor, P. and Nwagbala, S. (2023). Analysis on Reward System and Employee Performance in Selected Hotels in Awka, Anambra State Nigeria. *American Journal of Economic and Management Business*, 6 (1): 1 – 11.

- Ekhayemhe, A. J. and Oguzie, S. (2018). Assessing the Relationship between Rewards and Employees' Motivation in Some Selected Non-Profit Organizations in Abuja, Nigeria *The International Journal of Business Ethics and Governance* 1(1): 12 – 20.
- Faldetta, G., Fasone, V. & Provenzano, C. 2013. Turnover in the hospitality industry: can reciprocity solve the problem? *Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 11(4):583-595.
- Frenkel, J. S. and Bednall, T. (2016). How training and promotion opportunities, career expectations, and two dimensions of organizational justice explain discretionary work effort. *Human Performance*, 29 (1), 16-32.
- Held, J. (2016). Benefit trends: benefits a big part of compensation. *Benefits Magazine*, 53(7), 8–10
- Hinkin, T. and Tracey, J. (2010). The cost of turnover: putting a price on the learning curve”, *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(3): 14-21.
- Iverson, R. D. and Deery, M. (2017). Turnover culture in the hospitality industry”, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 7(4): 71-82.
- Janssen, O. (2000). Job demands, perceptions of effort-reward fairness and innovative work behavior. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 73 (3): 287-302.
- Kattara, H.S., Weheba, D. & Ahmed, O. 2015. The impact of employees' behavior on costumers' service quality perceptions and overall satisfaction. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 4(2):1-14.
- Lasisi, O. I., Adereti, A.E. and Olamilokun, O. E. (2021). Challenges of Rewards System On Employees' Performance in The Nigeria Civil Service: Empirical Evidence from The Lagos State Civil Service, Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Allied Research*, 6(1): 23 -34.
- Mfinanga, A.S. (2018). Assessing the Relationship between Employee Motivation and Employee Performance in Higher Education Regulatory Boards: A case of the Tanzania Commission for Universities. *Thesis. Master of Human Resources Management. Open University of Tanzania.*
- Mohammad Atiq and Afshan Bhatti (2014). The impact of incentives on Employees turnover at Pakistan International Container Terminal Limited (“PICT”) with respect to the different age brackets. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 16(1), 53-60.
- Mohsin, H. F. (2015). The linkage between career growth, work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior: An insight. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 5 (5), 1-4.
- Muchiri, H. (2016). Effects of rewards on employee performance in the hospitality industry: A case of Nairobi Serena Hotel (Doctoral dissertation, United States International University-Africa).
- Naeem Akhtar, Abdul Waheed Ahmad Awan, Muhammad Akmal Anwar, Sohail Saeed, Sajid Ali and Muhammad Qurban (2016). Impact of Job Satisfaction and Remuneration on Turnover Intention: A Survey of (Private) Schools of (Okara) Pakistan. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 5(2), 653-675.
- Ndede, H.O. (2014). Effects of reward management on employee performance in hotels in North coast, Kenya. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Effects-of-reward-management-on-employee-in-hotels-Ndede/11e616c3bf3e388ef38e0a2b590cdfb9e482571>
- Ndu, E. C. and Obiora, J. N. (2020). Proximity and performance of hotels in Port Harcourt: a corporate operations challenge. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 8(7), 78-94
- Nkouangas, ludmilla. (2023). The Impact of Reward Systems on Employee Performance in Selected Hotels in Cape Town. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. (Economica)*, 19(3), 7–26. Retrieved from <https://dj.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/AUDOE/article/view/2199>
- Nwamuo, I. C. (2019). Effect of Reward on Organizational Performance in Nigeria Breweries Company South-East, Nigeria *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 7(4):71-81.
- Ogunayo A. (2022). Negative and positive synergies: On employee development activities, motivational climate, and employee outcomes. *Human Resource Management*, 57(5), 1285-1302.
- Ogunayo, H. A (2022). Effect of Organizational Reward System on Employee Performance in Selected Hotels in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. *Saudi Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 10.36348/sjbms.2022.v07i07.002
- Ogwudire S., (2013). Organizational Performance and its Effects to Employee Recognition and Job Satisfaction in Some Selected Public Universities in the South East, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting*, 97-106.
- Prabhakar, V. (2019). Analysis of reward management options for low paid workers in the indian hospitality sector: a case study of royal orchid hotel ltd, brindavan garden mysore. Dissertation Submitted in Part Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of MBA in Human Resource Management at Dublin Business School.
- Rajapaksha, U. G. (2015). Analysis of Factors Affecting To Employee. Ratmalana, Sri Lanka: Department of Management and Finance, Kotelawala Defence University.

- Sarabjeet K. G. and Manisha S. (2017). Impact of Reward Management System on Organizational Performance with Special Reference to Hotel Industry In Jaipur: A Literature Review. *Inspira- Journal of Modern Management & Entrepreneurship* 7(4): 115 – 124.
- Shahzad, K Bajwa, SuSiddai A. Ahmad, F and Sultani A.R (2016) “integrating knowledge management (KM) strategies and processes to enhance organizational activity and performance” journal of modelling in management. 11 (1):154-179 <https://doi.org/10.1108/om2-072014-0061>
- Spisakova, E. D. (2019). Position of employee benefits in remuneration structure. *Transformations in Business and Economics*, 18(2), 47-61.
- Stalmasekova, N., Genzorová, T., and Corejova, T. (2017). Employee benefits as one of factors of work motivation. *In CBU international conference proceedings* (Vol. 5, pp. 448-452)
- Strenitzerova, M. (2015). A multi-stakeholder perspective of organizational citizenship and counterproductive work behaviors. *Human Resource Management Review*, 25(1), 80-93.
- Urbancova, H., and Snyderova, M. (2017). Remuneration and employee benefits in organizations in the Czech Republic. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, 65(1), 357-368
- Uzochukwu, C. E., Nwankwo, C. and Okafor, S. O. (2023). Effects of reward system on employee’s productivity in Nigeria. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 2023, 17(01), 361–373 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.17.1.0035>
- Vikrank K. and Sidharth S. (2021). Hospitality and Tourism Industry amid COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on challenges and learnings from India. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*.
- Wei, Y., Nan, H. and Wei, G. (2020). The impact of employee welfare on innovation performance: evidence from China’s manufacturing corporations. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 228 (107753), 1-20.
- Yeswa, S. L. and Ombui, K. (2019). Influence of talent management strategies on employee retention in hotel industry in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3 (7), 83-103.

Yoruba Traditional Medicine: A Panacea to Challenges of Global Pandemic (Covid-19)

Akinlabi, A. Williams

Department of Yoruba

School of Languages

Federal College of Education, Yola

awakinlabi@fceyola.edu.ng

Abstract

Global pandemic has decimated jobs and placed millions of livelihood at risk. This outbreak and its variants caused a lot of havoc socially, economically, culturally and health wise (all over the world). The main objective of this paper is to look for traditional ways of tackling this virus that wants to overwhelm the whole world. The paper does not only trace the negative effects of covid but also proffered solutions to curb this nightmare. The research methodology adopted for this study was secondary data, using Cultural Approach theory to back up the subject matter. The finding of the study reveals coronavirus as a deadly virus that can kill, steal and destroy the life of its victims. The major finding of the work proffers Yoruba traditional medicine as a cure to this global pandemic. It concludes that effective use of traditional medicine can prevent the society totally from every form of diseases. Yoruba traditional Medicine, is, therefore recommended because researches have shown that it stabilizes hormones and metabolism

Keywords: Traditional Medicine, Covid-19, Pandemic

Introduction

Traditional medicine refers to the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories beliefs and experience indigenous to different culture used in the maintenance of health and on the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness.

Traditional medicines in Nigeria have a high level of support from the government and research and development in this area are managed under the department for traditional medicine within the National Institute for Research on Public Health which is part of the Ministry of health. The main policy emphasis is on the use of improved traditional medicine, also referred to as material transfer agreements and for regulatory purposes, traditional medicine have been classified into four categories.

Category 1 – Traditional medicines that are prepared by a traditional health practitioner for an individual patient with fresh or dried raw materials with a short shelf life.

Category 2 - Traditional medicines currently used in the community that are prepared in advance and composed of crude raw plant materials.

Category 3 – Standardized plant extracts prepared in advance and supported by scientific research.

Category 4 – Isolated pure compound molecules from traditional medicines following scientific research (Bodeker and Kronenberg, 2002).

The improved traditional medicine is recognized on the basis of having pharmacological evidence of safety and efficacy, development of standardized dosage forms, and quality control. In some countries, traditional medicine or non-conventional medicine may be termed complementary medicine (W.H.O. 2013) for its more recently popular use in parallel with allopathic medicine, especially for the treatment and control of chronically diseases. Bodeker and Kronenberg (2002) opine that for some ethnic group traditional medicine has represented the only option for disease prevention and cure; this is mainly due to exclusion and extreme poverty in which they live, as well as the lack of health services. Following the submission of Bodeker and Kronenberg (2002), one can say that the effects of Traditional medicine in preventing Covid-19 are extremely high. It is not more a news that coronavirus pandemic is a deadly virus. It is an illness caused by a novel coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome. It is a communicable respiratory disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus that causes illness in human (<https://africdede.org>).

Using Traditional medicine is one of the solutions to the pandemic which is the aim of this paper. For critical analysis of this research, the researcher embraced cultural approach theory as theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework: Cultural Approach Theory

Fanon and Ngugi wa Thiongo that are propounders of this theory believe that there is a cordial relationship between culture and literature. And what literature does is to protect the culture and the tradition of the people. Therefore, the tasks before critics are to analysis and bring out the culture, value, norms and the tradition that reflects in literary work. Prof. Wande Abimbola says:

Therefore, in order to envelop an acceptable format for the
Appreciation of oral literature, we must blend our knowledge
of the most up-to-date techniques of literary criticism and
Stylistics with a thorough understanding of Yoruba culture
Without this, any critical work is bound to be sterile (1982:78)

The above excerpt is acceptable because literature and culture are interwoven and cannot be separated. The theorists see culture as pillars that hold the three genres of literature, i.e. Poetry, Drama and Prose. What expected from the Critic is to picture out the culture and tradition of the people and do a critical analysis to promote such a culture. It seems Yoruba writers take culture very important when it comes to literary works. As good as this theory is, one of the demerits is that it focuses on culture. There is a need for Critic to look at the relationship of that culture to the society and one should be able to relate it to the people. Secondly, can culture portray in the literally work bring development to the society? The way and manner the writer portrays the culture must be critically checked if such culture can bring set back to the people or the readers. The theorists divided into two, the First category believes that culture should be conservative, society should follow the tradition the way it is, and it should be stagnant. The second category sees culture as Progressive and dynamic, they see culture as a tool to be used to develop the society. The theorists in this category believe that those Cultures of witch crafting, killing of twins, using human being for ritual, sacrificing man to gods etc should go to extinction. Fanon (1967) and Ngugi wa Thiongo (1986) in Adeyemi (2006) say Culture that can bring development, Culture that can make the society to fight for their right, culture that can make the masses to be liberated from oppressors should be showcased in literary work most especially from any writer . What is expected of any writer is to portray culture that teaches moral, culture that society can proud of, culture that can preserve the tradition of the people. Ngugi wa Thiongo says using language for literary work is tantamount to preservation of culture because language is part of culture. The theorists believe that language can be used as a tool of freedom, He says, there is mutual understanding if the two people that are fighting understand each other (language), it will be difficult to overwhelm them, until one used another language, because language is power and authority. (Adeyemi, 2006: 25-26). The application of Cultural approach theory to this study is appropriate because it captures one of the aspect of Yoruba culture which is Yoruba traditional medicine and the study sees the Yoruba traditional medicine as part of Yoruba culture that need to be Progressive and dynamic. Therefore, the researcher adopted this theory due to its strength and principles

Yoruba Traditional Medicine

Yoruba people predominantly occupy the south western part of Nigeria which comprises the states of Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Lagos, Kwara and substantial part of Kogi state (Ajuwon,2015). Yoruba medicine is quite different from homeopathy, which uses medicinal ingredients that imitates pathological symptoms. Rather in a similar manner to mainstream orthodox medicine, it strives to destroy the agent that causes disease.

Yoruba people believe in herb that is why they used to say “Ewe n be Oogun wa, Oogun ti ko je ewe re lo ku kan” meaning, There is herb and there’s charm, any charm that does not function, that mean the process is not complete. Traditional herb is what Yoruba called “Agbo” Agbo as an important aspect of trado-medical practices in Yoruba land. Agbo has been a veritable source of medicine before the advent of orthodox drugs and it is still being used today by most of the population literate and illiterates alike, Yoruba traditional medicine can also be referred to as herbalism. This is a study of pharmacognosy and the use of medicinal plants, which form the basis of trado-medicinal basically, includes fungal and be products, as well as minerals, shell and certain animal parts. If Agbo is the traditional way of treating illness therefore, Agbo can be used to cure Corona virus. Before orthodox medicine there has been traditional medicine. During the olden days there was no easy access to orthodox drugs therefore Agbo became a veritable source of medicine. Even before access to orthodox drug, Agbo was the only thing available for usage. The use of medicinal plants or herbs as a fundamental component of the African traditional healthcare system is perhaps the oldest and the most assorted of all therapeutic system.

The bush according to Yoruba’s belief, though physically remote, is crucial to Yoruba’s well-being. The bush is the place where the spirit world infused the natural world with power. This made the plant and animal products of the bush potent substances that could strengthen bodies and physical boundaries. Oyebola (1980) explains that there are Yoruba people who prefer herbs for so many reasons which include being born and bred with traditional medicine, being stuck or used to it or just by preference. However, there is still insufficient scientific evidence to show that these herbs are effective and safe for human.

One cannot talk of traditional medicine without mention the traditional healers, Oyebola classified traditional healers into seven categories, these are, the Babalawo Onisegun or Adahunse, Alasotele (Soothsayer) Olorisa or Abore, Awon Leku-leja (traditional pharmacists) specialists comprising of traditional bone setters, traditional

psychiatrists, traditional birth attendants or midwives and the Olola and a miscellaneous group consisting of Aafa (Mallam) and Aladura (Spiritual healer) The functions of each category of traditional healers identified were clearly defined. Yoruba traditional healers are capable to heal all manner of diseases including Coronavirus.

Covid – 19

On 31st December, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified of an outbreak of respiratory illness of unknown cause in Wuhan, China. This disease was known as the 2019 Corona virus disease (COVID-19). The virus spread like wildfire to other countries of the world, including Nigeria, thereby causing the Director-General WHO to declare the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. (World Health Organization, 2013. <https://www.who.int.health>). According to National Primary Health Care Development Agency (2020a), the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first COVID-19 case in Lagos State on 27th February, 2020. On 11th March 2020, COVID-19 was declared as a pandemic (an epidemic of global scale). As the world became ravaged by the pandemic, nations are grappling with how to contain the spread and limit its effects within their borders (Obiakor, 2020). Thus, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), in line with the prescriptions of the World Health Organization (WHO), outlined the following safety measures, as presented by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (2020b).

1. Use of face mask
2. Physical distancing – maintaining a distance of at least two meters or six feet (2 arm's length) between you and another person;
3. Social distancing – avoiding crowded places and places where people congregate;
4. Stay at home – no visiting neighbours, no receiving visitors, only you and your family at home.
5. Hand hygiene – washing hands regularly with soap under running water for about twenty seconds or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
6. Avoid hands shaking or hugging – rather wave at the person or bow.

In this era of COVID-19 and its other variants, where human physical closeness has largely been restricted, communication between entrepreneurs, especially small and medium enterprises, and their clients/customers has been amply hampered. This ultimately, has affected productivity and sales, and by extension profits and goodwill of these business establishments. The need, therefore, arises for alternatives way(s) of maintaining and even improving their business relationships and statuses. Effective communication by leveraging on its channel through the agents (the new media tools) becomes a viable option in this regard.

Therefore, given the routes of its transmission which are mainly directly from person to person who are in close contact with each other and indirectly from infected materials to humans, equally through physical contacts (usually hands), the need to isolate oneself became higher. It was on this basis and the fact that many citizens had become infected and ultimately were dying that the Federal Government of Nigeria announced a total lockdown in March 2020. To that effect, schools, airports, worship centers, market places, night clubs cum recreational centers, motor parks, and so on were closed down. Dawn to dusk or even to dawn curfew was introduced, in many towns! This shattered the economy and brought attendant hardships on the Nigerian masses. (Obiakor, 2020).

The impacts of Covid -19 on Nigerians are enormous. Nevertheless, the first major victims are entrepreneurs, institutions and government offices. These are businessmen and women and medium enterprises (SMEs) whose establishments were shut down as a result of the restrictions on human mobility. The lockdown led to considerable decline in the demand for goods and services and by extensions the reduction on funds and liquidity. This forced many entrepreneurs to quit from their businesses with the corresponding result leading to economic crises.

In fact, small and medium enterprises could not absorb the involved risks and afford the cost as a result of depreciating business activities which led to scarcer funds. They were unable to service their clients/customers, pay salaries of their employees and shoulder the responsibilities of effective supplies. The need to down-size, therefore, created unemployment. This, in turn, created multiplicity of other effects which the scope of this paper would not let the researchers delve into.

Despite the above negative impacts, COVID-19 outbreaks have led to an increase in entrepreneurial activities. This is so because innovative entrepreneurs have moved into areas that could thrive in the post-pandemic world. Such areas include, for instance, health care, education, entertainment and basic day-to-day necessities. Equally, it afforded some people the opportunities to switch over to a new product line, online sales and increase in marketing efficiency. The innovative aspect of the online marketing activities and e-learning through new media channel was adopted during this era. Up till date some country has not come out of the tragedy caused by coronavirus.

Positive Effects of Yoruba Traditional Medicine in Curtailing Global Pandemic

Traditional medicines have been around for millennia. They are the oldest and most diverse forms of healing that form the foundation of medical systems in any regions of the world. There are many sickness and diseases that western medicine did not have solution to them, diseases like Rheumatism/Arthritis, Epilepsy etc but tradition medicine has proffered solution. During the Covid era, some of our traditional healers and research institutes used plants and natural elements to treat a Coronavirus and its variants.

The ancient art of well-being is still highly relevant in the modern world, though religion, (Islam and Christianity) modernization, and western education make many to disbelieve traditional medicine and make their worshippers to see it as an idol, which is wrong. The knowledge of natural remedies has been passed down from generation to generation. Even modern medicine can trace its roots back to medicinal plants and some of the techniques still being used in traditional medicine today. That is why these practices will continue for years to come; providing affordable healthcare to local communities.

The World Health Organization (W.H.O) recognizes traditional medicine and its importance to healthcare. W.H.O states that these practices are actually growing in popularity in many regions of the world as they offer complimentary healing for modern medicines. Numerous other scientific organizations have been studying traditional medicine and their effectiveness.

Yoruba herbal remedies can ease the symptoms of coronavirus, looking at the symptoms of this ailment. (coughs, cold, flu, fever, sore throats) traditional healers can use plant such as African Wormwood (Iwo), Ginger (Atale), Bitter Kola (Orogbo), Basil (Efinrin), Alligator Pepper (Ataare), Garlic (Ayu), Black Pepper (Iyere), Lemon (Orombo), Cloves (Kannafuru) to cure the first stage of coronavirus, once the ailment have been dealt with from the root, there will be no room for the virus to germinate into the next stage. Some remedies can support the entire immune system, making them ideal for supplementary medication. In the modern Era, traditional remedies are often used in conjunction with mainstream medicines as complementary treatments. They can be used to counterpart some of the side effects of pharmaceutical drugs and to speed up recovery times. Here are some other positive effects of Yoruba traditional medicines according to Oyebola (1980):

- They are more affordable than most conventional medicines
- They are easy to obtain and don't require prescription
- They strengthen the overall immune system
- They can stabilize hormones and the metabolism
- They can be found in nature, so cost very little to harvest and produce.

Chukwuma in *Guardian newspaper* 2022 suggested a blend of three local plants, King of bitter (Jogbo or Mejemeje- Seven Seven), Bitter kola, and Guava as remedy to cure covid-19, Bio-resources Development Group (BDG) developed the natural blend .i.e. King of bitter (Jogbo or Mejemeje- Seven Seven), Bitter kola, and Guava, called IHP Detox Tea. The presentation of the findings was made at College of Medicine University of Lagos and Lagos State University Teaching Hospital on Monday April 11, 2022 during the visit of the World Health Organization (W.H.O) team to Nigeria to evaluate clinical trials conducted in the country for Covid-19 using traditional medicine or herbal medicinal products. The IHP Detox Tea clinical trials showed clearly that the herbal product was effective in the treatment of Covid-19, with no single death recorded in the treatment group against three deaths in the control

Conclusion and Recommendations

Yoruba traditional medicines are still popular today and it will continue to be relevant as they have numerous benefits over modern medicines, especially in societies with little access to state healthcare and medical aids. The knowledge used in these practices has been passed on for centuries and the remedies are tried – and – tested. Modern medicine can still learn from traditional remedies and practices a belief held by the W.H.O and many other scientific organizations. The paper recommends that, Nigerian society should endeavor to use traditional herbals to remedy their health conditions. We share ways to improve our health through the lifestyle choices we make it's all about healthy living and being the best version of yourself. Society should disengage from the doctrine that says traditional medicine is a way of practicing idol. More studies and researches on traditional medicine should be encouraged, exhibition on herbal medicine should be promoted and those traditional healers should impart the knowledge and the skills to younger generation, if possible the knowledge and skills should be documented.

Furthermore, traditional healers should look for ways to modernize their products in such a way that it will not cause havoc to the body system and meet the international standard. Development of standardized dosage forms and quality control must be seriously looking into. Looking at the theoretical framework especially the second

principles of cultural approach theory, the study therefore concludes that Yoruba people should go back to the traditional medicine of using plants and herbs because there are lots of benefits in it and its merits are more than demerits. Traditional medicine has always been useful and is still useful till date. Yoruba people should not allow this special heritage to go into extinction because the elders say “Tiwa – n – tiwa takisa ni taatan” This paper concludes that effective use of traditional medicine can prevent the society totally from every form of diseases. Yoruba traditional Medicine, is, therefore recommended because researches have shown that it stabilizes hormones and metabolism in the body system

References

- Abimbola, W. (1982). Note on the Collection, transcription, translation and analysis of Yoruba Oral Literature, in Afolayan, A. (ed). *Yoruba Language and Literature*. Ife: University of Ife Press, Ife
- Adeyemi, L. (2006). *Tiori litireso ni ede Yoruba*. Ijebu Ode: Shebiotimo Publication.
- Ajuwon, S.A. (2015). Yoruba: The People and the Language. In Ajuwon, S.A., Ugwu, I.A. and Adeola, Y.O. (eds) *Topics in Yoruba and Igbo Studies for Primary Education Students. Book 1* Ibadan: Masterprint Publishers.
- Bodeker, G and Kronenberg, F. (2002). A Public health Agenda for Traditional Complementary and Alternative Medicine. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92, 1582-1591. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.92.10.1582>.
- Chukwuma, M. (2022) “Doctor Endorse Herbal drug as Cure for Covid-19”. <https://guardian.ng/features-health>. *Guardian Newspaper ONLINE*.
- Mainen, Y.M., Paulo, P.M. (2013). *Medicinal Plant Research in Africa* <http://www.sciencedirect.com/traditionalmedicine>.
- Obiakor, T. (2020). Covid-19 and the Informal Sector in Nigeria. The Socio-Economic Cost Implication <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/covid-19> and the informal sector in Nigeria- the socio-economic-cost-implication. Retrieve 31st May,2023.
- Oyebola, D.D.O. (1980). *Agbo (Yoruba Herbs). As an Important Aspect of Trado-Medical Practices in Yoruba land Nigeria*. <https://globahistorydialogues.org>.
- World Health Organization. (2013). <https://www.who.int.health> Topics

Images of Subjugation and Echoes of Resistance in Selected Poems of Agostinho Neto

Amuche Grace Nweke

Department of English Language and Literature
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
graceamuchenweke@gmail.com

&

Adaobi Olivia Ihueze, PhD

Department of English Language and Literature
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
oa.ihueze@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

African literature in the colonial era captures mostly the horrible experiences of the colonized in the hands of white imperialists. Colonization in Africa constitutes an era of lasting memories of pains and sorrows in the annals of the history of the continent. It was a period of imperial bastardization of Africa by European countries. The partitioning of the region by Western nations led to the occupation of different parts of Africa by major imperial powers, like Britain, France and Portugal. Accordingly, each of the colonizers has a unique style of administration in their colonies. Unlike Anglophone colonized countries, Francophone and Lusophone regions witnessed more harsh and brutal encounter with the White masters. This is evidently captured in the protest literature of the continent. The immersion of agonizing imagery in Lusophone poetry lends credence to the painful reality of the people's fate under the weight of Portuguese grip on the region. This paper examines instances of the injustices suffered by the people of the region as seen in Agostinho Neto's "Bleeding and Germinating," "February," "Contract Workers" and "Prison Nights. It argues that the language of the poems, imbued with words like bleeding, blood, fire, chains and corpses, underpins the incidents that characterize the contemporary reality of the poet's society during colonisation. The research applies postcolonial theory in the exploration of the poems. This is based on its appropriateness to the interpretation of the works in relation to the focus of the study, following Frantz Fanon's postulations on third world countries and resistance to colonial domination, as stressed in *The Wretched of the Earth*. The research is focused on evaluating the adverse effects of colonization, its attendant resistance by the colonized, and how the lingering impacts of imperialism has kept the Lusophone region/Africa backward, even after years of decolonization. This way, the study introduces a new insight into the perception of the primary texts, different from existing studies, which were mainly focused on revolutionary aesthetics.

Keywords: Images, Colonization, Subjugation, Resistance, Freedom, Blood, Exploitation

Introduction

Lusophone poetry is replete with the peculiarities in countries like Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Sao Tome, under the imperial administration of Portugal in the colonial era. Most of their works are often laden with protest language as a result of the suffering they passed through in the hands of the colonial masters. The oppressive government of the imperial masters compels the oppressed people to protest their unjust treatment. Elliot Ziwira observes that the African poet "... cannot help being combative, for his/her suffering calls for such; ..." (np). He is of the view that all the seeds of protest in Lusophone poetry are sown through the adept use of imagery and symbolism. It cuts across various works of writers from the region like in Antonio Jacinto's "Letter from a Contract Worker." The works depict the pains of the people in the hands of their oppressors. Lusophone African literature against colonial dominance is inherent in the manner in which they mount their exasperation and grievances in their poetry. This is justified in the manner in which the victims of imperial administration are singled out for subjugation as expressed by the personae in Agostinho Neto's poetry.

As seen in Neto's "Bleeding and Germinating," "February," "Contract Workers" and "Prison Nights," most of the poems of the authors in that period capture the generality of the people's feelings toward colonial rule and its attendant evils. Their works express such pains experienced by the colonized subjects. As conscious members of the society, writers from the region responded by using literature to ignite the people's consciousness and protest against their collective oppression. Russell Hamilton writes that:

In the 1950s and 1960s as the winds of change began to blow across Africa, socially conscious writers in the Portuguese colonies turned to modes of cultural expression that directly or indirectly challenged colonial rule. Growing anti-colonialism led to liberation movements and, by the early 1960s, armed rebellion in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. Writers from all five colonies increasingly produced works of cultural re vindication, social protest and combativeness. (33)

Hamilton's observation represents the mission of the Lusophone writers as they try to fight colonial injustice in the land. Similarly, writers from other African countries under European domination were strongly engaged in using their works to expose and combat Western imperialism. According to Simon Gikandi:

... what is now to be the heart of literary scholarship on the continent could not have acquired its current identity or function if the traumatic encounter between Africa and Europe had not taken place. Not only were the founders of modern African literature colonial subjects, but colonialism was also to be the most important and enduring theme in their works. (54)

The impacts of the colonial experience in Portuguese colonies are what inform the birth of Agostino Neto's poems under study. Hence, the choice of postcolonial analytical tool as relevant to the texts' interpretation. Postcolonial literature, according to Bill Ashcroft et al, "emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their difference from the assumptions of the imperial center" (2). In such literary productions are the pictures of the African experience told by the insiders themselves. The African experience is an integral part of the Lusophone African literature as obviously represented in the works of Agostinho Neto.

Neto's poetry has been read by critics from different perspectives. Such interpretations point to the aesthetic multiplicity of literary art. For instance, Irene Marques engaged the poetry of Agostinho Neto from the dimension of postcolonial consciousness. In her analysis of selected poems from Neto's *Sacred Hope*, she wonders: "can poetry carry enough sorrow, enough strength, enough fire, enough love, enough wisdom, enough care, and enough horror to penetrate the hearts and the souls of the oppressed and the oppressors so that both will desperately want to escape their sinister labels?" (5). She notes that as a great poet, Neto's artistry connects deeply with his political responsibility to the people of Angola. Her analysis of Neto's poems breeds overarching themes of "the oppression, apartheid, (un)civilization, and (un)Christianity brought to Africa by the Portuguese" (3). Marquis infers to her perception of Neto's "Bleeding and Germinating" that the poet tasks himself with "giving agency to the Africans that might feel powerless and trapped inside the oppressive colonialist system: he is showing them a way out of that system and encouraging them to be less afraid to fight for independence" (5). The critic insists that Neto's call to action in the majority of his poems is for Angolans to see the beauty of their origin and the havoc of the colonialists; and join in the fight for their collective freedom.

Colonialism and Agony of the Oppressed

At the surface level of Lusophone poetry, and particularly Agostino Neto's "Bleeding and Germinating," "February," "Contract Worker" and "Prison Nights" are the cries of torture experienced by the people of the region in the hands of the white masters. There are obvious depiction of pains emanating from the oppression and enslavement of the colonized. What is seen in the aforementioned poems replicate events in Edward Brathwaite's "Prelude." They are subjected to inhuman treatments as they are forced to work in fields and plantations just for the selfish interest of the colonial overlords. In "Bleeding and Germinating," the images of able-bodied men and women from the continent are painted as they are forced into slavery:

We of immense Africa
and above the betrayal of men
...anxious fervent mighty in roaring rivers
through the harmonious sound of muted
marimbas
through the looks youth of crowds
crowds of arms of anxiety and hope
of immense Africa
under claws (Lines 1-10)

The people are portrayed as being hounded into slavery by their captors. Their passage through "roaring rivers" reminisces the horrific experiences of African slaves as they were forced to Europe and America through the Atlantic ocean. They work day in day out, "bleeding in the estate sweat of the compulsion of / cotton fields" (lines 16 and 17). For the persona to describe Africa as being "under claws" indicates their state of captivity, like a prey on a lion's grip. It heightens the extent of the suffering of the blacks under imperial control. This is a kind of image that runs across Neto's poems as also discernible in his "On the Skin of the Drum." It is an exposition of the wickedness of man against fellow man. In like manner, "February" shows the gory image of the senseless massacre of blacks at the slightest provocation. Dead bodies of the victims are seen floating on the ocean. We read that:

It was when the Atlantic
by dint of the hours
returned corpses
wrapped in white flowers of foam
and the uncontained hatred of beast ... (Lines 1-5)

The graphic picture of the horrors of the horrendous deaths of the people is buttressed by Neto himself (in the subtitle of the poem, as *The Massacre of São Tomé*), which has remained indelible in the psyche of the people. The bodies of the deceased victims are left to be devoured by animals on “the beaches filled up with crows and jackals” (line 7). Colonialism is apparently a period of terror and misery for Africans. As seen in “Bleeding and Germinating,” what is encountered in the poem “February” further highlights the pitiful treatment of inhabitants of Portuguese colonies in Africa. The continent is described as “... the land burned by the terror of ages / enslaved in chains” (lines 10-11). The expression is an affirmation of the subjection of Africans into slavery.

The human figures represented in the poem are more or less depicted as slaves. Apparently, they are blacks from the Lusophone region, who worked as indentured servants under the strict supervision of their colonial masters. The system orchestrated the sustained exploitation of the colonial subjects by the imperialists. Like Britain, Portugal “... maintained control of its colonies and its wealth for a little longer, and also bolstered the conviction of white superiority. To justify slavery and indenture, [White] imperialists developed a teleological view of labor that was linked to hierarchical views of civilization and race” (Alison Klein 5). Consequently, black people, as evident in Neto's poetry, are subjected to harsh working conditions in their quest for survival. According to the speaker:

A long line of bearers
Holds the road
with rapid steps
and their grieving forms
they sprinkle the roadside dust
with their sweat .(Lines 1 – 6)

Significantly, the poet's use of language gives a pictorial imagination of the sufferings of the people in the hands of the White overlords. The diction “line of bearers,” “grieving form” and “sweat” points to the agonies of the black figures subjugated through the system of colonisation. It tells more about the inhuman conditions of the colonised people, and the life of servitude they witnessed as the imperial project lasted. The speaker laments that “On their naked backs” / “They carry heavy burdens” (lines 7 and 8). Theirs was a period of harvest of tears and sorrows, emanating from their subordinate status to the colonizers. The imagery created out of the pitiful situation of the masses metaphorizes the painful experiences of blacks during colonial administration. The colonial masters administered their colonies with the utmost harshness. Their subjects are maltreated and incarcerated at the slightest provocation. This is evidently represented in Neto's “Prison Nights,” where the pains borne by the victims is projected. According to the speaker:

Next door
Someone groans
Fingers edged with blood
Streaming from nails broken by the *palmatoria*
(Lines 25 – 28)

Experiences of the victims of colonialism in Lusophone Africa replicates the oppressive government in apartheid South Africa, with the incarceration of opposing voices, as in Denis Brutus's “The Sun on this Rubble.” The image of oppression and pain is a significant motif that runs across a good number of colonial literatures. The phenomenon concretizes the harsh and ugly realities that characterize the African experience.

Similarly, the agonies of the people from Lusophone colonies, as in “Bleeding and Germinating” is presented as a common suffering endured by Africans elsewhere, irrespective of who their colonial masters were. It is first and foremost “the process of expressing the tensions set up by our modern awareness by the varied and often contradictory elements of the collective experience” (Abiola Ireto 212). The shared experience is part of what is encountered in Neto's poems. According to the persona:

Our cries
are messenger drums of desire
in the babel harmony of nations
our cries anthems of love for hearts
flowering in the earth like the sun in seeds

cries Africa ... (Lines 24 – 29)

All ethnic/national affiliations are hereby represented as partakers in the colonial fraud. In their wailings are sounds of a collective desire for relief from subjugation. They want a world where all men are united by shared humanity propelled by love for one another as contained in the above excerpt. The same desire for respite from pain is echoed in “February” even as they bury the dead. The persona stresses the need “for love / and for harmony / and for our freedom” (lines 22 - 24), despite the prevailing realities that elicit tears among the people.

In “Contract Workers,” Neto foregrounds the unbearable weight of oppression on the people. The pictures painted out of their life reinforces Simon Gikandi's assertion “... that the cultural and political force of colonialism in Africa was so enduring that writers concerned with the nature of African society could not avoid the trauma and drama that accompanied the imposition of European rule on the continent” (*African Literature*. 55). Apparently, the victims of European imperialism groaned over the weight of suppression inflicted on them by the White masters. This is obviously manifested in the life of servitude they are subjected to, making existence very miserable to them as they trudge on looking for a means to survive. The speaker notes that:

They go on
Eyes distant
Hearts fearful
Arms strong
Smiles deep as the deep waters.(Lines 9 – 13)

The above stanza reflects the true nature of the people's conditions in colonial Lusophone Africa. As subalterns, they are structurally excluded and are portrayed as second class citizens whose survival is dependent upon their total submission to the whims and caprices of the imperial lords. The colonized are exploited and impoverished. Hence, their resort to indentured service outside of their homeland. The contract workers' quest for survival separates them away from home and the warmth of their loved ones. What is more, “They go full of homesickness / and dread / - but they sing” (lines 16 – 18). The question of homesickness underscores the length of the workers' absence from home and its attendant nostalgia. The dreadful experiences of the people notwithstanding, the speaker reiterates that they sing. The idea of singing is significant in the sense that it foretells the victims hope for a better future.

In “Prison Nights,” the speaker bemoans the excruciating experiences of the inmates as a result of the wickedness of the oppressors. The victims are depicted as being forced into a tiny cell where life is made unbearable to them. This is portrayed in the persona's lamentation of his kin's subjection to terror by the imperialists. It further buttresses the agonizing lives of the black people during colonial era. Africans suffered “... deprivation of all human rights in the age of human rights, as though they were not counted among humans” (Naguib Mahfouz 122). The prisoners' tortures lend credence to Mahfouz's submission. In his voice:

who will sleep
when next door there are the madman's cries
that they are jumping from the window to wound
his flesh
over the fatigue of sleeplessness anguish and
expectation?
Who will sleep
when he hears his best friend go mad
there in the next cell
his spirit killed by torture? (Lines 35 – 42)

The above rhetoric is a pointer to the dehumanization of the colonial subjects, without justifiable provocation. They are hounded like games and stripped of every iota of human dignity.

The selected poems are depicted as the personae's expression of the agony of a people subjugated on account of their status as the colonized. It is a confirmation of not just the Lusophone experience of imperialism, but an insight into the horrible pictures of Africa's tortuous past relived in the continent's postcolonial literature. Agostinho Neto, like some of his contemporaries, has deployed his works to depict the reality they were confronted with as the people groaned under colonial dictatorship. Writers, who out of commitment used their writings in this manner, were able to conscientize the masses and spur them into actions to fight for their liberation.

Contours of Resistance and Freedom in Neto's Poetry

In Agostinho Neto's poetry, as in most protest African literature, the voices of resistance and quest for freedom reverberate. This is consequent upon the feeling of exploitation and maltreatment by the Africans in the hands of

the colonial masters. Fanon observes that “the great figures of the colonized people are always those who led the national resistance to invasion” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 69). Accordingly, African writers took up the responsibility of addressing the sufferings of their people through their works. In the words of Breyten Breytenbach, “in the poor and colonized countries the writer plays a more visible role: faced with acute social and economic iniquities he is called upon to articulate the dreams and the demands of his people” (166). Evidently, Breytenbach’s submission reflects on the upsurge of literary productions witnessed in the colonial as a reaction to the atrocious background of Western imperialism in Africa and other third world countries. Aloysius Ohaegbu notes that “as would be expected, African intellectuals schooled in Western European critical tradition but imbued with a new sense of independence and cultural nationalism joined the existing body of the critics of African literature with some sense of revolt ...” (“Defining African Literature” 3). The waves of revolution as seen in the writings of African poets, like Agostinho Neto, re-echoes the yearnings of the masses for respite from pains as they struggle with the existential limitations of colonial rule.

In Neto’s “February,” “Bleeding and Germinating,” “Contract Workers,” and “Prison Nights,” the speakers express their frustrations with colonization, and yearns for freedom from the oppressive colonizers. The people’s struggles to break the yokes of colonial chains are depicted in the poems under study. For instance, in “February,” we see the persona express the people’s zeal to confront their adversary with the utmost tenacity. Poised with the resolution to dismantle Western influence on them, the people, by their individual commitments, collectively battle the common enemy even at the expense of their own lives. And many paid the ultimate sacrifice for others to be free. According to the speaker:

It was then that in eyes on fire
now blood now life now death
we victoriously buried our dead
and on the graves
recognised the rightness of men's sacrifice
for love
and for harmony
and for our freedom
even faced with death by dint of the hours. (Lines 18 – 25)

It is shown that the people have strong desire to break free from imperial captivity. Hence, the persona's choice of the words such as fire, sacrifice love, and freedom, interspersed on various lines of the poem. In a similar vein, Neto’s “Bleeding and Germinating” embodies the voice of a persistent quest for freedom. Like the rest of the poems, “Bleeding and Germinating” depicts the speaker’s horrible experiences in the hands of the Whites. Consequently, he expresses optimism for a relief from pains despite the present hopelessness. He laments:

Our cries
are messenger drums of desire
in the babel of voices harmony of nations
our cries anthems of love for hearts
flowering in the earth like the sun in seeds
cries Africa
cries of the mornings when in the seas are ever
more
dead in chains
bleeding and germinating. (Lines 23 – 31)

The speaker’s use collective pronoun *our* does not only suggest the shared deprivation suffered by the people, but also undergirds the unity black subjects in their fight for liberation from enslavement. Additionally, the use of terms like “flowering” and “morning” reaffirm the message encoded in *germination* (or germinating) as used in the title of the poem. This is because germination conjures the image a planting, which fundamentally involves seeds dying to sprout again by bringing out a new shoot. Metaphorically, the existential struggles of the colonized evokes the biological cycle of seeds/planting, in the sense that to achieve a new world/nation, the oppressed have to with their lives so that the birth of a free society can be possible. Apparently, the speaker laments the death of their kin in the course of the struggle for emancipation. The sacrifices of the fallen heroes herald the emergence of their freedom, which is symbolized by images of flowering, sun and morning. Significantly, the title of the poem in itself is revealing. The idea of bleeding and germinating at the same time foregrounds the determination and resilience of the oppressed people in the midst of unending exploitation and torture.

Like in “February” and “Bleeding and Germinating,” Neto’s “Contract Workers” embodies voice of longing for liberation from the clutches of dehumanization. The contract workers are kept away from home as a result of long

stay in their work place, occasioned by the exploitative disposition of the imperial powers. Nevertheless, the victims express optimism about the future even in their deplorable conditions. This is depicted in the speaker's words below:

Long months separate them from theirs
and they go filled with longing
and dread
but they sing (Lines 11 – 14)

The last line of the above stanza reflects the people's expectations for a promising future. Their ability to sing despite the ordeals they are subjected to, portrays their irrepressible spirit and resolve to continue with their struggle for survival. This is the kind of attitude that keeps them moving in the moment of hopelessness. Their song is a sign of victory to come. This is replicated in Neto's "Prison Nights," the persona is obsessed with the glorious days to come. According to the speaker, "He is thinking of victory / and no sleep comes to his prison days / or dreams to fill his solitude" (lines 29 – 31). The victim's preoccupation with freedom reinforces the captivity of the colonized people, and the agonizing grip of the colonial masters on them. There is a kind of subjugation that portends death. This is particularly why the speaker likens the prison experience to a vault. He notes that:

In the sepulchral silence
of four walls without sun
he reads in the Bible
the hopeful gift of his mother :
"Blessed are they who hunger
and thirst after righteousness ... " (Lines 53 – 58)

The reference to sepulcher, which has a biblical connotation, does not only symbolize a final resting place for the dead or the cell, by inference, as the final destination of the victims. It denotes an emerging period of rejuvenation and hope for their collective freedom. The speaker reiterates that "... theirs shall be the country / and the love of their people" (lines 59 and 60).

Significantly, Lusophone poets deployed various means in their attempts to resist Western hegemony which have gained influence in African literary canon. Like other protest poets of African extraction, Agostinho Neto's oeuvre shows that "poetry is constructed with unique artistic devices bearing denotative and underlying meanings. Its various elements conjure up meanings that are otherwise multivalent and transferable to different contexts for various purposes. It presupposes that: "The role of poetry is, therefore, a major one, not only because it is more powerful than other forms of writing as a means of political mobilization, but also because it sustains, within the popular memory, national continuity". (Elias Knouri qtd in Harlow 34)

These diverse nature of poetic elements are used by the Lusophone African poets as tools of colonial resistance. The ascription of poetry as the most effective tool of resistance lies in the manipulation of diction and language. Maduka and Eyoh go in-depth to explain the usefulness of diction in poetic expression. According to the scholars: Poetry pays close attention to words to grind the particles of meaning out of each of them. Accordingly, the choice of words which is generally referred to as diction is central to their activity. Diction embraces various operations: the poet chooses his words in the context of the emotional association they generate in him and possibly in the reader (connotations; imagery/figurative language; symbol; myths; archetypes). (qtd in Babatunde, 18)

The choice of words employed by Agostinho Neto is codified within the matrix of different poetic elements like tone, imagery, symbolism and form, among others.

As a revolutionary poet, Neto finds the use of form as constraining to the free flow of his message through his poetic thoughts. This is why he lets go of form to embrace a simple style of writing to ensure the success of his struggle for liberation using his poems. He also believes that conformity to lay out European traditional poetic form of stanzas and lines will contradict his idea of cultural and colonial resistance. For the Lusophone poet, language serves as a potent element of resistance and liberation through various avenues like free verse, no specific poetic structure and lack of punctuation. This simple stylistic organization of words manifests in Neto's works, particularly the poems under study. For instance, in "February," one encounters a verse that flouts the principles of poetic structure, punctuation and capitalization, as shown below:

It was when the Atlantic
by dint of the hours
returned corpses
wrapped in white flowers of foam
and the uncontained hatred of beasts (Lines 1 – 5)

The reader encounters a worker who sings to narrate their sufferings and pains, as is the song of pain found in "Contract Workers." What is noticeable is a deliberate free flow of thoughts across the lines and stanzas of the poem. This defiant poetic structure was indeed a harsh resistance measure when one peeps into the level of censorship that the early Lusophone writers faced as Sovon Sanyal pointed out: "It was a real uphill struggle for the writers to reject the colonial values which were then highly institutionalized" (118). It seems that Neto wrote his poems to make prominent his rebellion against Western traditions.

Additionally, at the heart of the poetic elements lies the representation of the African historical experiences which is best shown with the use of imagery and symbols to induce a perfect call to action for resistance, as exemplified in Neto's "Hoisting of the Flag," where there is the presence of symbols of ancestral harmonies like "Ngola Kiluanje," the "sacred Ngola Ritmos" and "Queen Ginga." This is encountered in Neto's "Prison Nights" where the speaker makes strong allusion to historical places. It further strengthens the bond between the prisoners and their country home. His nostalgic utterances re-echoe thus:

On hot afternoons
when looks and voices fill the Cuca road
and up Lixeira way
or in the Hills of Maianga
from this land impoverished of all by fear
and enriched by certainty
resurrecting fire and magic
and words burning with impatience (Lines 1 – 8)

Their presence in the poem shows a deliberate attempt to resist the colonial eradication of the African cultural identity and heritage. In its case "February," harbours similar and familiar cultural symbols like the green island of São Tomé and corpses bearing weights of historical struggles and experiences.

There is a contractual use of visual imagery of a stormy torrent of blood and the growing of a dead seed in "February." This shows the dire prices paid for freedom and the consequent hope of rebirth. There are also tactile and visual imagery of "bodies steeped in shame and salt" and "white flowers of foam" to highlight the level of violence meted out on the people and their land. The savagery of colonialism is made more manifest through the imagery of "crows," "jackals" and "with bestial hunger for battered flesh." All these are a metonymic display of the sufferings of the people during colonization.

In "February," there is a contrast in tones of despair which gives way to that of hope and triumph to underscore the multifaceted nature of poetry of resistance. Thus, the images of hope, rebirth and restoration are essential elements of poems resistant poems as seen in the primary texts. Neto, in "February," uses the "green land" imagery to allude to the glitter of hope for the people, as in "We must Plant," where the metaphor of the new tree of national independence serves as a ground for renewal of hope by every citizen. The same image and metaphor of "tree" is used by the persona in David Diop's "Africa." The image/symbol of tree in the poems is seen as young which symbolizes the rise of Africa that had been cut down by imperial incursion. The personae believe that they will rise to see freedom from bloodshed and bitterness at the point of the country's independence.

As an active protest poet during colonization, Neto's works depict his solidarity toward the fight for the emancipation of Africans from foreign invasion. He concurs with Aimé Césaire that a patriotic poet should write "about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out" (Césaire, 21). Accordingly, Neto has proven to be faithful to his historical background in his utilization of his literary prowess to address the challenges of his people, specifically as it concerns the African experience, in relation to colonial encounter.

Blood as a Symbolic Image in the Poetry of Agostinho Neto

Often encountered in Lusophone poetry is the immersion of blood across the lines and stanzas of the poems of Agostinho Neto as evidently shown in "Bleeding and Germinating," "February," and "Prison Nights." The presence of blood imagery symbolizes the dehumanizing experiences and pains suffered by the people. It shows the level of maltreatment the colonial masters meted out to the people of Portuguese colonies. In "Bleeding and Germinating" for instance, we see how they groan under heavy burden, working without being taken good care of:

bloody with pain and hope grief and strength
bleeding on the earth disemboweled by the blood
of hoes

bleeding in the estate sweat of the compulsion of
cotton fields . (Lines 13 – 17)

This is a clear picture of their predicament in the hands of the colonialists. They are “bleeding and germinating” (line 22). The metaphor evoked in the victims’ condition of bleeding and germinating at the same time is the resilient nature of the Africans. They have been suppressed enough to die, but instead they are seen struggling to survive amidst the challenges of their marginalization. A similar situation is noticeable in “February.” The persona decries the ugly state of affairs and the unwarranted death witnessed by blacks. Their state of mind is one weighed down by the images of life and death. According to the persona:

It was then that in eyes on fire
Now blood now life now death
We victoriously buried our dead
and on the graves
... (Lines 18 – 21)

They are not deterred by the attempt to exterminate them. The living, despite, the physical and mental agony they are facing, see their victory in their ability to accord their dead relatives a deserving burial. It is a way of foregrounding the people’s belief in the tradition of burying the dead ones in order to ensure the peaceful repose of their souls.

It is important to note that in the midst of their travails, they yearn for peace and freedom among Africans as the same people united by common heritage. Their dreams are to see a continent “germinating under the soil of hope / creating fraternal ties in freedom of desire / of anxiety for concord” (lines 51-53). Their desire for a free Africa stems from the fact that they believe in the binding power of love to humanity. It is not about Africa alone, but the world as a place for mutual understanding and cooperation among all. That is why in the face of victimization:

Our eyes blood and life
turned to hands waving love in all the world
hands in the future-smile inspires of faith in
the vitality
of Africa earth Africa human (Lines 45-49)

The plea for a peaceful human race of all colours is predicated upon the fact that everyone is the same by being human. The persona is interested in a world where everyone will be inspired by the firm belief that the strength of life is based on the earth as the original and collective *mother* of all human race. The people stretch their hands and appeal to all, including their persecutors, to embrace love for one another. In “February,” the persona stresses the kind of fraternal ties that bind them together. Even those buried on the graves:

recognized the rightness of men’s sacrifice
for love
and for harmony
and for our freedom
(lines 22-25)

The death of the fallen comrades is subtly understood as a price paid for the people’s freedom from their oppressors. They are massacred as they protest and question the rationale behind imperialism. The resistant they put up yields positive results made possible by the blood of their slain kith and kin. The living ones are hopeful that the sacrifices of the heroes past will, through them, see to the restoration of the land. The personae reiterate that “In us / the green land of São Tomé / will also be the island of love” (lines 29-31). The image of green signifies life, hence, prefiguring the survival and rising of the race in a bid to overcome their present suffering

In “Prison Nights,” the images of death and blood are evoked, which coincide with similar incidents in “Bleeding and Germinating” and “February.” The elements are symbolic of the level deaths, physical and psychological injury undergone by the masses as represented by the speaker. He laments that:

On these hot afternoons
and on moonlight nights
-when in a dirge the drum mourns a corpse
and girls sing-
there is a lead cell on the shoulders
of our brother
our blood our spirit

(Lines 9 – 15)

The above lines underscore the severity of their existential travails. In addition, one encounters violent patterns of bloodshed/sacrifice and victory in the aforementioned poems. The situation reaffirms Emmanuel Ngara's postulation that "independence cannot be given on a platter; it calls for suffering, endurance and sacrifice," (Ngara 104). Hence, the spilling of blood, vis-à-vis the flowing of water that one encounters in Neto's "February." This binary induces the hope of liberation for the colonised who must be resilient in their defiant struggle for independence. It serves as an ideological tool that shapes the narrative in the direction of strengthening the African spirit. The application of postcolonial theory in the interpretation of the texts validates Bill Ashcroft et al's assertion that "we use the term post-colonial to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (*The Empire Writes Back* 2).

Conclusion

A close reading of Agostino Neto's "Bleeding and Germinating," "February," "Contract Workers" and "Prison Nights" reveals the depth of the racial antagonism against blacks, particularly in the Lusophone region. As captured in Neto's poems, the victims of colonial invasion suffered both racial subjugation, exploitation and subordinate status. The sustained encounter with blood in the poems points to the severity of the pains experienced by the people as they try to resist colonial injustice. As typical of Lusophone protest poetry, the aforementioned poems are charged with forceful atmosphere, with tones that incite the people into immediate action toward a fight for their collective emancipation from imperial domination. This is because his writings were instruments of social consciousness and rebellious awakening, not just to them, but also to contemporary generation of Africans in the face of neo-colonialism. Significantly, the engagement meaningfully contributes to existing literature on Neto's oeuvre, as well as postcolonial discourse; and can serve as a source of research material to prospective scholars.

Works Cited

- Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice of Postcolonial Literature*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 1994.
- Babatunde, Ogunyemi Christopher. "Various Voices in African Poetry: An Analysis of *Poems of Black Africa*." *MA Thesis*, Darlana University, Sweden, 2007.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Breytenbach, Breyten. "The Writer and Responsibility." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, ed., by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 165-171.
- Brathwaite, Edward. *Rights of Passage*. Oxford UP., 1962.
- Brutus, Dennis. "The Sun on this Rubble." *Poems of Black Africa*, edited by Wole Soyinka, Heinemann, 1971.
- Diop, David. "Africa." *A Selection of African Poetry*. Revised and Enlarged Edition, Introduced and Annotated by K. E. Senanu and T. Vincent, Longman Group Limited, 1988, p. 73.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington, Grove Press, 1963.
- Gikandi, Simon. "African Literature and the Colonial Factor." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, edited by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 54-59.
- Hamilton, Russell G. "African Literature in Portuguese." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, edited by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 31-37.
- Harlow, Barbara. *Resistance Literature*. Methuen, 1987.
- Irele, Abiola. *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*. Oxford UP., 2021.
- Jacinto, Antonio. "Letter from a Contract Worker." *Poetry Hunter*, www.poetryhunter.com.
- Mahfouz, Naguib. "Nobel Lecture." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, ed., by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 122-125.
- Marques, Irene. "Postcolonial African Consciousness and the Poetry of Agostinho Neto." *Comparative Literature and Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2003.
- Neto, Agostinho. *Sacred Hope*. Translated by Marga Holness, Tanzania Publishing House, 1974.
- Ngara, Emmanuel. "Revolution Practice and Style in Lusophone Liberation Poetry." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, Eds Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007.
- Ohaegbu, Aloysius U. "Defining African Literature." *Major Themes in African Literature*, ed., by Damian U. Opata and Aloysius U. Ohaegbu, AP Express Pub., 2000, pp. 1-14.
- Sanya, Sovon. "Trailing the Growth from Nativism to Africanist in Lusophone African Poetry." *Jurnal Lingua Cultura*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2010, pp. 115 – 122.
- Ziwira, Elliot. "Lusophone Poetry and the Quest for Liberation." *The Herald*, 16 April 2018. www.herald.co.zw

An Overview of the Trend of Befitting Burial among the Present-Day Igbo Speaking People-Societies of Nigeria

Chidiobi, Okechukwu Christian

Graduate Student, Department of History and International Studies,
Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria.
E-Mail: okechukwuchris2020@gmail.com

&

Ibekwe, Juliet Chinenye

Graduate Student, Department of General Study Unit,
University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria Tel:
E-Mail: juliet.ibekwe.pg01600@unn.edu.ng/jullydio@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study x-rayed the trend of befitting burial among the Igbo-speaking people or societies of Nigeria. Death is an inevitable part of every biotic component of God's creation which man is invariably part of. As man journeys through life, death has become part of his regrettable realities which can never be wished away no matter how hard he tries to avert it and no matter his wealth, intelligence, academic status, influence, connections, religious positions and so on. After death, the obligation of the living to the deceased; is burial. In most African traditional religions or societies and in particular, in Igbo worldview or cosmology, it is believed that burial facilitates an easy transition of the dead to the great beyond and ensures that the departed gains entry into the spirit world. Burial also ensures that the spirit of the dead person does not hover around to torment the living. This by implication explains some of the pertinent reasons for burial. However, in the present-day Igbo societies of Nigeria, burial has assumed another worrisome dimension. The befitting burial has taken a center stage. It has become a concern to well-meaning Igbo people. The development has reached an alarming stage and something drastic has to be done to address the issue. Investigation from this study as well as personal experiences and eye-witness accounts of the authors, reveal that many families had gone the extra mile and out of their way to organize befitting burial for their departed loved ones. While many bereaved families out there are still looking forward to organizing the same for their departed ones. Given this, this study examined the causes of befitting burial, factors to be taken into consideration while preparing for such burial as well as its consequences. In general, the paper at the introductory part looked at death in man's earthly journey of life, the concept of burial and that of befitting burial as well as perspectives on burial across the world. Using the qualitative historical methodology, the study, analyzed and assembled the content of the secondary sources obtained from peer-reviewed books, online and journal publications, and so on as well as oral interviews, eye witness accounts and personal experiences of the authors on which the study relied heavily on. Among many other suggestions, the study concludes by noting that families of the deceased should conduct the burials of their deceased based on their financial capacities because the essence of burial is to bid farewell to the deceased and not to please the world or the crowd of invited and uninvited mourners by extravagant spending on things which are only enjoyed by the living.

Key Words: Death, Burial, Befitting-Burial, Funeral, Deceased-departed, Family and Igbo Societies-People

Introduction

The Christian Holy Bible has it that "man was made from the dust and to the same dust he shall return". The fact of this statement stares everyone in the face when the inevitability of death is considered. Undoubtedly, there is no day that passes without people dying or without the ugly news of death in every corner of the globe. Death is the most unfortunate and tragic thing to happen to mankind and perhaps the worst punishment given to man by God.

Since the time of Adam and Eve (the first man and woman) on earth, death has become part and parcel of humanity. According to the adherents of African Tradition religion (ATR), death is the last phase of life which man must pass through to move into the world beyond called after life. Similarly, Akpata (2023:21) stated that death and eternity have been a controversial issue in the history of man. To him some believe that life ends at death while Christians on the other hand, believes in life after death. He therefore noted that:

Catechism of the Catholic Church states that, "by death, the soul is separated from the body but in the resurrection God will give incorruptible life to our body, transformed by reunion with our soul". This hope of eternal life strengthens the dying and comforts the suffering, making them live happily in Christ. The depressed also takes consolation in his faith

In its view of death, an online dictionary defined death as the cessation of life and all associated process; the end of an organism's existence as an entity independent from its environment and its return to an inert, non-living state. Heinemann International Student

Dictionary (1991:164) see it as the end of life; an act or way of dying or being killed. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 8th edition (2010:375), similarly describe it as end of life; the state of being dead.

Igwe (2025:35) observed that our world has been graced with finest of minds; leaders, artists, philosophers and scientists like Albert Einstein, Michael Faraday, St. Augustine of Hippo, Abraham Lincoln, Michael Angelo, William Shakespeare and many more whose worth, achievement and progressive views had helped to shape and transform the world into what it is today and regrettably these men are no longer alive, as they are all dead and long buried. It is based on this that it is always said that "the graveyard is the richest place on earth. This statement arises from the fact that the graveyard remains the only place where many talents, knowledge, skills, aspirations as well as dreams both fulfilled and unfulfilled are forever buried. Igwe (2015:35), noted that it is the inevitability of death that made the Great English philosopher Thomas Hobbes during his dying moment on earth to say "If the world belongs to me I would rather give it all to live just a day longer. I am now departing on my last journey. It was my turn to take the rightful leap into the dark world."

In another related departing lamentation, Igwe (2015:35) also captured the words of Queen Elizabeth 1 often called The Virgin Queen while on her death bed and how she grasped her physician by the sleeve and pulled him down over her bed and whispered "half of the British empire for six months of life". Unfortunately, the doctor could not even give her 6 minutes of life and she died.

Death is sorrowful and regrettable and nobody ever wish for it even when it is unavoidable and will surely come knocking someday. According to Ojielo (2018:25), "the living person has the innate wish to exist forever but unfortunately, death is inevitable" ... It is thus, a misfortune that man must accept, cope and deal with as part of life. Rephrasing the words of Okafor (2015:37), death is a respecter of no one as men, women, boys and girls and even children all dies. Similarly, he observes that:

Papa, mama, young and old, rich and poor cry in sorrow asking God's mercy to replace the horrible pains of death which is always too late and impossible. Drawing from the Holy Bible, Okafor is however concerned about where the soul will go-heaven or hell after death or after someone dies.

Writing about death, Ezeokafor (2021:46), on his part stated as thus:

Death is inescapable human phenomenon. It is the separation of the soul from the body. Consequently, at the moment of death, this soul is taken away from the body. And when this occurs, friends and relatives of the deceased gather to perform its corporal work of mercy of burying the dead. Such therefore, is the manifestation of the human desire to demonstrate respect for the dead.

It is in recognition of the religious (Bible) commandment about the inescapable of death and the consequence return of the body to dust that, some Orthodox churches such as the Catholic, the Anglican, the Methodist, the Apostolic among others usually places or makes a sign of the cross using "ashes" on the foreheads of their lay-faithful or parishioners in obedience and observation to the annual ritual that marks the beginning of each Lenten and fasting period and which eventually culminate into celebration of the Christian religious function otherwise called Easter. Easter is a religious festival which commemorates the suffering and death of Jesus Christ which is believed by Christians grants them salvation and saves them from sin and give them hope of eternal life. It is a solemn celebration that takes place between March - April every year. During the kick-off of this all important religious obligation known as lent, the officiating priest (s) or minister (s) usually mutter the words "ashes to ashes" as he or they place the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the parishioners.

The implications of this event or ritual just as noted earlier is that "man came from the dust or ashes and to dust or ashes he shall go back or return when he dies.

Death is therefore not selective in its strikes. It strikes or kills whomever it wants or chooses without warning or notice. It does not take permission from anyone neither does it accepts kick-back from those who wishes not to die or who are afraid to die. It kills both the have and they have not, the old and young, the good and the bad, the ugly and the beautiful, the sick and the healthy, the weak and the strong, the normal and abnormal and so on. The story in the Christian Holy Bible has it that death was not originally in God's plan or design for mankind but started occurring as part of the consequences of Man, (Adam and Eve) disobedience to God's commandment or instruction when they ate the forbidden fruit (fruit of Good and evil).

This the Bible made it clear when it stated as thus:

You will have to work very hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything food until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from the soil, and you will become the same soil again (Genesis 3:19).

Death remains an ugly and saddening reality before man. It is something that triggers fears, or boggles the mind when it is remembered, thought of or mentioned. It breeds sorrow, loneliness, psychological trauma, depression, health challenges and even sober reflections to those affected or who have lost their loved ones. Death kills our loved ones, people around us, those we know and those we don't know or people in faraway places. Dons Eze (2021:17), sees death as:

Something that concerns everybody because it brings loss and sorrow to the family, friends and well-wishers. He observed that in Oghe as until recently, as in many traditional African societies and Igbo land by extension, death was never envisaged, until one attains a very ripe age. And this to him, is the reason every premature death is viewed as an anathema and why such death is believed to have been as a result of one malevolent spirit or the other.

In view of the above assertion, the Igbo cosmology or worldview as rightly observed by Madu (2003:45) have both good and bad death. A good death implies death after a ripe, old, matured age and other accompanied parameters while a bad death on the other hand implies death below this ripe, old age, a premature death all that detestable by diseases. According to him, a premature corpse is immediately disposed of and no funeral rite are performed until elaborate purification ceremony or rituals are conducted.

This passage as put forward by Madu (2003:45), in other words implies that in as much as death is unavoidable, that it is traditionally considered more glorious when one dies at an old, matured age while on this other hand, it is disheartening, regrettable and sorrowful when one dies at a young age. Thus, the summary of the whole thing is, death will certainly strike or come whether at a ripe age, matured old age or at a premature age. However, when it does strike, it is the obligation of the living or those alive to bury the dead.

Conceptual Clarifications

Conceptual Meaning of Burial and Funeral

The concept "burial" is also known as interment, inhumation, entombment, sepulcher, obsequy, and so on (www.american-webstar.com>dictionary). According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 6th Edition, burial comes from the word "bury". While burial means to place a dead body in a grave. It is the disposal of human remains by depositing it in the earth, a grave or a tomb by consigning to the water, or by exposing to the elements or to carrion-consuming animals. Burial therefore involve the ceremony or act of burying a dead body or person. It is a method of final disposition whereby a dead body is placed into the ground sometimes with objects. This is usually accomplished by excavating a pit or trench, placing the deceased and object(s) in it, and covering it over.

Burial is also seeing as the last journey of man on this mother earth. It is both religious and social concept, a mark of final respect to a deceased by the relatives, family members, friends and well-wishers. We bury people so that the spirit of the dead can rest in peace or gains its rightful place or entry into the land of the spirit. Ojielo (2018:25) observe that the Igbo cosmology does not view death as "finished" or as the end of human existence. Rather, it views the dead as existing in the other world, though in a diminished condition of life, as lessened life forces. Thus, Mbiti (1969) as cited in Dons Eze (2016) and Ojielo (2018:25) refers to the departed as the "living dead", whose personal immortality is expressed or externalized by the living through sacrifices, the pouring libation and rituals. As an ancient age-long tradition, burial is another way of bidding farewell to the deceased for the time spent on earth. It consists of long and complex rites. Thus, Parrinder (1976:95) noted that:

The great aim of much time and expense is to ensure a proper funeral for the departed, so that his spirit may be contented in the world beyond and will not return as a dissatisfied ghost to plague his family. Funerals are therefore, the last transitional rites introducing a man into the world of spirit.

It is in view of the above that Metuh (1991:136), averred that when one dies, the Igbo say "Ohapugo" meaning he/she has left, and that all efforts must be made to make sure that one reaches home (the spirit land of the ancestors). This according to him is achieved, as the Igbo believe, through elaborate funeral burial rites (ritual washing of corpse and decoration, lying in state, wailing by relatives and laying of the body into the grave and absolution).

Funeral on the other hand, is seen by Ezeokafor (2021:46) as a ceremony for honoring, praying and bidding farewell to the dead. Funeral custom according to him therefore comprises of beliefs and practices used by a culture to remember the dead, from interment or burial to other activities that may include prayers and rituals undertaking in their honour. Funerals as observed by Ezeokafor above often have religious aspects which are intended to help the soul of the deceased reach the eternal home of the saints. A funeral is also a ceremony that accompanies the final disposition.

The Concept of Befitting Burial

Befitting burial is a term which has become synonymous to every household in Igbo societies of Nigeria today. It is not uncommon to hear the word among the bereaved families as they engage in preparation to bury their loved ones. Thus, one may want to ask, what then is befitting burial all about? Just as the name implies befitting burial in the words of Chigbo (2021) can be seen as an excessively elaborate burial which takes into consideration so many items that gulps large amount of financial resources from the bereaved family and which are thought to make the burial occasion entertaining, memorable, pleasurable and worthwhile. In this, efforts are usually made to ensure that the would be guests are properly taking care of with respect to food, drinks and comfort even as they mourn with the deceased family. While organizing a befitting burial, immediate family members of the deceased and sometimes friends and well-wishers contribute and pull enormous resources be it financial or material together in a bid to make the expected attendees comfortable during the burial period. This kind of burial often attracts friends, business associates, colleagues, top government functionaries, business magnates, senior religious leaders as well as people from all walks of life as they are invited by the family of the deceased who most times want to show off their political and social status, as well as connections and contacts.

In preparation for befitting burial, Ibekwe (2021), informed us that building are sometimes renovated or new one is built, expensive caskets are bought, corpse are most times kept longer than necessary in the morgue in a bid to prepare well, foods and drinks are provided in excess, large colorful posters and banners are produced which announces the passing unto glory of a rare gem, an icon, a legend and the likes. Top musical (either religious or secular) artist including live bands and traditional music like folklore musicians are invited and heavily paid to perform, quality and beautiful souvenirs, brochures and invitation cards are produced, buses and other vehicles are chartered and paid for to convey guests to the venue of the burial, variety of expensive burial uniforms (ashebis) are bought and many more. At times, guests are fed for several days or weeks as the case may be.

Oluwabamisi (2014), in an online articles titled "*what is benefiting burial*" published in Business Day Newspaper on April of the same year corroborated the above observations. Befitting burial is also thought by some has not only to facilitate an easy transition of the dead to the great world beyond but also to ensure that the spirit of the dead ones not hover around to torment the living members of the family or relatives. It equally involved laying the body in state in an elaborately decorated chamber while direct descendants or relatives of the deceased are dressed in expensive ceremonial garments all in a bid to say farewell to the departed. (www.memorialplanning.com >burial-types).

In the cosmology of the traditional Igbo society, Madu (2003:46-47) noted that:

the burial associated with a good death include ritual washing of the deceased with water and anointing with cam wood dye to prepare it for the journey to the world beyond, killing of animals like goats and fowl and their blood smeared on the corpse and stuck all over with feathers, the rite of lying in state in his Obi which was normally built at the entrance of the compound, the laying of his working tools, his bags, his gun, some clothes, some coins, some animals and some food stuffs beside him, these were meant to be taken along to the spirit land, the rite of wailing by his wives and relatives and the rite of laying the body into grave and the rite of absolution which is performed by an old man if it is a man but this is done by two young virgins if the deceased is a woman.

The ritual according to him consists in pronouncements over the deceased body to cleanse the deceased of his transgressions and rid him or her of all obstacles which may impede his or her reincarnation and to bring greater blessings to the family. This is followed by some pronouncement by the old man or the virgins, as case maybe, to the deceased before he is interred.

Perspectives on Burial across the World

Burial takes different forms with respect to diverse cultural practices as seen all over the world. However, geography, religion, and the social system all influence burial practices. Climate and topography determines whether the body is buried under the ground, placed in water, burned/cremated, or exposed to the air. Religious and social attitudes determine how elaborate the burial should be; rank, for example, may determine whether the body is placed in the shallow trench of a simple burial or an underground chamber of impressive dimension and construction

1. Inhumation Burial (Natural, Earth, Green or Grave Burial).

This is a type of burial in the ground by hollowing out a trench in the earth for the body or covering it with rocks or dirt. This practice dates back to the middle Paleolithic period. It involves the use of containers for the dead, such as shrouds, coffins, grave liners and vaults, all of which can retard decomposition of the body. In ancient Egypt especially during the reigns of pharaohs, the remains of the dead were mummified or embalmed. Thus, Afrocentric historians believe that the origin of modern mortuary is attributed to this practice. However, the position of the body is significant in some cultures. For instance, the Buddhists – laid the dead body with head to the north, in ancient Egypt, this body was placed towards the west, Muslims are laid on the right side facing Mecca while many Native Americans buried their dead in a fetal position, sometimes in a basket or clay urn, with knees under the chin and the body neatly into a death bundle. Upright burial has been favoured by other people

particularly for warriors. Customarily, the body is placed in an extended position, in or out of a coffin, as if in sleep. The above views on the burial practices or positions of the dead were also shared by Dons Eze (2021:78) when he stated as follows:

In Oghe, it is...the diviner who will say where the dead person will be buried. According to him, normally, a person is buried with the head lying west-ward or south-ward. Each of these directions leads to spirit word. While a man is usually buried in front of his house; a married woman is buried inside her kitchen. This reflects their different roles, either as a shepherd, or as one in charge of the home front. A little child is however buried in the bush, to sojourn with other unidentified spirits hovering around the area, while a young man is made to appear in a masquerade before burial, as a way of recommendation to the ancestor for acceptance in the spirit world.

Similarly, Dons Eze observed as thus:

A war hero, in particular, one who had killed people during many of those inter-communal wars, will have an Ikpa music played for him to celebrate his valour. While a criminal, on the other hand, who had committed some heinous crimes, or who had sworn falsely before a shrine or an idol, and later died as a result, will have his corpse taken outside the community and thrown into the bush for the vultures to feast upon. All his personal belongings will be deposited with the shrine. In the case of a criminal, his entire property is thrown into Ajo Ofhia (Evil forest).

Grave burial, or inhumation, may be simple or elaborate. Some Eskimo people cover the corpse with a pile of stones or, where the stones are not readily available they use a small ice Igloo. The old Norse people-built barrows that sometimes-reached enormous heights. In Eastern North America, large burial mounds were characteristics of Indian cultures from 1000 BCE to 700 CE. Graves may be shallow pits, or they may be intricate and beautifully fashioned subterranean palaces sunk deep into the earth and may be spacious enough to accommodate vast number of persons. For example, the excavations of the royal graves of Ur dating back to about 300 BCE revealed in an inner chamber of one, the body of a ruler with a few intimate attendants, and in surrounding chambers, servants, ministers, dancing girls, charioteers with vehicles and animals and other persons who had been slain to provide service in death. (www.Britannica.com/spirituality)

2. Cave Burial

Caves, a natural refuge of humans, have also been used for the dead. The ancient Hebrews used natural single chamber caves and hewed oblong recesses lengthwise into the wall to accommodate the dead, a custom that encourage the building of mausoleums. This was later to be called sepulchral caves which is regarded as sacred and eventually became places of worship. Among them are thousands of rock temples in Western India and in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), some of which received elaborate architectural and sculptural treatment or design. Both caves and earth graves encouraged the development of other burial practices. The use of coffins and rich grave clothes and burial goods

3. Water Burial

The association between water and immortality is reflected in the myths of many cultures, myths that often center on a god-hero who sails away from his people in death with the promise to return again. The bodies of chiefs and heroes, therefore, have often been set adrift on rivers and oceans in death ships. Among the Norse, even those who were interred were sometimes given such a bier- a custom that was wide spread from Iceland to England during the 7th and 8th centuries CE. Perhaps the most famous of such ship burials that have been excavated was that at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, England. Archaeologists found the remains of a wooden boat for 38 rowers, 85 feet (26 meters) long that had been dragged a half mile (about 1km) from the river and lowered into the ground. Water burial has been common in other cultures. In the pacific Islands, it was customary to place the dead in a canoe and launch that on the water. However, not all water burial involves a ship or raft. In the Solomon Islands, bodies have simply been laid on a reef to be eaten by sharks, in other places they have been wrapped and weighted with stones. In western cultures, water burial is still employed on occasion when people die during a sea voyage. There is also a bone throwing ceremony that concludes death observances among the Hindu in India. Within a year after death, the remains of the dead are taken to the Ganges River or other rivers or streams that finally make their way to the Ganges.

4. Exposure Burial

This is placing the body of the dead where it may be eaten by scavenging birds and animals or weathered to its essential elements. The Zoroastrians have been perhaps the most widely known practitioners of this type of burial, which developed out of the belief that the corpse is unclean that to inter or cremate it, would contaminate the “pure elements” of earth, fire and water”. In other words, the tradition believes that a dead body defile everything it touches- including the ground and fire – and raising a corpse to the sky for vultures/birds to devour was historically the only option. This practice has been since 6th Century BCE. The Parsis of Mumbai, the Indian descendants of Persian refugees maintain “towers of silence”. The dead are carried to them, and funeral servants place them on stone beds surrounding a central pit. After the hovering vultures have stripped

the flesh from the bones – usually within a few hours—the bones are gathered and dropped into the central pit(www.britamica.com...> Spirituality).

5. Cremation Burial

In some culture like parts of India, when someone dies, the remains are cremated. The ashes or remains are sometimes kept in an urn or scattered in cemetery, garden, or at sea, river, stream or certain places with special meaning. An urn can also be placed in a spot with special meaning, such as over a mantle in a home, or in an urn garden, community/public mausoleum niche, urn mausoleum called a columbarium, or even bury in a gravesite space. A mausoleum is an above ground building memorializing multiple individuals. It provides you with a secure enclosure that will remain clean and completely dry without ever letting the casket or vault come in contact with the earth. Meanwhile, cremation can occur immediately the person is dead and the remains are returned to the family without any type of service. On the other hand, cremation can also take place few days after death and after a typical funeral service in which the body is displayed (www.memorialplanning.Com >burial-types).

Causes of the Trend of Befitting Burial in the Present-Day Igbo Society in Nigeria

The Igbos are known for their industry and competitive nature. They are also a very proud people who use every available avenue to showcase what they have achieved in life. Their flamboyant lifestyles are evidenced in occasions like Christmas, New Year, Easter, weddings and many other societal and personal celebrations. It is unfortunate, however, that this ostentatious display of lifetime achievement has been carried over to the burial ceremonies, as we are witnessing in many parts of Igbo land today. Today, a befitting burial is the trending thing for most deceased families. There are therefore a number of factors that have led to the ugly development. This according to Eziechi (2023) include the following:

1. Economic Status

As noted earlier, Igbos are hard-working people and at the same time a very proud race. Apart from the families who inherited our affluence, many others who have worked themselves up the ladder of economic status and social recognition will always want to show off the wealth they have acquired in the course of time at any slightest opportunity like burial occasions Eziechi (2023). In preparation for a befitting burial, special attentions are therefore paid to a number of things or items by deceased family in order to impress the would be invited and uninvited guests and to show them how God has blessed the family.

2. Connections and Contact of the Family

Another very important factor that has prompted families in Igbo land to engage in this trending burial is that they want to use that avenues to advertise their social, political, economic, educational and religious contacts and connections. It is no doubt that many wealthy families in the course of their life struggles and in the bid to climb up the economic and social ladder, have made important contacts and connections. Thus, during the burial of a deceased member of the family, these friends, colleagues, business associates, and wellwishers are usually invited. They are mostly people from all walks of Life; members of the religious bodies, academia, business magnets, political class among others. The level of the family sophistication is usually brought to bear during such burial occasions.

3. Undue Competitions

Undue competitions are another reason many families in Igbo land embarks on befitting burial. Competition is what the Igbos are known for. It is this competition that however made the Igbos what they are. They compete virtually in everything. In business, academic and what have you. This competition according to (Chiakwa 2023) is presently witnesses even in burial as befitting burial has taken a center-stage. To her, in many of Igbo villages and towns, families tries to outdo and outshine one another in their burial ceremony. Families goes extra miles in the bid to show that there are wealthier, more affluent and are more socially and politically connected to others. Thus, whooping amount of money is spent carelessly on many irrelevant and frivolous items just to impress the crowd of mourners and to prove superiority of wealth over other families

4. Social Recognition

It is also believed that most families in Igbo land who engages or had engaged in befitting burial does so to gain societal recognition. Having struggled through life and having succeeded and achieved the desired success, burial of the loved one therefore is always one of those numerous occasions which the bereaved families uses to show the world; the expected mourners, family members, friends and well-wishers that they have achieved wealth as well as social contacts and connections they have equally established in the course of time. The evidence of this is seen with the presence of personalities both invited and uninvited that are always in attendance.

5. To Maintain and Sustain Family Prestige:

Aniebonam (2013) is of the opinion that the deceased family are involved in this trend of befitting burial not only because they have the needed resources-wherewithal nor because it is really their intentions but because they are conscious of what their friends, colleagues, political and business associates, academic friends as well as their potential or would be mourners would say at the end of the burial ceremony or after departing the burial venue. In view of this, families are ready and prefer to spend their last Kobo to impress the public and to maintain, sustain and preserve their prestige, pride and bogus lifestyle.

Factors that are put into Consideration in Organizing a Befitting Burial

Number of items are listed and considered while organizing a befitting burial in today's Igbo land-societies. So, according to Anikwe (2022), Uzodiagu (2022) and Ezeudu (2022), these items include but may not be limited to the following: 1. **Electronic and Print Media Announcements / Jingles**

In a bid to publicize a would-be or an expected befitting burial in today's Igbo societies, a staggering amount of money is usually spent on radio and television announcements or jingles and on print media. These announcements are usually carried out before and even after the burial is said to be over. This publicity attracts various charges depending on the popularity of the media outfit in question, the name and the level of patronage enjoyed from the public and the agreement reached between the bereaved family and the media. For instance, if a very important program is on air, and has to be interrupted or paused for the burial announcement to be made, this in the words of Ogbonna, (2021) attract a higher or extra charge or fee. Reason being that there are expected to be much audience listening to the program as at the particular time the announcement is made or expected to be made and to which the program is or has to be interrupted.

On the other hand, the print Media also attracts huge charge for their services. Media outfits like newspaper, magazine and other sources of hard copy publications are avenue to which announcement or information about the obituary of the deceased are made. As at 2016 when the idea of this paper was conceived investigation revealed that a full page of advertisement in any of the national dailies attract a service fee of about #750,000, half a page goes for #350,000 while quarter and one quarter pages goes for #350,000 and #150,000 respectively. However, with the present day economic condition and inflation in the country, I am pretty sure that the charges must have gone astronomically high by now.

2. Burial Uniforms (Ashebis):

Burial uniform or the so-called "*burial Ashebi*" is another trend that has added to high cost of organizing a befitting burial in Igbo land-societies as at today. To Eluke (2021), Ashebi as it is fondly referred to, is a culture which the Igbo allegedly borrowed from their Yoruba brothers. It is a set of uniform (s) worn by family members, friends and well wishes during importance occasions. Today, these clothes have turned into clothes (sackcloth) that are used in the South East Igbo-land in mourning a departed loved one. Apart from burial ceremonies, the ashabis also features prominently in other social functions like traditional marriage, wedding ceremonies, to mention but a few. It is believed by some that burials are supposedly made colourful, rich and sophisticated by multifarious uniforms adorn by family member's relations and well-wishers of the deceased. In most cases, this clothing materials really cost a fortune to acquire by the bereaved family and individuals of various groups billed to grace the burial occasion.

3. Burial Musical Performance:

In burial occasion such as those of befitting burial, the hosting of high performing musicians of various musical types has become the norms in today's Igbo societies. Musicians such as Afro or Pop Stars, Gospel artists, life bands, folklore or traditional musicians among the rest are usually invited to perform. These musicians charge exorbitant fees to grace such burial occasion. However, the charges also vary depending on the popularity and caliber of the artist invited, hired or contracted to perform.

4. Burial Souvenirs:

Souvenirs are also not left out in the list of budget preparation for the burial of a deceased family member. Gift items are usually budgeted for and bought by the family or by individual or firm as the case may be contracted to organize the burial for the family. During this period, gift materials that would be shared or given to the invited guests, sympathizers or mourners at the end of the burial or as they are departing are usually bought and shared. The quality, type or the cost of the items are dependent on the financial strength / muscles of the bereaved family as well as the caliber and number of associates, colleagues, friends and so on expected to be at the burial. Among many of the varieties of the gift items that are usually bought and gifted to people are umbrella, towel, trays, jotters, shirts, Polo, caps, buckets, teacups, waste packers/bins and so on. Other very expensive items such as laptop, palmtop, wrist watches, hand fans, wrappers, to mention but a few are sometimes bought and are given

out too. This practice of gifting the mourners is however observed by Olisaemeka (2023) as a contradiction to Igbo ancient tradition whereby the sympathizers (friends/relatives) were the ones expected to present such items like food, drinks or even physical cash to the deceased family as their own little way of assisting the bereaved family to cushion part of the cost incurred during the burial occasion.

5. Burial Brochure an Invitation Cards

Burial brochure and invitation cards is another aspect of befitting burial which gulps a huge chunk of fund. The brochure usually contains the life history or autobiography of the deceased as well as his or her photo collections (galleries or album). It also includes the family pictures, their tributes and those of friends, colleagues and well-wishers. The more the tribute, the more the number of the pages are expected to be, and the higher the cost or charge or fee by the publisher/printer. The price also varies depending on the background (black and white or coloured) of the picture. In the same applies to the texture or quality of the paper. Just like the pages, the better the texture, the higher the price and vice-versa. The same vein, burial invitation cards are also found in the same category like that of the brochure (Olisaemeka, 2023).

6. Burial Casket

When it comes to the issue of casket, there are variety of them with different quality, sizes, shapes and built. In most of the so-called befitting burial today in Igbo societies of Nigeria, exorbitant casket are being purchased and are used for burials as articles of ostentation by rich families of the bereaved. In many instances, the undertakers are contracted to convey the corpse home, and in the process add colour to the burial occasion. The series of scintillating, well-rehearsed performances and physical and energetic displays while retrieving the corpse right from the mortuary and down to the point of the burial home of the deceased is something that many believes that keeps crowd of mourners or guests spellbound and somewhat entertained even in the midst of mourning. However, this service of the undertakers does not come cheap but at a varying costly prices. For instance, contracting or hiring the services of a renowned burial entertainment firm like APAMS FUNERAL SERVICES is really not for every deceased family, but for those who have the financial muscle.

7. Burial Venue

This is a major factor that is considered while organizing and arranging for befitting burial in Igbo societies today. The size and the nature of venues are dependent on the number and caliber of invited and expected sympathizers or mourners. Those who have bigger and befitting compounds sometimes uses the same for the purpose of the burial while those whose compound are small or not decent enough most times goes for something spacious, bigger and better for the hosting of the guests. Large sums of money are usually spent in hosting such befitting venues.

8. Mortuary Fees/Charges

Mortuary fees or charges sometimes blows up the cost of befitting burial. This is especially when a corpse is left in the morgue for a very long time. Ordinarily, the essence of putting the dead in the mortuary is to give the deceased family adequate time to prepare for the burial. It is also to enable those of the family member's residence abroad or in faraway places to get themselves prepared for the home trip with respect to the burial. Unfortunately, many wellto-do families in today's Igbo societies are annoyingly taking advantage of this by keeping their deceased loved ones longer than necessary in the mortuaries. At times, this may be as a result of unresolved lingering family disputes. But be that as it may, the longer the dead body stays up in the morgue, the more the charges pile up. This kind of situation observed by Chibor (2023) has prompted some religious denomination/community like the Catholic Churches in most parts of Igbo land to insist that no burial of her departed layfaithful/member shall exceed a month from the date the death announcement was pronounced in the church. Unfortunately, this law is usually not obeyed by most bereaved families in Igbo land today. According to the information further provided by Chibor (2023), one of the major cause of prolong keeping of the deceased in the mortuary is most times not for lack of money or financial constraints but for wanton reason of buying enough time to prepare adequately for the burial in order to impress the expected mourners coming to bid the deceased farewell. It is also good to know that the charges equally depend on the name, integrity and popularity of the mortuary in question. For instance, the chargers at Eastern Medical Centre mortuary in Enugu state and the likes are far more expensive to many other mortuaries in the state. The reason for this to Ubenyi (2023), is that the mortuary and others in the same category are adjudged to provide adequate security to the remains of the deceased and ensures that all the body parts are intact until the day the body would be retrieved for interment. There have been ugly stories whereby many mortuaries allegedly involve in the abominable acts of tempering or mutilating of the body part of the deceased for monetary gains. Such body parts according to the news sources are sold to ritualists for various purposes.

9. Burial Tents, Chairs, Tables and other Decoration Materials

The above items work hand in glove with the burial venue. You cannot talk about burial venue without putting all these items into consideration. After securing the burial venue, the next plan is on how to fill the venue with chairs, tables, and burial tents especially when it is an open space. The chairs and tables and the tent are equally beautifully decorated to make the place rich, colourful and attractive in order to meet the taste and appeal of the would-be mourners particularly the invited dignitaries. The number of expected guests and the size of the venue also determines the number of the chairs, tables, tents and canopies to be hired or contracted. At times, within a venue, a portion of it is specially decorated for the important guests invited/expected for the ceremony. In that portion, such guests are also specially entertained with unique music and varieties of local delicacies. Sometimes, foreign meals are also provided depending on the kind of guests expected at the occasion.

10. Burial Foods and Drinks Entertainment

So much money is also spent on food and drinks. In befitting burial, varieties of local delicacies are usually provided. Sometimes, foreign meals are usually served but this depends on the type or nature of the invited guests. Unfortunately, many of the foods are sometimes wasted at the end of the occasion. Apart from the wastage that comes from some of the already saturated or filled sympathizers or guests who out of greediness continue to request for more food only to later dump them after eating just a little fraction of it. It is also good to note that a large quantity of food is sometimes left unconsumed which eventually spoiled and are later discarded immediately after the burial.

The same scenario also applies with drinks as some of the so-called sympathizers sometimes demand for more drinks only to open them up to sip a little and later abandoned them. Some of the sympathizers also drinks themselves to stupor in the name of "AWUF" alias "free drinks". Besides, there are always these set of people who will steal drinks and wines meant to serve the guests given any slightest opportunity especially in a porous security environment. It is in view of the above that a paraphrased version of Ubaka (2024) in an online Facebook post queried as thus:

Why must there be food, drinks, wines and all manner of unnecessary entertainments at burials-funerals most especially those that involve untimely deaths of people below 70 years of age? And to make matter worst, he noted that some people usually get angry if they don't eat or where not served food and drinks at burials. While at the same time, some others shamelessly struggle for food even at the burials of 40 to 50 years old persons and every other deceased person below 70 years of age

Consequences of Befitting Burial in Igbo Land- Societies Today

The trend of befitting burial in the Present-Igbo societies- land has come with a number of consequences or implications. Eziechi (2023), noted that these are socio-economic and psychological in nature. To him, the present subculture-norm of befitting burial has obviously led to wastage of economic resources. In other words, money which the bereaved families could have been used to empower other jobless and not-doing-well members of the family are extravagantly lavished in the said burial. In a similar vein, the resources which could have been channeled into other productive and profitable ventures of the economy like the establishment of factories or industries that could have provided employment opportunities for the teeming jobless youth of the societies are blatantly mismanaged and wasted at the altar of wanting to impress and satisfy the burial guests in the name of befitting burial.

Sometimes, after hosting a successful befitting burial, life becomes hard, difficult and unbearable to some families as they struggle to survive having spent their entire life savings during the burial occasion. While some returns to square one or zero level, others according to the information provided by this research almost feed from hand-to-mouth because the burial has gulped the larger part of their resources. All these are the obvious realities especially for families who are not financially balanced but who choose to join the bandwagon or who choose to do befitting burial because others are doing it.

Again, family members or children of the deceased are compelled to go through harrowing emotional, psychological and financial stress or hurdles in a bid to meet up with all the so-called necessary burial arrangements and expenses typical of a befitting burial.

Most at times, deceased families are concerned or bothered with what people, friends, colleagues, associate, well-wishers and others would say if they fail to measure up with the needed expectations. So, in order to avoid gossips or perhaps embarrassment or what people would say befitting burial becomes inevitable option.

In addition, the quest to conduct a befitting burial has made some careless families perpetual and longtime debtors. Ibekwe (2021) revealed that long after a successful befitting burial, some families still battle to offset the loans they collected during the burial occasion. Moreover, there have been cases of families who had sold their valuable possessions like landed properties or other inheritance to settle debts or to have a befitting burial.

In the worlds of Ejiofor (2023), some members of the deceased families in Igbo land had gone out of the conventional ways or ethical norms of the society to raise funds to meet up with the task of conducting and organizing a befitting burial for their lost ones. This to him, had led some individuals into various forms of

criminalities such as theft, fraud, duping their employers, relatives, trusted friends and other members of the societies. In worst cases, some had taken to armed robbery and other abhorred social vices for this very purpose.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In traditional Igbo societies, just like in many places-societies in Africa, burial used to be a very solemn occasion that mourns a departed loved one. It was a period of reflections on the meaning and existence of life. Back in those days, death was feared by both the young and the adults. Unlike what is obtainable today, those days children were not allowed to come close to the burial place talk more of seeing the dead body. The news of the death of a relative kept the kids trembling and scared of moving about especially at night long after the burial.

Except in the death involving a titled man like Nze, Ozor, Ndi Ichie and so on or that which involved a man of ripe old and matured age as seen or witnessed in the burial of Ichie Ezeudu in Chinua Achebe "Things Fall Apart" (1995:2), burial was however done with little or no fun fair and without elaborate activities as we have it today in most Igbo societies. People did not bother themselves so much on a number of frivolous, irrelevant and money consuming long list of burial items that could be used for something better. Mourners were only interested in bidding the deceased farewell and not necessarily in what they would eat and drink as the norm in the contemporary Igbo land.

The point of departure today is that there is a craze or better still a more or less competitions among families in the south east region to outshine one another as they strive to organize befitting burial for their departed loved ones. This is even when some families do not have the needed finance for such elaborate burial. Burial in Igbo land has assumed a dramatic turn to something worrisome and inexplicable. The development has taken an unimaginable magnitude that it has become a bandwagon which every bereaved family in Igbo society wants to be associated with. According to Olija-Eze (2006:54), another area of materialistic inclination in our present age is the craze for burials, funerals and remembrances. He therefore averred that:

In africa and especially among diverse cultures, particularly among the Igbo speaking people-societies in Nigeria, that most people spend too much moneys for burials and funerals and even remembrances, and all these have raised much alarm as they have impacted negatively on the lives and wellbeing of the people in the region.

A Facebook group/page known as *Weird, Wonder and Strange* also acknowledged this craze for burial in the present Igbo societies of Nigeria in an online post (2024) shared on the 20th March when it opined that "we live in a world where funerals are more important than the deceased..." This cankerworm has eaten deep into the fabric of the Igbo societies that something has to be done to address this ugly trend.

However, this paper is not advocating for the idea that the deceased should be buried like a chicken or like an ordinary animal, no, not at all. It is rather condemning the unnecessary clamor for befitting burial and the need to check the ugly trend. In the words of Ezeji (2023), in an online post shared on the Facebook on the 11th November, he stated that:

Burials do not befit the dead, that the dead are dead and are unaware of what befit them or not. He further noted that "befitting burials" are bragging point for the living, and not for the dead, for the dead do not care what happens to their remains immediately after they are gone.

The authors of this paper are therefore of the opinion that the whooping sum of money that is used in hosting befitting burial occasions in the South-Eastern Igbo society can be used to grow and stimulate the economy of the region positively if channeled into productive and profitable ventures. Again, the money could be used to establish factories/companies that can generate employment for the army of unemployed youth of the region. Thus, this paper is calling for a massive sensitization programme to educate the people against this ugly development through relevant platforms or stakeholders; youth bodies, town Unions and many others within the various communities across the Igbo land.

Religious bodies should also use every available avenue of their sermon on the pulpit to condemn this ugly development. The traditional rulers are believed to be closer to the people and as well the custodians of the culture, customs and traditions of the people. They should therefore use their offices to educate the individual members of their communities on the need to play down on this unwholesome practice that contributes nothing to the economy of the region. This paper is also of the suggestion that this trend of befitting burial should be done with moderation if at all it must continue to be condoned. It condemns the clamor or competitions for the befitting burial among the people of the region especially when consider the stress and financial difficulties that the people passes through in hosting it.

Lastly, bereaved families should also learn to conduct burials based on their financial muscles or the resources at their disposal. The competition with other families that are well-to-do should stop. Thus, befitting burial should be planned in line with the families' available income or financial strength. The act of borrowing or incurring debt

to execute a benefiting burial should be stopped since the dead is gone and elaborate burial is simply to impress the living or the crowd of mourners and not the dead who knows nothing of the world anymore.

This paper will therefore conclude by drawing from the opinion of Ezeji (2023) in his online Facebook post shared on the 11th November when he noted as thus

Love your loved ones while they are here and alive, and sacrifices for them. Give them gifts. Speak words of affirmation to them. Do act of services for them. Touch them, hug them, kiss them and spend time with them. Laugh and smile with them, enjoy them. Do not save your accolades for the pages of their burial programs. The dead won't read them. Say what you need to say now, to the ones you love who are alive.

To Ezeji (2023), it is better to care for your loved ones while they are alive and healthy or when they are sick as the dead does not eat cows, goats, fowls, and cannon shots (egbe ala). He maintained that when somebody dies, that what matters is the spiritual benefits. Thus, he is of the opinion that if funeral loses its spiritual value, and become materialistic, then they are no more funerals. The concern here, according to him, is what can benefit the dead in the next world as well as his soul. This to him is the reason the church lays more emphasis not on food and drinks but prayers, Eucharistic celebration (or Holy Mass). He observed that the dead cannot help themselves, that all they need is our prayers. Therefore, any celebration or ceremony that loses touch of this spiritual value cannot longer be considered Christian. That is why these material celebration consisting of buying of goats, cows, uniforms, expensive caskets, burial brochures and invitation cards, burial venue, mortuary charges among others as superfluous practices and sheer exploitation of both the dead and the living

References

- Akpata, P. (2023), "Building Our Social Life Through Our Religious Faith" *In Christian Education : A Voyage into the Dignity of the Human Person. Being a Publication of Pastores Magazine of St. Bernard Seminary Hostel Nchatancha Nike, Enugu State. 14th Edition, March 2023-2024*
- Aniebonam, P. (2022), Post-Graduate Student, 35 years old, Interviewed at Enugu 20th February.
- Anikwe, F. (2022), Director of Cultural Studies, Godfrey Okoye University Enugu, 63 years old, Interviewed at Enugu, 13th February.
- Chiakwa, N.O. (2023), Retired Civil Servant, 68 years old, Interviewed at Enugu, 2nd May.
- Chibor, C. (2023), Nigeria Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Member, 27 years of age, Interviewed at St. Theresa's Group Schools, Agbani, Enugu 30th June.
- Chigbo E. (2021), Businessman, 68 years old, Interviewed at Iwollo Oghe, 28th August. Chinua Achebe (1958), *Things Fall Apart*, London: Heinemann Educational books.
- Dons Eze (2016), "Monwu Ibono and the Challenges of 21st Century" *In Oghe writers Association Journal, Vol. 1, No. 4*
- Eluke, N.O. (2021), On Air Personality (OAP)/Broadcaster, 33 years old, Interviewed at Enugu, 15th May.
- Eze, Dons (2021). From Cradle to the Grave: Marriage, Pregnancy & Birth, Death & Burial in Oghe: In Oghe Writers Association Journal. Vol.1 No 5.
- Ezeji, N. (2023), An Online Facebook Post Shared on the 11th November
- Ezeokafor, P. (2022), "The Issue of Traditional Interference in Christian Burials and Funerals: A Catholic Approach" *In Pastores Magazine 13th Edition. Christianity in Nigeria Today: Prospects and Challenges. Being a Publication of St Bernard Seminary Hostel Nchatancha Nike, Enugu State.*
- Ezeudu, L. (2022), Businessman/Politician, 49 years old, Interviewed at Enugu, 20th February.
- Eziech, C.C. (2023), Public Servant, 48 years old, Interviewed at Nigeria Prison Service (NPS), Enugu 2nd May.
- Goodnews Bible Second Edition, Genesis Chapter 3 versus 19. The United Bible Societies, 1994
- Hornby, A.S. (1948) Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 7th Edition London Oxford University Press.
- Ibekwe, M.O. (2021), Lecturer, 43 years old, Interviewed at Enugu Polytechnic Iwollo Oghe, 28th August.
- Igwe, E.P. (2015), "The Journey from Here" *The Safety Compass. A Publication of FRSC Zone, RE9HQ, Enugu. Vol.2 No.2.*
- Madu, J.E (2003). "Rites of Passage in Traditional and Modern Igbo Society". *In Obiajulu, A.O. (ed.) Readings in Humanities. Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publisher Ltd.*
- Mbiti cited in Ojielo, F (2018) "Monwu in Ezeagu Cosmology" Being a Publication of Gburugburu Movement Ezeagu Chapter in Civic Reception of His Excellency Rt.
- Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi Governor of Enugu State on Saturday 17th March Metuh, E.I. (1991). *African Religion in Western Conceptual Scheme*, Jos: Imico.
- Ogbonna, H. (2021), Journalist, 52 years old, Interviewed at Enugu, 15th May.
- Ojielo, F. (2018), "Monwu in Ezeagu Cosmology" Being a Publication of Gburugburu Movement Ezeagu Chapter in Civic Reception of His Excellency Rt. Hon. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi Governor of Enugu State on Saturday 17th March

- Okafor, N.A. (2015), "Make a Choice! Who Does Death Respect? No One". In *The Safety Compass. A publications of FRSC Zone, RE9HQ, Enugu. Vol.2 No.2.*
- Okafor, N.A. (2015). Make a Choice! Who Does Death Respect?-No One. In the Safety Compass. A Publication of FRSC, Zone RS9HQ, Enugu State. Vol. 2 N0.2
- Olija-Eze, J.S. (2006), *What Matters For You (Vol. 1)*, Enugu Press
- Olisaemeka, o. (2023), Master of Ceremony (MC), 41 years old of age, Interviewed at TransEkulu, Enugu, 30th June.
- Oluwabamisi (2014) "What is Befitting Burial?" online article published in Business Day on April 2014. Available in businessday.ng/life/article/what-is-a-befitting-burial. Accessed on 8th June, 2022.
- Parrinder E.G (1976). *African Traditional Religion 3rd edition*, London: Sheldon Press
- Ubaka, N. (2024), An Online Facebook Post Shared on the 11th March
- Ubenyi, G. (2021), Teacher, 39 years old, Interviewed at Central Primary School Iwollo Oghe, Enugu, 28th August.
- Uzodiagu, C.D. (2022), Trader/Pig Farmer, 45 years old, Interviewed at Enugu, 20th February.
- Weird, Wonder and Strange(2014), An online Facebook Post (<https://viralquill.com/modeling-through-the-ages-carmen-dellorefices-inspiring-story-ofperseverance/>) See www.merriam-webster.com> dictionary. Accessed on the 8th June, 2022.
- www.memoriaplanning.com>burial-types. Accessed on the 8th June, 2022.
- www.Britannica.Com>...Spitituality. Accessed on 8th June, 2022.
- www.https:en.m.wikipedia.org/...Accessed on the 8th June, 2022.

Influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child among the Igbo in Imo state

OFOR Obianuju Rita

Institute of Women and Gender Studies,
Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo state, Nigeria

Abstract

The study assesses the influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child among the Igbo in Imo state. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to select 206 respondents using interview schedule. Data collected on social development, and influence of paternal authority on the social development was analyzed with percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Average age of the girl children was 15.18 ± 0.86 years. Majority (63.1%) had WASSCE, 8.7% had sexual desire for their fathers, while 66.0% had special relationship with their fathers. Most (90.7%) of the girl-children in the study area accepted that they had positive relationship with their peers, and 84.9% accepted that they had good conflict management skills. My social development was promoted by fathers' support (WMS = 2.34) and fathers' stern reaction to my failures motivated me to work harder in subsequent tasks (WMS = 2.33) ranked foremost influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child. Also, 89.3% of the girl-children in the study area accepted that a fathers' absence makes a girl-child feel misunderstood and unappreciated in her social environment. The study concludes that fathers' stern reaction to their daughters' failures motivated their daughters to work harder in subsequent tasks.

Keywords: Paternal authority; social development; girl-child

Introduction

In many societies, the family unit serves as the primary agent of socialization for children, profoundly shaping their development and identities (Erna, 2018; Ignatius, 2020). Within this familial context, paternal authority, characterized by the power and influence wielded by fathers or male figures, assumes a crucial role in guiding children's upbringing and socialization (Nargiza et al., 2023). Among the Igbo community in Imo State, Nigeria, paternal authority carries significant weight, mirroring entrenched traditional values, cultural norms, and gender roles inherent in Igbo society (Adebayo et al., 2015).

The social development of children during their formative years is complex and influenced by various factors, such as cultural norms, societal arrangements, and family interactions. Within the Igbo community in Imo State, Nigeria, the significance of paternal authority in molding the social development of the girl-child is particularly noteworthy (Oguibe, 2014). Embedded in patriarchal customs, Igbo culture places a high value on the authority and decision-making role of fathers within the family structure (Odii et al., 2023).

Traditionally, the father's role in Igbo society transcends mere provision; he also bears the responsibility of guiding and molding the behaviour and values of his children, especially the girl-child (Uzoagba, 2017). The father's authority is perceived as pivotal in the socialization process, encompassing the acquisition of skills, norms, and values necessary for the girl-child to navigate the intricate societal expectations and gender roles within the Igbo cultural context (Odii et al., 2023).

Social development plays a pivotal role in a child's holistic development and welfare, impacting their capacity to engage meaningfully with others, establish wholesome relationships, and make constructive contributions to society (Uzoagba et al., 2022). Particularly for the girl-child, this developmental journey is intricately shaped by gender-specific societal expectations and cultural norms, which delineate their roles, prospects, and limitations within the community (Ignatius, 2020).

Social development is integral to a child's overall well-being, shaping their ability to interact effectively, cultivate meaningful relationships, and contribute positively to society (Uzoagba et al., 2022). Particularly for girls, this developmental process is influenced by gender-specific expectations and cultural norms that define their roles, opportunities, and limitations within their communities (Ignatius, 2020). In the Igbo society, characterized by entrenched traditional gender roles and patriarchal structures, paternal authority holds significant sway over the social development of the girl-child. This influence extends to various aspects of their lives, including education, socialization, autonomy in decision-making, and access to opportunities for personal growth and self-expression (Uzoagba, 2017).

Despite the increasing recognition of gender equality and the importance of empowering the girl-child, empirical research on the influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child among the Igbo in Imo State remains limited. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive assessment of the role of

paternal authority in shaping the social development of the girl-child within the Igbo cultural context. The specific objectives were to: (i) ascertain the social development of the girl-child in the study area; (ii) assess the influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child among the Igbo people in Imo State; and (iii) determine the effect of paternal absence on the social development of the girl-child.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Imo State, situated in the southeast, Nigeria. The state is positioned between Latitude $4^{\circ}45'N$ and $7^{\circ}15'N$, and longitude $6^{\circ}50'E$ and $7^{\circ}25'E$, covering an area of approximately 5,530 km² (2140 sq. mi).

The population of the study consists of all the girl-children between thirteen and eighteen years from Igbo extraction. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 206 girl-children for the study using an interview schedule. In the first stage, all (100%) the three senatorial zones in Imo state were selected. The three senatorial zones are Orlu, Owerri, and Okigwe.

In the second stage, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select 33.3% of the LGAs in Orlu and Owerri, and Okigwe zones. The selected LGAs are Ohaji-Egbema, Oguta, Njaba, Isu (Orlu zone); Owerri West, Owerri North, Ngor-Okpala (Owerri zone); and Obowo, Ehime Mbano (Okigwe zone). In the third stage, simple random sampling was used to select three communities from each of the chosen Local Government Areas. In the fourth stage, simple random sampling was used to choose four villages from each of the selected communities. In all the selected villages, a purposive sampling was used to choose two families each, that had at least a girl-child whose age at the time of data collection fell between thirteen and eighteen years. For families that had more than one girl-child within the age range of thirteen and eighteen years, a simple random sampling was used to select one. This gave a total of two hundred and sixteen (216) girl-children that were used for the study. However, only responses from two hundred and six (206) respondents were found useful for the data analysis.

Respondents were presented with 8 statements on social development of the girl-child with two response options of “yes” scored 1, and “no” scored 0. Influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child was measured with 9 paternal authority influences, with response options of “strongly agree” scoring 3, “agree” scoring 2, and “disagree” scoring 1 for positively worded statements. Negatively worded paternal authority influence statements were scored in the reverse order. The weighted mean score (WMS) was calculated and was employed to assign positions to the paternal authority influence statements in descending order, while the index of the paternal authority influence derived was used to categorize the respondents into low and high satisfied using below and above the mean criterion.

Respondents were presented with 9 statements on the effect of paternal absence on the social development of the girl-child with two response options of “yes” scoring 1, and “no” scoring 0. Socio-economic characteristics of the girl-child such as age, highest educational attainment, sexual desire for one’s father, and special/close relationship with one’s father were measured accordingly. The data were analyzed with percentages, mean, and Standard deviation.

Results and discussion

Socio-economic characteristics

The findings presented in Table 1 illustrate that the average age of the respondents was 15.18 ± 0.86 years. A significant majority (66.0%) fell within the age range of 13 to 15 years, while 34.0% were between 16 and 18 years old. The mean age of 15.18 ± 0.86 years observed among the girl-child participants in the study reflects various factors, including cultural norms, developmental stages, practical considerations, and the specific focus of the research. This mean age corresponds to the typical onset of puberty among girls in the Igbo community, a period marked by notable physical, emotional, and social changes, rendering it a critical phase for examining paternal influences on the social development of the girl-child.

Regarding the literacy level of the girl-child participants in the study area; Table 1 indicates that a majority (63.1%) possessed the West African Senior School Certificate Education, while 36.9% held the First School Leaving Certificate. Notably, none of the respondents had attained OND, HND, BSc, or PhD qualifications. This distribution suggests that all the girl-child participants in the study area were literate. Education holds significant potential to empower the girl-child among the Igbo of southeast Nigeria, fostering independence, critical thinking skills, and the capacity to challenge traditional norms and structures, as posited by Nwokolo and Nwokolo (2016). Regarding the inquiry into whether the girl-child participants harbored sexual desires for their fathers, Table 1 reveals that the vast majority (90.3%) responded in the negative, indicating that they had not experienced such desires. In contrast, 8.7% acknowledged having sexual desires for their fathers, while 1.0% were unsure. This

observation challenges the universality and applicability of the sexual clause of the Oedipus complex framework, highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity and specificity when interpreting psychoanalytic theories within diverse cultural contexts, as noted by Duruamaku-Dim (2019). The absence of oedipal desires underscores the complexity of human development and emphasizes the multitude of factors, including cultural, familial, and individual influences that shape psychoanalytic development and family dynamics.

Lastly, the data presented in Table 1 indicate that a majority (66.0%) of the girl-child participants affirmed having a special or close relationship with their fathers, while 30.1% reported otherwise. A small percentage (3.9%) was uncertain about the nature of their relationship with their fathers. The prevalence of close emotional bonds between the girl-child and their fathers, despite the absence of sexual desire, challenges the universal applicability of the sexual clause of the Oedipus complex framework. It underscores the importance of considering cultural factors when examining parent-child relationships and human development, as advocated by Urama (2019). Understanding family dynamics and emotional bonds in parent-child relationships necessitates a nuanced and culturally sensitive approach.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents (girl-children) according to their personal characteristics; n = 206

Variables	Percent
Age(years)	
13-15	66.0
16-18	34.0
Mean ± SD	15.18±0.86
Girl-child's highest educational attainment	
First School Leaving Certificate	36.9
WASSCE	63.1
OND	0.0
HND	0.0
BSc	0.0
PhD	0.0
Had sexual desire for one's father	
No	90.3
Not sure	1.0
Yes	8.7
Daughter had special/close relationship with her father	
No	30.1
Not sure	3.9
Yes	66.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Social development of the girl-child

Table 2 presents the responses indicating various aspects of social development among the girl-child participants in the study area. A significant majority, comprising 90.7% of the respondents, acknowledged having positive relationships with their peers. Additionally, 84.9% reported possessing good conflict management skills, while 77.6% expressed that they consistently communicated their thoughts and feelings effectively. Moreover, 77.6% of the participants affirmed having high self-esteem, and 72.8% stated that they handled their emotions judiciously in challenging situations. Furthermore, 92.2% of the respondents indicated that they exhibited empathy towards individuals facing difficulties, and a similar percentage (92.7%) reported active participation in community activities. Conversely, only a minority (10.1%) admitted to not having positive relationships with their family members. This finding contradicts the assertion made by Salihu (2023), which suggested that the social development of male children receives more emphasis than that of the girl-child.

Table2: Distribution of the respondents according to the social development of the girl-child; n = 206

Statements	Percent
I have positive relationship with my peers	90.7
I have good conflict management skills	84.9
I do not have positive relationship with my family members	10.1
I always express my thoughts and feelings with good communication skills	77.6
I have high self-esteem	77.6
I handle my emotions wisely in challenging situations	72.8
I show empathy to people when they are going through a difficult time	92.2
I participate actively in community activity	92.7

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Influence of paternal authority

Table 3 presents the findings regarding the influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child. It indicates that father's support (WMS (weighted mean score) = 2.34), father's stern reaction to failures motivating harder work in subsequent tasks (WMS = 2.33), and father's authority positively impacting interpersonal relationships in the girl-child (WMS = 2.19) were ranked as the most significant influences of paternal authority on social development. The prominence of father's support in promoting social development suggests that fathers who offer love, guidance, and positive role modeling empower their daughters with essential social skills, emotional intelligence, and self-confidence (Nduka and Ozioma, 2019).

Conversely, factors such as the quality of time spent by fathers enhancing relationships with others (WMS = 1.71), fathers' harsh discouragement of activities promoting social development (WMS = 1.19), and infrequent communication with fathers negatively affecting social development (WMS=1.15) ranked lower in influence. This suggests that the quality of time fathers spend with their daughters, their approach to discipline, and communication frequency were perceived as less impactful on the social development of the girl-child in the study area.

Furthermore, Table 3 reveals that 51.5% of the girl-child respondents indicated low influences of paternal authority on their social development, while 48.5% indicated high influence. This implies a mixed perception among the girl-children regarding the extent of paternal authority's impact on their social development.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to the influence of paternal authority on the social development of the girl-child; n = 206

Statements	Weighted Mean Score
My social development was promoted by father's support	2.34
Father's stern reaction to my failures motivated me to work harder in subsequent tasks	2.33
Father's authority in the family has positive effect in the development of interpersonal relationships in the girl-child	2.19
Girl-children in father-present families are more unlikely to demonstrate socio-emotional maturity than those in father-absent homes	2.13
The quality of time my father spent with me enhanced my relationship with other people	1.71
Fathers' authority affected my self-esteem, decision making ability, and other skills needed for successful social functioning	1.48
Fathers' attitude discouraged me from engaging in activities that will enhance my social development	1.27
The harsh manner of my father discouraged me from undertaking activities that will improve my social development	1.19
Father hardly talked with me and that negatively affected my social development	1.15
Level of paternal influence	Percentage %
Low	51.5
High	48.5

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Effect of paternal absence on the social development of the girl-child

Table 4 illustrates the impact of paternal absence on the social development of the girl-child. The findings highlight that a significant proportion (89.3%) of the girl-children acknowledged feeling misunderstood and unappreciated in their social environment due to their father's absence. Moreover, 63.1% expressed difficulty in trusting male authority figures as a consequence of paternal absence, while 55.3% noted its adverse effect on their relationships with peers. Additionally, 52.4% reported a negative impact on their self-esteem, and 50.5% mentioned feeling insecure and unloved in their daily lives.

Furthermore, 38.8% of the girl-children admitted to adopting a male rather than a female role model in the absence of their father, and 40.8% acknowledged feelings of abandonment. Similarly, 44.7% stated experiencing social isolation from their peers due to the lack of a father figure.

These findings suggest that paternal absence significantly influences the social development of the girl-children in the study area. The perception of feeling misunderstood and unappreciated in their social environment may have profound implications for various aspects of their social development, including self-esteem, trust, communication, relationships, and academic performance (Yamn, 2018; Umana, 2020). The absence or perceived absence of a father figure may contribute to these challenges, emphasizing the importance of paternal involvement in fostering healthy social development among girl-children.

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents (girl-children) according to the effect of paternal absence on the social development of the girl-child; n = 206

Statement	Percent
A fathers' absence affected the girl-child's relationship with peers	55.3
The girl-child experiences negative feelings towards her father's absence	55.3
The girl-child's self-esteem is negatively affected by father's absence	52.4
The girl-child feels insecure and unloved in her day-to-day life as a result of father's absence	50.5
The girl-child feels isolated from her peers due to the lack of father figure	44.7
A fathers' absence makes a girl-child feel misunderstood and unappreciated in her social environment	89.3
The girl-child adopts a male rather a fellow female as a role model due to her paternal absence	38.8
A fathers' absence makes a girl-child to feel abandoned	40.8
Paternal absence makes a girl-child to demonstrate difficulty in trusting male authority	63.1

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that fathers' stern reaction to their daughters' failures motivated their daughter to work harder in subsequent tasks. Also, social development of the girl-child was promoted by fathers' support in the study area. Majority of the respondents accepted that fathers' absence makes a girl-child feel misunderstood and unappreciated in her social environment.

The study recommends more of fathers' support to their girl-child in order to improve the social development of the girl-child. Fathers should express stern postures to their daughters' failure so as to motivate them to work harder in subsequent tasks.

References

- Anikwe, C. C., Mamaha, J. E., Okorochukwu, B. C., Nnadoziec, U. U., Obarezia, C. H., Ekwedigwe, K. C. (2020). Age at menarche, menstrual characteristics, and its associated morbidities among secondary school students in Abakaliki, southeast Nigeria. *Heliyon* 6, e04018.
- Duruamaku-Dim, J. U. (2019) Self-concept and Lesbianism Tendencies of Girls in senior Secondary Schools in Cross River State: Counselling Implications For Appropriate Sexual Orientation. *Calabar Counsellor*, 8(1), 111-124.
- Erna, R. (2018). Family Influence on the Development of Children. *Journal of Elementary Education*. Volume 2 Issue 1, pp. 2-12.
- Ignatius, N. O. (2020). The Notion of Family in Igbo African Society: A Philosophical Appraisal. *European Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religious Studies*. Vol.4, Issue 1, pp 17- 25.
- Nargiza, K., Tengiz, K., and Tinatin, G. (2023). The Role of The Family in The Socialization of The Individual, Contemporary Problems and Perspectives. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 1(37). doi: 10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/30032023/7942.
- Nduka, U. and Ozioma, N.G. (2019) Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and the Role of Women in Igbo Traditional Religious Culture. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 7, 272-289.
- Nwokolo, C., and Nwokolo, S. (2016). Girl – Child Education as a Panacea for National Development and Sustainability. *International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education (IJTIE)*, Special Issue Volume 3, Issue 1, 915-919.
- Odi, B. C., Ukaegbu, N., Uzoagba, C. O., and Uzoagba, O. (2023). Igbo cultural practices: Changing, dying or dead? *African Anthropologist*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, pp 68–86.
- Onyiriuka, A. N., Ehirin, F. A., Abiodun, P. O. (2013). Assessment of the age of menarche of Nigerian Urban

- School girls, *Pacific J. Med. Sci.* 11(1) 1–10.
- Salihu, M. A. (2023). Girl Child Education for Sustainable Development Goals in Northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Applied and Scientific Research (IJASR)* Vol. 1, No. 3, 2023 : 269-278.
- Umana, A. D. (2020). Parenting style as contact; an integrative academic performance 113, 487– 490.
- Urama, N.E. (2019). The Values and Usefulness of Same-Sex Marriages Among the Females in Igbo Culture in the Continuity of Lineage or Posterity. *SAGE Open* April-June 2019: 1–9; journals.sagepub.com/home/go
- Uzoagba, C.O. (2017). Visual art forms: The implications in the maiden rite tradition of Umuchu, South East, Nigeria. In Gabriella Nwaozuzu, Patrick Okpoko, Boniface Mbah, & Ndubuisi Ahamefula (Eds) *Igbo Institutions and Leadership*. Nsukka: Centre for Igbo Studies, University of Nigeria.
- Uzoagba, O., Mbah, B., Mbah, E., Okeke, C., Okeke, G and Uzoagba, C. (2022). Sociocultural underpinnings of toponyms in Nuskka Southeastern Nigeria. *Ikenga journal of African studies*, 23(2), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.53836/ijia/2022/23/2/008>
- Yam, D.N. (2018). *New introduction lectures on psychoanalysis*. New York. Norton.

Audience Perception of Public Affairs Programme on Nigeria Democracy: A Case Study of *Politics Today* on Channels Television

Ekhato, Emmanuel Zelinjo

Department of Mass Communication
Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku
Emmanuelekhato@gmail.com

Abstract

Given the nature of public affairs programme, they ought to hold the government accountable and canvass issues that are of interest to the political and economic development of the nation. This study investigated the audience perception of public affairs programme (politics today on channels television) on Nigeria's Democracy. The study became necessary to find out the contribution of politics today on channels television to the development of Nigeria's Democracy. Ascertain the public perception of the issue frequently discussed on the program (politics today). The study was anchored on political economy theory and media accountability theory. Survey design was employed with the aid of 13-table questionnaire. The data obtained from questionnaire administered were analysed and presented using four point Likert scale, frequency table, simple percentage and mean score. The sample size of 400 was derived using Taro Yamane formula through sample random and purposive sampling techniques to reflect and represent all the residents in 12 wards of OREDO Local government area of Edo State.. The result shows that politics today on channels television has contributed significantly to the development of Nigeria's democracy through the dissemination of information, education of audience about political issues. Finding also shows that the public perception of the issues frequently discussed on politics today on channels television are considered favourable, highly positive and signifies acceptance, respondents perceive the issues discussed on politics today as capable of contributing to a healthy and sustainable political climate in Nigeria. Also it was revealed from the findings that the programme provides a framework for the government to be responsible to the people. This study concluded that the time allocated to the programme is inadequate to effectively explore the various issues raise in the programme. Based on findings of this study, the researcher recommended that more time should be allotted to the programme and the media as the fourth estate of the realm should be given free hand to operate and function as the watchdog of the society.

Keywords: Audience, Perception: Public affairs, Democracy, Politics, And Television.

Introduction

Programme is the heartbeat of broadcasting. The Audience is able to relate to television because of the program/content. Therefore, it forms the true essence of the existence of broadcast media. Everything about broadcasting is predicated on programmes. Hence Ikhazuagbe (2009), stated that Programmes are the packages or materials produced and transmitted by broadcast station as it service. Television programmes are produced using such personnel's as producers, directors, presenters, talent/key players and music. It is an established fact that broadcasting does not exist in isolation; it happens and exist with the active connivance and participation of the society. Programmes are the content or services that broadcast stations offer their audience/viewers. There are various types of programmes such as news, entertainment, children, public affairs programmes etc with specific targeted audience. All programmes is for the consumption of the broadcast audience.

Broadcast media messages are presented to targeted audience through programmes. Therefore, a programme is a message which the broadcast media offers her publics (heterogeneous audience) to communicate ideas or feelings. These programmes including public affairs programmes are not an end in themselves, rather it allows the targeted audience to make informed decision and cope with their environment. Public affairs broadcast programs such a *Politics today* on Channels are function of what happens in the society. Each public affairs program just like "*Politics today*" on *Channels TV* has effects of educating, informing, awareness creation and entertaining as its main purpose and objectives, the programs are produce for the consumption of targeted audience

Nevertheless, public affairs programme like *Politics today on Channels Television* ensures national cohesion in the process of nation building should contribute to the development of national unity and strive for continuing expression of the Nigeria identity. Among other things it political objectives should primarily be to create and promote political awareness among the citizens in a democratic society, identify and promote civil responsibility amongst the citizenry, mobilize the people towards achieving national goals and promote social justice based on the fright and responsibilities of the individual in the society.

Since inception in 1999, the Nigerian democracy has experience difference lots of set-back due to the political atmosphere and abuse of power and injustice to the fundamental human right, hence this study is undertaken to examine audience perception of public affair programmes on the Nigeria democracy.

A public affair program offers TV audience with new and interesting perspective on Nigeria's democracy. Yet, there is a paucity of record looking at audience perception of public affair program on Nigeria democracy. The problem with mass communication is that the audience judges the information they receive from the media, it therefore becomes imperative to find out the contribution of *Politics today on channel television* to the development of the Nigeria democracy.

Given the nature of public affairs programme, they ought to hold the government accountable and canvass issues that are of interest to the political and economic development of the nation. It is not certain whether these issues are frequently canvassed on *Channels Television Public affairs programme, Politics today*.

The question this study seeks to answer is: What is the perception of Oredo residents of *Politics today* on channels Television? The study tends to ascertain relevant objectives such to find out the contribution of *Politics today* to the development of Nigeria, to ascertain the public perception of the issues frequently discussed on the programme as well as to find out the accountability issues promoted on the programme. Based on the stated objectives, research questions and hypotheses were derived in line with the independent and dependent variable of the study. The study will be beneficial to the Nigeria government with its numerous parastatals and relevant agencies such as Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the viewers. Furthermore, the findings of this study would serve as reference material and add to the body of knowledge for researchers, broadcasters, Journalists, students and lecturers among others who wish to work on similar area. The geographical scope of the study is Oredo local government of Edo State, the content scope is on audience perception of *Channels Television* most celebrated program; *Politics today*. The unit scope who formed the respondents were audience who are viewers of the Television programme of the study area.

The Concept of Public Affairs Broadcasting

Public Affairs broadcasting is a broadcast that lays emphasizes on public policies and politics for the benefit of broadcast audience and recommended by the government regulations.

In broadcasting, public affairs radio or television programs focus on matters of politics and public policy. Among commercial broadcasters, such programs are often only to satisfy National Broadcasting Commission regulatory expectations and are not scheduled in prime time. According to Orjiakor, et al (2015) Public affairs broadcasting can be referred to as a form of broadcasting where the public exercises right to expression; right to know the things happening within and outside their environment; right to seek and disseminate information and also right to information disseminated. Succinctly, public affair broadcasting is the social responsibility of the broadcast media to the public. The nucleus of Public affairs programme is on matters of public policies and politics that are informational, educational, cultural and entertaining.

Public affairs broadcast schedule involves following guidelines for providing the public with relevant, issue-oriented programming and information to meet their legal obligation to address public issues. Public Affairs programme may be a special unit, separate from the news department, dedicated to producing long-form public-affairs programming. These programmes can be in form of: Voxpop Documentaries, News Magazine, Public Panel, Human Interest events, Interviews, Talks, Drama etc. (Orjiakor, 2015). Therefore, Public affairs TV and radio programming is broadcast media that addresses matters of public policy and interest. Educational, informative, cultural, and appropriate for all listeners of a station, this programming covers a wide range of topics important to the nation.

Hence the broadcast stations act as public trustees. Public affairs program entails the development and production of sustaining programmes by a media house. Numerous public affairs programs like "*Politics today*" on *channels TV* are carried out to ensure the audience has access to vital information that pertains to the wellbeing of the nation. Such significant programs aired related to community issues, aka public affairs, attract the largest proportion of listeners, news and public affairs provision is a core function of a broadcast station, and garners enormous trust ratings yet it's a feature that is in short supply in participatory news media. Simply put public affairs program is for public good. Since the broadcast media is watchdog of the society and a public trustee, therefore it's required to serve the "public interest, convenience, and necessity.

Concept of Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the people have the authority to deliberate and decide legislation ("direct democracy") or to choose governing officials to do so ("representative democracy")

The Role of Public Affairs Programme in a Democracy

The nucleus of Public affairs programme is on matters of public policies and politics that are informational, educational, and entertaining. Simply put, it's for public good. The broadcast media in Nigeria performs the role

of a virile press; nevertheless, the Nigerian constitution bestows a larger role to the broadcast stations. One of such is to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. This responsibility therefore demands of the media to play a major role in the socio-political development of Nigeria. According to UNDP, Public service broadcasting has a key role to play in strengthening democracy and democratic governance as well as poverty reduction efforts by ensuring that marginalized and disempowered groups (those with neither political nor economic influence nor power) have access to information and provide a voice. Chima, (2015) States that public affairs programme covers development across the country in the areas of politics, current affairs, commerce, industry and infrastructure, sport, lifestyle, entertainment. Ace (2012) in the encyclopedia titled “Media and Election” asserted that media informs the public about matters of public interest and act as a watchdog over the government.

Thinking about how media can be used, and to what specific ends, has nevertheless shifted significantly over the years. In the early days, many in the field understood media mainly as a top-down tool for the dissemination of information. The challenge was to convey development “messages” on diverse subjects such as health awareness, disease prevention, agricultural practice, water management, or environmental responsibility. Recently, the emphasis has shifted to the empowering potential of media as a bottom-up means for promoting participation in society and political life, especially in marginalized communities.

From these perspective citizens require not only access to information but also the ability to consult, respond, and engage with leaders and opinion makers—to have voice. Citizens need access to the means of communication and voice in order, also, to be able to speak with one another, to discuss their conditions and aspirations, and to develop the capacity for engagement and for action to improve access to services and rights under the law. The approach values local knowledge, it respects local cultures, and it puts people in control

It is specifically concerned with how policy frameworks can most effectively enable media to hold authorities to account in the public interest, provide fora for informed and inclusive public debate, and help underpin effective governance.

The Challenges of Broadcast Commercialization on Public Affairs Broadcasting

Government control of print and broadcast media in many African countries leave little scope for dissenting opinions and, therefore, public debate. Such are the obstacles to media freedom. He who pays the piper dictates the tune, government owned media will never speak bad of the government even when she brings obnoxious policies, in the same vain some private media commercialize news just to make ends meet

In the Nigerian context Orjiakor (2015), highlighted some challenges that characterize public affairs broadcasting in Nigeria.

These include:

1. Bias in Topic Selection: public affairs broadcasting originated through educational programmes to educate, entertain and inform the public, but today most public affairs programmes focus on matters of politics and public polices at the near exclusion of educational programmes.
2. Funding: In Nigeria, the issue of creating an act that will incorporate public broadcasters, producers of programmes, individual public television and radio stations in the disbursement of federal budgetary allocation, which is obtainable in the United States of America, is a non –existence factor as far as public broadcasting is concerned in the country. This poses a strong challenge to public broadcasting in Nigeria.
3. High Cost of Production: Local production will cost more money, hence, funding presents barrier to moving public broadcasting towards local issues.
4. Imbalance Flow: New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) came about owing to qualitative and quantitative imbalance in the flow of news programme. In Nigeria media stations are not to be blamed for national programmes and /or foreign programmes, as they are cheaper than producing local programmes.
5. Graveyard Slot: Most public affairs programmes are most times slotted when few listeners/viewers tune in or are not even available. For example Christian programmes slotted between 5 – 6am on Sunday; 12 mid night programmes etc.
6. Recycling: This entails the exclusion of new and more diverse programmes because of loyalty to dedicated audience on old programmes.
7. Partiality: Most public affairs programmes aired in government-owned stations in Nigeria are perceived by the audience to be partial because all that is being aired is towards the interest and favour of the government in power.
8. Technological Innovation: Well seasoned journalists are not technologically compliant. This poses a great challenge when they occupy sensitive position like the Director of programmes, Producers etc. Also, recent technological innovation in New Media is overshadowing the old Media through the use of internet and satellite technology.

"Government-owned television has always been used for the interest of repressive regimes in Egypt, where the boundary between public service broadcasting (PSB) and state television has been blurry. This has been observed in the case study of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), which has posed itself as public service media, despite its allegiance to the state rather than the people (Abdulla, 2016)."

Historical Development of *Politics today* on Channels TV

Before we talk about the program *Politics today* on channels let us quickly know about channels television. *Channels Television* is a Nigerian independent 24-hour news and media television channel based in Lagos, Nigeria. The parent company, Channels Incorporated, was founded in 1992, a year before the Nigerian government deregulated the broadcast media. It began broadcasting in 1995. Its primary focus is producing news and current affairs programs on Nigerian domestic issues. The Channels mission is to act as a watchdog on governmental policies and activities. Operating in Nigeria's popular broadcast media market, *Channels Television* is the first and only thriving national TV brand, dedicated solely to the dissemination of news. It is the first Nigerian broadcaster to stream its television programming live for 24 hours. According to chanelstv.com, *Channels Television* was established by Nigerian veteran broadcasters and business moguls: John Momoh and Sola Momoh. The Company commenced operations in Lagos, south western Nigeria and has since grown to include three other Stations in Abuja, Edo and Kano states. The Company also has bureaus in almost every state in Nigeria, including stringers and affiliates in other parts in Africa. *Channels TV* was established with the aim of cultivating and upholding fairness, as well as satisfying the right of the individual to be informed. The company was licensed in June 1993 and allocated a frequency on uhf (channel 39). , "channels television", and now broadcasts to a well discerning audience of over 20 million people. The station has earned a reputation as an aggressive news outlet, which provides a balanced account of news coverage. The establishment of *Channels Television* as a news station was in response to the yearning of Nigerians for a TV station that will among other things: Give an alternative medium of communication to the government and its policies, and hold public officers accountable to the people;

- Accommodate opposing views;
- Inform and educate the general public on how they are governed, as well as educate them on their civic responsibilities to the state;
- Uphold the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to be informed.
- Committed to presenting the news with proven facts
- Airing divergent views, irrespective of differences and circumstances.
- Airing news that affects Nigerians.
- Ensuring we give the people a voice

Channels TV takes enormous pride in its role of an unbiased, candid observer of events in Nigeria, and its indisputable position today, as market leader, in its chosen but exclusive sphere, is an eloquent testimony to its unceasing innovativeness and remarkable evolution. The company is home to award-winning and outstanding broadcasters who have remained one of its key strengths. As Channels already enjoys wide popularity for its English-language content and operates a professional news organization with a nationwide reporting network, it is positioned to extend its franchise into northern Nigeria in Hausa and subsequently into Southern Nigeria in Yoruba and Ibo languages. Its flagship programs, *Politics today*, News at Ten and Sunrise Daily are the most popular and most watched television programmes in the Country. However *Politics today* is one of the most celebrated programs on *channels TV*. '*Politics today*' is aired for one hour every week, this is political show on *Channels Television* that seeks to bring a broader, more in depth perspective to issues in the political realm. It is also aimed at bringing viewers analysis from all the angles for a better understanding. We understand politics may be a complex business and the activities of the players may sometime appear complicated to comprehend; that's why we bring you the players themselves. *Politics today* is a show that x-rays recent significant development and activities in the world of politics in and around Nigeria. Political perspective of national issues are captured and analyzed in each edition. The program is anchored/ presented by Seun Akinbaloye. *Politics today* has a facebook page for its fans and followers. Anyone can like a page to become connected with it and get News Feed updates. The rapid spread of information and the immediate feedback on social media platforms like Facebook have made it an essential tool for news dissemination. Often, news stories are shared on Facebook before they are broadcasted on traditional media outlets, making it a potent source of firsthand information. As Ekhato Emmanuel Zelinjo (2019, p. 17 & 20) observes, 'Facebook is a portal for social networking sites because the users are constantly participating in the production and consumption of news through this medium.'

Empirical Review of Related Study

A number of researchers have conducted empirical research on the Appraisal of Audience perception of public affair program on Nigeria's democracy. This section reviews works of such scholars as they relate to this current study. The empirical works reviewed are:

Nsikan-Abasi S. Nkana & Duruson, M. C. (2016). Audience participation in and perception of AIT's current affairs program "Focus Nigeria." *International Journal of Science Arts and Commerce*, 1(10), 78–82.

The study of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam investigated the perception of audience and their participation in current affairs programmes, with a spotlight on African Independent Television's (AIT) "Focus Nigeria". The study employed the survey research design to investigate how each variable influence the extent to which members of the audience participate in interactive programmes, as well as how they perceive the programmes they participate in. In this study, it was found that the programme is more elitist than general in its approach which greatly influences the caliber of people who can participate in the programme. The elitist approach of the programme naturally screens the non-literate from participating, considering the language and nature of discussions. It also shows the inconsistency in audience participation as majority of the audience rarely participate in the programme. This implies that most people just watch the programme without airing their views

The findings/ result of this study revealed that despite the importance of feedback in a democracy, and opportunity created for audience participation in current affairs programmes, the audience failed to maximize the opportunity. It was also discovered that the programme has not sufficiently provided the opportunity for meaningful dialogue due to the political nature of issues, media screening of participants as well as timing. Most respondents also perceive the programme as too political in concept and content. It was therefore recommended that better audience enlightenment should be carried out for better participation, and other issues than politics incorporated into it.

This study of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) is related to this research in that both studies used the survey design research method. While the work of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) looks at the Audience Participation in and perception of AIT's current affairs programme "Focus Nigeria" this study streamlined its scope by examining only the audience perception of public affairs programmes on Nigeria democracy. A case study of *Politics today* on *channels TV*. However the study of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) was anchored on the Democratic Participant theory. While this current study is anchored on political economy theory and media accountability theory.

Theoretical Framework.

(a) Political economy theory

Political economy is an interdisciplinary branch of the social sciences that focuses on the interrelationships among individuals, governments, and public policy. Political economists study how economic theories such as capitalism, socialism, and communism work in the real world.²⁵ Feb 2021

The roots of political economy as we know it today go back to the 18th century. Scholars during the period studied how wealth was distributed and administered between people. Some of the earlier works that examined this phenomenon included those by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill.

But the term is probably best ascribed to the French writer and economist, Antoine de Montchrestien. He wrote a book called "Traité de l'économiepolitique" in 1615, in which he examined the need for production and wealth to be distributed on an entirely larger scale—not in the household as Aristotle suggested. The book also analyzed how economics and politics are interrelated.

Smith was a philosopher, economist, and writer who is commonly referred to as the father of economics and of the political economy. He wrote about the function of a self-regulating free market in his first book, which was called "The Theory of Moral Sentiments." His most famous work, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (or "The Wealth of Nations") helped shape classical economic theory. It was also used as the foundation for future economists.

Mill combined economics with philosophy. He believed in utilitarianism—that actions that lead to people's goodwill are right and that those that lead to suffering are wrong.⁸ In essence, he believed that economic theory and philosophy were needed, along with social awareness in politics in order to make better decisions for the good of the people. Some of his work, including "Principles of Political Economy," "Utilitarianism," and "A System of Logic" led him to become one of the most important figures in politics and economics.

Political economy became an academic discipline of its own in recent years. Many major institutions offer the study as part of their political science, economics, and/or sociology departments.

Research by political economists is conducted in order to determine how public policy influences behavior, productivity, and trade. Much of their study helps them establish how money and power are distributed between people and different groups.⁹ They may do this through the study of specific fields such as law, bureaucratic politics, legislative behavior, the intersection of government and business, and regulation.

(b) Media accountability theory

Another theory that relates to this work is the Media accountability theory, according to Neil Nemeth's (2000) starting point is that media accountability is essentially very simple, and it occurs all the time whether or not it is supported by theory or formalized systems: "Whenever someone asks a news organization to explain or justify one of its decisions, the media accountability process has been set into motion", he writes (p 42). Nemeth uses the phrase, "media accountability process", and that view of accountability imbues the anthology (Pritchard 2000) in

which Nemeth’s article appears. Editor Pritchard, for his part, defines media accountability as “the process by which media organizations may be expected or obliged to render an account of their activities to their constituents” (p 2).

The “constituents” are *Politics today* audience in Oredo local government area, Benin City of Edo state, individuals, groups and organizations (TV viewers, readers, advertisers, news sources, media colleagues and regulatory agencies). Borrowing terminology from the Law, Pritchard refers to the stages in the process as naming (a constituent identifies a media problem), blaming (the constituent holds a media organization responsible for the problem), and claiming (the constituent demands some form of reaction on the part of the media organization; these may range from an explanation of the rationale behind a decision to publish to economic compensation for the damage or trauma that publication caused). Although Pritchard mentions several different kinds of constituents, it is clear that he mainly has the private citizen in mind. “Ultimately, media accountability depends on citizen participation. The same, of course, is true of democracy” (p 192). The current interest in greater accountability is not confined to the media sector. It is prevalent in many different sectors of society. It may be seen as a function of globalization. As companies grow and consolidate on a global scale, we find that codes of conduct and ‘social governance’ become more common. Meanwhile, it has become easier to communicate and interact via the web, both for those who wish to exact an admission of responsibility from firms and organizations, and for firms and organizations who wish to respond and explain themselves.

Research methodology

The survey design was used for this study. The population of the study is drawn from residents of Oredo local government area of Edo State. The researcher randomly selected Oredo out of other local government areas in Edo states. The selected Oredo local government area (Edo South), population is 374,515. The population a total of Oredo (Edo south), 374,515, (Population Density, 2016).

The sample size for this work is 400, which is drawn from residents of Oredo Local Government Areas. This figure was derived using Taro Yamene Formula. The sample size of 400 was also deduced from the sample size determination formula proposed by Taro Yamane.

The sampling techniques employed in the collection of data were the simple random sampling and the purposive techniques. The simple random technique was adopted to allow the researcher give all respondents in the defined population equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample.

The research instrument for collecting data for this study is the questionnaire.

The instrument for this study was administered to 400 (four hundred) residence of oredo local government area, with benin city as the head quarter. Oredo local government area is made up of 12 (twelve) wards. The wards in oredo are: gra./oko, ogba, ogbe,ogida, uselu, new benin, ogbeson, etete, ologbo, irimwinhin, ugbekun and oka To reach the populace, the researcher distributed the 400 copies of questionnaires among the 12 (twelve) wards in oredo local government.

The researcher with the aid of one research assistant gave 33 copies of the questionnaires to 33 respondents in gra./oko ward, ogbe 33 copies, ogida 33 copies, uselu 33 copies, new benin33 copies, ogbeson 33 copies, etete 33 copies, ologbo 33 copies, irimwinhin 33 copies, ugbekun 33 copies, and oka 33 copies , with a total of 396 questionnaire. The remaining 4 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to 4 residences in any of the ward. The research study covered all the wards in oredo local government area. The completed copies of the questionnaires were collected on the spot upon completion.

The method employed by the researcher for the collection of this study data, was the person – to – person approach with the aid of one (1) research assistant to reach out to the 400 respondents in the 12 wards of Oredo local government area in Benin, Edo state. In effect, the completed questionnaire was retrieved on the spot. This enabled the researcher to collect the entire questionnaire administered without losing any. It also afforded the researcher the opportunity to clarify issues before the respondents within the confines of research ethics. The method used by the researcher in analyzing data which were collected from respondents was the simple percentage method.

Data Presentation and Analysis

SECTION A: BIO DATA

Table 1: Showing Gender of respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
Male	256	64 %
Female	144	36 %
Total	400	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From the data collected, majority of the respondents are males. This is because the male are 256 representing 64% of the total respondents, the number of female are 144 representing 36% of the total number of respondents.

Table 2: Showing the Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
-----------	-----------------------	----------------------------

18-22 years	12	3
23-29 years	24	6
30-36 years	164	41
37 years and above	200	50
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Data collected from the field revealed that majority of the respondents are those who fall under 37 years and above as they are 200 representing 50% of the total number of respondents. Respondents who fall under the age range of between 18 – 22 years representing 3% of the total numbers of respondents are the least as they were only 12 of them.

Table 3: Showing the Marital Distribution of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
Single	10	2.5 %
Married	360	90 %
Separated	20	5%
Divorced	10	2.5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Among the respondents, the married are more. They are 360 representing 90% of the total number of respondents. While the singles and divorced are ten (10) respondents each representing 2.5% each, those that are separated are twenty (20) representing 5% of the total number of respondents.

Table 4: Showing the Religion Distribution of Respondents

Religion of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
African Traditional religion ATR	16	4 %
Christian	360	90%
Muslim	24	6 %
Total	--	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Majority of the respondents surveyed are Christians as 360 of them representing 90% of the total number of respondents identify with the religion. While 24 respondents representing 6% of respondents are Muslims, only 16 respondents representing 4% of the total number of respondents practice African traditional religion.

Table 5: Showing Distribution of Respondents per wards

Wards	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
GRA./OKO ward	33	8.5
OGBE	33	8.5
OGBA	33	8.5
OGIDA	33	8.5
USELU	33	8.5
NEW BENIN	33	8.5
OGBESON	33	8.5
ETETE	33	8.5
OLOGBO	33	8.5
IRIMWINHIN	33	8.5
UGBEKUN	33	8.5
OKA	33	8.5
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The above table gives a breakdown of the population of OREDO local government area in Benin City, Edo State.

Table 6: Showing the Extent to Which Respondents Watch Politics Today

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Large Extent	384	96%
Low Extend	10	2.5%
Not Exposed	06	2.5%
Total `	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

Majority of respondents agreed that they are exposed to the programme titled politics today on channel television.

Table 7: Showing the extent *Politics today on channels TV* contribute to political communication and development of audience (Nigerians)

Item	Extent of Contribution Values	SA	A	D	SD	Total	*	Decision
		4	3	2	1			
i.	Politic today has contributed significantly to political communication	380 1520 95%	20 60 5%	0 0 0%	0 0 0%	400 1520/400 100%	3.95	Accepted
ii.	<i>Politics today on channels TV</i> Has not contributed significantly to political communication and Nigeria democracy	0 0 0	0 0 0%	40 80 10%	360 360 90%	400 440/400 100%	1.1	Rejected
iii.	The programme has contributed to the development of Nigerians democracy (audience)	250 1000 62.5%	150 450 37.5%	0 0 0%	0 0 0%	400 1550/400 100%	4.6	Accepted
iv.	<i>Politics today on channels TV</i> has help in sustaining Nigeria democracy by widely disseminating the kind of information people need?	250 1000 62.5%	98 294 24.5%	48 96 12%	4 4 1%	400 1394/400 100%	3.48	Accepted

Source: Field Survey; 2024

From the data collected as indicated above, respondents are of the view that the programme, politics today, on channels television has contributed significantly to political communication and the political development of the target audience who are mainly Nigerians. More so politics today on channels TV has help in sustaining Nigeria democracy by widely disseminating the kind of information people need (audience)

They rejected the view that the programme has not contributed significantly to political communication and by implication the political development of Nigerians

Table 8: Showing the Contribution of politic today to the development of Nigeria's democracy

Item	Contribution Values	SA	A	D	SD	Total	*	Decision
		4	3	2	1			
i.	Information Dissemination	380 1520 95%	20 60 5%	0 0 0%	0 0 0%	400 1580/400 100%	3.95	Accepted
ii.	Education of audience	240 960 60%	60 180 15%	30 60 7.5%	70 70 17.5%	400 1270/400 100%	3.17	Accepted
iii.	Audience Enlightenment	280 1120 70%	40 120 10%	45 90 11.25 %	35 35 8.75%	400 1365/400 100%	3.41	Accepted
iv.	Subtle Mobilization of electorate	280 1120 70%	20 60 5%	50 100 12.5%	50 50 12.5%	400 1330/400 100%	3.32	Accepted

v.	Sensitization	270 1080 67.5%	100 300 25%	30 60 7.5%	0 0 0%	400 1440/400 100%	3.6	Accepted
vi.	Advocacy	180 720 45%	140 420 35%	60 120 15%	81 81 5%	400 1341/400 100%	3.35	Accepted
vii.	Politics today on channels TV help masses to make informed political decisions	200 800 50%	100 300 25%	90 180 22.5%	10 10 2.5%	400 1290/400 100%	3.22	Accepted
viii.	Program Politics today on channels TV increase the level of awareness on national issues	240 960 60%	60 180 15%	70 140 17.5%	30 30 7.5%	400 1310/400 100%	3.27	Accepted
Ix	The program provide a forum and political parties to debates their qualification for office before the audience	380 1520 95%	15 45 3.75%	5 10 1.25%	0 0 0%	400 1575/400 100%	3.9	Accepted

Criterion mean 3.0 Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows that politics today has contributed to the development of Nigeria. The data collected revealed that the programme has contributed to the development of Nigerians democracy through the dissemination of information, education of the audience about political issues, enlightenment of the audience who are the potential electorates, media advocacy, subtle mobilization of the electorates and general sensitization of the media audience who are potential voters in elections.

Politics today on channels TV help masses to make informed political decisions. The Program Politics today on channels TV increase the level of awareness on national issues. And more so the program provides a forum and political parties to debates their qualification for office before the audience.

Public perception of the issues frequently discussed on the program

Table 9: Showing how respondents perceived political issues that are discussed on the programme

Item	Perception Values	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X	Decision
i.	Favourably	250 1000 62.5%	100 300 25%	30 60 7.5%	20 20 5%	400 1380/400 100%	3.45	Accepted
ii.	Non-favourably	03 12 0.75%	04 12 1%	183 366 45.75%	210 210 52.5%	400 600/400 100%	1.5	Rejected
iii.	Neutral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
iv.	Indifferent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Criterion mean 3.0: Source Survey, 2024

Most of the respondents strongly agreed that the issues that are frequently discussed in politics today on channel television are favourable.

Out of the 400 respondents, the mean score of those who are in the affirmative is 3.45. This signifies acceptance. No respondents were neutral and indifferent on their choic of perception of respondents on the programme.

Discussion of findings

R Q 1: What is the contribution of politics today to the development of Nigeria democracy?

From the various data presented as shown on the various tables establishes the fact that the contributions of politics today on channels TV are enormous. From the data collected from the field as shown in table 6, show that large extent of Oredo respondents are exposed to politics today on channels TV, respondents have access and are exposed to the programme politics today. Hence it encourages residents of Oredo local government participation in Nigeria's democracy, which is a clear indication that the public affairs programme titled politics today on channels TV contributes and continues to contribute positively to development of democracy in Nigeria. This finding is closely related and supported by the empirical study of akoja M. I (2016), who employed the

development media theory to drive home the watch dog role the programme play weekly. Finding reveal that the media just like politics today on channels TV encourages national development

Politics today as shown from the data collected from the field as presented in table (7) seven reveals that majority of respondents. Strongly agreed that issues discussed on politics today could and would contribute to a healthy political climate in Nigeria. This is because politics today channels television is provide various shades of enlightenment on political issues and stories as they unfold in Nigeria. The programme also provide a platform for various political perceive through interviews, debates and responses. This is just as it provides an opportunity for political actors and actresses (Political Key Player) to air their view. And more so the programme provide a forum and political parties to debates their qualification for office before the audience. Ojogbo (2002) sitting akakwandu (2016) frowns against elitist and democracy that detaches itself from the grass root.

Politics today has contributed to the political enlightenment of the audience (see table 7,8, & 9), The tables shows that politics today has contributed to the development of Nigeria. The data collected revealed that the programme has contributed to the development of Nigerians democracy through the dissemination of information, education of the audience about political issues, enlightenment of the audience who are the potential electorates, media advocacy, subtle mobilization of the electorates and general sensitization of the media audience who are potential voters in elections.

Politics today on channels TV help masses to make informed political decisions. The Program Politics today on channels TV increase the level of awareness on national issues. Bearing in mind the 2023 general election and the high level of awareness and participation among eligible voters

RQ2: How has the public perceived the issues frequently discussed on the programme?

The answer to this question can be proffered from Table 8. Which shows that the Oredo audience is favourably disposed to the issues that are discussed on politics today. This is because they see the issues are timely, controversial, highly challenging and debatable. Therefore the public perceptions of the issues frequently discussed in the programme politics today on channels TV is highly favourable more so Table 10 also provide a framework for the question from the data gathered and presented issues highlighted on the programme could and would contribute to a healthy political climate in Nigeria. Respondents are also of the view that the programme sharpener and shape political thoughts of audience and is capable of making or influencing them to take informed political decision in the future elections especially in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Data collected from the field as shown in the table 11 above, the respondents strongly agreed that politics today on channels television gives detailed political news. And Respondents perceive the presenter as not biased and they agreed that political analysis/question are not one sided [table 13] which conforms to the social responsibility theory and agenda setting theory as evident in the empirical study on audience perception of television magazine programme sunrise daily on channels television towards democratic development. Orewere(2006) sitting Asemah (2011) sees agenda setting as the ability of the mass media to influence the public, awareness of issues frequently aired as against the audience knowledge of the issue;

Table 13 shows that respondent strongly agrees that politics today Uphold the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to be informed, The programme is Committed to presenting the news with proven facts

RQ3: What is the accountability issues promoted in the programme.

Various accountability issues that revolve around the political sphere are presented and promoted on the programme, these issues are corruption, due processes during elections, attacks on INEC Offices, general accountability are responsibility of government to the people, media advocacy, political education and debates and critical analysis of basic responsibility of the government to the people. Hence media accountability theory becomes the theoretical bases for this study. Owing the fact that majority of respondents strongly agrees that politics today on channels TV provides a frame work that could make the Nigerian government accountable and responsible to the people'

Findings from this study in table 12 reveals that respondents strongly agrees that Politics today on channels TV encourage stewardship report to the masses from key political players in the political scene. It upholds the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to be informed. The programme is committed to presenting the news with proven facts. *Politics today on channels TV* continues to inform and educate the general public on how they are governed, as well as educate them on their civic responsibilities to the state and give the people a voice. This in turn may raise the level of media literacy and the legitimacy for media organizations as watchdogs (Plaisance, 2000; Glasser & Ettema, 2008). These finding agrees with the empirical study of Olusegun Wehinse Ojomo and Emmanuel Akpoveta (2019) which dwell on how media ethical practice can help sustain democracy in Africa. Olusegun and Akpoveta study concluded that media should ensure that government does what will make the citizens recognize and participate in democracy.

Conclusion

Politics today on Channels Television has witness a tremendous audience acceptance especially those that are political oriented. Hence, the study examines the perception of Oredo Local Government residents on the impact

of the programme. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that *politics today* on Channels TV is not only generally accepted by residents in Oredo Local Government area of Edo State, it is making significant contribution to political communication, political development and media political advocacy in Nigeria. Additionally, the researcher also concluded that the programme generally sensitize, educate, inform, mobilize, enlighten and persuade audience to take an informed political decision in future elections in Nigeria. Moreover it is the conclusion of the researcher that the programme is faced with two major challenges of inadequate time, and inconsistent and epileptic power supply and outage that has disrupted the audience from effectively participating during the programme

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study and arising from the conclusion from the study, the researcher recommended as follows

The time allotted or the programme should be increased by at least one hour. Thus will enable the programme enough time to effectively handle issues that bothered on politics in Nigeria. This more so that politics determine all other sphere of economic, cultural, technological and other aspect of human Endeavour and survival.

i. Relevant stakeholders in the media industry and political key players should be encouraged to adequately participate in political affairs, discourse and debates on political issue, should be encourage among media practitioners and operators.

ii. The media as the fourth estate of the realm and the watch dog of the society should be given more free hands to carry out their tripartite role which is reporting the government to the society and the society to the government. More so the masses who are the audience should be allowed to have a say in the way thier country is been governed, in the same vain those who governed the country should do so in accordance to the law of the country.

iii. Audience should be given opportunity of immediate feedback system and participation by random phone in by audience

References

- ACE(2012) media and election. Administration and cost of elections: Project-<https://aceproject.org>
- Akoja, Mofoluke I (2016). Audience participation and perception of media programmes: implications for national development. *Journal of research and development (jrnd)* vol. 2, no. 12,
- Asemahs.Ezekiel, Guybawu m., Ekhaeafu D.O and Okpanachi R A (2022). *Research method and procedures in mass communication*, Jos. Matkol press
- Chima (2015) *Public Affairs Broadcasting Radio and Television*, AFRN and Nigeria Television Authority (NTA).
- Chimaraoke Akakwandu (2014) *Public opinion research,obosi*. Wise connection school
- Diamond, L., & Morlino, L. (2004). The Quality of Democracy: An Overview. *Journal of Democracy*, 15, 20-31. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2004.0060>
- Dr. Nsikan-Abasi S. Nkana&Mirriam C. Duruson (December-2016). Audience Participation in and perception of AIT's current affairs programme "Focus Nigeria" *International Journal of Science Arts and Commerce*, Vol. 1 No. 10
- De Haan, Yael (2011). *Between Professional Autonomy and Public Responsibility: accountability and responsiveness in Dutch media and journalism*. Amsterdam: ascor.
- Ekhatu, Emmanuel Zelinjo (2019) *Attitude of UNIBEN Students Towards Facebook Usage in Benin city , Edo State*. A project submitted to the department of mass communication, university of benin for the award of Post Graduate Diploma in mass communication, university of Benin, Benin city.
- Gideon Timileyin Olaoye, Stella Chinyere Enyindah and Ezekiel S. Asemah (2022) *Influence of politics today on channels TV on public opinion about polities in Benin City*. (P 296) *Thoughts on political communication*.
- Glasser, Theodore L. & Ettema, James S. (2008). *Ethics and Eloquence in Journalism. An approach to press accountability*. *Journalism Studies*, 9(4), 512-534.
- Ikhazuagbe muhamad-nasiru (2009) *styles and techniques in broadcast media production and presentation: a practical approach*. Ibadan safmos publishers
- Jones (2004) *rural athens under democracy*. Philadelphia. Universityof Pennsylvania
- Nkan feb-ukozon (2004) *media organization and management*. Enugu. nsib publishers
- Ogili, E. E. (2005). *Project Writing: Research Best Practices*. Enugu: Providence Press Nigeria Limited.
- Olusegun Wehinse Ojomo & Emmanuel Ejomefowie Akpoveta(2019 P64) *Media ethical practice and democratic sustainability in Africa: A synergic approach*. *Novena journal of communication* Vol. 10. 2019
- Orjiakor, I. (2015). *Public Affairs Broadcasting*, Imo State University Owerri. (Unpublished)
- Orjiakor *Ifeoma, Ani Moses, Anyanwu Joy Chinwe, Nnabuife Nonso* (2015) *PUBLIC AFFAIRS BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA: MYTH OR REALITY?*
- Pinto & Helena Sousa (Eds.), *Communication and Citizenship.Rethinking crisis and change* (pp. 63-70). Braga: Universidade do Minho.

Population density (2016) <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/nigeria/admin>

R Abdulla (2016) Navigating the Boundaries Between State Television and Public Broadcasting in Pre- and Post-Revolution Egypt.

International Journal of Communication. Usc califonia

Steve bucklay, kreszertia duer toby mendel and sean o siochiru (2008) Broadcasting, Voice and Accountability: A Public Interest Approach to Policy, Law, and Regulation Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

The International Journal of Communication. (2016). Retrieved from <https://ijoc.org>

Tobias Eberwein, Susanne Fengler, Matthias Karmasin (2019) Media Accountability in the Era of Post-Truth Politics. London Routledge

Torbjörn von Krogh (ed) (13-14 March 2007), Media Accountability Today... And Tomorrow Updating the Concept in Theory and Practice. International Seminar at School of Communication and Design, Kalmar University, Nordicom University of Gothenburg.

UNESCO (2000), Public Broadcasting: Why? How, World Radio and Television Council and Centre D Etudes Sur Les Medias, Canada.

Zelizer, Barbie (2011). Media Accountability as a Portal on the Limits of Conceptualization. In Manuel Communication and Citizenship: Rethinking Crisis and Change (Ed) Manuel Pinto & Helena de; Sousa

www.wikipedia.com

www.channelstv.com

www.edostategovernment.com

www.freelibrary.com