

MULTILINGUALISM AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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Abstract

This paper, Multilingualism, Identity and Culture in a Globalized World, examines language as a constitutive element of human identity rather than a mere instrument of communication. The study is prompted by the rapid expansion of global culture and the gradual erosion of linguistic diversity. While multilingual practices are widespread, the nexus between language, culture and identity remains insufficiently articulated. The main objective is to interrogate how multilingualism shapes cultural expression and identity formation within a global context. It also considers the emergence of multiple and hybrid identities. The study adopts an interpretative method with insights from sociolinguistics, cultural theory and philosophy. Findings indicate that multilingualism engenders complex and encrusted identities. Individuals traverse diverse cultural domains with relative ease. Language mediates thought, emotion and social attachment. At the same time, global processes may diminish local cultural forms. The paper advances the thesis that multilingualism constitutes a decisive force in identity formation and cultural development. It demonstrates that linguistic plurality sustains cultural vitality and deepens mutual understanding. The study concludes that multilingualism remains indispensable in the contemporary world. It recommends that educational institutions and policy frameworks promote multilingual competence to foster inclusion and equip individuals to address global challenges.

Keywords: Multilingualism, identity, culture, globalized world and language.

Introduction

Language does more than convey meaning. It forms the core of human identity. It shapes thought, frames experience and sustains culture. The formation of ethnic groups relies on common cultural signifiers which have developed under specific historical, social and political context which encourage sense of belonging” (Edward, Shamagana and Margaret: 2018:78) In a world marked by constant movement, language now operates across borders with new intensity. Many individuals no longer belong to one linguistic space. They inhabit several. This shift calls for careful study. This paper begins with three language categories: monolingualism, bilingualism and multilingualism. A monolingual speaks one language, often the mother tongue. A bilingual commands two languages with notable ease. A multilingual speaks more than two. The first two provide a basis for contrast. The third drives this inquiry. Multilingualism reveals a richer and more complex relation between language, identity and culture.

The motivation for this study arises from current global conditions. Migration, digital exchange and transnational education have increased contact between languages. English now spreads across domains of power. Local languages face pressure. Cultural forms shift at a rapid pace. Many communities struggle to preserve their linguistic heritage. At the same time, individuals seek wider inclusion in global spaces. This situation raises urgent questions about identity and belonging. The problem, therefore, lies in the unclear relation between multilingualism and cultural identity. Does the use of many languages strengthen identity, or does it weaken it? Does it enrich culture, or does it lead to uniformity? Some argue that multilingualism fragments the self. Others claim that it expands human capacity. These opposing views demand critical attention. Without clarity, language policy, education and cultural preservation remain poorly guided.

The main purpose of this paper is to examine how multilingualism shape identity and culture in a global setting. It seeks to explain how individuals form varied identities through language use. It also explores how multilingual competence supports interaction across cultures. In addition, it assesses the risks posed by global linguistic dominance. The study aims to show that multilingualism holds both promise and challenge. To achieve this central aim, the study adopts an interpretative method. It draws from sociolinguistics, philosophy of language and cultural theory. The analysis relies on conceptual clarification and critical reflection. It engages key scholarly views on language, cognition and identity. The framework treats language as a social and symbolic system. It also regards identity as fluid, shaped by context and interaction. This approach allows for a balanced interpretation of multilingual experience.

The findings of this study indicate that multilingualism produces complex identities. Individuals do not lose themselves in multiple languages. Rather, they acquire new modes of self-understanding. Each language opens a distinct cultural horizon. Together, they form a complex identity. This condition may create certain issues, but it also fosters adaptability. Multilingual individuals often display stronger cognitive control and social awareness. They move across cultural spaces with greater ease. The study also finds that language remains central to cultural continuity. Each language carries values, memory and shared meaning. When languages decline, cultures lose depth. Yet multilingualism does not necessarily threaten cultural survival. It may support it. Individuals who command several languages often act as cultural bridges. They connect communities and sustain dialogue. However, the dominance of global languages, especially English, poses a real risk. It may reduce linguistic diversity if left unchecked.

Consequently, the study advances the thesis that multilingualism is not a threat to identity. It is a resource for its expansion. It does not erase culture. It deepens it when properly sustained. Language plurality strengthens human understanding. It equips individuals to engage a diverse world with insight and sensitivity. The challenge lies not in multilingualism itself, but in how it is managed within global structures of power.

The paper concludes that multilingualism remains vital in the present age. It supports both individual growth and collective life. It enhances communication, sharpens thought and broadens cultural awareness. At the same time, it demands careful support. Without such support, weaker languages may disappear. Cultural imbalance may follow. For this reason, the study offers clear recommendations. First, educational systems should promote the learning of multiple languages from an early stage. This should include both global and local languages. Second, governments should enact policies that protect minority languages. Such policies must go beyond symbolic recognition. They should include funding, curriculum design, and media presence. Multilingualism stands at the centre of modern identity. It reflects the condition of a world in motion. To ignore it is to ignore a key feature of human life today. To engage it with care is to secure both cultural richness and shared understanding.

Literature Review

The Concept of Language: Language stands as one of the most distinctive achievements of the human species. It is not merely a tool for communication. It is a structured system of symbols, sounds, and signs through which meaning is produced and shared. Through language, individuals convey thoughts, emotions and intentions within a social context. Language does not exist in isolation. It operates within society and derives meaning from it. Culture shapes language, and language, in turn, preserves culture (Gaaikwad, 2019). This reciprocal relation defines human interaction. Linguistic symbols function according to established rules and conventions. These rules make communication intelligible and stable across contexts.

One primary function of language is communication. It enables the transmission of ideas, knowledge and information. While all living beings communicate, human language permits abstraction and complexity. It provides a formal structure through which nuanced thought can be expressed. Nonverbal cues may support communication, but language remains its most precise medium. Language also serves an expressive function. It conveys inner states such as feelings, moods and attitudes. Expression gives language its emotional depth. It reveals the psychological condition of the

speaker. The roots of expression lie in representation through symbols, whether in speech, writing, or art (Taylor and Simonson 2016). Social conditions often shape the extent and form of such expression.

Another key function is the informative use of language. This function focuses on the transmission of factual content. It seeks clarity, accuracy and truth-value. Informative language appears in teaching, reporting and analysis. It allows knowledge to be organized and communicated in a structured manner. Language further enables social interaction. It establishes relationships and sustains social bonds. Through interaction, individuals learn norms, roles and patterns of behaviour. Children acquire language through engagement with others. This process also shapes identity and social competence. Language thus acts as a primary agent of socialization (Gaaikwad, 2019).

Emotionality forms another dimension of language. Words often carry affective weight beyond their literal meaning. This feature reflects the speaker's attitude and psychological state. Emotional content intensifies communication and gives it depth (Arifi, 2024). It distinguishes mere information from lived experience. Language also plays a central role in cultural preservation. It carries traditions, values and collective memory across generations. Oral histories, rituals and customs depend on language for continuity. Each language encodes unique ways of interpreting reality. The loss of a language often entails the loss of cultural knowledge. It should be stated that

language is both dynamic and foundational. It shapes thought, sustains culture, and structures social life. A proper grasp of its nature reveals its central place in human existence.

Multilingualism and Human Cognition: Multilingualism engages cognition at a deep level. It is not a simple addition of vocabulary. It reshapes how the mind processes information. Language and thought remain closely linked. Each language provides a distinct structure through which reality is interpreted (Arifi, 2024). The multilingual mind does not treat languages as separate units. It manages them in active relation. A speaker must select one language while suppressing others. This process demands control. It strengthens executive function and improves attentional capacity (Shaaban et al., 2024). Such mental regulation becomes more refined with sustained use.

Memory also benefits from multilingual practice. The retention of multiple linguistic systems requires constant recall. Words, rules and meanings must remain accessible across contexts. This demand strengthens both working memory and long-term storage. Over time, the brain develops greater efficiency in handling complex tasks (Sinha, 2019). Multilingualism also shapes perception. Languages encode reality in different ways. Some emphasise tense, others stress aspect or relation.

These variations influence how events are understood. A multilingual individual moves across these systems with relative ease. This movement expands interpretative capacity and supports flexible reasoning. Cognitive flexibility stands as a major outcome. Multilingual speakers often shift between perspectives without difficulty. They approach problems from different angles. This ability supports decision-making in uncertain conditions. It also encourages creative thought. New ideas often arise at points where linguistic systems intersect.

Language learning itself requires analytical effort. The learner must detect patterns, form rules, and apply them in context. This process strengthens abstract thinking. It also improves problem-solving skills. Language here functions as a cognitive exercise, not merely a communicative tool (Goundar, 2016). Empirical studies support these claims. Research links multilingualism with improved executive control and adaptive thinking (Shaaban et al., 2024). The brain responds to linguistic demand through structural adjustment. Neural pathways develop through repeated use. This reflects experience-dependent plasticity. There are, however, minor costs. The multilingual speaker may experience slower lexical retrieval in certain situations. This occurs due to competition between languages. Yet such difficulty remains limited. It does not outweigh the long-term cognitive advantages.

Multilingualism also enhances metalinguistic awareness. Speakers become conscious of how language functions. They reflect on grammar, meaning and use. This awareness supports learning across domains. It sharpens both linguistic and analytical reasoning.

Multilingualism, Identity and the Self: Identity does not arise in isolation. It develops through language, memory and social interaction. Language provides the structure through which the self is formed and expressed. It shapes how individuals think, interpret experience and relate to others. In this sense, language is not external to identity. It constitutes it (Arifi, 2024). The acquisition of more than one language introduces a new dimension to identity formation. The individual no longer operates within a single linguistic horizon. Each language carries its own logic, values and cultural assumptions. When a speaker moves between languages, the frame of reference also shifts. This shift affects self-perception. It also alters how the individual is perceived by others.

Multilingual individuals often develop layered identities. These layers correspond to different linguistic and cultural contexts. A person may think, feel and respond differently depending on the language in use. This does not imply instability. It reflects a broader range of self-expression. The self becomes extended rather than divided. This condition gives rise to hybrid identity. Hybrid identity

emerges from sustained contact between cultures. It blends elements from different traditions into a new form. Such identity is common in global settings shaped by migration, education, and digital exchange (Kerubo, 2024). It reflects the lived reality of individuals who belong to more than one cultural space.

Language plays a decisive role in this process. It mediates access to cultural norms and social practices. Each language encodes a specific worldview. It carries distinct meanings, values and forms of reasoning. When individuals acquire multiple languages, they gain access to multiple systems of meaning. This access reshapes their sense of self and expands their interpretative capacity. Multilingual speakers often display strong contextual awareness. They adjust language use to suit social settings. They shift tone, register and expression with precision. This adaptability strengthens social competence. It allows the individual to function effectively across diverse environments. Identity here becomes fluid, yet coherent. There is also a reflective dimension to multilingual identity. The speaker becomes aware of language as a system. This awareness invites critical self-examination. One begins to ask how identity changes across linguistic contexts. Such reflection deepens philosophical insight into the nature of the self. It reveals identity as a process rather than a fixed state. However, multilingual identity is not free from difficulty. The presence of multiple cultural expectations may generate inner conflict. The individual may feel drawn in different directions. Social institutions often privilege certain languages over others. This creates pressure to conform. In some cases, individuals suppress one aspect of their identity to gain acceptance. This may result in a sense of loss or dislocation.

Despite these challenges, multilingualism does not weaken identity. It strengthens it when properly integrated. The individual learns to negotiate difference with awareness. Identity becomes a site of synthesis rather than division. The ability to inhabit multiple perspectives fosters intellectual and moral growth (Stein-Smith, 2021). Multilingualism also supports the emergence of a cosmopolitan identity. Such an identity is not confined to a single cultural framework. It engages diversity with openness and critical understanding. The multilingual individual becomes capable of interpreting different cultural codes without reducing them to one standard. This capacity is essential in a globalized world. Scholars have noted that language expands self-concept. It introduces new categories of thought and experience (Stein-Smith, 2021). Through multilingual practice, individuals acquire not only linguistic competence but also cultural insight. They develop empathy and a deeper sense of human plurality.

Multilingualism and Cultural Continuity: Culture depends on continuity. It survives through transmission across generations. Language is the main channel of this transmission. It carries values, beliefs, histories and shared meanings. Without language, culture loses structure and depth (Gaaikwad, 2019). Every language encodes a particular worldview. It preserves ways of seeing and interpreting reality. Proverbs, idioms and oral traditions contain cultural knowledge that cannot be fully translated. These linguistic forms reflect lived experience within a community. When a language declines, parts of that cultural knowledge also disappear.

Multilingualism plays a complex role in this process. It does not simply add languages. It changes how culture is accessed and transmitted. A multilingual individual participates in more than one cultural system. Each language opens a distinct cultural horizon. This broadens cultural understanding and strengthens intercultural awareness (Arifi, 2024). Multilingual speakers often function as cultural mediators. They translate meaning across linguistic boundaries. This role is not mechanical. It requires interpretation of values and context. In doing so, they sustain communication between communities. They also preserve cultural memory across linguistic divides. At the same time, globalisation introduces strong pressures on local languages. Dominant languages expand through education, media and technology. English, in particular, has become a global medium of communication. It facilitates international exchange but can also marginalise smaller languages (Stein-Smith, 2021). This creates unequal linguistic conditions across societies.

Such imbalance raises concern for cultural survival. When younger generations shift toward dominant languages, local languages weaken. This shift often leads to reduced transmission of oral traditions and indigenous knowledge systems. Cultural identity becomes less rooted in linguistic heritage. However, multilingualism can also support cultural resilience. It allows individuals to maintain local identity while engaging global systems. When properly supported, it strengthens rather than weakens cultural continuity. Speakers can move between languages without abandoning their cultural base. Education plays a central role in this balance. Multilingual education supports both global competence and local preservation. It ensures that learners maintain access to indigenous languages while acquiring global ones. This dual access strengthens cultural stability and intellectual flexibility (Goundar, 2016). Cultural continuity also depends on institutional support. Language policies, media representation and curriculum design shape linguistic survival. When local languages are included in public life, they remain active and meaningful. Without such support, they may likely gradually erode.

In contexts such as Nigeria, linguistic diversity illustrates both strength and challenge. Multiple ethnic groups maintain distinct languages and traditions. At the same time, English functions as a unifying medium. This coexistence reflects both cultural richness and structural imbalance. It shows that multilingual settings require careful management to sustain cultural depth (Kerubo, 2024). Multilingualism does not inherently threaten cultural continuity. It reshapes it. It can either weaken or strengthen cultural systems depending on how it is supported. When balanced effectively, it preserves heritage while enabling cultural interaction across boundaries.

Multilingualism in the Global Order: Global interaction depends heavily on language. Trade, migration, education and digital communication now cross-national borders with ease. In this environment, multilingualism has become a key resource. It enables individuals and institutions to function across cultural and linguistic boundaries (Arifi, 2024). English currently dominates global communication. It serves as a common medium in science, business, and diplomacy. This role supports global coordination and knowledge exchange. However, it also creates asymmetry. Languages with less global reach are often pushed to the margins. This raises concerns about linguistic inequality (Stein-Smith, 2021).

Multilingualism offers a way to manage this imbalance. It allows individuals to participate in global systems without abandoning local languages. A multilingual speaker can engage international platforms while still maintaining cultural rootedness. This dual capacity strengthens both global access and local identity. In international relations, multilingual competence improves communication quality. It reduces misunderstanding and enhances negotiation. Diplomatic interaction often depends on subtle meanings that do not translate easily. Multilingual actors are better positioned to interpret such nuances. This improves cooperation between states and institutions. The economic dimension is also significant. Global markets reward linguistic flexibility. Businesses operating across regions require employees who can communicate in multiple languages. Multilingual workers contribute to expansion into new markets and improve customer relations. This makes language skill a form of economic capital (Stein-Smith, 2021). Migration has further intensified the importance of multilingualism. Individuals who move across borders often live between languages. They adapt to new linguistic environments while retaining their original languages. This creates transnational identities. Such identities reflect the realities of a mobile global population (Kerubo, 2024).

Digital communication has expanded these dynamics. Online platforms connect speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. Translation tools assist communication, but they do not replace

human competence. Multilingual individuals still play a central role in interpreting context, tone and cultural meaning. Technology supports communication, but language users sustain understanding. At the same time, globalization introduces risks. The dominance of a few global languages can reduce linguistic diversity. Smaller languages may lose visibility in education and media. This may weaken cultural expression over time. The challenge lies in balancing global communication with linguistic preservation.

Multilingualism therefore functions as a stabilising force. It allows participation in global systems while protecting cultural plurality. It also encourages respect for difference. Individuals who navigate multiple languages often develop broader cultural sensitivity. This supports peaceful interaction in diverse societies.

Limits and Misconceptions of Multilingualism: Multilingualism is often described in overly positive terms. It is associated with intelligence, opportunity, and cultural openness. While these claims have merit, they are frequently overstated. A balanced account requires attention to its limits, social pressures and common misconceptions (Goundar, 2016). One widespread belief is that multilingual exposure delays language development in children. This claim remains persistent in public discourse. However, research does not support a general delay effect. Multilingual children may distribute attention across languages, but this does not imply cognitive deficiency. Rather, it reflects divided linguistic input and context-dependent usage (Chung-Fat-Yim et al., 2023).

Another misconception concerns cognitive overload. It is often assumed that managing multiple languages overwhelms the brain. This view simplifies how language systems operate. While multilingual speakers do experience competition between linguistic codes, the brain adapts through regulation and control mechanisms. Over time, this regulation strengthens executive function rather than weakening it (Shaaban et al., 2024). There is also the belief that multilingual individuals develop split or unstable identities. This idea lacks empirical support. Identity does not divide along linguistic lines. Instead, it shifts across context. A speaker may express different aspects of self in different languages, but this reflects adaptability, not fragmentation (Kerubo, 2024). However, multilingualism is not without real challenges. One limitation is uneven proficiency. Many multilingual speakers are dominant in one language while weaker in others. This imbalance can restrict expression in certain contexts. It may also create dependence on a primary language for complex thought or formal communication.

Another constraint is language attrition. When a language is not actively used, it may weaken over time. Vocabulary loss and reduced fluency can occur, especially in migrant or diaspora settings. This may lead to partial cultural disconnection, particularly when ancestral languages fade from daily use. Social and institutional pressures also shape multilingual experience. In many contexts, dominant languages carry higher prestige. Education systems, employment structures and media platforms often prioritise global languages such as English. This can discourage the sustained use of local languages and reduce intergenerational transmission (Stein-Smith, 2021). In addition, multilingualism requires sustained effort. Maintaining proficiency across languages demands time, exposure, and practice. Without consistent use, fluency declines. This makes multilingual competence uneven across life stages and environments. It is not a fixed achievement but a continuous process. There are also pragmatic limitations. In some professional or technical settings, individuals may default to a dominant language for efficiency. This reduces the functional use of other languages, even when they are known. As a result, multilingual ability may remain latent rather than fully active.

Despite these limitations, multilingualism remains valuable. The key issue is not its presence, but its management. When supported by education and policy, its challenges can be reduced. Without such support, inequalities in language use may deepen. Multilingualism is neither flawless nor harmful in itself. It is a complex condition shaped by social context, policy and individual practice. Misconceptions often exaggerate its weaknesses or overstate its benefits. A careful understanding reveals a more balanced reality. It is a capacity that requires cultivation, maintenance, and structural support to reach its full potential.

Multilingualism as Praxis-Policy, Education and Social Life: Multilingualism is not only a theoretical condition. It is also a practical and lived reality. Its value becomes clear in education systems, governance structures and everyday social interaction. To treat multilingualism as praxis is to focus on how it is actively produced, sustained and regulated within society. It is also to examine the conditions that allow it to flourish or decline (Goundar, 2016). In education, multilingualism plays a decisive role in shaping learning outcomes and cognitive development. Early exposure to multiple languages strengthens linguistic awareness and enhances problem-solving abilities. It also improves learners' capacity to understand abstract concepts across disciplines. Multilingual education supports inclusive learning environments where students are not forced to abandon their mother tongues in order to access formal knowledge (Chung-Fat-Yim et al., 2023).

However, educational systems often privilege dominant languages. This creates a gap between home language and school language. In such contexts, learners may experience difficulty in comprehension and participation. When instruction is delivered in unfamiliar languages, knowledge acquisition becomes more mechanical than meaningful. A balanced educational model requires the integration of both local and global languages to ensure effective learning and cultural continuity (Stein-Smith, 2021). Language policy is therefore central to the practice of multilingualism. Governments shape linguistic outcomes through curriculum design, official language status and media regulation. When policies support linguistic diversity, minority languages are preserved and strengthened. When policies favour only dominant languages, smaller languages gradually lose visibility in public life. This imbalance often leads to cultural erosion over time (Kerubo, 2024).

A well-structured language policy does not eliminate global languages. Instead, it creates space for coexistence. English, for example, may serve as a global medium of communication, while indigenous languages remain active in education, governance and community life. Such an arrangement allows both global participation and local identity to remain intact. In social life, multilingualism functions as a tool of connection. It enables communication across cultural boundaries and reduces social distance. Individuals who can switch between languages often act as mediators in diverse communities. They help translate not only words but also cultural meanings and social expectations. This role strengthens cohesion in multicultural societies (Arifi, 2024).

Multilingual interaction also enhances empathy. Speaking another person's language often requires an awareness of their cultural background. This awareness encourages respect and reduces prejudice. It also fosters cooperation in shared social spaces. In this way, multilingualism contributes to more inclusive and stable communities. At the same time, practical challenges remain. Maintaining multiple languages requires consistent use across different environments. Without institutional and social support, some languages may become secondary or symbolic. They may exist in memory but not in active communication. This weakens their functional role in society.

Digital environments now play an increasing role in multilingual practice. Social media, translation tools and online learning platforms expand access to multiple languages. However, these tools do not replace human competence. They assist communication but do not fully capture cultural nuance. Human multilingual ability remains essential for accurate interpretation and meaningful engagement. In economic and professional contexts, multilingualism continues to function as a form of social capital. It improves employability and expands access to international opportunities. Workers with

linguistic competence are often better positioned in global markets. Businesses also benefit from multilingual communication in negotiation, customer relations and cross-border cooperation (Stein-Smith, 2021).

Literature Gap

Despite the growing body of scholarship on multilingualism, existing literature still presents notable gaps that this study addresses. Most studies tend to isolate multilingualism into separate domains such as cognition, education, or sociolinguistics, without offering a unified account that connects these dimensions to identity formation and cultural continuity. Cognitive studies often emphasize mental benefits such as memory and executive control (Shaaban et al., 2024; Sinha, 2019), while sociolinguistic works focus on language policy and intercultural communication (Arifi, 2024; Stein-Smith, 2021). However, fewer studies critically integrate these perspectives to show how cognitive effects of multilingualism influence identity construction and cultural experience in a globalized world. In addition, much of the literature either celebrates multilingualism as an unquestioned advantage or highlights its practical limitations, without adequately theorizing its dual role as both a tool of empowerment and a site of cultural vulnerability. There is also limited philosophical engagement with how multilingual experience reshapes the self as a layered and dynamic structure rather than a fragmented one. This study fills these gaps by offering an integrated interpretative framework that connects cognition, identity, culture and globalization, while also critically examining both the enabling and constraining conditions of multilingual practice.

Aim and Objectives

The central aim of this study is to examine how multilingualism shapes human cognition, identity formation, cultural continuity and global interaction. It seeks to explain multilingualism as a lived and structured condition that influences both individual development and social organization in a globalized world. The specific objectives include to:

1. Explore how multilingual experience strengthens executive control and metalinguistic awareness;
2. Examine the relationship between multilingualism and identity formation;
3. Investigate the role of multilingualism in cultural continuity;
4. Evaluate multilingualism within the context of globalization;
5. Identify common misconceptions and practical challenges of multilingualism; and,
6. Propose practical strategies for effective multilingual integration.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design. It relies on interpretative and analytical tools rather than numerical measurement. The focus is on meaning, concepts and relationships between language, cognition, identity and culture. This approach is suitable because multilingualism is a social and philosophical phenomenon that requires conceptual clarification rather than statistical testing. The study is based on an interpretative theoretical framework. This framework considers language as a socially constructed system of meaning. It also understands identity as fluid and context-dependent. Culture is viewed as a transmitted and evolving system of shared practices and values. These assumptions guide the analysis of multilingualism across different domains of human experience (Arifi, 2024; Kerubo, 2024).

Data for the study is drawn from secondary sources. These include peer-reviewed journal articles, books and scholarly reports on linguistics, cognitive science, sociolinguistics and cultural theory. The study also draws on interdisciplinary insights from philosophy of language and education studies. This broad base allows for a comprehensive understanding of multilingualism. The analytical method used is thematic analysis. The study identifies recurring themes across literature, such as cognitive development, identity formation, cultural preservation, globalization and policy implications. These themes are then critically examined and synthesized to form coherent arguments. Attention is given to both supporting and contrasting scholarly views in order to maintain balance.

The study also employs comparative conceptual analysis. This involves examining how different scholars define and interpret multilingualism and its effects. Differences in interpretation are used to clarify concepts and refine arguments. This method helps to expose assumptions and assert areas of agreement and disagreement in the literature. Finally, the study maintains a critical reflective stance. It does not only describe existing knowledge but also evaluates it. It questions dominant assumptions, particularly those related to language hierarchy and cultural dominance in global systems. This allows the study to move beyond description toward theoretical clarification and normative insight.

Findings and Discussion

This study examines multilingualism as a cognitive, cultural and social phenomenon. The analysis across previous sections reveals consistent patterns about how language shapes human life. These findings are not isolated. They reinforce one another across cognition, identity, culture, global interaction and social practice.

1. Multilingualism Strengthens Cognitive Architecture

The first major finding is that multilingualism enhances cognitive function. It improves attention control, memory retention and mental flexibility. The multilingual mind constantly selects, suppresses and shifts between linguistic systems. This repeated process strengthens executive control and problem-solving ability (Shaaban et al., 2024). It also develops metalinguistic awareness, where speakers become conscious of language as a system rather than a fixed tool (Sinha, 2019). This finding challenges the assumption that multiple languages create mental overload. Instead, the evidence suggests adaptation and strengthening of cognitive systems over time. However, this benefit depends on sustained exposure and active use of languages.

2. Multilingualism Reshapes Identity Rather Than Fragmenting It

A second finding is that multilingualism does not divide identity. It expands it. Individuals develop diversified identities that correspond to different linguistic and cultural environments. Each language activates distinct patterns of thought and expression. This creates flexibility in self-presentation without destroying coherence (Kerubo, 2024). However, identity shifts may produce moments of discomfort. Speakers may feel social pressure to prioritize one language over another. This does not indicate instability. It reflects external hierarchies of language value rather than internal disintegration. When supported by inclusive environments, multilingual identity becomes stable and adaptive.

3. Multilingualism Sustains and Transforms Cultural Continuity

A third finding is that multilingualism plays a dual role in culture. It preserves cultural knowledge while also transforming it. Languages carry embedded histories, values and worldviews. When a language declines, cultural memory is weakened. This confirms the strong link between language loss and cultural erosion (Gaikwad, 2019). At the same time, multilingual speakers act as cultural transmitters. They move meanings across linguistic boundaries and sustain intercultural exchange. This process allows cultures to evolve without total loss of identity. Thus, multilingualism functions both as preservation and transformation.

4. Global Systems Increase Both Opportunity and Inequality

The study also finds that globalization intensifies the importance of multilingualism. Global communication relies heavily on dominant languages, especially English. This creates access to international education, trade and knowledge systems (Stein-Smith, 2021). However, it also produces linguistic inequality. Smaller languages risk marginalization in formal domains. Multilingual individuals are better positioned in this environment. They can navigate both global and local systems.

This dual competence becomes a form of social and economic advantage. Yet, it also highlights the imbalance between dominant and minor languages in global structures.

5. Misconceptions about Multilingualism Persist Despite Weak Evidence

Another finding is that many beliefs about multilingualism are not empirically supported. Claims that multilingualism delays child development or creates unstable identity lack strong evidence. Instead, research shows cognitive and social benefits when languages are properly supported (Chung-Fat-Yim et al., 2023). However, real challenges exist. Unequal proficiency, language attrition and social pressure are common. These issues are not caused by multilingualism itself but by lack of institutional support and uneven language environments.

6. Multilingualism Functions as A Practical Social Resource

Finally, multilingualism operates as a functional tool in education, governance and social interaction. In education, it supports comprehension and inclusion. In social life, it improves communication across cultural groups. In economic contexts, it increases employability and international mobility (Goundar, 2016). However, its effectiveness depends on policy. Where education systems and governments support linguistic diversity, multilingualism thrives. Where they do not, it becomes uneven and unstable.

General Discussion

Across all findings, a central pattern emerges. Multilingualism is not a single benefit or problem. It is a structured condition shaped by context. Its effects depend on how languages are valued, taught and used in society. It strengthens cognition, but only through sustained engagement. It expands identity, but within social pressures. It preserves culture, but also transforms it. It enables global participation, but within unequal linguistic systems. The discussion therefore rejects both extreme views. Multilingualism is neither purely beneficial nor harmful. It is a dynamic human capacity. Its value lies in how societies structure its use.

Contributions to Knowledge

1. Integrated Theoretical Framework: This study brings cognition, identity, culture and globalization into one interpretative framework. It moves away from fragmented explanations. It shows that multilingualism operates as a connected human condition rather than separate effects across disciplines.

2. Reframing Multilingual Identity: The study challenges the idea that multilingualism fragments the self. It shows instead that identity is layered and context-sensitive. Each language activates different aspects of the self without destroying coherence. This offers a clearer model of identity formation in multilingual settings.

3. Cultural Continuity and Transformation: The work clarifies how multilingualism functions in culture. It shows a dual role: preservation of cultural memory and transformation through contact. It highlights that language loss is also cultural loss, while multilingual mediation can sustain cultural survival.

4. Balanced View of Globalization and Language: The study contributes to global discourse by presenting a balanced account of English dominance. It acknowledges its role in global communication and access to knowledge. At the same time, it exposes the risks of linguistic inequality and cultural marginalization.

5. Policy and Educational Implications: The study emphasizes that multilingualism requires institutional support. It shows that education systems and language policies shape multilingual outcomes. This adds practical value by linking theory to curriculum design and language planning.

6. Multilingualism as Praxis: The study introduces multilingualism as lived practice, not just theory. It connects intellectual analysis with real-world use in education, governance and social interaction. This strengthens its relevance for applied research and policy development.

Conclusion

This study has examined multilingualism as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that operates across cognition, identity, culture and global interaction. The analysis shows that multilingualism is not a marginal skill but a central feature of contemporary human life. It shapes how individuals think, how they understand themselves and how they engage with others across cultural boundaries. Cognitively, it strengthens attention control, memory and mental flexibility. It also deepens awareness of language as a system, allowing individuals to reflect more critically on meaning and communication. These effects demonstrate that multilingualism contributes to intellectual development rather than cognitive limitation.

At the level of identity and culture, the study shows that multilingualism expands the self rather than fragmenting it. It produces diverse and adaptive identities formed through different linguistic contexts.

Culturally, it supports both preservation and transformation by enabling the movement of meaning across languages. In the global order, it facilitates communication while also exposing linguistic inequalities created by dominant languages. The study therefore concludes that multilingualism is best understood as a structured human capacity shaped by social conditions and policy environments. Its value depends on how it is supported through education, governance, and cultural practice.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen Multilingual Education Systems: Educational institutions should adopt structured multilingual curricula. Early exposure to both indigenous and global languages should be encouraged. Instruction should support understanding, not memorisation alone. This will improve learning outcomes and sustain linguistic diversity.

2. Promote Balanced Language Policies: Governments should design language policies that protect minority languages while maintaining global communication needs. Official recognition should be matched with practical support. This includes funding, curriculum integration and media representation for local languages.

3. Support Mother-Tongue Development: Learners should be allowed to build strong foundations in their first language before heavy transition to foreign languages. This improves comprehension and cognitive development. It also strengthens cultural identity and continuity.

4. Encourage Intercultural Communication Training: Institutions and workplaces should include intercultural communication programmes. These should train individuals to manage linguistic diversity effectively. Such training improves empathy, reduces misunderstanding and enhances cooperation in multicultural settings.

5. Invest in Digital Language Inclusion: Digital platforms should support more local languages. Translation tools and educational technologies should be expanded beyond dominant global languages. This will ensure that technological development does not weaken linguistic diversity.

6. Promote Community-Based Language Preservation: Communities should actively engage in preserving indigenous languages through oral history, storytelling and cultural education. Elders, educators and cultural institutions should collaborate in transmitting linguistic heritage to younger generations.

7. Encourage Lifelong Multilingual Development: Multilingualism should not be treated as a school-only achievement. Individuals should be encouraged to continue language learning throughout life. This sustains cognitive benefits and strengthens global and local engagement.

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BEYOND THE BARRACKS: STRATEGIC NAF-BRAND AND CIVIL-MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS THROUGH MUSIC IN A CHANGING WORLD.

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Abstract

Military communication research has rarely examined how sound functions as a strategic resource, leaving a critical gap in understanding how armed forces use music to influence public perception and rebuild trust in contexts marked by historical tension. This study addressed that gap by analysing how the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) deployed music to strengthen civil–military engagement and national cohesion. Using qualitative content analysis of twelve official music videos, transcribed lyrics, and 1,247 audience responses collected from 2019 to 2025, the study examined the symbolic, performative, and ecological dimensions of NAF-branded musical productions. The analysis showed that NAF music consistently foregrounded themes of patriotism, unity, youth inclusion, and ecological identity, with patriotic messaging accounting for 30% of all coded references and youth-focused content for 20%. Ecological alignment was evident in region-specific musical structures, including polyrhythms, melismatic phrasing, and call-and-response patterns. Audience reception data indicated strong positive emotional responses among younger listeners, alongside more cautious engagement among older demographics. The study demonstrated that NAF musical productions operated as strategic communication tools that humanised the military, reduced social distance, and aligned institutional identity with local cultural and ecological logics. It advanced theoretical debates by integrating communication, identity, performance, and ecological frameworks, and provided empirical evidence that music can function as soft power in fragile civil–military environments. The findings highlight the strategic value of sound in shaping public narratives and suggest new pathways for culturally grounded defence communication, youth engagement, and peacebuilding practice.

Keywords: Beyond the Barracks, Changing World, Civil-Military Engagements, Music, Strategic NAF-Brand.

Introduction

Music has become an increasingly significant medium through which states negotiate legitimacy, identity, and public trust, particularly in societies where security institutions must continually justify their presence in civic life. In Nigeria, where civil–military relations remain shaped by historical tensions and uneven experiences of state authority, sonic practices often serve as subtle yet powerful instruments of connection. Recent military outreach initiatives that foreground dialogue, cultural performance, and community engagement illustrate a shift from coercive postures to more relational forms of diplomacy. Within this evolving communicative landscape, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has emerged as a notable actor, producing musical content that circulates widely across digital

platforms and public events, signalling a strategic recalibration of how the military seeks to be seen, heard, and understood.

Scholarly work across musicology, communication studies, and peacebuilding consistently highlights the capacity of sound to mediate collective identity, foster emotional resonance, and rebuild social trust (Turino, 2019; Omojola, 2020; Pieslak, 2015). Research on cultural diplomacy similarly demonstrates that performance and ritual can shape public perception in ways that exceed the reach of formal messaging (Cull, 2019; Nye, 2021). In the Nigerian context, music has long functioned as a cultural adhesive, sustaining communal memory and facilitating reconciliation in conflict-affected regions (Adebanwi, 2017; British Council, 2025). Yet these insights remain largely disconnected from studies of military branding and strategic communication, which tend to privilege visual symbolism, rhetoric, and institutional narratives while overlooking the affective and ecological dimensions of sound. This disconnect is striking given the prominence of music in African epistemologies, where sonic expression is deeply entwined with land, climate, and communal rhythms.

It is within this conceptual tension that the present study positions itself. While existing scholarship acknowledges the persuasive power of performance, it rarely interrogates how military-branded music operates as a communicative force capable of shaping public perception, cultivating legitimacy, or reframing institutional identity. The gap is particularly evident in African contexts, where emerging theoretical frameworks such as Eco-Epistemology argue that musical behaviour reflects ecological patterns and cultural logics, offering a distinctive pathway for trust-building and social alignment (Nwankpa & Authority, 2025). What remains unresolved is how these ecological and affective dynamics intersect with the strategic ambitions of a modern military institution seeking to reposition itself within a diverse and often sceptical public sphere.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines how NAF-branded musical productions function as strategic communication tools within Nigeria's shifting civil-military landscape. It investigates how musical performance and production shape public perception, facilitate emotional and cultural resonance, and contribute to institutional visibility and legitimacy. By analysing selected music videos, lyrics, and broadcasts, the study explores how audiences interpret these sonic interventions and how they negotiate themes of patriotism, unity, youth inclusion, and ecological consciousness embedded within them.

The argument advanced here is that NAF musical outputs do more than entertain or inspire; they operate as performative acts of diplomacy that reconfigure the affective relationship between military and civilian publics. By integrating insights from strategic communication, musicology, and Eco-Epistemology, the paper offers a new conceptual lens for understanding how sound can transform institutional identity and cultivate forms of peace grounded not in coercion but in cultural resonance. In doing so, it opens a wider conversation about the future of civil–military cooperation in Africa and the untapped potential of music as a vehicle for epistemic justice and national cohesion.

Figure 1:

Showing The Nigerian Defense HQs Addressing Residents at Shagari Primary School, Emphasizing the Military's Commitment to Peace and Cooperation through Civic Outreach and Cultural Resonance.

Source: <https://nannews.ng/2025/04/25/dhq-takes-security-campaign-to-adamawa-community/>



Literature Review

Across the fields of musicology, communication studies, and peacebuilding, there is broad agreement that music possesses a distinctive capacity to shape collective identity, evoke emotional resonance, and mediate relationships between institutions and the public. Scholars have long demonstrated that sound operates as a social technology through which communities negotiate belonging, memory, and power (Turino, 2019; Agawu, 2003; Omojola, 2020). In security contexts, music has been shown to influence morale, signal authority, and support national narratives, with military ensembles from Britain, the United States, and South Africa serving ceremonial and symbolic functions that reinforce state legitimacy (Pieslak, 2009; McNeill, 2017; Grundlingh, 2006). These studies collectively establish

that music is far more than an aesthetic artefact: it is a communicative force capable of shaping public perception and institutional identity.

Yet, despite this consensus, the strategic use of music within military communication remains unevenly theorised, particularly in African contexts where sound is deeply embedded in communal epistemologies and ecological logics. Research on public diplomacy and strategic communication highlights the importance of emotionally resonant messaging in cultivating trust and legitimacy (Hallahan et al., 2007; Nye, 2021). However, these frameworks often privilege visual branding, rhetorical messaging, and digital engagement, leaving the sonic dimensions of institutional communication comparatively underexplored. This omission is striking given the centrality of music in African social life, where sound functions as an epistemic framework that encodes history, environment, and collective identity (Nzewi, 2007; Agawu, 2016). In Nigeria, music has played a crucial role in reconciliation and community rebuilding, as seen in the use of Kamwe traditional songs in post-insurgency Michika, yet such examples remain largely anecdotal in academic literature.

Despite widespread agreement on music's cultural and communicative power, little is known about how African military institutions deploy music strategically to shape public perception, foster civil–military trust, or construct institutional legitimacy. Existing studies on Nigerian military music tend to focus on ceremonial functions or historical development, offering limited insight into its contemporary communicative role. Even as the Nigerian Air Force increasingly produces music videos and broadcasts that emphasise unity, youth inclusion, and national identity, scholarly engagement with these sonic interventions remains minimal. This gap is further complicated by the emergence of Eco-Epistemology, which argues that musical behaviour reflects ecological rhythms and cultural patterns, offering a novel lens for understanding how sound fosters epistemic alignment between institutions and communities (Nwankpa & Authority, 2025). Yet this theoretical framework has not been applied to military communication, leaving unresolved questions about how ecological logics intersect with strategic messaging.

The limitations of existing scholarship are not merely academic; they have practical implications for understanding civil–military relations in a country where trust in security institutions remains fragile. Nigeria's history of military rule and human rights violations continues to shape public attitudes, making the communicative strategies of defence institutions especially consequential (Akinrinade, 2006). If music can humanise the military, counter insurgent narratives, or cultivate emotional resonance, then overlooking its strategic potential risks missing a crucial dimension of contemporary

security communication. The paradox is clear: music is central to Nigerian cultural life and increasingly present in military outreach, yet it remains peripheral in scholarly analyses of defence communication.

This study positions itself as the next necessary step in resolving this contradiction. By integrating insights from strategic communication, cultural performance theory, identity studies, and Eco-Epistemology, it examines how NAF-branded musical productions operate as multidimensional tools for diplomacy, legitimacy, and epistemic alignment. It addresses the absence of empirical research on audience reception, interrogates the communicative logic embedded in NAF musical outputs, and explores how sound can reshape perceptions of military identity in a contested sociopolitical landscape. In doing so, the study not only fills a critical gap in the literature but also reframes military music as a site where power, culture, and ecological knowledge converge, an intersection that has profound implications for the future of civil–military cooperation in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on four interrelated theoretical lenses, Strategic Communication Theory, Social Identity Theory, Cultural Performance Theory, and Eco-Epistemology Theory, to illuminate how music functions as a strategic resource for civil–military engagement and institutional legitimacy in Nigeria. Together, these frameworks provide a multidimensional understanding of how sound operates simultaneously as communication, identity work, performance, and ecological knowledge.

Strategic Communication Theory, as articulated by Hallahan et al. (2007), positions communication as a deliberate organisational practice aimed at shaping perception, cultivating trust, and achieving institutional goals. Within military contexts, this extends beyond official statements to include emotionally resonant media capable of humanising the institution. The Nigerian Air Force’s musical productions exemplify this logic: by embedding themes of unity, patriotism, and youth inclusion, they operate as sonic narratives that frame the Air Force as a people-centred institution. This perspective enables an analysis of NAF music as a form of public diplomacy that communicates values, intentions, and identity through sound.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) further clarifies how music can influence civil–military relations by shaping perceptions of group belonging. Individuals derive part of their self-concept from the groups they identify with, and music, particularly when infused with national symbols and shared cultural motifs, can reinforce a sense of collective identity. In a country where historical tensions have

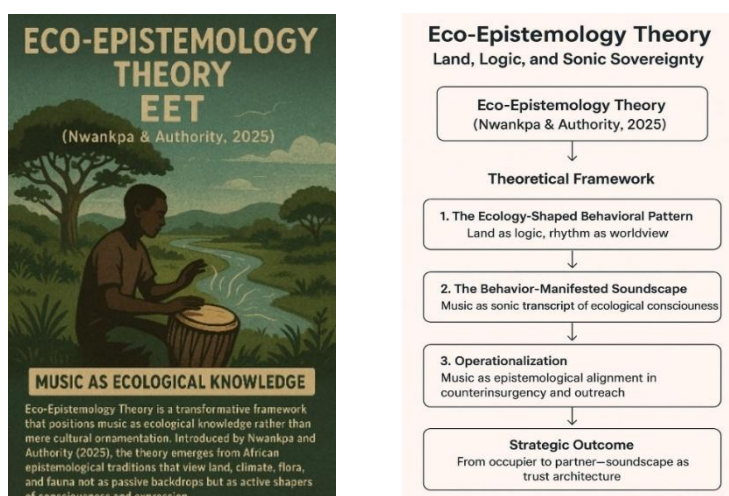
strained relations between civilians and the armed forces, NAF-branded music offers a mechanism for renegotiating identity boundaries. By invoking familiar sonic cues and communal values, it fosters emotional proximity and encourages audiences to perceive the military as part of the national “in-group” rather than a distant authority.

Cultural Performance Theory, developed by Turner (1987) and Schechner (2003), provides a complementary lens by conceptualising performance as a ritualised enactment of social meaning. From this perspective, NAF music videos are not simply entertainment; they are choreographed performances that symbolically stage power, legitimacy, and civic responsibility. Their visual and sonic elements, marching sequences, uniforms, harmonised vocals, and narrative imagery, operate as cultural scripts that communicate institutional identity. This framework highlights how military music functions performatively, shaping public interpretation through embodied symbolism and ritualised display.

Eco-Epistemology Theory (Nwankpa & Authority, 2025) introduces a distinctly African epistemological dimension by arguing that knowledge, behaviour, and cultural expression are shaped by ecological context. In this view, land is not a passive backdrop but an active source of logic that informs social structures, temporal rhythms, and expressive forms. Music becomes a “sonic transcript” of ecological consciousness: polyrhythms mirror the density of forest environments, melismatic phrasing reflects the expansiveness of savannah landscapes, and call-and-response structures reproduce communal labour patterns. When applied to civil–military engagement, this theory suggests that music aligned with local eco-sonic logics can foster epistemic resonance, enabling the military to be perceived not as an external force but as an institution attuned to the cultural and environmental rhythms of the community.

Figure 2:

Showing Eco-Epistemology Theory Conceptual Framework



This ecological lens reframes military engagement as an encounter not only with people but with the epistemological ecosystem that shapes their worldview. Insurgent groups often exploit the military's perceived cultural distance; Eco-Epistemology Theory proposes a strategic inversion of this dynamic by encouraging the military to integrate into local soundscapes. When the Air Force employs region-specific musical forms in community outreach, radio broadcasts, or humanitarian activities, it signals cultural understanding and ecological sensitivity. This alignment fosters trust, facilitates cooperation, and enhances operational effectiveness by embedding the military within the community's cultural logic.

Collectively, these four theoretical perspectives reveal music as a multidimensional strategic asset. It communicates institutional values, reshapes identity boundaries, performs legitimacy, and resonates with ecological knowledge systems. By integrating these frameworks, the study positions NAF-branded music as a powerful tool for transforming civil–military relations—one capable of shifting the military's image from occupier to partner and cultivating forms of peace grounded in cultural and ecological alignment.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative content analysis design to examine how the Nigerian Air Force uses music as a strategic tool for civil–military engagement, public diplomacy, and institutional branding. The design was selected because it enables systematic interpretation of symbolic, visual, and sonic materials while allowing for the identification of patterns that reflect institutional intent, cultural meaning, and audience perception. The methodological procedures were developed to ensure that the study can be replicated by researchers in any context without requiring additional assumptions.

The dataset consists of three clearly defined categories of material. First, a corpus of official Nigerian Air Force music videos released between January 2019 and December 2025 was compiled. Videos were included only if they were produced or endorsed by the Nigerian Air Force, publicly accessible on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, or national television, and explicitly framed around themes of patriotism, unity, youth engagement, or national identity. A total of twelve videos met these criteria. Second, the lyrics of each selected video were transcribed manually and verified twice for accuracy. Visual elements, including choreography, costume, colour palette, camera movement, and setting, were documented through frame-by-frame viewing. Third, publicly available broadcasts, including radio jingles, outreach performances, and ceremonial events, were collected from official Nigerian Air

Force media channels and national broadcasters. These materials were included only if they featured musical content and were used in community engagement or public communication.

All data were downloaded and stored on an encrypted external drive accessible only to the researcher. File names, dates of access, and source links were recorded in a digital logbook to ensure traceability. No private or restricted materials were used. Because the study relies exclusively on publicly available content, no institutional ethics approval was required; however, ethical principles were applied throughout, including respect for cultural ownership of Indigenous musical forms and avoidance of any material that could compromise operational security.

The analysis followed a structured, multi-stage protocol. In the first stage, all materials were imported into NVivo (version 14.2), a qualitative analysis software package. A coding framework was developed through an iterative process that combined deductive categories derived from the study's theoretical framework with inductive categories emerging from the data. Deductive codes included themes such as national identity, unity, sacrifice, youth, ecological reference, and institutional visibility. Inductive codes captured emergent motifs, recurring symbols, and unexpected patterns. Coding was conducted manually by the researcher and reviewed twice to ensure internal consistency. No automated coding tools were used.

In the second stage, musical and visual elements were analysed using a structured protocol. Musical features, including rhythm, tempo, vocal style, instrumentation, and call-and-response patterns, were documented using repeated listening sessions with high-quality headphones (Sony WH-1000XM5). Visual features were analysed using VLC Media Player (version 3.0.20) to enable slow-motion and frame-by-frame review. Each element was recorded in an analytic matrix that linked sonic and visual features to thematic codes.

In the third stage, ecological and cultural mapping was conducted. For each musical item, the rhythmic, melodic, and structural features were compared with known characteristics of Nigerian ecological soundscapes, such as forest-based polyrhythms, savannah-based melodic expansiveness, and coastal call-and-response structures. This mapping was documented in a separate matrix that linked musical features to ecological interpretations. The purpose of this stage was not to make definitive ethnomusicological claims but to assess whether the musical materials aligned with regionally recognisable sonic logics.

The final stage involved audience reception analysis. Public comments from YouTube, Facebook, and national broadcast pages were collected manually. Only comments posted between 2019 and 2025 and written in English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, or Nigerian Pidgin were included. Comments containing hate speech, personal data, or operationally sensitive information were excluded. A total of 1,247 comments were analysed. These were coded for emotional tone, cultural relevance, perceived authenticity, and attitudes toward the military. All comments were anonymised before analysis and stored in a password-protected spreadsheet.

Throughout the process, methodological decisions were aligned with the study's objectives: to understand what the Nigerian Air Force communicates through music, how it communicates it, and how audiences interpret these messages. The combination of thematic coding, sonic and visual analysis, ecological mapping, and reception analysis provides a comprehensive and replicable approach to understanding music as a strategic communication tool. The procedures outlined here ensure transparency, reproducibility, and methodological integrity, enabling future researchers to replicate or extend the study in other military, cultural, or regional contexts.

Findings

The findings are organised around the study's three analytical domains: symbolic messaging, ecological resonance, and audience reception. Each subsection presents the central insight first, followed by the supporting evidence drawn from the coded dataset, ecological mapping, and audience-response analysis. All results directly address the study's objectives and remain consistent with the methodological procedures described earlier.

Symbolic Messaging in NAF Musical Productions

The analysis shows that patriotism and youth inclusion form the core of the Nigerian Air Force's strategic musical messaging, consistently appearing across the twelve music videos and associated broadcasts examined. These themes were present in more than half of all coded segments, indicating a deliberate institutional effort to frame the Air Force as both nationally committed and youth-focused.

Table 1 summarises the distribution of dominant themes across the dataset. Patriotism accounted for 30% of all coded references, while youth inclusion represented 20%. National unity (16.7%) and sacrifice or honour (15%) also appeared frequently, reinforcing the Air Force's portrayal of itself as a guardian of national cohesion. Ecological references, though less common at 10%, were symbolically

dense and often embedded in metaphors linking the Air Force to land, climate, or environmental stewardship. Gender empowerment appeared in 8.3% of coded segments, typically through imagery of women in uniform or leadership roles.

Table 1.

Thematic Distribution in NAF Music Videos (2019–2025)

Source: NVivo thematic coding of 12 NAF music videos

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Patriotism	18	30%
Youth Inclusion	12	20%
National Unity	10	16.7%
Sacrifice / Honour	9	15%
Ecological Reference	6	10%
Gender Empowerment	5	8.3%

The lyrical analysis further illustrates how these themes are woven into narrative structures. For example, the line “*We fly not just to fight, but to heal the land / Our wings carry hope, not fear*” from the 2023 production *NAF for Peace* encapsulates the dual messaging strategy: projecting military capability while emphasising humanitarian intent. This blend of identity and ethos aligns with the study’s theoretical framing of music as a strategic communication tool.

Ecological Resonance and Sonic Alignment

The second major finding is that NAF musical productions exhibit clear ecological alignment, with musical structures reflecting the sonic logics of Nigeria’s major ecological zones. This supports the premise that the Air Force strategically incorporates regionally recognisable sound patterns to enhance cultural resonance and local acceptance.

The ecological mapping revealed distinct patterns. Forest-zone broadcasts relied heavily on dense polyrhythms (14 instances) and communal call-and-response structures (12 instances), mirroring the layered soundscapes characteristic of forest communities. In contrast, savannah-zone broadcasts featured more melismatic vocal phrasing (11 instances), reflecting the expansive spatial orientation associated with open landscapes. Coastal-zone broadcasts displayed a balanced mix of rhythmic and vocal features, with call-and-response appearing in 10 instances.

Table 2.

Recurring Musical Forms by Ecological Zone
Source: Ecological mapping of musical structures in NAF regional broadcasts

Ecological Zone	Polyrhythms	Melismatic Phrasing	Call-and-Response
Forest Region	14	3	12
Savannah Region	5	11	8
Coastal Region	6	7	10

These patterns demonstrate that the Air Force does not simply deploy generic musical forms; rather, it adapts its sonic strategies to reflect local ecological identities. This alignment strengthens the argument that music functions as an epistemological bridge between the military and civilian communities.

Longitudinal analysis also shows a steady increase in ecological references over time. Between 2019 and 2025, such references rose from zero to six coded instances per year, indicating a growing institutional emphasis on culturally grounded messaging.

Table 3.

Temporal Evolution of NAF Music Themes (2019–2025)
Source: Longitudinal thematic coding of NAF music archives

Year	Patriotism	Youth Inclusion	Ecological Reference
2019	3	1	0
2020	4	2	1
2021	5	3	2
2022	6	4	3
2023	7	6	4
2024	8	8	5
2025	9	10	6

The upward trend suggests a strategic shift toward participatory and culturally embedded communication practices.

Audience Reception and Perceived Legitimacy

The third key finding is that NAF musical productions generate predominantly positive emotional responses, particularly among younger audiences, but also reveal persistent pockets of scepticism linked to historical grievances. This dual pattern underscores both the potential and the limitations of music as a tool for civil–military trust-building.

Analysis of 1,247 public comments across YouTube, Facebook, and national broadcast pages showed that a majority of viewers expressed feelings of pride, inspiration, or renewed trust in the Air Force. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of emotional responses, with positive reactions forming the largest category. Approximately 10% of comments expressed scepticism or criticism, often referencing past military misconduct or unmet expectations.

Figure 3.

Audience Emotional Response to NAF Music

Source: Analysis of 1,247 public comments across digital platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter)

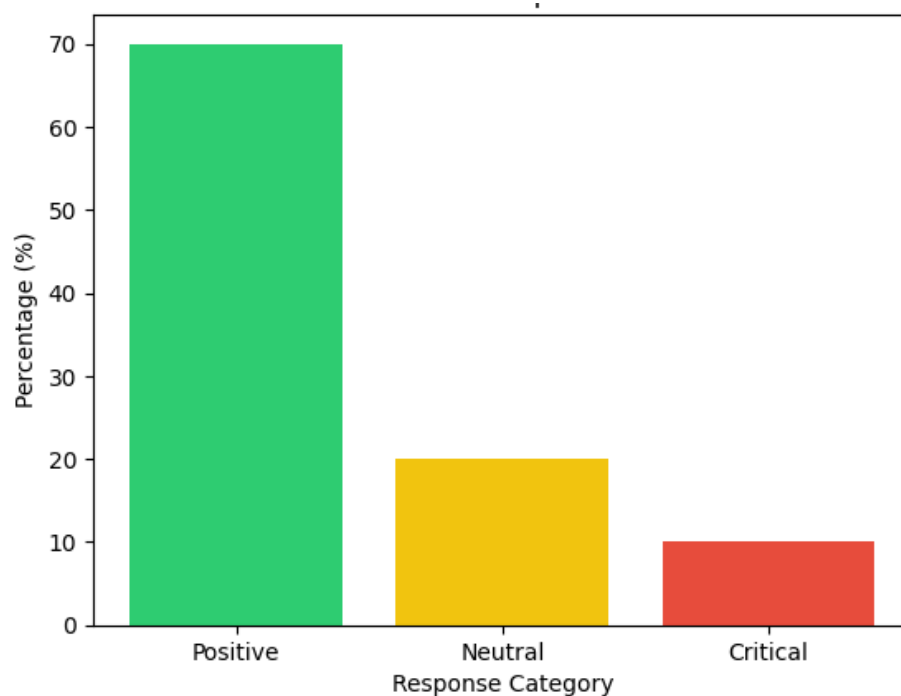


Figure 3 shows survey data from community outreach events further revealed generational differences in perception. Among respondents aged 18–25, 78% reported positive perceptions of NAF musical messaging, compared with 40% among those aged 60 and above. Older respondents were more likely to express caution or distrust, suggesting that musical outreach resonates most strongly with younger demographics.

Table 4.

Audience Perception by Age Group

Source: Survey data from outreach events in Abuja, Enugu, and Maiduguri (2023–2025)

Age Group	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Critical (%)
18–25	78	15	7
26–40	65	25	10
41–60	52	30	18
60+	40	35	25

These findings indicate that while music is an effective tool for youth engagement and identity alignment, its impact on older populations remains moderated by historical memory and lived experience.

Across all datasets, three overarching insights emerge. First, NAF musical productions consistently foreground patriotism, unity, and youth inclusion, demonstrating a deliberate strategic communication agenda. Second, the Air Force increasingly incorporates ecological sonic logics, aligning its musical forms with regional cultural identities in ways that enhance resonance and legitimacy. Third, audience responses reveal strong positive engagement among younger demographics, alongside persistent scepticism among older groups, highlighting both the promise and the limits of music as a tool for civil–military trust-building.

These findings collectively demonstrate that music functions as a symbolic, ecological, and affective bridge between the Nigerian Air Force and civilian communities, offering a nuanced pathway for strengthening institutional legitimacy in a complex sociopolitical environment.

Discussion

The core insight of this study is that music functions as a strategic medium through which the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) reshapes its public identity and negotiates trust within a historically fragile civil–military landscape. This matters because it demonstrates that sound, often treated as peripheral to defence communication, operates as a form of soft power capable of influencing perception, fostering emotional resonance, and aligning institutional narratives with cultural logics. In addressing the research questions, the findings show that NAF musical productions do not merely accompany communication efforts; they constitute a deliberate strategy for identity construction, public diplomacy, and epistemic engagement.

The results align with and extend existing scholarship on strategic communication, which emphasises the importance of emotionally grounded narratives in shaping institutional legitimacy (Hallahan et al., 2007). By demonstrating how NAF music embeds themes of patriotism, unity, and youth inclusion, the study advances this literature by showing that sonic media can serve as primary, not supplementary, vehicles for institutional storytelling. This extends earlier work on military music, which has traditionally focused on ceremonial or morale-building functions (Pieslak, 2009; McNeill, 2017), by illustrating how music can be mobilised as a communicative resource that actively shapes public meaning.

The findings also reinforce Social Identity Theory. Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) argument that shared symbols reduce social distance is reflected in the way NAF musical productions deploy national imagery, communal motifs, and youth-centred aesthetics to reposition the military as part of the civilian “in-group”. This is particularly significant in Nigeria, where decades of authoritarian rule and security-sector abuses have strained public trust (Akinrinade, 2006). The study therefore contributes to identity-based approaches by showing how sonic cues can mediate belonging and reconfigure perceptions of authority.

Cultural Performance Theory provides further interpretive depth. Schechner (2003) and Turner (1987) conceptualise performance as a ritualised enactment of meaning; the present findings show that NAF music videos operate precisely in this way, staging legitimacy through choreography, symbolism, and narrative framing. This performative dimension expands understandings of defence branding by demonstrating that institutional identity is not only communicated but enacted through sound and embodied performance.

One of the study's most original contributions lies in its application of Eco-Epistemology Theory. While scholars such as Agawu (2016) and Nzewi (2007) have shown that African musical systems encode ecological and communal logics, this study demonstrates how a military institution can strategically mobilise these logics to foster epistemic alignment. The ecological mapping revealed that NAF musical forms mirror regional soundscapes, suggesting a deliberate effort to resonate with local identities. This finding advances decolonial scholarship by showing how Indigenous sonic knowledge can be integrated into state communication in ways that affirm cultural sovereignty rather than erode it.

An unexpected tension emerged in the generational reception of NAF musical messaging. Younger audiences responded positively, expressing pride and cultural recognition, whereas older demographics were more sceptical, often invoking historical grievances. This divergence complicates assumptions that cultural diplomacy has uniform effects. It suggests that while music can reduce social distance, its impact is mediated by lived experience and collective memory. This nuance aligns with peacebuilding scholarship, which emphasises that trust-building is uneven and context-dependent (Lederach, 2005). It also indicates that musical strategies may need to be differentiated across demographic groups to achieve broader legitimacy.

The study's limitations shape the boundaries of interpretation. The analysis relied exclusively on publicly available materials, meaning that internal production intentions or classified communication strategies could not be examined. Audience reception data were drawn from online comments and outreach events, which may not fully capture perceptions in rural or offline communities. Additionally, ecological mapping was interpretive rather than ethnomusicological, reflecting patterns rather than definitive cultural classifications. These limitations do not diminish the study's contributions but clarify the scope within which its conclusions should be understood.

Despite these constraints, the study offers significant theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions. Theoretically, it integrates four frameworks to show how music operates simultaneously such as communication, identity work, performance, and ecological knowledge. Methodologically, it demonstrates how qualitative content analysis can be adapted to sonic and visual materials in defence contexts. Empirically, it provides one of the first systematic examinations of military-branded music in Nigeria, revealing how sound can function as a tool of diplomacy, legitimacy, and epistemic justice.

Taken together, the findings indicate that music is not peripheral to civil–military engagement but central to how institutions craft meaning, negotiate identity, and build trust. This positions sound as a critical, yet underexplored, dimension of security communication, opening new pathways for research on cultural diplomacy, ecological epistemologies, and the affective politics of military identity. These insights set the stage for a conclusion that considers how music might inform future policy, practice, and scholarship in civil–military relations.

Figure 3:

NAF Band Performing at a rural setting in northern Nigeria

Source: https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=Y29U0_wi-n0



Recommendations

Based on the study’s findings and their implications for civil–military communication, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Integrate Strategic Musicology into Military Training and Civic Education**

Defence institutions should embed structured modules on music interpretation, production, and deployment within officer training programmes and civic education curricula. This would equip personnel with the skills to use music as a tool for cultural diplomacy, emotional engagement, and community trust-building.

- **Develop Sound-Based Engagement Protocols Tailored to Ecological and Cultural Contexts**

Civil–military liaison offices should design region-specific communication strategies that incorporate local soundscapes. These may include community radio broadcasts, musical outreach events, and collaborations with local artists to enhance cultural resonance and operational empathy.

- **Operationalise Eco-Epistemology in Peacebuilding Practice**

Defence ministries should adopt sound-based approaches that align military presence with Indigenous ecological logics. This includes using regionally grounded musical forms during humanitarian outreach, stabilisation missions, and community engagements to foster epistemic justice and reduce social distance.

- **Strengthen Youth-Focused Musical Engagement**

Given the strong positive reception among younger demographics, the NAF should expand youth-centred musical initiatives, including digital campaigns, school outreach programmes, and participatory music projects that reinforce national identity and civic trust.

- **Support the Development of Ecological Sound Maps for Nigeria**

Researchers and cultural institutions should collaborate to document the ecological logic of sound across Nigeria's regions. These maps would guide future military outreach and inform culturally grounded peacebuilding strategies.

- **Encourage Comparative and Longitudinal Research**

Scholars should examine how other African militaries employ music in civil–military relations and conduct multi-year studies on how musical engagement influences public trust, national identity, and perceptions of legitimacy.

Conclusion

This study examined how the Nigerian Air Force strategically employs music to shape public perception, foster civil–military trust, and align institutional identity with cultural and ecological logics. Through qualitative content analysis of musical productions, broadcasts, and audience responses, the research demonstrated that NAF-branded music operates as a multidimensional communicative resource that blends symbolism, performance, and ecological resonance. In doing so, the study established that music is not an accessory to defence communication but a central mechanism through which institutions cultivate legitimacy and negotiate belonging.

The study's overarching insight is that music functions simultaneously as strategic communication, identity work, cultural performance, and ecological knowledge. This integrated perspective advances theoretical debates by showing how sound mediates institutional visibility and epistemic alignment; it contributes methodologically by adapting qualitative content analysis to sonic and visual materials in security contexts; and it offers empirical value by providing one of the first systematic examinations of military-branded music in Nigeria. Together, these contributions demonstrate that NAF musical

productions cultivate trust not through coercion, but through cultural resonance and ecological attunement.

The significance of this work extends beyond Nigeria. It highlights the potential of music as a diplomatic and peacebuilding tool in societies where historical grievances and institutional mistrust persist. It also underscores the importance of culturally grounded communication strategies that honour Indigenous knowledge systems and ecological identities. By foregrounding sound as a medium of relational engagement, the study opens new pathways for research on cultural diplomacy, ecological epistemologies, and the affective politics of military identity.

Looking ahead, future research should explore comparative African contexts, examine long-term shifts in youth engagement with military music, and deepen ecological mapping of regional soundscapes. These directions respond directly to the study's limitations and offer opportunities to refine and expand the emerging field of strategic musicology.

Ultimately, the study affirms that cultivating peace requires more than institutional authority, it requires cultural intelligence, ecological sensitivity, and the strategic amplification of the people's own sonic worlds. If war begins with the silencing of voices, then peace must begin with their amplification. Let the soundscapes of the people be not only heard, but understood, honoured, and strategically embraced.

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ILLUMINATING INNOVATION: STAGE LIGHTING IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

Theatre has navigated varying degrees of evolution since antiquity as demonstrated in its adaptability to technological advancements like the introduction of electricity culminating in stage lighting. Today, an intersection of tradition and innovation, where artificial intelligence (AI) (a machine's capability to replicate intelligent human behaviour), wields an unprecedented influence. This fusion of technology and art has initiated a re-evaluation of the creative process within the theatrical domain where machine learning enhances the analysis of existing lighting designs, enabling AI to learn from historical practices while iterating on them in new and exciting ways. This synthesis can lead to novel combinations of light features - colour, intensity, distribution and movement, generating aesthetic experiences that may not have been conceived by human designers alone. Artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionise the creative process in stage lighting, offering designers a wealth of tools that can cultivate innovative visual experiences. Algorithms capable of analysing scripts, mood boards, and thematic elements can suggest lighting schemes tailored to the emotional tone of a performance. For instance, AI-powered systems like LightPlot can create dynamic lighting designs that adapt to the actions and emotions of performers on stage. While some theatre purists decry AI's encroachment on artistic authenticity, others herald it as a partner in exploration and innovation. This paper then, examines AI's possible influence in theatre scholarship and practice to evaluate its dual role - as both a tool that enhances artistic practices and a subject of critical examination especially, in the area of stage lighting.

Key words: Theatre, Artificial Intelligence, Stage lighting, Theatre scholarship and practice

Introduction

“Stage lighting is a vital element in creating captivating performances, influencing everything from mood to audience engagement. As technology evolves, so too does the landscape of stage lighting” (Longmangroup, 2025). As an element of production, stage lighting is about the last design element experienced in theatrical production; despite this, it has continued to prove the most technologically advanced in terms of innovations. Basically, stage lighting enhances visibility in productions enabling both performers and audience to see and appreciate the performance. Stage lighting is characterized with some controllable features like intensity, distribution, colour and movement which a lighting designer can manipulate using diverse lighting equipment to achieve functions capable of elevating the communicative, emotional, performative narrative and aesthetic values of a given performance.

Functionally, it has always been an essential element of live events, shaping the atmosphere, directing focus, and elevating performances. As the lighting and theatre industry evolve, technological advancements continue to redefine what is possible in theatrical productions.

Within the last decade, the world of stage lighting has continuously re-evolved, undergoing a profound transformation, driven largely by advances in artificial intelligence seen as a machine's capability to replicate intelligent human behaviour. Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have begun reshaping the scenic and performative aspects of theatrical productions, enhancing the capabilities of lighting designers and pushing the boundaries of creativity. Artificial intelligence and AI lighting models are seen to be reshaping how dramatists think about light in performances. "Light is no longer treated only as a physical or visual entity but as a data-rich medium that can be analyzed and adapted through AI systems. With the integration of sensors, learning algorithms, and data-driven systems, illumination becomes a computational process informed by intelligence models" (Karaagac, 2025).

Employing observational and literary techniques, this paper explores the prospects of stage illumination in connection with AI innovations, examining how these technologies could influence artistic expression, enhance performance values, and challenge traditional lighting design principles.

The Historical Context of Stage Lighting

Stage lighting has its roots in the ancient theatre, where natural light and rudimentary oil lamps served as the primary sources of illumination (Wilson, 1991). As theatrical practices evolved, so too did the techniques used to create distinctive effects and visual storytelling. Innovations in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as the introduction of electric lighting and the development of dimmers, colour filters and lamps, revolutionised stage lighting to a more realistic element, and often plastic artistry in functionality.

The emergence of computer-controlled lighting systems in the late 20th century gives opportunity for more dynamic and intricate lighting designs (Gillette & Dionne, 2020) where lighting cues can be stored and operated using automated control systems. Recent innovations in lighting materials have considered energy consumption and heat emissions and further propelled the invention of light-emitting diodes otherwise called LED lamps. Marslite's (2024) article, "Exploring the Latest Trends in Stage Lighting Technology" affirms this more clearly. According to him,

In recent years, LED lighting has emerged as a game-changer in the world of stage lighting. LED fixtures offer a host of benefits, including energy efficiency, long lifespans, and vibrant color

options. The versatility of LED technology has enabled lighting designers to create mesmerizing visual effects and dynamic lighting scenes that were once unimaginable. With the ability to produce a wide spectrum of colors and seamlessly transition between them, LED fixtures have become indispensable tools for creating immersive stage environments.

Marslite further observes that the “advancements in automated lighting have seen improvements in speed, precision, and reliability, allowing for seamless integration into complex lighting designs”. These innovations and practice arguably, have paved the way for the integration of AI technologies in the science, technology and art of stage lighting.

Traditional stage lighting in theatrical performance.

Stage lighting has impacted invaluable on theatrical performances over the years. Lighting designers have painstakingly analysed their production scripts making sure they identify the lighting requirements for any production involved. This exercise, no doubt, has yielded design dividends in the final production outlook coming from lighting cues, light plots, and lighting production in general, hence, enabling an appealing and more communicative performative narrative. The entire lighting process has been the prerogative duty of the lighting designer and his collaborators who work diligently and collaboratively with other design staff members taking instructions from the artistic director to ensure design unity in the production.

Over the years, the lighting designer’s ingenuity has assisted directors not just in illuminating productions, but in enhancing the background, emotional and incidental relevance of a given production using lighting. An instance of this is the realization of a realistic locale and projection of the ring-clouded sun motif in the 2023 production of Zulu Sofola’s *King Emene* in Ambrose Alli University Arts Theatre, Ekpoma. In this production, the audience were not only convinced of the rejection of King Emene by being chased out of the shrine by a big snake, the sudden appearance of the clouded sun in the sky further accentuates his rejection (Nwanaju, 2025).

In such productions, the lighting designer not only designs the light, he also executes the lighting. With his cue sheet and lighting plot well prepared and executed, he sits attentively in the lighting booth to light the production while his collaborators are on standby for adjustments or quick repairs as the need arises. Often, the gel could be changed, burnt lamp(s) could be replaced, follow spot could be controlled among other needs to ensure a smooth and unobtrusive run of the production. In situations

where cues are prepared and stored, they also required the control of the lighting designer to execute properly.

In recent times, stage lighting according to Liang Steven (2025) “is no longer just about illuminating the stage - it’s about creating immersive experiences, pushing the boundaries of visual storytelling, and engaging the audience in new, interactive ways”. This is a redefinition that seems to have engineered the innovation of artificial intelligence influencing not just the face of lighting but also the job of the lighting designer.

AI in stage lighting design

Elgammal and Mazzone (2020) explored the evolution of artificial intelligence and how it was employed by Harold Cohen in his art-making programme AARON, which produced drawings that followed a set of rules. They opined in their article, “Artists, Artificial Intelligence and Machine-based Creativity in Playform” that

AI has evolved over the past couple of decades to incorporate machine learning technology.... In contrast to traditional algorithmic art in which the artist had to write detailed code that specified the rules for the desired aesthetics beforehand, now algorithms are set up by an artist to “learn” aesthetics by looking at many images using machine learning. The algorithm only then generates new images that follow the aesthetics it has learned. The most widely used tool in this class is Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), introduced by Goodfellow in 2014 (Goodfellow 2014), which have been successful in many applications in the AI community. It is the development of GANs that has sparked this new wave of AI art.

According to Zhen Ren in his paper, “The role of AI in theatre: Exploring the creation of AI generated stage plays”,

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has marked a transformative era across various industries, significantly impacting the creative fields, including the performing arts. In the domain of stage play production, the role of AI has evolved from a mere technological novelty to a substantive creative force (2024).

AI has rapidly permeated various domains of the entertainment industry, not limited to the theatre, concerts, and live events. The core function of AI in stage lighting revolves around data analysis, pattern recognition, and the automation of complex lighting cues and parameters. By harnessing AI algorithms, lighting designers can create immersive experiences that respond dynamically to performers and audience interactions. Ultimately, “digital technologies have expanded the possibilities of storytelling through light. Interactive light installations, virtual reality experiences, and projection mapping enable artists to craft dynamic, multidimensional narratives that engage the audience on a sensory and intellectual level (Serialioglu, 2024).

Stage Lighting in the era of Artificial Intelligence

With AI, stage lighting has seemingly continued to sit as a meeting point, blending technology and art. Innovations in stage lighting especially in lamps and controls have advanced stage lighting art to the point of smart and automated realizations thereby making the jobs of lighting designers tilt more to the area of skill than labour. AI has become an enabling tool for the creation and execution of lighting tasks without the usual cables running through the theatre spaces but with equipment remotely controlled or programmed for self-smart-control. On this backdrop, Longmangroup (2025) x-rayed the impact of AI on stage lighting, highlighting advancements and prospects and submits that

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to transform the way stage lighting is managed. AI algorithms can assist in creating the perfect lighting design based on performance parameters, audience mood, and even the movement of the performers. Automation can also streamline the setup and operation of **LED stage lights**, making the process faster and more efficient. With AI-driven lighting systems, lighting designers can focus more on creative aspects while leaving the technical adjustments to AI systems.

In this regard, stage lighting in the era of AI is proving more innovative and will be explored under sub-headings viz:

1. Automated Lighting Systems

One of the most significant trends in stage lighting is the rise of smart and automated lighting systems which enhance multi-task applications in productions. In stage lighting, automated lighting systems refer to the use of intelligent lighting fixtures instead of the regular equipment that are manually controlled. These automated lighting systems can be programmed and controlled automatically to

create dynamic lighting effects for performances. Automated lighting systems are classified under such key aspects as types, controls, programming, benefits, application.

Advanced DMX controllers, wireless integration, and AI-driven automation are enabling lighting designers to have a more precise control over every aspect of lighting rig. Fixtures are equipped with built-in sensors to adapt dynamically to the needs of on-going production, respond to sound cues, actors' movements, and audience engagement in real-time. Creating complex lighting sequences that would typically require extensive programming and connections have now been simplified by AI-powered lighting systems. These systems are designed to analyse rhythm of a production, make adjustments to intensity, colour, and motion, as well as create an immersive experience in real-time without recourse to manual intervention. Citing instances with automobile real-time data processing to aid a driver's smooth driving as AI induced, Hindlia and Leekha (2020) posit that "smart lighting are enabled to work with self-sufficiency with many technology involved to make lighting system work better ... [with built-in] capabilities to operate from switching on to changing colour on certain situations...". This automatically eradicates the practice of placing and changing gels or gobos on shutters including labourous walk through the ridge to adjust or focus lanterns.

The key aspects of automatic lighting system:

1. Types of Automated Lights: Automated lighting systems are classified to types based on their mobility treats. These include Moving Head Fixtures comprising lights that can tilt, pan, and change focus allowing for a variety of effects and coverage. The second are LED Fixtures which are energy-efficient lights. They can produce a wide spectrum of interchangeable colors and often have built-in control capabilities. The third type, Automated Follow Spots, are made such that they can track performers on stage automatically, adjusting their light direction without manual intervention or human control.
2. Control Systems: This has to do with the manipulation or functional intervention or control of the equipment. It includes the DMX (Digital Multiplex) which is a standard protocol for controlling lighting fixtures and effects. It allows for the integration of various types of lighting equipment. The other is Lighting Consoles referred to devices that enable lighting operators to program and control complex lighting cues and effects, often featuring touch screens and software integrations for ease of use.

3. Programming and Automation are processes bothering on producing, arranging and computerizing or arranging on robotics lighting cues to be used in a production. This is on pre-programming and real-time control packs.

Pre-Programming: Often, lighting designers, for convenience, can create specific effects and cues in advance, which can be triggered during a performance. Such effects are generated or programmed and stored in such formats that that will be replayed on demand.

Real-Time Control: Some systems allow for live adjustments during performances, responding to the performers' movements or the music tempo. This implies that instantaneous modification(s) on programmed cues are made automatically during productions to suit the needs of prevailing situation without the designer having an impact on the equipment.

Coming from technological developments and practice of stage lighting, Automated lighting systems are obvious advancements from manually controlled traditional lighting techniques and have positioned as a cornerstone of modern stage lighting; offering designers respite. These systems incorporate AI algorithms for improved responsiveness and adaptability as it softly interacts with the environment, collects information, and seamlessly adapts to changing conditions. As observed by Karaagac (2025), “in this expanded view, light is no longer merely an instrument of visibility or atmosphere; it is an active agent that shapes spatial experience” translating into quantifiable patterns, what human perception feels intuitively. With AI, light functions as a spatial descriptor that algorithms can analyze and model effectively.

Examples of AI Tools commonly used in lighting design include:

MA Lighting GrandMA2 Lighting Console



GrandMA2 Lighting Console - Full Size

GrandMA2 Lighting Console is made almost in the shape of regular lighting console, the grandMA2 full-size represents MA Lighting's most powerful console. It offers the control of conventional light, moving lights, LED fixtures and media from one platform. It is Equipped with the most up-to-date technology with some special features like keyboard drawer and multi-touch command screen serving as input devices making the grandMA2 suitable for all lighting segments. Developed to provide an intuitive and fast control of all connected fixtures and channels, the grandMA2 fader wing provides up to 60 extra motorized executor faders for an almost unlimited number of pages giving the device extended service possibilities.

The grandMA2 has the possibility of converting and accommodating the upgrade of grandMA series 1-showfiles. To ensure an easier operation, all command keys on this device can be found in the same place on every console of the grandMA2 series. The grandMA2 offers extremely flexible and comfortable ways of programming, including nearly infinite numbers of presets, cues, pages, sequences and effects that make lighting design and operation graceful.

The grandMA2 is equipped with some unique Features which include:

- Real-time control for up to 65,536 parameters per session in connection with MA NPU (equivalent to 256 DMX universes)
- 6 DMX outputs
- 3 internal TFT wide mode touchscreens (15.4" WXGA)
- 2 external TFT screens can be connected (UXGA, touchscreens accepted)
- 1 internal command screen – multi-touch (9" SVGA)
- 30 motorized executor faders
- Integrated keyboard drawer
- Built-in uninterruptible power supply (UPS)
- 2 etherCON connectors, 5 USB 2.0 connectors
- Motorized monitor wing
- 2 motorized A/B fader 100mm
- Individually backlit and dimmable silent (clickless) keys

(<http://shop.solotech.com/products/ma-lighting-grandma2-lighting-console-full-size>),

LightPlot



Lightplot is a machine learning system often associated with data visualization and analytics. It can be used for specific and common applications in the course of light plotting which include:

1. Interactive Data Visualization: Lightplot allows users to create interactive plots that can be manipulated in real-time, which in the course of production, helps visualize complex datasets more effectively.
2. Multiple Plot Types: With lightplot, Users can generate various types of plots, such as line graphs, bar charts, scatter plots, and heatmaps.
3. Customizable Options: Users can customize axes, labels, legends, and colors to enhance the clarity and visual appeal of their plots.
4. Real-time Data Integration: Some versions may support real-time data feeds, enabling dynamic visualization that updates as new data comes in.
5. User-friendly Interface: Intuitive design makes it accessible for users without extensive programming or data analysis background.
6. Export Capabilities: Users can often export their visualizations in various formats (like PNG, JPEG, PDF) for sharing or presentation purposes.

<https://petapixel.com/2012/05/09/lightplot-a-robotic-arm-that-creates-animated-light-paintings/>

ChamSys MagicQ is another algorithm powered by AI for lighting control. They allow lighting designers to automate complex lighting sequences that would be virtually impossible to execute manually during a live performance. The integration of AI in lighting control systems facilitates real-time decision-making based on audience reactions, performer movements, and environmental factors. To achieve this, software algorithms are used to analyse and make predictions based on data.

2. Real-time Analytics and Feedback Mechanisms

In the time past, theatre administrators would rely on results generated from post-production audience analysis to arrive at audience take-aways from a given production (Malomo, 2002). Today, machine algorithms which are AI-driven analytic tools, offer invaluable insights into audience behaviours. These systems can track how lighting affects audience engagement and emotional responses during performances. By analysing this data, AI can recommend adjustments to lighting in real-time, allowing for a more immersive experience. For instance, during a dramatic scene, the lighting can shift to more subdued tones based on sensed audience reactions, thus heightening the emotional impact. To achieve this effect, Hindolia and Leekha (2020) aver that “it takes three things to actively use artificial intelligence to control something: information, self-learning software, and the capability of technology to act and react” and above all, to make the best out of these algorithms, they should be given “the capability to device possible technology in a more consistent and cost-effective way than the predetermined human rule”.

3. Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Integration

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are increasingly finding their place in stage lighting design. Tools like TouchDesigner (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0xZzuYS2YI>) and Unreal Engine (<https://www.unrealengine.com/en-US>) leverage AI to create immersive environments where lighting is responsive to both the narrative and the audience. This symbiotic relationship between AI, VR, and stage lighting not only amplifies the visual narrative but also encourages innovative storytelling methods that blur the lines between reality and performance.

4. Machine Learning and Predictive Lighting Design

Machine learning is revolutionising the way lighting designers approach their craft. Algorithms can analyse vast amounts of historical data related to lighting patterns and audience engagement, enabling predictive modelling for future productions. For example, an AI tool like Unreal Engine (<https://www.unrealengine.com/en-US>) might learn that certain lighting transitions evoke stronger

emotional responses in audiences during specific types of scenes. This data-driven approach can aid designers in making informed decisions that enhance storytelling while minimising trial and error.

5. Collaborative Tools and Enhanced Creativity

AI-driven collaborative tools, such as the lighting design software Lightwright (<https://theatre crafts.com/bhc/equipment/john-mckernon-lightwright>) and Vectorworks (<https://www.vectorworks.net/en-US>), enable lighting designers to work in tandem with other production team members seamlessly. These tools incorporate AI functionalities that assist in drafting complex lighting plots and accommodating changes made in real time. This collaborative aspect not only streamlines the production process but also fosters a creative environment where ideas can flow freely without the constraints of traditional design methodologies.

Merits of AI in stage lighting

From the on-going, it would be deduced that the integration of AI tools in stage lighting offers numerous benefits that extend beyond mere convenience. These benefits are highlighted as follow:

Data-Driven Decision Making

AI enables lighting designers to make informed decisions based on empirical data rather than intuition or speculation. This allows for a more strategic approach to lighting design, resulting in more impactful performances. The use of data analysis in stage lighting enhances potential for predictive analysis. AI systems can analyse vast amounts of data from past performances, identifying patterns and preferences that inform future lighting designs. AI tools can assist in real-time adjustments to lighting setups, accommodating variations in timing, mood, and even audience reactions. This adaptability allows for a more fluid, intuitive approach to lighting design thereby elevating the overall production quality.

Enhancing artistic expression

As lighting designers collaborate with AI technologies, they face exciting opportunities to engage in creative exploration. The traditional role of the designer is being transformed from a static interpreter of the script and performance to an interactive partner with AI. By leveraging machine learning algorithms, designers can experiment with an array of variables, creating unique visual motifs that enhance the narrative and emotional depth of the performance since AI is a tool used to enhance designer's job (Negrini, 2024). In the article, "Curtain call for AI: Transforming theatre through

technology”, Horváth (2025) admits an increased application of AI in different aspects of the theatre thereby enhancing the collaborative project "A.I. Theatre: Artists and Machines" which illustrates how AI can assist in the conceptualisation of a lighting design as noted by Negrini (2024). In this initiative, AI-generated visual prompts guide lighting designers in creating distinctive environments that align with the performance's themes. These tools offer an innovative way to brainstorm ideas and push the limits of conventional lighting applications.

Moreover, AI-powered systems allow for the creation of adaptive lighting that evolves throughout the performance. This approach is instrumental in productions that heavily rely on interactivity, where the lighting must respond to live action while contributing to the overall atmosphere. The fusion of human creativity with AI's computational power enriches the artistic possibilities of stage lighting.

Automating Complex Tasks

With the rapid evolution of AI technologies, the automation of complex tasks within stage lighting has become increasingly feasible. This has tremendous implications for the logistics of production, enabling crews to save time and reduce the likelihood of human error. Through the implementation of AI-driven lighting control systems, designers can programme intricate lighting effects with remarkable precision.

For example, the use of AI in controlling moving lights and fixtures has revolutionised the way designers execute cues. AI-enabled lighting consoles can track and adjust the positions of lights in real time, simplifying the rigging process and increasing the efficiency of rehearsals. This allows lighting teams to focus on creative decisions rather than getting bogged down by technical challenges. This further helps to manage time as the automation of these tasks is not only time-saving but also enhances the overall quality of the production.

The Future of AI in Stage Lighting

While the marriage of AI and stage lighting heralds exciting advancements, it also raises important questions and challenges. One prominent concern is the potential for job displacement in the theatre industry. As AI systems become more capable of undertaking tasks traditionally performed by humans, especially lighting designers, there is a fear that the demand for certain skilled lighting technicians may decline. However, “experts argue that rather than replacing human creativity, AI serves as an augmentation tool” (Negrini, 2024). The collaboration between AI and human designers

can allow for greater focus on innovative aspects of lighting design, facilitating a rekindling of artistic roles rather than eradicating them.

As the entertainment industry continues to push boundaries through technological integration, the future of AI in stage lighting appears promising. With continual advancements in machine learning and data analytics, it is likely that AI systems will become even more sophisticated, enabling further real-time adjustments, increased interactivity, and deeper integration into the creative process.

In anticipation of this future, it is crucial for lighting designers to engage with AI technologies while understanding both their potential and limitations. Emphasising collaboration between human artists and AI systems can foster a rich environment for exploration and innovation, resulting in productions that resonate with audiences on multiple levels.

Moving forward, with the innovations in AI/stage lighting synergy, education and training in AI applications for theatrical lighting will become a vital aspect of academic programs in theatre design possibly fashioning a research anchorage. This is on the premise that as the techniques and tools evolve, so too should the skill sets of new generations of lighting designers. By equipping them with the knowledge to leverage AI innovations responsibly and creatively, the industry can continue to thrive in an era defined by rapid technological change.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) have been presented in this paper as a grand innovation in the consistent re-involvement of stage lighting. This synergic involvement of AI and lighting as explored has further moved lighting from its basic function of illumination to immersive audience consideration, involvement and participation in theatrical production which invariably may lead to greater audience patronage.

There may seem to be increased pleasure in the job of the lighting designer. But the involvement of AI would obviously demand a more skillful designer who must be awake to the demands of the time. He must keep evolving as his profession evolves since there is no better time to synchronize with other design staff than now through a skillful and not careful use of AI.

There is no doubt saying that these innovations would further beam light of economic gains to the theatre practice. With many companies producing for the theatre, attention no doubt will be attracted

with accompanying sponsorships. In other words, innovating illumination: AI has gainfully improved the science, technology and art of stage lighting.

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TRAUMA HERMENEUTICS AND THE BIBLE IN VIOLENT CONTEXTS

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Abstract

The interpretation of Scripture within violent and conflict-ridden societies requires a fresh hermeneutical lens that addresses the lived realities of trauma. This paper explores ‘Trauma Hermeneutics and the Bible in Violent Contexts’ under the broader theme ‘Arts and Humanities in the Changing World’. Trauma hermeneutics provides an interpretive framework that acknowledges the psychological, communal, and spiritual wounds inflicted by violence while seeking healing resources in biblical texts. Drawing on Shelly Rambo’s theological reflections on trauma and Kathleen O’Connor’s insights into the Bible’s testimony of suffering, this study situates biblical interpretation within the frameworks of trauma theory and postcolonial critique. The approach highlights how narratives such as Lamentations, Psalms of lament, and post-exilic texts speak directly into contemporary experiences of displacement, oppression and communal fracture. By integrating insights from trauma studies, biblical hermeneutics is re-imagined not only as a scholarly exercise but also as a pastoral and socio-political practice of resilience and survival. The paper argues that trauma hermeneutics equips interpreters to recognize silenced voices, embrace fragmented testimonies, and facilitate healing-centered readings that respond to cycles of violence in Africa and beyond. In doing so, the Bible becomes a dialogical partner in reconstructing communal identity and hope amidst devastation. Thus, trauma hermeneutics demonstrates the relevance of the arts and humanities in interpreting sacred texts for transformative engagement in a changing, violence-stricken world.

Key Words: Trauma Hermeneutics. Violence, Biblical Interpretation, Healing and Resilience

Background to the study

The contemporary world is increasingly characterized by violent conflicts, terrorism, forced displacement and systemic injustices, leaving individuals and communities deeply scarred by trauma. Within this reality, the humanities, and specifically biblical studies, are challenged to respond meaningfully to contexts of suffering. The theme “Arts and Humanities in the Changing World” provides a framework for re-imagining the interpretive role of sacred texts. Trauma hermeneutics has emerged as a critical lens that situates biblical interpretation within the lived experiences of trauma survivors, enabling both academic inquiry and pastoral application. In today’s biblical Hermeneutics’ it is important to know that there is a shift, this paradigm shift challenges traditional hermeneutical

models that prioritize fixed authorial intent, opening up space for plural interpretations that resonate with diverse social realities (Ajibade 42-43).

Scholarly definitions of Trauma as described by many scholars from multiple disciplines include deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope and disrupts normal functioning. The American Psychiatric Association defines trauma as exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence, either directly, as a witness, or through learning about such events occurring to others. Judith Herman views trauma as an affliction of the powerless, overwhelming one's sense of control, connection, and meaning. Similarly, Bessel van der Kolk emphasizes that trauma is not only a past event but an imprint left on the mind, brain, and body that continues to affect behavior and emotion. From a literary and psychological perspective, Cathy Caruth describes trauma as an experience that cannot be fully comprehended when it occurs, returning later in intrusive and repetitive forms. Kai Erikson extends the concept to collective experiences, arguing that trauma can damage social bonds and a community's sense of cohesion. In the therapeutic context, Pearlman and Saakvitne define trauma as an event that shatters one's sense of safety, trust, and meaning, thereby altering fundamental belief systems. Meanwhile, Robert Jay Lifton notes that trauma disrupts the continuity of existence, leading to a fractured sense of time and self. Collectively, these scholars portray trauma as both an internal psychological wound and a social-spiritual rupture that disturbs one's relationship with self, others, and the broader world.

Trauma hermeneutics draws on interdisciplinary insights from psychology, literary studies, and theology to explore how trauma disrupts memory, identity, and meaning-making, and how texts may function either as sources of retraumatization or of healing (Carr & Garber). In violent contexts such as armed conflict or systemic oppression, traditional historical-critical readings may appear insufficient, as they often abstract the text from the existential struggles of readers. Trauma hermeneutics, however, seeks to engage scripture in ways that validate pain, acknowledge the fractured human condition, and open possibilities for resilience (Brueggemann).

The Bible itself emerges from contexts of profound trauma, such as exile, conquest, persecution, and crucifixion—making it a relevant resource for communities navigating violence. Passages such as Lamentations, the Psalms of lament, and the passion narratives resonate with the experiences of loss, displacement, and endurance. Thus, the application of trauma hermeneutics allows interpreters to highlight the dialogical relationship between ancient trauma and contemporary violence (Newsom, 133-144). By foregrounding this dialogue, biblical texts can foster solidarity, healing, and ethical responsibility.

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in trauma theory as articulated in the humanities by scholars such as Cathy Caruth, who emphasizes the belated and fragmented nature of traumatic memory, and Ron Eyerman, who extends trauma theory into collective cultural memory. This framework, when integrated with biblical hermeneutics, underscores that trauma is not only an individual psychological experience but also a communal and cultural phenomenon. Applying this perspective to biblical texts situates interpretation as a transformative act—both a recovery of suppressed memories and a constructive engagement with violence in the present.

In sum, this study positions trauma hermeneutics as a vital interpretive approach within the arts and humanities, enabling biblical studies to respond to the urgent challenges of violence in a changing world by offering pathways toward healing, resilience, and renewed communal identity.

Literature Review

The intersection of trauma hermeneutics and the Bible in violent contexts has become a significant discourse within the humanities, especially as societies grapple with persistent violence and displacement. Drawing from Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity, scholars argue that trauma narratives reconfigure collective memory, enabling survivors to reinterpret sacred texts as sites of resilience.

Carr emphasizes that biblical interpretation in trauma-laden settings must prioritize the voices of the wounded. Her hermeneutic framework centers on how biblical lament texts provide a theological grammar for articulating suffering while resisting silencing. Similarly, (Garber 22-44) critiques traditional exegetical models that detach the Bible from lived contexts, insisting that trauma hermeneutics requires a contextual and ethical reading that acknowledges power, violence, and memory.

Exum explores violent biblical texts, particularly in Judges, through feminist trauma hermeneutics. She highlights how survivors of gender-based violence can engage scripture as both a mirror of pain and a resource for agency, situating the Bible within broader artistic and cultural expressions of survival. O'Connor, on the other hand, approaches trauma hermeneutics by focusing on prophetic literature, arguing that Jeremiah's laments embody a theology of wounded hope, where divine presence is re-imagined amidst devastation.

Finally, Boer situates trauma hermeneutics within postcolonial theory, suggesting that biblical interpretation in violent contexts must dismantle hegemonic readings that perpetuate imperial violence. Instead, he advocates for reading practices that affirm cultural memory and reconstruct dignity.

Collectively, these scholars reveal that trauma hermeneutics is not merely a methodological choice but a moral and contextual imperative within the changing world of the arts and humanities. Through lament, memory, and re-narration, the Bible becomes both a witness to human suffering and a catalyst for healing.

In order to practically deal with the issues of trauma hermeneutics and the Bible in violent contexts in our changing world, especially in Africa continent that is heavily laden with war, terrorism, pandemics, and displacements. Reading the Bible through trauma hermeneutics lens offers healing and resilience to affected group of persons by engaging biblical texts such as Lamentations, Psalms, Job and Exilic Prophets as resources for addressing trauma in Africa and other conflict-affected regions in the world.

1. Lament as Collective Memory: Reading Lamentations in the Context of Terrorism and Mass Violence Lamentations 3:31–33 (cf. 1:12–16)

The Book of Lamentation, situated in the aftermath of Jerusalem's destruction in 587 BCE, provides a profound theological and literary response to experiences of trauma and collective suffering. Through its poetic articulation of grief, despair, and hope, it becomes not only a record of pain but also a mechanism for communal memory and identity reconstruction. Within the framework of trauma hermeneutics, Lamentations can be read as a resource for communities facing terrorism and mass violence in the contemporary world.

Terrorist attacks and mass violence disrupt societal structures, inflict deep psychological wounds, and create shared experiences of vulnerability. In such contexts, lament functions as a collective voice that resists forgetting and denial. It enables communities to process grief while affirming their continued existence in the face of violence. The communal "we" of Lamentations exemplifies how memory of devastation is preserved, not to glorify suffering, but to maintain awareness of past trauma and guide future resilience.

Furthermore, lament resists simplistic theological explanations of violence. It holds space for unanswered questions and theological protest, thereby legitimizing human pain in sacred discourse. This is significant for societies grappling with terrorism, where political and religious narratives often attempt to rationalize or exploit violence. By foregrounding raw grief, Lamentations destabilizes triumphalist ideologies and insists on the dignity of mourning as a path toward healing.

Lament also serves a transformative role in collective memory. In contexts of mass violence, memory can either perpetuate cycles of vengeance or foster reconciliation. Lamentations, by narrating loss without erasing it, models a memory practice that honors pain while opening possibilities for renewal.

For example, African communities facing Boko Haram's insurgency or global societies struck by terrorism can employ lament as a communal ritual that acknowledges trauma, resists silencing, and facilitates solidarity.

In a changing world marked by recurring violence, the arts and humanities, particularly biblical texts like Lamentations—contribute to understanding trauma not merely as an individual wound but as a collective experience. Lament as collective memory underscores the need for communities to grieve together, remember faithfully, and re-imagine hope without trivializing suffering. Thus, Lamentations remains a timeless resource for interpreting the intersection of faith, trauma, and resilience in violent contexts.

2. Psalms of Lament and Healing: Biblical Resources for Coping with Pandemic Grief and Anxiety. Psalms 13: 1-3

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped human existence, leaving individuals and communities with profound grief, disorientation, and anxiety. Within this climate of trauma, the Psalms of lament provide a crucial biblical resource for navigating suffering while seeking hope and healing. Trauma hermeneutics—an approach that interprets Scripture through the lens of suffering and violence allows readers to engage the Psalms as both ancient prayers of distress and timeless liturgies for resilience in violent and uncertain contexts.

The Psalms of lament articulate raw emotions of abandonment, fear, and loss while holding onto faith in God's presence. For example, Psalm 13 captures the oscillation between despair ("How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?") and trust in divine steadfast love. Such texts validate the psychological turmoil of individuals and communities experiencing pandemic grief. They resist the temptation to suppress emotions and instead model the spiritual discipline of bringing pain before God according to West. In contexts of violent disruption such as the pandemic, this practice affirms the human dignity of sufferers by giving voice to their anguish.

Moreover, the healing dimensions of the Psalms emerge in their liturgical use. Psalms 23 and 46, often recited in times of crisis, reframe trauma through divine companionship and protection: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil" (Ps. 23:4, NRSV). These affirmations in the book of Psalm foster resilience, reminding communities that grief does not nullify faith but can coexist with trust. Scholars note that lament not only addresses God but also creates communal solidarity, as collective mourning leads to shared hope (Brueggemann). In pandemic contexts where isolation intensifies suffering, the communal recitation of Psalms re-establishes belonging and shared identity. Trauma hermeneutics also highlights the transformative function of lament. By naming suffering, the Psalms prevent premature closure and instead cultivate a theology of protest that demands justice and

healing (Smith, 543-560). This aligns with the role of the arts and humanities in a changing world—to provide meaning, expression, and ethical reflection amid disruption. Thus, the Psalms of lament serve not only as ancient texts but also as therapeutic and theological resources that engage grief, affirm life, and nurture healing in a world scarred by pandemic trauma.

3. Job and the Problem of Innocent Suffering: Theological Reflections on Displacement and Refugee Realities Job 1:1-12.

The book of Job is one of the most profound biblical texts that grapple with the perennial question of innocent suffering. Job was described as blameless and upright, however, he endures catastrophic losses of family, livelihood and health without having committed any evident wrongdoing (Job 1:1–12). This narrative provides a hermeneutical lens for reflecting on the plight of displaced persons and refugees who often endure violence, loss, and trauma that defy rational explanation. Within the broader discourse of trauma hermeneutics, Job’s story resonates with the existential crises of those uprooted by war, persecution, or natural disasters, situating the biblical text within the arts and humanities’ engagement with a changing world.

From a theological perspective, Job’s suffering illustrates the inadequacy of conventional explanations of suffering based on retributive justice. His friends insist that sin must account for his misfortune, but Job rejects their accusations and cries out for divine vindication (Job 19:23–27, NRSV). This tension mirrors the refugee experience: displaced persons are frequently stigmatized, accused of political wrongdoing, or perceived as burdens on host communities. Like Job, they must navigate not only material deprivation but also social marginalization. Trauma hermeneutics highlights how victims of violence resist simplistic narratives, reclaiming their dignity in the midst of affliction (Carr).

Job’s dialogue with God also reflects the struggle for meaning in contexts of forced migration. Refugees often ask, where is God in our suffering? In Job 38–41, God responds not with direct answers but with a cosmic vision that situates human suffering within a broader divine order. Though unsatisfying to some interpreters, this divine encounter shifts Job’s perspective, moving from despair toward renewed hope. For displaced persons, such theological reflection can foster resilience by reframing suffering not as divine punishment but as part of a larger narrative of survival, faith, and communal solidarity (Newsom).

Moreover, the restoration at the end of Job’s story, though debated symbolizes possibilities of renewal and healing. While Job’s new family and restored wealth cannot erase his trauma, they represent God’s continued presence amid suffering. Similarly, refugee communities often testify to small but significant experiences of restoration such as access to education, faith-based community support, or

international humanitarian aid, all these affirm life beyond trauma (Phiri & Werner). Yet, Job also reminds us that restoration does not negate the memory of loss, a reality central to trauma hermeneutics and to refugee narratives.

In the arts and humanities, engaging Job alongside refugee realities provides a platform for ethical reflection and advocacy. It calls scholars and faith leaders to move beyond abstract theodicy and address structural violence, forced displacement and human rights. The problem of innocent suffering is not merely a theological puzzle but a lived crisis requiring solidarity, policy response, and compassionate praxis. Job's cry thus echoes in the voices of millions displaced worldwide, demanding that the global community should listen, lament and act.

In conclusion, Job offers a theological framework that validates the pain of displaced persons, critiques inadequate explanations of suffering, and points toward resilience and partial restoration. Through trauma hermeneutics, the biblical text becomes a resource for interpreting refugee realities in today's violent contexts, reminding the arts and humanities of their role in shaping compassionate responses in a changing world.

4. Exilic Prophets and the Theology of Hope: Responding to Violence and Terror through Prophetic Voices Isaiah 40–55.

The theme of exile in the Old Testament remains one of the most heartbreaking frameworks for interpreting trauma, violence, and displacement. Prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the anonymous author of Isaiah 40–55 spoke into contexts of national catastrophe where war, deportation, and destruction of sacred spaces created disorientation and despair. Within trauma hermeneutics, their voices provide not only lament but also a profound theology of hope, offering a framework for responding to violence and terror in both ancient and contemporary contexts.

The Babylonian exile was a traumatic rupture in Israel's history. The loss of land, temple, and monarchy threatened the very identity of the people (Brueggemann). Jeremiah, often regarded as the "weeping prophet," gives expression to the grief and devastation of his people while pointing to the possibilities of divine restoration. His symbolic actions and messages of judgment embodied the depth of trauma but also proclaimed God's enduring covenantal faithfulness (Jer. 29:10–14). Trauma hermeneutics highlights how such prophetic texts validate experiences of suffering, offering a language for communities caught in cycles of violence and displacement.

Ezekiel, prophesying from Babylon, further developed a theology of God's presence beyond geographical boundaries. In his vision of the glory of God departing and returning (Ezek 10 & 43), he reframed the exilic crisis by affirming divine mobility. This challenged the perception of abandonment and underscored God's solidarity with the displaced (Block, Chapters 24-48). His vision of the valley

of dry bones (Ezek 37) epitomizes trauma recovery—acknowledging death-like despair but announcing the Spirit’s power to restore life and communal hope. Such imagery speaks powerfully into violent contexts today, where communities devastated by terror require narratives of renewal. Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55) offers perhaps the most profound theological articulation of hope in exile. With soaring poetry, he announced comfort, new creation, and the promise of return. The Servant Songs embody a theology of redemptive suffering, envisioning restoration not through military power but through faithful endurance and divine intervention (Childs). In trauma hermeneutics, these texts demonstrate how sacred traditions can transform narratives of victimization into testimonies of resilience and hope.

Applied to modern contexts of violence and terror, exilic prophetic voices challenge both church and society to engage with the pain of victims while envisioning alternative futures. Prophetic hope is not naive optimism but a counter-narrative that resists despair and sustains communities amid trauma (O’Connor). In violent societies, prophetic imagination provides a framework for truth-telling, communal healing, and moral resistance to oppressive powers.

Summarily, the exilic prophets exemplify how theology emerges in response to violent disruption. Their voices affirm that divine presence accompanies the traumatized, that despair can be transformed into resilient hope and that even in violent contexts, new beginnings are possible. Within the broader theme of Arts and Humanities in the Changing World, their legacy underscores the enduring power of prophetic imagination to inspire human communities to confront violence and cultivate peace.

5. Hermeneutics as Resistance: Reimagining Biblical Narratives for Healing in Violent African Contexts

In the face of pervasive violence across many African communities, resulting from war, political instability, ethnic strife, and systemic injustice—the discipline of trauma hermeneutics offers a potent framework for re-engaging biblical narratives as tools of resistance and healing. Trauma hermeneutics, as an interpretive methodology, attends both to the wounds and the hopes of traumatized populations: it reads scripture with sensitivity to historical and contemporary suffering and seeks to nurture resilience, restoration, and transformation.

Biblical stories such as those of Exodus, the prophetic laments, and the suffering of the innocent, when interpreted through a trauma-informed lens, become not just texts to be studied but companions in healing. In African contexts marked by pervasive violence, these narratives can reclaim meaning for survivors by validating their suffering and offering models of survival and hope. For instance, the Exodus narrative, typically studied in theological abstraction, when re-imagined in a traumatized African framework, resonates deeply as a story of deliverance from oppressive forces—both physical

and structural. Survivors may thus find in the Israelite exodus a mirrored reflection of their own journey toward liberation, invoking healing through identification with a community that endured atrocity and yet emerged.

Moreover, trauma hermeneutics as resistance recognizes that the act of interpreting and reclaiming scripture can itself be healing. In contexts where violence has sought to dehumanize or silence, communal storytelling and ritual reading of biblical texts can re-center voices, affirm dignity, and cultivate a shared memory of survival. These interpretive practices challenge oppressive narratives—often imposed from outside or by elites, and reclaim narrative authority for the traumatized communities themselves, in doing so, biblical texts become subversive acts of cultural and spiritual resistance to this saga.

Significantly, the arts—music, visual arts, drama, and oral performance play a critical role in trauma hermeneutic practice. Communities may dramatize biblical lament psalms or the passion narratives in localized performances that encode lived trauma and hope, transforming pain into communal art. These embodied readings allow survivors to externalize suffering, engage collectively in mourning, and re-member hope. Art-infused hermeneutics thus harnesses the biblical imagination to cultivate resilience, enact solidarity, and model alternative futures.

At its core, trauma hermeneutics in violent African contexts is fundamentally contextual and envisage deliverance. It refuses universalizing or detached readings and instead foregrounds interpretive practices that respond to local forms of suffering: insurgency in Nigeria's northeast, civil and communal violence in the Great Lakes region, or land conflicts and resource wars in West and Central Africa. Through grounded readings of scripture that acknowledge suffering, confront injustice, and offer visions of shalom, communities articulate lament and hope, memory and resistance.

In this light, trauma hermeneutics emerges as arts and humanities in action which mobilizes biblical narratives for healing, empowering survivors to reclaim agency, and inviting reinterpretation of ancient texts in the face of contemporary violence. By merging trauma-awareness, community arts, and narrative authority, this interpretive approach refuses silence, affirms resilience, and offers paths toward healing in violent African contexts.

Findings

Trauma Hermeneutics Reframes Biblical Interpretation

The study finds that trauma hermeneutics offers a necessary interpretive lens for reading Scripture in contexts of violence and conflict. It moves biblical interpretation beyond abstract theology to engage psychological, communal, and spiritual wounds. This reframing enables Scripture to speak meaningfully to lived experiences of suffering and survival.

Biblical Texts Function as Testimonies of Trauma and Resilience

The research demonstrates that texts such as Lamentations and Psalms of lament preserve fragmented and silenced voices of trauma. These texts do not resolve suffering quickly but bear witness to displacement, oppression, and communal fracture. Such narratives provide theological resources for resilience, memory, and healing within traumatized communities.

Trauma Hermeneutics Expands Hermeneutics into Pastoral and Socio-Political Praxis.

The paper finds that trauma hermeneutics transforms biblical interpretation into a healing-centered pastoral and socio-political practice. It equips interpreters to recognize marginalized voices and challenge cycles of violence, especially in African contexts. Through this approach, the Bible becomes a dialogical partner in reconstructing communal identity and hope.

Conclusion

The exploration of Trauma Hermeneutics and the Bible in Violent Contexts within the broader theme of Arts and Humanities in a Changing World underscores the urgent necessity of re-reading Scripture through the lens of suffering, memory and resilience. In violent contexts—whether marked by war, terrorism, systemic oppression, or communal conflict—the Bible has often been weaponized to legitimize harm. Yet, trauma hermeneutics invites us to reinterpret these same texts as sources of healing and solidarity for wounded communities (Carr). By centering the voices of survivors, trauma readings destabilize triumphalist interpretations and instead foreground lament, vulnerability, and the slow processes of recovery. This approach compels both scholars and faith communities to engage Scripture not as a distant historical relic but as a living testimony that speaks meaningfully to human brokenness and divine compassion.

Within the arts and humanities, trauma hermeneutics exemplifies how interpretive disciplines can offer constructive alternatives to cycles of violence. It opens pathways for dialogue between theology, literature, psychology, and cultural memory studies, thereby enriching interdisciplinary conversations in a rapidly changing world (Janzen). More importantly, it equips communities facing dislocation, abuse, or persecution with narratives that validate pain while nurturing hope. This reorientation is not merely academic but ethical: it challenges interpreters to move beyond intellectual curiosity toward transformative praxis that restores dignity and justice.

In conclusion, trauma hermeneutics highlights the profound capacity of the Bible to function both as a mirror of wounded realities and as a reservoir of healing imaginaries. In violent contexts, such readings resist the normalization of trauma and point toward a more humane and reconciliatory future. As the humanities evolve, this interpretive strategy ensures that biblical texts remain vital resources for fostering empathy, resilience, and peace.

Summary

In a rapidly changing world marked by persistent wars, systemic injustices, terrorism, and domestic violence, the Bible continues to be read and interpreted within contexts of trauma. Trauma hermeneutics has emerged as a critical lens in the arts and humanities for engaging sacred texts in ways that address human suffering and resilience. It emphasizes reading the Bible not merely as a theological document but as a repository of stories shaped by experiences of exile, oppression, displacement, and hope. Such a perspective resonates with survivors of violence who see their own wounds mirrored in biblical narratives, such as the lamentations of the Psalms, the trauma of the Babylonian exile, or the crucifixion of Christ.

The arts and humanities in the changing world provide interdisciplinary frameworks for understanding trauma not only psychologically but also socially, culturally, and spiritually. Trauma hermeneutics situates biblical interpretation as an act of solidarity with the oppressed, encouraging readers to listen to silenced voices and engage scripture for healing rather than harm (Carr). It challenges triumphalist readings that overlook pain, urging interpreters to embrace vulnerability and remembrance as integral to the interpretive process. In violent contexts like Nigeria, South Africa, or the Middle East, this approach enables communities to reclaim the Bible as a resource for peace, reconciliation, and resistance against further violence (Krause & Ellington).

Thus, trauma hermeneutics embodies the transformative role of the arts and humanities: it reshapes how sacred texts are read, how memory is preserved, and how hope is articulated amid violence. It underscores that in the changing world; the Bible remains not a distant artifact but a living witness to human struggle and divine presence.

Seven Thematic Applicable Recommendations

1. Contextual Reading of Biblical Texts

Biblical texts should be read with sensitivity to historical and present-day experiences of trauma. Contextual interpretation prevents the misuse of scripture to perpetuate violence and instead highlights its capacity to offer hope and resilience. Reading the lament Psalms as therapeutic prayers for communities affected by violent conflicts gives hope and resilience.

2. Integrating Trauma Studies into Biblical Interpretation

Trauma studies provide psychological and sociological lenses for interpreting biblical texts. This integration enables interpreters to uncover how texts reflect human suffering and recovery, thus making the Bible more relevant in violent contexts.

3. Promoting Healing through Narrative Engagement

Engaging biblical narratives of trauma—such as the exile, crucifixion, and lamentations—can foster collective healing in communities impacted by violence. Storytelling provides victims with language to articulate pain and reframe experiences.

4. Encouraging Liturgical and Artistic Expressions

Art, music, drama, and ritual can become healing spaces where trauma is expressed and processed communally. Humanities disciplines can creatively reframe biblical trauma texts into artistic expressions that support resilience.

5. Advocacy against Structural Violence

Trauma hermeneutics should move beyond individual healing to critique systemic violence such as war, poverty, gender-based violence, and oppression. Biblical interpretation becomes a resource for justice-oriented advocacy.

6. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Scholars in theology, psychology, history, and the arts should collaborate to provide holistic responses to trauma. Interdisciplinary approaches ensure that trauma hermeneutics does not remain abstract but becomes practical in healing violent contexts.

7. Educational Transformation in the Humanities

In a changing world, trauma hermeneutics should be embedded into educational curricula within religious studies, literature, and cultural studies. This ensures that future leaders, teachers, and clergy are equipped to address trauma with biblical and humanistic insights.

These seven recommendations show how trauma hermeneutics and the Bible can be practically applied within the arts and humanities in the changing world, offering healing, advocacy, and interdisciplinary transformation.

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THE CONVERGENCE OF SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND TECHNOLOGY IN MODERN AFRICA: EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 SAMUEL 13:16-22 IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

The intersection of science, religion, and technology presents challenges for contemporary African societies, particularly in the context of the subjugation of the Israelites by the Philistines. This research addresses the gap in existing scholarship concerning the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) frameworks on African identity, traditional religions, and socio-economic development. Previous studies have predominantly focused on the technological advances themselves without critically examining their socio-cultural effects; thus, the current study aims to illuminate how the historical subjugation of the Israelites by the Philistines in 1 Samuel 13:19 is reminiscent of the tendency of AI technologies, shaped by Western paradigms, can affect African worldviews and cultural integrity. The scope encompasses analysis of 1 Samuel 13:19 in exegetical alignment with African religious frameworks, traditional knowledge systems, and the role of oral traditions in Africa. Employing exegetical method, this study will utilise a theoretical framework based on the works of Jacob K. Olupona and Gerald West to explore African critical responses to the challenges of AI technologies within an African paradigm. Preliminary findings suggest that AI may undermine African linguistic richness and narrative ownership, echoing the Israelites' historical confrontations with technological dependency on the Philistines. The study concludes that a proactive reclamation of African narratives and knowledge systems is essential for promoting cultural resilience against external technological impositions. It recommends that African scholars and policymakers prioritise the integration of indigenous perspectives within the broader discourse on technology and identity to foster a more equitable approach to AI development and implementation.

Keywords: Science, Religion, Contemporary Africa, identity, Technology, Ethics and Development

Word Count: 248

Introduction

The intersection of science, religion, and technology is a critical area of exploration for contemporary African societies, particularly against the backdrop of historical narratives that shape identity and cultural integrity. The subjugation of the Israelites by the Philistines, as described in 1 Samuel 13:19, provides an illustrative framework for understanding the complexities inherent in the adoption of

modern technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), in Africa. This biblical account reveals not only the socio-political dynamics of ancient Israel but also the enduring implications of technological dependency and cultural domination, which resonate within today's contexts.

Despite the significant advancements in AI technologies, existing scholarship tends to focus predominantly on the technological elements rather than their socio-cultural ramifications, particularly in African settings. This research identifies a critical gap in the literature concerning how AI frameworks, often shaped by Western paradigms, influence African identity, traditional religions, and socio-economic development. While some scholars have engaged with the challenges posed by these technologies (Collins, 2025, p. 115), there remains a lack of comprehensive analysis that connects historical narratives, like that of the Israelites' oppression, with contemporary issues in African societies. Thus, the problem statement is underscored by a need for critical examination of the implications of AI technologies and their potential to undermine African worldviews and cultural integrity.

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the connections between historical narratives and present-day challenges, thereby advocating for a proactive reclamation of African narratives and knowledge systems. This purpose is crucial not only for preserving cultural resilience but also for promoting an equitable integration of indigenous perspectives in technology discourse. By grounding the analysis in the teachings of influential scholars such as (Olupona, 2014, p. 13-15) and (West, 2009, p. 13-21), this research aims to articulate African responses to the complexities posed by AI technologies within a distinctly African paradigm.

The scope of this research encompasses an exegetical analysis of 1 Samuel 13:19, framed by African religious frameworks and traditional knowledge systems. Additionally, it explores the role of oral traditions in articulating cultural identity in the context of technological advances. This approach is justified by the necessity of contextualising AI discussions within a rich tapestry of African heritage and contemporary experiences, thereby offering new insights into the implications of AI within African societies.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the broader discourse on technology and identity in Africa, highlighting the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into discussions about AI development and implementation. By advocating for an understanding of the historical subjugation experienced by the Israelites, the research underscores the urgency of reclaiming African narratives to safeguard against external technological impositions.

Employing exegetical method, this study utilises a theoretical framework anchored in the works of (Olupona, 2014, p. 13-15) and (West, 2009, p. 13-21). The research involves a critical analysis of existing literature, coupled with biblical narratives to gather diverse perspectives on the intersection of AI, African identity, and traditional religions. This methodological approach is essential for providing a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural effects of AI in Africa and positioning the study within a scholarly discourse that prioritises African voices and experiences.

The Intersection of Science and Religion in Contemporary Africa

The intellectual discourse on the relationship between science and religion has been a recurring theme throughout history and continues to be relevant today (Fleming, 2016, “Where science and religion meet” para.1-2). These two fields often sustain each other’s consciousness within human minds, not only through heated debates attempting to disprove one another’s claims but also in the pursuit of potential agreements. Fleming (2016) opines that popular contemporary culture often depicts religion and science as locking up in irreconcilable and unalterable conflicts arguing that historical records on the relationship between the two shows the opposite that science has largely developed because of religious quest to know more about God through the study of nature (“Where science and religion meet” para. 2).

Generally speaking, a segment of scientists now believes that an intelligent designer or being is responsible for the order and patterns observed in creation (Fleming, 2016, “Where science and religion meet” para. 7). This view aligns with the beliefs of both Abrahamic religions and various African religions, which attribute the workings of the universe to a supreme being. This dialogue has developed over centuries, leading to a converging relativism regarding the source of life (Nwaogwugwu, 2011, p.13).

Cunningham (1992) explains that religion fundamentally represents a belief system that encompasses the worship of supernatural beings (p.97). Regardless of how one interprets or debates this concept, it is essential to acknowledge its significance. If we were to abandon the connection to the supernatural, we would essentially strip religion of its very essence, the core that sustains it. Anderson and Keldon (2024) discussed science as a systematic pursuit of knowledge about the natural world, involving observation, experimentation, and analysis to understand how things work. It relies on evidence and seeks to explain phenomena through testable theories and models, following the scientific method of making observations, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments, and drawing conclusions. The

goal of science is to build knowledge that helps us understand the universe and improve our lives (p. 13).

In this modern age, we find ourselves in a world heavily influenced by scientific advancements and technological innovations, all designed to enhance human life. This profound commitment to science and technology has, in some circles, been perceived as a form of religion in its own right. While it is undeniable that modern scientific thinking possesses its own merits, it also serves to create a distinct divide between science and religion, the empirical and the divine (Fleming, 2016, “Where science and religion meet” para.1-10).

Science operates on evidence that can be observed and measured, appealing to human understanding through empirical facts. In contrast, religion addresses a deeper, often unquantifiable reality, resonating with the human soul and driving the pursuit of a connection with a supreme order and other divine entities. This quest for spiritual fulfilment can lead to moral transformation, establishing religion as a vital agency for social change and ethical development (Fleming, 2016, “Where science and religion meet” para.12-14).

Consequently, religion has demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of scientific and technological progress. At the same time, these advancements have contributed significantly to the historiographical narratives and sustainability of religious beliefs. For centuries, there has been a symbiotic relationship between science and religion. In fact, it seems that with the dawn of human intellectual advancement and creativity, religion has continually supplied the raw materials for scientific exploration. The desire to scrutinise and verify religious claims has, in turn, enriched both scientific knowledge and the broader spectrum of human thought and modernisation (Fleming, 2016, “Where science and religion meet” para.12-14).

The conclusion drawn from scholarly research on the interplay between science and religion indicates that science holds significant potential to advance humanity, particularly in the context of religious perspectives, if it prioritises the human and ecological dimensions of creation and existence. Conversely, religion can deepen its focus on humanity's connection to the supreme beings and divine realities through ontological theology, particularly in relation to human destiny within ecological systems and in addressing moral and spiritual imperatives for eschatology.

The Exegesis of 1 Samuel 13:19

The biblical exegesis of 1 Samuel 13:19 speaks profoundly to the complexities facing contemporary Africa as it grapples with the twin threats of cultural imperialism and technological domination. The verse encapsulates Israel's struggle against the Philistines, highlighting the themes of oppression, technological disparity, and the quest for autonomy. As Africa stands on the precipice of technological transformation, paralleling the Israelites' plight under Philistine control, the lessons gleaned from this scripture become increasingly pertinent. In a rapidly evolving world, where artificial intelligence (AI) and other scientific advancements pose both opportunities and challenges, the echo of this ancient narrative serves as a call to preserve cultural identity and cultivate self-sufficiency.

Textual Integrity

Researchers investigating the biblical text suggest that the historical accuracy of 1 Samuel 13 is sound and unproblematic. It has been noted that the passage lacks specific details about the duration of Saul's reign; however, Hebrew authors chose to leave this gap unaddressed rather than alter the original text. Kolberg (2024) further explains that 1 Samuel 13:1 is usually rendered as a mark of Saul's reign, who was the first king of Israel. For example, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) phrases it as: "Saul was... years old when he began to reign; and he reigned... and two years over Israel." The ellipses indicate that the translator believed a number was missing due to shortcomings. This analysis posits that the Hebrew wording of 1 Samuel 13:1 is intact, functioning as a chronological reference for Saul's reign rather than a comprehensive account of his time as king (p.1).

Historical Context and Contemporary Parallels

1 Samuel 13:19 reveals a time when Israel was unable to manufacture its own weapons due to the suppression imposed by the Philistines. This scenario can be likened to Africa's historical and ongoing struggles against various forms of external domination, including colonialism and neo-colonialism, as well as the current influx of Western technological paradigms that dictate the contours of development on the continent. The Philistines, having monopolised blacksmithing, represent the external forces that dictate what is produced, shaping the tools and technologies that dictate military (or, in contemporary terms, economic and technological) power.

In the modern context, Africa often finds itself reliant on Western powers for technological advancements. The narrative reflects a tangible fear: if the continent becomes overly dependent on Western technology, it risks not only economic subservience but also the erosion of its cultural

identity. Just as the Philistines aimed to diminish the Hebraic ability to defend themselves, contemporary Africa risks becoming incapable of leveraging its indigenous strengths, overwhelmed by foreign innovations that do not take local contexts into account.

Key Themes Explored

Control and Oppression

The control exerted by the Philistines over blacksmithing resonates with modern Africa's dependency on foreign technology and expertise. This control is multifaceted, ranging from educational materials dominated by Western paradigms to the pharmaceutical industry that often fails to cater to local health needs. Just as the Israelites were stripped of agency in weapon-making, African nations can find themselves deprived of the capacity to innovate and produce solutions to their challenges.

Technological Disparity

The absence of blacksmiths symbolises a significant gap in technological proficiency. Today, this manifests in terms of access to education and technological infrastructure that is often at odds with Africa's needs. While the world races toward an AI-driven future, the continent must grapple with inadequate resources, limited internet connectivity, and a scarcity of technical expertise. In an era where knowledge is power, the vast chasm in technological capability poses significant risks, not only to individual nations but to the collective identity of Africa.

Identity and Autonomy

The spiritual and socio-political implications of Israel's inability to forge its weaponry raise essential questions about African identity today. The dominance of foreign countries and cultures in shaping educational curricula, technological development, and economic policies creates a risk of cultural erosion. If African nations cannot reclaim their identity amid global advancement, there is a real danger that they will lose not just their cultural heritage but the means to thrive in their unique context.

Foreshadowing Conflict in Contemporary Context

The struggles depicted in 1 Samuel foreshadowed the wars that would follow, and today, the tensions created by dependency on foreign technology presage potential conflicts over resources, power, and identity. In a world where technology can dictate economic prosperity, access to AI, whether in

agriculture, education or health, will influence which nations flourish and which stagnate. As Africa navigates these turbulent waters, the need for foresight and strategic autonomy becomes paramount.

Theological Reflection

1 Samuel 13:19 urges reflective engagement concerning the balance between reliance on God and technological advancement. Despite the Israelites' material challenges, their rich spiritual heritage offered them resilience and guidance. This touchstone poses critical questions for contemporary African nations: How can they engage with advanced technologies while remaining anchored in their cultural and spiritual traditions? The pressing need for self-reliance, echoed by the Israelites in the face of Philistine oppression, translates into a modern mandate: to develop localised solutions that integrate indigenous wisdom with technological advancements.

Religious and spiritual practices, while often viewed through a colonial lens, have proven resilient. They offer platforms for community cohesion and the transmission of culturally relevant knowledge. With the integration of AI and technological innovations threatening cultural narratives and practices, African countries stand at a crossroads. They can either uncritically adopt Western paradigms or creatively reimagine technology's role while respecting their unique identities and histories.

Contemporary Applications of Biblical Text

The implications of 1 Samuel 13:19 extend powerfully into Africa's present-day context. The verse serves as a reminder of historical lessons that remain vital as nations approach next-generation technologies. Here are several contemporary applications:

Fostering Local Innovation

Africa must cultivate a culture of home-grown technology through investment in education and research that values indigenous knowledge. For example, local universities and institutions should collaborate with communities to develop contextually appropriate technological solutions that take African realities into account, thereby forging a path toward true autonomy akin to the Israelites' desire for weapon manufacture.

Empowering Cultural Narratives

The richness of African languages and cultural practices must be preserved and integrated into the programming of AI and technological tools. Just as the Yoruba language offers unique interpretations

and expressions, technologies should reflect and amplify local voices, ensuring that AI serves as an enabler rather than a detractor from cultural identities.

Harnessing Religious Communities

Religious institutions possess deep-rooted networks in African societies, providing unique platforms for education and social cohesion. By engaging these communities in the dialogue around technology and identity, there may emerge collective wisdom and strategies that align modern innovations with traditional values.

Advocating for Policy Change

Policymakers must prioritise the integration of indigenous knowledge systems within educational curricula and technology policies. This step includes advocating for equitable access to technology that empowers local communities, ensuring that advancements in AI do not necessitate sacrifices of cultural identity or autonomy.

The Implications of AI and Western Paradigms on African Identity, Religion and Development

Africa is on the brink of a significant transformation in the 21st century, with the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and technological progress. However, the continent is currently trailing its Western counterparts in scientific and technological advancement. Many African have abandoned their digital platforms for greener pasture in favour of the West (Narkoh, 2024, p213-214). The adoption and integration of AI into various sectors raises critical questions about its potential impact on African children and youth. As we traverse this new terrain, it is urgent to reflect on how the infusion of Western intellectual paradigms into African education might disrupt traditional modes of thought, thereby undermining the essence of African identity and cultural richness.

At the heart of understanding the implications of AI on African thought is the recognition of oration as a fundamental aspect of African culture (Gregorio, 2023, "AI and Freedom of Expression" para 34). African societies have long relied on oral traditions to convey knowledge, values, and communal history. The power of language as a vehicle for cultural transmission goes beyond mere communication; it embodies the identity, struggles, and triumphs of African peoples. However, as the Western educational system becomes increasingly dominant within African universities, there is a palpable risk of cognitive colonisation. When the minds of African youth are trained to align with

Western frameworks, traditional epistemologies risk being side lined, potentially leading to the loss of vital aspects of our cultural identity and richness.

The work is situated within an African scholarly context that seeks to illuminate how African societies respond to the convergence of scientific and religious thought. A pivotal voice in this discourse is (Olupona, 2014) who engages deeply with the legacy of Bolaji Idowu. Olupona emphasises that while Idowu acknowledges the many benefits inherent in the scientific method, he also highlights its intrinsic limitations, particularly regarding the pervasive negative attitudes towards African traditional religions. This perception reflects a broader scholarly struggle for African identity, challenging the dominant narratives shaped by colonial and neo-colonial influences (p. 13-15).

Olupona's framework, a significant contribution to the field, is employed to critically assess the limitations and challenges posed by AI technologies, as well as their potential benefits, from the perspective of the African worldview, a viewpoint already marginalised by Western constructs. Idowu's equally significant contributions are especially noteworthy; he advocated for a civil religion specifically tailored to Nigeria, aiming to preserve and celebrate African identity alongside traditional religious beliefs. By utilising the Yoruba religion as a case study, Idowu (1966) successfully established the concept of "Olodumare" as a universally recognised representation of an African consciousness of a Supreme God, positioned on par with Western conceptualisations of divinity (P.35-43). This intellectual endeavour serves to uphold the communal ideologies that are central to African societies.

West (2009) traced the origins of black theology to the initial interactions between indigenous peoples of southern Africa and missionaries affiliated with colonial powers, who employed the Bible as an instrument of subjugation. This historical backdrop played a significant role in the development of liberation hermeneutics (p.13-21). In a separate analysis, West critiqued the Enlightenment scientific paradigm, positing that it is fundamentally anchored in humanism and the Renaissance. He contended that it predominantly reflects the Western culture of industrialisation, which has been instrumental in facilitating colonialism. West asserted that the enslavement of Africans served to bolster Western industries and that the occupation of the African continent by Western and European entities is a direct outcome of this dynamic. He advocated for the establishment of an African ideological framework that emphasises African identity within a religious context (West, 1995, 21-25). Moreover, the increasing prominence of artificial intelligence within the religious domain necessitates a critical

examination to cultivate an African perspective on AI that effectively engages with religious texts and worship through an African lens.

Africa's legacy as the cradle of humanity is both a foundational narrative and a call to action. Western scientists have validated this narrative, recognising the continent as the birthplace of humankind, yet the true ownership of this history and its implications remains an ongoing struggle (Lombard, 2021, p.11-12). As the global economic landscape shifts towards Africa, the pressing question arises: will Africans genuinely assert ownership of the opportunities and narratives that emerge, or will we continue to be passive recipients, moulded by external influences? If we surrender our cognitive faculties to technologies like AI, the challenge of reclaiming our narrative becomes even more daunting. We stand at a crossroads where technology, while potentially beneficial, threatens to overshadow the unique creative capacities that define African thought.

The editorial capabilities of AI, alongside its rapid advancement, present both opportunities and risks. While it can enhance productivity and efficiency, we must be wary of its encroachment on human creativity, especially in communication modes deeply rooted in African linguistic diversity. For instance, the Yoruba language offers rich expressions that reflect unique cultural realities. When the Yoruba say "pele," it conveys empathy and concern, an interpretation that lacks a direct equivalent in Western expressions of apology such as "sorry." This linguistic nuance emphasises the danger of allowing AI developed within a Western context to dominate our linguistic landscape, potentially erasing the subtleties that define our communication styles and cultural expressions (Jemiriye, 1998, p.19).

Scholars such as Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe have made unparalleled contributions to literature and global discourse, grounding their narratives in African ideological and cultural frameworks. Their works exemplify how African voices and perspectives can resonate within the broader human experience, asserting that our stories are not ancillary to global narratives but central to them. However, suppose AI tools begin to reshape our expressions. In that case, we face the risk of diluting these rich legacies, serialising creativity in ways that strip away the essence of our cultural narratives.

Furthermore, religion, a complex yet pivotal element of African identity, intersects with our discourse on AI and colonisation. The dominant religions in Africa, particularly Christianity and Islam, have been transmitted through the cultural ideological lenses of the West and the Arab world. While they provide spiritual guidance, these frameworks can also act as agents of colonialism, shaping the beliefs and practices of African peoples in ways that often overlook indigenous knowledge systems. The

culturally contingent nature of religion means that despite the numerous interpretations it may undergo, there remains a central truth that binds Africans, transcending the boundaries of religious affiliations.

This sensibility is echoed in the traditional architecture of the Yoruba people, epitomised in structures like "Akodi." The design, featuring a central parlour surrounded by individual rooms, symbolises communal living and collaboration, a metaphor for harmony despite diversity. Such structures embody a cultural ideology that fosters unity among different religious and ethnic groups, emphasising that cooperation and mutual respect can coexist within a communal ideological framework (Adeoye, 2023, p.110-111).

Despite the incursions of Western influence that have disrupted these traditional structures, it is crucial to articulate a vision for traversing our realities that simultaneously embraces technological advancements and prioritises the preservation of our cultural identities. To do so, it is essential to advocate for an interpretive framework that integrates African worldviews not only in the arts and humanities but across all domains, including science and religion. This balanced approach is germane to maintaining our cultural identity while benefiting from technological progress.

Adamo (2005) explored the significance of interpreting religious messages through an African lens. Their works highlight the necessity of integrating African perspectives into theological discussions to maintain a sense of identity while engaging with global religious narratives. For instance, the engagement of Africans with Hebrew and other Semitic communities predates European influence, indicating that Christianity is not solely a Western construct. This counter-narrative allows for a more nuanced understanding of how African religious practices can be aligned with global traditions while maintaining their unique cultural roots (p.7-45).

However, as we embrace these scholarly perspectives, we must remain vigilant of the implications of scientific advancements, particularly those resonating from Western paradigms. The allure of technological progress should not overshadow the significance of cultivating home grown innovations that resonate with African realities and aspirations. It is vital to foster an educational environment that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and the preservation of traditional knowledge systems. This realisation entails recognising the sophisticated epistemologies that exist within our cultures and ensuring that they coexist alongside scientific advancements.

The Findings on the Ideological Infiltration of AI in the African Context

Impact of Western Education

The dominance of Western educational paradigms in Africa mirrors the scriptural narrative of Israel's struggle against Philistine oppression, paralleling the cognitive colonisation that threatens traditional African knowledge systems and cultural identity, akin to the Israelites' loss of agency in weapon-making.

Role of Oral Traditions

Just as Israel's cultural identity was tied to its storytelling and history, oral traditions in African societies are crucial for knowledge transmission and community bonding. However, these traditions may be overlooked in favour of Western modes of communication; much like the Israelites faced a systematic erasure of their self-reliance.

Linguistic Vulnerability

The richness of African languages reflects a unique cultural expression that stands at risk if AI technologies are solely developed from a Western context. This situation echoes Israel's technological dependency, where lack of control leads to vulnerability.

Narrative Ownership

African writers like Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe echo the need for narrative ownership, similar to Israel's struggle for autonomy in the face of Philistine control. The improper use of AI tools threatens to dilute African narratives; much like the Israelites faced the risk of losing their identity and means of defense.

Religious Frameworks

The influence of Christianity and Islam in Africa often arises from Western and Arab perspectives, overshadowing indigenous belief systems; akin to how Israel's spiritual resilience was challenged by external domination.

Recommendations

Integrate Indigenous Epistemologies

Educating systems should incorporate traditional African knowledge alongside Western frameworks. This integration mirrors the need for African nations to reclaim their identity and self-sufficiency, much like the Israelites' quest for independence from Philistines.

Preserve and Promote Oral Traditions

Initiatives to document and celebrate oral traditions should be prioritized. This echoes the importance of maintaining cultural memory as central to resilience, akin to the lessons of Israel's history that should guide contemporary practice.

Culturally Contextualised AI Development

There is a need to encourage local developers to create AI tools sensitive to African languages and cultural contexts, ensuring that nuances are retained. This approach is essential for fostering autonomy, as advocated by the narrative of 1 Samuel.

Empower African Narratives

Literature and media that highlight African perspectives should be promoted, reinforcing local voices akin to the voices of Israel that resonate in their ongoing struggle.

Support Indigenous Religious Practices

Discussions around indigenous belief systems should be fostered, allowing for coexistence with major religions. This creates room for the rich spiritual heritage that once provided resilience against oppression.

Community Involvement in Tech Dialogues

Local communities must be involved in conversations about AI and technology. Engaging them aligns with the biblical call for self-reliance and informed autonomy that characterised Israel's hopes against Philistine control. By implementing these findings and recommendations, Africa can explore technological advancements while preserving its rich cultural heritage and identity, echoing the resilient spirit of the Israelites in 1 Samuel 13:19.

Conclusion

The discussion of AI and Western paradigms in the context of African development is not a simple dichotomy of good or bad. It is a complex issue that requires a balanced approach. While we must be vigilant of the potential risks and pitfalls, we should also recognise the possible benefits and opportunities. By promoting a synthesis between tradition and innovation, we can steer these challenges and forge an African identity that remains resilient, dynamic, and reflective of the rich nature of our diverse cultures.

1 Samuel 13:19 captures profound truths about human experience, the struggles for identity, autonomy, and the reclamation of agency in the face of systemic oppression. As Africa stands at a technological crossroads, the lesson of the blacksmiths' absence resonates deeply: dependence on outside powers not only compromises the capacity for self-defence but also threatens to undermine cultural identities essential for community cohesion and resilience. In this era marked by rapid advancements in AI and other technologies, African nations face the formidable challenge of constructing their narratives while leveraging modern tools. By remembering the lessons of the past and acknowledging the cultural richness that defines them, African societies can move toward a future where they are not merely consumers of technology but innovators, custodians of their heritage, and architects of their destinies. This critical examination of identity and autonomy is both a necessity and a responsibility for the emerging generations, fostering a future that proudly embraces Africa's unique narrative within the global landscape.

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GLOBALISATION AND NIGERIAN INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SHIFT: ÑDI-ÌGBÒ CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AS PROTOTYPE

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of globalisation on Nigerian cultural traits, with a particular focus on the culture and language of Ñdi-Ìgbò residing in the South-East zone of Nigeria. Motivated by UNESCO's prediction of the near-extinction of the Ìgbò language, and by extension, its culture, the research aimed to identify strategies for preserving Ìgbò identity in a globalised Nigeria. It relied on secondary data collection techniques to examine the pros and cons of globalisation on indigenous Ìgbò culture, as well as the factors contributing to the near extinction of the Ìgbò language. Guided by the theoretical frameworks of cultural imperialism and language shift, the analysis revealed that the negative attitude of Ñdi-Ìgbò towards their native language and culture stemmed largely from modern colonialism - globalisation, which promoted economic growth and eroded cultural traditions via cultural hegemony and hybridisation. Another contributing factor to the decline of the Ìgbò language was the dominance of English as the language of politics, commerce, and education in Nigeria, with all legal documents, constitutions, and policies written in English. The study recommended that the Nigerian government review existing policies and enforce the provisions of the *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* (1988) and the *National Policy on Education* (2013), particularly those related to the use of indigenous languages. It also urged Ìgbò parents to actively speak the Ìgbò language to their children to ensure its sustainability, emphasising that the loss of language equates to the loss of culture and, ultimately, the loss of identity.

Keywords: Culture, globalisation, language, extinction, Ñdi-Ìgbò.

Introduction

The world is rapidly transforming due to technological advancements, particularly the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As smaller developing nations strive to find their footing in this dynamic landscape, powerful developed countries push toward global dominance often framed as the pursuit of a "One World Government." This phenomenon is a direct consequence of globalisation, characterised by increasing interconnectedness and interdependence among nations. While globalisation fosters progress in economic, social, cultural, political, and technological spheres, it simultaneously breeds inequality, cultural homogenisation, and language extinction.

Interpretations of globalisation vary widely depending on an individual's political ideology, geographic location, social status, cultural background, ethnicity, and religious beliefs (Asikaogu, 2018, p. 43). For some, it represents progress, stability, integration, and cooperation, while for others, it signals regression, neo-colonialism, destabilisation, cultural erosion and language extinction. For Asikaogu, globalisation is simply “modern colonisation” (2018, p. 43), while Iwara equates it with Westernisation or Americanisation, as globalisation is driven by Western Europe and the United States (2004, p. 20). Odionye views it as a “global culture” where people consume similar goods and services and use a common business language – English (2004, p. 3).

Language is not just a tool for communication; it is a symbol of identity, culture, and heritage. It shapes ethnic identity and fosters social cohesion; an indispensable tool for human communication and national development (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 120; Odinye & Odinye, 2010, p. 85). Through language, communities express their worldview and maintain cultural continuity. However, globalisation fosters the spread of dominant languages and cultures, often at the expense of indigenous ones (Ugochukwu, 2022, p. 150). In Nigeria, this dynamism manifests in the tension between Western culture and African traditions, and between English and Ìgbò language.

Colonialism introduced a deep-rooted inferiority complex among Nigerians. Indigenous customs were dismissed as “barbaric,” while Western culture was elevated through Christianity and formal education. This legacy persists as many Nigerians perceive local products and traditions as inferior, even when they surpass Western alternatives in quality. Even literary icons like Chinua Achebe advocate for English in African literature, as he “feel[s] that the English language will be able to carry the weight of [his] African experience” albeit “altered to suit new African surroundings” (Akujobi, 2016, p. 230). Parents increasingly discourage their children from studying arts or indigenous languages, favouring science and foreign languages like German, French, Latin, Chinese, and English. Some even ban indigenous languages at home, fearing accents or perceived backwardness. A sister once refused teaching her daughter the Ìgbò language because she did not want her daughter to have “Ìgbò tongue” (Ìgbò ascent) when speaking English later in life. Children are enrolled early in private schools that promote English, ignoring the Nigerian *National Policy on Education*'s mandate for mother-tongue instruction in early childhood (FRN NPE, 2013, p. 6).

Though colonialism has formally ended, globalisation has emerged as its modern counterpart; a phenomenon, a process, a concept, an unstoppable force shaping minds and behaviours, especially among youth. The internet, social media, and AI facilitate instant cultural exchange, often favouring

dominant Western paradigms. The 1988 *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* aimed to forge a national identity while celebrating cultural diversity. Yet, Nigerian media, tasked with producing 80% local content (FRN, 1988, p. 15), prioritises profit and Western standards. This has led to the propagation of globalised norms through fashion, music, language, and social customs. Nollywood, once a bastion of *Ìgbò* culture, now promotes hybridised narratives, blending indigenous and Western elements in language, costume, cuisine, and storytelling techniques. As Ugochukwu notes, any systems that integrate people tend to benefit their architects (2022, p. 151). As such, despite its economic and infrastructural benefits, globalisation poses a grave threat to Nigerian languages and cultures, particularly *Ìgbò*. From 20,000 languages in 8000 BC, the world now has only 6,909; many have been lost to globalisation and the dominance of languages like English, Spanish, and Mandarin (Odionye, 2024, p. 3).

Language is central to globalisation's spread. Ugochukwu rightly notes that without language, people would lose their identity same as without language there will be no globalisation as language is the very lifeline of globalisation (2022, p. 150). In Nigeria, English serves as the vehicle for Western civilisation, overshadowing indigenous tongues like *Ìgbò*. Despite being one of Nigeria's three major languages, *Ìgbò* is endangered. UNESCO predicts its extinction by 2050 (Asonye, 2013, p. 92), as young Nigerians increasingly abandon it in favour of English. This trend is exacerbated by English's dominance in education, commerce, and politics; threatening not just language, but cultural identity itself. This study explores the impact of globalisation on Nigerian cultural traits, with a focus on *Ìgbò* culture and tradition as a prototype. It aims to assess both the pros and cons of globalisation and to propose strategies for preserving *Ìgbò* heritage and language in the face of western influence and linguistic erosion.

Related Literature

Globalisation

Globalisation is a multifaceted phenomenon, variously defined as a process, a concept, and a revolution in world economy and culture. It stems from rapid technological advancements in information and communication, which manifests in everyday aspects of life; from the food we consume and the clothes we wear to the languages we speak and the ways we think, feel, and act (Odionye, 2024, p. 3). At its core, globalisation encompasses economic integration, political revolution, cross-border policy transfer, and the establishment of a global market. Odionye describes it as the unification of the global community into a shared system, economically or socially, where

dominant cultures dictate the pace of development (2024, p. 3). Similarly, Ugochukwu defines globalisation as the intensification of economic, political, social, and cultural relations across international boundaries (2022, p. 147). A most précised definition is obtained from Nsibami as cited by Obioha who summarises that globalisation is:

a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and people facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural values, systems and practices (2010, p. 2).

Importantly, Nsibami stresses that globalisation is not a neutral or spontaneous phenomenon. Rather, it is a deliberate and strategic process; a socio-politico-economic and cultural permeation orchestrated by governments, private corporations, international agencies, and civil society organisations (Obioha, 2010, p. 2).

This framing suggests that globalisation is a tool used by powerful nations to exert influence and control over others, while allowing those nations to retain nominal independence. Thomas Larsson offers a metaphorical interpretation, describing globalisation as a process of “wind shrinkage”, a reduction in distances and an increase in proximity, which facilitates easier interaction among people across the globe, often yielding mutual benefits (Asikaogu, 2018, p. 43). Iwara adds that globalisation pulls diverse regions into an expanding web of exchanges - of people, ideas, cultures, goods, and services (2004, p. 20). However, this interconnectedness also leads to cultural hegemony, hybridisation, and the erosion of cultural diversity.

Historically, globalisation was driven by long-distance trade, which gained momentum during the industrial revolution with advancements in transportation and communication (Taptiani, et al., 2024, p. 95). But currently, the advent of mass media in the dissemination of information and formation of global culture has facilitated cultural interaction, and convergence of popular trends in different countries (Ivashchenko cited in Taptiani, et al., 2024, p. 95). Odionye affirms that the global spread of English language, which is a major aspect of globalisation, has been facilitated by the Mass Media, Internet, satellite cable television, telecommunication facilities and other Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities (2024, p. 5). This has led to a rapid erosion of other cultures by western civilisation - the cultures of the world powers that are propagating globalisation to third world developing countries.

Globalisation, while often celebrated for its economic and technological benefits, has also led to acculturation - a process that poses significant threats to cultural and linguistic development, especially in “third world” countries (Odionye, 2024, p. 2). Africa and Nigeria in particular, stands at the forefront of this challenge. The impact is most pronounced among the youth, who ideally should serve as custodians of cultural heritage but instead gravitate toward Western norms, perceived as the pinnacle of civilisation. Taptiani et al. emphasise the importance of involving younger members of society in intergenerational dialogue, as they play a vital role in knowledge transmission, preservation of cultural identity and maintaining local cultural traditions amid the phenomenon of globalisation (2024, p. 93). Recognising this, propagators of globalisation and Western culture strategically deploy appealing technologies such as GSM phones, laptops, and smart watches, etc. to capture the attention and imagination of youths.

Adeseyome & Bella observe that teenagers and youths are generally vital to promoting African cultures (2012, p. 10) yet Nigerian youth increasingly adopt Western cultural expressions. This is evident in their modes of dressing, speech patterns, choice of cuisine, social interactions, worldviews and values. The dominance of English in Nigeria aggravates this cultural shift. It is not only the medium of instruction in schools but also the benchmark for intelligence and literacy. Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu affirm that English remains the language of education, commerce, politics, administration, law, and the judiciary in Nigeria (2024, p. 121). Ugochukwu further explains that although globalisation began as an economic and political concept, it has evolved into a linguistic phenomenon, with English now regarded as the language of globalisation. This shift has led to linguistic imperialism, where English and other dominant global languages overshadow and marginalise Nigeria’s indigenous languages (2022, p. 147–148).

Language and Culture

Language is a vehicle for transferring information, trading, commerce, advancing technologies, from one location to another and one generation to another. It is a “major tool for communicating social, cultural and intellectual capacity of a given society/individuals” (Udoeye, 2016, p. 14). Language is the identity of a people, the key to their existence and survival as most human activities make use of language, whether verbal or non-verbal. Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu state that a people derive their identity and heritage from sharing the same language as such man loses his personality at the point of losing his language (2024, p. 120). Culture, on the other hand, is simply a way of life of a people; the way they eat, sleep, dance, marry, celebrate, cultivate a living, and bury their dead. It is the very fabric upon which human existence, in any given society, is woven. It encompasses a people’s customs and

tradition, architecture, fashion, mode of transmission and communication, design and education, technology and sustainability. Schaefer defines it as “the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects and behaviour, including the ideas, value, customs and artefacts of a group of people” (cited in Nwegbu, et al., 2011, p. 1). Culture therefore guides the conducts of man in society and prescribes the acceptable pattern of living needed for peaceful co-existence among individuals within a defined culture (Nweze, et al., 2019, p. 50). Obioha notes that culture is not a universal concept and that culture is society-based or geographically-based and at the same time dynamic (2010, p. 6). This dynamic nature of culture allows it to borrow and diffuse other cultures where the need arises as no culture is absolutely sufficient.

The relationship between language and culture is dynamic in that; language is used to transmit culture while culture is used to preserve language. Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu confirm that through language the culture and collective consciousness of a people receive expression (2024, p. 121). Emenanjo says that the relationship is symbiotic and that they both share a causal-effect relationship, where what affects one affects the other (1988, p. 13). Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu support that ethnographic investigators have proven that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world, as such, language forms part of the culture of a people (2024, p. 121). Citing Durkheim, Emenanjo stated that “human intercourse rests upon a tripod of exchanges - exchange of information, exchange of women and exchange of commodities, of which exchange of information is primacy as the other two forms are encodable and decodable in human language (1988, p. 13). Since culture consists of learned and socially transmitted customs, language serves as the primary medium through which these customs are passed down to younger members of society, ensuring the preservation of both cultural heritage and linguistic identity. Thus, whereby the younger members of the group do not speak their language, their cultural practices suffer a decline and so do their language. Eva Engholm, cited in Nwadike, was right to say that language is the “key” to the heart of a people and the loss of this key is the loss of the people (2008, p. 13).

There are over 6,500 different natural languages in the world, and only eleven - Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, French, Bengali, Portuguese, Russian, German, Japanese, Arabic and English - account for the speech of more than a half of the world’s population. Obi-Okoye observes that “clearly language controls thinking, learning and all other mental processes and behaviour as well as acting upon and shaping human personalities and moods” (2008, p. 11). If this statement is true, it therefore means that Nigerians, particularly *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*, speaking English controls their mental processes and behaviour to begin to act like the English people in personalities, moods (emotional dispositions) and

modes (behavioural patterns), thereby losing their *Ìgbò* personalities. Since language is used as an identity to be part of the “world system” now, speaking English makes English of *Ñdi-Ìgbò* (Ugochukwu, 2022, p. 151). Eze sums up the influence of globalisation on *Ñdi-Ìgbò* as

the forces responsible for the apparent demise or progressive disappearance of *Ìgbò* traditional gods, deities and venerable ancestors ... [followed by] five principal threats to their existence; erosion of *Ìgbò* personality [*Chi*], the spread of popular global culture, loss of natural environments, loss of traditional languages and conversion to other religions [Christianity and Islam] (2019, p. 120).

***Ñdi-Ìgbò*, Language and Culture**

Ñdi-Ìgbò (*Ìgbò* people) are of the African descent, particularly from the Eastern part of Nigeria and occupy five States – Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. In a country estimated to speak over 500 languages (FRN, *NPE*, 2013, p. iii), the *Ìgbò* language is one of the three major languages, aside English, spoken in all five States including some parts of Delta State (Aniocha) and Rivers State (Ika) (Odinye & Odinye, 2010, p. 85; Obianika, 2014, p. 1). As found on Obianika (2014, p. 1-4), the study of *Ìgbò* language dates back to the colonial era when Christian missionaries sought to evangelise the *Ìgbò* speaking people. While there are variations of the dialects as found in Delta and Rivers States - Ika, Ikwerre and Izii, known as the “Igboid group of languages” (Igboanusi, 2006, p. 445), the Standard *Ìgbò* (SI) took years of controversy in what is termed “orthography controversy” between 1939 and 1962, to be achieved. This period was a “blank period in *Ìgbò* literary history” (Obianika, 2014, p. 2) as all parties involved were more concerned about propagating their own dialect (Aguata, Agulu, Arochukwu, Bende, Delta Igbo, Mbaise, Nnewi, Nsukka, Orlu, and Umuahia) rather than the progress and development of the language. Scholars eventually agreed that no orthography is perfect and that many standard languages of the world do not reflect all the distinctive sounds in their dialects in the standard orthography, as such, the Onwu Orthography was approved by the then Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education in 1962.

This same attitude of self-interest over the progress and development of the *Ìgbò* language has become the reason behind the decline of the language. Odinye & Odinye state that the *Ìgbò* people portray negative attitude towards their language. To support this statement, they quoted Eme (2004, p. 304) and Nwadike (2008, p. 39-40) who affirm that “some *Ìgbò* parents, especially the literate ones, do not speak *Ìgbò* to their children even at home. In some cases, the parents ban their children from using *Ìgbò* to communicate among themselves [such as the case of] a mother at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, [who] asked her children to desist from speaking that useless language (*Ìgbò*)” (2010, p. 87).

Odionye affirms that *Ìgbò* educated families speak English Language to their children in a bid to broaden the economic and social horizons of their children (2024, p. 4). The government policy of favouring English as the Lingua Franca of Nigeria and English being the language of government, trade and education, has resulted in *Ñdi-Ìgbò* developing a favourable attitude towards the English language at the detriment of *Ìgbò* language (Odinye & Odinye, 2010, p. 88). Odionye concurs that “the worst situation is where most schools and institutions in Eastern Nigeria prohibit pupils and students from communicating in *Ìgbò* language” (2024, p. 4). This is regardless of the fact that the use of English as language of instruction in education is against the requirements of the *National Policy on Education*, which stipulates the use of mother-tongue or indigenous language of immediate community at the Basic Education Level (2013, p. 6 & 8).

Ñdi-Ìgbò customs and traditions are expressed in their visual arts, use of language musical, dance forms, attire, festival ceremonies and language dialects (Asikaogu, 2018, p. 44). Culturally, the *Ñdi-Ìgbò* are known for their sense of communal life, sacredness of life, respect for elders, sacredness of religion and tradition, good human relations, sense of hospitality, sense of time, language and the use of proverbs as cohesive force of the community based on truth (Onwubiko qtd in Nweze, et al. 2019, p. 50). Nweze, et al emphasise that the African culture, as a whole, is positive and humanistic and that the *Ìgbò* cultural heritage places emphasis on communal life, family, concern for one’s neighbour, morality, the dignity of man, the dignity of labour, customs and traditions (2019, p. 50). The culture is holistic and standardised, with its different rites of passage to welcome new members into the community or include younger generations who have come of age into their various groups, marital rites for continuity, the various groups of elders, women and youths to main peace, respect and order, etc.

Every aspect of the life of *Ñdi-Ìgbò* has rules and regulations, traditions and customs guiding its very existence. These cultural practices are put in place for the continuity and survival of the *Ìgbò* language, culture, tradition and society. Although culture is society-based or geographically-based, there are common cultural practices peculiar to *Ñdi-Ìgbò*

Socialisation: *Ñdi-Ìgbò* have different means of socialising amongst them. The *egwu ọnwá* is where young people socialise under the brightness of the moonlight and play games of *agwugwa*, *okwu ngbawaọnu*, *ilu*, *nchō*, etc. The *akukọ ifo* is another form where the elderly (grandparents, parents, uncles, aunties, elder siblings) tell stories of morals to guide the behaviours of the younger ones and also transmit customs and traditions.

Education: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* system of education differs for both boys and girls. The boys who are prepared for making a living and providing for their family are educated under the *igba-boi*, or *nwa-boi* system where young men learn a trade as apprentice for a period of about seven years after which he becomes his own master. The girls who are prepared for their roles as wives, mothers, pregnancies and childbirths, etc. are educated under the *Iru Mgbede* system where young maidens are prepared for the rigours of marriage for a period of about three to six months, after which they move to their husband's house and begin another circle of their lives as women.

Religion: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* believe in personal gods, ancestral worship and family deities. Their personal gods known as *Chi*, functions like the guardian angel of the Christendom. The ancestral worship is a medium of communicating with their forefathers where families pray to their ancestors for guidance and protection. The family deities and worship of smaller gods such as *Amadioha* and *Ogwugwu* are means through which *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* communicate with the Supreme Being known as “*Chukwu-Okike*” loosely translated as “God of Creation”.

Rites of Passage: There are festivals to celebrate different rites of passages and events in the lives of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*, such as *Ofala* festival which marks the end of a spiritual cleansing for a king/kingdom; *Iriji* or *Ikeji* (New yam festivals) which marks the celebration of a bountiful yam harvest; the *Ohafia* War Dance which marks the virility, strength and daring nature of young warriors after a victorious war, *Egwu Umuagboho* a maiden dance which marks the coming of age of a young girl, etc.

Marriage: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* marriage system involves three steps – *iku-aka* (introduction), *ime-ego* (paying bride price) and *igba-nkwu* (traditional wine-carrying ceremony). The most important is *ime-ego*; failure to pay the bride price means that any child born of the girl belongs to her father and not the man who got her pregnant. All these rites must be done in the girl's father's compound, in the village and not any other venue; failure to complete all these rites results in the girl not allowed to participate in other people's marriage ceremony.

Death: *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* respect death as they believe there is a link between life and death, hence the ancestral worship. Death as a result of ripe old age is celebrated with a lot of pageantry while death at a young age is referred to as “*onwu-ike*” believed to be wrong death and will always be looked into to ascertain the cause. “*Onwu-ojo*” is abominable death cause by one's wicked act or suicide (of any kind) and such a person is never buried but thrown into the evil forest or buried at night without a ceremony.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the theories of culture and language, particularly cultural imperialism and language shift theories as the study is focused on globalisation - western culture - and its influence on Nigerian - *Ẹ̀dì-Ìgbò* - culture.

Cultural Imperialism Theory, rooted in anthropology, sociology, and ethics, explores how one culture dominates another, usually politically or economically, using advanced media technologies (Tobin, 2025, par. 1). The term was first introduced by Herbert Schiller in his 1976 work *Communication and Cultural Domination*, where he described how multinational corporations, including media entities from developed nations, exert control over developing countries (White, 2001, par. 4). It is cultural as the customs, traditions, religion, language, social and moral norms are distinct from the economic and political system that shapes other community. It is imperialism as the dominant community forcefully extends its way of life by transforming or replacing aspects of another culture, as was the case of West (British) colonising Africa (Nigeria). This leads to a language shift, extinction or death of the non-dominant culture.

The theory is complemented with the Language Shift Theory, which examines how a particular community of speakers (*Ẹ̀dì-Ìgbò*) gradually abandons its native language to speaking another language (English), often associated with greater social or economic prestige, the final stage being language death (Masruddin, 2023, p. 1-2). This theory is attributed to Joshua Fishman, whose 1964 work *Language Maintenance and Language Shift as a Field of Enquiry* investigates “the relationship between change and stability in habitual language use and ongoing psychological, social or cultural processes when populations differing in language are in contact with each other” (Fishman, 1964, p. 32). Fishman states that a language shift is driven by three primary factors – physical or demographic dislocation, social dislocation and/or cultural dislocation (Masruddin, 2023, p. 2).

In Eastern Nigeria, the *Ìgbò* language shift reflects a combination of these dislocations - the influx of foreigners, trade expansion, and mass media - which contributed to the perception of *Ìgbò* language and culture as inferior, barbaric and backward. This perception, coupled with socio-economic disadvantages and the dominance of Western technology, has accelerated the erosion of *Ìgbò* linguistic and cultural identity.

Discussion

Pros and Cons of Globalisation in Nigerian Cultural Traits

As earlier stated, there are two sides to globalisation; the good side of progress, stability, integration, and cooperation, and the bad side of regression, neo-colonialism, destabilisation, cultural erosion and language extinction. On the good side, globalisation has seen to the popularisation of Nigerian cultural in places beyond one's imagination. There are communities of Yoruba, *Ìgbò*, Efik, etc. flourishing in different countries of the world outside Nigeria and this is made possible by transatlantic trade. Odionye says the "advantage of globalisation to human existence is its ability to facilitate access to information and knowledge at a virtual or speedy rate" (2024, p. 2). The presence of ICT, GSM and internet in Nigeria is made possible by globalisation. Aside connecting Nigerians to the global world, GSM and internet has brought a lot of economic and job opportunities for Nigerians as engineers, teachers, technicians, software designers, etc. also, with reference to online education, people across the world have found ways of getting better results with less work (Odionye, 2024, p. 3). Ukhami et al. concur that globalisation has enabled the dissemination of Nigerian cultural expressions and customs to international arenas ... [evolving] into a significant tourist attraction (2024, p. 18). Through carnival and tourism, Nigerian culture has been popularised and monetised to boost the economy of the country and given it a place in international parlance. Taptiani et al. appraise the merits of globalisation on Nigerian cultural traits as having "enhanced local culture by exposing individuals to various civilisations, broadening the spectrum of musical genres and culinary options, and encouraging the creation of a mix of indigenous and innovative cultures" (2024, p. 96).

Despite the merits, Taptiani et al. emphasise that the emergence of new social norms and dialogues, as well as influenced preferences in music, pose challenges to traditional belief systems (2024, p. 96)

On the flip side, as earlier stated, globalisation leads to acculturation, a threat to cultural and linguistic development of the African continent. In a bid to be modern, civilised and educated, Nigerians have neglected their culture and language and adopted the western pattern of communication, cuisine, dressing, socialising and general way of living. Odionye states that, most Nigerian parents hardly communicate to their children in their native languages, they prefer the western dishes (noodles, pastas, soft drinks etc.) instead of local dishes like *Ukwa*, *Apku*, *Ugba*, *Ofe-Ede*, *Ofe-Olugbo* etc. as well as eating with cutleries instead of using bare hands. Their pattern of dressing and hairstyles are western - English suits and flamboyant hairstyles of different colours, rather than African native

material and hair styles such as *Isi-Agu*, two-waist wrappers, beads and *Isi-Owu* of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* (2024, p. 3).

Impact of Western Cultural Values on *Ìgbò* Traditional Practices and Customs

The culture and language of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* have suffered a decline and erosion as a result of globalisation. People prefer to wear western clothing styles over traditional *Ìgbò* attire even in *Ìgbò* ceremonial gathering such as weddings. Traditional *Ìgbò* wedding rituals are often replaced or significantly altered to incorporate Western wedding customs such as replacing wedding palm wine with juice or replacing the wine gourd (made of horn) with glass cup, or holding the wedding ceremony in the city, away from the traditional home of the bride's father, etc.

Western education has eroded the *igba-boi*, or *nwa-boi* custom; although still in practice, it is believed to be reserved for families who do not have the needed resources to send their sons to acquire western education. Western civilisation has seen to the total eradication of *egwu ọ̀nwa* and *akukọ ifo*, coupled with the advent of internet, GSM, social media and the current Artificial Intelligence. Children no longer socialise amongst themselves nor with elders, rather they socialise on the internet and gain knowledge of the world from the internet. Odionye affirms that the “*ino odu ezi*” (moonlight talks) of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*, through which the *Ìgbò* culture and tradition are passed down to younger generation, have phased out because of modern pattern of minding one's business without caring about one's brother's welfare; a product of globalisation (2024, p. 3).

Globalisation in general has seen to the dearth in practices of *Iru Mgbede* amongst *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*. Young girls no longer go to their husband's houses as virgins. Sex, which used to be a sacred thing, is now displayed on every site on the internet and sold to the highest bidder. Christianity not only destroyed the *Ìgbò* mode of worship, they have also complicated issues of marital rites by insisting the church marriage, which is actually the western marriage rites, is more important than the African traditional marriage rites. As such, couples who have done the African marriage rites are forced into abortion when going for the western (church) marriage rites as they are believed not to be married. Also when some intending couples do not have the resources to undergo all the necessary rites, both African and western, they result to cohabiting and bearing children without proper marriage rites between both families. Such an act is regarded in *Ìgbò* culture as sacrilegious and a thing of shame to be practiced.

Root causes of *Ìgbò* Language and Culture Near-Extinction

Ìgbò scholars and anthropologists have identified various reasons for the near extinction of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* culture and language. Some of the reasons as mentioned are:

1. "...in a bid to be modern and educated ... [resulted in the] negligence and abuse of the language [*Ìgbò*] by the speakers (Odionye, 2024, p. 3-4).
2. "...the failure in the transgenerational transmission of language ... [the] inability of the adults to pass it down to the children in the family" (Odionye, 2024, p. 3). "... *Ìgbò* language is 'endangered', based on the fact that [the] language is largely spoken only by the parents while only 10% of the children speak the language, and only 4% can write the *Ìgbò* language (Nzeaka & Ehondor, 2021, p. 38-39).
3. "With the emergence of new media and innovation in arts and culture, native *Ìgbò* languages and cultures are gradually giving way to foreign or second languages, especially English, French and Pidgin languages, thus threatening the survival of the native languages" (Odionye, 2024, p. 4).
4. "...the unconscious embracing of colonial languages in social and academic institutions has denied the contribution of African languages [particularly *Ìgbò*] to the world's academic system" (Odionye, 2024, p. 4).
5. As a result of the effect of the Civil War on *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò*, most of them "discovered potential powers for survival in other languages than their native language" (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 123).
6. Government language policy which gives preference to "English Language in government transactions reduces the utilitarian values of Nigerian languages", particularly *Ìgbò* (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 123).
7. "Media programmes ... highlight alien cultures [as supreme] but portray the *Ìgbò* culture as barbaric" (Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu, 2024, p. 124).

Remedies to *Ìgbò* Language and Culture Extinction

Drawing from the above mentioned reasons for the near extinction of *Ẹ̀di-Ìgbò* language and culture, this study outlines the following remedies for the revival, preservation and promotion of the culture and language.

1. Government should enforce and ensure strict adherence to the contents of policies that encourage the growth and sustainability of Nigerian culture and languages while making new ones that supports the use and preservation of indigenous language as languages of commerce, education and government, both at State and national levels. "*Ìgbò* language should be adopted and permitted to serve as the language of official communication, government, business, economy, science and technology" (Odionye, 2024, p. 6).

2. Government should ensure the archiving of Nigerian (*Ìgbò*) dialects and cultural materials; documented in the media (local, national and international), internet (social media) and library (Odionye, 2024, p. 6). The government should train language instructors and send them to schools around the country to instruct the younger generations.
3. Schools to adhere to the demands of the *National Policy on Education* (6th Edition) that stipulates the use of indigenous languages, either the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate environment, as language of instruction at the Basic Educational Level to inculcate in the Nigerian child as well as the *Ìgbò* child the value of their culture and language. *Ìgbò* historians should translate English literature to Nigerian indigenous language (*Ìgbò*) literature and write new textbooks in *Ìgbò* language as a way of archiving, encouraging and maintaining *Ìgbò* culture and language (FRN *NPE*, 2013, p. 6).
4. Media programmes should highlight the good values of our cultural heritage; encourage the speaking of African languages by presenting programmes in the indigenous language of Nigerians. Odionye agrees that mass media contents transmitted at local, national and international media should be on Nigerian culture such as dialects, tradition, ethics, mode of dressing, lifestyle, religion, arts, music, food and etiquette, etc. to promote the language and enable citizens of other countries to know, understand and appreciate the different aspects of African cultures, especially the *Ìgbò* culture (2024, p. 6).
5. Parents should focus their attention on the progress and development of their mother-tongue, rather than only the social and economic status of their family, as the loss of their language is the loss of their personality. As such, should encourage the speaking of their language to their children for continuity and growth of the language and culture.
6. *Ñdi-Ìgbò* should understand that the speaking of their language is as important as any economic benefits they may achieve. They should also understand that the loss of their language means the loss of their culture, identify and place value in human race. As such, they should change their attitude and perception towards the culture, language and traditions of *Ñdi-Ìgbò*.

Conclusion

Globalisation is rapidly reshaping cultures and languages, often to the detriment of indigenous identities. In Nigeria, particularly among the *Ìgbò*, this shift has led to cultural dilution, hybridisation, and a growing preference for Western norms; what traditional African society once abhorred and rejected is now widely accepted (Obioha, 2010, p. 6). Asikaogu notes that *Ìgbò* people have abandoned

ancestral practices without fully integrating into the new culture (2018, p. 48–49), a phenomenon Toni-Duruaku & Chukwu call “cultural halfcastes” (2024, p. 123).

Language plays a vital role in preserving culture. While Odionye warns that losing a language threatens the essence of a people (2024, p. 2), Ikonne emphasises that language and culture are inseparable; when one is lost, the other follows (2019, p. 15). By UNESCO’s prediction, the increasing dominance of English over *Ìgbò* poses a serious risk of extinction by 2050. Despite this, there is still hope of redemption. Cultural revivals, digital preservation, education reforms, and policy reviews can help safeguard *Ìgbò* language and heritage at local, national, and global levels.

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COWRIES, GOLD, AND COPPER RODS: THE MATERIALITY OF MONEY IN PRE-COLONIAL WEST AFRICAN TRADE

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Abstract

This article examines the materiality of money in pre-colonial West African trade through a comparative study of cowrie shells, gold and copper rods. Moving beyond abstractions of “primitive” currency, it explores how the physical properties, social meanings and circulation patterns of these objects shaped trading practices, power relations and spheres of exchange. Drawing on archaeological evidence, travellers’ accounts and recent historiography, the study argues that West Africa developed a sophisticated, plural monetary ecology in which different currencies occupied distinct yet overlapping roles: cowries as highly divisible small change in everyday markets; gold as a high-value medium for long-distance commerce, elite wealth and political authority; and copper rods and manillas as specialized media for socially marked payments such as bride wealth and major trade transactions. The article further shows how this heterogeneous system mediated West Africa’s insertion into trans-Saharan and Atlantic commercial networks, and how its material foundations conditioned the uneven transition to colonial coinage. By foregrounding the material and symbolic dimensions of money, the study challenges linear narratives of monetary evolution and highlights the enduring entanglement of economic, cultural and political value in West African histories of exchange.

Keywords: pre-colonial West Africa, cowries, gold; copper rods and manillas, monetary materiality.

Introduction

Pre-colonial West Africa was home to some of the most sophisticated commercial systems in the pre-modern world. Long-distance caravans crossed the Sahara, linking Sahelian empires with the Mediterranean. Coastal traders interacted with European merchants along the Atlantic, and dense networks of regional markets connected farmers, artisans, and merchants across savannah and forest zones (Boahen, 1986). Within these overlapping trade networks, people used an array of objects as money. Cowrie shells, gold dust and ornaments, and copper or brass rods and bracelets served not only as media of exchange, but also as stores of value, units of account, and embodiments of social meaning.

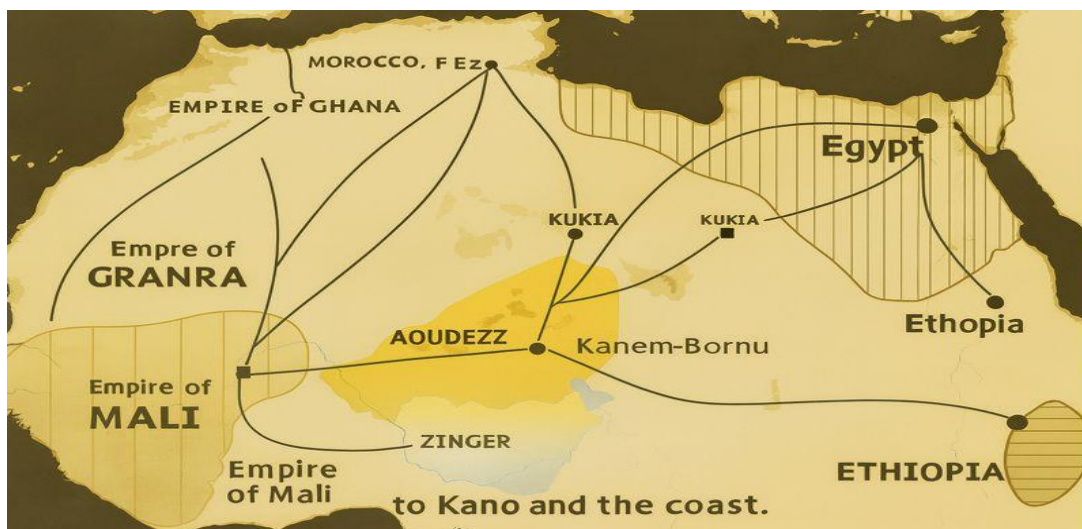
Much historical writing once treated these objects as primitive precursors to “real” money, or as curiosities that disappeared once colonial currencies arrived. More recent scholarship challenges this view, highlighting the complexity of pre-colonial monetary systems and their influence on the later

transition to colonial coinage and paper money (Austin, 2025). Yet, there remains a tendency to treat money in abstract terms, as if shells, metals, and coins were interchangeable tokens of value. This article instead foregrounds materiality: the physical properties, visual appearance, and social uses of different money forms, and how these shaped economic practices.

The article asks three interrelated questions. First, how did cowries, gold, and copper rods function as money in pre-colonial West Africa? Second, in what ways did their material characteristics influence their circulation, valuation, and social meanings? Third, how did these currencies coexist and interact within broader regional and global trade systems, especially on the eve of colonial rule? The focus is on regions where all three media were particularly significant, such as the Niger Delta, parts of present-day Nigeria, and Akan-speaking areas of the forest belt, while also drawing on wider West African evidence.

The argument is that the materiality of these currencies underpinned a form of monetary pluralism in which different objects occupied distinct but overlapping spheres of exchange. Cowries circulated widely in everyday markets; gold predominated in high-value, long-distance trade and elite wealth, and copper rods and bracelets mediated specific transactions, including marriage payments and aspects of the slave trade (Herbert, 1984; Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986). Rather than a linear progression from “primitive” to “modern” money, pre-colonial West Africa exhibits a layered monetary ecology whose material foundations persisted well into the colonial period.

A map of West Africa showing major trade routes (trans-Saharan caravan routes, coastal trading centres, and key production zones for gold and copper)



Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Money is conventionally defined in economics as whatever functions as a medium of exchange, unit of account, and store of value. This formal definition emphasizes roles rather than substances; almost anything can serve as money if people accept it in payment. However, anthropologists and historians, have long pointed out that money is not only a neutral facilitator of exchange, but is deeply embedded in social relations and cultural meanings. Jane Guyer (1995), for example, stressed that African currencies were often tied to specific “spheres of exchange”, where certain goods and payments were meant to circulate only within particular social domains.

Materiality is central to this broader understanding. The size, weight, divisibility, durability, and visual appearance of objects shape how people use them, what they can buy, and how they are perceived. Shells that can be strung and counted lend themselves to small-scale transactions; gold dust that must be weighed lends itself to higher-value exchanges and requires specialized equipment and expertise; heavy copper rods or bracelets may be less convenient for daily shopping but ideal for large, memorable transfers of wealth, such as bride wealth or ransom (Herbert, 1984; Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986).

This article also draws on debates about “commodity money” and “credit money”. In much of West Africa, commodity currencies such as shells and metals are often taken as evidence of a pre-monetary stage before the emergence of coins and banknotes. Yet these objects not only had intrinsic uses, such as jewelry or ritual adornment, but also operated within sophisticated systems of trust, debt, and delayed payment. Prices could be expressed in cowries or gold, even when actual payment took place later or in a different form. In this sense, material currencies were intertwined with credit relationships rather than opposed to them.

A further conceptual point concerns power and hierarchy. Control over the supply of money, or over the points at which currencies could be converted, was a source of political authority. Rulers who monopolized access to goldfields, coastal trading posts, or copper imports could influence exchange rates and levy taxes in particular media. At the same time, certain currencies carried gendered associations: in some regions, women dominated local markets where cowries were common, while male elites controlled high-value gold and metal currencies (Guyer, 1995).

This theoretical lens supports a comparative analysis of cowries, gold, and copper rods that treats them simultaneously as economic tools and social objects. Rather than assuming a single monetary system, the article examines how multiple currencies coexisted, overlapped, and sometimes competed, giving West African trade its distinctive character.

Historical Context: Trade Networks and Political Economies

By the early second millennium, West Africa was firmly integrated into a series of long-distance trade networks that connected the forest belt, savannah, and Sahara in a web of economic and cultural exchange. Trans-Saharan caravans, often organised by experienced merchant groups and protected by hired guards, traversed harsh desert routes linking oases and commercial centres. These caravans carried salt, textiles, horses, metalware, and luxury goods southwards in exchange for gold, slaves, and kola nuts, commodities that were abundant or especially valued in different ecological zones. The circulation of such goods did not merely enrich individual traders; it underpinned the growth of powerful states such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, which flourished partly by taxing this trade, providing security, and controlling key routes and market towns (Boahen, 1986). Customs duties, levies on caravans, and tribute from subordinate communities were often collected at strategic points along these routes, ensuring that political authority and commercial activity were closely intertwined. Later, Sahelian and savannah polities like Kanem-Bornu and Hausaland continued to mediate commerce between the Sahara and more southerly regions, maintaining long-established patterns of exchange even as political configurations shifted and new centres of power emerged (Boahen, 1986).

From the fifteenth century, Atlantic trade added a new dimension to this already complex landscape. Portuguese merchants, followed in subsequent centuries by Dutch, English, French, and other European rivals, established a string of forts and trading posts along the coast, from Senegambia to the Bights of Benin and Biafra and beyond. These coastal enclaves became focal points for the exchange of cloth, firearms, alcohol, metal bars, and an expanding range of manufactured goods for gold, slaves, and ivory. The arrival of these foreign traders did not displace existing trans-Saharan networks but intersected with them, creating alternative outlets and new opportunities for African intermediaries. Coastal polities and merchant groups, such as those of the Niger Delta and Gold Coast, positioned themselves as brokers between the interior and foreign ships, using their control of river mouths, lagoons, and coastal access to channel inland products seaward and to distribute imported goods internally (Inikori, 2002). In many cases, they developed sophisticated diplomatic and

commercial strategies, negotiating prices, playing different European nations against one another, and using revenues from trade to reinforce local political authority (Inikori, 2002).

Within this larger framework of trans-Saharan and Atlantic connections, there existed dense and highly organised networks of regional trade. Weekly, fortnightly, and periodic markets linked small villages with regional centres, creating a regular rhythm of commercial activity across the countryside. Farmers brought surplus grain, yams, and other foodstuffs to market; artisans sold pottery, iron tools, woven cloth, and leather goods; and itinerant traders moved salt, kola, cloth, and other goods between ecological zones, taking advantage of seasonal variations in supply and demand. Specialised merchant communities such as the Dyula, Hausa, and others established diasporic settlements far from their homelands, providing commercial services, credit, and information to local populations and to passing caravans. These communities often maintained their own religious and cultural institutions while integrating into the political structures of host societies, thereby facilitating trust and long-distance credit arrangements. In many areas, there was no single legal tender imposed by a central authority. Instead, different currencies were accepted in different markets, and exchange rates between them were locally negotiated and fluctuated over time, reflecting changes in supply, political conditions, and external trade links (Austin, 2025). Cowries, gold, copper rods, cloth strips, and other media of exchange circulated side by side, and traders needed to be familiar with the relative value of each in order to operate effectively (Austin, 2025).

Sources for reconstructing these monetary systems are varied, fragmented, and often uneven in their coverage. Archaeological evidence provides some of the most tangible clues, including hoards of cowries, caches of gold dust and weights, and deposits of copper and brass manillas and other metal currencies recovered from burial sites, former market towns, and riverine locations. These finds reveal patterns of accumulation, spatial distribution, and, in some cases, deposition rituals, indicating how different forms of money were stored, transported, or concealed. European travellers and merchants left written accounts that describe local currencies, payment practices, and price structures, though these narratives are frequently filtered through misunderstandings, ethnocentric assumptions, and specific commercial interests. Their descriptions of exotic “shell money” or “bracelet money,” for instance, need to be read critically alongside other evidence. Indigenous chronicles, oral traditions, and court records sometimes mention payments in cowries, gold, or metal rods, especially in relation to tribute, fines, bridewealth, and diplomatic gifts; however, these sources rarely give full price lists or consistent exchange rates, and they often prioritise political or moral lessons over economic detail.

Despite these limitations, by combining different types of evidence—material remains, European documents, and African textual and oral traditions—historians have been able to trace the circulation and uses of cowries, gold, and copper with increasing precision, reconstructing regional patterns of monetary practice and their evolution over time (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986; Herbert, 1984).

Image of a trans-Saharan caravan



Cowries: Shells as Currency

Cowrie shells, particularly the species *Cypraea moneta* and *Cypraea annulus*, became one of the most widespread and recognisable currencies in West Africa over several centuries. They were not indigenous to the region; most were collected in the Maldives and other parts of the Indian Ocean, where the shells occurred in immense natural beds. From there they were transported across the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea by Arab merchants to North Africa for integration into trans-Saharan trade, and, from the fifteenth century onwards, by European ships from the Indian Ocean via Europe to West African ports (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986; Hogendorn & Johnson, 2003/1986). In this way, cowries were part of a genuinely global commercial circuit, linking Indian Ocean collecting grounds, Middle Eastern and European trading houses, and African markets in a single chain of extraction, redistribution, and consumption (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986).

The shells' material properties made them particularly suitable for everyday transactions and help to explain why they spread so widely once introduced. Cowries are small, durable, and relatively uniform in shape and weight, which reduced disputes over quality and facilitated their acceptance among traders and ordinary consumers. Their hard, glossy surface resists wear, and they do not corrode or decay easily in humid tropical climates, in contrast to many metals that can tarnish or rust. They can be strung together or stored in bags, allowing for convenient counting, transport, and concealment. These practical advantages were crucial in societies where much exchange took place in open-air markets and where traders might need to carry large sums over considerable distances (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986).

West African traders and authorities developed detailed and regionally specific counting systems, with particular numbers of shells forming strings, bundles, and larger units used in pricing, taxation, and fines. For example, a set number of cowries might make up a "string", several strings could form a "head" or "bag", and these larger units served as benchmarks for wages, dowries, or levies. Such systems enabled complex calculations and allowed cowries to function as a genuine unit of account, not merely a casual means of payment (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986). At the same time, the reliance on imported shells meant that changes in the volume of cowries arriving at coastal ports could influence local price structures and sometimes produce inflationary pressures, especially in areas heavily exposed to European trade (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986; Hogendorn & Johnson, 2003/1986). The history of cowrie currency in West Africa therefore illustrates how an apparently simple natural object, once incorporated into large-scale trading networks, could underpin sophisticated monetary practices and shape the dynamics of regional economies over a long period.

Close-up image of cowries shells used as currency



Cowries circulated widely in local markets, especially from the seventeenth century onwards, in regions such as Yorubaland, the Niger Delta, and in other parts of the present-day Ghana and Nigeria. They were used to purchase food, cloth, pottery, and other everyday goods, as well as to pay wages, taxes, and fines. European traders often bought slaves, palm oil, or other exports by first exchanging European goods for cowries at the coast, and then using these shells to pay African suppliers further inland (Inikori, 2002; Nigeria's Ancient Currencies, 2023).

The shells also carried powerful symbolic meanings. In many West African societies, cowries were associated with fertility, femininity, and spiritual protection. They adorned clothing, hair, masks, and ritual objects, and were used in divination practices, notably in Ifa divination among the Yoruba, where cowries are cast and their patterns interpreted (Cultures of West Africa, 2017). Their use as currency therefore overlapped with their role as ritual and decorative items, blurring the line between economic and symbolic value.

However, dependence on imported shells exposed users to fluctuations in supply. Periods of heavy importation could cause inflation, as the purchasing power of cowries fell when large quantities flooded the market. Hogendorn and Johnson (1986) show that in some coastal areas, prices quoted in cowries rose sharply in the nineteenth century as European traders increased imports to pay for slaves and produce. Authorities sometimes tried to regulate the currency by setting official exchange rates or restricting its use for certain transactions, but such measures were often difficult to enforce.

Despite these tensions, cowries retained their role as small-change currency well into the colonial period. Even after colonial governments introduced coins and notes, people continued to use shells for minor purchases and ritual payments, illustrating the resilience of their material and symbolic value.

Gold: bullion, dust, and power

Gold lay at the heart of West Africa's long-distance trade for many centuries, shaping both external connections and internal political development. From the early medieval period, gold from the Bambuk and Bure fields and, later, from Akan-speaking forest regions flowed northwards across the Sahara, reaching North African and European markets. These deposits, located in the forest-savannah transition zones, were exploited through a mixture of seasonal alluvial mining and more permanent settlement-based extraction. Caravans of merchants and porters transported gold in carefully guarded consignments to Sahelian entrepôts, where it was exchanged for salt, textiles, horses, and luxury

goods. The fame of “lands of gold” such as Ghana and Mali was central to the region’s reputation abroad; Arabic geographers and historians repeatedly emphasised the abundance of gold and the wealth of West African rulers, helping to fix an image of the western Sudan as a place where gold was almost synonymous with the land itself (Boahen, 1986). From the fifteenth century, coastal trade redirected some of this gold towards Atlantic markets, with Portuguese and later other Europeans seeking direct access to gold exports and attempting to bypass trans-Saharan intermediaries (Boahen, 1986).

Gold circulated in several forms: dust, nuggets, and worked objects such as rings, bracelets, beads, and figurines. In many regions, gold dust served as a high-value currency. Traders carried it in small leather pouches or wooden boxes, often wrapped in cloth for added security, and weighed it with brass scales and a complex system of weights. Among the Akan, for example, goldweights (*abrammuo*) were finely cast brass objects that represented geometric patterns, animals, proverbs, and scenes from daily life. They ranged from tiny abstract shapes to miniature sculptures of humans, birds, reptiles, and tools. These weights formed a rich visual language, linking monetary practice with artistic and moral expression; particular motifs evoked well-known sayings about honesty, prudence, or the dangers of greed, thus embedding ethical commentary directly into the act of weighing and paying with gold (Akan Goldweights, 2020). The weighing process itself, often performed in public, could therefore be a moment of both economic negotiation and cultural performance.

Gold’s high value-to-weight ratio made it ideal for large transactions, dowries among elites, tribute payments, and long-distance trade. Substantial bridewealth payments might include carefully weighed quantities of dust along with gold ornaments, signalling the status of the families involved. Rulers used gold to reward military followers, secure alliances, and commission religious or commemorative objects. At the same time, its use as currency required specialist knowledge and equipment. Weighing dust accurately demanded trained goldsmiths or money-changers who could detect adulteration, recalibrate weights, and enforce accepted standards. They had to recognise attempts to mix gold with less valuable metals or to manipulate scales. This expertise created opportunities for profit and control, as rulers, officials, and wealthy merchants positioned themselves as guardians of legitimate weights and measures and sometimes claimed the right to certify or confiscate faulty sets (Guyer, 1995).

Photograph of Akan Goldweights and a small set of scales used for weighing gold dust



Politically, control over goldfields and trade routes underpinned state formation and royal authority. In the Mali Empire, the mansa was said to monopolise large gold nuggets, leaving only dust for private trade; whether literally true or not, such claims underline the association between gold and sovereignty and the idea that the ruler's body and court were the ultimate sources of wealth (Boahen, 1986). On the Gold Coast, Akan rulers used gold regalia, ornaments, and ceremonial objects to display wealth and power, reinforcing a hierarchy in which gold symbolised both spiritual potency and political dominance. Crowns, staffs, stools, and sword hilts covered in gold leaf or solid gold elements proclaimed the ruler's special relationship to the land and its resources. Court rituals in which gold was paraded or redistributed further dramatised these connections, making visible the link between mineral wealth, military might, and cosmological authority (Akan Goldweights, 2020; Guyer, 1995).

Gold thus functioned simultaneously as currency, export commodity, and symbol of elite identity. Unlike cowries, it was largely produced within West Africa itself, though foreign demand strongly influenced its value and circulation, especially as Mediterranean and later European economies expanded. The materiality of gold—its lustre, malleability, and resistance to corrosion—helped to sustain its role as a long-lasting store of wealth, while its high unit value kept it largely out of reach for everyday purchases. It anchored high-level exchanges and political hierarchies, even as more modest currencies such as cowries and metal rods served daily market needs. In this way, gold sat at

the apex of a broader, multi-layered monetary system that was both economically sophisticated and deeply embedded in West Africa's social and political order (Boahen, 1986; Akan Goldweights, 2020; Guyer, 1995).

Copper rods and metal currencies

If cowries represented small change and gold represented high-value wealth, copper and brass rods, bracelets, and manillas occupied an intermediate and often specialized positions. Copper and its alloys were prized across pre-colonial Africa for their colour, resonance, and workability. They were used in tools, weapons, jewelry, and ritual objects, as well as currencies. In many West African societies, copper was closely associated with blacksmiths and metalworkers, whose craft carried significant ritual and social status (Herbert, 1984).

Copper itself was both locally sourced and imported. Some West African regions possessed copper deposits and developed metallurgical traditions over many centuries. In addition, European traders imported large quantities of copper and brass in the form of rods, manillas (bracelet-shaped ingots), and other items specifically intended as trade currencies. These were used along parts of the West African coast, particularly in the Niger Delta and Bights of Benin and Biafra, where they featured prominently in trade for slaves and palm oil (Herbert, 1984; Before the Gold Standard, 2023).

Photograph of a brass manilla used as currency, showing its bracelet shape and decorative markings



The material properties of copper rods and manillas shaped their use. Heavier and bulkier than cowries, they were not as convenient for low-value daily transactions. Instead, they tended to be used in larger

payments: bridewealth, compensation for serious offences, purchase of slaves, or major trade deals. Variations in size, weight, and design affected their relative value, and in some region's specific types of manilla were required for specific purposes. This specificity reinforced the connection between particular metal forms and certain social relationships or ritual obligations (Herbert, 1984).

In some areas, copper currencies operated within distinct spheres of exchange. For instance, particular rods or manillas might be appropriate for marriage payments but not for buying food in the market, mirroring broader African patterns in which livestock, cloth, or other valuables circulated within bounded moral economies (Guyer, 1995). As with cowries and gold, there were also mechanisms for converting between metal currencies and other media of exchange. Brokers and specialised traders profited from arbitrage between regions where different forms of copper were more or less valued.

European intervention further complicated the picture. During the Atlantic slave trade, European merchants sometimes produced manillas to African specifications, taking advantage of local preferences while also seeking to standardise the currency for their own accounting. Yet African traders retained considerable power to accept or reject particular issues, forcing Europeans to adapt their products to local standards (Before the Gold Standard, 2023; Herbert, 1984). The resulting interplay between imported metal and indigenous valuation practices underscores the importance of seeing currency as negotiated rather than imposed.

Comparative Analysis: Materiality and Monetary Hierarchies

Comparing cowries, gold, and copper rods highlights in a particularly vivid way how material properties structured different monetary roles and how people in pre-colonial West Africa built a layered, plural currency system out of quite different substances. Cowries were highly divisible and easily counted, making them especially suitable for everyday transactions where prices were relatively low and change needed to be given in small increments. A handful of shells could buy a calabash of grain or a measure of palm oil, while a few strings might cover minor taxes, market tolls, or routine fines. Their small size and durability helped them circulate widely, passing quickly from hand to hand in busy markets and travelling with itinerant traders who moved foodstuffs, kola nuts, and cloth between villages and regional centres. At the same time, precisely these features meant that large quantities were required for substantial purchases. To pay for a slave, a horse, or a large consignment of goods, traders might need sacks or baskets of shells, creating storage and transport challenges and making cowries cumbersome for major transactions (Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986). This material

inconvenience encouraged people to seek higher-value media when large sums were involved, reinforcing cowries' place at the lower end of the monetary hierarchy.

Gold, by contrast, was compact and extremely valuable relative to its weight, sitting almost at the opposite end of the spectrum from cowries. It was ideal for large purchases, long-distance trade, and hoarding wealth over long periods. A small leather pouch of dust or a few nuggets could represent the value of an entire caravan load of salt or textiles. Gold's physical properties—its lustre, malleability, and resistance to corrosion—made it both durable and aesthetically prized. However, its divisibility depended on weighing rather than counting, which introduced its own complexities. Gold dust could not simply be piled into equal heaps by eye; it had to be weighed with scales and standardized goldweights, particularly elaborate in Akan regions where *abrammuo* were cast in diverse symbolic forms (Akan Goldweights, 2020).

This reliance on weighing opened up space for fraud and disputes. Traders could attempt to adulterate dust with less valuable metals or sand, while unscrupulous money-changers might tamper with scales or weights. These risks were managed through social mechanisms—trusted goldsmiths, recognized standard sets of weights, and public rituals around weighing—that embedded monetary practice in broader social relations (Guyer, 1995). In some communities, weighing might be conducted in the presence of witnesses, or particular weights associated with proverbs about honesty and fairness would be used to underline moral expectations (Akan Goldweights, 2020; Guyer, 1995). Thus the material fact that gold had to be weighed rather than counted did not simply pose a technical problem; it prompted the creation of institutions, reputations, and ritualised practices that anchored trust in specific people and objects.

Copper rods and manillas occupied yet another niche within this spectrum of currencies. They were less valuable per unit weight than gold but more substantial and visually striking than cowries. Their form as rods or bracelet-shaped ingots made them easy to display and handle in large payments, especially those meant to be publicly visible, such as bridewealth, compensation for serious offences, or the purchase of slaves. Because they required metallurgical skill to produce and were sometimes decorated with ridges, flares, or stamped designs, they carried aesthetic and symbolic value alongside their monetary function (Herbert, 1984). In some areas, particular shapes or sizes of manilla were reserved for specific uses, so that the physical appearance of the object signalled the type of transaction for which it was appropriate.

The production of copper currencies also tied them to craft specialists—smelters, smiths, and casters—whose knowledge was often surrounded by ritual and secrecy. As Herbert (1984) suggests, the control of metalworking technology endowed these specialists with a certain social power. That power could translate into influence over the supply of copper rods and manillas, since these had to be cast or reforged to meet local standards and preferences. Thus, once again, materiality intersected with social organisation: the fact that copper had to be mined, smelted, and cast, rather than simply collected like shells, meant that particular groups could position themselves as custodians of metallic money (Herbert, 1984).

These differences among cowries, gold, and copper contributed to what might be called monetary hierarchies. In many areas, people used cowries for low-value goods and services, copper or brass currencies for intermediate or socially marked transactions, and gold for high-value trade and elite wealth. A village woman selling vegetables might rarely see gold but handle cowries daily; a regional merchant arranging a caravan or a marriage alliance might transact in rods or dust; a ruler negotiating tribute or diplomatic gifts would think in terms of substantial amounts of gold. Yet the boundaries between these spheres were not rigid. Conversion between currencies occurred regularly, whether in markets, at coastal trading posts, or in the courts of kings and chiefs. Middlemen and money-changers specialised in this work, profiting from small differences in exchange rates and from their knowledge of where particular currencies were most desired.

Exchange rates varied over time and space, reflecting shifts in supply and demand, political changes, and external trade patterns (Austin, 2025; Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986). An influx of cowries brought by European ships, for instance, could lower their value relative to gold or copper in coastal regions, while interior areas less exposed to imports might maintain different ratios. Similarly, disruptions to gold mining or to trans-Saharan routes could alter the relative scarcity of gold and copper. These fluctuations required traders to be constantly attentive to the material flows underpinning currency supplies, and they underline the fact that value was not a fixed property of any object but emerged from the interplay between material characteristics, social institutions, and historical circumstance (Austin, 2025; Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986).

Materiality also shaped who handled particular currencies and therefore who was most affected by changes in monetary practice. Women often dominated market trade in foodstuffs and small goods and thus handled large quantities of cowries. Their expertise lay in rapid mental arithmetic, familiarity with local price structures, and the practical logistics of carrying and storing bags of shells. Men more

commonly controlled long-distance trade and the mining or export of gold and copper, activities that required access to caravans, capital, and political connections. Artisanal groups such as goldsmiths and metalworkers—often male—mediated the use of gold and copper currencies through their control of scales, weights, and metallurgical skills (Guyer, 1995; Herbert, 1984).

This gendered division of labour meant that changes in currency use could have uneven social effects. For instance, efforts by colonial authorities to phase out cowries in favour of coins sometimes disproportionately affected women traders whose livelihoods depended on small-change transactions. Coins and notes, although easier to transport in large sums, initially circulated less densely in rural markets, and their unfamiliar denominations could complicate everyday bargaining. Men involved in larger-scale commerce might adapt more quickly, especially where they dealt directly with colonial firms or state institutions that paid in European currency. Thus the shift from commodity currencies to colonial money not only altered the material forms of exchange but also reconfigured existing gender and class relationships, as those whose economic activities had been built around cowries or particular metal forms found themselves marginalized or compelled to adjust (Austin, 2025; Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986).

Seen together, cowries, gold, and copper rods therefore illustrate a sophisticated system in which different materials were assigned roles consistent with their physical properties and social meanings. The monetary hierarchy that emerged—small shells for everyday trade, metal rods for substantial and socially charged payments, and gold for elite and long-distance transactions—was not a simple ladder of progress but a dynamic arrangement continually renegotiated in response to new supplies, political changes, and external contacts. It is precisely by attending to the material details of these currencies, as well as to the social relations that sustained them, that historians can reconstruct the complexity of pre-colonial West African monetary life (Akan Goldweights, 2020; Guyer, 1995; Herbert, 1984; Austin, 2025; Hogendorn & Johnson, 1986).

Image showing cowries, goldweights, and metal manillas together



Transformations on the eve of colonial rule

By the late nineteenth century, the West African monetary landscape was undergoing profound change. The ending of the Atlantic slave trade shifted the structure of external commerce, with palm oil, groundnuts, rubber and other “legitimate” commodities replacing human beings as the main exports. This reorientation altered the scale and rhythm of trade: instead of sporadic, high-value slave sales, merchants increasingly dealt in bulk agricultural produce that required sustained investment in labour and infrastructure. At the same time, European colonial expansion brought new political borders and administrative structures, as well as attempts to impose metallic and paper currencies tied to European monetary systems (Austin, 2025). Colonial officials and merchants sought a more predictable and standardised means of payment that would facilitate taxation, salary payments, and the integration of West African economies into imperial trade and banking networks.

Commodity currencies such as cowries, gold dust, and copper manillas did not disappear overnight. In many areas they continued to circulate alongside European coins, providing familiar and trusted means of payment in local markets. Traders might accept silver or copper coins from a government office, then convert them into cowries or cloth to pay rural suppliers. In some cases, colonial authorities even adopted older currencies temporarily for tax collection or local payments, recognising their entrenched role and the difficulty of instantly replacing them. Over time, however, policies such as fixed exchange rates, legal tender laws, and restrictions on the use of non-official currencies eroded their position. Governments declared that only coins and notes issued or guaranteed by the colonial state would be accepted for certain obligations, especially taxes and court fees, thereby forcing people to acquire European money in order to meet their legal responsibilities. Scholars have shown that this transition was uneven and contested, with local populations sometimes resisting, delaying, or creatively adapting to new monetary regimes (Austin, 2025; Money and Exchange in West Africa, 2018). In some districts, people hoarded older currencies or used them in private transactions while keeping colonial coins only for dealings with officials.

The materiality of older currencies shaped the trajectory of this transition. Cowries, being bulky at high values and dependent on overseas supply, became increasingly inconvenient compared with coins of equivalent value. Transporting large sums for wholesale trade or tax payments in cowries was expensive and vulnerable to loss; metal coins, though initially scarce, were far more compact. Gold, although intrinsically valuable and still prized as a store of wealth, posed challenges for governments seeking control over monetary supply and struggled to fit within standardised colonial accounting

practices. Gold dust had to be weighed and assayed rather than counted, making it difficult to incorporate into a system based on fixed denominations and printed ledgers. Copper manillas and rods, closely associated with the slave trade and certain ritual obligations, were targeted for replacement as part of broader efforts to reshape social relations and distance colonial states from the legal and moral legacies of slave trafficking (Money and Exchange in West Africa, 2018). Officials sometimes organised campaigns to buy up manillas in exchange for coins, melting the metal down for other uses and symbolically demonstrating the supposed superiority of European monetary forms.

Nevertheless, echoes of pre-colonial monetary practices persisted in everyday life. Cowries and metal currencies continued to appear in bridewealth, funerary payments, healing rituals and divination, long after they ceased to function as general-purpose money. They survived as “special-purpose” currencies within particular moral and spiritual domains, where their antiquity and accumulated associations lent them a weight that new coins could not easily replicate. Gold retained its role as a symbol of prestige in regalia and jewellery, particularly among Akan and other groups, where chiefs and royal lineages continued to display golden ornaments and stools as emblems of authority. Families might invest savings in gold ornaments rather than bank deposits, trusting the metal’s enduring value and cultural resonance. These continuities highlight that money is more than a neutral instrument; it is entangled with memory, identity, and moral value (Austin, 2025; Money and Exchange in West Africa, 2018). The demise of commodity currencies as legal tender did not erase their cultural significance. Instead, they were partially transformed—from everyday media of exchange into powerful markers of history and belonging, reminding subsequent generations that earlier West African societies had developed their own sophisticated ways of materializing value long before colonial rule.

Conclusion

The history of cowries, gold, and copper rods in pre-colonial West Africa reveals a complex monetary ecology in which different objects occupied specialized niches shaped by their material properties. Cowries, imported from distant oceans, yet deeply embedded in local markets and rituals, served as highly divisible small change. Gold, mined within West Africa and exported to distant lands, functioned as a high-value currency and a potent symbol of sovereignty and wealth. Copper and brass rods and manillas, produced both locally and abroad, facilitated significant transactions and embodied prestige, craftsmanship, and social ties.

Attention to materiality helps overcome simplistic narratives that portray pre-colonial currencies as primitive or chaotic. Far from lacking “real” money, West Africans developed sophisticated systems for weighing, counting, valuing, and converting between currencies, anchored in social institutions such as merchant networks, royal courts, ritual specialists, and local markets. These systems were flexible enough to incorporate imported objects—whether shells from the Maldives or manillas from European foundries—while maintaining local standards of value and appropriateness.

Understanding this monetary pluralism also sheds light on the later transition to colonial currencies. Commodity monies did not simply give way to coins and notes; instead, longstanding practices of valuing and exchanging material objects shaped how colonial money was received, resisted, or repurposed. The legacy of cowries, gold, and copper rods thus extends beyond their disappearance as everyday money. They remain crucial for understanding the entanglement of economy, culture, and power in West African history and offer a reminder that money everywhere is, at root, profoundly material.

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TRANSITION AND TRAUMA: THE CHANGING WORLDS OF CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *DREAM COUNT*

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Abstract

This paper explores transition and trauma in Chimamanda Adichie's *Dream Count* and discusses how trauma impacts the inner and existential lives of four women. It considers a taxonomy of suffering that includes existential loneliness (Chiamaka), relational betrayal (Zikora), systemic hardship (Nafissatou), and ideological disillusionment (Omelogor). Through the lens of Cathy Caruth's attempts to theorize trauma and its ramifications, these readings support the arguments that trauma is both layered and an experience which disrupts and transforms someone on a deeply personal level but that trauma also has the capacity to create resilience. The fragmented, non-chronological narrative of the novel itself has also been taken to be a willful literary imitation of this jagged processing of memory and trauma. The collective trauma that serves as the backdrop for personal crisis and agonized overthinking about self-worth and connection is the COVID-19 pandemic. Restructuring intimacy, identity and knowledge through trauma so that female solidarity and forcibly reclaiming one's all Purpose becomes a pathway to resilience is yet another complexity and depth added to humanity in postcolonial and modern scholarship.

Keywords: Trauma, Transition, Identity, Trauma Theory, Feminist Critique

Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dream Count* (2025) is an achingly beautiful literary meditation on fractured self, psychic tenuousness and the fragility of interpersonal connection in a globalized and post-pandemic world. While Adichie's earlier novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*, center the historical conflict and diasporic negotiations of race, class, and belonging, *Dream Count* turns inward, inviting readers into the intimate emotional lives of four women whose lives fall apart due to personal, relational, and structural crises. The novel's COVID-19 temporality magnifies these affective breaks, creating what Cathy Caruth has termed an "epistemological crisis," whereby trauma fractures consciousness and cannot be directly represented linguistically (Caruth 4).

A productive function of trauma theory is to bring attention to that which exceeds the normal categories for processing experience. Caruth has been especially influential in defining trauma as an event that was never assimilated and thus "remains unavailable to consciousness," recurring, instead, in symptoms, dreams, and temporal disruptions rather than in narrative (5). This is the lens through which *Dream Count* must be read, a novel in which the characters cope with symptoms of compulsive memory, withdrawal, hypervigilance, existential dread. Judith Herman further clarifies what is at stake

in such suffering; complex trauma, particularly that from prolonged interpersonal betrayal, fundamentally alters identity, trust, and one's ability to relate (53). Her characters are indicative of this fragmentation. Chiamaka's isolation, Zikora's betrayals, Omelogor's disillusionment, and Nafissatou's victimization by institutions all show trauma as a rupture in established systems of meaning, resulting in a fragmented self-struggling to reconstitute itself.

At the same time, *Dream Count* interrogates transitions, psychological, emotional, geographical and ideological, that occur on the other side of a traumatic rupture. The characters move from disconnectedness to tentative connection, from emotional numbness to vulnerability, from corporate performance to intellectual honesty. These transitions are not smooth or linear but painful negotiations of the residues of trauma.

Through the internalization of the pandemic experience and the inevitable shattering of the false sense of stability, the story reveals how trauma propels one into liminal spaces that require a reworking of identity.

Also, Adichie's transition from themes of collective historical trauma in *Half of a Yellow Sun* to relational and systemic trauma in her later work marks a shift in the politics of representing African subjectivity within a globalized framework. De Mey writes that narration and testimony are integral to overcoming the silencing force of trauma (38), and Adichie's characters search for meaning in memory, conversation, and vulnerability with one another in a similar way.

This paper explores the relationship between trauma and transition in *Dream Count*, motivated by three goals: to consider how trauma appears within the text, to understand what causes this trauma and how traumatic rupture shifts the interiority of the characters' worlds. By deploying trauma theory and postcolonial feminist scholarship to frame Adichie's novel, the article's ultimate conclusion is that the contemporary African woman, as revealed in this novel, survives in a world of dread, of indeterminate possibility, and of tentative renewal.

Review of Literature: Trauma and Transition in Adichie's Works

The following analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's engagement with fractured selves and psychic rupture is brought into conversation with relevant criticism of trauma transition, and psychological transformation. *Dream Count* is too new for critical parsing, but Adichie's previous novels, *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* find a similar impulse toward the violent fracturing, disruption or rending of the characters' worlds. Getting acquainted with these frameworks sets the theoretical stage for approaching trauma and transition in *Dream Count*.

Trauma theory distinguishes between discrete, single events and the psychological effects that result from these (Type I trauma) and more chronic, repetitive, harm (Type II or complex trauma), each with varying effects on psychological life (Briere and Scott 15). Adichie fictions contain both of these types: Kambili, in *Purple Hibiscus*, suffers from structural domestic violence, and the characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* suffer from acute violent invasion on a background of chronic deprivation.

Relatedly, scholars point out the embodied nature of trauma, where traumatic memory is stored in the body rather than articulated through conscious, discursive means. The physical symptoms depicted by Adichie—Kambili's mutism, Olanna's paralysis, Ifemelu's depression—follow the clinical understanding of trauma as psychological and bodily.

Transitions magnify the impact of trauma. Gill further identifies periods of transition in identity as especially emotionally tumultuous and Miller points to how accumulated stress compounds individual susceptibility during transition (102). Relatedly, the experience of migration as a powerful psychological transition which Adichie's migrant characters undergo, and which specifically characterizes the experience of migration for Ifemelu, Ifemelu, the protagonist of *Americanah*, is that it destabilizes belonging, disrupts the continuity of culture, and necessitates the re-visioning of identity. Further, trauma suspends development, a point made in research on transitional-age youth (Frounfelker et al. 410) with parallels in the developmentally stunted characters who populate Adichie's coming-of-age narratives.

Thus, while trauma scholarship focuses on trauma, another body of literature focuses on resilience and post-traumatic growth. In an explicitly positive view of the psyche, Woolard suggests that people can find new sources of strength and capacities for meaning-making following trauma, conditional upon being enabled to have agency and being in supportive relations. Adichie's fiction often dramatizes such processes: Kambili begins to heal through alternative family structures in *Nsukka*, characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* find purpose through storytelling and communal solidarity, and Ifemelu reconstitutes voice and identity through creative expression.

There are many points of departure, but, that leave Western trauma models useful but incomplete. Much trauma scholarship is culturally narrow, failing to take into account collective trauma, postcolonial histories, or African sociocultural paradigms of healing. While Western paradigms center individual pathology, Adichie's narratives often contextualize trauma within larger collective, political, and historical frameworks. And while Adichie's work has received the attention of feminist

and postcolonial analyses, few critics have approached her fiction through the lens of trauma theory specifically to look for insights in those domains of narrative, memory, and psychological interiority.

In sum, existing literature shows that trauma disrupts identity, embodiment, and relational life, and transitions can exacerbate these ruptures, or provide opportunities for redefinition. As these scholars' contributions show, much of Adichie's oeuvre is consistent with these findings while also pushing scholars to consider how postcolonial histories, collective memory, and culturally specific modes of resilience might usefully extend the field of trauma studies.

These frameworks serve as the groundwork for analysis into how trauma manifests, is embedded, and becomes transformational in the emotional and relational lives of the novel's female characters, as represented in *Dream Count*.

Methodology

This study employs the qualitative literary-critical method of close textual analysis. Since *Dream Count* (2025) has not yet accrued much scholarship, the analysis primarily depends on careful reading of the primary text itself in order to understand the ways in which trauma and transition function in narrative structure, imagery, and characterization. Focusing specifically on formal devices in the novels such as narrative fragmentation, non-linear time, dreams, and virtual spaces such as Zoom and WhatsApp, the analysis finds that each of these formal devices reflect the disorienting and emotionally splitting properties of trauma. The primary theorist whose work I draw on in this project is trauma theorist Cathy Caruth and in particular her theorization of trauma as an event that cannot be assimilated and thus, is in the belated experience. This perspective is useful for placing the narrative itself within the characters' painful reality of intrusive memory, emotional blunting and warped time. It also takes note of the gendering of the traumatization process and cultural paradigms of womanhood and of interpersonal connection and care affect the impact of psychological diagnoses and the act and culture of seeking help and receiving psychological treatment. The characters' experience with and response to trauma. Following all formal analysis, a content analysis is conducted about the types of trauma found in the novel, relational, cultural, and structural trauma, the results of which are theoretically analyzed in the following sections. The paper offers a finely tuned reading of the articulation of trauma and transition, which is provided in *Dream Count* based on close reading and minimal theorization.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically based in trauma theory, in particular in the seminal work of Cathy Caruth articulation of trauma as what derealizes and floods consciousness.

For Caruth, a traumatic experience is one that has not been “assimilated” by the mind and thus returns afterwards as intrusive memories, repetitions, and disturbances of time (4-6). This frame is particularly fruitful in understanding the modes of psychological dislocation, for example between traditional... that permeates *Dream Count* wherein, rather than a single traumatic event, characters are traumatized by a schism that perseverates in dreams, virtual correspondence, and fragmented memories.

Caruth’s model explains the way that the disjunctive, non-linear novelistic form is in fact a reflected by the collapsing of time within characters’ intra character wars. To explore the relational and interpersonal aspects of trauma foregrounded by the novel I turn to Judith Herman’s Complex Trauma theory. Herman sees longterm betrayal, coercion or emotional abandonment as seriously damaging the capacity for trust, for relationship functioning and in general the capacities that are integral to the formation of selfhood (53-59). This framework emerges as integral not only to the emotional devastation of Zikora and Omelogor, but whose traumas begin in close ruptures, in conflict with mothers, and extreme forms of personal disillusionment.

Herman’s focus on the injury of disconnection and the difficult path toward reconnection provides a lens through which to examine these characters’ responses to betrayal and isolation.

Since *Dream Count* places trauma within larger social and structural contexts, the analysis also incorporates work on systemic and historical trauma. Nafissatou’s story in particular is about how personal pain collides with class hierarchy, misogyny and institutional failure. Also, African trauma studies foreground the “culture of silence and shame” that often characterizes conversations around sexual violence and emotional vulnerability (Ahmed 66), which sheds light on the initial difficulty characters experience when they attempt to articulate their experiences.

Combined, these three theoretical standpoints present a psychoanalytic, relational, and structural framework by which to understand the novel’s articulation of trauma and transition. They show how Adichie portrays trauma as an internal psychological rupture as well as a psycho-social condition mediated by gender, migration, institutional authority, and structural inequality.

Discussion

Manifestations of Trauma in *Dream Count*

In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dream Count* trauma is conceived not as a catastrophic singularity but rather as a constellation of psychic injuries, affective disjunctions, and relational ruptures that accrue over time and permeate the quotidian world. The novel charts the inner lives of its four main women, Chiamaka, Zikora, Omelogor and Nafissatou; all have lives organized around memory and anxiety, around alienation and feeling untethered. In this regard, this section will examine the various forms of trauma experienced by the protagonists of these novels: psychological, somatic, relational and structural suffering.

Chiamaka: Isolation, Bodily Inscription, and the Trauma of Disconnection.

Chiamaka's interior world is emotional shutdown and loneliness, exacerbated by the isolating circumstances of the pandemic and the way digital connection was not able to heal ruptured relationships. Her trauma comes not from spectacular violence, but from chronic emotional deprivation, "the slowly accumulating stress of not being heard," as the psychologist James Pennebaker puts it. "I have always wanted to be known, truly known, by another human being," she writes early in the novel (3). This statement is a lifelong psychological scar created by the process of alienation and by the absence of someone actually wanting him or loving him. Chiamaka's longing here points to a late coming awareness of harm, how too late one can know the value of having been seen, how living without it is itself a kind of harm.

Ironically, during virtual family gatherings she feels even more disconnected, as the emotional absence is amplified. She writes, "At the end of each Zoom call, I felt lonelier than I had been before, not because the call had ended, but because it had been" (4). What should connect instead amplifies distance. Relatedly, Sherry Turkle notes that we are "alone together" and while technology "intimacy" is promised, what is produced is "the illusion of connection" (154).

Trauma also inscribes itself somatically, and appears at moments when Chiamaka's body registers anxiety that her conscious mind has not yet articulated. She describes pressing her palm to her chest during a period of rising dread: She writes, "I pressed my palm to my chest and held it there... frightened of them, their unusual boldness, as though my world were about to be overrun not just by deer but by other lurking creatures" (5). Nature itself is the uncanny, a reflection of trauma's perceived world. Bessel van der Kolk writes, "the body keeps the score"; traumatic memory resides in the body's automatic reactions before it is conscious (53). The early description of this body-embeddedness in

the novel makes explicit this persistence: “sadness had crawled up her chest” (21) is a visceral metaphor that reflects van der Kolk’s claim that emotions are for individuals who have survived trauma experienced as an intruding physical sensation rather than as a natural occurrence.

Chiamaka’s failure to articulate her feelings, her experience of words “dying in her throat” (25), is also indicative of the silencing force of trauma.

The silence is not a choice, but forced by psychic overload. Herman writes that “traumatic events are almost impossible to put into words,” as they defy the normal order of understanding (1). Chiamaka’s silence is not only a marker of trauma, it is also suggestive of the fact that the mind is attempting to find a linguistic vehicle for intolerable affect.

Zikora: Betrayal Trauma and the Collapse of Relational Trust

It is proximity and intimacy that provide the psychological rupture for Zikora; her injury is the disrupted attachment that Herman identifies as “the fundamental trauma” (55). The cruel abandonment by her boyfriend, her mother’s judgment, doubles the wound to her relational security.

Similarly, Jennifer Freyd, who has developed a theory of betrayal trauma, explains that “betrayals by those we depend on can have especially toxic effects since they require those who are betrayed to dissociate knowledge of the betrayal in order to sustain the relationship” (8). Zikora has a similar experience, where her expectations about who will help her and support her lead to harm and she becomes alienated and unable to trust her own reality.

This internalized sense of dehumanization is Zikora’s own injury, and the novel reveals the extent of it. She remembers feeling “like a piece of garbage, drained of value” (37). This metaphor encapsulates the “dehumanizing” nature of betrayal that Herman describes, in which the survivor begins to see herself as the betraying others view her (56). Zikora’s identity has become linked to abandonment, her selfhood collapsed into the simple fact of her rejection.

Zikora’s difficulty in articulating her disappointment, her assertion that “the words curled back inside her” (39), also conveys this linguistic trauma. As Dori Laub observes, trauma engenders “an event without a witness,” in which survivors have difficulty testifying even to themselves about what has transpired (75). Zikora’s internal monologue is recursive, ruminative, and self-silencing in this way as well. The bathroom is a liminal space in which the carefully curated performance of normalcy comes undone, if only for a moment.

Omelogor: Disillusionment, Identity Fragmentation, and Existential Exhaustion

Omelogor is a traumatized subjectivity formed through aspiration, corporate pressure, and identity dislocation, a sort of suffering that Lauren Berlant calls “slow death”, the cumulative erosions of everyday emotional labor under conditions of precarity (754). Unlike narratives of trauma that center specific acts of violence, Omelogor’s crisis is a chronic, ongoing experience of institutional apathy and professional disillusionment. Arlie Hochschild’s concept of “emotional labor” helps elucidate Omelogor’s plight; the constant management of feeling required by service work and corporate culture exacts a psychological toll that can no longer be borne over time (7). Omelogor’s existential numbness is articulated when she reflects that “She felt hollowed out, as though her life had been emptied of meaning” (55).

Hollowness is the feeling of absence of self and meaning through complex trauma. Her confession that “she no longer recognized the woman in the mirror” suggests an alienation of identity; the subject sees herself as other (57). In this moment of misunderstanding, we see what Caruth defines as “the splitting of the self” that occurs when a traumatic event cannot be processed and within a particular structure of meaning.

It was a Zoom-meeting crying scene her tears fell silently as she stared at the screen, the digital trauma of loneliness, workplace alienation and pandemic pressure. This moment reveals the feeling for what Herman calls the sense of being trapped those survivors have: Omelogor cannot disconnect from the work she is overworked yet is equally incapable of performing the work she must do to be competent.

Nafissatou: Systemic Violence, Social Betrayal, and the Trauma of Injustice

Nafissatou’s story is one of structural and legal betrayal. Her experience, not an isolated one, formed a web of gendered violence, inequality and bureaucratic failure. Nafissatou’s trauma, unlike the emotional and relational pain experienced by the other protagonists, originates in her encounter with a justice system that denies her humanity. Her understanding that justice was not built for women like her is a psychic break, the moment the world itself becomes unsafe (78). Herman notes that “the sense of safety in the world, or even in a safe place in it, is lost” for survivors of systemic trauma (51).

Her trauma recurs as fear: “Nafissatou kept waking at night, her breath shallow with panic” (80). This constant hyper vigilance is consistent with Herman’s point that the ongoing fear felt by victims of systemic violence comes from the fact that the threat “is not an individual but an entire sociopolitical structure” (88). She also notes that “the shame clung to her skin” (82). African trauma specialists have

observed the gendered and racialized nature of shame, leading Ahmed to write of a “double burden of harm and silence” (66).

Her repeated cry, “He will send people to kill me!” each time collapsing the temporal borders which might separate a survivor from the experience of trauma, reveals the persistent hallucinatory aspect of trauma (10). Caruth notes that trauma consists of “the inability to escape repetition” (63). Nafissatou’s fear is real, in the sense that retaliation is a very real threat, and also symptomatic of trauma’s collapsing of time. Her rejection of therapy, saying “I cannot talk to stranger” (10) reflects both trauma’s inability to be contained within narrative form and the cultural stigma surrounding mental health.

Factors Responsible for Trauma in *Dream Count*

Trauma in *Dream Count* thus does not occur as an accidental rupture, but is the result of intersecting emotional, relational, cultural, and structural forces that overwhelm the characters’ ability to maintain stability. Herman claims that “trauma can only be understood in the social context that shapes the perpetrator, the victim, and the societal response” (9). This section looks at what was traumatic in each of the characters individual lives, how larger social and cultural formations and thus individual pain were created large scale social, economic and cultural formations.

Chiamaka: Emotional Isolation, Pandemic Loneliness, and Fear of Vulnerability

Chiamaka’s trauma is layered, physical isolation during the pandemic but also deeply emotional avoidance. She writes that long before the lockdown she had “built a wall around her heart” (23), a defense against disappointment that becomes injurious. During the pandemic this emotional architecture breaks down and her loneliness has a somatic weight; she “felt sadness crawl up her chest like a slow-moving animal.” (21). Van der Kolk remarks, “trauma is not just an event that took place sometime in the past; it is also the imprint left by that experience on mind, brain, and body” (21) and Chiamaka’s somatic experience is writ in this layering; past injuries flood the present via sensation.

Her silence is salt to his wound. When she tries to voice her feelings “her words died in her throat” 25. Years of repressed feeling become psychic paralysis. Later, when her affair with Darnell sours, she must face the truth she has been deferring: “We are in love and then we are not in love. Where does love go when we stop loving?” (62).

Her suffering is fuzzy and social. She is reminded of the crime of being single by family and peers. Her aunt tells her that without marriage and children ‘your life will just feel empty and meaningless’

62. This private desire becomes a public failure through these gendered expectations, further exacerbating her vulnerability. Her trauma is intimacy, emotional self-silencing, cultural monitoring of women's happiness, and the loneliness of lockdown.

Zikora: Maternal Rejection, Romantic Betrayal, and Intergenerational Shame

Zikora's trauma is rupture, rupture of trust in romance and maternal emotional austerity and patriarchal cultural codes. Her partner Kwame's withdrawal, "his face...went still" at the news of her pregnancy (125), accelerates her psychic disintegration. She imagined her life in stages: "a lucrative and prestigious job, then a splashy Catholic wedding, followed by two children" (109). The imagined future that she loses is something she is unprepared for and it fractures her identity and brings her sorrow.

Labor and abandonment are that trauma fused. She gives birth alone, waits obsessively for a Kwame's reply: "She sent another text: Your son... and then she knew that he had just" blocked her number" (142). The blocking is a form of symbolic deletion or denial of acknowledgment that itself exacerbates the physical and mental suffering of parturition. Freyd has argued that betrayal trauma is so damaging in part because it is "a violation of trust by someone on whom the victim depends." (22).

She is also culturally shamed. She fears exposure; she is haunted by "the monster of shame" (130) and paranoid that "everybody knew" she had been abandoned (130). Brené Brown, for example defines shame as "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and" therefore unworthy of love and belonging" (69) and Zikora internalizes this belief through cultural messages about single motherhood and female propriety. Her trauma is romanticized through betrayal, maternal emotional coldness, patriarchal stigma, and pattern of silence passed down through generations.

Omelogor: Capitalist Burnout, Identity Performance, and Emotional Overextension

Omelogor's trauma is depletion rather than cataclysm. Her breakdown is documented in her admission to feeling "hollowed out, as though her life had been emptied of meaning" (55). Years of hyper-performance in corporate and social spheres splinter her identity: "She no longer recognized the woman in the mirror" (57). The pandemic exacerbates this fissure by collapsing the public and the private.

Her tears streamed silently as she looked at the screen on a zoom call, illustrating how the culture of digital surveillance converts emotional collapse into a sort of invisible spectacle. And of course, her

suffering occurs in the shadow of an existential crisis, the pandemic. Terror has a new meaning that cannot be shaken from the news of the virus. The world was splintering and fracturing from an out of season peak. The trauma is not personal but atmospheric, a generalized anxiety and instability based on geopolitics. Extending this concept, Franco Berardi argues that late capitalism creates “semiocapitalist pathologies” of constant connection and the destruction of rest that manifest in rampant burnout and affective depletion.

Omelogor’s traumas are capitalist overwork and alienation from self, emotional labor overload and dehumanization through digital interaction, and the fraughtness of pandemic time. She knows, but cannot find her way out of, her unhappiness, trapped in Berlantian cruel optimism in which attachment to and desire for normative success prevent flourishing (2).

Nafissatou: Structural Oppression, Gender-Based Injustice, and Institutional Betrayal

Nafissatou’s trauma is perhaps the most brutal revelation of systemic violence in this novel.

Her rape by a French VIP “he did not think of her as a person... she was a thing, a thing to own and invade and discard” (203) shows that trauma is political and institutional, not only psychological.

Then comes the institutional betrayal as the prosecutor attacks her credibility, suggesting that her request for a translator means she is making things up (223). The law becomes a means of violation rather than a place of protection. Herman notes that “the law is there to protect men from the might of the state but not to protect women or children from the might of men” (72). Public shaming adds an injury on top of injury. Media narratives make her a spectacle: a newspaper headline labels her a “PROSTITUTE” (230). She knows “she would never wash off this stain of shame”. Threatening letters, journalists descending on her village, threats to her life: “He will send people to kill me!” (221) produce a trauma stemming from structural injustice, misogyny, class vulnerability, and lack of state protection. Nafissatou is further marginalized along the multiple axes of her gender, race, class, and immigration status, as intersectionality theory would suggest, as Crenshaw (1244) has shed light on.

Nafissatou’s story reflects trauma as a social injury, produced by institutional misogyny, cultural shame, and structural power inequalities that rob poor women of safety, dignity, and voice. Her trauma reveals, too, how individual pain cannot be separated from structural conditions, how violence is reproduced through the legal system and media representation, through economic markets and cultural narratives that deny certain women the ability to be credible witnesses to their own lives.

How Trauma Transforms the Worlds of the Characters in *Dream Count*

In *Dream Count* trauma is not only static but also reconstitutes the affective, psychological, and relational realities of the four women pushing each into different ways of seeing, being, and knowing the self and community. Consistent with Caruth's theorization of trauma as an "unclaimed experience"—an experience that continues to vibrate until it is brought to consciousness (4–6)—Adichie also depicts trauma as simultaneously destabilizing and generative, shattering previously known identities but also tentatively creating new pathways to the self and the possibility of ethical regeneration. Here, the paper explores how trauma alters the worlds of each protagonist.

Chiamaka: From Structured Emotional Distance to Painful Self-Confrontation

Chiamaka's world, at the novel's beginning, is one of emotional restraint and self-protective distance. Underneath this structure but is a longing, 'for what I then did not know as the splendence of being truly known,' unspent (35). Darnell is the unstable emotional architecture that Dark is; her relationship with Darnell points toward this instability. She acknowledges having "held on for so long" even when the relationship was hollow, until "letting go... mystery dissolves to dust" (62). Trauma shatters her sense of control.

The pandemic accelerates this unraveling. Lockdown suspends her temporally: "I felt trapped in my house, with the sensation of my days being erased" (349). The learned tactics of emotional detachment and internal privacy crumble in the face of separation of several years. She is painfully turned inward, a turn which leads to her realization that "the world has changed and you look back to take stock of how you've lived" (386).

Trauma flips this world, from dependency to relational resilience, as her ability to define and control her own emotional experience is restored. Herman underscores that, "the fundamental human experiences that are at the heart of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others" and, "recovery from trauma depends... upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections" (133). Trauma redirects her from avoiding feeling to facing herself, a grueling but necessary re-orientation toward vulnerability and relational truth.

Herman notes that trauma recovery requires "the survivor to reconstruct the trauma story" in a way that incorporates, rather than dissociates, painful experience (175), and Chiamaka begins this process by naming what she has lost and what she desires.

Zikora: From Silent Endurance to Emotional Recognition and Self-Awareness

Zikora's inner landscape is violently ruptured by betrayal and abandonment. "a splashy Catholic wedding... followed shortly by two" children" (109)—crumbles when, while pregnant, Kwame disappears on her. As she awaits his response in labor, her world contracts into terror and disbelief: "Your son...he weighs 6 pounds 13 ounces" (142), then the shock of being blocked. Trauma undoes her romantic certainties and destabilizes her sense of selfworth.

But this collapse creates transformation. She is haunted by "the paranoia of the abandoned" (130) but, through mothering and her relationship with her child, she reconstructs meaning. At the conclusion of the novel she professes, "You don't know love until you have loved your child... I don't know what I would have done without my mother" (386). Here we see a radical change from the centrality of identity and worth derived from romantic love to maternal and filial love as central, anchoring relationships.

Trauma reorients her world from dependency to relational resilience as her ability to define and control her own emotional experience is restored. Herman stresses that, "the fundamental human experiences that are at the heart of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others," and that, "recovery from trauma depends...upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections" (133).

Omelgor: From Corporate Perfectionism to Ethical and Existential Reorientation

Omelgor's transformation takes place less through individual crisis than through collective disillusionment with increased scale by collective catastrophe. Like her internal collapse, she realises as the pandemic spreads that "the world was splintering and fracturing" (351).

This reckoning is compounded by the injustice of Nafissatou and the moral poverty and Americans' addiction to celebrity that is her company's success. Instead, she communalizes her life. Omelgor does this. She writes simply, 'God blesses me and I want to bless women... help another woman when you can' (310-311). Trauma shifts her orientation from achievement to ethics, the lived experience of supporting Herman's argument that recovery is the project of reconstructing the lived experience of social relationships and moral engagement (196). She must also confront what Hochschild calls "the colonized self," the part of us that has the corporate values that deny authentic feeling (198). Omelgor begins to differentiate personal from professional aspirations people expect him to have. Lorde calls this 'the transformation of silence into language and action' (40) growing interest on her part to women's collective solidarity, the rejection of isolationism for collective fight and support.

Nafissatou's world is torn apart by sexual violence and institutional betrayal. She is dehumanized, rendered 'a thing, a thing to own and invade and discard.' The law, she writes, heaps injury upon injury until she feels that "like a condemned dog...her life would never be the same" (213). Public humiliation follows: "PROSTITUTE" blares in the news (230), and her social life reduces to stigma and fear.

By the time they are finally dropped (387) the damage has been done. But in sustaining and bonding, there is transformation. Chiamaka watches "Nafi unfurl, a woman becoming anew before my eyes" (391). Such a becoming anew does not erase trauma, but folds it into a new self and world. Nafissatou's pre-trauma world is one of faith in institutions, post-trauma her world shifts to survival, womanly solidarity and the slow road to dignity.

Nafissatou's transformation also includes what Herman describes as a "reconnection" to ordinary life and community (196). And she remakes connections that acknowledge her value, though institutions do not. Her healing, this novel implies, depends upon being seen, believed and validated, specifically by other women, by women who believe her story.

Also, her experience produces what Crenshaw has described their experience as intersectional consciousness, understanding of multiple systems of oppression and its portraiture of individual lives" (1245). Nafissatou narrates her pain not as individual pathology but as structural injustice perfectly predictable at intersections of racism, sexism, classism and xenophobia. But this awareness is excruciating but also an awakening; it allows her to shed shame and lay blame where it belongs."

Conclusion

Dream Count is a transition moment for Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, as she shifts from macro traumatic conflict narratives to micro cartographies of emotional and interpersonal suffering. This study argues that Adichie's shift is not a depoliticization of her work, but an expansion of the political, to include the slow violence of pandemic isolation, capitalist exhaustion and institutional abandonment. Building upon the articulation of Caruthian unassimilated memory and Herman's account of complex relational injury, the analysis pushes further into the novel in order to arrive at an understanding of how that novelist delineates the traumatic event as a catastrophic restructuring of identity and agency. Tellingly, the story itself deploys a multiaxial representational strategy: trauma emerges in Chiamaka's physical paralysis, Zikora's emotional explosions, Omelogor's existential burnout, and Nafissatou's hypervigilance.

In the narrative, these states become activated as instruments for making the “invisible” suffering of these women, who are positioned as outsiders/less than, visible. Most significantly, the present study contends that *Dream Count* embeds trauma in structural precarity, from patriarchal shame to digital mediation (the alone together phenomenon) to systemic racism. Rejecting redemptive tropes of “overcoming,” Adichie depicts transformation as a painful and provisional disrupting and reorienting of one’s ethics. Finally, the novel adds to trauma studies in a specific way by focussing on the African female experience within a globalized and digitized framework. It means that recovery is not individual heroic labor but collectively reconstructing meaning. In this manner Adichie is implicitly critiquing the moving importation of these traumatized narratives from the West and her novel creates a trauma reflective space of resilience as resistance and rooted in collective action and dignity restored in systemically destroyed space.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the research findings, the recommendations are:

1. For future scholarship to attempt to build towards African women’s literature as much as modern texts, the juxtaposition of personal trauma in *Dream Count* and historical collective trauma in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.
2. Future work will consider how the narrative strategies that Adichie employs are multilingual at multiple scales of violence, and a more nuanced understanding of trauma.
3. Another thematically similar text is *Dream Count*, which falls within the larger framework of African women’s writing, linking to writers like Tsitsi Dangarembga and Yaa Gyasi.
4. The effect of digital communication on the storytelling of traumatic narratives in Africa Genre, perhaps especially in view of the pandemic, should be researched.

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RETHINKING CREATIVITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: LATEST TRENDS IN CULTURAL AND MEDIA PRODUCTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The alarming growth of digitalization of cultural expression across Africa calls for a critical re-examination of the concept of creativity in relation to media and technology. This paper interrogates how the convergence of cultural and media arts in Nigeria is redefining the nature, process, and politics of artistic creation. With the proliferation of digital tools, ranging from artificial intelligence and virtual production to social media art and immersive installations, African artists are engaging new modes of authorship, teamwork, and audience participation. The study employs a qualitative approach and textual analysis to examine selected digital artworks and creative platforms. Drawing on theories of posthumanism and digital aesthetics, this paper examines how technology bridges tradition and innovation while reshaping the creative agency of the African artist. The analysis reveals how digital media translate and project indigenous aesthetic practices into global arenas, even as they provoke critical debates over authenticity, cultural ownership, and the preservation of continuity. By situating Nigerian and broader African creative practices within the dynamics of technological modernity, the paper argues that creativity in the digital age is no longer confined to individual artistry but emerges through networked, computational, and transnational interactions. In conclusion, the paper argues that African cultural and media arts embody a form of hybrid creativity that mediates between cultural memory and digital futurity, contributing to the ongoing redefinition of artistic identity and expression.

Keywords: Digital Creativity; African Media Arts; Cultural Hybridization; Posthumanism and Technology; Decolonial Aesthetics

Introduction

The digital revolution has begun to reshape the global landscape of artistic production, introducing new ways of producing and disseminating creative work.” Media literacy skills help the producers and consumers in achieving autonomy in understanding and creating the meaning of experiences, accommodating differences in ideas and opinions in the age of convergence” (Margaret, A. et al:2021) In Africa, especially Nigeria, technological innovation has occupied the core of development in the cultural and media landscapes. At the same time, the rapid expansion of digital networks, mobile technologies, and social media not only opens new possibilities for creative expression but also dissolves boundaries between traditional performance and contemporary digital art. Ukadike (22)

argues that African artistic expressions are adaptive and dynamic, evolving into new instruments and media that serve communal and political purposes. In the twenty-first century, this becomes resonant again with the convergence of digital media and performance, with artists experimenting with immersive forms such as virtual theatre, AI-generated visuals, and participatory online performances.

This turn to digital creativity in Nigeria evidences a paradigm change regarding cultural production and consumption. Indeed, theatre practitioners, filmmakers, musicians, and digital artists are increasingly incorporating multimedia tools and virtual spaces into their productive practices. Bisschoff (4) informs that the proliferation of digital technology across Africa “has opened up new creative territories and redefined the role of the artist as both innovator and social critic”. In so doing, this transformation extends the performative boundaries of theatre and performance art as Nigerian creators reach out to global audiences while conserving indigenous aesthetics through digital storytelling, livestreamed performances, and hybrid art forms.

This reconfiguration is exemplified in the emergence of digital theatre in Nigeria. The decline of live audiences and a move towards online platforms have dictated that artists forge new modes of staging and engagement. Imiti (93) notes “Nigerian Theatre cannot afford to remain glued to its roots in a technologically digitalized environment or society, but has got to evolve”. This evolution has birthed hybrid performances that combine stagecraft with live-streaming, projection mapping, and virtual reality, transforming how performance space, time, and presence are perceived. At the same time, such incorporation of technology undermines the notion of liveness critical to traditional notions of theatre. Instead, it suggests something more like what Auslander (11) calls “mediatized performance,” in which the live and digital are in constant interaction.

The digital turn democratizes cultural production through decentralization of creative control and audience participation. The integration of social media and digital platforms has given rise to participatory culture, where audiences contribute to meaning-making through sharing, remixing, and online interaction. According to Jenkins (3), in this paradigm, “consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content”, Nigerian artists and collectives, such as the Street Project Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on training and empowering young people through arts, culture, and creative expression, and the Committee for Relevant Art (CORA), a cultural organization dedicated to promoting literature, arts, and critical discourse, have adopted models of digital engagement to increase artistic participation, blend activism with art, and redefine public engagement with the creative industries.

But this digital convergence opens up questions about cultural authenticity, ownership, and sustainability. Ogude (11) contributes that the global circulation of African cultural products within digital economies often risks “the commodification of identity and the dilution of indigenous epistemologies”. Similarly, debates around decolonial aesthetics raise the question of whether digital tools are liberating or further entrenching global hierarchies in cultural production. The negotiation for Nigerian artists lies between tradition and innovation: technology used as a way not to replace cultural heritage but as a bridge between memory and modernity.

In sum, to rethink creativity in Nigeria’s digital age requires more than the adoption of new technologies; instead, it demands a reimagining of artistic agency, authorship, and collaboration. The emergent creative ecosystem, as a result, stands at the intersection of posthumanist and decolonial aesthetics, with the artist as an intermediary between the local and the global, the analog and the digital, the human and the machine. Thus, this study discusses how digital media and technological innovation are reconfiguring processes, politics, and possibilities in the practice of creative expression within Nigeria’s current cultural and media context.

Statement of the Problem

While digitalization has opened new avenues for creative expression in Nigeria, it also raises critical challenges relating to authenticity, access, sustainability, and cultural sovereignty. The integration of technology into theatre and media arts has blurred traditional artistic boundaries, however, scholarship on how these transformations influence creative agency and identity in the Nigerian context remains limited.

Most studies on digital creativity in Africa predominantly revolves around either media or film representations, as seen by Bisschoff 5; Ogude 12, respectively. There is a great deficit in understanding how theatre and performance are adapting to the digital paradigm. Secondly, very few interrogations have been made regarding the ways that these innovations are affecting local creative economies, audience interaction, and cultural preservation. This affirms Imiti's (94) argument when he posits that Nigerian digital theatre still faces infrastructural limitations, audience fragmentation, and resistance from practitioners who privilege conventional modes of performance.

Moreover, while Jenkins’s theory of participatory culture underscores interactivity and collaboration, Nigerian creative industries are embedded in asymmetrical digital ecologies that often favour urban, elite, or globally networked artists. This imbalance in access begs many questions

regarding the issues of inclusion and decolonial implications occasioned by digital cultural production. In that respect, the problem lies in understanding how Nigerian cultural producers negotiate the promises and pitfalls of digital technology while maintaining their authenticity, cultural relevance, and creative innovation.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to critically examine how digital technologies are changing the ways creativity and culture are produced within the Nigerian context. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine how digital tools and platforms shape artistic processes and performance practices in the Nigerian cultural and media sectors.
2. Investigates how digitalization redefines audience participation, collaboration, and authorship in Nigerian theatre and media arts.
3. Assess the implications of technological innovation for cultural authenticity, identity, and sustainability in the Nigerian creative economy.
4. Discuss the tension between local creative traditions and global digital aesthetics in Nigeria's emerging ecology of digital art.

Research Questions

1. How are Nigerian artists and media practitioners using digital technologies to innovate cultural and theatrical production?
2. How do digitalization processes affect notions of authorship, participation, and audience engagement in Nigeria's creative industries?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities that the digital turn presents for the preservation of cultural authenticity and identity in Nigerian creative practice?
4. How do Nigerian cultural producers negotiate between indigenous aesthetics and global digital trends in their artistic work?

Conceptual Framework

The redefinition of creativity in the cultural and media production of Nigeria has to be viewed in light of digital transformation dynamics and globalization. Digital creativity refers to ways that digital technologies allow conceiving, designing, and sharing artistic or cultural expressions that enable the artists to expand the boundaries of authorship, collaboration, and audience engagement. In modern creative practice, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok platforms, artificial intelligence, and virtual performance tools have reshaped how artists produce and share content.

Cultural theorists contend that digitalization democratized creative production through diminishing the few barriers to participation and access (Jenkins 15). The implication for Nigerian practitioners is that creativity has moved beyond performance spaces into the virtual space where multiple publics interact and create meaning. This notion leads to what Osofisan (42) describes as the “technological turn” in African performance, a moment when innovation and indigeneity combine in the production of hybrid cultural expressions. In the same way, Abah (88) opines that creativity in the digital context is effectively a form of social participation bridging communication, activism, and art. In this context, creativity within the scope of this study is conceptualized not simply in terms of individual artistic expression but as a networked process involving human and non-human actors, technologies, and audiences. It recognizes the fluid boundary between the creator and the consumer, performance and mediation, culture and technology. This conceptualization also reflects what Nwabuzor (123) refers to as the emergence of the “virtual audience” in Nigerian theatre, an audience participating, critiquing, and co-producing meaning through online interactivity.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts posthumanism and digital aesthetics as the twin theoretical frameworks through which the evolution of creativity in Nigeria’s digital age can be considered. Together, they provide a critical lens for examining how technology is shaping artistic identity, production, and participation.

Posthumanism Theory

Posthumanism challenges humanist underpinnings in creative logic and instead finds humans constantly interacting with technologies, ecologies, and other non-human systems. As Braidotti (39) claims, posthumanist thinking dismantles the humanist myth of the artist as an autonomous genius and shifts creativity to “hybrid assemblages” of humans, machines, and environments.. Donna Haraway’s

seminal work *A Cyborg Manifesto* also underscores this hybridity, describing the posthuman as a synthesis of organism and machine, which finally reconstitutes agency and authorship (149).

This framework helps to explain, within the context of Nigerian digital arts, how artists use technologies not as tools but as co-creative agents. As Emakunu (77) argues, the digital theatre environment in Nigeria has extended the field of the stage to include collaborative work between software, human performers, and audiences distributed across virtual spaces. Wuyep (45) also emphasizes that the posthuman condition of Nigerian performance “erases the distinction between live and mediated art, human and machine, artist and interface”.

In this sense, posthumanism furnishes this research with an ontological grounding to consider creativity as a distributed agency, that is, one emerging from the interactions among artists, algorithms, devices, and audiences.

Digital Aesthetics Theory

Digital Aesthetics puts a complementary perspective on Posthumanism, reflecting on how digital media influence the form, perception, and experience of art. As Manovich says, for instance, the shift of art from the analogical to the digital has redefined the aesthetic logic of creativity; as a result, creative works become dynamic, interactive, and process-oriented rather than static (18). Supporting Manovich’s position, Matthew Causey opines that digital performance introduces a new aesthetic of “liveness,” where performances simultaneously happen in physical and virtual places (61).

This aesthetic transformation is apparent in Nigeria through virtual performances, online art exhibitions, and technology-driven installations that remake indigenous motifs through digital textures. Akoh and Ugwu insist that “social-media theatre” in Nigeria creates an emergent digital aesthetic that amply merges performativity with interactivity and algorithmic visibility (6). Similarly, Essien contends that digital technologies within contemporary Nigerian theatre further increase access and “reinscribe local narratives within global digital imaginaries” (52).

Put together, Posthumanism and Digital Aesthetics present a strong interpretive framework through which to make sense of how technology mediates creativity in Nigeria’s cultural and media productions. If Posthumanism accounts for the ontology of digital creativity, its reconfiguration of agency and identity. Digital Aesthetics explains its form and experience. Both locate creativity within the nexus of human intention, technological affordance, and audience interactivity that undergirds what Manovich calls the “software condition of contemporary culture” (23).

In sum, these frameworks provide the theoretical foundation for an analysis of how Nigerian artists and media practitioners engage digital modernity: how they create, collaborate, and circulate artistic works within technologically mediated networks that extend beyond the local to the global.

Literature Review

Digital Creativity and the Transformation of Artistic Practice

The growing intersection between art and technology has changed the notion of creativity from an exclusively humanistic act to a technologically mediated process. As Manovich points out, digital creativity involves a transition from traditional forms of representation to what he describes as “cultural software”, a system wherein art is created, disseminated, and consumed by means of algorithmic and computational interfaces. This echoes Jenkins’ assertion that participatory digital culture has made audiences co-creators of meaning, collapsing the rigid divide that once separated producers and consumers.

In the Nigerian context, Akoh and Ugwu observe that “social-media theatre” is a new model of creativity that combines performativity and digital visibility, offering artists possibilities to perform and engage with global audiences through online platforms (2). Their study frames Nigerian performance within the “digital commons,” where social media simultaneously acts as both stage and archive for creative expression. In a related vein, Wuyep maintains that digital technology in Nigerian theatre “erases spatial constraints and redefines the temporal logic of performance,” thereby rendering the virtual stage a valid extension of live theatre (40).

This democratization of production also implies a reordering of creative agency. While earlier models relied on the artist as an autonomous genius, the digital paradigm emphasizes collaboration, interactivity, and the participation of audiences. From a posthumanist perspective, Braidotti further helps explain this movement: for her, creativity today results from “assemblages of human and non-human actants” that create meaning in concert (49). In Nigerian creative industries, this can be seen in forms of online storytelling, digital film production, and virtual performance workshops that depend on an integration of human imagination and technological affordances.

Cultural Hybridization and Global Circulation of Nigerian Media Arts

Another major discourse in digital creativity is that of hybridity: the blending of indigenous aesthetics with global digital forms. As Barber has noted, African performance has long derived from flexible

and adaptive traditions through which ritual, narrative, and improvisation are joined (88). The digital turn thus represents less rupture than continuity, as Nigerian artists integrate traditional structures of performance into new digital frames.

Essien's work on Theatre for Development has shown how Nigerian practitioners use digital media not only as tools of entertainment but also as platforms for social engagement and advocacy. Digital performances have now become spaces of artistic experimentation and civic participation, where artists can tackle issues of governance, gender, and social justice in more accessible formats. Digital creativity thus becomes both a medium of expression and of transformation, what Abah describes as "performative activism" with its roots in community consciousness (103).

Also, Adejumobi discusses that the globalization of Nigerian media arts, used by the streaming platforms and online festivals, increases their expressive visibility but also puts authenticity, ownership, and cultural sustainability into question (119). Such debates reflect or reproduce analogous tensions in the international debate, where one thinks of scholars such as Couldry and Madianou, who reflect on how global media flows both empower and commodify cultural production (67).

In Nigeria, from experimental web theatre to Afrofuturist digital installations, hybrid digital productions reflect a negotiation between cultural memory and technological modernity. As Osofisan notes, African theatre has always been dialogic, its responsiveness to the historical moment taking the shape of adaptation and innovation (41). The digital age merely extends this tradition into new aesthetic and communicative terrains.

Posthuman Creativity and the Reconfiguration of the Artist-Audience Relationship

The posthuman framework also redefines the ways in which authorship and spectatorship are conceptualized by Nigerian artists. As already pointed out, Haraway's concept of the cyborg—a hybrid of machine and organism—provides a forceful metaphor for understanding how creators in the present operate within digital networks (162). Nigerian digital artists often operate as "cyborg authors," integrating knowledge of coding, editing software, and performance technologies to create works that transcend the human body.

Emakunu's work on virtual audiences in Nigeria highlights this dynamic, noting that the "digital stage" enables co-presence and interaction among performers and audiences even across geographical distances (79). This sort of interaction could be considered what Causey has described

as an “aesthetic of embeddedness,” through which performance is enacted within nested structures of mediation rather than in relations of proximity (72).

This shift also reconfigures audience participation. Jenkins’ theory of participatory culture is grounded in the idea that digital users no longer passively consume art but, rather, are producers who remix, circulate, and reinterpret it (14). Within Nigeria’s creative industries, online followers, fans, and collaborators become part of the production process, providing feedback, sharing content, and creating digital art through hashtags, comments, and video duets. So, creativity now becomes an emergent property of collective engagement, or a process fusing performance with platform algorithms and audience interactivity.

Challenges and Ethical Implications

In the same direction, scholars have also pointed to limitations within the context of digital creative production: Servaes (211) warns that digital technologies could reinforce inequality in cultural participation on the African continent by marginalizing the non-digital communities; Kent and Taylor (25) underscored how digital communication, as dialogic as it might be, is nonetheless contingent upon ethical management of participation and representation (25).

Digital piracy, data exploitation, and platform dependency in Nigeria remain valid concerns. For Okoro and Nwafor, participatory communication in Africa has to balance openness with accountability since there is always the risk of digital spaces reproducing colonial hierarchies (93). The digitalization of creativity, therefore, entails a double nature: liberation and risk, where new voices are opened up but also new dependencies on transnational media infrastructures.

Overall, the literature underscores that Nigerian creativity in the digital era is simultaneously technological, cultural, and ethical: a site of negotiation where tradition meets innovation, where the local interfaces with the global, and where art becomes a process of collaborative becoming.

Methodology and Results/Discussion

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing the In-Depth Interview method complemented by interpretive thematic analysis. A qualitative approach is considered most appropriate because the study seeks to explore complex and context-dependent issues such as

creativity, authorship, cultural identity, and technological mediation within Nigeria's cultural and media industries. These phenomena are better understood through participants' lived experiences, subjective interpretations, and professional insights rather than through quantifiable measures.

The design is also exploratory and interpretive, allowing the researcher to generate rich, descriptive data on how digital technologies are reshaping artistic production and audience engagement. The approach aligns with the study's theoretical grounding in posthumanism and digital aesthetics, both of which emphasize fluidity, interaction, and relational meaning-making.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises Nigerian artists and media practitioners who actively engage digital technologies in cultural and creative production. This includes professionals working across theatre, film, digital content creation, visual arts, and cultural curation.

This population is appropriate because the study focuses on individuals directly involved in the evolving reshaping of digital creativity, particularly those whose practices reflect the intersection of traditional cultural forms and contemporary digital tools.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with demonstrable expertise and active involvement in digital creative practices. This technique ensures that only information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives are included.

A total of five (5) participants were selected, representing diverse segments of the creative industry, including a theatre practitioner/producer, a filmmaker and digital content creator, a social media storyteller, a digital/visual artist, and a cultural content curator. This diversity of participants enriched the study by providing a wide range of perspectives, thereby enabling a more holistic and nuanced understanding of digital transformation across multiple creative domains.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit detailed responses while allowing flexibility for probing and follow-up questions. The instrument was structured around four key thematic areas derived from the research questions, namely digital tools and creative production

practices, authorship, collaboration and audience engagement, cultural authenticity and identity, and the negotiation between indigenous aesthetics and global digital trends.

Interviews were conducted one-on-one, both physically and via digital platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and was audio-recorded with informed consent. Field notes were also taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual observations.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic approach, beginning with the transcription of all interview recordings and subsequent familiarization through repeated reading of the data. This was followed by the coding of significant statements and recurring ideas, which were then grouped into broader thematic categories. These themes were further interpreted in relation to the research questions and the study's theoretical frameworks.

The data were presented thematically, with participants' responses carefully paraphrased and synthesized to preserve meaning while ensuring anonymity. The analysis was organized around key emergent themes, including digitally mediated creativity, hybridization of artistic production, participatory culture and networked authorship, cultural visibility versus cultural dilution, and glocalization and creative negotiation.

To ensure validity, the interview questions were closely aligned with the study's objectives, while reliability was enhanced through systematic coding and consistent analytical procedures. Ethical standards were strictly maintained, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Theme 1: Digitally Mediated Creativity

Findings reveal that digital technologies have become central to creative production processes. Participants consistently described tools such as video editing software, virtual rehearsal platforms, and social media interfaces as integral to their work.

A theatre practitioner explained that rehearsals and performances now extend beyond physical spaces into virtual environments, enabling broader participation. Similarly, a filmmaker highlighted the role of editing software and analytics in shaping narrative structure and audience targeting. This suggests that digital tools are not merely supportive but constitutive of contemporary creativity, reinforcing the idea of media convergence in artistic production.

Theme 2: Hybridization of Artistic Production

A major pattern observed is the emergence of hybrid creative forms that combine traditional and digital elements. Participants reported integrating indigenous storytelling, music, and performance styles with digital formats such as livestreaming and short-form video content.

For instance, performances originally designed for stage presentation are now adapted for online audiences using multimedia enhancements. This reflects a shift toward flexible, multi-platform production, where the boundaries between theatre, film, and digital media are increasingly blurred.

Theme 3: Participatory Culture and Networked Authorship

The study finds a significant transformation in audience engagement and authorship. Participants noted that audiences now actively interact with content through comments, shares, and live feedback, influencing creative decisions in real time.

A social media content creator emphasized that audience reactions often determine the direction of subsequent content. This illustrates a shift from individual authorship to collective and networked authorship, where creative ownership is distributed across creators and audiences.

However, concerns were raised regarding content appropriation, lack of proper attribution, and weak intellectual property protection. Despite these challenges, participants acknowledged the benefits of increased visibility and engagement.

Theme 4: Cultural Visibility versus Cultural Dilution

Findings indicate a dual dynamic in the digital representation of Nigerian culture. On one hand, digital platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for global visibility, enabling artists to showcase indigenous narratives to international audiences.

On the other hand, participants expressed concern about cultural dilution, driven by algorithmic preferences, pressure to conform to global trends, and simplification of cultural content. This tension highlights the complexities of cultural production within global digital ecosystems.

Theme 5: Glocalization and Creative Negotiation

A key strategy identified is glocalization, the blending of local cultural elements with global digital formats. Participants reported consciously integrating indigenous languages, symbols, and narratives into digitally appealing formats.

For example, the use of subtitles to reach global audiences, the adaptation of traditional stories into short-form digital content, and the fusion of local music with contemporary digital aesthetics. Some participants also adopted resistance strategies, deliberately prioritizing cultural authenticity over popularity metrics.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that digital technologies function as both enablers and constraints in Nigeria's creative industries.

In response to Research Question 1, digital tools enhance innovation by enabling new forms of storytelling, performance, and production. This supports existing arguments that digital media expand creative possibilities while reducing logistical barriers.

Regarding Research Question 2, the study confirms that digitalization redefines authorship and audience engagement. Creativity is increasingly collaborative and participatory, aligning with theories of participatory culture and posthuman agency.

For Research Question 3, the findings reveal a tension between cultural promotion and cultural erosion. While digital platforms amplify Nigerian culture globally, they also introduce pressures that may compromise authenticity.

Concerning Research Question 4, Nigerian creators actively negotiate between local and global influences through hybrid practices. Rather than viewing globalization as a threat, they transform it into an opportunity for creative hybridity.

In conclusion, the findings reinforce the argument that creativity in the digital age is networked, hybrid, and relational, emerging from interactions among artists, technologies, and audiences.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that digital technologies have significantly transformed creative production in Nigeria, making it more flexible, innovative, and widely accessible to both creators and audiences. Creative processes are no longer confined to traditional physical spaces, as digital tools now enable experimentation, remote collaboration, and multi-platform dissemination of artistic works. This transformation has also redefined the concept of authorship, shifting it from an individual-centered model to a more collective and participatory framework in which audiences actively contribute to content creation, circulation, and interpretation.

Furthermore, the rise of participatory culture has enhanced audience engagement by fostering interaction, immediacy, and co-creation. However, this development also introduces challenges, particularly in relation to ownership, attribution, and intellectual property rights, as digital environments often blur the boundaries of creative control. At the same time, digital platforms have amplified the global visibility of Nigerian culture, providing artists with opportunities to project indigenous narratives to international audiences. Despite these advantages, such visibility is accompanied by concerns about cultural dilution, as creators may feel pressured to conform to dominant global trends and platform algorithms.

In response to these tensions, many artists adopt glocalization strategies, deliberately blending indigenous cultural elements with globally recognizable digital formats in order to maintain cultural authenticity while remaining relevant in the digital space. Ultimately, the study shows that creative practice in Nigeria is becoming increasingly hybrid, reflecting a dynamic intersection between tradition and technological innovation. This hybridity underscores the evolving nature of creativity in the digital age, where cultural expression is continuously negotiated across local and global contexts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This work has shown how digital technologies have radically reconstituted the field of cultural and media productions in Nigeria. Integrating traditional aesthetics with digital platforms has enabled Nigerian artists to forge hybrid modes of creativity that mediate between cultural memory and

technological futurity. New media tools, including virtual reality, AI-assisted production, and social media, have given way to forms of participatory authorship, increased audience engagement, and wider local and global reach for Nigerian arts.

The findings indicate that, in the digital age, creativity is no longer confined to the individual mind but is instead diffused throughout human and technological actors-what Braidotti has referred to as the relational agency of posthumanism. Nigerian artists engaging in various forms of digital media express how technological innovation can go hand in hand with indigenous cultural expression to produce works that are at once rooted in local traditions and attentive to global discourses.

However, the study also underlines a set of challenges: digital literacy gaps, infrastructural limitations, and concerns around the commodification or misrepresentation of traditional practices. These are all issues that demand careful consideration to ensure the adoption of digital tools supports sustainable, culturally authentic creative practices rather than undermining them.

Based on these insights, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. **Capacity Building and Training:** Arts practitioners in Nigeria should be supported through workshops and training programs to enhance their digital literacy, mastery of emergent creative technologies, and ethical considerations in digital art production.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Investment in reliable internet connectivity, affordable software, and virtual platforms is vital to be able to widen participation and facilitate equitable access to digital creative spaces.
3. **Policy and Regulation:** Policy framers and cultural institutions should come up with guidelines on how to protect intellectual property, cultural heritage, and ethical practices concerning digital media arts.
4. **Research and Documentation:** Continuous scholarly inquiry and documentation of digital artistic practices in Nigeria help in preserving the emerging forms of creative expression and consequently inform future interventions that integrate technology with the preservation of culture.

Conclusively, the creative industry in Nigeria is at the interface between tradition and technological innovation, with digital media themselves serving not as tools but as co-creators in shaping new artistic realities. Embracing hybrid creativity enables Nigerian artists to stake a claim for

cultural identity, audience participation, and contributions to the global debate on digital arts, which positions Nigeria to be a vibrant hub of innovation within the African and global creative economy.

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DANCE AS SATIRE IN NEW MEDIA: A STUDY OF *THERE IS GOD O* VIDEO SKIT (2014)

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Abstract

Dance serves diverse functions in the society, also as a satirical tool. Economic hardship in Nigeria has left Nigerians lamenting. Unfortunately, freedom of speech in Nigeria has become a mirage. Nigerians cannot speak freely for fear of being gagged. Fortunately, the recent upsurge of new dance trends observed on social media have seen Nigerians use these dances to embellish skits, in an attempt to create humour, and also ridicule Nigerian political leaders. It is on this premise that Dance-based Video Skits (DVS) is conceptualised, in order to explore its compositional element as a pilot of humour and satire. **There is God O** (2014) DVS as published on YouTube by Hala Naija Vlog has been selected for this study. The background behind the creation of the DVS will be supplied and elucidated. While responses of Nigerians to the DVS in the digital space is also examined. Using qualitative research method, netnography will be employed as research instrument. The dance movements, speech-errors, and musical content of the skit will undergo narrative and contextual analysis, in order to identify the elements of comedy and political satire in them. Hinged on Frye's (1944) satirical, and Tume's (2019) modified danceturgy theories, this research discovers speech error of a Nigerian political leader, simulated Afrobeats music, and cut-and-join dance movements as components of the DVS. The study concludes by recommending the usage of dance in the new media as crucial, and can serve as tool to conscientise the society, thereby dance should be deployed for social change.

Keywords: Speech errors, Satire, Afrobeats, Cut-and-join, New media, Dance-based Video Skits (DVS).

Introduction

Dance is perceived to be an indispensable and integral part of man's life. It is believed that dance is as old as man himself. It has been around all over the world since the most primitive of human civilizations: early cave paintings seem to depict dancing figures as early as 330 BC. Early on, dance seemed to primarily be used for ceremonial purposes or to communicate stories. By Ancient Greek times, dance was being used as a performing art as part of the Theatre. Dance had a brief falling out during the Middle Ages. In the Western world, religious leaders associated it with ritualistic activity and sexuality. By the Renaissance, dance was having a resurgence, both as a social activity and as an art form. Since then, dance has continued to develop, and has not only become a major part of our culture, but has brought with it new styles and movements, coming in and out of fashion every day (Greenawald 2021:1). Tume (47); identifies communication, worship, entertainment, education, history documentation, culture identification and promotion, communal edification and nation building as some of the main functions of dance in Nigerian societies. These functions often overlap depending on the user's preference or need, and since dance communicates ideas and messages

effectively, its “persuasive attributes” make it an “instrument for national awakening” which can “aid societal and behavioural changes” (Tume, 37; Udoka, 218; Awuawuer, 192). It is also used as a satirical tool to lampoon social ills and vices.

Music can be said to be the combination of sounds to create harmonious melody, pleasing to the ears. According to Becker, et al (4); the composition of music itself is made up of the vast grouping of notes, phrases, melodies, rhythms, harmonies, and lyrics, which all form a singular piece. Uwawah’s (114) assertion that “rhythm is a regular repeated *pattern* of sounds or movements” solidifies the reason why some see dance as “a musical art” or a “purposeful and intentionally rhythmical patterned activity that is derive from music (Bakare, 10; Akpughe, 124). Coons, and Kreie (21) posit that; dance choreography comes in different styles. One way is by telling a story, where the dance matches the music, using groups for different scenes. Another style is more free and expressive, using fluid dance movements to convey emotions.

Considering the above assertions; dance choreography as an art means an idea, and it through this idea it succeeds in creating a succession of physical movements, mostly interrelated with music that constitute such ideas. These solidifies the connectivity between dance and music, which are considered synonymous. They cannot be separated. Bakare (2019) supports this claim thus; Music, dance, and drama, are indivisibly one “within the context of African performance as opposed to the western concept of performing arts where dance, music, and drama exist as different art forms (5). Therefore, it is sufficed to say that the dance, as well as music, are typically to drive the structure. Meaning, structure is the way the movements are organized and combined to create a dance. While music determines the time and energy of the movements executed (Dancetopia, 2023).

According to Ufford (80); dance, from ancient history has always made use of music. This claim by Ufford agrees with Bakare’s that dance is “a musical art” in his *Rudiments of Choreography* (1994:10). Ufford (80) succinctly put it thus; dance is a medium of expression of emotions, and these emotions are actualized through rhythmic body movements. So, the fact that music is performed according to musical beats shows that music comes to mind first before the rhythmic movements of the body. Which provides the rhythm to guide and direct the design of body movements which is dance.

New Media is the term used to describe the new technologies through which contents are created and consumed. It refers to various forms of digital communication that have emerged in recent years, including social media, podcasts, websites, blogs, streaming platforms, and mobile apps (Kimi, 40). Kimi reiterates that “a key defining characteristic of new media is its ability to utilize multimedia

elements such as video and audio to create engaging, easily shareable content across different platforms” (40). Tume states that “Applications such as Facebook, X, Instagram, 2go, TikTok, Tinder, WhatsApp, WeChat, Tumblr, and LinkedIn, are viable social media platforms which facilitate the building of virtual relationships and communities” (126). The interactive nature of new media allows the quick sharing of ideas, opinions, and creations with the world. Maya claims thus:

From Facebook and Instagram to X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube, more than 5 billion people use social media, equal to roughly 62% of the world’s population. In early 2024, 94.7% of users accessed chat and messaging apps and websites, followed closely by social platforms, with 94.3% of users (investopedia.com).

The above information shows that social media typically features user-generated content that lends itself to engagement via likes, shares, comments, and discussion. Du and Wagner view social media as “the broad and evolving set of online technologies and related practices for social engagement and interaction” (99-121). It is a fact that almost every discussion on social media spaces resonates or revolves around politics, and political leaders.

According to Wineroither:

Political leadership, in a parsimonious definition, refers to the impact on decision-making and political outcomes that results from action by the holder of political office. Thus, it is connected with leadership style and may be rooted in certain character traits of the leader’s personality (1455-1461).

Wineroither’s take on political leadership is the description of an ideal situation, which unfortunately does not play out in reality. Khrushchev claims that “Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river (goodreads.com)”, while Enyinnaya opines that “I do not trust politicians or anybody exhibiting political behaviour, this is because they wear two or even three faces” (businessday.ng). The above opinions are testament to the fact that bad political leadership is a global menace, and of course, Nigerian political leaders are not exempted.

Skit making is an offshoot of comedy. Comedy is known as a genre of dramatic works or text intended to be humorous or amusing by inducing laughter, especially in theatre, Film, Stand-Up comedy, Television, radio, books, or any other entertainment medium, Hoy (2). The primary aim of comedy is to create humour. McKeown (2) opines that; “Politically speaking, humour can be used to include and to exclude, oppress but also to undermine those in power”. This underscores the importance of humour

as a performative element of comedy (1-11). This statement by McKeown can be seen as an attempt by the people to get even with the so-called political leaders, by undermining their capability. Leaders who through their greedy and manipulative ways succeeds in bringing about hardship on the masses.

The use of dance as satire to foster social change can be traced to indigenous festivals, within the context of traditional performances, the King is not exempted from these satirical songs and dances. If found wanting in terms of good governance, the townspeople may explore the avenues of musical and dance performances to ridicule him without the fear of any repercussions. This practice is the philosophy behind proverbs such as “Tor wuan Tor-shor ga” or “Tor une fa tyo u wuan Tor-shor ga” which is translated as “the King never kills an artiste or lead dancer”. The idea behind these proverbs is that the artiste enjoys artistic immunity. By implication, the artiste gets away with actions, words or songs that could cause negative consequences if they had emanated from ordinary people. However, even when it seems that the artiste is clowning, the message in his/her artistry is powerful enough to bring about social change.

This study finds Segun Adefila’s thoughts on this issue quite illuminating:

...May I then take us back to a time before now when the watchdogs of the early African societies were the custodians of their traditions. They were the priests, the bards, the griots, the drummers, and other artisans. It was on their shoulders that the responsibility for checks and balance, continuance of order in times of ruptures etc., rested.... For instance, the masquerade is a virtuoso performer who chants, sings, dances, and generally ‘acts’ out the role of warding off evil, while ushering in good tidings. Beyond performances, the masquerade also speaks to the conscience of the society. The spirit speaks truth to the hearts of kings and other rulers. This role is even so institutionalized by Yoruba people that they believe that ‘Oba kii pa Okorin’, loosely translated to mean that a king does not kill a bard (sic) (2022).

The above position by Adefila which puts in proper perspective the social functions of music and dance underscores the crux of this research.

Dance, Music, Politics, Social Media, and Skit Making: The Nexus

There is an undeniable connection between dance, music, politics, social media and Skit making. Dance and music are intertwined as political tools, and both are disseminated widely and easily through the social media. From time immemorial, it has been common practice for musicians to use dance as a means to popularize their music. With the advancement of technology, the use of dance to promote music videos became a norm. Also, dance-based adverts are now more popular and easily accessed on social media platforms, due to the emergence of new media. However, the recent upsurge of some new dance trends on social media, shows how these dances are used to embellish DVS, as an attempt to not only create humor, and entertainment, but also as a way of lampooning political leaders. This act is fueled by the negligence of these political leaders on the masses, after the assumption of office. As a result, there is angst in the country. The failed promises and mistreatment of Nigerians by these politicians brought about an unbearable hardship in the country, leading to distrust and misgivings towards leadership. Unfortunately, freedom of speech in Nigeria has become a mirage. There are many known, and unknown critics of the Nigerian government on social media who have experienced harassment, arrest, threats to life, or other vices for speaking truth against those in power. A few of the known cases are: Steven Kefeson, a journalist and critic of the government who was arrested in May 2019, and subsequently detained for 162 days over a Facebook post which criticized some policies of the government (www.solacebase.com). Also, arrested in 2020 was Babatunde Olusola, an orphan and final year student of Chemical Engineering of Ladoke Akintola University (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho, Oyo State. He was held in detention for 81 days at Police Force Criminal Investigation Department in Abuja after he was arrested for creating a parody Twitter account using the name of former president Goodluck Jonathan to criticize the government” (www.pmnewsnigeria.com>interview). Then, there was the case of Sunday Egena Odeh, a state house correspondent of people’s Daily, an Abuja-based newspaper, who was arrested in May 2021 by officers of the Nigeria Police Force. On the orders of the Benue State government, Sunday Egena Odeh was arrested for criticizing ex-governor Samuel Ortom, on Facebook over the way he handled a communal conflict in the state. It took the joint efforts of media rights groups before he regained his freedom (www.thecable.ng). While in November 2022, Aminu Muhammed, a final-year student of Federal University, Dutse, Jigawa State, was apprehended for criticizing former Nigeria’s first lady, Aisha Buhari on Twitter. Though arraigned in court, Aisha Buhari withdrew the case against the 23-year-old Aminu Muhammed a month later, after she was called out by Nigerians on social media for misusing her power of office (www.universityworldnews.com). And in July 2023, a popular broadcast

journalist, Chinonso Uba, otherwise known as Nonso Nkwa, was whisked away by police officers after he finished anchoring his morning programme on Ozisa FM, a radio station in Owerri, Imo State. It was gathered that, the journalist who initially resisted arrest expressing fears that he might be killed by the officers, is known to be critical of the administration of Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo State. (www.premiumtimesng.com).

While section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that guarantees the right to freedom of expression says “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference,” the government of Nigeria has on several occasion launches campaign to suppress this right through the various attempts to regulate social media. This led to the introduction of the anti-social media bill that was introduced in 2019, by the Nigerian authorities at the National Assembly. This bill was to allow the government to cut off internet access or block specific social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter at its own discretion, through the NCC (National Communications Commission). Although the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) in 2023, urged the then Senate President, and the Speaker, to reject the social media regulation bill, which would unduly restrict the rights to freedom of expression and privacy, but the then chief of staff to the President insisted that social media must be regulated. Adding to the already controversial Cybercrime Act which was passed into law in 2015, which has many provisions that violate the constitutional provision of the right to freedom of expression. (www.nigerian-constitution.com).

These and many more atrocities meted on the masses, stifling their right to freedom of speech, have necessitated the need for the people to find creative means of criticizing political leaders. Dance-based video skits (DVS) became that creative means, and a popular option for Nigerians to exercise their freedom of speech. However, there are several research efforts connecting humour, satire, skits, politics, and the new media. For instance, Botha (2014) investigates the intrapersonal reasons for viral social media contents in the context of political satire, while Kumar (2015) identifies parody and satire as an emerging discourse of social and cultural critique on the Indian social media. Orji's (2018) exploration on the contributions of the Igbo masking traditions to contemporary stand-up comedy traces the history of humour and satire to pre-colonial periods. Also, Adeseke (2020) examines satirical social-media skits as education resource, while Ojomo & Sodeinde (2021) investigate the influence of social media skits on broadcast audience. Unfortunately, the lack of sufficient evidences of research on the compositional elements in DVS or how they are deployed for satirical purposes.

More importantly, music, speech errors of Nigerian political leaders, and the effects of the use of dance choreography in DVS have received little or no attention, this then serves as the nub of this study.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts both Frye's Satirical Theory, and Tume's Danceturgy Theory as theoretical frameworks for this research. Propounded by Northrop Frye in 1944, in his work "*The Nature of Satire*", the work focuses on the role of satire in shaping cultural and social critique. The most important aspect of Frye's satire, is how it sees satire as a form of irony used to attack and challenge societal norms, and distinguishes between "horatian" (gentle, playful) and "juvenalian" (harsh, biting) satire. Frye argues that satire serves to critique societal norms and power structures, expose hypocrisy and absurdity, to encourage critical thinking and moral reform, and finally, to analyze satire through the lens of mythology, exploring how satirical works create new myths to challenge existing ones.

On the other hand, Tume's Danceturgy, as propounded in 2019, was deduced from Gotthold Ephraim Lessings, *Dramaturgy* in 1769. *Dramaturgy*, is the "architecture of the theatrical event, involved in the confluence of components in a work and how they are constructed to generate meaning for the audience". Meaning, *dramaturgy* is concerned with the weave of all fragmented elements that make up a dramatic performance from its conceptualization, documentation all the way to the actual performance. So as deduced, Tume's Danceturgy is concerned with the weave of all fragmented elements that go into a dance performance from its conceptualization, documentation, all the way to the actual performance. Based on this background, the concept of Danceturgy as propounded by Tume, encapsulates the arrangement of the entire structure of any dance work. It is an adhesion of the bits and pieces of all components which go into the theory and practice of dance choreography as a creative art. It is a form of storytelling through dance that unpacks in Choreographic terms, the socio-cultural interactions of human beings in everyday life. Both theories are considered as the most appropriate for this research work. Frye's Satirical Theory, focusing on its role in shaping cultural and social critique. And Danceturgy Theory, been a form of storytelling through dance, which is achieved through the arrangements of the entire structure of a story, an adhesion of the bit and pieces of all the components. The components in the context of this work are; the simulated Afrobeats music, the superimposed cut-and-join dance movements, and the blunders or speech errors, committed by the political leader, all fused together to make a whole.

A Content Analysis of *There is God o* DVS

HallaNaija V-LOG is a social media handle on YouTube that deals in covering entertainment news, beauty and lifestyle, events, interviews, and fashion. The handle was created on YouTube on August 1st, 2013, and as at today it has over 5,400,000 subscribers, 44 videos and 1,414,787 views of its contents. The DVS *There is God o* of the former first lady of Nigeria, Dame Patience Jonathan, which went viral on 14th May, 2014, was first released on the HallaNaija V-Log YouTube platform. Due to its high entertainment value, other bloggers and social media handles got hold of it and shared to other social media platforms. The V-log HallaNaija is a faceless account which cannot be attributed to a particular person. In spite of the numerous attempts to uncover the identity of the person(s) behind the account, it has remained a mystery. Suffice to say that the virality of the video *There is God o* can be attributed to HallaNaija V-Log, through its YouTube Channel.

Socio-cultural Context of *There is God o* DVS

Following the kidnap of the Chibok school girls who were abducted by the notorious *Boko Haram* terrorist group on the 14th April, 2014, the Nigerian physical and online space witnessed an outrage. The kidnap involved 276 mostly underage Christian female students and some Muslim students within the 16 – 18 age bracket. The attendant outrage led to several protests and most notably the #BringBackOurGirlsCampaign, in Nigeria, Africa, and the World at large. Nigerians openly criticized President Jonathan's slow response to the kidnap. In this vein, Ishaq Moddibo Kawu reported the reaction of Max Hastings to President Goodluck Jonathan to the kidnap thus:

We see in Nigeria the problems that beset the entire African continent...It is international publicity, not shame that has forced President Goodluck Jonathan's rotten regime to belatedly to respond to the (Chibok) kidnapping (vanguardngr.com)

Nigerians were therefore unimpressed when his wife, Dame Patience Jonathan called for a meeting with the mothers of the kidnapped Chibok girls.

Analysis of the Compositional Elements in *There is God o* DVS

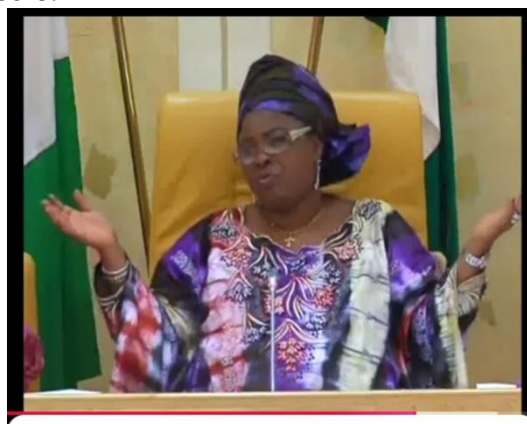
There is God o is a One-minute, twenty-six seconds (1:26s) long DVS. It is a product of what was deemed as the dramatic antics and theatrics of Patience Jonathan during the meeting. The video of that meeting went viral due to these reasons. According to Amina Mohammed:

The famous, “There is God” video skit by the first lady, Patience Jonathan, is Nigeria’s most viewed non-music footage ever on popular online video site, YouTube, the site’s owner, Google, announced Thursday. The video, published in 2014 by Channels TV, showed Mrs. Jonathan breaking down at a meeting over the abduction of about 276 school girls by Boko Haram insurgents in Chibok, Borno State, in a dramatic display of emotion that drew global attention (premiumtimes.com).

The basic components of the *There is God o* DVS are identified as speech errors, simulated Afrobeats music, and cut-and-join dance movements.

Speech Errors: The DVS *There is God o* is a cut from the full video clip of the former first lady of Nigeria, Dame Patience Jonathan, during an address with the northern women, and mothers of the abducted Chibok girls in Kaduna, on 15th April 2014. The former first lady was seen to be sympathizing with the parents of the abducted girls, while also chastising the authorities of Government Girls Secondary School Chibok, and the Borno State government, for its lack of adequate security for the students while in school. According to her, the government was ready to help the affected parents to recover the missing children and she urged more affected parents to come forward. Below is a transcription of the part of her speech relevant to this study:

Do you come with two teachers? Na only you waka come? God will see us... there is God in everything we are doing... those bloods that are sharing (sic) in Bronu (sic) will answer. The first lady is calling you...come I want to help you, come to find your missing child, will you keep quiet? Chai...chai...there is God o, this blood we are sharing (sic), there is God o... there is God o... there is God o.



Chai, Chai! There is God o!

Plate. 1: Dame Patience Jonathan in *There is God o* DVS.

Source: Internet

As seen above, her speech during the meeting was filled with grammatical errors, and her actions considered insincere. She concluded the speech with unconvincing tears, and the video immediately went viral. The part where she repeatedly said “There is God o” was cut from the full video and popularly shared online.

Simulated Afrobeats Music: The speech errors in *There is God o* DVS is simulated to music in 4/4 common time signature. The 4/4 common time signature identifies the number of notes in each music bar. The bottom number shows how big each note or beat is, while the top number indicates how many of that type of note is in each music bar. In *There is God o* DVS, a repetition of Patience Jonathan’s speech errors are simulated as music and set to staccato beats for aesthetic effect. The end product is a catchy Afrobeat music genre that is pleasant to the ears.

Cut-and-Join Dance Movements

An analysis of *There is God o* DVS reveals that the images are a cut-and-join from entirely different dance videos which were superimposed on the simulated Afrobeats music in the video. The images and persons represented can therefore not be arrested, or held responsible for the videos, as they were actually dancing to a different music in a different context. This leads us to the ingenuity of the producer who was able to identify dance movements from other videos that could be merged to the already simulated Afrobeats music for *There is God o* DVS. The general images in the *There is God o* DVS are broken down as follows:

- i. The first image in *There is God o* is that of two young African boys who effected asymmetrical facial expressions to accompany staccato dance phrases. Their arms, body, and faces were presented in a way that is not mirrored or balanced between the left or the right. Using their asymmetrical facial expressions and their distorted hand gestures, they created uneven caricatured shapes in a bid to create humour and laughter. This image was purposely used by the producer to caricature and satirize Patience Jonathan and insincere political leaders.



Plate 2 : Boys dancing, gesticulating, and caricaturing as superimposed in *There is God o* DVS.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

- ii. The second image is that of a boy dancing with his family. He effected an eccentric crisscross dance movement, characterized by the unconventional, and individualistic movements to create humour. This image references the inconsistencies of those in power.



Plate 3: A boy effecting an eccentric crisscross dance movement in *There is God o* DVS.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

- iii. The third image is that of a young lady executing binary form AB dance movements. This structure evident in her movements consists of sections A and B, each with their contrasting styles, and qualities. The popular dance movements like Azonto, Etighi, Kukere, and Shoki which she performs hold contemporary appeal for entertainment. This is another deliberately superimposed dancer in the *There is God o* DVS, strictly for comic and entertainment purposes.



Plate 4: A young lady executing the binary form AB dance movements in *There is God o* DVS.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

- iv. The last superimposed images are that of a professional dancer dressed in skimpy dance costume, dancing to the simulated *There is God o* song. The dancer, while maintaining stability to execute a complex movement, stands on her head, supported by her hands. This acrobatic summersault by the lady depicts an extreme reversal of a normal state. This action further mocks of the situation, as was the intention of the producer of the DVS.



Plate 5: A female dancer executing a complex acrobatic summersault dance movement in *There is God o* DVS.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

The above analysis reveals that the producer of the *There is God o* DVS went all out to make mockery of the then first lady and the PDP led political leadership as a whole, using the speech errors, simulated Afrobeats music, and cut-and-join dance movements.

Analysis of the Views, Likes and Comments on *There is God o* DVS

As earlier stated, *There is God o* DVS went viral upon its release via Halla Naija V-Log YouTube page on May 13th, 2014, and is still generating attention till date. As at the time of compiling data for this research, the video had garnered 214,000 views, 691 likes, and 60 comments. Out of the 60 comments on the post, 25 commenters found the DVS hilarious, 20 commenters were impressed with the quality of dance and music displayed in the video, while only 15 expressly voiced dissenting opinions to the general view of humour and satire which the video portends. While a minority of these commenters were not in full support of Patience Jonathan, they expressed that the Chibok girls matter was not something to joke about.

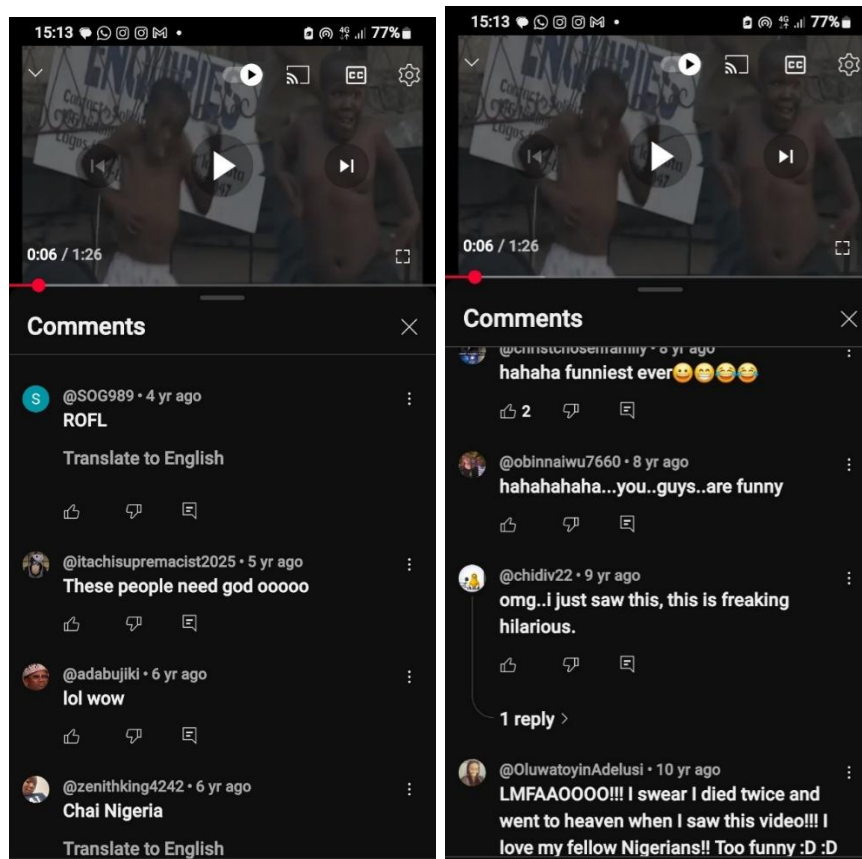


Plate 6: Screenshots of some of the commenters on the *There is God o* DVS.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

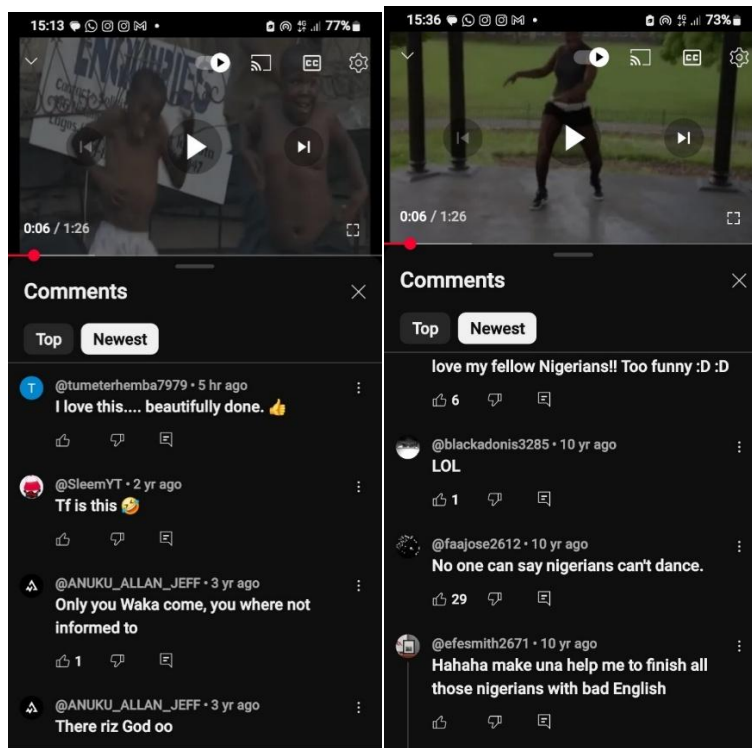


Plate 7: Screenshots of some of the commenters on the *There is God o DVS*.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

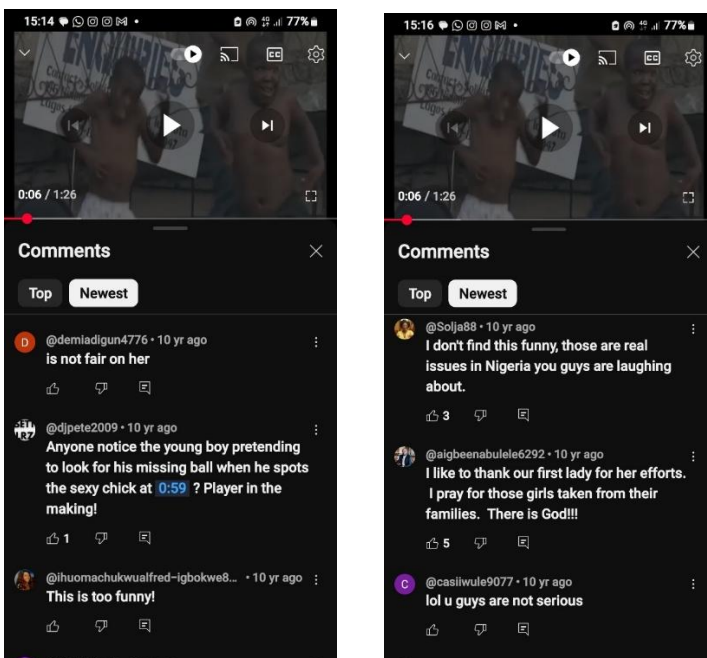


Plate 8: Screenshots of some of the comments in *There is God o DVS*.

Source: Still images from the DVS as accessed on HallaNaija YouTube page.

Going by the number of views, likes and nature of comments on the video, it is safe to conclude that the DVS was well-received by Nigerians. The high number of Likes and Views on the DVS undoubtedly portrays acceptability. The DVS *There is God o* was widely accepted by Nigerians, viewed, and liked by a large number of Nigerians within, and in the diaspora. While 214,000 people viewed the DVS, 691 were interested enough to drop a Like reaction. This means 213,309, people viewed the DVS without reacting. The number of those who reacted to the video, and those who only viewed but did not react, is an indicator that the DVS was well received by many Nigerians, hence interested enough to view it in the first place.

Conclusions and Recommendation

This research has explored the nexus between dance and social media to conceptualise Dance-based video skits (DVS). It identified speech errors, cut-and-join dance movements, and simulated Afrobeats music as the recurring themes and patterns which form the basic compositional elements of DVS. With specific concentration on *There is God o* (2014). The study investigated the confluence of speech errors, dance movements, and music in DVS to create humour and lampoon Nigerian political leaders. It also beamed a searchlight on the cultural contexts that informed the production of the DVS under study, as well as their impacts. Through a scrutiny of the layers of speech errors, dance, music, comedy, and satire in the selected DVS, the study investigated how they function as tools for lampooning Nigerian political leaders. The main compositional elements and features of DVS are identified as: attention-grabbing hook, short duration, virality, relatability, emotional connection, relevance and timeliness, humour, and heavy dance content. DVS create humour and satire through altering of speech errors of Nigerian political leaders and setting them to music, with inverted use of cut and paste dance movements from various sources to match the music simulated for the videos. Humour and satirical meanings are derived from the repetitions of the speech errors, exaggerated sounds of the simulated Afrobeats music, and the comic gestures accompanying the cut-and-join dance movements in the videos. It is discovered that actual events of political unrest, deceptive election campaign promises, and insincere political leaders leading to voter apathy and distrust, form the cultural contexts that informed the production of *There is God o* (2014) DVS. The varied reactions of Nigerians to the DVS are reflective of their lack of regard for and confidence in political leadership in the country. The techniques applied to the creation of *There is God o* (2014) DVS offer immunity and anonymity to its creators, thereby empowering them with freedom of expression and a voice hard to be ignored. The paper succeeded in recognising dance as a spur for satire in video skit. However, it is discovered that a lot still needs to be done. Thereby

prompting certain recommendations, which are; the need to deploy African dances to address social issues. Also, there is the need to encourage the usage of dance via new media in order to create encouraging and engaging experiences. Finally, it is also recommended that there should be organised workshops on how dance can be used in promoting social change through new media.

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MUSIC AND ORIENTATION: A PANACEA FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

With proper orientation, music has the capacity to ignite the passion for both national development and social integration in Nigeria. The thrust of this research investigated and identified the placement of music and orientation as a panacea for national development, cohesion and social integration. In consideration of the Nation's multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural, meta-political diversities and inclinations, this study examined the role of music and orientation in promoting national unity and social amalgamation. It underscored the significance of music in Nigerian culture and its potential for fostering national unity. Consequently, the research investigated how music and orientation could contribute compositely to national development and achieve social integration. Adopting the African communal life concept of Nketia, the methodology involved qualitative approach, empirical study and library sources. Findings from the research reveal that musical configuration and instruction with proper focus, character orientation and coordination can serve as a panacea to achieve social integration in a changing world. The study recommends that Music Departments across the tertiary institutions in Nigeria should partner with the Federal Government, National Orientation Agency, National Institute for Cultural Orientation, Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, and other agencies, integrating music instruction and enlightenment into national development plans, thereby promoting music programmes that celebrate Nigerian diversity and unity.

Keywords: Orientation, social integration, national development, panacea

Introduction

During a discussion in 2011, Prof. Anthony Mereni had remarked that if given the opportunity in Lagos State, he would solve the challenges of Lagos Traffic with the power of music and the mind. A deeper reflection on what transpired during that discussion gave rise to the topic of this research, "Music and Orientation: A Panacea for National Development and Social Integration in Nigeria". Nonetheless, delving into the power of using music to solve the challenges currently bedeviling national development, socio-economic, political, moral, cultural, scientific and technological

developments as observed in Nweke and Nwoye (2017), the study explored the potentials of music and orientation in promoting national development, solving issues that affect the progress of the country, and serving as a tool for social awareness and integration in Nigeria. With its rich cultural heritage and diverse musical traditions, music has long been an integral part of the Nigerian society.

There are agencies in Nigeria with inherent capacity to partner with music institutions for national development. Some of these agencies are National Orientation Agency (NOA), National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), formerly Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), and Voice of Nigeria (VON). The National Orientation Agency, for instance, is a unit of the Information Ministry dedicated to fostering national unity through enlightening the masses via the use of music for strategic public education and advocacy. “I’m A Real Nigerian” (NOA theme song), a song for national pride, “Nigeria will Survive” (Veno Marioghae), “Nigeria, My Beloved Country” (Funmi Adam), “We are Nigerians” (Princess Anath), “Which way Nigeria” (Sunny Okosun), and “MAMSER” (Onyee Nwankpa) are classic examples of music for national orientation, pride and patriotism.

Statement of the Problem

The problem that this study sought to address is the challenge of promoting good citizenship, national development and social integration in Nigeria, a country marked by significant cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and conflicts. Despite the country's rich cultural heritage, Nigeria continues to face significant challenges related to dichotomy, social disintegration, banditry, herdsmen arising from ethnic and religious strives, which often manifest tension and bloodletting conflicts.

The question is, can music function as a panacea for national development and social integration? Rhetorical as this may sound, this question is rooted in the understanding that music has the potential to bring people together, promote cross-cultural understanding, and foster a sense of national identity and unity. Affirmatively, the problem of this study is that music has not been seen as panacea for the development and social integration of the citizenry. By examining the role of music and orientation in promoting national development and social integration, this study identified the ways in which music can be used to address the challenges of social fragmentation and division in Nigeria.

The objectives of this paper highlight the importance of music and orientation in shaping national development and social integration, exploring the role of music in promoting national unity and social

cohesion, identifying the ways in which music can be used as a tool for shaping respectable citizenship, fronting law-abiding citizenship, creating awareness and consciousness, internalization of national values and coexistence as a nation. Additionally, the research tried to create spirit of empathy and kindness for the elders and the needy among the populace.

The research questions guiding this study are:

- How can music contribute to national development and social integration in Nigeria?
- Which agencies can partner with music to achieve social integration in Nigeria?
- How can these partnerships be engaged for national development and social integration in a changing world?
- What role can music play in promoting national unity and social cohesion in a culturally diverse society like Nigeria?

These research questions guided the study's investigation into the potential of music and orientation to promote national development and social integration in Nigeria. This study provided insights into the development of effective strategies for promoting national development and social integration in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Quite relevant to this study are four major terms which are essential for proper understanding of the various segments of this paper. "Orientation" refers to the process of directing or guiding individuals or groups towards a specific goal or objective within an organization or society. In the context of music and national development, orientation involves instilling a sense of national identity and unity among citizens. In similar vein, "social integration" refers to the process of creating a unified and liberal society where individuals from diverse backgrounds can interact, share values, and work together to achieve a common goal. In the context of Nigeria, social integration involves bridging the gap in cultural, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic dynamics to promote national unity and development.

Simply put, "national development" involves the process of improving the economic, social, cultural, educational and political well-being of a nation. In the context of Nigeria, national development is engrossed with addressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, and social fragmentation in the process of promoting sustainable development and national unity. The potential transformation power of orientation, through music, can contribute to national development by promoting cultural awareness, good citizenship, and social uniformity. Simply, "panacea" refers to a cure, remedy or

therapeutic solution to problem in a particular situation. In the context of music and national development, music, when objectively and purposively performed, has an estimable power to deliver an orientation that acts on the heart and mind of the practitioners and listeners. Additionally, it ignites the passion needed in promoting national unity and social integration in the country. Consequently, music has the ability to transcend cultural and socio-economic divides, promoting cross-cultural understanding and fostering a sense of national identity, and unity.

Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study involved empirical study, library sources, and interviews with music professionals and scholars. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the role of music and orientation in promoting national development and social integration. The use of interviews provided insight into the perceptions and experiences of music scholars.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of structural functionalism by Emile Durkheim and Herbert Spencer (cited by Ologundudu, 2020) which views and interrogates society as a complex system, with its component parts having the capacity to create social unity, promote solidarity and stability, becomes relevant to interrogate this paper. Ologundudu (2020: 92) observes that *structural* looks at how the society is structured, while *functionalism* addresses and cross-examines “the society as a whole entity in terms of the functions of its constituent elements, norms, customs, traditions and institutions”. Thus, the structural functionalism approaches societal issues via ontological and epistemological perspectives, identifying what is in the society and how it functions. In a country like Nigeria, it is imperative to adopt the structural functionalism theory which is capable of reflecting the cultural norms of the environment and its social structures. These, in turn, become facets to be celebrated and shared.

Further theoretical framework used in this study draws on African communal life, cultural identity and social cohesion by J.H. Kwabena Nketia (1979). These theories provide useful lenses through which to analyze the role of music and orientation in promoting national development and social integration. Cultural identity theory emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness and national pride in shaping individual and collective identities, negotiating their sense of self in relation to different cultural groups. This theory positions cultural identity as dynamic and social construct that are continuously molded and modified by interactions and relationships. It is observed that musical groups reflecting

ethnic inclinations have their own distinctive musical forms which they perform in connection with their ceremonies and other activities (Joseph, 2020). According to Nketia (1979):

The musical life of an African community is generally not left exclusively to spontaneous groups or limited to their activities. There are also organized groups, in which roles and responsibilities are distributed among members in some kind of associative relationship. Such performing groups are more or less permanent units within the social organization. (p. 41).

Discussing Music and Orientation and their Application in Nigerian Scene

- *How can music contribute to national development and social integration in Nigeria?*

Specifically, music contributes to the continuity, development, identity and stability of culture. According to Merriam in Enoh (2006: 66): “If music allows emotional expression, gives aesthetic pleasure, entertains, communicates, elicits physical response, enforces conformity to social norms, and validates social institutions and religious rituals, it is clear that it contributes to the conformity and stability of culture”. Consequently, music has the inherent panacea for national development and social integration in Nigeria. In another dimension, music industry generates revenue and employment to the nation and its people through internal and external performances, sales and royalties.

Furthermore, music plays a significant role in promoting cultural awareness and national pride as children are seen and heard singing the values highlighted in the NOA orientation songs that create consciousness, awareness and internalization of values of co-existence as a nation, thereby fostering a sense of shared identity and belonging among citizens.

Social cohesion theory emphasizes the importance of positive social relationships, a sense of belonging, and an orientation towards the common good of the people, promoting national unity and development. Thus:

In traditional African societies, music making is generally organized as a social event. Public performances, therefore, take place on social occasions- that is, on occasions when members of a group or a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, ceremony, festival, or any kind of collective activity, such as building bridges, clearing paths, going on a search party, or putting out fires-activities that, in industrialized societies, might be assigned to specialized agencies (Nketia, 1979: 21).

Music contributes to social cohesion by promoting cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and cooperation among citizens. The theoretical framework provides a useful basis and context for analyzing the role of music education and orientation in promoting national development and social integration. Drawing on cultural identity and social cohesion theories, the study provided insights into the ways in which music promotes national unity and development. For instance, the highlife music of Eddie Okwedi, “Happy Survival” (released shortly after the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1970), “not only provided comfort, relaxation and entertainment on the dance floor, it also created a reflection on the human losses, carnage, and a psychological atmosphere which has continued to discourage any punter from engaging in any future internal war in Nigeria” (Nwankpa, 2016: 54).

- *What role can music play in promoting national unity and social cohesion in a culturally diverse society like Nigeria?*

With proper orientation, music has the substance to strengthen and foster elements of unity in cultural diversity through shared common values via articulating our languages in music. For instance, *Pulo Dokiari*, an indigenous art choral music composition with local instrumental accompaniment, composed by Onyee N. Nwankpa in 2013, is “a reflection on the sentiments arising from the exploration and discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region” (Nwankpa, 2022: 14). The melo-rhythmic sound structures, configurations and the language of *Pulo Dokiari* are constructed with musical principles and other creative considerations true to the Niger Delta traditional idioms. Thus, through musical orientation (direction, initiation, adjustment, learning, emphasis, and location), various agencies can be engaged for social integration in a changing world.

- *Which agencies can be used to partner with music to achieve social integration in Nigeria?*

The agencies within the Ministry of Information and National Orientation can partner with music institutions, music professional associations and scholars to create music for national awareness, policy dissemination, social integration, national development, patriotism and unity. Ministry of Education is also critical to national orientation as it is expected to educate students on this purpose. Thus, these music partnering agencies include the National Orientation Agency (NOA), National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), formerly Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), and Voice of Nigeria (VON).

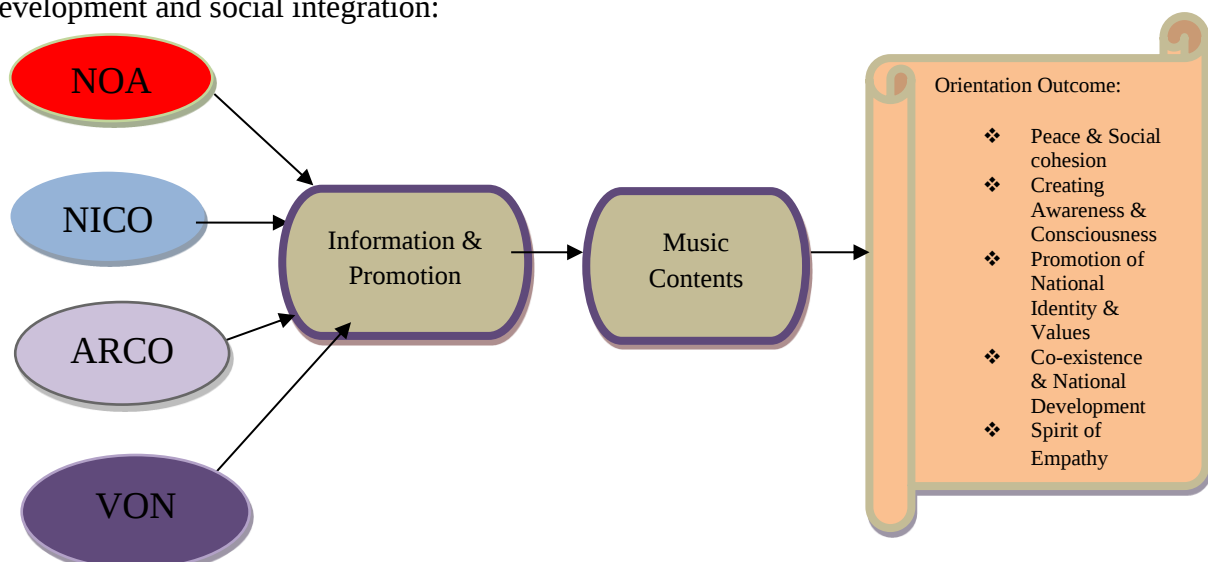
- ❖ NOA is dedicated to fostering national unity and development by enlightening and engaging citizens with accurate and timely information, using music as a strategic tool for public

education and advocacy. Furthermore, it provides content and accuracy of information through various media, creating and disseminating content, inspiring and engaging individuals especially the youth into active participation in Nigeria programmes and policies.

- ❖ NICO is committed to preserving the cultural values of the people by influencing their behavior, shaping their character, and defining the identity of a nation. Through music and orientation, NICO will serve as an agency for identification of various communities and their cultural idioms towards the understanding of their everyday life for shaping and fostering national unity and social integration.
- ❖ ARCON is an agency that focuses on promoting responsible and ethical advertising practices. It functions as the conscience of the society and is expected to check, censor, and monitor all forms of materials put in the public space concerning the nation programmes and policy, thereby ensuring transparency and decency of contents that will ensure national development through music. Accordingly, music becomes the oil with which *palmfruit* is eaten.
- ❖ VON represents the Voice of Nigerian, that is, Nigerian's viewpoint in external broadcasting. VON, in collaboration with Music institutions, can project respectable images, identities, values, characters, and cultural idioms of the nation for socio-political, economic, and cultural development.

Collaboration of Music and Orientation with Agencies in a Changing World

Through the diagram below, the authors expose the strategies for musical achievement for national development and social integration:



Music, as an epitome of applied studies and performance, play a significant role in promoting social integration by nurturing a sense of shared identity and belonging among citizens for national

development. This can be achieved through music that promotes roles of how to be a good citizen of the country, music performances that ignite cultural awareness, national pride, and social unity (as in the *Nigeria National Anthem*). Thus, applying proper orientation with music can effectively help individuals understand their roles in contributing to national development and social integration.

- *How can these partnerships be engaged for national development and social integration in a changing world?*

Effective collaboration with public orientation agencies such as NOA, ARCON, NICO, and VON will create the musical nexus for national development and social integration in Nigeria. Proper collaboration and partnership with Music institutions and professional organizations such as the Association of the Nigerian Musicologists (ANIM) and the Society of Music Educators of Nigeria (SOMEN), with their component units, will foster a great connection via musical creativity that strengthens honest and conscientious citizens, cultural awareness, spirit of empathy, national unity, pride and development, as well as advocates freedom, equity, and need for a democratic society. Consequently, the role of music and ways in which music is used in its activities can be properly and strategically harnessed and objectified to project and promote national identity, values, character, cultural idioms of diverse areas of Nigeria. In addition, the music institutions can develop activities and programmes that engage the various cultural structures in performances and other areas of creativity with a focus to achieve integration, unity, respect to diverse cultural values, promotion of national values and ideals of co-existence. Therefore, it is imperative that proper music advocating virtues and societal ideals should be used for orientation and public awareness. For instance, the music, *Which Way Nigeria?* by Sunny Okosun not only provided and still provides a feeling of patriotism, empathy and nostalgia for Nigeria, but also ignites the conscience and consciousness for our dear country's future. Another example of music which provokes national peace and unity is *Nye Anyi Udo Gi* (Grant us Thy Peace), composed by Onyee Nwankpa in 1987 and was recorded by the Anambra Broadcasting Service Television (ABS TV) Enugu, 1989.

Another level of orientation that lifted the spirit of the citizens of Nigeria, using music, was in the Federal Government's programme in the 1980s named MAMSER: Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Economic Recovery and Self-reliance. Again, composed in 1988 by Onyee Nwankpa, the text of MAMSER is as follows:

The Federal Government's objectives in MAMSER are:

Provision of Social Justice and Welfare for the people;

Eradication of alienation and marginalization of the Masses from decision making process;

Maximization of production and the assurance of equitable distribution of economy;

Establishment and an operation of truly democratic political system, and

Promotion of National unity by removing areas of tension.

Mass Mobilization for Social Justice, Economic Recovery and Self-reliance.

Using Music as Effective strategies for promoting national development and social integration in Nigeria

The following are strategies for promoting national development and social integration:

- In an interview in January 2026, Professor Anthony Mereni argued that playing and listening to appropriate music via the radio or MP3 can calm the drivers and diffuse tensions among the road users. Thus, radio stations need to work with music institutions, music professional associations and scholars in terms of creating the appropriate music to achieve this objective.
- Creating music to encourage compliance to traffic rules and regulations is an innovation that will improve national orientation and enhance both community life and structural functionality.
- Creating music for unity and solidarity such as the National Anthem that evokes emotion for nationhood and nationalism, just as institutional and organizational anthems capture their philosophy, vision, mission, aim, and nostalgic feelings.
- Performances of ideal music repertoire, an answer to challenges affecting social integration in Nigeria.
- Creation and implementation of music policy advocating social harmony and tolerance.
- Creating programmes that promote strength in diversity; downplaying the divisive issues, as reflected in Laz Ekwueme's (2025) *Christmas Carols from Nigeria*, in different languages, including Edo, Urhobo (Okpe), Kalabari, Igbo, Efik/Ibibio, Hausa, and Yoruba.
- Engaging national agencies in publicity, creating awareness and greater orientation with catchy music tunes on national values and ethical conduct.

- Partnering with ANIM, SOMEN, and their institutional components in providing solid and educative orientation, using the medium of music.

Conclusion

No doubt, music used in the process of creating and internalizing orientation has potentials to promote national development and social integration in Nigeria. Thus, the analysis of the samples highlights the importance of music education in shaping national identity, patriotism, mobilization and unity.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, some recommendations are presented:

- Music should be integrated into national development plans and in partnership with various orientation agencies to promote cultural awareness, national pride, and social cohesion.
- Music institutions, in collaboration with the aforementioned agencies, will promote music that celebrate Nigerian diversity and unity to foster a sense of shared identity and belonging among citizens.
- Community-based music initiatives should be encouraged to promote social cohesion and national unity at the grass roots level.

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DESIGN AND AESTHETICS IN CARNIVAL ARTS: A STUDY OF FUOYE THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS 2025 CARNIVAL OF PLAYS.

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Abstract

Design and aesthetics are essential artistic elements of carnival arts globally. This study critically explores the roles that design and aesthetics play in the execution of the FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts 2025 carnival of plays, examining carnival arts beyond the planning and performance stages. It highlights the importance of design and aesthetics embedded in costumes, makeup, and float designs. Using a qualitative participatory observation method, the study employs an autoethnographic qualitative research approach and Mikhail Bakhtin's carnival theory as the theoretical framework. The study reveals that design and aesthetics in carnival arts not only showcase artistic beauty but also enhance carnival spectacles, audience engagement, and in-depth meaning creation. This research emphasizes the importance of aesthetically considered design as a crucial element in carnival arts, whereby meaning is conveyed beyond performance and stimulates audience engagement and appreciation. The findings contribute to an in-depth understanding of how design and aesthetics operate in carnival arts and how they can enrich cultural experiences.

Keywords: Design, Aesthetics, Carnival Arts, FUOYE, Carnival of Plays

Introduction

Design and aesthetics are crucial elements of carnival arts, which define the visual and emotional attractiveness of a performance to an audience. The FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts 2025 carnival of plays, a vibrant, participatory, and inclusive exhibition of art and culture across the FUOYE campus, offers a rich environment to explore the role of design and aesthetics. This study underscores the important roles that an aesthetically considered design (costume, make-up, and floats) plays in carnival performances, focusing on the FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts 2025 carnival of plays. Furthermore, the study highlights design and aesthetics as key elements in conveying the underlying meanings embedded in carnival performances while also fostering audience engagement and appreciation. By examining the relationship between design (costume, make-up, and floats), aesthetics, and performance, this study is aimed at contributing to a rich understanding of the significance of carnival arts.

Methodology

This study employs an autoethnographic qualitative research approach, combining autobiography and ethnography, involving the researcher's active participation in the costume, make-up, floats design, and carnival procession in the FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts Carnival of Plays 2025 while reflecting on their personal experiences to explore broader social and cultural phenomena, such as cultural identity and community engagement. Primary data are derived from firsthand involvement in carnival preparation and the procession, which includes documented media (photographs, videos, and a documented departmental catalogue), while secondary data include relevant books, journal articles, and online resources that support the study's objectives.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of carnival, integrating an autoethnographic qualitative research approach for data analysis. Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of carnival, as elucidated in *Rabelais and His World* (1965) and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929, reworked 1963), is a robust theoretical model for the study of FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts Carnival of Plays 2025 with an autoethnographic qualitative research approach. This response underscores the major concepts of Bakhtin's theory, how they have been applied in the case of the FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts Carnival of April 3, 2025, at Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Oye-Ekiti campus, the inclusion of autoethnography in researching the carnival, and a conclusion on how relevant the theory is, with reference to the analysis.

The theory model conceptualizes carnival art as a temporary space for the suspension of societal norms and hierarchies, fostering subversive, communal, and playful engagement. Importantly, the carnivalesque in the model is characterized by the suspension of hierarchies, where social distinctions like class or status are dissolved, and equality among participants. Laughter, described as universal and ambivalent, while masks and costumes allow participants to adopt alternative identities, symbolizing transformation during festive events.

Application of Mikhail Bakhtin's Theory of Carnival to FUOYE TMA Carnival of Plays 2025

The FUOYE TMA carnival of Plays 2025, a vibrant, Participatory, and street audience engagement parade promoting a two-week festival of theatrical performances, harnessed Bakhtin's carnivalesque principles. The carnival fosters engagement by uniting students, lecturers, and the University management leaders in a shared celebration, with students leading performances and creative designs, temporarily equalizing roles. Laughter and humor were evident in the festive atmosphere, with dances

and skits evoking smiles and cheers from the onlookers, aligning with Bakhtin's liberating laughter. Costumes, make-up, and float designs aided meaning, color, while representing cultural figures (e.g., Igbo motifs in Ebubedike play icon) during the carnival procession.

The carnival's multicultural aesthetics, incorporating Yoruba, Igbo, and other Nigerian traditions, embodied polyphony, allowing diverse cultural voices to coexist as seen in (Bakhtin, 1984b). As a chronotope, the carnival transformed the Oye-Ekiti campus into a festive space on April 3, 2025, suspending academic routines within the Department of Theatre and Media Arts for creative expression. These elements recognize the role of carnival as a subversive yet regenerative cultural event.

In conclusion, Bakhtin's carnival theory serves as a powerful framework for an autoethnographic study of the FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts Carnival of Plays 2025, highlighting its role as a catalyst for subversion, cultural expression, and communal renewal. The application of Bakhtin's framework unfolds how FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts 2025 carnival of plays fosters cultural identity, students' creative talent, and community engagement. Importantly, the participation of the students, lecturers, and researchers in design (costumes, make-up, and floats) or performance provides a lens to examine the cultural and aesthetic dynamics of the carnival and the representation of Nigerian traditions, aligning with Bakhtin's concepts. This approach not only enriches understanding of the FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts Carnival but also demonstrates the relevance of Bakhtin's theory to contemporary African cultural events.

FUOYE TMA Carnival: An Overview

The Federal University Oye-Ekiti, established in 2011, has a Department of Theatre and Media Arts within its Faculty of Arts, with a focus on fostering adequate learning and training for students in the rudiments and practice of choreography, performance aesthetics, and other aspects of Theatre Arts.

FUOYE TMA carnival of plays emerged in 2024 as a key initiative of the then Head of Department, Dr. Tosin Kooshima Tume (A senior Lecturer and an award-winning playwright) as a vehicle to promote practical theatre education, combining public performances and academic projects.

FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts carnival of plays started in the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Faculty of Arts, on 15 May 2024 at FUOYE's Oye main campus. The carnival is a vibrant, participatory, and inclusive exhibition of theatrical performance, students' creativity, and cultural dynamism, with the engagement of lecturers in the department and the entire University community.

The carnival reflects FUOYE's commitment to advancing Arts and culture, aligning with the University's broader mission of innovation and transformation.

FUOYE TMA carnival of plays started as a prelude to showcase the performance of 10 selected dramatic texts by the final-year students as their respective project performance plays, alongside practical production workshops for the lower-level students under the supervision of lecturers in 2024. The carnival, which started in 2024, has now emerged as an annual event in the department and the entire University community to celebrate students' academic, creative, and cultural prowess.

FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts Carnival of Plays 2025: An Overview

FUOYE TMA carnival of plays, organized by the Department of Theatre and Media Arts (TMA) at Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE), as an annual continuation of the tremendous success of the 2024 carnival, an initiative of the then Head of Department Dr Tosin Kooshima Tume, is a vibrant exhibition of artistry and cultural dynamics in Arts held on 3 April, 2025 at the FUOYE campus. This annual carnival is a highlight of the department activities, showcasing the creative talent of students (lower-level, final year, and Postgraduate) in costume, make-up, and float design in theatrical performances while engaging the university community in a celebration of the Arts.

The 2025 FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts carnival was directed by Dr Tosin Kooshima Tume (Head of Department) and coordinated by Emmanuel Godwin Kalu (2024 Postgraduate Class Representative), and other lecturers in the department. The event served as a prelude to announcing the series of theatrical performances by the final-year and the lower-level students scheduled for April 7 to April 17, 2025, featuring two performances daily at 12:00PM and 2:00 PM respectively in FUOYE Arts Theatre. The carnival aimed to promote the upcoming plays, ticket sales, and foster community engagement with support from brands and students through the festival parade.

The 2025 carnival features students and lecturers dressed in colorful costumes representing theatrical icons, abstractly designed costumes from nature, recycled materials, and well-constructed group floats for the carnival parade. The event includes dance performances, distribution of flyers advertising the upcoming festival of plays, and ticket sales to prospective audiences.

The 2025 carnival of plays achieved a tremendously rich cultural identity, drawing cheers and participation from the University community. Finally, the carnival underscores Nigeria's rich cultural heritage with performances, costumes, props, and floats while reflecting diverse ethnic groups. Importantly, the carnival aligns with the Department of Theatre and Media Arts (FUOYE) goals of fostering cultural awareness and artistic expression as seen in previous departmental events like the

2023 induction ceremony, which soared beyond a Yoruba traditional point of view to embrace Nigeria's multiculturalism.

Design and Aesthetic in FUOYE TMA Carnival of Plays 2025

The FUOYE TMA Carnival of Plays 2025 directed by Dr. Tosin Kooshima Tume and coordinated by Emmanuel Godwin Kalu (2024 Postgraduate Class Representative), and other lecturers in the department, held on April 3, 2025, at Federal University Oye-Ekiti's main campus, was a vibrant, participatory showcase of theatrical artistry, with design elements such as costume, make-up, and floats playing a vital role in its aesthetic appeal. Organized by the Department of Theatre and Media Arts (TMA), the carnival served as a promotional street procession for a two weeks festival of plays scheduled (April 7–17, 2025) and was marked by colorful displays, cultural expressions, and creative designs that engaged the university community.

John Iwuh, in his assertion, posits:

Carnivals are essentially processional in nature through a conglomeration of activities, involving various forms of display and theatrical expressions. A carnival is an embodiment of color, versatility, and spontaneity of exuberant images in action (108).

Design in a carnival is not merely decorative; it's an integrated art process that conveys meaning, tells stories, and preserves cultural heritage. The process primarily functions at the level of costumes, make-up, and floats, and uses visual elements as a means of communicating a chosen theme to the audience. Importantly, design and aesthetics are one of the most valuable elements of theatrical and artistic appealing form display that must be properly considered for any carnival preparation, as both elements emphasize meaning, cultural norms beyond the selected theme of the carnival.

Costume Design

Costumes as an element of FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts 2025 carnival of plays are characterized as “colorful” and designed to represent theatrical icons, cultural figures, or characters from the upcoming plays of each group. Students and lecturers donned outfits that reflected Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, likely incorporating traditional elements from Yoruba, Igbo, and other ethnic traditions, while some of the Abstract costumes were made from recycled objects and things from nature, given the department's emphasis on multicultural and innovative representation. Bakare asserts

that in any carnival, fabrics, colors, and accessories make bold statements and interpret the theme. Therefore, costume design is crucial, as it brings meaning and vitality to the celebration (130).

The 2025 carnival costumes also served the purpose of promoting the festival of plays that was to be held in the University. The colors served the purpose of attracting attention, and they also beautified the carnival festive life. The carnival design will combine the use of local textile materials (eg, Ankara, Adire) with dramatic elements (e.g., oversized forms, vibrant colors) and the use of recyclable materials. The students under the supervision of Mr. Emmanuel Godwin Kalu (2024 Postgraduate Class Representative) handled the entire process to further enhance the practice of inclusiveness in the TMA department curriculum in costume making. The costumes were colorful and provided a spectacle, which the crowd cheered for. They also served as proof that the department is able to combine traditional, eco-friendly objects with modern theatrical technology.

Make-Up Design

Carnival makeup is more than just a cosmetic adornment; it's a vibrant expression of cultural identity and tradition. Through bold colors, intricate designs, and the incorporation of gems and glitter, participants celebrate their creativity and honor centuries of history and resilience (www.cultursmag.com).

FUOYE Theatre and Media Arts 2025 carnival of plays transcends beyond aesthetic appeal, serving as a celebration of cultures, themes, and traditions. Carnival makeup serves as a significant symbol of cultural pride and identity. The carnival make-up complemented the costumes, enhancing character portrayal, cultural identity, and adding to the festive theatricality and aesthetic appeals. They were a series of cultural and fantasy make-up on the faces of students and lecturers of the department to further enhance the ambiance of the carnival. The Make-up designs include vibrant colors, tribal patterns, fantasy face painting, or stylized designs to align with the cultural themes of the carnival.

Aesthetically, the 2025 carnival of plays' make-up designs enhanced the visual storytelling, making characters more recognizable and adding depth to the carnival's cultural and theatrical narrative. It contributed to the overall vibrancy, ensuring performers stood out in the open-air setting.

Floats Design and Construction

Floats are decorative platforms built in a vehicle, like a truck or towed, serving as three-dimensional wheel figures designed to aesthetically complement the carnival procession, showcasing thematic designs related to the plays or Nigerian culture. The 2025 carnival of plays floats were designed by Theatre and Media Arts students with the exclusive supervision of Mr. Emmanuel Godwin Kalu (2024

Postgraduate Class Representative), incorporating vibrant colors, cultural symbols, and theatrical elements. For example, a float for OYA (goddess of the whirlwind) featured designs of a Yoruba goddess environment or Yoruba cultural motifs. The Floats served as moving stages, amplifying the carnival's visibility and creating a focal point for the procession. It aided grandeur, making the festive atmosphere more memorable and engaging for the FUOYE community.

Findings of the Study

The study, "DESIGN AND AESTHETIC IN CARNIVAL ARTS: A STUDY OF FUOYE THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS 2025," critically explores the role of design and aesthetics in the 2025 Carnival of Plays. According to the study, design and aesthetics not only depict artistic beauty but also support carnival spectacles, audience participation, and meaning while executing the arts. It underscores the importance of aesthetically considered design as a critical element in carnival arts, which can convey meaning beyond the performance itself and create audience appreciation. Findings provide greater understanding of how such factors work in carnival arts and can enrich cultural experiences and appreciation.

Gap Covered

The study bridges the gap by examining carnival arts not only outside the planning and performance stages but also with a focus on design and aesthetic value in costumes, make-up, and float designs. It also demonstrates the relevance of Mikhail Bakhtin's carnival theory to contemporary African cultural festivals. The study enhances the comprehension of carnival arts through an examination of the relationship between design (costumes, make-up, and floats), aesthetics, and performance in FUOYE THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS 2025 CARNIVAL OF PLAYS.

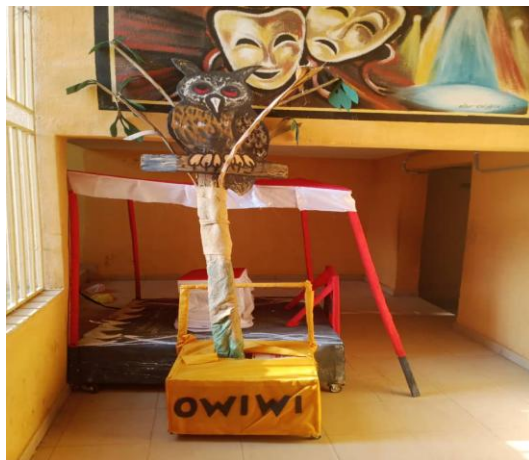
Conclusion and Recommendation

The focal point of this paper has been the attempt to present design and aesthetics as a crucial element in interpreting the theme of a carnival, as exemplified in FUOYE TMA 2025 carnival of plays. By leveraging the aesthetically designed carnival costumes, floats, and individual face painting, the theme of the carnival was effectively conveyed while representing and serving as an advert for the 10 different plays that will be produced in the festival of plays. This paper recommends that, as a carnival designer, your costumes, floats, and face painting must be relevant and unique. He/she must familiarize him/herself with the carnival's theme, objectives, and message to create designs that align with the overall carnival concept. Importantly, he/she must understand the need to gather references

from various sources, including cultural heritage, mythology, and contemporary art, to inspire innovative designs.

The researcher hereby concludes that design and aesthetics in carnival art not only showcase artistic beauty but also enhance carnival spectacles, audience engagement, and in-depth meaning creation. Therefore, design and aesthetics must be effectively considered to enhance the visual appeal of a carnival art while maintaining the overall concept of the carnival. The above findings and recommendations will help carnival designers create effective, visually stunning, meaningful costumes, floats, and face painting that will pass and resonate with the carnival theme message to the spectators before drama, dance, or music is displayed, and enhance the overall carnival or event experience.

Floats Design for FUOYE TMA Carnival 2025





Abstract Costume Design for FUOYE TMA Carnival 2025







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DIGITAL-TECHNOLOGICAL AMBIENCE AND THE RE-IMAGINATION OF OKUN-YORUBA LITERARY CULTURE AND CREATIVE ARTS INNOVATION

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Abstract

The rise of a digital-technological ambience, characterised by the pervasive influence of social media platforms, AI-powered tools, algorithmic visibility systems, and mobile content circulation has significantly reshaped the preservation, authorship, and innovation of Okun-Yoruba literary culture and creative arts. Rooted in rich oral traditions such as *oríkì*, *àlò*, ritual chants, and masquerade performance aesthetics, Okun-Yoruba creativity has historically depended on communal memory, sacred custodianship, and intergenerational transmission. Yet, as these traditions transition into digital environments, a critical paradox emerges; while technology facilitates archiving, enhances global accessibility, and encourages experimental aesthetic fusion, it simultaneously engenders risks of cultural commodification, epistemic dilution, and the marginalisation of traditional custodians. Guided by Technological Determinism and Media Ecology Theories, this research approaches digital technology not as a neutral tool but as an active cultural force that reorganises modes of perception, authorship and cultural authority. The study adopts a qualitative analytical methodology, drawing on media ethnography and critical discourse analysis of Okun-Yoruba cultural expressions across platforms such as TikTok, YouTube and AI-based storytelling systems. Findings indicate that digital technology operates as both a site of cultural empowerment and a terrain of vulnerability, simultaneously amplifying indigenous creativity and exposing it to algorithmic exploitation. The study ultimately advocates for a strategic, culturally grounded digital framework that safeguards authenticity while fostering future-oriented artistic innovation within Okun-Yoruba digital cultural ecosystems.

Keywords: Digital-technology, ambience, reimagination, okun-Yoruba, literary culture, creative arts, innovation, *oríkì*, *àlò*.

Introduction

The term Okun-Yoruba refers to a culturally and linguistically distinct sub-group within the broader Yoruba ethnolinguistic continuum, predominantly located in present-day Kogi and Kwara State within Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone. Rather than denoting a homogeneous identity, Okun-Yoruba encapsulates a cluster of communities such as *Bunu*, *Yagba*, *Owe*, *Oworo*, and *Ijumu*, whose shared heritage is expressed through closely related dialects, oral traditions, ritual systems, and performance aesthetics. Conceptually, it is best understood not simply as a regional variant of Yoruba culture, but as a micro-cultural formation that negotiates identity through localised histories, ecological settings, and intercultural contact zones. This framing foregrounds Okun-Yoruba as a dynamic cultural field with its own epistemologies, expressive forms, and systems of knowledge transmission, while still remaining integrally connected to the wider Yoruba cultural matrix.

Okun-Yoruba people are custodians of a deeply layered indigenous literary tradition expressed through oral-poetic genres such as panegyric *oríkì*, narrative folktales (*àlò*), ritual-performative chants, masquerade dramaturgies and highly codified communal aesthetics (Aremu, 2018, Oriola & Ayinmode, 2024). These expressive forms operate not merely as artistic entertainment but serve epistemic, spiritual and pedagogical functions, anchoring collective memory, moral regulation, sacred knowledge transmission and identity legitimation (Barber, 1991; Olupona, 2014). In Okun-Yoruba ontology, literature is lived, embodied, relational and ritually empowered, sustained through custodianship rather than authorship.

However, this cultural ecology is experiencing profound transformation in response to the rise of digital-technological ambience, a condition characterised by the algorithmic logic, real-time circulation and platformed visibility regimes of TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Reels and AI-assisted narrative generation systems (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Rather than being mere tools, digital media infrastructures now actively govern how cultural expressions are authored, archived, circulated, discovered and valued, reorganising the temporality, authority and memory-storage logic of indigenous creativity (McLuhan, 1964; Postman, 1985).

This emergent condition is deeply paradoxical. On one hand, digital platforms enable unprecedented opportunities for heritage preservation, diasporic reconnection, creative remixing and global audience reach (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013; Omoniyi, 2020). Okun-Yoruba chant traditions once restricted to sacred groves now appear in algorithmically viral formats, reaching youth publics previously detached from traditional festival circuits. Conversely, the same infrastructures produce

new vulnerabilities, that is, cultural commodification, sacral dilution, platform-dependence, context collapse, algorithmic invisibility and the dangerous outsourcing of epistemic authority to AI language models trained on Western-centric semiotic logic (Mbembe, 2015; Noble, 2018; Tella, 2022). The most critical danger lies not in loss of content but in the rewiring of the fundamental cognitive, ritual logics that inform active process of creating and sustaining vibrant, indigenous-centered futures.

The emerging research challenge, therefore, is not whether Okun-Yoruba culture will survive digital modernity but, on whose terms, within whose ontology and through what custodial ethics such survival will be negotiated. Although emerging scholarship has examined broader Yoruba engagements with digital media, focused inquiry into the specific negotiation of Okun-Yoruba literary culture within rapidly evolving technological ecologies remains strikingly underexplored. This scholarly gap forms the foundation of the present study, which responds to the urgent need for critical intervention at the intersection of heritage, technology and cultural reinvention.

In light of this reality, the study sets out to: (1) examine how digital-technological ambience influences the preservation and transformation of Okun-Yoruba literary culture; (2) analyse the role of social media in shaping contemporary Okun-Yoruba literary creativity and artistic expression; (3) investigate technological innovation as a catalyst for new aesthetic and narrative possibilities; and (4) interrogate authenticity, identity and cultural ownership within digitally mediated Okun-Yoruba creative practices. This investigation is theoretically grounded in a blended framework of Technological Determinism and Media Ecology Theories.

Drawing from McLuhan's proposition that "the medium is the message," the study treats technology as an active cultural force that reshapes meaning and perception. Technological determinism operates along a spectrum, ranging from hard determinism, which sees technology as an autonomous force dictating social outcomes, to soft determinism, which recognises human agency while still foregrounding the influential role of technological structures. Applied to Okun-Yoruba literary and artistic practices, the theory helps to illuminate how digital-technological infrastructures such as social media platforms and AI-driven tools are channels for cultural expression and transformative forces that reconfigure traditional systems of knowledge transmission, authority, and creativity.

Complementarily, Media Ecology Theory conceptualises digital environments as living ecosystems that reorganise how humans think, communicate and produce culture. It examines how communication technologies shape human perception, interaction, and cultural environments. The

theory emphasises that shifts in media forms from oral to digital transform patterns of knowledge production and cultural transmission. Together, these theories allow a critically balanced analysis of technology as both a site of preservation and a force of radical transformation within Okun-Yoruba literary and creative lifeworlds. These theories elucidate how digital platforms reconfigure Okun-Yoruba cultural expressions, influencing creativity, audience engagement, and cultural authority; and the extent to which the evolution of Okun-Yoruba cultural expressions in digital spaces is shaped by the affordances and constraints of the technologies themselves.

Digital Preservation of Okun-Yoruba Oral Traditions and Literary Heritage

The digital preservation of indigenous knowledge systems has increasingly become a critical cultural strategy for safeguarding vulnerable oral traditions in the face of disrupted intergenerational transmission (Adegbite, 2018; Barber, 2020). For the Okun-Yoruba, whose literary expressions are deeply rooted in performative orality through *oríkì* recitations, ritual chants, folktales and masquerade narratives, digital technologies now offer novel opportunities to extend cultural memory beyond the fragility of human recall and communal proximity.

For instance, *Ọwẹ* or *Ọghẹ* (Pre-processional songs) are preliminary ritual chants or melodies performed or rendered by young boys, girls, and masquerade custodians across some Okun-Yoruba communities during *Ẹpa* masquerade festival. Example of such ritual chant goes thus:

<i>Ẹmẹ ri wowo isin,</i>	No one notices when the Ackee apple tree drops its leaves,
<i>Isin gha gbọn,</i>	but even as they fall,
<i>Isin a ru wẹ</i>	new ones begin to grow
<i>Ẹmẹ ri wowo isin,</i>	No one notices when the Ackee apple tree drops its leaves,
<i>Isin gha gbọn,</i>	but even as they fall,
<i>Isin a ru wẹ</i>	new ones begin to grow

The Lyric: *"No one notices when the Ackee apple tree drops its leaves, but even as they fall, new ones begin to grow."*

This proverb-like lyric carries deep philosophical and cultural weight, where natural imagery is used to reflect human experiences. It speaks to the resilience of the human spirit. The shedding of leaves symbolises hardship, loss, or difficult transitions in life, most often, when one appears to be

diminished or going through struggle. However, the quiet regrowth of new leaves represents renewal, recovery, and unseen progress. It indirectly conveys that even in moments of decline or hardship, there is a hidden process of transformation and rejuvenation taking place. It reflects the belief that shame is not permanent; like the Ackee tree (*Blighia sapida*), people can silently prepare for a comeback while others are unaware of the transformation underway.

By implication, this lyric is a powerful metaphor for invisible resilience and quiet transformation. It encourages individuals not to despair in times of hardship, because just like the Ackee tree (*Blighia sapida*), they are silently preparing to flourish again. It reassures that no matter the trouble, shame will not define one's end, but renewal is always on the horizon. Through platforms such as YouTube, digital archives and AI-assisted transcription tools, Okun-Yoruba oral traditions and narratives are being recorded, indexed and circulated with unprecedented efficiency (Ayinmode, 2026). These platforms enable cultural content to transcend geographical boundaries, ensuring access not only to global audiences but also to diasporic communities yearning for cultural reconnection. In this sense, digitisation acts as a counterforce against cultural disappearance (Olatunji, 2019).

Digital preservation therefore, is not a neutral or purely archival process. It is a transformative act that inevitably relocates indigenous knowledge into new interpretive frameworks (McLuhan, 1964; Sobur, 2016). Once removed from communal performance and embodied ritual contexts, Okun-Yoruba literary forms are re-encoded within media systems governed by algorithms, search metrics and monetisation logics that often privilege visibility over cultural sanctity. This shift raises profound questions concerning authorship, custodianship and indigenous agency. While digital technologies appear to extend the lifespan of oral heritage, they also risk flattening dynamic, living traditions into static, consumable data artifacts designed for fragmented digital attention economies (Ibrahim, 2022). What is preserved, therefore, is not always equivalent to what was lived or intended.

The central tension, then, lies between cultural survival and cultural mutation. That is, if cultural survival protects depth and sacred meaning but risks becoming museum-like or inaccessible to younger generations or cultural mutation ensures relevance and global visibility but risks loss of depth, ritual context and ownership. Digital preservation therefore, enables visibility, remembrance and transgenerational survival. Though, simultaneously opens the door to appropriation, reinterpretation and epistemic dilution. It is within this paradoxical space that the Okun-Yoruba encounter digital modernity, negotiating the delicate balance between innovation, continuity and ontological sovereignty.

Social Media Platforms in the Revival and Global Circulation of Okun-Yoruba Indigenous Literary and Performative Arts

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter) have evolved into influential cultural spaces where Okun-Yoruba youths negotiate emerging forms of literary authorship and identity performance (Adeniyi, 2021). These platforms function not merely as channels of communication but as dynamic cultural stages where creativity is enacted, contested and reimaged in real time. For a tradition historically rooted in oral performance, storytelling and communal witnessing, the digital shift represents a radical reterritorialisation of literary space.

Through these platforms, young Okun content creators produce micro-poetry, digital oral narratives, satirical skits and reworked *oríkì* performances that creatively merge indigenous aesthetics with globalised digital cultures (Adekeye, 2022). The fluidity of these media environments allows for experimentation with language hybridity, blending Okun dialect with English, Yoruba and even visual sound symbolism; thus, birthing new forms of cultural expression that transcend conventional genre boundaries. Literary and performative creativity, once tied to ritualised community contexts, now operates within translocal digital networks. Social media also enables the decentralisation of cultural authorship. Traditionally, literary authority within Okun communities resided with custodial elders, lineage historians and ritual specialists. But in the digital ecosystem, authority is increasingly negotiated through user-generated content, peer reception and algorithmic visibility. This shift has opened literary participation to younger, previously marginalised voices effectively democratising access to cultural expression and narrative ownership.

However, this democratisation is not without consequence. Social media platforms are governed by algorithmic mechanisms that prioritise visibility, virality and monetisation over cultural authenticity or philosophical depth (Ogunleye, 2020). As a result, works that emphasise humour, spectacle or performative sensationalism often gain more traction than spiritually grounded or intellectually layered literary forms. Cultural capital (knowledge, artistic refinement, or intellectual prestige) is increasingly determined by metrics such as likes, shares and engagement rates. That is, in the digital age, social media algorithms and audience reactions are becoming the new determinants of status and relevance. Cultural importance is no longer judged mainly by elders, scholars or community recognition but by how many people react to your content online.

This dynamic introduces the risk of epistemic dilution, where sacred traditions are trivialised through memeification, decontextualised performance and aesthetic reduction (Eze, 2023). The

transformation of ritual *oríkì* into viral entertainment formats can result in the fragmentation of meaning, eroding the symbolic intensity and metaphysical depth embedded in traditional performance contexts. The boundary between cultural preservation and cultural exploitation becomes increasingly blurred. Thus, the role of social media in Okun-Yoruba literary evolution is profoundly dialectical. It simultaneously amplifies cultural visibility and threatens cultural sanctity; therefore, expanding creative possibilities while exposing indigenous epistemologies to commodification and distortion. The challenge facing contemporary Okun-Yoruba creators is therefore not merely to participate in digital culture, but to do so with cultural intentionality and epistemic responsibility.

Technology and Cultural Innovation: Okun-Yoruba Experience

The digital-technological ambience has unlocked new aesthetic and performative possibilities within Okun-Yoruba literary and creative arts, enabling hybrid experiments that transcend the limitations of purely oral or text-based traditions (Barber, 2020). Through the integration of digital audio-visual layering, AI-generated soundscapes, virtual masquerade simulations and remix-based narrative recompositions, technology is expanding the formal and expressive boundaries of indigenous creativity (Afolayan, 2022). This evolution is not a passive replication of tradition but a radical reimagination of it, producing what scholars now term “neo-indigenous aesthetics”, a fusion of ancestral symbolism and digital futurism (Ogunmodede, 2021)

This shift signifies not just artistic innovation but a transformative reorientation of meaning-making practices. Digital media enables new modes of multisensory storytelling that blend ritual memory with immersive technological environments, allowing Okun-Yoruba cosmology to be encoded in formats that resonate with both local and global audiences. The digital reanimation of tradition preserves its metaphysical spirit while situating it within contemporary creative ecologies, challenging static notions of cultural authenticity. Beyond aesthetics, digital platforms are increasingly reshaping the creative economy of Okun-Yoruba arts. Performers, poets, culture curators and digital griots now monetise their craft through livestreamed performances, subscription-based patronage systems and cultural branding on global-facing platforms (Akindele, 2023). This has created new forms of cultural entrepreneurship and visibility previously unattainable through locally bounded performance circuits.

For instance, Okun-Yoruba content creators and influencers such as Peter Oloksina Ijagbemi (a Nollywood actor), Ojo Alagadaogun, Raph Niyi, Funmi Omooookun, Hannah Opeyemi, Funmilayo Victoria Adefisayo (Funmiomookun), Solomon Tope Paul (Easygr33n) and many others are growing

in popularity. Yet, their emerging innovations are deeply uneven. Digital advantage is often concentrated among urban, digitally literate youths, while rural cultural custodians and oral tradition bearers' risk being economically and epistemically marginalised. The digital shift presents a paradox; although it offers new opportunities for cultural growth and economic gain, it also risks deepening generational, geographical and knowledge-based inequalities, raising critical questions about who has the power to produce, control and benefit from Okun-Yoruba digital culture.

Cultural Authenticity, Adaptation and Ethical Concerns in the Digitisation of Okun-Yoruba Literary Culture

The migration of Okun-Yoruba literary and artistic traditions into digital-technological spaces has ignited profound debates around cultural authenticity; not only as a philosophical idea but as a moral responsibility to ancestral continuity. Within indigenous epistemologies, authenticity is not defined by mere formal accuracy or aesthetic resemblance. Instead, it is rooted in the preservation of cosmological intention, ritual depth, spiritual ethics and collective custodianship of knowledge (Falola, 2018). Tradition, therefore, is not just what is performed but how and why it is performed within a metaphysical order.

By contrast, digital culture operates on an entirely different value system. It privileges remixability, rapid circulation, individualised creative authorship and algorithmic visibility. These tendencies often detach cultural expressions from their original ritual purpose and communal accountability, reframing them instead as data objects optimised for engagement, spectacle or monetisation (Adeleke, 2021). In such contexts, meaning is not inherited but re-engineered sometimes radically. This shift raises urgent ethical questions about cultural custodianship in digital environments. On one hand, young Okun-Yoruba creatives use digital media as a strategy of cultural self-assertion, innovation and resistance against erasure. On the other hand, their technologically mediated reinterpretations frequently provoke tension with traditional elders and custodians who fear that sacred knowledge, once algorithmically aestheticised, risks desacralisation or trivial commercial repackaging (Ogunyemi, 2022). The debate, therefore, is not innovation versus tradition, but innovation with or without spiritual accountability.

Complicating matters further, global digital exposure makes these cultural forms vulnerable to appropriation and reinterpretation by non-indigenous actors. Detached from their philosophical roots, Okun-Yoruba traditions risk being consumed as exotic content, detached heritage or sanitised cultural “aesthetic.” This introduces high-stakes questions of epistemic sovereignty; who has the right to

reinterpret, monetise or even narrate an indigenous tradition within the expanding economy of digital globalisation?

Authenticity in the Okun-Yoruba digital sphere is thus not a rigid binary between original and fake, sacred and profane. Rather, it emerges as a dynamic, negotiated field where preservation and futurity collide, shaped simultaneously by spiritual ethics, technological infrastructures, cultural agency and global power dynamics. It is within this unstable yet fertile tension that the future of Okun-Yoruba digital heritage will be determined.

Challenges and Prospects of Digital Technology

The impact of digital technology on Okun-Yoruba literary culture and creative arts exists in a dynamic tension between disruption and possibility. One major challenge lies in the algorithmic homogenisation of cultural expression, where indigenous complexity risks being flattened into consumable digital aesthetics optimised for virality rather than epistemic integrity (Ebirim, 2022). Additionally, the digital contents rooted in disparities of access, literacy and infrastructural availability threatens to marginalise rural custodians while privileging urban, technologically literate youths (Ojo, 2021). Such asymmetry not only reorders cultural authority but potentially fragments intergenerational transmission.

Conversely, digital technology presents profound prospects for cultural revitalisation, archiving, global visibility and creative innovation. It enables the reanimation of dormant narratives, the documentation of endangered oral forms, and the inscription of Okun-Yoruba presence within global digital cultural economies (Adesanya, 2023). Youth-driven digital experimentation has already begun to generate new hybrid genres that preserve ancestral memory while advancing contemporary artistic futurisms. The future of Okun-Yoruba literary culture in digital spaces, therefore, will depend not on resistance or uncritical embrace of technology, but on strategic cultural intelligence, an intentional negotiation that safeguards epistemic sovereignty while embracing innovation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The reimagination of Okun-Yoruba literary culture within the digital-technological ambience does not adhere to a simplistic trajectory of either cultural decay or technological progress. Rather, it unfolds as a fluid continuum of negotiation, that is a space where preservationist impulses and futuristic creativity collide, intersect and occasionally harmonise. Digital mediation does not merely extend

tradition but actively reconfigures its ontology, transforming not only how cultural forms are performed but also how they are perceived, valued and sustained across time.

This study has shown that digital platforms operate simultaneously as sites of empowerment and vulnerability. On one hand, they enable large-scale archiving, youth-driven artistic authorship and global circulation of Okun-Yoruba cultural expressions. On the other hand, they expose these same traditions to algorithmic erasure, cultural commodification and potential epistemic distortion. In this sense, digital technology functions not as a neutral tool but as a battleground of visibility, legitimacy and ownership, where the stakes extend beyond aesthetics into deeper questions of knowledge sovereignty.

By applying Technological Determinism, the study affirms McLuhan's argument that "the medium is the message" that new technology does not merely carry content but reshapes the cultural meaning of that content itself. Meanwhile, through the lens of Media Ecology Theory, digital technology is understood as an evolving cultural habitat, one that reorganises the sensory, communal and philosophical structures through which Okun-Yoruba literary identity is imagined and transmitted. In this paradigm, every new technological shift is also a shift in cultural ontology.

Thus, technology must be approached not as a threat to heritage nor as a guaranteed path to progress, but as a dynamic cultural environment requiring strategic negotiation. The future of Okun-Yoruba literary and creative expression will depend on whether digital engagement is guided by cultural intelligence, custodial accountability and epistemic self-determination. Only then can digital modernity serve not as a force of erosion, but as a platform for indigenous futurism and sustainable cultural evolution.

To ensure a sustainable and culturally responsible digital future for Okun-Yoruba literary and creative heritage, the following strategic interventions are proposed:

1. Strengthen cultural policy frameworks by institutionalising digital preservation initiatives, including state-supported archives and community-governed platforms that prioritise indigenous data sovereignty.
2. Implement inclusive digital literacy programmes that deliberately bridge rural–urban and intergenerational disconnects, by ensuring that traditional custodians are not displaced but empowered alongside emerging youth creators.

3. Adopt collaborative cultural governance models where scholars, cultural practitioners, technologists and indigenous custodians co-develop ethical protocols to prevent digital commodification, misappropriation and epistemic erasure.
4. Promote indigenous-led digital innovation through grants, curriculum integration and cultural entrepreneurship support, by positioning Okun-Yoruba creators not as consumers but as sovereign producers within global digital ecosystems.

In conclusion, what is required is a balanced, ethically grounded and innovation-conscious approach; one that neither romanticises tradition nor abandons it to algorithmic capitalism, but instead cultivates a critically guided digital engagement that safeguards and reimagines Okun-Yoruba cultural futures.

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REIMAGINING GENDER THROUGH LANGUAGE: A FEMINIST STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED NOVELS BY ABI DARÉ AND DAMILARE KUKU

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Abstract

This paper uses feminist stylistics to analyze *The Girl With The Louding Voice* (2020) by Abi Dare and *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* (2024) by Damilare Kuku as an exploration of how linguistic innovation reimagines gender norms in the 21st-century African fiction. Based on qualitative analysis at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels, using the framework of Sara Mills (1995,2008), the study recognizes non-standard grammar and neologisms such as louding, bumbum-enlargement, as well as derogatory body policing lexis, transitivity patterns that objectify women, and first-person/multi-voiced narratives as forms of resisting patriarchal silencing and commodification. The findings demonstrate that language is a two-fold mechanism of revealing ideological domination of the female body and a voice allowing identity rebuilding and empowerment of the marginalized protagonists; *Adunni* and *Temilade*. The discussion highlights the validity of non-standard forms in feminist discourse and suggests the use of digital space to create the voices of such alternative forms and additional stylistic research of the narratives of contemporary African women.

Keywords: feminist stylistics, gender reimagination, non-standard language, body policing, contemporary African fiction.

Introduction

The 21st century has marked a significant shift in the representation of gender. The feminist movements, known as the waves of feminism played a major role in bringing about these changes. The movements have evolved from fighting for political rights to emphasizing intersectionality, countering body shaming and implementing online platforms for empowerment. According to Rampton (2015), Feminism which was once restricted to academic discourse is now largely discussed and addressed by the public. This shift captures how modern societies have experienced an increase in the interrogation of gender norms and how women assert visibility and agency in new and transformative ways. Language is central to these transformations; it functions as both a communicative tool and a means of shaping the society's perspective regarding gender. It plays a

pivotal role in advancing global initiatives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5, which promotes gender equality and women's empowerment (Ezeh et'al.,2020). The inclusion of gender equality among the SDG5 indicates how feminist struggles have evolved from being women's issues alone to a global objective that is deeply embedded in achieving collective progress and transformation. Individuals and communities incorporate language to convey gendered experiences, resist patriarchal structures, and redefine social hierarchies. Therefore, language serves as a reflection and also an instrument of transformation within feminist discourses of the 21st century.

In literature, language is utilized as a strong tool for expressing and challenging gender identities. The language used by writers is strategic in its utilization to express, criticize, and transform the image of gender in society. Even though every work of literature is based on language, the writing choices made by each author which makes them unique is their style. Style is a linguistic fingerprint that discloses an author's vision of the world, their intentions, and creative self. Wales (1989) describes style as the unique method of expressing ideas in writing or speech and Widdowson (1975) defines stylistics as the linguistic study of literary texts that forms the gap between literary criticism and linguistic investigation. Based on this notion, Feminist Stylistics as theorized by Mills (1995) examines how the use of language in texts propagates, supports or challenges gender ideologies. It dwells upon the linguistic preferences as the manifestations of power relations and gendered experiences in the texts, which enables readers to see the ways in which women writers use their style as a means of resistance and empowerment.

The feminist fight against self-expression and representation has always been connected with linguistic reclamation, the demand to hear, to be heard, and to be represented. It is against this background that the modern African female writers use linguistic innovation to challenge the patriarchal systems and to provide a voice to the realities of women. A relevant portrayal of this reformation of the concept of gender using language is Abi Daré and Damilare Kuku in their novels: *The Girl with the Louding Voice* (2020) and *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* (2024). The two authors are creative in manipulating the English language as they use it to predetermine the agency of women in patriarchal societies. In her effort to describe the socioeconomic situation and the level of education of her heroine, *Adunni*, Daré uses less commonly employed variants of English. Apart from using it as a symbol of honesty, Daré's word choice is equally well-suited for *Adunni's* inner conflict and ultimate triumph. Her lack of schooling is similarly set out in words and therefore serves to reinforce her intelligence and determination. By the unique word choice, Daré intentionally humanizes her and reverses the sociocultural context that limits *Adunni*.

In the same vein, *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* by Kuku relies on colloquial expressions and informal language to portray the commodification of women in the society and the survival of the protagonist in a society where physical appearance comes first over people's personalities. Through the choice of words of the protagonist (Kuku) the energy and resilience in the face of the patriarchal system is seen as she managed to go beyond representation to the complexity of objectification and agency.

The study, hence, presents a feminist stylistic analysis of *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Daré and *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* by Kuku to consider how the two authors employ language to redefine the concept of gender and agency in the 21st century. The study sheds light on how linguistic creativity can defy the conventional gender norms and make women voices as empowerment agents by analyzing their stylistic devices: non-standard English, colloquialism, lexical inventions, metaphors, modality, point of view and so on. The importance of the present study is that it helps to comprehend how the African women writers of the 21st century use language to reshape gender discourses, portray feminism, and assert social-cultural realities in postcolonial settings.

Language, Identity and Empowerment in Contemporary African Women's Writing

The use of non-standard English has increasingly gained recognition as a means of expressing authentic African experiences and challenging dominant linguistic and social orders in African literature. The debate surrounding the use of English as a medium of African expression has been a long-standing one, involving key figures such as Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Achebe (1975) advocates for the adaptation of English to eloquently present African realities, while writers of the postcolonial era have since transformed this stance by infusing their writing with the rhythms and idioms of African speech. As Percillier (2018) observes, contemporary African authors use non-standard English to mimic everyday conversations, thereby reversing colonial linguistic conventions and foregrounding postcolonial identities.

Furthermore, the concept of foregrounding, a key term in stylistic analysis, refers to the ways in which certain linguistic elements in a text are made prominent to evoke particular effects. Riaz (2021) argues that literary works usually utilizes strategies like grammatical and semantic deviations, along with lexical, syntactic, and phonological repetitions, to deviate from ordinary language use, in order to draw attention to their form as much as their content. Language deviation serves not only as a stylistic choice, but also as a form of social resistance and empowerment. Tupas (2022) asserts that through deliberate subversion of linguistic norms, authors are able to challenge dominant discourses and open

new perspectives on social inequalities. Similarly, Elgie (2021) highlights the power of narrative as a vehicle for agency among marginalized groups, particularly women. According to her, indigenous women have long used storytelling to resist oppression and to reclaim their autonomy. Dojack and Abu-Obeida (2023) equally demonstrate how issues of race are mediated through metaphors and other linguistic devices in a stylistic analysis of Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*. Likewise, scholars such as Ogunyemi (1988) and Nfah-Abbenyi (1997) have emphasized the feminist linguistic practices of African women writers who employ language to transcend patriarchal boundaries and assert agency. In postcolonial Africa where gender discrimination and cultural exclusion persist, such linguistic defiance becomes deeply meaningful.

In contemporary African women's writing, the use of non-standard English and native language elements functions as a strategy of self-definition and resistance to sociopolitical constraints. In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, Abi Daré's protagonist, *Adunni*, embodies this linguistic rebellion as her fractured English and Nigerian Pidgin express both her marginalization and her courage. Similarly, Damilare Kuku's stories employ colloquial languages to critique society's obsession with wealth and appearance while promoting broader notions of empowerment and self-worth. Recent studies also emphasize the importance of narrative perspective in advancing social advocacy. Singh and Medhavi (2024) observe that writers such as Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga use point of view to foreground marginalized voices and dismantle dominant power structures. Kakembo (2025) adds that inclusive narration allows literature to confront stereotypes and represent silenced identities. These insights are reflected in the works of Daré and Kuku, whose protagonists' voices symbolize both empowerment and resistance within patriarchal and socio-economic constraints. Although existing scholarship has explored stylistic elements in African prose and poetry, providing insight into how linguistic choices contribute to meaning, there remains a need for further investigation into the use of non-standard English in representing marginalized voices in contemporary African women's fiction. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining how language functions as a tool of identity, empowerment, and resistance in the works of Abi Daré and Damilare Kuku.

Overview of the Selected Texts and their Authors

The Girl with the Louding Voice, Nigerian novelist and public speaker Abimbola Dare's debut novel, was long listed for the 2018 Literary Consultancy Pen Factor competition and received the Bath Novel Award for unpublished fiction. In 2023, she established the Louding Voice Educational and Empowerment Foundation in Nigeria, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing scholarships to

young girls in rural Nigeria. It exists as a testament to the belief that education and empowerment can be an avenue of change for girls in the 21st century in Nigeria. Also, Damilare Kuku, the author of *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, is a Nigerian writer who has also worked as a filmmaker, actor, producer, playwright, and radio host. She has also spoken at United Nations-hosted mentoring workshops for teen girls in Lagos and taught academies about feminism and the craft of visual storytelling.

Abi Dare's 2020 novel, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, and Damilare Kuku's 2024 novel, *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, both discuss the ways that women attempt to shatter ill-conventional social norms. Female commodification, sexism against women, body shaming and sexual harassment, and rape culture are some of the issues described in the books of the two new Nigerian writers.

Abi Dare portrays how women navigate their paths under the cover of societal circumstances through the eyes of *Adunni*, the heroine of *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. The novel focuses on the manner in which the heroine, *Adunni*, struggles to achieve self-empowerment and resistance against patriarchal oppression. Her father, her husband and her boss' husband oppress *Adunni* as she develops her voice in a society that silences women's voice.

On the other hand, *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* by Damilare Kuku reflects the latest trends among women in the society known as BBL (Brazilian Butt Lift). This cosmetic surgery is done in order to enlarge or reshape the buttocks, most of the women who undergo the surgery are influenced by societal standards of an ideal woman, where women with "snatched body" (curvy or well-shaped body) are more privileged and celebrated in the society. The issue of body shaming has pervaded the society to an extent that females are making every possible effort to fit into the category of the ideal type. *Temilade*, the protagonist is determined to 'renovate' her bumbum at all cost due to constant mockery from people. She tries to modify her body shape by becoming gluttonous and eating late foods which resulted in a big belly —another body dissatisfaction. She tries several other means and eventually resolves to get a BBL, travel to Lagos and meet the love of her life. The story also explores the experiences of women such as Ladun, Jummai, Big Mummy and Temi's mother, Hassana with an ideal shape and their ordeals with men. The novel portrays certain ideas of the second wave of feminism that were reintroduced in the fourth wave of feminism such as sexual abuse, rape, violence against women, the pressure on women to conform to a single and unrealistic body type.

Female oppression stems from gender differences which occur as a result of social convention that dictates how both men and women are expected to behave. These societal conventions are the major

cause of several women's ordeal which has been portrayed by the distinct styles used in the representation of marginalized voices that are employed in both texts through their main characters, *Adunni* and *Temilade* including some other women in the novels respectively.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework to be adopted for this study is feminist stylistics. It is a stylistic sub-discipline interested in locating how gender matters are inscribed into language within texts and examining gender's association with language through stylistic analytical models. As Mills (1995), one of the first to apply the term, describes it, feminist stylistics is not only interested in detecting sexist representation in texts, but also in investigating how literary devices such as metaphor, transitivity, and point of view are related to gender relations. In exposing the main biases in the manner language formulates gender identities, feminist stylistics questions conventional gender norms. For example, both Mills (1995) and Woolf (1929) opine that language is gendered in nature and reflects and consolidates social inequality. This philosophy has its roots in feminist criticism, specifically the notion that language is key to the perpetuation of patriarchal system. One of the most significant notions in contemporary feminist linguistic analysis is that feminist stylistics identifies a seeming stylistic difference between women's and men's writing (Mills, 1995). Ashimbuli and Woldemariam (2024) point out how readers can reinforce or challenge prevailing gendered constructions in texts, and note the significance of considering both the writer's and the reader's double role in producing and interpreting gendered meanings.

One of the principles of feminist stylistics is an exploration of gendered language options, including discourse strategies, grammatical features, and lexical selection. Feminist stylisticians can investigate how linguistic structures mirror changing gender knowledge, beyond binary conceptualizations of man and woman...(Montoro, 2014:348). Particularly in examining how language constructs gender in society, feminist stylistics comes into play in this current research. Feminist stylistics is an adequate method to analyze the manner language in Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* represents the struggle of the protagonist towards empowerment and identity within a patriarchal society. Feminist stylistics becomes an appropriate approach to conduct this study since the language of the novel such as the use of non-standard English and female agency representation sheds light on the intersections of language, gender, and class in the 21st century.

Methodology

In seeking stylistic examination of Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* and Damilare Kuku's *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, this study utilizes a qualitative research design. Through a close reading of the selected texts, the study considers the author's usage of unique linguistic features to understand how the concept of gender is redefined with the help of language and narrative voice. The excerpts that portray the main issues of the novels on patriarchy, identity, and reclaiming the voices of women were adequately identified for the analysis. Based on the principles of feminist stylistics by Mills (1995), the study examines how language in the novels reinforces or challenges gendered power relations as evident in the 21st century. The identification of occurrences of colloquialism, non-standard English, and characteristic linguistic features in the narrative will be the main goal of the study. The utilization of language in redefining gender in modern African fiction; creating unique voices for the protagonists and delineating their personal, societal conflicts will be analyzed.

Data Analysis

Feminist stylistics, as developed by Mills (1995), foregrounds how women's language serves as a tool for resisting the usual role of women to be silent while asserting their agency. The language of women in literary texts is foregrounded most especially when marked by deviation from dominant norms. Based on these, Mills (2008) proposed three levels of feminist stylistics analysis with tenets that serves as lens for examining gendered linguistic choices under each level: The lexical level, syntactic level and discourse level. This section applies Mills' Feminist Stylistic framework to *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* by Damilare Kuku and *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Daré. Each level is further divided into thematized sub-sections that allow for a comparative interpretation of how gender ideology, power relations, silencing, and female agency are linguistically constructed, negotiated, and reimagined in both texts.

The Lexical Level

Mills (1995) argues that sexist ideology is frequently embedded in apparently ordinary lexical items; particularly nouns, adjectives, and metaphors used to describe women. Feminist stylistics therefore interrogates what is named, how it is named, and whose interests such naming serves.

Body-Centred Lexicalisation and the Reduction of Female Identity

In *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, female identity is frequently qualified with body-centered adjectives such as “tiny, flat, skinny, fat, inverted, fake, big, saggy. As in: “Your bumbum has always been flat” (p. 8). The lexical choices of the author foreground the body as the yardstick that defines a woman, thereby relegating their mental capacity to the background. These evaluative adjectives depict how the female physique is being measured by a standard set by the society, any woman that fails to meet the requirement will be described with different derogatory adjectives and this act is known as body policing.

Also, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, words like lazy, talkative, feisty, good-for-nothing, wasted waste, useless, godforsaken are some of the derogatory adjectives used to describe the main character, *Adunni* as seen in the sentence: “A lazy good-for-nothing waste-of-space” (p. 134). The dominant uses of the derogatory adjectives reduce the identity of the female protagonist to someone who lacks value. The social level of *Adunni* further propels the usage of such adjectives to describe her. These reflect the situation of maids like *Adunni* in the 21st century, where they are treated with less regard. The literary texts effectively mirror the issues of gender in the 21st century through the unique lexical choices of the authors.

Mills (1995) highlights that the lexical level should examine what words were used to describe women and what words were emphasized. Thus, the analysis highlights data that portrays the derogatory adjectives used to describe women repeatedly in the literary texts, revealing how language actively sustains patriarchal definitions of female worth in texts.

Lexical Invention and Informal language as Markers of Female Objectivity and Agency

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, *Adunni*'s neologism; “lounding”, “force-marry”, “memorying,” and “sorrowing”, “dunni-licious” are linguistic inventions that function as deviations from normal linguistic choices. These words highlight the pains and struggles of women in a society that commodifies them through marriage and simultaneously reflect female agency. These inventions reflect her limited exposure to formal education; yet, they showcase her refusal to remain silent within a society that expects women to keep their emotions bottled up and follow the norms such as being forced into a marriage.

The term “lounding,” is a fusion of the adjective “loud” and the progressive “-ing”. The coinage becomes a symbolic articulation of *Adunni*'s desire to have a voice in a patriarchal context where

women are discouraged from communicating their opinions and are subjected to listening and obeying rules. Through the lens of feminist stylistics, such deviations are not linguistic errors but are signals of female subjectivity (Mills, 1995).

Similarly, in *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, compounded words like "Bumbum-enlargement" (p. 9), "Keep-Your-Husband" (p. 44), emphasizes the new means through which women get and keep men. These innovative words capture the deep meaning behind the compounded words that would not have been foregrounded if it were separated. Also, the usage of an informal language to describe the female protagonist also adds to the intensity of the female body's policing. Yoruba words like "Opelenge", "Penkelemeesi", "Lepa Shandy" are words that indicates a very slim person with no shape which were used to body shame *Temilade*.

The Usage of Metaphors

Metaphor operates as a powerful ideological device in both texts. A Metaphor is a figure of speech that involves direct comparison without using "like" or "as." It states one thing is another thing, to highlight a shared quality or characteristic.

In *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, metaphorical terms such as "Témì Is a Blackboard" (p. 8) and "Témì Is Also a Mopstick" (p. 54) replace the female body with inanimate objects. These metaphors strip women of humanity and turning them into an object of ridicule.

In contrast, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* deploys metaphor as a counter-discursive tool. In the text, education is portrayed with utmost importance through the metaphorical expression "Your schooling is your voice, child" (p. 23). The depiction of education as "your voice," therefore highlights the role of education as a tool for audibility and empowerment in a society where the protagonist lacks the right to voice out her preferences.

Syntactic Level

At the sentence level, feminist stylistics focus on how grammatical structures distribute power by determining who acts, who is acted upon, and whose responsibility is obscured (Mills, 2008).

Transitivity and Grammatical Construction of the Female Agency

Transitivity patterns, as a feminist stylistic tool for analysis, can show the allocation of the participants into the role of Actor, Process, and Goal in grammatical structures. (Mills, 2008). The analysis of the

agent and recipient of the actions is thus vital in gaining insight into the manner in which gender ideology is coded at the sentence level.

In Damilare Kuku's *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, a very gendered agency is encoded in the clause: "If she could fuck, cook and keep her mouth shut, she would find a husband" (p. 53) using transitivity. The repetition of "she" as the Actor of behavioural (fuck), material (cook) and behavioural/verbal-suppressive (keep her mouth shut) processes, builds female agency as performative and a conditional agency. Even though the woman is grammatically active, her behaviour is confined as being in sexual availability, domestic labour, and silence which are ideologically depicted as conditions to achieve social legitimacy. The material process "find a husband" is a secondary act, which makes marriage a reward following adherence to patriarchal rules. This transitivity pattern, according to a feminist stylistic view, strengthens the commodification and power of the women bodies, labour and voices, and it reinforces an argument of Mills (1995) that grammatical agency is not always accompanied by social power.

Equally, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the statement is: "Do her anyhow you want. Use her till she is useless" (p. 31), predicts the existence of extreme gendered power asymmetry in the form of its transitivity structure. Both statements use material processes (do, use) in which the male Actor (you) has a free hand and thus the female partner (her) is always put in the Goal position and is objectified with no agency. Domination is enhanced by the imperative mood since it does away with selection and agreement which makes exploitation appear as an action that can be accepted. The circumstantial aspect, also enhances this predominance by authorizing unlimited mistreatment. The final relational clause she is useless acts as an attributive process coding the resultant condition of the woman and making her value and usefulness the only unique way to describe her worth. In terms of feminist stylistic analysis, the grammar is not only an expression of patriarchal ideology, but also a proponent of the latter, because it makes the male the focal point of action while it makes the female existence a condition and a dispensable aspect.

Non-Standard Grammar and Female Subjugation

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, *Adunni's* use of non-standard grammar clearly reflects her exclusion from formal education and social power. For example, in the sentence "He have the same eyes when he was telling me, three years ago, that I must stop my educations," (p.7) there is a lack of subject-verb agreement ("He have") and unnecessary pluralisation "educations". These grammatical deviations are not accidental. They reveal that *Adunni* was denied proper schooling because of

gendered expectations—her father withdrew her from school so she could be married off. As a result, she has limited access to the standard form of English, which is closely tied to authority, education and social mobility.

Similarly, in the statement “All the mens in our village, they are allowing them learn school and work, but us the girls, they are marrying us from fourteen years of age,” (p. 59) *Adunni* contrasts the educational freedom given to boys with the early forced marriages imposed on girls. The non-standard structures in this sentence reinforce the reality of gender inequality. Feminist stylistics interprets these grammatical deviations not as linguistic failure, but as evidence of how social marginalization especially of girls becomes encoded in language use. (Mills, 1995).

In *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, the letter Hassana sent to Jummai clearly shows the usage of non-standard grammar, as seen in the sentences: " I miss U. Many tins av happened to me. I lost my flower to a wicked man. I want to come to ur skul. Please send hostel number and adress. I love U" (p. 104). The inappropriate spelling of "you" as "U", "your" as "ur", things as "tins," have" as "av" and the omission of your in" please send hostel number and address" exposes social media texting culture in the 21st century which majorly influence people's writing experiences especially the ones with less education. The usage of non-standard grammar exposes her limited education and some of her ordeals with men such as being raped. In contrast to *Adunni* who desires to go to school but doesn't have the opportunity to go due to the duty she has to get married, while Hassana opts out of school because she has dyslexia.

Overall, both texts show that non-standard grammar is not a sign of incompetence, but a reflection of gendered exclusion. Feminist stylistics read these linguistic patterns as powerful indicators of how women's oppression, lack of education, and social vulnerability are inscribed directly into language.

Modality: A Reflection of Feminist Portrayal in the Texts.

According to the feminist stylistics of Sara Mills, modality serves as a language tool that expresses normalized ideology. According to Mills, modal constructions tend to hide patriarchal values by promoting gendered expectations as normal, unavoidable and unquestionable (Mills, 2008: 87-94). Within an analysis of modal options in *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* and *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the worth and the agency of women is shown to be linguistically limited.

In *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow*, female value is structured via conditional modality as being dependent on bodily conformity. The desirability is made by the statement, "If only your ass was

bigger, your little waist would be a magnet to compliments" (p. 8), which builds up the statement of desirability with the hypothetical cause-and-effect format, making social approval to conform to male established beauty standards. Compliments are therefore made to be conditional rewards as opposed to natural reward. This stance can be supported by deontic modality in the statement: "Today this small yansh must go" (p. 7), the modal auxiliary should denote the requirement and need. The feminine body is discursively constructed as something that needs to be corrected, whereas the alteration of the body is naturalized as something inevitable.

In *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, restricted agency of the female is disclosed with the help of volitional and counterfactual modality. The statement; "I want a louding voice" (p. 23) by *Adunni* is a volitional modality, in which she desires to have, and not a right to have, voice and to express herself, which is not presumed to be part of her socio-cultural upbringing. Likewise, "I wish I'm a man" (p. 59) is an illustration of counterfactual modality where a hypothetical world is created where power and autonomy is construed as male in nature. Instead of confronting the issue of patriarchy, the statement inherits the same logic in making maleness the means of empowerment.

The presence of modal constructions in both texts, in general, limits women agency and upholds the patriarchal norms. Conditional modality makes the female worthy contingent, the deontic modality makes the body to be regulated as necessitated, the volitional modality makes agency constrained by desire, and the counter modality brings out contradictory gender hierarchy in an internalized manner. As per the argument presented by Mills (2008), these modal options serve as an ideological way of clothed patriarchal control as common sense and reproducing gendered oppression via the use of everyday language.

Discourse Level

At the discourse level, feminist stylistics analyzes how textual structures shape gender representation and ideology beyond the sentence or syntactic level. As outlined by Sara Mills (1995, 2008), it focuses on narrative voice, point of view, and the positioning of characters and readers. It interrogates who speaks, whose perspectives are foregrounded or silenced, and how texts guide ideological interpretation. Through these strategies, discourse both reproduces and challenges patriarchal meanings. This section therefore analyzes how the selected novels deploy discourse features to construct female agency, silence, and resistance.

Point of View and Ideological Positioning.

Sara Mills contends that point of view is never neutral and it is an effective ideological instrument that positions the readers on the side of certain viewpoints and naturalises other views (Mills, 1995). Feminist stylistics focus on the speaker, his or her social status, and how the readers are encouraged to perceive gendered experiences.

Abi Dare uses the first-person homodiegetic voice in *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, through her character of *Adunni*, whose voice prevails throughout the story. This narrative decision throws the reader into the direct focus of the lived experience of the economically marginalised Nigerian girl at a young age. More to the point, the viewpoint of *Adunni* is not just the choice of style, but the feminist maneuver: it makes the readers confront patriarchy as understood by its victim. In the narration of *Adunni*, child marriage, educational deprivation, domestic servitude and others are not told as abstract social issues, but are very personal violations. To illustrate, as *Adunni* contemplates being taken out of school because her father could not afford school fees but at the same time considers marrying, the reader is put in a position to realize the gendered injustice as not an isolated event but a systematic issue. Based on this, the text challenges the so-called masculine generic perspective by giving a female subject, who is generally deprived of narrative prerogative, precedence.

In comparison, *Only Big Bumbum Matters Tomorrow* uses a fragmented, multi-voiced discourse, which is usually focalised by unnamed or loosely related female characters. Instead of one fixed narrator, Damilare Kuku introduces a trail of gendered experiences such as catcalling, body policing, sexual bargaining as well as everyday linguistic violence that women experience daily. Such scattered vision resembles diffusion of patriarchal ideology as Mills explains. (2008: 92-99). Most of the time the experiences of women are not told in a stance of authority but are often flavoured by a male voice, social media commentary or internalised self-surveillance. Consequently, the readers find themselves in a situation where they can observe the functioning of misogyny by direct dominance as well as by repetition and normalisation.

While reading the two novels simultaneously, one has to acknowledge the existence of some contrasting, yet complementary feminist strategies. Dare maintains her first person narration to restore narrative power to a silenced girl-child, and a fractured world-view of Kuku reveals how the female form is constantly being constructed and judged by the discourse of the public. In both instances, point of view serves an ideological purpose to disclose the aspect of patriarchy as a lived linguistic practice

and not a remote social organization, consistent with Mills insisting that feminist analysis should question the manner in which texts orchestrate reader sympathy and reading.

Conclusion

This feminist stylistic reading shows that language in the novels by Dare and Kuku goes beyond communication being a dynamic tool to resist patriarchal standards, gender identities, and gender commodification in the 21st century. Among the most important findings are lexical deviations, syntactic objectification, modal constraints, and narrative perspectives which reproduce and subvert silencing of women agency, and neologisms and slang as the true voice to authenticity in the face of body shaming and educational exclusion. They are literary texts that state the role of linguistic creativity in empowerment, the need to acknowledge non-standard varieties, digital feminist advocacy, and continued investigation of marginalized voices in postcolonial literature.

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CEMETERY SCULPTURES AND CULTURAL MEMORY: DOCUMENTING ABEOKUTA'S FUNERARY ART FOR HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND NOLLYWOOD ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper examined cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta, Nigeria, as vital repositories of cultural memory and heritage. Funerary sculptures, ranging from busts and full body portraits to angelic figures and etched gravestones, served not only as memorial markers but also as symbolic archives of Egba identity, spirituality, and social history. Despite their importance and cultural significance, these works remain underdocumented, poorly preserved, and increasingly vulnerable to urban expansion and neglect. Drawing on fieldwork, visual documentation and interviews with local sculptors and caretakers, the study provided a stylistic and material analysis of selected cemetery sculptures across Abeokuta metropolis. Findings revealed that these monuments embodied layered narratives of lineage, belief systems and cultural continuity. The paper argues that cemetery sculptures are more than funerary objects, they function as open air museums, sustaining communal values across generations. Yoruba art has long served as a language system of symbols and motifs, transmitting memory and meaning across time, yet Nollywood has not fully explored these sculptural resources in its visual storytelling. To prevent further loss, the study recommended comprehensive documentation, inclusion of funerary art in cultural curricula, and heritage preservation initiatives that recognized cemeteries as cultural archives. Ultimately, preserving these monuments ensures the continuity of Yoruba cultural memory, strengthens Nigeria's broader heritage discourse, and provides authentic resources for Nollywood film production.

Keywords: Cemetery, Sculpture, Cultural Memory, Heritage Preservation, Abeokuta, Nollywood

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Cemetery or funerary sculptures are three-dimensional artworks created for burial spaces as markers of remembrance and reflection. They employ symbolic motifs such as angels, doves, crosses, and ancestral figures that embody cultural and spiritual values. Materials range from marble and bronze to cement and carved stone, while forms vary from realism to abstraction. Beyond their memorial role, they are creative expressions shaped by religious, cultural, and historical contexts—valuable as both art and heritage. Conceptually, this study draws on funerary art, cultural memory, and visual semiotics, viewing cemetery sculptures as sculptural texts that mediate between the living and

the dead. As sites of memory, they encode indigenous iconography and symbolic codes that express communal belief systems and continuity.

Within this framework, cemetery sculptures act as cultural scripts preserving Yoruba values found in egungun traditions and symbolic imagery. As Laurajane Smith (2006) argues, heritage involves processes of meaning-making, not just monuments. Abeokuta's cemetery sculptures thus represent vernacular heritage with potential for historical awareness and preservation (Atanda, 1980; Adekoya, 2015). Yet, while funerary art attracts global study, Nigerian examples remain underexplored. Yoruba palace and masquerade arts have gained attention, but cemetery sculptures are marginalized, even though Nollywood frequently employs cemetery settings. This study examines Abeokuta's funerary art as sites of cultural memory and explores their relevance for heritage preservation and cinematic storytelling.

Historically, funerary art has served as a visual record of identity and belief across civilizations (Carroll, 1967; Bascom, 1973). Among the Yoruba, death marks passage into ancestral existence (Lawal, 2001), and commemorative effigies or carved posts once preserved social memory. In Abeokuta, stone and terracotta grave sculptures encode beliefs about life and afterlife. Permanent grave sculpture emerged during colonial influence, replacing ephemeral *àkó* effigies (Poynor, 1987; Akintonde, 2004).

To situate Abeokuta's funerary sculptures within a broader art-historical continuum, it is important to acknowledge earlier traditions of sculptural realism in ancient Nigerian art that inform later commemorative practices. Fagg (1977) and Willett (2002) observe that ancient Nigerian sculptural traditions, particularly those of Ile-Ife, display refined naturalism that has often been described as superficially resembling classical Greek art. In analyzing Ife terracotta and bronze heads, Blier (2015) highlights their anatomical accuracy, balanced proportions, and subtle facial modeling, qualities commonly associated with classical sculptural ideals. Dark (1973) similarly notes that Benin royal heads and commemorative bronzes employ idealized realism to convey authority, identity, and cultural memory.

Rejecting diffusionist interpretations, Lawal (2012) argues that such realism reflects indigenous aesthetic philosophies rather than external influence, while Ben-Amos (1995) situates Benin naturalism within localized court traditions and advanced metallurgical practices. This indigenous classical realism provides a historical framework for later Yoruba commemorative forms,

including funerary sculptures in Abeokuta, where sculptural likeness functions as a visual strategy for remembrance, status affirmation, and ancestral continuity.

The subject matter is particularly peculiar to Abeokuta of Egband due to the city's distinctive historical evolution, cultural identity, and funerary traditions. Abeokuta, as the ancestral homeland of the Egba people, possesses a rich legacy of sculptural practice shaped by its 19th-century formation as a refuge settlement and its subsequent development into a politically and culturally significant Yoruba center. This unique history fostered a strong consciousness of lineage, status, and memory, which is vividly expressed in its cemetery art. Unlike many other Yoruba towns, Abeokuta's cemeteries display a remarkable concentration of personalized sculptural forms—ranging from naturalistic portraiture to symbolic grave markers—that reflect both indigenous beliefs and external influences such as Christianity and colonial aesthetics. The city's long-standing engagement with formal education, missionary activity, and artistic production further contributed to the evolution of funerary sculpture as a hybrid visual tradition. Consequently, cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta are not merely memorial objects but culturally specific expressions of Egba identity, making the subject uniquely grounded in the historical, social, and artistic landscape of Egband.

However, Colonial contact further reshaped Yoruba funerary practices through Western realism, cement, and bronze (Kalilu & Akintonde, 2013). Memorials such as Elerede in Akure and Sòjà Ìdùmòtà in Lagos demonstrate this hybridization. By the mid 20th century, artists like Ben Enwonwu expanded public sculpture, a development later seen in Abeokuta cemeteries like Lantoro, where Yoruba and Western styles merged (Adisa, 1999; Akintonde, 2004). Abeokuta, the Egba capital in Ogun State, remains rich in heritage expressed through ancestral effigies and symbolic grave markers. Yet many are undocumented, decaying, or excluded from contemporary narratives. This study explores these sculptures as repositories of cultural memory and creative potential. Through documentation and digital archiving, it bridges traditional art with Nollywood's visual storytelling, emphasizing their value for heritage preservation, tourism, and Nigeria's creative economy. Despite their significance, many are threatened by neglect, vandalism, and urban expansion (Adeyanju, 2004; Adekoya, 2015), while Nollywood has yet to fully harness their cultural and visual potential.



Figure 1a: Father Coquard.

Fig. 1b: Old building of Sacred Heart, Isale Ake

Photography Courtesy: Seyi-Gbangbayau. 2025.

Statement of the Problem

Despite its long history and cultural richness, Abeokuta's funerary art remains largely unstudied, undocumented, and underutilized in Nigeria's heritage and creative discourses. Cemetery sculptures—busts, full figures, etched portraits, and angelic monuments—stand as silent archives of Egba identity, spirituality, and social history. Yet these sculptural traditions face neglect, environmental decay, and destruction from urban expansion. The absence of structured documentation and scholarship has led to deterioration and the gradual loss of cultural memory. Equally concerning is their exclusion from Nollywood, Nigeria's globally recognized film industry. While the industry frequently dramatizes death, ancestry, and spirituality, it rarely employs authentic cemetery sculptures in its visual storytelling. This omission creates a disconnect between tangible heritage and cinematic representation. Thus, the problem is twofold: the material decline of funerary art as cultural heritage and its invisibility in creative media. Without intervention, future generations risk losing vital symbols of Egba identity while Nollywood continues to rely on generic or foreign visual tropes. This study addresses these gaps by analyzing Abeokuta's funerary art as both cultural heritage and a creative reservoir for film practice.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on selected cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria specifically busts, full body figures, etched portraits, and angelic monuments. It does not attempt to survey all Yoruba funerary monuments but concentrates on Abeokuta as a representative case due to its

prominence as the Egba capital. The scope is limited to art-historical, cultural, and cinematic perspectives rather than archaeological or theological interpretations.

Goal and Objectives of the Study

The study investigates Abeokuta's cemetery sculptures as cultural archives of Egba identity and explores their potential integration into Nollywood as authentic visual resources for heritage preservation and cultural development.

Specific Objectives:

- i. To document and describe selected cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta, highlighting their forms, styles, and symbolic meanings.
- ii. To examine their functions as repositories of Egba cultural memory and heritage preservation.
- iii. To explore ways of integrating funerary art into Nollywood's set design, characterization, and narrative structure.
- iv. To propose strategies for conserving and creatively adapting cemetery sculptures for heritage and cinematic use.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Cultural Memory Theory and Visual Culture Theory, which together explain how societies preserve memory through artistic expression.

Cultural Memory Theory (Assmann, 2011) posits that identity is transmitted through tangible and intangible media. Cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta are therefore seen as vessels of collective memory linking the living and ancestral worlds. While Visual Culture Theory (Mirzoeff, 2002) examines how visual forms shape social understanding and identity. Applied to Nollywood, this theory views funerary sculptures as visual texts that can enrich cinematic portrayals of death, spirituality, and tradition. Combined, these frameworks position cemetery sculptures as dual resources preserving Egba memory and enriching Nigerian visual storytelling.

Literature Review

African Cultural Heritage

According to Abiodun (2014), Yoruba art functions as a visual language where symbols communicate lineage, belief, and cosmology. Within this framework, funerary sculptures embody spiritual and social narratives. Okeke-Agulu (2015) interprets African art as a negotiation of postcolonial identity and continuity. Similarly, Lawal (2001) and Drewal (1992) describe funerary works as visual texts that instruct and commemorate. Falola and Genova (2006) emphasize material culture's epistemic role, while Eyo (2008) views funerary sculpture as a lens into indigenous aesthetics. Seyi-Gbangbayau (2023) identifies cemeteries as repositories of cultural memory relevant to heritage and media. Collectively, these scholars establish funerary art as an archive of intangible heritage with contemporary relevance.

Theoretical Review

The study draws on Cultural Memory, Visual Semiotics, and Performance Theory. Assmann (1995) situates memory in symbolic forms, aligning Yoruba funerary art with intergenerational knowledge transmission. Drewal (1992) and Barber (1987) show that Yoruba art functions within ritual performance cycles, turning sculpture into a living enactment of memory. Barthes (1977) and Kalilu & Oladugbagbe (2013) employ semiotic analysis to decode posture and iconography in funerary art. Schechner (2003) extends this to performance, linking sculpture with masquerade and ritual as acts of communal remembrance. Together, these theories frame funerary sculpture as dynamic cultural performance rather than static artifact.

Documented Practices

Ethnographic accounts by Akintonde (2021) and Odiboh (1984) document Yoruba funerary symbols while warning of modernization threats. Seyi-Gbangbayau (2023) views public art as a tool for sustainability and heritage education, highlighting cemeteries as creative spaces for Nollywood. Haynes (2016) critiques Nollywood for superficial depictions of cultural heritage, while Ugochukwu (2014) urges deeper integration of indigenous artifacts in film. Adepegba (2018) and Omibiyi-Obidike (2019) promote digital archiving to preserve funerary sculptures for future generations. Collectively, these studies underscore both neglect and potential—emphasizing the need for preservation and creative re-engagement.

Summary of Literature Review

Yoruba funerary sculpture serves as a vessel of cultural memory, identity, and spirituality. Conceptually, it embodies communicative and mnemonic value (Abiodun, 2014; Okeke-Agulu, 2015). Theoretically, it aligns with cultural memory, semiotics, and performance (Assmann, 1995; Barthes, 1977; Drewal, 1992). Empirical studies (Akintonde, 2021; Seyi-Gbangbayau, 2023) highlight neglect and creative possibilities, while Haynes (2016) and Ugochukwu (2014) expose Nollywood's underutilization of indigenous heritage. The gap this study addresses is clear connecting cemetery sculpture preservation with cinematic application to strengthen Nigeria's cultural and creative identity.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and exploratory research design, suitable for examining the aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural significance of cemetery sculptures within selected burial grounds in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The research is rooted in the disciplines of Sculpture, Art History, Cultural Anthropology, and Heritage Studies, and employs methods that prioritize visual analysis, cultural interpretation, and contextual documentation.

Study Area

The research was conducted in selected historical and contemporary cemeteries within Abeokuta, including:

Lantoro Cemetery (This is divided into two sections. One for the First Baptist Church and the second for group of churches under the name Lantoro Missionary Cemetery). Others include: Cemetery along Ogbe Road, Adekunle Compound, Ita Adekunle, Ile Ogunsuada, Ikija, Old Sacred Heart Hospital, Ake. Selected family and community burial sites in core traditional neighborhoods such as Kolobo and Ake. These locations were chosen based on their historical relevance, variety of sculptural expressions, and access to visual and oral records of funerary practices. However, among all the public cemeteries visited, only the ones at Lantoro have sculptures and some individual family graveyards



Fig. 2: Lantoro Missionary Cemetery **Fig. 3;** First Baptist Cemetery, Lantoro

Photographs courtesy: The Researcher, 2025

Data Collection Methods

The study employed four major qualitative data collection techniques:

- 1. Field Observation and Visual Documentation:** Systematic on site visits were undertaken to observe, photograph, and record various sculptural forms and motifs on graves, tombs, and memorials. Notes were taken on:
 - i. Material composition (cement, marble and fiberglass)
 - ii. Iconographic content (crosses, angels, busts, religious symbols)
 - iii. Condition and degradation levels
 - iv. Spatial and stylistic arrangements
 - v. Photographs were used as primary visual data for post-field analysis.
- 2. Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with one local sculptor and two masons who specialize in funerary art, three cemetery caretakers and two elders familiar with local burial traditions
- 3. Archival and Literature Review:** Relevant academic literature on funerary art, Yoruba visual culture, memory studies, and Nollywood aesthetics was also consulted.
- 4. Data Analysis:** The sculptures were analyzed stylistically and material wise

Ethical Considerations

Respect for the sacredness of burial spaces was maintained throughout the study. No sculptures were altered or removed, and photographs were taken only after verbal consent where appropriate.

Names of deceased persons or families were documented the report after permission was granted by the cemetery caretakers

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Stylistic and Material Analysis of the Sculptures

A. Contextual Significance

The cemetery sculptures of Abeokuta are vital cultural artifacts serving as visual memorials that honor the deceased and celebrate lineage and social identity. Their presence in burial spaces reflects a Yoruba tradition of using art to sustain memory and communal values. Unfortunately, the practice is fading, making documentation and preservation essential. This study analyzes selected cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta, examining their media, styles, and conditions to reveal their historical and cultural relevance. Through description and symbolic interpretation, the analysis highlights their importance as visual records of Egba heritage and recommends their preservation and integration into Nollywood for cultural continuity.

B. Descriptive, Material and Symbolic Analysis

Total number of sculptures analyzed: 18

Concrete Busts – 7 (1 female, 6 males; Figs. 4–10)

Full-size Concrete Portraits – 2 (Figs. 1 & 11)

Full-size Fiberglass Male Portraits – 2

Relief Portrait Etchings – 4

Angel Figures – 3

C. Material and Stylistic Analysis

C.i. Reinforced Concrete: (9 works: 7 busts and 2 full-size)

Style: Realism

The adoption of reinforced concrete marks a transition from temporary funerary expressions to enduring memorialization. Its durability aligns with Yoruba beliefs in ancestral permanence. Though

common in construction, its sculptural adaptation reflects technical mastery and realism that deepen both symbolic and aesthetic appeal.

Scale and Presence: The busts are slightly larger than life, suggesting elevated status, while the two full figures—a standing male and seated female—are rendered life-size. Their monumentality conveys dignity and remembrance. The male figure (Figs. 1 & 12), adorned in grey attire with beads and white hair, evokes authority and ancestral wisdom. The seated female (Fig. 11), dressed in white iro and buba with a modest gele, symbolizes maternal purity and transition, reflecting Yoruba cosmology where white signifies peace and spirituality.

Stylistic Orientation: Realism represents the cultural documentation of all the works captured in this research including the concrete sculptures. All nine concrete portraits employ realism, reflecting the Yoruba idea of continuity between life and the ancestral realm. Attention to facial expression, hairstyle, and attire preserves individuality and transmits cultural identity. These sculptures thus serve as visual documentation of Egba lineage and social values.

Gender Representation: Male figures dominate (7 of 9), each personalized with symbols of status or profession. The two female figures, particularly the seated one, embody dignity and motherhood, balancing the gender narrative in Yoruba commemorative art. Their portrayal reinforces the cultural esteem of women as nurturers and moral anchors within ancestral memory..



Fig 4: Chief O. Kuforiji, 1935

Fig 5: S.O Ladele, 1998

All the above sculptures are found in the cemeteries at Lantoro

Photographs courtesy: The Researchers, 2025



Fig.6; Mariam Badamosi, 1987

Fig.7: Pa T.O.Amosu, 1993

All the above sculptures are found in the cemeteries at Lantoro

Photographs courtesy: The Researchers, 2025



Fig 8: Unnamed Figure.

Fig 9: Chief S.O. Kuforiji, 1998

All the above sculptures are found in the cemeteries at Lantoro

Photographs courtesy: The Researchers, 2025



Fig. 10: Sir J. Caxton Idowu, 1994, Kolobo, Abeokuta

Image Courtesy: Nifemi Gbangbayau, 2025



Fig 11: Madam P. Majekodunmi,

1928, Ita Adekunle, Ikija Road



Fig. 12: Rev Father Coquard (same in fig. 1)

1933, Isale Ake

Photographs courtesy: The Researchers, 2025

C.ii. Fiberglass Sculptures

Number: 2

Medium: Patinated fiberglass

Style: Naturalistic/Idealized **Scale:** Full body, 7 ft.

Artists: Unknown.

Year of production: Unknown

C.ii.a. Chief Ogunsuada (Fig. 13)

Once installed on a colonial balcony, his agbada, fila, and beads projected Egba nobility. Now displaced to a dark room after urban redevelopment, the statue reflects the fragility of cultural memory amid modernization.

C.ii.b. Chief Akinolugbade (Fig. 14)

A towering funerary figure at Owu, Abeokuta, positioned before the hospital bearing his name. This seven feet fiberglass sculpture epitomizes Yoruba cemetery art, blending reverence and sculptural grandeur.



Fig 13: Chief Ogunsuada, Ikija. **Fig.14:** Chief Akinolugbade, Owu, Abeokuta

Image Courtesy: The Researcher, 2025. **Image Courtesy:** Nifemi Gbangbayau

C.iii. Etching Portraitures

Number: 3 (2 reliefs, 1 outline) Medium: Marble Style: Stylized Realism & Semi-abstract
Line Drawing

Figs. 15–16 (Mrs. B. Sotiloye–Oke, 2024; Mrs. O. O. Adeyi, 2023) feature etched female portraits rendered in delicate realism that preserves facial likeness. Fig. 17 (Sola and Pa Otolorin) shows a simple line drawing on grey marble—less detailed yet emotionally resonant, symbolizing memory’s endurance.

All portraits are centrally positioned on gravestones framed by modest architectural borders and vegetation, reflecting Yoruba reverence for nature and ancestry. The use of granite and marble underscores durability and communal respect for permanence.

C.iii.a. Cultural Preservation

These portraits function as open-air archives, recording hairstyles, attire, and genealogies that connect generations.

C.iii.b. Aesthetic Value

Their emotional realism humanizes the deceased, while the blend of modern etching and traditional mourning reveals Nigeria’s evolving funerary aesthetics.

C.iii.c. Nollywood Potential

Such portraits provide authentic cemetery imagery and visual cues for character development, offering Yoruba perspectives on death and ancestry—key themes in Nigerian film.

In essence, the three gravestone portraits—two etched and one outlined—serve as cultural and aesthetic landmarks that bridge memory, artistry, and cinematic interpretation. They stand as living archives, preserving indigenous identity while enriching Nigeria’s creative and visual heritage.



Fig.15: Mrs B.Sotiloye-Oke, **Fig 16:** Mrs O.Adeyi, **Fig. 17;** Sola and Pa Otolorin

Burial place for two people

The above images are from Lantoro cemetery

Photographs courtesy: The Researcher, 2025

C.iv. Sculptures of Angels

Number: 4 Medium: Marble & Concrete Style: Symbolic Realism Height: Approx. 5 ft. (Figs. 18–22)

Angels embody peace, protection, and afterlife guardianship. Some resemble classical male figures common in Greco-Roman funerary art, symbolizing eternal youth and strength, yet resonate with Yoruba memorial practices that highlight virtues of the deceased.

Figs. 21–22 show angels from the tombs of Prof. S. Tomori (1984) and Chief E. Laleye (1971). Tomori's kneeling angel symbolizes humility and prayerful intercession. Laleye's fragmented angelic head, though damaged, retains spiritual significance, symbolizing both resilience and fragility of memory. These hybrid forms merge Christian and Yoruba cosmologies (e.g., Egungun traditions), creating a shared spiritual language.

For Nollywood, such imagery offers visual metaphors: the kneeling angel as divine presence, the broken angel as disrupted heritage. Their cinematic use could deepen narratives of faith, ancestry, and identity.



Fig.18: Marble (Unknown date) **Fig. 19:** Male figure. **Fig. 20:** Back of Fig. 19

The above images are from Lantoro cemetery

Photographs Courtesy: The Researcher, 2025



Fig. 21: Kneeling Angel on the tomb of **Fig.22:** Broken Angel- on the tomb of

Prof S. Tomori, 1984

Chief E. Laleye, 1971

The above images are from Lantoro cemetery

Photographs Courtesy: The Researcher, 2025

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study shows that cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta preserve collective identity, spirituality, and history while offering underexplored resources for Nollywood. More than memorials, they function as visual archives of lineage, aesthetics, and ancestral reverence.

Recommendations and Policy Statement

Cemetery sculptures in Abeokuta should be systematically documented through photographs, oral accounts, and stylistic analysis to preserve their artistic and cultural essence. Collaboration among filmmakers, historians, and sculptors will enrich Nollywood's visual authenticity, while incorporating funerary art into fine arts and cultural studies curricula will promote heritage awareness. Cemeteries should also be conserved as cultural heritage sites to inspire community pride and heritage tourism.

Policy Statement:

Government and cultural agencies should adopt a preservation policy that recognizes cemetery sculptures as national heritage. Such a policy should support documentation, conservation, and creative engagement, ensuring these monuments continue to sustain cultural memory and identity.

Future Research

Future research should compare cemetery sculpture traditions across Nigerian cultures to highlight regional variations in funerary symbolism, while also investigating digital heritage tools such as 3D scanning, VR, and AR for preserving and interpreting these works in scholarly and public contexts.

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NARRATIVES OF FEMALE AGENCY AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIAN CINEMA: EXAMINING GENDER AND EDUCATION IN *THE ROYAL HIBISCUS HOTEL* AND *FINDING ME* MOVIES

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Abstract

The powerful influence of filmic representation on the public perception of gender and power has made the representation of women in Nigerian cinema a significant area of scholarly inquiry. This study interrogates Ishaya Bako's *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* (2017) and Funke Akindele's *Finding Me* (2020) to explore how female protagonists negotiate the intricacies of patriarchy, education, and personal agency by utilizing a CDA approach grounded in the work of Norman Fairclough (1995). Findings reveal that the education of the protagonists is a reflection of social norms and each character's drive toward autonomy. Characters in these films also use education to empower themselves, challenge patriarchy, and gain agency through negotiating family relationships, economic independence, and reinterpreting traditional femininity and leadership. These findings reveal the complexities of Nigerian women's lived experience and the need for more nuanced portrayals of women within Nollywood that reflect the diversity and agency of women in Nigerian society. The study highlighted the intersection of gender and education in these films, emphasizing the potential of media as an active mechanism for women's empowerment. This finding supports research on Nollywood and gender representation and underscores the importance of media in debunking and reconstructing such stereotypical notions about the role women can play and their agency within Nigerian society.

Keywords: Agency, Education, Leadership, Patriarchy and Empowerment

I. Introduction

Nigerian cinema, specifically Nollywood, has become a major cultural force in shaping the public understanding of issues related to identity, culture, and society. One area in which Nollywood has attracted attention is its treatment of women, particularly though not exclusively in relation to depictions of agency and leadership (Amonyeye & Agbo, 2022; Obire & Eginwin, 2025; Okafor 2025; Uchendu, 2023). Film provides a particularly potent site for both creative and political articulation of gender roles and women's agency (Udoh, 2025; Worlu and Harcourt-Whyte, 2025).

Nigerian film scholarship has also discussed the representation of women in film, with some arguments that these films reinforce patriarchal ideology and others suggesting that more complex and empowering ideals of femininity are represented. Nollywood films also frequently mirror the power struggle between husband and wife, and traditional gender roles are supported rather than rejected (Nyamkoh and Ngwa 2021). Gbambu et al (2025) also observes the dominant negative representations

of women in Northern Ghanaian film. Yet recently made films have begun to dismantle these stereotypes, presenting more nuanced depictions of women's lives (Martins et al. 2025; Sachar, 2024; Vafa & Yahya, 2024).

Education has also been identified as a pivotal area in which to promote female agency and leadership in a way that could challenge patriarchal norms and promote gender equality (Chandra, 2025; Koko and Osuji, 2018; Rajvala, 2025). There is, but, still a gap in the literature on the ways in which Nigerian cinema handles the intersection between gender and education in narratives of empowered women.

The films in this study focus on female protagonists whose journeys are impacted by society's expectations and family obligations as they strive to complete their education and achieve their dreams, specifically *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* by Ishaya Bako and *Finding Me* by Funke Akindele. This makes these films particularly timely to explore representations of female agency and leadership in Nigerian film.

Although gender has been previously studied in Nollywood (Nyamkoh & Ngwa 2021, Ofori 2024; Ogunbola, et al. 2024; Olawuyi & Odesola, 2024), very little research exists that addresses the discursive articulation of female agency and leadership via the educational themes in these films specifically. Hence, the relevance of this present study.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to explore how female agency and leadership are constructed and represented in 21 century Nigerian film by investigating the ways in which *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* and *Finding Me* deploy educational narratives to either disrupt or uphold the status quo of patriarchy.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. examine how these films' narrative discourses depict female protagonists' search for economic autonomy.
2. analyze how formal education and professional training become instruments through which women assert agency and negotiate domestic and professional conflicts.
3. explore how films redefine or subvert traditional gender roles and cinematic portrayals of leadership within the Nollywood context.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This work is placed in the context of insights made available to the literature on Nollywood through CDA of contemporary films regarding the media's impact on gender attitudes. It also informs policy and advocacy for gender equality by identifying effective narrative strategies for promoting Female leadership.

II. Literature Review

Female agency is rooted in the ability of women to act independently (Akpakpan, 2025; Obioha & Daminabo, 2021). The construction of agency is itself also conditioned by cultural dynamics, especially in postcolonial contexts. Gender, like the concept of leadership, is not static and the world has seen the evolution of both, but female leaders continue to face challenges in male dominated spaces (Kessler, 2014; O'Brien et al., 2023). Education is both a crucial instrument and catalyst of education and a fundamental means for self- discovery and empowerment (Obioha and Daminabo, 2021). It has the potential to break the poverty cycle, to lower inequality and to promote long term development (Mahanta, 2024). Thus, the education of girls and women is viewed as instrumental to gender equality and the attainment of international development objectives (SDG Report, 2025). Media is central to this change and plays an active role in perpetuating societal conceptions of women (Ahmad Dar, 2023).

This evolution in Nollywood's treatment of women's roles has progressed from stereotypes to empowered, resilient women (Ali Ibbi, 2017; Aromona, 2016; Akindare, 2021; Emwinromwankhoe, 2021). As noted by Sanni (2025), one of the functions of media is to establish societal norms and beliefs about the acceptability of women in leadership positions. The portrayal or absence of women in media also has an effect on and can either strengthen or disrupt gender stereotypes, ultimately affecting the formation of women leaders. Nollywood has become a cultural powerhouse for the continent. But, there are gender stereotypes as a result of socio- cultural conceptions of gender (Akanbi, 2025).

The Royal Hibiscus Hotel (2017), directed by Ishaya Bako, also takes up issues of identity, culture and power in contemporary Nigeria, but in a more complex way. Thus, similar to Gbadegesin's (2020) article on Nollywood films and the reconstruction of girl child identity, in which education is also positioned as a mechanism for transformation into a more empowered, less exploited version of the African girl child, this film promotes the idea of education as an empowering practice. This theme is also reinforced by Ojobo's claim that educational empowerment is a springboard to all other types of empowerment. (2008, p. 93).

Finding Me, in contrast, has more emotional manipulation, toxic masculinity, and societal pressure to maintain a broken marriage for the sake of appearances (Omoruyi, 2025). This film emphasizes an identity quest, a theme that is important for Nollywood films in general (Somi, 2025). Olayiwola (2024) further looks at the heterogenous roles played by men and women in Western contexts in Nollywood, in a focus on identity that supports the notion of modernity as refiguring images of female gender through popular Nigerian film (p. 128).

The scholarship on *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* and *Finding Me* gives some sense of the ways in which empowerment is being depicted in films from present-day Nigeria. Yet there are still important gaps in understanding the systemic nature of patriarchy and social constructions of gender. **Mulvey's (1975) theory** of the "male gaze" analyzes the objectification of women in film (Vanbuskirik, 2025). *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* and *Finding Me* disrupt this trend by featuring protagonists whose professional ambitions trump romantic aspirations or passive stand-ins for others, but scholarship has not yet thoroughly analyzed these texts in order to consider their Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) critical projects.

III. Methodology

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine Nigerian cinematic discourses on female agency and leadership in Nigerian cinema using textual analysis of specific excerpts from *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* (2017) and *Finding Me* (2020).

Data Sources

The text data analyzed in this study was primarily extracted from the script lines of the two films that were selected for their central focus on female agency and female leadership. The secondary source of data comprised books, journals articles, and internet. Norman's Analysis guided this analysis. Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional model: Description (Text), Interpretation (Discourse Practice) and Explanation (Sociocultural Practice).

Rationale for Movies Selection

The Royal Hibiscus Hotel and *Finding Me* were chosen for their contemporaneity and their discussion of issues pertinent to this study.

Data Analysis Procedure

The selected were coded and grouped according to the study's particular aims. Excerpts of *The Royal Hibiscus* and *Finding Me* movies were also tagged as RHH and FM.

IV. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The following section outlines a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the film clips, organized according to the research objectives and Fairclough's dimensions.

Economic Empowerment

This section analyzes the discursive construction (Description) of their economic independence and also interprets (Discourse Practice) these arguments as subverting normative gender roles (Discourse Practice).

Instances are given in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 1 (TRHH): I want to teach young people how to cook and create career for themselves.

Excerpt 2 (FM): I am also making my money.

Excerpt 3 (FM): Congratulations to us... You are the best wife ever, you are the best husband ever.

In excerpt 1 above the modal verb “want to” indicates volition and future action; the object is “Nigerians proud.” Opeoluwa’s vision discourse: Her professional motivation is a legacy of nationalism and excellence, not a question of domestic survival. It positions her culinary education as a form of public service, a reinterpretation of women’s skill that undermines the assumption that it ought to remain private (domestic labor). On top of that, in excerpt 2 the emphasis on “teach”, “create career” evokes empowerment and protagonist agency- the traditional role of woman limited to economic opportunity has been redefined. She equally positions herself as an educator and job creator, thus challenging the traditional female role as passive recipient of economic activity. Her international exposure and quality education, therefore, can be understood as transferable cultural capital that she can then use in order to support others. In excerpt 3, the present continuous tense “am making” establishes an independent, active source of income that is in the process of being generated; the variation expressed by the adverb “also” suggests equality or support behind the primary anticipated source of income, which would be the husband. This makes a direct claim of financial independence from her relationship, countering patriarchal arguments of financial dependence. Her successful investment (which is coupled to educational attainment as well as business acumen) interprets education as the “tool for change” to combat traditional dependency. More so in excerpt 4 the use of the reciprocal pronoun “us” as well as the parallel superlative praise (best wife ever/best husband ever). Success is recognized institutionally, and this mutual acknowledgment of success also subverts male superiority ideologies and constructs the relationship as a successful modern economic and domestic partnership.

Asserting Agency through Educational Capital (Interpretation & Explanation)

This section analyzes how formal education is used to assert agency (Interpretation) and explains how this challenges socio-cultural power relations (Explanation) (RQ2).

Excerpt 4 (TRHH): She is the future owner... trained in London. / Na which member of your family don go London before?

Excerpt 5 (TRHH): Regardless, we are going to be making some changes... Miko, this is my international standard!

Excerpt 6 (FM): Tinuke has two masters “gidigba lekan na, o loko, o lomo omo”, You, ordinary pass. When I see you are serious with yourself then, you can become the CEO.

Excerpt 7 (FM): Kola, I have told you to stop body shaming me... I don’t like it.

In excerpt 4 Opeoluwa's mother invokes being "trained in London" (educational capital) as a sign of superiority and authenticity. This affirms that Opeoluwa has a claim to leadership. "Trained in London" becomes a sign of quality and authenticity. International educational experience becomes modern cultural capital, which is made explicit through its privileged status over the local. In this context, it challenges the socio-cultural practice of only allowing male heirs to inherit or lead.

The adverbial "regardless" in excerpt 5 conveys a certainty and finality that overrides the resistance expressed by Miko. The performative authority is found in "international standard". Opeoluwa draws on her professional training for a source of universal validation that positions her as modern and progressive. This directly confronts Miko's patriarchal resistance and creates new workplace hierarchies dependent on ability rather than gender.

In excerpt 6, the chief Olowoporoko of Olowo Steel Company, who is Atinuke's father, deploys his daughter's education to undermine the male claim, Dotun. Education, still operating under a patriarchal system but more merit based than gender based, is the lever that breaks the pattern of automatic male succession. The performative act of asserting oneself in excerpt 8 comes from directly addressing and stating the limits with, "stop" "I don't like it". Her refusal to be objectified by her husband is a performative rejection of patriarchal ownership of women's bodies. Her self-assertion, through her own professional agency, allows her to delineate her boundaries between value and beauty.

Redefining Gender Roles and Leadership

This section addresses the Explanation dimension and how the actions within the films question gender roles and reframe concepts of leadership (RQ3).

Excerpt 7 (TRHH): You should think about settling down.

Excerpt 8 (FM): I am the heir apparent of Olowo steel... If Daddy die now, who will take over? (Dotun)

Excerpt 9 (FM): Fix it by working away from him... Is it until a man beat you to death? (Sarah's advice)

Excerpt 10 (FM): You have to do digital marketing... Yes.

Excerpt 11 (FM): This is lovely. We need to change our style.

The mother's advice is a standard discourse of patriarchal expectation that values marriage over career. The predominance of Opeoluwa's professional aspirations (Excerpt 7) interrupts this troped discourse. Classic discourse of patriarchal expectation, with marriage taking precedence over work. The plot affirms Opeoluwa's decision to prioritize her career over marriage, legitimating women's professional aspirations above the urgency to marry, explaining the sociocultural change.

Through the film, the women's questions regarding careers as a priority over the pressure to marry is legitimized within the narrative of the film, offering an explanation for a changed attitude and value structure in society. Dotun's comment in excerpt 8 employs the formal legalistic term "heir apparent" to draw attention to the embedded patriarchal presumption of automatic male succession, with gender as the primary qualification for ascension to leadership. The rhetorical question ("who will take over?") attempts to lend credibility to this assertion by appealing to a sense of crisis in the absence of the male founder. This discourse is positioned in contrast to Atinuke's meritocratic capacity (demonstrated by her several Masters' degrees, Excerpt 6). This narrative explains the breakdown of culturally reproductive practices of primogeniture as a recommendation for leadership based on educational capital and evidence of competency. The film promotes a contemporary business ethics in which executives obtain their status through educational achievement and demonstrated skill rather than hereditary privilege or masculinity. Dotun's expectation is in stark contrast to Atinuke's proactive leadership and superior training (Excerpt 8). When educated competence contests it, a claim to tradition is framed within the narrative as an illegitimate challenge to which one should respond with a tradition of merit-based succession in the socio-cultural practice.

Sarah's counsel in excerpt 9 then places the woman's physical safety and financial self-sufficiency (working away) ahead of the sanctity of marriage prioritizing self-preservation and physical safety, urging escape from a toxic/abusive relationship. This impactful rhetoric dismisses the familial or societal pressure that women should suffer in toxic relationships to uphold and protect marriage. This guidance puts the emphasis on the individual woman herself, and her autonomy, rather than on her societal obligation to stay in an abusive marriage. This empowering message disavows the narrative that women are to suffer in toxic relationships. It outlines how economic agency is integral to personal safety and freedom Atinuke's directives also showcase her training and her ability to make empowered CEO decisions (Excerpt 10). Her orders (to Anthony, to the guides) are normalized by her competence which inverts expectations of who should be in charge and who should be authoritative and thus her authority as a woman is unquestioned. Atinuke has been educated and has the training necessary to direct a young man. In excerpt 11, the use of the collective pronoun "we" and the imperative to "need to change" indicates some managerial oversight. So Atinuke's instructions are normalized according to managerial know-how.

V. Summary of Findings

Using Fairclough's CDA as a framework, this study finds that the texts of contemporary Nigerian film, such as *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* and *Finding Me*, engage in a transformative discursive practice that is redefining gender and power relations in the Nigerian social imaginary.

The discourse of the films conservatively and consistently deploys meritocracy, professionalism, and outside certification (education) as the rightful foundation for women in leadership positions. This becomes a powerful challenge to two main patriarchal ideological formations: Challenging The narratives' challenge to the idea that ascription by birth determines power in professional and domestic spheres replaces an ascriptive discourse with one based on competence and achievement.

Also, the discourse connects financial resources and educational advancement directly to personal and bodily autonomy, female agency thereby shifting from the boardroom to the private space of marriage.

Ultimately, these films serve as sites of ideological struggle that make possible a new Order of Discourse in Nollywood that validates and naturalizes the highly educated, economically independent and self-assertive female leader, an alternative and counter-hegemonic narrative to the solidified patriarchal reproductive ideals.

VI. Conclusion

Using Fairclough's CDA methodology, this study finds that the narratives present in contemporary Nigerian films such as *The Royal Hibiscus Hotel* and *Finding Me* are not merely features of stories about successful women, but that working to represent women as talented and empowered is a significant discursive practice that plays a role in restructuring the gender/power dynamics of the Nigerian social imaginary.

Meritocracy, professionalism, and external certification (education) are used as the rightful foundation for female leadership in the discourse surrounding these films in a systematic fashion. The effect of this is a powerful intervention into two of the primary patriarchal ideological formations:

The narratives dismantle the notion that power in domestic and professional life is determined solely by birthright or gender, replacing it with a discourse rooted in competence and achievement.

The discourse links economic independence and educational attainment directly to personal and bodily autonomy, extending female agency from the public boardroom into the private marital space.

Ultimately, these films are sites of ideological struggle, contributing to a new Order of Discourse in Nollywood that legitimates and naturalizes the highly educated, economically independent, and self-assertive female leader, presenting a counter-hegemonic narrative to entrenched patriarchal norms.

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REFERENCING AND INFERENCING: A COMPARATIVE PRAGMATIC STUDY OF OCCUPY NIGERIA AND ENDSARS PROTESTS' DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This study presents a comparative pragmatic analysis of the Occupy Nigeria (2012) and EndSARS (2020) protests, focusing on how protesters construct meaning in public protest discourse. Although protest movements have become prominent forms of political participation in Nigeria, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to the pragmatic mechanisms through which protesters encode and communicate their intentions in protest texts. Consequently, the linguistic strategies through which meaning is negotiated, implied, and interpreted in protest discourse remain insufficiently explored. Addressing this gap, the study investigates how reference and inference function as pragmatic tools for meaning construction in protest communication. Drawing on the frameworks of Yule (1996) and Mey (2001), the research examines how identified referents in protest texts relate to contextual factors to convey meaning and reveal speakers' communicative intentions. The study argues that protest discourse in Nigeria functions as a strategic site of meaning-making in which protesters deploy referential expressions and inferential cues to construct collective identity, articulate dissent, and implicitly negotiate power relations within the socio-political context. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, protest texts from the two movements are analysed to identify patterns of referential expressions and inferential meanings. The findings reveal that protesters frequently employ pronouns, particularly "we," to construct collective identity and establish in-group and out-group distinctions. Demonstrative pronouns and noun phrases are also strategically used to signal physical and psychological distance, often expressing rejection or disapproval. Furthermore, inferential meanings embedded in the discourse reveal speakers' intentions to threaten, reassure, criticise, condemn, incite, and confront authority. The study situates Nigerian protest discourse within a global context and, by so doing, contributes to the ongoing project of re-imagining language in a globalised world, demonstrating how locally grounded protest expressions circulate through transnational communicative networks and participate in broader conversations on justice, governance, and civic resistance.

Keywords: Reference, inference, EndSARS, Occupy Nigeria, protest discourse, context.

1.0 Introduction

Language is a fundamental medium of human communication through which individuals coordinate actions, share knowledge, and express thoughts (Goodman & Frank, 2016, p. 818). Beyond everyday interaction, language also plays a central role in public life, particularly in moments of social and political contestation such as protests. Protest constitutes a collective social process through which

citizens articulate grievances, challenge authority, and mobilise support to influence public opinion and demand institutional or policy change (Cammaerts, 2015, p. 2). In this sense, protest represents an important form of civic engagement, allowing social actors to contest governance practices and advocate for reforms across domains such as economic policy, human rights, health, gender, and political accountability (Oyedemi, 2018). Within such contexts, language functions not merely as a communicative medium but as a strategic resource through which protesters frame issues, contest state authority, and construct collective positions (Chiluwa, 2015; Cammaerts, 2015).

The right to protest is widely recognised within international and national legal frameworks, including Article 21 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 11 of the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). Nigeria has experienced several protest movements reflecting citizens' engagement with governance and public policy. Among the most prominent are the Occupy Nigeria protest of 2012, which emerged in response to the removal of fuel subsidies, and the EndSARS protest of 2020, which mobilised widespread opposition to police brutality. Both movements attracted significant national and international attention and generated extensive public discourse across physical and digital spaces, highlighting the central role of language in shaping public engagement with socio-political issues.

Moments of protest and political crisis often produce dense and symbolically charged discourses through which social actors articulate grievances, negotiate identities, and challenge institutional authority. As Adeyanju (2007) observes, political discourse in crisis situations frequently contains expressions that signal threats to peace, law, and social order. Existing scholarship has examined protest discourse from perspectives such as political communication, media representation, and critical discourse analysis. While these studies provide valuable insights into the dynamics of protest communication, comparatively limited attention has been paid to the pragmatic processes through which meaning is constructed and interpreted in protest discourse, particularly in the Nigerian context. Specifically, the role of pragmatic mechanisms such as reference and inference in shaping the interpretation of protest messages and the construction of shared socio-political meanings remains insufficiently explored.

This study addresses this gap by examining how referential and inferential mechanisms operate in the discourse of the Occupy Nigeria (2012) and EndSARS (2020) protests. Drawing on the pragmatic perspectives of Yule (1996) and Mey (2001), the study analyses selected protest texts to demonstrate

how linguistic choices enable participants and audiences to identify social actors, interpret implicit meanings, and construct shared understandings of socio-political realities. Through a comparative analysis of texts from both movements, the study demonstrates how protest discourse mobilises pragmatic resources to articulate grievances, construct collective identities, and position actors within broader ideological struggles.

By situating Nigerian protest discourse within a global context, the study further contributes to the ongoing project of re-imagining language in a globalised world. It demonstrates how locally grounded protest expressions circulate through transnational communicative networks and participate in broader conversations on justice, governance, and civic resistance. In this way, protest language in Nigeria is understood not merely as local political communication but as a form of linguistic practice that interacts with and reshapes contemporary global activist discourse.

The subsequent sections of the paper review relevant scholarship, articulate the theoretical framework and methodological approach, and present a comparative pragmatic analysis of protest discourse in the Occupy Nigeria and EndSARS movements.

2.0 Occupy Nigeria and #End SARS Protests: An Overview

The protest tagged Occupy Nigeria, started on Monday, 9 January 2012, when the Federal Government of Nigeria on January 1, 2012, removed fuel subsidy in Nigeria without warning and announced an increase in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) from ₦65 (Sixty-five naira) to ₦141 (one hundred and forty-one naira), as contained in the Long-term Fiscal Framework and 2012 Fiscal Strategic paper submitted by President Jonathan to the National Assembly, proposing full deregulation of the oil sector to commence from the 2012 fiscal year. This singular action shook the sensibilities of Nigerians. It elicited stiff resistance from Nigerians as led by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and supported by a coalition of Civil Society groups, opposition politicians and professional associations, all coalescing into a Joint Action Front (JAF), to stage a five-day nationwide protest from Monday January 9, 2012 to Friday January 13, 2012. Protests occurred in cities such as Kano, Surulere, Ojota (within metropolitan Lagos), Abuja, Minna, and at the Nigerian High Commission in London, characterised by civil disobedience, civil resistance, strike actions, and demonstrations.

The #EndSARS protest was a decentralized online social movement that began in 2017, using the hashtag #EndSARS to voice concern about police brutality, abuse, and impunity by the Special Anti-

Robbery Squad (SARS) in Nigeria, especially against the youths, in response to the formation of the unit in 1992 in response to increasing crime rates in Lagos state, which by 2002 had spread to other states of the federation, but whose officers had deviated from the founding principles to become a terror to innocent citizens, a resurgence in October 2020 after further revelations of the unit's abuses, and mass demonstrations across major cities in Nigeria and social media platforms with over 28 million tweets on Twitter alone. The protest, which was initially peaceful, turned violent after it was alleged that security forces and suspected thugs attacked protesters, resulting in the death of some protesters and the injury of many.

3.0 Research Problem

Although both Occupy Nigeria (2012) and #EndSARS (2020) are major civic uprisings in Nigeria's recent history, how participants used language to frame grievances, build collective identities, and mobilise public support remains not well understood from a pragmatic perspective. Existing studies (e.g., Agbedo, 2012; Chiluwa, 2015; Meng, 2021; Onanuga, 2021; Adeniyi, 2022; Chidozie, E. C. & Chukwuezi, E. E., 2024; among others) tend to describe their political contexts, media dynamics, or ideological content, but rarely examine how referencing and inferencing—two core pragmatic mechanisms—shape the interpretation and persuasive power of protest discourse. Furthermore, the two movements took place in different communication environments: Occupy Nigeria relied mainly on traditional media and early social networking platforms, while #EndSARS occurred within a highly digital, multimodal, and globally connected space. These differences in communication ecology likely influenced how protesters chose referential expressions (e.g., “we,” “the youth,” “the cabal,” “a president,” “SARS”) and how audiences inferred implicit meanings, contextual assumptions, and ideological positions. However, scholarly work has not systematically compared these pragmatic strategies across the two protests.

The main issue, therefore, is the limited scholarly attention to the pragmatic mechanisms by which protesters encode and communicate meaning in protest discourse, particularly through reference and inference. More specifically, there is a lack of comparative research showing how referencing and inferencing function differently in the discourses of the Occupy Nigeria and #EndSARS movements, and how these differences reflect changes in Nigeria's socio-political landscape, media culture, and patterns of civic engagement. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding how language shapes the creation, circulation, and influence of protest messages in evolving democratic contexts. Consequently, this study offers a new perspective on the examination of protest discourse within pragmatics and, more broadly, in linguistics.

4.0 Empirical Review

The study of language use in socio-political contexts has increasingly foregrounded pragmatics as a critical analytical lens. Pragmatics, concerned with meaning-in-context, provides tools such as referencing, inferencing, implicature, deixis, and presupposition to uncover how speakers encode ideological stances and shape audience interpretation (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Scholars such as van Dijk (2006) and Fairclough (2010) emphasize that discourse practices in political and protest settings are inherently strategic, deploying linguistic choices that subtly negotiate power, legitimacy, and collective identity. Protest discourse, therefore, becomes a site where groups signal alignment, frame grievances, and mobilize action through shared inferential knowledge and contextual cues.

Previous studies in linguistics have demonstrated the use of various linguistic theories to analyse protest discourse in placards (Agbedo, 2012; Abuh, 2024), posters (Ibrahim, 2017; Agbara & John, 2022), social media posts (Onanuga, 2021; Adeniyi, 2022; Chidozie & Chukwuezi, 2024), cartoons and visual images (Ukor, 2022; Usman, 2024), and newspaper reports and headlines (Egbunike, 2015; Ademilokun, 2023). Most scholars who have worked on the context-based analysis of protest have not used the pragmatic tools of reference and inference to compare the language of protest with other forms of discourse. For instance, Agbedo (2012) analysed the linguistic messages of placards displayed during the fuel subsidy removal protests in Nigeria, using Halliday's (1978) notion of context stratum (part of Systemic-Functional Grammar) as the analytical tool, and found an emerging pattern of civil protest in Nigeria that interrogates a wide range of socio-economic and political ills plaguing the Nigerian nation. Using a pragma-semiotic approach, Igwebuike, Abioye & Chimuanya (2017) analysed the verbal and visual representations of people and their actions during the Occupy Nigeria protest, employing Mey's (2001) pragmatic act and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse analysis.

In a study that deployed Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory and Hoye and Kaiser's (2007) Visual Act Theory for data analysis, Ukor (2022) found that verbal and visual elements in the Nigerian EndSARS protest movement were used in the acts of charging, stating, commanding, reminding, naming, describing, etc. Visual elements like colour, facial expression, and other linguistic expressions such as metaphor, symbolism, gesture, contrast, and satire were also found to be used to demand and lampoon the government; the authors concluded that visual act theory and pragmatic acts complement each other in multimodal communication. Agbara and John (2022) investigated pragmatic inferences in verbal aggression employed during Nigeria's ENDSARS protest to identify the pragmatic inferences used by protesters to register their resentment and frustrations, and to identify how

protesters negotiated the intended meaning of the various inscriptions on the posters. By deploying the pragmatic tools of implicature and presupposition, Chidozie and Chukwuezi (2024) found that the language of protesters was characterised by distinct classes of presuppositions, which served as persuasive techniques that made the message seem real and convincing.

While numerous studies address the linguistic characteristics of both protests, few undertake a comparative pragmatic analysis focusing specifically on referencing and inferencing across the two movements. Existing works tend to treat each protest independently or emphasize discourse structure, ideology, or digital activism without examining how pragmatic markers shift across socio-political and technological contexts. This study fills that gap by offering a comparative perspective that links pragmatic strategies to evolving protest cultures in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatists (i.e., Malinowski, 1923; Firth, 1962; Halliday & Hassan, 1989; Odebunmi, 2006; Kecskes, 2010 & 2014; Odebunmi, 2016; Paranowo, 2020, and others) have long argued the importance of the discourse environment for meaning. This study prioritises the discourse context, using the pragmatic tools of reference and inference outlined by Yule (1996) and Mey (2001) to analyse the selected texts. Reference and inference are two distinct yet interrelated processes in pragmatics (Mey, 2001). When users of language carry out linguistic actions in discourse, they refer to human and non-human characters. The addressee must understand what entity or process the speaker has in mind. This indicates that any communicative situation requires the identification of entities, processes, and instances.

In this sense, reference is a relation that holds between words or phrases in language and what a speaker uses those words or phrases to refer to in the real world in a discourse context (Akinwotu, 2016, p. 92). Yule (1996, p. 23) defines reference as “an activity in which the speaker uses a particular linguistic form (referring expressions) to point the listener to the identification of some entities”. A speaker can use references to select referents such as people, objects, and concepts in a specific context of interaction. Reference is a social act because reference is connected to the goals of the speaker, and the speaker assumes that the meaning of the identified referent will be understood as the speaker intended (Yule, 1996, p. 17). Reference is a social act in which the speaker assumes that the meaning of an identified object, person, or notion in a given context will be interpreted as the speaker intended because reference is associated with the goals of the speaker (Chukwu, 2024):

Pragmatic reference has to do with the use of words to indicate persons or objects that are not recoverable from a sentence or immediate linguistic environment. However, the objects or persons being referred to can be identified from the context in which the reference is made or from the background knowledge of the participants in the conversation.

Deictic expressions are a type of pragmatic reference: "indexical expression is a special referential expression, in which, in addition to the naming semantics of their sense, they have the sense of the reference to the particular context in which that sense is used" (Mey, 2001, p. 54). Reference is a general term for naming entities in the world or context (Cruse, 2006), and a referring expression or reference is "a linguistic unit, a noun phrase, which is used in an utterance and is linked to something outside the language" (Kreidler, 1998, p. 130), which can be dead, living, abstract, or a group of such. Pronouns are perhaps the most common referring expressions (Yule 1996, p. 17), and they are contextualised to derive contextual meaning through the inferencing process. For example, a proper noun is a specific name in a text, the pronoun refers to something based on the location of the speaker and/or hearer, and its referring expressions refer to persons (e.g., first, second, third person pronouns, I, me, you, we, her, him, them, that man, etc.), which usually refers to the participants of speech (first and second person) and the participant of the speech (third person) that is not speaking and hearing (Wodak et al., 2009). The referents of the definite and indefinite noun phrases are also context dependent.

Yule (1996) claims that "Inference is what the listener brings to bear to make what is said equal what must be meant". Grundy (2000) defines inference as "a characteristic of the utterance or its connection to other known facts or features that leads the hearer to the suspicion that the literal meaning is not (the only) meaning that the speaker intends to convey". The meaning of an utterance depends on what is said (or written) and what is inferred by the listener or reader, a process which Mey (2001, p. 54) claims requires "contextual coordinates" such as mutual understanding of the discourse situation/ context, shared background knowledge of interlocutors, shared linguistic knowledge, and mutual understanding of social conventions and cultural beliefs as factors necessary for appropriate inferencing and interpretation of meaning. Every utterance has both explicit and implicit meaning, and the implicit meaning usually corresponds to the intended meaning of the speaker, even if it was not explicitly stated. It is also self-evident that appropriate inferencing by the hearer (that is, successful reference) is a necessary condition for successful reference.

Building on the classic notions of reference and inference and how they interplay in discourse, Hall and Mazzarella (2023) empirically show that speaker accountability is greater for explicated content (linguistically encoded directly) than for implicated content (inferred indirectly), which is relevant to this study as texts tend to have intentional gaps that audiences must infer. Hu, Degen, and Schuster (2023) further show that pragmatic inferences, and in particular scalar inferences, are shaped by assumptions about unexpressed alternatives, suggesting that inferencing is not a solitary cognitive act but a socially and contextually embedded act of inferencing constrained by linguistic selection, communicative context, and probabilistic reasoning. Furthermore, the classical pragmatist framework in which inference is reduced to recovering speaker intent, while theoretically more robust, fails to adequately acknowledge that inference is an interactive emergent process or part of discourse fluidity (Elder and Haugh 2024). This integrated approach, for example, can ask when a referring expression is used in a text, what the referent is, and how it is identified. This study conceptualises reference as the means by which entities, processes, and events are selected for discussion, and inference as the means that provides implicit or unstated meaning, such that communication is more than just literal forms constrained by common ground discourse context, cultural norms, and interactional history.

Methodology

The content analysis method was used to examine the chosen texts because it was qualitative research. Information was gathered from X posts (previously Twitter) and newspapers. The Guardian, The Punch, and Nigerian Tribune are the chosen newspapers. The information includes ten (10) quotes from the speeches of the TUC and NLC, the leaders of the Labour unions, during the Occupy Nigeria demonstration, as well as ten (10) X posts from EndSARS activists during the EndSARS demonstration. According to the data, the EndSARS protest took place between October 4, 2020, and October 20, 2020, whereas the Occupy Nigeria protest took place between January 2 and January 14, 2012. The pragmatic tools of reference and inference developed by Yule (1996) and Mey (2001) were used to analyse and thoroughly study them.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Pronouns, proper nouns, definite noun phrases, indefinite noun phrases, demonstratives, and adverbial expressions of place and time are examples of referring expressions that indicate the referents in the selected texts. The context determines the meanings of these referents rather than their structure. The speaker's intentions to threaten, reassure, criticise, condemn, incite, and warn are revealed by the expressions they use. This depends on the mutual understanding of the discourse situation or context,

the background knowledge of the interlocutors, their linguistic knowledge, and their shared understanding of social conventions and cultural beliefs.

Use of Pronouns

Throughout the texts, pronouns are used in various ways to refer to the speaker, the addressee, the government, and other protest leaders. Pronouns such as: I, we, you, they, and they are among the pronouns that are used. As the analysis below demonstrates, the context determines how each should be interpreted:

First person singular 'I' and 'me'

Text 1

I will advise Goodluck Jonathan personally to boot those witches known as Alison Madueke and Okonjo Ngozi Iweala out of his way if he wants to win back the heart of Nigerians.

(The Punch Newspaper, January 13, 2012, p.6)

Text 2

#EndSARS is the good morning message to our gallant protesters. I pray we do not lose anyone again. #ArrestKillerOfficers is long overdue, and open all SARS cells nationwide; it's a kidnapper's den.

(X post, Oct 17, 2020)

REF: The speaker who doubles as a person opposed to the removal of fuel subsidies is referred to by the pronoun "I" in texts 1 and 2. The demands of the demonstrators were made clear by the speakers' voices. Assuming a leadership role, the speaker in text 1 openly counsels President Goodluck Jonathan on how to regain the public's support. In text 2, the speaker guides and prays for protesters, assuming both a physical and spiritual leadership role. To placate the demonstrators, the physical leader gives instructions to those in charge.

INF: The inferred meaning from text 1 is an implicit threat based on the common background knowledge of the discourse context. Text 2 explicitly indicts the police authorities, thereby implicitly inciting the public.

Text 3

We are getting reports of some peaceful protesters arrested in front of the Nigerian Embassy in Egypt. We want to report this to the proper channels, but we need more information. If you have more information, please let me know. (X post, Oct 18, 2020)

REF: In text 3, the speaker is the referent of "me." Its reference, however, goes beyond the speaker's identification within the context to include the leadership role that the speaker has taken on. The shift

from the collective “we” to the individual “me” suggests a change in responsibilities. It also asserts the speaker's authority within the given context.

INF: Despite text 3’s informative structure, the speaker subtly warns those who engage in protests to cease or face reporting and legal action.

Second person singular/ plural pronoun ‘You’

In a communicative context, the audience, readers, or listeners are directly addressed or referred to using the second-person pronoun. The referent of “you,” which can be either singular or plural, depends on the context.

Text 4

They said we have collected money and have been compromised, but how can we repay you who have shown so much faith in this struggle? (The Guardian, Jan. 14, Pg. 7)

Text 5

SARS is still on the streets. They are still committing crimes and killing people. We want that changed. If you think we will get tired, you are wasting your time. This is just the beginning.

(X post, Oct 17, 2020)

REF: In text 4, protesters are captured by the referent “you,” but not the speaker. To address the demonstrators directly and reassure them of the protest leaders' dedication to the cause, the speaker uses the pronoun “you.” For the demonstrators to ignore the bribery rumour and make concessions against their leaders, this reassuring gesture is required. In text 5, the group of people opposing the protest serves as the referent for “you”. In the context, this group is implied to be those in government and those who support them. In texts 4 and 5, the referent of “you” changes based on the speakers’ intentions and the circumstances.

INF: Text 4 conveys an implicit message of reassurance. Even so, the text’s structure indicates an act of informing. The speaker’s claim of on-going protest in Text 5 poses a threat to the government.

First person plural pronoun ‘we’ and ‘us’

In the texts, this class of pronouns is used to refer to the group of protesters, the speaker, the hearers, and in certain instances, both the protesters and those opposed to the protest. Depending on the discourse context, each can be identified.

Text 6

We cannot afford to disappoint Nigerians; we cannot afford to fail Nigerians. Nigerians at home and abroad are looking up to labour. We cannot afford to back out at this time.

(Nigerian Tribune, Jan. 14, P. 4)

Text 7

What we need now are very good lawyers; any police officer's name mentioned for brutality or killing should be charged immediately in court by the time we use one as a scapegoat, they will know we are serious about this new Nigeria. (X post, Oct 18, 2020)

Text 8

If we have refineries, and we have dedicated barrels for local consumption. It means that the litres of petrol from the refineries that are functioning won't have the freight, the demurrage, the cost of the smaller vessel that offloads, insurance, and others.

(The Punch, Jan. 7, Pg. 9)

REF: In texts 6, 7, and 8, 'we' has different referents depending on the context: a 'royal we' as in text 6 (it is not addressee inclusive), a more inclusive 'we' as in text 7 (addressee inclusive), and a 'we' that is 'universal' as in text 8 (it includes the speaker and his public [both present and non-present]; it indicates the speaker's assumption or understanding of the addressees' frames of mind that things are not right in the oil sector). Therefore, 'we' in the three selected texts is used to create a sense of shared identity with others, enabling collective action.

INF: Incitement is the implied meaning of text 6. Even so, the structure clearly conveys a sense of reassurance. The threat in Text 7 is meant to serve as a warning to the careless police officers who have killed and brutalised innocent people. Although Text 8 is structured as advice, it subtly criticises the incompetence of those in charge of the nation's oil industry.

Third person plural pronoun 'they' and 'them'

Typically, the use of "they" and "them" indicates a large number of people. However, as will be examined below, the two serve purposes beyond those that are merely structurally conditioned in the context of protest:

Text 9

They said we are going to get tired. They said we can't do it for more than four days. Today is the fourth day, and we are increasing. Are you people tired? No! We must achieve our aim.

(The Punch, Jan. 13, Pg. 2)

Text 10

The announcement ending SARS was just Step1- they've been banning SARS every year. The continuous assaults and murders still ongoing show that corrupt officers are defying the order. Tomorrow, we will peacefully march to present our demands. We want action. Not just an announcement. (X post, Oct 12, 2020)

REF: Texts 9 and 10's use of the third-person plural "they" denotes the existence of a group outside of the speaker's and his protesters' group. The pronoun "they" is linked to a construction of an external group of people that is not included in the discourse itself, according to the context's common knowledge. It alludes to those who are against the demonstration. However, it is used in a more limited sense in text 10 to refer only to government officials who are responsible for disbanding SARS but have so far failed.

Text 11

We told them that the National Executive Council (NEC) of our congresses gave us a mandate. We cannot go beyond that mandate. On N65 we stand!

(Nigerian Tribune, Jan. 14, P. 4)

REF: Another indication of opposition to the protesters in the context is the use of the objective cases of the person plural pronoun 'them' in text 11. Based on a mutual understanding of the circumstances, "them" is inferred to be the federal government representatives who had previously met with the protest leaders without making any progress.

INF: Threats to the government are implied in Text 9, which expressly refers to an informing act. Text 11 not only informs but also subtly warns, while Text 10 makes an implicit warning clear.

Use of Proper Noun

According to Alabi (2014), a proper noun is a capitalized, specific name of a specific individual, location, organization, or object. Regardless of where they appear in a sentence, proper nouns always start with capital letters. The protest texts' proper nouns were given more meanings by the discourse context. For instance:

Text 12

I will advise Goodluck Jonathan personally to boot those witches known as Alison Madueke and Okonjo Ngozi Iweala out of his way if he wants to win back the heart of Nigerians.

(The Punch Newspaper, January 13, 2012, p.6).

Text 13

This promises to be a long-drawn battle; we know its beginning, but we do not know its end or when it will end. But we are confident that the Nigerian people will triumph over the cabal in Aso Rock.

(Nigerian Tribune, Jan. 3, Pg. 2)

REF: Text 12 has the structural reference to particular people: Goodluck Jonathan, Alison Madueke, and Okonjo Iweala, but based on the interlocutors' shared background knowledge, Okonjo Iweala is the Minister of Finance, Alison Madueke is the Minister of Petroleum Resources, and Goodluck Jonathan is the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Due to their positions, they were responsible for removing fuel subsidies and the financial hardships that followed, which led to widespread protests among the population. The two women are labelled witches, which captures the long-standing enmity against them, and the cultural beliefs that witches have with interlocutors. Aso Rock, in text 13, is a geographic landmark in Nigeria. However, here it is understood as the location where those in power make decisions that affect the lives of the people (the “cabal”), causing protests and unrest.

INF: Text 13 explicitly threatens the government while subtly encouraging and inciting the protesters to see the end of the tunnel, while text 1 contains the structure of advice but is an implicit threat based on common knowledge of the protest context.

Use of a Definite Noun Phrase

A specific and identifiable entity within a particular context is called a definite noun phrase. Let us look at the examples below:

Text 13

This promises to be a long-drawn battle; we know its beginning, but we do not know its end or when it will end. But we are confident that the Nigerian people will triumph over the cabal in Aso Rock.
(Nigerian Tribune, Jan. 3, Pg. 2)

Text 14

In the last 24 hours, there have been 1.8 million tweets with the hashtag #EndSARS. Unless it is taken from the tweet to the street, nothing is going to happen. It was the Asians who first discovered that stubborn people react to only a terrifying crowd. (X post, Oct. 4, 2020)

REF: A political clique or faction is indicated by the definite noun phrase "the cabal" in text 13 (Hornby, 1997). The politician in question, along with their supporters, has been charged with being indifferent to the plight of Nigerians, who are already dealing with difficult economic circumstances. The word “cabal” implies negativity in this context. They are held accountable for the outrage and protests that people have experienced. Text 14’s allusion to “the Asians” implicitly supports the call for protest and does not just refer to those of Asian heritage.

INF: Text 13 implies a threat to those in positions of authority, whereas text 14 subtly encourages.

Use of an Indefinite Noun Phrase

A noun that refers to a general or non-specific noun with the articles "a," "an," or no article is called an indefinite noun phrase. It usually adds something new or unknown to a conversation.

Text 15

I sympathise with Nigerians because I never knew a president who cannot pay N18,000 minimum wage to workers could come up with obnoxious policy to annihilate his people.

(The Punch, Jan. 3, P.11)

Text 16

#SarsAlert: Successful young men are tagged 'Yahoo Boys' and ladies are also victims of SARS illegality/harassment. #EndSarsNow #EndSARSBrutality. (X post, Oct 4, 2020)

REF: In test 14, the interlocutors' shared contextual background knowledge identified “a president” as President Goodluck Jonathan. Due to his removal of subsidies and refusal to pay the new minimum wage, he is accused of causing the suffering of Nigerian workers. The interpretation of “Yahoo boys” in text 15 as young men involved in online fraud is aided by the interlocutors' shared linguistic knowledge and similar background knowledge. The discourse context helps us understand this Nigerian-origin linguistic idiom. An appropriate interpretation of the text is ensured because both the speaker and the listeners are aware of the word's meaning.

INF: Although text 15 expressly expresses condemnation with implicit incitement against the SARS officers, text 14 is an explicit criticism that subtly incites the public against the government.

Use of Demonstrative Pronouns and Demonstrative Noun Phrases

Demonstrative pronouns are words used in English to point to specific things or people by replacing nouns. Demonstrative pronouns could be ‘this’ or ‘that’ to indicate singular entities and ‘these’ or ‘those’ for plural entities. They can also be used to indicate proximity e.g., ‘this’ and ‘these’ (near), ‘that’ and ‘those’ (far). On the other hand, a demonstrative noun phrase is usually introduced by a demonstrative pronoun to refer to a particular object, person, place or idea. It also indicates proximity or distal and singular or plural. The context is critical to the interpretation of demonstratives, as shown below:

Text 17

This is unacceptable to us and the Nigerian masses who have been ambushed by a government they expressly gave a popular mandate to represent them a few months back. The president has declared a

total war on the poor masses of this country.

(Nigerian Tribune, Jan. 2, Pg. 2)

Text 18

Another good day to ENDSARS, there's nothing to reform about that unit, those blood suckers and men of the underworld. We won't stop till we #EndSARS#EndSarsNow #EndPolice Brutality.

(X post, Oct. 10, 2020)

REF: In text 17, 'this' is a proximal demonstrative pronoun that conveys nearness, which is symbolic, since it does not involve a pointing gesture, but activates knowledge about the communicative situation of the referent. It refers to the removal of the subsidy that raised the price of petroleum at the pump. In text 18, the use of demonstrative noun phrases 'that unit' and 'those blood suckers' is used by the speaker to indicate both physical and psychological distance from the speaker and the group of protesters: physically, the referents are distal, and psychologically, it is a demonstration of apathy and hatred for the referents, as is also seen in the use of 'those witches' in text 1 which is dependent on the mutual understanding of the social conventions and cultural beliefs of the interlocutors concerning witches.

INF: Texts 17 and 18 subtly depict threats to those in power based on the interlocutors' shared prior knowledge.

Use of Adverbial Expressions

Where and when an action occurred or will occur are revealed by the adverbial expressions used in the texts.

Text 19

The announcement ending SARS was just Step 1- they've been banning SARS every year. The continuous assaults and murders still ongoing show that corrupt officers are defying the order. Tomorrow, we will peacefully march to present our demands. We want action. Not just an announcement.

(X post, Oct 12, 2020)

Text 20

Chaos everywhere. Still no response from the authorities. Keep the energy up! We are not backing down!!! #ENDSARS #EndPoliceBrutality.

(X post, Oct. 9, 2020)

REF: The adverbial phrases "every year" and "tomorrow" in text 19 are not limited to a specific moment in time. In this context, "every year" conveys people's ire at the federal government for not

outlawing the SARS unit over the years, while “tomorrow” alludes to a future date that indicates preparedness for further actions against the government and the unit. In text 20, the word “everywhere” refers to a situation that is thought to be fairly universal. The speaker uses the word “everywhere” to imply large-scale protest actions with a lot of participants.

INF: Text 19 poses a direct danger to those in authority, according to the general understanding of the situation. The text implies criticism of authorities for inaction. In addition to being a threat, text 20 is an indictment. It implies a collective threat or resolve, even if not explicitly stated (“we are not backing down” suggests continued protest).

Conclusion

By examining pragmatic acts in the discourse of the Occupy Nigeria and EndSARS movements, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to re-imagine language in a globalised world. The findings suggest that referent’s function both as markers of protest discourse and as indicators of social and political reference, with their interpretation relying less on grammatical form than on context, prior knowledge, and shared cultural norms, which anchor meaning in each instance. Through these mechanisms, protest language conveys a range of intentions, including condemnation of injustice, threats to state authorities, calls for collective action, reassurances among fellow demonstrators, and critique of government policies. While some referential strategies—such as pronouns and other devices—are common to both movements, the 2020 EndSARS protests exhibit distinctive patterns compared with the 2012 Occupy Nigeria demonstrations. Unlike the earlier movement, which referenced specific politicians and culturally loaded concepts such as witches, the largely youth-led and predominantly online #EndSARS protests employed more fluid referential tactics, including adverbs (e.g., “this,” “tomorrow,” “everywhere”) and demonstratives, emphasising immediacy and engagement in a transnational digital space. In these contexts, pronouns such as “we” shifted between inclusive (“let us unite”) and exclusive uses depending on the situation, reflecting the dynamic, context-sensitive nature of protest communication.

References

Primary:

The Guardian newspaper

The Nigerian Tribune newspaper

The Punch newspaper

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A PERFORMANCE CRITIQUE OF MADAM TINUBU: THE TERROR IN LAGOS STAGED AT THE FUOYE THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS (TMA) FESTIVAL OF PLAYS 2025

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Abstract

This paper is a critical investigation of the production of *Madam Tinubu: The Terror in Lagos* by Akinwumi Isola, directed by Ireayomi Daniel Omokunga at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE) Theatre and Media Arts (TMA) theatre. As part of the FUOYE TMA 2025 Festival of Plays, the staged production ran between the 7th and 17th of April, 2025. Brechtian epic theatre and Rasaki Ojo Bakare's terms of performative idioms are utilised to read performance selections, aesthetic design, and cultural staging. By participant observation, close textual-performance interpretation, and comparative recourse to local work on theatre aesthetics, the paper contends that the staging effects significant cultural recovery and critical challenge whilst demonstrating persistent technical failings in work on accent, sound focus, and ensemble accuracy. In conclusion, the paper suggests the study's contribution towards discourses on African historicity in performance and provides practical recommendations towards staging historically informed drama in Nigerian university theatres.

Keywords: Madam Tinubu; Akinwumi Isola; Brecht; *Verfremdungseffekt*; performance aesthetics; cultural identity; FUOYE; Theatre and Media Arts (TMA).

Introduction

Akinwumi Isola's play, *Madam Tinubu: The Terror in Lagos*, characterises the life and political resilience of Efunroye Tinubu, the market leader and kingmaker in 19th-century Lagos, whose life has become a contested reference point in Nigerian history. In April 2025, the Department of Theatre and Media Arts (TMA) at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE) staged the play as part of its Festival of Plays. The department described the festival as a fortnight-long presentation, during which *Madam Tinubu* was staged alongside other canonical and contemporary works that matter in the repertoire. With this production, we have an educational context to investigate how university theatres in Nigeria deal with the interaction between history, aesthetics, and public education.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Studies relating to African theatre always underscore the intersectionality between politics, aesthetics, and identity. Brecht's formulation of epic theatre, particularly the concept of the *Verfremdungseffekt* or alienation effect, is useful in terms of examining performances aimed at educating as well as

entertaining. Brecht's proposed methodologies foster critical distance among the spectators, allowing them to reflect on the dynamics of society as opposed to emotive consumption. Contemporary proponents of Brecht's work emphasise the use of interruptions, opaque staging plots, and structural features that avert the audience from becoming fully emotionally engaged.

Within the Nigerian scholarly landscape, considerable scholars from FUOYE have generated research that is intricately related to performance practice, stage design, and applied drama. The studies conducted by Taofiq Olaide Nasir on applied drama underscore the theatre's ability to communicate social issues effectively, often by creating the "emotional arousal" necessary for prompting intellectual or behavioural change. Michael A. Adeoye emphasises in his research on theatre design how visual codes present on stage influence audience reception. Rasaki Ojo Bakare's theoretical contributions and practical engagements with performative trinity and choreography enrich the understanding of how movement and spatial arrangements can signify social hierarchies and cultural memory. Furthermore, Oluwatosin Kooshima Tume's examination of storytelling and performance practice proves valuable for interpreting contemporary Nigerian stage aesthetics, particularly her work on danceturgy and cultural integration. These regional scholarly contributions offer methodological and aesthetic resources for the detailed analysis that follows.

Theoretical Framework

This study brings together two mutually completing frameworks. First, Brechtian epic theatre demands a theatre that stimulates commentary. Methods involve direct address, scene changes seen on stage, commentary singing, and gestures that inscribe social attitudes. These methods are helpful when a production is not attempting the romanticisation of a figure like Madam Tinubu but is attempting to politicise and historicise her.

Secondly, Bakare-informed performative aesthetics underscore the significance of choreography, ceremony, and community performance in the process of meaning construction within Rasaki Ojo Bakare's artistic practice. While Brecht prioritises critique via estrangement, Bakare highlights the role of embodied cultural knowledge and ritual as conduits for collective memory. Integrating these viewpoints enables a discernment of where the production accentuates critical distance and where it seeks to recover cultural continuity through the mediums of spectacle and dance.

Methodology

This is a qualitative, practice-based research project. Data consist of participant observation of the live show at FUOYE (2:00 pm and 4:00 pm runs during the week) and field notes written instantly after the show, as well as a close reading of the playtext. Text-performance comparison, informed by Brechtian categories (alienation devices, interruption and song, gestus) as well as by Bakare's choreography and compositional principles, serves as our comparative analytical approach. In suitable instances, we consulted appropriate secondary sources and FUOYE scholarship to provide context for design and pedagogical choices. No interviews were necessary for this review, though future research plans include systematic audience response and interviews with the director and the designers.

Summary of the Production

The staging of *Madam Tinubu* at the FUOYE TMA theatre is defined by its ambitious scope. The department utilised dynamic flats and modular furniture to depict different locations. Traditional Yoruba forms dominated the costume design. Alternating warm and stark colour schemes were used in the lighting design to illustrate communal life and interactions with colonial figures. An important Eyo masquerade dance was salient as a climactic event, intertwining Lagosian ritual practices with the text's historical claims. The blocking by the director frequently utilised levels to indicate hierarchy: the throne and elevated platforms signified monarchical power, whilst the lowered ground levels simulated day-to-day civic life. Such design choices supported the play's historical basis and assertive declaration of cultural authenticity.

Analysis

Thematic and Historicity The production supports three interrelated thematic arguments: the political activism of women, resistance to imperialism, and conservation of culture. *Madam Tinubu* is represented as a leading figure who navigates the spaces of commerce, kinship, and political power. The production resists reductionist, sentimental forms of characterisation. Instead, it frames her as a commercial leader and a prominent figure in high politics. Attention in the play to Yoruba sayings and chants serves to locate Tinubu in a cultural frame that is critical, challenging myths that dispense on reducing her to a caricature. This accords with an Afrocentric aesthetic that works at recovering collective memory through performance.

Performance and Characterisation The standout performance of Olowolanade Misola Grace as Madam Tinubu was the production's strongest suit. Misola infused the character with a tonal richness that enabled Tinubu to embody charisma as much as strategy, displaying flashes of raw emotion and turbulence. Spatial control, forceful gesturing, and monologue vocal inflexion occasioned points of ethical and theatrical control. An example of a staging device that worked exceptionally well was the actor climbing onto a chair as she declaimed a passionate monologue. It directed the eye of the audience and made the rhetoric physically compelling. Such choices betoken a collaborative process between director and actor that values gestus as a socio-indicator, a process consonant with Brechtian gestural politics as well as Bakare's choreographic performance style. The leading actor's definition and focus on the stage veiled some ensemble variability.

Directorial Method and Brechtian Methods Director Ireayomi Daniel employed a self-conscious theatricality that is Brechtian in style. At significant points, actors spoke directly to spectators by breaking the fourth wall, and explicit scene changes served as a reminder that the story was being staged. Interruptions in the chant, with addresses directly to spectators, encouraged the audience to reflect on the social structures depicted, rather than becoming stuck on feelings of personal despair. It worked effectively as a prompt to critical engagement. There were, nonetheless, points at which the alienation effect lacked consistency. At times, the ensemble returned to naturalism in a way that opposed the desired effects of distance. The production, therefore, balanced a productive tension between epic criticism and the immersive aspects of local ceremony.

Spectacle, Design, and Sound. The spectacle was highly effective in augmenting public appeal. Costumes and the Eyo dance routine emphatically depicted Lagosian cultural memory in rich detail. Lighting levels and sets were used to define hierarchy and create an atmosphere. A key technical shortfall was observed in sound mixing. On more than one occasion, the live music and drum groups overpowered the spoken words, especially when the emotional intensity was high. This diminution of clarity undermined the possibilities for rhetorical elegance. Theatre design scholars note the need for sound and text to coexist on stage without one overwhelming the other; Michael Adeoye notes this significance based on the interaction between the visual and the sonic on audience perception. In this play, balancing these elements will strengthen succeeding performances.

Language, Dialect, and Authenticity

An acting student portraying a British colonial officer attempted an English accent that obscured clarity. Trying too hard after Received Pronunciation led to a stiff performance, which deflated the character's implied authority. Given the constraints on university production, clarity should be the priority. In situations where training in accents is lacking, a properly restrained neutral presentation or a fastidiously trained accent that ensures clear articulations will be more effective in serving the text. This is counsel from a practical as well as an aesthetic perspective.

Ensemble and Timing

The show went on too long beyond optimal pacing. Certain deliberations at the palace lingered; some market and transitional scenes could be condensed. Stage lapses like missed lines and poorly timed exits were scarce but apparent. These issues are common in student productions that are put on under the time crunch of a festival. They do not nullify the show's successes, but they indicate areas for better rehearsal timing and stage management education.

Discussion: Aesthetics, Identity, and Pedagogy

The production served a dual purpose: it teaches the immediate audience something about a disputed historical figure, and it exemplifies a form of university theatre that presents history as cultural debate. Brechtian distancing and Bakarean choreography combined to provide a hybrid aesthetic that serves Nigerian pedagogy well. It enables students and audiences, on the one hand, to think critically about power, and on the other hand, to be partakers in cultural validation. This hybrid, however, demands continuous technical discipline. If the text is overridden by spectacle, the pedagogic intention devolves into mere entertainment. If distancing is exercised without a cultural referent, the play ends up appearing strange and unfamiliar to local audiences. FUOYE succeeded more often than not in navigating these conflicting imperatives.

Findings and Contributions to Knowledge

The play reveals that university theatre is capable of staging public history both as political criticism and cultural foundation. The hybrid adoption of Brechtian tactics and local performing traditions provides a working template for performing historical drama in the Nigerian university setting. It is recorded in this paper that this hybrid aesthetic is highly recommended and warrants further research.

The Gap Filled by the Study

Existing literature relating to live theatrical performances of the historical Yoruba, understood through the dual prisms of Brechtian and Bakarean modes, is surprisingly lacking. In attempting to fill this gap, the present paper provides a scrupulously detailed case study relating to the presentation of *Madam Tinubu* at FUOYE. It provides a template for future practice-based work and practical recommendations designed to augment the technical aspects of students' theatrical performances.

Recommendations

1. Make speech intelligibility a priority when mixing the sound. Rehearse technically with attention given to monologue clarity.
2. Offer brief, focused accent workshops on non-native speech requirements. Where comprehensive training is impractical, favour clear, unobtrusive diction.
3. Condense prolonged deliberative sequences to enhance pacing. Modify the script at the performance stage to preserve rhythm.
4. Employ formal methods of audience response, such as brief questionnaires after the performance, to note reception data for future studies.
5. Promote cross-training among students in stage management, sound, and lighting design to enhance technical dependability.

Conclusion

The FUOYE production of *Madam Tinubu: The Terror in Lagos* is a substantial success. It combines cultural credibility with a perceptive directorial approach. The starring performance was convincing, and the production was highly engaging as a whole. Despite technical issues with sound and small-scale ensemble errors, none undermines the production's accomplishment at recovering a significant historical narrative on behalf of today's audiences. The production serves as a priceless model for university theatres that wish to facilitate national awareness and civic education.

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Documented Pictures from Madam Tinubu's Performance at FUOYE TMA Theatre







CONTRIBUTION OF YORUBA INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE FILM TO CULTURE PROPAGATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Language is the identity of people and racial recognition. Indigenous language films seem to have been the extant means of language development across ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, the use of indigenous language among the people of Nigeria requires attention because western education has relegated the language of the people to the background through promotion of foreign ones. Some Nigerians prioritise the indigenous language and freely speak it with their children and people. It has been noticed that majority of Yoruba people have replaced communicating with their indigenous language with foreign ones. This trend has signaled the extinction of some indigenous language in Nigeria because people have fanatically stuck to the use of foreign language to the detriment of the local language. Indigenous language films seem to be the antidote to this menace. Many Yoruba language films have promoted the propagation of the language as some Yoruba film makers continue to enforce the use of the language among the growing fans of their films while some have allowed status quo to persist. We have used a Humanistic Regeneration Theory to interrogate the content of this paper. The research paper also adopted qualitative research method and apply content analysis as instrument to explore related media, identified patterns, themes, and meaning of the variables. The researchers purposively chose Mainframe film: *Magun* (2001) among others, which was produced and directed by an astute filmmaker Tunde Kelani, to establish the impact of indigenous language film on the propagation of Yoruba language itself. Kelani's films and that of other few have helped many to use the language more often than not. This same syndrome has been affecting other Nigerian languages, however, this paper chose Yoruba as a case study among other three major languages and recommended for continuation to keep the tide.

Keywords: Indigenous, Language, Film, Propagation, development

Introduction

Language is codified words agreed upon by a set of cultural group to enable them exchange views and ideas. When this language is developed among a set that shares cultural aspiration, it is therefore, a means to identify them in comity of nations. This type of language is referred to as people's indigenous language. Indigenous language having developed among the people that speak such brand

of language becomes an integral part for which they are identified and means to consolidate the inherent cultural heritage of the people. By speaking this language often, the upcoming generation learn it and use it to communicate firstly at home with their parents. This language helps the younger generation to also connect to their cultural roots and heritage. To ensure adequate uniqueness and continuity in a particular community, language becomes the driver and this is done through storytelling and dissemination of values orally.

Film language is the method adopted for narrative expressions which in turn develops the story in plot. Film language (diction) is very important because no film is adjudged successful when the language of expression becomes incoherent before the target audience. That is why Cook (p. 10) describes language as a life wire of every society. For this reason, indigenous language film does portend the only means for communication as the case may be, but an extensive and complex system of knowledge in circulation have made people to put effort in development of language over the millennia. The language people speak has become the central means of identifying the social development and helps in the process of preserving people's cultures. Anyanwu (p. 10) says that without language, there is no society. There is no society truly without language of communication which enables understanding and harmony. It allows people to have opportunity to be viewed globally from the perspective of their visions, aspirations and means for the expression of self-determination.

Indigenous languages are not merely tools for identity and communication; however, they are central to all the indigenous people's identity and means to preserve their cultural aspiration among the comity of nations. Many nations in Africa though have adopted colonial language as lingua franca to enable them have equal share of idea and attainment of national growth. When it first started, it was introduced and embraced with the intent of making the indigenous people to become relevant in the industrial world. It was also branded with developmental view since most indigenous people if not all were not enjoying writer-ability and readability of their local languages apart from speaking it locally. No wonder Eze (p. 3) says language is so important in every aspect of human life. He further mentioned that language is needed in both formal and informal teaching. Notwithstanding, people have achieved the development and propagation of their means for existent in their own way before colonial master ventured to derogatively malign people's way of life as barbaric. The issue of barbarism made them not to educate people on how to develop their own language into what can be written. The colonial masters clandestinely shortchanged people with believe that foreign language is the only tool available for development. And because of that, schools that were established resulted in breaking the fabric of unity known from aeon among the indigenous people of Africa. People were

eventually made foreigner in their own land for inability to speak and line themselves behind the language of their birth.

It has been noticed that the deed of relegation to indigenous language has been done and probably cemented. The colonialism has succeeded in making the indigenous people foreigner in their own land because of majority's inability to communicate in their indigenous language of birth. This syndrome continues to be a chasm that requires attention among the indigenous people of Africa. First language (L1) has no relevance in peoples' education while Second Language (L2) has been approved as the only meal ticket if one must exist. L2 in educational institutions is the only means for communication and if one does not know how to speak and write it well the gate for opportunities to such an individual is closed for life. This promotion made to L2 also made L1 inconsequential no matter how well one is endowed in ability to speak or write it. The acceptance of L2 in totality created a vacuum that requires the Africa people to find lasting solution as many of these indigenous languages are fast going into extinction or oblivion. This research report therefore explored the notoriety attached to speaking and writing of indigenous language and how films that used indigenous language as means to communicate its plot served as veritable tool to revamp the loss.

The collection of data was achieved through observations, examination of both extant indigenous language films and literatures to arrive at the decision. This research article is looking at the role played by indigenous language films in propagating Nigerian languages and cultural heritage too. Tunde Kelani's indigenous language films are used as litmus test to unravel the development of African languages through films shun in local people's languages.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to discourage and educate people from approving the superimposition of foreign tongue over the language of the people through the employment of indigenous language film as panacea to curb the derogation. In achieving this main objective, the study therefore was further guided to:

- i. examine the role of Yoruba indigenous language films in the development and preservation of the Yoruba language.
- ii. assess how indigenous language films contribute to the propagation of Yoruba cultural heritage.
- iii. evaluate Tunde Kelani's Mainframe films as a model for indigenous language promotion in Nigeria and beyond.

- iv. identify the advantages of promoting indigenous language films over foreign language films in Nigeria.
- v. make recommendations for the sustainable promotion of indigenous language films in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review of Indigenous Language Film

Film language is determined at times by the target audience for such a film. Indigenous language film can be classified as ethnographic film. These films come in form of documentary, epic stories, and features that are shot for indigenous people to communicate them in their language. Many films shun in local languages are well patronised by people at the grass-root because such films speak the language of the grass-root. Indigenous language film can be defined as forms of film's expression, conceptualised, produced and circulated by indigenous people, locally or internationally to serve as the vehicle for communication. It also includes cultural preservation, cultural and artistic expression, political self-determination, and cultural sovereignty. The meaning of indigenous language may look simple to comprehend from understanding of language in itself. It could further mean a language that originated in a specified geographical place and was not brought to that place from elsewhere. There are types like substrate or substratum language (that is language influenced by an intrusive language, which may or may not ultimately change it to become a new language), which is a type of language that contributes features to the language of the invading people who in effect impose or force their language on the indigenous or local population despite meeting them on ground with a language. Example of indigenous language is autochthonous (that is language of the local people rather than the language that descended from migrants or colonists), which is a language spoken by native people or a regional language spoken by the indigenous people. Indigenous language may not be a national language but a language spoken by people and majority of indigenes of an area.

In Nigeria, there are major natives whose language considerable number of populations speak. There are over 500 indigenous languages in the country and more than 250 ethnic groups which made the country one the diverse nation in the world. However, these languages were classified into major 'big three' of Hausa-Fulani (North), Igbo (East), and Yoruba (West) languages (Udo, 2026). In breaking these Nigerian languages down, it is discovered that about 65-80 million people speak Hausa, Yoruba is spoken by about 47-54 Million people, Igbo speakers are about 39-42 million, others are combined speakers of Efik/Ibibio which are numbered about 15 million, Fulfude has about 13 million speakers while Kanuri and Tiv share 5 million each as part of Nigeria indigenous language speakers (Udo 2026, & Zeynep 2026). Apart from these major languages being spoken by millions in each of their categories, there are other minorities whose languages have been subsumed by the so-called

major languages in Nigeria (Taiwo, 2020). All of these languages are combined together to form indigenous languages in Nigeria. Indigenous languages are languages that are native to a particular group of people and spoken by the indigenous people living in the locality (Mbaka 2020). Ifejola looks at the issue of language and dialect from another perspective when she says that languages are typically prestigious, official and written, whereas dialects are mostly spoken, unofficial and looked down upon (1). From the foregoing, it is believed that films made with indigenous languages speak to the majority of people and the content of the film affect and effect the behavior of the recipient viewers because, it must also have endeared and exposed them to probably new thing in their language.

Development and Benefits of Indigenous Language Films

Generally, film has been so tremendous to human existence because it contains information. This was proved when Harvey says that film has educated and entertain us nearly 120 years and, although a relative short timespan in the wider scheme of things, it has kept us informed through extraordinary periods of revolution, and reform, helped us sustain our morale through two world wars, tackled changes in social attitudes and perceptions throughout the twentieth century (8). This means that there is no way we chuff aside film in the development of human regeneration. The United Nation (UN) under the forum of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) consistently draw people attentions to the threats against indigenous languages, and has pushed for action to promote and protect these languages. UNPFII since 2003 recommended that governments should introduce the use of indigenous language in public schools, in administration and in territories where this is feasible. As a follow-up to this pronouncement, the UN in 2005 mandated that its country offices should make efforts to disseminate their activities in publication with indigenous languages. It goes further to say that this is necessary because at present, 96 per cent of the world's approximately 6, 700 languages are spoken by only 3 per cent of the world's population. Among these are the indigenous peoples that make up less six per cent of the global population which has been rated to be 8 billion (Gerrit 2026), and they speak more than 4,000 of the world's language.

The UN responded to the problem bedeviling indigenous language by setting up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a focus on reviving the use of indigenous languages. In 2015 General Assembly. At this assembly, aims were set up to ensure equal access for indigenous people in all level of education and vocational training under the Sustainable Development Goals Target 4.5. It was specifically spelt out that the use of indigenous language in education and training must be strongly entrenched to meet the target by 2030. In response to this recommendation from the Permanent Forum in 2016, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of

Indigenous Language. UNESCO led the campaign and drew spirited attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages. The campaign went ahead to spell out the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages at the national and international levels (UN Department of Public Information).

The international organisations were poised to the need of revamping the propagation of indigenous language. Harvard Library collated few activities in this direction to exhibit how they are concerned about the extinction of most indigenous languages. There are proofs for promotions of indigenous language film all over the world with the aim of giving identity and transmission of virile cultural heritage of people around the world. It served as language guide for those interested in finding resources on indigenous language in Europe and beyond. Different compilation fora where emphases were put on production of indigenous language film were collated by Harvard Library thus:

- i. *American Indian Film Gallery*: This is online collection of more than 450 films which were about Native Americans. This was hosted by the University of Arizona. The collection were dated from 1925 to 2010. The films paraded were in the categories of cultural practices, biographies, public presentation among others (Harvard Library, 2024).
- ii. *Ethnography Video Online, Indigenous Voice*: The films under this category were in documentaries, and shots made by and for indigenous people and communities (Harvard Library, 2024).
- iii. *Kanopy*: This is a wide-ranging collection of classics, independent films and documentaries. It includes documentaries and movies centering on indigenous stories (Harvard Library, 2024).
- iv. *Massachusetts Multicultural Film Festival 2022 "Ingenuities"*: This festival proudly presented a season of global contemporary indigenous film and media art. The report adds that over the past decades, indigenous cinema has emerged from geographically-scattered centres to become part of a global-linked media network with increasing reach and transnational presence, therefore, 'ingenuities' explored how contemporary filmmakers and media artists leverage moving image forms to directly address the politics of identity and representation (Harvard Library, 2024).

The above arrangements at different fora have let out credence into how the world over are concerned about the extinction of the local (indigenous) languages. What stands dismay about the trends remained that, spirited moves to propagate local languages seem not to bother the speakers of

these languages like bystanders or far observers. Are there advantages in shunning films in indigenous language then?

Advantages of Indigenous Language Film

The speakers of local or indigenous languages often enjoy hearing information in their language because that is what they are used to. Hearing information directly from indigenous language benefits them so much because, they can understand the content without an employment of an interpreter who may not capture the detail in full. Indigenous language films have several advantages that contributed to the development and preservation of local languages and people's culture. Some of these advantages include:

- i. *Language Preservation:* indigenous language films help to document and preserve local languages, which are often at risk of disappearing. The Yoruba language vocabularies and jargons for example are restored into circulation most especially for the upcoming generation among the speakers of the language through films produced in the language.
- ii. *Cultural Promotion:* These indigenous language films in Yoruba promote cultural heritage and traditional practices, raising awareness and appreciation for indigenous cultures.
- iii. *Language Learning:* Watching films in local or indigenous languages, for example in Yoruba can help people learn and improve their language skills.
- iv. *Community Engagement:* Indigenous language films often involve local communities in the production process, fostering community engagement and ownership.
- v. *Economic Benefits:* Indigenous language films can generate income and create job opportunities for local communities.
- vi. *Representation and Diversity:* these films provide a platform for underrepresented voices, offering diverse perspective and tell their story that nobody want to tell.
- vii. *Cultural Exchange:* These films produced in Yoruba can facilitate cross-cultural understanding and exchange, promoting global cultural diversity.
- viii. *Education and Research:* These films shunned with indigenous Yoruba language can enhance the education people have about a particular group of people and in turn serve as valuable resource material for research engagements most especially for linguistic and cultural researchers, as well as instructional material for educators in different field of humanities.

- ix. *Empowerment and Pride*: When people from indigenous setting see their language and culture represented on screen, this can empower them and instill pride of their heritage in them. This can also serve as pride for them to be identified within the comity of nations.
- x. *Digital Archiving*: Indigenous language films can be archived or preserved digitally, ensuring long-term retrieval or accessibility and protection of cultural heritage. Several films produced in Yoruba language can be found in this category and many scholars have been retrieving such to boost knowledge acquisition.

By supporting indigenous language films, it is possible for individual to contribute to the preservation or archiving and development of local language and cultures. In addition, collectively everyone can contribute to the promotion of linguistic diversity and propagate the richness of cultural endowment found with local people which remain untapped because of little or no secular education and barrier of channel among the rural people. Despite all these listed good things that are derivable from promoting indigenous language films, does promoting foreign language over indigenous language has any devastating effect? The simple is YES, however, further discussion of this research work surely exposed ineptitude of endorsing foreign language through the theory of humanistic regeneration.

Humanistic Regeneration Theory and Application

The effect of foreign language on the development of local African language requires riot act to revamp or regenerate. For this reason, we want to recall what was termed as *Humanistic Regeneration* theory as the smartest move to get this effected. Humanistic Regeneration theory is a process of bringing back a jaundiced ideal, having allowed a system to be affected by different factors that truncated its successful goal. Regeneration in this context therefore means, the process of replacing or restoring damaged process to its full function. Like living things that regenerate after a noticeable damage done on the process of growth, so also a process can regenerate when the damaged process is identified and a revamping concept is created. Though there is regeneration theory in science, however, the originator of this theory used the same concept to form a Humanistic Regeneration Theory. Humanistic Regeneration is a theory propounded by Idowu Olatunji (2024). It is the theory of redefining, rejuvenating, readdressing and revamping a damaged and decaying process. A process is like human body that keep growing until it reaches a degeneration point. It's often referred to as aging, however when elixir is applied to aging process in human, it rejuvenates the ongoing collapsed body system. When a humanistic system is as well bastardized or experiencing a collapse, it can go through regeneration through the use of a process like elixir in medical parlance. The regeneration elixir in humanity is identifying the problem and find a humanistic solution to it.

Humanistic problems fester when scientific solutions is used because humanistic problems should be humanistically resolved. Humanistic Regeneration theory recommends a process that looks like a substance, usually a liquid, with a magical power to cure, improve, or preserve something. This theory is to see to how some extinct or obsolete cultural assimilation can be brought back, improved, and preserved through the process of regeneration. This includes the creation of a procedural concept that reeducates, which forms a conduit for revamping, reengaging, and rejigging of a jaundiced humanistic process.

Language is one of the humanistic area that promotes social coexistence. The process of language learning is through constant speaking and when it is frequently or regularly spoken, it develops. Many foreign languages go through developmental process because they are attached to commerce, education, technology, and art. Family therefore, plays an important role in humanity and language regeneration. The society is formed from conglomeration of different families which at times may be endowed to speak different languages. Ronald argues that ‘many social functions of the family have eroded, but society has not yet come up with a satisfactory substitute for the psychological role of the family in providing love, self-esteem, and socialization’ (328). This argument drives home the importance of family in the development process of social segment which language is part. Relying also on teachers to develop many humanistic social functions may result to an aberration of process and practice. Despite playing important roles in language development, Ronald goes further to say ‘they (teachers) cannot provide the intense love and individual attention over a lifetime that parents usually give a child. New concepts are easily learnt through enough devolvment of love which is peculiar to family’ (328). Many functions are left for the teachers to effect in the society, however, teachers are those with legal responsibility to take on some of the functions and responsibility of a parents which make teachers to be referred to as *loco parentis*. This is taken from English Common Law in which educational institution are granted to act in the best interest of a learner as the institution deem fit. The second part of this law still grant a non-biological parent to exercise the legal rights and responsibilities of a biological parent if they have held themselves out as parent (Rosen-Molina, 1). It is therefore clear that educational institutions and society by law are legally right to act in inculcating the expectations in a situation where parents are lagging. In the context of Humanistic Regeneration Theory, it applies to redefining the concept for local language learning as it is now a herculean task in nature, because the infiltration of foreign languages are poised to extinct the indigenous forms of expression. Revamping it has to start from homes. It must be encouraged in schools and this theory helps to tread the revamping process with little stress of speaking it for children to learn it easily. This

only requires commitment on the part of parents, teachers, entire society, and community leaders to promote its reemergence and regeneration.

Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research design. The choice of qualitative methodology is informed by the nature of the research questions, which are concerned with the cultural meanings, language functions, and social effects embedded in indigenous language films. The study relied on two main sources of data: primary and secondary.

Primary data were collected through systematic observation and content analysis of selected Yoruba indigenous language films and texts, with particular focus on the works of Tunde Kelani. The film *Magun* (Thunderbolt, 2001) was purposively selected as the central case study on account of its cultural significance, its exclusive use of the Yoruba language, and the widely acknowledged impact on Nigerian films and Yoruba cultural discourse. The films were viewed and examined for their deployment of Yoruba vocabulary, idioms, proverbs, cultural practices, and values, as well as their overall contribution to language preservation and cultural propagation.

Secondary data were sourced from existing academic literature, comprising books, journal articles, and online resources on indigenous language, film studies, and cultural preservation. These sources were critically reviewed to provide both a theoretical foundation and a comparative context for interpreting the primary findings. The Humanistic Regeneration Theory, propounded by Idowu Olatunji, served as the overarching theoretical framework for analysing and interpreting the data collected.

The data gathered from both primary and secondary sources were analysed using content analysis as instrument. Recurring contents relating to language development, cultural preservation, and the social and economic impact of indigenous language film production were identified and organised as credence for the findings. Findings are presented descriptively, with supporting evidence drawn from the films examined and corroborated by the reviewed literature.

Effect of Foreign Language Films on Indigenous Language

Lingua franca, or dominant language is the language agreed upon as means of communication among the people with diverse languages or with different language groups. It could also be said to mean a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native language are different. The research found that there are several disadvantages for indigenous language and cultural

aspirations of the indigenous people when their indigenous languages are not prioritised. The followings are possible after effect of promoting foreign language over the indigenous one:

- i. *Language Suppression*: The dominance of foreign language film can lead to the suppression of indigenous language, as people may end up prioritising learning the dominant film language for economic or social advancement.
- ii. *Cultural Erasure*: The widespread of foreign language films can contribute to erasure of indigenous cultural identities, as traditional languages and cultural practices are propagated and replaced with the culture of the dominant language culture.
- iii. *Loss of Linguistic Diversity*: The promotion of foreign language as lingua franca in locally produced films can lead to the decline or extinction of indigenous languages, resulting in a loss of linguistic diversity and cultural heritage.
- iv. *Cultural Homogenisation*: Foreign films can contribute to cultural homogenisation, similarity or uniformity as foreign dominant cultures and languages spread at the expenses of indigenous language films like wild fire.
- v. *Power Dynamics*: The imposition of a lingua franca and the use of it for the promotion of traditional films can perpetuate power imbalance. With dominant language speakers holding more power and influence over indigenous communities.

The disadvantages highlighted above shed light on the importance of preserving and promoting indigenous languages and cultures, and recognizing the value of linguistic diversity in a globalised world. Tunde Kelani is a foremost filmmaker who has been known for championing filmmaking in indigenous language, precisely Yoruba. He once said in an interview on a national television that there are some condiment, vocabulary, jargons, expression of cultural details, and situations that cannot be properly expressed with foreign language rather than the language of the people that owns the culture (Kelani on AIT, 2013).

For instance, in Tunde Kelani's film titled *Magun* and translated "Thunder Bolt" in English, he entrenched the culture in which Yoruba indigenous people frowned at promiscuity among the married women. This film was shunned out in 2001 and was directed by Tunde Kelani. Lacing of *magun* on a woman suspected to be having extra-marital affair is one of the check mechanism in doubt among the western medical practitioners. The film emphatically created a verisimilitude of the cultural belief about *Magun* (Thunderbolt) that some people doubt so much. The film was able to achieve cultural preservation and showcase Yoruba culture, tradition, and mythology. It engenders social

commentary by exploring love as a theme that eschewed betrayal and redemption. The film was entertaining because it engaged the audiences with a compelling narrative in people's indigenous language with stunning visuals. It was educative when it highlighted the consequences of disobedience and the importance of tradition. *Magun* (Thunderbolt) film told the story of a young woman (Ngozi) who defies her family's wishes to marry outside their race, leading to a series of tragic events.

Watching this film, viewers eventually can appreciate Yoruba culture, language, and heritage. The film reflected on the importance of tradition and family values while it though created an atmosphere of enjoyment as the story remained captivating all through with memorable characters. Mainframe Films' objective is to produce high-quality culturally relevant content that resonates with Nigerian and international audiences. *Magun* (Thunderbolt) film significantly contributed to the development of Yoruba people's culture and language in several ways. The film showcased Yoruba mythological beliefs, specifically the concepts of *Magun*. It preserved traditional practices which Yoruba customs, rituals, and ceremonies depict. It went further to highlight cultural values by emphasising the importance of cultural reverence among the people no matter their affiliation. The film promoted Yoruba language usage and relevance as it was produced in Yoruba language. It served as means for language documentation and helped in preserving Yoruba language through film, making it accessible to future generations. The film ensured linguistic accuracy by ensuring authenticity by using correct Yoruba dialect and expressions. Through the film the younger generations are encouraged to explore their cultural roots as it revived interest in Yoruba heritage. In the process, the film fostered cultural heritage, linguistic pride of Yoruba traditions and values. The content provided immense cultural education through dissemination Yoruba historical, mythological, and customary accounts dramatically.

Apart from the cultural and language development, the film also had economic impact on the Yoruba people. It empowered local artists through creating opportunities for Yoruba actors, writers, and filmmakers to follow the same trend. It boosted local economy of the people by generating revenue through film production and distribution. It as well promoted cultural tourism as it showcased Yoruba culture to attract interest from global populace. The film did not fail to address social issues among the Yoruba people such as family conflicts and social responsibility. It encouraged discussions and reflections on Yoruba values and traditions through fostering community engagement. It bridged generational gaps by connecting older and younger generations through shared cultural heritage. To sum it up, *Magun* (Thunderbolt) films' is committed to cultural documentation, language preservation, community empowerment, and artistic expression.

Tunde Kelani as a renowned Nigerian filmmaker, who continues to inspire and educate audiences about Yoruba culture and language. He expressed several reasons for preferring to produce cultural films in indigenous languages instead of English because of the following inexhaustible reasons:

- vi. *Cultural Authenticity*: He believes that using indigenous languages preserve cultural authenticity and ensure that the stories are told in their original form in Yoruba, without compromise.
- vii. *Connection with the Audience*: Kelani wants to connect with his primary audience, the Yoruba people, in their own language, to evoke emotions and create a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage.
- viii. *Language Preservation*: By using indigenous language, he aims to contribute to their preservation and promotion, counteracting the decline of indigenous language use among younger generations.
- ix. *Cultural Pride*: Producing films in indigenous Yoruba language instill cultural pride and ownership among the community, celebrating their unique identity.
- x. *Distinctive Storytelling*: He is of the opinion that indigenous language films offer a distinctive storytelling style, rich in idioms, proverbs, and nuances, which enrich the cinematic experience.
- xi. *Local Resonance*: Films in indigenous languages resonate more with local audiences, making the stories more relatable and impactful.
- xii. *Resistance to Foreign Cultural Assimilation*: By promoting indigenous language films, he resists cultural assimilation and the dominance of English or other foreign languages.

From the foregoing reasons, Tunde Kelani's commitment to producing cultural films in indigenous Yoruba language ensures the preservation and celebration of one of the Nigeria's rich cultural diversity which Yoruba tribes carry the fair share of its dissemination. Corroborating this, Adeoye says that 'all creative means of communication that appeal to the visual and auditory senses are regarded as art (for which performing art is a part). The appreciation of art as a critical language has little or no requirement for Western literacy or conventional formality' (19). This implies that the aim of artistic productions are meant to communicate the intent of the content with an uncompromising understanding by avoiding the use of any foreign translatable language that seem confused to indigenous people. From all indications, it is believed that if achievement in propagation of indigenous language is to be felt,

the production of indigenous language films should be encouraged in disseminating and communicating African cultural heritage. This keeps the content intact, original, devoid of basterdisation, and adulterations.

Yoruba language films have successfully preserved the peoples' culture, revitalize the language use, diversely representative, communal people empowerment, peoples' economic viability, cultural exchange and understanding. Local language films like Yoruba films allow for educational research in the areas of culture and linguistic, artistic expression and creativity. By promoting indigenous language films, we can celebrate cultural diversity, support language preservation, and empower indigenous communities to share their stories and perspective with the world.

Research Findings

The analysis of Yoruba indigenous language films, particularly the works of Tunde Kelani, produced the following findings:

1: Indigenous Language Films Preserve and Circulate the Yoruba Language

The study found that films produced in Yoruba actively document and circulate authentic language features that are at risk of disappearing from everyday use. These include proverbs, idiomatic expressions, dialect-specific vocabulary, and cultural terminology that carry layers of meaning unique to the Yoruba worldview. In Magun (Thunderbolt, 2001), the language used is not simplified or anglicised for external audiences but is authentic to the cultural context being depicted. This makes the film function not only as entertainment but as a living linguistic record accessible to audiences who would never engage with formal language documentation.

2: Yoruba Films Effectively Transmit Cultural Values across Generations

The study found that indigenous language films transmit cultural values, beliefs, and practices in a manner that formal education rarely achieves, because they communicate through narrative and emotional experience rather than through prescription or instruction. Magun demonstrates this clearly: the cultural logic of the practice it depicts is communicated not by explanation but through lived dramatic consequence. Viewers come away from the film with an understanding of Yoruba cultural values that is experiential rather than merely informational, making the message more durable and more meaningful.

3: Tunde Kelani's Filmmaking Reflects a Deliberate Language Advocacy Strategy

The study found that Kelani's preference for producing films in the Yoruba language is not incidental but is grounded in a clear and consistent philosophy of cultural and linguistic advocacy. His stated reasons, including cultural authenticity, community connection, language preservation, cultural pride, and resistance to foreign cultural assimilation, are consistently enacted across his body of work. This deliberate stance distinguishes his filmmaking from that of producers who may use indigenous language for convenience or local market appeal, and it has produced films that make the Yoruba language feel alive, relevant, and artistically desirable.

4: Indigenous Language Films Generate Social and Economic Benefits

Beyond their cultural and linguistic value, the study found that Yoruba-language films generate tangible social and economic benefits. Kelani's productions have created employment for Yoruba actors, writers, and production crew; generated revenue through film distribution; facilitated community dialogue on social issues such as marital fidelity and family responsibility; bridged generational gaps through shared cultural references; and attracted interest from international audiences, thereby promoting Yoruba cultural heritage globally.

5: Institutional Support for Indigenous Language Films Remains Inadequate

The study found that despite the demonstrated value of indigenous language filmmaking, the broader institutional environment offers little structural support. Government funding for indigenous language film production is minimal, broadcasting policies do not mandate indigenous language content, and distribution networks continue to favour foreign-language productions. The contributions of filmmakers like Kelani have been achieved largely through personal commitment rather than institutional backing, pointing to the need for systemic policy intervention if indigenous language cinema is to fulfil its potential as a tool for language development and cultural preservation.

Implication of Research Findings

The findings of this study confirm what the existing literature has long argued, that indigenous language films are not peripheral cultural products but central institutions in the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage. What this study adds is a focused account of how that function is performed in practice, through the deliberate choices of filmmakers, the linguistic content of their work, and the cultural and social effects those films produce among their audiences. The finding that Yoruba-language films preserve and circulate authentic linguistic features connects directly with the positions of Anyanwu (2006) and Cook (2010), who respectively argue that without language there is

no society, and that language is the lifeblood of every community. Every Yoruba film that documents and disseminates the authentic use of proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and culturally specific vocabulary is, in a concrete way, extending the life of the language and making it available to those who might otherwise never encounter it in its full richness.

The finding regarding the effectiveness of film in transmitting cultural values across generations supports the Humanistic Regeneration Theory's central claim that damaged cultural systems can be deliberately revived through creative and communal intervention. Kelani's sustained career of Yoruba-language filmmaking is, in the theory's terms, an extended act of regeneration: he has identified a damaged process, the erosion of Yoruba language and culture under colonial and postcolonial pressure, and has applied the theory's recommended elixir in the form of culturally committed, linguistically authentic filmmaking.

The finding that Kelani's work reflects a deliberate language advocacy strategy resonates with Adeoye's (2021) argument that the arts carry a critical communicative function that transcends formal literacy. Kelani has understood that the choice of language in filmmaking is not a neutral technical decision but a cultural and political act, and his consistency on this point over several decades represents precisely the kind of sustained human agency that the Humanistic Regeneration Theory recommends.

The finding that institutional support remains inadequate points to the limits of individual agency and calls for the systemic intervention that scholars like Mbaka (2020) and international bodies like UNPFII have advocated. Personal commitment from individual filmmakers is necessary but not sufficient. Language regeneration at the scale required demands policy change, institutional investment, and a broader cultural shift in how Nigerian society values its indigenous linguistic heritage. This study contributes to that conversation by establishing Kelani's filmography as a model of what is possible when creative commitment is sustained over the time, and by identifying the structural conditions that would allow that model to be replicated and scaled.

Recommendations

Indigenous films are contingent to the development of local peoples' languages and cultural heritage. There is need for all hands to come together to promote and develop indigenous language so that such languages can develop the local people to compete at par with their contemporaries with similar local language. Government should provide funding, grants, and tax incentives for indigenous language film production. There is need for the establishment of festivals dedicated to indigenous

language films, promoting cultural exchange and recognition. Language preservation programmes should be initiated to document, preserve, and teach indigenous languages. Shunning films in indigenous language offer education and proper cultural training and this can be promoted through workshops, scholarship, and training programmes for indigenous filmmaking. It as well promotes collaboration among artistes during productions, enhances distribution, marketing, community engagement, language comparison and propagation of both language and cultural heritage because of the online presence. The recommendations can be itemised into:

- i. Government at federal and state levels should establish dedicated funding, grants, and tax incentive schemes for indigenous language film.
- ii. Broadcasting policy should include a provision mandating a minimum percentage of broadcast dramatic sessions in Nigerian indigenous languages.
- iii. Indigenous language films should be formally incorporated into school curricula at levels.
- iv. Cultural institutions and government agencies should establish film festivals dedicated specifically to films in indigenous languages
- v. Universities, cultural institutions, and filmmakers should collaborate on language documentation programmes to archive indigenous language expressions, proverbs, and idioms used in film.
- vi. Workshops, scholarships, and mentorship programmes should be established to train the next generation of indigenous language filmmakers.
- vii. Community-level awareness campaigns should be launched to encourage parents, religious institutions, and community organisations to prioritise the use of indigenous languages with children.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the use of indigenous language among the people of Nigeria requires attention because western education has made locally spoken language irrelevant to the people. This as well has been infused into different leaders in Nigeria and the most pathetic aspect of the situation is that teachers have been made to champion the local language relegation. The language of the local people therefore has been conspicuously pushed to the background through promotion of foreign language in disseminating education and cultural heritage rendition. Some Nigerians prioritise the indigenous language and freely speak it with their people. This research paper found that majority of Yoruba people have replaced communicating with their indigenous language with foreign ones and even

compelled the upcoming generations to do so. This trend has signaled the extinction of many Nigerian indigenous languages because people have fanatically stuck to the use of foreign language and even shun indigenous language films to the detriment of the local language.

Indigenous language films seem to be the antidote to the extinction of local language menace. Many Yoruba language films have promoted the propagation of the language as Yoruba filmmakers continue to shun film in the local language for the patronage of their fans in attempts to establish the language and culture. Notable among the Yoruba filmmakers is Tunde Kelani. He is an astute filmmaker, who made and continue to make efforts to put the language on an honourable pedestal as most of his films are shun in Yoruba language. His films especially have helped many to use the language, understand many of its jargons, and grammar more often than not. This same syndrome has become noticeable among other indigenous language speakers and filmmakers from other language extractions in Nigeria. The war to propagate Nigerian languages and African languages at large is the right steps and concern for everyone who endears promoting indigenous cultural and language heritage.

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SOLVING SOCIO-FINANCIAL CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY MUSLIMS IN NIGERIA USING CASHWAQF

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Abstract

CashWaqf is an integral part of Islamic Social Financial System and its uniqueness goes a long way to improving the scope of *Waqf* practice in the banking and non-banking sectors in Nigeria. It is one of the socio-financial tools used in solving challenges facing contemporary Muslims. There are problems of socio-financial issues among the contemporary Muslims which lead to poor health care, insecurity and poor access to education. This paper aims at solving socio-financial challenges of Contemporary Muslims in Nigeria with the use of CashWaqf. Qualitative and analytical methods are employed in the research for presentation of facts and its objective analysis. Qualitative method is employed to examine the existing works on the subject in its sequence while the analytical helps to make use of proper analysis of the Islamic financial models. The finding reveals that, CashWaqf is viable and innovative as it gives room for many individuals to invest in the hereafter via finding solutions to human problems wholistically. It makes available modern Models of *Waqf* in Cash form that can be adopted by Islamic Finance Sector and beyond. The paper concludes on the need to work on *Waqf* institution as it may avail mankind many other carrier opportunities in the nearest future. It is recommended that application of CashWaqf and its models in line with principles should be made known to the generality of Muslims while making them aware of opportunities therein. Also, the training of *Waqf* Managers should be improved on in order to have effective usage of the model.

Keywords: *Socio-Financial*, challenges, contemporary Muslims, Nigeria, CashWaqf

1. Introduction

Nigeria economy has dropped drastically during recession and unable to move out of the financial challenges till moment (World Bank 2025). The foreign debt keeps increasing while inflation persists amidst other challenges such as high value of taxation and excessive increased in price of commodities which had brought about high rates of hunger, poverty, malnutrition, health deficits and a host of others. Effects of these challenges on the majority of people is glaring and making the society unsafe causing prevalent acts of kidnapping, banditry, theft and stealing, promiscuity, cybercrimes, ritual killings and gross corrupt practices in the public sectors (Assayouti, 2023).

Muslims are affected by these economic challenges across the nation. Most especially, northern Muslims are living in abject poverty of multidimensional forms. Teeming population of Muslim youth are also living below the minimum standard of living a in the society, thereby creating rooms for religious and social extremism and other criminal involvements (Bala, 2021).

There had been many reforms, initiatives, policies and programmes with a view to solving these financial challenges in the country such as trader money, conditional Cash transfers, home grown feeding programmes by the previous government. Yet, the problems persist and create concerns on the need to find alternative means to find lasting solutions to these perennial financial crises. The study is aimed at solving socioeconomic financial challenges of contemporary Muslims in Nigeria using *CashWaqf*. And to examine its legality in and its application to curb socio-economic issues among Muslims in Nigeria.

Against this background, that this paper therefore discusses *CashWaqf* as a means of solving Socio-financial challenges among Muslims. This paper elucidates on the need to apply this modern Models of *CashWaqf* as tools in Islamic Social Finance which can be adopted in Islamic banking sector and non-banking Sector.

Considering the trend of socio-financial challenges which are traceable to economic recession, interest rates and unfit system of the economy, there is a need for paradigm shift like *CashWaqf* for Socio-economic development. It guarantees rapid growth on investment and remittances, job creation and cushions the effect of inflation. The independent nature of the world economy on oil as it is the case in Nigeria has been the reason for price shocks and fiscal crisis, debt and food crisis can also be addressed through the *Waqf* system. This study will avail the policy-maker, alternative means that facilitates socio-economic growth of the nation as it is being practiced in many countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia with the use of Islamic approach.

Islam has made available, the rich knowledge on the practice of setting aside a property for a particular benevolent purpose which came to be known popularly under the title of *Waqf* and developed into different forms.(Kenjaboyeva, 2020). *Waqf* has been prospering tremendously in Islam with rejuvenation and promotion carried out under the divine guidance by the Prophet. Aand since the 7th Century, it became a well-known practice to Muslims all over the world as an investment. It is a tool for promoting socio-economic goodness and Muslims throughout history have been rendering their properties into *Awqāf* in the service of mosques, hospitals, education, social and charitable institutions and other purposes of goodness.(Abid & Miakhil, 2024)

Hence, the need for the study to adopt the viability of the *Waqf* a component of Islamic Social Finance in solving socio-economic insecurities among Muslims in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

The literature reviewed works of earlier scholars on concept of Waqf with gaps on the application of Cash Based *Waqf* in solving social challenges in Nigeria which this study will address and the limitation of the work is pegged at Cash*Waqf*, This gives room for *Waqf* Cash usability and viability in solving any societal problems like, health issues, insecurities, and education inequality. Based on this scheme, poverty eradication would be achieved in Nigeria.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Imam Zufar Cash*Waqf* theory in the 8th century. The theory was built on the need to make cash liquidity as a perpetual asset for charitable purpose. It indicates that, a donor can make a desired amount of money permanently available for a set of designated beneficiaries. The theory allows the operation of money as waqf different from tangible assets. It gives room for more donors and widens the scope of the beneficiary. The capital donated as Waqf will be invested and the its profits only will be used to take care of the beneficiary. The current study applies the theory to establish a jurisprudential proof of cashwaqf. And to corroborate the need to expand the scope of waqf as opined in the paper with a view to solving financial challenges among the Muslims. Imam Zufar opined that Cash*Waqf* is the means of contribution of an amount of money by a founder with a purpose of dedicating its usufruct in perpetuity to prescribed purposes of charitable endowment.

Conceptual Analysis of Cash*Waqf*

Waqf is an Arabic word which is said to be "holding forth" or "put on hold" from the root word which is "*waqafa*" means "to stop" and also means causing a thing to stop and stand still(Laluddin et al., 2021). Its other meaning is simply "a pious (charitable) foundations(Abdur-Rashid, 2021).

It is defined technically as a perpetual or temporary holding of a *Māl* (asset or usufruct) that produces repeated services or products for an objective of general or private righteousness(Solichin, 2022).*Waqf* involves holding assets, properties, or belongings in the custody of an Islamic entity meant to specifically see the needs of the poor and needy(Hamzah et al., 2023). Alaro and Alalubosa (2019)defined *Waqf* as the "confinement of immovable or movable property from the ownership of the founder and the dedication of its usufruct in perpetuity to needs that may arise in the different Muslim societies in a way that it cannot be revoked, bequeathed or sold."

In other words, *Waqf* is also defined as retaining an asset for distribution of its usufruct to beneficiaries. This definition is universal as it defines the essence of *Waqf*: conservation of the asset and distribution of its usufruct for charitable ends. It emphasises the importance of continuous holding such as protection from being consumed either through sale, providing as collateral, or transferring in the form of gift and inheritance.

Forms of *Waqf*

Waqf can be classified into three broad categories depending on its nature, subject matter, and by type of beneficiaries. 1. *Waqf* categorized by nature are Unrestricted *Waqf*, Restricted *Waqf*, and Temporarily Restricted *Waqf*. 2. Categories of *Waqf* by virtue of the beneficiaries are Public/Philanthropic *Waqf*, Family/Private *Waqf*, Joint *Waqf*, Personal *Waqf* and, Religious *Waqf*. 3. Categories of *Waqf* by subject matter are Immovable assets such as Landed properties, houses, companies etc. and Movable assets like Cash, vehicle, animals, etc. (Ramli et al., 2021).

Cash *Waqf*

Cash *Waqf* as one of the movable forms of *Waqf*, is defined as usage of fund or Cash at hand or bank as endowment for the purpose of solving financial hiccups faced by Muslims. The Cash *Waqf* was a special type of endowment and it differed from the ordinary real estate *Waqf* in that its original capital, *asl al-Māl* or, corpus, consisted purely or partially, of Cash (Firdaus et al., n.d.). The earliest origins of the Cash *Waqf* may be traced back to eighth century, when *Imam Zufar* was asked how such *awqaf* should function. The fact that such a question was asked at all may be taken as an indication of the existence of such *awqaf* at that time (M. Abdullah, 2020).

Cash *Waqf* has been given two definitions in *Fiqh* (Fanani & Abduh, 2023). *Al-Tasuli*, in his book, '*al Bahjah fi Sharh al Tuhfah*', defined the meaning of Cash *Waqf* in the *Māliki* School as "the process of dedicating Cash as *Waqf* for the purpose of lending it to those designated as the beneficiaries without interest" (Nujaym, n.d.). In the book of *Ibn Nujaym*, he explained that it is the Cash given on *Mudarabah* basis and the proceeds are for the *Waqfas* stipulated on charitable purpose for which it is assigned. Kahf confirmed these two definitions in his writings and affirmed that Cash *Waqf* has been widely practised by late Hanafis and *Mālikis* (Kahf & Mohomed, 2017). Çizakça defined Cash *Waqf* as "charitable endowments established with Cash capital" and as a "Trust Fund established with money to support services to mankind in the name of God". Cash *Waqf* has also been defined as "the confinement of an amount of money from founder and dedication of its usufruct according to founder's condition, in perpetuity to the welfare of the society." (Çizakça, 2004).

Legality of Cash Waqf from the Shari'ah Perspective

The legality of *Waqf* can be traced back to the primary sources - *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, and the secondary sources such as *Ijma'* (scholarly consensus). Though the word '*Waqf*' is not used in the texts, but the essence of it and its importance are well explained in the following Qur'anic passages: Q2:261, Q3:92, Q34:39, Q64:16, and Q73:20 among others.

There are numerous traditions (*ahādith*) narrated from the Prophet Muhammad on the importance of charitable endowments. As reported by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet listed three things that benefit the deceased, (An-Nawawi, 1991) among them is *Sadaqatu Jariyyah* which takes form of *Waqf*. In addition, 'Umar made *Waqf* of a piece of land in *Khaybar* (Khan, n.d.). Subsequently, the case of 'Uthman bn 'Affan on the purchase of *Biru Ruman* was also another indication of *Waqf* practised during the period of the Prophet. And the golden advice of the Prophet to Abu Talhah with regard to his palm garden is also another top notch on this Islamic endowment project (Hajjaj, 1987).

The basis for Cash *Waqf* can be found in the classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Cash *Waqf* is viewed as permissible by the scholars of Mālikiyyah, Imam Ahmad bn Hanbal, as well as Al-Ansary, student of Imam Zufah (Hanafiyyah). According to Imam al-Zuhri, it is permissible to have *Waqf* on dinar as long as it is used for working capital and the profit is distributed to the beneficiaries (Nastiti & Anggraini, 2022). The first generation of Hanafiyyah viewed that it is permissible to contribute *Waqf* in the form of Cash as an exception, based on *Istihsan bil-'urf* (customary preference), supporting the opinion of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (*Islamiyati et al.*, 2021). As mentioned by some Shafi'iyyah, Imam ash-Shafi'i considered *Waqf* on *dinar* and *dirham* as permissible (Ghozali & Putra, n.d.). This opinion has great importance for modern application of *Waqf* because most contributions are made in the form of Cash, *Waqf* certificates, *Waqf Sukuk*, etc. *Waqf* in the form of Cash and shares have been known to occur from the time of the *Mamluks* (Kings) and scholars have unanimously agreed on it (Igarashi, 2021). Today, *Waqf* in the form of Cash is acceptable widely in Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, India, and others (Saad et al., 2017).

Forms of Cash Waqf

- (1) Cash *Waqf* can be in Cash for lending and collecting it from the borrowers to be relented to others.
- (2) It can be a Cash to be utilized on *Mudārabah* basis and its profit assigned to the beneficiaries of the *Waqf* while preserving the investment principal (Thabith et al., 2023).

Viability of the CashWaqf in Islamic Finance

The usage of Cash as *Waqf* is one of the best ways to safeguard use of this tool innovatively to launch a means in socio-economic status of Islamic Finance because it provides better way in which people are encouraged to engage in this rewarding and charitable means. This has been in vogue for years in many Muslim countries and used to solve immediate problems emanated from socio-economic issues. Its flexibility and affordability makes it worthwhile for all to participate in crowdfunding in any available project embarked upon by any Muslim Community. It has played a great role in economic and social development of Islamic societies. It was the first system that supported financing many of socio-economic projects and infrastructures. *Waqf* as a separate legal entity has the capacity to accept or transfer ownership, to engage in contracts, invest and accept payments. It has potentials to eliminate challenges associated with land waqf used for a real estate or agriculture. Its advantages are the flexibility of fund raising, widest public participation and effectiveness in poverty alleviation make it viable.

The *Waqf* institution, to a great extent in the Islamic history, had been relied upon for the provision of goods and services necessary for the comprehensive development of the community, ranging from various social institutions such as schools and hospitals to religious objects such as mosques, and welfare schemes like water supply and highway facilities(Haneef, 2018).*Waqf* institutions helps in providing or constructing social amenities that immediate members of societies are in dire need of, this includes construction of boreholes and dams to aid the irrigation activities, cemeteries, and street fountains.

III. Methodology

The qualitative and analytical methods are employed in the research for presentation of facts and its objective analysis. The qualitative method was used to review related literature and relevant text to CashWaqf and its forms. The analytical method was used to analyse the socio-economic challenges of Nigeria and how CashWaqf models could be applied as means of solving the socio-economic challenges.

IV. Results and Findings

Socio Financial Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria is situated in the West Africa sub-region with an estimated population of 300 million. About 53.5% are Muslims, 45.9% are Christians while about 0.6% belong to African traditional religion (Ifegbesan & Rampedi, 2018). While 63% of people living in Nigeria which amount to 133 million people are multidimensional in the state of poverty (Ifegbesan & Rampedi, 2018). 65% of the poor (86.45million people) live in the North, the region where Muslims dominate, while 35% (nearly 47 million) live in the South. Poverty levels across States in Nigeria vary significantly, with the incidence of multidimensional poverty ranging from a low of 27% in Ondo to a high of 91% in Sokoto as case study. Over half of the population of Nigeria are multidimensionally poor and cook with dung, wood or charcoal, rather than cleaner energy. High deprivations are also apparent nationally in access to education, sanitation, healthcare, food security and housing among host of others (Kolawole & Torimiro, 2006).

It is glaring that, high percentage of Muslims are facing financial challenges in the area listed above in addition to religious financial projects like construction of *Masājid*, Arabic Schools, training of religious scholars, and giving out scholarships to the less privileges. Socio-financial challenges among Nigerians are multifaceted. It includes majorly; poverty, lack of basic needs and life necessity, good health care, good access to qualitative education, family financial crisis, theft and stealing, cheating, socio injustice, bribery and corruption among others. (World Facts 2023)

Nigeria was rated in the year 2022 by UNICEF as the only country having more than 10 million children out of the school system and is seen to be the highest rate in the world showing how poor the educational system is in the country. The figures of Nigerian children who have never set foot in a classroom is high and it tells what lies in the future for the country. Perhaps equally tragic is the high number of children who make it into a classroom, but never make the transition from primary school to secondary school – thereby cutting off their chances for a secure future. What brings about these ugly faces are mostly devastated financial strength of parents because governments failed to do the necessary. Hence, the level of illiteracy is growing which can result in poor productivity of labour efficiency.

The health care system is another notable challenge for millions of Nigeria due to the inability to bear the financial cost that is always attached to the health delivery and this led to self-treatment, drug

misuse and abuse. Many women do self-delivery at home or approaching quacks for child delivery which in return claims lives and deprived many new born babies medical and parental cares which prone them to unwanted diseases and premature death.

It is pathetic seeing Muslims in the state of these challenges due to financial incapacitation which rendered them prone to the societal challenges because finance is the bedrock of making good individuals void of socio crimes. The percentage of Nigerian Muslims in this category of Nigeria population is high and calls for immediate solutions which will afford contemporary Muslims to have access to many opportunities in solving their socio-financial challenges.

Discussion

CashWaqf Models in solving Socio Financial Challenges among Contemporary Muslims in Nigeria

The last two decades have witnessed the revival of the institution of *Waqf* and the creation of movable *Waqf*, i.e. CashWaqf, in almost all Muslim countries and Muslim minority countries. Various *Waqf* models have been implemented in different jurisdictions, and, with the technological advancement, more sophisticated structures could be adopted for the efficient *Waqf* management. This tool, among others *Waqf* forms, will enable contemporary Muslims from both Northern and Southern Nigeria, means to improve their socio financial status in wholistic. It is not popular as others but it will go along to give many Muslims opportunity to donate and participate in *Waqf* while giving room to have more fund generation thereby, putting smiles into the faces of Muslims who are in dare needs of socio financial supports. This era brings about systematic and coordinated endowment organizations which make it possible to look attractive and progressive indeed as the institution works to serve the purpose of its conception in solving socio-financial challenges. A coordinating body for *Waqf* institution in Nigeria named Association of Zakat and *Waqf* Organizations in Nigeria (AZAWON) published total number of *Waqf* institutions in Nigeria to 38 registered *Waqf* institutions across the country while some had emerged but not duly registered under the organization(Shuaib & Sohail, 2022).

CashWaqf practices Models

1. *Waqf* Share Model, the *Waqf* founders (individuals and firms) make financial commitment to *Waqf* fund and receive CashWaqf certificates from Managers(*An-nadhir*). He distributes the accumulated funds or generated revenue for charitable purposes. This model is used for public *Waqf* and currently practised in Mālayasia, Indonesia, England, Sudan, and Kuwait(Aziz et al.,

2013). In Nigeria, the Sokoto State Zakat and Endowment Commission commonly use this model to generate fund for building mosques, Islamic schools, medical facilities, water and sanitation, and supporting orphans and widows. Currently, empowerment worth of 10million for 160 women in one of 81districts of Sokoto State is ongoing after the completion of the first 200 women empowerment. (Habebah 2023) This is new in Nigeria and is seen as viable and innovative tool to make it worthwhile in solving socio-financial challenges through pooling of financial resources and fund to support needy and poor in the society. A systematic and organized *Waqf* institution will utilize this model effectively and efficiently targeting its goals. As the name implies, the corpus for this form of *Waqf* is the Stocks, otherwise called the Shares. The endower of stock *Waqf*, normally an individual who is capable and has sufficient wealth, earmarks his share ownership in a company for *Waqf*, which in turn becomes the beneficiary of profits accruing to the company under (ownership) shares in such company.

2. Direct *Waqf* Model, *Waqf* founders make fund deposits into special bank account of Manager. The bank invests the collected Cash and generates profits. *An-Nadhir* receives the funds from the bank and distributes them for charitable purposes. This model is employed in Mālayasia, Singapore, Bahrain, UAE, Pakistan, India, the United States, South Africa, IDB, OPEC in the form of public *Waqf*(Abd Jalil et al., 2016).This is practised as demonstrated by SOZECOM in the country and it requires the need to make the orientation about its operations know to individuals who are interested in making *Waqf*.(Aliyu 2023) Financial Institutions or Banking Sectors in Nigeria should see it as responsibility to have a window for this project where a willing Muslim can plan and work towards actualisation of *Waqf* project in his life time via deposit into his *Waqf* account regularly. The Cash *Waqf* of Jaiz Foundation, Nigeria is into this form of model with three major benefactors (firms) and one registered *Wāqif* and this had made Jaiz to invest 1.4billion Naira into the creation of *Waqf* Investment and its annual profits are shared in solving Socio-financial challenges among Muslims in Nigeria, in the area of empowerment, health and education.
3. Mobile *Waqf* Model, *Waqf* founders make contributions by sending SMS to a mobile operator with the order to deduct their airtime and send it to managers. Mobile operator transfers the sums to the manager. Managers and mobile operator invest the collected funds through *mushārakah* contract. The profit generated is shared as per agreement. Finally, the manager distributes the amount to beneficiaries. This model of *Waqf* is found in Mālayasia and Kuwait and used for Public *Waqf*(Rasheed et al., 2020).This is another model which will make it easy

to cater for the needs of Muslims in Socio Financial sector regularly, thereby alienating sufferings of the populace at large. Many Nigerians recharge daily which tunes into hundreds and thousands of Naira through which they can willingly give a percentage or amount to be deducted and set aside for the *Waqf* project. This will afford many individuals means to have access to funds that will help them solve immediate family challenges faced by Muslims. Many engage in gambling via deduction of airtime while some subscribe to things of less value or no important in the society which makes it worthwhile to work on because, it makes possible easy execution of this project.

4. Compulsory *Waqf* Model, this type of Cash*Waqf* is mostly practiced by many institutions or employers that are Islamic faith based in which the *mawquf* (employees) make monthly contributions from the salary (through automatic check-off system). *Waqf* Managers receives funds and spends on philanthropic purposes. This model is used in Singapore by Singapore Islamic Council for Public *Waqf*(Allah Pitchay et al., 2018). It is practiced in Nigeria with case study of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin: a certain amount of money is been deducted monthly from the salaries of senior staff and these deducted funds are directly sent to the Abdul-Raheem Oladimeji Foundation (AROIF) to support humanitarian services and provide scholarship for less privileges(Hassan, 2024). The only thing needed here is to tag it *Waqf* with intent of making it perpetual benefits through-out his stay as employee of the institution. Islamic Mission for Africa is another case study where it was tagged Zakat contributions from the salaries of Junior and Senior members. These funds are used for charitable development in solving socio financial challenges. (Razak, 2020)
5. Deposit Product *Waqf*, this form of Cash*Waqf* goes a long way in solving financial challenges of many Nigeria entrepreneurs who are in need of capital to begin their vocation or businesses. (Rasheed etal 2020) In this case, the *Waqf* founders deposit Cash in a special *Waqf* account opened in bank. Bank manages funds on behalf of the trustee, invests on *mudārabah* and *Qard Hasan* basis. The bank transfers the generated profit to Cash*Waqf* account. The manager distributes funds to beneficiaries. This model can be found in Bangladesh and employed by SIBL (Social Investment Bank Limited) and IBBL (Islamic Bank Bangladesh Limited) for public *Waqf*(Mizanur Rahman & Nurul Islam Sohel, 2019).This requires a Muslim who is wealthy to make available to the bank a certain fund for *Waqf* which is purely managed on *Mudārabah* which afford many petty traders to have access to Cash for the business on which the profit and loss will be shared on percentage as agreed by both parties at the commencement

of the contract. The profit received only is taken to the charitable acts stipulated by the *Wāqif*. This kind of model serves dual charitable purposes which is empowerment and charity through *Waqf*. Many families can have succor if it is practised and managed correctly. The Sokoto State Zakat and *Waqf* (Endowment) Commission (SOZECOM) also has this and currently practising it with a viewing to eradicating beggars among women by giving *Qard* of 50,000 Naira to be paid back for period of six months.

6. Cooperative *Waqf* Model, the *Waqf* founders (local citizens) make Cash *Waqf* contributions to the District Cash *Waqf* Fund. Manager receives funds and invests. Earnings are spent on the development of public projects in the area. The model is used in Uzbekistan in 1992 for public *Waqf* (for religious, educational, healthcare and economic development) and called *Mahalla Cash Waqf* (Allah Pitchay et al., 2018). The cooperative *Waqf* Model is not seen as such as many Islamic organizations pull fund resources together which is invested in to a profitable business which yielded profit overtime but not solely for charitable donations.
7. Mutual Fund *Waqf* Model: the *Waqf* founders make contributions to Mutual Fund and specify that certain portion of investment earnings will be allocated to *Waqf* fund. Generated profit is divided into two funds - Mutual and *Waqf*. *Waqf* Fund is used to provide endowments to charitable purposes. This model is used in Indonesia in the form of joint *Waqf* (*mushtarak*) (Khalil et al., 2014) and *Waqfu Takaful* is brought to the context of solving socio financial challenges that may arise from damage of properties. This mutuality will give immediate financial supports to the victims thereby alienating sufferings that must have been witnessed initially.
8. Crowdfunding *Waqf* Model, the donors are made aware of the needs to contribute any certain amount of money to particular charitable project development in which the money realised will judiciously spent for the purpose. (Rasheed et al 2020) This is majorly practised in Nigeria due to low approaches and orientation to *Waqf* institution and it is not in line with its basic rule of intending to establish *Waqf* in relation to the need at hand. This is like the first model tagged *Waqf* share Model but not similar in total approaches because the Crowdfunding *Waqf* is not limited to a certain number of shareholders as the case is in *Waqf* Share Model (WSM). It makes use of available project to seek for funds from the crowd who is ready to assist in solving the immediate socio financial challenges. This may be seen widely practiced by many individuals in solving either collective or personal social financial challenges. Most often, it

requires trustworthy individuals whose integrity is ascertained by good number of the members of society, to mobilize crowdfunding for any organization or individuals. It is generally considered as *Waqf* due to the charitable purpose involved which falls under the ways in which *Waqf* fund can be expended on. This is commonly used in Nigeria as health-related issues were resolved and academic school fees were paid; scholarships were given to many individuals while basic needs of life were also provided via this approach especially in Ramadan.

9. *AgroWaqf* is also another area of Model investment which was first introduced by SOZECOM. Individuals who wish to give outcharity for his/her deceased parents are encouraged to do it under the supervision of the commission. The fund to procure the seedlings and its nurturing for 3 years will be paid by the individuals to a designated account and after which it will be transferred to the Commission. The Commission sells the fruits harvested from such tree and use the money for charitable acts (Habebah, 2022).

The issues solved with *CashWaqf* include the following among others in the country:

- a. Humanitarian Intervention: Provision of relief materials and capacity building to victims of accidents or natural disasters such as floods, earthquake, fire outbreak, civil unrest, insurgency in the country. Jaiz Foundation in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the American University of Nigeria (AUN) provided livelihoods intervention for 120 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Returnees and Host Community in Damasak, Borno State with over 7million naira fund used to train, equip the beneficiaries with items and start-up capital across the North East in 2019. Most of the beneficiaries contacted during the course of the research responded positively well as the intending problems identified were solved through the provision of the financial aids given (Aldeen et al., 2020).
- b. Educational Intervention: *CashWaqf* renders educational support for the benefit of the community through sponsorship of conferences and workshops especially in the area that is related to Religious and Peaceful Co-existence, Economic and Community Development. Also, publishing and sponsorship of books especially in the areas of social and economic empowerment of the people were rendered. Khsarahmah Academy Kastina is educational *Waqf* Project Built by Jaiz Charity and Trust Foundation. *CashWaqf* played a high significant role in given required supports on education of many Nigerian Muslims across the country with less privileged were helped in the payment of school fees and took care of total running of the educational cost as full scholarship in either primary or secondary schools and tertiary institution. Some of the Female Medical students in clinical stages in any Nigerian

University enjoyed the *Waqf* fund of the Sultan of Sokoto annually till completion of their course (Aldeen et al., 2020).

c. Health, Water and Sanitation: Jaiz Foundation conducts intervention in the provision of medical relief programs to needy communities across the country. Jaiz Charity Foundation had already disbursed over 3.7 million naira to meet pressing medical needs of some beneficiaries recommended by some of Zakat donors for urgent surgeries such as kidney transplant and hyperthyroidism among others which could not be delayed. There are in existence hundreds of boreholes that were executed through the use of *CashWaqf* with a view to providing good water fit for drinking. In fact, some areas enjoyed access to water due to presence of *Masajid* situated in such areas as the *Waqf* managers constructed boreholes that serve the *Masjid* and the community. (Raimi et al., 2015).

d. Agricultural Intervention through support in areas of training, skills acquisition and facilitation of Micro Credit on the basis of *Mudāraba* and *Qard Hassan* (partnership and benevolent loan). The relevance of this cannot be over-emphasised in the country and many Nigerian Muslims are in the know of this scheme with which many are taking the advantages therein. (Lawal 2023)

e. Assisting entrepreneurial: *CashWaqf* can also be used to distribute materials such as industrial sewing machines, deep freezers, and printers, among others, to artisans and individuals to grow their respective businesses. (Habeebah 2022)

The study also shows that the current economic situation of the country is been dominated by small scale enterprises and this may be highly upgraded with the provision of grant, tools and materials needed for self-reliance which will enable them to take care of financial needs (Raimi et al., 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Nigeria socio-financial challenges are enormous and multidimensional which has caused a lot of socio-economic disasters leading to rising rates of unemployment and multidimensional poverty, unstable monetary policies with weak financial institutions and poor financial inclusion, inflation and instability of currency and poor fiscal management and rising debt. Attempt was made to discuss *CashWaqf*, its forms and legality from shari'ah perspective of using it as a concept with a view to facilitating the permanent solution to the financial challenges. Also, the study discussed the socio-economic challenges of Muslims in Nigeria and how *CashWaqf* can be used to solve these predicaments. The

study revealed that Jaiz Foundation and Sokoto State Zakat and *Waqf* Organization are the two prominent institutions that made use of *CashWaqf* as a tool viable to solve socio-financial challenges among Muslims in Nigeria. Through it, they improved the quality of life, provided timely socio-economic development support through direct and indirect interventions to the *Ummah* and humanity at large.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

The study found that *CashWaqf* is viable and has capacity to solve the identified challenges in no distant time as 100,000 of individuals or households benefited from the Jaiz *CashWaqf* Model (Aliyu, 2019) while more than 950,000 individuals had benefited from the *Waqf* project of SOZECOM. Therefore, the paper recommends that

- i. Muslims should be enlightened on the benefits of *CashWaqf*
- ii. *CashWaqf* models should be integrated into financial institutions in Nigeria
- iii. employment of experts in the field of Islamic finance to manage the existing Islamic institutions on *CashWaqf*
- iv. prioritizing the appropriate *CashWaqf* that would work effectively for Nigeria context.

5.3 Managerial Implication

For contemporary Muslims in Nigeria to be ameliorated from socio-economics problem; suitable application of *CashWaqf* models should be applied.

(Bala, 2021) and 66 orphans are currently in Qatar for undergraduate programs with full scholarships. It can increase the investment in the form of financing Islamic contract and spending the profit of invested *CashWaqf* on poverty reduction programs. It's noteworthy that, this concept of *Waqf* is viable and quite innovative, but there are challenges than mitigate against its application in Nigeria due to few presences of experts who specialize on *Waqf* Management, Administration, *Waqf* Estate Valueer and Surveyors, *Waqf* Legal Expert among others. The education on *Waqf* is also not as much with the populace which will make it worthwhile to keep on educating and informing Muslims in the need to invest in *Waqf*. Also, there is an urgent need to streamline the legal framework for *Waqf* in Nigeria through proper legislation.

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PENTECOSTALISM: AN INSTRUMENT OF RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Abstract

The most significant religious movement in the 21st century has been Pentecostalism. This vision emanated from the impersonal nature of the urban society that was fast emerging in the late 18th century. The relationship in the society was changing and it was difficult to reaccept the original sense of communalism. In this context, a vision where God was the centre of living and the great provider for all, leading all to experience the universal harmony in creation, restoring to the disinherited their rights, liberating them from the tentacles of the faceless oppressive society was a welcomed good news which provided an environment for the explosion of the Pentecostal movement. In the light of this, this article discusses Pentecost, Pentecostalism and the Holy Spirit conceptually and explains some of the strength and impacts of Pentecostalism in Nigeria contemporary society. The work also reviews some literature based on the explosion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. This study therefore, is an attempt to bring to the fore, Pentecostalism as an instrument of resilience in the changing world in the aspect of evangelism, poverty alleviation, and empowerment programmes organized for their members. The article also brings to limelight, some of the teachings, preaching and doctrines that serve as resilience to their members in the changing world, i.e. the holy bible, spirituality and prayer, liturgy worship, ecclesial consciousness, and believe in the Holy Spirit. Using participant observation, this work concludes that Pentecostalism, through their teaching, preaching and doctrine have been able to serve as instrument of resilience to the Christians in the face of challenges like, insecurity, oppression, assault, health challenges, poverty and suffering, etc. This paper therefore, recommends that Pentecostal churches should do more to help their members in this turbulent and trying times. Moreso, the work also recommends that there should be an organizational model and a culture of authority among the Pentecostal Churches.

Keyword: *Pentecostalism, instrument, resilience, changing, world*

Introduction

In an era defined by rapid globalization, social fragmentation, economic meltdown, recession, insecurity, oppression and existential uncertainty, the explosive growth of Pentecostalism is one of the most significant religious movement standing tall as an instrument of resilience at this time. Far from being a retreat from modernity, Pentecostalism can be understood as a powerful and highly adaptive instrument of resilience, providing individuals and communities with the spiritual, social and psychological tools not to only endure change but to navigate and thrive within it, through their teachings, belief and doctrines. Since the 1970s there have been new developments in African Christianity – Ogbukalu (2000).

Charismatic revivals from within mainline churches soon fed into Pentecostal forms as young Christians emerged from the mainline, churches and formed current day Pentecostal ministries and churches. These churches all over Africa have their roots in the mainline churches. Asamoah-Gyandu (2000). These churches gained prominence in the 1990s. their emergence and proliferation is attributed to a reaction to the bureaucratization of the mainline churches and their subsequent lethargy. They are also linked to the legitimacy, economic and social-political crisis in Africa since the 1980s Gyandu (2000). Pentecostal churches identify with the central act of conversion in which individual consecrates his or her life to Christ, atones for past sins and becomes “born again” or “saved” Ruth Marshall (1995).

According to Gyandu (1998), since the 1990, the Pentecostal churches have become the fastest growing churches in Africa. He explained that the Pentecostal churches have challenged the historic churches and old African Independent Churches to reinvent themselves to become more relevant and in tune with the spiritual needs of their flocks Gyandu (1998).

These churches often function as surrogate kinship networks. Members call each other “brother” and “sister”, and the church provides material support such as food, jobs, childcare, emotional comfort and a strong sense of belonging. Similarly, belief in miracles, divine healing and prophecy make the supernatural immanent and practical. For instance, a person struggling with illness, unemployment, or family strife, the belief that God can and will intervene directly transforms situation of despair into one of hope and potential victory.

In the same vein, these churches have given rooms and opportunity to exhibit their potential, women to operate as leaders in their own capacity. This is due to the Pentecostal theology that provides avenues for charismatic gifting regardless of gender. To some extent their attitudes towards women's leadership has been positive. Gyandu (1998) It is also noteworthy that the explosion of Pentecostalism introduced into Nigeria's spirituality has awakened across board a tremendous desire for a kind of "primal spirituality" in the country.

Meanwhile, this has helped the disinherited people and the oppressed of the land and the strangers in the common household of God have sought a means of getting themselves free from the shackles and shame of being prisoner in one's house and slave in the father's house Isichel (1989). It is in the light of this that this work is carried out to explore Pentecostalism; as an instrument of resilience in a changing and perverse world.

Conceptual Clarifications

There are some terms that need clarification in this article. This aspect of the work will be dedicated to that. These are Pentecost, Pentecostalism and the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost

Pentecost, meaning 50 (fifty), is the Greek name for the Old Testament feast of weeks, since this festival occurred on the 50th day (seven weeks) after Passover. Along with the three annual pilgrimage feast for the Jews. A harvest festival, it marked the beginning of the time when the people brought their offerings of first fruits. This can also be referred to as the feast of ingathering and Day of First fruits Donatus (2008). Considering the above perspective, one could consider Pentecost as a commemoration of a religious consciousness of a people, a celebration of the saving presence of God as a giver of the fruits of the land and to whom belong the primal fruits. From the Old Testament tradition, Pentecost is peculiarly a feast of the "in-gathering", that is the gathering together of human beings, who recognize Yahweh as the Giver of the fruits of the earth – John (2008).

John (2008) maintains that in Judaism, the feast received a historic motif, it became the anniversary of the giving of the law of Moses. This Motif does not certainly appear until after the beginning of the Christian era. According to him, the feast therefore points to two religious experiences in the Jewish religion, namely: the covenant, and the giving of law of Moses. God gave the people of

Israel the rules of living, offering them a unique identity among the people of the earth. In the Old Testament therefore, Pentecost pointed to the recognition of God by the people, which manifested in their communal act of worship.

In the New Testament, the event of Pentecost assumed a new dimension. “The feast of Pentecost commemorated in the church as the day on which the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2) is fulfilment of the promise of Jesus, this is traditionally recognized as the birth of the church as an institution. John (2008). The feast of Pentecost became a providential moment for the in-gathering of the people of God. The experience of the early Christians on the day Pentecost constitutes a foundational and perennial principle of the Christian faith.

The crux of this encounter according to the Acts of the Apostles is the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, the discourse of Peter and the formation of the first Christian community. Therefore, these could be considered as a tripod of the church: the Holy Spirit, the proclamation and the community. The feast of Pentecost is to be seen in this context and as such it provides an indelible identity of the church. It is the power and enthusiasm that were manifested by the early Christians during and after the feast of Pentecost that have been awakened in the phenomenon of Pentecostalism in the contemporary era. J.D.G. Dunn (2008).

Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is the most significant religious movement in the twentieth century John (1995). Pentecostal churches are growing three times faster than Protestantism as a whole, particularly in Africa, and also in Latin America where it is the largest protestant denomination. The principal Pentecostal distinctive is speaking in “tongues” – a language other than one known to the speaker, called glossolalia – which Pentecostals believe is an outward evidence of an inward experience of being “baptized in the spirit”. Pentecostals are called Pentecostals because the first visible sign of the spirit-speaking in tongue came on Pentecost in AD 30 John (1993). In Pentecostalism, religious “experience” is more important than theology. Schewarz (1995). The biblical background of the contemporary phenomenon of Pentecostalism is commonly situated in the religious feast of the Jewish people marking or celebrating 50 days after the Passover. This Old Testament “agricultural” celebration marks the beginning and offer a foundational set up and terminology for the overwhelming religious conviction in the hearts of the earliest followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

This unique experience exercises a permanent influence on the nascent Christian church, her spirituality and ministry Donatus (2008).

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person in God head – thus a “person” and the third person in trinity. God the father, son and the Holy Spirit Wilbur (1992). When we write about the Holy Spirit, we refer to Pentecostalism, hence, these are churches who believe in the gifts of the spirit but are not insistent on speaking in tongue as the only evidence of the spirit.

It is clear that it is primarily the Holy Spirit who is at work in the church and in individual Christian today. Jesus said when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). From this verse, it is clear that it is the Holy Spirit who persuades people about their sin. The Holy Spirit is present all over the world, at all times and no one can hide from him. Wilbur (1992) depicts that, if it were not for the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the world today, life in this world would be unbearable. The Holy Spirit restrains much of the evil that people would like to do. It is clear that the Holy Spirit does not restrain all evil from taking place. The world still has much crime and violence. However, if the Holy Spirit were to suddenly stop his restraining work, the world would become almost unbearable.

According to Wilbur (1992), the Holy Spirit uses different ways to restrain evil in the world. Sometimes he uses the government, the laws and police. He also uses the holy angels of God in response to the prayers of Christians. Probably the most general way in which the Holy Spirit restrains evil in the world is by speaking to people’s hearts about right and wrong, and convicting them to guilt for doing wrong.

In all, it can be deduced that, since these churches believe in Holy Spirit and as well teach and instill in their members the place of the Holy Spirit in their lives, these have helped the Christians in so many ways by serving as instrument of resilience to overcome in the changing world.

Literature Review

Historical Background of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Pentecostalism developed from the religious and political scenario of the country between 1950 and 1970. The historical context of these decades is very vital for and indepth understanding of what can be termed as “the Nigerian Spirit and hazard”.

The goal of self-affirmation and actualization was glaringly evident in the projects of the nationalists, seeking liberation from the churches of the European imperialism. This spirit of nationhood and self-affirmation swept over everything that was western in origin and configuration but only exteriorly without touching the reality of the things in themselves. Mbete (2008), in spite of the optimism generated by this spirit, there was an undeniable attraction for the western system and, perhaps a kind of childish longing for the “white man’s apple”. This longing and attraction has remained a constant hazard in African culture generally. Mbete (2008), from the spirit of this epoch, any situation that was wholeheartedly in conformity with the pre-colonial status quo, that fostered self-consciousness and identification was accepted. To this end anything that offered more practical solutions or gave impetus for the realization and actualization of the desire for liberation was a welcome phenomenon in Nigeria.

Pentecostalism surface within this context and it was intertwined with this spirit religiously. Mbete (2008) observes that there was dissatisfaction among members of the missionary churches in the country.

According to Mbete (2008), “this general dissatisfaction opened door for new religious forms among members of the mainline churches in particular and the general populace at large. The desire for a religious experience will become a constant hazard in the country, compelling people to constantly change their ecclesial affiliation based on their current and prevailing religious feelings.

When the influenza epidemic broke out the same year, the group saved many affected with prayers. This consolidated the formation of the prayer group, which was named precious stone and later the “Diamond Society” Ogunmola (2012).

By 1920, the Diamond Society had grown tremendously with branches around the Western Region of Nigeria. It emphasized divine healing, holiness and complete dependence on God, Ogunmola (2012). The Oke Ooye, Ilesha revival sparked off Pentecostalism in Nigeria. The late Apostle Ayo Babalola performed several miracles that culminated in the formation of the Christ Apostolic Church. Meanwhile, many mainline churches such as Anglican Communion, Methodist Church, Baptist Convention and others were witnessing similar internal dissensions. Many Africans were denied Holy and disallowed from church workforce on allegations of being polygamous pushed to the wall, many of the pulled out and formed the own churches.

It all started in 1918 in Ijebu-Ode when the first Aladura movement was founded Sunday Ogunmola (2012) According to Sunday Ogunmola (2012) a School Teacher, Sophia Odunlami, and a gold-smith, Joseph Sadare, were behind it. The duo, members of St. Saviour's Anglican Church, rejected infant baptism and all forms of western and traditional medicine.

They initiated the "prayer group and band" popularly called Egbe Aladura Sadare was compelled to give up his post in the Synod and others were forced to resign their jobs and withdrawn their children from the Anglican School. The Aladura began as a renewal movement in search of true spirituality.

Other indigenous churches sprang up such as the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) founded by the late Prophet Samuel Oshoffa and the Cherubim and Seraphime Movement led by the late Prophet Moses Orimolade. Both spiritual churches, however, witnessed different Schism that led to different factions based on personal and doctrinal crises.

Ogunmola (2012) explains that, in 1930, a certain Joseph Akindayomi joined the Cherubim and Seraphim Church. By 1947, he started to become concerned that the church was departing from the true word of God in some of its practices. By 1952, he felt totally persuaded to leave the church. He started a house fellowship at Willoughby street, Ebute Metta, christened the Glory of God Fellowship. Initially, there were nine members, but before long the fellowship rapidly grew as the news of the miracles that occurred in their midst spread. In a vision, late Akindayomi saw The Redeemed Christian Church of God written on a blackboard. Thus began the RCCG, the world's largest growing Pentecostal church in 1952.

Ogunmola (2012), added that, somewhere in Benin City a sickly child was born and christened Benson Idahosa. He was converted to Christianity and began conducting outreaches from village to village. Renowned for his vibrant faith and power ministration, Idahosa rose to become the first Pentecostal Archbishop in Africa.

He broke new grounds, aggressively converting many from animism. The founder of the Church of God Mission International is acknowledged as the father of Pentecostalism in Africa, raising such prominent preachers like Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, Bishop David Oyedepo, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome and Bishop Fred Addo, among several others. Through him, charismatic Pentecostalism became a force to reckon with in Nigeria. Today, there are thousands of independent charismatic churches across the length and breadth of the nation.

Pentecostalism as an Instrument of resilience in a changing world

Pentecostalism is seen as an instrument of resilience in a changing world based on the following:

1. **Evangelism:** According to the president of International Church Growth Ministries, Dr. Francis Akin-John, Pentecostal churches have aggressive evangelical zeal going for them. “They are fearless and fiercely committed to taking the gospel to hitherto unreached parts of the world. That is why the Nigerian churches are spearheading missionary efforts everywhere in the world” Ogunmola (2012). Fracins is of the notion that this evangelical zeal is why it is so easy for Pentecostal churches to start branches everywhere in the world, regardless of the most stringent conditions. Through rigorous evangelism these churches to also helped break the stronghold of traditional religion across the nation. Several former traditionalist accepted Christ and burnt their charms, a development that repelled spiritual darkness. The fire brand Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM) is reputed for deliverance and breakthrough sessions. This has delivered millions from spiritual strongholds and generational curses, thereby servings as an instrument of resilience to the people in the face of life challenges.
2. **Poverty Alleviation:** Much as people have issues with crass materialism in the independent churches, the fact is the church owes it current buoyant financial status to them. Gone are the days church rats were sarcastically said to be poor. These days, rats are competing to gain access to Pentecostal churches to enable them taste of the many crumbs in churches. Many of these churches have also contributed to poverty alleviation in no

small way by supporting indigent students and widows in so many ways. These churches see this as responsibility and stewardship what God called them to do, and they are relentlessly passionate about it.

3. **Empowerment Programme:** Beyond poverty alleviation, many of them have also started business ventures that are empowering members financially. They run churches, printing presses, banks, creches and several business outfits that are providing employment and sources of livelihood for members. These ventures also provide alternative incomes for members and the churches. Consequently, until the rise to prominence of these churches, Christianity remained largely a despised, conservative religion, attracting only the dregs and outcast of the society. Through the influence of Pentecostal church founded in Nigeria, Christianity now has a new face, attracting upwardly mobile executives and business owners like never before. According to Bishop Wale Oke “The people never wanted to have anything to do with the Lord. They felt they had wealth and comfort and wondered what else can Christ offer them. But Pentecostals have proven that they need much more than that. These churches have taught their adherents how they can bring the faith to bear in business decisions and policies. Market place evangelism and Christianity have become the fad”.
4. **The Holy Bible:** Pentecostalism through teachings has reawakened a general desire and love for the Bible as the written word of God and a perennial document of authentic Christian life. Many Christians nowadays take the Bible seriously as a weapon to fight against life’s challenges and it is no longer considered a book meant for the clergy alone.
5. **Spirituality and Prayer:** Pentecostalism has teaches its adherents an eagerness for spiritual life in the secular world, and a desire for an experiential communion with God in prayers. People now give serious attention to their prayer lives. Pentecostalism is noted for encouraging spirituality that abhors confinement and standardization, while provoking an intimate experience of the holy spirit in a person’s life Achunike (2003).
6. **Ecclesial Consciousness:** Pentecostalism has really influenced the ecclesial consciousness of many Christians and their identification with the church is becoming very strong. The spirit is not just gathering people into a faceless mass, but into an organized body of Christ. There is personal identification with the church. “My church” slogan is becoming popular among Nigerians. Expressions such as these are commonly used by Nigerians nowadays.

“There is a function in my church”, “come and worship with me in my fasting in my church today”, etc. these indicate that people now considered ecclesial identification seriously. The Pentecostal teaching of born-again has had much influence and impact on the Christians, since every authentic Christians, since every authentic Christian is expected to live a new life in Christ and to be guided by the spirit. There is no evidence that there is a church that is contrary to holiness and righteousness of her members, and many are compelled by their ecclesial identification to demonstrate acceptable Christian moral standards in public, at least so that they do not tarnish the image of their church. It is obvious that this will eventually have impact on the general society at large.

Conclusion and Recommendations

An attempt has been made to explore Pentecostalism as an instrument of resilience in a changing world. In the process, we have identified the fact that until the emergence of Pentecostalism, Christianity remained largely a despised, conservative religion, attracting largely only the dregs and outcasts of the society. The work also spelt out analyzed some areas of resilience which Pentecostals are known for and have been so committed to making sure that their adherents enjoy.

In view of Pentecostalism as an instrument of resilience in a changing world, the following recommendations are proffered: it is observed that, there are some of these churches that have been founded by some so called pastors that were not called by God in the world today, and so take advantage of those churches to perpetrate evils. This work recommends that there should be an organizational model and a culture of authority among the Pentecostal churches.

Similarly, it is being observed also Pentecostalism scope has witnessed pluralism and diversity characterized by pockets of fundamentalists. Therefore, this work also recommends that Pentecostalism raise the standard for probity and accountability.

Lastly, in alignment with the instrument of resilience the Pentecostal churches are known for this work recommends that some of these churches owned one institution of learning or the other should have a human face to the extent that both pastors and members laboring in such ministries should enjoy some benefits and scholarship for their children.

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RELIGION AND HERITAGE: A REVIEW OF THE DILEMMA OF MOBILIZATION IN THE PAN-YORUBA MOVEMENT.

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Abstract

The Yoruba people from the southwest of Nigeria are commonly called *omo kaaro ojire*. They have rich cultural, religious, and social history. Unfortunately, religion, an essential element of human civilization and a moral foundation of society, has influenced the culture, social norms, values, rituals, and behaviours of the Yoruba people. This research employs Framing Theory from social movement studies to analyze the argument. The Pan-Yoruba movement advocates a heritage framework, highlighting indigenous Yoruba symbols such as *Odùduwà*, *òrìṣà*, and the sacred city of Ilé-Ifè as the secular cultural basis of a unified identity. A powerful theological counter-frame utilised by Islamic and Christian groups always challenges this structure. This framework calls these symbols fetish, pagan, and against revealed religion. This study used a qualitative methodology, examining sermons, religious literatures, social media dialogues, and interviews with some religious adherents of the major religion in practice in Yoruba land. This study investigates how this fetishist and pagan framework obstructed people from mobilizing and participating in the pan-Yoruba movement. Thus, the research concludes that the counter-framing of foreign religion, which views Yoruba heritage as pagan and fetish, alongside the Pan-Yoruba movement's inability to challenge this religious framing effectively, represents considerable impediments to the growth, development, and overall acceptance of the Pan-Yoruba movement.

Keywords: Religion, Heritage, Review, Dilemma, Mobilization, Pan-Yoruba

Introduction

The Pan-Yoruba movement aims to consolidate and advocate for the cultural and political concerns of the Yoruba community, offering a fertile structure for analyzing the dynamic relationship between religion and culture. This movement originated from the southwestern part of Nigeria, it encompasses several elements of Yoruba identity, such as language, traditions, and religious rituals. An analysis of the relationship between religion and culture in this movement provides insights into the wider dynamics of post-colonial African communities (Peel, 2000). The Yoruba people possess a lengthy history marked by an intricate interplay of native religions, Christianity, and Islam. Prior to the onset of colonialism, the Yoruba people followed a traditional religious system called Ifá, which comprised a collection of deities (Orisas) and a substantial body of tales, rituals, and divination customs.

The advent of Christian missionaries in the 19th century and the spread of Islam brought forth new religious dynamics, resulting in a diverse religious environment (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The Yoruba people of South-West Nigeria intricately incorporate religion with their cultural identity. For example, Ifá, the traditional religion, is not simply a collection of spiritual ideas, but rather an essential component of the Yoruba culture. It has a profound impact on societal norms, morals, and even governmental systems. Equally, religious traditions frequently confer legitimacy upon traditional rulers, known as Obas, who act as intermediaries between the divine and the populace (Peel, 2003). The advent of Christianity and Islam had a profound impact on Yoruba culture. Both religions made significant contributions to the dissemination of Western education and the introduction of new socio-political concepts, which played a pivotal part in the development of modern Yoruba nationalism.

Furthermore, these religions also ignited cultural syncretism, assimilating aspects of indigenous beliefs and rituals into Christian and Islamic worship. Yoruba people who have accepted foreign religions still incorporate some elements and aspects of their traditions into their worship. The syncretism of Yoruba Christians and Muslims is evident in their celebration of festivals, performance of rites, and adherence to taboos that have their origins in traditional religion (Akintoye, 2010). It is a common saying among some religious adherents of Christianity and Muslims that *Igbagbo koni kamasoro ile eni*, meaning accepting Christianity and Islam should not prevent someone from involving or participating in traditional festivals. The Pan-Yorubaism movement aims to foster the cohesion and progress of the Yoruba community, with a particular focus on the significance of cultural legacy. Religion as a moral bastion of the society according to Adabembe (2022) serves a double purpose in this movement. On one side, it acts as a cohesive element as the majority of Yoruba individuals, irrespective of their religious beliefs, partake in shared cultural customs and principles. Equally, the presence of different religions creates a difficulty in achieving unity, which requires active measures to overcome disparities and promote mutual respect (Ajayi, 2007). This is despite the fact that, Southwest Nigeria has been identified to by Adabembe (2025) to be an epicenter of religious harmony in Nigeria.

Consequently, understanding the relationship between religion and culture in Yorubaland, Southwest Nigeria, and its impact on Yoruba activism is essential. The region has experienced substantial changes shaped by the interaction between native Yoruba customs and the introduction

of religions such as Christianity and Islam (Peel, 2000). The intricate fabric of cultural and religious existence in Southwest Nigeria exemplifies a vibrant incorporation where traditional beliefs coexist and engage with these foreign but rapidly spreading religions. The complex interplay between these factors continues to influence the social, political, and economic landscape of modern Yoruba society (Falola, 1998). Unfortunately, these foreign religions have dominated the region. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the interplay of religion and culture in South West Nigeria to discover how they shape identity, impact the Pan Yoruba movement, and influence social unity in the region.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the relationship between religion and culture and its impact on the Pan-Yoruba activism movement.

The specific objectives of this study are to;

- i. Investigate the historical origins and development of the Pan-Yoruba movement, and assess the impact of cultural practices on the religious landscape within the Yoruba community.
- ii. Examine the Pan-Yoruba movement's vision for the preservation and promotion of Yoruba culture and religion.
- iii. Assess the movement's role in addressing contemporary social, political, and economic challenges.

Literature Review

The Yoruba's Pre-Colonial Cultural, Social, and Political Structures

Cultural Structures

The Yorùbá traditional society is a corporate and religious society that is endowed with a rich cultural heritage and values. Religion according to Adabembe (2024), is as old as human life, and there are three main religions in Nigeria. Scholars have conducted extensive research on different areas of Yoruba and their beliefs and have affirmed that, “Yoruba beliefs and practices have a crucial role to play in the maintenance of their cultural values with its cultural implications for

modern Nigeria” (Odudele, Familugba, Fasiku & Adabembe, 2023). The Religion and Spirituality of the Yoruba people are polytheistic. According to the 2006 census in Nigeria, about 63.9 to 67.8% of the Southwestern population are Christians, about 31.6 to 35.5% are Muslims, and the rest are traditionalists (Notre et al., 2016). Their religion is centered on the worship of Orishas, who are deities representing natural forces and ancestors. Each Orisha has specific attributes, domains, and associated rituals (Peel, 2003). Some of the common *orisa* in Yoruba land are: *Ogun* the god of iron, *Yemoja*, the river goddess; *Obatala*, the deity of creation; the deity of creation; *Osun*, the goddess of river and fertility; Sango god of iron, Oya, the river deity and deity of children; *Esulaalu* deity in-charge of ritual and sacrifice (among others). The king, also referred to as the Oba or Kabiyesi among the Yorubas, holds the esteemed position of being the spiritual leader of the town and is respected by all religious groups in Yoruba land. As a result, the oba carries out traditional rituals that may conflict with the beliefs of Christians and Muslims. Surprisingly, the same ruler will attend a church or mosque service on Sunday to express gratitude for the successful completion of a traditional festival. (Nolte R. J., Khadijeh. T. and Giovanni. O. 2016).

Equally, *Ifá* divination is a complex system used to communicate with the divine. The babaonifa, that is, the Ifa diviner, interprets the patterns made by casting sacred objects (Bascom, 1969). Babalawos are consulted for virtually everything in Yoruba land. *Ikansejaye* is the way to trace or predict the destiny of a newborn. Also, Ifa divination is crucial in selecting a new king. The Ifa diviner plays a significant role among the Yorubas. Ifa must choose from the numerous princes presented for the position of king; anyone Ifa selects becomes the king. *Ifa canfore* that is, the oracle spoke well or spoke otherwise. Moreover, the family structure of Yoruba society is organised around extended families (*Ebi*), which are fundamental social units. These families, according to Johnson 1921), are patrilineal, tracing descent through the male line. Male children in Yoruba land are *daodu* and *opomulero*. The traditional Yoruba families often live in compounds (agboile), housing multiple generations and fostering communal living and support (Bascom, 1955). Meanwhile, next in line to *agbo-ile* are social group organisations, including age grades, which are groups of people of similar age who undergo communal rites of passage together, fostering social cohesion (Lloyd, 1955). Age grade is one of the fundamental and formidable social groups in South-West Nigeria. Some of these groups serve as warriors who protect their towns and villagers from invaders. Also, societies like the Ogboni play crucial roles in maintaining social

order and justice, often acting as advisory bodies to the kings and chiefs (Morton-Williams, 1960). The Yoruba are renowned for their sophisticated art, particularly in sculpture and pottery. Their textiles include Aso-Oke, which comes in different kinds such as sanyan, alaari, etu, and opaaro, among others. These artworks often depict religious themes that play important roles in Yoruba socio-cultural expressions (Thompson, 1974). These artworks are used in various ceremonies in southwest Nigeria (Drewal, Pemberton, & Abiodun, 1989).

The Yoruba political system is highly hierarchical, with kings, *Obas*, holding significant religious and political authority. They are considered divine or semi-divine figures (Smith, 1988). *Oba* are still regarded as *alaseekejiorisa* to this day. The kings are supported by the Council of chiefs, who assist in governance and administration. These councils are composed of high-ranking nobles and advisors (Atanda, 1973). Pre-colonial Yoruba land was not a unified empire but consisted of numerous independent city-states, such as Ife, Oyo, and Ibadan. Each had its own governance system but shared cultural and religious similarities (Falola, 1984).

Historical Origins and Development of the Pan-Yoruba Movement

The Pan-Yoruba Movement's evolution is one of the nationalist movements that emerged in Nigeria and throughout Africa during the early 20th century. There are similar nationalist movements in Nigeria, such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), founded in 1999, aiming to revive the Republic of Biafra and advocate for the self-determination of the Igbo people (Ezeani, 2013). In 2012, Nnamdi Kanu founded the Ingenious People of Biafra, Nigeria (IPOB), in the eastern part of Nigeria. The movement's objective is to seek the secession of the south-eastern region of Nigeria, aiming to form an independent Biafra (Olokor, 2017). The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) was founded in 2000 to promote Northern Nigeria's socio-economic and political interests. In 1945, Yoruba leaders like Obafemi Awolowo established Egbe Omo Oduduwa, aiming to advance Yoruba culture and political goals within the broader Nigerian context. The Egbe Omo Oduduwa aimed to safeguard Yoruba customs and promote self-governance at the regional level within a federal Nigeria (Falola & Heaton, 2008). After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the Pan-Yoruba movement continued to develop. The Action Group, under the leadership of Awolowo, advocated for the political interests of the Yoruba people in both regional and national contexts. The movement prioritized the significance of federalism, cultural conservation, and economic advancement for the Yoruba community. The

Pan-Yoruba movement has demonstrated its ability to adjust to evolving political and social forces in recent decades. Groups such as Afenifere, a socio-political organization that supports Yoruba interests, have been instrumental in addressing current issues, including resource control, federalism, and regional development (Olukoju, 1997).

Impacts of Islam and Christianity on Yoruba Culture, Traditional Religion and Pan-Yoruba Movements

The introduction and spread of Islam and Christianity have significantly impacted Yoruba culture and traditional religion, leading to transformations in religious practices, social structures, and cultural expressions.

Religious Syncretism and Coexistence

One notable effect of Islam and Christianity on Yoruba traditional religion is the emergence of religious syncretism. Yoruba people often blend traditional religious practices with those of Islam and Christianity, creating a unique form of worship that incorporates elements from multiple faiths. This syncretism is evident in the ways Yoruba festivals, rituals, and ceremonies have incorporated Islamic and Christian symbols and practices. Adogame (2013) noted that, "The Yoruba have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience by integrating elements of their traditional religion with those of Islam and Christianity, creating a hybrid religious identity that reflects their cultural and historical context" (Adogame, 2013). The spread of Islam and Christianity has also led to changes in social and cultural practices among the Yoruba. These religions introduced new moral and ethical frameworks, which sometimes conflicted with traditional beliefs and practices. For example, certain traditional practices, such as the worship of deities like Ogun and Sango, faced opposition from Christian and Islamic teachings that promote monotheism. However, these changes have not been entirely negative. Olajubu (2012) affirms that, "The interaction between Yoruba traditional religion and the Islam and Christian faiths has led to a dynamic cultural exchange, enriching Yoruba culture with new forms of artistic expression, literature, and music" (Olajubu, 2012). Equally, these foreigners have influenced the institutional structures of Yoruba society. The introduction of Islamic and Christian educational institutions has played a significant role in shaping contemporary Yoruba society. These schools often emphasizes religious teachings, which may have led to the marginalization of traditional religious knowledge and practices.

Children of African traditional religious practitioners are forced to adopt one of the foreign religions in school.

Impact of Cultural Practices on the Religious Landscape within the Yoruba Community

Despite this, traditional Yoruba institutions, such as chieftaincies and councils of elders, have persisted and adapted to the changing religious landscape. Peel argues that, "The Yoruba have managed to preserve many of their traditional institutions by finding ways to integrate Islamic and Christian elements into their existing social and political structures" (Peel, 2016). Likewise, Yoruba rituals and festivals have also been transformed by the presence of Islam and Christianity. For instance, annual festivals dedicated to traditional deities now often include prayers and blessings from both Islamic and Christian clerics. Equally, that Obas in Yoruba land are saddled with the responsibility of engaging in customary rituals that contradict the beliefs of Christians and Muslims, while also serving as the cultural and spiritual authority in the area. This shows the pluralistic religious identity of the Yoruba people. In some cases, traditional festivals have been reinterpreted or rebranded to align with Islamic or Christian values. For example, the Udiroko Festival in Ado-Ekiti, the Ojude Oba Festival in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, and the Eyo Festival in Lagos State, among others, are originally traditional Yoruba events that have incorporated elements appealing to both Muslim and Christian participants, making them more inclusive celebrations.

All these show that despite the pervasive influence of Islam and Christianity, there has been a resurgence of interest in Yoruba traditional religion in recent years. This revival is partly driven by a desire to reclaim and celebrate Yoruba cultural identity in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization. Scholars have documented efforts to revive and promote Yoruba traditional religion through academic research, cultural festivals, and the establishment of traditional religious organizations. Abiodun (2018) states, "The contemporary revival of Yoruba traditional religion is a testament to its enduring significance and the resilience of Yoruba cultural identity".

The impact of Christianity and Islam on the Pan-Yoruba Movement

This article aims to examine the influence of Christianity and Islam, the two predominant religions among the Yoruba people of southern Nigeria, on the Pan-Yoruba movement, a socio-political and cultural effort. In the past, during the Pre-Colonial era, the Yoruba people had a vibrant history

and a well-established indigenous religion called Ifá. This involved the veneration of deities known as Orishas. Simultaneously, the emergence of Christianity and Islam brought up new religious dynamics, which consequently modified the conventional customs and social structures of the Yorubas. Christianity witnessed fast growth during the colonial era as a result of missionary efforts. However, Islam had already established a substantial foundation through existing trading links. The colonial authority frequently showed a preference towards Christian missions, resulting in significant effects on the socio-political scene. Christian missionaries founded educational institutions and introduced Western education, resulting in the emergence of a new educated upper class within the Yoruba community. This educated class gained prominence within the Pan-Yoruba movement, advocating for the advancement of modernization and socio-political changes.

A significant number of Yoruba leaders involved in the nationalist movement were adherents of Christianity. They strategically deployed their authority to organize support for the cause of Yoruba solidarity and the preservation of their cultural heritage. Christian institutions frequently served as a forum for political discussion and mobilization. Notwithstanding these factors, Christianity, with its Western influences, occasionally clashed with indigenous Yoruba traditions and beliefs. Islam, deeply embedded in Yoruba society, fostered a feeling of unity among the Yoruba Muslims. Islamic institutions served to strengthen communal ties and preserve cultural identity. Yoruba Muslims have actively contributed to the Pan-Yoruba movement, campaigning for policies that align with their religious and cultural principles. The involvement of significant Muslim leaders facilitated the reconciliation of differences among various Yoruba sub-groups. Islam has exhibited a greater level of syncretism with traditional Yoruba customs in comparison to Christianity. The integration has facilitated a more effortless blending of religious and cultural identities, enhancing the Pan-Yoruba movement.

The Pan-Yoruba Movement's Vision for the Preservation and Promotion of Yoruba Culture and Religion

Promoting the Assimilation of Religious and Cultural Beliefs

The Pan-Yoruba movement can endorse initiatives that preserve and safeguard the integration of religious and cultural customs. A unified Yoruba identity can be strengthened through festivals, cultural events, and media depictions that incorporate components from both Islamic and Christian

traditions (Adebayo, 2019). These initiatives aid in acknowledging and appreciating the varied contributions of both religions to Yoruba culture.

Tackling prevalent socio-political obstacles

The Pan-Yoruba movement has the capacity to establish forums or working groups that encompass leaders and people from both the Christian and Muslim communities, to tackle urgent socio-political matters. Cooperative efforts in areas like poverty reduction and healthcare can promote an integrated strategy to address problems while also strengthening social unity (Ibrahim, 2020). This inclusivity guarantees that solutions are culturally appropriate and universally embraced, even across different religious groups.

The Movement's Role in Addressing Contemporary Social, Political, and Economic Challenges

In the contemporary Yoruba community, there is an increasing desire towards inter-religious interaction and collaboration within the Pan-Yoruba movement. Christian and Muslim leaders collaborate to tackle shared socio-political issues affecting the Yoruba community. The movement aims to achieve balance in the religious diversity within the Yoruba community, while simultaneously advocating for a unified cultural and political identity. Strategic measures are taken to prevent religious disparities from overshadowing the shared objectives of the Pan-Yoruba movement.

Consequently, using the religious strengths to foster a unified pan-Yoruba movement. The Pan-Yoruba movement attempts to foster cohesion and safeguard the cultural heritage of the Yoruba community, yet it faces the challenge of integrating diverse religious influences. Meanwhile, both Christianity and Islam have unique strengths and distinct qualities that might enhance a unified and all-encompassing Yoruba identity.

Fostering Inter-Religious Dialogue and Collaboration

Both Christianity and Islam have extensive legacies of engaging in community service, promoting education, and providing social welfare. The Pan-Yoruba movement may utilize all these rich traditions of religious communities to effectively tackle shared socio-economic problems and develop unity among the community. Engaging in inter-religious discussion can foster a sense of

mutual understanding and respect. Collaborative efforts, such as community service projects or educational programs, can act as platforms for cooperation, strengthening a collective Yoruba identity that goes beyond religious divisions (Ojo, 2017). Through collaboration towards shared objectives, Yoruba Christians and Muslims have the potential to enhance their collective sense of identity while effectively tackling societal issues.

Harnessing the Potential of Educational Institutions and Embracing Modernization

The Pan-Yoruba movement has the potential to form partnerships with Christian and Islamic educational institutions to develop curricula that prioritize the study of Yoruba history, culture, and values. The aforementioned strategy not only safeguards cultural heritage but also fosters a collective perception of identity among Yoruba adolescents (Adegboye, 2018). Meanwhile, integrating indigenous education with contemporary education methods will assist the movement to establish a comprehensive educational framework that upholds religious and cultural settings.

In conclusion

The Pan-Yoruba movement has been influenced both positively and negatively by Christianity and Islam. Although new educational, social, and political dynamics have been created, they have also presented difficulties in preserving a unified cultural identity. The popularity of the movement stems from its adeptness in leveraging the virtues of both religions, while simultaneously nurturing a cohesive and all-encompassing Yoruba identity.

By promoting inter-religious dialogue, utilizing educational resources, encouraging cultural integration, and addressing shared socio-political concerns, the Pan-Yoruba movement may effectively leverage the advantages of both Christianity and Islam. This method not only promotes a cohesive Yoruba identity but also provides an open atmosphere where many religious viewpoints can contribute to the overall welfare of the Yoruba community.

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EXPLORING THE INNOVATIVE ROLES OF TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIAN ART MUSIC PRODUCTION SCENE

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Abstract

This study explores how digital technology is transforming Nigerian art music production. It highlights the shift from traditional methods to digitally enhanced practices, showing how access to sound engineering tools, online platforms, and streaming services is reshaping both creative processes and employment structures in the music industry. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education, this study addresses that gap by examining how digital tools are integrated with indigenous musical traditions, fostering new creative directions and reconfiguring production workflows. The research emphasizes the role of technology in preserving indigenous compositions while promoting digital literacy and skill development among artists. Despite global digitization, there is limited academic focus on how Nigerian art music practitioners are adapting to this evolving landscape. Anchored on Technological Determinism Theory, which posits that technology shapes culture and creativity, through digital ethnography and qualitative content analysis. With qualitative design this paper analyzes online spaces, where composers showcase their work. Findings reveals that technology significantly enhances artistic productivity, global reach and economic sustainability. In conclusion, Nigerian composers and producers are encouraged to strategically embrace digital innovations to improve production quality, preserve cultural heritage, and remain competitive in a rapidly digitizing world.

Keywords: creativity, digitization, education, innovation, music, technology

Introduction

Digitalization in the music industry has not only changed the concept of the music business but has fundamentally reshaped its entire value-added network. Digitalization has profoundly transformed the global music industry, redefining traditional roles and expanding the creative landscape of music production. In Nigeria, this transformation has created new pathways for art musicians, producers, and technologists, fostering innovative practices that integrate digital tools with indigenous artistic expressions. This study argues that digitalization not only revolutionizes production and distribution but also reshapes aesthetic values, audience engagement, and entrepreneurial possibilities in Nigerian art music. Globally, digital innovations are transforming

the industry through new entrepreneurial ventures, online visibility, and audience engagement (Hadida & Paris, 2014). These developments have opened new creative and commercial spaces for musicians and producers. In Nigeria, art music production once confined to academic or orchestral settings has expanded into hybrid forms that blend technology, creativity, and entrepreneurship. The emergence of digital audio workstations, online music platforms, and social media networks has empowered Nigerian composers and producers to explore innovative production methods. In today's digital era, change and innovation have become constants in the creative industry. For Nigerian art music to remain relevant in a globalized music ecosystem, it must embrace technological innovation as both a creative and economic strategy.

According to Omibiyi-Obidike (2001), Nigerian art music is rooted in the fusion of indigenous cultural expressions with Western classical techniques; however, the twenty-first century has witnessed a further evolution through technology. Just as investors in business settings assess risk and sustainability (Beretta & Bozzolan, 2004), music producers and stakeholders must understand the implications of adopting new technologies for long-term artistic and economic sustainability. Top managers in music institutions and studios must be positioned to assure investors, artists, and audiences that creative risks are well managed through structured technological innovation (El-Beshlawy & Ardroumli, 2021). The development of Nigerian art music, which blends indigenous musical idioms with Western compositional techniques, has witnessed significant transformation through technological innovation. From analog recording methods to digital workstations and online streaming platforms, technological change has reshaped how Nigerian composers, producers, and performers conceptualize, create, and distribute their works.

These innovations have contributed not only to artistic growth but also to economic development by attracting investment, enhancing cultural exchange, and creating new employment opportunities within the music industry. The Nigerian art music scene has evolved from traditional and academic compositions into a digitally enabled ecosystem where music production benefits from software innovations such as Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), virtual instruments, and automated mixing tools. These technologies have democratized production, enabling composers and producers to experiment with sound textures, orchestration, and hybrid styles that reflect both cultural heritage and modern trends. The integration of technology into music production conceptually aligns with the United Nation Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9 Industry

innovation and infrastructure, and SDG Quality Education. These goals emphasizes fostering innovation, building resilience infrastructure, and promoting inclusive and equitable education through technological advancement.

This study examines how innovative digital technologies affect production, quality, creativity, and the spread of Nigerian art music. It investigates and provide an in-depth grasp of how technology innovation is influencing the creation, dissemination and perception of Nigerian art music. Its goals is to highlight the importance of digital tools in promoting artistic expression, improving production standards, while extending options for musicians and producers. Furthermore, the study aims to add to scholarly discourse by relating music production methods to more general concerns like the growth of the creative economy, digital literacy, and the purpose of quality education for sustainable development. Despite the increasing amount of research on studies that particularly concentrate on Nigerian music and digital technologies, there are still severely lacking studies that particularly concentrate on the relationship between cutting-edge technology and the Nigerian musicians and artistic. A large portion of the literature now in publication focuses on popular music genres (such as Afro beats). Art music and its production methods have received little attention. Nevertheless, there is not enough academic investigations of how new technologies like mobile production apps, home studios, additionally, professional standards and artistic identity, and quality assurance are impacted by digital distribution channels. Thus by offering a focus analysis, this study aims to close this gap of technological advancement in Nigerian art music creation, by providing information about both its advantages and disadvantages while advancing a more thorough and impartial knowledge of the music industry in Nigeria.

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory serves as the foundation for this paper, which explain how technology is adopted and Technological Determinism Theory, underlines its transformative impact. These theories offer a thorough comprehension of the inventive function that technology plays in Nigerian art music production. Although technology has greatly improved Nigerian music production, its use in art music, the industry continues to face a number of difficulties, including a high expense of modern equipment, digital audio workstations (DAWS), studio monitors, microphones and software are examples of contemporary music production equipment. These instruments are out of reach for many up-and-coming Nigerian art music producers and composers. Despite the availability of digital tools, there remains a gap in technical

knowledge due to inadequate technical skills and training. Many music practitioners frequently lack formal training in music technology, sound education, and digital production. These problems indicate highlight that technology is a valuable instrument for promoting Nigerian art music production, its full potential can only be achieved with increased infrastructure and investment. Better finance, improved training, and regulations that balance innovation with cultural preservation.

Methodologically, this study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design based solely on secondary data analysis. This provides a comprehensive and cost-effective means of examining the innovative role of technology in the Nigerian art music production scene. It enable the researcher to draw from a wide range of scholarly perspectives, offering a well-rounded understanding of the subject while identifying areas for further research.

Literature Review

Innovation and technology have become central to the transformation and advancement of Nigeria's art music production scene. The application of innovative technologies not only enhances creativity and efficiency in music production but also contributes to the broader economic and cultural development of the nation. According to Oikelome (2012), technology has redefined the way music is composed, recorded, and distributed in Nigeria, leading to a significant shift from analogue to digital production practices. This transformation reflects the global trend of digitalization but with a distinctly Nigerian flavor that integrates indigenous musical elements and cultural aesthetics into modern production techniques. Innovation in Nigerian art music production operates as both an opportunity and a challenge. As Okafor (2005: p.33) notes, "*art music in Nigeria has traditionally emphasized intellectual creativity, formal structures, and cultural education. The introduction of technology has expanded this scope, allowing composers to use digital notation software, virtual instruments, and automated mastering tools that improve both creativity and precision*".

The Emergence of Nigerian Art Music Production

The emergence of Nigeria's art music production scene represents a significant milestone in the nation's cultural and technological evolution. Prior to the establishment of recording studios within

Nigeria, most musical recordings were produced outside the country, particularly in London between 1911 and 1922. This period marked the formative stage of Nigeria's recorded music history, where early indigenous compositions encountered Western recording technology. Efurhievwe M (2020;p.3)

Notable Nigerian musicians such as Revered J.J Ransome- Kuti and Shotayo Adeyemi had their works recorded in London, thereby serving as cultural ambassadors who bridged traditional African musical expressions with modern production techniques. The evolution of Nigeria's art music production is deeply rooted in the historical emergence of recording technology and its gradual domestication within the country. Moreover, digital recording studios and online collaboration platforms have expanded access for young Nigerian composers and producers, fostering inclusivity and professional networking across borders. Such developments demonstrate how innovation has redefined the processes of music creation and dissemination in contemporary Nigeria.

Forms and Functions of Innovation in Music Production

Innovation in Nigerian art music production can be classified into several forms:

1. **Product Innovation:** The introduction of new musical software, sound libraries, and recording equipment that enhance artistic expression and production quality.
2. **Process Innovation:** The modernization of studio workflows through digital editing, mastering automation, and virtual sound modeling that improve efficiency and reduce production costs.
3. **Service Innovation:** The growth of online music distribution, streaming services, and virtual performance platforms that increase visibility and accessibility of Nigerian art music. These innovations, whether incremental improvements or radical transformations, have contributed to the sustainability and competitiveness of the music production scene.

Socioeconomic and Cultural Implications

Innovation has not only impacted the artistic aspect of Nigerian art music but also its economic and cultural dimensions. By integrating advanced technologies, Nigerian music producers now attract collaborations with international artists and investors. This has stimulated local

entrepreneurship and enhanced Nigeria's cultural export. Additionally, digitalization promotes the preservation of indigenous sounds through high-quality recording and archiving systems, ensuring that the nation's musical heritage remains relevant in the digital age. (Olusola J 2023, p. 146) Innovative technology plays a transformative role in shaping the Nigerian art music production scene. It has enhanced creativity, improved production quality, and opened global pathways for Nigerian composers and producers. However, to sustain this growth, stakeholders including government, educational institutions, and private investors must support digital innovation through training, infrastructure, and policy frameworks. The future of Nigerian art music lies in its ability to blend artistic ingenuity with technological innovation to achieve cultural preservation and global relevance.

Every Nigerian art music production firm that seeks to thrive in today's competitive environment must develop new ideas and adopt innovative technologies to remain relevant. Innovation, as a process of creating new or improved ways of producing and delivering artistic content, has become central to the success of the Nigerian art music industry. The emergence of digital recording systems, online streaming services, and computer-based composition tools has transformed the creative and operational dynamics of music production. Emmanuel and Temitope (2022, p. 5) Over the past two decades, Nigerian art music production has undergone significant transformation due to the introduction of digital technologies.

Impact of Innovative Technology on Workforce and Production

The influence of innovative technology extends beyond creativity into the structure of employment within Nigeria's art music production ecosystem. While automation and digital tools have reduced the need for certain manual production roles, they have simultaneously created new opportunities for skilled professionals such as sound engineers, digital composers, and content managers. Moreover, technology has facilitated remote collaboration, allowing Nigerian composers to work with orchestras, choirs, and producers across continents without physical boundaries. This digital interconnection has enhanced professional visibility and provided Nigerian art musicians with access to international networks and funding opportunities.

The Nigerian government and private sector have also played key roles in supporting technological innovation within the creative industries. As observed by Omibiyi-Obidike (1995), investment in

technological infrastructure and music education is essential for sustaining artistic growth. In Nigeria, music technology programs, digital media centers, and recording studios have become incubators for creativity and entrepreneurship, promoting the development of local talents while strengthening the music industry's contribution to national economic growth. These institutions serve as platforms for the training and mentoring of young music producers, composers, and sound engineers, enabling them to compete globally.

Furthermore, the proliferation of Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), synthesizers, and mobile recording technologies has democratized music production in Nigeria. Ajewole (2018) notes that producers and artists now have access to advanced software and equipment that allow them to compose, arrange, mix, and master music from virtually anywhere. This has fostered inclusivity and innovation, giving rise to a new generation of self-taught producers who merge traditional African rhythms with contemporary digital sounds. As a result, Nigerian art music has evolved into a hybrid form that celebrates both cultural identity and technological modernity. However, Oyesiku (2020) cautions that the rise of home studios and independent production poses challenges to maintaining professional standards. Many upcoming producers bypass the traditional roles of trained audio engineers, leading to inconsistencies in sound quality. Nonetheless, the benefits of technological advancement far outweigh its limitations. With appropriate government policies, funding mechanisms, and educational programs, technology can continue to drive innovation and ensure sustainable growth in Nigeria's music industry.

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on Quality Education, integrating technology into music production promotes creativity, digital literacy, and professional competence. It empowers Nigerian artists to engage meaningfully with global trends while preserving their cultural authenticity. Thus, innovative technology remains a vital force in shaping the Nigerian art music production scene, enhancing artistic excellence, and contributing to socio-economic development. The integration of innovative technologies into the Nigerian art music production scene has created remarkable opportunities for creativity, efficiency, and global competitiveness. Just as technology enhances productivity and communication in other sectors, its application in music production has given Nigerian artists and producers a distinct competitive advantage in both local and international markets. Through the use of advanced digital tools,

producers are now able to deliver high-quality sound recordings, reduce production costs, and expand their reach to diverse audiences with greater ease and precision (Oikelome, 2012).

Technology has transformed the banking and service industries, it has revolutionized the Nigerian music landscape by redefining how music is created, promoted, and consumed. Modern recording technologies such as Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), MIDI controllers, virtual instruments, and online distribution platforms have made music production more accessible, thereby fostering creativity among both professionals and emerging artists (Ajewole, 2018). This democratization of music creation has strengthened Nigeria's artistic identity while enabling producers to blend indigenous elements with global sound trends, ensuring that Nigerian art music continues to evolve dynamically. However, despite its numerous benefits, technological innovation in the music industry is not without challenges. As Oyesiku (2020) notes, the cost of acquiring and maintaining modern equipment, limited access to funding, and insufficient government support often hinder the full realization of technological potential in Nigeria's creative sector. Additionally, the shift towards home-based and internet-dependent production systems, though convenient, can sometimes undermine traditional studio collaboration and the interpersonal mentorship that characterized earlier music-making processes.

To sustain the growth and innovation witnessed in Nigeria's art music production scene, both government and private institutions must invest strategically in technological infrastructure, creative education, and funding mechanisms for research and digital skill development (Omibiyi-Obidike, 1995). By supporting innovation through grants, training programs, and partnerships, Nigeria can strengthen its music industry as a viable contributor to national development and cultural diplomacy.

The Global Shift: Digitalization and the Music Industry

Music was mostly used by the film, advertising, and electronic media sectors in the decades before the year 2000. But the digital age has spread to many different countries, Businesses that were previously unrelated to music now play crucial roles in terms of monetization and delivery. For instance, Apple's market domination in music downloads, in addition to websites like Amazon, Google, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, has revolutionized the creation, distribution and consumption of music (Wikström & DeFillippi, 2016). Additional, businesses now intentionally

employ music to advertise their goods, automobiles' services that incorporate streaming services. Airlines are now using digital playlists as a travel inducement. Nigeria's art music industry has been greatly impacted by these worldwide trends, bringing in a digital culture that encourages creative innovation.

The Digital Composer and Producer

Contemporary Nigerian art composers increasingly integrate technology into composition and production processes. Using software such as Logic Pro, Cubase, or FL Studio, they create, record, and edit music that blends Western classical idioms with African indigenous elements. This hybrid approach exemplifies innovation bridging the traditional and modern.

The Sound Engineer and Technologist

Sound engineers and technologists in Nigeria are playing crucial roles in digital sound design and mixing. They experiment with indigenous sound samples, transforming traditional instruments like the *Udu*, *Ekwe*, and *Ogene* into digitized formats for modern orchestral and electronic compositions. This fusion enhances both cultural preservation and creative exploration.

The Multimedia Collaborator

Art music production has transcended audio boundaries. Nigerian producers now collaborate with filmmakers, dancers, and digital artists to produce multimedia performances and installations. Through these collaborations, art music becomes an interdisciplinary medium, fostering broader cultural and aesthetic engagement.

The Online Curator and Distributor

The growth of social media platforms and digital streaming services has created new roles for art musicians as digital curators. Nigerian producers now manage their own online portfolios through platforms such as YouTube, Audiomack, and Spotify, bypassing traditional record labels. This autonomy enhances global visibility and economic potential.

Managing Risk through Technological Innovation

Drawing parallels from corporate governance, where firms implement risk management systems to enhance sustainability (Maingot, Quon & Zeghal, 2013), Nigerian art music production houses can adopt similar frameworks to mitigate risks. These risks include copyright violations, data loss, creative redundancy, and over-dependence on imported software. A structured approach through training, policy development, and local innovation ensures that technological adoption is not only effective but also sustainable. Onyebuchi (2018) stresses the importance of education in digital literacy for music producers and performers, arguing that a well-informed creative workforce can better manage innovation-related risks while driving artistic excellence.

The Changing Nature of Music Production in Nigeria

Since the turn of the millennium, Nigerian art music has been redefined by the digitalization of sound and the integration of computer-aided composition. The “constant” in this modern landscape is change producers, composers, and performers must continuously innovate to remain competitive. As Ekong (2020: 45-58) observes, the dynamism of Nigeria’s art music scene lies in its capacity to reinvent itself through technological integration, ensuring that new generations of musicians can engage with both global trends and local traditions.

Innovation as a Unique Competitive Advantage:

By adopting digital recording systems, virtual orchestration tools, and artificial intelligence in composition, Nigerian art music producers gain distinctive creative and technical advantages. These innovations enhance sound quality, widen artistic possibilities, and foster international competitiveness.

Restoring and Expanding Creative Skills:

Technological innovations encourage Nigerian composers and producers to acquire new skills in music technology, sound design, and digital mastering. As Onyebuchi (2018) observes, digital literacy has become an indispensable skill in contemporary Nigerian music education and production.

Rewriting the Basis of the Industry:

The introduction of advanced music technologies has redefined how music is conceived, produced, and consumed. As Vidal (2012) notes, the structure of Nigeria's music industry is shifting from analogue to digital, from performance-centered to technology-driven. This change reshapes the very foundation of art music production. Digital tools enable complex layering of sounds, expanded orchestration, and refined tonal balance.

Automation and Efficiency:

Automation in recording, mixing, and mastering processes has significantly reduced production time and cost while improving consistency and sound quality. Nigerian producers now employ automated mastering platforms and AI-based mixing systems to achieve professional-level output even in small studios.

Continuous and Gradual Innovation:

Innovation in Nigerian art music is not a one-time event but a gradual process. As Ekong (2020) highlights, the digital transformation of Nigerian art music evolves through continuous experimentation, adaptation, and knowledge sharing among musicians, educators, and producers. In essence, innovation in the Nigerian art music production scene serves as both a creative and economic catalyst. It fosters originality, supports cultural preservation, and enhances global participation. The continuous fusion of musical artistry with cutting-edge technology ensures that Nigerian art music remains dynamic, competitive, and culturally resonant in the twenty-first century.

Innovation, though often associated with invention, goes beyond the creation of new ideas. While invention refers to the generation of creative concepts, innovation involves translating those ideas into functional products, services, or processes that meet human and market needs (Adair, 2010). In Nigerian art music production, innovation manifests through the creative application of technology to expand artistic possibilities, enhance sound quality, and redefine musical experiences. In recent years, technological innovation has transformed the Nigerian music production landscape, blending traditional art music with digital tools such as MIDI sequencing, virtual instruments, and computer-based recording systems. Nigerian scholars such as Ojukwu

(2018) and Adeogun (2020) emphasize that this fusion between indigenous art music and digital technology has redefined compositional practices, enabling artists and producers to manipulate sound in more complex and expressive ways.

Although innovation is not yet fully established as a formal academic discipline like engineering or accounting, it is increasingly being recognized as a vital competency that can be developed through education and practice (Matthews & Brueggemann, 2015). In the Nigerian art music scene, institutions like the University of Lagos and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, have begun integrating digital music technology into their curricula, thereby equipping students with both creative and technical skills relevant to the evolving music industry (Okafor, 2019: 10). However, it is worth noting that not all innovative ideas within the music industry translate into commercial or artistic success. As Schilling (2013) observed, only a small fraction of creative ideas evolves into viable products or sustainable innovations. This reality resonates in Nigeria, where despite the abundance of talented producers and composers, challenges such as limited access to high-end technology, insufficient funding, and piracy continue to hinder the full realization of creative innovations (Omojola, 2013, p. 13). (Omibiyi-Obidike, 2018, p. 20).

Nonetheless, technological innovation continues to drive growth in Nigeria's music sector by creating new revenue streams, improving production standards, and broadening global access to Nigerian art music. According to Olorunyomi (2021), the adoption of digital platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, and Audiomack has enabled Nigerian composers to reach global audiences, fostering both cultural exchange and economic empowerment. Ultimately, the innovative roles of technology in Nigerian art music production underscore the symbiotic relationship between creativity, culture, and digital advancement. As producers and scholars continue to explore these intersections, the nation's art music scene is gradually positioning itself as a model of cultural innovation in the digital age.

The emergence of modern technology has revolutionized the Nigerian art music production landscape, fostering innovation, precision, and accessibility in the creative process. Technology, described by Onwuegbuna (2017) as the scientific application of knowledge for productive ends, has transformed music-making in Nigeria from a largely manual and acoustic endeavour into a more digitalized and technologically driven art form. Contemporary Nigerian music producers

now employ various digital tools and software for recording, arranging, editing, mixing, and mastering sound, making the entire process more efficient and artistically engaging.

According to Euba (1989, p. 59) and Omibiyi-Obidike (1995), Nigerian art music rooted in traditional idioms yet influenced by Western compositional techniques has always adapted to changing cultural and technological environments. The advent of digital technology in the 1980s and its subsequent adoption in Nigeria marked a turning point in the way music is produced, distributed, and consumed. Scholars such as Oikelome (2012) and Omojola (2006) affirm that the integration of digital recording devices and compute-based systems has enhanced sound fidelity, simplified production processes, and enabled Nigerian producers to merge indigenous musical aesthetics with global sound technologies. This has given rise to a distinctive Nigerian sonic identity that is both modern and rooted in tradition. Digital innovation has democratized music production in Nigeria, providing opportunities for both established and emerging artists to produce high-quality works without depending solely on major recording studios. As Ajewole (2018, p. 45-58) notes, the use of Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), virtual instruments, and mobile studio applications has made music production more inclusive, leading to an explosion of creativity and entrepreneurship within the industry. This technological revolution has also boosted commercialization and international recognition of Nigerian art music and popular genres alike, making Nigeria a major player in the global music economy.

Nevertheless, the rapid growth of technology in the sector presents challenges. As Oyesiku (2020) observes, the rise of home-based studios and self-taught production practices has sometimes undermined professional standards, raising concerns about sound quality and the preservation of musical integrity. Many artists now bypass professional producers and engineers, resulting in inconsistent production outcomes. Despite these issues, the advantages of technological innovation remain overwhelming, providing a platform for experimentation, collaboration, and educational development.

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on Quality Education, technological advancement in Nigerian art music production enhances skill acquisition and digital literacy among young musicians and producers. It has become an indispensable tool for creative expression, research, and industry growth. As such, technology continues to redefine the Nigerian

art music scene bridging tradition and modernity, and positioning the nation as a dynamic contributor to global music innovation.

Challenges Facing Art Music Digitalization in Nigeria

Despite these advancements, several challenges persist. Limited access to high-quality recording equipment, inadequate technical training, and the high cost of software licensing hinders many Nigerian art music producers from fully utilizing available technologies. Furthermore, unstable power supply and poor internet infrastructure affect consistent productivity. To address these challenges, continuous investment in digital literacy, infrastructure development, and industry collaboration is necessary.

The pervasive adoption of digital technologies has revolutionized how Nigerian composers and producers create and distribute their works. Platforms such as Spotify, Boomplay, and Audiomack have democratized access to audiences, while social media tools like YouTube and Instagram serve as promotional and educational spaces for art musicians. In this regard, innovation becomes a tool for both artistic and economic survival. As Euba (2009) emphasizes, innovation in Nigerian music is not simply about modernity but about reinterpreting tradition within new frameworks of sound and expression. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in composition, cloud-based recording systems, and automated sound engineering are examples of how technology fosters efficiency and global relevance.

Prospects for the Future

The future of art music production in Nigeria depends on institutional partnerships, investment in music technology, and creative research. Universities offering music programs should integrate digital production courses, while private studios can serve as innovation hubs. Furthermore, promoting Nigeria's digital art music on international platforms could enhance cultural diplomacy and creative export.

Theoretical framework

Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Everett Rogers, 1962)

This study adopts the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Everett Rogers, 1962) The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory explains how innovations, ideas, practices, or technologies spread through specific populations or social systems over time. According to Rogers (1962), adoption happens through five key stages: Knowledge awareness of the innovation, Persuasion forming an attitude toward it, Decision choosing to adopt or reject it, Implementation putting it to use, Confirmation validating the results of adoption. He also identified categories of adopters: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. This theory explains how Nigerian art musicians and producers discover, accept, and integrate innovative technologies such as digital audio workstations (DAWs), MIDI controllers, AI-based mastering, and online distribution platforms into their production process.

Technological Determinism Theory Marshall McLuhan (1964)

Technological Determinism Theory Marshall McLuhan (1964), posits that technology is a primary driver of social and cultural change. The theory suggests that technological development is the primary force shaping human society, culture, and behavior. McLuhan's idea that "the medium is the message" emphasizes that the form of a medium influences how we perceive and engage with the world not just its content. This framework helps explain how technology has redefined Nigerian art music influencing not only production methods but also artistic creativity, sound quality, performance, and audience engagement. For instance: The introduction of digital recording changed the aesthetics of traditional art compositions. Music editing software and auto-tuning introduced new sonic identities. Streaming and social media have transformed audience interaction and global visibility. Thus, Nigerian art music is not just being "produced" differently; it is being conceptualized and experienced differently because of technological mediation, that technology is not neutral, it actively shapes creative practices and the evolution of Nigerian art music. It positions digital innovation as a cultural force influencing rhythm, instrumentation, and performance aesthetics.

Nigerian scholars like Okafor (2015: 8) and Omibiyi-Obidike (2018:87) support this view, noting that technology has revolutionized music creation in Nigeria by merging indigenous soundscapes with modern production tools, thereby redefining the nation's musical identity

This study highlights the shift from traditional methods to digitally enhanced practices, showing how access to sound engineering tools, online platforms, and streaming services are reshaping both creative processes and employment structures in the music industry. It also examines how digital tools are being integrated with indigenous musical traditions, fostering new creative directions and reconfiguring production workflows. The research emphasizes the role of technology in preserving indigenous compositions while promoting digital literacy and skill development among artists.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design based solely on secondary data analysis, carefully selected to provide credible, relevant, and contemporary insights into the intersection of technology and Nigerian art music production.

Method of Data analysis

A major source of data for this study is content derived from digital platforms where composers and producers actively share their work and production processes.

YouTube channels featuring music productions, tutorials, and studio sessions.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, where artists showcase studio setups, workflows, and creative outputs.

Digital Archives and Streaming Content: The study utilizes materials from digital archives and streaming platforms, including:

Recorded music (audio and video formats)

Documented live and studio performances

Curated playlists and digital music libraries

Artist-Generated Content and Statements were also gathered from materials produced by artists themselves including:

Interviews and commentaries shared online

Artist statement and production notes.

Data Collection Procedure

Relevant materials were identified through systematic searches using key terms such as technology in music production, digital audio in Nigeria, Nigerian art music and music technology innovation. Priority was given to recent and credible scholarly works, the selected document were carefully reviewed and pertinent information was extracted, organized, and categorized according the study objectives.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employs thematic content analysis to analyze the collected data this involves:

- 1) Identifying recurring themes related to technology, innovation, and music production
- 2) Grouping similar ideas into categories such as tools, impact, challenges, and opportunities
- 3) Interpreting patterns and relationship across different scholarly view points

Findings

- 1) The emergence of digital hybridity in music production

The study found out that Nigerian composers and producers actively integrate traditional musical elements with digital technologies, resulting in hybridized sound forms

- 2) Increased sonic experimentation

Evidence from tutorials, studio sessions, and shared production workflows indicates a high level of experimentation among Nigerian producers. Digital tools enable manipulation of

pitch, timbre, tempo and effects, allowing artists to explore unconventional sounds and innovative compositional styles.

3) Accessibility and democratization of production tools

Observation across social media platforms reveals that many producers operate from home studios equipped with relatively affordable digital tools.

4) Informal leaning and sharing

YouTube tutorials, online forums, and social media interactions serve as major avenues for skill acquisition and professional development. Most producers share step-by-step guides, production tips, and behind the scene content, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

However, the findings indicate that digital platforms have become central to the evolution of Nigeria art music production. They not only facilitate creativity and innovation but also reshape how knowledge is acquired, how music is produced and how it is consumed.

Recommendations

Given the results and issues found, the following are suggested to improve the efficient incorporation of technology in Nigerian art music

- 1) Nigerian music training facilities and music training centers should integrate music technology courses in their curriculum. Practical instruction in digital audio, production, and the use of modern production equipment, and sound engineering must be prioritized
- 2) The public and private sector should work together to invest in the creation of infrastructure for music technology, such as well-equipped digital studios, centers for creativity and innovation.
- 3) To address challenges of diminishing quality, efforts should be made to build and implement best practices and professionals standards in music creation.

Conclusion

The exploration of innovative roles in technology within the Nigerian art music production scene reveals that creativity, risk management, and sustainability are deeply interconnected. Technological innovation not only enhances artistic quality but also serves as a foundation for economic growth, visibility, and global participation. However, to maximize these benefits, Nigeria must invest in digital infrastructure, capacity building, and local research to ensure that technological tools are adapted to the nation's cultural context.

As technology continues to evolve, Nigerian musicians and producers must adapt by embracing digital literacy, creative experimentation, and collaboration. When properly harnessed, technology will not only enhance artistic quality but also position Nigerian art music as a competitive force in the global creative economy.

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PERSONHOOD AND DIGITAL AGENCY IN THE INFOSPHERE: TOWARDS A NEO-AFRICAN JURISPRUDENCE OF DIGNITY

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Abstract

The advent of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed conceptions of personhood, agency, and legal subjectivity. Autonomous systems, algorithmic platforms, and virtual entities increasingly operate as normative actors, challenging classical jurisprudential frameworks grounded in anthropocentric notions of autonomy and responsibility. Drawing upon Luciano Floridi's philosophy of the infosphere and the African ethical paradigm of Ubuntu, this paper advances a Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity. Ubuntu, expressed in the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, "a person is a person through other persons", emphasizes relationality, communal interdependence, and moral personhood as realized through social engagement (Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights" 534). Integrating Floridi's ontology of the infosphere with Ubuntu-inspired relational ethics, the proposed framework reconceptualizes legal personhood, agency, and accountability in mixed human-digital networks. It contends that digital agency necessitates a recalibration of jurisprudential categories while preserving human dignity through participatory governance, ethical stewardship, and relational recognition. The Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity thus offers a culturally grounded, philosophically rigorous, and normatively coherent model for addressing contemporary challenges in digital law, AI governance, and ethical regulation, situating African philosophical insights within global debates on personhood and the infosphere. By foregrounding relational ethics alongside technological realities, the framework provides a robust lens for examining the evolving moral, legal, and social landscapes of the digital age.

Keywords: Digital personhood; Infosphere; Neo-African jurisprudence; Human dignity; Digital agency; AI ethics; Ubuntu; Relational ethics; Legal personhood; Technological governance.

Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed the unprecedented proliferation of digital technologies, radically transforming the ways in which human beings understand themselves, their communities, and the law. The philosopher of information Luciano Floridi identifies this transformation as the "fourth revolution," characterized by the emergence of the infosphere, which encompasses the totality of informational entities, their properties, interactions, and relationships (Floridi, *The 4th*

Revolution 45). Unlike previous technological revolutions, which primarily enhanced human capacities externally, the digital revolution reshapes ontological and normative categories themselves. Autonomous systems, algorithmic platforms, and networked virtual entities now operate as agents that co-constitute social, legal, and ethical realities. Consequently, classical jurisprudential frameworks, historically rooted in anthropocentric notions of the autonomous individual, face severe challenges in addressing emergent forms of agency, accountability, and legal personhood (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 14). The digital environment, often described as “onlife”, blurs traditional boundaries between offline and online existence, complicating the attribution of responsibility and the protection of human dignity in ways unanticipated by classical legal theory (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 123).

Central to addressing these challenges is a reconsideration of the concept of human dignity. In many Western philosophical and legal traditions, dignity is framed as an intrinsic attribute of the autonomous individual. Yet, such individualistic conceptions inadequately capture the relational and communal dimensions of personhood, especially in technologically mediated contexts where agency and responsibility are distributed across networks of humans and non-human actors. African philosophy, viewed by some scholars as “African preconception of concepts like time, personhood, immortality” (Asira & Bisong, *Philosophy and Logic for Beginners*, 79), in particular, offers a robust alternative through the ethic of Ubuntu. Ubuntu, expressed in the Southern African aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* “a person is a person through other persons” emphasizes relationality, interdependence, and the achievement of moral personhood through communal engagement (Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights” 534). Bolden sees Ubanu as a social philosophy based on principles of care and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness that expresses the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence (Ubuntu, *Encyclopedia of Action Research*, 1). According to Thaddeus Metz, Ubuntu provides a normative basis for human dignity by situating ethical evaluation in the capacity to identify with others and act in solidarity, framing violations of dignity as degradations of relational moral capacities rather than merely breaches of individual rights (Metz 535–36). This relational ontology is particularly apt for the digital age, where individuals are embedded in complex informational networks that shape moral, social, and legal outcomes.

Building on these insights, this paper proposes a **Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity**, integrating Floridi's informational ontology with Ubuntu-inspired ethics. The central thesis is that digital agency, manifested through AI systems, algorithmically mediated platforms, and virtual entities, necessitates a jurisprudential recalibration that both acknowledges the normative significance of non-human actors and preserves human dignity as a relationally constituted phenomenon. This framework contends that legal personhood and agency must be reconceptualized to accommodate emergent realities in the infosphere, but in a manner that is culturally grounded, ethically coherent, and philosophically rigorous.

Three interrelated conceptual moves define this framework. First, the ontology of the infosphere challenges classical legal and philosophical categories by demonstrating how informational entities act, influence, and participate in the co-construction of normative environments (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 14). Digital actors, including autonomous algorithms, are not merely passive instruments but constitute functional agents whose operations have ethical and legal consequences. Second, Ubuntu-based relational ethics offers an ethical grounding, emphasizing that dignity and moral status arise within networks of social interdependence and solidarity (Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory" 322). Within this paradigm, human dignity is preserved through mutual recognition, relational accountability, and active engagement with communal values. Third, synthesizing these strands produces a jurisprudential model wherein human dignity is safeguarded not by excluding digital actors but by integrating them into informational networks under conditions of ethical governance and participatory oversight. This synthesis allows for a coherent approach to accountability, distributive responsibility, and the equitable regulation of both human and non-human actors within the infosphere.

The Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity offers several theoretical and practical contributions. It provides a **culturally grounded philosophical lens** that situates African ethical thought at the center of contemporary debates on digital agency and legal personhood. By integrating Ubuntu with the philosophy of information, the framework addresses the ontological and ethical realities of the digital age without resorting to either anthropocentric exceptionalism or technocentric determinism. It also establishes **normative coherence** by linking human dignity to relational achievement and ethical practice rather than to formalistic legal definitions alone. In doing so, it presents a viable model for interpreting, regulating, and ethically evaluating digital actors in both

African and global contexts. This, to a extent, explains the assertion that “the business of philosophy is ideas: and ideas are very necessary in understanding ourselves (Ojimba & Chukwuma, 307).

The practical relevance of this framework extends to governance, law, and technology policy. In digitally networked societies, accountability is often diffuse, making it challenging to assign legal responsibility and uphold ethical standards. Recognizing digital agents as participants in relational networks allows for regulatory frameworks that assign moral and legal significance according to the capacity to affect communal outcomes. Moreover, Ubuntu-based relational ethics suggests mechanisms for participatory governance, promoting inclusivity and mutual accountability in algorithmic design and digital policy-making. Such an approach is particularly relevant for African jurisdictions, which may leverage indigenous ethical traditions alongside global normative standards to develop contextually appropriate frameworks for digital governance.

Structurally, this paper is organized as follows. **Section I** analyzes Floridi’s conceptualization of the infosphere, its ontological implications for human and non-human agents, and the ethical challenges posed by distributed agency. **Section II** examines Ubuntu and the ethics of relational dignity, engaging critically with Metz’s moral theory and its implications for human rights and jurisprudence. **Section III** synthesises these perspectives into a Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity, outlining the theoretical foundations of legal personhood, agency, and accountability in mixed human-digital networks. **Section IV** applies this framework to practical governance, regulatory, and ethical challenges in digital spaces, emphasizing African and transnational contexts. The **Conclusion** reflects on the broader implications of this framework for jurisprudential innovation, digital ethics, and the protection of human dignity in the infosphere.

In sum, this study asserts that the digital age demands both **conceptual innovation** and **normative fidelity**. By integrating Floridi’s philosophy of information with Ubuntu’s relational ethics, the Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity offers a philosophically robust, culturally grounded, and ethically coherent framework for understanding and regulating personhood, agency, and legal responsibility in the twenty-first century. This approach addresses the transformative challenges of digital technologies while remaining attentive to human dignity, relationality, and communal

ethical practices, contributing a novel perspective to the global discourse on digital jurisprudence and philosophy of technology.

The Ontology of the Infosphere

The contemporary proliferation of digital technologies has precipitated a fundamental reconfiguration of personhood, agency, and legal subjectivity. Luciano Floridi designates this epochal transformation as the “fourth revolution,” characterized by the emergence of the infosphere, the totality of informational entities, their properties, interrelations, and systemic interactions (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 45). Unlike preceding technological milieus, which extended human capacities externally, the infosphere constitutes an ontological environment in which entities, both human and artificial, exist, interact, and co-construct normative and social realities (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 14). This ontological framing demands rigorous reflection from philosophy, law, and ethics, as it necessitates reconsidering agency, personhood, and responsibility in digitally mediated contexts.

Classical jurisprudence and moral philosophy have traditionally anchored agency in human intentionality, autonomy, and rational deliberation. Kantian ethics, for instance, grounds moral responsibility in the capacity of rational agents to act according to universalizable maxims (Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* 27). Similarly, Western legal theory has long construed the legal subject as a human individual endowed with rights and duties (Hart 80). The infosphere, however, disrupts these anthropocentric assumptions: algorithmic systems, autonomous platforms, and distributed digital agents increasingly function as operational participants capable of generating tangible social, legal, and ethical effects (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 123). Such entities are not mere instruments; they constitute functional agents whose interactions actively shape the contours of normative and social reality.

Floridi’s concept of “re-ontologizing technologies” aptly captures this transformative dynamic. These technologies, he argues, do not merely enhance human capacities; they redefine the conditions of existence for both human and non-human actors (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 14). Social media algorithms, autonomous vehicles, and artificial intelligences introduce new forms of causality, decision-making, and normative influence, which classical legal

categories struggle to apprehend. Agency in the infosphere is therefore **distributed**: actions emerge from hybrid networks comprising human actors, digital entities, and algorithmic processes, compelling a reconceptualization of accountability, liability, and moral responsibility (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 145).

The epistemic dimensions of the infosphere further underscore its normative significance. Digital environments are constituted by informational flows that are dynamic, networked, and often opaque. Knowledge production and dissemination in such contexts require frameworks capable of evaluating truth, reliability, and ethical implications (Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction* 42). Human actors operate not in isolation but as nodes within informational ecosystems, where non-human agents influence outcomes with profound social and legal consequences. Consequently, jurisprudence must expand to account for hybrid forms of agency while ensuring that human dignity remains central.

Importantly, Floridi differentiates between **functional agency** and moral personhood. While he does not attribute intrinsic moral status to digital entities equivalent to human beings, he emphasizes their normative relevance as actors within informational networks whose operations yield real-world consequences (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67). For jurisprudence, this insight entails a recalibration of legal personhood and responsibility: law must account for the agency of non-human actors within networks without diminishing the centrality of relational human dignity.

Classical legal categories of rights, duties, and liability are increasingly inadequate in the context of the infosphere. Traditional frameworks presuppose linear responsibility anchored in individual intentionality (Hart 90). Yet in digitally mediated networks, accountability is often diffuse, requiring recognition of the interdependent actions of human and non-human agents. Autonomous vehicles, for instance, may make real-time operational decisions through algorithmic processes; when harm occurs, liability cannot be ascribed solely to a human operator but must be understood in relation to algorithmic design, infrastructural constraints, and networked causality (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67–68). These developments necessitate a jurisprudential orientation that privileges relational accountability and recognizes the distributed nature of agency in contemporary digital contexts.

Floridi's ontological framework also foregrounds ethical imperatives. Digital entities are not morally neutral; they shape human experiences, social relations, and access to knowledge, with significant implications for justice and dignity. Ethical evaluation must extend beyond individual acts to encompass informational ecosystems, assessing the consequences of human and digital agency on the integrity, accessibility, and normative quality of information (Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction* 42–43). Such an approach enables the development of normative principles that govern both human and non-human actors, ensuring that informational networks promote fairness, accountability, and the protection of dignity.

Floridi's ontology of the infosphere, therefore, provides a rigorous conceptual foundation for understanding the ontological, ethical, and juridical dimensions of digital environments. By framing informational entities as functional agents capable of influencing social and legal outcomes, the ontology challenges classical assumptions about autonomy, intentionality, and personhood. At the same time, it prepares the ground for integrating relational ethical frameworks, such as Ubuntu, into a Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity. Recognizing the structural and ethical realities of the infosphere enables legal and philosophical inquiry to accommodate hybrid networks of human and digital actors while preserving the primacy of human dignity, relational accountability, and normative coherence.

Ubuntu and the Ethics of Relational Dignity

Ubuntu, a cornerstone of African philosophical thought, articulates a conception of personhood and moral responsibility that is inherently relational. Expressed in the Southern African aphorism *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, “a person is a person through other persons”, Ubuntu posits that individual identity, moral worth, and legal recognition are actualized through communal interaction and ethical engagement with others (Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights” 534). This relational ontology challenges the individualistic and atomistic paradigms prevalent in Western jurisprudence, offering a framework that is both normatively robust and ethically coherent for contemporary governance, particularly in digitally mediated contexts.

At the core of Ubuntu is the principle that moral and juridical status derives from the capacity to cultivate relational virtues. Thaddeus Metz explicates this conception by arguing that personhood

is actualized through the ability to empathize with others, to act in ways that promote communal flourishing, and to respect the dignity of fellow persons (Metz, “Toward an African Moral Theory” 322). In this view, violations of dignity are understood not merely as infringements upon autonomous individuals but as disruptions to the relational and moral fabric of the community (Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights” 536). Consequently, Ubuntu is not only an ethical paradigm but also a juridical one: it provides a normative foundation for assessing accountability, legitimacy, and moral responsibility in both social and legal spheres. This extends to cover for the idea of Ushingio & Chukwu in the sense of taking care of issues of factions, tribalism, nepotism and the likes. It takes care of the situation of one-sided approach to human interest (Peace and Conflict Resolution: A Paradigm for National Development, 120).

In integrating Ubuntu with contemporary jurisprudential challenges, its relevance to digital agency becomes evident. Within the infosphere, autonomous algorithms, artificial intelligences, and networked digital platforms increasingly co-constitute social and normative realities (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 123). Traditional legal frameworks, grounded in anthropocentric conceptions of responsibility and rights, struggle to accommodate the distributed and emergent nature of digital agency. Ubuntu offers a complementary lens: ethical and legal accountability should be understood relationally, accounting for the networked interactions of all agents, whether human or artificial. By emphasizing relationality, jurisprudence can uphold human dignity while effectively regulating complex, hybrid networks of agency.

Furthermore, Ubuntu reconceptualizes the notion of dignity. In classical Western legal theory, dignity is often treated as an intrinsic attribute of autonomous individuals (Donnelly 34). Ubuntu, by contrast, situates dignity within relational contexts: it is realized through ethical engagement, mutual recognition, and the capacity to foster communal well-being (Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights” 535). This conception has profound implications for a Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity: dignity becomes a dynamic achievement rather than a static entitlement, realized through participatory engagement, relational accountability, and the ethical integration of both human and digital actors within informational networks.

Ubuntu also offers practical guidance for the ethical governance of digital environments. Algorithmic systems and autonomous technologies often operate opaquely, generating

consequences that diffuse across social and normative networks. Ubuntu emphasizes transparency, participatory oversight, and reciprocal accountability, ensuring that all agents contribute to communal flourishing (Metz, “Toward an African Moral Theory” 326). Such principles resonate with contemporary debates in AI ethics and digital jurisprudence, where relationality, fairness, and ethical stewardship are recognized as central to normative evaluation (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67).

Significantly, Ubuntu provides a culturally grounded framework for navigating legal pluralism in African contexts. Many African jurisdictions must reconcile formal statutory law with customary and communal norms. Ubuntu offers an ethical anchor capable of integrating these diverse normative systems, thereby fostering jurisprudence that is philosophically coherent, culturally resonant, and practically applicable in contemporary contexts (Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights” 539). This explains the traditionalist notion of African philosophy when it states that the enterprise is a collective world view of Africans and by extension the investigation, recording and analysing these worldviews. Any rational venture within the context of African rely on the anthropological reports of scholars which is informed by the conception of philosophy as a body of ideas through perceive, feel and interpret reality (Jimoh, *Philosophy A Guide for Beginners*, 189).

Central to Ubuntu is the recognition of co-constituted moral agency. Whereas classical frameworks locate responsibility exclusively in discrete individuals, Ubuntu situates accountability within relational networks that include both human and, in the context of the infosphere, non-human actors. The outcomes of digitally mediated interactions are emergent properties of complex networks, and Ubuntu’s relational ethics permits a jurisprudential response that incorporates these dynamics while preserving human moral primacy (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 145).

By emphasizing relational dignity and accountability, Ubuntu aligns directly with contemporary ethical and legal imperatives in digital governance. Human dignity is preserved not only through formal recognition but through active engagement with, and ethical management of, the digital and informational environment. This relational paradigm ensures that law and ethics account for the normative influence of algorithms and autonomous systems without undermining human dignity or eroding moral responsibility (Metz, “Toward an African Moral Theory” 324–25).

The synthesis of Ubuntu with Floridi's ontology of the infosphere thus provides the foundation for a **Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity**. While Floridi elucidates the structural and normative challenges of the infosphere, Ubuntu furnishes the ethical and juridical grounding necessary for evaluating these challenges within a culturally coherent and philosophically rigorous framework. This synthesis allows for a jurisprudential model that is relational, contextually sensitive, and normatively robust, ensuring that human dignity remains central while acknowledging the operational significance of digital agents.

Ubuntu, which is uniqueness is seen in its depth of meaning in relationality, collective responsibility and communal accountability, social justice, recognition, and reciprocity, (Udah, *et al.*, 1), offers both a philosophical and juridical paradigm capable of addressing the ethical, legal, and social complexities of the infosphere. By situating personhood, moral responsibility, and dignity within relational networks, Ubuntu complements Floridi's informational ontology, enabling a Neo-African jurisprudence that is simultaneously rigorous, culturally grounded, and applicable to contemporary digital and legal contexts. This framework equips African jurisprudence with the normative and conceptual tools necessary to navigate the digital age while maintaining fidelity to indigenous philosophical insights and universal principles of justice.

Neo-African Jurisprudence of Dignity: Synthesizing Infosphere Ontology and Ubuntu Ethics

The digital age, characterized by the pervasive integration of autonomous systems, artificial intelligences, and networked informational platforms, compels a reconfiguration of jurisprudence that transcends classical anthropocentric paradigms. The Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity emerges as a philosophically rigorous and culturally grounded framework that synthesizes Luciano Floridi's ontology of the infosphere with the relational ethics of Ubuntu. This synthesis situates human dignity not as an inherent, isolated attribute but as a relational and normative achievement actualized through ethical engagement with human and digital agents alike (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 45; Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights" 534).

At the core of this jurisprudence lies the recognition that digital agents, while lacking intrinsic moral personhood, are operationally and normatively significant. Algorithmic processes, autonomous platforms, and hybrid informational networks act as participants in social and legal

interactions, producing effects that bear upon communal and individual flourishing (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67). Consequently, accountability must extend beyond the human subject to encompass the distributed and emergent nature of agency within the infosphere (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 145). Ubuntu's relational ethics provides the normative lens to assess these interactions, ensuring that moral and legal responsibility remains anchored in the promotion and preservation of human dignity (Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory" 322), which Gelaye maintains that its essence is attribution of respect to a human person and the recognition of their superior value in comparison to other creatures (Gelaye, *African Human Rights Yearbook*, 116).

Ubuntu reconceptualizes dignity as relational, emphasizing communal recognition, interdependence, and the ethical cultivation of moral capacities (Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights" 535). This conception diverges from classical Western traditions, which often frame dignity as a fixed attribute of autonomous individuals (Donnelly 34). Within digital and hybrid human-digital networks, relational dignity requires that jurisprudence evaluate the consequences of human and non-human actions not only in terms of individual intent but also in terms of their broader normative effects. Algorithmic decision-making, for instance, must be assessed according to its capacity to promote communal well-being, relational integrity, and participatory accountability (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67–68).

The integration of Floridi's ontological framework with Ubuntu ethics produces a jurisprudence that is both descriptively accurate and prescriptively rigorous. Floridi identifies the structural conditions of informational reality, revealing the emergent properties of hybrid networks and the distributed character of agency (Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction* 42). Ubuntu provides the ethical framework through which these structural realities are evaluated, emphasizing relational responsibility, moral empathy, and the cultivation of communal flourishing. Together, they generate a jurisprudential model capable of addressing the complex interplay of human and digital actors, ensuring normative coherence and ethical legitimacy.

Practically, Neo-African jurisprudence articulates principles that guide both law and technology governance. First, **distributed accountability** recognizes the emergent effects of digital actors and evaluates human responsibility in relation to their oversight, design, and interaction with these systems (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 145). Second, **participatory oversight** operationalizes

Ubuntu's emphasis on relational engagement, promoting transparency, deliberation, and ethical monitoring within digital networks (Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory" 326). Third, **relational dignity** demands that legal and technological systems are designed to enhance communal well-being, mitigate harm, and reinforce participatory agency (Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights" 539).

Moreover, Neo-African jurisprudence offers a principled approach to **legal pluralism** in African contexts, reconciling statutory law, customary norms, and emergent digital regulatory frameworks. Ubuntu functions as a normative anchor, harmonizing these diverse sources by prioritizing relational dignity and ethical responsibility (Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights" 536). Regulatory frameworks for artificial intelligence, for example, must be evaluated not only for formal compliance but also for their capacity to preserve communal integrity and relational accountability in accordance with Ubuntu ethics.

This jurisprudence also accommodates **emergent liability structures**. Classical doctrines premised on linear causality and individual intentionality are insufficient in digitally mediated networks, where algorithmic systems operate semi-autonomously. Neo-African jurisprudence reframes responsibility relationally: human actors retain primary accountability for design, supervision, and intervention, while the normative impact of autonomous systems is incorporated into legal and ethical evaluation (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67–68). Such a framework maintains the primacy of human dignity while acknowledging the operational significance of digital agents.

Central to this model is the recognition of **ethical co-constitution**. In digitally mediated networks, normative outcomes emerge through the interaction of human and non-human actors. Ubuntu informs the ethical evaluation of these interactions, emphasizing empathy, reciprocity, and relational accountability. By situating responsibility within networks rather than in isolated agents, jurisprudence reconciles technological realism with moral and legal obligation (Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory" 324–25).

Lastly, the Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity contributes to **global legal and ethical discourse**. Rooted in African philosophical insight yet attentive to the ontological realities of the infosphere,

it provides a model applicable to AI governance, transnational digital law, and international ethics. By integrating ontology with relational ethics, this jurisprudence promotes accountability, protects human dignity, and guides normative evaluation across hybrid human-digital systems (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 123; Metz, “Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights” 535).

In summary, Neo-African jurisprudence offers a philosophically rigorous, culturally grounded, and jurisprudentially coherent framework for understanding and regulating the complex interplay of human and digital agency. By synthesizing Floridi’s ontology of the infosphere with Ubuntu ethics, it reconceives dignity as a relational achievement, anchors responsibility in networked interactions, and provides normative guidance for law, technology, and ethics. This framework demonstrates the enduring relevance of African philosophical traditions in shaping contemporary jurisprudence while engaging with the challenges of the digital age.

Core Argument: Dignity, Distributed Agency, and the Neo-African Turn

In the unfolding epoch of the digital revolution, the **infosphere**, a term meticulously articulated by Luciano Floridi, signifies more than a mere technological domain; it denotes an ontological milieu wherein human and artificial agents coexist, interact, and co-constitute the reality of information (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67). Within this metaphysical continuum, the locus of agency ceases to be exclusively human. Rather, agency assumes a **distributed configuration**, diffused across interdependent human and digital nodes that collectively generate action, intention, and consequence. This profound transformation necessitates a jurisprudence commensurate with its ontological foundation: one that preserves the inviolable dignity of the human person while recognizing the emergent, relational character of agency in the infosphere.

The **Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity** answers this challenge with philosophical precision and moral profundity. Drawing from the African communitarian ethic of *Ubuntu*, it redefines personhood as an achievement of relational harmony rather than a static possession of autonomous rationality. As Thaddeus Metz elucidates, personhood is realized through one’s capacity to participate in, and sustain, relations of mutual recognition, solidarity, and moral responsiveness (“Ubuntu as a Moral Theory” 534; “Toward an African Moral Theory” 323). Such a relational

ontology transcends the atomistic tendencies of classical liberal jurisprudence, grounding dignity not in isolated self-determination but in the intersubjective web of communal flourishing.

When transposed into the digital context, this moral insight acquires renewed urgency. The algorithms and systems that now mediate human interaction are no longer neutral instruments but **moral participants** in the creation and dissemination of meaning. The Neo-African framework thus contends that these digital architectures must be evaluated not solely by their instrumental rationality, efficiency, precision, or computational power, but by their **capacity to uphold human relational dignity**. The dignity of the person, in this view, extends into the digital realm as a criterion for just design, ethical programming, and equitable governance (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 45; Metz, 535).

The classical jurisprudence inherited from Kantian autonomy and Western rationalism anchors moral responsibility in the self-legislating subject, presuming agency to be both unitary and intentional. Yet, in the digital infosphere, causation and responsibility are often distributed across multiple interacting agents, human, algorithmic, and institutional. To persist with anthropocentric legal paradigms is to risk **juridical anachronism**. The Neo-African turn proposes instead a **communal accountability** that complements distributed agency with moral cohesion. In this model, human dignity does not vanish amid digital multiplicity; rather, it finds renewal through ethical interdependence and collective stewardship.

Accordingly, the emerging **digital legal subject** cannot be conceived as an isolated rights-bearing entity, but as a **relational participant** within a dynamic web of informational and ethical exchanges. Law, therefore, must evolve toward what may aptly be termed **networked accountability**, a mode of legal reasoning attuned to the entangled causality of the infosphere. As Jack Donnelly observes, human rights jurisprudence remains the guardian of dignity, yet its application must now extend beyond corporeal existence into the informational self (112). The task of Neo-African jurisprudence is precisely this: to articulate a normative synthesis that safeguards dignity amidst the fluidity of hybrid agency.

Ultimately, the Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity reconciles Floridi's ontological pluralism with the normative teleology of African communitarian ethics. Where Floridi discloses

the **structure of informational reality**, Ubuntu provides its **moral direction**. Together they constitute a jurisprudence of the infosphere that is both descriptive and prescriptive—grounded in the recognition that technology is a moral habitat and that human dignity remains its cardinal measure. In this synthesis, dignity ceases to be an abstract property of rational beings and becomes the living principle of harmony animating the moral, social, and digital order of existence.

Conclusion: Toward a Neo-African Jurisprudence of Dignity in the Digital Age

The emergence of the infosphere, characterized by the pervasive presence of autonomous systems, artificial intelligences, and complex informational networks, necessitates a rearticulation of jurisprudence that transcends classical anthropocentric paradigms. Luciano Floridi's ontological analysis elucidates the structural and normative dimensions of these networks, revealing that human and non-human agents co-constitute social, ethical, and legal outcomes in ways that challenge traditional frameworks (Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 45). In response, the Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity, grounded in the relational ethics of Ubuntu, offers a philosophically rigorous and culturally coherent model for understanding agency, accountability, and personhood in the digital era (Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human Rights" 534).

This jurisprudence reconceives human dignity as a relational achievement, actualized through ethical engagement, communal recognition, and the cultivation of moral capacities. It recognizes the operational significance of digital actors while situating ultimate moral and legal responsibility within human agents, thereby preserving the primacy of human dignity in emergent informational networks (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67–68; Metz, "Toward an African Moral Theory" 322). In so doing, it bridges the ontological realities of the infosphere with the normative imperatives of African philosophical thought, producing a jurisprudential framework that is simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive.

Neo-African jurisprudence further addresses the complexities of legal pluralism and digital governance in African and transnational contexts. By harmonizing statutory law, customary norms, and ethical principles derived from relationality, it provides coherent guidance for regulating AI and autonomous technologies in ways that enhance communal flourishing, ensure accountability, and preserve participatory oversight (Metz, "Ubuntu as a Moral Theory and Human

Rights” 536; Floridi, *The 4th Revolution* 123). Algorithmic systems and autonomous platforms are thus evaluated not only for their compliance with formal rules but also for their capacity to promote relational dignity and ethical coherence within human-digital networks (Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67–68).

A central contribution of this jurisprudence lies in its emphasis on **ethical co-constitution**. Human and non-human actors jointly produce normative outcomes within the infosphere, and Ubuntu provides the evaluative lens by which these interactions are ethically and legally assessed. This relational approach ensures that accountability, responsibility, and the protection of dignity are not abstracted from context but are grounded in the dynamics of communal life and digital interactivity (Metz, “Toward an African Moral Theory” 324–25).

Practically, the Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity recommends: (1) **regulatory recognition of distributed agency**, ensuring human oversight and accountability for algorithmic systems; (2) **institutionalization of participatory mechanisms**, facilitating ethical deliberation, transparency, and community engagement; (3) **integration of relational ethics into law**, harmonizing customary and statutory norms with the exigencies of digital governance; and (4) **prioritization of human dignity**, guiding technological development to reinforce rather than compromise ethical and social flourishing (Metz, “Toward an African Moral Theory” 326–27; Floridi, *The Ethics of Information* 67–68).

In sum, the Neo-African jurisprudence of dignity offers a **philosophically sophisticated, jurisprudentially coherent, and ethically grounded framework** for the regulation of hybrid human-digital networks. By synthesizing Floridi’s ontological insights with Ubuntu’s relational ethic, it reconceives dignity as a relational achievement, situates accountability within networks of interaction, and provides normative guidance for law, governance, and digital ethics. This model demonstrates that African philosophical thought can make substantive contributions to global discourses on personhood, agency, and normative regulation in the digital age, offering both a theoretical foundation and a practical guide for navigating the ethical, legal, and technological challenges of the twenty-first century.

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SAWOROIDE: THE YORUBA MODEL OF SOCIAL CONTRACT

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ABSTRACT

The theoretical underpinnings of this paper are grounded on (i) perceived belief of the relationship between philosophy and literature, when literature is understood as embracing artistic genres, such as film and philosophy as a reflective discipline; and (ii) as a reflection of Paget Henry's view that philosophy as an academic discipline is embedded in , and can be extracted from, non-philosophical discourses (iii) argument in Western political philosophy that the origin of government rests on a social contract between leaders and their subjects.

The data for philosophical reflection centre on the Yoruba film, *Saworoide*, produced by Tunde Kelani and written by Akinwunmi Isola, in which the relationship between leaders and the people is depicted as a bound/contract between leaders and their subjects. It is observed that this contract is not only political, but it is also spiritual in the sense that contractual relation between leaders and their citizens takes the form of a bond /vow in which the violation of the terms of the contract/bond/vow can lead to unpleasant consequences, including death, on the part of the leader. It is argued in the paper that this model of social contract is stronger and more credible than a hypothetical contract, enunciated by some Western contractarian philosophers, in the sense that it relies on an actual historical contract which bypasses the scepticism against the explanation and justification of the Western model of social contract, which sees such contract as a hypothetical one. The Yoruba model of social contract that is illustrated by the film, *Saworoide*, is an actual contract that takes place in actual historical situation and therefore it is more relatable.

The paper suggests that the Yoruba model of social contract as expressed in *Saworoide*, can be adopted as the explanation and justification of the origin of government and the political process, for the purpose of guaranteeing and ensuring accountability, responsibility and transparency in governance.

Key words: Literature and Philosophy, Social contract, *Saworoide*, Yoruba model of social contract.

I. Introduction

One fundamental question that defines the province of Political philosophy is the question about the origin and justification of the state and government. The question takes the form of why and how. For Philosophy, the why question is more fundamental than the how question. But we can work our way through the how question to the why question and vice versa. Thus we need to ask the question, why do we need the state and government at all and if that question can be answered then we need to ask how to initiate the process of state and government in actual historical situation. The how question can be viewed as a historical and ahistorical question as to when, in time, did government come into place. It might also be seen as ahistorical question in the sense

that we are not asking when, in history, government started to exist; rather, the question is about why we need government at all. This is a fundamental, hence, philosophical question.

In Western political philosophy, the why question is often responded to by presenting a hypothetical situation in which there is no government and the presumed effects and consequences of such a situation. This presentation denies a historical state of affairs and regards the response as a model- a justification for the existence of state and government. This way of formulating this response has engineered a debate as to the distinction between political justification and legitimacy.

The contractarians of modern and contemporary Western political philosophy- Hobbes (1962), Locke (2000), Rousseau (2000), Kant (2000) and Rawls (1971) and Nozick (1974) respectively, were noted for this kind of response.

Two concepts that are noted for elucidating the contractarian positions are (political) justification and legitimacy. In the literature, some political philosophers had suggested that both concepts are fused while some acknowledge a distinction between them. (Simmons 1999, Bamikole 2017). In simple terms, Justification looks forward to the future while legitimacy looks backward to the past. Justification refers to the good purposes or ends of the state, while legitimacy relates to a function of showing that the actual history of the state turns on consent, on the actual history of that state's relation with its subjects.

Locke and Nozick were identified by Simmons as those who recognized the distinction between justification and legitimacy. For Locke, “ no one can be put out (of the state of nature) and subjected to the political power of another without his or her own consent (Locke 2000, 330). On the other hand, Nozick (1974, 134) opined that state legitimacy is a function of showing that the actual history of the state which is the relationship between it and its citizens is morally acceptable.

While the debate on political justification and legitimacy has taken a sophisticated dimension, in this paper we shall be focusing attention on political legitimacy because it is the analysis of this concept and its normative consequences that is directly relevant to the concern of this paper.

The position taken in this paper is that relationship between the leader and citizens is not only based on power, that is the ability of a leader to make citizens do what they want even when the

citizens are unwilling; but more importantly, it is a moral relation- that leaders govern based on the consent of the citizens. In the history of actual states, political turmoil, which can take different dimensions, have been the consequences of the infraction and violation of the moral relationship between leaders and the citizens.

Within the context of this paper, the refusal of Lapite to adhere to the tradition of Jogbo kingdom by refusing to take a vow and incision makes his leadership illegitimate leading to political turmoil in the society. By the same token, the forceful taking over of government by Lagata violates the terms of agreement between Jogbo kingdom and its people, not only leading to turmoil, but to the demise of Lagata, the military ruler. The paper used this model of social contract to argue that the contract between leaders and citizens does not only take a rational and moral explanation but a spiritual one. It is argued that if existing states, especially in Africa, can adhere and employ this model, then accountability and transparency would be promoted in the act of governance. We shall then have a better social and political state of affairs than the existing one where the moral virtues of governance are violated with impunity.

II. The film, Saworoide

Saworoide is a Yoruba film directed by Tunde Kelani. The film combines elements of tradition, symbolism, and storytelling to address important themes such as leadership, corruption, justice, exploitation, and the relationship between those in power and the people they govern. The story is set in the fictional town of Jogbo, a place rooted in strong cultural values and strict traditional procedures for installing a king.

Traditional Background

In Jogbo, becoming a king is not based on influence, desire or charisma alone; a ruler must undergo a sacred initiation and ritual involving a special drum known as Saworo Ide (the brass drum). The drum symbolizes truth, transparency, responsibility and accountability. Any king who goes through the initiation can hear the drum without harm. However, if a ruler ascends the throne without completing the ritual and eventually hears the drum, he is going to suffer unpleasant physical, social and spiritual consequences, marking him as an unlawful or illegitimate leader.

King Lapite's Ascendancy to the Throne

At the beginning of the film, Lapite, who is desperate to become king, commands Oba Adebosipo, the legitimate king, to be assassinated along with his son to obliterate Ayangolu's lineage from ascending the throne. As fate will have it, Ayangolu is assassinated while his son is assisted to escape. After this, Lapite ascends the throne but refuses to participate in the sacred ritual because he wants the freedom to rule without being accountable to tradition. Instead of embracing the responsibilities of leadership, he seeks power for selfish and parochial interests.

Lapite forms alliances with corrupt chiefs and influential individuals who support his rejection of tradition. Through manipulation and wealth, he secures the throne. After gaining power, Lapite begins selling Jogbo's land and natural resources to foreign companies for personal profit. This led to the suffering of the citizens—farmlands were destroyed, poverty increases, and the leaders accumulate wealth while the people become impoverished.

Corruption and Decline in Jogbo

Over time, Lapite becomes oppressive and authoritarian. He silences anyone who challenge his leadership and ensure that the Saworo Ide drum is never played, fearing the consequences of being exposed. Under his rule, Jogbo shifts from a peaceful cultural community into one filled with corruption, injustice, and hardship. The chiefs who support him also exploit the town for their own gain. However, the citizens do not fold their arms and watched Lapite and his corrupt chiefs to oppress and exploit them. They rebel against the unjust administration of Jogbo kingdom.

Lagata's Coup

During Lapite's reign, a military officer named Lagata returns to Jogbo. Although he initially appear to seek peace, he also desires power. He helps Lapite to strengthen his rule but later turns against him. Lagata stages a coup, removes Lapite from the throne, and takes over power.

However, Lagata also refuses to go through the Saworo Ide ritual. He believes power relies on force, especially through the barrels of the gun, rather than cultural and legitimate authority. He ends up ruling with the same oppression and selfishness, causing more suffering for the Jogbo people.

Ayangalu and the Defenders of Tradition

Throughout the film, cultural figures like Ayangalu, the custodian of the Saworo Ide drum, continues to act as protectors of tradition. They remind the community that true leadership is rooted in culture, responsibility, and justice. They represent ancestral wisdom and moral guidance.

As the suffering in Jogbo grows, the people began to realize that restoring tradition is the only way to reclaim peace and fairness.

The Drum's Power and the Climax

In the climax, the Saworo Ide drum is finally beaten. Since neither Lapite nor Lagata undergo the required initiation and ritual, the sound of the drum exposes their illegitimacy and leads to their downfall and eventual demise. The drum becomes a powerful symbol of justice, proving that corruption and abuse of power cannot escape physical, social and spiritual consequences.

In the end, *Saworo Ide* emphasizes that true change and progress come from restoring truth, culture, transparency and accountability.

III. Philosophical Analysis of Saworoide as a Yoruba Model of Social Contract

Ayangolu and the ritual materials signify the origin of government as rooted in the contract between leaders and their citizens. This is a political contract which accounts for the origin of government and citizens' political obligation towards it. In the film being analysed, Jogbo Kingdom is rooted in tradition that confers legitimacy on the state and the government and the individuals who are symbols of these political institutions.

Lapite's non adherence to the Jogbo tradition by refusing to take the oath and incision suggests arrogance and crack individualism; not recognising the prevalent view in African philosophy, that "I am because we are" (Mbiti, 1970, p.108)

By the same token, Lagata's forceful take-over of government without resorting to the will and the consent of Jogbo people is a violation of the contractual arrangement between Jogbo leaders and their citizens. The turmoil that results from this illegitimacy is reflected in the relationship between the state and government. Illegitimate government uses its power to oppress, exploit and does injustice against the citizens of illegitimate states. Thus, state and government legitimacy are not

to be independent of one another, since an illegitimate state could not have a legitimate government.

In Jogbo, the vow and ritualism that bind the leader with the people are based on the tradition of the society, which has to be accepted critically or uncritically (Popper, 1991) but more importantly, it should not be taken lightly. It is the nature of oaths and rituals that when the object is violated there are always immediate unpleasant consequences (Mbiti 1972).

IV. Saworoide: A Yoruba Alternative Model of Social Contract

It has to be noted that besides the internal criticism of the Western contractarian theory; for instance, that the theory only signifies a hypothetical contract and that it is not binding on future generations, Charles Mills (1997) has suggested that the social contract theory is a racial contract.

According to him, the orthodox social contract is based on white domination, given the historical events of slavery and colonialism. Thus, the social contract cannot explain the political justification and legitimacy of non-white states and governments. On the orthodox model of social contract, non-whites are not regarded as subjects; rather, they are objects. Consequently, the moral elements in the orthodox social contract do not apply to the relationship between white and non-white persons. Given this view, the orthodox social contract should be replaced with another form of contract that is based on the existential realities of non-white peoples.

This provides the impetus for developing a model of social contract that is based on the thought system of the African society, using the Yoruba culture as an illustration.

As aforementioned, the Yoruba model of social contract is not only a rational and moral contract, but it is also a spiritual one. The spiritual dimension relates to an actual contract that is based on concrete spiritual materials and processes that are predicated on the belief system of the Yoruba people. One of the ways by which the Yoruba can ensure trust in relationship is the process of oath taking among parties concerned in a given relationship. Oath taking is a traditional way of binding and entrusting parties to a relationship. It is the belief that given the concrete situation of the contract, parties to a relationship will keep to its terms when specific spiritual items are presented to them which cement the relationship. It is also believed that if any of the parties violates the spirit of the relationship, such a person will be met with unpleasant consequences.

At this point, an objector might suggest that in concrete terms, leaders in our time swear on the Bible and the Koran as the case may be, and the question is: What is special about the Yoruba model which gives it an edge over the Western model of oath taking?

Our response to this question is that the consequences of breaking the terms of contract within a given relationship within the Yoruba spiritual model is immediate and conclusive. The Western model of oath taking is predicated on the assumption that justice can be meted out to a violator of contract in the fullness of time, if not in this world but in the world to come. This is the idea of God's penal justice in Kant's (1960) philosophy of religion. On the other hand, the Yoruba idea of not delaying consequences which follow upon violation of an oath is based on the saying that *ki ile to pa osika ohun daradara a ti ba je* (Before nemesis catches on the evil doer, good things would have undergone irreparable damage). Therefore, the Yoruba model hinges upon immediate justice for the evil doer, especially when s/he has been a party to an oath taking in relation to a given (legitimate) relationship.

This is not to suggest that the Yoruba believe in jungle justice, which Western legal system would regard as the violation of the rule of law. The point is that the violation of an oath and the consequences that follow upon such violation is a natural process, not mediated by human agency and as such, the involvement of a formal judicial process is out of the picture.

V. Conclusion

This paper has been an exercise in rethinking the elements that form the kernel of the subject matter of political philosophy- the question about the origin and justification of the state and government. Given the nature of the philosophical enterprise, the question is a perennial one and that has provided the impetus for examining anew, the Western contractarian philosophy.

The subsequent criticisms that have been levied against the orthodox contractarian philosophy provides the justification to shift the 'geography of reason' and look towards the African philosophical tradition as an alternative model of responding to the age old question about the origin and purpose of the state and government.

The Yoruba film, *Saworoide*, provides the data for philosophical reflection and it is argued in the paper that the Yoruba model of social contract is a good alternative to the orthodox social contract that has been bedevilled by myriad of criticisms.

In its application to actual states, especially in Africa, it is the belief and suggestion of the paper that if the Yoruba model of social contract is adopted in contemporary African states, then there is a possibility of witnessing accountability and transparency in government; rather than the existing situation where the moral virtues of governance are violated with impunity.

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THE RESILIENCE OF RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Abstract

This paper examines the resilience of religion in a rapidly changing world. Contrary to predictions of decline under modernization and globalization, religion continues to thrive by adapting to new cultural, technological, and social realities. Despite predictions of secularization, religion continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of modern challenges. Rather than disappearing, it has adapted to globalization, cultural shifts, and pluralistic contexts. This paper further argues that religion endures by transforming traditions, fostering interfaith cooperation, and maintaining moral authority. Drawing on scholarly perspectives, the study highlights four dimensions of religious resilience: adaptation to globalization, engagement with cultural change, interreligious cooperation, and renewal through resistance. Drawing on examples from Africa, South Africa, and global interreligious initiatives, the study highlights how religious communities renew themselves while remaining rooted in faith. The resilience of religion lies not in static preservation but in dynamic adaptation to a changing world. Case studies such as Pentecostal growth in Africa, Christian women in South Africa, and interfaith collaboration in Nigeria demonstrate how religion creatively reinterprets tradition while addressing contemporary challenges. The analysis concludes that religion endures not through rigidity but through flexibility, transformation, and its ongoing ability to provide meaning and moral guidance.

Introduction

For much of the twentieth century, scholars widely assumed that modernization would inevitably lead to the decline of religion. According to the secularization thesis, scientific progress, economic development, and globalization would gradually render religion irrelevant in public and private life. Yet the twenty-first century tells a different story. Far from disappearing, religion remains a powerful force shaping identities, communities, and societies around the globe. Its resilience lies in its ability to adapt, reinterpret traditions, and respond to cultural and social change. As Benjamin Grant Purzycki and Richard Sosis argue; religion “is not static but an evolving cultural and ecological system” (12).

For decades, scholars advanced the secularization thesis, predicting that modernization, rationalism, and globalization would diminish religion's influence. Yet contemporary evidence demonstrates that religion remains a powerful and adaptive force. As Purzycki and Sosis note, religion is "an evolving cultural and ecological system" (12), capable of reshaping itself in response to social transformations. This essay examines how religion demonstrates resilience in today's changing world through globalization, cultural adaptation, interreligious cooperation, renewal in the face of resistance, the resilience of religion by focusing on four key dimensions: globalization, cultural adaptation, interreligious cooperation, and resistance to moral fragmentation.

Religion and Globalization

Globalization has reshaped nearly every aspect of human life, including religion. The rapid flow of people, ideas, and technologies has brought different traditions into closer contact, sometimes creating tension but also opening new opportunities for growth. Véronique Altglas observes that globalization challenges established religious authorities while simultaneously encouraging creative forms of expression and identity (9). Pentecostalism illustrates this resilience. Across Africa and Latin America, Pentecostal churches have expanded by embracing global theological emphases while adapting to local cultural realities. As Alberto da Silva Moreira notes, its "flexibility and contextual character" explain its remarkable growth in societies undergoing rapid transformation (3).

Technology has further amplified this adaptability. Through digital platforms, religious communities now worship, teach, and evangelize beyond geographic boundaries. Rather than being eroded by globalization, religion has transformed its modes of presence, proving its ability to thrive in an interconnected world.

Globalization has transformed the way religion interacts with society. Migration, technological advancement, and cultural exchange have placed diverse traditions in constant dialogue. Altglas suggests that globalization challenges religious authority while simultaneously providing new opportunities for renewal (9). Pentecostalism in Africa illustrates this dual dynamic. Moreira explains that its "flexibility and contextual character" allow Pentecostalism to thrive amid rapid

social change (3). Instead of being weakened, religion has leveraged globalization as a platform for expansion, demonstrating resilience by adapting across cultures and borders.

Adaptation to Cultural Change

Religion also endures by engaging with cultural change rather than retreating from it. While some perceive adaptation as compromise, history demonstrates that resilience often requires reinterpretation. It is observed, that western methods of thinking and learning with which theology came were not suited to the African ways and had to be made to go in African ways (O'Donovan 2 - 5). O'Donovan went on to say state three things on how to relate the Bible to Africans as; what the Bible says on the subject matter, how Africans relate to what the Bible says on the subject and how to express the truth of the scripture on the subject in a way related to the African culture (6). The scripture must be used to interpret scripture, and in a case whereby we have sixty-six Books in the scripture and written by about forty authors were based in different locations, whose cultures might not be unilateral or uniform and this call for a diversified cultural background in which they wrote the scripture (O'Donovan 20). The adaptation of the scripture, known to be western to a specific cultural background call for thorough exegetical analysis of the scripture in an unbiased way or in a way in which the truth is not swallowed with a certain cultural tendency.

In South Africa, Christian women negotiating shifting gender norms continue to affirm their faith in what they call an “unchanging God in a changing world” (Perera and Swartz 4046). Their faith practices show how tradition can remain meaningful while being lived out in new cultural contexts. Similarly, Dwight N. Hopkins and his colleagues argue that globalization inevitably reshapes religions, but survival depends on how traditions “embed themselves in the lived experiences of their adherents” (23). By absorbing aspects of culture and reinterpreting them within a religious framework, faith traditions remain vital across generations.

Interreligious Resilience and Collaboration

In today's pluralistic societies, resilience is also expressed through dialogue and cooperation between traditions. Instead of isolating themselves, religions increasingly collaborate to address shared challenges such as conflict, inequality, and climate change. Michael Hogue and Dean Phillip Bell emphasize that interreligious leadership is now essential for sustaining resilience in a diverse and interconnected world (57).

Such cooperation strengthens religious communities by building networks of trust and solidarity. Whether in peace-building initiatives between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria or global interfaith campaigns on environmental sustainability, resilience today often emerges not through competition but through collaboration.

Resistance and Renewal

On the other hand, resilience involves not only adaptation but also resistance. Religion has long been a source of strength against oppression, injustice, and moral fragmentation. Anna Halafoff and colleagues describe religion as both “power and resistance” in divided societies, enabling communities to survive and transform even in the midst of crisis (14).

In Nigeria, for example, globalization introduces secular ideologies and consumerist values, yet religion continues to serve as a moral compass for society. Ambrose Ogueche and his co-authors argue that rather than being diminished, religion in Nigeria has renewed its public role in shaping ethical discourse and guiding community life (5). Such resistance ensures that religion remains a relevant force even when confronted by competing worldviews. Odey et al observe, that African Traditional religion (ATR) and Christianity interact in a way that often challenge and rejuvenate African cultural heritage and values, rejecting dehumanizing colonial imposition while affirming positive traditions (Odey et al 4).

Cultural Adaptation and Renewal

Resilience also emerges through adaptation to shifting cultural realities. This illustrates how religion remains relevant by embedding itself within lived experiences. Hopkins and colleagues emphasize that religious traditions survive when they respond creatively to cultural demands (23). Adaptation, therefore, is not a dilution of faith but a re-expression of timeless truths within evolving contexts.

Cultural adaptation refers to the modification of cultural patterns, practices, and worldviews in response to internal or external pressures. According to Paul G. Hiebert, adaptation occurs when individuals or societies encounter new environments and must “rethink old assumptions and adjust to new realities” (Hiebert 32). In Africa, cultural adaptation has been a historical constant from the

pre-colonial encounters between tribes to the colonial and postcolonial transformations of governance, education, and religion.

In the context of Christianity, cultural adaptation manifests in the way faith is expressed through indigenous music, dance, and art forms. Rather than merely adopting Western religious forms, African Christians have reinterpreted the Gospel through their own cultural idioms. Andrew F. Walls observes that Christianity, by nature, is a “translated religion,” one that continually adapts itself as it crosses cultural boundaries (Walls 26). Therefore, adaptation allows for the contextualization of the Gospel so that it speaks authentically within specific cultural frameworks.

While adaptation addresses external change, cultural renewal focuses on internal restoration. Renewal involves a deliberate effort to reclaim, preserve, and reinterpret cultural values and traditions that may have been eroded by colonialism, globalization, or secularism. As Kwame Gyekye notes, “Tradition is not a static inheritance but a resource for renewal and innovation” (Gyekye 45). Renewal thus seeks to balance heritage with progress.

In postcolonial Africa, cultural renewal has taken the form of language revival, revalorization of traditional governance systems, and integration of indigenous ethics into modern education and theology. Aylward Shorter describes this process as “inculturation,” the dialogue between faith and culture that enables mutual transformation (Shorter 12). Through inculturation, the Gospel not only adapts to local contexts but also renews cultural meaning by affirming values such as community, hospitality, and respect for life.

Interreligious Cooperation

Religious resilience increasingly depends on collaboration across traditions. In pluralistic societies, cooperation strengthens faith communities against fragmentation. Hogue and Bell argue that interreligious leadership is crucial for addressing global issues such as violence, inequality, and ecological crises (57). Examples of interfaith peace-building in Nigeria and environmental campaigns worldwide reveal how cooperation enhances the vitality of religion. By engaging in shared missions, religious groups not only preserve their identity but also strengthen their relevance in a globalized era.

Resistance and Moral Authority

Alongside adaptation, resilience is evident in religion's capacity to resist forces that undermine human dignity. Halafoff and colleagues describe religion as both "power and resistance," enabling communities to endure crisis and division (14). In Nigeria, globalization has introduced consumerism and secularism, yet religion continues to provide moral guidance. Ogueche and co-authors note that Nigerian religion has "renewed its public role in shaping ethical discourse" (5). Through resistance, religious communities reaffirm their authority while maintaining continuity with tradition.

Conclusion

The persistence of religion in a rapidly changing world underscores its remarkable resilience. By adapting to globalization, engaging cultural shifts, fostering interfaith collaboration, and resisting forces that threaten human dignity, religion continues to shape both private faith and public life. Its endurance does not reflect rigidity but rather creativity and transformation. As Perera and Swartz remind us, believers continue to encounter an "unchanging God" within ever-changing circumstances (4046). This paradox of continuity and change ensures that religion will remain central to human experience, not as a relic of the past but as a living force for meaning, hope, and renewal in the future.

Religion's endurance in the modern era demonstrates that it is neither obsolete nor stagnant. Its resilience lies in the ability to adapt, cooperate, and resist without losing its essence. By responding to globalization, embracing cultural change, engaging in interreligious collaboration, and upholding moral authority, religion continues to play a central role in shaping human life. As Perera and Swartz remind us, believers encounter an "unchanging God" amid changing realities (4046). This paradox explains religion's resilience: it is both rooted and dynamic, ensuring its ongoing relevance in a rapidly changing world.

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MULTILINGUALISM AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: THE CASE OF THE IGBO LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Multilingualism is linguistic situation where there is the existence of more two languages in a community. The Igbo language is one of the three major languages spoken in Nigeria where there is the existence of more four hundred languages. In Nigeria, the Igbo language is spoken in the following south-eastern states: Abia, Anambara, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. It is also spoken in some parts of: Delta, Rivers, and Edo states in the south–south region of the country. The major objective of this paper is to suggest ways of preserving the Igbo language in a globalized multilingual world. The theoretical framework that is used is the Ethnolinguistic theory. The reason for the adoption of this theory for this paper, is because it encourages competence in all the cultural aspects of a language. The data for this paper were collected by interviewing four native speakers of the Igbo language who are literate and have lived consistently in Igbo land for fifteen years. Some of the findings of the paper are: that some of the ways to sustaining the Igbo language in a globalized multilingual world is to encourage vital uses of the language in speech, writing, phatic, ludic and the internet. This paper recommends further research into the linguistic status of the Igbo language in a globalized multilingual world.

Keywords: globalization, Igbo, language, linguistic vitality and multilingualism.

Introduction

The preservation of every language is of relevance to the linguist and to the users of a language. Languages are bound to shift or die completely where a global language like: English, Spanish or French has a strong pull on the work force and life style of many people. cf. Holmes (2008, p. 69). According to Essien (2010, p.48), “When your language dies, your people also die as a people with a distinct culture and heritage”. This simply implies that when a language dies, an integral aspect of the existence of the people equally dies, because such culture will cease to be functional or even remembered in the world. Thus, the objective of this paper is to suggest ways of preserving the Igbo language in order to preserve their identity for posterity. In the subsections of this paper, a review of some concepts will be briefly discussed. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical framework, the methodology, the Igbo people, some Igbo cultures, and finally ways of preserving the identity of the Igbo people in a globalized world.

Conceptual Review

Globalization

Globalization is a social situation where different cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other as a result of the influence of large multinational companies and improved communication systems. cf. Hornby (2010, P. 636). Globalisation is also referred to as international co-operation. In globalization, countries share common ideologies, goals and many other expectations among countries in the world. cf. Odewale and Egotanwa (2019, p.186). This implies that in globalizations, countries in the world will move in the same direction, in their economies, politics, technology, religion, language and so on. Ezeani (2013, p. 73), notes that globalization results in the production of a global citizen who is learned and can work in any part of the world. This means that in globalization, people will have same language, same educational ideologies, same industrial skills and many other shared views in the world. From <https://www.pile.com> (2025, p.1), “Globalization describes the growing interdependence of the world’s economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investments, people, and information”. This implies that globalization aims at sharing or partnering with every country in the world enhanced by transportation of goods and persons across the globe and the easy communication of messages. From, <https://www.britannica.com> (2025, p.1), “... globalization can be defined as the stretching of economic, political, and social relationships in space and time”. Here one can see that globalization means the spread of an idea, concept, or goods across the globe. This internet source goes on to mention that, “A manufacturer assembling a product for a distant market, a country submitting to international law, and a language adopting foreign loanwords are all examples of globalization”. These all show instances of shared interests among member nations of the world. From, <https://www.vedantu.com> (2025, p. 1), “Globalisation is the process by which economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through increased communication, trade, investment, and technology transfer”. Here, the definitions look at the factors that help to bring people together into a common fold as trade, cultures, communication, investments, economic ideals and shared technologies. Thus, what is seen in country A, is seen in country B. **Language**

Sapir. (1921, p.8) writes that language is a “... purely human and non-instinctive method of communication of ideas, emotions and desires by voluntarily produced symbols”. This means that

the human language is not an automatic act which starts at birth but that it is a behavior that is acquired over a period of time which enables man to express his likes and dislikes to one another.

Cameron (1990, p. 3) refers to language as: “cultural edifice whose norms are laid down in things like: grammars, style books, and other glossaries- all of which have historically been compiled by men and conservative men at that”. From this definition, cultural structures like: houses, arts, crafts, pottery and the general lifestyle of a particular group of people constitute the language of such a group of persons. Cameron in this definition also sees language as a created and controlled thing by men, since the world is a male dominated place.

Nutsukpo (1990, p.1), notes that language is “a tool or a code system used for human communication. It is made up of sounds and graphic symbols that the speakers of a particular language have accepted to use as units of communication”. Thus, language is a device that is made up of phonetic units which are the substance that can be translated into forms (morphological, lexical, phrasal or sentential) used by human beings to pass on information to themselves.

Ndimele (2001, p. 1), defines language as “... a semiotic system, because it entails the use of certain agreed-upon symbols or signals to convey meaning from one person to another within a given speech community”. This means that every does have language verbal, or non-verbal accepted means of transferring information from one person to another. The non-verbal forms could be graphic or symbolic in nature.

Agbedo (2003, p. 15) notes that “language is generally seen as a human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols”. Agbedo here, like other scholars that have been discussed above, describes language as a conventional device for the transference of information amongst persons of identical code which could be by oral, gestural, or graphic mode. According to Agbedo (2003, p. 27) “language as a means of human communication, is carried out through two basic human activities: speaking and listening”. Thus, language involves oral productions and auditory perceptions for it to have meaning. Speech and auditory organs are positioned in the head, and in the head is the brain which is the central control system of all human activities.

Essien (2010, p. 12), defines language as “a system of structural arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which human beings make meaning, communicate and interact with each other in a given

community. Put more simply, language is a system of rules and principles in which sound, structure and meaning are integrated for communication”. From this definition, one can see that language is ordered and spoken by the use of meaningful sounds accepted by convention to convey a particular meaning. It is by convention because a particular sound, morpheme or word in one language could mean a different thing in another language.

In this work, one can equally add that language is a behavioural activity that can be expressed by the use of sounds, body movements, or by the use of graphic forms. Some of the functions of language are: informational, expressive, phatic, directive, ideational, performative, and ludic. cf. Ndimele (2001, p. 4-5). One thing that must be mentioned in this paper is that every language is spoken in a given or specific geographic location and languages of the world are typified according to shared features. cf. Yul-Ifode (2001, p. 6). From the various definitions given above on language, one can see that the definitions of *language* are numerous and cannot be exhausted in a single paper like this. However, each of the definitions has made an inlet as to what language is.

Multilingualism

A multilingual, is a person that has equal control of more than two native languages. Robins (1989, p. 402), notes that: “... multilingual communities are an extreme form of the multidialectal communities found in many of the large cities of the world, wherein dialect differences reinforce the solidarity of groups, but also mark social class differences and aspirations among speakers of the same language”. This means that language is used as a social index in a multilingual society, creating social bonds amongst users of the same linguistic variety, with context determining the language to be used at various occasions. Multilingualism on the other hand, refers to a community or situation where more than two languages co-exist as native languages. cf. Matthews (2007, p. 255). Yul-Ifode, (2008, pp. 168-169), notes that multilingualism is a situation where “... there are communities of widely different cultural and linguistic background with the people all living in close proximity. Such communities comprise a number of sub-societies, each speaking a different native language, but are all subject to the same political authority, attend the same schools, and interact with each other in different co-operative ways”. This means that in a multilingual community, many languages co-exist in the same environment, with each language serving different social roles such as: official, international, religious, educational, regional, in-group and out-group roles. cf. Yul-Ifode (2008, pp176-181). Essien (2010, p. 42), notes that multilingualism

is a situation where many languages are spoken with the language of the community, socially differentiated. In such communities, there may be linguistic clash arising from education, wealth, royalty or political dominance invested on a particular language. Holmes (2008, p. 74), notes that in multilingual communities, different linguistic varieties or codes are often distinguished. This stresses further that many languages and dialects of different languages do co-exist in a multilingual community. From: <https://en.wikipedia.org>, (2025, p1), “Multilingualism ... refers to the skill of speaking, comprehending, reading, or writing in multiple languages with degrees of proficiency varying widely from basic phrases to full fluency. People who are multilingual are often called polyglots, while those who speak exactly two are bilinguals. Multilingualism promotes cross-cultural understanding, improves cognitive abilities, and is essential for globalization”. In other words, in a multilingual society, the linguistic competence of individuals do vary from one language to another which all depends on their exposure to them, or their social relevance to the user. In the subsection that follows, the word *Igbo* will be briefly discussed.

Culture

According to Lyons, (1981, p. 302), “Culture may be described as a socially acquired knowledge that is the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society”. This means that culture is acquired by one’s membership of a society which directly checks his social behaviour. Emanu (2001, p.43), notes that: “Culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic, and religious norms and modes of organization, thus distinguishing them from their neighbours”. In other words, a person’s culture is an index of distinction between him and others. Omego, (2007, p. 169), refers to culture as: “That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society”. Thus, culture is an acquired behaviour of the social or linguistic norms of a society in which a person lives. Odewale and Egotanwa (2019, p. 33), note that: “Culture is the whole way of life of the people of a society. It includes the totality of peoples’ beliefs, their modes of worship, their works of art and craft, language, religion, technology, dressing, ways of thinking, dancing, greeting etc”. From the definition by Odewale and Egotanwa, culture, is the totality of everything that a people are known for. From the internet source of Wikipedia.org. n.p. (2019, p.1), “culture refers to the arts, and

other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies”. This would mean that art includes the food, architecture, clothing, festival, type of marriage, agriculture, taboos, religion, type of medication and so on, all of which is consciously acquired by a person over a period of time since such knowledge is not instinctively acquired. Another internet source <dictionary.cambridge.org>... n.p. (2019, p.1), “culture is the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time”. From the above assertion, one can see that culture is a pattern of existence by a specific group of people which varies from place to place. From: [livescience.Com>2](https://livescience.com/2...)...(2017, p.1), “culture is the characteristic and knowledge of a particular group, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts”. One can see that culture involves the totality of all that makeup a person: from religion to music, dance, paintings, crafts, language, marriage, birth, death, name giving, taboos, and so on and this is the view that this paper adopts.

Igbo

The word *Igbo*, stands for the language and the people. *Igbo* is a language in the Niger-Congo language family under the new Benue-Congo. cf. Williamson (1989, p. 21). Igbo is a language spoken in Nigeria, in the Eastern states of Abia, Anambara, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo and in some parts of Delta, Edo and Rivers states. It is one of the three major languages that are spoken in Nigeria. The other two major languages in Nigeria are: Hausa and Yoruba. The Igbo language has a standard variety called *Ìgbò Ìzùgbé*. This standard variety is taught in schools, used in writing text books and in the media houses. The standard variety is also internationally recognized. In spite of the fact that it has a standard variety, the Igbo language has many dialects such as: Abiriba, Arochukwu, Enuani, Etche, Ikwerre, Mbaise, Mbaano, Ndoki, Ngwa, Ohofia, Onitsha, Owere, Umuahia and so on, all which are mutually intelligible to the users of the language. Linguistically, the Igbo language is classified as a Niger-Congo language under Kordofanian. cf. Williamson (1989, p. 21). From the historical perspective, the Igbos are said to be descendants of the Jewish tribe who were displaced from their original homeland during the Babylonian Conquest. cf. Alaezi (2011, p. 16-22). According to Emengini, (2025, p. 2), “... the Igbo people stand out as one the most dynamic and widely dispersed, noted for trade, migration, and cultural resilience”. This means that the people are a very hardworking group of people ever ready to leave home in search

of greener pastures. The Igbo people have and social system sustained by kinship, extended family network, age grades and a common religious system. Their political system is plural where every man ruled his household, however, there are Obis, Ezes, and Igwes for a higher social cohesion. cf. Emengini (2025, p.1). The focus of this paper is on the general stand of the Igbo language in a globalized village. The next section of this paper is on the methodology used for the collection of data that is used in this work.

Methodology

The data for this paper were collected by interviewing four native speakers of the Igbo language who are literate and have lived consistently in Igbo land for fifteen years. On the two meetings held with the informants, writing instruments such as: pen, paper, and voice recorders were used. In the interview, data was collected of some Igbo cultures, which they mentioned may die if they were not revitalized through active use by the native speakers. The subsection below discusses the theoretical framework that is considered in this paper.

Ethnolinguistic Theory

The theoretical framework used in this paper is Ethnography of Communication. According to Okeke (2017, p. 160). “The Sociolinguistic approach to language study known as Ethnography of Communication was developed by Dell Hymes. Ethnographic study is not concerned simply with the structure of language used in communication, but with its use, paying extra attention to underlying socio-cultural rules that form the basis of the language used”. This means that context, and indigenous knowledge system all have a part to play in the use of every language. In Ethnolinguistic study, *Communicative Language Teaching* holds that during language acquisition or learning, what is learnt is not just the linguistic forms, but beyond the linguistic forms are social-cultural forms which show to how to properly use language so as to perform the kind of social functions that people in the society do, using language. cf. Okeke (2017, p. 162). Ethnography of Communication, evaluates the place of culture in predicting the behaviours of individuals in a particular cultural setting in line with the taboos of that society. Thus, one of the premise on which Ethnography of Communication is established is that, the expression and understanding of a behaviour is mainly entrenched in the socio-cultural system of a society of which language is a part of. Ethnography of Communication, describes the forms and functions of verbal and non-

verbal behaviours within the cultural settings of a people. It is within this framework that every information in this paper on, *multilingualism and cultural identity in a globalized world* will be considered. From the internet source: <https://en.wikipedia.org>, (2025, p. 1), notes that: “Ethnolinguistic theory, explores the relationship between language and cultural or ethnic identity, focusing on how language use reflects and shapes social and ethnic identities”. This means that Ethnolinguistic theory is a framework concerned with the study of how a person’s language shapes his social behavior as a result of the cultural norms that embedded in his language. Two sub areas of Ethnolinguistic theory are: Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory, (ELIT), which examines how individuals use language to affiliate with or distinguish themselves from social groups, and Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (EVT), which investigates the factors that help a language maintain its strength and status over time. In this paper, Ethnolinguistic vitality will be briefly discussed here, since it gives an insight to how the Igbo language can be sustained in a globalized world.

This theory was developed by: Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor in 1977. Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (EVT), is a social –psychological method used for examining the role of socio-structural variable in intergroup relations, cross-cultural communication, second language learning, mother tongue maintenance, language shift and loss. In Ethnolinguistic Vitality, the idea is that the more a language is in a vitality linguistic group, the more functional it will be and the more the language has the chances of survival. Ethnolinguistic Vitality is thus, a linguistic framework that seeks to restore the vitality of a speech form through: language empowerment, language maintenance, language development, text development and capacity building. cf. Umeodinka (2017, p. 149). Umeodinka further explains that language empowerment, language maintenance, language development, text development and capacity building, arise as a result of the increasing phenomenon of multilingualism amidst linguistic diversity. Some of the factors according to Umeodinka (2017, p. 150), that enhance vitality are: status, demography, and institutional support because these factors help to give the classification of a language into ethnolinguistic groups of low, medium, and high vitality in order to tell the strengths and weaknesses of a group. Under this note it is possible for low vitality groups to go through linguistic assimilation and not to be taken as a distinct collective group. For instance, the Fulani language in the Northern part of Nigeria can be assimilated or dropped for the Hausa language since the Hausa language has high linguistic vitality in the North with a greater number of its users. On the contrary, it is possible for high

vitality groups to preserve or maintain their language and distinctive cultural traits in multilingual environments. For instance, in Nigeria: the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba language speakers have very high chances of maintaining their language and cultural institutions than the speakers of Ogoni or Nembe languages.

In Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (EVT), the variable *status*, is all about a community's social prestige, its socio-historical status, and the prestige of its language and culture within its mainstream community. The implication of this is that the more prestigious status a group or language has, the more vitality it will have and the more desirable and functional such a linguistic group will have. The economic status variable has to do with the extent to which a linguistic form has control over the material and financial goods in the community. The social status variable is about the image this group has, both its own view and the view of other groups it relates with. The socio-historical status variable pertains to the amount of shared cultural history a group has. Such as: a battle that was won or a famous person. The demographic variable refers to the number and distributional patterns of ethnolinguistic group members throughout a particular region or national territory. Institutional support group variable relates to the degree to which a language group enjoys support or recognition from the mass media, education, government services, industry, religion, culture and politics. According to Umeodinka (2017, p. 151), "Giving a language some support in the areas of research, education policies and the use of the language in both the print and the electronic media, is also a sort of institutional support". This means that when a language has such support, it will enhance use and development of such a language. For instance in Nigeria, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba have more: social, historical, demographic, economic and institutional support than any other language groups. This means that minority languages in the country may be constrained to shift to any of the dominant languages depending on the locality of the minority language. Some of the uses of Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory are:

- a. provision of direction,
- b. shaping of ethnic groups' attitudes,
- c. influencing the language behaviour of succeeding generations,
- d. determining the integrative attitudes of ethnic groups,
- e. serving as a tool for language-attitudes investigative issues. cf. Ugorji, (2020, pp.517-527).

Having introduced the background on which this paper will be discussed, one will then present some of the Igbo cultures and how to preserve them in a multilingual globalized world.

Some Cultural Identities of the Igbo People

Recall, that Lyons (1981, p. 302), asserts that: “Culture may be described as a socially acquired knowledge, that is the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society”. This means that culture is acquired by one’s membership of a society which directly checks his social behavior. In this subsection of the paper, some cultural identity of the Igbo people will be presented.

The Igbo Language

The most striking culture about the Igbo people is the culture of speaking the Igbo language. In a multilingual world in which it co-exists with other languages of the world, every effort should be made by its users to preserve the continuous existence of the language in both the oral and written forms. For example, use should be made of the language in greeting, singing, writing, storytelling/writing, praying, running errands, internet uses, radio, television, newspaper, drama, schools, buying, selling, worship (sermons), interpersonal conversations, letter writing, minutes, in local meetings and so on. This will help in the preservation and active use of this precious language of the Igbo people.

The Igbo Attire

An immediate striking feature of a people is the dress they put on. The Igbo man is known for tying a piece of wrapper on a pair of shorts, with a long or short sleeved shirt with or without cufflinks. The Igbo woman is known by tying two pieces of wrapper, with a blouse and headtie. The attires above mark the Igbo man and woman out where ever they are.

The Igbo Food

The food of the Igbo people is part of their culture. The Igbo man is known for his love of bitter leaf soup and fermented cassava flour. Other food taken by the Igbo man are: bread fruit, tapioca, yam (boiled, roasted, fried, pounded), three leaves yam, cocoyam, plantain (boiled, roasted, fried), cowpea, oil bean, and so on. These foods are healthy and nutritious for consumption.

The Igbo Religion

The religion of a people marks them out where ever they are. The Igbos are traditional worshippers. Every community in Igbo land has god, 'chi', that is venerated such as: *àlà*, 'the earth goddess', *àmàdịghà*, 'god of thunder and lightning/justice', *ányánwú*, 'the goddess of sun/fortune/wisdom/wellbeing', *ńjòkú*, 'god of yam/productivity', and so on. Thus, the Igbo people serve many gods depending on what they want.

The Post-natal Culture

The Igbo people have a strong postnatal culture, where a woman who puts to bed is tenderly cared for, for a minimum of six weeks. At this instance, the mother of the bride or groom comes to take care of the new born baby and his mother. During this period, the woman who has just put to bed, is bathed and rubbed with a oily cream, eat and rest. She does nothing at all except to eat and breast feed her baby. At night even when the baby cries, it is the female adult close relation, that comes to carry the baby. At the end of the post-natal care, the adult female person who comes to stay with the new mother and the new born, is appreciated with tokens of wrapper, blouse, head tie, milk, sugar, chocolate, bread soap, cream and so on. The father of the bride is given a bottle of alcohol and some money for allowing his leave home. cf. Ugorji (2019, pp. 30-44).

The Igbo Festivals

The Igbo people have a culture of observing many festivals such as: the new yam festival, ekpe festival, mmanwu (masquerade) festival, iwa akwa (clothing) festival, ede (coco yam) festival and so on. At these festivals, the gods are venerated by throwing pieces of kolanuts and pouring palm wine on the ground to them and ancestors.

The Culture of Hard work

In the Igbo belief system, nobody is expected to be lazy or depend much on others as an adult. They believe that if one does not work, then one should not eat. This philosophy pushes the Igbo man to be daring and very determined to excel in anything he does.

The Culture of Taboos

The Igbo culture is embellished with a lot of taboos. The essence of this is to check the behavioural dispositions of the people, with the intent to retain their social values. Some these taboos are: treating the yam crop with disdain, giving or taking of things from an elderly person with a left hand, having carnal knowledge of one's biological relation, committing suicide, blessing the kolanut by a woman, climbing the palm tree/raffia tree by a woman, a king seeing dead body, burying of a witch and so on. cf. Ugorji (2019, pp. 118-128).

The Culture of Cleanliness

In Igbo land, every home and place is expected to be clean. This culture is so enshrined in the life of the people that when a man is looking for a woman take as a wife, he asks around of her hygienic character. Thus, if the woman has a poor disposition to being clean a potential suitor may withdraw.

The Culture of Hospitality

The Igbo man is known to be a very hospitable person. When a visitor comes to an Igbo man's place, he is welcomed with all joy and warmth. The visitor is given a drink of palmwine and the choicest meal. If the person were to sleep, he is given a clean room with bed to sleep on, where the man is poor, he gives his bed to the visitor.

There are so many other cultures in Igbo land, but for the purpose of this paper, the discussions on the Igbo culture will stop here, since some of the rich features/identities of the Igbo man has been briefly mentioned. The next section of the paper will discuss ways the Igbo language, which is part of its culture can be sustained in a globalized world.

Sustaining the Igbo Language in a Globalized World

Recall, that one of the definitions given on language in this paper is that, "Language is generally seen as a human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols". cf. Agbedo (2003, p. 15). This means that language is a conventional device for the transference of information amongst persons of identical code which could be by oral, gestural, or graphic mode. Recall too, that, "globalization has been defined as

“... international co-operation. In globalization, countries share common ideologies, goals and many other expectations among countries in the world. cf. Odewale and Egotanwa (2019, p.186). This implies that in globalizations, countries in the world will move in the same direction, in their economies, politics, technology, religion, language and so on. In doing this, a shift to the detectives of the super powers result, with a loss in language, philosophy, culture and so on, of the lesser countries in the world. Thus, with this in mind, the next section of the paper attempts to make suggestions on how the Igbo language can be preserved in a globalized world bearing the ideas of linguistic vitality as a reference point.

Verbal use of the Igbo Language

One of the ways of sustaining the vitality of the Igbo language is to encourage the oral use of the language, at home, school, work, church, mosque, market, and so on. Where a language is not used in oral conversations, the language is likely to die over a long period of time.

Protection of the Igbo Orthography

Without an orthography, a language cannot have rules guiding its phonetic forms for higher grammatical development. It is true that the Igbo language has a standard orthography, this orthography should be sustained by avoiding the intrusions of foreign phonemes from entering into it.

Development of Primers

Basic primers that project simple words in the language should be developed. This is support the acquisition or learning of the language in a simple natural form. This will also help non-native speakers who are interested in the language to have a material to assist them do so.

Development of Dictionaries

Dictionaries are books that contain many words in a language arranged in alphabetical order. A dictionary gives the meaning of a word, the phonetic form, and its syntactic use. Having many Igbo dictionaries will help to capture many words in the Igbo language, towards the sustenance of the language in a multilingual globalized world.

Use of the Igbo Language in the Mass Media

An encouragement of the Igbo language in media of mass communication like: the television, radio, newspaper, will help in saving the identity of the Igbo language in our multilingual globalized. This is because broadcast in these modes of communication reach many people at different places thereby reinforcing the oral, written and hearing forms of the language.

Avoidance of Code-Mixing

Code-mixing is a sociolinguistic act of using two languages in a single of utterance. This sociolinguistic behaviour distorts languages in contact, such that overtime, some lexicons in a language may cease to be functional in speech. For instance, in the Igbo language, many of its native speakers seldom use the conjunction *màrà/màlà* 'and'. Thus, it is under used and may eventually die off in the language.

Involvement of the Government

The principal leaders in the Igbo communities should be involved in the encouragement of the use and the development of the Igbo language. This is because they will serve as role models in the preservation of the language and the entire Igbo culture.

Encouragement of Conferences on the Igbo Language

Igbo language scholars should, from time to time be able to hold conferences where papers of different aspects of the language are presented and discussed before the publication of such article/

Use of the Igbo Language in Education

Use, should be made of the Igbo language for the teaching of pupils in primary schools, secondary school and a subject at the tertiary level. This is to help entrench the features of the language in the minds of its users early in the lives of t

Use of the Igbo Language in the Internet

The internet is a new arrival in the Igbo world, but it is an avenue for the spread of the Igbo language. If one will use the language in writing or sending or receiving messages in the Igbo messages in the language. This will help in the vital use of the language.

Use of the Igbo Language in the Family

Many families where Igbo is spoken should be encouraged to use the Igbo language with their children and wards. This because the home which is a primary place of education where the children are nurtured for proper social behaviours.

Transference of the History of the Igbo People from Generation to Generation

Oral history of the Igbo people should be handed down to the young Igbo children. This is to help them know who they are and what their expectations will be.

Creation of an Igbo Language Day

The setting apart a day to celebrate the Igbo people and their language of Igbo is to pronounce the continuation of all that the Igbo people are known for. Thus, value will be given to the language and its users.

Encouragement of Igbo Festivals

Igbo festivals, such as the *íri jí* 'new yam festival', *èkpè*, 'the masquerade festival', *Òdò*, 'festival remembrance of the ancestors in Igbo land', *òfálá* 'festival of the appearance of the king', *Íwá ákwà*, 'festival initiation into adulthood' and so on. These festivals are opportunities for individuals to be acquainted with the various aspects of the language.

Encouragement of the Use of the Igbo Counting System

Igbo, as a language and people, have a counting system, which is not used in the teaching of calculations in schools. If this is not looked into by the education sector, it will die off. Therefore, users of the language should develop this important aspect of the language to prevent its death. It will also help to allay fear in the study of mathematics, physics, chemistry and other science subjects. It will also help to balance literacy and numeracy in the language.

Use of the Igbo Language by the Igbos in the Diaspora

Igbos in the diaspora refers to Igbo speaking persons living outside Igbo homeland. Persons living outside their homeland often are bilingual or multilingual as a result of the force to meet different linguistic needs. Overtime, such persons may use less of his native language and if may even

unlearn the language. thus, culminating to a shift to another language. However, the suggestion here, is that the Igbo language should be used by Igbos living outside the Igbo land area to enhance the vital existence of the language. The next subsection of this paper presents the findings of the paper.

Encouragement of the Use of Igbo Names

The use of Igbo names by the native speakers may look irrelevant to the existence of the language, but it is a reminder to the users of the language of who they are and the language they speak.

Encouragement in the Proper Spelling of Names

In the Igbo language, there are some names that are incorrectly spelt. For instance, names such as: **Àdákù*, ‘first daughter of wealth’, **Nwámàrà*, ‘A child of grace’, **Tóchí*, ‘praise God’. Are wrongly spelt and should be spelt respectively as, *Àdàákú*, ‘First daughter of wealth’, *Nwáámára*, ‘a child of grace’, *Tóóchí*, ‘praise Good’. The full articulation and graphic representation of the sounds will help in sustaining the phonetic forms of the language irrespective of any phonological process that may occur. In the subsection that follows, a brief account of the findings in the paper are presented.

Conclusion

The paper has attempted to suggest ways by which the vitality of the Igbo language can be preserved in a multilingual globalized world. In doing this, it was discovered that globalization is a social process in which the world moves towards the unification of; the economy, politics, commerce, trade, language, religion, food, technology, science and so on, in all countries of the world. The paper also disclosed that the Igbos have many cultures which the magnitude of this paper cannot exhaust, some of which are: the culture of hardwork, cleanliness, taboos, post-natal culture, festivals and so on. Finally, the paper suggested many ways by which the vitality of the language can be maintained through: the oral use of the Igbo language, study of the Igbo language, development of many Igbo dictionaries, encouragement of the use of the language in praying, greeting, buying, selling, writing of minutes, telling of the history of the people, use of the Igbo language in the mass media, use of the Igbo counting system in the teaching of mathematics, physics, chemistry and other science subjects, development of primers, use of the language in the

internet, encouragement of Igbos in the diaspora to use and also pass on the Igbo language to their children, involvement of the government or organizations to support the development of the Igbo language and so on. This paper, recommends for further research in other various Igbo cultures of the Igbo people, in order to find out how they can help to sustain the identity of the Igbo people in a multilingual globalized world.

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